



The South Hampstead Art Collection

Mary Potter – 1900-1981



“her works exist in the domain of seeing and feeling; we know that they are exactly right in the same way that we know a singer to be perfectly in tune“

Kenneth Mackenzie Clark, Baron Clark - Art Historian

Mary Potter – Portrait of Ms Potter, Headmistress

Mary Potter was a painter of still lifes and landscapes in oil and watercolour.

Born in Beckenham, Kent in 1900, she was a school friend of Enid Blyton. Afterwards, she studied at the Beckenham School of Art in 1916 before being awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. Potter declined and instead, in 1918, took the Orpen bursary and began her studies at the Slade. After gaining a full scholarship the following year, Potter became a protégé of the influential new Professor, Henry Tonks, and graduated with seven awards in 1921.

Potter's best-known work uses a restrained palette of subtle, elusive colours as well as fugitive shapes and textures to convey the ephemeral quality of the air and light. Many of her pre-war paintings are of the Thames at Chiswick, as seen from her window, while her later work responds to the coastal landscape around Aldeburgh, Suffolk, where she lived for many years.

Potter had been made a member of the Seven and Five Society from early in its history in 1921, and their exhibitions provided her first source of critical praise. From 1922 Potter also exhibited with the New English Art Club under her maiden name (Attenborough) before marrying Stephen Potter in 1927. She moved to the London Group, who split from the NEAC in 1930, the same year that she was appointed a Member. Potter's first solo exhibition took place at the Bloomsbury Gallery in 1931 and was well-reviewed by contemporary critics. She went on to have many solo exhibitions with London galleries. From 1967 she had seven solo shows with the New Art Centre in London, which continued to champion her work following her death, holding a further five Mary Potter exhibitions. She was awarded an OBE in 1979, and major retrospective exhibitions of her work were shown at the Tate Gallery in 1980 and the Serpentine Gallery in 1981, which opened to great critical acclaim a few months before her death.



Gillian Ayres CBE – 1930-2018



“the only true British contribution to American abstract expressionism.”
Guardian 2018

Gillian Ayres – The South Hampstead Murals & other works

In 1957, the architect Michael Greenwood, who at the time was redeveloping South Hampstead, commissioned the young artist Gillian Ayres to paint the 'Hampstead Murals' as decoration for the dining hall. Ayres allegedly took inspiration from a photograph she saw of Jackson Pollock working on one of his controversial abstract expressionist murals. His method of loosely splattering, pouring and dripping household paint on a horizontal canvas is visible in Ayres' mural which is made up of four individual works.

Over the years, the four 'South Hampstead Murals', which were painted on hardboard, were also used as dividers in the staff room but were eventually covered over with wallpaper.

In the early 1980s, Headmistress Averil Burgess requested that the paper be removed so that staff and students could again appreciate the works. "The head of art Jenny Newman mobilised her class with buckets of warm water to peel away the paper," she recalls. "It was very exciting to see these vivid swirls of colour emerging from their hiding and we were all thrilled about it." Mrs Burgess invited Gillian Ayres invited back to the school and she was delighted to view the works she had created 30 years ago. In 1989, Ayres was nominated for the Turner Prize.

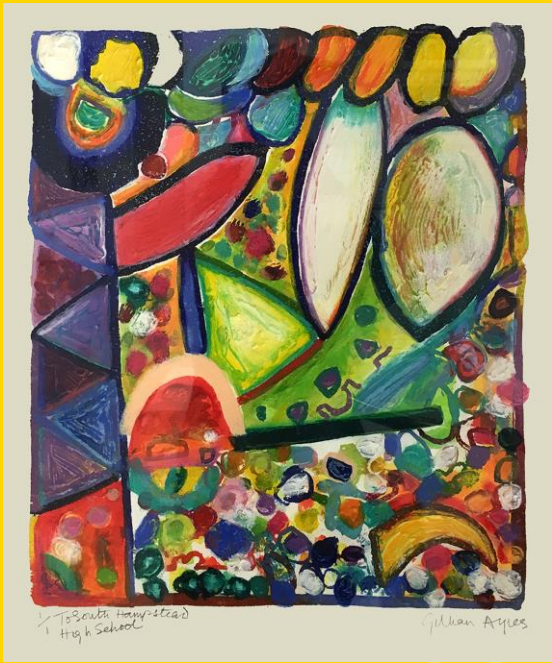
When South Hampstead moved into its new building in 2014, the murals were cleaned and restored by an art conservation company. The markings and scratches from cutlery were reduced and the old restoration work was removed. The murals are now proudly on display in South Hampstead's reception, and next to the Head's office. Her unabashedly bold use of colour and mark-making embody the quirky and pioneering spirit of the school – a vibrant and inspirational backdrop to everything that happens here. When Ayres died in 2018, at the age of 88, her obituary in the Guardian cited the murals as possibly: *"the only true British contribution to American abstract expressionism."*

