


British art pursues a different path to European art. The two overlap but following WWI the 'return to order' is stronger in Britain. Also, there is a stronger tradition of figurative art in all its forms.

1. New Ways of Seeing
  2. Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Fauvism
  3. Cubism and Abstraction
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  5. Return to order and Stanley Spencer
  6. Dada, Surrealism and Expressionism
  7. British Sculpture
  8. WW2 Art
  9. British Figurative art
- About three paintings from each week are shown as a summary and reminder.
  - British art divides into two periods, 1900 to 1950 and 1950 to the present day. In the first period the majority of British art, although not all, follows in the tradition of nineteenth-century art with some twentieth-century influences from the Continent.

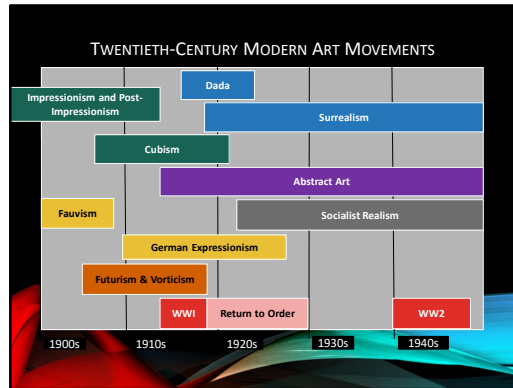
- In the second period British art blossoms on the world stage starting with the development of Pop Art. From Pop Art onwards the majority of the art being promoted by the establishment continues to be significant on the world stage. In this case 'the establishment' is the Royal Academy and the Turner Prize, Tate Modern and the high prices commanded at the leading auctioneers. In parallel, the British tradition of figurative art continues and in photorealism the two briefly combine as a leading art movement demonstrates that technical proficiency is one aspect of the avant garde exploration of representation.



## NEW WAYS OF SEEING: MODERN BRITISH ART

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1. New Ways of Seeing
2. Impressionism, Post-Impressionism & Fauvism
3. Cubism, Abstraction and the British Avant Garde
4. Vorticism and World War One Artists
5. Return to Order: Stanley Spencer
6. Dada, Surrealism & Expressionism
7. British Sculpture & Henry Moore
8. World War Two Artists
9. British Figurative Art
- 10. Summary 1900-1950**



- In Britain the work of John **Constable** was seen to break with the past because of his use of bright colours and contemporary rural settings. The later work of J.M.W. **Turner** was revolutionary because of his loose style and unconventional approach. However, neither artist started a school of art and the art world was still strictly controlled by the **Royal Academy**. In 1848, the **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood** broke with contemporary teaching by seeking authority from the artists who worked before Raphael. Their meticulous approach and a use of colour that was based on contemporary colour theory created a unique school that outlived their brief period of cooperation. In the 1870s a loose style that extolled the independence of art was used by J.A.M **Whistler** and Albert Moore. It was called ‘**art for art’s sake**’ and it broke away from the conventions of Royal Academy teaching. In 1877 Sir **Coutts Lindsay** opened the **Grosvenor Gallery** and this provided a forum for many artists to display their new approaches.
- In France the **Impressionists** held eight exhibitions between **1874 and 1886**. They were controversial because of their sketchiness, use of colour and subject matter. The Impressionists were never a clearly defined school and they inspired artists, known as the **Post-Impressionists**, to experiment further.
- The role of art and the desirability of change were being driven in both Britain and France by the **rapid advances** taking place in science, technology and society.

Newly **wealthy industrial patrons** wanted a modern art that **reflected the modern society** that they were helping to create.

- In the early twentieth century a new wave of changes took place in both art and science further **destabilising** established conventions. As W. B. Yeats wrote in his 1919 poem, "The Second Coming": **'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold'**. Artists, such as Paul **Cezanne**, were investigating the basic structure of form and others, such as Henri **Matisse** were using colour not as a representational addition to form but as a way of expressing emotion. Pablo **Picasso** and Georges **Braque** rejected single-point perspective and fragmented form into components representing different views at different times. They later represented objects directly using cut paper rather than oil on canvas.
- From the late nineteenth century artists had been interested in **'primitive' art** and the Other. 'Primitive' art was art produced by artists unconstrained by the conventions of Western European academic art. Artists, such as Paul **Gauguin**, were also interested in visiting and representing 'primitive' societies as these were thought to embody a lost innocence, naturalness and sincerity that had been lost by Western society.
- Between 1913 and 1917 Marcel **Duchamp** created the **Readymade**, manufactured objects that through his selection became art. As he said they were **'a form of denying the possibility of defining art'**. Attempts to define art or limit its scope founder on the rock of Duchamp's *Fountain*. From this point on artists were free to create what they wished.
- In **Italy**, the excitement of the new machine age, fast cars, aeroplanes and rapid change gave rise to **Futurism**, a group of artists headed by Filippo Marinetti represented these ideas in art.
- In Britain, in a short period, everything associated with the Victorian age was satirized and rejected. England's special place in the world was questioned and the late **Victorian optimism** and triumphalism was **eroded**. Even before WWI a belief that existing institutions, culture and society could provide stability and achieve unlimited progress was disappearing. Developments in **psychoanalysis**, such as the work of **Sigmund Freud**, challenged the belief that we are fundamentally rational creatures. In science, universal laws of nature were being undermined by new theories of relativity and quantum mechanics. Comparative mythology and a better understanding of the world's belief systems ultimately **destabilised faith in Christianity** as the correct system.
- **WWI (1914-1918)** marked the end of any remaining optimism about progress as the young generation were confronted at first hand by death on a scale that the world had not previously known. The British Empire, by this time, was coming apart as well.
- The response of artists after the war was to return to the order they had experienced before the war. In Europe, a group of artists created **Dada** as a rejection of all rational beliefs and all existing systems. Another group of artists,

the **Surrealists**, explored the unconscious mind using new forms of symbolism, irrationality, ambiguity and automatism. In Germany, **Die Brücke** was interested in primitivist art. Like Fauvism, it was interested in expressing extreme emotions through the use of non-naturalistic colour. It rejected abstract art but its figurative drawings were often crude and the subject matter was emotionally charged scenes of city life and sexually explicit events.

- Starting in 1913, Wassily **Kandinsky**, Kasimir **Malevich** and Piet **Mondrian** rejected the representation of the natural world in order to explore the possibilities of **abstract art**.
- In Britain, from WWI until the 1950s the majority of art produced was conventional portraits, landscapes and other figurative art. However, there were exceptions. In 1910, **Roger Fry's** exhibition **Manet and the Post-Impressionists** influenced many artists in a fundamental way. Virginia Woolf wrote later, '**On or about December 1910, human character changed**'. In **1936**, Henry Moore, Paul Nash, Roland Penrose, Herbert Read and others organised the **International Surrealist Exhibition** which was to have a major influence.
- **WWII** (1939-1945) commissions were for figurative art that showed the British response to the war.
- In 1949, during Alfred Munnings' valedictory speech as President of the Royal Academy he drunkenly rejected all modern art. Amusingly, this reactionary view was expressed just before Britain became a leading centre of modern art.
- In **1951**, the **Festival of Britain** was organised to bring about a feeling of recovery and excitement and to promote Britain's contribution to science, technology, design, architecture and the arts. In **1956**, **Richard Hamilton** and John McHale organised **This is Tomorrow**, an exhibition that was a foretaste of the sudden explosion of British pop culture and innovation in the 1960s.

### **Art Movements**

- The twentieth century was a time when art was rethought from the basics many times. As a result there are many intertwined art movements.
- Some art movements are self-defined and consciously constructed by a group of artists, some are labelled as such, often using a disparaging term, by art critics and some are constructed by art historians later in order to group like-minded artists in a convenient way.
- Major twentieth-century art movements.
  - Impressionism, 1872-1892, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, John Singer Sargent
  - Post-Impressionism, 1880s-1914, Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat, Edouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard, Henri Rousseau, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
  - Cubism, 1907-1922, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Fernand Léger, Juan

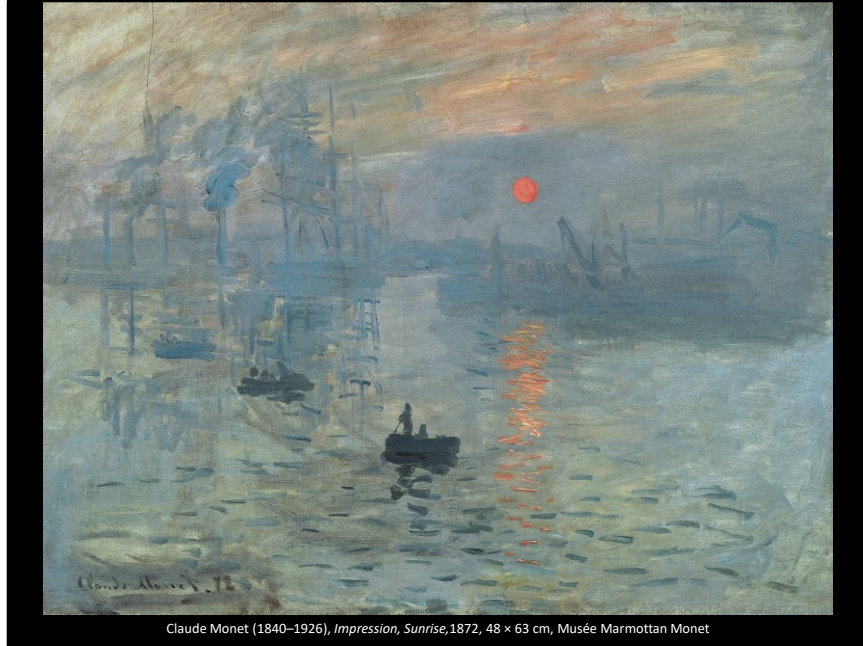
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- Orphism, Robert and Sonia Delaunay
- Fauvism, 1899-1908, Henri Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck, André Derain
- German expressionism, Die Brücke, Der Blaue Reiter
- Abstract art, De Stijl, Constructivism and Suprematism
- Socialist Realism, 1920s to 1960s, enforced style in Soviet Union
- Dada, 1916-1924, Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Hannah Hoch, André Breton, Kurt Schwitters
- Surrealism, 1920s-1960s, André Breton, Hans Arp, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Alberto Giacometti, Joan Miro, Rene Magritte, Man Ray, Yves Tanguy, Leonora Carrington, Pablo Picasso, Meret Oppenheim
- Futurism, 1909-1920s, Umberto Boccioni, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini
- Vorticism, 1914-1920s, Wyndham Lewis, David Bomberg
- Constructivism, 1915-1930s

# IMPRESSIONISM, POST-IMPRESSIONISM AND FAUVISM







Claude Monet (1840–1926), *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, 48 × 63 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet

Claude Monet (1840–1926), *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, 48 × 63 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet (30 minute walk from Eiffel Tower, over the Seine and then due West)

- In the early 1860s **Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley and Frédéric Bazille** met while students at the atelier of **Charles Gleyre**. They painted together in the countryside using bright, synthetic colours and they painted finished works on the spot in the manner of Gustave Courbet and the **Barbizon School**. They met at the Café Guerbois and discussed art with Édouard Manet, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cézanne, and Armand Guillaumin.
- In 1863, the Salon rejected **Manet's *The Luncheon on the Grass*** and many other works. Emperor Napoleon III decreed the public should judge and the **Salon des Refusés** was organised. Although many only came to laugh it did draw attention to a new type of art and it was better attended than the Salon.
- The **first Impressionist exhibition** was held in Paris in **1874**. The term Impressionist was not actually used until the Third Impressionist Exhibition in 1877. It was originally a disparaging term used by the critic (painter and playwright) Louis LeRoy (1812-1885) in the satirical magazine *Le Charivari*. He was describing the painting *Impression, Sunrise* by Claude Monet. The exhibition was held by The Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, there were 135 works by 30 artists and

about 4,000 people attended.

- Monet, Sisley, Morisot, and Pissarro were the 'purest' Impressionists, in their consistent pursuit of an art of spontaneity, sunlight, and colour. Degas rejected much of this, as he believed in the primacy of drawing over colour and belittled the practice of painting outdoors. Renoir turned away from Impressionism for a time during the 1880s, and never entirely regained his commitment to its ideas. Édouard Manet, although regarded by the Impressionists as their leader, never abandoned his liberal use of black as a colour, and never participated in the Impressionist exhibitions.
- Although Sisley died in poverty in 1899, Renoir had a great Salon success in 1879. Monet became secure financially during the early 1880s and so did Pissarro by the early 1890s. By this time the methods of Impressionist painting, in a diluted form, had become commonplace in Salon art.
- Monet became wealthy from his painting and later built a home in Giverny, France, where he planted his now-famous gardens and the water lilies that became the subject of many of his paintings.
- It was rare for women to become artists at this time but there were some trailblazers, including American Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) and Eva Gonzalès (1849-1883) — who was the only pupil Manet ever took.
- Attributes of Impressionism
  - Modern life subjects including railway stations and contemporary fashions.
  - Accurate depiction of light and the colours of nature, no black, with colours in the shadows.
  - Painting *en plein air* using small strokes and dabs of bright colour to capture the transitoriness of nature.
  - Loose, 'painterly' style, like a sketch, placing pure colours directly on the canvas. The paintings lacked 'finish'.
- A small group of artists broke away from the stranglehold of the annual Salon, an official exhibition sponsored by the French government through its Académie des Beaux-Arts. The Impressionists mounted eight shows from 1874 to 1886, although very few of the core artists exhibited in every show and Manet exhibited at none of them. After 1886, the dealers organized solo exhibition or small group shows, and each artist concentrated on his or her own career. They remained good friends (except for Degas who stopped talking to Pissarro) and Monet survived the longest and died in 1926.
- Younger artists started to take their art in different directions and they became known as the Post-Impressionists who include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat and Vincent van Gogh.

### Notes

- The leading Impressionists (in alphabetical order) were:

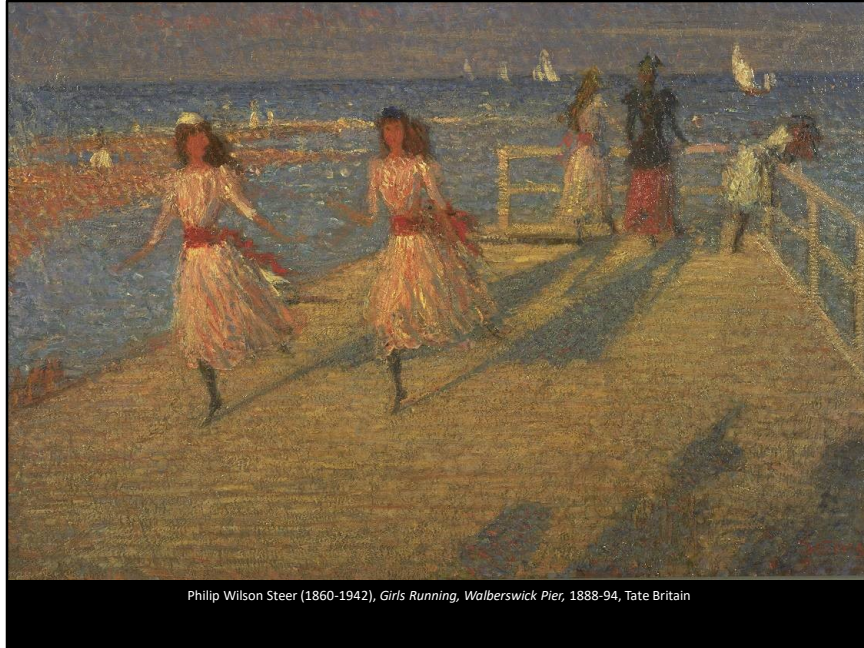
- Frédéric Bazille (who only posthumously participated in the Impressionist exhibitions) (1841–1870)
- Gustave Caillebotte (who, younger than the others, joined forces with them in the mid-1870s) (1848–1894)
- Mary Cassatt (American-born, she lived in Paris and participated in four Impressionist exhibitions) (1844–1926)
- Paul Cézanne (although he later broke away from the Impressionists) (1839–1906)
- Edgar Degas (who despised the term Impressionist) (1834–1917)
- Armand Guillaumin (1841–1927)
- Édouard Manet (who did not participate in any of the Impressionist exhibitions) (1832–1883)
- Claude Monet (the most prolific of the Impressionists and the one who embodies their aesthetic most obviously) (1840–1926)
- Berthe Morisot (1841–1895)
- Camille Pissarro (the ‘father of Impressionism’ although this title is sometimes given to Monet) (1830–1903)
- Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)
- Alfred Sisley (1839–1899)
- 1874, The First Impressionist Exhibition was named retrospectively as the term ‘impressionism’ was used as an insult by the critic (painter and playwright) Louis LeRoy (1812-1885). It was held by The Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, etc. at 35 Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, France. There were 135 works and about 4,000 visitors. The 30 artists who exhibited were Zacharie Astruc, Antoine-Ferdinand Attendu, Édouard Béliard, Eugène Boudin, Félix Braquemond, Édouard Brandon, Pierre-Isidore Bureau, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Paul Cézanne, Gustave Colin, Louis Debras, Edgar Degas, Jean-Baptiste Armand Guillaumin, Louis LaTouche, Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, Stanislas Lepine, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Alfred Meyer, Auguste De Molins, Claude Monet, Mademoiselle Berthe Morisot, Mulot-Durivage, Joseph DeNittis, Auguste-Louis-Marie Ottin, Léon-Auguste Ottin, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Stanislas-Henri Rouart, Léopold Robert, Alfred Sisley.
- 1876, the Second Impressionist Exhibition showed 252 works by only 19 artists who were Édouard Béliard, Pierre-Isidore Bureau, Gustave Caillebotte, Félix-Adolphe Cals, Edgar Degas, Marcellin Desboutin, Jacques François (an anonymous woman), Alphonse Legros, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, Jean-Baptiste Millet (Jean-François Millet's brother), Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Léon-Auguste Ottin fils, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Stanislas-Henri Rouart, Alfred Sisley, Charles Tillot.
- 1877 the term Impressionist was used in the title of the exhibition for the first time so this could be called the first Impressionist exhibition so named. There were 241 works and 18 artists who were Gustave Caillebotte, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Paul

Cézanne, Frédéric Cordet, Edgar Degas, Jean-Baptiste Armand Guillaumin, Jacques-François (an anonymous woman), Franc Lamy, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Alphonse Maureau, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Ludovic Piette, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Rouart, Alfred Sisley, Charles Tillot.

