

BRITISH ART SINCE 1900

Summary






Draft Agenda

1. A History of Tate
2. From Golden Age to Civil War, 1540-1650, 28 works
3. From Restoration to the Georgian Age, 1650-1730, 24 works
4. The Georgian Period, 1730-1780, 22 works (+3 by Hogarth) & 1760, 12 works
5. William Hogarth
6. The Industrial Revolution, 1780-1810
7. William Blake
8. The Victorian Period, 1810-1840, 29 works, 1840 97 works
9. Turner
10. Summary

11. The Victorian Period 1840-1890 14 works
12. The Edwardian Period, 1900-1910 31 works
13. The Great War and the Aftermath, 1910-1930 44 works
14. The Interwar Years, 1930 26 works
15. Henry Moore
16. World War II, 1940 22 works & 1950 33 works
17. The Beginning of the Modern World, 1960 7 works & 1970

- 18. The Postmodern world, 1980
- 19. The Electronic Revolution, 1990-today
- 20. Summary



BRITISH ART SINCE 1900: NEW WAYS OF SEEING

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| 1. New Ways of Seeing | 1. British Art Since 1950 |
| 2. Impressionism to Post-Impressionism | 2. Pop Art |
| 3. Cubism, Abstraction & British Avant Garde | 3. Figurative Art since 1950 |
| 4. Vorticism and World War One Artists | 4. David Hockney |
| 5. Return to Order: Stanley Spencer | 5. Feminist Art |
| 6. Dada, Surrealism & Expressionism | 6. Conceptual Art & Minimalism |
| 7. British Sculpture & Henry Moore | 7. The Young British Artists |
| 8. World War Two Artists | 8. Video and Performance Art |
| 9. British Figurative Art | 9. Outsider Art & Grayson Perry |
| 10. Summary 1900-1950 | 10. Summary |

British Art Today

- Wildly popular 'big name' blockbuster exhibitions
 - Three London museums (Victoria and Albert, Natural History Museum and Science Museum) totalled 11.9 million visitors in 2015, more than Venice.
 - Of the 124.4 million tourists in the UK in 2015 half (65.2 million of which 18.8 were international) went to venues in London
 - Blockbusters
 - Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty had 493,043 visitors, its most visited exhibition ever
 - Ai Wei Wei 372,000
 - Late Rembrandt 264,000
 - Late Turner 267,000
 - UK domestic visitors to the National Gallery and the Tate have dropped while overall numbers have risen. This may be because domestic visitors now wait for major, blockbuster exhibitions and no longer visit the permanent collections as much as they used to.
- Three of the ten most visited museums in the world are in London (note that different sources report different attendance figures):
 - Louvre 8.6m

- British Museum 6.8m
- Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York, 6.5m
- Vatican Museums, 6m
- National Gallery 5.9m
- National Palace Museum, Taipei, 5.3m
- Tate Modern 4.7m (6.1m including Tate Britain's 1.4m)
- National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 4.1m
- State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 3.7m
- Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 3.4m
- Victoria and Albert, 3.3m
- Mega-prices art world of Damien Hirst, Christie's and Sotheby's.
 - Six of the top 10 highest prices every paid were bought in 2015.
 - The top ten prices (as far as known) are
 1. William de Kooning ~\$300m (2015)
 2. Paul Gauguin ~\$300 (2015)
 3. Paul Cézanne \$259m (2011)
 4. Jackson Pollock ~\$200m (2015)
 5. Mark Rothko \$186m (2014)
 6. Rembrandt \$180m (2015)
 7. Pablo Picasso \$179.4m (2015)
 8. Amedeo Modigliani \$170.4m (2015)
 9. Jackson Pollock \$164.3m (2006)
 10. Willem de Kooning \$161.4m (2006)
 - In the top 50 the only British artist to appear is Francis Bacon with three works (\$144.7m the highest price ever paid at an auction, \$94.8m and \$81.9m).
 - The highest prices for British female artist were Bridget Riley *Chant 2*, \$5m (2008), Tracy Emin *My Bed*, \$4.4m (2014), Jenny Saville *Plan*, \$3.5m (2014).
- Popular art buying
 - Jack Vettriano (*The Singing Butler*)
 - Beryl Cook
 - *Frieze* and other art markets
 - Local artists
- Popular art programmes and exhibitions
 - Art experts
- Street art
 - Banksy
- Internet
 - Amalia Ulman (Argentinian artist)

References

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15436961>
- <http://www.cedricchambers.com/katy-perry-banksy-and-postmodernism/?v=402f03a963ba>
- <http://petapixel.com/2016/01/23/this-artist-got-90k-instagram-followers-with-photos-of-a-fake-lavish-lifestyle/>



BRITISH ART SINCE 1900

- 1900s – Edwardian painting, John Singer Sargent, Pictorialism, Vorticism
- 1910s – WWI artists, Paul Nash, Eric Ravilious, Stanley Spencer, Euston Road School
- 1920s & 30s – Birmingham Surrealists, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth
- 1940s – WWII artists, David Bomberg, Duncan Grant, Henry Moore, Laura Knight
- 1950s – Figurative painters, Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach
- 1960s & 70s – David Hockney, Pop-Art, Peter Blake, Op-Art, Bridget Riley
- 1980s & 90s – Young British Artists, Damien Hirst, Tracy Emin, Rachel Whiteread
- 2000s & 10s – The Stuckists, Beryl Cook, Banksy, Anthony Gormley, Grayson Perry

- In 1933, a short-lived group known as Unit One included the sculptors Henry Moore and Dame Barbara Hepworth and the painters Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash.
- Three noted 20th-century painters, Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland, and Francis Bacon.
- In 1954 the pop art movement originated in England in response to commercial culture.
- Well-known contemporary painters include Lucian Freud, David Hockney, Michael Andrews, Bridget Riley, and Christopher Wood; among notable sculptors are Reginald Butler, Lynn Chadwick, and Kenneth Armitage.
- More recent art (1980-2000) called neoconceptual, has been eclectic and employed a variety of often mixed and sometimes surprising media.
- Much of the art deals with life's big questions, has a certain shock value, and shares a preoccupation with mortality and bodily decay.
- Probably the best known of England's post-Thatcher artists is Damien Hirst, whose images have included dot paintings, cabinets of pharmaceuticals, and, most famously, animals, sliced or whole, pickled in formaldehyde and displayed in glass vitrines.

- A wide range of other contemporary English works and artists include Chris Ofili's sparkling elephant dung–encrusted semiabstract paintings;
- Rachel Whiteread's plaster casts and rubber sculpture of domestic objects;
- Jenny Saville's fleshy and disturbing nudes;
- Gary Hume's cool and brilliantly coloured abstracts;
- Fiona Rae's jazzed-up abstractions; and
- Marc Quinn's controversial works, notably a cast of his head made with his own blood.
- Other notable English contemporaries include Ian Davenport, Gillian Wearing, Gavin Turk, Abigail Lane, Mona Hatoum, Marcus Harvey, and Sarah Lucas.
- Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Graham Bell, Peter Blake, Mark Boyle, Patrick Caulfield, Jacob Epstein, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George, Eric Gill, Harold Gilman, Spencer Gore, Duncan Grant, Richard Hamilton, Barbara Hepworth, David Hockney, Gwen John, Allen Jones, RB Kitaj, Percy Wyndham Lewis, Richard Long, Henry Moore, Paul Nash, Christopher Nevinson, Ben Nicholson, Eduardo Paolozzi, John Piper, Bridget Riley, Walter Richard Sickert. Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland.
- And of course, LS Lowry (1887-1976)

References

Infoplease



- International Art Movements and Styles
 - 43 Group: A modern art movement formed in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1943 by a group of young, pro-independence painters who were committed to promoting a Sri Lankan form of modernism.
 - 85 New Wave: Coined by the curator and critic Gao Minglu, 85 New Wave defined a nationwide avant-garde movement that emerged in China in the mid-1980s.
 - 798 Art Zone (also known as Dashanzi Art District): An artistic community based in an old industrial area of North-East Beijing.
 - Object art is used to describe artworks which explore themes that transgress and threaten our sense of cleanliness and propriety particularly referencing the body and bodily functions.
 - Abstraction-Création: Association of abstract artists set up in Paris in 1931 with the aim of promoting abstract art through group exhibitions. It embraced all abstract art but tended towards the more austere forms such as Concrete art, Constructivism and Neo-Plasticism. In Britain members of the modernist groupings the Seven and Five Society and Unit One, kept in close touch with Abstraction-Création. Their chief members were Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson, Paul Nash and John Piper.

- Angry Penguins was a modernist literary and artistic movement that sought to shake up the entrenched cultural establishment of Australia in the 1940s. It was the victim of a literary hoax when M.H. Harris published a set of concocted modernist poems later found to be obscene. His trial set back modernism in Australia.
- Artists' International Association was an exhibiting society founded in London in 1933, which held exhibitions and events to promote and support various left-of centre political causes.
- Bloomsbury Group name commonly used to identify a circle of intellectuals and artists who lived in Bloomsbury, near central London, in the period 1904–40. It included Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry and Duncan Grant as well as Lytton Strachey, Maynard Keynes, Virginia Woolf and Clive Bell.
- British Surrealism
- British War Artists
- Camden Town Group
- Concrete Art is art that is entirely free from any basis in observed reality and has no symbolic meaning. The term was introduced by Theo van Doesberg in *Manifesto of Concrete Art* (1930). Max Bill said the aim of Concrete art was 'to represent abstract thoughts in a sensuous and tangible form'. It is very close to Constructivism.
- Constructivism, an austere branch of abstract art founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko in Russia around 1915. It directly reflects the industrial world. Tatlin was influenced by Picasso's cubist constructions that he saw in 1913. In the 1923 manifesto it said, 'The material formation of the object is to be substituted for its aesthetic combination. The object is to be treated as a whole and thus will be of no discernible 'style' but simply a product of an industrial order like a car, an aeroplane and such like. Constructivism is a purely technical mastery and organisation of materials.' It was suppressed in Russia in the 1920s and brought to the West by Naum Gabo and his brother Antoine Pevsner.
- Cubism was a revolutionary new approach to representing reality invented in around 1907/08 by artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque who aimed to bring different views of subjects (usually objects or figures) together in the same picture, resulting in paintings that appear fragmented and abstracted. Cubism was one of the most influential styles of the twentieth century. It is generally agreed to have begun around 1907 with Picasso's celebrated painting *Demoiselles D'Avignon* which included elements of cubist style. The name 'cubism' seems to have derived from a comment made by the critic Louis Vauxcelles who, on seeing some of Georges Braque's paintings exhibited in Paris in 1908, described them as reducing everything to 'geometric outlines, to cubes'. By showing different viewpoints at the same time the three dimensional nature of the object

was suggested at the same time as emphasizing the flatness of the canvas. 'A head', said Picasso, 'is a matter of eyes, nose, mouth, which can be distributed in any way you like'. Cubism divides into Analytic from 1908-12, the initial phase of fragmented images in blacks greys and ochres and Synthetic from 1912-14 with simpler shapes, brighter colours and often including collaged real elements such as newspaper cuttings. The inclusion of real objects was one of the most important ideas in modern art.

- Dada was an art movement formed during the First World War in Zurich in negative reaction to the horrors and folly of the war. The art, poetry and performance produced by dada artists is often satirical and nonsensical in nature. Dada artists felt war called into question every aspect of society and their aim was to destroy all traditional values and assumptions. Dada was also anti-bourgeois and aligned with the radical left. The founder of dada was a writer, Hugo Ball. In 1916 he started a satirical night-club in Zurich, the Cabaret Voltaire. Dada became an international movement and was the basis of surrealism in Paris after the war. Leading artists associated with it include Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Kurt Schwitters. Duchamp's questioning of the fundamentals of Western art had a profound subsequent influence.
- De Stijl. De Stijl was founded in 1917 by two pioneers of abstract art, Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. De Stijl means style in Dutch. The first issue of the magazine De Stijl defined the term neo-Plasticism. Mondrian left in 1923 after Van Doesburg started to use diagonal lines.
- Direct Carving
- Euston Road School
- Futurism was an Italian art movement that aimed to capture in art the dynamism and energy of the modern world. It was launched by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909. On 20 February he published his *Manifesto of Futurism* on the front page of the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. He wrote, 'We declare...a new beauty, the beauty of speed'. Chief artists associated with futurism were Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini.
- Group X was a short lived group of British artists formed by Wyndham Lewis in 1920 to provide a continuing focus for avant-garde art in Britain following the First World War. It was an attempt to revive Wyndham Lewis's pre-war Vorticist group. One group exhibition was held in 1922.
- Leeds Art Club
- London Group
- Merz is a nonsense word invented by the German dada artist Kurt Schwitters to describe his collage and assemblage works based on scavenged scrap materials. It is said to have come from 'Commerz Bank' which appeared on a piece of paper in one of his collages. Schwitters

founded a dada group in Hanover where he was based from 1919. There he created his first Merzbau (Merz building). This was his own house, which he filled with about forty 'grottoes' – constructions actually attached to the interior fabric of the building and even extending through windows. In 1937 his work was judged degenerate and he fled to Norway and created a second Merzbau. In 1940 he went to England and started a third Merzbau at Ambleside. The first was destroyed in the war, the second in a fire and the third left unfinished and is now in Hatton Gallery, Newcastle.

- Naïve
 - Neo-Plasticism is a term adopted by Piet Mondrian for his own abstract art which used only horizontal and vertical lines and primary colours. It is from the Dutch and means new art as painting and sculpture are plastic arts. It is also applied to the work of the De Stijl group until Mondrian left in 1923..
 - Neo-Romanticism
 - Seven and Five was formed in London in 1919 and advocated the return to traditional pre-war techniques. Its first exhibition was in 1920 and it did not advocate a new 'ism' as it felt there had been too much pioneering work. In 1924 Ben Nicholson joined followed by other modernists including Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and later, John Piper. They effectively hijacked the group, expelling the non-modernists. In 1935 they renamed it the Seven and Five Abstract Group and held the first all abstract exhibition in Britain at the Zwemmer Gallery in London.
 - Unit One was a group formed by Paul Nash in 1933 to promote modern art, architecture and design. At this point there were two major current in modern art, abstract art and surrealism and Nash embraced both. He held the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936. It also involved Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Edward Wadsworth.
 - Vorticism. The vorticists were a British avant-garde group formed in London in 1914 with the aim of creating art that expressed the dynamism of the modern world. Vorticist painting combines cubist fragmentation of reality with hard-edged imagery derived from the machine and the urban environment. It was founded by the artist, writer and polemicist Wyndham Lewis in 1914. Two issues of the magazine *Blast* were issued by Lewis. He was 'blasting' what he considered to be the effete-ness of British art and culture. Although it was a British form of Futurism Lewis was deeply hostile to the Futurists. WWI brought an end to Vorticism although Lewis tried to revive it in 1920 with Group X. In Britain the horrors of war brought about a rejection of the avant-garde and a 'return to order'.
- Tate Categories post-1945
 - Abject Art
 - Auto-Destructive Art

- British Constructivism
- British Pop
- CoBra
- Colour field painting
- Conceptual Art
- Constructivism
- Feminist Art
- Geometry of Fear
- Identity Politics
- Independent Group
- Kinetic Art
- Land Art
- New British Sculpture
- New Generation Sculpture
- New spirit painting
- Optical Art
- Performance Art
- Pop Art
- Post Painterly Abstraction
- School of London
- Situation
- St Ives School
- Tachisme
- Young British Artists (YBA)



15 QUESTIONS RAISED BY MODERN ART

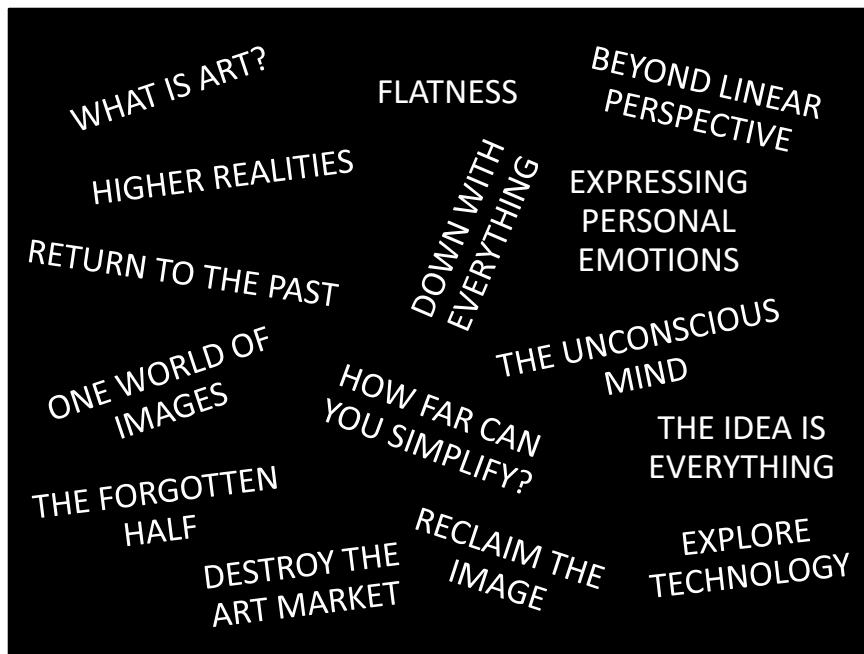
- What is Art?
- Are there other ways in which the world can be represented?
- Can art represent a spiritual world?
- Our society led to a world war and 18 million deaths so what can we replace it with?
- Is our subconscious mind the most important and fundamental aspect of our everyday lives?
- If we react spontaneously will we obtain a more truthful art?
- Is art part of one world of images?
- How far can an artwork be simplified and still be art?
- Is the idea behind a work of art its most important aspect?
- Can an artwork change the way we see the world?
- Can a work of art change the world?
- Should we return to the power of the image and the skill of the artist?
- Can new technologies be used to expand the range of artistic expression?
- Is sales price a measure of an artworks value?
- Can art be taken to the streets?

- In the **19th century** artists developed **new styles within established tradition** but in the **20th century artists questioned and destroyed the fundamental assumptions concerning role and purpose of art.**
- Before the 20th century artists were relatively sure of what they had to do. There was much discussion about how to do it but the subjects were dictated by the purchaser and included history paintings, portraits, landscape, nudes, still life and genre or subject paintings. In Britain, the Aesthetic Movement, particularly the work of Whistler, raised questions about the purpose of art but it was not until WWI that artists began to question the fundamental question 'What is Art?' and 'What is Art For?' Perhaps, the most famous example of this period was Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917).
- Artists vary and during the 20th century what we might call the conventional art forms continued with portraits and landscapes still making up the majority of paintings at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. However, the origins of today's art world can only be understood by examining what a small number of 'avant garde' artists were trying achieve.
- This 20 week course examined British art chronologically, bringing in work from overseas when necessary and it traced many interweaving approaches to art. **Art itself was problematized**, that is turned into a problem, and there as many

solutions to that problem as there are artists.

