

The Jerwood Supplement

Acquisitions (1987–2007) at National Museums Liverpool

A PREVIOUS SUPPLEMENT in the July 1996 issue of this Magazine published a selection from the first ten years of acquisitions by National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside in the fields of fine and decorative art, antiquities and oriental art. The present Supplement of acquisitions of National Museums Liverpool (NMGGM's successor) is limited to paintings, drawings and sculpture, including works omitted in 1996.¹ The fine art collections of National Museums Liverpool are spread across three venues: the Walker Art Gallery in the centre of Liverpool; Sudley House, in one of its southern suburbs, a Liverpool shipping-line owner's art collection recently reopened to the public; and across the river Mersey at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight.

The displays at the Walker Art Gallery now cover medieval to modern Western art, but it was originally built in 1877 by Liverpool City Corporation to house the newly established Liverpool Autumn Exhibition, staged annually from 1871 until 1938. One of the Walker's most recent acquisitions, Lord Leighton's *Study for 'Weaving the wreath'* (Fig.XVII) was for a painting bought from the 1872 Liverpool Autumn Exhibition. The Walker's collections expanded through purchases from the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition, where continental artists also exhibited; gifts and bequests from Liverpool's business community; and acquisitions from the collections of the local gentry and aristocracy. The latter still provide additions to the collections. Van Goyen's *View of Dordrecht* (Fig.VI), for example, came from the Blundell family of Ince Blundell Hall, north of Liverpool. In 1893 the Gallery's collection of European painting was transformed when it was loaned and later given the early Italian and Netherlandish paintings acquired by William Roscoe (1753–1831).

The Walker also collects work by Liverpool-born or -based artists. These range from the eighteenth-century marine painter Richard Wright to the twentieth-century painter Christopher Wood, who studied architecture at Liverpool University. Wright's *Man of War in harbour* (Fig.I) will be unveiled in the Walker's forthcoming exhibition *Joseph Wright of Derby in Liverpool* (17th November 2007 to 24th February 2008), where his work forms a context for the impact that Joseph Wright (unrelated) made on his arrival in Liverpool in 1768.

Most of the contemporary painting acquisitions derive from the biennial John Moores Painting Exhibition, established in 1957 with the financial support of John Moores (1896–1993), founder of the Liverpool-based company Littlewoods. It has retained a reputation as the country's leading painting biennale. From 1980 the Walker was automatically presented with the first-prize-winning work and by this means has acquired outstanding works by, among others, John Hoyland,

Bruce McLean, Lisa Milroy and Michael Raedecker. Now works such as Alexis Harding's *Slump/fear (orange/black)* (Fig.XXXV), winner in 2004, are purchased by the Gallery. National Museums Liverpool benefit from a longstanding relationship with the Contemporary Art Society and many of our acquisitions are made with the help of the Art Fund.

By contrast, the Lady Lever Art Gallery represents the highly individual taste of one collector, the soap manufacturer William Hesketh Lever (1851–1925), 1st Viscount Leverhulme, and was named in memory of his wife. It is noted for its collections of furniture, Wedgwood and Chinese ceramics and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings, drawings and sculpture, predominantly British. It is primarily a static collection and acquisitions are made only when they have connections with the Lever family. Not all of Leverhulme's collection was given to the Gallery when it opened in 1922. Many works were auctioned in 1925 and others were kept by the family. Leverhulme's grandson owned two paintings by Millais, *Spring (apple blossoms)*, which was purchased for the Lady Lever Art Gallery in 1986, and *Cymon and Iphigenia* (Fig.XIV), which was acquired in 2004.

National Museums Liverpool have always aimed to strike a balance between their local and national and international responsibilities, showing Liverpool as a vibrant metropolitan centre capable of supporting artists and fostering collectors of national importance. As the city prepares to become European Capital of Culture in 2008, National Museums Liverpool hope that its acquisitions will continue to uphold that mission.

XANTHE BROOKE

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I. *Man of War in harbour*, by Richard Wright (c.1723–c.1775). Late 1760s. Oil on canvas, 106.5 by 167.5 cm. (Bought with the assistance of the Friends of National Museums Liverpool, 2006; inv. no.WAG 2006.21).

