

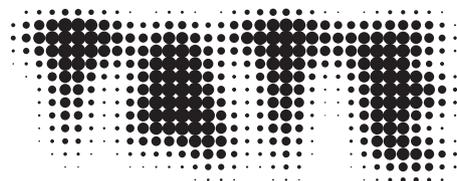
# EDWARD BURNE-JONES

24 October 2018 – 24 February 2018

## LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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ROOM 1

## EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) was one of the key figures in Victorian art, achieving world-wide fame and recognition during his life-time. As the last major figure associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, he led the movement into new symbolist directions where the expression of a mood or idea replaced the earlier focus on providing a realistic description of the natural world. Using myths and legends from the past he created dream-worlds of unparalleled beauty, balancing clarity of observation with dramatically original composition.

Initially inspired by the church and by all things medieval, Burne-Jones remained committed to the ideal of beauty throughout his career. For him it represented the antidote to the crude ugliness and rampant materialism he believed was degrading modern Britain. From his studio in Fulham he designed and made artworks in a variety of media: paintings, drawings, stained glass, embroidery, tapestry, furniture and jewellery. Many of the most splendid examples of these works feature in this exhibition, the first major retrospective to be held in London for over forty years. Burne-Jones's art was intended to uplift and inspire the spectator through its mystery and intricacy of design and execution. It also discloses something of the inner melancholy that lay at the heart of the artist's vision.

## **APPRENTICE TO MASTER: 1856–1870**

As an artist Burne-Jones was unusual in having been educated at university rather than art school. Born and raised in industrial Birmingham, he later went to Oxford to study theology. Here he met his lifelong friend and collaborator, William Morris, with whom he developed a love for medieval romance and architecture. In 1856 Burne-Jones decided to abandon his studies and direct his religious enthusiasm towards art. Under the guidance of the artist-poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti he started to make intricate drawings in pen and ink which won him the support of artists and patrons in the Pre-Raphaelite circle.

Burne-Jones's move into colour was encouraged by his early work in stained glass. As a founder member of the design collective Morris & Co. in 1861, he designed furniture and stained glass for domestic and ecclesiastical settings. This decorative work informed the bold outlines and patches of colour of his early experimental watercolours. In 1864 he was elected to the prestigious but conservative Old Watercolour Society and began exhibiting with them, gradually moving away from Gothic themes to a more classical aesthetic. He resigned in anger six years later following complaints about the male nude figure in **Phyllis and Demophoön**. By then Burne-Jones had

established a reputation as one of the most original and daring artists of his day.



**Anti-clockwise from wall text:**

**Unidentified subject, possibly Cupid's Daughter  
from Chaucer's 'Parlement of Foules'  
c.1857**

Ink on paper

This early drawing by Burne-Jones may depict Cupid's daughter seated by his forge from Chaucer's dream-poem The Parlement of Foules (Chaucer being one of Burne-Jones's and Morris's favourite authors). Stylistically it falls between the **Fairy Family** illustrations and the group of Rossetti-influenced medieval subjects on the adjacent wall. These are similarly crammed with detail but more assured in terms of design.

William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest  
X64675

Archibald Maclaren 1819–1884

**The Fairy Family. A series of Ballads and Metrical Tales  
Illustrating the Fairy Mythology of Europe**

1857

Book: Frontispiece and title page by Edward Burne-Jones

A champion of physical education, Maclaren ran a gymnasium in Oxford which Burne-Jones and Morris attended as undergraduates. Through their friendship Maclaren commissioned Burne-Jones to illustrate a book of fairy tales he had written for his daughter Mabel. Burne-Jones started work on the designs in 1854, producing many drawings in a finicky romantic style although only three were to appear in the publication. He later played down his authorship, embarrassed by the naivety of his early draughtsmanship.

Collection of Stephen Calloway.

X41162

## Going to the Battle

1858

Ink with wash on vellum

The first works Burne-Jones produced were small-scale drawings in pen and ink, a choice probably dictated by his poor health at the time. He perfected this method by attending to minutely observed detail and pattern. In this medieval courtly-love scene three women bid farewell to knights from the safety of an enclosed garden. Enraptured by the drawings, Rossetti proclaimed them to be 'marvels in finish and imaginative detail, unequalled by anything except perhaps Albert Dürer's finest work'.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge  
X64429

## Buondelmonte's Wedding

1859

Ink with wash on vellum

This drawing illustrates the event that triggered the Guelph and Ghibelline conflict in Florence in 1215, the date inscribed on the frame. The far left shows the Guelph widow Gualdrada Donati presenting her daughter to Buondelmonte. On the right, his betrothed bride of the Ghibelline family is guided by the blindfolded figure of Cupid. Some of the details reflect Burne-Jones's study of early Renaissance art during his first visit to Italy in 1859 including the Venetian-style figures in the foreground. The drawing overwhelms in its detail, a tendency he was to move away from during the 1860s.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge  
X64430

## The Return of the Dove to the Ark

1863

Ink and wash on boxwood

In 1862 Burne-Jones was commissioned to make designs for the Dalziel brothers' **Illustrated Bible**. Only one of these was engraved – **The Parable of the Boiling Pot** – studies for which can be seen in the next room. This scene shows the dove returning to Noah after the flood waters had receded, revealing the corpses of men and animals. The macabre details indicate the artist's fascination with the grotesque, while the steep perspective may have been suggested by Paolo Uccello's **Deluge** at Santa Maria Novella in Florence which he would have seen on his first visit to Italy in 1859.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Given by Sir Philip Burne-Jones, Bart, on behalf of the executors of the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

X64473

**Ladies and Death, painted panel from  
the Frederick Priestley (maker) upright piano  
1860**

Painted and gilt gesso on wood with a layer of shellac over gilded areas

In 1860 Burne-Jones married Georgiana Macdonald, a keen amateur musician. As a wedding present the couple were given an upright piano which Burne-Jones decorated with designs that included, at the base, a frieze of women languidly listening to music in a garden unaware of Death knocking at the gate. Based on a similar scene in a 14th-century **Triumph of Death** in the Campo Santo at Pisa, it strikes a sinister note, suggesting that death is forever present, even in paradise.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Given by Mrs J.W. Mackail, daughter of the artist.

X64468

## **The Wise and Foolish Virgins**

c.1859

Ink with wash on paper

The largest and most finely worked of the early pen-and-ink drawings presents Burne-Jones's imaginative retelling of Jesus's Parable of the Ten Virgins. The five who wisely brought oil for their lamps are shown snug inside enjoying the wedding feast, while the five negligent virgins plead in vain to be admitted as one drops her lamp into the water. The drawing is packed with detail including a peacock nibbling foliage on the right and a carefully-observed lock-gate in the foreground.

Private collection

X64495

## **Childe Roland**

1861

Ink and wash on paper

The last in the group of elaborate pen-and-ink drawings shows the hero from Robert Browning's 1855 poem 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came'. The knight stands before the tower and announces his arrival by blowing his horn. The peacock feather and sunflowers anticipate two of the motifs that were later adopted by the aesthetic movement with which Burne-Jones was closely involved. He was later to return to the figure of an armoured knight standing before tangled vegetation in **The Briar Wood** in room 6.

The Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

(The Higgins Bedford)

X27759

## **The Good Shepherd**

1857–61

Stained glass panel

Burne-Jones's earliest design for stained glass was **The Good Shepherd**, for James Powell & Sons, a leading manufacturer of glass before the establishment of Morris's Firm in 1861. Made for the Congregational Church in Maidstone, Kent, it shows Christ as a real shepherd carrying the lost sheep on his shoulders. The loaf and bottle of wine at his waist double up as the Eucharistic elements and the wounded sheep chews on a vine leaf, symbolic of Christ, the true vine. The panel combines Pre-Raphaelite naturalism with extreme stylisation, the vibrant patches of colour accentuating the flatness of the design.

Birmingham Museums Trust  
on behalf of Birmingham City Council  
X64424

## The Calling of St Peter

c.1857

Stained glass panel

This panel shows St Peter kneeling in a boat with angels holding tiny figures of knights and nuns in the style of medieval donor portraits. The halo bears the words 'Dabo tibi' ('I will give you'), referring to St Matthew's account of Jesus giving the keys of heaven to Peter. In 1857 Burne-Jones was contracted by Powells to provide designs for their stained-glass stock of which this is an example. Although it is not known if it was ever used, the shape suggests it was intended for the top of a pointed arched window, or lancet.

Victoria and Albert Museum

X64464

## The Annunciation and the Adoration of the Magi

1861

Oil paint on three canvases

On the recommendation of architect G F Bodley, Burne-Jones painted an altarpiece for St Paul's church in Brighton.

