

Ben Johnson


Ben Johnson was born in Llandudno, Wales, in 1946. He studied at the Royal College of Art and has lived and worked in London since 1965.

His first solo exhibition was at the Wickesham Gallery, New York, in 1969 immediately after graduating from the Royal College. He is best known for his paintings based on architectural spaces (some almost forensically accurate, others heavily manipulated) and his large-scale, intricately detailed cityscape paintings, which include panoramas of Hong Kong, Zürich, Jerusalem, Liverpool and, most recently, his view of London which was completed as part of a residency at the National Gallery, London, in 2010.

Over the past 46 years he has exhibited widely in galleries and museums across the world, including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; the Art Institute of Chicago; Kunsthalle Tübingen; and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. At the first Venice Architecture Biennale in 1991, Norman Foster portrayed his work solely through Johnson's images and he included him again in his installation there in 2012. His work was part of a travelling exhibition which toured museums in Europe from 2012 - 2017 with several venues achieving record visitor numbers, and the first retrospective exhibition of his paintings opened in September 2015 at the Southampton City Museum and Art Gallery. Johnson has for years been an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects for his contribution to the public's understanding of contemporary architecture and, in 2015, was made an Honorary Fellow of Glyndwr University, Wales, for services to the public appreciation of the Arts. In 2017 he was made a Member of the Royal Cambrian Academy in Wales.

He has undertaken commissions for the Royal Institute of British Architects, the British Museum and National Museums Liverpool as well as for IBM, HSBC, JP Morgan, British Steel, Hong Kong Telecommunications and many others.


His work is included in the permanent collections of museums worldwide, including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Regional Services Museum, Hong Kong; and the Government Art Collection.



Plus One Gallery

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** "Perfect Spaces: Paintings by Ben Johnson." Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Virtual Exhibition
- 2015-16** "Spirit of Place: Ben Johnson Paintings 1969 – 2015, Southampton City Art Gallery
- 2014** "Time Past Time Present," Alan Cristea Gallery, London
- 2010-11** "Modern Perspectives," National Gallery, London
- 2010** "Ben Johnson Paintings," Alan Cristea Gallery, London
- 2008** "Ben Johnson's Liverpool Cityscape 2008 and the World Panorama Series," Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 2008** Artist in Residence, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 2002** "Still Time," Blains Fine Art, London
- 2001** "Jerusalem, The Eternal City," Chester Beatty Museum, Dublin
- 1997** "Hong Kong Panorama 1997," Royal Academy, London; New Convention & Exhibition Centre Hong Kong - unveiled and accepted by Tung Chee Hwa, Chief Executive, Special Administrative Regional Government of Hong Kong, on behalf of the people of China
- 1994** "Time Present and Time Past are Both Perhaps Present in Time Future and Time Future Contained in Time Past," Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1992** "Paintings & Diverse Projects," Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1991** "Collaborations: Collaborative Sculpture Projects with Ove Arup & Partners, Arup Associates and Foster Associates," Arup Associates, London
- 1990** Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York
- 1989** "Painting Beyond Architecture - Independent Observation," Royal Institute of British Architects, London
- 1987** "Great Engineers," Royal College of Art, London
- 1986** "Structuring Space," Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1984** "A Study in Patronage - Art, Architecture and Design," Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1981** South Square Gallery, Bradford
- 1978** Riverside Studios, London
- 1978** "Paintings 1975-1978," Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1975** Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1973** Institute of Contemporary Art, London
- 1969** Wickesham Gallery, New York



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SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021-2022** “Gradate,” Islamic Arts Festival 24th Edition, Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates
- 2021** New Beginnings : Spring 2021, Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York, USA. Virtual Exhibition
- 2021** Spring Contemporary, Waterhouse & Dodd, London. Virtual Exhibition
- 2020-2021** “Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize Exhibition”, Winner of the working Drawing Award. Drawing Projects Trowbridge UK; Cooper Gallery University of Dundee, Scotland; Trinity Buoy Wharf London; The Gallery, Arts University Bournemouth, UK.
- 2020** ING Discerning Eye, Virtual Exhibition
- 2020** “Cure3 2020,” Bonhams, London
- 2020** “Works from the Arup Collection,” Arup, London
- 2020** “Wells Art Contemporary”, Wells, U.K.
- 2020** “London Art Fair”, London
- 2020** “A Sharp Pencil”, Falmouth Art Gallery, Cornwall
- 2020** “The Architecture Drawing Prize Exhibition”, Sir John Soane’s Museum, London
- 2019** “137th Summer Exhibition”, Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, North Wales
- 2019** “251st Royal Academy Summer Exhibition”, London
- 2019** “Architecture of London,” Guildhall Art Gallery, London
- 2019** “Summer Salon 01, British Painting: Disposition,” Bermondsey Project Space, London
- 2018-2019** “Fifty Years of Realism – Photorealism to Virtual Reality,” Bank of Brazil Cultural Centre, Sao Paolo; Brasilia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2018** “Cure3 2018”, Bonhams, London
- 2018-2019** “Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2018” Trinity Buoy Wharf, London; The Gallery at AUB, Poole; The Royal Drawing School, London; Drawing Projects UK, Trowbridge; Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk.



