**Rembrandt**

*The Ship Builder and his Wife*, 1633, will be the first of five major loans agreed, one per year until 2021 in a long term partnership with the Royal Collection.

The Ferens has an etching, ‘The Negress Lying Down’ acquired via the Governments Acceptance in Lieu scheme in 2007 but this is the first time that a Rembrandt painting will have been brought to the city.

The painting is one of the highlights of the Royal Collection and has a particular relevance to Hull not only due to its subject matter but because of the mysterious story surrounding Rembrandt’s possible visit to the city made between 1641 and 1642 to escape his creditors. The possibility will be supported by primary source material from the British Library.

A contemporary artwork by the Rotterdam based artists Bik van der Pol (artists represented in the Ferens permanent collection ‘Untitled (Gold)’, purchased 2015) was commissioned by Invisible Dust, curators of the exhibition *Offshore: artists explore the sea* in direct response to the Rembrandt loan.

This newly commissioned work (funded ACE) forming part of the *Offshore* exhibition is displayed in Gallery 2 which contains the Ferens Netherlandish collection. Bik van der Pol’s work takes the form of a carpet which reproduces a detail of the hands from the Rembrandt painting. The hands show the passing of a note between the husband and wife and 8 people living or working in Hull have written letters imagining the content of the note- the letters are presented as audio works on headsets in Gallery 2.

The gallery received 230, 611 visitors against an initial target of 80,000 whilst the exhibition was on display making it the most popular display of 2017 at the Ferens. The average daily visitor figure was 1580 which means approximately 225 people viewed the works every hour. The social media campaign achieved 78,088 impressions and 4115 engagements. Website views for the Ferens page during the exhibition reached 20, 036.

The exhibition has also represented an exciting opportunity to engage with a range of partners and stakeholders and to build upon relationships that will be of vital importance in the gallery’s future development. Stakeholders and partners have included HLF, Royal Collection Trust, British Library, ACE/GIS, Heritage Learning (HCAL) and Hull History Centre (HCAL). Extended partnership with Invisible Dust who commissioned Bik van der Pol to produce new artwork in response to the RC Rembrandt loan thus linking the Offshore and Rembrandt exhibitions and underlying maritime and Dutch connections

**Early Italian Loans: Lorenzetti**

Pietro Lorenzetti: From Siena to Hull was one of the focal points of the Ferens’ re-opening. A key success was securing all of the eight loans which were originally requested from the National Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Ashmolean Museum and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. As a result, the exhibition successfully brought together ambitious loans to provide a context for the Lorenzetti; created an atmospheric environment; and explored the heritage through interpretation and engagement. This success has been proven through both visitor feedback and the visitor numbers which by the end of the exhibition reached 212,574 a number which far exceeded targets.

As well as both local and national visitors, the exhibition has also enabled Ferens’ staff to engage with museums professionals and subject specialists and to establish and grow relationships with key partners – a success which will provide a professional legacy for the gallery. Research for the interpretation led to conversations with external curators. A smooth and successful installation cemented good working relationships with couriers and curators who accompanied the loans. Relationships have also been grown with lenders to the exhibition – for example, the Directors and Patrons of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts visited the Ferens as a result of their loan in the show.

The exhibition has also directly inspired the scope of the separately-funded engagement programme – which in turn has been a key success, as shown through related evaluation.

The Ferens worked closely with Heritage Learning on the separately-funded HLF engagement project around the Lorenzetti acquisition – which was, of course, directly related to the subject matter of the exhibition. The separate engagement project focused upon the following key audiences: schools, volunteers, local community, families and under 5s, adults and tourists. Participation will be reported back to HLF via the Lorenzetti acquisition project.

The activities were focused around a ‘Spotlight On: Lorenzetti’ Season, adapted for both children and adults. Alongside a popular schools programme, this programme included a lecture series (to date attended by 160 visitors), artist-led workshops exploring 14th-century painting and sculpting techniques, and ‘Up Close’ tours in the exhibition – with magnifying glasses and torches. The Ferens also hosted the Pre-1900 National Gallery Subject Specialist Network event which was an opportunity for professional development among other museum professional and subject specialists (attended by 30 people).

