



A Free Course on the History of Western Art

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Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *Ennui*, c. 1914, cm, Tate Britain

23-19 NEWLYN, GLASGOW AND CAMDEN TOWN

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- This is Section 23 which is on Victorian art and this talk number 19 is on the Newlyn School, the Glasgow School and Camden Town Group (established in 1911 by Walter Sickert). It covers the late Victorian period and beyond, a time when British attitudes to modern art were polarized. Modernist movements were praised by some and vilified by others. For example, Impressionism was initially regarded by many conservative critics as a "**subversive foreign influence**", but it became assimilated into British art during the early-20th century. So, this talk is on how that happened.

NOTES

1880-1901 The Late Victorian Period

Decline of Royal Academy Monopoly

- By the late Victorian period the importance of the Royal Academy and the **old academic style of painting had declined**. With the decline of the Royal Academy artists in various geographic locations were able to form substantial and influential groups of like minded artists.

Pessimism and Decadence

- It was a time of contradictions. It was a time of prosperity (although the 'Long Depression' was from 1873-79) and the Empire was the largest it had ever been yet among intellectuals there was a **feeling of pessimism and impending doom**. Max Nordau expressed this well in his book **Decadence**, in which he made the surprising claim that art, starting with the Pre-Raphaelites, was the **product of diseased minds**. The disease was **mysticism and irrational thinking** that he thought would lead to the collapse of civilization. From an art historical perspective, this shows that the Pre-Raphaelites had begun a profound change,

which indicates that they should be regarded as an early vanguard (an 'avant garde') of what we now call the modern art movement.

- **A related concern was physical health.** The 1899 Boer War was a shock to public confidence in the Empire. Britain used 450,000 troops to defeat 35,000 Boers. During the Boer War a half of all the young men conscripted were in too poor health to serve. In some towns 90% of men were rejected. It was found to be caused by poor diets and in 1906 schools provided meals to their pupils. There was a movement to improve the health of the nation both physically and mentally. It was related to 'muscular Christianity' where godliness was equated with manliness, and Thomas Arnold's educational system at Rugby School.

Orientalism and Fairy Painting

- Orientalism was concerned with representing scenes from the Middle East but more generally there was an interest in other societies, sometimes called the 'Other' (Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1979). This included what were known as 'primitive' societies that were geographically remote, such as fishing villages like Newlyn and exotic societies such as Japan as well as those that were remote in time such as classical and medieval societies.
- The idea of other worlds also included literary and fantasy worlds that included fairy painting.

NEW ART MOVEMENTS

- The stranglehold of the Royal Academy was being broken by art movements, such as the Pre-Raphaelites and by artists, such as Whistler, that were outside the establishment.
- It was further weakened when the Grosvenor Gallery opened in 1877 and promoted 'modern' art.
- The New English Art Club (NEAC) started in 1885 and became another alternative to the Royal Academy and led to other groups including:
 - English Impressionism was influenced by Jules Bastien-Lepage.
 - Newlyn School, was founded by Stanhope Forbes and it became a large artistic community.
 - Glasgow School which includes the Glasgow Boys and the Glasgow Girls.
 - Walter Sickert, the Fitzroy Street Group and the Camden Town Group developed an English style of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism with a strong strand of social documentary. They combined with the English

Vorticists in 1913 to form The London Group and artist-led organisation that still holds exhibitions.

- There were also smaller artistic communities, such as:
- Staithes Group, an art colony in North Yorkshire, 25 artist, inspired by Monet, Cezanne and Renoir. It included Laura Knight.
- Cullercoats, Winslow Homer spent two years there 1881-2.

NOTES

- Royal Academy became increasingly ossified; the unmistakably late Victorian figure of Frank Dicksee was appointed President in 1924.
- The NEAC conveniently used the Egyptian Hall opposite the Royal Academy. Today the NEAC remains figurative and the Royal Academy is mostly abstract and conceptual art. Early members included Thomas Cooper Gotch, Frank Bramley, John Singer Sargent, Philip Wilson Steer, George Clausen and Stanhope Forbes
- Jules Bastien-Lepage had a profound effect upon a group of young Scottish painters who came to be known as the "Glasgow Boys", who included Sir John Lavery and George Henry. They straddled Impressionism, and Art Nouveau, Japonisme and the Celtic Revival in design, with the architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh now their best-known member. Painters included Thomas Millie Dow, George Henry, Joseph Crawhall and James Guthrie.
- The Camden Town Group included Walter Sickert, Harold Gilman, Spencer Frederick Gore, Charles Ginner, Robert Bevan, Malcolm Drummond and Lucien Pissarro (the son of French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro).
- The Scottish Colourists indeed mostly used bright light and colour; some, like Samuel Peploe and John Duncan Fergusson, were living in France to find suitable subjects. They were initially inspired by Sir William McTaggart (1835–1910), a Scottish landscape painter associated with Impressionism.
- Victorian art also includes British Orientalism (John Frederick Lewis, Holman Hunt, David Roberts, Edward Lear) and Fairy painting.
- Important artists not mentioned include:
 - Samuel Palmer, mystic landscape artist in the tradition of William Blake
 - James Tissot, French painter of middle-class social scenes.
 - Gustave Dore, engraver of scenes including the London poor

- In photography Pictorialism aimed to achieve artistic indeed painterly effects; The Linked Ring (founded 1892) was founded by Henry Peach Robinson, George Davison, and Henry Van der Weyde with the aim of bringing art back into the science of photography.
- The American John Singer Sargent was the most successful London portraitist at the start of the 20th century, with John Lavery, Augustus John and William Orpen rising figures. John's sister Gwen John lived in France, and her intimate portraits were relatively little appreciated until decades after her death.
- The London-born Irish artist Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957), was based in Dublin, at once a romantic painter, a symbolist and an expressionist.
- In the early 20th century, Vorticism was a brief coming together of a number of Modernist artists in the years immediately before 1914; members included Wyndham Lewis, the sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein, David Bomberg, Malcolm Arbuthnot, Lawrence Atkinson, the American photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, Frederick Etchells, the French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Cuthbert Hamilton, Christopher Nevinson, William Roberts, Edward Wadsworth, Jessica Dismorr, Helen Saunders, and Dorothy Shakespear.
- The early 20th century also includes The Sitwell's artistic circle and more notably the Bloomsbury Group a group of mostly English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists, including painter Dora Carrington, painter and art critic Roger Fry, art critic Clive Bell, painter Vanessa Bell, painter Duncan Grant among others; very fashionable at the time, their work in the visual arts looks less impressive today. British modernism was to remain somewhat tentative until after World War II, though figures such as Ben Nicholson kept in touch with European developments.

WHAT WAS THE STATE OF THE BRITISH ECONOMY DURING THE 19TH CENTURY?

The agricultural economy was dependent on the weather and the import and export laws. The manufacturing economy depended on the availability of capital, a skilled workforce, political stability and the availability of raw materials.

- 1814 the last 'Frost Fair' held on the Thames. The 'Little Ice Age' started in 1350 and ended in the 1850s, with three particularly cold periods from

1650, 1770 and 1850.

- 1815 Implementation of the 'Corn Laws' to artificially fix the price of corn. The start of an agricultural depression leading to the Swing Riots of the 1830s.
- 1816 Terrible harvest, the 'Year Without a Summer'
- 1825 Banking crisis
- 1840s 'The Hungry Forties'
- 1846-49 Great Irish Famine
- 1846 the repeal of the 'Corn Laws' by Robert Peel, a Conservative with the support of the Whigs against his own party.
- 1847 Rail stock crash
- 1873-79 the Long Depression, particularly in the US where it extended into the 1890s.
- 1877-95 agricultural depression caused by wet summers, US imports and animal diseases
- 1870-1914 foreign trade tripled
- 1880-1913 the 'Golden Age' for international finance
- 1900-1914 the Edwardian Era was a time of peace and prosperity with no depressions and widespread prosperity.
- 1913 US overtook the UK as the largest economy in the world. London became the world's financial capital and the export of capital became the basis of the UK economy.

UK POPULATION

- From 1801 to 1901 the UK population increased from 10.5m to 40m (fourfold in a century). The population in 1701 was estimated to be 6.5m.
- In 1700 only 17% of the population lived in urban areas, by 1800 it was 25.5% and by 1900 it was 77%. That is, during the nineteenth century roughly half the population moved from rural to urban areas. This was to meet the demand for labour and because of the 'agricultural revolution' that pre-dated 1750 a was a combination of good harvests, crop rotation and increased mechanisation.



Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, 1885, 120 x 150 cm, Plymouth Art Gallery

Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, 1885, 120 x 150 cm, Plymouth Art Gallery

- By the late Victorian period the power of the Royal Academy had declined and the **old academic style of painting was going out of favour**. With this decline artists in various geographic locations were able to form substantial and influential groups of like minded artists.
- The Newlyn School was founded by **Stanhope Alexander Forbes** (1857-1947), the '**father of the Newlyn School**' and it grew to **50 artists** including his wife Elizabeth Forbes, **Henry Scott Tuke**, **Harold and Laura Knight** (1877-1970), **Frank Bramley** and Alfred Munnings.
- Forbes was born in Dublin and studied at Lambeth School of Art and the Royal Academy School. He travelled to Paris and was influenced by *en plein air* painting and by the landscapes of **Jules Bastien-Lepage**.
- Forbes lived in artistic colonies in Brittany and settled in **Newlyn in 1884**. Other artists were attracted to Newlyn, partly because of his reputation and his charismatic character but as the number of artists in Newlyn dwindled, Stanhope and his wife Elizabeth Forbes founded their **School of Painting in 1899**. This was to attract a whole new generation of artists to the area.
- This ambitious canvas, *A Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, brought the group to the attention of critics and audiences when exhibited to acclaim at the Royal Academy in 1885.
- Forbes painted the picture **entirely outside over a period of a year** overcoming the problems of **rain, wind, fainting models and rotting fish**. He could paint only when the tide was out and the sky grey.
- It depicts a beach auction of the fish that have just been caught. The auctioneer or 'jowster' would sell the catch to the highest bidder.