- 1879, Fourth Impressionist Exhibition had 15,400 visitors and was the first that was financially successful even though Cézanne, Renoir, Morisot, Guillaumin and Sisley were missing. There were 246 works by 16 artists who were Félix Braquemond, Marie Braquemond, Gustave Caillebotte, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Louis Forain, Paul Gauguin (not in the brochure), Albert Lebourg, Claude Monet, Ludovic Piette (not in the brochure), Camille Pissarro, Henri Rouart, Henri Somm, Charles Tillot, Federico Zandomenoghi.
- 1880 Fifth Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1881 Sixth Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1882 Seventh Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1886 Eighth Impressionist Exhibition. The artists were Marie Braquemond, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Jean-Louis Forain, Paul Gauguin, Armand Guillaumin, Mme. Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Lucien Pissarro, Odilon Redon, Henri Rouart, Émile Schuffenecker, Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, Charles Tillot, Paul-Victor Vignon, Federico Zandomenoghi.

### **References**

<http://paintoutside.com/wp/the-history-of-plein-air-painting/>



Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), *Girls Running, Walberswick Pier*, 1888-94, Tate Britain

- At the beginning of the 1890s **Philip Wilson Steer** was the **leading follower of French Impressionism in England**. However, he has a Post-Impressionistic technique that produced a balance between the formal properties of the surface and the naturalistic representation of the subject. He had been influenced by **Whistler** and **Degas** but from about 1895 he began to reassess the work of the Old Masters such as **Constable and Turner** and he started to paint the English countryside.
- Steer made many visits to Walberswick in Suffolk (south of Lowestoft). *Girls Running, Walberswick Pier* was one of the most authentic Impressionist works in Britain and was regarded as either uncompromisingly avant garde and according to one critic 'evil'. The painting captures the warmth of late afternoon sunlight but unlike Monet there are darker elements. **At first** it appears **carefree** with two girls dancing down the pier in the sunshine but there is a closeness and a feeling of **claustrophobia** accentuated by the **three shadows** in the foreground. The girls **hold hands** in the shadow but they have parted perhaps signifying a friendship breaking apart. The long shadows at the end of the day suggest **night falling and**

**death** but the flat perspective and the **heavily worked paint surface** bring us back from meaning to seeing paint on a flat surface. The painting balances precariously between **abstract pattern and profound meaning**.

- In 1927 he began to **lose his sight in one eye** and started to paint almost exclusively in watercolour with a looser style sometimes verging on total abstraction. He continued **to teach at the Slade until 1930**.

### Notes

#### Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942)

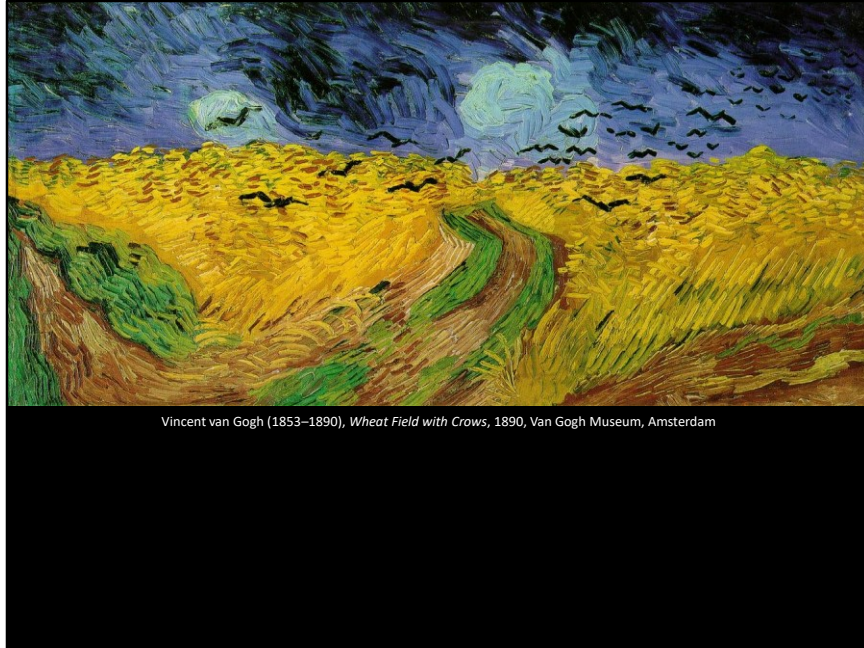
- British **landscape and portrait painter** and **leader of the Impressionist movement in England**.
- He was born in Liverpool, the son of a portrait painter. From 1880-1 he studied at the South Kensington Drawing School. He was rejected by the Royal Academy and went to Paris to study at **Académie Julian**, and then in the École des Beaux Arts under Cabanel.
- Between 1883 and 1885 he exhibited at the Royal Academy and in 1886 became a **founder of the New English Art Club**.
- In 1887 he spent some time at the **Etaples art colony in Northern France** and later painted a number of works at **Walberswick**.
- He was influenced by Whistler, Boucher, Gainsborough, Constable and Turner.
- He was a WWI painter of Royal Navy scenes. His self-portrait is in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

### References

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_Wilson\\_Steer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_Steer)

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/steer-girls-running-walberswick-pier-n06008>





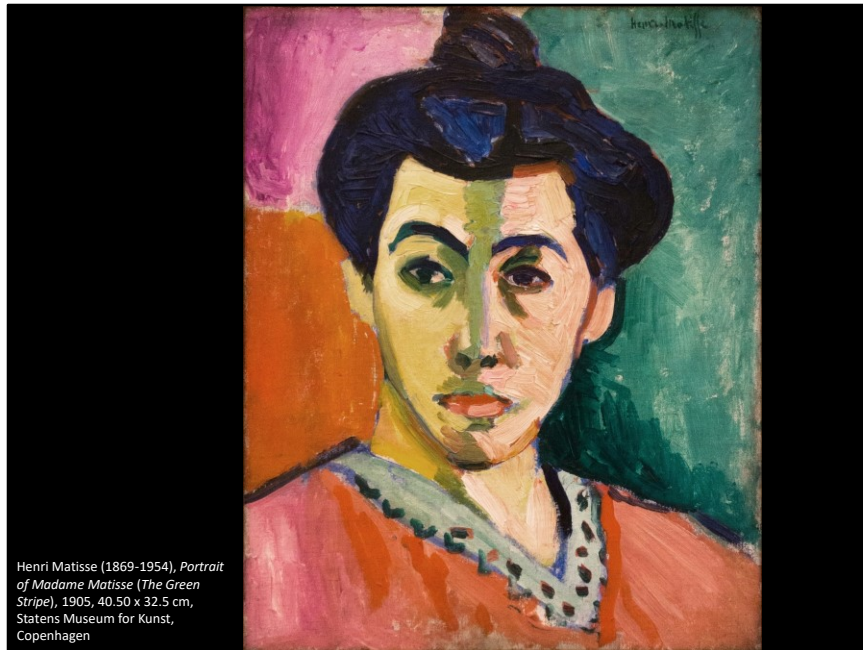
Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Wheat Field with Crows*, 1890, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Wheat Field with Crows*, 1890, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

- In 1890 Vincent van Gogh wrote he had made three paintings in Auvers of large fields of wheat under troubled skies and *Wheat Field with Crows*, an oil on canvas, may have been one. It is generally described as his last painting but we do not know if this is the case. It is certainly one of his last paintings.
- Vincent Willem van Gogh (1853-1890) was a Dutch Post-Impressionist who had a profound influence on twentieth-century art. He died when he was 37 and in just over a decade produced 2,100 artworks including 860 oil paintings, most of them in the last two years of his life. He sold only one painting in his lifetime and committed suicide after years of poverty and mental illness supported only by his brother, a Parisian art dealer.
- Van Gogh came from a well-off family and started work as an **art dealer**. He was transferred to **London** but became **depressed** and turned to **religion**. He spent time in 1879 as a **missionary** in the coal towns of **southern Belgium** and, after moving back to his parents home, **took up painting in 1881**. His early work depicts labourers in earthy tones and it was not until he went south that he painted

landscapes in vivid colours. He lived and worked in **Antwerp** in 1885 and lived in **poverty**. He **worked in Paris** for two years **1886-88** before moving south to Arles where he lived in the 'Yellow House' for a short period with Paul **Gauguin**. They developed a way of using colour to represent their inner emotions and feelings. He suffered from violent episodes and delusions and there was a violent encounter that led to a break up of his relationship with Gauguin. He committed himself to a **mental hospital** where his condition stabilised and he had a productive period painting. He moved under the care of a homeopathic doctor, Paul **Gachet**, and while there his brother, **Theo**, wrote to him to say he **could no longer support him**. A few weeks later van Gogh walked into a wheat field and **shot himself** in the chest and died two days later. Originally viewed as a madman his reputation improved as his work was seen to influence the German Expressionists and the Fauves. His life story has been repeatedly retold as it illustrates the tragic life of the romantic ideal of the tortured artistic genius. He is now generally regarded as exceptionally talented, original and very influential but his mental instability, rather than empowering his art is seen as inhibiting and frustrating it.





Henri Matisse (1869-1954), *Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Stripe)*, 1905, 40.50 x 32.5 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

- **Fauvism** is the style of les Fauves (French for "the wild beasts"), a loose group of early twentieth-century Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism. While Fauvism as a style began around 1900 and continued beyond 1910, the movement as such lasted only a few years, 1904–1908, and had three exhibitions. The leaders of the movement were Henri Matisse and André Derain.
- In 1888 Gauguin had said,
  - *"How do you see these trees? They are yellow. So, put in yellow; this shadow, rather blue, paint it with pure ultramarine; these red leaves? Put in vermillion."*
- **Fauvism** can be seen as a **type of Expressionism** as it uses colour to express the artists personal feelings.
- Gustave Moreau was the movement's inspirational teacher until Matisse was recognised as the leader in 1904.
- In 1896 Matisse visited John Peter Russell and saw his first Impressionist painting. He was so shocked he had to leave. He returned a year later and started to paint in

the Impressionist style influenced by van Gogh, a close friend of Russell.

- In 1901, Maurice de Vlaminck saw van Gogh's work in an exhibition for the first time and began to squeeze paint directly from the tube onto his canvases.
- In 1905, Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck and others exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of 1905, the **critic Louis Vauxcelles** disparaged the painters with the phrase "Donatello chez les fauves" ("**Donatello among the wild beasts**"), contrasting their "orgy of tones" with a Renaissance-style sculpture that shared the room with them. Henri Rousseau was not a Fauve, but his large jungle scene *The Hungry Lion Throws Itself on the Antelope* was exhibited near Matisse's work and may have had an influence on the wording, Vauxcelles' comment was printed on 17 October 1905 in *Gil Blas*, a daily newspaper, and passed into popular usage.
- *Gil Blas* was the hero of an early eighteenth-century French novel set in Spain about an ordinary youth's adventures. It influenced Henry Fielding *Tom Jones* and Charles Dickens *Nicholas Nickleby*.



Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), *Bathers (Les Grandes Baigneuses)*, 1898-1905, 127.2 x 196.1 cm, National Gallery

- Cézanne  **painted many bathers**  from the 1870s onwards and towards the end of his life he painted three large-scale pictures of groups of female bathers. This is the only one in England. He worked on the painting for **seven years** and it was **unfinished** at the time of his death. Each version of the bathers gradually moved away from traditional representations to give a timeless quality to his work.
- Many old masters including Titian and Poussin produced pictures of groups of female nudes in the landscape, often with a mythological narrative.
- Cézanne took a different approach and he dealt with the nudes as **forms integrated into the landscape** in terms of their size, composition, shape and colour. The forms are **architectural** in their **solidity** and their grounded structure.
- When exhibited in 1907, this painting **became an inspiration** for the emerging **Cubist movement**; both Picasso and Matisse took a strong interest in it.
- It is claimed that Cézanne said, **“I am a shy man, a bohemian ... people mock me. I don’t have the power to fight back. People think I am crazy because I am isolated. At least that way no one can get their hooks into me.”** Cézanne did not

want to be influenced by other artists and worked in isolation discovering new ways to represent reality.

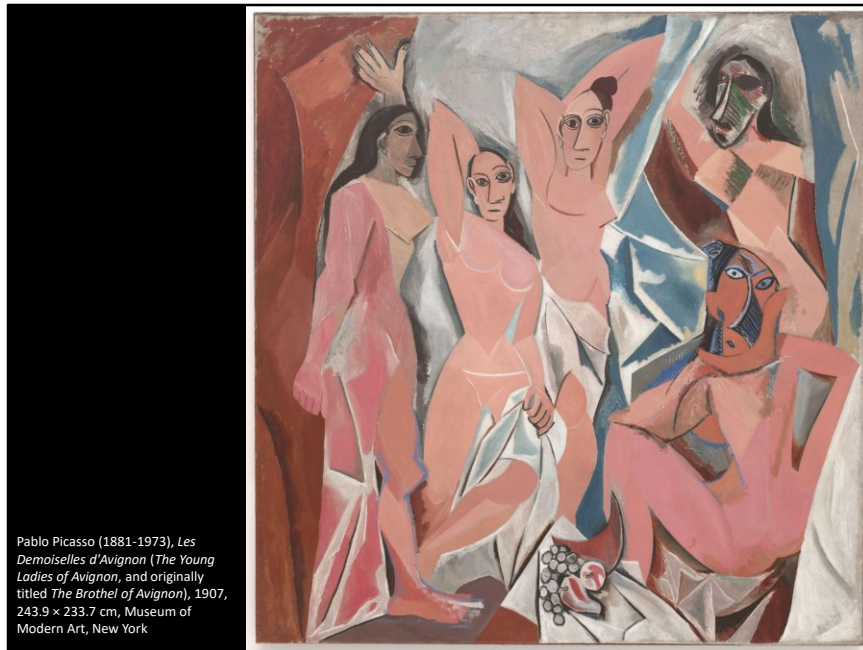
- Cézanne continued painting until the end of his life. At the age of 67 he was caught in a storm while painting in a field. He continued working for two hours in the rain before returning home. He collapsed on the way home and although he regained consciousness he died a few days later of pneumonia.

### **References**

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Bathers\\_\(Cézanne\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bathers_(Cézanne))

CUBISM, ABSTRACTION  
AND THE BRITISH AVANT GARDE





Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. 1149)* (*The Young Ladies of Avignon*, and originally titled *The Brothel of Avignon*), 1907, 243.9 × 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. 1149)* shows **five nude prostitutes** from a brothel in Barcelona. None of the figures is conventionally feminine; they are angular, confrontational and menacing. The two figures on the right have heads that look like **African masks**. The rejection of perspective and the embracing of primitivism marks a break from traditional European art. This work is generally regarded as proto-Cubist because of the flat surface, angular forms and limited colour range. It was regarded at the time as deeply revolutionary and it led to anger even amongst his friends. Matisse considered it a bad joke and Braque disliked the painting but both artists studied it in detail and responded to it.
- Its **resemblance to Cézanne's *Les Grandes Baigneuses***, Paul Gauguin's statue *Oviri* and El Greco's *Opening of the Fifth Seal* has been widely discussed by later critics.
- When it was first exhibited in 1916 it was regarded as immoral. The organiser of the exhibition gave the work its current title replacing Picasso's title *Le Bordel d'Avignon*. He did this to lessen the scandal he knew it would cause but Picasso never liked the new title. The painting was intended to shock. It is clumsy,

overworked and unfinished and the women show no sign of humanity or emotion.

- The earliest sketches of the brothel include two men, a sailor and a medical student holding a book or skull. The viewer has replaced the men and it has become a meditation on the dangers of sex. The art historian Rosalind Krauss describes the 'trauma of the gaze' and the implied threat of violence.
- One of Picasso's biographers, John Richardson, wrote, "*Les Femmes d'Alger* is the **first unequivocally 20th-century masterpiece**, a principal detonator of the modern movement, the cornerstone of 20th-century art. For Picasso it would also be a rite of passage: what he called an exorcism.' It cleared the way for cubism. It likewise banished the artist's demons. Later, these demons would return and require further exorcism. For the next decade, however, Picasso would feel as free and creative and 'as overworked' as God."
- In July 2007, *Newsweek* published a two-page article about *Les Femmes d'Alger* describing it as the "most influential work of art of the last 100 years".