As already mentioned, the exhibition attracted 212,574 visitors including 20,936 in the first week alone (the best performing first week at the Ferens this year). It was also especially encouraging to see that 32% of visitors to the exhibition were attending for the first time. The digital campaign also proved extremely successful with 252,588 impressions on social media and 5524 engagements while the number of website views reached 27,071.

The culmination of the exhibition has been underpinned by the National Gallery’s exceptionally supportive relationship with the Ferens, which has successfully continued and grown since the acquisition of the Lorenzetti panel in 2013. Their support of the exhibition, not least in agreeing the first loans, set the scope for the project which made a strong case for borrowing the other ambitious loans. This partnership has also allowed the Ferens to reach wider museum professional and subject specialist research networks.

The National Gallery partnership also provided a unique opportunity for professional development and training. The exhibition itself was curated by The National Gallery Curatorial Trainee (with Art Fund Support and the assistance of the Vivmar Foundation) who also assisted on the separately-funded engagement programme

Another key success has been establishing new partnerships, not least with the other lenders: The Ashmolean Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Barber Institute. This will provide a legacy not only for potential future borrowing, but also opportunities for research. Other groups which this exhibition has encouraged new links with is the Future Ferens (18-25 years) who had not really worked on a project focused around ‘Old Master’ paintings before. Their contribution to the project has been important, particularly for the related engagement programme.

**Francis Bacon: Nervous System**

Francis Bacon: Nervous System is an exhibition and associated events programme which encourages fresh conversations to develop around the Lorenzetti and related early religious Loans. It will also shed new light on the existing strengths within the Ferens permanent collection and enable new relationships to be explored. In doing this the heritage collection will be set in context with other significant works encouraging broader engagement and deeper understanding.

Institutions lending works to the exhibition were Arts Council Collection, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Estate of Francis Bacon and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. These partnerships have enhanced Ferens reputation and created the possibility of working together on future exhibitions projects. New relationships have also been built with freelance art handling technicians in the region (two freelance technicians were used for the install of the Bacon loans).

The Exhibition has been on display since 21 January accompanied by a series of education events, talks and film screenings managed by Heritage Learning and the exhibition has been featured in local and national press and has been advertised in specialist art publications which has resulted in the raising of the gallery’s reputation and profile.

The main exhibition ran until 1 May 2017 and featured a range of learning and engagement activities. After this date the additional loans from Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, Estate of Francis Bacon and Sainsbury Centre were de-installed and returned to the lenders. The Arts Council Collection work will remain on year-long loan to the gallery and be redisplayed within the Ferens permanent collection. A range of learning and engagement activities will continue to run alongside this single significant loan until the end of the year.

The Bacon loans – drawn from the artist’s series of so-called ‘screaming popes’ - enabled the exploration of contrasting contexts and approaches to the making of art and its meaning; from religious icon to contemporary artistic icon, from believer to non-believer, sacred to profane, 14th century to modern day. This allowed Heritage Learning to broaden the depth of their programmes and their impact and engagement by encouraging fresh conversations around the Lorenzetti purchase and related early religious loans.

The exhibition attracted a visitor figure of 18,773 in the first week and a total visitor figure of 208, 973 against an initial target of 200,000. It is extremely encouraging to see that over one third of visitors to the exhibition were in the under 16 age bracket. Social media campaigns associated with the exhibition reached an audience of 117,137 and resulted in 3409 engagements. Web page views for the Ferens in the period in which the exhibition was on display came to 24,680.

The Bacon loans were interpreted and used specifically to shed new light on existing strengths within the Ferens permanent collection. This allowed us to set the heritage collection in context with other significant works encouraging broader engagement and deeper understanding through film screenings, talks, tours and interpretation. Heritage Learning and the National Gallery Trainee also included the Bacon paintings to enhance the public benefits and educational range and depth in the delivery of the HLF’s Lorenzetti linked Activity Plan.