It depicts the Adoration of the Kings and Shepherds in the centre with the Annunciation on the wings. The use of gold leaf and raised pattern work (**pastiglia**) reflects his study of early Renaissance techniques. The Virgin and king kneeling before her were based on Jane and William Morris. The poet Swinburne is the shepherd playing the bagpipe with Burne-Jones behind him. The Virgin in the Annunciation resembles Georgiana, the artist's wife.

Tate. Presented by G.H. Bodley in memory of George Frederick Bodley 1934.

N04743

**Geoffrey Chaucer**

1863

Ceramic tile

**The God of Love and Alceste from  
Chaucer's 'Goode Wimmen'**

1861–4

Stained glass panel

**Dido and Cleopatra from Chaucer's 'Goode Wimmin'**

1861–4

Stained glass panel

Victoria and Albert Museum.

X64467, X64790, X64466

Burne-Jones and Morris shared a love for the poems of Geoffrey Chaucer. As testimony to this, the inscription on the back of the tile says it was designed by Burne-Jones and painted by Morris. Burne-Jones particularly admired Chaucer's **Legend of Goode Wimmen**, in which Amor (Love) introduces the poet to women in antiquity who suffered for love, producing many variations on the theme. These scenes are duplicates of stained-glass panels he designed for artist Miles Birket Foster. One shows Amor with the faithful Alcestis; the other, Cleopatra with the serpent and Dido with a flaming torch.

## Phyllis and Demophoön

1870

Watercolour and gouache on paper Burne-Jones's most controversial picture depicts the abandoned Phyllis reaching out from the almond tree into which she had been turned, to reclaim the lover who had abandoned her. It proved too much for conventional taste, not least for its display of full-frontal male nudity although the androgynous figure types were also considered distasteful. After refusing to alter the picture to make it more decent, Burne-Jones withdrew it from the Old Watercolour Society exhibition and resigned. The head of Phyllis has been identified as that of Maria Zambaco who was his lover at the time.

Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of  
Birmingham City Council.

X00544



## The Wine of Circe

1863–9

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Exhibited at the Old Watercolour Society in 1869, together with **The Lament**, this painting shows the extent to which the artist had developed as he adopted a more classical mode of composition in a particular range of colours. It depicts the sorceress Circe from Homer's **Odyssey**, preparing the deadly potion that will turn Odysseus's men into swine as their ships approach in the distance. Although the artist was now recognised as a painter of rare imagination, the picture was widely condemned as perverse and Burne-Jones singled out as one of the most unconventional artists of the day.

Private collection.

X64498



## The Lament

1865–7

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Like **Le Chant d'Amour**, this is a subjectless picture that depends on music and contrasts of warm and cool colour to convey alternating moods and states of mind. Its frieze-like arrangement, the pillar with Pan on the left and the heavy folds of drapery, the chalky colour, and overall feeling of repose, all reflect the artist's study of classical art, especially the Parthenon frieze, while the bell harp evokes the Middle Ages.

William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest  
X34053

## **Le Chant d'Amour (The Love Song)**

1865

Watercolour and gouache on paper The high point of the Venetian influence in Burne-Jones's early work was **Le Chant d'Amour**, a pastoral scene strong in mood but with no narrative content. The title was suggested by the refrain of an old Breton song which Georgiana may have sung at the piano. The fluttering drapery and wings of the blindfolded Cupid contrast with the overall stillness of the scene. The painting was exhibited at the Old Watercolour Society in 1865 where it was purchased by the wine merchant William Graham who became Burne-Jones's most devoted patron.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Martin Brimmer  
X64427

## **The Annunciation (the Flower of God)**

1862

Gouache on paper

This painting originated as a commission from the engravers George and Edward Dalziel who were struck by Burne-Jones's art when visiting his studio. Described as a 'Harmony in Red', it was among the first works he exhibited at the Old Watercolour Society in 1864, to which he was elected that year. It was singled out there for its extreme Pre-Raphaelite elements of design including the steep perspective and eccentric 'tree-house' structure which serves as the Virgin's chamber.

Private collection

X65315

## Merlin and Nimue

1861

Watercolour and gouache on paper

The 15th-century writer Thomas Malory was a favourite of Burne-Jones and Morris. Their love of mysticism, romance and chivalry was largely inspired by his **Le Morte d'Arthur**, a compilation of the legends of the Court of King Arthur. In this scene from the story of Merlin and Nimue, Nimue evades Merlin's sexual advances by using the magic he had taught her to lure him to his death. Merlin's dog tugs vainly at his sleeve as he is drawn towards a grave in the lower right-hand corner. The heavy opaque colour complements the sinister theme.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

X64471



## **Clerk Saunders**

1861

Gouache and watercolour on paper

The subject of this watercolour derives from Walter Scott's romantic ballad that re-tells the ancient and macabre story of Clerk Saunders. After spending the night with his beloved Margaret, Saunders is murdered by her seven brothers but later returns from the grave to visit her at dawn. Burne-Jones shows Margaret recoiling from his embrace as if illustrating the lines:

**My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,  
It has the smell, now, of the ground;  
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,  
Thy days of life will not be long.**

Tate. Presented by Mrs Wilfred Hadley through  
the Art Fund 1927  
N04390

**Clara von Bork 1560**

1860

Watercolour and gouache on paper

**Sidonia von Bork 1560**

1860

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by W. Graham Robertson 1948

N05878, N05877

During the 1860s Burne-Jones painted primarily in watercolour and gouache, developing his own opaque method to resemble oil. The source of these paintings was Wilhelm Meinhold's gothic tale **Sidonia the Sorceress**, 1847, about a beautiful witch who destroys the rulers of Pomerania. One represents Sidonia, her dress apparently based on a portrait of Isabella d'Este at Hampton Court; the other her cousin and victim, Clara, modelled on Burne-Jones's wife Georgiana.

The artist only adopted 'Burne' as part of his surname in the 1860s which is why Clara is signed 'Jones'. He hyphenated his name formally in 1894 after accepting a baronetcy.

## Cupid's Forge

1861

Watercolour and gouache on paper One of Burne-Jones's early exhibits at the Old Watercolour Society, this painting exemplifies the medieval manner that made his works appear so archaic and extreme to conservative taste. Based on Chaucer's poem **The Parlement of Foules**, it shows Cupid filing his arrow heads watched over by two doves of Venus. To the left his daughter tempers the hot blades of the finished darts.

Private collection courtesy of  
Peter Nahum . Renate Nahum . Agency  
X64785

ROOM 2

## **BURNE-JONES AS A DRAUGHTSMAN**

Drawing was fundamental to Burne-Jones's practice. 'To draw was his natural mode of expression,' a friend observed, 'line flowed from him almost without volition.' After moving in 1867 to a house in Fulham known as the Grange, Burne-Jones had enough studio space to embark on a succession of large-scale projects that preoccupied him for the rest of his life. For these he made countless preparatory studies, many of which were considered works of art in their own right.

A close study of Renaissance art, stimulated by four visits to Italy in 1859, 1862, 1871 and 1873, encouraged Burne-Jones's inventive approach to the body. Male figures tended to be troubled and expressive, while he portrayed women as beautiful, sometimes sinister. Burne-Jones was experimental in his use of media, employing gouache with chalk and later using metallic pigments. For his work in the applied arts he adopted a boldly stylised manner, reserving a more refined approach for figurative studies.

The flip side to Burne-Jones's obsession with grace and beauty was his fascination with the grotesque, manifested in the comic drawings that betray inner fears and fantasies. In some drawings Burne-Jones appears as the butt of his

own humour: falling hopelessly in love, appearing sick and feeble or just overwhelmed by life.



**Clockwise from the wall text:**

**Composition Study for 'Clerk Saunders'**

c.1861

Graphite on paper

Study for the finished painting shown in the previous room.

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927

A00105

**Study for the figure of Merlin in 'Merlin and Nimue'**

1861

Graphite and chalk on paper

A study for the finished painting shown in the previous room.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday

X64472

## Composition Studies for 'Ezekiel and the Boiling Pot'

c.1860

Graphite on paper

### Ezekiel and the Boiling Pot

Ink and watercolour on vellum

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927

A01163, A01164, A01165, A01166

Tate. Purchased 1923

N03719

This group of studies shows how Burne-Jones developed a composition by producing detailed studies as well as experimenting with the overall conception of the scene. The subject is based on the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel, who foresees the destruction of Jerusalem when he burns his beard while attending a fire that is boiling a pot. It was Burne-Jones's only published design for the Dalziel Brothers' **Illustrated Bible**, eventually published in 1882 as a volume of 62 wood-engraved scenes from the Old Testament.