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- 2018** "250th Royal Academy Summer Exhibition", London
- 2018** "136th Summer Exhibition", Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, North Wales
- 2018** "Hiperrealisme," Museu del Tabac, Andorra
- 2018** "John Moores Painting Prize," Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 2018** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2017," Vane Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne
- 2018** "Superstructures: The New Architecture 1960-1990" Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich
- 2018** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2017," The Edge, Bath
- 2017-2018** "Athar" ("Impact") Islamic Art Festival 20th Edition, Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates
- 2017-2018** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2017," East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts
- 2017** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2017," Jerwood Space, London
- 2017** "135th Annual Summer Exhibition," Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, Wales
- 2017** "Photorealism: 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting," Kunsthal Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 2017** "Cure3," Bonhams, London
- 2017** "By Popular Demand," Mall Galleries, London
- 2017** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2016," The Gallery, Arts University Bournemouth
- 2017** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2016," Turnpike Arts Centre, Leigh
- 2016-2017** "Paper Arabesque – An Exhibition of Collage," Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames
- 2016** Abu Dhabi Art Fair
- 2016** "By Invitation," Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, North Wales
- 2016** "Photorealism. 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting," Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany
- 2016** "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2016," Jerwood Space, London, The Edge, ICIA, Bath
- 2016** "Photorealism. 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting," Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia



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- 2015-16 "Light" ("Noor") Islamic Art Festival 18th Edition, Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates
- 2015-16 "Jerwood Drawing Prize 2015," Jerwood Space, London
The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham
Sidney Cooper Gallery, Canterbury
Falmouth Art Gallery, Cornwall
- 2015 Abu Dhabi Art Fair
- 2015 "Masters of Light," Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2015 20th Anniversary Exhibition, Alan Cristea Gallery, London
- 2014-15 "Photorealism: The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Collection," New Orleans Museum of Art.
- 2014-15 "Hyperrealism 1967-2013," Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao, Spain
- 2014 Abu Dhabi Art Fair
- 2014 "The Threadneedle Prize : Figurative Art Today," Mall Galleries, London
- 2013-14 "Photorealism: 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting," Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, UK
- 2013-14 "40 Years of Fine Art, Part Two," Bohun Gallery, Henley-on- Thames
- 2013 "Hyperreal – More Than Pop!" Saarland Museum, Germany
- 2013 "Hyperrealism 1967-2012," Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain
- 2012-13 "Photorealism," Kunsthalle, Tübingen, Germany
- 2013 "Hyperrealism Today," Museu del Tabac, Andorra
- 2012 "Beyond Reality, British Painting Today" Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague
- 2012 Contributed to Norman Foster installation, Venice Biennale, Venice
- 2009 "Discerning Eye Exhibition," The Mall Galleries, London
- 2009 Zürich Art Fair, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2009 "New to DACS," Kowalsky Gallery, London
- 2009 London Art Fair
- 2008 "Celebrating Palladio," Plus One Gallery, London
- 2008 "Set in Stone," PM Gallery & House, London
- 2008 Miami Art Fair
- 2008 Dubai Art Fair
- 2007 Abu Dhabi Art Fair
- 2007 Toronto Art Fair
- 2007 Inaugural Exhibition House of Arts, Garden of Arts, Vught, Netherlands