This is a classic example of the Liverpool artist's mature London period, when he was the leading marine painter in Britain. He made his name in 1761 with *Queen Charlotte's passage to England in a storm* (Royal Collection). Although the ship is unidentified (apart from being that of an Admiral of the White), the painting was bought by Jervoise Clarke (1733–1808), MP for Yarmouth, Isle of Wight and later Hampshire. The painting is still in its original frame, which added sixteen guineas to the picture's original cost of £63.

¹ Fully footnoted catalogue entries for all unpublished post-1987 acquisitions of foreign fine art can be found at the following web address: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections.



II. *Reclining nude woman lifting a curtain*, by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino (1591–1666). 1641 or 1646. Pen and iron gall ink on paper, 20.3 by 24.3 cm., in original eighteenth-century mount. (Bought at the sale of the Holkham Hall drawings collection, Christie's, London, 2nd July 1991, lot 22, with the help of the Art Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund; inv. no. WAG 10949).

The drawing shows Guercino's typically vigorous and vivacious line and is possibly related to a sketch of a *Venus and Cupid* doodled on the back of a letter dated 28th December 164(1 or 6) in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem. It is one of the notable examples of Guercino's drawings collected by the young Thomas Coke (1697–1759), 1st Earl of Leicester (5th creation), during his Grand Tour of Italy (1712–18) and later kept in his library at Holkham Hall, Norfolk.



III. *Ulysses winning the archery contest in the presence of Penelope's suitors*, by Francesco Primaticcio (1504–70). Between 1541 and 1559. Red chalk heightened with white on light red prepared paper, 24.3 by 32.4 cm. (Bought with the assistance of the Art Fund, 1991; inv. no. WAG 10843). This drawing is Primaticcio's preparatory *modello* for the thirty-ninth fresco relating the story of Ulysses, commissioned by Francis I for his château at Fontainebleau. The purchase of this sheet, formerly in the collection of the Blundell family, spurred the National Museums to buy, between 1995 and 1998, the rest of the Blundell collection of over 330 old-master prints and drawings, which included major drawings by Barocci, Correggio, Domenichino, Guercino, Mantegna, Parmigianino, Reni, Sirani, Tintoretto and several by Rubens. The collection of drawings was catalogued in X. Brooke: *Mantegna to Rubens: The Weld-Blundell Drawings Collection*, London 1998.



IV. *Adoration of the shepherds*, by Jusepe de Ribera (1591–1652). c.1640–45. Black and red chalk and grey and brown wash heightened with white on paper, 16.5 by 19.5 cm. (Bought at the sale of the Holkham Hall drawings collection, Christie's, London, 2nd July 1991, lot 26, with the assistance of the Art Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund; inv. no. WAG 10851). During the 1640s Ribera painted at least three versions of this theme and began another (but possibly did not complete it). The drawing is not obviously related to any of his known paintings of the subject and it may therefore be an independent variation on the theme rather than a preparatory composition.



V. *Classical landscape with a city by a river*, by Jean-François, called Francisque, Millet (1643–79). c.1660–65. Oil on canvas, 83.2 by 103.2 cm. (Bequeathed to the Art Fund by Mrs Marguerite Frederika Sternberg and presented to the Walker Art Gallery, 1992; inv. no.WAG 10854).

Millet is acknowledged as one of the subtlest interpreters of Poussin's classical landscapes and this work was presented to the Walker to add to its strong collection of Poussin landscapes, including his *Landscape with Phocion's widow gathering his ashes* (inv. no.WAG 10350). The present work was not listed or illustrated in Bernard Biard's summary catalogue of Millet's work published in *Dossier de L'Art* 93 (2003), pp.82–89.



VI. *View of Dordrecht and the Groot Kerk from across the Maas*, by Jan van Goyen (1596–1656). 1644. Oil on panel, 64.8 by 96.8 cm. Signed and dated (on rowing boat): 'VG 1644'. (Accepted by HM Government in lieu of tax from the estate of Colonel Sir Joseph Weld (d.1992) and allocated to the Walker, 2000; inv. no.WAG 2000.25).

One of the largest and finest of the eight known views of Dordrecht that Van Goyen painted in 1644. This work shows his mastery in painting with fluid brushstrokes the rippling waves, damp blustery clouds and liquid sunlight over the old river Maas. Although he has depicted accurately the Dordrecht skyline, dominated by the Groot Kerk, typically he has exaggerated the distances between the buildings to create a more panoramic view.