### **Cubism - Climbing the Mountain**

- Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963) worked closely together between 1907 and 1914. Braque wrote, 'We were **like mountain-climbers roped together**'. Picasso said, 'Almost every evening either I went to Braque's studio or Braque came to mine. Each of us had to see what the other had done during the day.'
- 'The pioneering of Cubism by Picasso and Braque is the most passionate adventure in our century's art.' (William Rubin)
- 'Cubism is like standing at a certain point on a mountain and looking around. If you go higher, things will look different; if you go lower, again they will look different. It is a point of view.' (Jacques Lipchitz (Cubist sculptor, 1891-1973))
- This period was when they invented a **new way of painting** called Cubism. It arose from their close friendship and their different approaches to art. **Picasso suppressed his natural virtuosity and love of narrative** imagery and became committed to finding new ways of expressing himself. Braque was not a child prodigy like Picasso but was inventive in regard to materials and textures and he had an outstanding appreciation of space and light. It was Braque's technical innovations that formed the basis of Cubism's most important breakthroughs but it was Picasso's flare that exploited their full potential.
- By 1910, Picasso and Braque had developed Cubism into a new way of representing the world. The first stage, known as **Analytical Cubism** (1910-1912), was concerned with producing a conceptual image of the object rather than a visual one. Objects were deconstructed into their components. In some cases, different viewpoints were shown alongside each other. The aim was not a mimetic representation but to provide a summary of the facts concerning the object. The second stage was called **Synthetic Cubism** and used non-art materials as abstract

signs. The use of a grid or framework, the shallow space and the use of abstract signs influenced later artists such as Piet Mondrian.

### Notes

- 'The period from 1910 to 1912 is referred to as Analytical Cubism. Paintings executed during this period showed the breaking down, or analysis, of form. Right-angle and straight-line construction were favoured, though occasionally some areas of the painting appeared sculptural ... Colour schemes were simplified, tending to be nearly monochromatic (hues of tan, brown, grey, cream, green, or blue preferred) in order not to distract the viewer from the artist's primary interest--the structure of form itself. The monochromatic colour scheme was suited to the presentation of complex, multiple views of the object, which was now reduced to overlapping opaque and transparent planes. These planes appear to ascend the surface of the canvas rather than to recede in depth.'
- Cubism was one of the most influential visual art styles of the early twentieth century. It was created by Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) and Georges Braque (French, 1882–1963) in Paris between 1907 and 1914.
- Cubism began between 1907 and 1911. Pablo Picasso's 1907 painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)* has often been considered a proto-Cubist work. Georges Braque's 1908 *Houses at L'Estaque* (and related works) prompted the critic Louis Vauxcelles to refer to 'bizarreries cubiques' (cubic oddities). Gertrude Stein referred to landscapes made by Picasso in 1909, such as *Reservoir at Horta de Ebro*, as the first Cubist paintings. The first organized group exhibition by Cubists took place at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris during the spring of 1911 in a room called 'Salle 41'; it included works by Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes, Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay and Henri Le Fauconnier, yet no works by Picasso or Braque were exhibited.
- By 1911 Picasso was recognized as the inventor of Cubism, while Braque's importance and precedence was argued later, with respect to his treatment of space, volume and mass in the *L'Estaque* landscapes. But 'this view of Cubism is associated with a distinctly restrictive definition of which artists are properly to be called Cubists'. wrote the art historian Christopher Green
- The roots of cubism are to be found in the two distinct tendencies of Cézanne's later work: first his breaking of the painted surface into small multifaceted areas of paint, thereby emphasizing the plural viewpoint given by binocular vision, and second his interest in the simplification of natural forms into cylinders, spheres, and cones. However, the cubists explored this concept further than Cézanne. They represented all the surfaces of depicted objects in a single picture plane, as if the objects had all their faces visible at the same time. This new kind of depiction revolutionized the way objects could be visualized in painting and art
- Cubism has been divided into phases. Under one scheme there was:
  - Analytical Cubism between 1910 and 1912,



- Synthetic or Crystal Cubism between 1912 and 1919 when Surrealism gained in popularity.
- One might also talk of Early Cubism between 1907 and 1910.

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Georges Braque (1882–1963), *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece* (*Clarinette et bouteille de rhum sur une cheminée*), 1911, 81 x 60 cm, Tate

Should I also cover Fernand Léger, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, Juan Gris, Francis Picabia, Robert Delaunay and Marcel Duchamp?

- This is *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece* by Georges Braque and it was painted in 1911.
- At first it looks abstract but the title gives us a clue. If we look carefully we can make out certain objects. Across the centre is something that could be a clarinet. We can see words, such as 'Valse', meaning Waltz, and on a grey square the letters 'RHU', the beginning of the French word for rum over what could be the shape of a bottle. At the bottom is a scroll of the type that forms a corbel that you often get below a mantelpiece which taken together gives us the title, *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece*. Only parts of the various objects are shown and some parts are shown at different angles from others. For example, although the clarinet appears to go from right to left its bell is shown end on. The bottle of rum has three 'shoulders' and hidden in the centre left is a cup that might be on a table or a mantelpiece.

- So why did the artist, Georges Braque, represent the objects in this way? Conventionally, since the Renaissance, artists have represented objects using the rules of perspective and shown them as if seen from a single position. This is where the artist is assumed to have stood and where the artist forces the viewer to view the scene. However, as we move around we see objects from different views and we retain memories of these different views that we combine to form our complete understanding of the form of an object. Braque is therefore representing his different views and different memories of a scene. He restricted the number of colours to concentrate our attention on the forms and their interaction. Braque described, '**objects shattered into fragments... [as] a way of getting closest to the object...Fragmentation helped me to establish space and movement in space**'.
- Between about 1908 and 1912 Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque created this new way of painting that corresponds more closely to the way we see the world over time. Braque recalled '**We were like mountain-climbers roped together**' as they struggled to break free from the conventions of the past. This new style they created is called Cubism. There were two stages, the first stage, produced pieces like this one and is called 'Analytical Cubism' and the second is called 'Synthetic Cubism'.
- There is one anomaly in the painting that stands out once you have spotted it. Just right of centre about one third down from the top is a nail that has been painted conventionally and it casts a shadow across the canvas as if it were nailed through the surface. Perhaps, it is a witticism, Braque is showing us the nail on which to hang the picture but he painted a nail and its shadow on other works so it may be more significant. Perhaps, he is reminding us that a painting is an illusion and the artist can mix a conventional three-dimensional representation with these flat hints of parts of objects seen from different angles.



Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935), *Black Square*, 1915, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

- The Black Square was first shown in The Last Futurist Exhibition 0.10 in 1915. The work is frequently invoked by critics, historians, curators, and artists as the “zero point of painting”, referring to the painting's historical significance and paraphrasing Malevich.
- **It is the first time someone made a painting that wasn't of something**
- **It began life as a stage curtain.** Tate, ‘The first *Black Square* (Malevich actually painted not one, but four versions between 1915 and 1930) was (we believe) painted in 1915, although Malevich actually dated it 1913 - maybe with an eye to his legacy as the father of abstraction. In any case, the square's first appearance was indeed in 1913, as the design for a stage curtain in the futurist opera *Victory over the Sun*.’
- **It's a revolutionary symbol**
- **It was the first icon that wasn't, well, an icon**
- **There's no 'right' way to look at it**

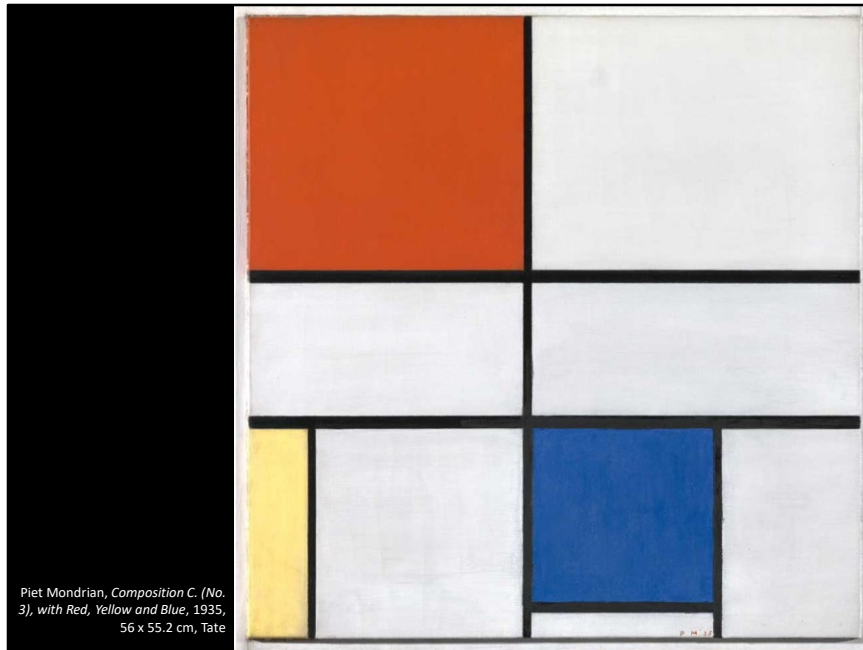
### Notes

- Kasimir Malevich was born Kazimierz Malewicz to a Polish family who fled Poland to settle near Kiev, He spoke Polish and Russian. His father managed a sugar factory and Kasimir was the youngest of 14 children. He spent most of his childhood in the villages of the Ukraine. Until the age of 12 he knew nothing of professional artists. When his father died in 1904, when he was 26, he moved to Moscow to study art.

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Piet Mondrian, *Composition C. (No. 3), with Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1935, 56 x 55.2 cm, Tate

- **During late 1920 and 1921**, Mondrian's paintings arrive at what is to casual observers their definitive and mature form. Thick black lines now separate the forms, which are larger and fewer in number, and more of the forms are left white. This was not the culmination of his artistic evolution, however. Although the refinements became subtler, Mondrian's work continued to evolve during his years in Paris.

**Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition C (No. III) with Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1935**

- **Description.** Piet Mondrian is one of the best known abstract artists but perhaps the most misunderstood. You might think he produced these painting in a few hours using a ruler and primary colours straight from the tube. In fact, he never measured or used a ruler, he carefully painted every area and line. What appear to be squares are often rectangles. This is *Composition C (No. III) with Red, Yellow and Blue* and the red square, for example, is slightly wider than it is tall and the vertical black line is not central. Mondrian would only use vertical and horizontal lines and he fell out with his friend Theo van Doesburg [whose work is on display round the

corner] over the use diagonal lines. The colours are built up from layers of mixed paint, never squeezed direct from the tube. One day an art dealer (New York, Sidney Janis, 1932) came to his studio to buy a painting and Mondrian told him it was not quite finished as one small area of blue needed a further coat of paint. The dealer later said, '**I didn't get the picture for a whole year**'.

- **Background.** So, how did he arrive at these grid-like paintings? His early work was representational and he painted conventional landscapes but in 1908 he came under the influence of the spiritual and philosophical writings of the Theosophy Society. He spent the rest of his life searching for a way to represent that spiritual knowledge in art. He simplified and simplified as he looked for the essence of the objects.
- **The artist.** Looking at these black lines and flat areas of colour some people think of his paintings as 'cold' and 'calculated' but he was a deeply passionate artist. When he was 39 (1911) he left his fiancée and his job in Amsterdam to move to Paris and pursue a new type of art. In order to integrate with the Parisian avant-garde, he changed the double 'aa' in his name to a single 'a'. He had few personal contacts when he first moved but it was a very productive period artistically. The other influence on his art was music; he loved jazz and his use of the word 'composition' in the title invokes musical associations. Later, he was labelled degenerate by the Nazis and moved to London and then New York.
- **Avoiding balance.** He thought long and hard about achieving balance but he also wanted to avoid symmetry and he often put a large area of colour on one side of the painting. He argued with other artists about this as they sometimes found his paintings unbalanced and the colours inharmonious, but this was intentional as he was seeking for a different form of balance. Balance is easy if it involves one thing cancelling another but he wanted to retain vitality and energy in the painting. Mondrian regarded the vertical as the spiritual, the male, the inner mind where the ideal resides and the horizontal as the material, women, the outward form, the sea, the horizon and nature. He thought that harmony could be achieved by combining the vertical and the horizontal in certain ways.
- **Save the world.** Mondrian thought that we are all evolving to a higher state and his paintings would light a path that would help people achieve this state. Unlike Kazimir Malevich, who though abstract art would bring political reform, Mondrian believed his art would bring about spiritual reform and his abstract paintings were his mission to help save the world. Let us look next at a very different relationship between art and society.

### **Notes on Piet Mondrian, *Composition C (No.III) with Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1935**

- Mondrian's art was linked to his spiritual studies and in 1909 he joined the Theosophical Movement founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and others. For the rest of his life his work was inspired by the search for spiritual knowledge underlying nature. He believed that his vision of modern art would transcend

divisions in culture and become a new common language based on the pure primary colours, flatness of forms, and dynamic tension. He wrote, **'What art makes us see and feel ... is...beauty, truth, goodness, grandeur, and richness – the universe, man, nature...universal equilibrium.'**

- Mondrian gradually decluttered his home and studio and they became a place of pilgrimage. The artist Ben Nicholson described the astonishing quietness and repose. The paintings were never framed as they were extensions of the world; the world reduced to the simplest possible forms and colours.
- He was an artist who thought he could elevate us all and make the world a better place. He wrote, **'I wish to approach truth as closely as is possible, and therefore I abstract everything until I arrive at the fundamental quality of objects.'** As Maurice Denis said (in 1890), **'Remember that a picture, before being a battle horse, a nude, an anecdote or whatnot, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order.'** In the terminology of Clive Bell (1914, Bloomsbury Group) it is the **'significant form'** which he defined as **'lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, [that] stir our aesthetic emotions'**.
- He was labelled a 'degenerate' artist by the Nazis and just before World War II (1938) he fled Paris for London and then New York. Mondrian loved dancing, jazz and the energy of the Charleston. In the mid-1920s he bought a record player and began to collect records and his studio became a place to dance. Music is an abstract art and his paintings reflect a lot of the syncopation and energy of jazz. Mondrian called this his 'boogie woogie' and in New York he painted *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (1942-43, MoMA). He never married and thought women were put on earth to be dancing partners. Mondrian danced 'very stiffly, awkwardly and seriously', usually with the wives or mistresses of other artists and he never looked at his partner or spoke on the dance floor.
- The Greek philosopher Plato (c.429-347 BCE) wrote, **'I do not now intend by beauty of shapes what most people would expect, such as that of living creatures or pictures, but ... straight lines and curves and the surfaces or solid forms produced out of these by lathes and rulers and squares ... These things are not beautiful relatively, like other things, but always naturally and absolutely.'** Plato thought that world we directly experience is but a shadow of an absolute world of pure ideas, such a truth and goodness. Therefore, most representational art takes us further away from understanding this world by making a representation of a representation.
- See the article on 'Mondrian's Balance' by the University of Maryland. They have tested people using genuine Mondrian paintings and Mondrian-like paintings and people choose the Mondrian so his paintings are not as easy to copy as the naïve viewer might believe.

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Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), *Cossacks*, 1910-11, Tate

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), *Cossacks*, 1910-11, Tate

- Kandinsky was an **influential Russian painter and art theorist**. He is credited with painting one of the first purely abstract works. Born in Moscow, Kandinsky spent his childhood in Odessa, where he graduated at Grekov Odessa Art school. He enrolled at the University of Moscow, studying law and economics. Successful in his profession—he was offered a professorship (chair of Roman Law) at the University of Dorpat—Kandinsky began painting studies (life-drawing, sketching and anatomy) at the age of 30.

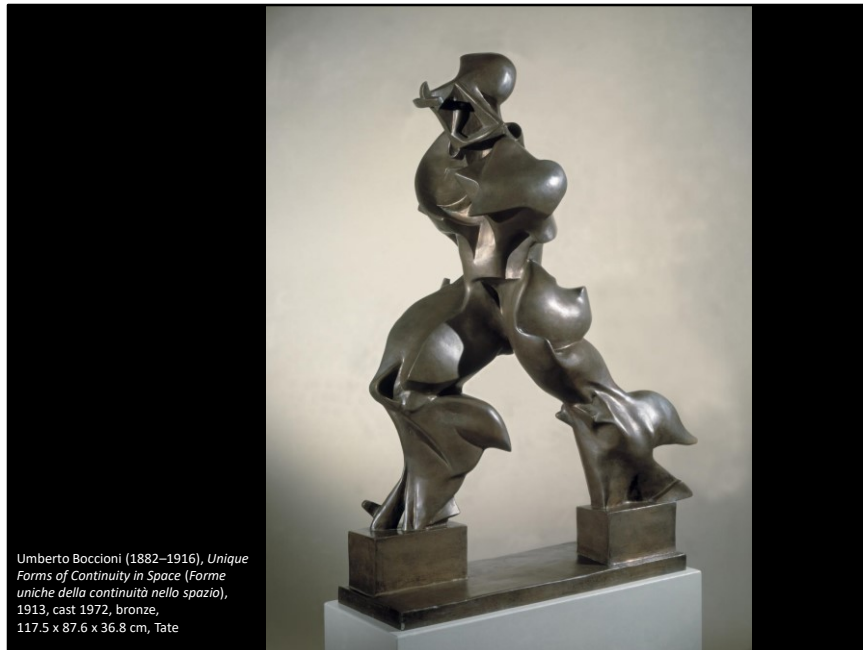
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## VORTICISM AND WORLD WAR ONE





Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916), *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (*Forme uniche della continuità nello spazio*), 1913, cast 1972, bronze, 117.5 x 87.6 x 36.8 cm, Tate

- This is perhaps the most famous Futurist work. It is **Umberto Boccioni** (1882–1916), ***Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*** and was first made in **1913**. **Boccioni died** only three years later, aged 33, but he had a very productive life and his work was very influential. He was a painter who also produced drawings and sculptures that all incorporated a sense of energy and movement that was associated with the modern, mechanical age.
- This work is considered to be the most successful of his sculptural experiments. The bronze casting was done posthumously in 1949, from the artist's original plaster (which was never cast during his lifetime).
- The head is sculpted to look like a helmet suggesting war. The Futurists were looking for change and saw war, before WWI, as a positive force for change as they thought it would sweep away the old and enable the new mechanical age of speed to arise. The figure does not have arms but there are wing-like features at the back which could represent the swirling air rapidly displaced by the fast moving body. This swirling air is also indicated by the flame-like shapes that begin at the calves.
- Movement was a key element for Boccioni and the other Futurists, as the

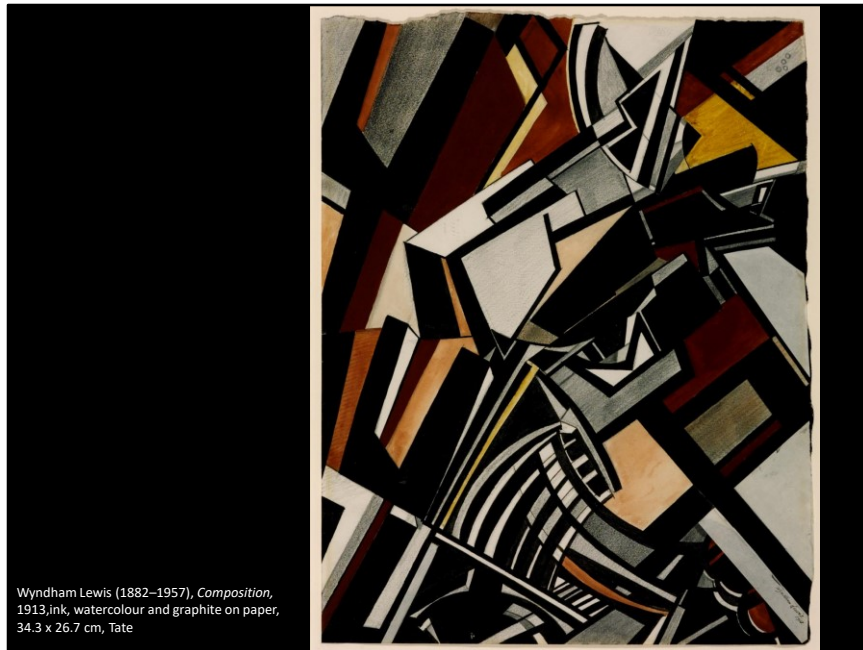
technology of transportation (cars, bicycles, and trains) allowed people to experience ever greater speeds. The Futurist artists often depicted motorized vehicles and the perceptions they made possible—the blurry, fleeting, fragmentary sight created by this new love of speed. In this work there is no blur but speed is suggested by the manipulation of forms and the solidity of the metal structure adds a monumental seriousness to the work. It becomes a timeless monument to energy and speed.

### **Notes**

- Boccioni's father was a minor government official who was moved around Italy so Boccioni lived in many regions. Some after the age of 16 he moved to Rome and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. In Rome he met and became a friend of Gino Severini (1883-1966) and they both became students of Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), a painter focusing on the modern Divisionist technique. Balla was an older artist who influenced both Boccioni and Severini. In 1906, he briefly moved to Paris, where he studied Impressionist and Post-Impressionist styles, before visiting Russia for three months, getting a first-hand view of the civil unrest and governmental crackdowns. In 1910 he met Marinetti who had already published the Futurist Manifesto. Boccioni became the main theorist of the movement and when he went to Paris and met Picasso and Braque did the movement begin to take shape.
- In 1912 and 1914 he exhibited in London and made a deep impression on the English artist C. R. Nevinson who became the only English member of the organisation. Others aligned themselves instead to its British equivalent, Vorticism, led by Wyndham Lewis.
- In 1914 he wrote,
  - 'While the impressionists paint a picture to give one particular moment and subordinate the life of the picture to its resemblance to this moment, we synthesize every moment (time, place, form, colour-tone) and thus paint the picture.'
- He was called back into service in June 1916, and stationed outside Verona with an artillery brigade. During a training exercise, Boccioni was thrown from his horse and trampled. Still a young man of just thirty-three, Boccioni succumbed to injuries and died a day later on August 17.

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(Percy) Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957), *Composition*, 1913, ink, watercolour and graphite on paper, 34.3 x 26.7 cm, Tate

- **Wyndham Lewis** was an English painter and author. He co-founded the **Vorticist movement** and was editor of the Vorticist magazine *BLAST*.
- He said he was born on his father's yacht off Nova Scotia and he went to Rugby School following his parents separation. He later went to the Slade School of Art and then spent most of the 1900s travelling around Europe and studying art in Paris. He lived in London from 1908 and was a founder of the Camden Town Group in 1911. In 1912 he exhibited at Roger Fry's second Post-Impressionism exhibition. He met Roger Fry and Clive Bell but soon fell out with them. In 1913-15 he developed a form of geometric abstraction that his friend Ezra Pound called 'Vorticism'. He wanted to combine the solid structure of Cubism with the liveliness of Futurism. He joined Roger Fry's Omega Workshop but fell out with him and created the Rebel Art Centre and although this only lasted three months it gave rise to the Vorticist Group and *BLAST*.
- In 1917 he was posted to the front in a forward post directing artillery fire. IN December he was made an official war artist. One of his best known works *A Battery Shelled* (1919, Imperial War Museum) which we will look at later.

- Lewis had what has been called a thorny personality and he managed to offend all those who might have helped his career. Lewis went to war unlike the other literary men, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and James Joyce and the experience embittered him. During the 1920s he developed a public persona, known as The Enemy, who shot at popular ideas and art, left-wing artists and intellectuals. He even went so far as to state the case for Hitler, a position he later recanted after visiting Berlin in 1938, but only after the damage had been done. Few understood that his motivation at the time was avoidance of another war. Lewis attacked everyone, Virginia Woolf (for copying James Joyce), the Bloomsbury set, the Sitwells, the 'romantics' D. H. Lawrence, Gertrude Stein and even Joyce and his close friends Pound and Eliot. He wrote 23 books between the wars and was one of the foremost portrait painters. However, his attacks meant he had no steady employment and he suffered from a stream of libel actions.

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Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson (1889–1946), *Dance Hall Scene*, c.1913–4, gouache and graphite on paper, 22.2 x 19.7 cm, Tate

- This scene of wild partying was probably inspired by the Albert Hall Ball, held in London on 3 December 1913. Nevinson was fascinated by the idea of 'simultaneity'. His composition here not is just depicting dancers, but conveys the experience of dancing. He was the only British artist to wholeheartedly embrace futurism, co-signing the manifesto *Vital English Art* which rejected 'the pretty-pretty, the commonplace, the soft, sweet, and mediocre' in English culture, in favour of the modern and dynamic.

### Notes

- Nevinson was the son of a war correspondent and was a student at the Slade School of Art between 1909 and 1912. The Futurist Exhibition of March 1912, held at the Sackville Gallery, London, proved decisive for his development.
- **Futurism** had by now become a **catchword** in London for **anything new and outrageous**, and the **British avant-garde grew resentful** of its influence. Nevinson continued to make Futurist paintings of machine-age London, celebrating the dynamism of the underground Tube trains, the traffic in the Strand, and a Bank



Holiday crowd on Hampstead Heath. The advent of **World War I changed his mind**. Having gone to France with the Red Cross and been invalided home soon afterwards, he announced that he would be using 'Futurist technique' to express the reality of war in his new work. In subsequent paintings Nevinson confirmed that he saw the Great War essentially as a tragic event. **Bleak, outspoken and often angry**, his paintings of 1915–16 are among the masterpieces of his career, bravely opposing the prevailing jingoistic tendency. By 1919 he had **given up Futurism**. Retreating instead to a more traditional vision, he painted lively interpretations of New York, which fuse a lingering love of Futurist angularity with a new respect for naturalistic observation. Nevinson was at his best when dealing with the dynamism and vertiginous scale of big-city life. In later years he concentrated more on pastoral scenes and flower pieces, where a gentler mood prevailed.

- In 1918, Nevinson was the person who showed Paul Nash how to produce lithographs.

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Paul Nash (1889-1946), *The Menin Road*, 1918, 182.8 × 317.5 cm, Imperial War Museum, London

- *The Menin Road* is a large oil painting by Paul Nash completed in 1919 that depicts a First World War battlefield. **Nash** was **commissioned** by the British **War Memorials Committee** to paint a battlefield scene for the proposed **National Hall of Remembrance**, which was never built. The painting is considered one of the most iconic images of the First World War and is held by the Imperial War Museum.
- He decided to paint the Ypres Salient (a technical term for an area surrounded on three sides by the enemy) as it had been devastated during the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge where there was a cluster of German pill boxes the British called *Tower Hamlets*. He was originally going to call it *A Flanders Battlefield* but eventually decided on *The Menin Road*. Nash knew the area well as he had served there. He considered Tower Hamlets to be 'perhaps the most dreaded and disastrous locality of any area in any of the theatres of War'.
- Nash started worked on the large painting in a herb drying shed in Chalfont St Peter and when he had to move out he had difficulties finding a studio and eventually completed the work in Gower Street, London. The room in Gower

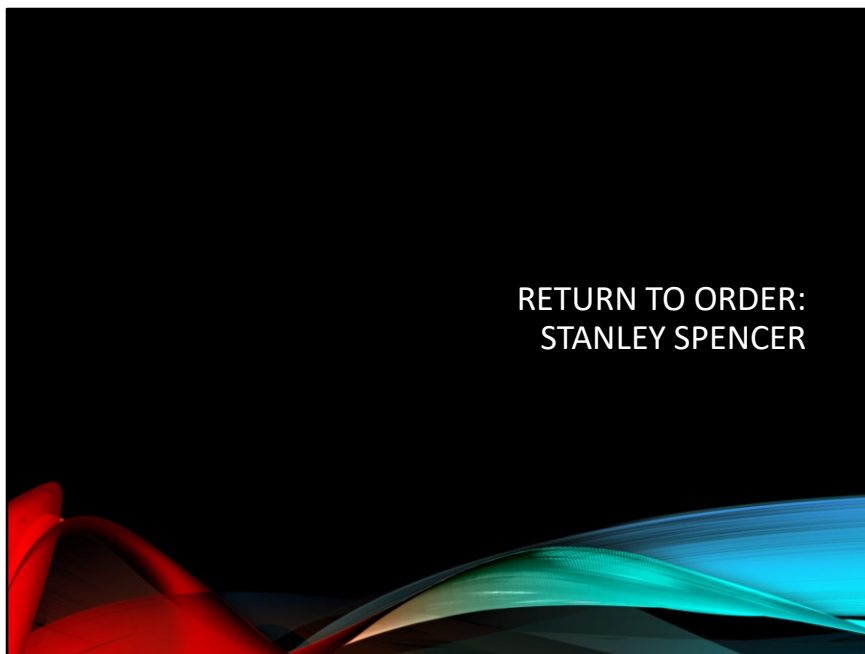
Street was so small Nash had to climb out of the window to see the complete picture.

- “*The Menin Road* depicts a landscape of flooded shell craters and trenches while tree stumps, devoid of any foliage, point towards a sky full of clouds and plumes of smoke, bisected by shafts of sunlight resembling gun barrels. Two soldiers at the centre of the picture attempt to follow the, almost, unrecognisable road but appear to be trapped by the landscape. Nash composed the picture in three broad strips. The foreground is filled with shell craters and debris, which block access to the road in the middle of the picture. The only possible path, to the side of one of the mud pools, is blocked by a fallen board. Across the centre of the picture, shell holes punch into the road at regular intervals, while debris further breaks up the road, as do the shadows from a line of trees alongside it. Beyond the trees, the battlefield stretches to the horizon, with a wood of stunted trees on the right hand side and to the left a series of seven zigzag streams, that also fail to reach the horizon and escape. Nash came to consider this painting to be his finest work.”

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RETURN TO ORDER:  
STANLEY SPENCER





Stanley Spencer (1891-1959), *Self-Portrait*, 1912, drawing

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait*, 1914, Tate

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait*, 1923, Spencer Gallery

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait*, 1939, 39.7 x 55.2cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait by Gaslight Looking Downwards*, 1949, 57 x 47cm, Reading Museum and Town Hall

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait with Patricia Preece*, 1937, 61 x 91.2cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum

Stanley Spencer, *Self-Portrait*, 1959, Tate

Note that this is a selection of the many self-portraits Spencer painted. They are all honest and penetrating; none of them tries to elevate or glamorize the artist.

## 1. Spencer's Early Life, 1891 to 1914

- **1891, A crow fell down the chimney at Fernlea** on Cookham High Street, flapped around the room, flew out of the window and **Stanley Spencer was born**. The date was June 30th 1891 - and the family thought it was a good omen. He was the eighth surviving child of Annie and William Spencer, a piano teacher, and he was joined a year later by his younger brother

- Gilbert. This is a picture of the **house today** and this is how the High Street looked in the 1880s. The Kings Arms Hotel is four houses away from Fernlea.
- 1891-1907, his father did not think the local school was satisfactory and could not afford a private school so Spencer was **educated by his sisters Annie and Florence** in the shed at the bottom of the garden next door but as Spencer did not like school work so they allowed him to draw instead. **Painting was not an important subject** for the Spencer family but there were a number of reproductions on the walls and when he was old enough his mother took him to the **Summer Exhibition** at the Royal Academy.
  - **1907**, Spencer was stimulated by reading from the **family bible** and enjoyed taking **long, solitary walks**. He spent time drawing with the wife of a local landowner, **Lady Boston** who, in 1907, arranged for him to go to **Maidenhead Technical Institute**.
  - **1908-12** he studied at the **Slade under Henry Tonks**. Contemporaries included Christopher Nevinston, David Bomberg, and Paul Nash. **1912** he exhibited *John Donne Arriving in Heaven* at Roger Fry's **Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition**. He was considered to be influenced by **Gauguin**. However, he was more influenced by **Giotto and Mantegna** and when asked what he thought of Picasso he said 'I haven't got past Piero della Francesca yet'. Paul Nash called him 'the last of the Pre-Raphaelites'. He so loved Cookham that he would come home for tea on the train. This was noted and gave rise to the nickname, 'Cookham', which Spencer himself used.
  - ❑ **This first self-portrait** is a drawing was done while he was at the Slade. It was the year of the second Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries.

## 1. World War One, 1914 to 1918

- ❑ **1914** he began work on this second self-portrait which was painted in Wisteria Cottage, a decaying Georgian house Spencer rented, from the local coalman in Cookham, for use as a studio. Its dark, rich colours and strongly modelled form was inspired by a reproduction of the head of Christ by the Italian Renaissance artist Luini.
- **1915-18** he attended the **Slade School of Art** between 1908 and 1912 and so his career started at the same time as the **First World War**. During the war his **poor physique** caused him to apply for ambulance duties. He enlisted in the **Royal Army Medical Corp** and was sent to Bristol and later Macedonia. He requested a transfer to the infantry in 1917.
- **1918**, he returned to **Cookham** in December 1918 to hear his brother Sydney had been killed in action three months previously and he lost '**the all pervading joy I felt as a child**' and the 'serenity of spirit'. His much

loved brother had been killed in the last few weeks of the war and returning to the work after the war he found it difficult to continue, often stating "**It is not proper or sensible to expect to paint after such experience.**" Many artists felt the same and although in Europe some artists reacted against the slaughter by rejecting all social, cultural and artistic standards in Britain and among many artists in Europe there was what has been called a "**return to order**". The excesses of modernism were rejected and there was a return to more conventional figurative painting. **Cubism was partially abandoned** even by its creators, Braque and Picasso, and **Futurism**, which had praised machinery, violence and war, **was rejected by most of its adherents**. The return to order was associated with a revival of classicism and realistic painting.

## 2. 1920 to 1927, *The Resurrection, Cookham*

- **1919** lived and worked at Cookham. He became a member New English Art Club until 1927.
- **1920-21** he lodged with Henry Slessor and his wife at Bourne End near Cookham.
- **1922** he accompanied the **Carline family** on a holiday to Yugoslavia, became **engaged to Hilda Carline** and moved to Hampstead.
- **1923, aged 32, he painted this third self-portrait.**
- **1925 married Anne Hilda Carline** and had two daughters Shirin (1925) and Unity (1930). When he first met Hilda he became a changed man in his own words the old Stanley Spencer 'was now no longer so' and the **new 'lust or what you will was sweeping me along'**.
- **1926 completed *The Resurrection***, one of his '**major, most memorable achievements**'. *The Times* critic would call it '**the most important picture painted by any English artist during the present century ...** What makes it so astonishing is the combination in it of careful detail with modern freedom in the treatment of form. It is as if a **Pre-Raphaelite had shaken hands with a Cubist.**'

## 3. The Sandham Memorial Chapel. Burghclere, 1926-32 (National Trust)

- **1927** Spencer received commissions including the **Sandham Memorial Chapel** (1927-1932). It was in 1927 that he held his first **one-man exhibition** at the Goupil Gallery. The centre piece of the exhibition was ***The Resurrection, Cookham***.

## 4. Cookham, 1932-1935, The Church House Project

- **1932** moved to 'Lindworth', a large house in Cookham. Began work on '**Church-House**' idea. Elected an Associate of the Royal Academy. Dudley Tooth became his sole agent.

## 5. Divorce and Remarriage, 1935-1938

- **1935 resigned from the Royal Academy** after the rejection of *The Dustman* and other works from the Summer Exhibition and the controversy resulted in his popularity declining.
- **1937 he was divorced** by his wife Hilda Carline and immediately married Patricia Preece. His second marriage was a disaster, never consummated and his wife manipulated and exploited him. Spencer tried to win back Hilda but never succeeded. He began work on the *Beatitudes of Love* series.
- ☐ **1937**, this **fourth self-portrait** shows Spencer with Patricia Preece.
- **1938 in financial difficulties**, left Cookham and went to stay with the Rothensteins in London. Dudley Tooth took over managing his business affairs. Began *Christ in the Wilderness* series in bed-sit in Swiss Cottage.

## 6. Port Glasgow, World War Two, 1935-1945

- **1939-41** stayed at the White Hart Inn, Leonard Stanley, Gloucestershire, with George and Daphne Charlton. In March 1940 the War Artists Advisory Committee commissioned Spencer to paint the **Port Glasgow shipyards**, which occupied him until 1946. Went to live in Epsom with his children and then moved back to Cookham.
- ☐ **1939**, this fifth self-portrait shows him with paintbrush and palette.

## 7. Resurrection Pictures, 1945-1950

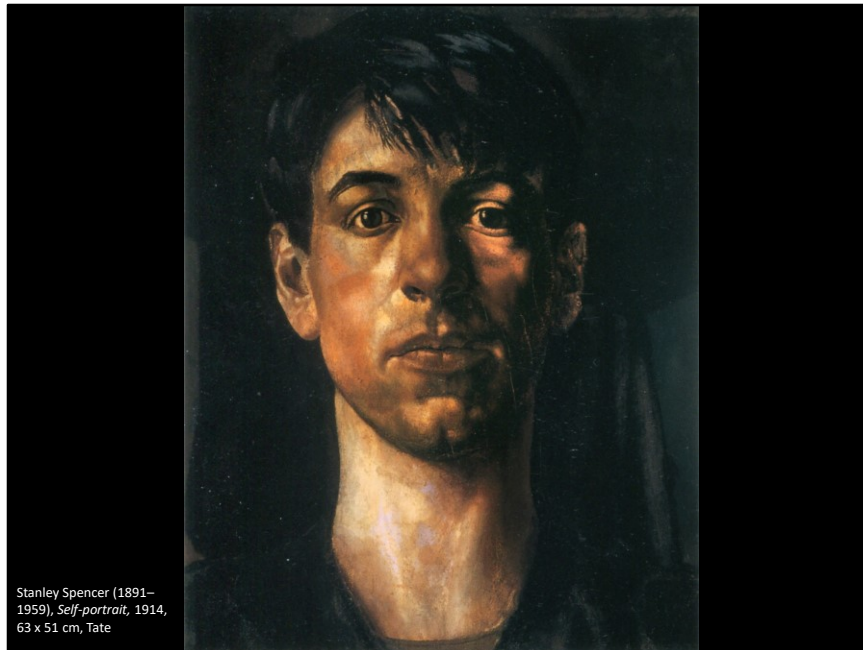
- **1945 began *The Resurrection, Port Glasgow* series (1945-1950)**. His reputation improved as a result of his war commissions
- ☐ **1949**, this **sixth self-portrait** shows just before the scandal of the obscenity charge and the death of Hilda.
- **1950 Alfred Munnings**, the President of the Royal Academy, **initiated a prosecution** against Spencer for **obscenity** but Munnings then resigned and the new President persuaded Spencer to re-join the RA. **Hilda died** of breast cancer in November. This followed years of mental health problems during which Spencer visited her weekly and sent long letters, some of over one hundred pages. He continued to send letters after her death.

## 8. Final Years, 1951 to 1959

- **1954 he visited China** as a guest of the Chinese authorities.
- **1955** there was a **retrospective** exhibition at the Tate Gallery.
- ☐ **1959 seventh and his final self-portrait** was painted from 12 to 16 July. He was knighted in 1959 and died of bowel cancer on 14 December aged 58 at the Canadian War Memorial Hospital, Cliveden, Berkshire. His last years until his death in 1959 were financially successful although his reputation



and his sale prices did not soar until after his death.



Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), *Self-portrait*, 1914, 63 x 51 cm, Tate

### **1. Spencer's Early Life, 1891 to 1914, *Self-Portrait* (1914)**

- Spencer was born in Cookham the son of a piano tuner and organist who did not believe in universal education. Spencer was taught by his sister Annie in the shed at the bottom of the garden next door but as Spencer did not like school work so she allowed him to draw instead. Spencer was stimulated by reading from the family bible and enjoyed taking long, solitary walks. He spent time drawing with the wife of a local landowner, Lady Boston who, in 1907, arranged for him to go to Maidenhead Technical Institute.
- From 1908 to 1912 he studied at the Slade School of Art under Henry Tonks with Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, Paul Nash and David Bomberg. However, he so loved Cookham that he would come home for tea on the train. This was noted and gave rise to the nickname, 'Cookham', which Spencer himself used.
- In 1914 he began work on a self-portrait which was painted in Wisteria Cottage, a decaying Georgian house Spencer rented, from the local coalman in Cookham, for use as a studio. Painted with a mirror, the painting is bold and austere with a direct and penetrating gaze, softened by the deep shadow on the right hand side – the head fills the picture space and is painted one and a half times life size. The art

collector Edward Marsh bought *Self-portrait* and considered it to be "masterly...glowing with genius."

### **Notes**

- Spencer wrote extensively about his work so we have a lot of written material to consider.
- Spencer was the eighth surviving child of William (known as 'Par') and Anna (née Slack). The family home was called 'Fernlea' on Cookham High Street and had been built by Spencer's grandfather.

### **References**

<http://www.christies.com/features/Stanley-Spencer-A-Primer-6261-1.aspx> a good summary of his life, personality and work



Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), *Travoyes Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-Station at Smol, Macedonia, September 1916, 1919*, 182.8 x 218.4 cm, Imperial War Museum

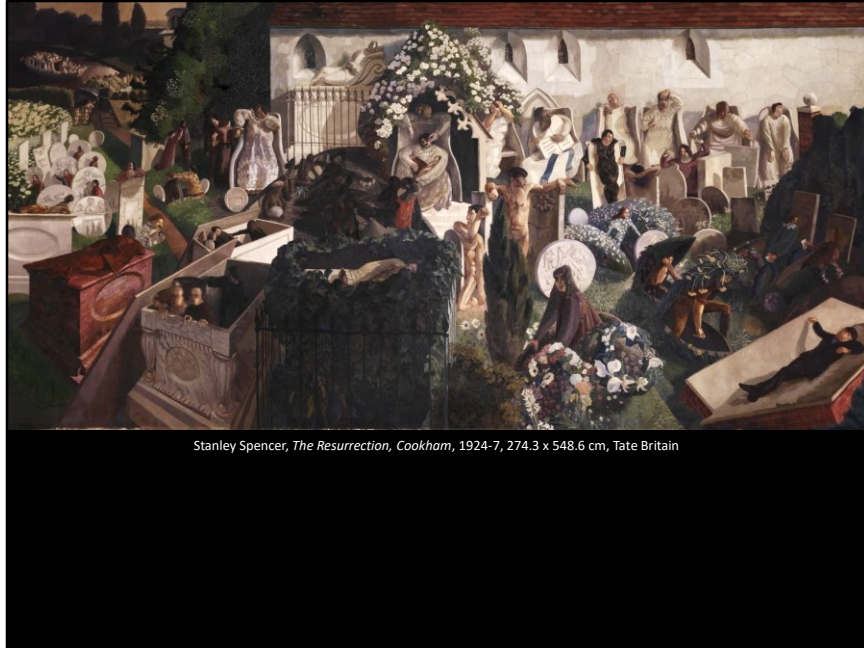
### **World War One, Travoyes Arriving with Wounded (1919)**

- At the start of the war Spencer was keen to enlist but because of his weak physique his mother persuaded him to enter the ambulance service. He worked at Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, a large Victorian gothic building. He left in 1916 for overseas duty and following ten weeks training he was sent to Macedonia (a Balkan nation north of Greece and between Albania and Bulgaria). In 1917, he volunteered to join an infantry unit and he spent two and a half years on the front line fighting German and Bulgarian troops. He was eventually invalided out following persistent bouts of malaria. His survival while so many of his fellow soldiers, including his brother Sydney, were killed marked his attitude to life and death for the rest of his life.
- Towards the end of the war Spencer was approached by the British War Memorials Committee to complete a commission. It was commissioned for the proposed Hall of Remembrance, which was never built. The Commission suggested a religious service at the front but Spencer wanted to show a real event. This shows the wounded from the previous day's attack queueing to be treated by the surgeons in

an old Greek church that was used as a dressing station and operating theatre. Spencer wrote that the men were calm and peaceful despite their wounds and he saw it in religious terms as like Christ on the Cross and the Resurrection through the efforts of the surgeons. In 1938, Spencer wrote, 'I meant it not a scene of horror but a scene of redemption'.

#### Notes

- A travoy is a frame structure used to drag loads across land using horses.



Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection, Cookham*, 1924-7, 274.3 x 548.6 cm, Tate Britain

Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), *The Resurrection, Cookham*, 1924-7, 274.3 x 548.6 cm, Tate Britain

### **1920 to 1927, *The Resurrection, Cookham* (1927)**

- Spencer stayed in Cookham until 1920 when he moved to Bourne End, just over a mile away, to stay with the trade union lawyer Henry Slessor and his wife. He worked on a series of paintings for them before moving to Steep in Hampshire where he worked on murals for the village hall. In 1923 he stayed in Poole, Dorset, with Henry Lamb (1883-1960, British painter and founder of the Camden Town Group) and worked on another mural scheme. This work convinced the Behrend's to commission Spencer to design murals for a chapel at Burghclere in memory of Mary Behrend's brother, Lieutenant Henry Willoughby Sandham.
- In 1925, Spencer married Hilda Carline, then a student at the Slade and daughter, Shirin, was born in November of that year and a second daughter, Unity, in 1930. In October 1923, Spencer started renting Henry Lamb's studio in Hampstead where he began work on *The Resurrection, Cookham*.
- *The Resurrection* is perhaps Spencer's most famous painting. The resurrection is one of the most challenging of all traditional Bible subjects but Spencer, by the

power of his personal approach, has created a triumphant masterpiece. The picture created a sensation when shown in his one-man exhibition at the Goupil Gallery in London in 1927 and was bought immediately for the national collections for £1,000.

- The critic of The Times called it '... the most important picture painted by any English artist in the present century ... What makes it so astonishing is the combination in it of careful detail with the modern freedom of form. It is as if a Pre-Raphaelite had shaken hands with a Cubist.' and even the Bloomsbury critic Roger Fry, who generally disapproved of narrative painting, wrote 'it is highly arresting and intriguing ... a very personal conception carried through with unflinching nerve and conviction.'
- Spencer believed that the divine rested in all creation. He saw his home town of Cookham as a paradise in which everything is invested with mystical significance. The local churchyard here becomes the setting for the resurrection of the dead. Christ is enthroned in the church porch, cradling three babies, with God the Father standing behind. Along the wall of the church is a row of prophets including Moses, with a dark beard, holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The rest of the churchyard is filled with people resurrecting from their tombs. The group of black people emerging from sun-baked soil implies that Spencer's conception embraces the whole of humanity. Spencer made it clear that his Resurrection was a joyous event and that the resurrected are already in Heaven: '... in the main they resurrect to such a state of joy that they are content ... to remain where they are.' Even 'the punishment of the Bad', said Spencer, 'was to be no more than that their coming out of the graves was not so easy as in the case of the Good'.
- Spencer himself appears near the centre, naked, leaning against a grave stone; his fiancée Hilda lies sleeping in a bed of ivy. At the top left, risen souls are transported to Heaven in the pleasure steamers that then ploughed the Thames.

## **References**

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/spencer-the-resurrection-cookham-n04239/text-illustrated-companion>

## DADA, SURREALISM AND EXPRESSIONISM







Cabaret Voltaire, 1916, Zurich, Switzerland

### Cabaret Voltaire, 1916, Zurich, Switzerland

- Dada was an art movement of the European avant-garde in the early 20th century. It began in 1916 at Cabaret Voltaire, in Zürich, Switzerland. The Dada manifesto was read by Hugo Ball at the launch in Cabaret Voltaire on 14 July 1916. It spread to Berlin shortly thereafter, but the height of New York Dada was the year before, in 1915. It was formed as a negative reaction to the horrors and folly of the war. The art, poetry and performance produced by Dada artists is often satirical and nonsensical in nature. Dada artists felt the war called into question every aspect of a society capable of starting and then prolonging it – including its art. Their aim was to destroy traditional values in art and to create a new art to replace the old. As the artist Hans Arp later wrote:
  - *Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might.*
- Dada rejected everything and a common cry was 'Dada is anti-Dada'.

### Notes

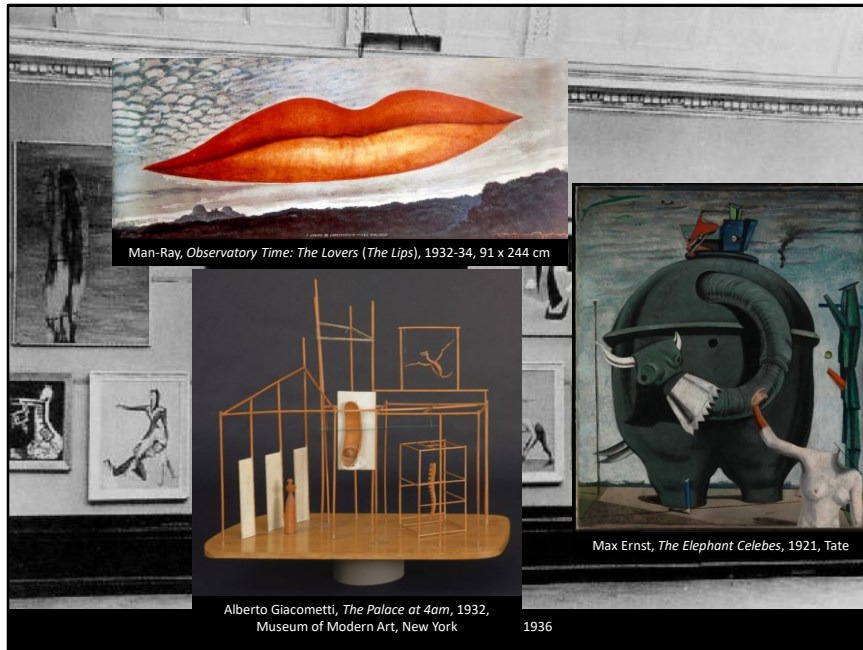
- Zurich in 1916 was a gathering place for refugees from all over war-torn Europe

and a relatively permissive society. Intellectuals gathered in cafes and discussed the structure of a future society to replace the one that had led to the carnage of the war. Lenin was in Zurich preparing his own revolution in 1916. Another intellectual was Hugo Ball with his wife Emmy Hennings, Tristan Tzara, Arthur Segal, Jean Arp, the Janco brothers and Richard Huelsenbeck, all founders of the Dada movement. Some were Romanian Jews escaping persecution and other were Germans escaping the war. They were all convinced that the war resulted from outdated bourgeois values and that society with all of its inequalities and brutality need to be replaced by a kinder, more human social order.

- The founder of Dada was the writer, Hugo Ball. In 1916 he started a satirical nightclub in Zurich, the Cabaret Voltaire, and a magazine which, wrote Ball, 'will bear the name "Dada". Dada, Dada, Dada, Dada.' It was named Cabaret Voltaire after the French philosopher who also challenged the status quo. It opened in February 1916 and the first events were similar to those Ball had organised in Berlin with mainstream music. Over the months the events became more and more daring until 14 July 1916 when the Dada movement was launched. Some say the launch on 14 July was held in the Waag Hall which was hired for one night. Dada was more an anti-art than an art movement and it consisted of performances aimed at shocking the audience. The outrage resulted in the Cabaret Voltaire closing and it moved to another location which also soon closed. Despite this it moved to other cities. Those artists that did not remain Dadaists became Surrealists.
- Hugo Ball separated himself from Dada in 1920 and became a Christian and his role was taken over by Tristan Tzara, a Romanian and French poet, playwright, and avant-garde performer who played a key role in early Zurich Dada. He was a proponent of pure automatic techniques.
- There are many theories regarding the origin of the name, one was that it was found by sticking a dagger in a dictionary and the point was over the French word 'dada' meaning 'hobby-horse'. It also means 'yeah, yeah' in Romanian. The cabaret soon closed but Dada became an international movement and eventually formed the basis of surrealism in Paris after the war.
- Leading artists associated with it include Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Kurt Schwitters. Duchamp's questioning of the fundamentals of Western art had a profound subsequent influence.
- Ironically, in 2004, Cabaret Voltaire reopened, funded by the city of Zurich and private funders. Presciently, Hugo Ball wrote in 1916, "I have another system now. I want to do it differently....I declare hereby that Expressionism, Dadaism and other "isms" are the worst type of bourgeoisie. All are bourgeoisie, all bourgeoisie. Evil, evil, evil".