- The Newlyn School painters were **not trying to improve the conditions** for the fishermen and their families. Forbes described Newlyn as a '**dirty hole**' and the artists complained of the continual smell of rotting fish and that the locals charged twice as much as the fishermen and their families in France. They went because of the social activity within the artists' community, it was a cheap place to live and because of the dream of having a painting accepted by the Royal Academy. Harold and Laura Knight ordered 'furniture, linen and silver' from the Harrods catalogue' when they first arrived (Barbara Morden, *Laura Knight: A Life*).

Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947)

- Founded by Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), '**father of the Newlyn School**'. Forbes became an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1892 and a Royal Academician in 1910.
- Forbes was the son of a French woman and an English railway manager and was educated at Dulwich College and then the Royal Academy School. His uncle was a well-known art collector, James Forbes.
- He married the Canadian artist **Elizabeth Armstrong** (1859-1912) in Newlyn in 1889 and they founded the Newlyn School. She died of cancer when she was only 52 and he remarried a friend and former student called Maude ('Maudie ') Clayton Palmer (1880-1952) in 1915. His son died in WWI and he died in Newlyn, aged 89.
- Forbes and Henry Herbert La Thangue (1859-1929) went to **Cancalle, Brittany** and painted *en plein air*, like Jules Bastien-Lepage, which became a technique that Forbes used throughout his career.
- The Newlyn School grew to 50 artists including **Frank Bramley, Henry Scott Tuke**, his wife Elizabeth Forbes, Harold and **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) and Alfred Munnings.

NOTES

- Newlyn is a fishing village near Penzance, Cornwall.
- The founding of the School was similar to the founding of the Barbizon School (1830-1870, near the Forest of Fontainebleau).
- Initially Forbes started this painting with a huge canvas 275 x 165 cm but later had to change to a large but more manageable 150 x 120 cm canvas.

St Ives School

- The St Ives School came after the nineteenth century although it had attracted artists since the railway was extended in 1877.
- In 1928, Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood visited St Ives where they were impressed by the work of local artist Alfred Wallis. This started the development of the Cornish fishing port as an artists' colony.

- Its heyday was in the 1950s and 60s but the opening of Tate St Ives in 1993 reinvigorated the town as an artistic community.

The Barbizon School

- Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, and Charles-François Daubigny were inspired by John Constable in 1824 to paint direct from nature and they founded the Barbizon School. It later attracted Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley.



Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *The Health of the Bride* 1889, 152 x 200 cm, Tate Britain

Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *The Health of the Bride*, 1889, 152 x 200 cm, Tate Britain

- Forbes finished *The Health of the Bride* in 1889 and the £600 proceeds from its sale enabled him to get married the same year. It was sold to Henry Tate who gave it to the nation in 1897 when the Tate Gallery was founded.
- Forbes depicts **generations of the same family seated around a table at the wedding breakfast.**
- A **sailor raises a toast** to the bride who **stares pensively** into her bouquet, her eyes not meeting the gazes of her admiring onlookers.
- The *Health of the Bride* received an **enthusiastic response** at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1889 (the Tate website says 1899). The critic of the *Art Journal* remarked in 1893 that the '**solemn awkwardness** of the young couple themselves, the **knowledgeable indifference** of the old, and the **innocent unconcern** of the very young - all these are managed with **frankness and skill**' (quoted in Cook, p.168).
- Forbes was praised for his choice of subject, its painterly qualities and his handling of light from two sources. Note that the source on the right is not visible, what looks like a window is the reflection from the glass front of a cabinet.

NOTES

- The party is shown toasting the bride with her sail brother. The sailor is a sergeant.
- The picture was painted from the **artist's friends** at his studio in Newlyn, not from professional models, and the setting is the local inn.
- Lord Lever considered buying Stanhope Forbes's *Health of the Bride*. He described how the painting was 'ready' for the purpose of advertising:

"Scarcely wants a touch ... I should have put a box of Sunlight Soap in the hands of the best man, who is standing up with a glass in his hand drinking health and prosperity to the newly-married couple. The glass would have been replaced by the soap, with the toast, 'Happy is the Bride that Sunlight Soap Shines Upon.' " However, the painting was already promised to Henry Tate, the sugar magnate who left his collection to what was renamed the Tate Gallery.

- **Tate:**

- On 16 July 1889 Stanhope Alexander Forbes wrote to Sir Henry Tate (1819-1899) 'I myself will be rather occupied down here - no less a matter than my own wedding. It was inevitable after painting this picture' (quoted in Cook and Hardie, p.84). Forbes was writing from **Newlyn where he had been staying since 1884.**
- The small Cornish fishing village attracted a number of artists in the late nineteenth century including **Thomas Cooper Gotch** (1854-1931), **Frank Bramley** (1857-1915) and Walter Langley (1852-1922). Opposed to the insularity of British painting, these artists were **encouraged to paint en plein air**, taking much of their inspiration from the work of French naturalist painters such as **Jules Bastien-Lepage** (1848-1884) and Jules Breton (1827-1906), and often choosing 'working life' subjects.
- Forbes recalled that the idea for the painting came to him when 'Standing in one of these inn parlours I had first thought of a painting of an anglers' meeting - you will notice one or two cases of fish on the wall - but it occurred to me that a wedding party could be much more picturesquely grouped, even though one had to paint them in the smarter, more conventional Sunday clothes' (quoted in Fox, p.28).
- The *Health of the Bride* reflects many of the aims of the Newlyn artists at the time. Forbes has chosen to use **non-professional models** and a **recognisable site**, the local inn in Newlyn. In addition, he includes evidence of the local fishing industry, for example the **stuffed fish, print** of a painting of a ship and the **masts of ships** seen through the window. This painting can be included amongst a number of works by Forbes, including *Off the Fishing Grounds* (1886) and *Old Newlyn* (1884), which reveal an **unchanging view of life** in Newlyn at a time when rural activities and traditional ways of life were gradually disappearing. **Forbes had a monopoly on such subjects in the eyes of the Victorian public**, his paintings being characterised by their subdued palette and **square brushwork**.
- The painting was **bought for the large sum of £600 by Sir Henry**

Tate in 1889 and was to become part of the collection which he gave to the nation at the foundation of the Tate Gallery. The **profits** from the sale of the painting **enabled Forbes to propose to the artist Elizabeth Armstrong** (1859-1912) who had moved to Newlyn in 1885. Their marriage took place in St Peter's Church in Newlyn a few months after *The Health of the Bride* was completed.



Frank Bramley (1857-1915), *A Hopeless Dawn*, 1888, 123 x 168cm, Tate Britain



Frank Bramley (1857-1915), *A Hopeless Dawn*, 1888, 123 x 168cm, Tate Britain

- Bramley was a leading member of the Newlyn School, and this painting made his reputation when it was shown at the **1888 Royal Academy** exhibition. It was immediately bought for the nation and has been on almost continuous view at the Tate Gallery since its opening in 1897.
- The title of this painting comes from a **passage by John Ruskin**, which affirms that Christ is at the helm of every boat. The kneeling woman, comforted by her mother-in-law, realises that her **husband is lost at sea**, but the open Bible, altar-like table and print on the wall hint at the consolations of religion.
- The painting was purchased by the **Chantrey Bequest** and the Royal Academy wrote, 'The painting's strong emotional and narrative content, together with its aesthetic appeal and tonal harmony, make this one of the most admired Newlyn School works to this day.'
- It was seen by many as **too sentimental**.
- Bramley was one of the **founders** of the **New English Art Club** but left when criticized by Walter Sickert.
- Tate explanation:
 - 'The title, and to some extent the subject, came from a description of a beach with fishing boats in **John Ruskin's *The Harbours of England***: 'Human effort and sorrow going on perpetually from age to age; waves rolling for ever; and still, at the helm of every lonely boat, **through starless night and hopeless dawn**, His hand, who spreads the fisher's net over the dust of the Sidonian palaces, and gave unto the fisher's hand the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'
 - The print after Raphael's cartoon of 'Christ giving the Keys to St Peter' represented on the wall on the right has evidently been placed there

deliberately to bear out the text.

- However, the subject can also be related to **Charles Kingsley's** famous and morbid **poem and ballad of 1851**, *The Three Fishers*, which describes the overnight vigil of **three fishermen's wives** whose husbands are at sea, concluding: 'Three corpses lay out on the shining sands / In the morning gleam as the tide went down / And the women are weeping and wringing their hands ... / **For men must work and women must weep ...**'
- The wife and mother of the overdue fisherman have **waited a day and a night** and have **now given up hope**. The **dying flame of the candle** on the window ledge symbolises his death somewhere out in the stormy sea that is seen beyond it. An **open Bible** lies in front of the two women. As critics noted at the time, the picture is beautifully painted, particularly in its effects of light and low key colour, and in this respect it is one of the finest examples of Newlyn School painting.
- A completely contrasting view of the life of the sea was provided by Stanhope Forbes in his equally famous painting *The Health of the Bride* of 1889. It depicts the wedding feast of a young sailor and his bride in a local inn and like 'A Hopeless Dawn' was also praised both for its social observation and for its painterly qualities, particularly Forbes's ingenious lighting of the scene from two sources, one out of the picture on the right.'

Frank Bramley

- English post-impressionist painter.
- Born in Lincolnshire and studied at the Lincoln School of Art and then from 1879 to 1882 at the Royal Academy School. He lived in Venice from 1882 to 1884 when he moved to Newlyn.
- He was considered one of the leading artists of the Newlyn School with Forbes and Walter Langley. He was an exponent of the square brush technique used to create a jigsaw pattern that enlivened the surface of the painting.
- He married fellow artist Katherine Graham. In 1895 they moved to the West Midlands and then to the Lake District.
- In 1894 Bramley became an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) and in 1911 he became a Royal Academician (RA). He was also a gold medal winner at the Paris Salon.