VII. *Warmond Castle and Voorschoten Church in a winter landscape*, by Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten (1622–66). 1661. Oil on canvas, 93 by 128 cm. Signed and dated: 'J. Berestraaten ft. 1661'. (Presented by the widow of Kenneth Robinson, 1988; inv. no.WAG 6610).

The painting combines a view of Warmond Castle, near Leiden, owned by the Catholic Jan van Wassenaer (1626–87), and the church at Voorschoten, some seven miles to the south of Warmond, where the Van Wassenaers had their family tomb. As Jan van Wassenaer remarried in 1661 he may have commissioned Beerstraten to portray his family home and church in one composite view.



VIII. *Dutch merchant-ships in a storm*, by Ludolf Bakhuizen (1631–1708). 1670s–1690s. Oil on canvas, 39.5 by 48 cm. (Presented by the widow of Kenneth Robinson, 1988; inv. no.WAG 6611).

This typical marine scene by Ludolf Bakhuizen was once in the eclectic art collection of the eccentric John Miller (1795/96–1873/78), a Liverpool tobacco merchant who is best known for his sizeable group of works by British landscape artists, including J.M.W. Turner, and his friendship with and patronage of London- and Liverpool-based Pre-Raphaelite painters. One of his Turners, a watercolour of the port of Deal seen in a choppy storm (also in the Walker; inv. no.WAG 1001; Wilton 758) shows Miller's taste for the sort of maritime views in which Bakhuizen specialised.



IX. *Portrait of Richard Gildart*, by Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97). 1768. Oil on canvas, 125 by 100 cm. Signed and dated: 'J. Wright pinxt 1768'; inscribed: 'AET 95'. (Bought by Private Treaty sale through Agnew & Sons, London, from a descendant of the sitter, 1988; inv. no. WAG 10637).

This arresting image of Liverpool's senior citizen aged 95 portrays Richard Gildart (c.1673/4–1770), three times mayor, the city's freeman for seventy years and MP for twenty, a merchant in the sugar and tobacco trade all his adult life. The painting will be included in the Walker's exhibition *Joseph Wright of Derby in Liverpool* (17th November 2007 to 24th February 2008), along with two other portraits that Wright of Derby painted when he lived in Liverpool (1768–71) of Mr and Mrs Fleetwood Hesketh (inv. nos. WAG 10846 and WAG 10847), which the Walker acquired in 1991.



X. *Interior of a foundry with visitors*, by Léonard Defrance (1735–1805). 1789. Oil on panel, 41.9 by 59.1 cm. Signed and dated: 'FRANCE DE. LIEGE MDCCLXXXIX'.

(Purchased from Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London, with the assistance of the Art Fund, 1990; inv. no. WAG 10824). The painting shows fashionable visitors to one of the many iron foundries of Liège, the artist's home town. Defrance specialised in industrial interiors, some commissioned by the enlightened and modernising François-Charles de Velbruck, Prince Bishop of Liège (1772–84). This view, of which there are two other versions in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, was painted in the first year of the French Revolution, which reached Liège in August 1789. Defrance witnessed and played a role in the revolutionary movements in both Paris and Liège.

XI. *Flock of mountain sheep with a fir tree* and *Flock of mountain sheep with a deciduous tree*, by Gian Domenico Tiepolo (1727–1804). c.1790s. Pen and grey ink and wash on paper, 25.1 by 18 cm.; 23.5 by 18 cm. Signed: 'Dom^o Tiepolo' and 'Dom^o Tiepolo f.'. (Bequeathed to the Walker by George Palmer Holt, 1990; inv. nos. WAG 1993.2 and WAG 1993.3).

Both drawings may be compositional ideas for the series of frescos of animals in landscape settings that Gian Domenico Tiepolo painted between the 1770s and 1790s on the walls of the Tiepolo family villa at Zianigo, near Mirano. The front row of sheep in both drawings were adapted from a 1763 engraving by Pietro Monaco after a painting by Castiglione of *David leading away his father's flock* (then in the collection of John Smith, the British Consul in Venice).