**Gualdrada Donati presenting her  
daughter to Buondelmonte**  
c.1860

Ink with graphite on paper

This unfinished drawing was made in relation to **Buondelmonte's Wedding** in the previous room. The bold linear style is strongly influenced by the wood engravings of the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), whom Burne-Jones revered. The profile image of Buondelmonte on his horse makes reference to Dürer's famous engraving, **The Knight, Death and the Devil** (1513).

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Purchased, 1951.

X64487

**Studies of Drapery and the Figure of the Virgin for the  
'Annunciation' in the Church of St Martin's-on-the-Hill,  
Scarborough, Yorkshire**

c.1862

Graphite on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927

N04343

**Study of the Head of a Female Attendant  
for 'The Adoration of the Kings'**

c.1861

Graphite on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927.

A00103

## **Head of a Woman: possibly Georgiana Burne-Jones**

c.1861

Graphite on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927

A00099

## **The Miracle of the Newborn Child, after Titian**

1862

Watercolour and chalk on paper

This is another study Burne-Jones made on his trip to northern Italy with his wife and John Ruskin in 1862. It shows the central section of a painting by the Venetian painter Titian, taken from the original fresco in the Scuola del Santo, Padua, close to Venice. In this biblical tale, St Anthony works a miracle that enables a child to speak out in defence of its mother, who had been accused of adultery.

Private collection.

X65850

**Study of the Head of Bacchus in Tintoretto's 'The Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne in the Presence of Venus', before the picture was restored**

1862

Graphite and chalk on paper

In 1862 Burne-Jones made his second trip to Italy, travelling with his wife Georgiana and the writer John Ruskin who funded the visit. They travelled via Milan to Venice where Burne-Jones studied the works of Venetian painters and made copies for Ruskin. This study of the head of Bacchus crowned with vine leaves was made from the original painting by Tintoretto in the Palazzo Ducale.

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Presented by John Ruskin to the Ruskin Drawing School (University of Oxford), 1875.

X64488

**Sketch of Two Seated Figures: 'Chant d'Amour'**

c.1862–5

Graphite on paper

Sketch for the painting in the previous room.

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927

A00109

**Sketch of Two Seated Figures possible for**

**'The Backgammon Players'**

c.1861

Graphite on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by J.R. Holliday 1927.

A00110

**Study of the Maid for 'King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid'**  
1883

Graphite on paper

Study for the painting in room 3.

Tate. Purchased 1963.

T00565

**Studies for 'The Golden Stairs': draped female figure studies**  
c.1876–80

Graphite on paper

Studies for the painting in room 3.

Courtesy of Mrs Dianne Roberts

X67351-3

**Study of Seated Figure for 'The Garden Court'  
in the 'Briar Rose' Series**  
c.1873

Graphite on paper

Study for the painting in room 6.

Tate. Bequeathed by A.N. MacNicholl 1916  
A00064

**Study of hands with cymbals and holding a violin  
for 'The Golden Stairs'**

c.1878

Graphite on paper

**Study of feet for 'The Golden Stairs'**

c.1878

Graphite on paper

Studies for the painting in room 3.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of  
Cambridge

X64432, X64433

**Study of the King in 'The Wheel of Fortune'**

1879

Graphite on paper

A study for the painting in room 3.

The British Museum, London.

Bequeathed by Eric George Millar, 1967

X64688

**Study of a Man's Head**

1866

Graphite on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by A.N. MacNicholl 1916

A00059

## **Souls on the Banks of the River Styx**

c.1873

Oil paint on canvas

Inspired by a passage in Virgil's 'Aeneid' in which souls await their passage to the Underworld by the banks of the river Styx, this unfinished study appears to have been cut off at the right. It might have been a preparatory study for a more elaborate work as suggested by the pencil studies for some of the figures shown cowering nearby.

Private collection courtesy of  
Peter Nahum . Renate Nahum . Agency  
X64772

## Study for 'The Masque of Cupid'

1872

Graphite and charcoal on paper

Based on Edmund Spenser's 'The Faerie Queene' (1590), the figure of Britomart, the 'fair' and 'bold Britonesse' stands on the left, representing maidenly purity. In the enchanted chamber of the house of Busyrane, she watches the Masque of Cupid. Here Death brandishes a sword at a group who personify negative human characteristics including strife, anger and infirmity. The drawing was made in relation to a design for a mural painting that was not realised in the artist's lifetime.

Ar fenthyg gan Amgueddfa Cymru / Lent by National  
Museum Wales

X64445

## Venus Discordia

c.1872–3

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones's compositions often took a long time to evolve and many were never completed. Once he had settled the design on paper, his assistants would transfer it to canvas and paint in the base layers in monochrome as seen here. This painting formed part of a large triptych illustrating the story of Troy. It shows Venus contemplating a scene of destruction inspired by Vices representing Anger, Envy, Suspicion and Strife. As one of his most Italianate compositions, it shows the influence of Pollaiuolo, Signorelli and Michelangelo, works by whom he had studied on his 1871 visit to Italy.

Ar fenthyg gan Amgueddfa Cymru / Lent by National  
Museum Wales

X64443

## **Study of female head to right**

1889

Charcoal on paper

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery

X64459

## **Head study for mermaid in 'The Depths of the Sea'**

1886

Graphite on paper

National Museums Liverpool,

Lady Lever Art Gallery

X64458



Burne-Jones specialised in producing experimental head studies in the manner of Renaissance artists he admired such as Botticelli, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Although generally based on particular models, the drawings ranged beyond portraiture in seeking to capture some inner emotion and grace. In this group the medium used in each study is employed in different ways for expressive effect.

## **The Head of Cassandra**

1866–70

Chalk on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Bequeathed by  
Constantine Alexander Ionides.

X64474

## **Desiderium**

1873

Graphite on paper

Tate. Presented by Sir Philip Burne-Jones Bt 1910

N02760

## **Stella Vespertina (The Evening Star)**

c.1880

Oil paint on canvas

William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest  
X64677

## **Maria Zambaco**

1871

Graphite on paper

Burne-Jones specialised in producing experimental head studies in the manner of Renaissance artists he admired such as Botticelli, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Although generally based on particular models, the drawings ranged beyond portraiture in seeking to capture some inner emotion and grace. In this group the medium used in each study is employed in different ways for expressive effect.

Private Collection, Maas Gallery

X67367

## William Morris reading poetry to Edward Burne-Jones

1861

Ink on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum.

X64475



Though a serious and thoughtful artist, Burne-Jones had a more playful side to his personality, enjoying humour and practical jokes. This is revealed in the numerous sketches and caricatures that decorated his letters to friends and family. In these he often portrays himself as worn out, with a scraggy beard, as opposed to William Morris who appears large, energetic and well-fed. One drawing shows Burne-Jones falling asleep as Morris reads from his epic verse; another shows him overwhelmed by a mountain of correspondence.

**Self-portrait caricature in a letter to Cosmo Monkhouse**  
1894

Ink on paper

Collection of Stephen Calloway.  
X64770

**The Artist and Maria Zambaco**  
1866–72

Graphite on paper

Private collection courtesy of  
Peter Nahum . Renate Nahum . Agency  
X64786



**A Bathing Beauty: Two views, front and back, of Emma De Burgh, with Leonardo's 'Last Supper' tattooed on her back, whom the artist had seen that afternoon at the London Aquarium**

c.1893–5

Graphite on paper

Peter and Renate Nahum.

X67529 , X64777

**Comic Drawing of four figures in long robes**

1880s

Graphite on paper

The British Museum, London.

Donated by Dr Robert Steele, 1941.

X64689

## **Nymphs of the Stars**

1896

Gouache, gold pigment and pastel on paper

## **Nymphs of the Moon**

c.1896

Gouache and metallic pigments on paper 'I love to treat my pictures as a goldsmith does his jewels', Burne-Jones once said, and towards the end of his life he started to experiment with metallic paint on coloured papers. Some of these drawings were for designs; others were independent drawings that show the influence of medieval and Byzantine art with paint applied in a direct abstract manner.

Ar fenthyg gan Amgueddfa Cymru / Lent by National  
Museum Wales

X64452, X64451

## Lot and his Daughters

c.1874

Watercolour, gouache and chalk on paper In his designs for the applied arts, Burne-Jones developed a highly stylised manner with figures compressed into compact compositions. For these he often used gouache in combination with chalk and pastel as in this study for a panel for the west window of Calcutta Cathedral commissioned as a memorial to Lord

Mayo, Viceroy of India.

The Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

(The Higgins Bedford)

X64771

## St Luke

1872

Graphite, pastel and gouache on paper

The Evangelist St Luke, one of Burne-Jones's most frequently produced designs, was first created for the stained-glass window of the Chapel at Jesus College, Cambridge. It was made by Morris and Co., and installed in 1873. The modelling of the figure shows the influence of Michelangelo. On his visit to Rome in 1871 Burne-Jones spent a day in the Sistine Chapel lying on his back and viewing the painted ceiling through opera glasses.

Tate. Purchased 1919.

N03426

## **Design for Embroidery**

1890s

Watercolour on linen

## **A Woman Playing a Cithara**

1896

Tempera, gold paint and watercolour on paper

Private collection. X65848

Tate. Bequeathed by Miss Maud Beddington 1940. N05175

In his later years Burne-Jones began to experiment with gold paint on dark backgrounds, exhibiting four 'Designs in Gold' at the New Gallery in 1890. This example shows a woman playing a cithara, an ancient Greek musical instrument of the lyre family. This design was then used as the basis for an embroidery, one of the many gifts he bestowed on Frances, the daughter of his patron William Graham. Their portraits are exhibited later in the exhibition.

**Plant study for 'Love and the Pilgrim'**

1877–97

Graphite on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge

X64439

**Studies of birds for 'Love Leading the Pilgrim'**

c.1877–97

Chalk on paper

Ar fenthyg gan Amgueddfa Cymru / Lent by National  
Museum Wales

X64449

**Study of the Pilgrim for 'The Pilgrim  
Outside the Garden of Idleness'**  
c.1872–7

Chalk and graphite on paper

Tate. Presented by Lord Duveen 1924  
N03979

**Studies for 'Love Leading the Pilgrim'**  
c.1877–97

Graphite on paper

Studies for the painting in room 3.

Tate. Presented by Lord Duveen 1924  
N03984

## The Pilgrim Outside the Garden of Idleness (Scene from 'Roman de la Rose')

c.1893–8

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones was fascinated by Geoffrey Chaucer's tale of courtly love, 'The Romaunt [Romance] of the Rose' (c.1390s), based on the 13th-century French poem 'La Roman de la Rose'. It tells of a poet (the pilgrim) who dreams of an encounter with the God of Love and discovers a secret garden with a wonderful rose, symbolising perfect love. Here the pilgrim contemplates personifications of the vices – Avarice, 'Envye', 'Elde' and Sorrow - outside the Garden of Idleness. The work is unfinished, the preliminary painting made by Burne-Jones's studio assistants and much of it still awaiting his final touches.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Sir Philip Burne-Jones and Mrs J.W. Mackail, children of the artist.

X64463



**Head of a woman with furrowed brow, probably a study for Medusa in 'The Finding of Medusa'**

c.1875–7

Graphite on paper

**Study of a Gorgon in 'The Finding of Medusa'**

1876

Graphite on paper

**A Study for Andromeda for 'The Doom Fulfilled' in the 'Perseus' series**

1885

Graphite on paper

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery. X64457

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge. X64437

The British Museum, London. Bequeathed by Eric George Millar, 1967. X64687

**Andromeda**

c.1885

**Chalk on paper Study of Athena in 'The Call of Perseus'**

1876–7

Graphite on paper

**Study for the head of Medusa in 'The Baleful Head'**

1876–7

Graphite on paper

**Study of Armour: Perseus in the 'Finding of Medusa'**

before 1880

Gouache on paper

Tate. Presented by Lord Duveen 1924. N03980

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of  
Cambridge X64435, X64438, X64436

In 1875 Burne-Jones began a series of paintings based on the classical tale of Perseus and his quest to kill the Gorgon Medusa and rescue Andromeda. A commission for the young MP Arthur Balfour, the larger designs and finished paintings can be seen later in this exhibition. Burne-Jones made several figure and head studies from models for the main characters, and had real armour made by his friend William Benson, a metalworker, so that he could study and capture its metallic appearance.

## **Vitrine in centre of the room-opposite wall text**

**Left to right:**

### **Sketchbook with studies of Perseus and Andromeda after 1875**

Ink on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given in accordance with the wishes of the late Lady Horner by her daughters Mrs Raymond Asquith and the Hon. Mrs Cecily Lambton  
X64479

### **Study for 'The Golden Stairs': Frances Graham at the foot of the stairs c.1876–80**

Graphite on paper

Courtesy of Mrs Dianne Roberts  
X67350

## **Vitrine in centre of the room**

**Left to right:**

### **Album of illustrated letters to Mrs Gaskell**

1893–8

Ink and graphite on paper

Burne-Jones met May Gaskell in 1892 and developed an intense, albeit platonic, relationship with her. One of the invented characters that feature in the hundreds of letters he sent to her was 'the fat lady', also known as Julia Parkington. In these illustrations he imagines her in activities including making a deep curtsy and sleeping in a hammock.

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Purchased, 2015

X64492

**Account Book with Morris & Co. with caricature frontispiece  
of the artist and William Morris**

1883

Ink on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge

X64442

## **Illustrated Letter to Angela**

c.1896

Coloured pencil on paper

With a facsimile of the inside pages Angela Mackail (later Thirkell) was Burne-Jones's favourite grandchild and the recipient of many illustrated story-letters drawn in coloured pencil to appeal to a child. She later became a novelist, recalling her memories of Burne-Jones in her 1931 reminiscence 'Three Houses'.

Private collection

X70175

**Manuscript volume of illustrated letters and humorous drawings sent to Helen Mary Gaskell  
1897–8**

Bound volume

Burne-Jones's letters to May Gaskell covered a wide range of subjects. In this witty pastiche of classical scholarship he imagines the restoration of an antique vase absurdly reconstructed as a representation of Pan. The lewd inscription in reverse apparently refers to Pan's anus.

Private collection

X65322

**Caricature of an 'Annunciation' by  
Rubens from the album 'Letters to Katie'  
1883–9**

Graphite on paper

Burne-Jones disliked the Baroque as represented by Rubens. The Flemish painter's fleshy corpulent figures are the direct opposite of the types that inhabit Burne-Jones's dream world. In this parody of an Annunciation, Burne-Jones mocks the excesses of his least-favourite artist.

The British Museum, London.

Bequeathed by Katherine Lewis, 1960

X64690

ROOM 3

## EXHIBITION PICTURES: 1877–1898

Following his resignation from the Watercolour Society in 1870 Burne-Jones experienced a period of liberation which he later described as the 'seven blissfullest years of work that I have ever had; no fuss, no publicity, no teasing about exhibiting, no getting pictures done against time'. He embarked on a number of paintings that took the London art world by storm when they were exhibited in 1877 at the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery. Established as an alternative to the more conservative Royal Academy, the Grosvenor cultivated artists whose work emphasised sensory expression and poetic feeling above naturalism and narrative. With their unusual extended vertical and horizontal formats, and melancholy subjects in which men are often presented as victims of female power and desire, Burne-Jones's paintings were controversial and won him immediate fame.

When **King Cophetua** was shown at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1889, Burne-Jones became known throughout Europe, inspiring symbolist artists from Fernand Khnopff to Picasso. Reproductions of his works promoted his reputation overseas, the absence of colour in the prints reinforcing the remoteness and strangeness of his art.

This room brings together some of the greatest pictures

that Burne-Jones exhibited at the Grosvenor and at its successor, the New Gallery, which opened in London in 1888. The later paintings in this section are stark and monochromatic showing just how unwilling the artist was to compromise his vision for commercial purposes.



**Clockwise from wall text:**

## **The Morning of the Resurrection**

1886

Oil paint on wood

Also known as **Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre**, this painting is unusual among Burne-Jones's exhibition pictures in representing a religious subject. The painting originated as a memorial to the Christian Socialist, Frederick Denison Maurice. It was commissioned by Burne-Jones's friend, Dr Charles Bland Radcliffe, for the altar of the London church of St Peter's in Vere Street. This second version was exhibited at the Grosvenor in 1886. Burne-Jones dedicated the painting to his friend Laura Lyttelton who had died in childbirth that year by adding a private inscription along the lower left-hand edge.

Tate. Bequeathed by Mrs S.G. Potter 1937

N04888

## **The Depths of the Sea**

1886

Oil paint on canvas

In 1885 Burne-Jones was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy and reluctantly became part of an organisation he had despised since his youth. The only work he exhibited there up to his resignation in 1893 was **The Depths of the Sea** in which a mermaid drags a sailor to the ocean bed; her ambiguous smiling expression (unusual for Burne-Jones) adds a sinister note. Although strongly suggestive of Leonardo, the face was apparently based on Laura Lyttelton who died the same year, adding to the disturbing nature of the image. A study for the head can be seen in room 2.

