Take it from here

CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY PURCHASES
1992–1995
"Seldom can there have been a moment in recent times when so much innovative and
exciting work has been produced by a great number of younger artists in Britain."

EDWARD LEE buyer for 1994

The name of the Contemporary Art
Society buyer is unknown in all but
few cases.

1992

RICHARD FRANCIS
JULIETH LE ABERENT
1991–92. oil on canvas
and newspapers and newsprint.

1993

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1994

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1996

RICHARD FRANCIS
JULIETH LE ABERENT
1991–92. oil on canvas
and newspapers and newsprint.
"Early CAS buyers were told that 'a shilling well spent today will go as far as a pound tomorrow.' I hope that will be true of my purchases."

Cecily Lowenthal, buyer for 1993

I Study for 'Cruising Disaster', 1991

1994

Unca-N Miller

Oil on canvas

IQQI

Tosha Lee

ill and wax on cotton duck

5avid Austin

MMGELA WEIGHT

1994

'995

(Study for Cruising Disaster. Buyer for 1994

Departure is only by train."

Generations, at least three

“Judgement can only be developed by constantly looking at a wide range of work but among these works there are those which have developed a certain recognisable point of order and completion, no matter how open ended the 'content' of the work might be. This, I think, is what 'museum worthy' means and when choosing works I have used this criterion.

JANE LEE, buyer for 1995

Helen Chadwick

Salt Particle, 1991, salt, chrome transparency, glass, aluminium frame and electron

Collage Index: Repetition (Nvidia/Gray), 1995, oil on canvas

I decided at once that I was not going to aim for the latest hot young property (unless I happened to like it when I saw it) nor was I interested in attempting to gap-fill with established modern masters, even if it had been possible with the budget available.

Age would be immaterial, and indeed the artists whose work I have bought span at least three generations.

ANGELA WEIGHT, buyer for 1994

"I have used this criterion."
Take it from here


Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery
City Library and Arts Centre

Vardy Gallery, University of Sunderland

2 MARCH TO
13 APRIL 1996

ART SERVICES LTD

HENRY MOORE FOUNDATION

Exhibition
organised by Mary
Doyle Museum
Liaison

THE WORKS IN THIS EXHIBITION HAVE
been purchased by the Contemporary Art
Society between 1992 and the first weeks of 1996
and are now gathered together before being
presented to museums around the country.

There seems little doubt that there is need for
more private patronage of our public collections
and that the way that the Contemporary Art Society
works is, as far as I am aware, unique in the
world. Many know our name from the labels
beside some of the most distinguished examples
of modern British art in museums throughout
Britain. Few are aware that we retain no
collection of our own or that all purchases are
entrusted to individuals without the net of a
committee. I suspect that this way of operating
reflects the manner in which the Contemporary
Art Society has been viewed. At first, admirably
avant garde: later, eccentric, cozy and dubiously
undemocratic. Today, I hope, we are seen as
bravely separate from the nervously correct,
risk-taking and attempting to lead rather than
follow.

Our gifts to museums are infrequent and
cannot mask the huge gaps in public collections,
in the regions and even in our national museums,
caused by lack of money and lack of resources
for those curators who are charged with their
care. Improvements have been made to the
housing of the arts and to funding exhibition
provision over the last two decades but unless
those collections are added to we will be all back
to the point where the word 'museum' was used
pejoratively, meaning fossilised and retrospec-
tively. I want to thank all the members of the
Contemporary Art Society between 1992 and the first
weeks of 1996 and we wish to acknowledge the
individual and significant contributions of our buyers: their
names and a complete list of their purchases are
shown on the other side of this leaflet.

None of this would be possible without the
constant financial support of private and public
full funding bodies who support our work with grants and
advice. The Henry Moore Foundation
generously allows us to acquire major examples of
sculpture: the Crafts Council enables us to give
applied art collections the equal attention they
deserve; the Worshipful Company of Painter-
Stainers adds the very contemporary to its wide
range of beneficiaries and the Elephant Trust has
responded enthusiastically to our pilot project to
bring the work of site specific artists into
permanent public collections.

The Arts Council of England has funded
our Musuem Liaison work since 1995 and we
appreciate not only the extra resources but the
recognition that this confers on our achievements.
We are delighted to be able to participate in the
Year of Visual Arts 1996. This is the first time
that our exhibition has been shown solely outside
of London and we are grateful to all our hosts in
Sunderland, Northern Arts and Northern Sights.
In 1990, our founders realised that Britain had
excellent young artists with new ideas which
would not be reflected in museum collections
throughout Britain unless they (collectors, critics,
curators and other art lovers) organised
techniques that would raise purchasing funds and encourage gifts and bequests. Very little has changed. Lastly,
I want to thank all the members of the
Contemporary Art Society, not least our museum
members. The number of individual members has
been growing steadily in the last two years and
their active support of artists and museums is
vital, emphasising the importance of collecting
today. I hope they are as proud as we are of our
achievements in difficult times.

GILL HEDLEY
Director, Contemporary Art Society

"I chose to spend most of the money on furniture. Modern
furniture in Britain is rooted in a hybrid craft-art-design
background and I have chosen examples that illustrate a
range of craft, art, and design ideas. There is no thesis and
no grand ideological structure to my purchases, I did not
even stick to my prejudices regarding what I like or dislike.
"PETER DORMER craft buyer 1994

"It is very satisfying to be able to buy a group of works that give
great insight into the artist's range and
working practice. I have very much
enjoyed my task, and look forward
to discovering which museum will
claim these treasures."

"The tradition of studio pottery in Britain has
helped place contemporary work in a world
class. I was pleased then to be able to buy
pieces from five important practitioners: Jacqui
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The Role of the Contemporary Art Society

The contemporary art society encourages and advocates the collecting of contemporary art by art museums, companies and individuals. It is therefore a major support to living artists. The Society spreads the enjoyment and understanding of contemporary art and introduces it to a wider public.

The Society, which has extensive contacts and links with artists and commercial galleries throughout Britain, also uses its expertise to advise and assist companies on the acquisition and commissioning of works of art. It is completely independent having no contracted artists or stock and can undertake projects and commissions on any scale and in any medium.

The Society encourages individuals to collect for themselves and enjoy art by living artists. The annual Art Market provides the opportunity to see and buy reasonably priced art for the home. In addition, an extensive range of events, studio visits, lectures and visits overseas, provide a 'look behind the scenes' and are advertised in a regular newsletter. These activities are educational and fun and aimed at individual and professional members alike. The Society also serves as a channel for gifts and bequests of 20th century art.

A registered charity supported by its members, the Society also receives grants for specific projects from the Arts Council of England, the Crafts Council, the Henry Moore Foundation and the Elephant Trust. The resources generated from advising companies, from the Art Market, and from other activities go directly to purchasing works of art for art museums.

We need support more than ever to continue our vital work and hope very much you will help us expand the membership of the Contemporary Art Society. Please encourage friends and family to join, or give membership as a gift.