The artist bequeathed five new prints to the school in her will which are on show on the fifth floor and in the Head's office. They are testament to the artist's courage, non-conformity, independence and determination in her art and her lifestyle. Her works give South Hampstead a special place in the history of art and form the heart of our modern art collection.

Murals Commissioned by the South Hampstead Governors 1957. Additional prints donated by Gillian Ayres 2018







William Sweetlove



William Sweetlove – Penguins

William Sweetlove is a renowned international artist and a member of the artists' collective, 'The Cracking Art Group.' The group use a type of plastic produced via a thermo-chemical reaction in crude oil, known as 'cracking' - the physical medium that provides the basis for their art. The aesthetic choice of recyclable plastic represents an acceptance of the inevitability that our world is becoming increasingly artificial. His work unites dadaism with surrealism and pop art in humoristic sculptures that at first sight may seem "kitschy". However, closer familiarity with his works reveals their role as a creative antidote to the overproduction and over consumption of our society.

The artworks are designed to inspire a community-wide conversation about the environmental importance of recycling, while leaving a potent artistic trace. With his cloned animals William Sweetlove calls for greater ecological awareness and urges us to reflect on the consequences of the climate change challenging humanity. His cloned dogs wear boots since the sea level rises and the penguins carry water bottles since we are running out of drinking water.

To celebrate the completion and opening of the new South Hampstead Senior School building on Maresfield Gardens in 2014, six distinctive 'school penguins' were commissioned from the. Our colony of life-size blue and gold penguins, dotted throughout the school, has been providing an injection of colour and humour ever since, even inspiring the name of our student magazine.

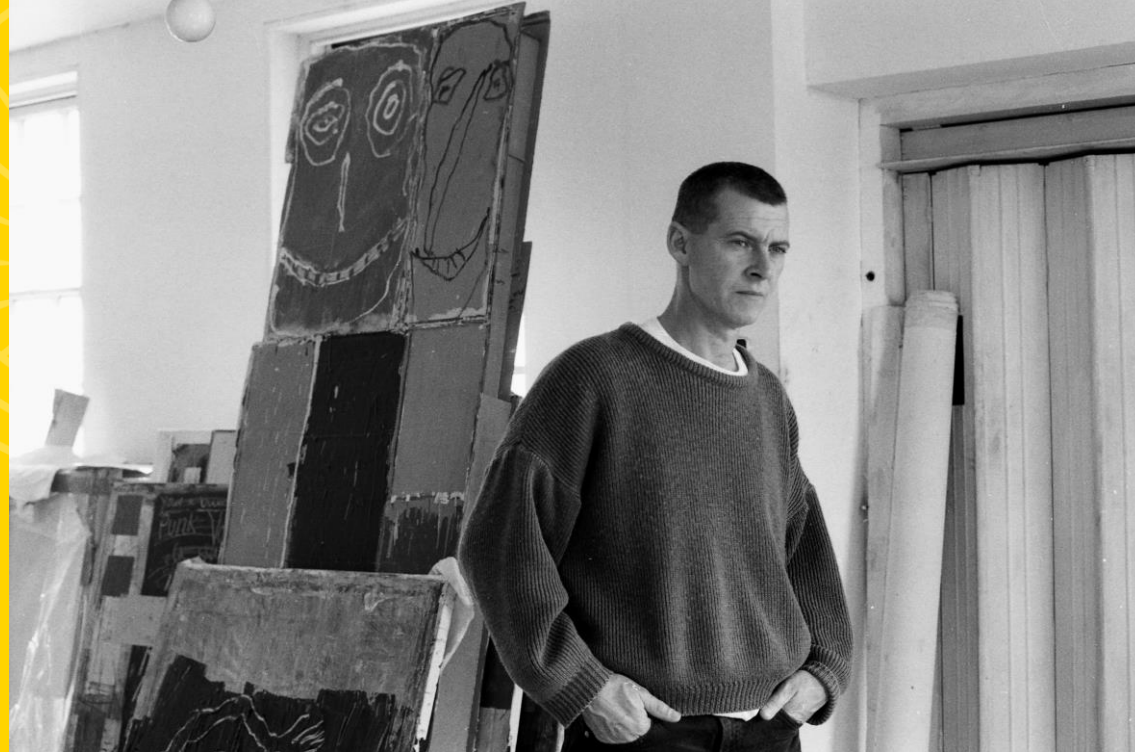
The artist chose the penguin, complete with water-bottle backpack, to typify the school's somewhat quirky and irreverent outlook. Our pupils, just like penguins, are quick, resilient and highly social; eager to dive in, and displaying excellent vision in choppy water, each has their own distinct call. As one of the few species where males and females share the chick-rearing, penguins possess an egalitarian outlook which resonates well at South Hampstead. Interestingly, penguins have more feathers than the average bird.

