

CONCEPTUAL ART
AND MINIMALISM
IN BRITAIN



QUESTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

- Sarah Lucas lives with her partner, the artist, musician and poet Julian Simmons



Artists Sarah Lucas (C) and Tracey Emin (R) attend The ICA Fundraising Gala held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on March 29, 2011 in London, England.

- Sarah Lucas now lives principally near Aldeburgh in Suffolk with her partner, the artist, musician and poet Julian Simmons, in the former bolthole of the composer Benjamin Britten and the tenor Peter Pears. She bought it as a weekend place with Sadie Coles in 2002. 'I moved out there six years ago – it's nice, impressive,' she says curtly, before clamming up. 'I don't want people coming and snooping on me.' (*The Telegraph*, 10 September 2013)
- Benjamin Britten's first house in Aldeburgh was Crag House on Crabbe Street overlooking the sea. He later moved to the Red House, Golf Lane, Aldeburgh which is now a Britten museum.



BRITISH ART SINCE 1950

1. British Art Since 1950
2. Pop Art
3. Figurative Art since 1950
4. David Hockney
5. Feminist Art
6. **Conceptual Art & Minimalism**
7. The Young British Artists
8. Video and Performance Art
9. Outsider Art & Grayson Perry
10. Summary



- **Conceptual Art.** In the 1960s artists began to abandon traditional approaches and made ideas the essence of their work. These artists became known as Conceptual artists. Many of the YBA can be considered, and consider themselves, conceptual artists. That is, they regard the idea behind the work as important or more important than the work itself. In some ways Conceptual Art was a reaction against Pop Art. Asking what art is, as well as what it might be for, inevitably led some artists to create work that was often politically engaged with themes and issues ranging from feminism to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Among others the recent exhibition at Tate Britain, **Conceptual Art 1964-1979** considered: Keith Arnatt, Art & Language, Conrad Atkinson, Victor Burgin, Michael Craig-Martin, Hamish Fulton, Margaret Harrison, Susan Hiller, John Hilliard, Mary Kelly, John Latham, Richard Long, Bruce McLean, David Tremlett and Stephen Willats.
- Tate definition: 'Conceptual art is art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object. It emerged as an art movement in the 1960s and the term usually refers to art made from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.'
- Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917 can be considered a precursor of Conceptual Art.
- In 1967 the American artist Sol LeWitt wrote *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* for the American art journal *Artforum*. This gives a type of manifesto for Conceptual Art.

- Other well known works include:
 - Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965)
 - 1991: Charles Saatchi funds Damien Hirst and the next year in the Saatchi Gallery exhibits his *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, a shark in formaldehyde in a vitrine.
 - 1999: Tracey Emin is nominated for the Turner Prize. Part of her exhibit is *My Bed*, her dishevelled bed, surrounded by detritus such as condoms, blood-stained knickers, bottles and her bedroom slippers.
 - 2001: Martin Creed wins the Turner Prize for *The Lights Going On and Off*, an empty room in which the lights go on and off.

Notes

Sentences on Conceptual Art

by Sol Lewitt

1. Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.
2. Rational judgements repeat rational judgements.
3. Irrational judgements lead to new experience.
4. Formal art is essentially rational.
5. Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically.
6. If the artist changes his mind midway through the execution of the piece he compromises the result and repeats past results.
7. The artist's will is secondary to the process he initiates from idea to completion. His wilfulness may only be ego.
8. When words such as painting and sculpture are used, they connote a whole tradition and imply a consequent acceptance of this tradition, thus placing limitations on the artist who would be reluctant to make art that goes beyond the limitations.
9. The concept and idea are different. The former implies a general direction while the latter is the component. Ideas implement the concept.
10. Ideas can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.
11. Ideas do not necessarily proceed in logical order. They may set one off in unexpected directions, but an idea must necessarily be completed in the mind before the next one is formed.
12. For each work of art that becomes physical there are many variations that do not.
13. A work of art may be understood as a conductor from the artist's mind to the viewer's. But it may never reach the viewer, or it may never leave the artist's mind.
14. The words of one artist to another may induce an idea chain, if they share the same concept.
15. Since no form is intrinsically superior to another, the artist may use any form,

from an expression of words (written or spoken) to physical reality, equally.

16. If words are used, and they proceed from ideas about art, then they are art and not literature; numbers are not mathematics.
17. All ideas are art if they are concerned with art and fall within the conventions of art.
18. One usually understands the art of the past by applying the convention of the present, thus misunderstanding the art of the past.
19. The conventions of art are altered by works of art.
20. Successful art changes our understanding of the conventions by altering our perceptions.
21. Perception of ideas leads to new ideas.
22. The artist cannot imagine his art, and cannot perceive it until it is complete.
23. The artist may misperceive (understand it differently from the artist) a work of art but still be set off in his own chain of thought by that misconstrual.
24. Perception is subjective.
25. The artist may not necessarily understand his own art. His perception is neither better nor worse than that of others.
26. An artist may perceive the art of others better than his own.
27. The concept of a work of art may involve the matter of the piece or the process in which it is made.
28. Once the idea of the piece is established in the artist's mind and the final form is decided, the process is carried out blindly. There are many side effects that the artist cannot imagine. These may be used as ideas for new works.
29. The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.
30. There are many elements involved in a work of art. The most important are the most obvious.
31. If an artist uses the same form in a group of works, and changes the material, one would assume the artist's concept involved the material.
32. Banal ideas cannot be rescued by beautiful execution.
33. It is difficult to bungle a good idea.
34. When an artist learns his craft too well he makes slick art.
35. These sentences comment on art, but are not art.

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References

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-minimalism.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-conceptual-art.htm>



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917, replica 1974

- In order to understand this artwork by Marcel Duchamp I would like you to imagine it is April 1917 and you are a director on the board of the American Society of Independent Artists in New York. It is in the middle of World War I in Europe and as a result many European artists have come to New York and you are planning to take over from Paris as the leading centre for modern art. To help achieve this you announced that artists could be certain that whatever they send would be hung. However, you have just been called to an emergency meeting as an artist called Richard Mutt has submitted this—a urinal turned 90 degrees with the title *Fountain*, signed 'R. Mutt, 1917' and mounted on a black pedestal. You now have to decide if it is a work of art. What do you think? Is it a work of art?
- Would you like to know what the board decided? By a narrow majority they decided it was not an artwork. Some of the board thought it was indecent, indicated by newspapers referring to it as a 'bathroom appliance', and some unoriginal, I assume this meant that the artist had not used any physical skill in making it but had simply bought it from a shop.
- What the board didn't know was that the work was submitted by a fellow director, Marcel Duchamp using the false name 'Richard Mutt'. As a result of the board's decision not to accept *Fountain* Duchamp resigned in protest together with fellow

director Walter Arensberg. He felt that the heart of the matter was that no committee could or should judge whether a new, innovative work was art or not, it was arbitrary censorship.

- Why a urinal? Was Duchamp testing the committee? Undoubtedly. Duchamp told a New York newspaper, '**A great deal of modern art is meant to be amusing**'. That is another possibility. He had been experimenting with the idea of found items he called 'Readymades'. He had already mounted a bicycle wheel on a kitchen stool (*Bicycle Wheel*, 1913) and had chosen a bottle dryer (*Bottle Dryer*, 1914) as Readymades. So what is a Readymade? You might think he selected the urinal because the curves of the basin are beautiful or because the shape is similar to a hooded Madonna or a seated Buddha but we know he did not select them for their beauty.
- He was making the point that a work of art was created simply by an artist choosing an object and presenting it as a work of art. He was bypassing the association of art with physical skill and craft and presenting an idea, was exposing the role of institutions in defining what is art and was drawing our attention to the particularity of an otherwise anonymous mass-produced object. In 1959, Duchamp was asked on BBC Radio if he considered the Readymades art and he gave a more profound answer, he said they were '**a form of denying the possibility of defining art**'. These were and still are controversial ideas, as someone complained at the time, if the urinal was art an artist might just as well put a pile of manure on a canvas and call it art.
- *Fountain* became one of the most discussed works of the twentieth century. In 2004, 500 British art experts voted it the most influential work of art of the twentieth century. It remains enigmatic and sits there, still raising the question 'Am I art?'

Notes

- Henri-Robert-Marcel Duchamp (28 July 1887 – 2 October 1968) was a French, naturalized American painter, sculptor, chess player and writer whose work is associated with Cubism, conceptual art and Dada, although he distanced himself from the Dada group.
- Duchamp was a well-known in New York by 1917, in fact notorious, as the avant-garde French artist who had exhibited *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* at the Armory Show in four years previously (1913) and he arrived in New York in 1915.
- Readymades came in existence almost accidentally. The first was when he felt like mounting a bicycle wheel upside down on a wooden stool (*Bicycle Wheel*, 1913). Another was a cheap reproduction of a winter evening landscape on which he added two small dots, one red and the other yellow. Another was *Bottle Dryer* (*Bottlerack*), 1914. Another was a snow shovel on which he wrote, 'In Advance of the Broken Arm'. Another was *Comb* (1916). They were studio objects. The idea of exhibiting them only came later. Two were shown to little effect in 1916, it was

only with *Fountain* in 1917 that there was a public reaction. Duchamp recalled that *Fountain* resulted from a discussion with Walter Arensberg and the artist Joseph Stella.

- The titles of the Readymades (that had titles) were not intended to explain, they did not act a signifier to the signified but they clashed with the object and prevented an explanation by surrounding it in a cloud of mystery. Duchamp was aware that history decides the value of an artwork so he limited the number of Readymades each year and selected them in such a way that history is unable to decide. Duchamp was asked in 1959 if a readymade is a work of art. He said it was a difficult question as every age defines art in different ways meaning there is no one essential way of defining it. The readymade is a sort of irony because it says **'here is a thing I call art; I didn't even make it myself'**. Etymologically art means to make and instead I take it readymade **'so it was a form of denying the possibility of defining art'**.
- Duchamp was working on *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (the Large Glass) (1915-1923) at the time.
- The Society of Independent Artists exhibition opened on 10 April 1917 at The Grand Central Palace New York. Walter Conrad Arensberg (1878–1954) was a wealthy American art collector, critic and poet. He was a friend of Duchamp and director of the Society of Independent Artists. He resigned at the same time as Duchamp when *Fountain* was rejected.
- In Europe art had largely ceased and galleries had closed because of the war. Americans thought they could use the opportunity to assume leadership in art. The Society of Independent Artists was formed in December 1916.
- The rules said all art works would be accepted if the artist paid the \$6 fee. The board argued it was not an art work as no physical craft was involved. A secondary argument that it was indecent was not covered by the rules and it is unlikely it would have broken any US laws regarding decency or pornography.
- Photographed by Alfred Stieglitz and published in *The Blind Man*.
- The original urinal was lost. There are now 17 replicas commissioned by Duchamp in the 1960s.
- Duchamp arrived in New York in 1915? And became involved in the anti-culture, anti-art, anti-reason movement called Dada.
- Duchamp bought a Bedfordshire model urinal from J. L. Mott Iron Works and took it to his studio 33 West 67th Street. By some accounts he oriented it ninety degrees to the normal position. In a letter to his sister he said it had been sent by a woman friend ('une de mes amies'). There are two candidates for this mystery woman Dadaist Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven or Louise Norton's address at 110 West 88th Street is partially visible the paper entry ticket attached to the object, as seen in Stieglitz's photograph.
- Duchamp has written that he intended to shift the emphasis with art from physical craft to intellectual interpretation. Also, he wanted to 'de-deify' the artist.