Private collection

X65316

## The Dream of Launcelot at the Chapel of the San Graal 1895–6

Oil paint on canvas

This is typical of Burne-Jones's later pictures which tend to be dark and austere. Based on Malory's **Morte d'Arthur**, Launcelot lies dreaming as he hears from the angel guarding the Grail that he will never achieve his quest because of his adulterous relationship with Guinevere. The painting originated in a design for the Holy Grail tapestries two of which can be seen in the final room. It was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1896 where Burne-Jones was surprised to discover that it came across as a 'man's picture'. 'Women', he said, 'won't so much as look at it'.

Southampton City Art Gallery  
X64591

## **The Tree of Forgiveness**

1881–2

Oil paint on canvas

In his dramatic reworking of **Phyllis and Demophoön** (room 1), Burne-Jones adopts for the figures a muscular style he had derived from Michelangelo. This serves to intensify Phyllis's embrace as she bursts out of the almond tree to reclaim the lover who had deserted her. The agitated treatment of the bodies contrasts with the rhythms of Phyllis's hair and the wisp of drapery Burne-Jones added to conceal Demophoön's genitals, perhaps to avoid the controversy of the earlier work. The painting was exhibited at the Grosvenor in 1882 alongside **The Mill**.

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery

X64456

## **The Beguiling of Merlin**

1873–4

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones's version of the Merlin and Nimue story was one of the works which he exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. Here Nimue casts a spell on the wizard that will entrap him in a hawthorn bush. Her hair is entwined with snakes and the serpentine rhythms of the design convey Merlin's helplessness as he is overcome by the sorceress's magic powers. The painting caused a sensation in London and was the first of the artist's works to be shown on the continent when it was exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition the following year.

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery

X33412

## The Wheel of Fortune

1875–83

Oil paint on canvas

In Burne-Jones's reworking of a medieval motif, the giant figure of Fortune slowly turns a massive wheel upon which are suspended (in descending order) the straining bodies of a slave, king and poet. Fragmented glimpses of buildings and a mill can be glimpsed through the spaces separating the foreground forms. The Michelangelo-inspired nude figures were informed by Burne-Jones's first-hand viewing of the artist's works on his 1871 visit to Italy. The painting was exhibited at the Grosvenor in 1883.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

X36871



## **The Mill**

1870–82

Oil paint on canvas

With its warm colour and lyrical mood, **The Mill** contrasts with the cooler palette of some of Burne-Jones's other exhibition pictures. It has no subject but music is suggested by three women dancing. In the intervals between them male nude bathers can be seen in the background. The motif of buildings reflected in water influenced the work of symbolist painters, notably Fernand Khnopff, Burne-Jones's main follower on the continent. The three figures were reputedly based on Aglaia Coronio (who designed many of the costumes that appear in Burne-Jones's paintings), her cousin Maria Zambaco and the painter Marie Spartali.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Bequeathed by Constantine Alexander Ionides.

X64462

## King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid

1884

Oil paint on canvas

This work was based on an Elizabethan ballad reinterpreted by Alfred Tennyson in his 1842 poem 'The Beggar Maid'. The king of Ethiopia lays aside the trappings of power and wealth for the love of a beggar maid. It was hailed as Burne-Jones's greatest achievement. Five years later it caused a sensation at the Paris International Exhibition where one critic termed it the embodiment of the 'Apotheosis of Poverty' – a vision of a social hierarchy in reverse. Through this painting and its reproduction in print form Burne-Jones became regarded in Europe as the most important symbolist painter of his generation.

Tate. Presented by subscribers 1900.

N01771



## **Laus Veneris**

1873–8

Oil paint on canvas

In **Laus Veneris**, Burne-Jones conveys a languid mood in his interpretation of the legend of the wandering knight Tannhäuser who abandons himself to sensual pleasure with the goddess of love. The title can be translated as 'In Praise of Venus'. Swinburne had retold the story in his 1866 **Poems and Ballads** dedicated to Burne-Jones. His poem was condemned as immoral and this criticism rubbed off on Burne-Jones, despite the painting being more wistful in mood. Henry James remarked that Burne-Jones's Venus possessed 'the aspect of a person who has what the French call an "intimate" acquaintance with life'.

Laing Art Gallery (Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums).

X33381

## **The Golden Stairs**

1880

Oil paint on canvas

Exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1880, this, the most formal of Burne-Jones's designs, came to epitomise the dreamlike beauty of the aesthetic movement. Designed in a silver colour key, 18 women descend a staircase holding musical instruments. The appearance of many artistic and well-connected society women in the picture enhanced its association with the Grosvenor set. The figures include Frances Graham (daughter of Burne-Jones's patron William Graham) on the bottom left, Mary Gladstone (daughter of the Liberal MP and Prime Minister WE Gladstone) behind her, and Burne-Jones's own daughter, Margaret, at the top of the stairs.

Tate. Bequeathed by Lord Battersea 1924.

N04005

## Love Leading the Pilgrim

1896–7

Oil paint on canvas

Derived from Chaucer's **Romance of the Rose**, this picture was Burne-Jones's last major painting to reach completion. Exhibited at the New Gallery in 1897, it shows Love as a guardian angel surrounded by birds guiding the pilgrim from a thorny thicket into the open air. It was accompanied by lines from Burne-Jones's friend Swinburne to whom the picture is dedicated: 'Love that is first and last of all things made, /The light that moving has man's life for shade.' The pilgrim, like so many of Burne-Jones's other male figures, was often perceived as female.

Tate. Presented by the Art Fund 1942

N05381

## Love among the Ruins

1870–3

Watercolour and gouache on paper The title derives from Robert Browning's poem of the same name. It presents love as a fragile but pure value that endures with the passing of time. The painting was first exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1873 and was one of the few works Burne-Jones exhibited in the years immediately preceding the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery. It was frequently requested for exhibition, becoming one of the paintings that best exemplified the bittersweet emotion that lay at the heart of his vision. Although painted in watercolour it looks like oil which explains why it came to be damaged by being accidentally washed with egg white in preparation for reproduction in Paris. It was restored shortly before the artist's death.

Private collection.

X65317



## **Vitrine in the centre of the room**

**Clockwise from wall text, starting from 'Le Chant D'Amour':**

Robert Walker Macbeth 1848–1910

after Edward Burne-Jones

### **Le Chant d'Amour**

1896, published by the Fine Art Society

Etching on paper

Reproductive prints and photographs played a key role in bringing Burne-Jones's art to an international audience although the artist was very exacting about who was employed to carry out the translation. He usually preferred printmakers such as Campbell who used traditional methods to Macbeth's vigorous etching technique which he found 'clumsy' and 'brutal'.

The Maas Gallery

X68821

Charles William Campbell 1855–1887  
after Edward Burne-Jones

**Pan and Psyche**

1887, published by Robert Dunthorne

Mezzotint on paper

The Maas Gallery

X68820

Feliks Stanisław Jasiński 1862–1901  
after Edward Burne-Jones

**Proof print for 'The Annunciation'**

1897

Engraving on vellum

Victoria and Albert Museum

X64477

## Copper plate for 'The Annunciation'

1897

Engraving on copper

Burne-Jones tended to use European rather than British engravers believing the quality of their work to be superior. The Polish-born printmaker Jasiński shared the melancholy refinement of Burne-Jones's vision and was, like him, a master of line. Burne-Jones was so pleased with Jasiński's interpretation of his **Annunciation** (exhibited at the Grosvenor in 1879) that he requested an exception be made to the rule of destroying a plate after an edition had been made so it could be presented to the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). The print was published by Arthur Tooth & Sons in 1897.

Victoria and Albert Museum

X64476

ROOM 4

## PORTRAITS

Burne-Jones's portraits depart from convention in conveying inner feeling above physical likeness or social status. He tended to avoid fashionable society portraiture, preferring to focus on family and friends on whom he could project the pale and enigmatic beauty that became the trademark of his style. Burne-Jones was recorded as saying: 'My pictures are for the people – my inner life for myself and my friends.'

Familiar faces appear in many of his portraits. These include his long-suffering wife Georgiana with her disquieting penetrating gaze, and his beloved daughter Margaret on the brink of marriage dressed in her favourite blue. Other works show friends such as his devoted patron, William Graham, and his daughter Frances on whom Burne-Jones showered many tokens of affection, several shown in this room.

The few commissioned portraits here were dark and ethereal without props or accessories. Some works such as **Flamma Vestalis** and **Vespertina Quies** recall paintings by Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Sandro Botticelli, their titles helping to emphasise the sitter's spiritual qualities. Although Burne-Jones admired male beauty, he was generally drawn to women whom he

imagined as soulful types in tune with the inner workings of his mind.



