

contemporary art by showing John Nash and LS Lowry. (In 1947, *Ripe Corn* by John Nash was the first painting by a living artist to be bought for the Collection.) In 2008, when art is the yardstick of cool as well as very big business, any government might think it expedient to be closely associated with contemporary artists. I only wish that taste and connoisseurship did not seem to be in quite such abeyance.

Looking through this well-produced volume is a pleasure from beginning to end. It is a chance to re-meet old acquaintances – a couple of Eileen Agars, one an early work from 1938, the other a mature 1979 canvas, and two Craigie Aitchisons, a portrait and a resonant still-life – and to discover new things, such as the clutch of fine John Aldridge landscapes, and such little-known figures as Anthony Rossiter, Michael Salaman and Alf Stockham. Ethel Walker (1861–1951) could also do with a dust-off. I was delighted to find the euphoniously named Stacy Billups, who died tragically young and full of promise, in the company of such distinguished painters as Adrian Berg and Sandra Blow. There are three paintings by that underrated master Jeffery Camp (b 1923), including the beautiful, vertiginous *Beachy Head* painting on the cover of the book.

Prunella Clough gets a very good representation, with 11 paintings. After her recent Tate retrospective, this quietly innovative artist is winning the wider public she has always deserved. There is an early Helen Clapcott, a welcome rarity in a public collection, some fine paintings by John Craxton, including the classic *Tree Root in a Welsh Estuary* (1943), and a couple of strongly patterned Jessica Dismorr landscapes. There are rather too many Roger de Greys (11) and Duncan Grants (17), though for sheer volume the prize goes to Carel Weight with 26 paintings. There are eight pictures each by Tony Eyton and Mark Gertler (about right, I would say), a fine-looking Provençal landscape by Allen Gwynne-Jones, slightly hallucinatory in morning light (1920), a couple of interesting Roger Hiltons, some good paintings by both Hitchens and Hoyland. A small collection of Henry (Heinz) Inlander's work, now rarely seen, is most welcome.

There is an extensive range of work by Henry Lamb – a baker's dozen including landscapes as well as portraits – seven paintings by Robert Medley, two geometric colour structures by Jeremy Moon (now back in fashion), and eight pictures

by John Nash. A substantial lyric talent, he has been largely overshadowed by brother Paul, here represented by five paintings. (Penny Johnson calls *Event on the Downs* by Paul Nash 'perhaps the most well-known modern painting in the Collection'.) Algernon Newton, master of weird and dramatic *plein air* lighting, has four pictures. There is an impressive group of Claude Rogers, lynchpin of the Euston Road School and little seen nowadays. There are plenty of Sickerts (17), testament to the enlightened taste of the previous director, Wendy Baron, and four Euan Uglows. There is only a single Leon Underwood, another underrated artist, but far better known as a sculptor. Which reminds us that these Public Catalogue Foundation books only chronicle oil paintings (so no prints or watercolours, for instance), but what a marvellous job they are doing. I look forward to the next.

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WILLIAM COBBING: *GRADIVA* PROJECT

WILLIAM COBBING ET AL.

Camden Arts Centre, London 2007 £9.99 \$25.00
47 pp. Fully illustrated in colour and mono
ISBN 1-90047-076-4

Exhibitions at the Freud Museum often precipitate an experience of the uncanny. It is, in Freud's own words, an 'unheimlich house'. Contemporary works sit amongst the furniture and artefacts in Freud's old London home and we wonder what he might have made of them. William Cobbing's *Gradiva Project* is no different. Incorporating sculpture, installation and video, it stems from the artist's enduring interest in the plaster cast of Gradiva in Freud's study and the tale with which she is associated. The original bas-relief of *Gradiva* was inspiration for Wilhelm Jensen's 1903 novella, *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fantasy*. In Jensen's novel, Hanold, a young archaeologist, dreams that the bas-relief comes to life only to be buried alive beneath the ashes of Vesuvius' AD79 eruption. He is obsessed with Gradiva's distinctive gait and deludes himself that his dream can take root in reality. When he chances to meet Zöe Bertgang, a childhood friend, archaeological phantasy becomes love story as Hanold's obsession with Gradiva is replaced with his once-repressed love for Bertgang. Jensen's tale became the subject of Freud's 1907 essay, 'Dreams and delusions in Jensen's

Gradiva'. In this study Freud famously analysed Hanold's dreams, comparing the archaeological dream narrative to his own field of psychoanalytic investigation.

Gradiva Project began in 2006 after Cobbing won a Helen Chadwick Fellowship at the British School in Rome and his first Gradiva-embossed manhole cover took up temporary residence in the via Gramsci. Later, Cobbing sited another manhole cover, this time in the streets of Pompeii. A new Gradiva manhole cover is a key piece in this exhibition too, situated by the front entrance to the Freud Museum. In the forecourt of the nearby Camden Arts Centre two manhole covers by Cobbing show his interpretation of André Masson's images of Gradiva and Acéphale. Mignon Nixon's catalogue essay explores Cobbing's practice as Surrealist legacy, noting that, for the Surrealists, Gradiva was an 'emblem of obsessional desire' rather than a symbol of psychoanalysis. For Cobbing, Gradiva seems to symbolise both these things.

The works belonging to *Gradiva Project* sit provocatively in the Freud Museum, poised between playfulness and serious engagement with psychoanalysis, an aspect of the work that Joanne Morra picks up in her essay. In the video work *Earthprinter*, for example, a computer printer is buried in a pile of loose earth, and I confess to a certain sense of bemusement watching printed pages spew forth like messages from the underworld. Yet when we learn of the familial resonance in this work (the pages contain poetry written by Cobbing's grandfather) it acquires a certain tenderness and suddenly the playful becomes emotive. As Morra writes of another work in the project, it evokes 'memories, desires, and wishes that are slowly unpacked in analysis'.

Jon Bird's essay tells Gradiva's tale like a detective story. Freud's travels to Rome and Pompeii, Bird reveals, displayed his phobia of Rome as well as art historical interests that informed his psychoanalytic thinking. Bird's sensitive curatorship grounds the show in an historical framework of psychoanalysis that we are not often privileged to see. Items from the Freud Museum's archive are on display alongside Cobbing's work and it is thrilling to see Freud's own annotated copy of Jensen's *Gradiva*. Gradiva is restored from the recesses of Hanold's psyche, Jensen's literary imagination and Freud's analysis of the fictional tale. Cobbing has embraced her cipher, and her story and dreams and delusions are given material



William Cobbing, *Gradiva Project* (2006–7). Cast iron manhole cover and lifting keys. Image courtesy the artist. From *William Cobbing: Gradiva Project* by William Cobbing et al.

presence in contemporary London. Yet the work is not a straightforward representation of Gradiva. Yes, there is the chance to encounter Gradiva in the manner of Hanold's original encounter, but now displaced in time and space. Then, there is an opportunity to engage with psychoanalytic thinking in Freud's last home. In this way, Cobbing's dialogue with Freud is mediated by passage of time, displacement of location, and personal experience.

In the video work *Excavation* (2004) a figure chips away at his concrete-encased head. A chisel releases fragments of concrete, which we hear hitting the floor. There is no resolution to his plight since the video loops continuously and he is never released, but we are, as Rebecca Heald suggests in her essay, 'on a firm footing' and the work remains securely grounded in Freud's thinking. The archaeological metaphor is a persistent theme in Freud and, just as

Cobbing digs beneath the surface of things, we are asked as viewers to look inward. In *Untitled (Standing Figure)* (2007) a life-size cast of the artist is plumbed into a doorway in the museum, bringing connections between art and its beholder, psychoanalysis and the Freud Museum, sharply into view. In *Agraulidae* (2007), Gradiva appears on the front of what looks like a normal household radiator on the wall but the radiator is disconnected. Reminiscent of a spectre rising from the underworld of plumbing and drainage, Gradiva prompts us to question the relationship between surface and depth, conscious and unconscious. Like the symptoms with which the analyst is confronted in the consulting room, these works demand we look deeper and unearth what is beneath their surface.

It is, however, the Gradiva manhole cover that most caught my attention. Since the cover can be lifted to permit access to what is beneath, it seems appropriate that Gradiva herself takes this form, inscribed on its surface. A manhole is, after all, a link with an underworld of dark sewers. In a

similar manner, the psychoanalytic process functions to unearth that which is repressed. Just as Freud wrote of burial as a symbol of repression and analysis as excavation of repressed material, *Gradiva Project* unearths the artist's journey. The creative experience is apprehended and given material form in the Freud Museum. The catalogue, with Gradiva embossed on its cover, has been beautifully designed. Printed on thick, heavy-gauge paper and with its grey cloth cover, it reminds me of current debates on the role of touch in the psychotherapeutic space. Perhaps now is also the time to reconsider the role of touch in the museum space too.

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REPRESENTING SLAVERY: ART, ARTEFACTS AND ARCHIVES IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

DOUGLAS HAMILTON & ROBERT J BLYTH (EDS)

Lund Humphries 2007 £50.00 \$100.00
320 pp. 120 col/76 mono illus
ISBN 978-0-85331-966-5

In 2002 the National Maritime Museum, London, acquired, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Michael Graham-Stewart Slavery Collection of 450 artefacts, manuscripts, printed books, ephemera, maps, paintings, drawings, prints and photographs. *Representing Slavery* is an introduction and catalogue to this collection and another 180 or so slavery-related materials held by the museum, including its latest acquisition, the logbook of the Liverpool-based slave schooner 'Juverna'. Useful additions to the book would have been an account of the Michael Graham-Stewart collection and more details of the provenance of the items in the catalogue entries.

There are ten introductory essays. Jane Webster looks at the archaeology of the slave ship. The carpenter was a key crew member – often there were two. They had to carry out temporary modifications: the construction of slave decks between the main deck and the 'tween deck, as well as the barricado, a partition of wood across the quarterdeck to allow the slaves to exercise on deck without jeopardising the security of the crew. An extra stove was also installed for the slaves to cook their meals.

David Richardson explores the Middle Passage 'through African eyes'. The narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, 'the African' is the only account to survive and