



Zero Energy Experimental Pile/Z.E.E.P.

Screenprints and lithographs. 1969–70
Located in the Arts Building.

In the late 1960s, Paolozzi was a visiting Professor of Art at the University of California. Gaining stimulation from the American environment through trips to Disneyland, L.A. and the computer centre at the University, Paolozzi produced this series of screen prints which was garnered from magazines including *Scientific American*, *Playboy*, *Aviation Technical Magazine*, and *Fortune*: Z.E.E.P. is one of the artist's most intricate, busy and brash print series.

Calcium Light Night

Photolithographs. 1974–1976
Located in the Bramall Concert Hall.

Music was a central part of Paolozzi's life. From childhood, his daily routine was played out to the familiar, melodic sound of the radio.

His father made radios for each room of their house, and Paolozzi later came to listen continuously to music whilst working in his studio. In the early 1970s, after discovering a German magazine illustration rendering organ music into pictorial form, the artist began working on collages to evoke the movement and energy of music. This idea informed the series **Calcium Light Night**.

In this series, Paolozzi has created a visual equivalent of the 'collage technique' employed by the composer Charles Ives, whose compositions fused different genres of music, and layered different orchestral sounds and rhythms through random cues from the conductor. This created a miscellaneous, collaged sound. The grey, black and white fragments of photographically enlarged linear compositions suggest the vibrations, movement and flow of music. The mechanical element of the linear compositions might also be interpreted as parts of musical instruments, such as the curling of brass pipes, or the tubular bells of a vibraphone. The result is a collection of works that seem to vibrate and stir on the walls.

Ives's composition 'Calcium Light Night' was an interpretation for chamber ensemble of the torchlight parades held during student elections at Yale University. The piece begins quietly, then slowly progresses into the climaxing chaos of the main section, before regressing down to calm once again. Paolozzi's series is hung in the busy Bramall Building, where students materialize in a cacophony of footsteps, shouts and conversation and then just as suddenly disperse on the hour for lectures. This melodic student rhythm seems very much in tune with this series.



Faraday

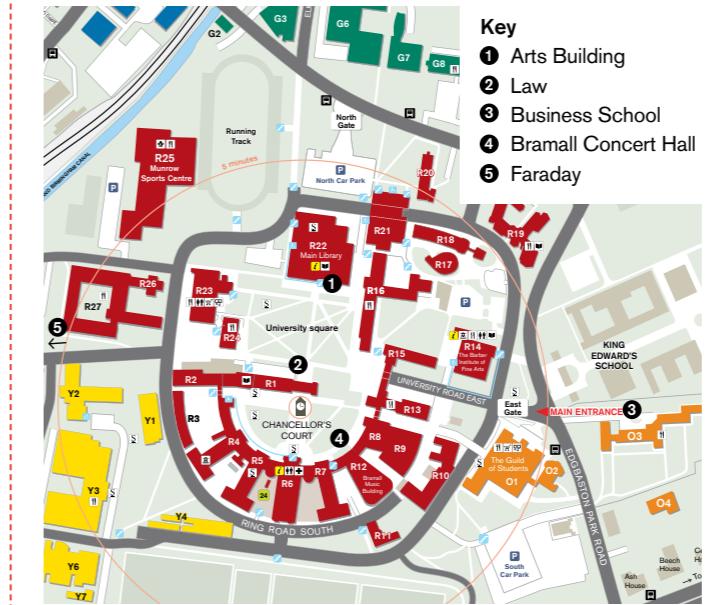
Bronze 2000
Located on the West entrance of the University, near University Station.

Paolozzi's intensive fascination with the processes and products of modern technology led to his developing ways of using mass-production methods to create giant 3D forms. His lectureship in sculpture at Central St Martins from 1955 further enhanced his sculptural process. Pressing diverse items – toys, forks, clock parts, sticks – into soft clay to derive a negative form, many of Paolozzi's sculptures bear traces of found objects, creating multi-textured surfaces that urge us to touch.

Paolozzi found technical engineers who would catalyse his drawings and models into monumental forms that were then bolted and welded together, creating sculpture with a mechanical undertone. The assembly method may be understood as an industrial collage, with Paolozzi narrating the finished creation. Sitting over five metres high, the momentous **Faraday**, like **Newton** at the British Library, London, is a key example of Paolozzi's mechanical personalities that enhance public institutions in Great Britain.

Faraday was manufactured at The Sculpture Factory, Clerkenwell. It was given to the University by the artist to mark the centenary in 2000. Dominating the crest between the Edgbaston campus and the railway station, Faraday observes the flowing journey of University life, a time of growth, travel and change, but also a time of reflection of the past – and the future. The artist chose to embellish the base of the sculpture with engraved lettering from T.S Eliot's poem 'Dry Salvages', to evoke something of the purpose of the University experience.

Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;
You are not those who saw the harbour
Receding, or those who will disembark.
Here between the hither and the farther shore
While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind.



