



## PRESS RELEASE 2021

**A group of 175 modern and contemporary British paintings, prints and sculptures from the collection of architects MJ Long & Sir Colin St John Wilson acquired by the nation for Pallant House Gallery**

An outstanding collection of Pop art and British figurative art has been allocated to Pallant House Gallery from the estate of the architect MJ Long via the Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme, run by the Arts Council. The Wilson collection includes celebrated works by some of the most important figures in Modern British art, including Michael Andrews, Frank Auerbach, David Bomberg, Anthony Caro, Patrick Caulfield, Prunella Clough, Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Howard Hodgkin, R.B. Kitaj, Eduardo Paolozzi and Colin Self.

The Wilson collection was formed by renowned American architect MJ Long, Lady Wilson, OBE (1939 – 2018), and her husband, British architect Prof Sir Colin St John Wilson RA (1922 – 2007), who are best-known as the architects of the British Library and their 2006 extension to Pallant House Gallery. Together they formed one of the most significant collections of post-war British art, reflecting their close friendships with the leading artists of the period. The 175 artworks represent Pallant House Gallery's most important acquisition of the past fifteen years and join a previous notable donation of over 400 artworks by the couple through Art Fund in 2006.



R.B. Kitaj, *The Architects* (1981), Oil on canvas, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax by HM Government from the estate of MJ Long / Wilson and allocated to Pallant House Gallery, 2021) © Estate of R.B Kitaj

Together these acts of philanthropy mean that Pallant House Gallery now has one of the most significant international public collections of British Pop art. The majority of the artists represented in the Wilson collection were personal friends of the couple and can be seen as embodying an approach to artistic patronage that spanned connections between art, architecture, literature and philosophy.

Wilson (known to friends as 'Sandy') began the collection prior to his marriage to his second wife MJ Long in 1972, though from that point onwards she played an integral role, designing numerous studios for artists including R.B. Kitaj, Frank Auerbach, Sir Peter Blake, Paul Huxley and Gordon House. The couple were memorably painted by the American artist Kitaj in a family portrait joining Pallant House Gallery's collection, *The Architects* (1981), which depicts the couple with their children Harry and Sal in the studio Long had designed for the artist. The red background and lamp were a reference to Vincent van Gogh's *The Night Café* (1888) in the collection of Yale University where the couple had met. The interior of the family home in Cambridge (designed by Wilson) was depicted by Sir Howard Hodgkin in his vibrant painting *Grantchester Road* (1973-75) in which the mezzanine and fireplace are depicted amidst swirls of expressive colour. The painting also joins the Gallery's collection.

Together with Richard Hamilton, Nigel Henderson and Eduardo Paolozzi, Wilson had been a member of the radical 'Independent Group', a precursor to the development of British Pop art, which met at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in the 1950s to discuss architecture, art, design and advertising. Wilson collected early works by these artists including Hamilton's early abstract painting *Respective* (1951), *Man Walking (after Muybridge)* (1953) and the *Rotary Disc* from his celebrated 'fun house' in the seminal exhibition 'This is Tomorrow' held at Whitechapel Gallery in 1956. He also acquired Paolozzi's ink drawings *Picador* (c.1947), and *Head (The Early Head)* (1953), together with early screenprints and posters for his exhibitions, and the large aluminium sculpture *Artificial Sun* (1964), all of which will join the Gallery's collection.

These artists were to become key figures in the British Pop movement and the collection

also includes Hamilton's etching, aquatint and collage *Swingeing London* (1967) depicting Mick Jagger and the art dealer Robert Fraser in the back of a police van outside Chichester Magistrates Court following a conviction for drugs possession. Other examples of British Pop include David Hockney's *Kaisarion with all his Beauty* (1961); 65 prints by R.B. Kitaj, his major painting *Junta* (1962) and collage *The Republic of the Southern Cross* (1965), along with works by Sir Peter Blake, Allen Jones, Mark Lancaster, Colin Self, Joe Tilson and the Swedish-American artist Claes Oldenburg. Patrick Caulfield's well-known *Coloured Still Life* (1967) is accompanied by his later painting *Kellerbar* (1997) along with twelve preparatory drawings and seven screenprints that provide a fascinating insight into the artist's working methods.

The Wilson Collection also traces a lineage of figurative art from Impressionist artists such as Édouard Manet through to Modern British artists including David Bomberg and Frank Auerbach. The acquisition includes Manet's etching of *Olympia* (1864), a group of five etchings by Walter Sickert, a significant group of drawings and paintings representing each key period of Bomberg's work, as well as an early painting by Auerbach, *Reclining Model in the Studio I* (1963) a pivotal depiction of the model on a bed that looks back to the example of Sickert. An alternative Slade tradition of figuration is represented by a group of paintings including Michael Andrews' *Study for a Head for a Group of Figures* (1967), Colin Self's *At the Party (Hunt Ball)* (1962), and Victor Willing's *Swing* (1978) and *Stepladder* (1976).

A watercolour by Prunella Clough, a sculpture by Anthony Caro, 12 drawings by Outsider artist Scottie Wilson, and a group of sculptures by Indian artist Dhruva Mistry RA, who Wilson commissioned to create work for the British Library are also included in the collection.