XII. *Naples from the Mole*, by J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851). c.1818. Signed at lower left: 'JMW Turner RA'. Pencil and watercolour with scratching out on paper, 14 by 21.3 cm. (Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax from the estate of Mrs Evelyn Charlton and allocated to National Museums Liverpool, 2006; inv. no. WAG 2006.19). This view of Naples looking along the old harbour quay, with the Castel dell'Ovo on the right and S. Martino in the distance, was painted by Turner before he made his first visit to Italy in 1819. It was based on a pencil drawing by the architect and topographical draughtsman James Hakewill (1778–1843), who used it to illustrate his *A Picturesque Tour of Italy* (1820). In A. Wilton: *JMW Turner. His Art and Life*, Secaucus 1979, no. 712, it is listed as untraced, but it was in the collection of the grand-daughter of Robert Durning Holt (1832–1908), brother of George, who owned Sudley House and was prominent in Liverpool's mercantile, artistic and political affairs. He had bought it in 1866.



XIII. *St John's Market, Liverpool*, by Samuel Austin (1796–1834). 1827. Pencil and watercolour heightened with white on paper, 48.9 by 80 cm. Signed and dated: 'S. Austin 1827' (twice). (Purchased from Christie's, London, 21st November 2001, lot 29, with the help of the Museums' Friends organisation; inv. no. WAG 2001.62).

This highly finished large watercolour is an important example of the Liverpool-born artist's work. It depicts the hustle of Liverpool's commercial centre, the now demolished St John's Market, newly built by John Foster junior between 1820 and 1822, and in particular the grandeur of its 500 foot long hall, which attracted the admiration of Karl Friedrich Schinkel visiting in 1826 and anticipated other great provincial market halls and early train sheds.



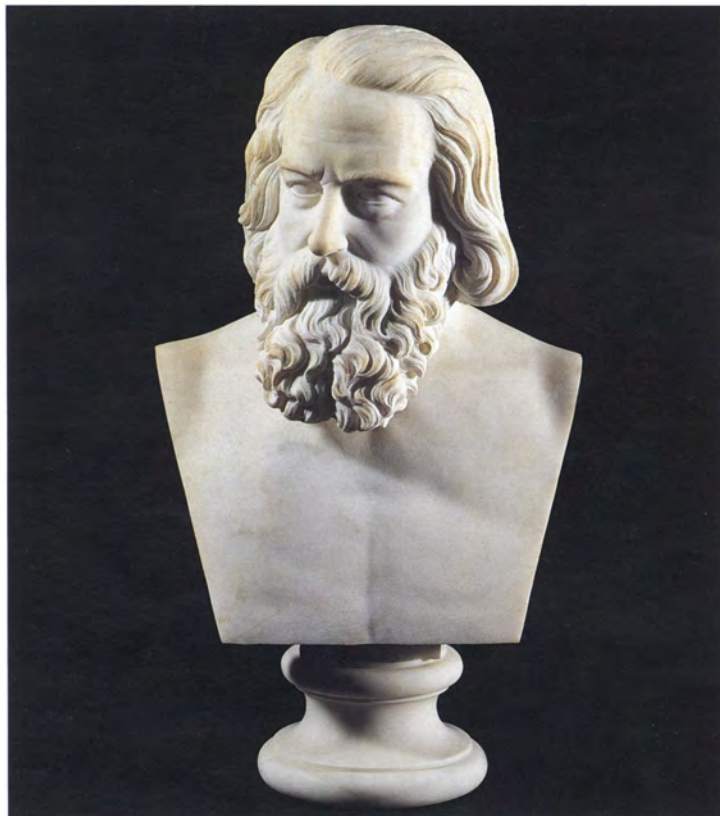


XIV. *Cymon and Iphigenia*, by Sir John Everett Millais (1829–96). February to April 1848 and 1852. Oil on canvas, 114.5 by 147.5 cm. Signed: 'JMillais' (JM in monogram). (Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax from the estate of the 3rd Viscount Leverhulme and allocated to National Museums Liverpool, 2004; inv. no.LL 10336).

The subject is taken from Dryden's version of the tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in which the ignorant shepherd-lad Cymon falls for the beautiful Iphigenia and through love is transformed into a polished gallant. Seemingly parodying William Etty's brushwork and figural style, Millais has painted a suitably dim-witted Cymon and a shame-faced Iphigenia. In April 1848 it was submitted to the Royal Academy, London, but rejected as 'unfinished' and bought in 1849 for £60 by the Oxford collector and dealer James Wyatt.