Three Fishers

- Poem by Charles Kingsley (1851) and set to music by John Hullah (1851). 'Men must work and women must weep' became a catchphrase during the

Victorian period.

Three fishers went sailing out into the West,
Out into the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who lov'd him the best;
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the light-house tower,
And they trimm'd the lamps as the sun went down;
They look'd at the squall, and they look'd at the shower,
And the night rack came rolling up ragged and brown!
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come back to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep—
And good-by to the bar and its moaning.



Henry Scott Tuke (1858–1929), *Ruby, Gold and Malachite*, 1902, 117 x 159 cm, Guildhall Art Gallery

Henry Scott Tuke (1858–1929), *Ruby, Gold and Malachite*, 1902, 117 x 159 cm, Guildhall Art Gallery

- Henry Scott Tuke was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1900 and a full member in 1914. His work fell out of favour after WWI. It regained popularity when it was discovered gay artists in the 1970s.
- **Pictures of naked youths** outside a classical context were generally **not acceptable** at this time with the **exception for figures bathing**. At this time it was normal for boys and men to bathe naked in rivers and the sea.
- This painting was **found acceptable** partly because Tuke had been appointed an **ARA two years previously** and he had recently exhibited a painting of a **ship at sea** (*The Run Home*) and a **portrait** of a wealthy South African who lived in Falmouth (*Portrait of Alfred de Pass*).
- However, the deal Colnaghi withdrew his early support of the New English Art Club after seeing a similar painting, Tuke's *The Bathers* of 1886.
- Tuke's manliness was supported by his reputation as a marine painter and one reviewer of this painting described 'decorative beauty' which implies effeminacy but also the 'sailors and boys' which implies manliness.
- By **showing a group** rather than a single boy Tuke shifts from the homoerotic to the **less threatening homosocial**. The close association of healthy young men was part of the **public school model** promoted by Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) at Rugby School.
- The painting can be read in several ways:
 - as a celebration of **athletic masculinity and the healthy sport of swimming**;
 - a representation of the **innocence, fun and the purity of youth**;

- unconscious in a natural setting and therefore celebrating **man as part of nature**;
 - an image of a **lost rural idyll**;
 - a depiction of the **healthy sons of empire**;
 - or (in the aftermath of the Boer War, October 1899 – May 1902) a implicit criticism of the **militarisation of youth**.
- Also, Paul Clayton points out in '**How the Mid-Victorians Worked, Ate and Died**' that, 'Within two generations, however, male health nationally had deteriorated to such an extent that in 1900, **five out of 10 young men** volunteering for the second Boer War **had to be rejected** because they were so undernourished. The deterioration in the health of the 'rough boys' of the working class was regarded as a serious problem for the Empire and Tuke shows the type of healthy working-class boys that the Empire needed.

NOTES

- Ruby, Gold and Malachite – refer to the red, yellow and green tones used. This echoes an essay by John Addington Symonds, and may refer to the opening lines of a poem "The Sundew" published by Algernon Swinburne in 1866: "A little marsh-plant, yellow-green, // And pricked at lip with tender red". The poem describes a lovers' tryst in marshland, witnessed by a sundew. Swinburne's poem was the inspiration for Tuke's 1893-4 work, *August Blue* (Tate Britain), the title of Tuke's painting being a quotation from the closing lines of the poem.
- Tuke used several of his regular models for the work, including the brothers Richard and Georgie Fouracre, Bert White, Harry Cleave, and Charlie Mitchell (shown resting on the rocks in the lower left).
- The model in the left foreground is **Charlie Mitchell** (1885–1957), who was Tuke's boatman for 30 years. Tuke left Mitchell £1,000 in his will.
- Depicts six young men near Newport Beach, Falmouth
- Many commenters noted Tuke's acquaintance with the **Uranian movement** and discern a homoerotic charge.
- Tuke did occasionally paint **female nudes**, such as *Perseus and Andromeda* (1890), *Cupid and Sea Nymphs* (oil 1899, watercolour 1905) and *The Pearls* (1905, now lost) but he found it difficult to find models who would pose naked outside. It was also regarded as immoral for a woman to be naked outside with a man and so he was in danger of losing his reputation locally. For *The Pearls* he paid a professional model (Isa Watson) to travel from London and used her for both women in the painting. In addition, he was heavily criticized for his rendition of female anatomy in his *Perseus and Andromeda* of 1890.

HENRY SCOTT TUKE

- Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929) was from a Quaker family and he was encouraged to draw from an early age.
- In **1875**, he enrolled in the **Slade School of Art** under **Alphonse Legros** and **Sir Edward Poynter**. In 1877 Tuke **won a scholarship**, which allowed him to continue his training at the Slade and in Italy in 1880. From 1881 to 1883 he was in **Paris** where he met **Jules Bastien-Lepage**, who encouraged him to paint *en plein air*. While studying in France, Tuke decided to move to **Newlyn** where many of his Slade and Parisian friends had already formed the Newlyn School of painters. He received several well paid commissions after exhibiting his work at the Royal Academy of Art in London.
- He painted female nudes but they were not as successful and his male nudes were never overtly sexual, the model's genitals are almost never shown and there is almost never and physical contact.
- Tuke never married.
- He was also an important maritime artist and from an early age could paint a ship's rigging from memory.
- He received many lucrative commissions which enabled him to travel abroad and in 1914 he was elected to the Royal Academy.



Laura Knight, *The Fishing Fleet*, c. 1900, 123 x 84 cm, Bolton Library

Laura Knight (1877-1970, née Johnson), *The Fishing Fleet*, c. 1900, 123 x 84 cm, Bolton Library

- This picture was painted in **Staithes**, Yorkshire, shortly before the artist's marriage to Harold Knight in 1903. Staithes was a relatively small artists' colony, but the Knights knew and made friends with artists such as the Scot, **Charles Mackie** and the Impressionist painter from Oldham, **Fred Jackson**.
- Staithes and neighbouring Runswick had been the focus of artists since the 1880s and was recommended to Laura and Harold by a master at Nottingham School of Art.
- She had attended an **exhibition of Newlyn School artists** while at **Nottingham School of Art in 1894** (aged 16-17) and had been deeply impressed. She had particularly **admired Bramley's *A Hopeless Dawn***.
- This was her most ambitious painting at Staithes and it was signed using her maiden name **Laura Johnson** as she did not marry Harold until 1903. The **muted greys and browns** reflect her concern with the **harsh and tragic lives** of the local fishing community.
- From 1904 to 1907 they made three visits to the colony of artists at Laren in the Netherlands and in **1907 they moved to Newlyn**. Her colour palette lightened at Newlyn and her brushwork became freer reflecting their pleasure in their carefree bohemian lifestyle.

STAITHES

- Was another artistic colony but short-lived and smaller than Newlyn.

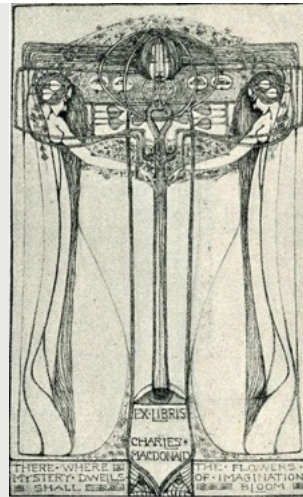
LAURA KNIGHT (1877-1970, NÉE JOHNSON)

- English artist in the figurative, realist tradition who embraced Impressionism. She became one of the most successful and popular painters in Britain.

- Created a **Dame in 1929** and in 1936 became the first woman to be elected as an **Academician** since its foundation
- She painted the theatre, ballet and marginalised communities, such as gypsies and circus performers. She was a war artist during the Second World War.
- Her father died shortly after her birth and so she was brought up in tight financial circumstances. She was sent to **France** to study in an **atelier** at the **age of 12** but she shortly returned and entered the **Nottingham School of Art** when she was 13 paying no fees. Her mother **Charlotte Johnson** did part-time work at the School. When she was 15 she took over her mother's teaching duties when her mother became seriously ill. She won a scholarship and a gold medal from the South Kensington School.
- She was criticized for 'drawing like a man' as she used thick outlines and drew from the shoulder rather than the wrist.
- She gave private lessons to **support** herself and her sister, **Sissie (Evangeline Agnes)** when her mother, her other sister and her grandparents died.
- She met **Harold Knight, then aged 17**, and the most promising student at the School and she was determined to copy his techniques. They became friends and were **married in 1903**.
- In **1894 they visited Staithes**, a Yorkshire fishing community, to paint. They returned with Sissie to live and work there.
- They also visited the artists colony at **Laren in the Netherlands**, a group of artists who had been painting in remote rural communities since 1850.
- They moved to **Newlyn in 1907**.



Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze* (detail), 1902, Vienna Succession Building



Margaret Macdonald for husband Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Ex Libris*, 1898.
'There Where Mystery Dwells
Shall the Flowers of Imagination
Bloom'

Margaret Macdonald for husband Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Ex Libris*, 1898.
'There Where Mystery Dwells Shall the Flowers of Imagination Bloom'
Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze* (detail), 1902, Vienna Succession Building

- This is typical of Margaret Macdonald's innovative design. It combines the flat linear technique of Aubrey Beardsley with the sinuous lines of art nouveau. Her work predates many of the other innovative designs of the period.
- She **exhibited** with Mackintosh at the **1900 Vienna Secession**, where she was **arguably an influence on the Secessionists Gustav Klimt** (his *Beethoven Frieze* was 1902 and *The Kiss* was 1907-8) and Josef Hoffmann.
- Ex Libris means 'from the books' and is often used on a bookplate.

