

SIMON SINCE FUJIWARA 1982

TATE
ST IVES



Simon Fujiwara (born London, 1982) lives and works in Berlin. He studied Architecture at Cambridge University from 2002 to 2005, and then Fine Art at the Städelschule Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Frankfurt am Main from 2006 to 2008. He has participated in recent biennials including the Venice Biennale, 2009; Manifesta 8 and São Paulo Biennial in 2010; Singapore Biennial, Manchester International Festival, and Performa, New York, all 2011. His work has been presented at galleries including the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco; The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto; MUSAC, Léon; and MOT, Tokyo. He was the winner of the Cartier Award at Frieze Art Fair and the Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel both in 2010.

Portrait of Simon Fujiwara in front of a reproduction of Patrick Heron's *Horizontal Stripe Painting: November 1957 – January 1958* © Estate of Patrick Heron. All Rights Reserved, DACS, 2011 Photograph: Benedicte Sehested © Simon Fujiwara

Simon Fujiwara

Since 1982

This leaflet is designed to help visitors explore the exhibition. For further information and resources on Simon Fujiwara's work, please visit the Exhibition Study Point on Level 3 and the Studio Resource Room off Lower Gallery 2.

Please note that for this season the route through the galleries has been reversed. The exhibition begins in the Heron Mall on Level 1, then continues into Gallery 5 on Level 3, and concludes in Gallery 1.

Some elements of this exhibition are of an adult nature. If you would like more information, please speak to a member of staff.

Parental discretion is advised in Gallery 4 and Gallery 3. The audio presentation that takes place daily in Gallery 4 (15.45 January – February; 16.45 from March) contains explicit language and is not suitable for 16s and under.

A large print version of the publication is available on request – please speak to a member of staff.

Introduction

Simon Fujiwara is a young artist who has been building a strong reputation over the last few years. *Since 1982* is his first major show in the UK and his most ambitious exhibition to date. It includes six new installations made especially for Tate St Ives. Integrated into Fujiwara's installations are works by key artists

from the St Ives school – Bernard Leach, Alfred Wallis, Barbara Hepworth and Patrick Heron – as well as contemporary practitioners such as Sarah Lucas and Andrea Fraser, all of which he has selected from the Tate Collection.

Fujiwara was born in London to a British mother and a Japanese father. He moved to Carbis Bay, a mile from St Ives, at the age of four, and lived there until he was sixteen. His recent projects have focused on his childhood in West Cornwall with increasing intensity: in this exhibition he explores, for example, his formative encounters with art in St Ives as well as his relationship with his distant Japanese father. *Since 1982* is a kind of homecoming, bringing his projects into the unique context to which they refer.

Autobiography, both real and imagined, forms the basis of much of Fujiwara's art. He uses storytelling to fuse aspects of his identity and family experiences with myths and historical truths. He creates intricate works that blur fact and fiction to powerful effect. Fujiwara himself plays multiple characters in this drama, including researcher, novelist, playwright and tourist. He combines memories and artefacts to produce alternate readings of both his inner world and more universal cultural and political narratives.

Novels, plays and film scripts are all part of Fujiwara's art practice. He usually narrates these in the form of lectures, adding visual imagery and memorabilia to illustrate the plot. The stage-sets he designs for these performances have increasingly become installations in their own right, and have led to the development of some of the works in this exhibition.

Since 1982 consists of a series of rooms which the artist has compared to the interiors of National Trust properties. As the exhibition's title suggests, each gallery presents an installation enacting a scene from Fujiwara's life, from conception to adulthood. As part of this rationale, the information panels displayed in the galleries have been written by the artist.

These discuss themes ranging from the mother-figure and homosexuality to colonialism and class inequality. In this way, the exhibition offers a journey of discovery into Fujiwara's thinking and production narrated through his voice rather than that of the museum.

Heron Mall

Autobiography of a Museum 2012

As a teenager living in West Cornwall, Simon Fujiwara often visited Tate St Ives. The gallery provided his first encounter with art and he claims his interest in both art and architecture was generated here. Fujiwara went on to study art in Germany after graduating in architecture in the UK.