## Anti-Clockwise from wall text:

### Portrait of Frances Graham

1879

Oil paint on canvas

Frances was the second daughter of William Graham and a leading figure among the intellectual and artistic group The Souls. She was probably the most significant of the young women with whom Burne-Jones developed intimate friendships in his later years. They shared literary and artistic interests and remained close even after Frances's marriage in 1883 to the barrister John Horner. Frances's features can be recognised in some of his painted works. She appears as the woman at the bottom right in **The Golden Stairs** (room 3) and as a sea nymph in **The Calling of Perseus** (room 5).

Private collection

X64858

## **Portrait of William Graham**

c.1880

Oil paint on canvas

Graham, a wine merchant and Liberal MP for Glasgow, was Burne-Jones's most loyal patron, also overseeing his financial affairs. A devout Presbyterian, he collected Italian Renaissance art and lent the artist works from his collection for inspiration. Burne-Jones once said of him that he could recognise a good picture even if it was upside down. This portrait was painted following the sudden death of Graham's two sons and at the onset of the illness that led to his own death in 1885. Georgiana described his face as 'that of a saint and at times like one transfigured'.

Private collection

X65325

## Portrait of Katie Lewis

1886

Oil paint on canvas

Painted in an unusual horizontal format, this portrait shows Katie, the youngest daughter of Sir George Lewis, the most famous solicitor of the day. The dog and orange are playful allusions to the **Arnolfini Portrait**, a painting that influenced the depth of tone and colour Burne-Jones sought in his own work. The vivacious and strong-willed Katie was known for what Oscar Wilde called her 'fascinating villainy'. Burne-Jones's letters to her were filled with comic drawings and signed 'Mr Beak', the nickname she gave him.

Private collection

X65319

## Margaret Burne-Jones

1885–6

Oil paint on canvas

Painted two years before her marriage to the classical scholar JW Mackail, Burne-Jones's portrait of his beloved daughter Margaret shows her in front of a large convex mirror that encircles her head like a halo. The mirror was probably inspired by Van Eyck's **Arnolfini Portrait** in the National Gallery which he admired. Exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1887 as **A Portrait**, the picture epitomises Burne-Jones's dreamy ideal of beauty. Margaret wears blue, her favourite colour. This matches her eyes and draws attention to the sweet-pea pinned discreetly at her neckline.

Private collection

X64494

## Portrait of Georgiana Burne-Jones

begun 1883

Oil paint on canvas

Georgiana, the high-minded daughter of a Methodist minister is shown as a mature woman having survived some 23 years of marriage to Burne-Jones. Their children Philip (an aspiring painter) and Margaret can be seen in the background in a composition indebted to mannerist portraiture. The artist has caught Georgiana's penetrating gaze and dignified bearing. She holds Gerard's **Herbal**, an Elizabethan guide to plants and their properties – the pansy resting on the page symbolises thoughts and enduring love. The book also serves as a reminder of the hours she spent reading aloud to her husband while he worked.

Private collection.

X39350



## Baronne Madeleine Deslandes

1895–6

Oil paint on canvas

Madeleine Vivier-Deslandes was a symbolist writer under the pseudonym Ossit. She ran a Paris literary and artistic salon and became a devoted follower of Burne-Jones. Her description of his types as 'chimeric, disordered and suffering' discloses something of the mystery conveyed by the portrait she commissioned him to paint. The Baronne appears as a kind of priestess or sphinx with the laurel branch connoting her literary interests. Georgiana took a more down-to-earth view of the sitter, writing to a friend, 'he has finished a portrait of a French lady, who **would** be painted by him'.

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

Purchased with funds donated by Andrew Sisson, 2005.

X64485



## Lady Windsor

1893–5

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones's only full-length portrait was of Lady Windsor, otherwise known as 'Gay', Alberta Victoria Sarah Caroline (née Paget). Commissioned by her husband, the portrait shows her set against the severe geometrical alignments of the room in which she stands. Gay was a member of the circle known as The Souls who admired Burne-Jones for the spiritual refinement of his vision. This quality is relayed by the austere palette and the sitter's self-enclosed demeanour. In 1899 Lord Windsor acquired Burne-Jones's equally ethereal painting **The Uninterpreted Dream** (shown in the foyer outside the exhibition), maybe to complement the portrait of his wife.

Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of a Private Lender.

X64426

## Portrait of Amy Gaskell

1893

Oil paint on canvas

Amy was the beautiful but troubled daughter of Burne-Jones's last passionate attachment Helen Mary Gaskell ('May'), who had been introduced to him by Frances Horner (née Graham). Although she generally preferred to wear white, Burne-Jones asked Amy to sit in a black dress to emphasise her pale face and hands against a dark background. The painting is one of the sparest and most aesthetic of the late works, anticipating the abstract portrait style that developed in the 20th century. Amy was to die in unexplained circumstances in 1910. May, like Frances, lived until 1940, treasuring her memories of the artist.

Private collection.

X65318

## Vespertina Quies

1893

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones's homage to Leonardo's **Mona Lisa** was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1894. This was a portrait of Bessie Keene, a favourite model during his later years who succeeded her mother as chief 'angel' and 'nymph'. The title of the painting translates as 'Quiet of the Evening', suggesting a mood rather than a particular narrative or individual.

Tate. Bequeathed by Miss Maud Beddington 1940

N05176

## **Flamma Vestalis**

1896

Oil paint on canvas

**Flamma Vestalis** could be described as a pendant to **Vespertina Quies**, being a Renaissance-influenced portrait set against a still enigmatic background. The sitter has been identified as the artist's daughter Margaret in fanciful guise. The title can be translated as 'Vestal Flame'. The motif of the flaming torch associates her with the vestal virgins whose duty it was to tend the sacred flame of the goddess Vesta, while the rosary is suggestive of a nun reciting her prayers.

Private collection

X65320

## Ignacy Jan Paderewski

1890

Oil paint on canvas

Burne-Jones first met the Polish concert pianist (and future Prime Minister of Poland) in 1890, the year of Paderewski's celebrated London debut. Apparently he was so taken by the pianist's striking appearance and shock of red hair that he likened him to an archangel striding the streets of London. After painting his portrait the two men became close friends and Burne-Jones went on to use Paderewski's features for the heads of several of the knights in the Holy Grail tapestries. One of these can be seen in the final room of the exhibition.

RCM Museum, Royal College of Music, London

X64678



## **Portrait head of King Cophetua**

c.1883–4

Oil paint on canvas

The model for this study of Cophetua (room 3) was William Arthur Smith Benson, one of a family known for their looks who modelled for Burne-Jones. The strongly defined profile shows the artist's skill as a draughtsman. Benson was useful to Burne-Jones in other ways. Trained as an architect, he designed the Garden Studio at the Grange in London, as well as supervising the alterations to his seaside home in Rottingdean, near Brighton. As a metalwork designer he made full-scale models for the objects that feature in Burne-Jones's paintings, including the shield, crown and armour in **King Cophetua**.

Peter Nahum . Renate Nahum . Agency  
X64775

## Vitrine in centre of the room

### Left to right:

Frances Graham 1855–1940

and Edward Burne-Jones

**Embroidered purse with the zodiac sign of Aries**

mid-late 1870s

Silk

Private collection.

X65849

Frances Graham was a skilled needlewoman and collaborated with Burne-Jones on several designs. She made this silk purse from a design the artist made of the zodiac sign of Aries to mark her birthday.

Carlo Giuliano 1826–1895

after Edward Burne-Jones

**Brooch pendant in the form of a singing bird**

1885–95

Enamelled gold set with turquoise, coral, pearls and a ruby

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Given by Geoffrey and Caroline Munn through the Art Fund.

X64481

Burne-Jones often gave jewels to his daughter Margaret, associating gems with his love for her and need to keep her close. This brooch was made from a design of his and shows a dove surrounded by olive branches. It is identical to the one he gave her as a young woman.

William Morris 1834–1896  
and Edward Burne-Jones  
**The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**  
1872

Illuminated manuscript

Private collection.  
X65326

Burne-Jones made a gift to Frances Graham of this manuscript of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the **Rubáiyát** by the 12th-century poet Omar Khayyám. Lettered and ornamented by William Morris it contains six large miniatures by Burne-Jones, composed of couples overshadowed by an air of sadness. Although not made with her in mind, they foretell something of his frustrated and longlasting attachment to Frances.

## A painted casket decorated with angels

1877

Oil paint and gold on panel

Private collection.

X64859

Burne-Jones's feelings for Frances Graham took the form of the many gifts he gave her. After her marriage in 1883, as he ruefully told Ruskin 'Many a patient design went to adorning Frances's ways. Sirens for her girdle, Heavens and Paradises for her prayer books, Virtues and Vices for her necklace boxes'. This casket decorated with Virtues and Hope with angels was made for her birthday on 28 March 1877.