As part of the commission, the artist moulded a number of smaller, limited-edition replicas of the original sculptures. These are proudly presented to members of our community who have made a significant and important contribution to the school.

Commissioned by South Hampstead High School for the opening of the new senior school 2014



David Spiller



David Spiller – I'd Walk a Million Miles

David Spiller was classically trained in painting and drawing at Beckenham School of Art. This is where he also started to develop a lifelong passion for music of all kinds: rock'n'roll, rock, the blues and music from the movies. In 1962 he gained a place to study at the Slade School of Art, where he was taught Frank Auerbach and William Coldstream and where he won the Henry Tonks Prize for Drawing. He now works from studios in London and New York.

Spiller's work appropriates concepts from popular culture and childhood memories. His art is filled with enthusiasm and energy, compressing a world of influences and ideas onto a single piece of artwork. From: Picasso, Dubuffet, Warhol, Disney, Graphic design, often taking an already iconic image he recycles and recontextualises symbols already packed with hidden connotations. Essentially David Spiller is an urban artist focusing on graffiti and media. By using different painterly techniques he creates rich and complex surfaces. Blending styles by mixing the hard-hitting immediacy of Pop Art, with bold colours, punchy texts and clean lines, alongside expressionistic painting and hard-edged abstraction. To these striking images he adds another layer of informal freehand texts and drawings including characters and motifs that echo in his mind, combining these elements with evocative lines from his favourite songs by: the Beatles, Bob Dylan, The Pogues and other lyrics that have seeped into his consciousness. With all of this information and emotion Spiller constructs a canvas or print that uniquely combines all of these elements.

Love is at the centre of David Spiller's work. The Beatles sang *All You Need is Love* as if it were a mission statement. Spiller's paintings are a cornucopia of appropriated and remembered images, a smorgasbord of influences from American Pop Art, boyhood comics, TV cartoons and art history.

Donated by John Rosefield (Former Chair of Governors 2014)

You are always on my mind.
WHERE ARE YOU TONIGHT
I'd walk
tell me something
AND IN THE END IT WAS THE LOVE YOU MADE...
9 Million
I'm here with the advantage... without you to light the scene.
JUST ONE KISS
miles
TAKE ME HOME
for one of your
To See you once more. All the fun we'd HAVE
Smiles
I MISS YOU EVERY DAY
Walk on the wild side
I'll walk with you in the garden of Eden.
LOVE will find a way.
WAOS SORRY NOW
May your Wishes all come TRUE

©

© 2009

David Spiller

MIRA CINNAMON - 1939 to 2021



Mira Cinnamon - Looking Beyond

Mira Cinnamon (1939 – 2021) was born in Iraq, educated in Israel, and from the 1970's practised as an artist in London .Her sculptures feature varied materials such as bronze resin, stone, clay , breezeblock and aluminium. Breezeblock and aluminium are often used in the preparatory stages of the traditional sculptural process to build maquettes or to prepare stands onto which layers of secondary materials can be added in a new direction.. Rarely are they used alone.