Fujiwara's work is based on research into facts and narratives, both personal and imagined. He usually brings together visual sources, notes and artefacts, often writing fictional pieces that intertwine these ideas and objects. Models play a similar role in architectural practice as sketchbooks do for artists. After his research trips to St Ives during the organisation of this exhibition, Fujiwara made a model of the gallery in his Berlin studio to help him with his preparation.

Fujiwara presents this model alongside photographs of himself growing up in West Cornwall and items associated with Tate St Ives, including sand from nearby Porthmeor Beach. Situated somewhere between a professional three-dimensional rendering of the building and a doll's house, *Autobiography of a Museum* tells both the story of Tate St Ives and of this exhibition through Fujiwara's eyes.

An artist who blends universal themes with particular subjects and a gallery that connects global discourses with local histories might have been made for each other.

Gallery 5

Selective Memory 2012

Simon Fujiwara's works are often autobiographical, drawing on life experiences, memories and family history. In this room he focuses on his childhood and explores links with the early development of the St Ives School.

As a child Fujiwara lived with his mother in Carbis Bay, a mile from St Ives. He has said that the lighthouse on nearby Godrevy Island is one of his earliest recollections. According to the artist, its dancing light, playing across his bedroom ceiling, was fundamental to the development of his imagination.

Selective Memory, Fujiwara's installation in this room, features a group of paintings from the Tate Collection by Alfred Wallis. Wallis, born in 1855, was a fisherman and later ran a marine store in St Ives. With no formal training, he took up painting in his late sixties, after his wife's death. Like Fujiwara he drew his subject matter from his memories, often focusing on seascapes with a range of nautical motifs including ships, shipwrecks and lighthouses.

The story of Wallis's 'discovery' is well known to regular Tate St Ives visitors: artists Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood met Wallis in St Ives in 1928 and were encouraged by his naïve style to continue their own exploration of a 'primitive' language of art. Nicholson and his wife Barbara Hepworth moved to West Cornwall a decade later, soon joined by other modernist artists. Being brought up locally, Fujiwara was very aware of Wallis's

encounter with Nicholson and Wood, the mythological founding moment of the St Ives school.

Like Wallis, Fujiwara took his first steps as an artist in West Cornwall. He was the first student in the nursery school his mother established in the kitchen of their home (which she still runs today). There he developed his artistic skills, making pictures showing an interest in personal narratives, which he shares with Wallis.

Selective Memory is Fujiwara's tribute to Wallis and the St Ives School legacy. Fujiwara creates four large-scale, childishly crafted structures based on lighthouses depicted in Wallis's paintings. These sculptures have a playful dimension, enhancing the feeling of safety that the real lighthouses produce. Nevertheless, they also have a sinister quality, suggesting associations of danger and loss typical of seafaring. It is a state of innocence Fujiwara evokes, linking the vision of the untrained artist with the inherent creativity of children.



Simon Fujiwara (second from right) aged four in his mother's nursery school, Carbis Bay, 1986 © Simon Fujiwara

Gallery 4

Welcome to the Hotel Munber 2008–10

Simon Fujiwara's parents lived in Spain during most of the 1970s, running the Hotel Munber in a tourist town on the Costa Brava in Catalonia. There they encountered the charms of the Mediterranean world while witnessing the oppression and violence that was commonplace under the regime of fascist dictator Francisco Franco. Fujiwara grew up around personal accounts, photographs and memorabilia of Francoist Spain, and this period of his family history became a fundamental part of his mind-set.

This room offers a kind of flashback to the period just before Fujiwara's birth. The information panel on the wall, written by Fujiwara as part of his work, plays with the mixture of fact and fiction that runs throughout the exhibition. It records Fujiwara's assertion that his early life in the Hotel Munber has strongly influenced his art practice, while at the same time claiming that 'accurate historical research' has shown this could not have happened as he was born after his parents left Spain.

Fujiwara attempted to write about his parents' life in Spain in the form of a novel. He had an exotic setting and peculiar characters, a mixed-race foreign couple; the only thing missing was the plot. Realising that censorship under Franco had prevented the development of gay literature (pornography was banned and homosexuality was illegal), Fujiwara embarked on a mission to salvage this missing chapter of Spanish history. An erotic fiction set in the Hotel Munber, with his parents as the key protagonists, seemed the natural topic.

Fujiwara never completed his book, incapable of resolving the inner conflict that addressing his parents' sexuality elicited. The work went through different stages and formations, including a performance in which Fujiwara reads excerpts of the novel in which his father is portrayed playing out various homoerotic fantasies. In 2010, Fujiwara developed it into an installation recreating the bar in the Hotel Munber.

The installation presented in this room, *Welcome to the Hotel Munber*, is an environment mimicking the kitsch styling of a stereotypical Spanish bar, with dark wood panels, barrels and (fake) ham hanging from the ceiling, as well as wall decorations ranging from portraits of Franco to a bull's head. Objects with phallic qualities, such as sausages and horns, as well as partly obscured homosexual pornographic imagery, complement the display. These fetishistic elements operate as surrogates of the suppressed narrative of gay culture in Francoist Spain.



Welcome to the Hotel Munber 2008–10 (detail) Private collection, London.
Courtesy Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt am Main



Simon Fujiwara aged seventeen with Spanish hams, Segovia, Spain, 2000
© Simon Fujiwara

Gallery 3

The Mirror Stage

2009-12

According to Simon Fujiwara, he attended the opening of Tate St Ives in 1993, when he was eleven. Here he saw *Horizontal Stripe Painting : November 1957 – January 1958* by Patrick Heron, a celebrated St Ives School artist. Heron's painting was influenced by 'abstract expressionism', a desire to represent emotions, sensations and the physical world through abstract, but highly expressive, compositions of colour and form. Recalling this event, Fujiwara declared that the painting was 'the most beautiful thing I had ever seen'. He went on to claim it made him realise firstly that he wanted to become an artist and secondly that he was gay.

Inspired by his encounter with Heron's painting, Fujiwara wrote a play called *The Mirror Stage*. In the text he prepares to re-enact this event with the aid of a teenage actor, who represents his younger persona. In the play Fujiwara speculates that Heron's painting performed for him the role that the mirror does in the theories of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Lacan had proposed that humans, in infancy or later, go through a stage in which an external image of the body, reflected or projected onto the mother or significant female figure, produces a pleasurable psychic response that generates a sense of the self. Lacan described this 'mirror stage' as crucial to the formation of personal identity.

For this exhibition Fujiwara has created *The Mirror Stage* as an installation. Here he constructs an idealised, theatrical version of his teenage bedroom, which he presents on a raised, cordoned-off structure echoing the stage set for the play. Mirror-lined walls surround Ikea furniture, including a bed with sheets inspired

by Patrick Heron's painting. Heron's painting itself is positioned in the centre of the room like an altarpiece. Alongside it are three works by Francis Bacon also from the Tate Collection, all apparently influenced by Heron.

Bacon stayed in St Ives in the winter of 1959–60, taking a studio next door to Heron. There has been speculation about the influence of Heron's art practice on Bacon's figurative style. In *Reclining Woman* 1961, for example, stripes appear as a backdrop to a figure that was originally depicted as a man, the genitalia of which was later covered. Bacon used the misidentification of gender as a way of disguising the work's homoerotic charge at a time when homosexuality was illegal in the UK.



Simon Fujiwara *The Mirror Stage* 2009–12 (detail of performance at Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, 2011) Courtesy of the artist

Also part of the installation is a TV set showing a video based around the narrative of Fujiwara's play. This explores different

cultural aspects of the episode, including the St Ives artists' colony; Lacan's mirror stage; Bacon's friendship with Heron; and the apparent appropriation of Heron's work by the world of interior design.



Francis Bacon *Reclining Woman* 1961
Tate © Estate of Francis Bacon.
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Apse *Saint Simon* 2012

Simon Fujiwara's fascination with the legacy of Spanish folk culture has led him to visit Mexico on a number of occasions. During these trips he became acquainted with Maximón, also known as San Simón, a popular saint in Guatemala and southern Mexico, the territory occupied by the Maya people. In a typical blend of native and Christian traditions, Maximón is a personification of Mam, a Maya deity of merchants and travellers, and of Judas Iscariot, the biblical symbol of betrayal.

Today, Maximón is venerated during Holy Week, when his effigy is paraded through the streets. The rest of the year he resides in houses or bars, where he can be visited by devotees. The effigy, a rustic, life-size mannequin with short arms, is usually dressed in a dark suit and cowboy hat, the face hidden by sunglasses, a bandanna and a moustache; a cigarette often hangs from his mouth. He sits on a wooden throne, surrounded by offerings appropriate to an unorthodox saint: money, alcohol and cigarettes, as well as flowers, burning candles and colourful garlands.

Fujiwara projected himself into this character psychologically, not only because Maximón's Spanish name is the same as his, but also because they share other traits, including historically mixed origins and a love of iconoclasm. *Saint Simon* is Fujiwara's recreation of Maximón's effigy, presented in an apse inspired by the shrines he saw in Mexico. Usually the effigy's face is represented by a mask, which Fujiwara replaces here with a sculpted rendering of his own face.

Upper Gallery 2

Rehearsal for a Reunion (with the Father of Pottery) 2011–12

With a British mother and Japanese father, Simon Fujiwara grew up between two cultures. Living only a mile from St Ives, he visited the Leach Pottery at an early age. It is only recently, however, that he realised the parallels between his own family history and that of Bernard Leach, known as the 'Father of British Studio Pottery'.

Leach, born in Hong Kong in 1887 to British parents, worked as a potter in Japan and China until he moved to the UK in 1920. By his death in 1979, the pottery studio he established in St Ives with his soul mate, Japanese potter Shoji Hamada, had influenced the work of potters across the world. It was Leach's combination of Western and Eastern sensibilities that initially drew Fujiwara's attention.

Fujiwara re-visited the Leach Pottery in 2011, and was particularly struck by the parent and child workshops held there. These inspired a project with his father, who had been a distant figure since moving to Japan after separating from Simon's mother when he was a boy. The two men attended pottery classes in Japan, producing copies of Leach's standard ware that Fujiwara had seen at the Leach Pottery.

Rehearsal for a Reunion (with the Father of Pottery), Fujiwara's installation in this showcase, consists of a recreation of a display of Leach, Hamada and other artists' work shown at Tate St Ives in 2001. Fujiwara might have seen the display when re-visiting the town after leaving West Cornwall in the late 1990s. Interspersed among the exhibits are elements related to the project. These include hammers, a PG Tips box and recreations of vintage photographs of Leach and various Japanese figures that Fujiwara replicated by posing with his father as doubles of these characters.

The paintings in the original display have been replaced by wooden-framed flat screens showing a video Fujiwara made after his stay in Japan. It records a rehearsal for a play, with Fujiwara representing himself and an actor taking the role of his father. The characters talk and drink tea, using the pots father and son made in Japan. But they have to choose between these replicas and the standard ware Fujiwara saw at the Leach Pottery: should they preserve the idyllic version of the East-West relationship symbolised by the Leach pots, or stress the personal bond rebuilt between Fujiwara and his father? They opt for the latter and ritually destroy the standard ware.



Simon and Kan Fujiwara *Rehearsal for a Reunion (with the Father of Pottery)*, after Bernard Leach 2011 Courtesy of Simon Fujiwara

Lower Gallery 2

Mothers, of Invention

2012

Having grown up in Carbis Bay, Simon Fujiwara is very familiar with the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, as well as the legacy of Hepworth's life and work in St Ives. Hepworth's family opened her house and studio as a museum and sculpture garden in 1976; Tate has managed it since 1980. It contains a significant group of sculptures as well as artefacts, documents and memorabilia.

Feminists have argued that Hepworth's practice cannot be separated from her gender, and that circumstances such as being the mother of triplets have to be taken into account when examining her art practice. Fujiwara explores this by considering Hepworth alongside contemporary women artists who have addressed the tradition of feminism. In this installation he brings Hepworth together with Sarah Lucas and Andrea Fraser, among others, in an arrangement of works from the Tate Collection.

With the nanny of her triplets, Hepworth established an informal nursery school in the kitchen of her home in Carbis Bay during the early years of the Second World War. Fujiwara's mother owns a nursery school in Carbis Bay, whose first student was Fujiwara himself. This biographical coincidence suggested the potential significance of Hepworth as a mother-figure to Fujiwara. But he also parodies this in the information panel in the room, which he has written himself. Rather than an introduction to the works displayed in the room, the text discusses the state of scientific research into the 'causes' of homosexuality, including being brought up by an 'overbearing or doting mother'.

Fujiwara's installation recalls a stage-set, incorporating details of an artist's studio, in this case borrowing from the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, as well as a workshop space for the production of female forms. In this way, it also draws from a gothic imagination, referring perhaps to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Core elements of this imagery, including chains, caskets and body parts are mixed with romantic ingredients such as Juliet balconies, an allusion to the exquisite terror associated with the romantic sensibility.

Fujiwara complements the works from the Tate Collection with three sculptures of his own. These relate to Hepworth and two more of his mother-figures: his art teacher at school, who was also a former glamour model, and his cello teacher. The central sculpture represents Hepworth in a pose reminiscent of the Virgin Mary (the archetypal Christian mother-figure) and is pierced like one of her works on display. Fujiwara presents the

sculptures in interiors suggested by decorative elements such as screens, curtains, rugs, tables and vintage plinths for Hepworth's works. This feeling of domesticity evokes the private sphere attributed to femininity in patriarchal society.



Studio view of work in progress (detail from *Mothers, of Invention* 2012)

© Simon Fujiwara

Gallery 1

Letters from Mexico

2010–11

The title of this installation echoes the *Letters from Mexico* published by Hernán Cortés, the Spanish ‘conquistador’ commanding the expedition that overthrew the Aztec empire in 1521, in modern-day central Mexico. Cortés wrote his personal account of this conquest in five missives sent to the Spanish king, Charles I, who by then had become Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Like Cortés, Fujiwara is a European who travelled across Mexico and, also like Cortés, he recounts his experiences in a series of eight dispatches. Fujiwara’s letters from Mexico reveal his initial enthusiasm for the local culture, from the appealing architecture to the rich flavours of the food. However, they also demonstrate his later disenchantment with the country’s social inequality, of which the most evident manifestation is conspicuous violence.

Fujiwara’s texts were typed in the Plaza Santo Domingo, an area in Mexico City’s historic quarter known for its scribes. These street typists assist illiterate people by transcribing any piece of writing, from official documents to personal accounts. Fujiwara dictated his texts to a group of them over a number of weeks in the winter of 2010–11. As they didn’t understand English, the scribes typed his words phonetically. Lost in translation, these communications appear to symbolise the ongoing misunderstanding between Europeans and Mexicans.

Fujiwara has framed each of the transcribed texts and shows them alongside memorabilia of his journey. The first includes a Lufthansa air ticket and a toy metal sword inside a vintage edition of Cortés’s *Letters from Mexico*, as well as a photograph of a Plaza de Santo Domingo tile sign. Fujiwara also shipped Mexican

items to Europe, including a replica skull of a 'conquistador', a sombrero and a revolutionary scythe. Resembling a cabinet of curiosities, the display recreates the atmosphere of an anthropological museum.

Mexico simultaneously celebrated the bicentenary of its independence and the centenary of its revolution in 2010. Fujiwara evokes the colonial relationship between Spain and Mexico by addressing most of his messages to 'Europe', and alludes to Mexican nationalism by surrounding the display with curtains in the green, red and white of the Mexican flag. The last of his letters from Mexico, as the artist makes clear in the information panel he includes as part of the installation, describes his 'fictionalised death at the hands of a merciless story that he, himself, has written'.



Simon Fujiwara *Letter from Mexico (Briefcase) 2010*
Courtesy of the artist

Special Events

Tate Talk at UCF: Simon Fujiwara

University College Falmouth,
Woodlane Campus
Thursday 19 January, 18.00

Free, advance booking recommended. Tickets via UCF at www.eventbrite.com

Start the spring season with an opportunity to hear artist Simon Fujiwara introduce his practice and key works in the new exhibition at Tate St Ives.

In association with University College Falmouth

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Curator's Talk

Tate St Ives
Saturday 21 January, 12.30

 BSL interpreted

Free, advanced booking essential

Tate St Ives Curator Miguel Amado introduces key themes in the new exhibition and will talk in depth about the selection, commissioning and presentation of the works in the galleries.

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In Conversation with Simon Fujiwara

Tate St Ives
Saturday 21 January, 16.30

£5 (concessions £4), advanced booking essential

Tate St Ives Artistic Director Martin Clark joins Simon Fujiwara on the opening weekend of the show to reflect on his return to St Ives and West Cornwall for his major UK exhibition.

Late at Tate

Hidden Narratives, New Histories: Round Table Discussion

Tate St Ives
Friday 30 March, 19.30–20.45

£4 (concessions £3), advance booking recommended


Explore the way in which Simon Fujiwara fuses his biography, real and imagined, with the context of St Ives art. Consider how the works in the exhibition might offer new perspectives in which to reconsider the legacy of the St Ives artists' colony. Contributors include artist John Clark, author Michael Bird, and Leach Pottery's Julia Twomlow and Jack Doherty. Chair: Tate St Ives Curator Miguel Amado.

Talks

Free Gallery Talks

Tate St Ives

Tuesday–Sunday (Mondays also from March), 11.30 and 14.30

 BSL interpreted at 14.30 on Saturday 4 February, Saturday 3 March, Saturday 7 April and Saturday 5 May

Free with admission

Meet at the Exhibition Study Point

Join a member of the gallery team for an informal 30-minute introduction to the exhibition at Tate St Ives.

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Talking Art

Tate St Ives

Saturday 10 March, 11.00–13.00

 Designed for visitors who are blind and partially sighted

Free, advance booking essential

Share new perspectives on work in the current exhibition through audio description, discussion and practical art activities. No previous art experience necessary.

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Text written by Miguel Amado
and edited by Sarah Hyde,
Susan Lamb and Martin Clark.

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Simon Fujiwara: Since 1982 is
programmed by Martin Clark,
Artistic Director, Tate St Ives and
curated by Miguel Amado, Curator,
Tate St Ives.

The exhibition is accompanied by
a 400-page publication designed
by the artist with Chiara Figone,
Archive Appendix. It is available
in the shop at a special price of
£29.99. The exhibition is also
accompanied by a booklet that
is available in the shop priced
£5.00 (free with purchase of
the publication).

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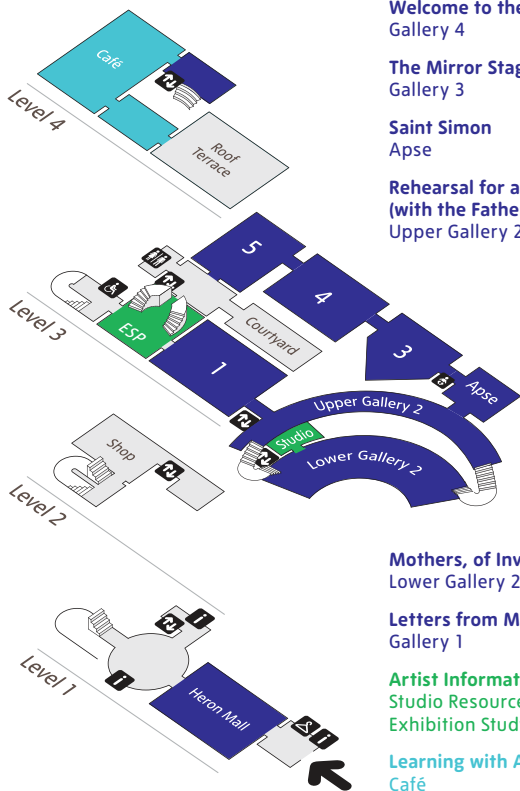
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The Tate St Ives logo, featuring the word 'TATE' in a large, bold, blue, pixelated font, with 'ST IVES' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it.

Map



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Heron Mall

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(with the Father of Pottery)**
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