- The title *Fountain* suggests an outflow of liquid rather than a receptacle. Duchamp has therefore inverted the normal order and assumptions. It is also likely but not certain that he inverted the orientation by laying it on its back. One effect of this is to disrupt the normal visual recognition of its function and the protruding water inlet functions as a simulated penis. It is a urinal that is peeing back at us. The original was porcelain but the copies are glazed earthenware painted to look like porcelain.
- The name 'R. Mutt' may refer to the German word 'armut' ('poverty') or 'urmutter' ('great mother'). If we separate the capital and lowercase letters we get 'R.M' and 'utt', 'R.M' would stand for Readymade which is the fountain itself and 'utt' when read out loud sounds like 'eut été' ('had been'). Duchamp used puns, as in his modified Mona Lisa, titled *L.H.O.O.Q.* a pun on 'Elle a chaud au cul', 'She is hot in the arse' or as Duchamp translated it 'there is fire down below'. The name R. Mutt is a play on its commercial origins and also on the famous comic strip of the time, Mutt and Jeff (making the urinal perhaps the first work of art based on a comic). In German, Armut means poverty, although Duchamp said the R stood for Richard, French slang for 'moneybags', which makes *Fountain*, a kind of scatological golden calf.
- The American Society of Independent Artists was, to some extent, derived from the Eight, the 1910 Independents Group and the Armory Show (1913, introduced astonished Americans to Fauvism, Cubism and Futurism for the first time), but it was, from the beginning, based on the French Société des Artistes Indépendants. Duchamp and Francis Picabia (1879-1953) arrived in New York in 1915. The board consisted of 14 members, William Glackens (president), George Bellows, Rockwell Kent, Maurice Prendergast, three women Katherine Dreier, Regina Farrelly and Mary Rogers, Walter Pach, Duchamp, Man Ray, John Covert, Joseph Stella, Morton Schamberg and Walter Arensberg. The Society's announcement said artists could be 'certain that whatever they send would be hung'.
- Duchamp adopted the female identity Rose Sélavy in 1920. Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* was exhibited at the Armory Show in 1913 and became one of the most notorious exhibits.
- Philosopher J. L. Austin defined statements that accomplish an action 'performative' and the word could be applied to what Duchamp was doing. However, he was not elevating to the status of 'art object' but separating them from their surroundings in order to raise the question 'What is art?'
- Duchamp was challenging conventional assumptions, especially regarding physical craft or skill, he was exposing the role of institutions in defining what counts as art and he was making us aware of the intrinsic otherness of each mass-produced, otherwise anonymous, object. From the Renaissance onwards there has been a gradual shift from the value of craft and manual skill to the value of conception and inspiration. Arguably, the late eighteenth-century Romantic movement valued creative genius more than skill. During the nineteenth century the criteria for

valuing art were challenged by many artists but Duchamp was sceptical and saw that artists were still producing art to satisfy a market. A work entered into a 1910 exhibition was produced by tying a brush to a donkey's tail. The donkey was called Lolo but its work was entered using the pseudonym Joachim-Raphaël Boronali from Genoa. The painting was literally Fauvist ('wild beast'). Rather than compete with 'even a child (or a donkey) could do it' Duchamp produced no work at all.

- Duchamp firmly rejected the idea that he chose Readymades because of their beauty. Selection was never made on the basis of 'aesthetic delectation', as he put it. They were chosen by of their 'visual indifference'. The creation of a readymade is a kind of event that takes place at a particular instant of time that can be recorded.
- Duchamp's concept of the 'infra-thin' is the subtle yet real difference between seemingly identical objects or events in either time or space. An object at one time then a second later is infra-thin. The warmth of a seat that has just been left, a stare and twins are infra-thin objects; they are identical but separated in space or time. Infra-thin smoke exhaled from a mouth takes on its own three-dimensional form.
- Walter Benjamin in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' discusses the way people perceive is determined by their cultural and history. Historically, works of art had an 'aura' – an appearance of magical or supernatural force arising from their uniqueness. The aura includes a sensory experience of distance between the reader and the work of art. The aura has disappeared in the modern age because art has become reproducible. Think of the way a work of classic literature can be bought cheaply in paperback, or a painting bought as a poster. Think also of newer forms of art, such as TV shows and adverts. Then compare these to the experience of staring at an original work of art in a gallery, or visiting a unique historic building. This is the difference Benjamin is trying to capture. The aura is an effect of a work of art being uniquely present in time and space. It is connected to the idea of authenticity. A reproduced artwork is never fully present. If there is no original, it is never fully present anywhere. Authenticity cannot be reproduced, and disappears when everything is reproduced. Benjamin thinks that even the original is depreciated, because it is no longer unique. Along with their authenticity, objects also lose their authority. Contemplation of art is replaced by distraction which replaces thought by moving images.
- As an extra twist this urinal at the Tate is not the original which was lost, it is one of 17 copies produced in the 1950s and 60s and authenticated by Duchamp thus further removing the aura associated with works of art.



Joseph Beuys (1921-86), *Lightning with Stag in its Glare*, 1958-85, Tate

Description. This is called *Lightning with Stag in its Glare* by Joseph Beuys. The title is slightly misleading as it suggests we should find a realistic stag with antlers lit by a bolt of lightning. However, objects were not important to Beuys who wanted to represent the elemental forces of nature and our relationship to them. The large bronze object at the back is the lightning strike and, like lightning, it is powerful and potentially dangerous. The lightning is an elemental force and illuminates a group of creatures. The stag is the silver object which was originally made from an ironing board but Beuys remade it using cast aluminium to suggest the glare. Since childhood, Beuys had been interested in northern European folklore, in which certain animals are endowed with mystical power. The stag had particular significance for him as a spiritual guide that appears in times of distress and danger. Its annual shedding and regrowth of its antlers made it a symbol of rebirth and renewal. The cart represents a humble goat, one of the first animals to be domesticated and the lumps of bronze on the floor are primordial, blind worm-like creatures. The box with a small compass on top is mounted on a tripod and is called '**Boothia Felix**'. This is the northern most part of Canada as was named after Felix Booth and was the location of magnetic north – another reference, with the lightning flash itself, to the natural

energies of the earth

Meaning. To understand Beuys work it is necessary to know more about Beuys. He said that '**Everybody is an artist**' and what he meant was that the way we choose to live our lives is our artistic statement. He felt that all art is intrinsically revolutionary and he wrote '**The revolution is us**'. If we could pay attention to our relationship with nature, then it would transform society. Our lives all depend on vast forces of nature that are completely outside our control. If a tsunami hits our shores, or an earthquake destroys our buildings or a volcano erupts then we are powerless to control or resist it.

History of this work. In 1982, Beuys took part in an exhibition in Berlin, where he installed a huge mound of clay and surrounded it with sculptures as well as furniture and tools from his studio. Afterwards he made casts of some of the elements to create *Lightning with Stag in its Glare* 1958-85. The bolt of lightning itself was a bronze cast from a section of the clay mound, while the stag was cast in aluminium as if illuminated by a sudden flash of light. Made towards the end of Beuys's life, this major installation could be a scene from a primordial jungle or a nightmare future world. It addresses themes of finality and death, but also ideas of regeneration and the transformative power of nature.

Influence. Beuys is now regarded as one of the most influential artists of the second half of the twentieth century. He was one of the founders of the Green Party in Germany and he wants us to appreciate the interconnectedness between all life forms and so create a path towards an ecologically sustainable future. He founded the Organization for Direct Democracy which believes that all political decision should take place using referendums.

Notes

- Joseph Beuys (1921-1986, pronounced like 'Boyce') was born in Germany in 1921 and so his teenage years were overshadowed by the rise of the National Socialist Party and Hitler youth. According to Beuys, when the Nazis burned books in his schoolyard he rescued Carl Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*. In 1941 Beuys volunteered for the Luftwaffe as a radio operator and he later became a rear gunner and was shot down over the Crimea. This became a defining moment in his life as he claimed he almost died and was saved by the nomadic Tartars who covered him in fat and wrapped him in felt. Some people claim that although the pilot died shortly after the crash, Beuys was conscious, recovered by a German search team, and there were no Tatars in the village at that time. Nevertheless, the incident was traumatic for Beuys and was a defining moment in his life.
- After the war he had a nervous breakdown and dedicated his life to healing society as he had been healed. He turned himself into a work of art and was one of the earliest performance artists. He always wore blue jeans, a white shirt, a fishing vest covered in useful pockets and a felt trilby hat from Lock & Co of St James to insulate the two metal plates in his skull from extremes of temperature.

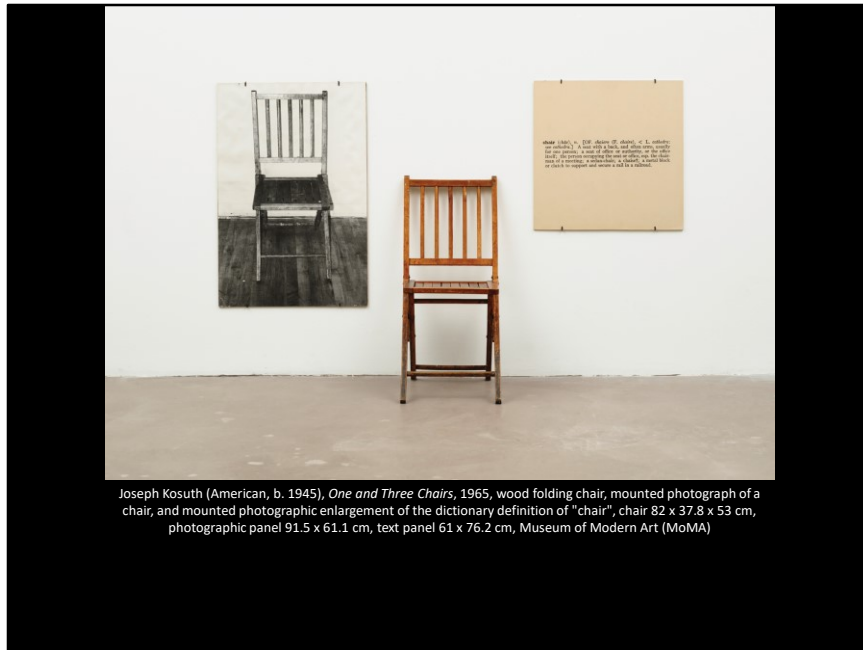
- From 1947 to 1951 he studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and was interested in Rudolf Steiner, Christianity, mythology, botany and zoology. This led him to evolve a rich and complex symbolism, including archetypal animal images of hares, sheep, swans, and bees. His first one-man exhibition was at the Städtisches Museum, Kleve in 1961. He moved from Kleve to Düsseldorf in 1961 and became professor of sculpture at Düsseldorf Academy. He participated in the Fluxus movement from 1962 and started in 1963 to give action-performances using such elements as dead hares, fat and felt. A conflict developed over his teaching methods and he was dismissed in 1972 leading to student strikes and widespread protests. Beuys said, **‘teaching is my greatest work of art’ and ‘Objects aren’t very important any more. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it’.**
- Beuys was a member of Fluxus, an international network of artists, composers and designers in the 1960s. It was anti-commercial and anti-art and was influenced by John Cage. Cage said that the process of creating was more important than the finished product. Another important influence was Marcel Duchamp, a French artist who was active within Dada and whose 'ready-mades' influenced Fluxus.
- Beuys first public performance in 1965 was **‘How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare’**. He spent three hours explaining his art to a dead hare that he carried round the exhibition. Beuys wrote, **‘everyone consciously or unconsciously recognizes the problem of explaining things, particularly where art and creative work are concerned ... even a dead animal preserves more powers of intuition than some human beings with their stubborn rationality. The problem lies in the word “understanding” and its many levels which cannot be restricted to rational analysis. Imagination, inspiration, and longing all lead people to sense that these other levels also play a part in understanding ... my technique has been to try and seek out the energy points in the human power field, rather than demanding specific knowledge or reactions on the part of the public. I try to bring to light the complexity of creative areas’.** Beuys argued that social decision-making should be made by the people through referendums rather than elected political parties. It was this concept of ‘direct democracy’ that he explored in his Information Action at the Tate in 1972, from which three of the blackboards shown here are taken.
- Antony Gormley said, **‘he realized that art was about in a way understanding who we are, by understanding our roots’ and ‘we only understand who we are through the making of these otherwise useless objects that in someone chart our passage through time’.**
- The long date range of the piece is because it is based on ideas he started to develop in 1958. It is based on a work he produced for the 1982 exhibition Zeitgeist but in that exhibition he used a mound of clay and furniture from his studio. He cast the bronze representation of lightning from the clay he used and the rough texture of the clay can still be seen. The work is suspended from a girder and just touches the floor but is not resting on it. It represents elemental forces

and energy. The aluminium structure represents the stag and was originally an ironing board. The stag is a symbol from Christian mythology and from shamanism, both areas of deep interest to Beuys. It represents the initiation of the hunter/gatherer, life itself and stag act as guides through the spirit world. The stag was also used as a symbol for Christ. Beuys said that when he was in trouble he was visited by a stag which gave him hope and inspiration. The lumps of clay represent primordial creatures, tools and the earth and civilization. Beuys wrote that the stag appeared **'in times of distress and danger'** bringing **'the warm positive element of life.'** He concurred with earlier Christian myths that it was **'endowed with spiritual powers and insight.'**

