



NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI

Collage

A POLITICAL ACT

Large Print Labels

**Please do not remove
from the gallery**

Collage breaks the rules – it disrupts – both by repurposing images (cutting and pasting) and by disrupting how we look at them and what we take away.

For hundreds of years collage existed outside what was considered ‘fine art’. Originally associated with women as a creative pastime, using whatever material was available, it became adopted as an accepted means of expression in the 1900s by the Cubists, initially Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. This led to it becoming more acceptable as an art form (no longer dismissed as a ‘women’s craft’) but still remaining

on the edges of artistic activity and still associated with women artists, albeit in a more political way.

Edges are important in collage – not just the edges where two pieces of paper meet, but existing on the edge of art has often meant artworks are focused on conversations on the edge of the mainstream. Artists agitate pre-existing images to create new works whilst also agitating through their choice of subject, voicing frustration, and making statements by repurposing these images. Previously ‘throwaway’ artworks are made permanent and given new meaning.

The familiar structure of the images is broken and as viewers we are asked to consume them differently and subsequently challenge how we look at the world around us.

Abstract Collage (1949)

Victor Pasmore (born 1908)

paper collage on board

BELUM.U681

In the late 1940s Pasmore moved away from the traditional painting he was known for to become a pioneer of abstract art in Britain.

As centre of the British Constructivist Group he often created work that looked at the 'act of assembling' and saw an importance in the form and aesthetic of mathematical principals and geometric composition.

The constructivists were concerned with new principles of design and environment.

1. *A Common Gift* (around 1977)

Declan McGonagle

mixed media collage

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Gifted Collection

BELUM.U2012.3.812

**3. *The Expulsion (After Massaccio)*
(around 1988)**

Alice Maher (born 1956)

charcoal, pastel, collage

BELUM.U2012.3.863

Alice Maher often explores Irish cultural history and current issues through using materials and techniques seen as outside the tradition of fine art. This work was created early in her career and is based on Masaccio's painting

of Adam and Eve. She described choosing this historical biblical scene that connects sin and sexuality because “it has clear echoes in a contemporary state controlled by religious beliefs and restrictive laws, divorce was illegal, contraception was for married people, same sex activity was a criminal act and abortion carried a fourteen year prison sentence.”

2. *Collage* (1946)

F.E. McWilliam (1909–1992)

mixed media on paper

BELUM.U4689

4. *Tableau Vivant* (1959)

Conroy Maddox (born 1912)

gouache & collage on board

BELUM.U1431

9. *By Glue to the Bed* (1939)

Colin Middleton (1910–1983)

collage, paper on magazine page

BELUM.U2012.3.100

10. *Vogue* (1939)

Colin Middleton (1910–1983)

collage, fineline pen

BELUM.U2012.3.95

Collage allowed artists in the surrealist movement to use photography, usually a tool for factual recording, to communicate the spontaneous and unreal. By

using familiar images without context, and the method within collage of distorting size and scale, an uneasy reality is created.

Politically the surrealists had links with communism and anarchism. Often artists exploring new emerging art forms also had an interest in new emerging social ideas. Such as Conroy Maddox who had links with communist intellectuals and himself was seen as sitting outside English art circles because of his surrealist style and beliefs.

5. *Enlarger* (1981)

Ann Carlisle (born 1956)

mixed media collage

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Gifted Collection

BELUM.U2012.3.864

6. *Meathead* (1992)

Terry Loane (1966)

mixed media collage

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Gifted Collection

BELUM.U2012.3.513

7. *No la tires (Don't throw it out)* (2010)

Helen Escobedo (1934–2010)

offset lithograph

Kindly on loan from the Irish
Museum of Modern Art

Collage allows artists to expand and play with their usual forms of practice. Escobedo was known for her sculptural work and urban installations. She also used the technique to express her ideas and humour. As her career developed she became more concerned with the environment and human impact on the earth, these political issues were reflected in her work. Here she used the opportunity to play with scale that collage provides to convey the enormity of the issue.

8. *Ghost of Breda* (1969)

David Winters (born 1940s)

mixed media collage

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Gifted Collection

BELUM.U2012.3.117

11. *Mother and Nest* (2020)

Claire Miskimmin (born 1981)

digital collage, Giclée print

This collage by musician and artist Claire Miskimmin was created for a t-shirt for She Sells Sanctuary.

The Belfast based online initiative supports women's charitable causes through selling donated items created by local artists. It was set up in reaction to the Covid-19 lockdown responding to the

terrifying rise in domestic abuse cases and charitable donations being channelled elsewhere, affecting charities like Women's Aid.

12. *Migration of Symbols* (2014)

Linder Stirling (born 1954)

collage

Kindly on loan from the Irish
Museum of Modern Art

Linder's artistic practice centres on feminism, anti-capitalism and anti-consumerism. For the past forty years she has appropriated commercial images depicting women, the domestic and advertising. Destabilising them in order for us to question the visual culture around us, and our obsession with materialism.

**13. *Ladies Should Visit from When They Put Their Hands Out Like Scales*– *Women on Waves* (2014)
Emma Campbell (born 1978)
digital photo collage
Kindly provided by the artist**

Artist and activist Emma Campbell uses photography, archive images and collage to platform the current and historic work by fellow activists campaigning for reproductive rights. In 2014 Campbell was given access to the Woman on Waves (WOW) archive (held at Atria, the Institute on gender equality and women's history) and the National Library of Ireland Creative Commons. WOW was a ship that set sail from the Netherlands for

Ireland in 2001 to aid and advise women who could not gain access to reproductive support as at that time Ireland had the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe.

14. *Middle Passage* (2020)

Samantha J Brown (1968)

digital photo collage

Kindly provided by the artist

London born photographer and visual artist Brown currently lives in Ireland. This project was a collaboration with Nigerian born Afrobeat musician Gboyega Akerle. Listening to his lyrics inspired Samantha to walk along a local river. Climbing over a fence to watch the still water she pondered

the many ways water has been traversed over time and considered migrancy in its many forms. From an Afro Caribbean background, a DNA test revealed that she had Nigerian ancestry - a shared ancestral history between the two artists began to emerge.

Middle Passage is in reference to a stage of the triangular route in which millions of Africans were forcibly transported to the New World as part of the Atlantic slave trade.

15. *Remember Gulliver* (1975)

Michael Farrell (1940–200)

collage on paper

Kindly on loan from the National
Gallery of Ireland

Though living in Paris for most of his career Farrell often returned to Ireland, specifically Northern Ireland, in his work. He would reuse imagery from advertising, art and literary history; applying new meaning. One of his most known appropriations was taken from a French advert for the drink Citron Pressé. Using elements of the original advert to represent pressure, blood and violence.

16. *Focus* (around 2019)

Aoife Layton (born 1979)

etching and collage on paper

**Kindly on loan from the National
Gallery of Ireland**

Riots (June 3rd - June 8th, 1947)

(2019)

Troy Michie (born 1985)

collage - paper, magazine textbook

BELUM.U2020.3.1-6

Michie sees collage, and its historical association with disrupting by using existing images, as the perfect tool to “reanimate American narratives centered around trauma and displacement of queer, black, and brown bodies.”

In 1943 the Zoot Suit Riots occurred

in Los Angeles, spurring a series of racially motivated riots and attacks across the United States. White servicemen violently attacked young male members of the Latinx community for wearing 'zoot suits'. They considered their wear to be unpatriotic due to Second World War ration regulations that prohibited the production of clothes with excessive fabric, of which the zoot suit used large amounts.

In Michie's words "The suit had become materially emblematic of a lineage that codes race based hate and subcultural repression of black and brown bodies, literally stripping the wearer of the right of addressability."

***Bán Bíd* (2019)**

Comharghrúpa Array

**colláis chlóite ar chanbhás déanta
as clóiríd pholaivinile**

Ar iasacht ó Chomharghrúpa Array,
le meas

Is comharghrúpa ealaíne agus
gníomhaíochais é Array atá
fréamhaithe i mBéal Féirste.

Cruthaíonn siad gníomhartha
comhoibríocha mar fhreagra

ar cheisteanna sóisialta –

mar shampla, cearta teanga,

comhionannas inscne, agus cearta

inscne agus atáirgthe – a bhaineann

leis an ghrúpa, le pobal s'acu

agus a gcuid comhghuailithe. I

léirsithe sráideanna agus spásanna

dánlainne, cruthaíonn agus

léiríonn Array carachtair éagsúla a bhaineann leas as an bhéalóideas réamh-Chríostaí ó shean-Éire agus an imní comhaimseartha atá faighte i dTuaisceart na hÉireann amháin.

Léiríonn ‘An Bán Bídih’, nó an ‘sacred cow’, an seanchaidreamh leis an talamh, san am roimh an Ghorta Mhór. Is é seo spiorad an diaspóra atá ag filleadh, an aiteach, agus an neamh-dhénárthacht taobh amuigh den féiniúlacht reiligiúnach-eitneach. Seo céim mhór don Bán Bídih a bhfuil ag ath-glacadh le cothú atá ligthe i ndearmad. Cuireann sé i gcuimhne dúinn nadúr timthriallach an chothaithe agus an dul chun cinn.

***Bán Bídh* (2019)**

Array Collective

printed collage on PVC canvas

Kindly on loan from Array

Collective

Array are a collective of artists and activists rooted in Belfast. They create collaborative actions in response to social issues – around language, gender and reproductive rights – affecting themselves, their communities and allies.

Through street demonstrations and in gallery spaces Array have developed and performed as characters drawn from the pre-Christian folklore of ancient Ireland cross-bred with contemporary anxieties particular to the north of Ireland.

Bán Bídih, the sacred cow, speaks of the historic relationship with the land, a time before the hunger. Embodying the diaspora returned, the queer, the non-binary beyond religio-ethnic identity. Bán Bídih strides to re-embrace a forgotten nourishment and remind us of the cyclical nature of nature and progress.

***Protest Crowd, Charlotte, USA,
(Black Lives Matter 2016) (2017)***

Joy Gerrard (born 1971)

Japanese ink on linen

BELUM.U2021.1.3

This painting is not a collage in the traditional sense. Exploring collage teaches us to look at images differently. A collage artist is an observer, looking at images that they do not own and repurposing them. Sometimes it is not about assigning it new meaning but assigning it new authorship. Collage refocuses an image and creates more access to it.

Joy Gerrard considers herself an observer, sharing images of demonstrations to shed light on

causes and the act of protest itself. She uses media images of protest as her source. Gerrard is interested in their formation - who organises them and why, how they are recorded by mass media and how these photographs depict city architecture holding and controlling demonstrations; representing the control of state.