Born in New Jersey, MJ Long attended high school in Montreal before studying at Smith College and Yale School of Architecture, where she met Wilson. In 1965, she joined his architecture practice and they married in 1972. In partnership with fellow architect Rolfe Kentish, as Long & Kentish, she designed museums, galleries and libraries including the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall, the Jewish Museum London and the award-winning extension to Pallant House Gallery, in association with Sir Colin St John Wilson. Long also renovated the Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, and wrote a notable book on the artist studios she had designed throughout her career.

**Simon Martin, Director, Pallant House Gallery said:** "We are thrilled to have acquired such an extraordinary collection of modern art for the nation through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. MJ Long and Colin St John Wilson were much loved and respected figures in the worlds of art and architecture, leaving behind not only extraordinary public buildings and private studios, but amassing an astonishing collection of British Pop and figurative art. To be able to preserve this almost in its entirety is cause for great celebration at a very difficult time for public museums and galleries. We look forward to reopening with many of these works on display amongst our collection of Modern British art."

**Edward Harley, OBE, Chairman, Acceptance in Lieu Panel, said:** "I am delighted that this extensive collection of Modern British art has been acquired from the estate of MJ Long, Lady Wilson, through the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme by Pallant House Gallery. This allocation is particularly gratifying given the close connection of MJ Long to the gallery, for which she and Rolfe Kentish designed an award-winning extension known as the 'New Wing'. With a broad scope including paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures, from artists such as Walter Sickert and David Hockney,

it represents a significant acquisition comprising nearly 200 works. Assembled with her husband, Sir Colin St John Wilson, this is an impressive collection that speaks of their friendships with many of Britain's most cherished artists. I hope that this example will encourage others to use the scheme to find a place for great art in our national collections."

**Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of the Arts Council, said:** "I'm delighted that this outstanding collection of Pop and British figurative art has been allocated to Pallant House Gallery. Few architects have been closer to artists than MJ Long and Sandy Wilson. Their enthusiasms and friendships are reflected in a collection that is highly personal but also a remarkable survey of some of the most important aspects of advanced British Art in the post-war period. It is especially fitting that the collection will have a permanent home in Chichester in the galleries that MJ and Sandy designed as an award-winning extension to Pallant House Gallery."

**Caroline Dinenage, Minister of State for Digital and Culture said:** "I am delighted that this remarkable collection has been allocated to Pallant House Gallery which has been significantly shaped by MJ Long and Sir Colin St John Wilson's generosity. This latest acquisition of renowned British art will make another invaluable contribution to the Gallery. The Acceptance in Lieu scheme exists to enable important pieces such as these to be enjoyed by the public for years to come."

**ENDS**

## Notes to Editors

A group of 175 contemporary and modern British paintings, prints and sculptures from the collection of MJ Long & Sir Colin St John Wilson has been acquired for the nation through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme and allocated to Pallant House Gallery.

For further information please contact:

Pallant House Gallery: Hannah Vitos at Rees & Co

Tel: 020 3137 8776 / Email: [hannah@reesandco.com](mailto:hannah@reesandco.com)

The Arts Council England: Nisha Emich, Communications Officer

Tel: 0207 268 9563 / Email: [Nisha.emich@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:Nisha.emich@artscouncil.org.uk)

The acceptance of the group settled £3,469,836 of tax and was negotiated through Sotheby's.

The **Acceptance in Lieu scheme** is administered by the Arts Council. The Acceptance in Lieu Panel, chaired by Edward Harley OBE, advises on whether property offered in lieu is of suitable importance and offered at a value which is fair to both nation and taxpayer. AIL allows those who have a bill to Inheritance Tax to pay the tax by transferring important cultural, scientific or historic objects to the nation. Material accepted under the scheme is allocated to public collections and is available for all. In the last decade this important government initiative has brought £423m worth of treasures into public ownership for the enjoyment of all – see more at: [artscouncil.org.uk/tax-incentives/acceptance-lieu#section-1](https://artscouncil.org.uk/tax-incentives/acceptance-lieu#section-1)

**Arts Council** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

[artscouncil.org.uk](https://artscouncil.org.uk)

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council has developed a £160 million emergency response package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. Find out more at [artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](https://artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)

**Pallant House Gallery** in Chichester is a leading UK museum that stimulates new ways of thinking about British art from 1900 to now. As well as an original and critically-acclaimed exhibition programme and a public programme with inclusion at its heart, the gallery houses one of the best collections of Modern British art in the country – all within the distinctive setting of an 18th century townhouse and a 21st century gallery. [pallant.org.uk](https://pallant.org.uk)

## Opening Hours

Please note that due to coronavirus (Covid-19), the Gallery will have revised opening hours:

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am – 5pm (last timed entry at 4pm)

Sundays/Bank Holidays: 11am – 5pm (last timed entry at 4pm)

Mondays: Closed

## Ticketing

Visitors are encouraged to pre-book timed tickets to ensure the Gallery adheres to Public Health England's Health and Safety measures. Tickets include full access to the house and temporary exhibitions programme.

Please visit [pallant.org.uk](https://pallant.org.uk) to book your tickets, or call the gallery on +44 (0) 1243 774557

The Pallant Café will be open during opening hours with socially distanced tables inside and in the courtyard garden.

Please go to [pallant.org.uk](https://pallant.org.uk) ahead of your visit to check for daily updates to opening hours

## Pallant House Gallery

8 – 9 North Pallant  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1TJ