

# Tate Modern

## In the Studio

Boiler House (North) Level 2 East

12:00-12:45

Laurence Shafe

# In the Studio (Level 2 East)

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- This is based on the new hang in Level 2 East on 27 May 2016.
- Works marked with “\*” are key works not to be missed and the others are optional.
- Each work is shown with the artist followed by the talk itself (typically 3 to 5 minutes), followed by bullet point notes designed to answer possible questions. The section ‘Visual Aids’ at the end contains additional images that may be used to illustrate related works or ideas.
- Optional sections are shown in square brackets. All quotations are in bold and names are underlined.
- In general, start with the title and the artist followed by a description of the work and end with a link to either the theme ‘In the Studio’ or the next work. Avoid dates, movements and ‘isms’ unless directly relevant. Only refer to other works or historic events if they help explain the work being presented.

## Introduction

1. Welcome to Tate Modern. My name is Laurence and I am your guide for the next 45 minutes.
2. I have a hearing loop for anyone that requires it and if you need a seat there are folding stools over there.
3. We are in Tate Modern, named after Henry Tate, a wealthy nineteenth-century entrepreneur who made his fortune selling sugar cubes. In later life, he gave a lot to charity including what became Tate Britain and, about 100 years later, this building was opened to hold the ever-expanding collection. This building is a converted power station, called Bankside, and last year the display area was substantially increased with the opening of a ten-story extension called the Blavatnik Building.
4. Tate Modern is one of the most popular international modern art gallery in the world and we have managed to keep our permanent collection free by charging for temporary exhibitions, some Government funding and the use of volunteers like me. Please help us remain free by having lunch here, buying a book or giving a small donation.
5. On this side of the building, called the Boiler House, there are four permanent displays. Two on this floor and two on the fourth floor. I will be showing you a wide variety of work illustrating the creative process and how different artists approach the production of art 'In the Studio'. The studio is a symbol of this private experience and a physical space that sometimes determines the nature of the work produced. I will be approaching the art works and asking if it is possible to find meaning in modern art.
6. We will be looking at about ten works that I have selected as representative and important and we will finish in the final room where I will leave you to continue looking round the gallery. The next tour starts 15 minutes after this one ends [and there is then a one hour break for lunch]. I am happy to take questions as we go around so let's get started in the first room.

## Notes

- **The Founder.** Henry Tate (1819-1899) was the son of a clergyman and set up his own grocery shop when he was 20. He expanded this to a chain of six shops which he sold and became the owner of a sugar refinery in 1859. This was 26 years after slavery had been abolished in the British Empire (1833) and 52 years after Britain had abolished the slave trade (1807). In 1872, Tate bought a German patent for making sugar cubes from Eugen Langen and it was this that made his fortune. The same year he opened a refinery in Liverpool. Towards the end of his life he gave money to many colleges, hospitals and founded Streatham, Balham, South Lambeth and Brixton libraries. In 1897, he spent £150,000 (some say £80,000) on building the National Gallery of British Art ('Tate Gallery' in 1932), endowed it with his personal art collection of 65 contemporary paintings and gave it all to the nation. The famous portico was designed by the architect Sidney Smith. It was separated from the National Gallery in 1954. Tate Britain was extended twice by Joseph Duveen, an art dealer who also paid for an extension at the British Museum, and in 1987 Charles Clore funded the Turner wing.
- **Bankside power station** was designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (1880-1960) who designed Liverpool Cathedral and many of the red telephone boxes. He was the grandson of the prolific Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) who designed the Midland Hotel at St. Pancras and the Albert Memorial. The façade of the building is made from 4.2 million bricks. The chimney is 325 feet (99m) and was designed to be lower than St. Paul's Cathedral opposite (365 feet, 111m). At its peak, the power station generated 300 megawatts but it became uneconomic and too polluting and was closed in 1981. The turbine hall is 509 feet (155 m) long, 115 feet (35 m) wide and 85 feet (26 m) high. The conversion was carried out by Herzog & de Meuron at a cost of £134 million of which £50 million was from the Millennium Commission. Tate Modern opened in 2000 and had become one of the most visited museums of modern and contemporary art in the world.
- **Attendance.** According to Wikipedia and the Tate Annual Report 2014-15 the four Tate galleries received 7.9 million visitors and Tate Modern 5.7 million. The Louvre was number one with 9.7 million, number two was the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art with 6.1 million, the British Museum was number three with 5.6 million and Tate Modern was number four.
- **Extension.** Within four years of opening our success meant we started planning to expand the gallery. This new extension, again designed by Herzog & de Meuron, cost £260 million and opened on 17 June 2016. This ten-storey extension, now called the Blavatnik Building, increases the display space by 60%. Len Blavatnik is the UK's richest person and has been a UK citizen since 2010.
- **Gender balance.** Nearly 40% (38%) of the artists on display at Tate Modern are women and 50% of the monographic rooms are by women.
- **Management.** The Director of the Tate is Maria Balshaw who was previously Director of the Whitworth (University of Manchester) and Manchester City Galleries, and Director of Culture for Manchester City Council. The previous Director, since 1988, was Sir Nicholas Serota (b. 1946). The Director of Tate Modern is Frances Morris and of Tate Britain Alex Farquharson.
- **In the Studio.** The display investigates the processes artists use to make artworks, and how we respond to them. It is about the close engagement between the individual and the work of art, whether it is the artist making the work or the viewer experiencing it. At its heart is a room devoted to Mark Rothko's Seagram murals, a group of paintings that the artist wanted viewers to encounter in an enclosed space that would encourage an immersive and contemplative experience. Some rooms in the display include abstract works that draw attention to the process of seeing and the complex nature of perception, while others show the ways in which artists have continued to engage with the human figure.