- On the left is a cart with a pick axe on top that is referred to by Beuys as a goat, one of our oldest companions and a source of food and clothing. The goat, for Beuys, represents technology and nature, which he believed must be balanced.
- On the far left is the Boothian Felix, a pile of earth on a tripod with a small compass on top. This represents elemental forces and the human part of the artist. Boothia Felix was named in honour of Sir Felix Booth the financier of an exhibition headed by James Ross in 1829. In 1831 Ross charted the location of the magnetic north pole on the west coast. It is now called the Boothia Peninsular and the magnetic pole has moved further north.
- Beuys was part of the Fluxus movement that involved the inter-relationship of music, art and literature with daily life.
- The Ja/Nein poster rejects the party state (he grew up in Nazi Germany) in favour of democracy through referendums. Another poster shows he stood as candidate for a political party, the Organisation for Direct Democracy.
- One of his last projects was the planting of 7,000 oak trees and there is a photo at the end of a pile of 7,000 stones which were moved when each tree was planted. The project took five years and the idea spread around the world. The myths associated with the artist, such as the Crimea/Tartar fat and felt myth should be treated as part of the identity of the artist rather than factual stories.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beuys-lightning-with-stag-in-its-glare-l02180>
<http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/19211>



Joseph Kosuth (American, pronounced 'ku-sue-th', b. 1945), *One and Three Chairs*, 1965, wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of "chair", chair 82 x 37.8 x 53 cm, photographic panel 91.5 x 61.1 cm, text panel 61 x 76.2 cm, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

Post-Modernism

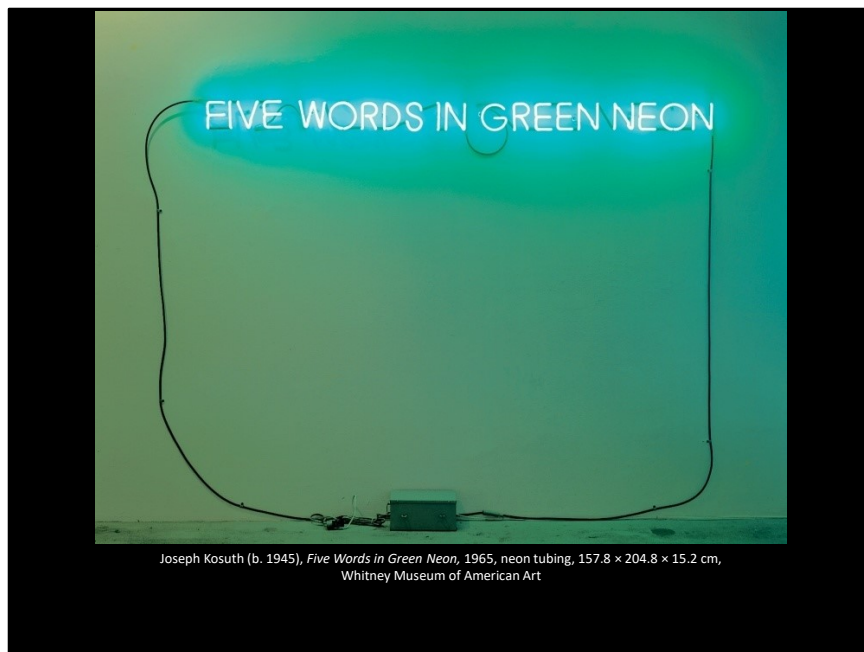
- There is no clear definition but in all disciplines it is a clear break with the past at a fundamental level.
- One definition of postmodernism is "Weird for the sake of weird", Moe Szyslak
- I am using the term 'post-modern' to describe the most innovative British art since 1950. I therefore need to define the term 'post-modern' more clearly as not all the art since 1950 can be described in this way.
- Post-modernism is a broad development across all the arts and it is associated with a distrust of all ideologies and grand narratives. It is therefore often, tongue-in-cheek, self-referential, ironic and sceptical.
- It questions objective reality in the sense that all opinions, comments and descriptions are subjective so there is no absolute truth and ideas of a fixed human nature or progress of society are rejected. The Enlightenment gave us the

structure that there are truths that are absolute and independent of us and we are able to have objective knowledge of some of them through the application of reason. This process of acquiring knowledge will result in progress. Post-modernism maintains that all knowledge is the result of our social, historic and political systems. Our basic common sense ideas are constructs of our society that are taught from birth onwards.

- Kosuth – **“We don’t work with forms and colours, we work with meaning. How you make a work is far less important than why you make the work.”**
- We think of the world as clearly divided into objects, this chair, this table, the wall and so on but it is actually far more complex. The mind is presented with a swirling mass of colour patches, lights, sounds, feelings and emotions. From this we synthesize objects. Kant refers to the “synthesis of the manifold.” This chair is not just something ‘out there’ we learn to recognise, it is a product of our experience and the way we learn language and communication. There are no objects in the world; there are our concepts that are based on our conceptual activity and our sense data.
- Rene Descartes used the method of doubt. He doubted everything including the world around him as we might be dreaming or hallucinating. There is one thing we cannot doubt and that is doubt itself which is me thinking, so ‘I think, I am’. Could I be dreaming I exist, no because the thought itself shows me I am thinking and so that I am. Postmodernists disagree with Descartes, we do not know ourselves directly, we are constructed from concepts like the chair. They call this decentring, we do not have direct knowledge of ourselves. Our knowledge of ourselves is determined by our language, our beliefs and our ‘common sense’, that is our unquestioned assumptions about how we and others function and communicate.
- Jacques Derrida is famous for saying ‘everything is a text’. There is nothing outside the text. Language is a system of distinguishing, a system of recognising differences. To recognise a chair we distinguish it from everything else, non-chairs. There can, of course, be vague boundaries, is a stool a chair? So all language does is to establish a structure. It cannot say anything about what that structure consists of. There is therefore no direct link to reality and so there is no sharp distinction between fiction and non-fiction. There is no difference between describing and imaging. So there are no absolute truths particularly regarding race, class and identity. Reason is simply a tool used by empowered people to oppress people. Emotions and experiences are to be valued over rational argument. Postmodernists believe we must fight oppression by breaking free from reason and the past. Everything is a social construct.
- However, by the end it seems a false conclusion has been reached. Earthquakes are not social constructs although this sentence and any discussion of them is a social construct. Postmodernism itself has become so full of jargon it has become incomprehensible and therefore meaningless. Nietzsche said where there is no

truth there is only power. If we disagree and there is no reason how do we settle out disagreement.

- W. V. O. Quine is a relativist and a sceptic but there is a lot to agree on. The world is basically, radically indeterminate. Imagine natives of a tribe whose language we do not understand says 'Gavagai' when there are rabbits around. Does it mean rabbit? It could mean part of a rabbit, living thing, white thing, living God, rabbithood or even food. How do we distinguish which it is? The same applies to our language. There is 'no place to stand' to judge the native's language, our language or any language.
- Postmodernism takes many different forms in literature, philosophy, history, economics and architecture but we will only be considering the visual arts.
- Postmodernism is often associated with deconstruction and post-structuralism.
 - Deconstruction maintains that all words establish their meaning by means of their role with respect to other words. Words do not refer to or point to anything outside of this linguistic system such as physical objects, feelings, ideas or sense data. Meaning is therefore never present but only created with respect to other words. A concept is understood by reference to its opposite such as male/female, normal/abnormal, being/nothingness.
 - The structuralists were philosophers who maintained that human culture can be understood in terms of a structure modelled on language and that this linguistic structure mediates in some way between physical reality and abstract ideas. Post-structuralists reject the idea of an absolute or fixed structure that links the world to ideas. One example of the consequences of this approach is in textual analysis. A post-structuralist will replace the author by the reader as the primary subject of interest. This is called destabilizing or de-centring the author and is described in Roland Barthes's essay 'The Death of the Author' (1967). Barthes argued that the author was not the source of the work's meaning but that each reader constructed a meaning from the text and each was equally valid.
- In art, postmodernism was specifically a reaction against modernism which had dominated art theory and practice since the beginning of the twentieth century.
- **Post-modern art is self-referential, ironic and eclectic.**
- **Eclecticism** is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions, but instead draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary insights into a subject, or applies different theories in particular cases.



Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), *Five Words in Green Neon*, 1965, neon tubing, 157.8 × 204.8 × 15.2 cm, Whitney Museum of American Art

- We have seen Kosuth's work before with *One and Three Chairs* (1965), the same year he produced this work. In 1969, Kosuth published a series of articles called 'Art After Philosophy' and he immediately became a leading theorist and Conceptual artist.
- **"Being an artist now,"** he wrote, **"means to question the nature of art."** According to Kosuth, traditional art forms such as **painting would only summon old-fashioned considerations** of aesthetic value or taste. Art needed to define itself anew by abandoning conventional means of expression. *Five Words in Green Neon* anticipates Kosuth's written manifesto by a few years but clearly reflects its assertion that Conceptual art is based "on the understanding of the linguistic nature of all art propositions." The work, comprising only the words of the title constructed in green neon tubing, makes language its content by collapsing description and image into each other. *Five Words in Green Neon* is not only the title of the object, but all that we see. Art, Kosuth suggests, does not reside in the object itself, but in our ideas about the object.' (Whitney Museum)
- Kosuth moves away from art as an illusionistic representation of the world and

uses it as a means of exploring meaning itself.

- Neon signs became an art form used by other artists such as Tracey Emin in the 1990s:
 - 'I Promise to Love You'
 - 'I Listen to the Ocean And All I Hear is You'
 - 'Love is What you Want'
 - 'You Touch My Soul'
 - 'When I Hold You I hold your heart'
 - 'I Can't Believe ~~How Much~~ I Loved You'
 - 'The Heart Has Its Reasons'



Michael Craig-Martin (b. 1941), *An Oak Tree*, 1973, Tate

- Conceptual artist, influenced the YBA, many of whom he taught.
- ***An Oak Tree*** is a conceptual work of art created by **Michael Craig-Martin** in 1973. The piece, described as being an oak tree, is installed in two units – a pristine installation of a glass of water on a glass shelf on metal brackets 253 centimetres above the ground, and a text mounted on the wall. When first exhibited, the text was given as a handout.
- Craig-Martin's text deliberately asserts the impossible. The questions probe the obvious impossibility of the artist's assertion with such apparently valid complaints as: 'haven't you simply called this glass of water an oak tree?' and 'but the oak tree only exists in the mind'. The answers maintain conviction while conceding that 'the actual oak tree is physically present but in the form of the glass of water ... Just as it is imperceptible, it is also inconceivable'
- "I considered that in *An Oak Tree* I had deconstructed the work of art in such a way as to reveal its single basic and essential element, belief that is the confident faith of the artist in his capacity to speak and the willing faith of the viewer in accepting what he has to say. In other words belief underlies our whole experience of art: it accounts for why some people are artists and others are not, why some people

dismiss works of art others highly praise, and why something we know to be great does not always move us.” (Quoted in *Michael Craig-Martin: Landscapes*, [p.20].)

- In the late 1970s he joined Goldsmith’s College as a teacher and nurtured a generation of Young British Artists including Julian Opie, Damien Hurst and Sarah Lucas.

Notes

The Text

Q. To begin with, could you describe this work?

A. Yes, of course. What I’ve done is change a glass of water into a full-grown oak tree without altering the accidents of the glass of water.

Q. The accidents?

A. Yes. The colour, feel, weight, size ...

Q. Do you mean that the glass of water is a symbol of an oak tree?

A. No. It’s not a symbol. I’ve changed the physical substance of the glass of water into that of an oak tree.

Q. It looks like a glass of water.

A. Of course it does. I didn’t change its appearance. But it’s not a glass of water, it’s an oak tree.

Q. Can you prove what you’ve claimed to have done?

A. Well, yes and no. I claim to have maintained the physical form of the glass of water and, as you can see, I have. However, as one normally looks for evidence of physical change in terms of altered form, no such proof exists.

Q. Haven’t you simply called this glass of water an oak tree?

A. Absolutely not. It is not a glass of water anymore. I have changed its actual substance. It would no longer be accurate to call it a glass of water. One could call it anything one wished but that would not alter the fact that it is an oak tree.

Q. Isn’t this just a case of the emperor’s new clothes?

A. No. With the emperor’s new clothes people claimed to see something that wasn’t there because they felt they should. I would be very surprised if anyone told me they saw an oak tree.

Q. Was it difficult to effect the change?

A. No effort at all. But it took me years of work before I realised I could do it.

Q. When precisely did the glass of water become an oak tree?

A. When I put the water in the glass.

Q. Does this happen every time you fill a glass with water?

A. No, of course not. Only when I intend to change it into an oak tree.

Q. Then intention causes the change?

A. I would say it precipitates the change.

Q. You don’t know how you do it?

A. It contradicts what I feel I know about cause and effect.

Q. It seems to me that you are claiming to have worked a miracle. Isn’t that the case?

A. I'm flattered that you think so.

Q. But aren't you the only person who can do something like this?

A. How could I know?

Q. Could you teach others to do it?

A. No, it's not something one can teach.

Q. Do you consider that changing the glass of water into an oak tree constitutes an art work?

A. Yes.

Q. What precisely is the art work? The glass of water?

A. There is no glass of water anymore.

Q. The process of change?

A. There is no process involved in the change.

Q. The oak tree?

A. Yes. The oak tree.

Q. But the oak tree only exists in the mind.

A. No. The actual oak tree is physically present but in the form of the glass of water. As the glass of water was a particular glass of water, the oak tree is also a particular oak tree. To conceive the category 'oak tree' or to picture a particular oak tree is not to understand and experience what appears to be a glass of water as an oak tree. Just as it is imperceivable it also inconceivable.

Q. Did the particular oak tree exist somewhere else before it took the form of a glass of water?

A. No. This particular oak tree did not exist previously. I should also point out that it does not and will not ever have any other form than that of a glass of water.

Q. How long will it continue to be an oak tree?

A. Until I change it

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Brilliant Ideas: Artist Michael Craig Martin, 24 May 2016 (YouTube)

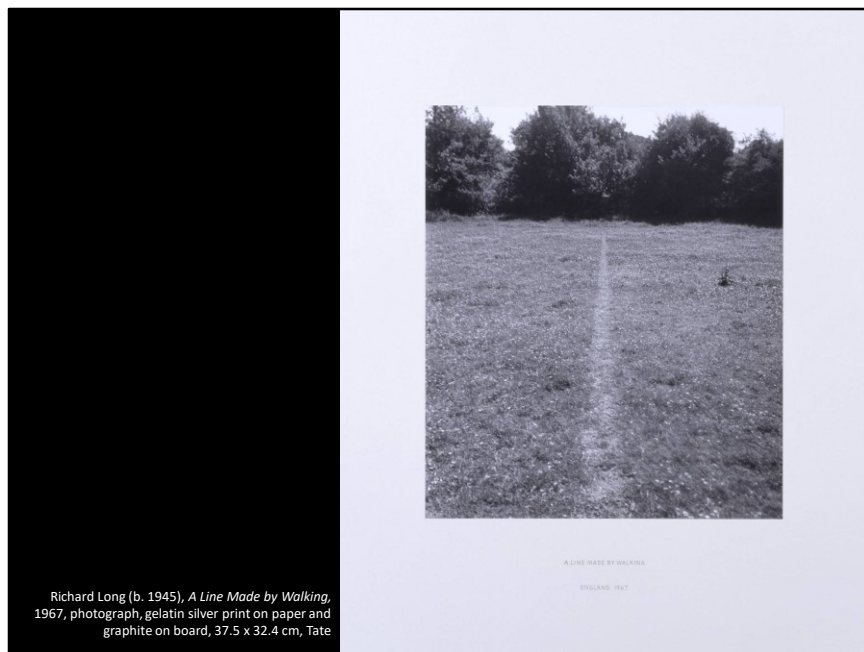
Michael Craig-Martin has always been a radical. In the 60's & 70's he was at the vanguard of conceptual art in Britain. In the 80's and 90's he nurtured a whole generation of rebellious young artists known as "Y-B-A's", he went on to change the face of contemporary art.



Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake, Utah

Environmental or Land Art

- One of the earliest and best known works of environmental or land art is Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, a 1,500-foot-long and 15-foot-wide spiral constructed using earth-moving equipment. A construction company moved the 6,650 tons of rock over six days constructing a spiral structure that is revealed in times of drought and submerged at other times. The work was actually built twice.
- During the construction he and his wife made a 32-minute colour film called *Spiral Jetty*. Smithson died in a helicopter crash three years after the work was completed. The work is now owned and managed by Dia Art Foundation.
- The term 'land art' was coined by Smithson. The landscape is moulded or deformed and the work may involve water, metal, asphalt, concrete or other materials. Many of the early works were ephemeral and only exist as videos or still photographs.



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 kept silent about his work for a long time but issued a poem-like statement of which this is a part,

*I like the simplicity of walking,
the simplicity of stones.
I like common means given
the simple twist of art.
I choose lines and circles because they do the job.
My art is about working in the wide world,
wherever, on the surface of the earth.
My work is not urban, nor is it romantic.*

*It is the laying down of modern ideas
in the only practical places to take them.*

- He was allegedly irritated by being described as a romantic in the tradition of Rousseau, Wordsworth and Coleridge. His work is not about finding himself through walking either by refreshing himself through contact with nature or by discovering himself through nature. It is more about enjoying nature. He has also said,
 - “I feel I carry my childhood with me in lots of aspects of my work’, he remarked. ‘Why stop skimming stones when you grow up?’”
 - “...Walking - as art - provided a simple way for me to explore relationships between time, distance, geography and measurement. These walks are recorded in my work in the most appropriate way for each different idea: a photograph, a map, or a text work. All these forms feed the imagination.”
 - “My work really is just about being a human being living on this planet and using nature as its source. I like the intellectual pleasure of original ideas and the physical pleasure of realising them. A long road or wilderness walk is basically walking all day and sleeping all night. I enjoy the simple pleasures of wellbeing, independence, opportunism, eating, dreaming, happenstance, of passing through the land and sometimes leaving (memorable) traces along the way, of finding a new campsite each night. And then moving on.”.
- Richard Long RA CBE (b. 1945) is an English sculptor and one of the best known British land artists. Long was born in Bristol and between 1962 and 1965 he studied at the West of England College of Art, and then, from 1966 to 1968, at Saint Martin's School of Art in London, where he studied under Anthony Caro. 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



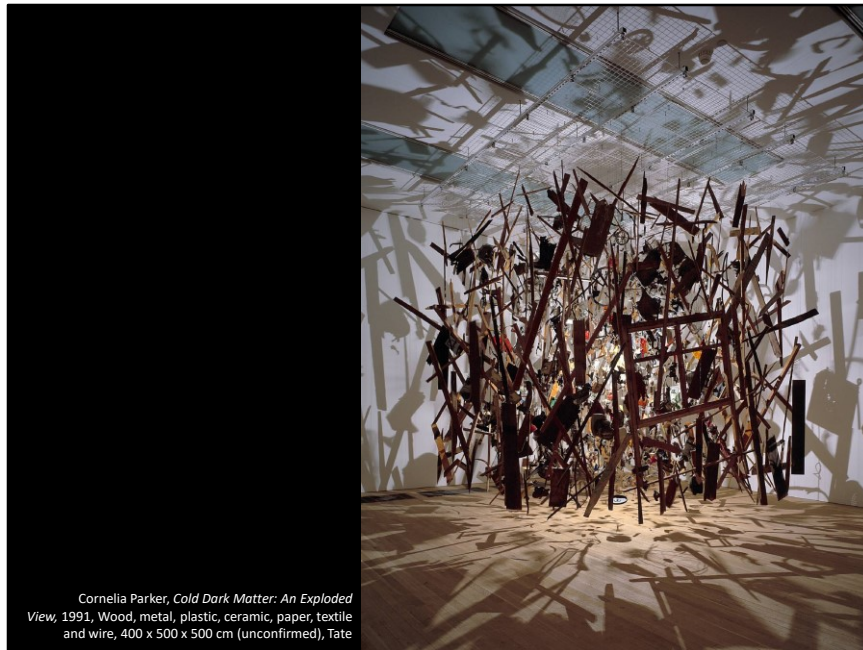
Richard Long (b. 1945), *South Bank Circle*, 1991, Delabole slate, 10 x 199.7 x 199.7 cm, Tate

- Delabole (pronounced 'dell-a-boll') slate is handcrafted Cornish slate from the renowned Delabole Slate Quarry. It is probably the oldest working slate quarry in the world and has been mined from 1,000 years and although 10 million tons of slate has been removed there is enough remaining for another 1,000 years.
- The circle was created specifically for Long's retrospective at the South Bank Centre in 1991. Long provided instructions for assembling the circle such as every stone should touch another, the long thin stones should be nearer the centre and the work should look balanced and circular.
- "you could say that my work is ... a balance between the patterns of nature and the formalism of human, abstract ideas like lines and circles. It is where my human characteristics meet the natural forces and patterns of the world, and that is really the kind of subject of my work" (quoted in Richard Long: *Walking in Circles*, p.250)
- Long bases his work on walks made outdoors in nature, often in remote locations. The documentation of these walks, which takes a variety of different forms, constitutes the visible manifestation of the artwork, which for Long exists as much in the making of it as in its end product. Long has picked up and arranged stones

on his walks in many of the world's most remote locations. It is one of his preferred materials and he has said: 'I like the idea that stones are what the world is made of.' (Quoted in *Richard Long: Circles Cycles Mud Stones*, p.24.)

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Cornelia Parker, *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991, Wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 400 x 500 x 500 cm (unconfirmed), Tate

- Her best known work.
- This is a **garden shed that was blown apart** by Cornelia Parker at the Banbury Army School of Ammunition. She then picked up all the pieces and meticulously suspended them as if in mid-flight. She was **exploring cartoon deaths** at the time such as things falling off cliffs, things being run over by a steam roller, things being blown up, shot full of bullets, like Roadrunner or Tom and Jerry.

“The garden shed came about because I was trying to find something **universal and archetypal** and that we all **identified with** and that was **familiar** to us. It's not the house but it's this kind of attic-y private place at the bottom of the garden which we put all our left-over stuff in. And so it seemed like a depository rather than the place that you live.

The point of **suspending** it is to **rob it of its pathos**. After it was **blown up** and all the objects were **lying on the floor**, all **very distressed**, they **had a pathos** and somehow putting it back in the air where they were a little while before, it sort of re-animates them.” (Cornelia Parker)

- It inspired an orchestral composition of the same name by Joo Yeon Sir.

- *Mass (Colder Darker Matter)* (1997), Parker suspending the charred remains of a church that had been struck by lightning in Texas.
- She wrapped Rodin's *The Kiss* sculpture in Tate Britain with a mile of string (2003).
- In 2016 she was the first female artist to be commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met) in New York to create a work for its roof garden. *Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)* is a scaled down replica of the house from the 1960 Hitchcock film *Psycho*.

Notes

- Studied at Gloucestershire School of Art and Wolverhampton Polytechnic. MFA from Reading University.
- Cornelia Parker was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 1997 and was Artist in Residence at the Science Museum in 1998-99.
- She became a Royal Academician in 2010 and received three honorary doctorates in 2000, 2005 and 2008. She won Artist of the Year Apollo Award in 2016.

