

### Cadences

Historical and modern paintings, drawings, prints and films related to themes of falling and destruction

27 June -  
7 September 2014



*Cadences*, Installation view, MK Gallery, 2014.

### Key artists

Bridget Riley  
Catharine Yass  
Jason Matham  
Maurits Cornelis Escher  
Marcel Broodthaers  
Marinus Boezem  
Neri di Bicci  
Lucio Fontana  
Jean Dubuffet

### Key words

Flight  
Icarus  
Birds  
Falling  
Monochrome  
Gravity  
Destruction  
Music  
Cadence

### About the Exhibition

This exciting exhibition brings together works from the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam and a film by British artist, Catherine Yass. Drawing on key themes in Yass' work such as flight, falling, destruction and gravity, *Cadences* brings together a unique mix of historical and modern artworks from one of Holland's most encyclopaedic art collections. In musical composition a 'cadence' is a phrase of notes that signals to the listener that the music is about to end.

The paintings, prints and ceramics from the museum range from Old Master artists such as Neri di Bicci and Frans Huys, to Modern artists M.C. Escher, Lucio Fontana, Bruce Nauman and Bridget Riley.

The exhibition also includes various representations of the Greek myth of Icarus, whose wax and feather wings melted when he flew too close to the sun, such as Frans Huys's *Armed Three-master with Daedalus and Icarus in the Sky* c.1561-62 and Jacob Matham's *Landscape with Daedalus and Icarus*, c.1603.

### About this Pack

This pack has been designed to provide background information about the *Cadences* exhibition at MK Gallery. For more information about our schools programme, please contact:

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MK Gallery is supported by



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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# Explore

This section contains information and questions to help students explore the exhibition.



Right: *Cadences*, Installation view, MK Gallery, 2014.

Above: *Cadences*, Installation view showing Jacob Matham: *Landscape with Daedalus and Icarus*, (c.1603). MK Gallery, 2014.



## About the Artist

Jacob Matham was a well known Dutch artist, who lived in the city of Haarlem around 400 years ago. At the age of eight he was adopted by the artist Hendrik Goltzius, who taught him how to create detailed drawings and prints. Throughout his life, Jacob Matham created pictures of famous people, religious scenes and scenes from well-known stories or myths.

## About the Artwork

In the Long Gallery we find *Landscape with Deadalus and Icarus* by Jacob Matham, which shows two shepherds with their goats on a mountain. One of the shepherds is pointing at something very unusual - two men with wings in are in the sky! One of the men is flying, but the other is falling. The title of the artwork tells us that these men are Deadalus and Icarus, two characters from Greek mythology.

The picture was made through the methods of engraving and etching. Both of these techniques are types of printmaking which involve cutting into a metal plate to create a drawing, before covering the plate in ink and then pressing paper onto the surface.

If you look closely at *Landscape with Deadalus and Icarus*, you will see that the picture is made up from lots of small lines - these were the cuts that Matham made in his metal plate to create the drawing.

## The Myth of Icarus

In the myth, Deadalus and Icarus are father and son, and are trapped in a deadly maze by King Miro. The two men try to find a way to escape. Deadalus, is a very clever inventor and collects up feathers and wax to create wings for himself and his son Icarus. The two men escape the maze and fly away to freedom, but Deadalus warns his son, 'Don't fly too close to the sea or your wings will become wet, and don't fly too close to the sun or the wax will melt!'

Icarus doesn't listen to his father's advice, and excited to be flying high in the sky, he goes higher and higher, getting closer and closer to the sun. The wax holding his wings together begins to melt in the heat of the sun, and Icarus falls down into the sea.

## Explore

What other artworks can you find in the Long gallery that might link to the myth of Icarus?

What different types of artwork can you see?

Can you find the oldest, and the newest piece of artwork in the room?



Right: Guest at *Cadences* exhibition preview. MK Gallery, 2014.  
Above: Catherine Yass: film still from *Flight* (detail), 2002.  
Left: Hendrick Goltzius: *Icarus* (1588).