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- 2007** London Art Fair
- 2006** Toronto Art Fair
- 2006** "London Now," City of Heaven, City of Hell," Guildhall Art Gallery, London
- 2005** "The Artist and Radio 4," Bankside Gallery, London
- 2004** "Small is Beautiful," Flowers Central, London
- 2004** "BlowUp, New Painting and Photoreality," St Paul's Gallery, Birmingham
- 2004** "ARTitecture," Collins Gallery, Glasgow
- 2003** "Exactitude," Plus One Plus Two Galleries, London
- 2003** "Realism," Flowers East, London
- 2002** "Architecture: 3 Ways," The Robert Phillips Gallery at Riverhouse, Walton-on-Thames
- 2002** "Small is Beautiful," Flowers East, London
- 2001** "Interiors Observed," Bernarducci.Meisel.Gallery, New York
- 2001** "Great! Britain," Bernarducci.Meisel.Gallery, New York
- 2000** "Zen and the Art of Cities," curated by the London Arts Café, Rivington Gallery, London.
- 2000** "Urban Realism," Blains Fine Art, London
- 2000** "Looking Forward," Inaugural exhibition, The Robert Phillips Gallery at Riverhouse, Walton-on-Thames
- 1999** Travelling Exhibition: "Into the Light," Royal Photographic Society, Bath; Cadaques, Spain
- 1999** "Mobiles @ Camberwell," London
- 1999** "Mobiles @ RIBA Architecture Gallery," London
- 1999** "The Discerning Eye," Mall Galleries, London
- 1998** National Print Exhibition, Mall Galleries, London
- 1997** "Oil on Canvas," Boundary Gallery, London
- 1997** Virgin Airways, Heathrow Airport, London
- 1994-96** Travelling Exhibition: "Contemporary British Architecture," UK LA 1994 Festival, Pacific Design Centre, Los Angeles; 1995 National Academy of Design, New York; 1996 Art Institute of Chicago
- 1992** "The Art of Folly," New Academy Gallery, London
- 1991** Photographic collaboration with Norman Foster, Venice Biennale, Venice
- 1990** "Aspekte des Europäischen Realismus von 1900-1990," Cologne



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- 1990 "Art Works : From IBM's UK Locations," Glasgow Art School, Glasgow
- 1989 "50 Years of Collecting: Art at IBM," IBM Gallery of Science and Art, New York
- 1988-92 Travelling exhibition : "Châteaux Bordeaux," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; 1989 Bordeaux; 1990 Frankfurt; 1990 Palais de Beaulieu, Lausanne; 1991 Pabellón Mudéjar, Seville; 1992 Mercado Ferreira Borges, Portugal.
- 1988 "Light & Space - Looking into Paintings," Crawford Centre for the Arts, Scottish Arts Council Touring Exhibition.
- 1986 "Lieux? de Travail," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
- 1986 "Painting/Photography," Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1985 Travelling Exhibition: St. Martin's School of Art, London; Dartington Hall, Dartington; Winchester Gallery, Winchester.
- 1984 "Images et Imaginaires d'Architecture," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
- 1984 Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.
- 1983 "Four British Realists," Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney
- 1983 "Eight British Realists," Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York
- 1983 "Contemporary British Painting," Museo Municipal, Madrid
- 1982 Glasgow City Art Museum, Scotland
- 1982 "Art into the 80's," Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 1982 Solomon Gallery, Dublin
- 1982 "Painter/Printmaker," Farnham Art School, Farnham
- 1982 Arts Council, Edinburgh Fruit Market, Scotland
- 1981 "The Real British," Fischer Fine Art, London
- 1981 International Print Biennale, Ljubljana
- 1981 "John Moores Exhibition 12," Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 1977 International Print Biennale, Cracow
- 1977 "Illustrating Architecture", Royal Institute of British Architecture, London
- 1976 Graphics '76 Britain, University Art Gallery, Kentucky
- 1976 "British Realists", Ikon Gallery, Birmingham
- 1974 Bradford Print Biennale, Bradford



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- 1974** "John Moores Exhibition 9," Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
1973 "Europalia," Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels
1967 "London Group '67," London

WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

National Museums, Liverpool
Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam
The British Council, London
The Contemporary Arts Society, London
De Beers/CSO Collection, London
Royal Institute of British Architecture, London
City Art Gallery, Glasgow
Whitworth Gallery, Manchester
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Deutsche Bank
British Petroleum
Guildhall Art Gallery, Corporation of London
Special Administrative Regional Government of Hong Kong, New Convention & Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong
Regional Services Council Museum, Hong Kong
Museum of London
The British Museum
The Government Art Collection
Museum of Modern Art, New York

CORPORATE COMMISSIONS

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British Steel
Stanhope Grays Inn Ltd.
Chelsfield Management Services Ltd.
Cable & Wireless plc.
Hong Kong Telecommunications Ltd.
Pearson plc
HSBC Holdings plc

MILLENNIUM COMMISSION

Panorama "Jerusalem, The Eternal City" commissioned by The Khalili Family Trust. World Tour commenced Royal Academy, London 2000

Commemorative print commissioned by The British Museum Development Trust to celebrate the opening of The Great Court

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE COMMISSION

"The Liverpool Cityscape" commissioned by National Museums Liverpool for 2008, when Liverpool was European Capital of Culture.