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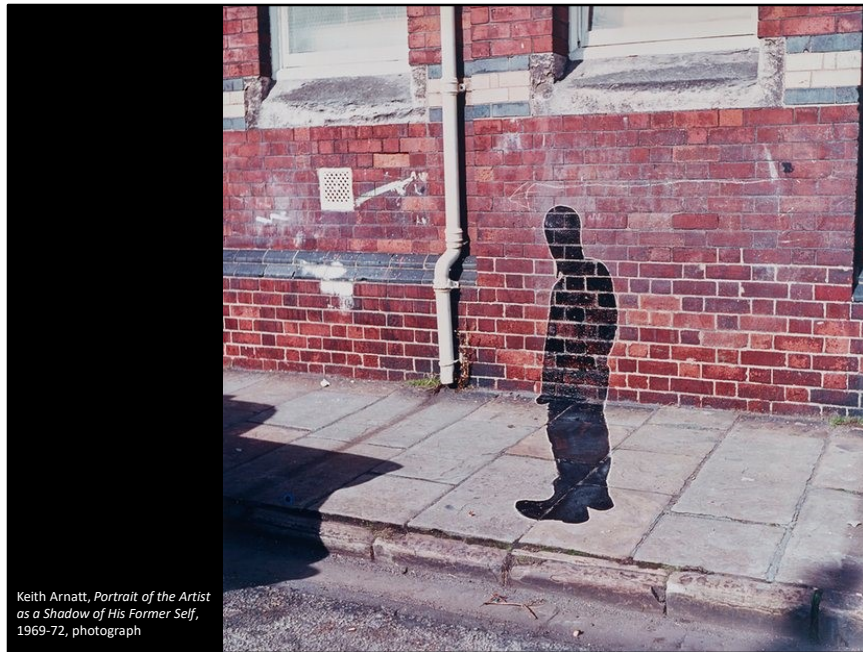


Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), *Breathless*, 2001 (made), silver-plated brass wind instruments, flattened and suspended on stainless steel wire, V&A

Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), *Breathless*, 2001 (made), silver-plated brass wind instruments, flattened and suspended on stainless steel wire, V&A

- “‘Breathless’ is a work commissioned specially from the British artist Cornelia Parker for display in the new British Galleries. It was specifically designed to fill the oculus or open space newly created between the two floors of the Galleries in a corner. It is made of 54 defunct brass band instruments which have been squashed flat and hung from wires. They are designed to be seen from both above and below, with polished upper surfaces and tarnished undersides. the work is an attempt by the artist to explore such ideas of duality as silence/noise, upper class/lower class, and death/resurrection.” (V&A)
- The work involved no destruction of working musical instruments. All the instruments were beyond economic repair. The 54 instruments were purchased from the British Legion and Salvation Army and were crushed using one of the 22 tonne weights that raise and lower Tower Bridge.
- The work cost £50,000 and is suspended between two floors of the V&A.
- Cornelia Parker said of the work,
 - “A vibrant working class tradition has been brought into the British Galleries in the guise of a heraldic ceiling rose. I wanted to create

something that would explore the ideas of duality: light/dark, silence/noise, upper class/lower class, the North/South divide, black cloud/silver lining, death/resurrection. I see the work as a ghostly last gasp of the British Empire.”



Keith Arnatt (1930-2008), *Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self*, 1969-72, photograph

- He stated: 'the continual reference to the disappearance of the art object suggested to me the eventual disappearance of the artist himself. mocks the manner in which much avant-garde art of the time incorporated the image of the artist as subject, object and creator of the work, again within the context of disappearance. He stood on the pavement at the door to the Newport College Art department while a colleague drew a chalk line around his shadow cast on the pavement and the wall behind. The silhouette was filled in with semi-transparent grey-brown paint and the scene was photographed.
- He has commented: 'I was beginning to become aware of the unreliability of photographic evidence and began to play with that feature. I felt that what a photograph could not tell or show might be just as significant as what it could.'

Notes

- Keith Arnatt was born in 1930 in Oxford. He left school early and worked for a period in the drawing office of the Morris car works in Cowley, Oxford. He did National Service in the RAF in Malta. He went to art school in Oxford where he met

his wife, Jo. He also attended philosophy lectures being particularly interested in the moral and ordinary language philosophy then current at Oxford. He recounted meeting Michael Dummett (who wrote importantly on the philosophy of mathematics and verificationism, Frege, the Tarot, and style issues in English grammar) who was entirely dismissive of any significant thought about art in connection with philosophy. He later studied at the Royal Academy.

- Arnatt taught art in the sixties and seventies at Liverpool School of Art and then Manchester School of Art. At Manchester he lived on the Yorkshire moors working from a studio in his barn. He moved with his family to Monmouthshire in 1969 and taught until his retirement at Newport College of Art, starting just before the appointment of the radical head of department Roy Ascott.

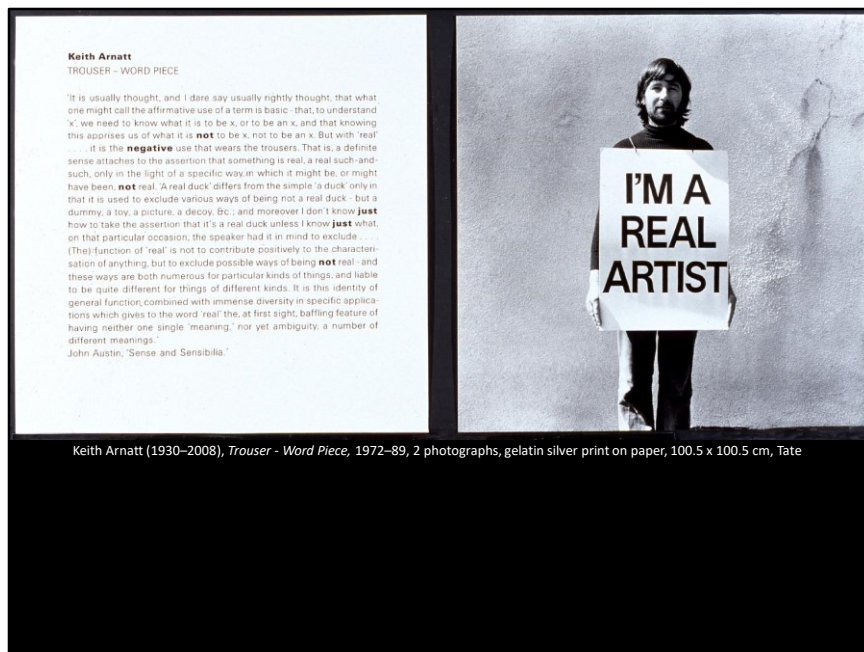
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Keith Arnatt (1930–2008), *Trouser - Word Piece*, 1972–89, 2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper, 100.5 x 100.5 cm, Tate

- “On the left, under the artist’s name and the work’s title, a paragraph of text quotes from the writings of the British philosopher **John Langshaw Austin** (1911–60) published under the ironic title ***Sense and Sensibilia*** in 1962. In common with contemporaries working in his field, Austin placed his emphasis on an analysis of the **subtleties of ordinary language**. He believed that by investigating and cataloguing the most commonly employed grammatical constructions, a philosopher might discover the practical distinctions which create nuances of meaning. In *Sense and Sensibilia* he applied these principles to perception and illusion. Arnatt had attended a course in **Moral Philosophy at Oxford University** in 1959, focusing on the **philosophy of language**, and had begun to draw parallels with his own artistic investigations. In *Trouser - Word Piece* he employed Austin’s linguistic analysis as a satirical meditation on the **nature of the real**, using the devices of philosophical enquiry to **mock the notion of artistic celebrity**. The section of Austen’s text asserts that it is **only in the negative**, i.e. in knowing what is being posited as *not real*, that the assertion that something is *real* may be understood; thus ‘**it is the negative use that wears the trousers**.’” (Tate)

- “The analysis of **what constitutes the ‘real’** reflects a particular climate of enquiry in the early 1970s, when artists were consciously using ‘real’ materials in ‘real time’ and ‘real space’. At the same time art was being forensically examined and unravelled to its most basic component parts. ” (Tate)

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Martin Creed (b. 1968), *Work No. 227: The lights going on and off*, 2001

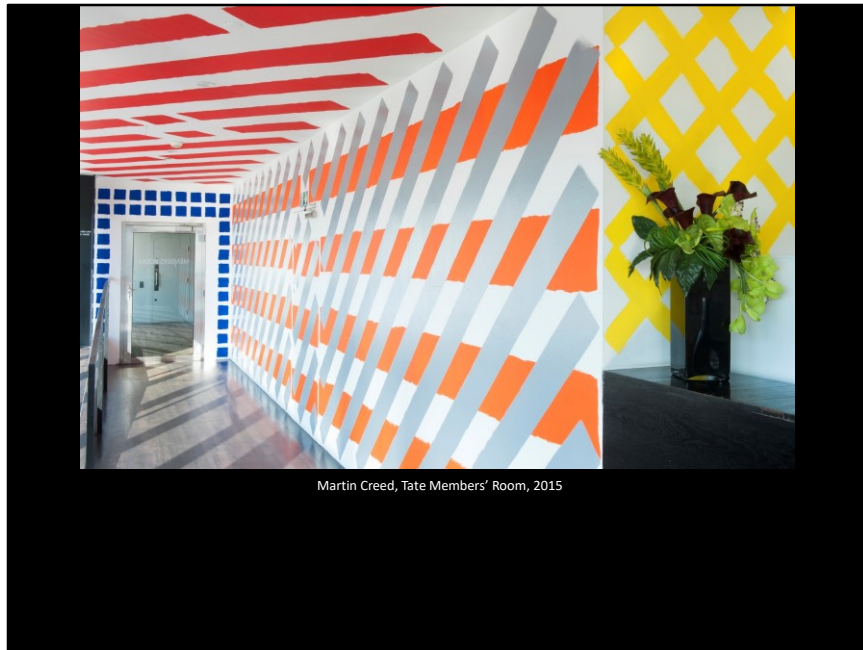
- Creed is perhaps best known for winning the 2001 Turner Prize with *Work No. 227: The lights going on and off*. The work presented was an empty room in which the lights switched on and off at 5 second intervals. This work created a great deal of press attention, most of it questioning whether something as minimalist as this could be considered art at all.
- His work has often excited controversy: a visitor threw eggs at the walls of Creed's empty room as a protest against the prize, declaring that Creed's presentations were not real art and that "painting is in danger of becoming an extinct skill in this country". Ironically, in recent years Creed has been exhibiting paintings in nearly every exhibition he has done.
- Most of his titles are descriptive. *Work No. 79: some Blu-tack kneaded, rolled into a ball and depressed against a wall* (1993), for example, is just what it sounds like, as is *Work No. 88, a sheet of A4 paper crumpled into a ball* (1994). One of Creed's best known works is *Work No. 200: Half the air in a given space* (1998), which is a room which has half of its cubic space filled with balloons.
- In an interview published in the book *Art Now: Interviews with Modern Artists* (2002), Creed explains that he used to 'make paintings' but never liked

having to decide what to paint. He decided to stop making paintings and instead to think about what it meant, and why he wanted to make things. He says:

- “The only thing I feel like I know is that I want to make things. Other than that, I feel like I don’t know. So the problem is in trying to make something without knowing what I want. [...] I think it’s all to do with *wanting* to communicate. I mean, I think I want to make things because I want to communicate with people, because I want to be loved, because I want to express myself.”
- Creed says that he makes art works not as part of an academic exploration of 'conceptual' art, but rather from a wish to connect with people, 'wanting to communicate and wanting to say hello'. The work is therefore primarily emotional,
 - “To me it’s emotional. Aye. To me that’s the starting point. I mean, I do it because I want to make something. I think that’s a desire, you know, or a need. I think that I recognise that I want to make something, and so I try to make something. But then you get to thinking about it and that’s where the problems start because you can’t help thinking about it, wondering whether it’s good or bad. But to me it’s emotional more than anything else.

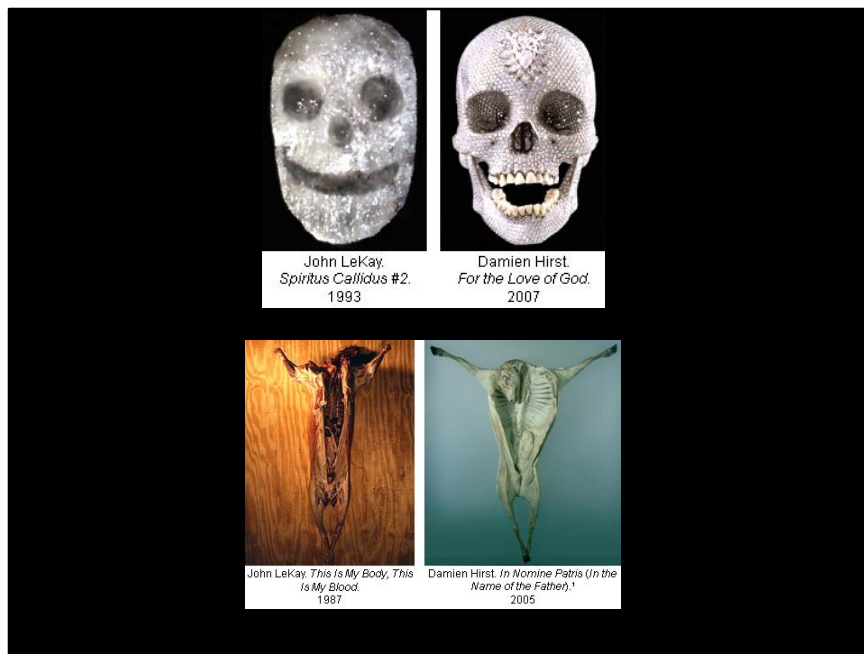
Notes

- Martin Creed was born in Wakefield, England. He moved with his family to Glasgow at age 3 when his silversmith father got a job teaching there. He is an artist and musician. His parents were Quakers, and he was taken often to Quaker meetings. He studied art at the Slade School of Art at University College London from 1986 to 1990.



Martin Creed, Tate Members' Room, 2015

- Every two years, an artist represented in the Tate collection is invited to become the Tate Members commissioned artist. Previous commissioned artists include David Shrigley, Jim Lambie, Fiona Rae and Chris Ofili.
- Martin Creed has produced a suite of colourful new works for the commission that have been used to create a new collectable membership gift pack. Creed has also taken over the Members Room at Tate Modern, covering every wall and ceiling surface with a series of different wall paintings.
- Martin Creed said: **“To me, the main problem is that life is difficult.** The most common feeling, to me, is a bad feeling and I go to work to try and not feel like that. So anything I can do to make my life better, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else, is really worth trying to do. **That's all I'm trying to do, is to make my life better...**colours help, they make me happy.”



- John LeKay (b. 1961) is an English conceptual and installation artist and sculptor, who lives in New York City. In 1993, he began to make skulls covered in crystal: he has accused Damien Hirst of copying his ideas. LeKay also stated that Hirst had got other ideas for his work from a “marked-up duplicate copy” of a Carolina Biological Supply Company catalogue, which he had given him. One example was Hirst’s work *Mother and Child, Divided* – a cow and calf cut in half and placed in formaldehyde: “You have no idea how much he got from this catalogue. The Cow Divided is on page 647 – it is a model of a cow divided down the centre, like his piece.”
- In 1993, LeKay produced a series of 25 skulls, some made out of paradichlorobenzene (a strongly smelling substance used in mothballs) and one made from soap covered with Swarovski crystals which are made from lead glass. LeKay says he mentioned the idea of a skull covered in diamonds to Tanya Bonakdar, a gallery manager who gave Hirst his first solo show in the US. In 2007, Hirst made a skull covered in diamonds. LeKay used a title, *Spiritus Callidus*, a name for the devil. Hirst called his *For the Love of God*.
- LeKay’s 1986 work of a split-open crucified sheep was titled *This Is My Body, This Is My Blood*. In 2005, Hirst did a split-open crucified sheep, titled *In the Name of the Father*. LeKay’s was on a board and Hirst’s was in a tank of formaldehyde.

Notes

- John LeKay was born in London. He was educated at Isleworth Polytechnic, London in 1977. He moved to New York in 1991. Instead of higher art education, he travelled with a circus and worked at Pinewood Studios. Inspired by the early work of Francis Bacon and the painting of a slaughtered ox by Rembrandt, he made a “meat series”, 1986–87. An example of this is the 1987 sculpture, *This is my Body this is my Blood*, consisting of a cut open decapitated lamb carcass, nailed to a piece of plywood. His 1987 sculpture, Wind pipe, was a double bed with a varnished sewer pipe on it.

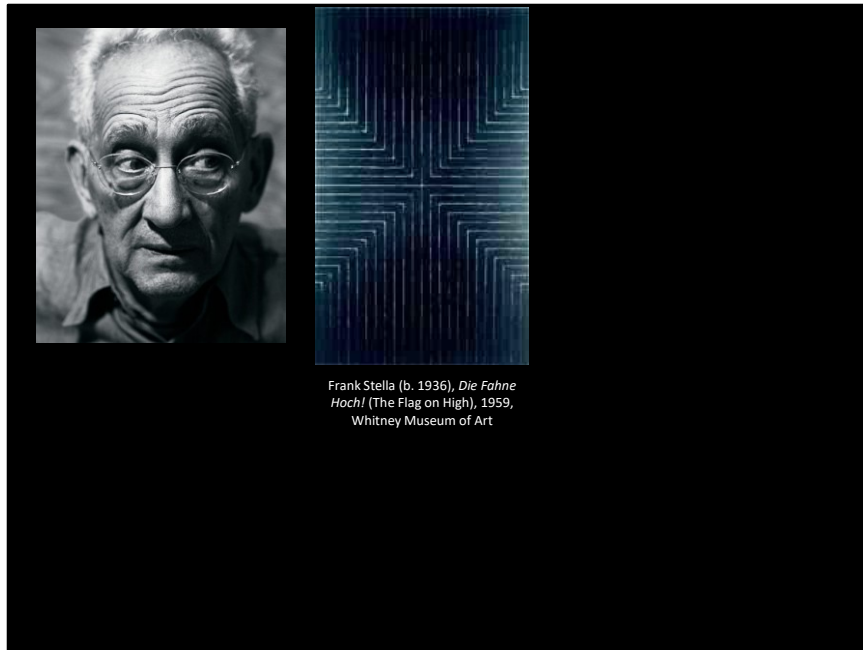
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<http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/stuck-inn-xi-the-art-damien-hirst-stole/>



- “**Minimalism** emerged in New York in the early 1960s among artists who were self-consciously renouncing recent art they thought had become stale and academic. A wave of new influences and rediscovered styles led younger artists to question conventional boundaries between various media. The new art favoured the cool over the "dramatic": their sculptures were frequently fabricated from industrial materials and emphasized anonymity over the expressive excess of Abstract Expressionism. Painters and sculptors avoided overt symbolism and emotional content, but instead called attention to the materiality of the works.” (theartstory.org/movement-minimalism.htm)
- Minimalism was a reaction against recent art that some artists considered stale. They favoured undramatic, ‘cool’ art which used industrial materials and emphasized anonymity in order to produce what appeared to be factory-built commodities. They rejected the promotion of the artist, ‘fine art’ and excessive emotion and expression. They were inspired by Marcel Duchamp and the Russian Constructivists. The most famous work is Carl Andre’s *Equivalent VIII* 1966, known as ‘the pile of bricks’, because of the controversy it caused when it was purchased by the Tate in 1972. They rejected what they saw as academic fine art distinctions between sculpture and painting and the formalist dogma of art critics. The leaders of the movement were Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd and Robert Morris.

- Tate definition: 'Minimalism is an extreme form of abstract art developed in the USA in the 1960s and typified by artworks composed of simple geometric shapes based on the square and the rectangle.'
- Minimalist art is abstract art with no reference to the outside world. Minimalist painter Frank Stella famously said about his paintings 'What you see is what you see'.
- Minimalism emerged in the late 1950s when artists such as Frank Stella, whose Black Paintings were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1959, began to turn away from the gestural art of the previous generation. It flourished in the 1960s and 1970s with Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Agnes Martin the movement's most important innovators.
- Aesthetically, minimalist art offers a highly purified form of **beauty**. It can also be seen as representing such qualities as **truth** (because it does not pretend to be anything other than what it is), order, simplicity and harmony.
- Minimalists were mostly American artists although Anthony Caro (1924-2013) is a British minimalist sculptor and Bob Law (1934-2004) was a founding British Minimalist painter and sculpture.



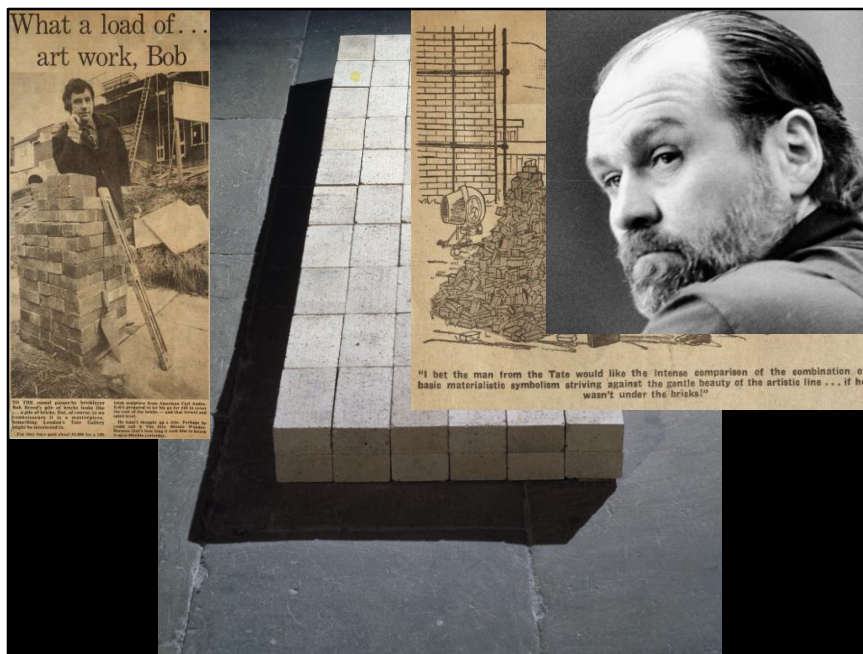
Frank Stella (b. 1936), *Die Fahne Hoch!* (The Flag on High), 1959, Whitney Museum of Art

- *Die Fahne Hoch!* is a Minimalist painting by Frank Stella completed in 1959. The use of basic geometric systems in the work is regarded by many as the precursor of Minimalism. The painting was made by marking equal subdivisions along the sides, bottom and top edges of the canvas and using these intervals to generate simple, symmetrical patterns consisting of bands of black enamel paint separated by thin lines of unpainted canvas.
- Frank Stella gave the work a provocative title. ***Die Fahne Hoch!*** ('The Flag on High') is named after the **anthem of the Nazi Party**, the "Horst Wessel Song", and is one of several paintings in the series that make direct reference to Nazism. By applying a hotly emotive title to the image, Stella's ironic purpose was that of destabilizing the idea of meaning itself.
- After attending Phillips Academy he went to Princeton University to study history. He is one of the most well-regarded post-war American painters still working today. He is heralded for creating abstract paintings that bear no pictorial illusions or psychological or metaphysical references in twentieth-century painting. He

moved to New York in 1958 and his work began to react against the expressive use of paint by most painters of the abstract expressionist movement. He was drawn to the 'flatter' surfaces of Barnett Newman's work and the 'target' paintings of Jasper Johns. He began to produce works which emphasized the picture-as-object, rather than the picture as a representation of something, be it something in the physical world, or something in the artist's emotional world.

References

<http://nuvomagazine.com/magazine/summer-2008/frank-stella>



Carl Andre (b. 1935), *Equivalent VIII*, 1966, firebricks, 12.7 x 68.6 x 229.2 cm, Tate

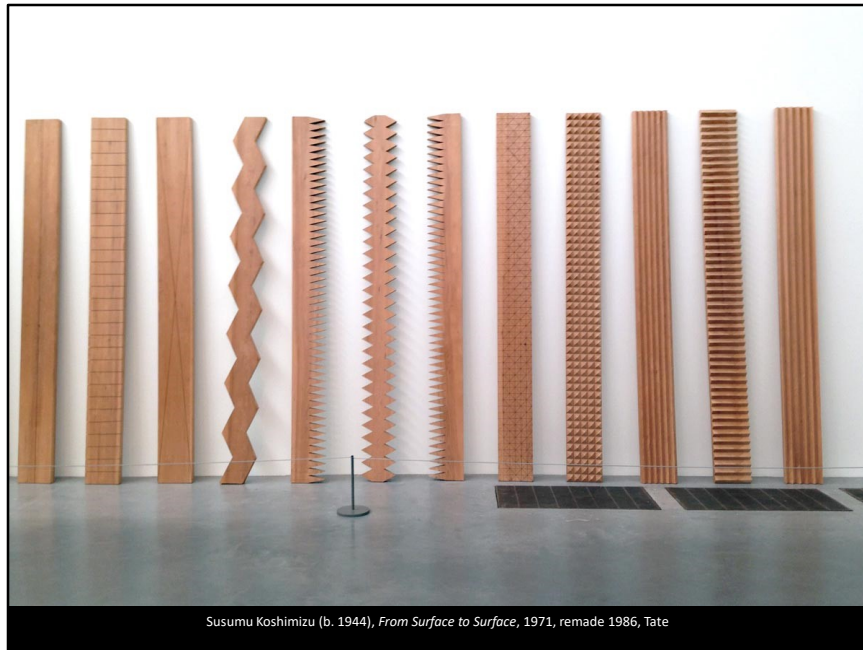
- This was the last of his series of 120 firebricks which were arranged differently but were all 'equivalent'.
- Andre is famous for his grids and linear structures. He has been commissioned to produce large public works as well as small floor tiling for an exhibition space.
- In 1956 Andre was introduced to Constantin Brâncuși through whom he became re-acquainted with his former classmate, the artist Frank Stella. In 1960 he worked for four years as a railway brakeman and he often wore blue overalls and a blur shirt after that, even to formal events.
- In 1988, Andre was tried and acquitted for the death of his wife Ana Mendieta. Mendieta fell to her death from Andre's 34th story apartment window in 1985 after an argument with Andre. There were no eyewitnesses. A doorman in the street below had heard a woman screaming "No, no, no, no," before Mendieta's body landed on the roof of a building below. Andre had what appeared to be fresh scratches on his nose and forearm, and his story to the police differed from his recorded statements to the 911 operator an hour or so earlier. The police arrested him. Andre was charged with second degree murder. He elected to be tried before a judge with no jury. In 1988 Andre was acquitted of all charges related to

Mendieta's death. Mendieta was a Cuban American performance artist and sculptor who produced over 200 works of art using earth.

Tony Smith, Die, 1962

References

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-minimalism-artworks.htm>



Susumu Koshimizu (b. 1944), *From Surface to Surface*, 1971, remade 1986, Tate

- **The work.** This is called *From Surface to Surface* and is by Susumu Koshimizu. It consists of twelve planks of wood. Koshimizu investigates the substance of wood by sawing planks into different shapes, exposing their surface qualities through different kinds of repetitive cuts. The cut lines are made with an industrial saw and contrast with the slight irregularities of the natural wood.
- **Mono Ha.** Susumu Koshimizu began his career just as students in Japan were violently protesting the Vietnam war [in 1968]. He and other artists started working with natural materials in protest to capitalism and modern art. The artists were later called Mono Ha which means the '**School of Things**'. Mono Ha artists denied they were involved in the violent protests but their work is informed by the unease and disillusionment with post-war Japanese modernity.
- **Lee Ufan.** Another, slightly older, Mono Ha artist was Lee Ufan, whose work *Relatum* [1968, 1994] can be seen in the middle of the room. It consists of a hundred two-metre long, stainless steel bands. Ufan saw that an artist's ability to make things had been nullified by technology. He rejected traditional ideas of representation in favour of revealing the world as it is by engaging with materials and exploring their properties.

Notes

- Susumu Koshimizu is a Japanese sculptor and installation artist. His first solo exhibition was in 1971 and he represented Japan at the 1976 and 1980 Venice Biennales. He has received more attention in the US since 2012 when Mono Ha was first reviewed in a Los Angeles gallery.
- Koshimizu was part of Mono Ha ('School of Things', 1968-75), which reacted against the embrace of technology and visual trickery in mid-1960s Japanese art. They sought to understand 'the world as it is' by exploring the essential properties of materials, often combining organic and industrial objects and processes. It was stridently anti-modernist and worked with basic materials such as rock, sand, glass and metal often displayed with the minimum of artistic intervention. The term Mono Ha was disparagingly coined by critics after they had begun to exhibit their work. Except for Lee Ufan, who was a decade older, most of the Mono-ha artists were just beginning their careers when the violent student protests of 1968–69 occurred. The protests were against the dominant position and interference of the US and the binding of Japan into providing logistical support for the US war in Vietnam. The protestors were critical of US imperialism and wanted to establish Japanese identity.
- Mono Ha artists met to discuss how to transcend Western Modernism by ending representation. The sentiment in post-war Japan was to re-examine their indigenous culture to bring attention to the physicality of things. It shared many commonalities with Arte Povera in Italy, and Minimalism in the United States.
- I am not sure what kind of wood it is, possibly Japanese pine or cedar.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/koshimizu-from-surface-to-surface-t12822>
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/lee-relatum-t14334/text-summary>



Giuseppe Penone (b. 1947), *Breath 5*, 1978, Tate

- **The work** consists of three terracotta sections roughly joined together to form a one and a half metre tall vase shape. It is by Giuseppe Penone (b. 1947) and is called *Breath 5*. It was made by a pottery firm near Turin in Northern Italy in 1978. The compressed area running down one side is an imprint of the artist's clothed body. Penone first made a cast of himself and then stacked coils of clay against the cast. He then removed the cast leaving the imprinted clay around which he moulded swirling clay forms. At the top is a clay cast of the inside of his mouth. The overall effect is to suggest the billowing forms of air as the artist leans forward and breaths out. He began to explore the notion of breath in 1977 and this is one of nine vase-like clay forms he made the following year.
- **Infra-thin.** Penone was interested in the idea that the air we breathe out forms a sculpture, '**a sculpture that lasts an instant, but is already a sculpture**'. The sculpture gives monumental shape to something that was temporary and invisible. Despite the transience of a breath it is a fundamental condition of our being alive and the sculpture pays respect to this fundamental condition of life. This idea of an almost imperceivable difference, in this case between the air around us before and after we have breathed out was described by Marcel Duchamp's as the 'infra-thin'.

It is the subtle yet real difference between seemingly identical objects or events in either time or space. It is the difference between a urinal and *Fountain*.

- **The artist.** Penone was born in north-west Italy in the mountains near the French border and he trained for a year at the Accademia di Belle Arte in Turin (1970). His early work was concerned with sight, so, for example, *Reversing One's Own Eyes* 1970 involved the artist wearing reflective contact lenses as he struggled to orientate himself within natural surroundings. He has had a recurring interest in vegetation and trees and has investigated the notion of breath throughout his career. He has been associated with the development of *arte povera*, a term coined in 1967 by a critic and which refers to a group of Italian artists who used everyday materials, such as earth and newspapers, to undermine the commercialisation of art. *Arte povera* has similarities with Mono Ha (mid-1960s) in Japan and Minimalism (1960s) in America.

Notes

- Giuseppe Penone (b. 1947) was born in the Garessio forest in north-east Italy near the French border. Penone's work is concerned with establishing a contact between man and nature. Penone was born in a forest area and the tree is a central element in much of his work which also uses everyday materials such as lead, iron, wax, pitch, wood, plaster and burlap. One of his early works was an iron hand gripping a tree trunk and another was trees pierced with nails and laced with metal wire. He is a member of the Arte Povera group which explores the link between nature and culture. He has always been interested in using his body as the main subject or the source of the work.
- **Arte Povera** (pronounced art-ay po-vera) was a radical movement that took place between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s in major cities throughout Italy. They attacked government, industry and culture by using unconventional materials and styles. They used only simple objects (the term literally means poor or impoverished art), their art is often related to the body and they find meaning in the everyday. Their work is often concerned with energy and dynamism and nature and industry appear but without complex symbolism. Like Duchamp they challenge what can be defined as art but without detracting from the importance of art and its ability to transform our lives. Michelangelo Pistoletto was one of the founders.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/penone-breath-5-t03420/text-summary>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Penone



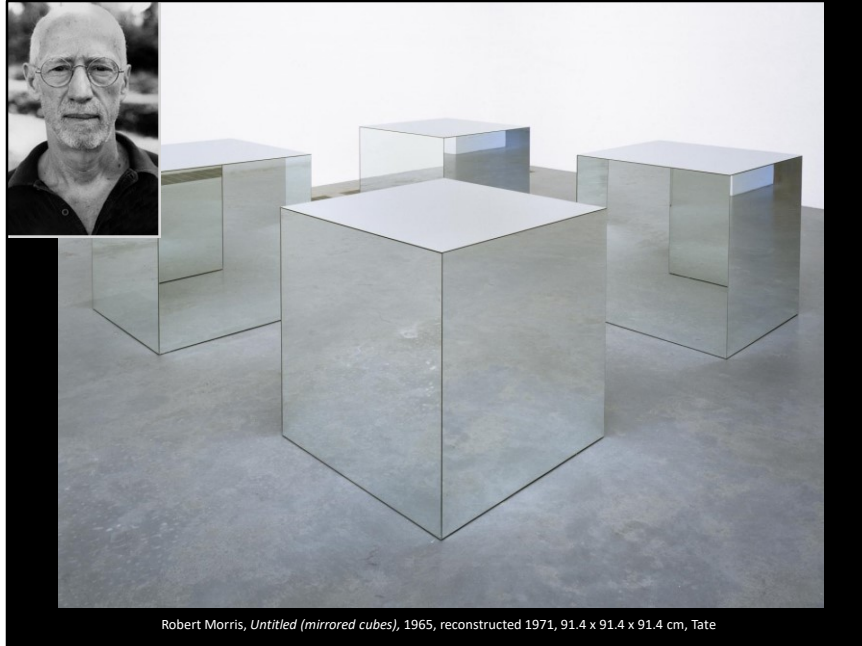
Donald Judd (1928–1994), *Untitled*, 1980, steel, aluminium and Perspex, 22.9 x 101.6 x 78.7 cm, Tate

“Judd began making stacks in the 1960s. Most consist of ten elements, although there is variation in the materials used. The stacks are all ordered according to strict principles: the gap between each unit, and between the first unit and the floor, should be equal to the height of a single unit. Since the units are all identical, their significance derives from this pre-determined geometric order rather than from any individual features. However, Judd's attention to the sensuous qualities of his materials prevents *Untitled* from being cold or clinical.” (Tate)

“Judd's works belong to the Minimalist movement, whose goal was to rid art of the Abstract Expressionists' reliance on the self-referential trace of the painter in order to form pieces that were free from emotion. To accomplish this task, artists such as Judd created works comprising of single or repeated geometric forms produced from industrialized, machine-made materials that eschewed the artist's touch. Judd's geometric and modular creations have often been criticized for a seeming lack of content; it is this simplicity, however, that calls into question the nature of art and that posits Minimalist sculpture as an object of contemplation, one

whose literal and insistent presence informs the process of beholding.”
(theartstory.org)

“**Donald Judd** (June 3, 1928 – February 12, 1994) was an American artist associated with minimalism (a term he nonetheless stridently disavowed). In his work, Judd sought autonomy and clarity for the constructed object and the space created by it, ultimately achieving a rigorously democratic presentation without compositional hierarchy. It created an outpouring of seemingly effervescent works that defied the term "minimalism". Nevertheless, he is generally considered the leading international exponent of "minimalism," and its most important theoretician through such seminal writings as "Specific Objects" (1964).” (Tate Biography)



Robert Morris, *Untitled (mirrored cubes)*, 1965, reconstructed 1971, 91.4 x 91.4 x 91.4 cm, Tate

- One of the central figures of Minimalism.
- This group of four mirrored cubes illustrates the artist's development as both a Conceptual artist and a Minimalist over a five-year period. Robert Morris began by producing large grey painted plywood boxes that were first used as stage props for a ballet company where he also performed.
- “Morris’s Minimalist sculptures of the mid-1960s consist of rigorously pared down geometric forms. He typically arranged these into ‘situations’ where ‘one is aware of one’s own body at the same time that one is aware of the piece’. This work demonstrates the principle. As the viewer walks around the four cubes, their mirrored surfaces produce complex and shifting interactions between gallery and spectator. The cubes were originally installed in the garden at Tate for Morris’s 1971 exhibition, but were put on show in the galleries when the exhibition had to be re-made with substitute works.” (Tate)

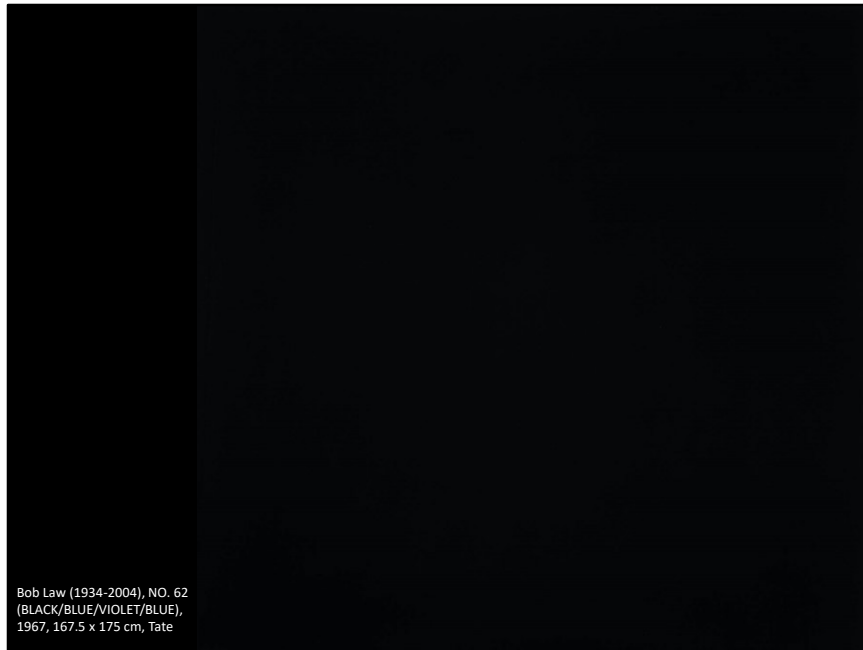
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<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-morris-robert.htm>



“Minimalism emerged in New York in the early 1960s among artists who were self-consciously renouncing recent art they thought had become stale and academic. A wave of new influences and rediscovered styles led younger artists to question conventional boundaries between various media. The new art favoured the cool over the "dramatic": their sculptures were frequently fabricated from industrial materials and emphasized anonymity over the expressive excess of Abstract Expressionism. Painters and sculptors avoided overt symbolism and emotional content, but instead called attention to the materiality of the works.” (theartstory.org/movement-minimalism.htm)

Mostly American artists. Anthony Caro (1924-2013) can be seen as a British minimalist sculptor and Bob Law (1934-2004) was a founding British Minimalist painter and sculpture.