In the first week of the course I asked 15 questions:

1. What is Art?
2. Are there other ways in which the world can be represented?
3. Can art represent a spiritual world?
4. Our society led to a world war and 18 million deaths so what can we replace it with?
5. Is our subconscious mind the most important and fundamental aspect of our everyday lives?
6. If we react spontaneously will we obtain a more truthful art?
7. Is art part of one world of images?
8. How far can an artwork be simplified and still be art?
9. Is the idea behind a work of art its most important aspect?
10. Can an artwork change the way we see the world?, installation art, Rachel Whiteread.
11. Can a work of art change the world?
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- Remember, we started by climbing the mountain of modern art with what could be regarded as twelve of the most difficult art works of the twentieth century.
- Twentieth century art is often shocking, often trite and often obscure. One wonders who is it produced for, the artist? Everyone? The art elite? Most artists want to reach as many people as possible but some works of modern art are dismissed by the public as trivial or trite with phrases such as 'what is it about', 'it must have taken five minutes, 'my child could do it' or 'it is just trying to shock'.
- I hope that this course has gone some way to showing what artists were trying to achieve.

Notes

- Artistic aims:
 - Representation, like Hockney
 - Revolution
 - Relationships and identity
 - Materials, fun, beauty
 - Making money
- Artistic ideas:
 1. **What is art?** Found art, Marcel Duchamp and the urinal, the exhibition

was meant to accept all work submitted but the jury found the urinal 'by no definition, a work of art'. This raises the question 'What is a work of art?' Many definitions have been proposed.

2. **Flatness.** One characteristic of modern art is that the artist draws attention to the fact we are viewing a work of art. Prior to the twentieth century artists celebrated figurative forms and accurately depicted things that had a basis in reality. The motivation for flatness is less clear, it might be an honesty to the materials used, an exploration of new effects that are then possible, a way to try to depict the spiritual realm or a rejection of an task that is better handled by photography. In 1960, Clement Greenberg published *Modernist Painting* in which he argued that the essential and unique element in Modern painting is its flatness. The unique aspect of painting is that it is done on a flat surface and therefore this should be recognised and embraced by artists. **Abstraction** recognises the essential flatness of painting.
3. **Beyond linear perspective and the camera 's view.** The defining moment was **Cubism**.
4. **Higher realities.** Altered reality (e.g. Fauvism) and **abstraction** (e.g. Malevich, Mondrian and Kandinsky), **abstract expressionism**, what is it trying to achieve? The first exhibition of British abstract art was held in England in 1935. The following year the more international Abstract and Concrete exhibition included work by Piet Mondrian, Joan Miró, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson. Hepworth, Nicholson and Gabo moved to the St. Ives group in Cornwall to continue their 'constructivist' work. Some link the prevalence of abstract art with the growing abstraction of social relations in an industrial society, others link it to the abstract power of money that reduces everything to exchange-value, others to the abstract nature of our increasingly bureaucratic society and Post-Jungians to the way in which scientific theories, such as quantum theory, disintegrate the apparent solidity of matter into abstract energy. Abstract expressionism, action painting and colour field painting.
5. **Down with everything. Dada** and the rejection of meaning
6. **Expressing personal emotions** and feelings. Expressionism was an art movement that started in Germany and it presented the world from a subjective viewpoint, distorting the visual representation to achieve emotional effect in order to evoke a mood.
7. **Return to the past, Neo-romantics landscape** 1930s to 1950s. School of London (see <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/s/school-of-London>), R.B. Kitaj and a return to figurative painting in the face of the avant-garde in the 1970s. The Stuckists.
8. **The unconscious mind. Surrealism** and the subconscious

9. **One world of images, Pop Art, Op-Art**, popular culture and the mass media. Art as a part of the world of images.
10. How far can you **simplify art**? **Minimalism**.
11. **The idea is everything. Conceptual art** and installation
12. **The forgotten half**. Half the world is women yet the art world largely ignores or sidelines them. **Feminist art**.
13. **Destroy the art market**. The destruction of the power of the art market through, for example, **performance art**. Performance art breaks with the hegemony of the 'art world', the 'art work' and the white walls of the exhibition.
14. **Reclaim the image**. Photorealism and **hyperrealism** aim to reproduce a photograph to draw attention both to the fact it is a painting (unlike *trompe l'oeil* which attempts to hide it) and to reclaim the image in a world flooded with images through the time and effort expended by the artist.
15. **Explore technology. Video Art, Computer Art** and other media. Video art may not employ the use of actors, may contain no dialogue, may have no discernible narrative or plot, or adhere to any of the other conventions that generally define motion pictures as entertainment. It now includes augmented reality (AR).

IMPRESSIONISM, POST-IMPRESSIONISM AND FAUVISM





Édouard Manet (1832-1883), *Olympia*, 1863, first exhibited 1865, 130.5 x 190 cm, Musée d'Orsay

Titian (Tiziano Vecelli, c. 1488/90-1576), *Venus of Urbino*, 1539, 119 x 165 cm, Uffizi Gallery

- Manet took the modern world and fast-changing city life as his subject for the first time allowing artists to address the modern world rather than follow in the footsteps of the Old Masters.
- This painting is general accredited with being the first work of modern art. Émile Zola wrote, "**When our artists give us Venuses, they correct nature, they lie. Édouard Manet asked himself why lie, why not tell the truth; he introduced us to Olympia, this fille ['fee'] of our time, whom you meet on the sidewalks.**" In other words it is a nude that does not hark back to the classical world for justification but shows a contemporary woman and a prostitute who looks proudly out of the picture returning out gaze, a modern woman.
- Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) wrote "*The Salon of 1846*", and in the section "*On the Heroism of Modern Life*," he argued that modern life was as heroic as ancient life and that men in frock coats were as brave in their own time as the Roman

gladiators were in the arena. Baudelaire's modern day hero was the *flâneur*, the cultivated, well-educated observer of modern life. He mixes with the crowd but is never part of it. The female counterpart to the dandy, the prostitute, the only kind of woman allowed to go abroad at night. Modernism and its heroes is not for the respectable nor for the faint-hearted.

- Baudelaire wrote in *The Painter of Modern Life* about the artist Constantin Guys as a representative of what it means to be modern. The poet states, **"By 'modernity,' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable..."**
- Baudelaire is writing about what we mean by the modern world and recognises its centrality, its features and the need for artists to respond to it and make it central to the work. Modern art must respond to the fast changing, dislocating, unexpected, crude, confrontational modern world. The artist cannot hide in the certainties and security of the past but must confront the future and respond to it both in the means of representation, the subject matter and the meaning.

Notes

- In part, the painting was inspired by Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (c. 1538), which in turn refers to Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* (c. 1510). Léonce Bénédite was the first art historian to explicitly acknowledge the similarity to the Venus of Urbino in 1897. There is also some similarity to Francisco Goya's *La maja desnuda* (c. 1800).



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

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

Impressionism

- The Impressionists freed painters from the need to meticulously transcribe the world into paint. The transient nature of their work mirrored the transience of the modern world.
- The first Impressionist exhibition was held in Paris in 1874. The term Impressionist was not actually used until the Third Impressionist Exhibition in 1877. It was originally a **disparaging term** used by the critic (painter and playwright) **Louis LeRoy** (1812-1885) in the satirical magazine *Le Charivari*. He was describing the painting ***Impression, Sunrise* by Claude Monet**. The exhibition was held by The Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, there were 135 works by 30 artists and about 4,000 people attended.
- That began successful careers for the Impressionist artists. Monet became wealthy from his painting and later built a home in Giverny, France, where he planted his now-famous gardens and the water lilies that became the subject of many of his paintings.

- It was rare for women to become artists at this time but there were some trailblazers, including American Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) and Eva Gonzalès (1849-1883) — who was the only pupil Manet ever took.
- Attributes of Impressionism
 - **Modern life** subjects including railway stations and contemporary fashions.
 - **Accurate depiction of light and the colours of nature**, no black, with colours in the shadows.
 - **Painting *en plein air*** using small strokes and dabs of bright colour to capture the transitoriness of nature.
 - **Loose, 'painterly' style**, like a sketch, placing pure colours directly on the canvas. The paintings lacked 'finish'.
- A small group of artists broke away from the stranglehold of the annual Salon, an official exhibition sponsored by the French government through its Académie des Beaux-Arts. The Impressionists mounted eight shows from 1874 to 1886, although very few of the core artists exhibited in every show and Manet exhibited at none of them. After 1886, the dealers organized solo exhibition or small group shows, and each artist concentrated on his or her own career. They remained good friends (except for Degas who stopped talking to Pissarro) and Monet survived the longest and died in 1926.
- Younger artists started to take their art in different directions and they became known as the Post-Impressionists who include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat and Vincent van Gogh.

Notes

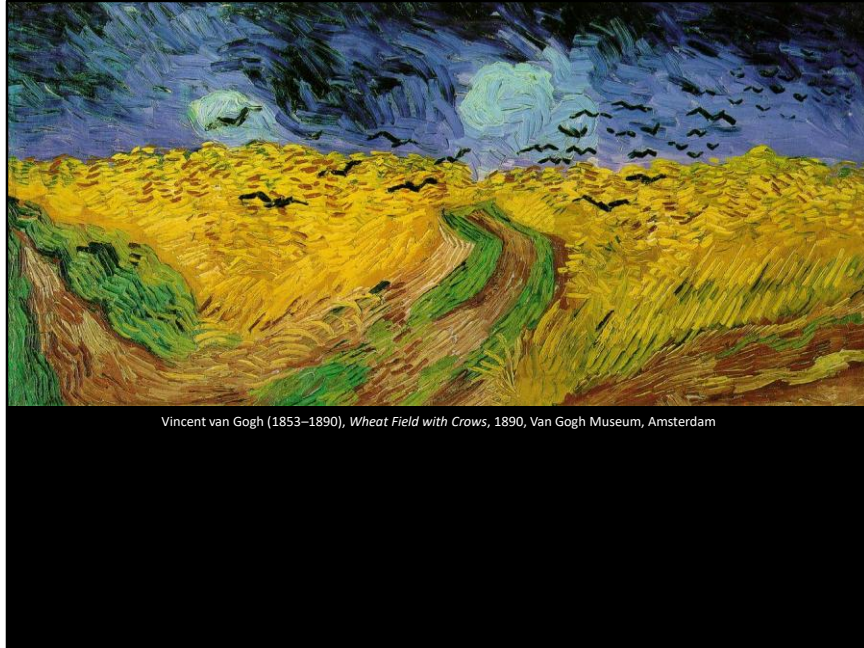
- The leading Impressionists (in alphabetical order) were:
 - Frédéric Bazille (who only posthumously participated in the Impressionist exhibitions) (1841–1870)
 - Gustave Caillebotte (who, younger than the others, joined forces with them in the mid-1870s) (1848–1894)
 - Mary Cassatt (American-born, she lived in Paris and participated in four Impressionist exhibitions) (1844–1926)
 - Paul Cézanne (although he later broke away from the Impressionists) (1839–1906)
 - Edgar Degas (who despised the term Impressionist) (1834–1917)
 - Armand Guillaumin (1841–1927)
 - Édouard Manet (who did not participate in any of the Impressionist exhibitions) (1832–1883)
 - Claude Monet (the most prolific of the Impressionists and the one who embodies their aesthetic most obviously) (1840–1926)
 - Berthe Morisot (1841–1895)
 - Camille Pissarro (the 'father of Impressionism' although this title is

- sometimes given to Monet) (1830–1903)
 - Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)
 - Alfred Sisley (1839–1899)
- 1874, The First Impressionist Exhibition was named retrospectively as the term ‘impressionism’ was used as an insult by the critic (painter and playwright) Louis LeRoy (1812-1885). It was held by The Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, etc. at 35 Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, France. There were 135 works and about 4,000 visitors. The 30 artists who exhibited were Zacharie Astruc, Antoine-Ferdinand Attendu, Édouard Béliard, Eugène Boudin, Félix Braquemond, Édouard Brandon, Pierre-Isidore Bureau, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Paul Cézanne, Gustave Colin, Louis Debras, Edgar Degas, Jean-Baptiste Armand Guillaumin, Louis LaTouche, Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, Stanislas Lepine, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Alfred Meyer, Auguste De Molins, Claude Monet, Mademoiselle Berthe Morisot, Mulot-Durivage, Joseph DeNittis, Auguste-Louis-Marie Ottin, Léon-Auguste Ottin, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Stanislas-Henri Rouart, Léopold Robert, Alfred Sisley.
- 1876, the Second Impressionist Exhibition showed 252 works by only 19 artists who were Édouard Béliard, Pierre-Isidore Bureau, Gustave Caillebotte, Félix-Adolphe Cals, Edgar Degas, Marcellin Desboutin, Jacques François (an anonymous woman), Alphonse Legros, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic, Jean-Baptiste Millet (Jean-François Millet's brother), Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Léon-Auguste Ottin fils, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Stanislas-Henri Rouart, Alfred Sisley, Charles Tillot.
- 1877 the term Impressionist was used in the title of the exhibition for the first time so this could be called the first Impressionist exhibition so named. There were 241 works and 18 artists who were Gustave Caillebotte, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Paul Cézanne, Frédéric Cordet, Edgar Degas, Jean-Baptiste Armand Guillaumin, Jacques-François (an anonymous woman), Franc Lamy, Jean-Baptiste-Léopold Levert, Alphonse Maureau, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Ludovic Piette, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Rouart, Alfred Sisley, Charles Tillot.
- 1879, Fourth Impressionist Exhibition had 15,400 visitors and was the first that was financially successful even though Cézanne, Renoir, Morisot, Guillaumin and Sisley were missing. There were 246 works by 16 artists who were Félix Braquemond, Marie Braquemond, Gustave Caillebotte, Adolphe-Félix Cals, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Louis Forain, Paul Gauguin (not in the brochure), Albert Lebourg, Claude Monet, Ludovic Piette (not in the brochure), Camille Pissarro, Henri Rouart, Henri Somm, Charles Tillot, Federico Zandomeneghi.
- 1880 Fifth Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1881 Sixth Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1882 Seventh Impressionist Exhibition.
- 1886 Eighth Impressionist Exhibition. The artists were Marie Braquemond, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Jean-Louis Forain, Paul Gauguin, Armand Guillaumin, Mme.

Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Lucien Pissarro, Odilon Redon, Henri Rouart, Émile Schuffenecker, Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, Charles Tillot, Paul-Victor Vignon, Federico Zandomenoghi.

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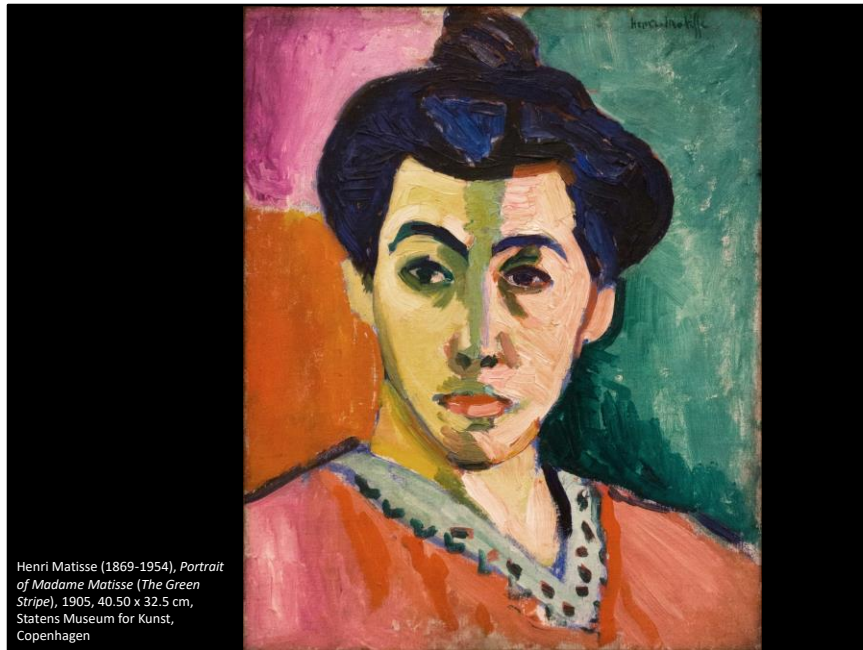


Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Wheat Field with Crows*, 1890, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Post-Impressionism (a term that was first used by art critic **Roger Fry** in 1906 and for his 1910 exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*)

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

back to his **parents home**, took up **painting in 1881**. His early work depicts **labourers in earthy tones** and it was not until he **went south** that he painted landscapes in **vivid colours**. He worked in **Paris for two years 1886-88** before moving south to **Arles** where he lived in the '**Yellow House**' for a short period with **Paul Gauguin**. They developed a way of using colour to represent their inner emotions and feelings. He suffered from **violent episodes** and delusions and there was a violent encounter that led to a break up of his relationship with Gauguin. He committed himself to a **mental hospital** where his condition stabilised and he had a productive period painting. He moved under the care of a homeopathic doctor, **Paul Gachet**, and while there his **brother, Theo**, wrote to him to say he could **no longer support him**. A few **weeks later** van Gogh walked into a wheat field and **shot himself** in the chest and died two days later. Originally viewed as a madman his reputation improved as his work was seen to influence the German Expressionists and the Fauves. His life story has been repeatedly retold as it illustrates the tragic life of the romantic ideal of the tortured artistic genius. He is now generally regarded as exceptionally talented, original and very influential but his mental instability, rather than empowering his art is seen as inhibiting and frustrating it.



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

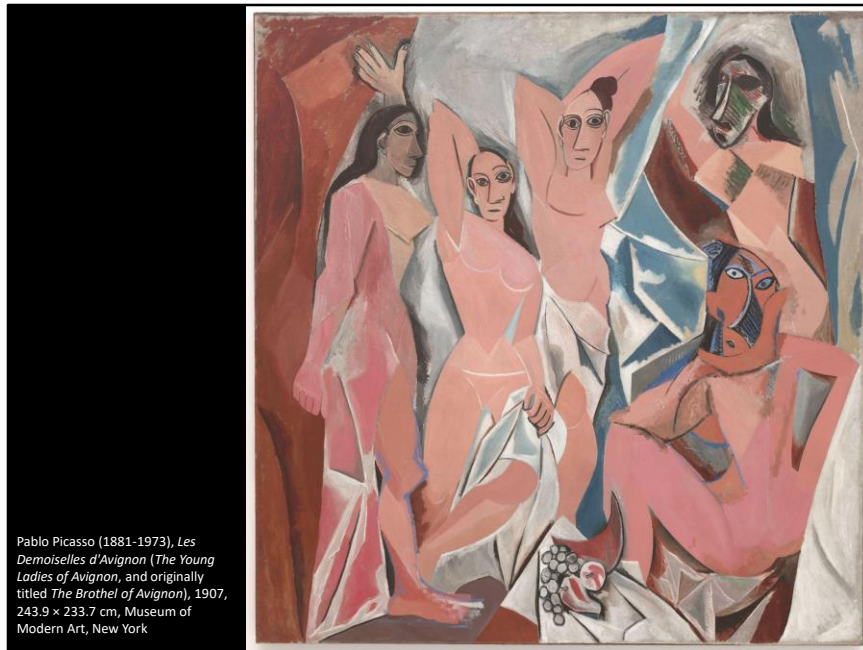
Fauvism

- The Fauvists freed artists from the need to represent colour accurately. Instead colour could be used to represent feeling.
- Fauvism is the style of les Fauves (French for "the wild beasts"), a loose group of early twentieth-century Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism. While Fauvism as a style began around 1900 and continued beyond 1910, the movement as such lasted only a few years, 1904–1908, and had three exhibitions. The leaders of the movement were Henri Matisse and André Derain.
- In 1888 Gauguin had said,
 - "How do you see these trees? They are yellow. So, put in yellow; this shadow, rather blue, paint it with pure ultramarine; these red leaves? Put in vermilion."
- Fauvism can be seen as a type of Expressionism as it uses colour to express the artists personal feelings.

- Gustave Moreau was the movement's inspirational teacher until **Matisse was recognised as the leader in 1904.**
- In 1896 Matisse visited John Peter Russell and saw his first Impressionist painting. He was so shocked he had to leave. He returned a year later and started to paint in the Impressionist style influenced by van Gogh, a close friend of Russell.
- In 1901, Maurice de Vlaminck saw van Gogh's work in an exhibition for the first time and began to squeeze paint directly from the tube onto his canvases.
- In 1905, Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck and others exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of 1905, the **critic Louis Vauxcelles** (pronounced 'lew-ee vo-cell') disparaged the painters with the phrase "Donatello chez les fauves" ("**Donatello among the wild beasts**"), contrasting their "orgy of tones" with a Renaissance-style sculpture that shared the room with them. Henri Rousseau was not a Fauve, but his large jungle scene *The Hungry Lion Throws Itself on the Antelope* was exhibited near Matisse's work and may have had an influence on the wording, Vauxcelles' comment was printed on 17 October 1905 in *Gil Blas*, a daily newspaper, and passed into popular usage.
- *Gil Blas* was the hero of an early eighteenth-century French novel set in Spain about an ordinary youth's adventures. It influenced Henry Fielding *Tom Jones* and Charles Dickens *Nicholas Nickleby*.

CUBISM, ABSTRACTION
AND THE BRITISH AVANT GARDE





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

Cubism

- Cubism freed artists from the need to represent perspective accurately. As we move around the world we do not experience the world in terms of traditional perspective but as a changing mosaic of images and memories.
- *Les Femmes d'Alger* shows five nude prostitutes from a brothel in Barcelona. None of the figures is conventionally feminine; they are angular, confrontational and menacing. The two figures on the right have heads that look like African masks. The rejection of perspective and the embracing of primitivism marks a break from traditional European art. This work is generally regarded as proto-Cubist because of the flat surface, angular forms and limited colour range. It was regarded at the time as deeply revolutionary and it led to anger even amongst his friends. Matisse considered it a bad joke and Braque disliked the painting but both artists studied it in detail and responded to it.
- Its resemblance to Cézanne's *Les Grandes Baigneuses*, Paul Gauguin's statue *Oviri*

and El Greco's *Opening of the Fifth Seal* has been widely discussed by later critics.

- When it was first exhibited in 1916 it was regarded as immoral. The organiser of the exhibition gave the work its current title replacing Picasso's title *Le Bordel d'Avignon*. He did this to lessen the scandal he knew it would cause but Picasso never liked the new title. The painting was intended to shock. It is clumsy, overworked and unfinished and the women show no sign of humanity or emotion.
- The earliest sketches of the brothel include two men, a sailor and a medical student holding a book or skull. The viewer has replaced the men and it has become a meditation on the dangers of sex. The art historian Rosalind Krauss describes the 'trauma of the gaze' and the implied threat of violence.
- One of Picasso's biographers, John Richardson, wrote, "*Les Femmes d'Alger* is the first unequivocally 20th-century masterpiece, a principal detonator of the modern movement, the cornerstone of 20th-century art. For Picasso it would also be a rite of passage: what he called an exorcism.' It cleared the way for cubism. It likewise banished the artist's demons. Later, these demons would return and require further exorcism. For the next decade, however, Picasso would feel as free and creative and 'as overworked' as God."
- In July 2007, *Newsweek* published a two-page article about *Les Femmes d'Alger* describing it as the "**most influential work of art of the last 100 years**".

Cubism - Climbing the Mountain

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

was concerned with producing a conceptual image of the object rather than a visual one. Objects were deconstructed into their components. In some cases, different viewpoints were shown alongside each other. The aim was not a mimetic representation but to provide a summary of the facts concerning the object. The second stage was called Synthetic Cubism and used non-art materials as abstract signs. The use of a grid or framework, the shallow space and the use of abstract signs influenced later artists such as Piet Mondrian.

Notes

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

represented all the surfaces of depicted objects in a single picture plane, as if the objects had all their faces visible at the same time. This new kind of depiction revolutionized the way objects could be visualized in painting and art

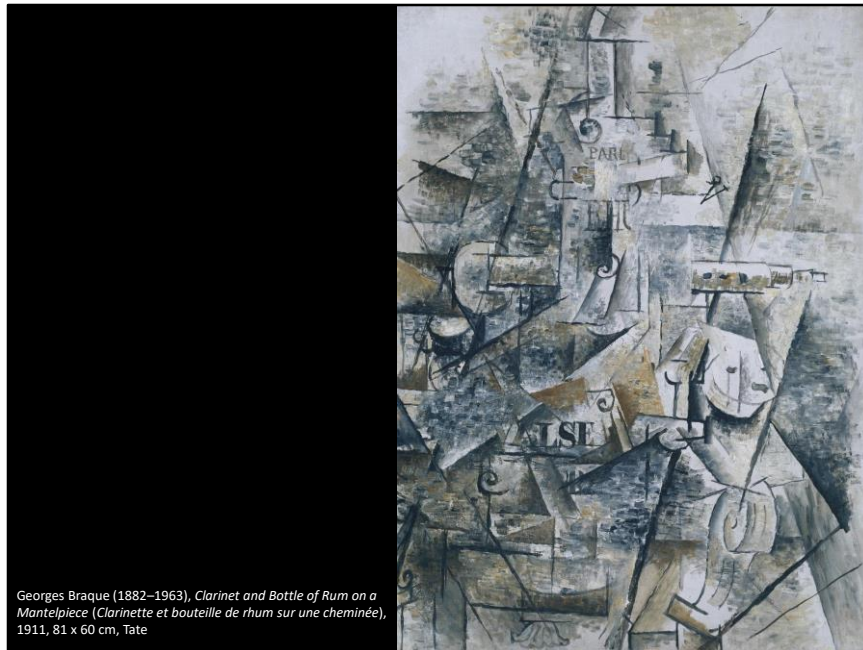
- Cubism has been divided into phases. Under one scheme there was:
 - Analytical Cubism between 1910 and 1912,
 - Synthetic or Crystal Cubism between 1912 and 1919 when Surrealism gained in popularity.
- One might also talk of Early Cubism between 1907 and 1910.

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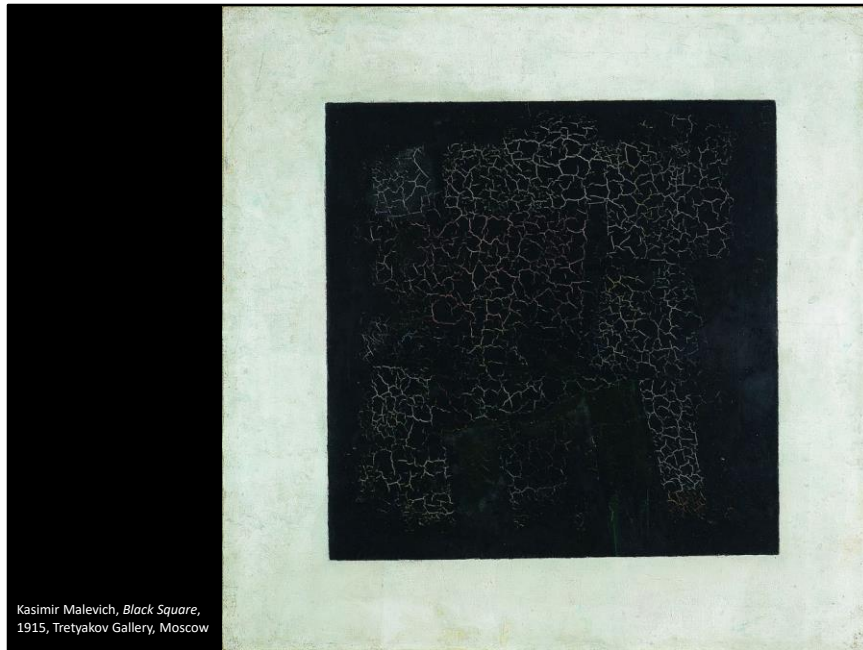


Georges Braque (1882–1963), *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece* (*Clarinette et bouteille de rhum sur une cheminée*), 1911, 81 x 60 cm, Tate

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

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

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



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

Abstraction

- Abstraction freed artists from the need to represent the world at all and this allowed them to think about the central aims of art without reference to perspective, colour, subject matter or representation.
- The Black Square was first shown in The Last Futurist Exhibition 0.10 in 1915. The work is frequently invoked by critics, historians, curators, and artists as the “zero point of painting”, referring to the painting's historical significance and paraphrasing Malevich.
- **It is the first time someone made a painting that wasn't of something**
- **It began life as a stage curtain.** Tate, 'The first *Black Square* (Malevich actually painted not one, but four versions between 1915 and 1930) was (we believe) painted in 1915, although Malevich actually dated it 1913 - maybe with an eye to his legacy as the father of abstraction. In any case, the square's first appearance was indeed in 1913, as the design for a stage curtain in the futurist opera *Victory over the Sun*.'

- **It's a revolutionary symbol**
- **It was the first icon that wasn't, well, an icon**
- **There's no 'right' way to look at it**

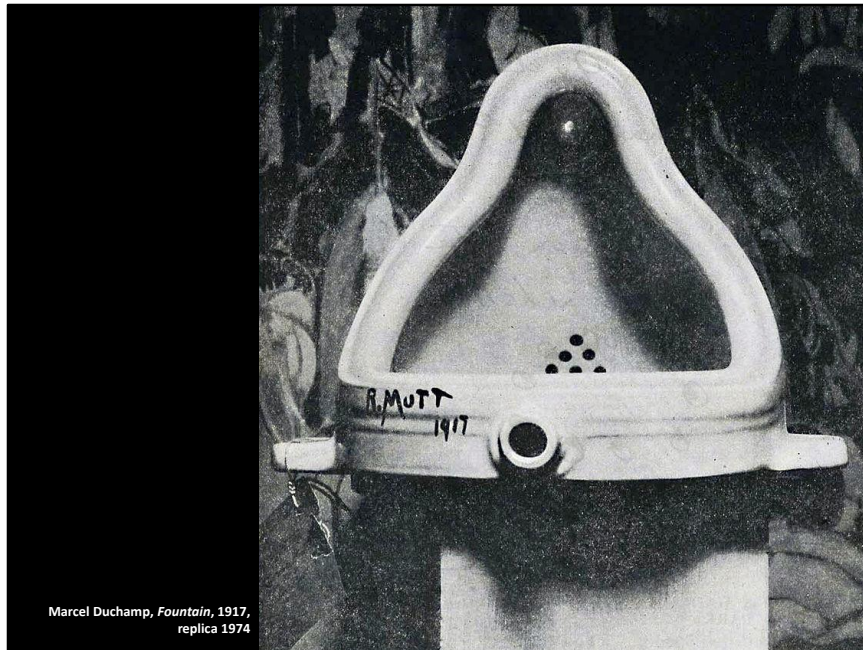
Notes

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

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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

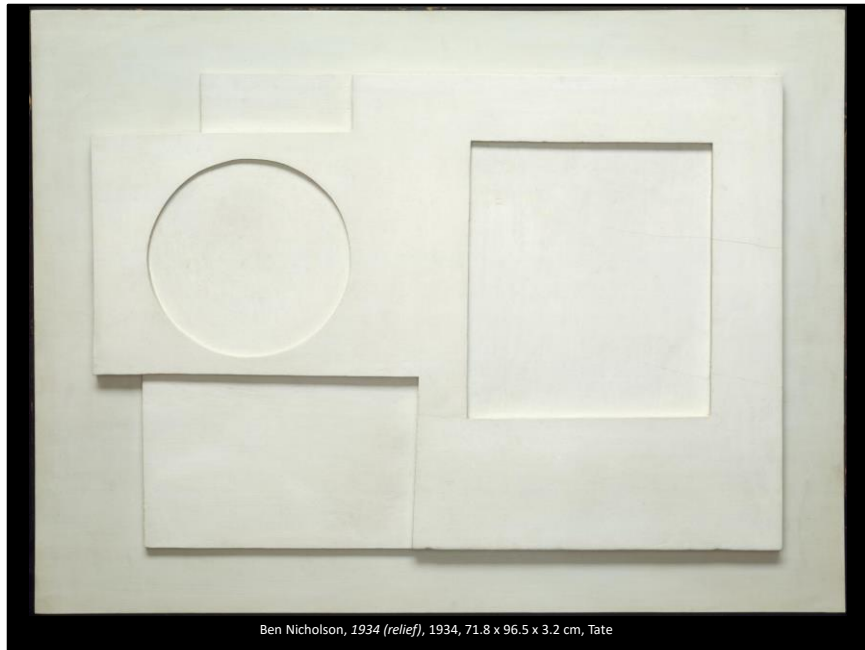
only with *Fountain* in 1917 that there was a public reaction. Duchamp recalled that *Fountain* resulted from a discussion with Walter Arensberg and the artist Joseph Stella.

- 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.

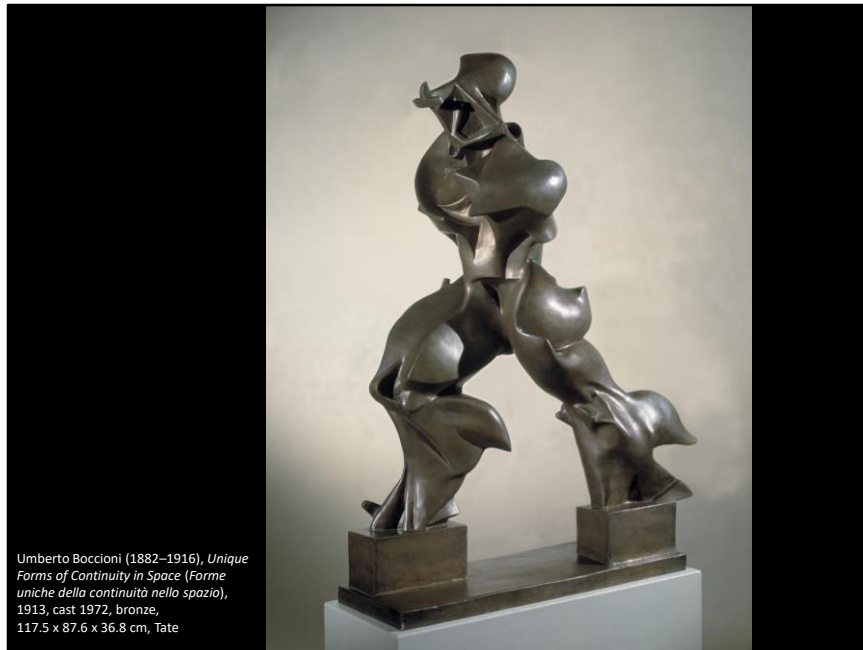


Ben Nicholson, *1934 (relief)*, 1934, 71.8 x 96.5 x 3.2 cm, Tate

- **Ben Nicholson** was one of the **few abstract painters in Britain** between the wars.
- Nicholson was interested in the ways in which paintings can **represent space**. In the 1930s, he made **shallow reliefs** in which areas of different depths define actual space. In the **most radical of these, colour was reduced to just white or grey** to achieve a **sense of purity**. Depth and plain colour make the play of light and shadow an intrinsic part of the work. This emphasis was related to new ideas about living and, especially, to modern architecture, in which natural light and formal simplicity were major concerns.

VORTICISM AND WORLD WAR ONE





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

- The Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism and Abstraction together created an entirely new world for the artist to explore. This was at a time when war was looming and there was one art movement that welcomed change to the extent of praising war as a positive force for change.

Futurism

- This is perhaps the most famous Futurist work. It is **Umberto Boccioni** (1882–1916), ***Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*** and was first made in **1913**. Boccioni **died only three years later, aged 33**, but he had a very productive life and his work was very influential. He was a painter who also produced drawings and sculptures that all incorporated a sense of energy and movement that was associated with the modern, mechanical age.
- This work is considered to be the most successful of his sculptural experiments. The bronze casting was done posthumously in 1949, from the artist's original plaster (which was never cast during his lifetime).
- The head is sculpted to look like a helmet suggesting war. The Futurists were

looking for change and saw war, before WWI, as a positive force for change as they thought it would sweep away the old and enable the new mechanical age of speed to arise. The figure does not have arms but there are wing-like features at the back which could represent the swirling air rapidly displaced by the fast moving body. This swirling air is also indicated by the flame-like shapes that begin at the calves.