\*Antony Gormley, *Untitled (for Francis)*, 1985 (Room 1)



1. **Finding Meaning.** In this room we have two contrasting works. Agnes Martin was one of the many artists who turned away from representing the recognizable world towards abstraction. Antony Gormley remains a figurative artist, that is he uses forms derived from life.
2. **Construction.** Let us start with Gormley's work, called *Untitled (for Francis)*, which was made in 1985. Like many of his other works it was made directly from his own body. He was wrapped in clingfilm and then covered in two layers of plaster. When it had dried the cast was cut from his body, reassembled and then covered in fibreglass and resin. Twenty-four sheets of lead were then hammered over the figure and soldered together. If you look closely you will see that the figure has been pierced in the breast, hands and feet by small holes cut in the lead.
3. **St. Francis.** The attitude of the eyeless figure, standing with head tilted back, feet apart and arms extended to display the palms of its hands, resembles that of a Christian saint receiving the stigmata. Stigmata are the five marks left on Christ's body by the Crucifixion although one of these wounds is in the breast, rather than, as tradition dictates, in the side. The title *Untitled (for Francis)* refers to Saint Francis of Assisi who allegedly received the wounds of Christ in 1224 and specifically it refers to Giovanni Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy* (c. 1479-85, see Visual Aids).
4. **Buddhist.** Although he was brought up as a Catholic he lost his faith after spending three years in India studying Buddhist meditation. His ability to meditate enables him to stay still while his body is covered in plaster. He uses his own body not to produce a self-portrait but to examine the physical and spiritual relationships between all of us and the world around us. He uses the physical body to talk about the relationship between our interior feelings and thoughts and our external appearance.
5. **Boundaries.** What does the work mean? At a time when art is becoming more abstract his return to the body could be considered old-fashioned but he avoids this by using the body as a universal symbol. It is about our inner life, the boundary between each of us and the world and the relationship between all of us and the natural world. He did not want to create a beautiful object for our enjoyment but he wanted to create something that makes us think about who we are and our relationship with the world. According to Gormley, this work is concerned with our openness to outside experiences and it reflects his concerns about the survival of the world and the human beings in it. So, we can see that what appears to be a figure is being used to convey abstract ideas. Gormley says, '**sculpture, for me, uses the physical as a means to talk about the spirit ... a visual means to refer to things which cannot be seen.**' Let us now turn to an abstract artist.



## Notes on Antony Gormley, *Untitled (for Francis)*, 1985

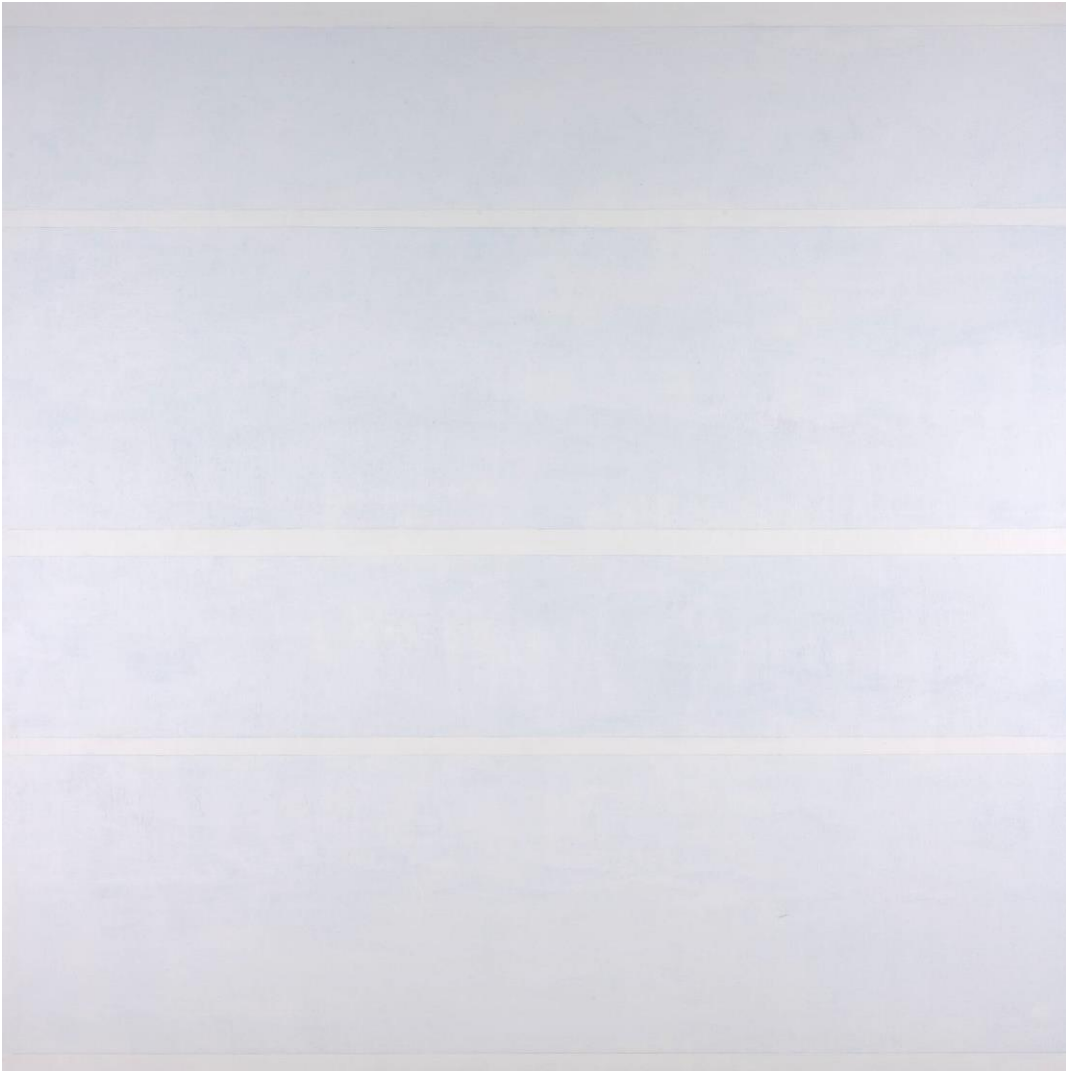
- Antony Gormley was born in 1950 in London where he continues to live and work. In the late 60s he studied archaeology, anthropology and art history at Cambridge. He spent three years in India studying Buddhist meditation and healing and in the late 70s he studied sculpture at the Slade School of Art. Since the 1980s he has worked with the human figure and often works directly from his own body. He was awarded the Tate Turner Prize in 1994 for *Testing a World View* (five identical iron figures bent at a right angle at the waist). His best known work is *The Angel of the North* which was completed in 1998.
- He uses his own body to capture a lived moment which is then transformed into another zone of time. The body is a place where **'meaning can arise'**. Gormley uses lead to provide a shield or shell that conceals and protects an inner space. Lead is heavy and impenetrable but it is also poisonous.
- *'Untitled (for Francis)'* is a plaster mould of the artist's body, reinforced with fibreglass and encased in a skin made from sheets of soldered lead. His wife, the painter Vicken Parsons, first wrapped his body in clingfilm then covered it in two layers of plaster and jute cloth. When set the shell was cut open, reassembled and reinforced with resin. Twenty-four pieces of standard roofing lead were then hammered over the cast. The lead surface varies in colour from dark to light grey. Gormley said that it is untitled to discourage too specific an iconographic reading. However, he explained that its subtitle refers to Giovanni Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy*. It shows St Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226) receiving the stigmata in 1224. St Francis was chosen as he **'realised the interdependency of life'**, a very modern concept, and the work is concerned with our openness to outside experiences. It is one of a group of seven standing figures made around the same time. The five eye-shaped 'wounds' suggest an openness to outside experience and provide access to the centre of the work. It is one of only two of Gormley's works dedicated to individuals. The other is *'Desert to Walter'* dedicated to American land artist Walter de Maria. This work is to do with openness to all levels of being. The aperture in the breast has four slits extending from cardinal points around it. He could have welded them slits together but he liked the pentagram or house shaped wound. He said, **'For me the work suggests that in order to be whole you have to be wounded.'**
- Gormley comments, **'I am interested in the body but not as appearance...Your body belongs to my visual experience more than it does to you.'** I had a choice to either pursue a spiritual life and not engage with the world or become a sculptor and engage with real things in the world. [My work] **'only begins to breath outside the gallery'**.
- Gormley was brought up as a strict Catholic and attended a Benedictine boarding school but has lost his faith. Buddhist meditation has taught him to deal with the here and now.
- Lead, plaster, polyester resin and fibreglass 1900 × 1170 × 290cm.
- His best known works include *Angel of the North* (1994-98, Gateshead), *Event Horizon* (2007, 31 figures on rooftops in London and New York), *Another Place* (2007, 100 figures on Crosby beach, Liverpool), *Asian Field* (2006, 180,000 clay figurines) and *Exposure* (2010, giant trellis figure in the Netherlands).

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gormley-untitled-for-francis-t05004>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gormley-untitled-for-francis-t05004/text-catalogue-entry>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/4659>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/antony-gormley-artists-talk> (1hr 23mins)



\*Agnes Martin, *Faraway Love*, 1999 (Room 1)



1. **Description.** This is Agnes Martin's *Faraway Love*, painted in 1999. It is a five-foot square canvas painted over using acrylics and graphite pencil. Martin began by painting the canvas all over with a white acrylic. She then measured out and marked with pencil the rectangular bands into which she painted the large light blue segments, with rough brushstrokes and we can even see some fingerprints in the paint. The light blue is a type of acrylic paint called Liquitex which is more translucent and light-reflecting than most acrylics.
2. **Mark Rothko.** Martin was influenced by Mark Rothko; whose work we will see later. She said he had '**reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth**'. She reduced her work to the bare minimum and her early abstract work consists of lines and grids with subtle colours on a six by six-foot canvas. Later, like this work, she reduced the size of the canvases to five by five foot and used pencil marks and bands of colour.
3. **New York to New Mexico.** Early on, she worked in New York for ten years in the 1950s and 60s and was one of the few leading female artists in the masculine art world of the period. She moved to the desert in New Mexico in 1968 and worked on her own in her remote studio for the rest of her life. She became reclusive and gave few interviews. When she died in 2004, aged 92, she said she had not read a newspaper for the last fifty years.
4. **Buddhism.** She studied Buddhism, like Gormley, not as a religion but as a guide to living her life. She viewed her work as a pursuit of perfection and she strived to create paintings that reflected '**beauty, innocence, and happiness**.' She said, '**Beauty and perfection are the same, they never occur without happiness**' and added '**Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not just in the eye, it is in the mind. It is our positive response to life**.' Her peaceful and reclusive lifestyle and her gentle and subtle paintings have become extremely influential. She is seen to have approached near-mystical perfection and for some she has become a visionary and for others almost a saint. Her art has been described as a '**religious utterance, almost a form of prayer**' and she said that '**art is the concrete representation of our most subtle feelings**'.
5. **Meaning: Figurative to Abstract.** So, we can see that two artists, Gormley and Martin, who appear at first glance to have taken a very different approach to art, one figurative and one abstract, in the end are both exploring what it means to be human. This room is an introduction to the close engagement between artist and art work and between us, the viewer, and the artwork. Let us now go back to the beginning of the twentieth century and look at some of the pioneers of modern art.

## Agnes Martin, *Faraway Love*, 1999

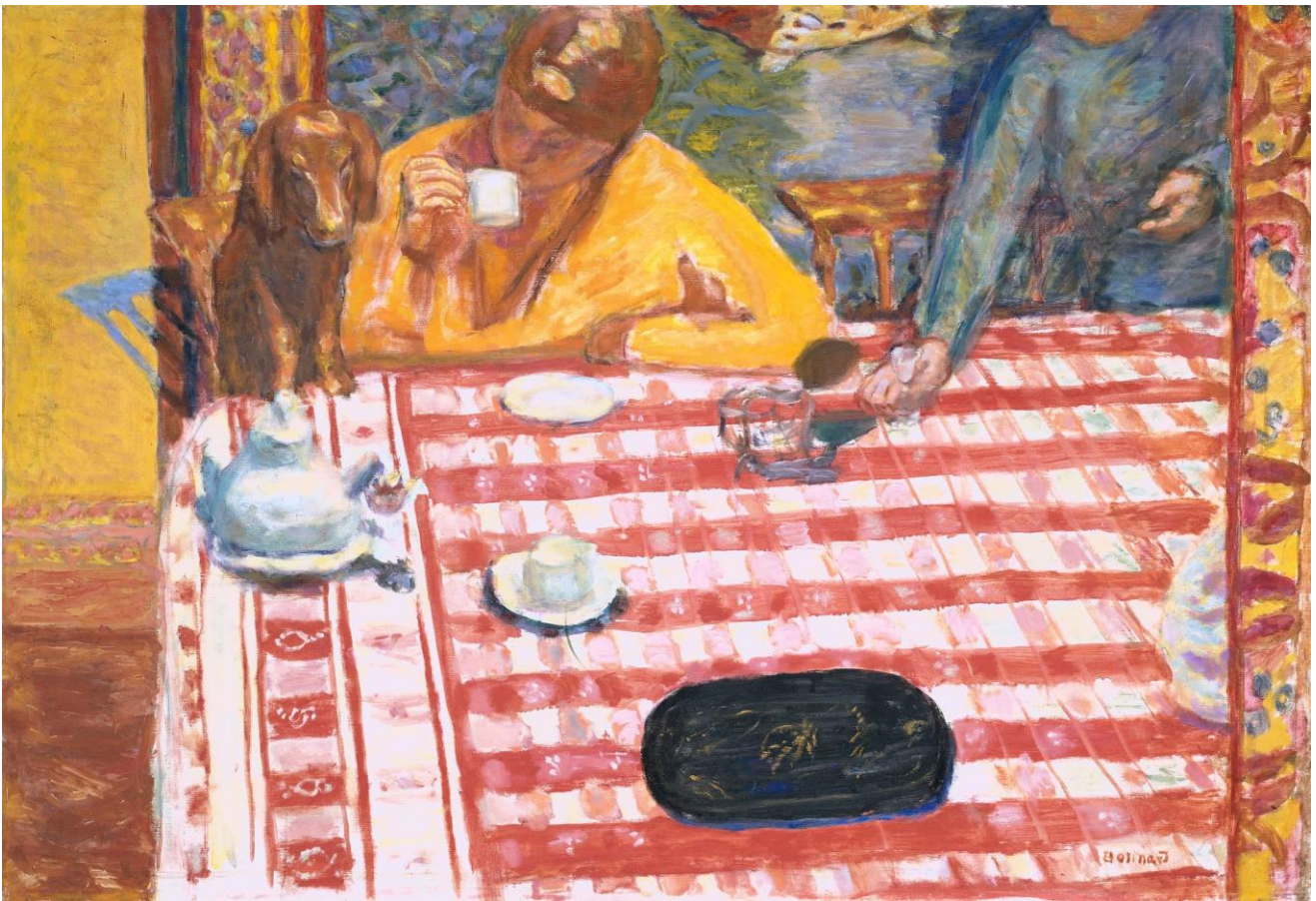
- Agnes Martin (1912-2004) was born in Canada and moved to America when she was 19. After college she studied Buddhism, like Antony Gormley. However, she was not interested in it as a religious discipline but as a code of ethics for life. She taught in New Mexico before moving to New York in 1957, aged 45. She left New York ten years later and disappeared from the art world to live alone in New Mexico. She did not paint for seven years and returned to painting in 1974, aged 62. She was known to have schizophrenia and once had electric shock treatment and she was known as a closet homosexual but never publicly expressed her feelings for women. From 1973 onwards she was regularly exhibited in major galleries around the world. When she died aged 92 she was said to have never read a newspaper during the previous 50 years.
- Martin praised Mark Rothko for having **'reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth'**. Following Rothko's example Martin pared down her work to encourage a perception of perfection and to suggest a reality beyond our direct perception. Her signature style was defined by an emphasis upon line, grids, and fields of subtle colour. In the early 1960s, she created 6 × 6 foot square canvases that were covered in dense, minute and softly delineated graphite grids. Later, like this work, she reduced the scale of her signature paintings to 5 × 5 foot and shifted to using bands of ethereal colour. She also modified the grid structure by using pencil lines and, in some paintings, she used primary colour washes of diluted acrylic paint blended with gesso.
- Many of her paintings have positive names, like *Happy Holiday*. She said, **'Beauty and perfection are the same. They never occur without happiness'**. She believed in art as a realm of transcendent experience and said **'Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not just in the eye. It is in the mind. It is our positive response to life.'**
- Martin wrote, **'I hope I have made it clear that the work is about perfection as we are aware of it in our minds but that the paintings are very far from being perfect – completely removed in fact – even as we ourselves are.'**
- Martin has often equated beauty and love with happiness, as an abstract concept not influenced by or reflective of her own personal life: **'In my best moments I think "Life has passed me by" and I am content.'** This sentiment chimes with the title *Faraway Love*, which suggests something out of reach, perhaps even unattainable, which nevertheless remains a pure state, not tainted by melancholy or longing.
- Artists such as Richard Tuttle, Ellen Gallagher and Roni Horn cite Martin as a central figure in their research and practice. **'Her art has the quality of a religious utterance, almost a form of prayer,'** wrote one New York critic, reviewing her recent exhibitions at the Elkon and Pace galleries.
- In 1976, she made one movie called *Gabriel* which is about a day in the life of a young boy which is full of happiness and innocence and is absolutely free of misery.

