

# Government Art Collection: Selected by Downing Street Staff: 12 from No10

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The Government Art Collection has looked after works of art at 10 Downing Street since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this exhibition non-political staff from the British Prime Minister's official Residence, including personal assistants, custodians and IT managers, were asked to select works of art from No10 that they felt were particularly significant.

Portraits of previous Prime Ministers, such as Sir Robert Walpole (c.1740), the first State representative at No10, from the studio of **Jean Baptiste van Loo**, as well as World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill by **Yousuf Karsh** (1941), are seen alongside historical figures. These include the medical and nursing reformer Florence Nightingale by **Arthur George Walker** (1910) and mathematician and daughter of Lord Byron, Ada Lovelace, by **Margaret Carpenter** (1836).

The staff selected works that both intrigued and surprised them, such as videos by **Wood & Harrison** from the series *Twenty Six (Drawing and Falling Things)* (2000-1), and **John Bratby's** kitchen sink *View from a Window, Dartmouth Row, Blackheath* (c.1954-6), which offers a contrast to the decorative grandeur of No10's interiors. Included in this display is a video documenting the selection process as well as the comments of some of the participants.

The Government Art Collection is on display in more than 400 locations all over the globe, and includes paintings, sculptures and other works of art from the 16th century to the present day. This display is part of the Whitechapel Gallery's ongoing programme opening up important public and private collections for everyone.

The exhibition will tour to Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and Ulster Museum, Belfast, 2012-13. This display is a collaboration between the Government Art Collection and the Whitechapel Gallery.

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The Whitechapel Gallery's Collections Programme is supported by:

