



22

M.B. Melancholia. Infanticide.

BETHLEM
MUSEUM OF THE MIND

TOURING EXHIBITIONS

Louis Wain

Louis Wain studied at the West London School of Art in the 1870s, and taught there for some time before leaving to work as a freelance artist. Wain sold designs for greetings cards, drew cartoons and gained employment at the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*.

In 1883, Wain married his sisters' governess Emily Richardson, ten years his senior, but she died just three years into their marriage. During her illness, Emily was comforted by the couple's pet cat Peter, who Wain sketched continually. Emily encouraged Wain to sell the drawings and the illustrations became immensely popular, featuring in children's books, papers, journals, magazines, and in his own *Louis Wain Annuals*, which were published from 1901-1921.

After the death of his wife, Wain decided to return to live with his mother and sisters, but began to struggle under the financial strain of supporting his family. In the early 1920s, Wain developed schizophrenia and was committed to the pauper's ward in Springfield Mental Hospital in Tooting in 1924. When the artist's whereabouts became public knowledge, an appeal was launched to raise the funds to transfer him to Bethlem Royal Hospital and later to Napsbury Hospital in Hertfordshire. Wain continued to paint and draw during his time in hospital, including many images of cats, the subject for which he is best known. Louis Wain died at Napsbury in 1939. This exhibition contains 30 prints, paintings and drawings.

- Includes interpretation panels and captions
- No cost to borrow, but transport and insurance must be covered





Stanley Lench

Stanley Lench was born in Peckham, South London in 1934. Early mental health problems affected his schooling, but he developed a great interest in art and taught himself to paint as a young teenager. Lench's work was exhibited at the Beaux Art Gallery in West London in 1955, and he subsequently gained a place at the Royal College of Art, studying in the stained glass department. This specialism is reflected in the bold use of colour and dark outlines that characterise Lench's paintings.

While studying, Lench channelled a childhood fascination for popular icons into his work, basing his thesis on the stars of the silent screen. Lench particularly admired the self discipline involved in the stars' maintenance of youth and beauty. Appearances, glamour and the aging process all became crucial and long standing themes of his work.

After graduating, Lench held a second exhibition at Beaux Art Gallery, selling a portrait of Pola Negri to the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Despite the exhibition's success, Lench became progressively more reclusive, depressed and worried about his career as an artist. Throughout his life, periods of seclusion and introspection were interrupted by periods of great artistic creativity, when he would paint and draw for months at a time. Lench was treated on a number of occasions at Bethlem Royal Hospital and the Maudsley Hospital. He donated many of his works to the hospitals, which are now in the collection of Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust, and included in this exhibition.

In an interview with his friend David Trowbridge, Lench explained that he became an artist to 'cheat death and time.' This statement reflects the themes of Lench's work, but also highlights his ultimate goal: to be recognised and remembered for his art. Stanley Lench died in 2000. This exhibition contains 24 paintings, text panels and captions.

- Includes interpretation panels and captions
- No cost to borrow, but transport and insurance must be covered

Insanity in Focus

Between 1857 and 1859 Regent Street portrait photographer Henry Hering made several visits to Bethlem Royal Hospital, then at St George's Fields, Southwark. He photographed several patients on the general wards as well as in its criminal department. It is likely that he was attempting to document what was then known as the "physiognomy of insanity", though no record of his intentions has been kept. Whatever his purpose, the enduring result is a striking record of institutional life in mid-Victorian Britain.

By the 1850s Bethlem Royal Hospital was already over 600 years old and conditions were far removed from the stereotype of 'Bedlam' popularised by Hogarth. Those admitted were treated with perhaps less stigma than they are today and their living conditions were significantly better than those of Victorian London outside, with an emphasis on fresh air, clean water, well-lit corridors, gardens, and respect for patients. The hospital had deliberately moved to Southwark in 1815 to get away from the crowded metropolis.

Patients admitted to the Hospital were presumed curable. Although the methods available were very much simpler than those of today, the results could be very striking. Included in the exhibition are photographic examples of patient recovery. The exhibition consists of 20 large reproduction photographs, text panels and captions.

- Includes interpretation panels and captions
- No cost to borrow, but transport and insurance must be covered



Bethlem Royal Hospital, founded in 1247, is the country's oldest psychiatric hospital. The Museum at Bethlem is run by the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust, whose mission is:

- to collect, preserve and interpret for the benefit of the public, archives, pictures, artefacts
- and manuscripts relating to mental health.
- to promote wider knowledge of the history of mental health care and treatment.
- to contribute generally to the public understanding and de-stigmatisation of mental illness.

We are the only full-time archives and museum in the country specialising in mental health.

We do not charge for the loan of our touring exhibitions, but we do ask that our charity and its work is prominently acknowledged.

How to borrow a temporary exhibition

If you are interested in borrowing one of our touring exhibitions, please send a completed expression of interest form to the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust at least 8 months before your intended exhibition start date. The Trustees usually meet in March, June and October.

Please include details of the loan venue, which exhibition you are interested in borrowing and when. Also include a completed UKRG Facilities Report, which can be downloaded from: www.ukregistrarsgroup.org. If you would like more information about our general conditions of loan, or more about the available exhibitions please get in touch with us using the contact form on our website.

Bethlem Museum of the Mind

Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX

www.museumofthemind.org.uk



'This is to thank you for Bethlem's generosity in loaning us works for our exhibition on Louis Wain. The exhibition and its supporting programme of talks and events has been one of our most successful and much praised not only by local residents but also by visitors from other London boroughs as well as from outside London.'

-Brent Museum