GLASGOW SCHOOL

- The Glasgow School began to develop in the 1870s and flourished from the 1890s to 1910.
- Sub-groups were The Four (also called the Spook School), the Glasgow Girls and the Glasgow Boys.
 - **The Four**: the painter and glass artist **Margaret MacDonald**, acclaimed architect **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** (MacDonald's husband), MacDonald's sister **Frances**, and **Herbert MacNair**. Cumulatively, The Four defined the Glasgow Style's syncretistic blend of influences including the Celtic Revival, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Japonisme, which found favour throughout the modern art world of continental Europe. The Four, otherwise known as the **Spook School**, ultimately made a great impact on the definition of Art Nouveau.
 - **The Glasgow Girls** were a group of female designers and artists including Margaret and Frances MacDonald who were members of The Four (see above), Jessie M. King, Annie French, Jessie Wylie Newbery,

Ann Macbeth, **Bessie MacNicol**, Norah Neilson Gray, Stanmore Dean, Eleanor Allen Moore, De Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar and Christian Jane Fergusson. May Wilson and Eliza Bell (among others) continued the tradition of ceramic artistry into the 1940s and 1950s by hand painting various items with floral patterns.

- **The Glasgow Boys.** Through the 1880s and 1890s—around the same time that the Spook School was gaining prominence—a collective which came to be known as the Glasgow Boys was interpreting and expanding the canon of Impressionist and post-impressionist painting. Their subject matter featured rural, prosaic scenes from in and around Glasgow. Their colourful depictions attempted to capture the many facets of the character of Scotland.

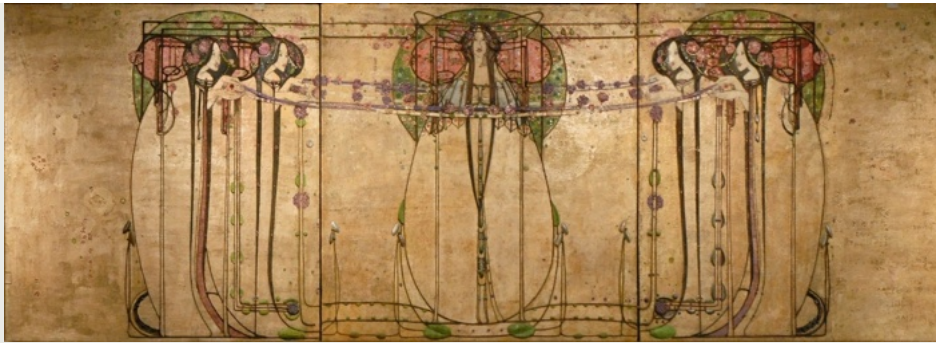
Notes

- The Glasgow Boys consisted of several men, most of whom were trained in, or had strong ties to the city of Glasgow. These men were brought together by a passion for realism and naturalism and this showed through in the pieces they produced. Along with this passion for naturalism, they shared a marked distaste for the Edinburgh oriented Scottish art establishment, which they viewed as oppressive. Driven and motivated by these ideals they embraced change, created masterpieces, and became Scottish icons in the process.
- Among the painters associated with the group were Joseph Crawhall (1861–1913), Thomas Millie Dow (1848–1919), **James Guthrie** (1859–1930), **George Henry** (1858–1943), E. A. Hornel (1864–1933), and E. A. Walton (1860–1922). David Gauld (1865–1936), William Kennedy (1859–1918), **John Lavery** (1856–1941), Harrington Mann (1864–1937), Stuart Park (1862–1933), William Wells (1872–1923), David Young Cameron (1865–1945), Alexander Ignatius Roche (1861–1923), Arthur Melville (1855–1904), Thomas Corsan Morton (1859–1928), James Nairn (1859–1904), George Pirie (1863–1946) and John Quinton Pringle (1864–1925). James Paterson (1854–1932) and William York Macgregor (1855–1923) were leading figures in the group, which used to meet at Macgregor's studio.
- Their main influences were that of Japanese print, French Realism including Jules Bastien-Lepage, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, but all of their experiences around the world greatly impacted on and inspired their work, in particular in Spain, North Africa, and Japan. The group was constantly influenced by what they saw in the world around them and strove to display these images by utilizing the techniques of realism and naturalism; they had a passion to depict things as they actually are. This is one of the reasons that the group often chose to work outdoors. Working outdoors allowed them to produce paintings that were as true to nature as possible

and it allowed them to paint realistic objects in their natural environment. They painted real people in real places. The production of naturalistic paintings was new to this time period, and thus their techniques were considered to be innovative. Similarly, the pieces often created a sense of movement, an accurate (or naturalistic) depiction of light and shade, and extremely realistic texture. This made them stand out in the art community.

Notes

- **Beethoven Frieze** was painted by Klimt in 1902 for the 14th Vienna Secessionist exhibition, which was intended to be a celebration of the composer.
- 'The frieze illustrates human desire for happiness in a suffering and tempestuous world in which one contends not only with external evil forces but also with internal weaknesses. The viewer follows this journey of discovery in a stunning visual and linear fashion. It begins gently with the floating female Genii searching the Earth but soon follows the dark, sinister-looking storm-wind giant, Typhoeus, his three Gorgon daughters and images representing sickness, madness, death, lust and wantonness above and to the right. Thence appears the knight in shining armour who offers hope due to his own ambition and sympathy for the pleading, suffering humans. The journey ends in the discovery of joy by means of the arts and contentment is represented in the close embrace of a kiss. Thus, the frieze expounds psychological human yearning, ultimately satisfied through individual and communal searching and the beauty of the arts coupled with love and companionship.' (www.gustav-klimt.com)



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, *The May Queen*, 1900, gesso panel, 159 x 457 cm, Glasgow Museum

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, *The May Queen*, 1900, gesso panel, 159 x 457 cm, Glasgow Museum

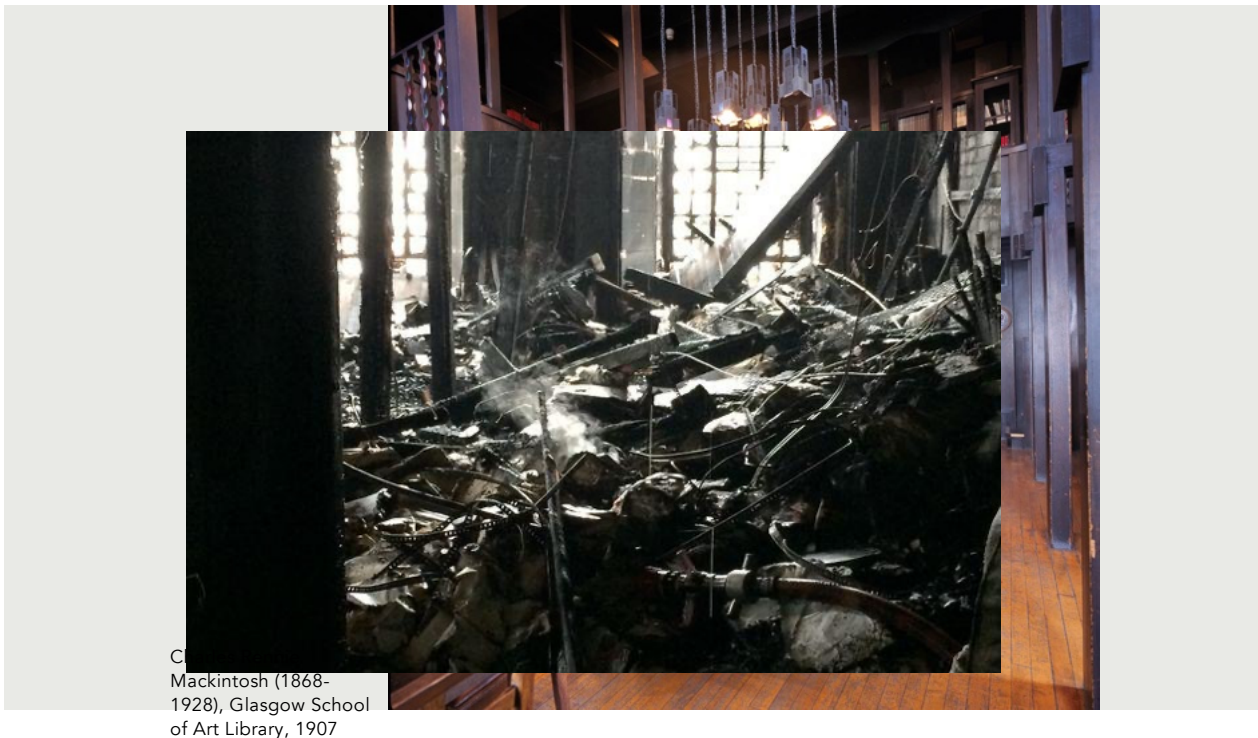
Made from gesso, hessian, scrim, twine, glass beads, thread, mother-of-pearl, tin leaf

- In 1896 Charles Rennie Mackintosh met **Catherine Cranston** an entrepreneurial local business woman, daughter of a Glasgow tea merchant and a strong believer in temperance.
- They conceived the idea of a series of 'art tearooms' which Charles worked on with his wife Margaret between 1896 and 1917. The first was the **Buchanan Street** tearooms for which he designed wall murals consisting of elongated female figures surrounded by roses. In 1898 he worked on the **Argyle Street tea room** for which he designed the interior and the furniture.
- In 1900 Miss Cranston commissioned him to redesign the entire tea room for **Ingram Street**. This included the mural **The May Queen** from the Ladies' Luncheon Room by Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh. Before being installed the gesso panels were transported to the Eight Exhibition of the Vienna Secession in 1900.
- This led to the commission to design completely the proposed new tearooms in Sauchiehall Street in 1903. For the first time, Mackintosh was given responsibility for not only the interior design and furniture, but also for the full detail of the internal layout and exterior architectural treatment. The resultant building came to be known as the **Willow Tearooms**, and is the best known and most important work that Mackintosh undertook for Miss Cranston. The name "Sauchiehall" is derived from "saugh", the Scots word for a willow tree, and "haugh", meadow.
- During the last full year of his life, Charles Mackintosh wrote to Margaret this summation of their joint work: **You must remember that in all my**

architectural efforts you have been half if not three-quarters of them. He had repeatedly expressed the opinion that, while **he possessed talent, his wife had genius.**

NOTES

- Gesso is a white paint mixture used to prepare bare canvas or wood panels. It forms the underlying substrate onto which the pigment is applied. There are many specialist gesso mixtures and techniques.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), Glasgow School of Art Library, 1907

- He was only 28 when he drew the plans for the building.
- The first half was **completed in 1899** but the art nouveau design took another 12 years to complete.
- His concern was to build around the needs of individual people with the flourish of Art Nouveau and the simplicity of Japanese forms.
- The project that helped make his international reputation was the Glasgow School of Art (1897–1909).
- Like his contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright, Mackintosh's architectural designs often included extensive specifications for the detailing, decoration, and furnishing of his buildings. The majority if not all of this detailing and significant contributions to his architectural drawings were designed and detailed by his wife Margaret Macdonald whom Charles had met when they both attended the Glasgow School of Art.
- Many of his designs were never built and disillusioned with architecture he turned to **watercolour painting** of landscapes and flowers. They moved to the Suffolk village of **Walberswick in 1914**. Rennie Mackintosh was accused of being a **German spy** because of his strong Glaswegian accent and briefly arrested in 1915.
- The Glasgow School of Art building (now "The Mackintosh Building") is cited by architectural critics as **among the finest buildings in the UK**.
- (Click) On **23 May 2014** the building was **ravaged by fire**. The library was destroyed, but firefighters managed to save the rest of the building.

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH

- Scottish architect, designer, and artist. The main representative of Art Nouveau in the UK.

- Born in Glasgow, the **fourth of 11 children**. His father was superintendent of the Glasgow police.
- He **won a travelling studentship** and on his return joined an architectural practice.
- He was engaged to be married when he met **Margaret MacDonald** at the Glasgow School of Art and they married on **22 August 1900**. They had no children. Fellow student **Herbert MacNair** married her sister **Frances MacDonald** and the four became '**The Four**', prominent members of the 'Glasgow School'.
- Mackintosh admired Japanese art because of its economy and restraint and its simple forms and natural materials and its use of texture, light and shadow.
- During the early stages of the Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh also completed the Queen's Cross Church project in Maryhill, Glasgow. This is considered to be one of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's most mysterious projects. It is the only church by the Glasgow-born artist to be built and is now the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society headquarters.
- His work was shown at the Vienna Secession Exhibition in 1900. Mackintosh's architectural career was a relatively short one, but of significant quality and impact. All his major commissions were between 1896 and 1906, where he designed private homes, commercial buildings, interior renovations and churches.
- By 1923 they had moved to Southern France where he concentrated on watercolour landscapes but illness forced them to return to London in 1927. He was diagnosed with throat and tongue cancer and he died in 1928, aged 60.
- He gained in popularity in the decades following his death and his 'House for an Art Lover' was built in 1966.
- The rediscovery of Mackintosh as a significant figure in design has been attributed to the designation of Glasgow as European City of Culture in 1990.



Bessie MacNicol, self-portrait,
c. 1894



Bessie MacNicol
(1869-1904),
*Under the Apple
Tree*, 1899

Bessie MacNicol (1869-1904), *Under the Apple Tree*, 1899
Bessie MacNicol, self-portrait, c. 1894

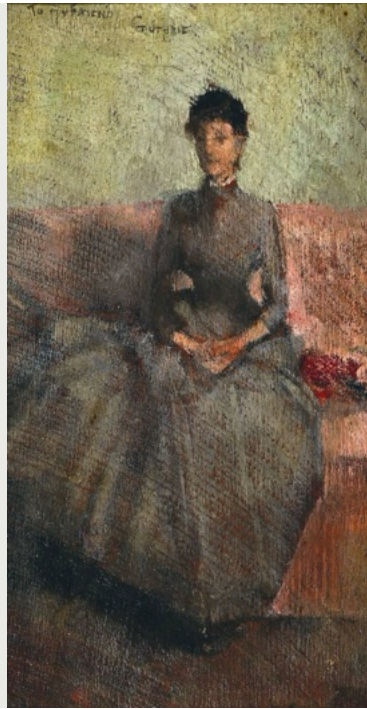
- She attended **Glasgow School of Art** from 1887 until 1892 and afterwards **studied art in Paris** at the Académie Colarossi, which was one of the first of the Paris studios to offer classes in which **women trained alongside men**. She was thus part of the first wave of women artists who were crossing to Paris from the United Kingdom to further their art education as their male peers had been doing for several generations (since about 1840). However, she said she did not gain much as she felt she was being repressed rather than encouraged.
- In 1899 she **married Alexander Frew**, a physician and artist, and they lived in the Hillhead area of Glasgow, where she set up a **large studio** at the back of the house. Both her parents died in 1903, and she was in the late stages of a pregnancy when **she died in Glasgow on June 4, 1904, at the age of 34**. Her husband **remarried** shortly before his **own death by suicide in 1908**, and his **second wife** sold the Hillhead house and all of **MacNicol's paintings** the same year. This could be one reason that so few of MacNicol's works and papers are known to exist; there are only a few letters and photographs, and **no sketchbooks** appear to have been found.
- She was widely exhibited both before and after her death.
- She was influenced by the **plein air tradition** of the **Barbizon School**, as well as by the **impressionism of James McNeill Whistler** and some of her Glasgow contemporaries among the **Glasgow Boys**.
- She was known for her command of color, light, and texture, while her portraits are admired for their **solid composition** and **psychological depth**. One contemporary writer, admiring her dextrous touch and expressive color, compared her **favourably to Berthe Morisot**. Like Morisot, she often painted

young, fashionable women posing outdoors, but with a distinctive **dappling of leaf shadows** that creates a strong overall pattern of alternating light and dark. During her lifetime, her work was exhibited in Scotland and London, as well as in several European and American cities.

- Today she is included in group known as the **Glasgow Girls**, among whom are also numbered **Margaret MacDonald**, Frances MacDonald, Jessie M. King, Jessie Wylie Newbery, Ann Macbeth, and Norah Neilson Gray.

NOTES

- Her father was a teacher and school principal.



Sir John Lavery (1856-1941),
Mrs Guthrie, 1898, 32x17cm,
Tate Britain

Sir John Lavery (1856-1941), *Mrs Guthrie*, 1898, 32x17cm, Tate Britain

- This is a portrait of Mrs Guthrie, wife of his fellow artist James Guthrie. This may have been a sketch for a larger painting or a present as the Guthrie's were married the previous year. Lavery became a well known portrait painter and this shows the influence of Whistler in its dark colours and elongated proportions. Lavery typically began a new subject by painting a small study directly in front of the model.
- He **studied in Glasgow** and Paris and returned to **join the Glasgow School**. He was commissioned to paint the state visit of Queen Victoria and this launched his career as a **society painter** and so he **moved to London** here he became **friendly with Whistler**.
- In 1909 he married **Hazel Martyn** an **Irish-American beauty** and they had one daughter Alice. Hazel was to figure in **more than 400 of her husband's paintings**. She modelled for the allegorical figure of Ireland on **banknotes from 1928 to 1975** and then as a watermark until 2002. They had a **tempestuous marriage** and Hazel was reputedly unfaithful.
- Appointed an official war artist like William Orpen but ill health prevented him from travelling to the front and a car crash kept him from working as a war artist. He painted boats, aeroplanes and airships and was a close friend of the Asquith family.
- After the war he was knighted and elected to the Royal Academy in 1921.

NOTES

Tate

This **tiny portrait study** is of the wife of **Lavery's friend the artist James Guthrie**. They had **married the year before**. It may be a sketch for a larger

portrait, or perhaps executed as a present. Lavery became a stylish portrait painter, especially of women, and **like Whistler** had a **preference for dark colours and elongated proportions**, but with a sharper sense of fashion. He began his career in Glasgow, where with Guthrie he belonged to a group of artists known as the '**Glasgow Boys**'. They followed a French interest in painting out of doors. Lavery often began a new subject with a very small study, painted directly in front of his model.

JOHN LAVERY

- Sir John Lavery, Irish painter known for portraits and wartime scenes.
- He married Kathleen MacDermott in 1889 but she died of TB shortly after the birth of their daughter Eileen in 1891.
- He died in 1941 aged 84 from natural causes.



James Guthrie (1859-1930), *The Wash*, 1882-3, Tate Britain

James Guthrie (1859-1930), *The Wash*, 1882-3, Tate Britain

- Guthrie and two other artists spent 1882 painting at **Crowland** in Lincolnshire.
- Guthrie presumably **began 'The Wash' at Crowland** but did not finish and date it until the following winter when he was working in the studio he had borrowed at Helensburgh.
- It shares the **sombre tonality** of *A Funeral Service in the Highlands* (Glasgow Art Gallery), painted in 1881–2, rather than the **brighter palette** of Guthrie's **other Crowland paintings**, for example *To Pastures New* (1882–3, Aberdeen Art Gallery). The **change** may be explained by his discovery of the work of **Bastien-Lepage** during a **visit to London**.

NOTES

Tate:

- Roger Billcliffe suggests in his recent book that they may have chosen this part of the country because it allowed them to concentrate on their rustic figure subjects without the distraction of grand scenery and the presence of other artists and because it offered a more consistent light than Scotland, where they had painted together in previous years.
- The visit to London is not documented but Guthrie would almost certainly have gone down to see his own 'Funeral Service' hanging in that year's Royal Academy exhibition. Four of Bastien-Lepage's paintings were on view in London and Guthrie would also have seen works by British artists who had already come under the spell of this remarkably influential Frenchman: Stanhope Forbes's *A Street in Brittany* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), for example, was on view at the RA.
- 'The Wash' originally belonged to Guthrie's cousin Frederick Gardiner, who with his brothers James and William had founded a successful

shipping company. During the 1880s they were major patrons of Guthrie and other Glasgow artists.

