



## Private Eye: The First 50 Years

18 October 2011 – 8 January 2012

*'At last. Private Eye makes an art of itself.'* – Ian Hislop

The V&A presents a display celebrating 50 years of Private Eye magazine. Since it was founded in October 1961, the magazine has distinguished itself from other titles by its unique combination of humorous cartoons and satire with hard-hitting journalism.

This display explores the wealth of artistic talent that the magazine has fostered, showing the original artwork for over 120 of Private Eye's finest and funniest cartoons. Since its beginning, 'The Eye' has published and promoted the work of more than 90 artists, many of whom started their careers at the magazine, including Gerald Scarfe, Ralph Steadman, William Rushton, Barry Fantoni, Michael Heath, John Kent, Ed McLachlan, Nick Newman and Grizelda.

A group of drawings highlights the grotesque art of caricature, and another shows the artists' keen observation of social trends and lifestyles over the years. The popular cartoon strip series are also well represented, from Bill Tidy's rural 'Cloggies' and Tony Husband's 'Yobs' to Mike Barfield's eccentric 'Apparently'.

One wall is devoted to Private Eye's trademark front covers, for which editor Ian Hislop has selected one from every year the magazine has been published, constituting an idiosyncratic timeline for five decades of modern British history.

Visually, Private Eye is renowned for its low-fi aesthetic. The display reveals how little its cut-and-paste production techniques have changed in over 50 years, despite the switch from cowgum to computers and lettraset to the internet.

*Private Eye: The First 50 Years* evokes the atmosphere of the magazine's Soho headquarters, with a recreation of the editor's office, the creative hub where every fortnight the joke-writing team convenes. It is scattered with seldom-seen ephemera commemorating past campaigns and court cases, as well as a life-sized cut out of Tony Blair, a stuffed dog, a flying Robert Maxwell and a giant inflatable banana.

**-Ends-**

#### **Notes to Editors**

- *Private Eye: The First 50 Years* is on display in the V&A's Studio Gallery from 18 October 2011 to 8 January 2012
- Admission to the display is free
- The display is curated by Julius Bryant, Keeper of the V&A's Word and Image Department and Elizabeth James, Senior Librarian in the V&A's Word & Image Department, working with *Private Eye*.
- The V&A's Word & Image Department incorporates the National Art Library and the Museum's prints, drawings, paintings and photographs collections.
- A book entitled *Private Eye: The First 50 Years* by Adam McQueen has been published by *Private Eye* to mark their 50th anniversary year.
- The V&A Shop is stocking a range of products to accompany the display. For further information about these products contact Lee Kendall, V&A Enterprises on 0207 942 2681 or L.Kendall@vam.ac.uk.

For public enquiries please call 020 7942 2000 or visit [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

**For further PRESS information please contact Elinor Hughes at the V&A press office on 020 7942 2500 or email [e.hughes@vam.ac.uk](mailto:e.hughes@vam.ac.uk) or [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk)**

**A selection of high resolution press images are available to download from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk) (Not for publication)**