XV. *Music versus work*, by Joseph Edward Worrall (1829–1913). 1864. Oil on canvas, 31.1 by 22.9 cm. Signed and dated: 'J.E. Worrall 1864'. (Bought at Christie's, London, 23rd November 2005, lot 128; inv. no.WAG 2005.40). Worrall was a Liverpool follower of the Pre-Raphaelite movement who favoured Victorian domestic and street life painted in minute detail and with a delicate touch, such as this scene of a servant-boy putting aside his brush and dustbox to play on a tin whistle. Although examples of Worrall's paintings rarely appear on the market, he exhibited twenty-five works at the Liverpool Academy between 1853 and 1867 (mainly landscapes in the 1850s and genre scenes in the 1860s), and the Walker also owns five drawings and watercolours by Worrall.



XVI. *Bust of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, by Mary Edmonia Lewis (1843/45–after 1911). 1872. Marble, 65.5 by 41 by 22 cm. Signed and dated: 'EDMONIA LEWIS ROMA 1872'. (Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax from the estate of Mrs G.P.V. Mackeson-Sandbach and presented to National Museums Liverpool for display at the Walker, 2003; inv. no.WAG 2004.5).

Bought from the part native American part African-American sculptress in Rome in February 1872 by Henry Robertson Sandbach (1807–95), a Liverpool merchant and one of Britain's leading collectors of contemporary sculpture. Lewis's ancestry inspired her interest in Longfellow and his *Song of Hiawatha* and she modelled him on his visit to Rome in 1869 and carved at least one other larger bust of the poet (1871), for the Harvard University Library, Cambridge, MA.



XVII. *Study for 'Weaving the wreath'*, by Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830–96). c.1872. Black and white chalk on grey paper, 26 by 17.5 cm. (Purchased from Sotheby's, London, 27th November 2003, lot 314; inv. no.WAG 2004.4).

This is a compositional study for the painting *Weaving the wreath* (inv. no.WAG 256), which George Holt bought at the second Liverpool Autumn Exhibition in 1872 for £525. The painting is now exhibited at his Sudley House. The drawing was first illustrated (C. Tardieu: 'La peinture à L'Exposition Universelle de 1878', *L'Art* 16 (1879), p.44) when the painting was exhibited in Paris in 1878. The drawing joins ten paintings by Leighton in the NML's collections, while a further six drawings, two watercolours and a sculpture are at the Walker.



XVIII. *The oyster girl*, by Karl Gussow (1843–1907). 1882. Oil on Winsor & Newton panel, 76.4 by 63 cm. Signed and dated: 'C. GUSSOW Brln. 1882'. (Bequeathed to the Art Fund by Mrs. O.M. Baker and presented to the Walker, 1996; inv. no.WAG 1996.66).

This picture is typical of the German artist Gussow's minutely detailed naturalism, influenced by his admiration of seventeenth-century Dutch *finjschilder* painters. It was the first in a series produced shortly after he left the teaching staff of the Königliche Akademie der bildenden Künste, Berlin, in 1880. The painting was presented to the Walker because the Gallery already owned another genre painting by Gussow, *The old man's treasure* of 1876 (inv. no.WAG 2877), which was shown at the 1879 Liverpool Autumn Exhibition.



XIX. *Portrait of Pau Cucurny with a dog*, by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). 1903. Ink and watercolour wash on paper, 21.5 by 12.8 cm. (Presented to the Walker by an anonymous donor in 2000; inv. no.WAG 2000.34). Pau Cucurny was a Catalan art enthusiast and wealthy son of a Barcelona manufacturer who enjoyed frequenting the Els Quatre Gats bar along with Picasso and other artists. Cucurny had died by 1904 and Christian Zervos has dated the drawing on stylistic grounds to 1903, when Picasso spent most of the year in Barcelona having returned from Paris almost penniless.