## About the Artist

Lucio Fontana was an Italian painter, sculptor and ceramicist. He founded the 'Spatialism' movement in 1947, which aimed to include science and technology in art. Fontana is most famous for his 'hole series' in which he created holes and slices in canvases.

## About the Artwork

In the Middle Gallery we find, *Concetto spaziale* which is a good example of Lucio Fontana's most well known series of artworks. The artwork is unusual, because it looks like a painting, but when you look closely you can see that lots of holes have been made in the canvas.

Fontana hoped that this artwork would encourage the viewer to look beyond the painting's surface. By punching holes through the painting, Fontana was trying to make the flat picture into a sculpture.

The holes in the picture might seem like an attack on the painting itself, but Fontana saw it as creative rather than destructive. He said "many people have thought I wanted to destroy: but that is untrue. I have made and not destroyed".

## Explore

Do you think Fontana's artwork is a painting, a sculpture or both?

Does the picture remind you of anything?

Can you find any other artworks in the Middle Gallery that have been made by destroying something?

## About the Artist

British artist Catherine Yass lives and works in London. She is known for her films and colourful photographs exploring architectural space, inside and outside. In 2002 she was nominated for the Turner Prize.

## About the Artwork

We have used the entire Cube Gallery to display the film *Flight* by Catharine Yass. To make the film, Yass attached a camera onto a remote control helicopter, which then enabled her to film over the rooftops of London.

Catharine Yass is very interested in how indoor and outdoor architectural spaces make us feel. The film shows how many huge buildings there are in London, and how the city seems to go on as far as the eye can see. The movement of the camera, as it dips up and down like a rollercoaster, makes the viewer feel dizzy!

## Explore

Use the film to imagine you are Icarus flying through the sky over London. What can you see?

The film has no sound, why do you think that is? What sounds would you expect to hear?

# Create

Activities for back  
in the classroom



Guest at *Cadences* exhibition preview.  
MK Gallery, 2014.



Neri di Bicci: *The fall of the rebel angels with St Michael fighting the dragon* (detail). C.1480.

## Materials

A piece of large plain paper  
A selection of coloured paper  
Coloured chalk  
Charcoal  
Drawing ink  
Air drying clay  
Poster paint  
PVA glue

## Destructive Drawing

Mark-making activity for students at Key Stages 1- 2

Sometimes destructive or violent actions can result in new kinds of art. Lucio Fontana is a good example of an artist who explored the idea of 'breaking something to make something'.

This activity is all about playing with different materials, to see what marks are made when they are dropped, smashed, or broken. This activity is messy, so make sure you cover up your clothes!

1. Drop the ink or paint from a height onto a piece of paper
2. Crush the chalk into the paper using a rolling pin
3. Smash the clay onto the paper using your hands
4. Rip paper up, and drop it to see where it lands

What other destructive actions can you think of? Are there other materials you could use?

## Inspired by Icarus

Poetry and Spoken Word Activity for students at Key Stage 3 – 4

Throughout history, poets and writers have used the myth of Icarus as inspiration.

British poet and rapper Kate Tempest created a spoken word piece inspired by the story of Icarus. Below is the first verse of Kate Tempest's poem *Icarus*. You can watch her performance of the entire piece by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yv5fggapRwQ>

*Soaring the skies*

*That had always been beyond his reach.*

*He felt like a champion.*

*His feet kicked the clouds.*

*His arms were bound in the feathers of his father's labour*

*Which a little while later would be ashes, vapour.*

Extract from *Icarus*, 2010, Kate Tempest

1. Choose a character in Jacob Matham's *Landscape with Daedalus and Icarus* and imagine the scene from their point of view. How would you describe what you see? How does the action unfold?
2. Write a poem using the myth of Icarus as inspiration. Will your poem rhyme, or use alliteration?
3. How does your poem sound when it is read aloud? Is there anything you could change to make the poem have more rhythm, or flow?

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