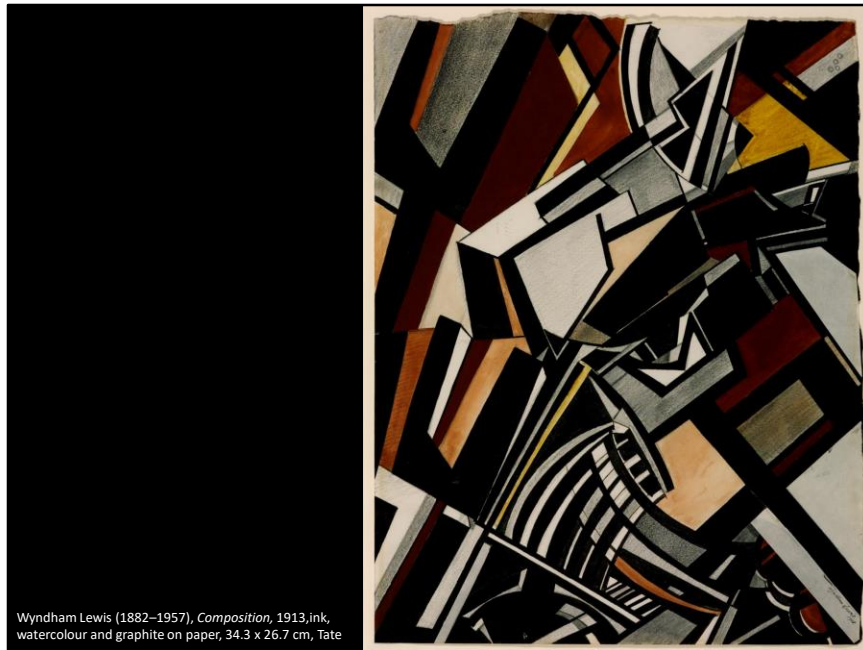
- **Movement was a key element** for Boccioni and the other Futurists, as the technology of transportation (cars, bicycles, and trains) allowed people to experience ever greater speeds. The Futurist artists often depicted motorized vehicles and the perceptions they made possible—the **blurry, fleeting,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

Notes

- Boccioni's father was a minor government official who was moved around Italy so Boccioni lived in many regions. Some after the age of 16 he moved to Rome and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. In Rome he met and became a friend of **Gino Severini** (1883-1966) and they both became students of **Giacomo Balla** (1871-1958), a painter focusing on the modern Divisionist technique. Balla was an older artist who influenced both Boccioni and Severini. In 1906, he briefly moved to Paris, where he studied Impressionist and Post-Impressionist styles, before visiting Russia for three months, getting a first-hand view of the civil unrest and governmental crackdowns. In 1909 **Filippo Tommaso Emilio Marinetti** (1876–1944) published the **Futurist Manifesto**. In 1910 Boccioni met Marinetti and Boccioni became the main theorist of the movement and when he went to Paris and met Picasso and Braque the movement began to take shape.
- In 1912 and 1914 he exhibited in London and made a deep impression on the English artist C. R. Nevinson who became the only English member of the organisation. Others aligned themselves instead to its British equivalent, Vorticism, led by Wyndham Lewis.
- In 1914 he wrote,
 - **'While the impressionists paint a picture to give one particular moment and subordinate the life of the picture to its resemblance to this moment, we synthesize every moment (time, place, form, colour-tone) and thus paint the picture.'**
- He was called back into service in June 1916, and stationed outside Verona with an artillery brigade. During a training exercise, Boccioni was **thrown from his horse and trampled**. Still a young man of just thirty-three, Boccioni succumbed to injuries and died a day later on August 17.

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

Vorticism

- **Wyndham Lewis** was an English painter and author. He co-founded the Vorticist movement and was editor of the Vorticist magazine *BLAST*.
- This composition was among the first works by Lewis to suggest the architectural and mechanistic rhythm of urban life using a distinctive abstract style. Vorticism challenged French Cubism and Italian Futurism, although its sharp-angled depiction of fragmented space owed a debt to these movements. However, Vorticism focused on the idea of the 'Vortex', the still centre where creative energy is most intense.

Notes

- Lewis said he was born on his father's yacht off Nova Scotia and he went to Rugby School following his parents separation. He later went to the **Slade School of Art** and then spent most of the 1900s **travelling around Europe** and studying art in Paris. He lived in London from 1908 and was a founder of the **Camden Town Group** in 1911. In 1912 he exhibited at **Roger Fry's second Post-Impressionism**

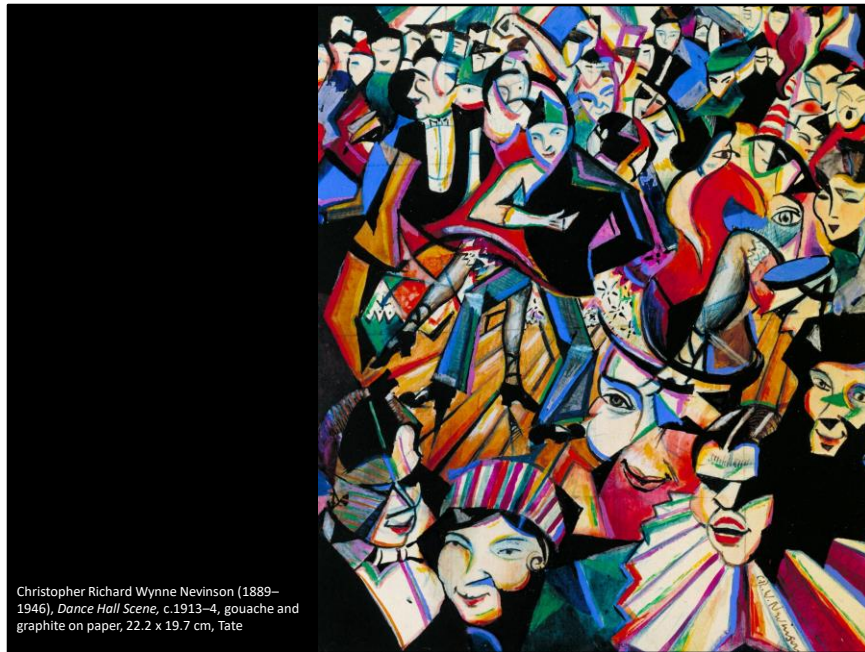
exhibition. He met Roger Fry and Clive Bell but soon fell out with them. In **1913-15** he developed a form of geometric abstraction that his friend Ezra Pound called '**Vorticism**'. He wanted to combine the **solid structure of Cubism with the liveliness of Futurism.** He joined Roger Fry's **Omega Workshop** but fell out with him and created the **Rebel Art Centre** and although this only lasted three months it gave rise to the Vorticist Group and *BLAST*. In 1917 he was posted to the front in a forward post directing artillery fire. In December he was made an **official war artist.** One of his best known works *A Battery Shelled* (1919, Imperial War Museum).

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

References

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<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2008/apr/17/wyndhamlewisoverlookedscour>



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

Futurism & Vorticism

- **Futurism had by now become a catchword in London for anything new and outrageous**, and the British avant-garde grew resentful of its influence.
- This scene of wild partying was probably inspired by the Albert Hall Ball, held in London on 3 December 1913. **Christopher R. N. Nevinson** was fascinated by the idea of '**simultaneity**'. His composition here not is just depicting dancers, but **conveys the experience of dancing**. He was the only British artist to wholeheartedly embrace Futurism, co-signing the manifesto *Vital English Art* which rejected 'the pretty-pretty, the commonplace, the soft, sweet, and mediocre' in English culture, in favour of the modern and dynamic.

Notes

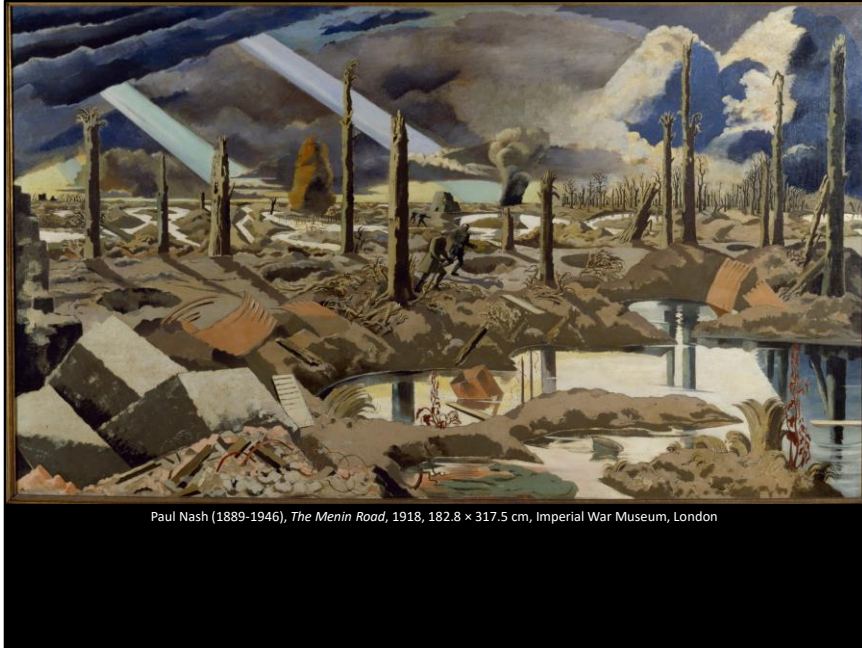
- Nevinson was the son of a war correspondent and was a **student at the Slade School of Art** between 1909 and 1912. The Futurist Exhibition of March 1912, held at the Sackville Gallery, London, proved decisive for his development.
- Nevinson continued to make Futurist paintings of machine-age London,

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

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

References

- Tate website



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

- The First World War had a profound effect on developments in modern art and in the UK many artists rejected the new art and returned to the certainties of the old pre-war world.

World War I

- ***The Menin Road*** is a large oil painting by **Paul Nash** completed in 1919 that depicts a First World War battlefield. Nash was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee to paint a battlefield scene for the proposed national **Hall of Remembrance**, which was never built. The painting is considered one of the most iconic images of the First World War and is held by the Imperial War Museum.
- He decided to paint the **Ypres Salient** (a technical term for an area surrounded on three sides by the enemy) as it had been devastated during the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge where there was a cluster of German pill boxes the British called *Tower Hamlets*. He was originally going to call it *A Flanders Battlefield* but eventually decided on *The Menin Road*. Nash knew the area well as he had served there. He

considered Tower Hamlets to be 'perhaps the most dreaded and disastrous locality of any area in any of the theatres of War'.

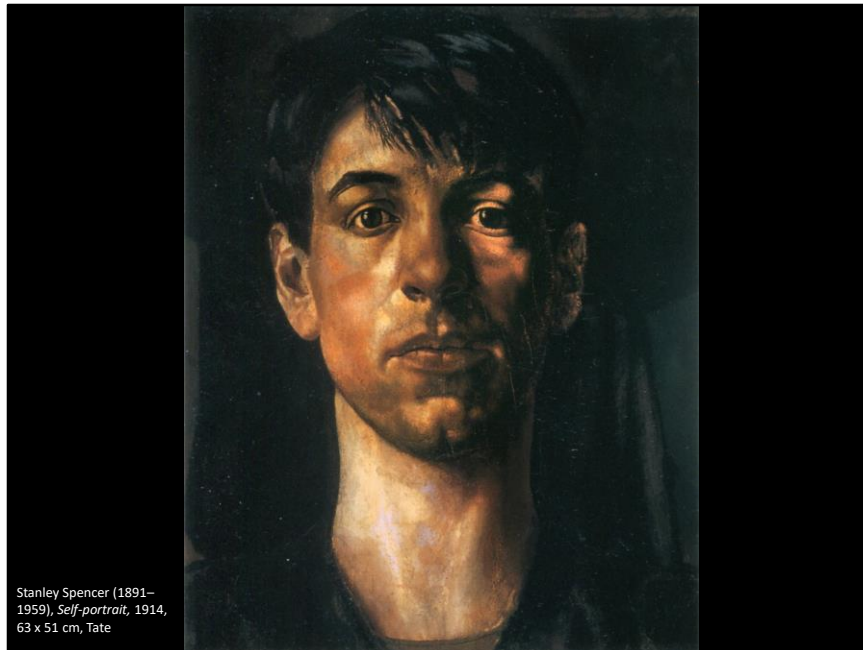
- Nash started worked on the large painting in a herb drying shed in Chalfont St Peter and when he had to move out he had difficulties finding a studio and eventually completed the work in Gower Street, London. The room in Gower Street was so small Nash had to climb out of the window to see the complete picture.
- "*The Menin Road* depicts a landscape of flooded shell craters and trenches while tree stumps, devoid of any foliage, point towards a sky full of clouds and plumes of smoke, bisected by shafts of sunlight resembling gun barrels. Two soldiers at the centre of the picture attempt to follow the, almost, unrecognisable road but appear to be trapped by the landscape. Nash composed the picture in three broad strips. The foreground is filled with shell craters and debris, which block access to the road in the middle of the picture. The only possible path, to the side of one of the mud pools, is blocked by a fallen board. Across the centre of the picture, shell holes punch into the road at regular intervals, while debris further breaks up the road, as do the shadows from a line of trees alongside it. Beyond the trees, the battlefield stretches to the horizon, with a wood of stunted trees on the right hand side and to the left a series of seven zigzag streams, that also fail to reach the horizon and escape. Nash came to consider this painting to be his finest work."

References

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RETURN TO ORDER:
STANLEY SPENCER





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

Spencer

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

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

Notes

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

References

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



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

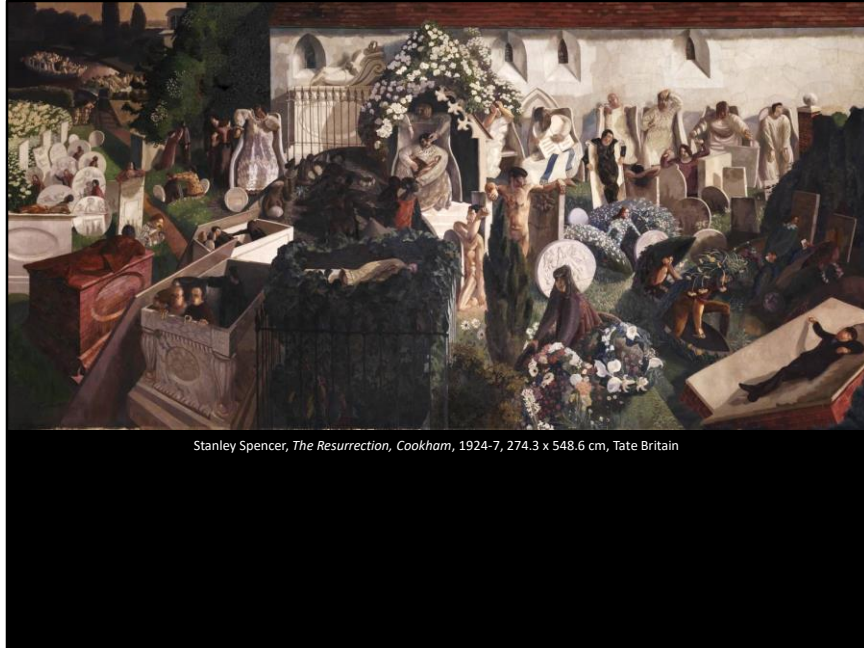
World War One, *Travoyes Arriving with Wounded* (1919)

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

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

Notes

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



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

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

- ***The Resurrection* is perhaps Spencer's most famous painting.** The Resurrection is one of the most challenging of all traditional Bible subjects but Spencer, by the power of his personal approach, has created a triumphant masterpiece. The picture created a sensation when shown in his one-man exhibition at the **Goupil Gallery** in London in 1927 and was bought immediately for the national collections for **£1,000**.
- The critic of *The Times* called it '... **the most important picture painted by any English artist in the present century** ... What makes it so astonishing is the combination in it of careful detail with the modern freedom of form. It is as if a **Pre-Raphaelite had shaken hands with a Cubist.**' and even the Bloomsbury critic Roger Fry, who generally disapproved of narrative painting, wrote 'it is highly arresting and intriguing ... a very personal conception carried through with unflinching nerve and conviction.'
- Spencer believed that the divine rested in all creation. He saw his home town of Cookham as a paradise in which everything is invested with mystical significance. The local churchyard here becomes the setting for the resurrection of the dead.

Christ is enthroned in the church porch, cradling three babies, with God the Father standing behind. Along the wall of the church is a row of prophets including Moses, with a dark beard, holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The rest of the churchyard is filled with people resurrecting from their tombs.

- **The group of black people** emerging from sun-baked soil implies that Spencer's conception embraces the **whole of humanity**. Spencer made it clear that his Resurrection was a joyous event and that the resurrected are already in Heaven: '... in the main they resurrect to such a state of joy that they are content ... to remain where they are.' Even '**the punishment of the Bad**', said Spencer, '**was to be no more than that their coming out of the graves was not so easy as in the case of the Good**'.
- Spencer himself appears near the centre, naked, leaning against a grave stone; his fiancée Hilda lies sleeping in a bed of ivy. At the top left, risen souls are transported to Heaven in the pleasure steamers that then ploughed the Thames.

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

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

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DADA, SURREALISM AND EXPRESSIONISM





Cabaret Voltaire, 1916, Zurich, Switzerland

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

Notes

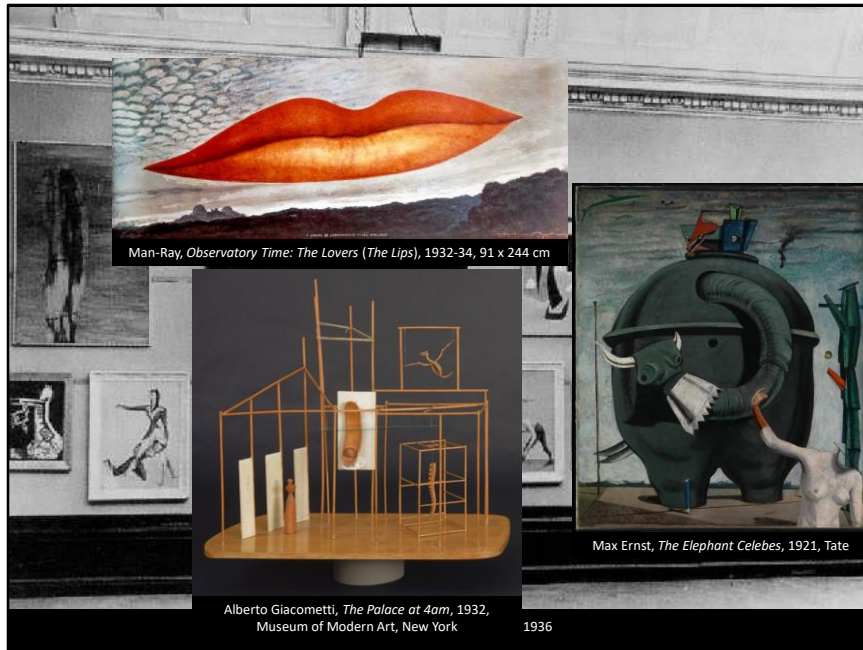
- **Zurich** in 1916 was a gathering place for refugees from all over war-torn Europe

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

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

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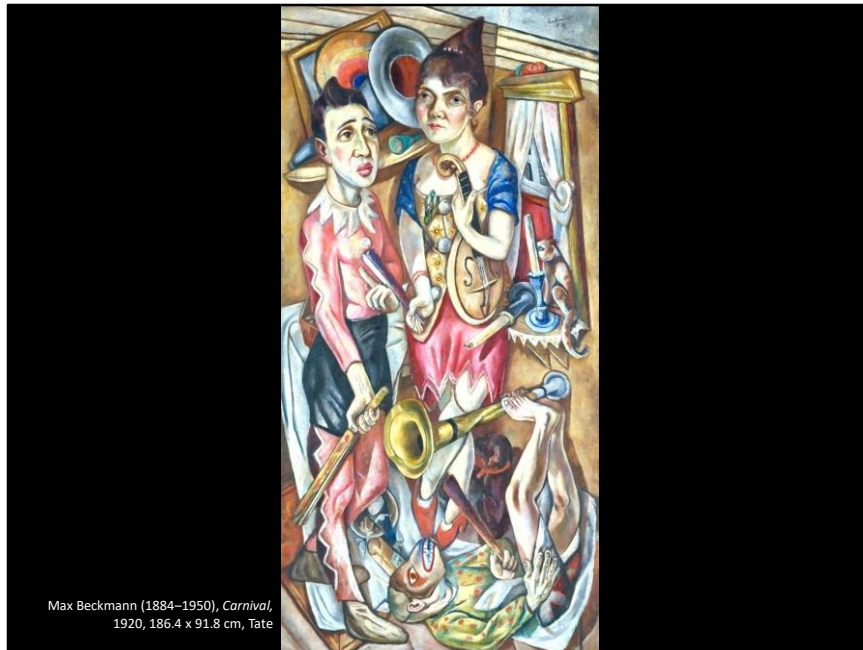


Surrealism

- International Surrealist Exhibition, 1936 at which Salvador Dalí attempted to deliver a lecture whilst wearing a deep-sea diver's suit and holding two hounds on a leash, but he had to be rescued after nearly suffocating
- 12 June to 4 July 1936
- First brought Surrealism to London. It was well received by artists as **Britain** had always had a **tradition of whimsy, fantasy and dreams** through artists such as **Henry Fuseli** (1741-1825), **Richard Dadd** (1817-1886), **Edward Burne-Jones** (1833-1898) and **Lewis Carol** (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, 1832-1898). The exhibition was very influential but although Surrealism was the **longest lived and most influential movement of the twentieth century** it could be said to have **quickly died away in Britain**.
- **At the time it caused an immense stir** and it is often quoted by art historians but it not change the approach of many artists. Like an **exploding rocket** it was bright and entertaining for a short period but quickly died away. One reason is that many artists left Europe in 1938-40 for the US. Franco launched his coup in July of the same year.

- Surrealism was a reaction against the 'return to order' and classicism and it was inspired by the work of Sigmund Freud.
- Automatic art took root in the US and gave rise to action painting.
- Andre Breton, *What is Surrealism*, 1924. David Gascoyne organised Surrealism with Roland Penrose, Herbert Read, Henry Moore and others.
- The art works from Denmark were impounded by the police as obscene and they were eventually sent back.
- Some of the more well known artists and art works are:
 - Man-Ray, *Observatory Time: The Lovers (The Lips)*, 1932-34, 91 x 244 cm, took two years to complete, refers to the devouring woman, a central reference for Surrealists
 - Max Ernst, *The Elephant Celebes*, 1921, Tate, based on a Sudanese corn-bin, name comes from a German nursery rhyme
 - Alberto Giacometti, *The Palace at 4am*, 1932, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Giacometti said the work relates to "a period of six months passed in the presence of a woman who, concentrating all life in herself, transported my every moment into a state of enchantment. We constructed a fantastical palace in the night—a very fragile palace of matches. At the least false movement a whole section would collapse. We always began it again."
 - Francis Picabia, *Spanish Night*, 1922, 150 x 186 cm, private collection. Picabia changed his ideas as often as he changed his shirt. He was regarded as uncategorisable.
 - Pablo Picasso, *The Studio*, 1934, 128 x 159.4, Indiana University Art Museum
 - Miro, *Harlequins Carnival*, 1924
 - Magritte, *On the Threshold of Liberty*, 1930. He disagreed with the Surrealists over their rejection of religion.
 - Pablo Picasso, *The Woman with the Golden Breasts*, 1914 The Surrealists tried to claim Picasso but he was in a category of his own.
 - Giorgio de Chirico, *The Philosophers Conquest*, 1914, 125.1 x 99.1 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago
 - Giorgio de Chirico, *The Child's Brain*, 1914
 - Salvador Dali, *The Dream*, 1931
 - Salvador Dali, *Paranoiac Face*, 1935
 - René Magritte, *The Annunciation*, 1930, 113.7 x 145.9, Tate
 - Man-Ray, *The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows*, 1916, Museum of Modern Art, New York
 - Paul Klee, *The Mask of Fear*, 1932, 100.4 x 57.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York
 - Paul Klee, *Siesta of the Sphinx*, 1932

- Dora Maar, *Le Simulateur* (The Simulator or The Pretender), 1936
- The exhibition was well attended, there were traffic jams in Piccadilly for the first time.
- Penrose bought several of the works afterwards.
- The exhibition was educational and there were lectures.
- Dylan Thomas walked around offering people cups of string and asking if they wanted it 'weak or strong'.
- Critics did not like it, nice boys but immature.



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

Expressionism

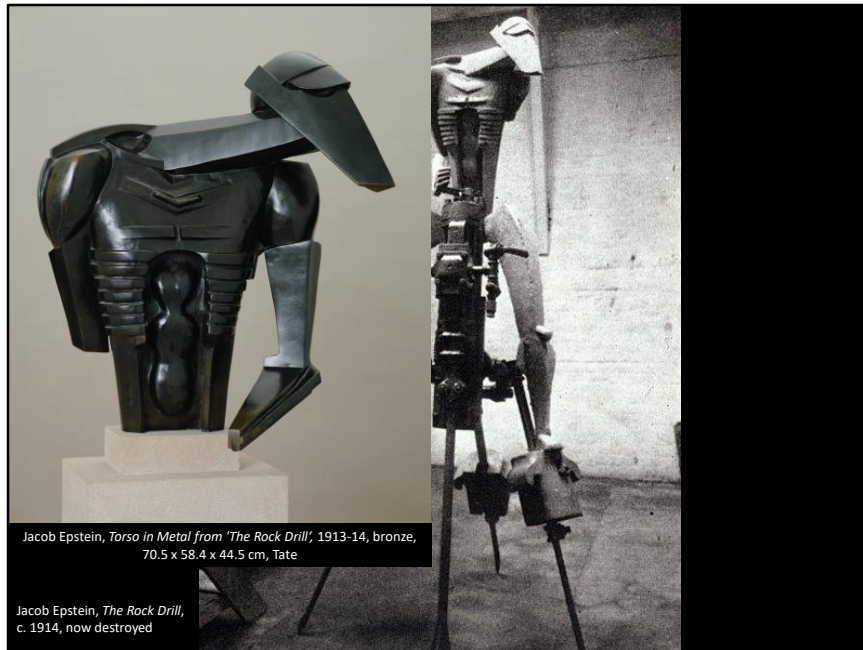
- Tate website, 'This work represents the climax of **Carnival**, a season of **fancy dress parties**, masked balls and street processions with wild music and dancing. The two figures are based on close friends of the artist, Israel Ber Neumann, Beckmann's art dealer, as Harlequin, and Fridel Battenberg, as Pierrette. In reality the two never met. Beckmann is possibly represented by the masked clown. The trumpet or horn he holds traditionally signalled the appearance of Harlequin. Beckmann's work, with its grotesque and distorted figures, epitomised what the Nazis considered to be 'degenerate' art. He was dismissed from his teaching post in Frankfurt in 1933. Several of his works were included in the 1937 Degenerate Art show, prompting him to leave Germany for Amsterdam.'
- The slapstick was a sheet of paper that was folded into pleats and used to hit passers-by. It made a loud noise but did not hurt them.
- 'Fastnacht,' the painting's German title, is the height of Carnival's celebratory excess before Lent. In 1920, the Frankfurt authorities banned public festivities for Fastnacht, the possible reason this celebration is confined indoors.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beckmann-carnival-t03294>

BRITISH SCULPTURE





Jacob Epstein, *The Rock Drill*, c. 1914, now destroyed

Jacob Epstein, *Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'*, 1913-14, bronze, 70.5 x 58.4 x 44.5 cm, Tate

British Sculpture

- Between 1913 and 1915, **Jacob Epstein** was associated with the **short-lived Vorticism movement** and produced one of his best known sculptures *The Rock Drill*.
- This is a photograph of ***The Rock Drill*** in its original form. This work appeared at the London Group exhibition in 1915. By the time of its second outing in summer 1916, however, he had dismantled it. He discarded the drill, dismembered the figure and cut it in half, leaving a one-armed torso which was then cast, initially in gun metal and ultimately in bronze. Epstein, it seems, took an expression of masculine aggression and then emasculated it. Obvious conclusions may be drawn from the fact that he is doing this at the time of the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Verdun.
- Epstein later said "**I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No Humanity, only the terrible**

Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into... later I lost my interest in machinery and discarded the drill. I cast only the upper part of the figure."

- Epstein often produced controversial works which challenged taboos on what was appropriate subject matter for public artworks. He also made paintings and drawings, and often exhibited his work.
- The figure is sharp-edged, its limbs square in profile, and its head is a long beak-like armoured visage. The torso has what looks like armoured ribs, and in the abdomen area is an indentation containing an embryonic form. The extraordinary thing about this mechanised abstracted human figure is that it sat on top of a real miner's rock drill, with the name of its American manufacturer emblazoned on its side. The whole assembled sculpture was over three metres tall, giving it an amazing brooding and threatening physical presence. Of course, with the enormous drill jutting out from the figure's loins, it has an extraordinary phallic power about it.

References

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



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

- This statue was Moore's **first large-scale commission for a bronze** and his first commission following the Second World war. It was originally intended for Impington Village College in Cambridge and the Family Group subject fits in with the village college philosophy of life-long education. However, after Moore had designed the maquette, Impington cancel the sculpture due to lack of funds.
- The project was revived a few years later when the new town of **Stevenage** was being designed. The Chief Education Officer, John Newsom, persuaded the council to allocate funds for public art works at each of the **new schools being built**, allowing Moore to complete Family Group for the **Barclay School in 1950**.
- Moore's signature form is a reclining figure. Moore's exploration of this form, under the influence of the Toltec-Mayan figure he had seen at the Louvre, was to lead him to increasing abstraction as he turned his thoughts towards experimentation with the elements of design. Moore's earlier reclining figures deal principally with mass, while his later ones contrast the solid elements of the sculpture with the space, not only round them but generally through them as he pierced the forms with openings.



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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

WORLD WAR TWO ARTISTS





Laura Knight, *Ruby Loftus screwing a Breech-ring*, 1943, Imperial War Museum

Laura Knight (1877-1970), *Ruby Loftus screwing a Breech-ring*, 1943, 86.3 x 101.9 cm, Imperial War Museum

- Miss Ruby Loftus had been brought to the attention of the War Artist's Advisory Committee as 'an **outstanding factory worker**'. Laura Knight was expected to paint a studio portrait but the Ministry of Supply requested that she be painted at work in the Royal Ordnance Factory in Newport.
- Making a '**Bofors Breech ring**' was the **most highly skilled job** in the factory, normally requiring **eight or nine years training**. Loftus was **aged 21** at the time of the painting and had no previous factory experience. Her ability to operate the machine presented a considerable publicity coup at the time and she was probably placed at this machine for this reason.
- Knight had been painting circus performers and ballet dancers; industrial machinery was a wholly new element in her work but her technical accuracy was praised in contemporary reports.
- The painting received **enormous publicity** and was reproduced in most of the **daily newspapers**. Laura Knight was the most outstandingly successful women artist of the inter-war years and she was the best-known and most honoured woman artist.

She did not conform to gender expectations and campaigned actively and vocally to become the first female Royal Academician since the founding membership. She wrote, '**Can Women Succeed as Artists?**' and identified **inequality of opportunity** between men and women as the basis for the **latter's near exclusion** from the centre of the British art world.

- **It could be said that Knight, like Loftus, was proving herself in a traditionally male environment.** However, the press and society at large identified Knight and Loftus **not as beacons** of gender equality but as **outstanding exceptions** whose achievements highlighted the limitations rather than the potential of other women.

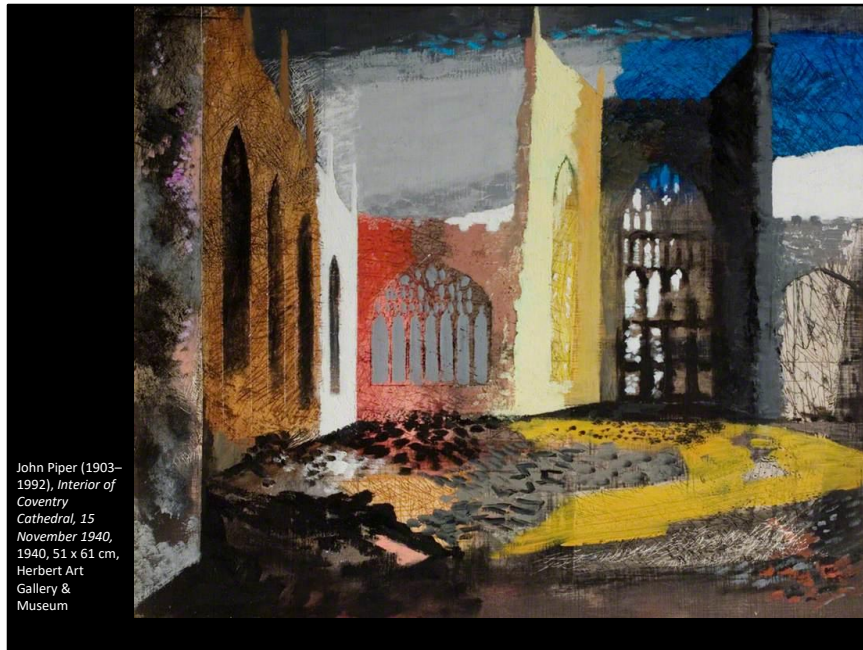
Notes

- *Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breech Ring* (1943) – in the autumn of 1942 the WAAC commissioned Knight to paint a portrait to bolster female recruitment to the ordnance factories, as the Ministry of Supply were concerned at the level of disaffection and absenteeism among women in the factories. The resulting painting is one of the largest oil paintings in the entire WAAC collection, and the largest single figure portrait it acquired throughout the war. The painting was first shown on 30 April 1943 at the Royal Academy and the next day was reproduced in eight British newspapers. The painting, along with Knight and Loftus, also featured in a British Paramount News short film shown in cinemas, and was reproduced in a poster version by WAAC. The success of the painting led to further industrial commissions for Knight throughout the 1940s. In 1945 she painted *Switch Works* at Ellison Switchgear in Birmingham. This was followed by paintings of operations at the Dow Mac concrete railway-sleeper works and at the Skefko ball bearing factory.
- **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) was an English artist who worked in oils, watercolours, etching, engraving and drypoint. Knight was a painter in the figurative, realist tradition who embraced English Impressionism. In her long career Knight was among the most successful and popular painters in Britain. In 1929 she was created a Dame, and in 1936 became **the first woman elected to the Royal Academy since its foundation in 1768**. Her large retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1965 was another first for a woman. Although Knight was known for painting amidst the world of the **theatre and ballet** in London, and for being a war artist during the Second World War, she was also greatly interested in, and inspired by, marginalised communities and individuals, including **gypsies and circus performers**. Her success in the male-dominated British art establishment paved the way for greater status and recognition for women artists. Laura Johnson was born in Derbyshire and her father died shortly after she was born so she grew up in a family struggling with financial problems. Her husband, Harold Knight registered as a conscientious objector, and was eventually required to work as a farm

labourer. Wartime censorship included restrictions on painting around the British coastline, which caused problems for Laura Knight.

References

- Imperial War Museum website
- Brian Foss, *War Paint, Art, War, State and Identity in Britain, 1939-1945*, 2007



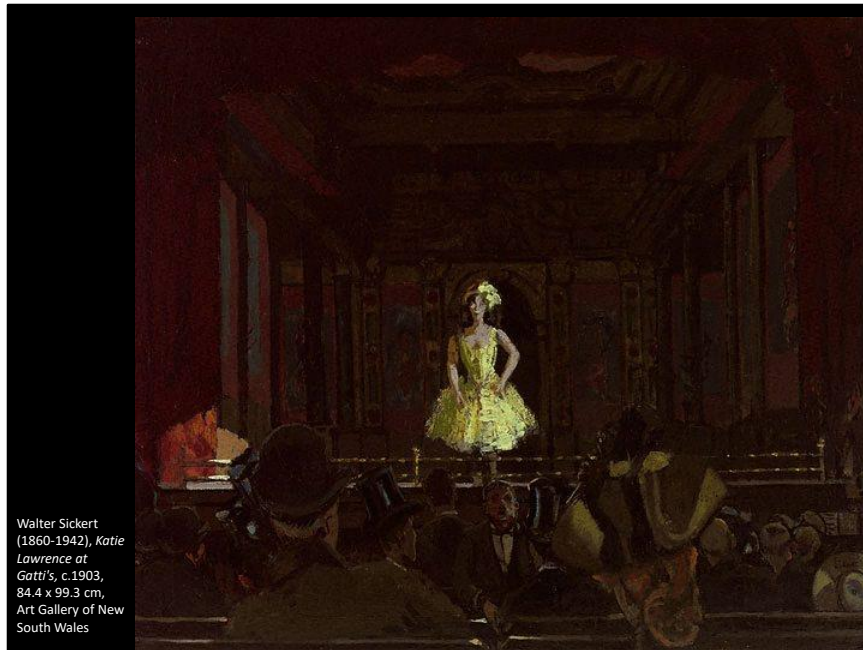
John Piper (1903–1992), *Interior of Coventry Cathedral*, 15 November 1940, 1940, 51 x 61 cm, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

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

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

BRITISH FIGURATIVE ARTISTS
1900-1950





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

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

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

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

Notes

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

References

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



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

World War II

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

Notes

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

life including a knighthood and so he hold the record for the most rejected British honours. There was a major retrospective at the Tate in 2013 and his first solo exhibition outside the UK in China in 2014.

