

Black Eyes and Lemonade: Curating Popular Art

Black Eyes and Lemonade revisits an exhibition of British popular art, which opened at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1951, as part of the Festival of Britain. Curated by artist, designer and writer **Barbara Jones** (1912–1978), it is considered ground-breaking in its curation of the craft, the folk, and the popular object.

The archive exhibition is divided in seven sections which refer to **Barbara Jones's** background and ideas, her challenging definition of popular art as well as the post-war design reform which she embraced. With a focus on 1951, the year the original Black Eyes and Lemonade exhibition was put together, the display closely follows its making through the presentation of material from the Whitechapel Gallery Archive, the Design Archives, Jones's studio and Vogue Archives.

The fireplace in the shape of an Airedale Terrier borrowed from the Design Museum, and Nora a funfair horse from Jones's personal collection, were also included in the original exhibition, together with a number of smaller items showed inside cases.

The display at an art gallery in 1951 of objects normally excluded from the genre of art and design, and the juxtaposition of the crafted, the machine-made and the contemporary as a methodology which Jones deployed, are in dialogue with the practices of contemporary artists and curators today.

Through the examination of cultural values attached to everyday objects further questions around museum and gallery hierarchies are raised.

The exhibition highlights **Barbara Jones's** innovative understanding of popular art, and the ingenious connections she was able to draw across images, objects and text.

The striking poster designed by **Barbara Jones** for the 1951 exhibition is reprinted and available at the Gallery's bookshop.

The exhibition is co-curated in association with the Museum of British Folklore and its director **Simon Costin**, the University of Brighton Design Archives, design historian **Catherine Moriarty**, Curator Archive Gallery, **Nayia Yiakoumaki**.

Generously supported by Catherine and Franck Petitgas