In 1993, Cinnamon visited Pietra Santa in Italy to explore new mediums for her work and experimented with alabaster and marble. It was here that she created the concept of making maquettes in breezeblock and it was this relatively inexpensive medium that was to influence her work in a new direction. While marble is durable, luxurious and references an ancient sculptural tradition, breezeblock is functional and has no precedent in art history.

Cinnamon's work focuses on the female form and consciousness through universal themes such as growing up,motherhood, love and suffering. She was often drawn to events affecting people in a momentous way- moments when layers of social and cultural convention were stripped away and the raw commonality of human feeling remained.

Her work and commissions were exhibited widely including, Israel, Switzerland and the USA, and at The Royal Academy, The Fukuyama Museum of Art in Japan and the sculpture, 'Looking Beyond' at the South Hampstead High School for Girls.

Donated by : Moni Levy (former Chair of Governors & Parent)

Nina Mae Fowler



Nina Mae Fowler – Head Portrait

Headmistress, Jenny Stephen's, portrait was commissioned from alumna artist Nina Mae Fowler.

Nina Mae Fowler (1999) graduated in sculpture from the University of Brighton and returned to South Hampstead to teach art between 2012 & 2015. She has been nominated for the BP Portrait Award for her painting of the ballet dancer Carlos Acosta, as well as reaching the shortlist for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2010 and 2015. In 2012 the University of Oxford commissioned her to depict Professor Richard Dawkins. The portrait was used by Dawkins in his book *An Appetite for Wonder: The Making of a Scientist*.

In April 2019, Fowler unveiled a major commission awarded to her by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Fowler's series of charcoal portraits depict nine of the UK's leading living film directors; Sir Ridley Scott, Asif Kapadia, Sally Potter, Ken Loach, Paul Greengrass, Nick Park, Sam Mendes, Joe Wright and Amma Asante. Fowler chose to capture each director whilst watching a film of importance to them. With their faces illuminated only by the light of the screen, Fowler took several stills of the directors and made preliminary sketches that formed the basis of the final pencil and charcoal drawings. Intriguingly, the director's film choice remains private between artist and sitter and not revealed to the public. The intimate scale of the works draws the viewer into the minds of the people behind the lens, conveying the inspiration felt by the directors when watching great cinema. Portraits of Film Directors by Nina Mae Fowler are now part of the museum's permanent collection and represent the institutions first contemporary drawing commission. The drawings were on public display from April 2019 until October 2019.

Fowler's work is collected by prominent figures such as John Maybury Jude Law, Sharleen Spiteri and Caroline Issa. Her work is in the National Portrait Gallery, London.



Bobby Mills



Bobby Mills – The Helen Strange Lectern

In 2020 we commissioned the craftsman Bobby Mills to create a Lectern in memory of our former Chair of Governors, Helen Strange.

Bobby is a photographer and furniture maker working out of his studio in North Devon. His inspiration comes from many places but first and foremost from the wood he works with - each piece telling a story of time passing and the ebb and flow of the seasons.

For our commissioned lectern, Bobby waited to find the right piece of wood – he only uses native wood from around the UK and mostly from very close to where he lives (but not exclusively). Primarily, he selects windblown trees or wood from conservation projects and countryside management programs. He looks to celebrate each piece of wood, and the more he can understand about where it grew and why or how it fell, the more he can engage with the piece and then pass that on with the finished work.

On a visit to one of his trusted wood sources he saw some absolutely stunning oak and was completely drawn to it as the material for the lectern. He has already spent a lot of time working with on a completely different piece of wood but found himself drawing new lines on this new oak.

