



High Sheriff West Midlands 2015-16 Printed Portraits

Jonnie Turpie MBE

29th April to July 2nd 2017
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery





Background to the exhibition

Introduction

Last year I was proud to be High Sheriff of the West Midlands. It was an honour I had never expected to take up, but was very glad to do so as I met so many great people from across the County involved in many rich and varied walks of life, including The Judiciary, Shrievalty, Faith, Voluntary, Commercial and diverse Communities.

I chose to focus the year on the arts, creative industries and young people which enabled me to meet

many talented and committed people involved in the creation, delivery and promotion of arts and culture. To focus my activities I chose a national charity, the Koestler Trust, and the Midland's John Feeney Trust. Both charities have supported young people from diverse and sometimes challenged backgrounds to find expression through the arts. John Feeney was the Birmingham Post editor and benefactor whose bequest in 1905 supported the building of the Museum extension, now known as the Feeney Galleries. He is remembered through the stone title above the exit from the Round Room and his portrait in the entrance.

In my High Sheriff 2015-16 year there were many opportunities to visit, meet and promote the wealth and diversity of arts, culture and entrepreneurship across the region. I held two awards ceremonies: one looking out over the city from high up in the Library of Birmingham and one in the Museum and Art Gallery.

These awards celebrated the creativity of the people of the West Midlands in many ways, but in particular through portraiture. So the museum and portraiture featured prominently in the formal itinerary of Shrievalty events.

Much less public was another 'excursion' from my day job in the media I was Artist in Residence at the historic Birmingham School of Art, in the splendid Margaret Street building round the corner from the Museum. Having trained as a printmaker over 35 years ago, I was honoured to be invited by BCU to take on this role. Over the year I honed my old skills, updated and developed new drawing and digital techniques. I applied myself and drew and printed portraits of 30 West Midlanders I met as High Sheriff. The first drawings were received well by early subjects who gave me encouragement to pursue my re-found calling.

There is a great history of print in the city, both commercial and artistic. This can be seen in the extensive 'works on paper' collection held in the Museum, and in the School of Art archive in Birmingham City University's Parkside building. The Museum and Art Gallery has an ongoing commitment to the region's art and artists through its displays of the work of the Birmingham School, collections of work by Birmingham artists and involvement in projects such as New Art West Midlands which supports the work of artists graduating in the region.

It is an immense honour to exhibit these portraits in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, adjacent to collections of great artists held by our city, including the iconic Pre Raphaelites. This is "way out of my league", but is a great recognition of the High Sheriff's role, the West Midlands Shrievalty and an opportunity to celebrate it and those that have contributed.

The portraits capture a wide and diverse group of people who in prominent and official public and private sector roles participated in the High Sheriff's year, as well as those who make and maintain the excellent art and culture of the region.

These portraits are my personal choice that I have drawn and printed in the timeframe. There could have been many more from the many people I met across the West Midlands in 2015-16 and I look forward to making more portraits of people from the region and beyond as I embark on my work at the Birmingham School of Art as I pursue new work and research into digital and analogue techniques of printed portraiture.

This exhibition is also an opportunity to support Birmingham Museums Trust, which looks after 9 sites across the city, including Aston Hall, Soho House, Sarehole Mill, Thinktank and Blakesley Hall in Yardley. The Trust also looks after the city of Birmingham's collection: one of the biggest public collections in Europe with great examples of our past cultural and innovative glories, from steam engines and taxis to badges and watercolours.

Currently the Charitable Trust faces core funding challenges as it plans for a 21st-century future. Through my modest artistic efforts I make the Shrieval Year prints available for sale with all proceeds going to the Trust. You also may make a direct donation to the Trust to maintain the

great value arts, culture and our heritage make to our quality of life and the welcome to people of all creeds from the West Midlands and beyond to when visiting our city.

I am most thankful to Dr Ellen McAdam, Katie Hall and Victoria Osborne from Birmingham Museums Trust in their assistance and advice in planning this show. Dr Andrew Kulman, Professor of Graphic Arts at BCU for his inspiration and encouragement. Justin Sanders for his technical and artistic support and welcome challenges. Dr Robert Grose for hanging the show and Lawrence at the Custard Factory Framers for his great attention detail. My partner Marian Davies for her continued love and support over many years.

The Role of The High Sheriff

The High Sheriff office is the oldest secular office in Britain having been originated over 1000 years ago, the era of the Saxon warriors, with many judicial and executive powers at the disposal of the title holder. The High Sheriff is required to attend on Her Majesty's Judges to protect and uphold their dignity and well-being. The High Sheriff's sword is the symbol of the Queen's justice – and may also be called upon to protect Her Majesty's Judges in case of need.