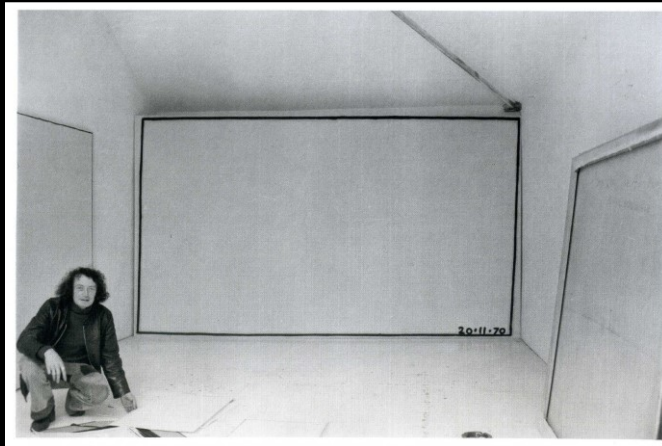


Bob Law (1934-2004), NO. 62 (BLACK/BLUE/VIOLET/BLUE), 1967, 167.5 x 175 cm, Tate

- One of a series of paintings between 1959 and 1974 that were painted in Law's studio in Richmond. They were all the same size and are known as the **'black' paintings** but they consist of layers of acrylic painted in the sequence shown. Law took great care to make sure that each layer of the nine of ten was perfect. The failure rate was very high and only one painting out of eight or ten would succeed. Each coat took about two days to dry and Law would sit in front of the painting contemplating it as it dried.
- He was lambasted by the press and in 1977 in a BBC programme, Fyfe Robertson saw himself as representing the common man and said,
 - *The man who seems to me to have travelled furthest down the avant-garde road to nothing and nowhere is Bob Law... What are [the viewers] getting from empty white canvases on a white wall? For me, these things are not art. They're symptoms of a modern sickness that repudiates standard in almost everything, not just – Bob Law-wise – in art.*
- David Hockney said,
 - *Well it seems to me that if you make pictures there should be something*

there on the canvas. I don't understand four lines of ballpoint pen round the edge of canvas. I've no idea really what it's about, I suspect it's supposed to be about an experience of looking at some weave.

- Law was a modest man full of self-doubt who was severely affected by such criticism.
- Bob Law (1934–2004) can be described as the founder British Minimalism. He was a prolific artist throughout his lifetime but he struggled to be recognised and has been written out of art history.
- He was born in Middlesex and **left school at 12**. He went through a number of jobs and taught himself draughtsmanship, then geometry and architecture. By the mid-1960s he was designing and building houses. He lived in St. Ives between 1957 and 1960 where he met Ben Nicholson and his artistic career started. He was influenced by the abstract paintings by Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko that he saw at the Tate in 1959. He made furniture and in 1973 made the sculptures for Donald Judd. He took up sculpture in the 1970s and returned to Cornwall in 1997 where he died in 2004.



Bob Law, *Mister Paranoia IV 20.11.70*, 1970, 240 x 418 cm, Thomas Dane Gallery

Bob Law, *Mister Paranoia IV 20.11.70*, 1970, 240 x 418 cm, Thomas Dane Gallery

- Law was a difficult person but loved and still remembered by his friends. He has been excluded from histories of post-war British art but in the 1960s he was a well-known and respected artist. He was exhibited in the leading galleries, collected by leading collectors and was the subject of a major retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1977 curated by Nicholas Serota. It appears that his personality was to blame. He was a 'hard line' avant garde artist who did not contend with the hostility and isolation well. When he was finally accepted he responded by provoking arguments and splits.

References

http://www.artcornwall.org/features/Bob_Law_Richard_Saltoun_Karsten_Schubert.htm



Anthony Caro (1924–2013), *Woman Waking Up*, 1955, bronze, 26.7 x 67.9 x 34.9 cm, Tate

- Anthony Caro produced figurative work early in his career.
- **Woman Waking Up:** “The surface of this sculpture is roughly pitted. During the 1950s there was great interest in the ‘skin’ of the sculpture. This was, in part, a reaction against the smooth finish of Henry Moore’s bronzes; Caro had worked for Moore in the early 1950s. The woman’s body seems almost to overflow the plinth, unlike the passive, contained poses of traditional nudes. This came partly from Caro’s working method: he dropped soft clay from a height and then developed the forms suggested. This meant he could make the most of both chance and the expressive potential of the clay from which the bronze is taken.” (Tate)
- Anthony Alfred Caro OM (1924–2013) was an English abstract sculptor whose work is characterised by assemblages of metal using 'found' industrial objects. His style was of the modernist school, having worked with Henry Moore early in his career. He was lauded as the greatest British sculptor of his generation.
- He was born in **New Malden** to a **Jewish family** and his father was a **stockbroker**. He was educated at **Charterhouse School**, studied art part-time at Farnham School

of Art and earned a degree in **engineering from Christ's College, Cambridge**. He spent some time in the Royal Navy and studied at the Royal Academy School from 1947 to 1952.

- After spending two years as an **assistant to Henry Moore** in the early 1950s, Caro began to develop an entirely independent outlook. Between 1953 and 1959 he made over thirty sculptures: strange **lumpen figures**, heads and animals, impressed with rocks, pebbles and fragments of cast objects. Reacting **against Moore's smooth, carved forms**, Caro investigated the expressive potential of clay - freely modelled and beaten, subject to the intervention of chance. He would drop and hit the soft material, so that the resulting shapes suggested forms which could then be developed imaginatively.
- After being introduced to the American sculptor David Smith in the early 1960s, he abandoned his earlier figurative work and started constructing sculptures by welding or bolting together pieces of steel such as I-beams, steel plates and meshes. Often the finished piece was then painted in a bold flat colour.

References

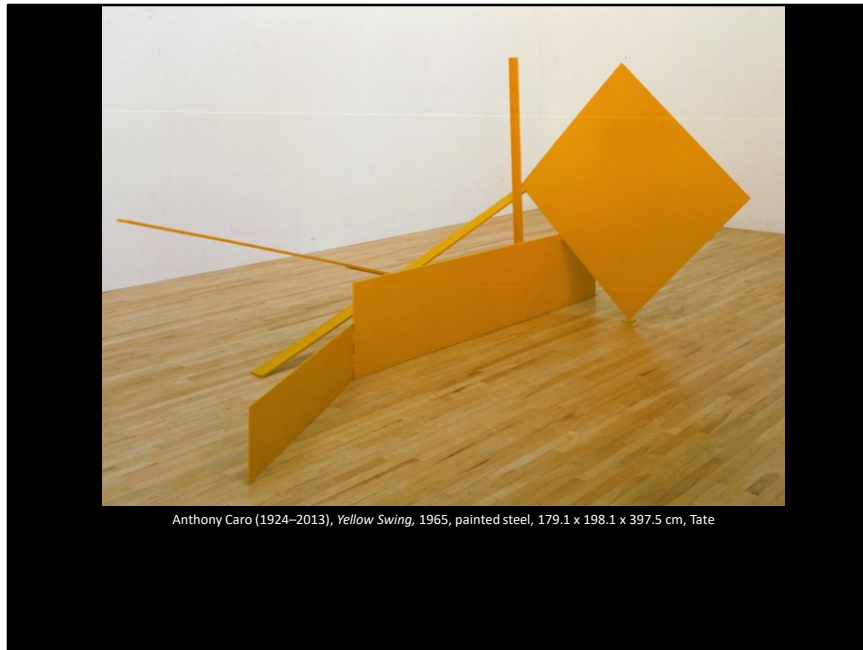
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Caro

<http://www.anthonycaro.org/frames-related/biography.htm>



Anthony Caro (1924-2013), *Early One Morning*, 1962, Tate

- “*Early One Morning* is a major example of the kind of sculpture that established Caro as the leading young sculptor of the 1960s. In this work, his arrangement of planes and lines along a horizontal axis gave greater freedom in creating different rhythms and configurations. The work has no fixed visual identity and no single focus of interest. Rather, it unfolds and expands into the spectator’s space, its appearance changing with the viewpoint. The individual elements are unified by the bright red colour and Caro sees the way they cohere, making a sculptural whole, as being like the relationship of notes within a piece of music.” (Tate)
- It was his wife, the artist, Sheila Girling, who suggested that *Early One Morning* would be better painted red rather than its original green: he agreed and the piece became one of his most famous early works.



Anthony Caro (1924–2013), *Yellow Swing*, 1965, painted steel, 179.1 x 198.1 x 397.5 cm, Tate

Anthony Caro (1924–2013), *Yellow Swing*, 1965, painted steel, 179.1 x 198.1 x 397.5 cm, Tate

- **Yellow Swing:** “Caro began to work in steel following a trip to America in 1959, often using pre-formed industrial sections such as girders and joists. In the mid Sixties he used steel, cut and sprayed with colour, in balanced constructions of planes and beams directly on the floor, bolted and welded together. The appearance of any Caro sculpture changes radically as one walks around it.” (Tate)

Anthony Caro (1924-2013)

- In the **1980s Caro's work changed direction** with the introduction of more literal elements, with a series of figures drawn from **classical Greece**. After visiting Greece in 1985, and closely studying classical friezes, he embarked on a series of large-scale narrative works. In the early 2000s, his work featured nearly life-size equestrian figures built from fragments of wood and terra cotta on gymnast's vaulting horses.
- Caro was also a tutor at St Martin's School of Art where he taught **Richard Deacon**, Barry Flanagan (bronze hares), **Richard Long** (land artist) and **Gilbert & George**.



Anthony Caro, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe II*, 1989, Tate

- *Déjeuner sur l'herbe II* was made after Edouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863).
- Originally Caro worked with scrap material but in the 1980s he expanded into using brass, silver, ceramic and paper. "The voluptuous shapes of *Dejeuner sur l'herbe II*, which belie the intransigence of the steel, demonstrate this changing direction in his work." (Tate)
- "Although based on, and named after, an earlier work of art, there is no literal equivalence between *Déjeuner sur l'herbe II* and its model; such so-called 'source' sculpture is not simply a question of transcription. Instead, Caro has taken the essence of the figurative original and transformed it into a fully resolved abstract sculpture. Sheets of steel have been cut and arranged to produce organic forms that contrast with the uncompromising nature of the material. The sculpture achieves its coherence through a sense of movement that flows through the complex arrangement of the various elements that have been bent, buckled and twisted before being welded together to articulate space and create rhythm and movement. This table sculpture draws on the energy and atmosphere of its model but in the process of engagement with it, the source is refracted, producing new a

work in which abstract formal invention and new possibilities of meaning coalesce.” (Tate)

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/caro-dejeuner-sur-lherbe-ii-t07588>



Anthony Caro, Promenade, 1996, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

- Caro used assistants for the welding which he conducted by waving his arms to show what he wanted.
- He we have a line of steel sculptures 'going for a walk'.
- Shortly before his death, he was asked whether he thought he had always been rebellious, he replied, "I thought I was an easy-going person who did what was expected, but... I have been rebellious all through my life. Or rather I have not been rebellious, I have been questioning". (*Independent*)

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- <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/anthony-caro-a-material-boy-who-made-it-big-10402748.html>



NEXT WEEK:
YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

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