Faraday under construction at The Sculpture Factory, Clerkenwell 1999

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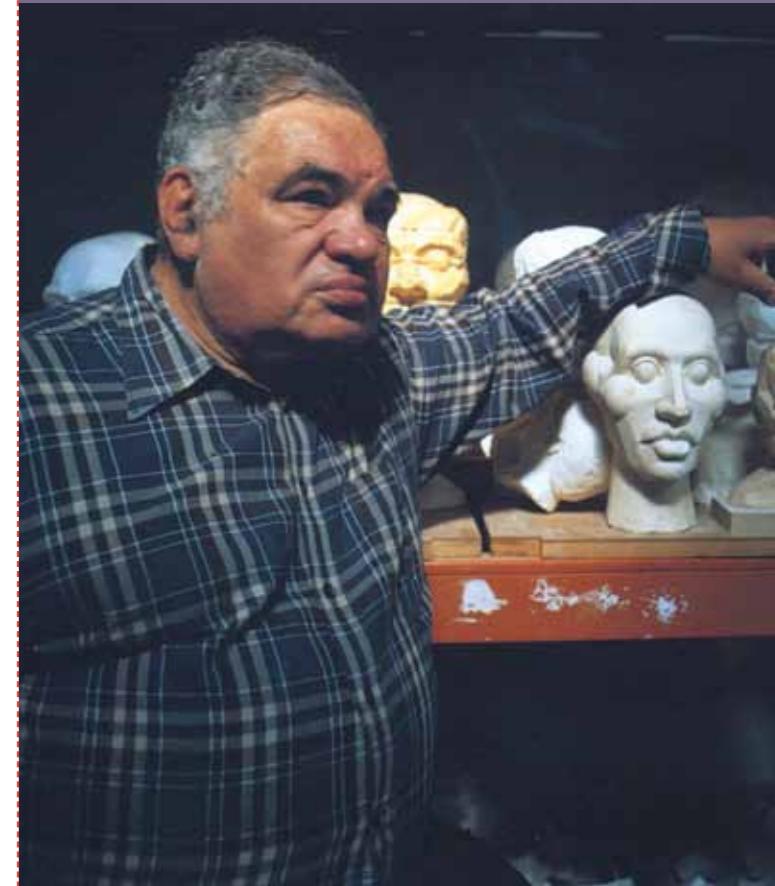
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Text by Lucy Wheeler.
Images courtesy of
The Paolozzi Foundation.

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Research and Cultural Collections

Eduardo Paolozzi 1924–2005



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Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005)

Eduardo Paolozzi was a prolific sculptor, printmaker, collector and teacher, whose work explores a life-long fascination with popular culture, science and technology.

Paolozzi's association with the University of Birmingham began in 1996, when he was awarded an Honorary D. Litt, joining artists Barbara Hepworth (1970), John Bratby (1992), John Walker (1994), and later Howard Hodgkin (1997), Raymond Mason (2000) and Cornelia Parker (2005) as Honorary Graduates. Paolozzi gave four print series to the University, and Faraday, his final large scale sculpture. At his death he bequeathed a series of plaster maquettes to the University.

Early Years

Eduardo Paolozzi was born in Leith, Scotland in 1924, where his Italian immigrant parents owned a confectionery business. This sugary sweet environment of confectionery wrappers, colourful packaging and trademarks had an enchanting effect on the young Paolozzi.

His passion for collecting, which consumed him throughout his life, began in Leith. Paolozzi's youth was further shaped, and scarred, by the Second World War. When Italy declared war in 1940, Paolozzi spent three months in prison, and his father and uncle were sent to Canada on a sea convoy. Their ship was torpedoed, and they were drowned.

Paolozzi began attending evening classes at the Edinburgh College of Art in 1940, with the dream of becoming a commercial artist. After brief military service, he attended St Martin's School of Art in 1944, followed swiftly by acceptance to study at the Slade School of Art, then relocated to Oxford.

Paolozzi's imagination was fired by the fragments of ancient sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum, his close reading of Amédée Ozenfant's book *The Foundations of Modern Art*, and his unrelenting collecting.



This is Tomorrow: Peter Smithson, Paolozzi, Alison Smithson, Nigel Henderson

Surrealism and The Independent Group

Friendships with artists Raymond Mason and Nigel Henderson inspired Paolozzi to look beyond Oxford for inspiration. Mason's knowledge of the Parisian art scene, coupled with Henderson's contact with Marcel Duchamp, attracted Paolozzi to Surrealism, and in 1947 he moved to Paris.

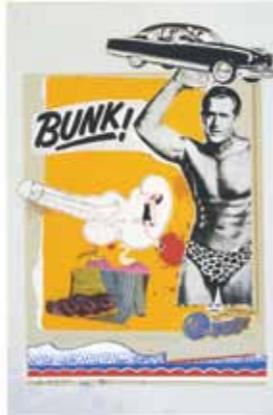
Inspired by the Surrealist movement, Paolozzi began to use unconventional materials and to juxtapose images in vibrant combinations in his sculptures and collages. This multifarious imagery became a characteristic.

