

Modern Art

“You cannot be serious”

When Marcel Duchamp exhibited a urinal in 1917 and called it a fountain, he changed the course of art.

The general public thought his art was just a joke but Duchamp had a serious message: art can be in any media and take any form.

LS Lowry once said,
Why can't a work of art be humorous and still be taken seriously?

This display, using works from the collection made during the second half of the 20th century, explores the space between these two polarities. It aims to demonstrate that art can be many things: sometimes serious, sometimes playful yet often it is a combination of the two.

In their search for new ways of interpreting life, artists have employed a variety of approaches. They have pared forms to their very essence, and plundered pop culture for ideas and images. Increasingly it is left for the viewer to interpret art. As the 21st century unfolds, we ourselves must judge how far artists can, or cannot, be taken seriously.