ROOM 5

## THE SERIES PAINTINGS

Burne-Jones's preoccupation with myth and legend led to him working with groups and sequences of images. This impulse found full expression in his two great narrative cycles: **Perseus** and **The Briar Rose**, both of which have been reassembled for this exhibition.

## THE PERSEUS SERIES

The **Perseus** series recounts the story of the Greek hero's quest for Medusa, the Gorgon whose gaze turned men to stone, and his rescue of Andromeda from a sea monster. The commission came in 1875 when the young Conservative politician and future Prime Minister Arthur Balfour approached Burne-Jones about making paintings for the drawing-room of his London residence. He left the choice of subject to the artist.

In telling the story of Perseus, Burne-Jones devised a set of ten subjects to be hung in a band around the room encased within a decorative acanthus border. He also designed panelling and lighting for the space to create an immersive experience. Between 1875 and 1885 he completed the cartoons for the panels, only four of which were eventually worked up into finished oils. The original scheme was also to include four relief panels on oak, of which only one was completed. It is shown here together with a selection of the cartoons and oils to make up the cycle.

The series is numbered and hung anti-clockwise from the left.



## Clockwise from the wall text

**10**

### **The Baleful Head**

1885

Gouache on paper

In order to convince Andromeda of his divine origin and to win her hand in marriage, Perseus shows her the 'baleful' (threatening) head of Medusa. To view it safely he uses the reflection in a well. The setting is a lush walled garden, in contrast to the bleak and menacing earlier scenes.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64590

9

## The Doom Fulfilled

1888

Oil paint on canvas

Having released Andromeda, Perseus kills Cetus, presented here as a serpent-like monster. Preliminary studies in pencil for the figure of Andromeda can be seen in room 2.

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

X33378



**8**

**The Rock of Doom**

1885–8

Oil paint on canvas

Returning to Seriphos, Perseus finds Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, king of Joppa, chained to a rock. Her mother, Cassiopeia, had angered the sea god Poseidon by boasting that her daughter was more beautiful than the sea nymphs. This provoked Poseidon to send the sea monster, Cetus, to destroy the people of Joppa. The only way to prevent this was to offer Andromeda as a sacrifice to Poseidon.

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

X33377

7

## Atlas Turned to Stone

c.1878

Gouache on paper

Atlas was a Titan defeated by Zeus and condemned to stand on the edge of the earth holding up the sky. Burne-Jones represents it as a misty globe containing signs of the zodiac. As Perseus flies by he reveals Medusa's head and turns Atlas to stone. Some accounts of the story suggest Atlas requested this as he wanted to end his eternal suffering; others say it was punishment for refusing Perseus hospitality. This would have been the third relief panel.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64584

**The Call of Perseus; Perseus and the Graiae;  
Perseus and the Nereids**

1875–6

Gouache, gold paint and ink on paper

**The Finding of Medusa; The Death of Medusa (The Birth of  
Pegasus and Chrysaor); Perseus Pursued by the Gorgons**

Gouache, gold paint and ink on paper

**Atlas Turned to Stone; The Rock of Doom and the Doom  
Fulfilled; The Court of Phineas; The Baleful Head**

Gouache, gold paint, graphite and chalk on paper

Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1919  
N03456-8

These three works show Burne-Jones's original conception for the display of the series at 4 Carlton Gardens. Each painting shows a separate wall within the room, two indicating how the panels would fit above a door and fireplace. The paintings were to be surrounded by decorative plasterwork based on an acanthus pattern produced by Morris & Co.



## **Perseus and the Graiae**

1877–8

Silver and gold leaf, gesso and oil paint on oak This is the only surviving relief panel of the four planned for the series and is comprised of gesso (or ground mineral gypsum) with gold and silver leaf on an oak support. Burne-Jones subsequently abandoned this approach for oil on canvas. The finished oil version of this scene is number 2 in the narrative sequence, shown in this room.

Ar fenthyg gan Amgueddfa Cymru / Lent by National  
Museum Wales

X49306

Pallas urges on Perseus by her advice.  
She equips him with arms.

The Graiae, deprived of eyesight,  
show him the secret dwelling

Of the Nymphs. From here, his feet  
winged, his head hidden in shadow,

The Gorgon, alone mortal out of  
these non-mortals,

He strikes with his blade. The twin  
sisters rise and press on him.

Behold Atlas stony, and, snatched  
from the slain dragon,

Andromeda, and the comrades of  
Phineus now stony bodies.

Behold the maiden wondering in a  
mirror at terrible Medusa.

Translated by Charles Martindale  
from the Latin by Richard Jebb

**6**

**The Death of Medusa (II)**

c.1881–2

Gouache on paper

The second, revised, version of the death of Medusa shows Perseus fleeing from the enraged Gorgons as he thrusts Medusa's head into the pouch given to him for the purpose by the sea nymphs. The white lines at the bottom show the work 'squared up' for transfer.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64583

**5**

**The Death of Medusa (I)**

c.1882

Gouache on paper

This is the first of two compositions Burne-Jones made for the moment when Perseus kills Medusa. He is unaware that she is pregnant with the children of Poseidon, and as he cuts off her head they emerge in the shape of Chrysaor and the winged horse Pegasus. This act avenges Minerva, as Medusa had conceived them in a temple dedicated to the goddess. The figures and horse show the influence of the Parthenon frieze which Burne-Jones had studied at The British Museum. This was the second design intended for a relief panel.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64582

4

## The Finding of Medusa

c.1882

Gouache on paper

Alighting in a cave, Perseus discovers the Gorgons. Medusa stands facing the viewer with her fateful stare while her sisters crouch at her feet, covering themselves with their wings in an attempt to hide. The figure of Perseus is not fully realised. Burne-Jones made further studies showing him in armour, one of which can be seen in room 2.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64581

**3**

## **Perseus and the Sea Nymphs (The Arming of Perseus)**

1877

Gouache on paper

The Nereids (sea nymphs) provide Perseus with the equipment he needs to defeat Medusa: the winged sandals lent by Hermes to enable him to fly; the helmet of invisibility; and a magic pouch, or 'kibisis', to contain Medusa's head. The artist made various studies in pencil for the heads of the nymphs from female models. The figure on the right is thought to be based on Frances Graham.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X64587

2

## **Perseus and the Graiae**

1892

Oil paint on canvas

In order to find Medusa, Perseus needs to seek the sea nymphs who live in a cave on the island of Seriphos. Their location is known only to the Graiae, three sisters of the Gorgons, who have between them only one tooth and one eye. As the eye is passed between them Perseus steals it, forcing the Graiae to tell him the way. This was the first of the series intended to be completed as a relief panel, as seen in the other version shown in this room.

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

X33376

1

## The Call of Perseus

1877–98

Oil paint and chalk on canvas

The first image in the series combines two episodes from the Perseus myth. In the background a dejected-looking Perseus contemplates the impossibility of his quest to bring to Polydectes, king of Seriphos, the head of the terrifying Gorgon, Medusa. He is approached by a hooded figure who is revealed in the foreground scene to be the goddess Minerva, an enemy of Medusa. She presents Perseus with a mirror to avoid the gaze of Medusa, which turns every living thing to stone, and a sword to cut off her head.

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

X64592

ROOM 6

## THE BRIAR ROSE

Based on the story of Sleeping Beauty, **The Briar Rose** consists of four panels on which Burne-Jones worked intermittently between 1874 and 1890. The title derives from the version of the fairy tale published by the brothers Grimm.

All four scenes represent the same moment suspended in time: the prince enters a realm of arrested motion in which figures lie overcome by sleep. As the artist explained: 'I want it to stop with the princess asleep and to tell no more, to leave all the afterwards to the invention and imagination of people.' The canvases were successfully exhibited at the London art dealers Agnew's before being shown to a broader audience at Toynbee Hall in the East End, affirming the artist's belief in art for all. They were subsequently bought by the financier and MP, Alexander Henderson, and installed in the saloon of his country residence, Buscot Park in Oxfordshire. Ten smaller panels were added to link the paintings around the room. Morris provided verses that were lettered beneath the framework of the four paintings. These are repeated here to recreate the ensemble.



**Clockwise from the wall text:**

**The Briar Wood**

1874–84

Oil paint on canvas



**The Council Chamber**

1885–90

**The Garden Court**

1885–90

**The Rose Bower**

1886–90



## **The Briar Rose**

infill panels

1891

Oil paint on canvas

The Faringdon Collection Trust

X65851, X65853, X65852, X65854, X71798-X71807

ROOM 7

## BURNE-JONES AS DESIGNER

Burne-Jones was in essence a decorative artist. Seeing no distinction between the fine and applied arts he adapted his ideas in different media, designing for stained glass, tapestry, embroidery, furniture, book illustration as well as for painting. In this he was supported by a circle of wealthy collectors for whom Burne-Jones represented the ultimate in artistic taste and refinement.