Since 1461 the Sheriffs of Counties, known as High Sheriffs, have been nominated annually on the morrow of St. Martin, November 12. The nominations are made in a ceremony held in the Royal Courts of Justice. They enter into Office on making the Declaration prescribed by the Sheriffs Act of 1887 for a 12month term whereby they aim to contribute to the betterment of their respective county. The Office of High Sheriff is a non-political appointment.

Nominations to the Office of High Sheriff are dealt with through the Presiding Judge of the Circuit and the Privy Council for consideration by The Sovereign in Council. The selection of new High Sheriffs is made annually in a meeting of the Privy Council by The Sovereign in March, when the traditional custom of 'pricking' the appointee's name with a bodkin is perpetuated. Subsequently a Warrant of Appointment is sent by the Clerk of the Privy Council in the following terms:

'WHEREAS HER MAJESTY was this day pleased, by and with the advice of HER PRIVY COUNCIL, to nominate you for, and appoint you to be HIGH SHERIFF of the COUNTY OF West Midlands during HER MAJESTY'S PLEASURE: These are therefore to require you to take the Custody and Charge of the said COUNTY, and duly to perform the duties of HIGH SHERIFF.

On the 31st of March 2015 Jonnie Turpie was installed at the Queen Elizabeth Law Courts in Birmingham in the presence of HHJ Dame Thirwall, The Lord Lieutenant Paul Sabapathay, Mr Greg Lawson the Under Sheriff, The High Sheriff Chaplain, The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle, the County's Mayors, religious, police and emergency services leaders and a wide range of arts, creative legal, business representatives.

Ms Pauline Bailey	silk screen	A0 Somerset tub
Mr Neil Baldwin	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Ms Anita Bhalla OBE DL	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Dr Keilth Bradshaw DL	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Vanley Burke	silk screen	A0 Somerset tub
Bishop Christopher Cocksworth	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
HHJ Charles Haddon Cave	silk screen	A0 Somerset tub
Mrs Jean Denning	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Ms Alex Fraser	silk screen duotone gold	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Lucan Grey MBE	digital Print	A3 pastel paper
Professor Brian Griffin	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Ninder Johal	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Phil Howkins	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Adam Hockney	silk screen duotone gold	A1 Fabrianno
Professor Andrew Kulman	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Greg Lowson	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Colonel George Marsh TD	digital print	A3 pastel paper
Mr Kevin Morgan	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Rev Catherine Ogle	mezzotint	A3 hannehueller
Ms Lara Ratnaraja	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno

The Portraits



Rev Catherine Ogle	mezzotint	A3 hannehueller
Ms Lara Ratnaraja	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Ms Amerah Saleh	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Justin Sanders	digital print	A3 pastel paper
HHJ Mary Stacey	silk screen duotone mauve	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Andy Street CBE	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Mr Amajit 'Ammo' Talwar MBE	silk screen	A3 fabrianno
Mr Stewart Towe CBE DL	digital print	A3 pastel paper
Bishop David Urquart	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Baroness Warnock	mezzotint on	A3 hannehueller
Mrs Eileen Wright	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno
Italian Cathedral Visitor	silk screen	A1 Fabrianno



These portraits are in the main silk screen prints created using techniques that have been developed over the last 30 years. I have used these to make large scale 'litho-like' portraits. These are created through transforming images from iPhone 'meetings' to mark resist and true grain, which are films with a 'tooth' or texture that can be drawn on. Images are created with pencil, graphite, crayon, touché (a kind of ink wash) and sometimes scratches that allow different degrees of light to be exposed on to silk screen. The quality of marks is also created by the texture of the tooth and thereby the size of dots that prevent the light coming through to the screen emulsion. The drawing process can take a few hours or days before being ready to be transferred to the silk screen through being exposed on a large vacuum exposure unit for a number of 'light units'. Once exposed and washed out the screens are 'stopped out' to allow the images to be isolated from their backgrounds and be printed on high quality Fabrianno, Hahnemuhle or Somerset paper. Printed in small editions using a small palette of colours the images then 'float' on the paper. The floating is taken further when framed 'off' the backing and each becomes a unique image.

The smaller prints all begin in the same way – as small smartphone pictures from a meeting or event that I draw on an iPad using an application called Procreate and an Apple Pencil. Two of the small portraits are made through the traditional technique of mezzotint, which is challenging as every element of the process – from sourcing, preparing and rocking copper plates through to scraping, burnishing and printing – is crucial to get right: there is little chance to retrace steps. But the 'velvet' quality of ink on paper cannot be achieved any other way. The last 5 small prints are made using a fully digital process, where the portraits are drawn on an iPad with an electronic pencil. These are then printed on a standard laser printer on 230gram paper in small editions. The pictures are brought back into the analogue world though being framed and presented with care.

High Sheriff Printed Portraits

Email : HSWM@jonneturpie.com

Web: printsanew.jonneturpie.com/hswm-portraits