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



Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Standing by the Rags*, 1988–89, 168.9 x 138.4 cm, Tate

- Since the **1960s the nude** has been an important part of **Freud's work**. Commentators have commented on the disturbing accuracy which he describes as '**revealing and intrusive, rather than rhyming and soothing**'. Intense scrutiny rather than idealisation is an important theme within Freud's work.
- Like many of Freud's pictures ***Standing by the Rags*** was painted in his London studio. The motif of the mound of rags first appeared in *Red Haired Man* 1962-3 (Erich Sommer Collection) but only became commonly recurrent during the late 1980s. The rags, which are in fact **heaped in front of a hidden radiator**, are used by Freud for **wiping brushes** and have been interpreted by some critics as a coded sign for the artist's presence in the image. Jeremy Lewison has compared the smeared paint on the rags to blood and other bodily secretions.
- The degree of attention given to the detail and texture of the rags is equivalent to that given to the figure. The shallow spatial depth of the picture makes it difficult to tell whether the woman is standing against or lying on the rags.
- The painting has been compared to that of the female figure in Ingres' *Angelica Saved by Ruggiero* (National Gallery Collection, London), a painting that Freud included in 'The Artist's Eye' exhibition held at the National Gallery in 1987. The

pose is also reminiscent of the figure of Christ being lowered from the Cross in old master paintings of the Deposition.

- The paint has been applied with a stiff hog-hair brush to create a textured appearance for the whole painting. The model's face, breasts and genitalia are rendered in a particularly thick impasto, which heightens their physical presence within the overall scheme. The physicality of the model is further enhanced by the warm, dark palette used for her body compared to the cool tones of the rags. In contrast to the ivory smoothness of a classical nude, the flesh of Freud's model is sagging, mottled and flushed. *Standing by the Rags* is one of Freud's largest paintings of the nude.

References

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



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

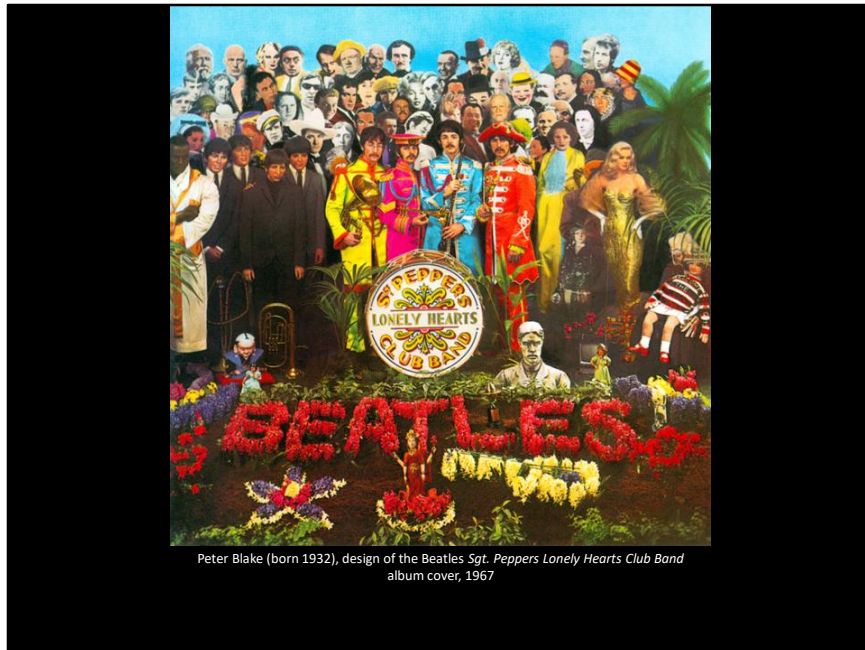
- This is one of the David Hockney paintings at the Royal Academy exhibition 2 July to 2 October 2016. It is a snapshot of those that have crossed his path in **the last two years**. His subjects – all friends, family and acquaintances – include office staff, fellow artists, curators and gallerists.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





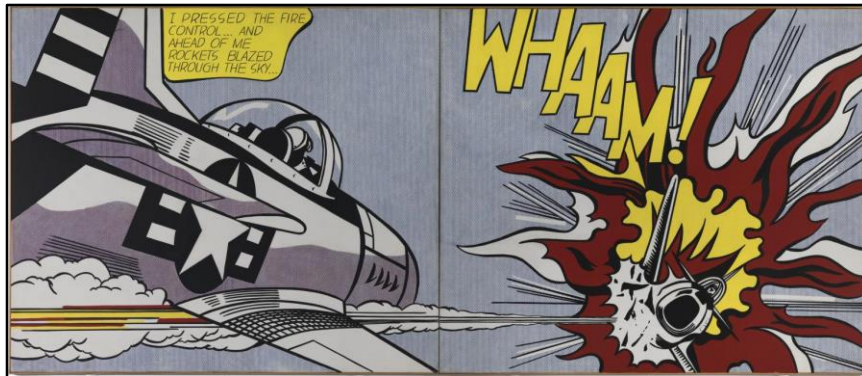
Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), *Summertime: Number 9A*, 1948, oil paint, enamel paint and commercial paint on canvas, 84.8 x 555 cm, Tate
Hans Numuth, Jackson Pollock, photograph

- Before Pop Art there was **Abstract Expressionism**, which can be sub-divided into Action Painting and Colour Field (e.g. Mark Rothko). Pop Art can be seen as a reaction against the emotional hubris of Abstract Expressionism.
- During his lifetime, Pollock enjoyed considerable fame and notoriety; he was a major artist of his generation. Regarded as reclusive, he had a volatile personality, and struggled with alcoholism for most of his life. In 1945, he married the artist Lee Krasner, who became an important influence on his career and on his legacy. Pollock died at the age of 44 in an alcohol-related single-car accident when he was driving. In December 1956, several months after his death, Pollock was given a memorial retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.



Peter Blake (born 1932), design of the Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover, 1967

- ***Sgt. Pepper's* album cover was designed by the pop artists Peter Blake and Jann Haworth** from an ink drawing by McCartney. It was art-directed by Robert Fraser and photographed by Michael Cooper. The front of the LP included a colourful collage featuring the Beatles in costume as the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, standing with a group of life-sized cardboard cut-outs of famous people.
- The final grouping included singers such as **Bob Dylan** and Bobby Breen; the film stars **Marlon Brando, Tony Curtis, Marlene Dietrich and Marilyn Monroe**; the artist Aubrey Beardsley; the boxer Sonny Liston and the footballer Albert Stubbins. Also included were the comedians Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy (as well as comedian W.C. Fields) and the writers H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll and Dylan Thomas.
- The cost of the cover was £3,000 when an album cover typically cost £50.



Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), *Whaam!*, 1963, acrylic paint and oil paint on canvas, 172.7 x 406.4 cm, Tate

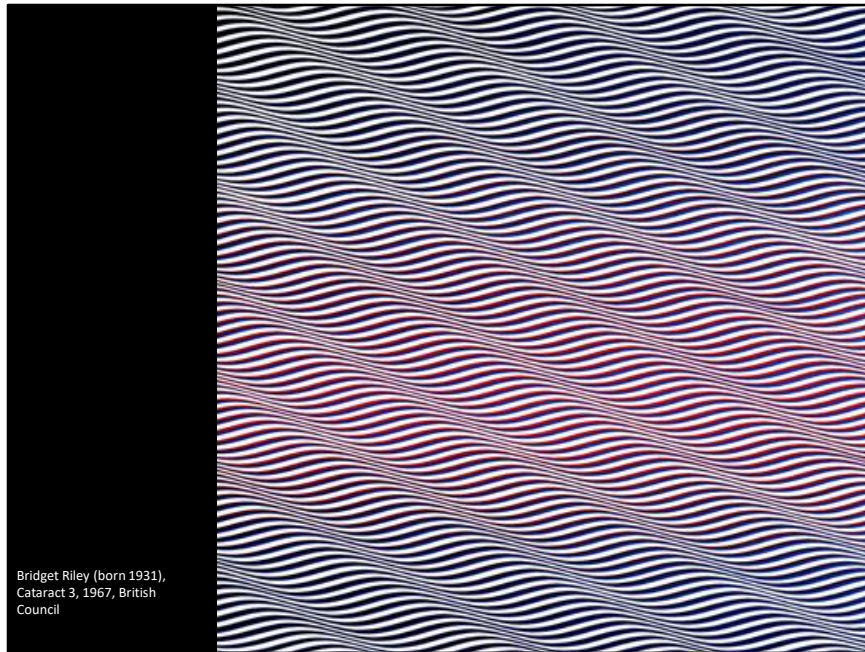
Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), *Whaam!*, 1963, acrylic paint and oil paint on canvas, 172.7 x 406.4 cm, Tate

Pop Art

- *Tate website:* *Whaam!* is based on an **image from *All American Men of War*** published by **DC comics in 1962**. Throughout the 1960s, Lichtenstein frequently drew on commercial art sources such as comic images or advertisements, attracted by the way highly emotional subject matter could be depicted using detached techniques. Transferring this to a painting context, Lichtenstein could present powerfully charged scenes in an impersonal manner, leaving the viewer to decipher meanings for themselves.
- One world of images, Pop Art, Op-Art, popular culture and the mass media. Art as a part of the world of images.
- Lichtenstein employs his usual comic-book style: stereotyped imagery in bright primary colours with black outlines, coupled with imitations of **mechanical printer's Ben-Day dots**. The use of these dots, which were invented by Benjamin Day to simulate colour variations and shading, are considered Lichtenstein's "signature method".

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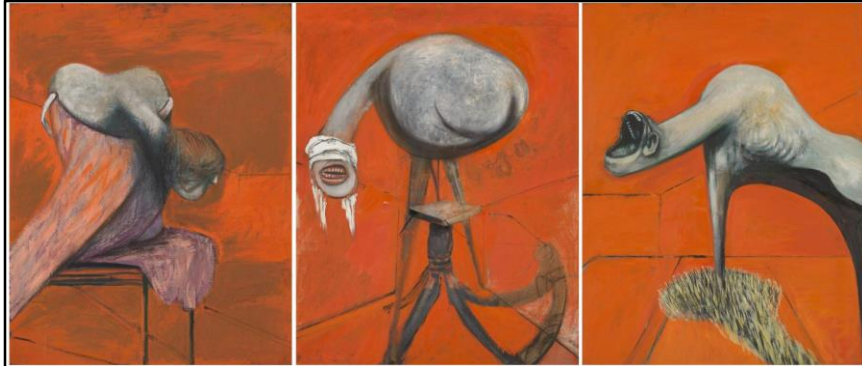


Bridget Riley (born 1931), Cataract 3, 1967, British Council

- Born in Norwood, the daughter of a businessman. She spent her childhood in Cornwall and Lincolnshire and studied at **Goldsmiths' College and the Royal College of Art**. She began painting in a **semi-impressionist style** and changed to pointillism in 1958 until 1960 when she started painting Op-art and exploring the potential of optical phenomena.
- Around 1960 she began to develop her **signature Op Art style** consisting of black and white geometric patterns that explore the dynamism of sight and produce a disorienting effect on the eye.
- **The Cataract series** was a **defining moment** in her career and she was the first British artist and **the first woman artist to win the International Prize for Painting at the 1968 Venice Biennale**.

FIGURATIVE ART SINCE 1950





Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, c.1944, each 94 x 73.7 cm, Tate

Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, c.1944, each 94 x 73.7 cm, Tate

Matthias Grünewald (c. 1470-1528), *Mocking of Christ*, 1503-5, 109 × 74.3 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

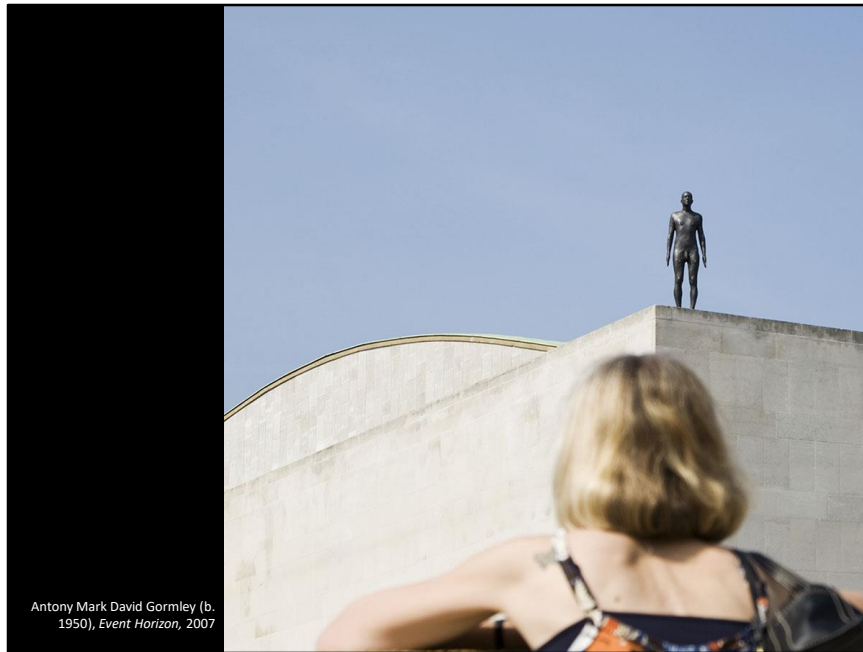
- His **breakthrough** came with the 1944 triptych *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, which in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, **sealed his reputation** as a uniquely **bleak chronicler** of the human condition. Remarking on the cultural significance of *Three Studies*, the art critic John Russell observed that "**there was painting in England before the Three Studies, and painting after them**, and no one...can confuse the two."
- Tate caption, 'The title of this triptych refers to figures sometimes depicted at the foot of the cross in religious paintings. Bacon later related them to *The Eumenides*, vengeful **Furies** of Greek myth. Typically, he drew on various sources, including photography. The work's exhibition in April 1945 coincided with the release of the first photographs and film footage of the Nazi concentration camps. For some, Bacon's triptych reflected the pessimistic world ushered in by the Holocaust and the advent of nuclear weapons.'
- Painted in oil and pastel on **fibre board** and completed in two weeks. It was

painted in his ground floor flat in South Kensington which had previously been John Everett Millais's billiard room. The orange hue displays inconsistently across the canvasses, due in part to the low level of oil in the paint, which resulted in varying rates of absorption into the board. The pallid flesh tones of the figures were achieved by overlaying grey and white brushstrokes, while the figures' props were coloured using a variety of yellow, green, white, and purple tones.

- The figure on the left is most human-like and could be a mourner. The central figure has a mouth in its neck and is blindfolded like the figure in Matthias Grünewald's *Mocking of Christ*. The figure on the right is on a patch of grass and may be screaming or yawning. Inspection under infra-red shows the panels were heavily reworked and the central figure was surrounded by flower-like objects and there was a distant figure. Marks around the edge of the canvas suggest the composition was carefully calculated.
- He started painting images based on the Crucifixion in 1933 but his early work was 'beautiful, but lifeless'. He regarded his painting career as starting with this painting and tried to destroy all previous works and he insisted no retrospective should include any paintings pre-dating 1944.
- When asked by critic Jean Clair why his Crucifixion scenes tended to comprise mainly "**slaughter, butchery, mutilated meat and flesh**", Bacon replied, "that's all the Crucifixion was, isn't it? ... Actually, you can't think of anything more barbaric than the Crucifixion, and that particular way of killing somebody."
- Bacon said that he saw **images 'in series'**, and his artistic output typically focused on a single subject or format for sustained periods, often in triptych or diptych formats.
- His output can be crudely described as sequences or variations on a single motif;
 - beginning with the **1930s Picasso-informed Furies**,
 - moving on to the **1940s male heads** isolated in rooms or geometric structures,
 - the **1950s screaming popes**,
 - and the **mid-to-late 1950s animals and lone figures**.
 - These were followed by his **early 1960s variations on crucifixion scenes**.
 - From the **mid-1960s he mainly produced portraits of friends** and drinking companions, either as single or triptych panels.
 - Following the **1971 suicide of his lover** George Dyer, his art became more **sombre, inward-looking** and preoccupied with the passage of time and death. The climax of this later period is marked by masterpieces, including his 1982's "Study for Self-Portrait" and *Study for a Self-Portrait—Triptych*, 1985–86.
- Bacon in person was highly engaging and **charismatic, articulate, well-read** and unapologetically gay. He was a **prolific artist**, but nonetheless spent many of the evenings of his middle age eating, drinking and gambling in London's Soho with

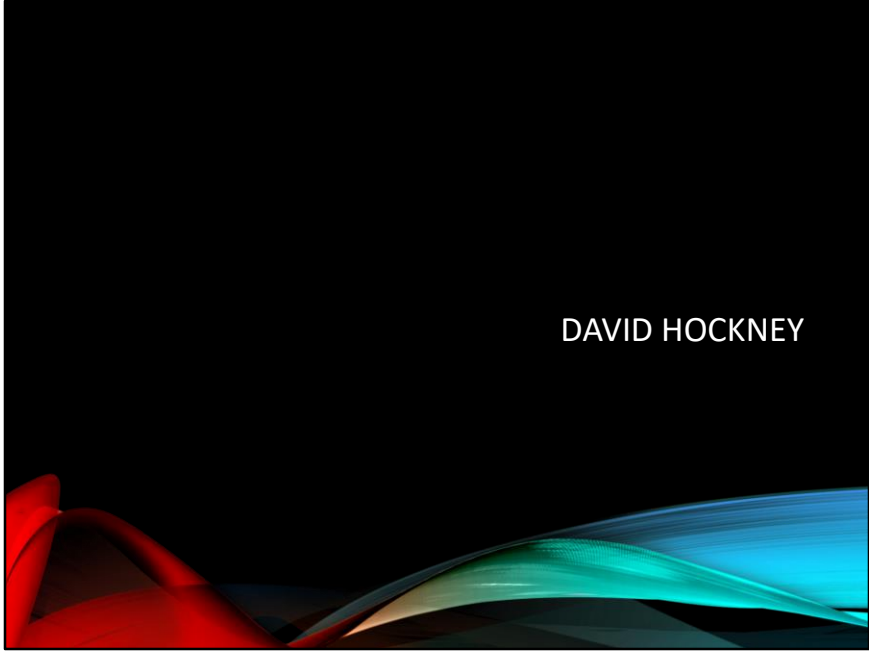
like-minded friends such as Lucian Freud.