This is the first time paintings by Bacon have been exhibited in Hull, marking a significant moment in the city’s cultural heritage and ensuring that visitors are able to access the highest quality of art possible in perpetuity and in keeping with the TR Ferens original vision.

**A Common Foe**

The aim of this project is to show that in the face of the challenges of the sea, Reykjavik and Hull have more in common than they do differences. It demonstrated a different history between Iceland and the UK beyond the Cod Wars. This joint and travelling project/exhibition explored how both Iceland and UK have helped each in adversity at sea, as well as confronted each other during the Cod Wars. A short film and photographs both by Simon Sharp was displayed in the Hull Maritime Museum; the film will also be shown in the Reykjavik City Museum.

The project included an exchange visit of a small group of ex-fishermen/seafarers from Hull and Reykjavik – visiting Hull’s Arctic Corsair and Odinn, an Icelandic coastguard vessel and there was a temporary exchange of the ship’s bells between the Arctic Corsair and Odinn.

This project has been developed in partnership with 2 existing partners; STAND and the University of Hull. A greater understanding and synergy between the participants has been achieved. The partnership with the University of Hull has allowed the narrative of a key period in Hull’s recent history to be re- examined. The partnership with STAND (Hull’s Fishing Heritage Charity) has given authenticity to the project.

Heritage Learning have maned a successful project involving both local school children and members of Hull’s fishing community. Year 4 children have been working with a photographer/filmmaker to create an audio that documents the interaction between the school and three members of Hull’s fishing community, including a trawler man, a wife and a daughter. These intriguing conversations took place in a variety of settings including Hull Maritime Museum and the Arctic Corsair trawler on the River Hull. The discussions will be composed by Simon Sharp into an emotional documentation of the experience of The Trip from the contrasting points of view, of those that left and those that were left behind, filtered through enquiring minds of young children. As part of this process children have participated in a range of activities at the Maritime museum to immerse themselves into this key part of Hull’s heritage. This quarter the outcomes of this work where exhibited as a part of A Common Foe

Children have developed new knowledge about Hull’s fishing industry through investigation of primary source material and interviewing members of the fishing community. This has been further embedded by the children visiting the exhibition to see their work on display

The exhibition achieved a total visitor figure of 64,581 during its installation period of which just over a third came from the local postcode area. The social media campaign achieved 87437 impressions and 1855 engagements as well as 1031 click-throughs on the associated e-newsletter.

The main successes in terms of audience engagement relates to a great extant to the links forged with the fishing community groups and their counterparts in Iceland before the exhibition opened. The visit to Reykjavik helped to not only forge new links between Hull & Iceland but also helped to raise awareness among Hull’s fishing heritage groups and their networks. The social media campaign in particular which followed the Hull trawlermen’s progress in Iceland and covered the symbolic exchange of the ship’s bells drew a great deal of interest both online and with local media sources. Also, the fact that the documentary film was such a central element of the exhibition meant that the appeal was a lot wider than perhaps a more traditional, object based display. It’s appeal to the local audience is borne out by the fact that around a third of visitors to the exhibition came from the HU1-9 postcode area.

The main challenge has been to get the message out while in competition with a host of high profile exhibitions and shows taking place at the same time. When A Common Foe launched the Ferens was hosting SKIN, Rembrandt, Offshore and TR Ferens: Hull’s Philanthropist (as well as the year-long Bacon loan). The Maritime Museum was also hosting Bill Bailey’s Cabinet of Curiosities so trying to compete in comms and marketing terms was always going to be tricky particularly as the exhibition has in many ways a quite local appeal.

