

Passports: Great Early Buys from the British Council Collection

Since its founding in 1934, the British Council has built an outstanding public collection of modern and contemporary British Art.

Today it numbers over 8,500 works of art in all media. Seen by over a million people a year in exhibitions and displays around the world, they also make an important contribution to the UK's cultural relations with other countries. However, these works have no permanent home and are very rarely seen in this country.

Organised to coincide with the British Council's 75th anniversary, this is the first in a series of five displays that will be presented over the course of the next year.

Selected by the artist Michael Craig-Martin, it focuses on two of the collection's strengths: buying with foresight, often at an early stage in an artist's career, and showing works from the collection all over the globe. In the course of its exhibition history every work has acquired a 'passport', published alongside its purchase price in the leaflet accompanying this display.

Michael Craig-Martin has brought together significant early works by some of the UK's leading artists, encompassing the entire 20th century to the present. Three further guest curators will each highlight different aspects of the collection. The fifth exhibition will result from a competition open to curators resident outside the UK.

An illustrated guide to British art represented by this collection, with essays by Michael Craig-Martin and Andrea Rose and analyses of individual works by Dorothy Feaver, Jessica Lack, Alex Leicester, Laura McLean Ferris and Richard Parry accompanies this display.

Hiscox's sponsorship of the Whitechapel Galley's presentation of great collections underlines its commitment to promoting and protecting the very best in modern and contemporary art.

Sponsored by:

