The Selectors

Dr Xavier Bray
Assistant Curator at the National Gallery

Dr Xavier Bray has been Assistant Curator of 17th and 18th Century European paintings at the National Gallery, London, since 2002. He completed his doctoral dissertation, ‘Royal Religious Commissions as Political Propaganda in Spain under Charles III’, at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1999.

Between 1998 and 2000, he was Assistant Curator at the National Gallery in London, where he co-curated exhibitions such as Orazio Gentileschi at the Court of Charles I (1998-99), A Brush with Nature: The Gere Collection of Landscape Oil Sketches (1999) and The Image of Christ: Seeing Salvation (2000). He was also the curator of a Room I exhibition on Goya’s Family of the Infante Don Luis (2001-2002).

Between 2000 and 2002 he was the Curator of Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Bilbao, where he organised exhibitions such as An Intimate Vision: Women Impressionists (2001-2002) and a focused exhibition on Vicente López: Court Painter to Fernando VII (2002). On his return to the National Gallery in 2002 he was the co-curator of El Greco (2004), Caravaggio (2005) and Velázquez (2006).

He has recently curated his first solo exhibition, The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700 (Autumn 2009) and is now working on an exhibition of Goya’s Portraits.

David Rayson
Professor of Painting at the Royal College of Art

“In our local shopping precinct there are a few general stores, a play park and just by the underpass is the off-licence, which seems to be open all hours.

Tomorrow if I go out most of these things will still be there, there will be some changes, cars parked in slightly different places, a lot of the litter will have been cleared up and replaced with new litter, and the curtains down the streets will have moved. People who work will have their houses empty, and others’ lights will be on.

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Whether I’m inside or out, everything seems to be continually unravelling, and becoming more unreal. I’m drawing out these attempts to make sense of every day to celebrate my everyday fantasies.”

(Extract from text for The Everyday catalogue, Marlborough Gallery)

David Rayson’s work stems from his ongoing relationship with suburbia. With the advent of the Internet we can go anywhere without having to move, so why go anywhere when somewhere else is always just around the corner.

His work has been exhibited within the country and internationally, and many public and private collections.

David is currently Professor of Painting at the Royal College of Art. During the last ten years he has been a visiting lecturer at all the institutions nationwide.

As fantastic as the everyday is, set sail on his next venture The Sea to new lands beyond the precinct days still make it back for ‘last call’ Kings Head.
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(Extract from text for The Everyday Fantastic catalogue, Marlborough Gallery, 2009)

David Rayson’s work stems from and deviates out from his ongoing relationship to living in suburbia. With the advent of TV and the Internet we can go anywhere we like without having to move, so why go anywhere else, when somewhere else is always here?

His work has been exhibited widely in this country and internationally, and is included in many public and private collections.

Michael's public works include the International Seafarer's Memorial, sited outside the headquarters of the International Maritime Organisation in London and the WW2 Malta Siege Memorial, sited at the entrance to the Grand Harbour in Valetta. For the latter he was awarded the Henry Hering Memorial Medal by the National Sculpture Society of America. Themes of war, death, destruction, inhumanity and media manipulation are constant in his work, as he treads a path outside the fashionable mainstream.

He is now a member of the Royal Academy again, although his relations with that body could be described as ‘often stormy’. He resigned in 1997 – staying out seven years – in protest over what he construed as the Academy’s ‘ducking and weaving’ over the inclusion of the Myra Hindley portrait, against the wishes of the mother of one of the ‘Moors Murders’ victims. He was made a Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors in 1994.