- After his lover, George Dyer's suicide he largely distanced himself from this circle, and while his social life was still active and his passion for gambling and drinking continued, he settled into a platonic and somewhat fatherly relationship with his eventual heir, John Edwards.
- Bacon was equally reviled and acclaimed during his lifetime. Art critic Robert Hughes described him as "the most implacable, lyric artist in late 20th-century England, perhaps in all the world" and along with Willem de Kooning as "**the most important painter of the disquieting human figure** in the 50's of the 20th century." Francis Bacon was the subject of two Tate retrospectives and a major showing in 1971 at the Grand Palais. Since his death his reputation and market value have **grown steadily**, and his work is amongst the most acclaimed, expensive and sought-after. In the late 1990s a number of major works, previously assumed destroyed, including early 1950s popes and 1960s portraits, re-emerged to set record prices at auction.
- On 12 November 2013 his *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* set the world record as the most expensive piece of art sold at auction, selling for **\$142,405,000**, until exceeded by the sale of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* in May 2015.



Antony Mark David Gormley (b. 1950), *Event Horizon*, 2007

- It was installed along the **South Bank** of the Thames and in 2010 around Madison Square, New York City; 2012 in São Paulo, Brazil; 2015-16 in Hong Kong.
- *Event Horizon* consists of **30 human size standing figures** in fibreglass and cast iron. Most were on roof tops but one was on Waterloo Bridge.
- The figure is moulded on Gormley's body but it is not a self-portrait but a representation of any body, a human space.
- "Isolated against the sky these dark figures look out into space at large asking: **Where does the human project fit in the scheme of things?** In an age in which over 50% of the human population of the planet lives in cities, this installation in New York (the original and prime example of urban high-rise living) questions how this built world relates to an inherited earth ... *Event Horizon* hopes to activate the skyline in order to **encourage people to look around**. In this process of looking and finding, or **looking and seeking**, one perhaps **re-assesses one's own position** in the world and becomes aware of one's status of embedment."



DAVID HOCKNEY



David Hockney (born 1937), *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, 1970–1, 213.4 x 304.8 cm, Tate

Fashion designers Celia Birtwell and Ossie Clark

- **Birtwell has been a muse for Hockney since 1968**, and features in many of his paintings including this one, one of Hockney's most celebrated and one of the most viewed paintings in the Tate Britain gallery. In 2005, it featured on the Today programme's shortlist of the **Greatest Painting in Britain**.
- Celia and Ossie had two sons together but their marriage broke up in 1973 and Celia left the fashion industry to bring up her two sons while teaching in London.
- "*Celia is a droll observer. Her work is always lively and 'pretty'.*" (David Hockney)
- It is a direct reference to **Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews*** (c. 1752). In Gainsborough's painting, as John Berger has pointed out, it is both a portrait of a married couple and a **man with his property** which includes his wife sitting dutifully at his side. **Hockney has reversed the convention by having the woman standing and the man sitting**. The Clark's identity is constructed not through property but through their clothes and the tasteful interior design. Celia was a celebrated fabric designer and Ossie a fashion designer both well known in the London fashion world during the sixties.

David Hockney (b. 1937)

- Born in Bradford, went to Bradford Grammar School and **Bradford College of Art**. He was born with synaesthesia and sees colours in response to music. At the **Royal College of Art** he met R. B. Kitaj
- 1961 *Young Contemporaries* exhibition announcing the arrival of British Pop art. His early work shows expressionist elements similar to some Francis Bacon. He exhibited alongside Peter Blake (born 1932), Patrick Caulfield and Allen Jones. He met Ossie Clarke and Andy Warhol.
- He featured in Ken Russell's *Pop Goes the Weasel* with Pauline Boty (pronounced 'boat-ee')
- Hockney had his first one-man show when he was 26 in 1963, and by 1970 (or 1971) the Whitechapel Gallery in London had organized the first of several major retrospectives.
- He moved to **Los Angeles in 1964, London 1968-73 and then Paris 1973-75**. He produced 1967 paintings *A Bigger Splash* and *A Lawn Being Sprinkled*. Los Angeles again in 1978 rented then bought the canyon house and extended it. He also bought a beach house in Malibu. He moved between New York, London and Paris before settling in California in 1982.
- He was openly gay and painted many celebratory works. In 1964 he met the model Peter Schlesinger and was romantically involved. In California he switched from oils to acrylic using smooth, flat and brilliant colours.
- He made prints, took photographs and stage design work for Glyndebourne, La Scala and the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.
- From 1968 he painted portraits of friends just under life size. David Hockney, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, 1970–71, Tate
- In the early 1980s he produced a series of photo collages which he called 'joiners'. First using Polaroid and then 35mm. An early work was a portrait of his mother. As he took photographs from different angles the resulting work is related to Cubism. His aim was to discuss the way human vision works.
- In 1976 he created a portfolio of 20 etchings based on themes in a poem by Wallace Stephens. In 1985 he designed the cover page for *Vogue*.
- In 1985 he used a computer program that enabled him to sketch directly on the screen.
- In the 1990s he returned to Yorkshire every three months to see his mother. Who died in 1999. From 1997 he started to capture the local surroundings, some from memory. By 2005 he was painting *en plein air*. He created large paintings from multiple smaller canvases, 9 or 15 placed together.
- In June 2007, Hockney's largest painting, *Bigger Trees Near Water*, which measures 15 feet by 40 feet, was hung in the Royal Academy's largest gallery in its annual Summer Exhibition. It uses 50 canvases painted over five winter months.
- In October 2006, the National Portrait Gallery in London organized one of the

largest ever displays of Hockney's portraiture work, including 150 paintings, drawings, prints, sketchbooks, and photocollages from over five decades.

- Since 2009 he has painted hundreds of portraits of friends using iPad and iPhone *Brushes*.
- In 2011 he visited Yosemite to paint on his iPad.
- From 21 January 2012 to 9 April 2012, the Royal Academy presented *A Bigger Picture*, which included more than 150 works, many of which take entire walls in the gallery's brightly lit rooms. The exhibition was dedicated to landscapes, especially trees and tree tunnels. The exhibition attracted more than half a million visitors, making it one of the Academy's most successful shows ever.

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Marina Abramović (b. 1946), *Rhythm 0*, 1974

- *Rhythm 0* (1974) was a six-hour work of performance art by Serbian artist Marina Abramović in Naples. The work involved **Abramović standing still while the audience was invited to do to her whatever they wished**, using one of **72 objects** she had placed on a table. These included a rose, feather, perfume, honey, bread, grapes, wine, scissors, a scalpel, nails, a metal bar, and a gun loaded with one bullet.
- The purpose of the piece, she said, was to find out **how far the public would go**: "What is the public about and what are they going to do in this kind of situation?"
- Her instructions were placed on the table:
 - There are 72 objects on the table that one can use on me as desired.
 - Performance.
 - I am the object.
 - During this period I take full responsibility.
 - Duration: 6 hours (8 pm – 2 am)
- Visitors were gentle to begin with, offering her a rose or a kiss.
- Art critic Thomas McEvilley, who was present, wrote:

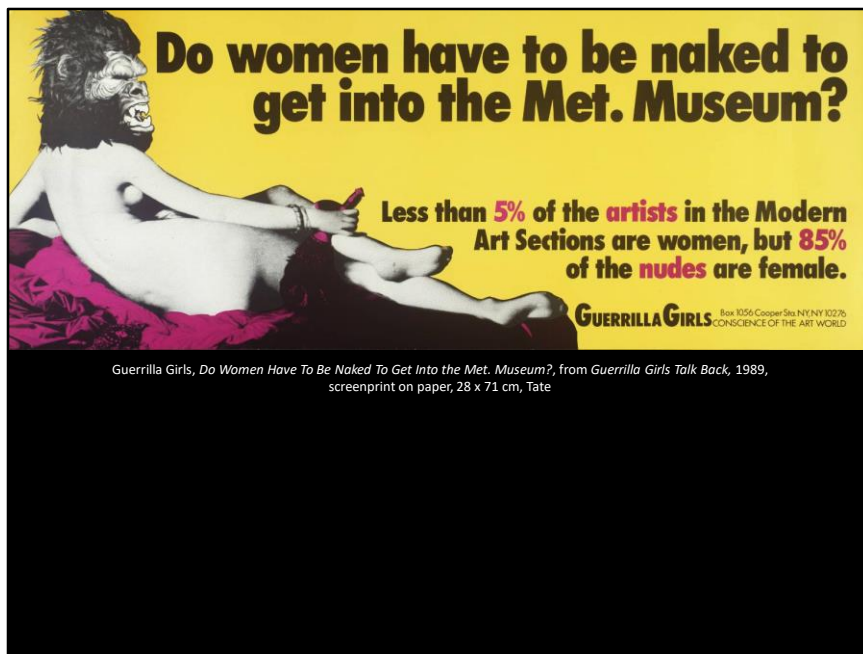
- “It began tamely. Someone turned her around. Someone thrust her arms into the air. Someone touched her somewhat intimately. The Neapolitan night began to heat up. In the **third hour all her clothes were cut from her with razor blades**. In the **fourth** hour the same **blades** began to explore her skin. **Her throat was slashed** so someone could suck her blood. Various **minor sexual assaults** were carried out on her body. She was so committed to the piece that she would **not have resisted rape or murder**. Faced with her abdication of will, with its implied collapse of human psychology, **a protective group began to define itself** in the audience. When a **loaded gun was thrust to Marina's head** and her own finger was being worked around the trigger, **a fight broke out** between the audience factions.”
- As Abramović described it later: **“What I learned was that... if you leave it up to the audience, they can kill you.”** ... **“I felt really violated**: they cut up my clothes, stuck rose thorns in my stomach, one person aimed the gun at my head, and another took it away. It created an aggressive atmosphere. After exactly 6 hours, as planned, I stood up and started walking toward the audience. Everyone ran away, to escape an actual confrontation.”
- When the gallery announced the work was over, and Abramović began to move again, she said the audience left, unable to face her as a person.
- Abramović said the work "pushed her body to the limits." When she returned to her hotel room she found some of her hair had turned white.

Notes

- As a child, Abramović's mother beat her. In an interview published in 1998, Abramović described how her "mother took complete military-style control of me and my brother. I was not allowed to leave the house after 10 o'clock at night till I was 29 years old. ... [A]ll the performances in Yugoslavia I did before 10 o'clock in the evening because I had to be home then. It's completely insane, but all of my cutting myself, whipping myself, burning myself, almost losing my life in the firestar, everything was done before 10 in the evening." The 'firestar' was *Rhythm 5* (1974) when she lost consciousness because of lack of oxygen in the centre of a star-shaped fire. Her life was saved when the audience realised what was happening.

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Guerrilla Girls, *Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?*, from *Guerrilla Girls Talk Back*, 1989, screenprint on paper, 28 x 71 cm, Tate

- In 1985 a group of female artists formed the **Guerrilla Girls** to draw attention to the way female artists had been and were being ignored or marginalised. Guerrilla Girls formed in response to the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture," which opened in 1984. The exhibition was the inaugural show in the MoMA's newly renovated and expanded building, and was intended to be a survey of the most important contemporary art and artists in the world. In total, the show featured works by 169 artists, of whom only 13 were female.

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CONCEPTUAL ART & MINIMALISM





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 between 'boys' and '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.

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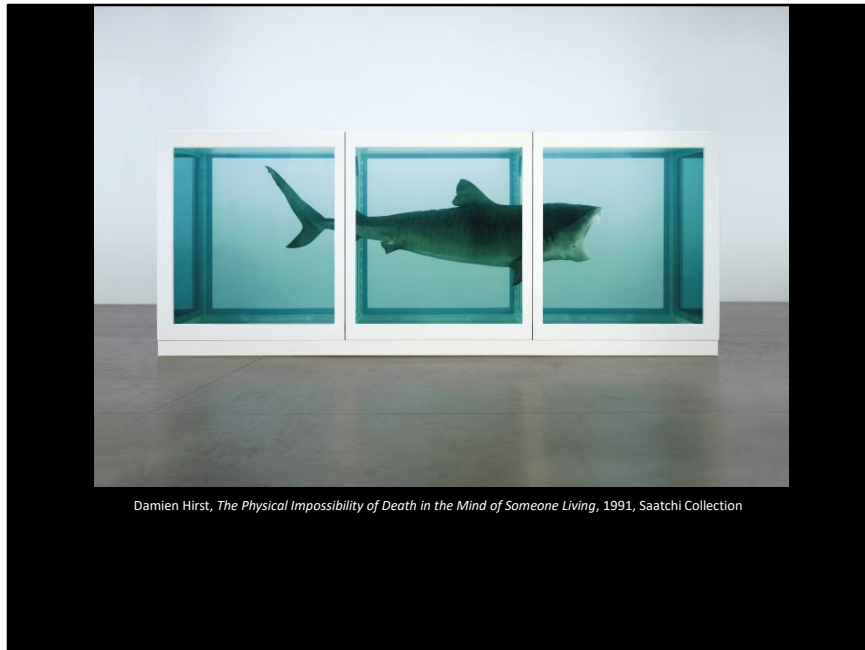
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Carl Andre, *Equivalent VIII*, 1966, 12.7 x 68.6 x 229.2 cm, Tate

- **How far can you simplify art? Minimalism was at its strongest between the 1960s and the early 1970s.**
- Tate website, 'The sensation of these pieces was that they come above your ankles, as if you were wading in bricks', Andre has commented. 'It was like stepping from water of one depth to water of another depth.' This was the last in his series of *Equivalent* sculptures, each consisting of a rectangular configuration of 120 firebricks. Although the shape of each arrangement is different, they all have the same height, mass and volume, and are therefore 'equivalent' to each other.

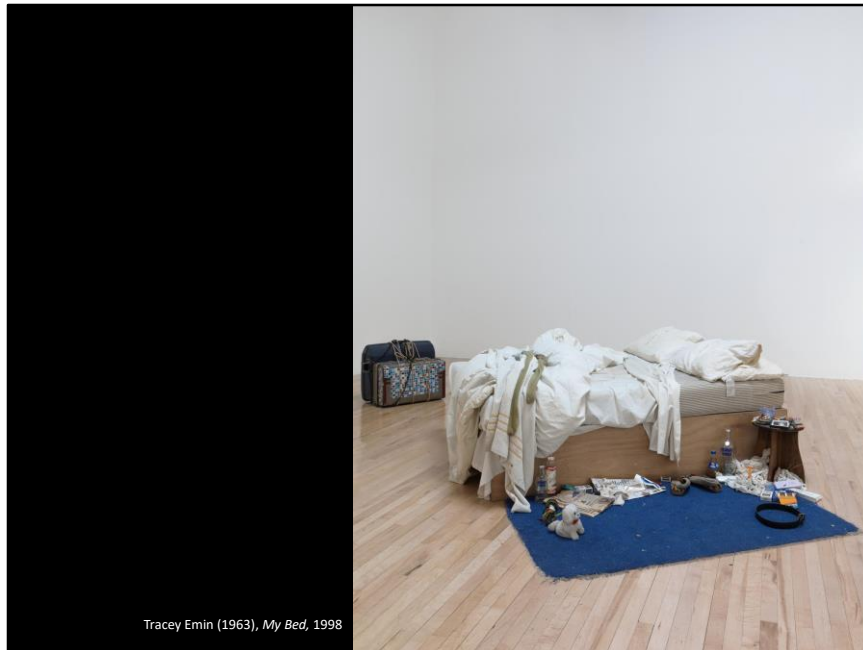




Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991, private collection

The work was funded by Saatchi and was sold by the Saatchi Collection in 2004 to Steven A. Cohen for an estimated \$8 million.

- It consists of a thirteen-foot tiger shark preserved in a tank of formaldehyde, weighing a total of 23 tons. The shark is contained within a steel and glass vitrine three times longer than high and divided into three cubes.
- According to the artist, the title was, **“just a statement that I had used to describe the idea of death to myself”**.



Tracey Emin (b. 1963), *My Bed*, 1998

- This work was exhibited in the **Tate Gallery in 1999** and was **shortlisted for the Turner prize**. The idea for *My Bed* was inspired by a depressive phase in the artist's life when she had remained in bed for several days without eating or drinking anything but alcohol. When she looked at the vile, repulsive mess that had accumulated in her room, she suddenly realised what she had created. Emin ardently defended *My Bed* against critics who treated it as a farce and claimed that anyone could exhibit an unmade bed. To these claims the artist retorted, "**Well, they didn't, did they? No one had ever done that before.**" Not strictly true as Robert Rauschenberg created an artwork from his own bed in 1955. Hung on the wall like a traditional painting, his bed, still made, becomes a sort of intimate self-portrait consistent with Rauschenberg's assertion that "painting relates to both art and life...[and] I try to act in that gap between the two." However, this also endorses the idea of a bed as a readymade art object.
- Tate Liverpool is holding *Tracey Emin and William Blake: In Focus* to show surprising links between the two artists. The exhibition runs until 3 September 2017. "At the heart is one of Britain's most renowned artworks of the past 20

years, Tracey Emin's (b.1963) *My Bed* 1998. This will be the first time *My Bed* has been displayed in the north of England. Featuring Emin's own bed, it offers an unflinching self-portrait in which the artist herself is absent. *My Bed*, along with drawings by Emin from the Tate collection, will be shown alongside those of the visionary British poet and artist, William Blake (1757–1827). Presented in the context of Emin's empty bed, and symbolising the absent figure, highlights include *Pity* c.1975 and *The Crucifixion: 'Behold Thy Mother'* c.1805. Blake stood against the hypocrisies of his age championing liberalism, sexual freedoms and above all freedom of expression. This new display affirms Blake's Romantic idea of artistic truth through existential pain and the possibility of spiritual rebirth through art, shared in the work of Tracey Emin.

- *My Bed* was bought by Charles Saatchi for £150,000 and displayed as part of the first exhibition when the Saatchi Gallery opened its new premises at County Hall, London (which it has now vacated). Saatchi also installed the bed in a dedicated room in his own home. When it was announced, in May 2014, that the work was to be auctioned, David Maupin, Emin's dealer in New York, described the £800,000 – £1.2 million estimate as too low. When auctioned by Christie's in July 2014, the piece was sold for a little over £2.5 million.