The oak is a Sussex Pippy oak, and the finished form of the Lectern really celebrates the natural contours of the original tree whilst echoing the presence of the old oaks we all know well. You are encouraged to run your hands over the lectern to get a sense of the wood and pick up the small drinking cup to feel the texture and history of the original tree.

Commissioned by John Rosefield (Former Chair of Governors) in memory of Helen Strange 2021



Clare Woods



Clare Woods – Idle Hands

Clare Woods (born 1972) was born in Southampton, England, in 1972. She studied for her BA Fine Art at Bath College of Art 1991-94 and for her MA Fine Art at Goldsmith's College, London 1997-99. She lives and works in Hereford, England.

In 2012 Woods was commissioned by the Contemporary Art Society, London to create a permanent ceramic mural for the London Olympic Park, and in 2015 she created a 20 x 8 metre painting for Aarhus VIA University College, Denmark.

Woods' paintings are held in many major national and international collections including the Arts Council Collection, London, British Council Collection, London, Southampton City Art Gallery, National Museum Wales Collection, Arken Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, and the Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, USA.

Our print 'Idle Hands' has been purchased and donated for The Burgess Room. It is currently on display at the Royal Academy of Arts as part of the 2022 Summer Exhibition.

Purchased 2022 thanks to a generous donation



Yinka Shonibare CBE



Yinka Shonibare CBE – Mayflower All Flowers

Born in London in 1962, Yinka Shonibare moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to the UK to study Fine Art at Byam Shaw School of Art, London and Goldsmiths College, London, where he received his Masters in Fine Art.

Over the past decade, he has become well known for his exploration of colonialism and post-colonialism within the contemporary context of globalization. Working in painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation, Shonibare's work examines race, class and the construction of cultural identity through incisive political commentary on the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe, and their respective economic and political histories. Shonibare uses wry citations of Western art history and literature to question the validity of contemporary cultural and national identities.

In 2004, he was nominated for the Turner Prize and in 2008. In 2010, his first public art commission, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* was displayed on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London. In 2013 Shonibare was elected a Royal Academician. Works recently shown at the RA have included the *RA Family Album*, which was used to wrap Burlington Gardens during the refurbishment of the RA, and the room he curated as part of the 2017 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. His sculpture *Wind Sculpture VI* was also displayed in the RA courtyard during that exhibition. His work is included in notable museum collections including Tate, London; the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago among others.

Our new print which has been donated to our art collection is a complex combination of woodblock and relief printing. It depicts the iconic ship, the Mayflower, which transported a group of colonists from Plymouth, England, to the New World in 1620, some of whom were Puritans - religious separatists fleeing persecution in Europe – known today as the Pilgrims. The remaining passengers were merchants, craftsmen, indentured servants and children - the Pilgrims refer to them as “strangers”. Prior to leaving the ship and establishing Plymouth Colony, the first permanent settlement of Europeans in America, the colonists, both Pilgrims and “strangers” signed the Mayflower Compact. This document established a rudimentary form of democracy with each member contributing to the welfare of the community. The Mayflower Compact was an early attempt at democracy and played a role in shaping the United States of America as we know it today.

The icon of the Mayflower ship is decorated with multicoloured batik fabric sails. The brightly coloured “African” batik fabric was inspired by Indonesian design, mass-produced by the Dutch colonists, and eventually sold to the colonies in West Africa. In the 1960s the material became a new emblem of African identity and independence even though it originated in Indonesia and was made in Europe. Fragments of this brightly coloured wax batik fabric, which has become a recognisable and potent recurring component of Shonibare's work, have been collaged into areas individually hand-cut from the print. The history of the fabric serves as a potent metaphor for the shifting of both historical and contemporary cultural identities through the ages. *Mayflower, All Flowers* seeks to champion and reassert the great American principle and tradition of the right to equality. The words ‘All Flowers’ in the title of the work have been added to ‘Mayflower’ to emphasise the necessity for an egalitarian society, encompassing immigration status, race, gender, religion or disability, in today's United States of America.

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