**Turner & The Whale**

This is an exhibition of 4 oil paintings by JMW Turner, depicting whaling and maritime scenes that will be hung in conjunction with a variety of artworks and artefacts from the museum’s permanent collection linked to the whaling trade. Further academic study on these works is being undertaken as part of a collaborative PhD with the University of York’s History of Art Department looking at Hull’s collection of whaling art in context.

Tate Britain have provided the the loans based on a partnership with the University of York. This is the first time the Maritime Museum has had loans of this stature from a national museum or gallery.

This exhibition is being run in conjunction with the Turner prize held at the Ferens Art Gallery over the road in autumn 2017. A cross-fertilisation of differing audiences which naturally occur, with out-of-town visitors having come into the city for either exhibition. The history of challenging art will be an interpretative thread developed as part of a broader programme by our educational team at Heritage Learning.

As mentioned, the display of these paintings is supported by our whaling collections which are recognised as being the best British and European whaling collections in the world. Besides the museum’s internationally important scrimshaw collection, the exhibition is also helping to bring the works of renowned Hull maritime artists such as John Ward and Henry Redman to a wider audience. Anecdotal evidence from the invigilation staff indicates that many visitors, particularly those from outside of the city, have been surprised and delighted with the quality of the local marine artist’s work.

The exhibition has so far attracted an audience of 13,621 in its first 16 days with visitor reaction extremely positive and survey collection is progressing well. We are taking out an advertisement in The Times Saturday Review on the 4th November which serves as much to raise the profile of the museum nationally as it does to attract visitors. We have also hosted a screening of In the Heart of the Sea in the court room to tie in with both the exhibition and Museums at Night. It was very well received and has prompted us to start thinking about future screenings at the museum tied to museum collections and Hull maritime history in general.

This funding for this project is designed to support engagement with the Manet loan which sat alongside the SKIN exhibition from 22 April - 13 Aug (16 weeks). SKIN was an exhibition about the nude or naked portrait showcasing work by contemporary artists including a new purchase and commission alongside landmark achievements in the naked portrait from the C19th & C20th. The exhibition drew from the Ferens existing strength in naked portraiture by artists such as Hockney, Spencer, Uglow and Coplans and introduced to this works by three exceptional international artists; Lucian Freud, Ron Mueck and Spencer Tunick. Manet’s 19th century masterpiece Déjeuner sur l’herbe which caused controversy in its day, provided a fascinating historic introduction to the theme.

The exhibition was developed in partnership with the Courtauld Gallery and Tate/Royal Galleries of Scotland (ARTIST ROOMS).

Heritage Learning worked with the Future Ferens group to develop a Future Ferens led Engagement programme. The engagement activity was delivered by Future Ferens in August 2017 (as part of the Skin Exhibition programme). These included:

• A series of tours developed and delivered by Future Ferens, run on Thursday evenings 6.15pm – 6.45pm

• An early evening performance event held in the Ferens studio aimed at developing new audiences in the 18 – 25 bracket. Developed by Future Ferens with support from the learning team. The FF created a call out for artists that asked for people to submit creative interpretations of the themes of the exhibition. Artist’s selected, included electronic experimental music, visual art (painting photography) performance, live installation.

• Future Ferens led symposium supported by learning and curatorial teams, target audience general visitor. Exploring perceptions of the nude in art.

The Future Ferens group are bringing a fresh and unique perspective to the engagement programme and was key in rasing engagement with younger adult audiences. The SKIN DEEP event in particular had a significant impact in developing new audiences in the 18 – 25 bracket. The event, which involved a live skype interview with Spencer Tunick in Mexico was a sell out with 150 young people filling the gallery. FF also worked with a marketing company which developed their understanding of working with external marketing companies. The FF also worked with a marketing company to develop a targeted campaign, through print and social media

The exhibition in general was visited by 176,443 visitors during its 16 week installation which is a staggering figure. Online engagement was similarly impressive with 78,100 impressions and 8521 engagements. The website figures were 14,542 page views and 1678 click throughs for related e-newsletters. The engagement programme reached 506 individuals of which 382 were from the 16-24 age group.