JAMES GUTHRIE

- A Scottish painter best known at the time for his portraits but today known as a Scottish Realist.
- He was the son of a Scottish minister and initially enrolled to study law at Glasgow University. He abandoned law to study painting in 1877.
- He was strongly influenced by Bastien-Lepage and associated with the Glasgow Boys.
- He was elected an associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1888, and a full member in 1892. In 1902 he became president of the RSA, and was knighted in 1903. In 1920 the King of Belgium awarded him with the Cross of Commander of the Order of the Crown.



Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *The Oxford Music Hall or the Old Bedford*, c. 1888-9

Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *The Oxford Music Hall or the Old Bedford*, c. 1888-9

- We now come to Walter Sickert and the Camden Town Group.
- One of the two paintings he exhibited at the **New English Art Club** 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.
- Walter Sickert (1860-1942), see <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-r1105345>
- A very **influential and prolific artist** but a painter's painter. That is, he influenced many twentieth century artists even after his reputation was less well-known to the general public.
- He was a **colourful and charming** character who was recognised as an important artist in his lifetime. He courted many eminent personalities and was a **skilled raconteur**. In old age he cultivated his eccentric habits frequently appearing in the newspaper having changed his appearance or his name or for some controversial painting stunt.
- He was born in **Munich to a Danish father and an Anglo-Irish mother**. In 1868 the family moved to England and London remained his home although he spent time in Italy and France. He spoke fluent English, German and French and had good Italian.
- His father was a painter and illustrator but discouraged him from painting and when he was 18 he took up acting under the stage name 'Mr. Nemo'. In 1881 however, he signed for the Slade School. In 1882 he abandoned the stage to

join **Whistler's studio**.

NOTES

- The **Camden Town Group** was a group of English Post-Impressionist artists **active 1911-1913 (and therefore they are outside our period)**. They gathered frequently at the studio of painter Walter Sickert in the Camden Town area of London. It was decided it should be men only and limited to 16 members. Female artists like Ethel Sands, Anna Hope Hudson and Marjorie Sherlock that were involved on the periphery.
- The members of the Camden Town Group included Walter Sickert, Harold Gilman, Spencer Frederick Gore, Lucien Pissarro (the son of French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro), Wyndham Lewis, Walter Bayes, J.B. Manson, Robert Bevan, Augustus John, Henry Lamb, and Charles Ginner.
- Influences include Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin whose work can clearly be traced throughout this groups work.
- He denounced Whistler anti-literary theory of drawing and saw all create paintings as telling a story. He also disliked Whistler's titles as he felt the title set the scene in which the painting could be interpreted. Regarding the aesthetic, he said, '**for me it's the rudest word I know**'.
- Sickert chose to allegorise painting as 'a robust and racy wench'. Dismissing Whistler's *Symphony in White, No.3* as a 'bad picture ... badly composed, badly drawn, badly painted' and appealing only to English sentiment, he insisted that: 'painting is a rough-tongued, hard-faced mistress, and her severe rule will brook no dallying of that sort'.
- A major retrospective was held at Tate Britain in 2008



Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, 1892, Tate Britain

Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, 1892, Tate Britain

- This is **Minnie Cunningham** who was a 'serio-comic' singer and dancer in the music halls. Because of confusion with an older American actress of the same name it used to be thought that Sickert painted a middle-aged performer but this Minnie was in her early twenties when Sickert met her in 1892 and she was described by the poet Arthur Symonds as 'very pretty, very nice, very young.' She dressed as a teenage girl and sang '**romping schoolgirl songs**' that included **sexually provocative double-entendres** that circumvented the obscenity laws.
- Note that it is now known to date to 1892 so it is the **Tivoli on the Strand** not the Old Bedford in Camden Town
- Reviews were mixed. *The Birmingham Gazette* described *Minnie Cunningham* as '**thoroughly enjoyable** and artistic ... **the picture of the Exhibition**', and *Black and White* agreed it was '**quite excellent**'. Several of the **negative reviews** drew attention to what they believed was the **rigid quality** of the figure. '**How inhuman and caricature-like is the result**', *Life* complained, '**a pretty little girl is turned into a wooden doll**'.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Richard_Sickert



Walter Richard Sickert, *St Mark's, Venice (Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus)*, 1896, Tate Britain

Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *St Mark's, Venice (Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus)* 1896, Tate Britain

- Although he focused on music halls he also worked on portraits, domestic scenes from everyday life, and landscapes of **Dieppe and Venice**, which he visited for the **first time in 1895**.
- As a last effort to **save their marriage**, Sickert and his **wife Ellen went to Venice** for the first time in 1895. Although the marriage was not saved, Sickert discovered a Venice beyond the paintings and etchings of his master Whistler. He made numerous paintings of St Mark's as a way of experimenting with technique and style. He is believed to have painted a few of them in **his studio in London from photographs**, including possibly this large painting.
- Following his separation and **divorce from Ellen** (on the **grounds of his adultery**) and a growing **disillusionment with the New English Art Club**, Sickert **moved to Dieppe** where he remained (with occasional sojourns in Venice) **until 1906**.
- Unlike Monet's paintings of Rouen Cathedral which he had seen on his way through Paris he was concerned with the structure and the **use of light to accentuate the features and the spirituality of the basilica**. It is the evening with the golden mosaics and crosses reflecting the last rays of the setting sun. Sickert hints at activity at ground level in front of the Basilica. Small blobs of paint are used to portray people walking around the Piazza San Marco. The subtitle of this painting is 'pax tibi marce evangelista meus', meaning 'Peace be unto you Mark, my evangelist', and it is the motto of the city of Venice.
- Venice had become a **tourist attraction if the 1880s and 1890s** and many photographers and artists created romantic scenes of the city. **Sickert rejects the Impressionists use of bright colours** but pays scrupulous attention to the **tonal values** even in the shadow areas. All his work is pervaded with a sense of

melancholy



Walter Richard Sickert, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties, Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c.1902-3, Yale University Art Gallery

Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties, Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c.1902-3, Yale University Art Gallery

- Sickert was **one of the most influential British artists of the 20th century**. He is often called a **painter's painter**, appealing primarily to artists working in the figurative tradition; there are few British figurative painters of the 20th century whose development can be adequately discussed without reference to Sickert's subject-matter or innovative techniques. He had a direct influence on the **Camden Town Group** and the **Euston Road School**. Sickert's active career as an artist lasted for nearly 60 years and his output was vast. He may be seen as the last of the Victorian painters and as a major innovator and precursor of international developments in later 20th-century art.
- 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

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



Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *The Camden Town Murder or What Shall we do for Rent?*, c. 1908, Yale Center for British Art

Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *The Camden Town Murder or What Shall we do for Rent ?*, c. 1908, New Haven, Yale Center for British Art

- Back in London, Sickert established himself in rooms in Camden Town and began to hold Saturday afternoon 'At Homes' in his studio in Fitzroy Street. His regular core of visitors became the more formalised '**Fitzroy Street Group**', an independent, modern exhibiting society which, in 1910, evolved into the **Camden Town Group**.
- Although this work by Sickert is after the end of the nineteenth century I thought I would include it because of the title. To show how a picture can be **interpreted** differently **depending on the title**. The original title was '**What shall we do for rent?**' and the picture can be interpreted as a **distraught husband** and **wife depressed** because of their **financial problems**. Some say, in the **1930s** he added '**The Camden Town Murder**' which changes the interpretation. We now see a woman who may have been murdered.
- Sickert loved bamboozling historians. A catalogue from 1911 shows the painting was exhibited as **Consolation**. It has also been suggested he later changed the title to *Father Comes Home* and then sold it as *The Germans in Belgium*.
- Sickert was fascinated with working-class life and with the **Camden Town Murder** which was a **prostitute called Emily Dimmock** who was murdered in **1907**. Sickert also took a keen interest in the crimes of **Jack the Ripper** and believed he had lodged in a room used by the infamous serial killer. In 1976 a book was published **claiming that Sickert** had been forced to be an accomplice in **Jack the Ripper's murders** because of a statement from **Joseph Gorman** who claimed to be **Sickert's illegitimate son**. He later admitted **he had lied**. In **1990** another book claimed **he was the killer** and in **2002 Patricia Cornwell** published a third book in which she claims she has proof he was Jack

the Ripper from **DNA evidence**. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography **dismisses such claims as 'fantasy'** as do historians.

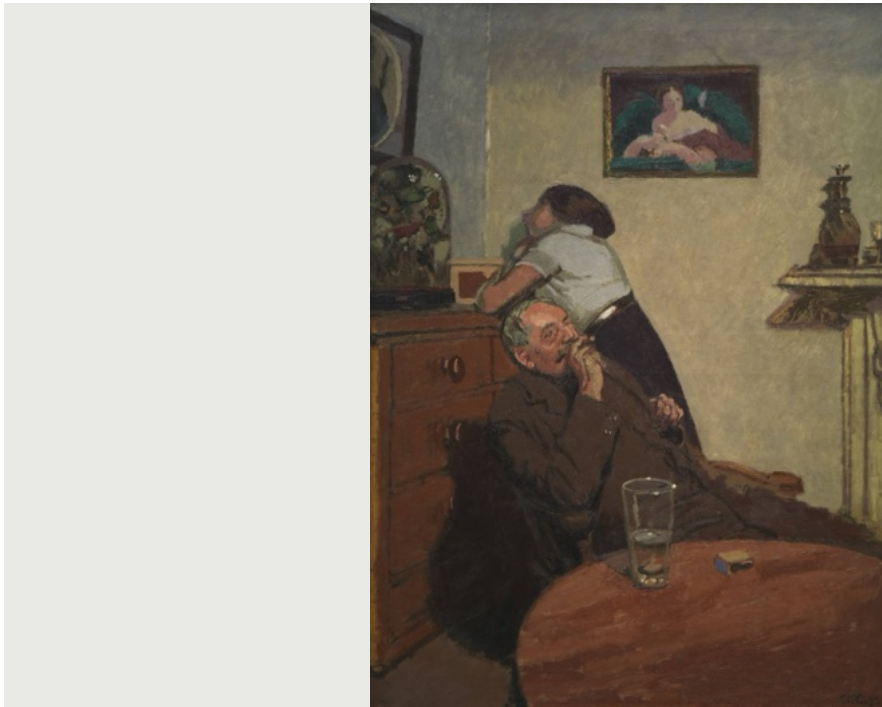
NOTES

Tate website + [comments]