## **References**

- <https://olgaistefan.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/cabaret-voltaire-from-dada-to-nietniet/>

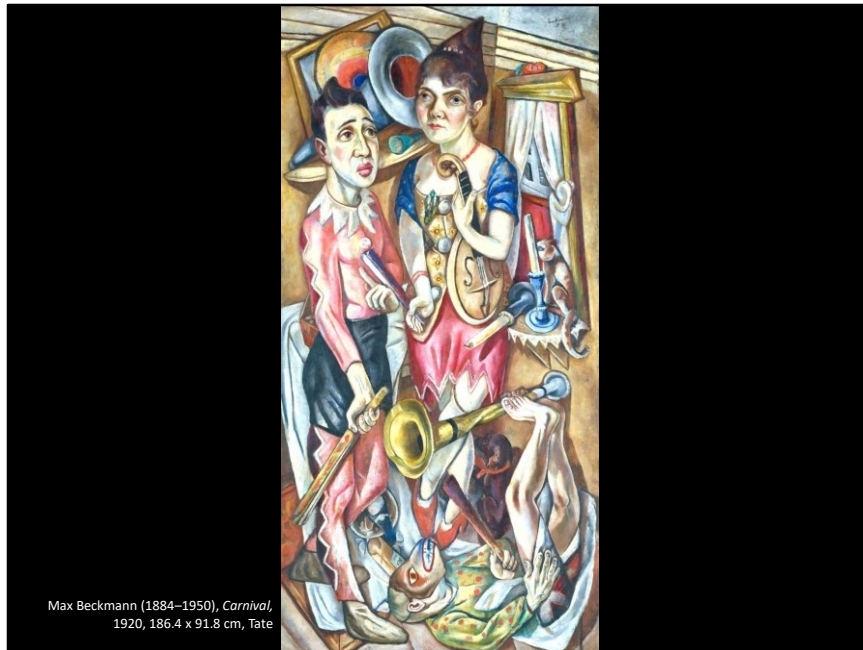


- International Surrealist Exhibition, 1936 at which Salvador Dalí attempted to deliver a lecture whilst wearing a deep-sea diver's suit and holding two hounds on a leash, but he had to be rescued after nearly suffocating
- 12 June to 4 July 1936
- First brought Surrealism to London. It was well received by artists as Britain had always had a tradition of whimsy, fantasy and dreams through artists such as Fuseli, Dadd, Burne-Jones and Lewis Carol. The exhibition was very influential but although Surrealism was the longest lived and most influential movement of the twentieth century it could be said to have quickly died away in Britain.
- At the time it caused an immense stir and it is often quoted by art historians but it not change the approach of many artists. Like an exploding rocket it was bright and entertaining for a short period but quickly died away. One reason is that many artists left Europe in 1938-40 for the US. Franco launched his coup in July of the same year.
- Surrealism was a reaction against the 'return to order' and classicism and it was inspired by the work of Sigmund Freud.
- Automatic art took root in the US and gave rise to action painting.
- Andre Breton, *What is Surrealism*, 1924. David Gascoyne organised Surrealism with Roland Penrose, Herbert Read, Henry Moore and others.

- The art works from Denmark were impounded by the police as obscene and they were eventually sent back.
- Some of the more well known artists and art works are:
  - Man-Ray, *Observatory Time: The Lovers (The Lips)*, 1932-34, 91 x 244 cm
  - Max Ernst, *The Elephant Celebes*, 1921, Tate
  - Alberto Giacometti, *The Palace at 4am*, 1932, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Giacometti said the work relates to "a period of six months passed in the presence of a woman who, concentrating all life in herself, transported my every moment into a state of enchantment. We constructed a fantastical palace in the night—a very fragile palace of matches. At the least false movement a whole section would collapse. We always began it again."
  - Francis Picabia, *Spanish Night*, 1922, 150 x 186 cm, private collection. Picabia changed his ideas as often as he changed his shirt. He was regarded as uncategorisable.
  - Pablo Picasso, *The Studio*, 1934, 128 x 159.4, Indiana University Art Museum
  - Miro, *Harlequins Carnival*, 1924
  - Magritte, *On the Threshold of Liberty*, 1930. He disagreed with the Surrealists over their rejection of religion.
  - Pablo Picasso, *The Woman with the Golden Breasts*, 1914 The Surrealists tried to claim Picasso but he was in a category of his own.
  - Giorgio de Chirico, *The Philosophers Conquest*, 1914, 125.1 x 99.1 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago
  - Giorgio de Chirico, *The Child's Brain*, 1914
  - Salvador Dali, *The Dream*, 1931
  - Salvador Dali, *Paranoiac Face*, 1935
  - René Magritte, *The Annunciation*, 1930, 113.7 x 145.9, Tate
  - Man-Ray, *The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows*, 1916, Museum of Modern Art, New York
  - Paul Klee, *The Mask of Fear*, 1932, 100.4 x 57.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York
  - Paul Klee, *Siesta of the Sphinx*, 1932
  - Dora Maar, *Le Simulateur (The Simulator or The Pretender)*, 1936
- The exhibition was **well attended**, there were **traffic jams in Piccadilly** for the first time.
- Penrose bought several of the works afterwards.
- The exhibition was educational and there were lectures.
- **Dylan Thomas** walked around **offering people cups of string** and asking if they wanted it 'weak or strong'.
- Critics did not like it, 'nice boys but immature'.

**Max Ernst, *The Elephant Celebes*, 1921, Tate**

- The boiler-like monster to which the title refers is, like the rest of the painting, highly ambiguous. It has a horned head with apparently sightless eyes, but a pair of tusks projecting on the left suggests the possible presence of a second head (or perhaps the real head?) on the other side. Its neck seems to consist of a long snake-like coil which emerges from a hole in its upper section; the top is surmounted by a brightly-coloured construction containing a mysterious eye. It seems to be standing in a large open space, but there are also indications that it is embedded in a solid background, while two fishes swim in the sky above. Three upright objects stand around it, while in the bottom corner a headless mannequin figure with a raised arm appears to be beckoning the monster towards it.
- As was first noted by John Craxton and subsequently confirmed by Ernst himself, the image of the boiler-like form on its pair of 'legs' was originally inspired by an illustration in an English anthropological journal of a huge communal corn-bin peculiar to the Konkombwa tribe of the southern Sudan. The photograph is taken from the same angle and is basically very similar, but the artist has given the hollow clay container a metallic appearance and changed its character completely by adding the various appendages described above.
- The title 'Celebes' is taken from a scurrilous couplet popular among German schoolboys.



Max Beckmann (1884–1950), *Carnival*, 1920, 186.4 x 91.8 cm, Tate

### Expressionism

- Tate website, 'This work represents the climax of **Carnival**, a **season of fancy dress parties**, masked balls and street processions with wild music and dancing. The two figures are based on **close friends** of the artist, who is possibly represented by the masked clown. Beckmann's work, with its grotesque and distorted figures, epitomised what the Nazis considered to be 'degenerate' art. He was dismissed from his teaching post in Frankfurt in 1933. Several of his works were included in the **1937 Degenerate Art show**, prompting him to leave Germany for Amsterdam.'
- Beckmann suffered from his harrowing experience as a hospital orderly during World War I and had a **breakdown in 1915**. After this his painting took on a harsh realism in which he created a complex and **mysterious symbolism** to express his tragic view of human nature. This was painted at the beginning of the 'Weimar Republic' (see below).
- Tate website, "The German title of 'Carnival' is 'Fastnacht' which refers to the climax of the Carnival season of fancy dress parties, masked balls and street processions with wild music and dancing, which take place in Catholic countries between **mid-January** and the **beginning of Lent** on Ash Wednesday (46 days

before Easter, between 4 February and 10 March). Fastnacht thus traditionally symbolises the vanity and futility and transience of the world. The fact that this carnival scene is taking place **indoors** maybe related to the fact that in **1920** the **Frankfurt police banned all public festivities** on grounds of extravagance.

- The standing figures are portraits of two important people in Beckmann's life. The woman is **Fridel Battenburg**, wife of his friend the painter Ugi Battenburg, who had taken him in and looked after him for four years after his discharge from the army. The man is **I.B. Neumann**, an art dealer who was one of the first to realise the significance of Beckmann's new post-war style and the only dealer prepared to exhibit it before 1919. Their relationship was one of close mutual emotional and intellectual support. The image of these two people in the painting reflects **Beckmann's affection for them**. The **figure on the floor** has been identified as **Beckmann himself** disguised as a **clown in a monkey mask** and wielding a trumpet with his bare feet. Beckmann seems to be using the image of the **Clown or Fool** to represent the **madness of the world** and in very general terms this image of carnival may be a metaphor for the **world as a madhouse**."

### Notes

- Unlike several of his avant-garde contemporaries, Beckmann rejected non-representational painting; instead, he took up and advanced the tradition of figurative painting. He greatly admired not only Cézanne and Van Gogh, but also Blake, Rembrandt, and Rubens, as well as Northern European artists of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, such as Bosch, Bruegel, and Matthias Grünewald. His style and method of composition are partially rooted in the imagery of medieval stained glass.
- Max Beckmann was a German painter and writer who is often described as an Expressionist although he rejected both the term and the movement. He was born in Leipzig and his traumatic experiences in World War I changed his art from academically correct to distortions of figures, forms and space. He is known for the many self-portraits he painted throughout his life. He was well read in philosophy and literature and influenced by mysticism and theosophy. He enjoyed great success and was honoured by the Weimar Republic.
- The Weimar Republic is the unofficial name of the German state between 1919 and 1933 when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor. It faced numerous problems including hyperinflation, political extremism and a difficult relationship with the victors of WWI. The people of Germany blamed the Weimar Republic rather than their wartime leaders for the country's defeat and for the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles. However, the Weimar Republic government successfully reformed the currency, unified tax policies, and organized the railway system. Weimar Germany eliminated most of the requirements of the Treaty of Versailles and negotiated repayment down or away.
- Beckmann's fortunes changed with the rise to power of Adolf Hitler, whose dislike

of Modern Art quickly led to its suppression by the state. In 1933, the Nazi government called Beckmann a "cultural Bolshevik" and dismissed him from his teaching position at the Art School in Frankfurt. In 1937 the government confiscated more than 500 of his works from German museums, putting several on display in the notorious Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich. The day after Hitler's radio speech about degenerate art in 1937, Beckmann left Germany with his second wife, Quappi, for The Netherlands. For ten years, Beckmann lived in self-imposed exile in Amsterdam, failing in his desperate attempts to obtain a visa for the United States. In 1944, the Germans attempted to draft him into the army, although the sixty-year-old artist had suffered a heart attack. The works completed in his Amsterdam studio were even more powerful and intense than the ones of his master years in Frankfurt. They included several large triptychs, which stand as a summation of Beckmann's art. After the war, Beckmann moved to the United States. During the last three years of his life, he taught at the art schools of Washington University in St. Louis.

- Today his large paintings regularly sell for over \$1 million and the record price is \$22.5 million in 2001.

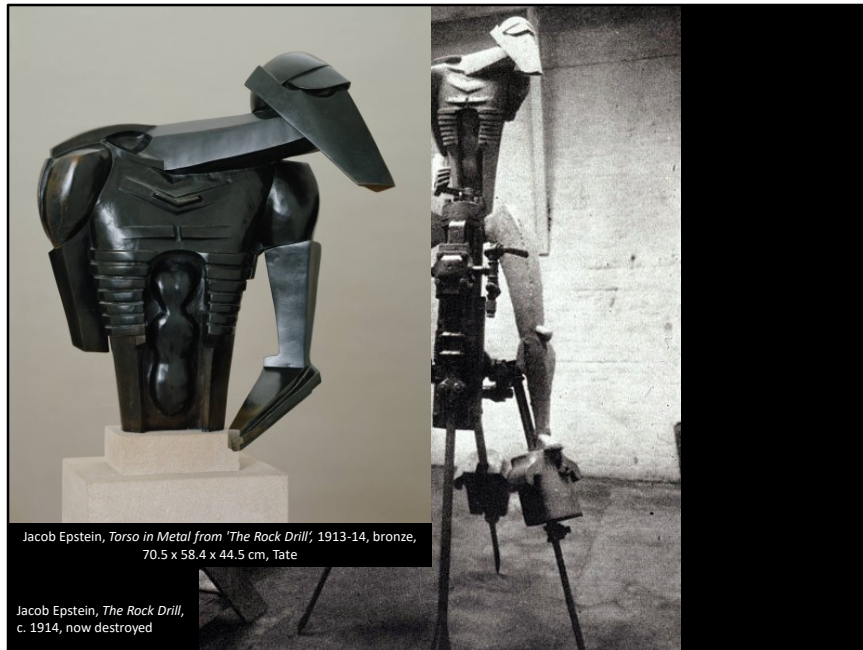
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## BRITISH SCULPTURE





Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *The Rock Drill*, c. 1914, now destroyed  
 Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'*, 1913-14, bronze, 70.5 x 58.4 x 44.5 cm, Tate

- Between 1913 and 1915, Epstein was associated with the short-lived Vorticism movement and produced one of his best known sculptures *The Rock Drill*.
- This is a photograph of *The Rock Drill* in its original form. This work appeared at the London Group exhibition in 1915. By the time of its second outing in summer 1916, however, he had dismantled it. He discarded the drill, dismembered the figure and cut it in half, leaving a one-armed torso which was then cast, initially in gun metal and ultimately in bronze. Epstein, it seems, took an expression of masculine aggression and then emasculated it. Obvious conclusions may be drawn from the fact that he is doing this at the time of the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Verdun.
- Epstein later said "Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No Humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into... later I lost my interest in machinery and discarded the drill. I cast only the upper part of the figure."
- Epstein often produced **controversial works** which **challenged taboos** on what was

appropriate subject matter for public artworks. He also made paintings and drawings, and often exhibited his work.

- The figure is sharp-edged, its limbs square in profile, and its head is a long beak-like armoured visage. The torso has what looks like armoured ribs, and in the abdomen area is an indentation containing an embryonic form. The extraordinary thing about this mechanised abstracted human figure is that it sat on top of a real miner's rock drill, with the name of its American manufacturer emblazoned on its side. The whole assembled sculpture was over three metres tall, giving it an amazing brooding and threatening physical presence. Of course, with the enormous drill jutting out from the figure's loins, it has an extraordinary phallic power about it. Writing about the piece in his autobiography Epstein said: "I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into..." (Tate)
- Epstein was a British sculptor who was born in America and moved to Paris when he was 22. He became a British citizen in 1911. His parents were Polish Jewish refugees who lived in New York's Lower East Side. His parents were middle class and he learnt to draw during long periods of illness as a child. In New York he worked in a bronze foundry. He used the money from his first major commission to move to Paris to continue his studies. In 1905 he moved from Paris to London and he married the following year. He had many extra-marital affairs that brought him five children. His wife Margaret tolerated these except for his affair with Kathleen Garman whom she shot and wounded in 1923. His eldest daughter also called Kathleen married Lucian Freud in 1948. He lived in Loughton from 1933 to 1950 and is buried in Putney Vale cemetery. He was very original for his time and influenced many sculptors including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

## **References**

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/story-jacob-epsteins-rock-drill>



Henry Moore, *Family Group*, 1950, bronze, sited at the entrance to Barclay School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, England

- This statue was Moore's **first large scale commission for a bronze** and his first commission following the Second World war. It was originally intended for **Impington Village College in Cambridge** and the Family Group subject fits in with the village college philosophy of life-long education. However, after Moore had designed the maquette, **Impington cancelled** the sculpture due to lack of funds.
- The project was revived a few years later when the **new town of Stevenage** was being designed. The Chief Education Officer, John Newsom, **persuaded the council to allocate funds for public art works** at each of the **new schools** being built, allowing Moore to complete *Family Group* for the Barclay School in 1950. He kept the cost down to £750, the price of the materials and transport. Today it is worth about £20 million. Four copied were made, and a fifth later, one of which is owned by the Tate.
- Moore's signature form is a reclining figure. Moore's exploration of this form, under the influence of the Toltec-Mayan figure he had seen at the Louvre, was to lead him to increasing abstraction as he turned his thoughts towards experimentation with the elements of design. Moore's earlier reclining figures deal

principally with mass, while his later ones contrast the solid elements of the sculpture with the space, not only round them but generally through them as he pierced the forms with openings.

- In May 2010 thieves tried to steal the sculpture for scrap. Police only found out later when reviewing CCTV footage and in February 2011 the School moved it inside.

### **References**

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/henry-moore-om-ch-family-group-r1172198>



Barbara Hepworth, *Figure (Nyanga)*, 1959-60, Tate

- This is *Figure (Nyanga)* by Barbara Hepworth. It is elm on a plywood base and is a warm honey colour and a broad grain that she uses to enhance the modelling. The sculpture is called *Figure* which encourages us to read the form as a head, particularly if consider what could be a shoulder, a jaw line, an eye and a profile. The eye is accentuated by a spiral form and the interior of the hole is slightly whitened with paint to form a contrast with the main waxed surface. If the front edge is a profile, then the face is turned upwards in a pose that reminds us of religious saints looking up to heaven. I do not mean it represents a saint but that it invokes spiritual feelings.
- Hepworth believed that art could play a powerful role in community activity, and ardently supported the United Nations as it attempted to maintain peace during the international tension of the 1950s. She saw this abstract sculpture as a response to the racial violence taking place in Africa. Hepworth said that when she was carving this sculpture she was preoccupied with **'thoughts about Africa and the United Nations'**, explaining that her concern for human suffering and dignity had on occasion lent a certain poignancy to her works. Hepworth associated the sculpture retrospectively with the efforts of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary

General of the United Nations, to establish peace in Central Africa. Hammarskjöld was a close friend of Hepworth and he was killed in a plane crash [in 1961] on his way to negotiate with a rebel leader.

- This work was linked more specifically to her sense of sorrow after the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, when South African police opened fire on demonstrators, killing 69 people. The demonstrators were objecting to 'Pass Laws' that restricted their freedom of movement. The Sharpeville massacre focused international attention on the apartheid system of racial segregation in South Africa and it initiated three decades of protest.
- A few weeks later, and a thousand miles from Sharpeville, five people were killed in Nyanga [near Cape Town]. One of those killed was a young child shot in her mother's arms. Ingrid Jonker wrote a poem in Afrikaans called '***The Child who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga***' which starts with a line from the Bible, '**The child is not dead**', and includes the line '**The child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere**'. The late Nelson Mandela read her poem at the opening of the first democratic Parliament in South Africa [on 24 May 1994]. The statue could therefore be about a single child's death but represent the universality of suffering.

### Notes

- Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) is an English artist and sculptor and one of the few internationally significant women artists in the early and mid-twentieth century. She was born in Yorkshire to a middle-class family and won a scholarship to study at Leeds School of Art (1920-21) where she met fellow student Henry Moore (1898-1986). There was a friendly rivalry and Hepworth was the first to sculpt the pierced figures that became the hallmark of both of their works. She won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art (1921-24). She travelled to Italy on another scholarship and married John Skeaping in Florence. They had a son, Paul, in 1929. She became associated with the 'new movement', direct carving, abstraction and precise forms and she joined the London Group and the 7 & 5 Society. She divorced Skeaping had triplets with Ben Nicholson in 1934 and they married in 1938. They visited the Parisian studios of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși, Piet Mondrian, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso and joined Abstraction-Création, and were major figures in Paul Nash's Unit One group.
- Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957) was a French-Romanian founder of modern sculpture who introduced abstraction and primitivism for the first time. His works were as important as Picasso's paintings to the development of modern art. His simplification of form suggests spirituality, integrity and the innate beauty of materials but above all he pursued 'the inner, hidden reality'.
- Hepworth was a skilled draughtsman and her work includes 80 drawings of surgical procedures and operating rooms after she struck up a friendship with the surgeon Norman Capaner in 1944. During World War II she was a leading figure in

the St Ives School with Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo and she divorced Nicholson in 1951. After the war she was in great demand and employed assistants. She produced two sculptures for the Festival of Britain (1951). Her son, Paul, died in a plane crash in 1953. In 1964 she attended the unveiling of *Single Form* at the United Nations in New York, which was commissioned in memory of her friend Dag Hammarskjöld (pronounced 'Hammer-shold'), Secretary General of the United Nations, who was killed in 1961. Hepworth died in an accidental fire in St. Ives in 1975 aged 72.

- Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965) wrote '**The child is not dead**' following a visit to the Philippi police station to see the body of a child who had been shot dead in his mother's arms by the police in the township of Nyanga in Cape Town. It happened in the aftermath of the massacre of 69 people in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, on 21 March 1960. The poem starts with a line from the Bible, 'The child is not dead' (Mark 5:39, Christ says, 'The child is not dead but sleeping'). Note, The Tate website says 71 were killed at Sharpeville and other sources, including the BBC, say 69.
- Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning 'separateness', or 'the state of being apart' and it was a system of racial segregation in South Africa enforced through legislation by the National Party, the governing party from 1948 to 1994.
- Nyanga is elm on a plywood base, 90.8 x 57.1 cm, and was presented by the artist to the Tate in 1969. Such large blocks are prone to splitting and a substantial crack on the rear face has been carefully filled with matching wood.
- The 7 & 5 Society was founded in 1919 and was originally seven painters and five sculptors and was traditional and conservative until Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth joined in the 1920s when it became modernistic and the non-modernists were expelled.



## WORLD WAR TWO ARTISTS





Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887–1976), *The Pond*, 1950, 114.3 x 152.4 cm, Tate

- I begin today with a range of artists, presented in chronological order of their birth date, with a representative example of the work they were producing in the 1930s.
- The 1930s was a period when a great deal of British art was figurative, uncontroversial and little influenced by developments on the Continent. I have selected artists who were more controversial for a variety of reasons.
- The biggest event of the 1930s regarding the influence of modern art from the Continental was the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936.
- Tate website: 'Like many of Lowry's pictures this is not a depiction of a particular place, but is based on recollections of a school seen in Lancashire. Lowry's combination of observation and imaginative power often produced images which capture a deeply felt experience of place, with which others could identify. For example, in 1939 John Rothenstein, then Director of the Tate Gallery, visited Lowry's first solo exhibition in London and later wrote: 'I stood in the gallery marvelling at the accuracy of the mirror that this to me unknown painter had held up to the bleakness, the obsolete shabbiness, the grimy fogboundness, the grimness of northern industrial England.' This work was then purchased by the

Trustees.'

### **Notes**

- Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976) lived in Pendlebury, Lancashire, from the age of 22 and the area around was the subject of many of his paintings for more than 40 years. He painted mysterious unpopulated landscapes, urban landscapes populated by 'matchstick people', brooding portraits and the unpublished 'marionette' works that were only found after his death. His father was a clerk and a 'cold fish' and his mother was a talented pianist but in poor health. She wanted a daughter rather than a 'clumsy boy' and she was controlling and intolerant of failure. He had an unhappy childhood and his parents never appreciated his artistic talent. He made few friends at school and showed little academic aptitude. After school he started work as a rent collector and spent his evenings learning to draw and in 1905 he attended Manchester School of Art where he came into contact with French Impressionism. Between 1915 and 1925 he studied at the Royal Technical Institute, Salford. He had to care for his mother as she became more ill and painted between 10pm and 2am after she had fallen asleep. She died in 1939 and during the war he was a volunteer fire fighter and he became an official war artist in 1943. He became depressed after his mother's death and neglected the house to such an extent that the landlord repossessed it. However, he had money and bought another house which although he found it ugly and uncomfortable he remained in it until his death 30 years later. In 1962 became a Royal Academician aged 74.
- He went on holiday in the Seaburn Hotel in Sunderland and sketched everywhere. When he had no other material he sketched on serviettes which he gave to young people around him. These serviette sketches are now worth thousands of pounds. He collected amusing stories whether true or not and often set out to mischievously deceive. He had a collection of clocks in his living room all set to different times. He had many long-lasting friendships and made friends throughout his life. As his celebrity grew he disliked by approached by strangers, particularly at home and there is a story that he kept a suitcase by the front door so that he could make an excuse to leave as soon as anyone arrived. He discontinued this practice when one young man offered to take him to the station and he had to buy a ticket to the next station to get rid of him.
- He claimed he was a simple man who could not appreciate modern art but he admired René Magritte and Lucian Freud, although he admitted that he "didn't understand" Francis Bacon's work. When he became more wealthy he acquired paintings and drawings by Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti who he described as his chief inspiration.
- Lowry was a shy and secretive artist who remained unmarried until his death, at the age of 88, Lowry once admitted that he had "never had a woman". He was a keen ballet-goer who regularly attended performances by the Royal Ballet at

Covent Garden and in his home city of Manchester. He rejected five honours in his life including a knighthood and so he holds the record for the most rejected British honours. There was a major retrospective at the Tate in 2013 and his first solo exhibition outside the UK in China in 2014.

- Quotations:
  - I wanted to paint myself into what absorbed me ... Natural figures would have broken the spell of it, so I made my figures half unreal.
  - You don't need brains to be a painter, just feelings.
  - I am not an artist. I am a man who paints.
  - This art is a terrible business.



Laura Knight (1877-1970), *A Balloon Site, Coventry*, 1943, 102.5 x 127 cm, Imperial War Museums

- **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) was an English artist who worked in oils, watercolours, etching, engraving and drypoint. Knight was a painter in the figurative, realist tradition who embraced English Impressionism. In her long career Knight was among the most successful and popular painters in Britain. In 1929 she was created a Dame, and in 1936 became the first woman elected to the Royal Academy since its foundation in 1768. Her large retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1965 was another first for a woman. Although Knight was known for painting amidst the world of the theatre and ballet in London, and for being a war artist during the Second World War, she was also greatly interested in, and inspired by, marginalised communities and individuals, including Gypsies and circus performers. Her success in the male-dominated British art establishment paved the way for greater status and recognition for women artists.
- Laura Johnson was born in Derbyshire and her father died shortly after she was born so she grew up in a family struggling with financial problems.
- Her husband, Harold Knight registered as a conscientious objector, and was eventually required to work as a farm labourer. Wartime censorship included

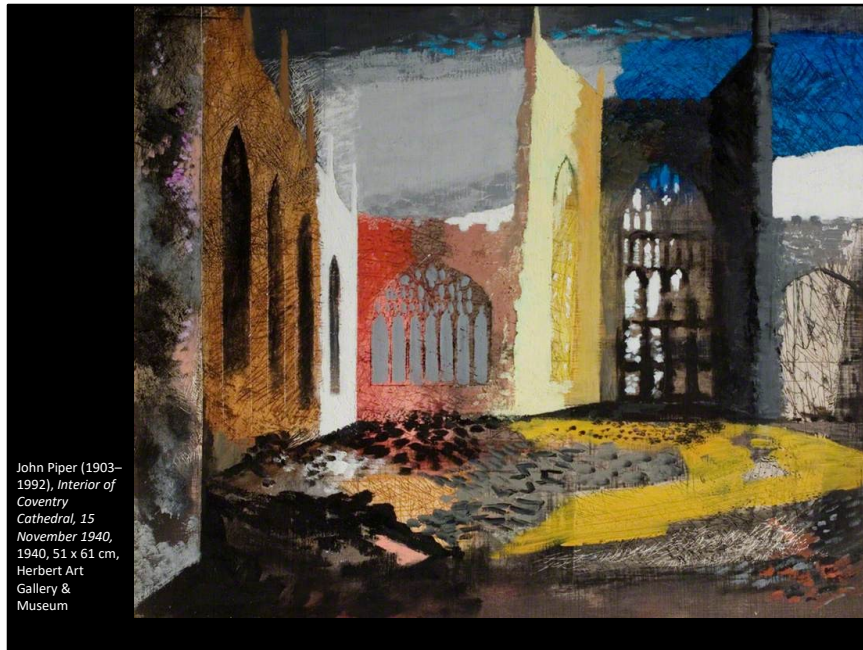
restrictions on painting around the British coastline, which caused problems for Laura Knight.

- In September 1939 Knight was asked to produce a recruitment poster for the Women's Land Army. Knight hired two Suffolk Punch horses and a plough from a farmer and painted them outdoors in a cherry orchard on the Averills' farm in Worcestershire. Her original design for the WLA poster was rejected for placing too much emphasis on the horses rather than the women working. A new design, with a single woman, was accepted. Knight painted her 1940 Royal Academy entry, January 1940, showing a similar scene at the same time. During the Second World War, Knight was an official war artist, contracted by the War Artists' Advisory Committee on short-term commissions.
- *A Balloon Site, Coventry* (1942) – shows a team of women hoisting a barrage balloon into position with the chimneys of industrial Coventry in the background surrounding the spire of Coventry Cathedral. WAAC commissioned the work as a propaganda tool to recruit women for Balloon Command, and Knight's composition succeeds in making the work appear both heroic and glamorous.

### **References**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura\\_Knight](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Knight)

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/15503>



John Piper (1903–1992), *Interior of Coventry Cathedral, 15 November 1940*, 1940, 51 x 61 cm, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

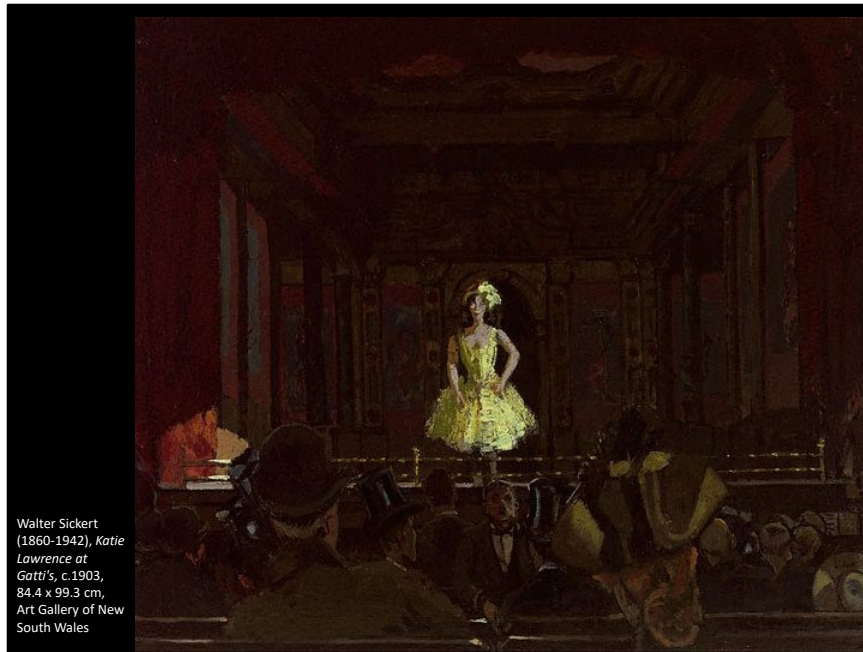
- **John Piper** (1903-1992) was born in Epsom, the son of a solicitor. As a child he explored the countryside and painted pictures of old churches and started making illustrated guide books. He had two older brother one of whom was killed at Ypres in 1915. After attending Epsom College he wanted to become an artist but his father insisted he join the family law firm. He worked there for three years and took his articles but refused an offer of a partnership. His father disinherited him but it enabled him to attend Richmond School of Art where he prepared for his entry into the Royal College of Art in 1928. He married a fellow student in 1929. He held a joint exhibition with his wife and wrote art and music reviews. One review led to an invitation to join the Seven and Five Society. In 1935 his wife left him for another artist and he moved in with Myfanwy Evans, the art critic, in a farmhouse near Henley. Piper met John Betjeman who asked him to write and illustrate the *Shell Guide to Oxfordshire*.
- At the start of World War Two Piper was persuaded by Kenneth Clark to work as an official war artist for the War Artists' Advisory Committee, which he did from 1940 to 1944 on short-term contracts. Piper was one of only two artists commissioned

to paint inside of Air Raid Precaution control rooms. In November 1940 Piper persuaded the WAAC committee that he should be allowed to concentrate upon painting bombed churches. This may have reflected both his pre-war conversion to the Anglican faith as much as his previous interest in depicting derelict architectural ruins. The terms of this commission meant Piper would be visiting bombed cities, and other sites, as soon as possible following an air raid often "the following morning, before the clearing up". He arrived in Coventry the morning after the air raid of 14 November 1940 that resulted in 1,000 casualties and the destruction of the medieval cathedral.



## BRITISH FIGURATIVE ARTISTS





Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Katie Lawrence at Gatti's*, c.1903, 84.4 x 99.3 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales

- One of the two paintings he exhibited at the NEAC in April 1888, *Katie Lawrence at Gatti's*, which portrayed a well known music hall singer of the era, incited controversy "**more heated than any other surrounding an English painting in the late 19th century**". Sickert's rendering was denounced as ugly and vulgar, and his choice of subject matter was deplored as too tawdry for art, as female performers were popularly viewed as morally akin to prostitutes. The painting announced what would be Sickert's recurring interest in sexually provocative themes.
- Sickert's music hall paintings were **inspired** by those of his friend **Edgar Degas**. In Paris, Degas and Edouard Manet's pictures of café concerts were greeted with interest and even respected.
- The painting technique used was derived from that used by Whistler and during the 1880s Sickert had been Whistler's studio assistant. The shallow foreground and lack of background recession are typical of Whistler, for example, *Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1, Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, 1871.
- By 1887 he had fixed upon the theme which would occupy him intermittently for

most of his career, the world of the **British music hall**, exhibiting his first painting of this subject, *Le Mammoth Comique*, at the Society of British Artists. A natural platform for his work at this time was the recently formed New English Art Club, which Sickert joined that year. His arrival crystallised a split within the group between the more conservative artists and those who looked to the example of **French impressionism**.

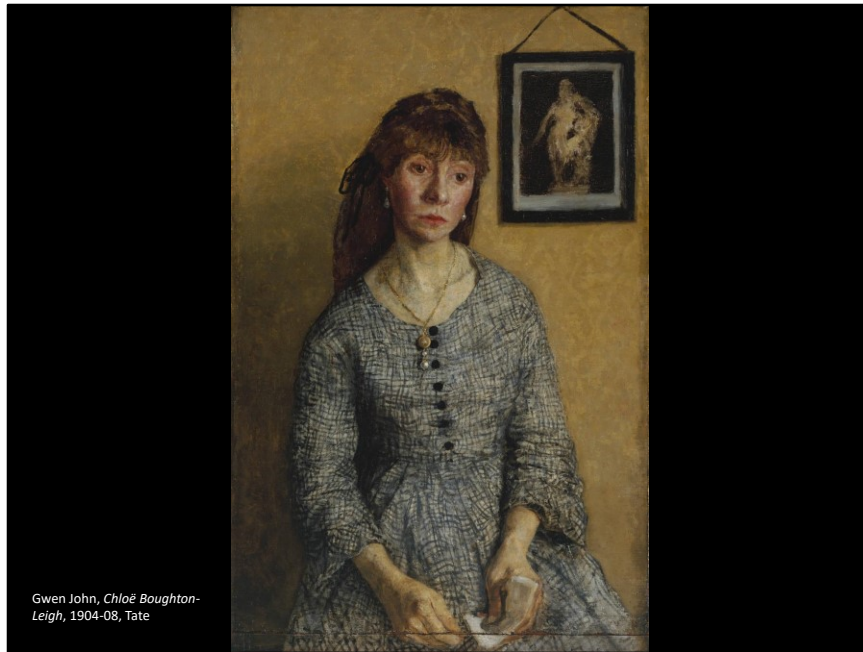
- In Britain Sickert faced intense critical hostility when he showed *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties: Second Turn of Miss Katie Lawrence*, **1887–8** (believed destroyed, possibly similar to the painting above) at the New English Art Club in **April 1888**. It represented '**the lowest degradation of which the art of painting is capable**', according to the *Builder*, while the *Artist* believed it symptomatic of 'the **aggressive squalor** that pervades to a greater or lesser extent the whole of modern existence.' Even other members of the New English Art Club were shocked, and the artist **Stanhope Forbes** angrily scorned the picture as '**tawdry, vulgar and the sentiment of the lowest music hall**'.