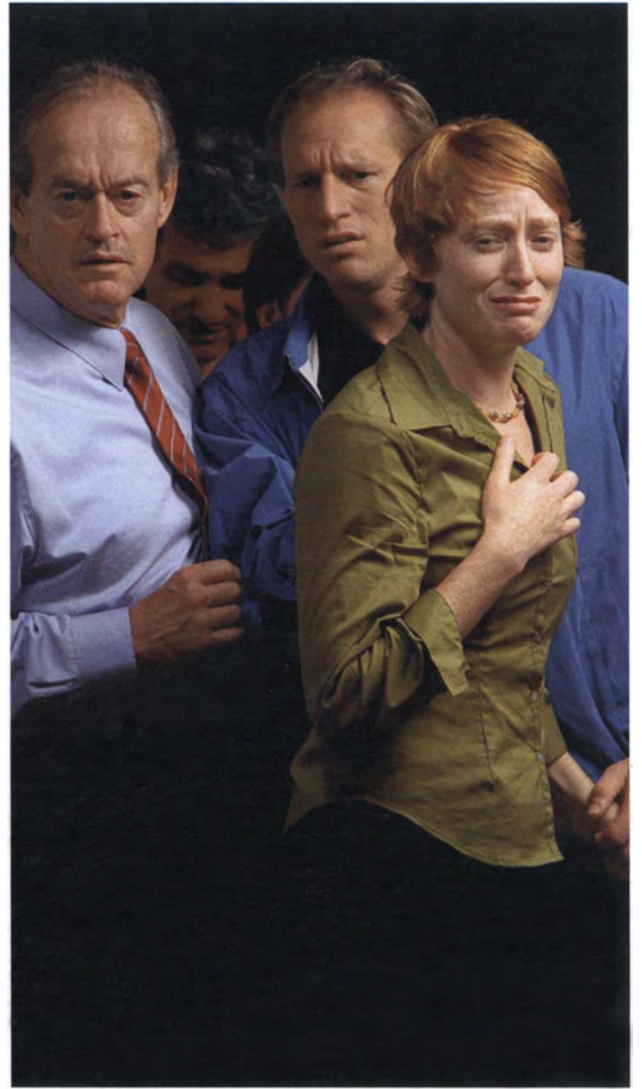
XX. *French cyclists and a girl*, by Christopher Wood (1901–30). c.1930. Oil on board, 19 by 23 cm. (Presented by Laurence Harbottle through the Art Fund, 2005; inv. no.WAG 2005.13).

The artist was born in Knowsley, a suburb of Liverpool, where he first started studying architecture at university and met Augustus John, before enrolling at the Académie Julian in Paris in 1921 and developing contacts with the avant-garde, including Picasso. This scene may have been painted in Brittany in the last year of his life when his work is acknowledged for its *fausse naïveté* and lyrical sense of colour.



XXI. *Harrow Hill*, by Keith Vaughan (1912–77). 1972. Oil on board, 45.7 by 40 cm. (Given in memory of Brian Willis by Greg Worth, from their collection, through the Contemporary Art Society, 2005; inv. no.WAG 2005.21).

The painting is the second work by Vaughan to enter the Walker's collections, the other being a 1951 pencil drawing for his *Still life with skull and pears*. Vaughan first established himself with his *Theseus* mural decoration for the 1951 Festival of Britain Dome. Although this painting is not typical of the Neo-romantic figurative works for which Vaughan is known, it was selected as a beautiful example of his late, highly abstracted, style.



XXII (top left). *Blotter*, by Peter Doig (b.1959). 1993. Oil on canvas, 249 by 199 cm. (Winner of the first prize in the John Moores Painting Exhibition 18 and presented to the Walker Art Gallery in 1993; inv. no. WAG 1993.81).

Doig's first prize at the Walker's John Moores Painting Exhibition 18 helped launch his career as one of the most feted young contemporary artists in Britain. Like many of his paintings the scene recalls Doig's Canadian childhood. Its source is a photograph of his brother standing on a thawing frozen pond, transformed by Doig's typical rhythmically patterned thick impasto. The painting's title suggests absorption – of the boy into the landscape and the paint into the canvas – but also knowingly refers to slang for LSD tabs.

XXIII (top right). *Observance*, by Bill Viola (born 1951). 2002. Video installation, 120.7 by 72.4 by 10.2 cm. (Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, 2004; inv. no. WAG 2004.24).

Observance is part of a series entitled *The Passions* inspired by Viola's stay at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, where he took part in a study of the artistic representation of the passions and the challenge of arousing and depicting extremes of emotion.

XXIV (left). *Slump/fear (orange/black)*, by Alexis Harding (b.1973). 2004. Oil and gloss paint on MDF board, 192 by 183 cm. (Purchased from the John Moores Painting Exhibition 23 as winner of the first prize, with the assistance of the John Moores Liverpool Exhibition Trust, 2004; inv. no. WAG 2004.17).

Harding created the work by pouring oil paint onto primed MDF and while it was still wet pouring the quickly-drying gloss paint over it through perforated guttering to create the grid, before tilting the board repetitively over six months and squeezing the unstable paint layers with his fingers. The result combines control with change and seems to mirror biological, geographical and other physical processes.