The Independent Group

Paolozzi's radical aesthetic combining images of fine arts and popular culture brought him into contact with like-minded artists and architects including Richard Hamilton and Peter and Alison Smithson.

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) became a melting pot of innovative and diverse ideas, leading to the creation of The Independent Group (IG).

The IG, which argued that images from mass media and popular culture should be regarded as art, celebrated the imagery of science fiction, industrial design, machinery and pulp magazines through seminal lectures and group exhibitions. Paolozzi's 1952 lecture at the ICA, 'Bunk', relied on a fast-paced projection of images culled from Paolozzi's archive, including army insignia, Disney cartoons, pin ups and automobiles, displayed one after another by the near-silent lecturer. For Paolozzi, this alternative culture had more energy and excitement than official culture. 'Bunk' and the group show 'This is Tomorrow' held at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956, together set Pop Art in Britain on its way.



BUNK!

Screenprints and collage 1967

Located on the American and Canadian Studies corridor, 4th floor of the Arts Building.

'Bunk' is the collaged series of the images Paolozzi used in his ICA lecture in 1952. The word 'Bunk' refers to American car manufacturer Henry Ford's statement that 'history is more or less bunk'. In this series Paolozzi explores the paradoxes of popular culture. On one hand, it is a bombardment of inconsequential junk; yet this disposable culture has shaped our lives. It follows therefore that this series could be understood as a historical record of the 1940s and early 1950s.

Recurring themes of advertisements, mechanical forms, glamorous pin-up girls and Disney characters gives us an insight into what it was that fascinated Paolozzi. The artist was excited by the glamorous and affluent glossy images of American consumerism, and to Paolozzi, these lush images, given to him by American ex-servicemen in Paris, were 'a catalogue of an exotic society, bountiful and generous, where the event of selling tinned peaches was turned into multicoloured dreams.' In the collage *Meet the People* (1948), Paolozzi layers a juicy fruit platter, frothy orange juice and 'fancy tuna' over rainbow waves, inviting the viewer to this colourful, fantasy world.

In *I was a Rich Man's Plaything* (1947) and *Evdene in Green Dimension* (1952) Paolozzi brings together mass-produced ephemera to create disparate readings. Pin-ups in kiss-and-tell features are placed as part of an anatomical drawing or positioned next to strawberries and bright cherries. These are indicative sexual symbols in both art history and in American slang and evoke a subversive playfulness. Paolozzi re-appropriated images to encourage a fresh look at popular culture. The repetition of science fiction stories, automobile adverts and machinery suggested that these images were active sign systems that could be decoded by a contemporary audience. In this, they parallel the iconography of Renaissance painting.

Moonstrips Empire News

Screenprints 1967

Located in the Law entrance lobby and stairs leading up to the Law Library.

Paolozzi became increasingly occupied with printmaking in the 1960s. Working at Kelpra Studios, London, with the master silkscreen printer Christopher Prater, he created images that translated collage into screen prints. This experimentation led to the series *Moonstrips Empire News* (1967). These one hundred screenprints made up of both random texts and images interspersed with coloured geometric patterns serve as an idiosyncratic analysis of popular culture.

In this world, our eyes flicker over electric blue cars, a game of chess played by anthropomorphic musical instruments, kitsch icons and bizarre headlines such as 'Triplets Found in a Baby Boy', encapsulating elements of our daily relationship with visual media. The texts used in the series are culled from newspaper articles, story books and novels, and appears in teasing fragments. Using the process of collage, Paolozzi makes stylistic jumps which intrigue viewers who become lost in this tangle of words.

Through the repetition of Disney characters, pin-up girls and film icons, Paolozzi also alludes to the hero worship of modern times. In *The Silken World of Michelangelo*, plastic and Renaissance icons stand together. Paolozzi suggests that Mickey Mouse is as identifiable as a hero of modern society as Michelangelo's *David* is of the High Renaissance.

Paolozzi display in Law



General Dynamic F.U.N.

Screenprints and photolithographs 1965–1970

Located in the Business School, first floor corridor.

General Dynamic F.U.N. is a series of fifty screenprints and lithographs predominantly made using images culled from American magazines.

The series could be understood as a visual accompaniment to Paolozzi's article 'Moonstrips-General Dynamic Fun' in the magazine *Ambit* (1967) which parodied the sugar-coated jargon of American popular press.

The utopias of American mass-advertising are amusingly alluded to through juxtapositions of Hollywood stars, food advertisements and high fashion features offering the viewer a vibrant amassing of consumer culture. With equally eccentric titles such as 'Totems and Taboos of the Nine-to-Five Day' the series connotes the plentiful imagery of American consumerism endowed with irony and wit.

In this series, the viewer revels in consumer heaven, where children gaze at ice cream cakes, beauty secrets are shared in a stream of rollers and face masks, and plastic icons and pin-ups stand with robotic personalities, encapsulating the eccentricities of popular culture.

Like *Moonstrips Empire News*, the series does not require a rigid sequence. Assembled in large frames along an upstairs corridor in the Business School, the sequence provides a vibrant dash of multi-colour to the white walls.