- [Manet's *Olympia* combined the nude and the prostitute, categories that had been kept distinct.]
- 'Mapping the prostitute on to the nude – facing and confusing the body in art (as symbol) with the body in life (as commodity) – produced a subversive, modern, hybrid imagery which congealed into old-masterdom in its turn.' [By the end of the nineteenth century Manet's *Olympia* was hung alongside Ingres and was regarded as an 'old master'.]
- 'Murder does a certain amount of work for the realist body here. It raises the stakes in invoking an underside of prostitution which was once itself the underside of the nude.' [No one had combined the nude, prostitution and murder. That was Sickert's challenge.]
- 'The social profile of the prostitute was unskilled, poor working class, with local origins but displaced family relations (like Emily Dimmock, the youngest of fifteen children, who started her working life in a straw-hat factory in Bedford). Prostitution offered a temporary solution to pressing problems – like what to do for the rent – and limited social and economic independence. Many women moved on or married out of it. Emily Dimmock, who was young, attractive, sociable and settled with Bertram Shaw, might have done so too. But she fell victim to a sex-murderer. After the impact of the Ripper crimes in 1888 this was the new narrative ending for the prostitute's life. Jack the Ripper switched the rails, as it were, from an imaginary trajectory that ended in shame, disease, poverty and a watery suicide to one that ended in bloody violence.' [The mid-nineteenth century fate of the fallen women (such as Watts and Augustus Egg) was poverty and suicide. At the end of the century Jack the Ripper changed this to murder.]
- Conservative artists such as Sir William Blake Richmond thought Sickert's Camden Town Murder paintings should be brought to the notice of the police as they were '**worse far than Prostitution** because it is done by a man [who] should know better' (letter from Sir William Blake Richmond to Robert Ross, 16 January 1911).

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<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/lisa-tickner-walter-sickert-the-camden-town-murder-and-tabloid-crime-r1104355>



Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *Ennui*, c. 1914, 152.4 x 112.4 cm, Tate Britain

Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *Ennui*, c. 1914, 152.4 x 112.4 cm, Tate Britain

- In 1913, the **Camden Town Group** merged with the **Fitzroy Street Group** and the **English Vorticists** to create **the London Group** to challenge the Royal Academy. The London Group is democratic, artist-led, includes men and women artists and is still in existence. Sickert resigned from the London Group in 1914 and **re-joined the NEAC** where he exhibited his most famous painting, *Ennui*.
- "A man, smoking, and a slump-shouldered woman share the same domestic interior, yet appear psychologically estranged from one another. Sickert provided no resolution for the pair, moral or otherwise, causing the writer **Virginia Woolf** to attribute *Ennui's* 'grimness' to the fact that 'there is no crisis' ... The physical proximity of the two figures supposes an intimate connection between them such as marriage, but their **complete disassociation and lack of engagement with one another creates an atmosphere of isolation, indifference and loneliness.** " (Tate website)
- It is not a Victorian narrative painting but an **exploration of a mood**. The critic of the *Observer* wrote in 1914:

The incident counts for nothing – the mood is all important. And this mood, the **hopeless dreariness** of the milieu, the consciousness of the **impossibility of escape**, the terror which a **monotonous commonplace existence** in **repulsive company** must hold **for a woman** who has realised its emptiness – and all this is expressed with directness and rare intensity.

- Like his one-time mentor, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, **Sickert was an extremely articulate and erudite man** for whom the skilful and precise use of language was an important characteristic. He was one of the most entertaining raconteurs of his day and a prolific writer and art critic. The painter William Rothenstein described him as 'a finished man of the world. He was a famous

wit; he spoke perfect French and German, very good Italian, and was deeply read in the literature of each. He knew his classical authors, and could himself use a pen in a masterly manner.'

- The title **Ennui** does not mean boredom as often translated but 'a **feeling of weariness and disgust**, dullness and languor of spirits, arising from satiety or want of interest; tedium' (Webster's dictionary, 1913). Its **Latin root** suggests '**to hold in hatred**'. It has been described as 'state of emptiness that the soul feels when it is deprived of interest in action, life and the world, a condition that is the immediate consequence of the encounter with nothingness, and has an immediate effect, a disaffection with reality' whereas boredom is a temporary condition that is alleviated by changing circumstances. Sickert is presenting **a symptom of modern urban life – alienation and depression**.
- Ennui was the experience of many **French writers** such as **Baudelaire, Flaubert, Balzac, Zola, Maupassant and Mallarmé** and to escape the meaningless of existence they took artificial stimulants. The **world-weary decadent type of the 1890s** echoes the same feeling of ennui.

NOTES

- The models for the man and woman in *Ennui* were **Hubby** (a school friend fallen on hard times whose real name is unknown) and **Marie** (Marie Hayes, Sickert's charlady), who appear in many of Sickert's paintings of Camden Town interiors, although they were not a couple in real life.
- The location of *Ennui* is **Sickert's studio in Granby Street**, off the Hampstead Road, Camden Town. The bare shouldered woman in the painting is believed by some to be Queen Victoria. The bell jar of stuffed birds a remnant of Victorian taste.
- The angle of the table destabilises the painting and the colour palette gives a feeling of nausea.
- The art connoisseur Hugh Blaker wrote to the Observer describing it as one of '**the finest pictures painted in England in recent times**' and he recommended it be purchased for the nation.
- It has become the **best known and most widely discussed of Sickert's paintings**.
- There are **five versions** of the painting, numerous drawings and three etchings showing the subject was important for Sickert.



Lucien Pissarro, *Kew Gardens, London, 1892*, 15 x 23.5 cm, Northampton Museums & Art Gallery

Lucien Pissarro (1863-1944), *Kew Gardens, London, 1892*, 15 x 23.5 cm, Northampton Museums & Art Gallery

- Lucien Pissarro was the eldest son of the '**father of Impressionism**' Camille Pissarro. He was taught by his father and visited England when he was seven, worked in England between 1883-4 and then settled in England in 1890.
- On 10 August 1892 he married **Esther Levi Bensusan** in Richmond. On 8 October 1893 she gave birth to their only child, a **daughter, Orovida Camille Pissarro**, who also **became an artist**.
- Pissarro associated with **Walter Sickert** in Fitzroy Street, and in 1906 became a **member of the New English Art Club**. From 1913 to 1919 he painted landscapes of Dorset, Westmorland, Devon, Essex, Surrey and Sussex.
- In 1916 Pissarro became a British citizen. While in Britain he was one of the **founders of the Camden Town Group** of artists.
- This small canvas represents a **leafy corner of Kew Gardens**, perhaps painted on the spot by Lucien Pissarro in 1892. Like his father, Lucien often worked in a **sketchy manner**, as can be seen here. Lucien **lived near Kew** which he painted on several occasions. He was **newly married** and it is **perhaps his wife Esther** who is shown here walking through the Gardens

NOTES

BBC, Your Paintings

Lucien Pissarro (1863–1944) Anglo-French painter and graphic artist, born in Paris, the eldest son of the Impressionist painter **Camille Pissarro** (1830–1903). His **four brothers** all became painters. Lucien was taught and continuously coached by his father, and the letters they exchanged are valuable documents on late 19th-century art. Lucien visited **England in 1870 as a child**, worked there briefly in 1883–4, and **settled permanently in the country in 1890** (although he

often made trips to France), becoming a **British citizen in 1916**. Pissarro had a thorough knowledge of printing techniques, and in 1894 he founded the Eragny Press (named after a village in Normandy where his father lived). This was one of the most distinguished of the private presses that flourished at this time, creating books that existed primarily for the sake of their appearance—typography, illustration, binding—rather than their content. The illustrations were mainly from Pissarro's own drawings, engraved on wood by himself and his wife, Esther, and they are remarkable for their use of colour.



Augustus John (1878-1961), self-portrait, c. 1901, private collection



Augustus John, W. B. Yeats, 1907

Augustus John (1878-1961), self-portrait, c. 1901, private collection
 Augustus John, W. B. Yeats, 1907

- Augustus John was a Welsh painter, draughtsman, and etcher. For a short time around 1910, he was an important exponent of Post-Impressionism in the United Kingdom.
- "Augustus was celebrated first for his brilliant figure drawings, and then for a new technique of oil sketching. His work was **favourably compared in London with that of Gauguin and Matisse**. He then developed a style of portraiture that was imaginative and often extravagant, catching an instantaneous attitude in his subjects."
- He became a **leader of the New English Art Club**, where he chiefly exhibited. With his vivid manner of portraiture and his ability to catch unerringly some striking and usually unfamiliar aspect of his subject, he **superseded Sargent as England's fashionable portrait painter**. In 1921 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy and elected a **full R.A. in 1928**. He was named to the Order of Merit by King George VI in 1942. He was a trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1933–41, and President of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters from 1948–53.
- In his day he was the leading portrait painter and the highest paid. This painting sold at Christies in 2012 for £30,000 at the lowest end of the estimate.



Harold Gilman, *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1917, Tate Britain

Harold Gilman (1876-1919), *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1917, Tate Britain

There is a larger version in the Walker Art Gallery with a William Morris chair on the right.