Designs commissioned by Morris & Co. were his most regular source of income. With the reorganisation of Morris's company under Morris's sole direction in 1875, Burne-Jones became its main figure designer, with Morris providing the ornament. Together they developed the Firm's distinctive compositions combining figures with decorative surrounds for tapestry, embroidery and stained glass.

The majority of Burne-Jones's designs were for stained glass windows, driven by the market for church decoration throughout Britain and its Empire. It has been estimated that some 660 of his designs were produced as windows by Morris & Co., transmitting to a broad audience around the world Burne-Jones's vision of 'heaven beginning six inches over the top of our heads, as it really does'.



**Anti-clockwise from wall text:**

**The Holy Grail Tapestries:**

**The Attainment: The Vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad,  
Sir Bors and Sir Perceval**

1890–4

Cotton, wool and silk

In this scene Sir Galahad kneels before a vision of the Holy Grail, surrounded by white lilies symbolising purity. Within the chapel the Holy Ghost is represented by a rushing wind that drops the blood of Christ into the Grail. Upon seeing the Grail, Galahad dies and ascends to heaven; Sir Bors and Sir Perceval are protected from the sight of the Grail by three angels. This tapestry was to cover the entire back wall of the dining room at Stanmore Hall, the section missing in the bottom right-hand corner was cut out to allow for the top of a doorway.

Collection Jimmy Page courtesy Paul Reeves London.

X41222

## The Holy Grail Tapestries:

### The Arming and Departure of the Knights of the Round Table on the Quest for the Holy Grail

1890–4

Cotton, wool and silk

In 1888 Morris and Burne-Jones were commissioned by Australian oil and mining magnate, William Knox D'Arcy, to design six tapestries for his country house, Stanmore Hall in Middlesex. The subject was the Quest for the Holy Grail from Malory's **Morte d'Arthur** and the tapestries were made by Morris and Co. A few other versions were made, one later exhibited at the International Exhibition in Paris, in 1900. Here the knights are shown embarking on their mission. On the left Launcelot takes his shield from Guinevere, a reminder of their adultery which causes his failure in the quest.

Collection Jimmy Page courtesy Paul Reeves London.

X41218

## The Adoration of the Magi

1894

Cotton, wool and silk

In 1886 the Rector of Exeter College, Oxford (Morris and Burne-Jones's former college) asked Morris & Co. to produce a tapestry for the chapel. The design was based on a large watercolour Burne-Jones had recently completed for the new Birmingham Municipal Gallery, titled 'The Star of Bethlehem'. The tapestry shown here is the third version, commissioned by the Manchester calico printer William Simpson which he later gifted to the City of Manchester.

Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections

X64660



## The Fall of Lucifer

1894

Gouache and gold paint on paper

Burne-Jones's painting of Lucifer and his knights being cast out of heaven was conceived as part of the mosaic scheme he devised for the American Episcopal church of St Paul's Within-the-Walls in Rome. Originally titled 'Paradise Lost', it refers to the 'Christ in Majesty' scene that marks the place in heaven where the archangel stood before his rebellion. Burne-Jones worked up the design into this painting which he exhibited at the New Gallery in 1895. The decorative aspect of the picture is reinforced by the gilded inscription around the edge.

Private collection.

X65321



## **Elijah in the Wilderness**

1883

Stained glass panel

The Old Testament prophet Elijah is shown with the raven that came to him in the wilderness. The panel is based on a design the artist made in 1874 for one of ten large figures for the west window of Calcutta Cathedral which was later recycled for other commissions. This version with the figure robed in white was sent to the 1883 Foreign Fair in Boston, Massachusetts to demonstrate the various skills represented by Morris's Firm.

Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council. Presented by Mrs J. H. Francis, 1920.

X64425

**Angeli Ministrantes  
(Salisbury Cathedral)**

**Angeli Laudantes  
(Salisbury Cathedral)  
1878**

**Coloured chalk on paper**

These two cartoons (full-scale preparatory drawings) were for stained-glass windows at Salisbury Cathedral. The Angeli Laudantes (singing angels) pluck harps while the more earth-bound Angeli Ministrantes (ministering angels) wear sandals and hold pilgrim staffs. The scallop shell motif on their cloaks refers to St James and the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. The drawings also served as designs for tapestry.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge  
X64440-1

## **The Pelican in her Piety**

1880

Coloured chalk on paper

The east window in the church of St Martin's, Brampton, Cumbria, is widely regarded as one of Morris & Co.'s finest works in stained glass. The church was designed by Philip Webb and consecrated in 1878. The pelican in her piety is a long-established Christian emblem of self-sacrifice: the pelican pecking at her breast to feed her own blood to her young, symbolising Christ giving his own blood for humanity. Burne-Jones's treatment of the tree trunk in this drawing could be said to anticipate the design aesthetic that developed in the early 20th century with art nouveau.

William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest  
X64676

## Pomona

c.1885

Embroidered wall hanging; linen embroidered with floss silks

Pomona was the Roman goddess of fruit trees and orchards, as indicated by her clutch of apples and the decorative background of flowers and fruit. It was designed in 1882 and made as a large embroidered hanging by needlewomen under the direction of May Morris at the newly-founded Royal School of Needlework. Burne-Jones painted the face and hands directly onto the linen support. The poem round the edge is by William Morris. Half-size versions were made in tapestry by Morris & Co. as a more affordable option for potential purchasers.

Private collection

X64497

## Piano in centre of room

### The Graham Piano

1879–80

Painted wood

Friend and patron William Graham commissioned this piano as a gift for his daughter Frances's 21st birthday. A poem by William Morris about Orpheus and Eurydice inspired the scenes, which are The Garden, The Garden Poisoned, The Gate of Hell, The Doorkeeper, Across the Flames, The House of Pluto, The Regained Lost (three images), and The Death of Orpheus. The inside lid represents the terrestrial world with Mother Earth. The outside shows the celestial world with a poet receiving a message from his muse (apparently a portrait of Frances herself) with the Graham family motto, meaning 'do not forget'.

Private collection.

X65324



## **Vitrine in centre of room**

**Left to right:**

William Morris 1834–1896

**The Earthly Paradise**

1868

Book

Morris's long narrative poem was published in three instalments between 1868 and 1870. In it Morris provided new tellings of stories from classical and medieval literature. The verses were originally intended to be illustrated with scenes by Burne-Jones in a combined word-and-image project, but this proved too ambitious. In the end Morris cut 50 woodblocks of Burne-Jones's designs.

Collection of Stephen Calloway

X64769

William Morris 1834–1896

**The Dream of John Ball**

1888

Book, frontispiece by Burne-Jones Morris's re-telling of the Peasants' Revolt (1381) presents a happy, prosperous, medieval England, where Guilds protect workers from exploitation. This was in contrast to his view of the poverty and iniquity of the modern industrial world. Ball, a rebel priest, posed the question: 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?' This is the subject of Burne-Jones's frontispiece.

Collection of Stephen Calloway

X41164

## The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer

1896

Book

The greatest work Morris and Burne-Jones produced for the Kelmscott Press was completed shortly before Morris's death in 1896. Morris designed the borders, title page and large initial letters, with Burne-Jones providing designs for the 87 wood-cut illustrations. Burne-Jones wrote: 'If we live to finish it, it will be like a pocket cathedral – so full of design and I think Morris the greatest master of ornament in the world.'

Private collection

X65323

Frederick Hollyer 1838–1933

**Album of 21 photographs recording the Burne-Jones  
Memorial Exhibition at the New Gallery in 1898–9**

Album of photographs

Burne-Jones died in June 1898, aged 64, having suffered from angina and heart trouble for a number of years. In December that year a large memorial exhibition opened at the New Gallery in Regent Street comprising 235 works in a range of media.

Peter and Renate Nahum

X64776

# MANTON FOYER

Edward Burne-Jones 1833–1898

**Spirits or The Uninterpreted Dream**

1890s

Oil paint on canvas

Etienne Bréton, Saint-Honoré Art Consulting, Paris.

X70054

**EDWARD BURNE–JONES  
PRE–RAPHAELITE VISIONARY  
24 OCT 2018 – 24 FEB 2019**

Curated by Alison Smith, Chief Curator, National Portrait Gallery with Tim Batchelor, Assistant Curator, Tate Britain

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#BurneJones

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Clore Auditorium

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£27/concession £22