Notes

- Emin was born in Croydon and brought up in Margate with her twin brother, Paul. Her mother is of Romany descent and her father is a Turkish Cypriot. It is claimed that Emin's paternal great-grandfather was a Sudanese slave in the Ottoman Empire. She suffered an unreported rape when she was 13 and her work has been analysed in the context of childhood abuse.
- She studied at the Medway College of Design (1980-82) where she met expelled student Billy Childish and they were a couple until 1987. She was the administrator for his press which published his poetry. In 1984 she studied printing at Maidstone Art College.
- In 1987, Emin moved to London to study at the Royal College of Art, where in 1989 she obtained an MA in painting. After graduation, she had two traumatic abortions and those experience led her to destroy all the art she had produced in graduate school and later described the period as "emotional suicide". Her influences included Edvard Munch and Egon Schiele, and for a time she studied philosophy at Birkbeck, University of London.
- In 1993, Emin opened a shop with fellow artist Sarah Lucas, called The Shop at 103 Bethnal Green Road in Bethnal Green, which sold works by the two of them, including T-shirts and ash trays with Damien Hirst's picture stuck to the bottom. In November 1993, Emin had her first solo show at the White Cube gallery and in the mid-1990s she toured America with Carl Freedman, a collaborator with Damien Hirst. She gave readings from her autobiographical book *Exploration of the Soul* to

finance the trip.

- The couple spent time by the sea in Whitstable together, using a beach hut that she uprooted and turned into art in 1999 with the title *The Last Thing I Said to You is Don't Leave Me Here*, and that was destroyed in the 2004 Momart warehouse fire. Emin said, "I'm upset, but I'm also upset about those whose wedding got bombed [in Iraq, on 19 May], and people being dug out from mud in the Dominican Republic." The work of 20 artists was lost in the fire valued at £30-50 million.
- One of the works destroyed in the fire was her 'tent' *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–1995*. It was a blue tent, appliquéd with the names of everyone she has slept with. These included sexual partners, plus relatives she slept with as a child, her twin brother, and her two aborted children. Although considered by some a shameless exhibition of her sexual conquests, others considered it a piece about intimacy in a more general sense.
- She was largely unknown by the public until she appeared on a Channel 4 television programme in 1997. The show comprised a group discussion about that year's Turner Prize and was broadcast live. Emin said she was drunk, slurred and swore before walking out. Two years later, in 1999, Emin was shortlisted for the Turner Prize herself and exhibited *My Bed* at the Tate Gallery. There was considerable media attention regarding the apparently trivial and possibly unhygienic elements of the installation.

INSTALLATION, VIDEO & PERFORMANCE ART





Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), Interior view of *The Beanery*, 1965, restored 2012; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2013 photo

Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), Interior view of *The Beanery*, 1965, restored 2012; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2013 photo

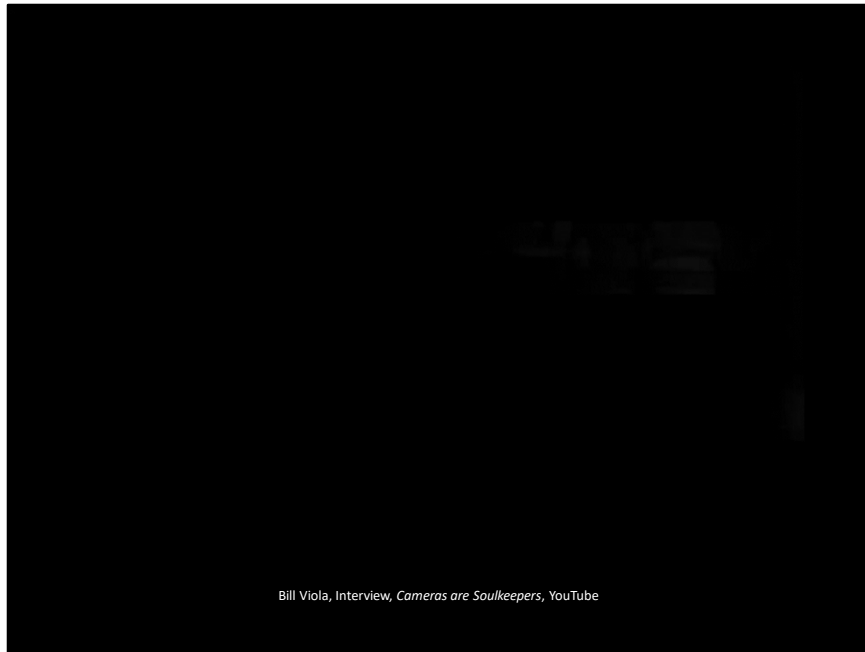
- ***The Beanery*** is a life-size, **walk-in artwork** created in 1965 by the American artist **Edward Kienholz**; it has been referred to as his greatest work, and "**one of the most memorable works of late 20th-century art**". It features the **smells and sounds of the bar**, and models of customers, all of whom have clocks for faces with the time set at 10:10. Only the model of Barney, the owner, has a real face. Kienholz is quoted as saying "The entire work symbolizes the switch from real time (symbolized by a newspaper) to the surrealist time inside the bar, **where people waste time, kill time, forget time, and ignore time.**"
- Edward Kienholz (1927–1994) was an American installation artist and assemblage sculptor whose work was **highly critical of aspects of modern life**. From 1972 onwards, he assembled much of his artwork in close collaboration with his artistic partner and fifth wife, Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Throughout much of their career, the work of the Kienholzes was more appreciated in Europe than in their native United States, though American museums have featured their art more prominently since the 1990s.
- Kienholz once said, "A bar is a sad place, a place full of strangers who are killing

time, postponing the idea that they're going to die."

- When asked by a journalist to characterise its aesthetic virtues he replied, "I don't know if it's art, but I don't give a damn."
- **I saw the work at the Stedelijk in 1978 and it haunted my mind until the present day.**

Notes

- A 'beanery' is a cheap restaurant.
- Stedelijk Museum "It may happen that you are somewhere in the middle of the Museum when suddenly enters a pub called 'The Original Beanery' appears. There is music, glass shattering and murmur of voices. Inside hang people at a bar, a girl with long blond hair and a striped sweater and a man. Are they people? They do have regular clothes on, but in place of their face is a clock.
- Kienholz based this work on an existing pub in Los Angeles called 'The Original Beanery'. Inside *The Beanery* by Kienholz there are a few pictures of the real Beanery which was located in a neighbourhood of Los Angeles where there were many galleries. It was the haunt of artists. From 1953 Kienholz, who then lived near there, visited it regularly. After a few years he decided he wanted to recreate this bar. He wanted to use as many authentic items as possible. The Original Barney supplied several objects such as an old phone, the nameplate, the swing doors, the canopy, the scratched tables and more. Kienholz's Beanery was reduced to 2/3 of its original size.
- Newspapers lie at the entrance in a vending machine. Inside is a bartender reads a newspaper. This figure is a portrait of Barney, the then owner of the pub. He is the only one with a plain face, all the other figures have their faces replaced by clocks. A clear reference to the time. The hands show that everybody is at ten minutes after ten or perhaps the hands are their eyebrows? The brown colour of the cafe suggest old age or something that is in decline. Time is Kienholz theme, it is something that everyone has until we die. He once said about the Beanery, "*The whole thing symbolizes the course of real time (symbolized by a newspaper) to the surreal time at the bar where people waste their time, forget the time to kill the time and ignore the time.*"
- The **figures are based on live models**. Each human model was rubbed with liquid paraffin (a refined mineral oil) and covered with gauze which had been saturated with gypsum plaster. Because a very thin layer was applied the body shape remains clearly visible. When the plaster hardened he carefully cut it loose and added a frame and padding. The same technique is used in the manufacture of a death mask.
- The sound that can be heard is based on the sounds of the original Beanery.
- The air contains an odour that is spread by a fan from a liquid based on a special recipe Kienholz created.



Bill Viola, Interview, *Cameras are Soulkeepers*, YouTube

Bill Viola, Interview, *Cameras are Soulkeepers*, YouTube

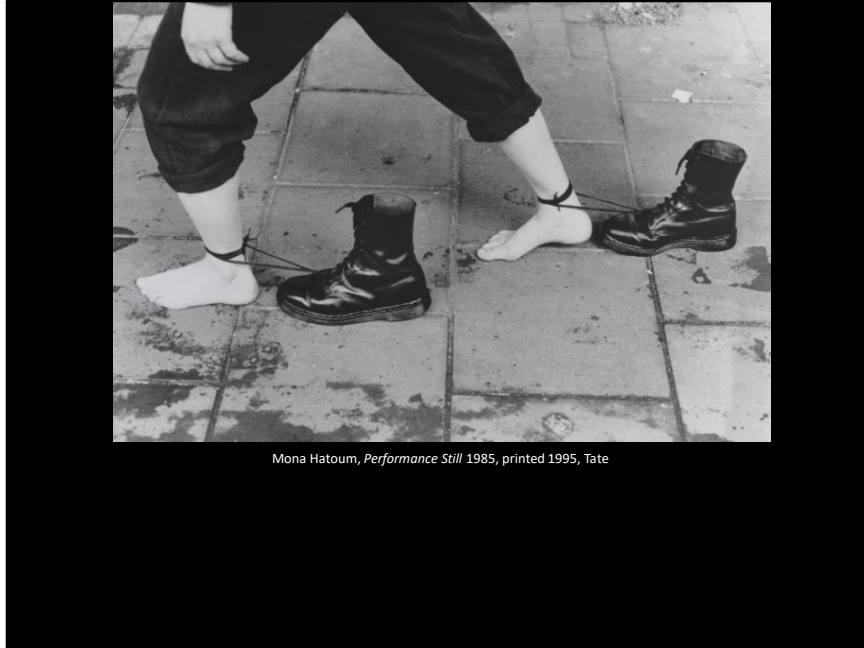
2 minutes, I clipped the end which is, "I found the real thing is under the surface of life."

- Video Art, Computer Art and other media. Video art may not employ the use of actors, may contain no dialogue, may have no discernible narrative or plot, or adhere to any of the other conventions that generally define motion pictures as entertainment. It now includes augmented reality (AR).
- **Bill Viola** (born 1951) is a contemporary video artist whose works focus on the ideas behind fundamental human experiences such as birth, death and aspects of consciousness.
- He grew up in Queens, New York and graduated from Syracuse University in 1973. His first job was as a video technician and he performed in a new music group. He became a technical director and met Nam June Paik and Bruce Neuman. In 1977 he met Kira Perov, who he later married and they worked and travelled together around the world. He represented the United States at the 46th Venice Biennale in 1995 for which he produced a series of works called *Buried Secrets*, including one of his best known works *The Greeting*, a contemporary interpretation of

Pontormo's *The Visitation*. In 2003, *The Passions* was exhibited in Los Angeles, London, Madrid, and Canberra. This was a major collection of Viola's emotionally charged, slow-motion works inspired by traditions within Renaissance devotional painting.

References

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uenrts2YHdI>



Mona Hatoum, *Performance Still* 1985, printed 1995, Tate

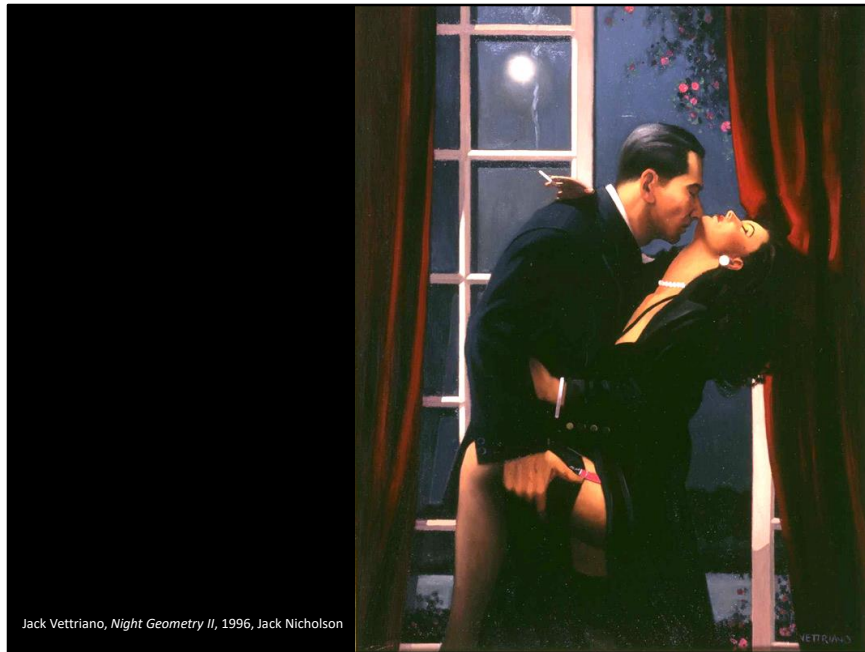
Mona Hatoum, *Performance Still* 1985, printed 1995, Tate

- **Mona Hatoum** first became known in the early 1980s for a series of **performance and video pieces** which used her own body as a site for exploring the **fragility and strength of the human condition** under duress. *Performance Still* 1985 records one of three street performances which Hatoum carried out in **Brixton** for the *Roadworks* exhibition organised in 1985 by the Brixton Artists Collective. **The performance consisted of the artist walking barefoot through the streets of Brixton for nearly an hour, with Doc Marten boots**, usually worn by both police and skinheads, attached to her ankles by their laces. *Performance Still*, printed and published ten years later turns the original documentary photograph of the performance into a work in its own right, and has therefore come to identify this aspect of Hatoum's practice.
- Mona Hatoum (b. 1952), is a Lebanese-born Palestinian video artist and installation artist who lives in London, United Kingdom. Hatoum studied graphic design at Beirut University College in Lebanon for two years and then began working at an advertising agency. Hatoum was displeased with the work she produced while working in advertising. During a visit to London in 1975, civil war

broke out in Lebanon and Hatoum was forced into exile. She stayed in London, training at both the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art (University College, London) between the years 1975 and 1981

OUTSIDER ART & GRAYSON PERRY





Jack Vettriano, *Night Geometry II*, 1996, Jack Nicholson

- “I got that title from a book by A. L. Kennedy. I know Alison quite well. She writes about how when you’re in bed with somebody you tuck your knees under theirs and caress their backs, making geometric shapes. Only in my painting they’re standing up. Jack Nicholson bought it”
- “I always take photos of my subjects. I’ve never been to art school and the one time I tried to paint a woman while she posed I realised I didn’t have any confidence.”

Notes

- **Jack Vettriano**, otherwise known as **Jack Hoggan**, was born on 17. of November 1951 in **Methil, Fife**, Scotland. His parents are of Italian origin. Vettriano left school when he was 16 years old, to work in the local coal mine. His goal was to becoming a mining engineer. Vettriano began to paint rather by accident. His girlfriend at the time gave him a set of watercolour paints for his 21st birthday. Vettriano learned to paint by reading textbooks and studying and copying paintings from other well known artists. Jack Vettriano has been working for the last two decades as a very successful painter. His original art as well as posters and prints of his motifs are

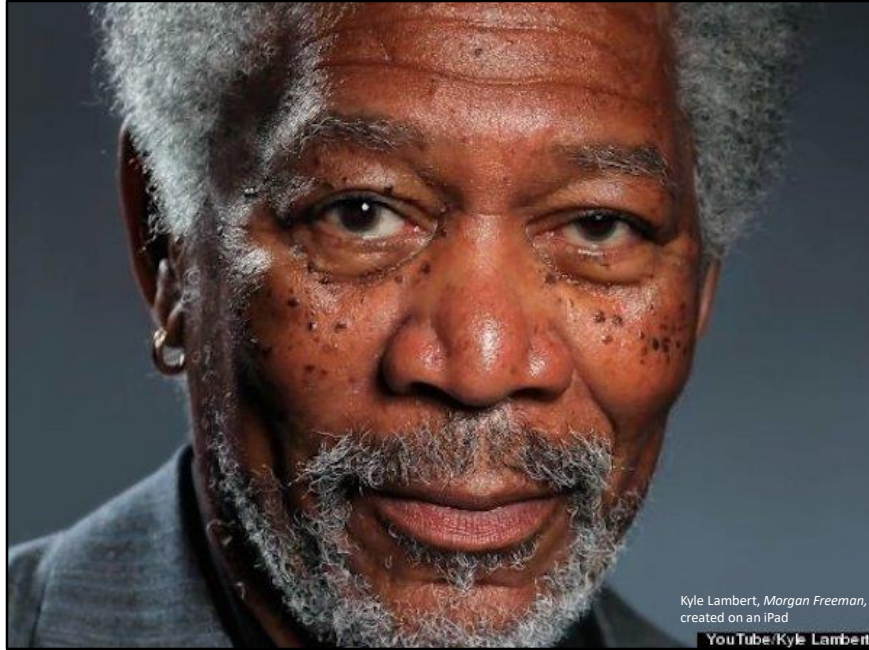
widely admired and collected. The style of Vettriano's art is often described as sentimental, mysterious, and often melancholic.

- Jack Vettriano is a **self made man** who, by the beginning of the 21st Century had sold more than **500,000 works**. Most of these paintings are now in private, public and commercial collections all over the world. His most acclaimed and best-selling work is *The Singing Butler*. Interestingly, it was dismissed by the summer exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1992. However, the painting of *The Singing Butler* sold at auction twelve years later for **£744,500**.

References

<http://www.vettriano-art.com/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-2418792/Jack-Vettriano-reveals-dark-controversial-artist.html>



Kyle Lambert, *Morgan Freeman*, created on an iPad

The British-born artist spent over 200 hours and made over 285,000 brushstrokes.



Banksy, *Naked Man*, on the wall of a sexual health clinic in Park Street, Bristol
Following popular support, the City Council has decided it will be allowed to remain

- Banksy is an English-based graffiti artist, political activist and film director whose real identity is unknown. His satirical street art and subversive epigrams combine dark humour with graffiti executed in a distinctive stenciling technique. His works of political and social commentary have been featured on streets, walls, and bridges of cities throughout the world. Banksy's work grew out of the Bristol underground scene, which involved collaborations between artists and musicians.
- “The hunt for the true identity of **Banksy** took a new twist today after a member of Massive Attack was named as the artist. Robert '3D' Del Naja, the founding member of the Bristol band, has been accused of being the guerrilla graffiti star because art keeps appearing near their gigs.”, 1 Sep 2016, *Daily Mail*
- Other possibilities include Robin Gunningham, Robin Banks, Paul Horner or Thierry Guetta (also known as Mr Brainwash, either a hoax created by Banksy or Banksy).



Grayson Perry, *What is Art?*

Two minutes long.

- Let us finish with Grayson Perry eloquently struggling with the unanswerable, but well worth asking, question “What is art?”

References

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCINKXM1pao>

HAVE A GOOD SUMMER AND
SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER ...