- **Mrs Mounter** was the subject of a number of portraits by **Harold Gilman**. She lodged at the same address as Gilman at 47 Maple Street, off Tottenham Court Road and may have been his **housekeeper**.
- The house was near Fitzroy Street where the Camden Town Group showed their work.
- By the time he painted this he and **Sickert** had become **alienated** as **Gilman's pure colours and bright palette** were not to Sickert's taste. Gilman was influenced by the **colour palette** of **Pissarro**.
- Mrs Mounter is **not glamourized**. **Gilman admired** not only of **Van Gogh's directness** in portraiture but also that of Cézanne and Gauguin.
- 'In this painting her **direct gaze and time-worn features**, highlighted in warm tones and haloed tightly by an orange kerchief, draws the viewer in. The ordinary crockery on the table indicates the unceremonious **sharing of breakfast across social classes** and despite wartime shortages.' (Tate website)

NOTES

HAROLD GILMAN

- Harold Gilman's father was a Rector in the Romney Marshes and he was educated in Kent, Berkshire, Rochester and Tonbridge and for one year at Brasenose College, Oxford University which he had to leave because of ill health. He studied at the Hastings School of Art and transferred to the Slade School in London where he met Spencer Gore. He met Walter Sickert in 1907

and became a founding member of the **Fitzroy Group** (1907) and then the **Camden Town Group** (1911). His interest in Post-Impressionism took him further and further away from Sickert. He **died in 1919 aged 43** of the Spanish Flu.

- **Tate:**

- “Gilman uses a psychologically sophisticated composition to draw us into Mrs Mounter’s space. The foreground consists only of the tea table, cutting the nearest plate in half, and it is as if we are sitting opposite her. Placed against the wooden doors, the lack of background recession further reinforces this personal proximity ... Gilman’s sympathy with ordinary people found expression in socialist beliefs, which reputedly irritated Sickert on occasion. His move to Letchworth Garden City was partly an expression of his political outlook, as it was a model community which attracted a mixed bag of idealists, fresh-air fanatics and vegetarians.
- This meeting of artist and sitter is, as the art historian Andrew Causey has written, ‘**a confrontation that dignifies without flattering and is not limited by any class condescension**’.”

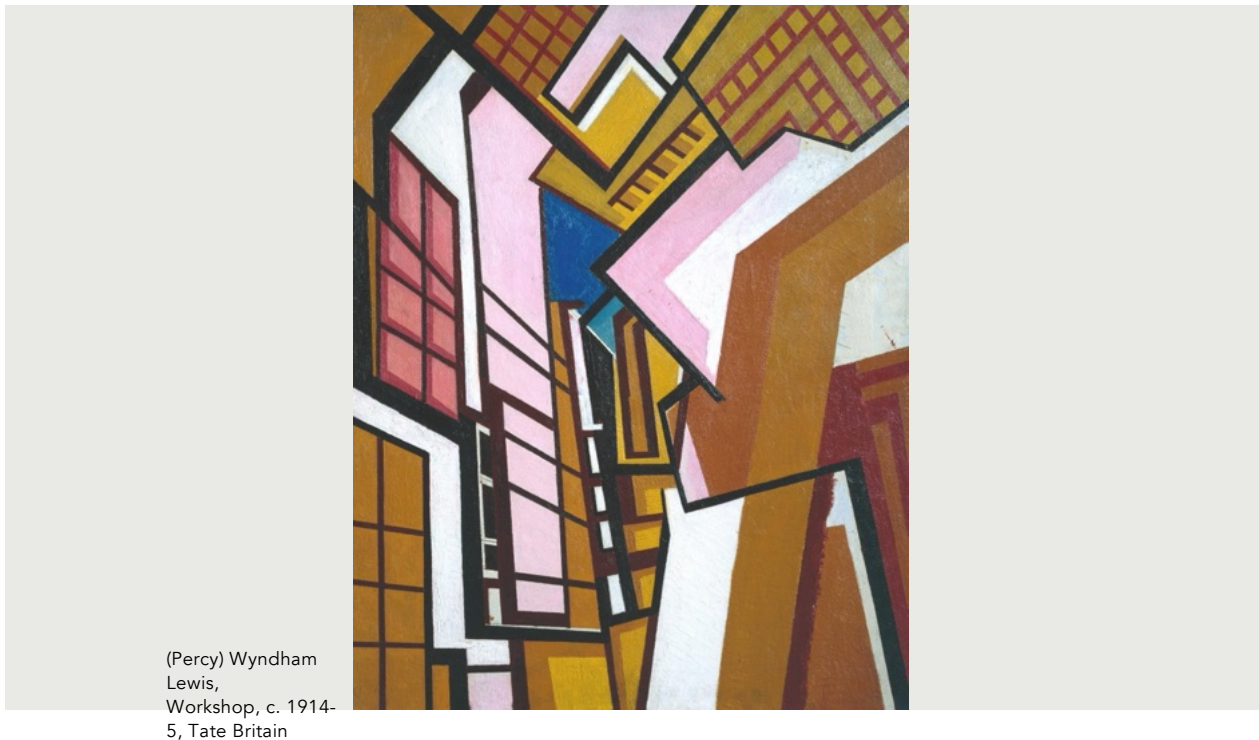
- **Liverpool Museums:**

- “Harold Gilman was born in Somerset to the Reverend John Gilman, a Rector of Snargate with Snave in Kent. After studying at Oxford for a year in 1894 he decided to become an artist. In 1897 he went to study at the **Slade School of Art** alongside Frederick **Spencer Gore** (who became his lifelong friend) under the instruction of Tonks, Wood, and Steer. The strong foundation in **draughtsmanship** encouraged at the Slade is evident throughout Gilman's artistic career.
- Gore introduced Gilman to **W.R. Sickert** and his circle at Fitzroy Street in 1907 and it was here that the **colour of Lucien Pissarro** began to filter through into Gilman's painting. In 1910 Gilman travelled with Charles Ginner - another member of the Fitzroy Street Group - to Paris where he became familiar with the recent advances in French art made by **Signac, Gauguin, Matisse and Van Gogh**. In particular, he began to admire the work of the Post-Impressionist **Cézanne**. However it was not until **Roger Fry's infamous 1910 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition** and later **1912 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' held at the Grafton Galleries** in London that Gilman really began to **admire the art of Van Gogh**, who **became his idol**. Wyndam Lewis said of Gilman: “he was proud to be a man who could sometimes hang his pictures in the neighbourhood of a picture postcard of ...Van Gogh”.

- After **grievances with** their main exhibiting society, the **New English Art Club**, the informal **group of Fitzroy Street artists** **formed** themselves into the more progressive **Camden Town Group**. Gilman was a founding member of the group when it began in 1911. His paintings took on **Sickert's motifs of working-class cluttered interiors**, informal portraits, nudes, shop fronts and eating-places. He began to combine this subject matter with a **brighter palette** and **thickly-applied paint** inspired by **Van Gogh**. However, it was as **president of the London Group**, formed in **1914** when the **Camden Town Group was fragmenting**, that Gilman's confident and argumentative character really came to the fore. This was apparent both in his presiding over of the group, and through his more adventurous use of **vivid colour**. As he **grew apart from Sickert**, his style became more open to the influence of Ginner and his decorative use of thick flat paint and patterning inspired by Post-Impressionist and **Fauve styles** rather than that of Sickert, whose work retained a duller, more dauby Impressionist palette. Gilman **rejected the Impressionist** concept of **painting being like a sketch** in favour of permanence which he achieved using a firm base and strong framing element with thick layers of paint **working slowly from pen and ink sketches**, not from life.
- Gilman developed a **very individual style** that had gone largely **unnoticed** when he **died suddenly during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1919**. He **sold very few works during his lifetime** and it was not until the **1955 Arts Council exhibition** of his work that he began to **receive recognition** for his short-lived but significant contribution to British modernism."

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(Percy) Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957), *Workshop*, c. 1914-5, Tate Britain

- English painter and author. Co-founder of the Vorticist movement and edited their magazine BLAST.
- **Vorticism** was a relatively **short-lived style** that was seen as an alternative to Cubism and was based on the ideas of Italian Futurism.
- After the **Vorticists' only U.K. exhibition in 1915**, the movement **broke up**, largely as a result of World War I, though Lewis's patron, John Quinn, organised a Vorticist exhibition at the Penguin Club in New York in 1917. Lewis was posted to the **western front**, and served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. After the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917, he was appointed as an official war artist for both the Canadian and British governments, beginning work in December 1917.
- His book Hitler (1931), which presented Adolf Hitler as a "man of peace" and Lewis's novels have been criticised for their satirical and hostile portrayals of Jews, homosexuals, and other minorities.

NOTES

- Lewis was born on his father's yacht off Nova Scotia and educated, first at Rugby School, then at the Slade School of Art, University College, London, before spending most of the 1900s travelling around Europe and studying art in Paris.
- He was a founder-member of the **Camden Town Group** in 1911. In 1912 he exhibited his **Cubo-Futurist illustrations** to *Timon of Athens* and three major oil-paintings at the **second Post-Impressionist exhibition**. This brought him into close contact with the **Bloomsbury Group**, particularly **Roger Fry** and **Clive Bell**, with whom he soon fell out.
- Vorticism (named by his friend Ezra Pound) combined the strong structure of

Cubism with the liveliness and dynamism of Futurism.

Tate

Vorticism was a short-lived but radical movement that emerged in London immediately before the First World War. 'The vortex is the point of maximum energy', wrote the American poet Ezra Pound, who co-founded the Vorticist journal *Blast* with Wyndham Lewis in June 1914. The journal opened with the 'Blast' and 'Bless' manifestos, which celebrate the machine age and Britain as the first industrialised nation. Lewis's painting **Workshop** epitomises

Vorticism's aims, using **sharp angles and shifting diagonals to suggest the geometry of modern buildings**. Its **harsh colours** and lines echo the **discordant vitality of the modern city** in an '**attack on traditional harmony**'.

The group's aggressive rhetoric, angular style and focus on the energy of modern life linked it to **Italian Futurism**, though it did not share the latter's emphasis on speed and dynamism. Artists associated with Vorticism included William Roberts, Edward Wadsworth, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, **CRW Nevinson** and David Bomberg. The First World War demonstrated the devastating reality of pitting men against machines and Lewis's attempts to revive the movement in 1919 came to nothing.



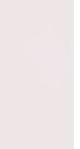
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Walter Sickert (1860-
1942), *Ennui*,
c. 1914, cm, Tate Britain

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