### Notes

- 'No painter before Sickert had dared to consider the music hall as a fitting subject for art, and his production of such pictures was considered wilful and provocative. In Britain the music hall held distinct connotations of immorality. Many of the acts, Minnie Cunningham included, dealt in the currency of ribald, vulgar or suggestive humour, and it was just this waywardness that partly made the music hall so popular. But the halls themselves were considered dens of dissolution by the moral majority. Alcohol was served throughout performances, and volatile audiences were encouraged to join in singing the often bawdy song choruses. Additionally, many of the halls were believed to be venues where prostitutes plied their trade. The Empire in Leicester Square was particularly notorious as a place where, away from the auditorium in its promenade area, clients could meet prostitutes.' (Tate website)

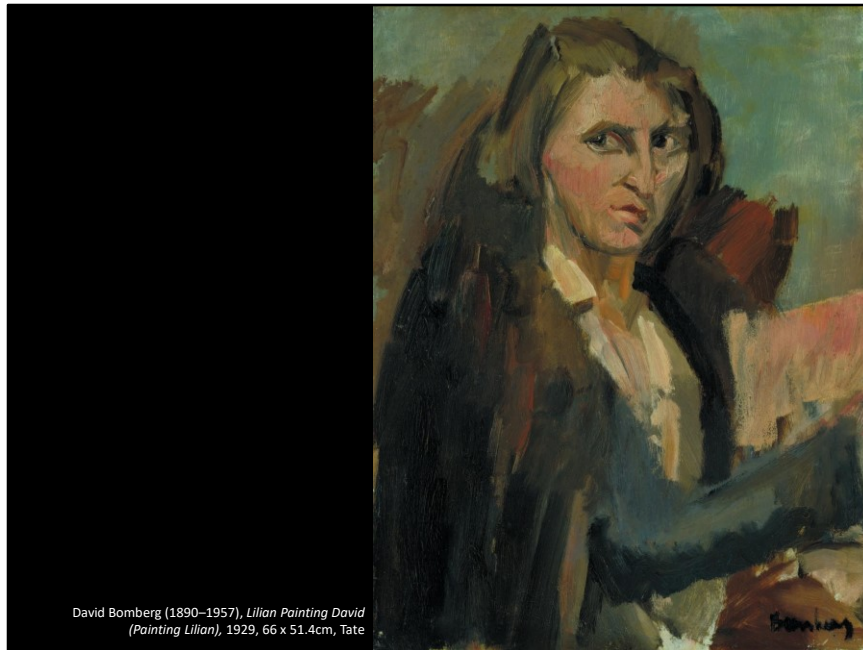
### References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-minnie-cunningham-r1139296>



Gwen John, *Chloë Boughton-Leigh*, 1904-08, Tate

- The solitary figure, her downward gaze and the open book in her hand produce a sense of calmness and intensity that was typical of her work. Gwen John's quiet art with its subtle colour relationships, stands in contrast to her brother, Augustus John's, far more assertive work. She was once overshadowed by his work and his enormous reputation at the time but critical opinion now tends to view her as the more talented. Augustus predicted this reversal, saying '**In 50 years' time I will be known as the brother of Gwen John.**' And in 1952 she was described as 'one of the finest painters of our time and country' [John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters*].
- The portrait shown here is of a Paris friend, Chloë Boughton-Leigh. The subdued colouring, short foreground and self-absorption of the sitter create a deeply intense atmosphere. John showed it in London, at the New English Art Club. Ellen Theodosia Boughton-Leigh (1868–1947), known by her family as Chloë, was, like Gwen John, a Catholic convert and latterly she and her sister Maude (q.v.) lived on Canvey Island. Maude was Gwen John's friend; both had studied at the Slade and probably met in Paris.



David Bomberg (1890–1957), *Lilian Painting David (Painting Lilian)*, 1929, 66 x 51.4cm, Tate


- Whether because his **faith in the machine age had been shattered** by his experiences as a private soldier in the trenches or because of the pervasive retrogressive attitude towards modernism in Britain Bomberg moved to a more figurative style in the 1920s and his work became **increasingly dominated by portraits and landscapes** drawn from nature. Gradually developing a more expressionist technique he travelled widely through the Middle East and Europe.
- Tate, “This portrait shows Bomberg’s second wife, Lilian, painting him at the same time as he is painting her. She later wrote, ‘We recognized the total commitment to art in each other’. The portrait that Lilian Bomberg was painting at the same time no longer exists. Portraits of artists’ lovers abound in art. But here Bomberg chooses to portray his wife as a working artist, rather than as his muse. Bomberg had recently returned from Toledo where, influenced by El Greco, a sixteenth-century Greek artist who worked in Spain, he developed a loose and expressive style which characterised his later work.”
- Bomberg was one of the **most audacious** of the **exceptional generation** of artists

who studied at the **Slade** School of Art under Henry Tonks, and which included Mark Gertler, Stanley Spencer, C.R.W. Nevinson and Dora Carrington. Bomberg painted a series of complex geometric compositions combining the influences of cubism and futurism in the years immediately preceding World War I; typically using a limited number of striking colours, turning **humans** into simple, **angular shapes**, and sometimes overlaying the whole painting a strong grid-work colouring scheme. He **was expelled** from the Slade School of Art in 1913, with agreement between the senior teachers Tonks, Frederick Brown and Philip Wilson Steer, because of the **audacity** of his breach from the conventional approach of that time.

- Bomberg is now recognised as one of the **most exceptional** and original artists of his generation, but he died in 1957 in near obscurity. Son of Jewish immigrants from the East End of London, he was one of the pioneers of early modernism. During the First World War Bomberg fought at the Somme and, having witnessed the atrocities, he spent the rest of his artistic career trying to find or create order, moving frequently, painting and drawing the landscapes of Palestine, Spain, Cyprus, Cornwall and London.

### Notes

- **David Bomberg** (1890-1957) was **born in Birmingham**, the seventh of eleven children of a **Polish-Jewish leatherworker**. When he was 5 the family moved to Whitechapel where he spent the rest of his childhood. He studied art at City And Guilds and returned to Birmingham to train as a lithographer but quit to study under Walter Sickert at Westminster School of Art from 1908 to 1910. **Sickert was an early influence** alongside Roger Fry's 1910 exhibition ***Manet and the Post-Impressionists***, where he first saw the work of **Paul Cézanne**.
- Bomberg had **financial difficulties** but with the help of John Singer Sargent he was able to attend the **Slade** School of Art. The emphasis in teaching at the Slade was on technique and draughtsmanship to which Bomberg was well-suited—**winning the Tonks Prize** for his drawing. He rapidly moved away from traditional techniques under the influence of the Futurists, Francis Picabia and Gino Severini, and Fry's ***Second Post Impressionist Exhibition*** in 1912, which displayed the works of Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and the Fauvists alongside those of Wyndham Lewis, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell. He was **expelled from the Slade** because of his radical approach but was noticed by Wyndham Lewis and Filippo Marinetti and he then travelled to France with Jacob Epstein and met Amedeo Modigliani, André Derain and Pablo Picasso. On his return he exhibited at the Camden Town Group (1913) and the London Group (1914). He refused to join the Vorticists or submit an article for their magazine BLAST.



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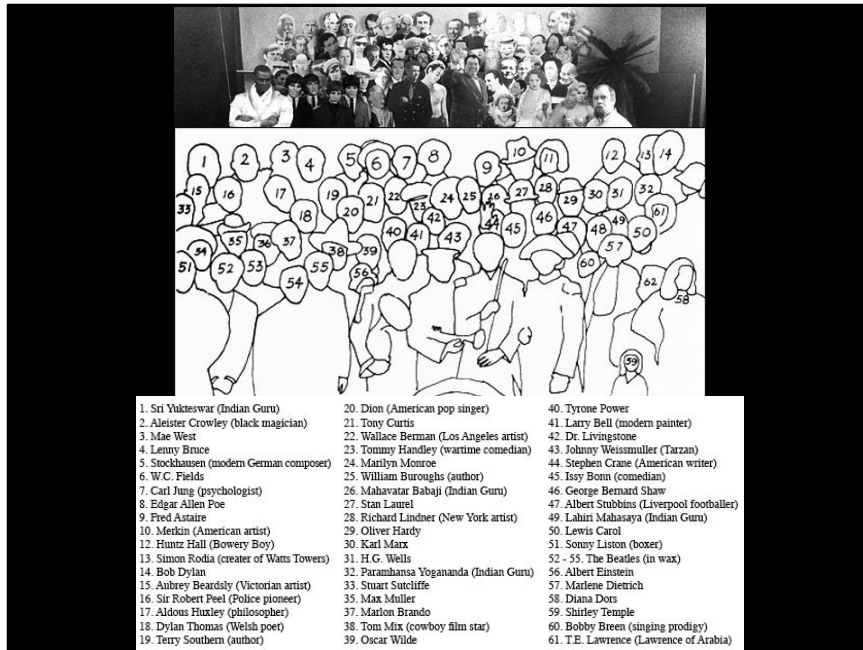




Peter Blake (b. 1932), The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band record sleeve design, 1967 (made), colour offset lithograph on paper and card

The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, released by EMI Records in 1967, is arguably the most famous album sleeve of all time. The image on the album cover is composed of a collage of celebrities. There are 88 figures, including the band members themselves. Pop artist Peter Blake and his wife Jann Haworth conceived and constructed the set, including all the life-sized cut-outs of historical figures. The set was photographed, with the Beatles standing in the centre, by Michael Cooper. Copyright was a problem as Brian Epstein, the Beatles' manager, had to locate each person in order to get permission to use their image in this context.





Famous personalities were represented in the photograph by cardboard cutouts but the PR effort was enormous as every star had to be contacted for permission.

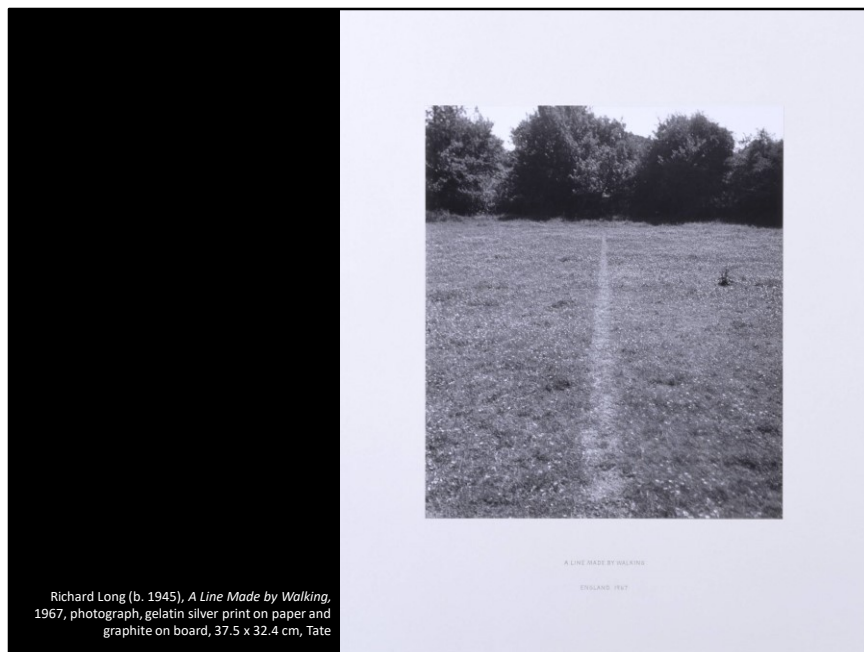
1. Sri Paramahansa Yogananda (Indian Guru)
2. Aleister Crowley (black magician)
3. Mae West
4. Lenny Bruce
5. Stockhausen (modern German composer)
6. W.C. Fields
7. Carl Jung (psychologist)
8. Edgar Allan Poe
9. Fred Astaire
10. Merkin (American artist)
11. Bowery Boy Leo Gorcey, insisted on a \$400 fee and was promptly airbrushed out
12. Huntz Hall (Bowery Boy)
13. Simon Rodia (creator of Watts Towers)
14. Bob Dylan
15. Aubrey Beardsley (Victorian artist)
16. Sir Robert Peel (Police pioneer)

17. Aldous Huxley (philosopher)
18. Dylan Thomas (Welsh poet)
19. Terry Southern (author)
20. Dion (American pop singer)
21. Tony Curtis
22. Wallace Berman (Los Angeles artist)
23. Tommy Handley (wartime comedian)
24. Marilyn Monroe
25. William Burroughs (author)
26. Mahavatar Babaji (Indian Guru)
27. Stan Laurel
28. Richard Lindner (New York artist)
29. Oliver Hardy
30. Karl Marx
31. H.G. Wells
32. Paramhansa Yogananda (Indian Guru)
33. Stuart Sutcliffe (the fifth Beatle, he left to pursue a career as an artist but died of a brain haemorrhage in 1962 aged 21)
- 34.
35. Max Muller
- 36.
37. Marlon Brando
38. Tom Mix (cowboy film star)
39. Oscar Wilde
40. Tyrone Power
41. Larry Bell (modern painter)
42. Dr Livingstone
43. Johnny Weissmuller
44. Stephen Crane (American writer)
45. Issy Bonn (comedian)
46. George Bernard Shaw
47. Albert Stubbins (Liverpool footballer)
- 48.
49. Lahiri Mahasaya (Indian Guru)
50. Lewis Carol
51. Sonny Liston (boxer)
52. The Beatles (in wax), John Lennon (1940-1980)
53. Ringo Starr (b. 1940)
54. Paul McCartney (b. 1942)
55. George Harrison (1943-2001), he died of lung cancer
56. Albert Einstein
57. Marlene Dietrich

- 58. Diana Dors
- 59. Shirley Temple
- 60. Bobby Breen (singing prodigy)
- 61. T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia)

### **References**

- <http://performingsongwriter.com/sgt-peppers-album-cover/>



Richard Long (b. 1945), *A Line Made by Walking*, 1967, photograph, gelatin silver print on paper and graphite on board, 37.5 x 32.4 cm, Tate

- **Land Art** Land art was part of the wider conceptual art movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The most famous land art work is Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* of 1970, an earthwork built out into the Great Salt Lake in the USA. Land art is art that is made directly in the landscape, sculpting the land itself into earthworks or making structures in the landscape using natural materials such as rocks or twigs.
- Richard Long RA CBE (b. 1945) is an English sculptor and one of the best known British land artists.
- Long is the only artist to have been short-listed four times for the Turner Prize. He was nominated in 1984, 1987 and 1988, and then won the award in 1989 for *White Water Line*. He currently lives and works in Bristol, the city in which he was born. *A Line Made by Walking* (1967).
- In 2009, a retrospective of Long's work entitled "Heaven and Earth," appeared at the Tate Britain.
- Long's *Whitechapel Slate Circle* (1981) brought a record price for the artist in 1989 when it sold for \$209,000 at Sotheby's in New York



Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Standing by the Rags*, 1988–89, 168.9 x 138.4 cm, Tate  
 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), *Angelica saved by Ruggiero*, 1819-39, 47.6 x 39.4 cm, National Gallery

- Looking forward to next term, two paintings, one by Lucien Freud and the other by David Hockney continue the theme of British figurative painting.
- Since the 1960s the nude has been an important part of Freud's work. Commentators have commented on the disturbing accuracy which he describes as 'revealing and intrusive, rather than rhyming and soothing'. Intense scrutiny rather than idealisation is an important theme within Freud's work.
- Like many of Freud's pictures *Standing by the Rags* was painted in his London studio. The motif of the mound of rags first appeared in *Red Haired Man* 1962-3 (Erich Sommer Collection) but only became commonly recurrent during the late 1980s. The rags, which are in fact heaped in front of a hidden radiator, are used by Freud for wiping brushes and have been interpreted by some critics as a coded sign for the artist's presence in the image. Jeremy Lewison has compared the smeared paint on the rags to blood and other bodily secretions.
- The degree of attention given to the detail and texture of the rags is equivalent to

that given to the figure. The shallow spatial depth of the picture makes it difficult to tell whether the woman is standing against or lying on the rags.

- The painting has been compared to that of the female figure in Ingres' *Angelica Saved by Ruggiero* (National Gallery Collection, London), a painting that Freud included in 'The Artist's Eye' exhibition held at the National Gallery in 1987. The pose is also reminiscent of the figure of Christ being lowered from the Cross in old master paintings of the Deposition.
- The paint has been applied with a stiff hog-hair brush to create a textured appearance for the whole painting. The model's face, breasts and genitalia are rendered in a particularly thick impasto, which heightens their physical presence within the overall scheme. The physicality of the model is further enhanced by the warm, dark palette used for her body compared to the cool tones of the rags. In contrast to the ivory smoothness of a classical nude, the flesh of Freud's model is sagging, mottled and flushed. *Standing by the Rags* is one of Freud's largest paintings of the nude.

### **Notes**

- The subject of the painting by Ingres is taken from Ariosto's epic poem, 'Orlando Furioso' (Canto 10). Ruggiero, riding on a hippogriff (a mythological animal which was half horse and half griffin), rescues Angelica from a sea monster. This painting is a later and smaller version of a large picture on this subject which Ingres painted for Louis XVIII in 1819 which is now in the Louvre, Paris.

### **References**

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/freud-standing-by-the-rags-t05722/text-summary>



David Hockney (b. 1937), *Barry Humphries, 26th, 27th, 28th March, 2015*, acrylic on canvas. 21.92 x 91.44 cm

- I cover Hockney next term but this shows that the British figurative tradition is still alive and well. This is one of the paintings at the Royal Academy exhibition 2 July to 2 October 2016. It is a snapshot of those that have crossed his path in the last two years. His subjects – all friends, family and acquaintances – include office staff, fellow artists, curators and gallerists. Each work is the same size, showing his sitter in the same chair, against the same vivid blue background and all were painted in the same time frame of three days. Yet Hockney's virtuoso paint handling allows their differing personalities to leap off the canvas with warmth and immediacy.
- Barry Humphries (b. 1934) is an Australian comedian, actor, satirist, artist, and author. He is best known for writing and playing his on-stage and television alter egos Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson. He is also a film producer and script writer, a star of London's West End musical theatre, an award-winning writer, and an accomplished landscape painter.