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/martin-faraway-love-ar00178/text-summary>
- Dieter Schwarz (ed.), *Agnes Martin: Writings/Schriften*, Ostfildern 1991, pp. 15, 17.
- <http://www.diaart.org/exhibitions/introduction/89>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/agnes-martin/who-is-agnes-martin>
- <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/agnes-martin>
- <http://www.artnews.com/2015/07/31/what-we-make-is-what-we-feel-agnes-martin-on-her-meditative-practice-in-1976/> an interesting and in-depth interview with Martin.



\*Pierre Bonnard, *Coffee*, 1915 (Room 2)



1. **Whimsy with taste.** This is *Coffee* by the French painter Pierre Bonnard and it was painted in 1915. The work contains a number of puzzles. Look at the back wall, is it the outside with a curtain on the left or a painting? The perspective of the table looks wrong making it look like a cliff. Why is it vertical? It creates a barrier between us and the woman. On the right there is a vertical bar that matches the area behind the dog but the two have no logical connection. Bonnard's paintings often exhibit a type of eccentricity, whimsy or wit. This often took the form of a cat or dog staring out at us, or a patterned edge with no apparent purpose, or a wildly tilting table, or a cut-off figure leaning in from the side. His visual taste meant that he never takes it too far and we are left with a puzzle, a wry smile or a poetic feeling rather than being offended by a gross over-statement or too much decoration.
2. **Working methods.** The three sketches on the right give us a great insight into his working practices. They are small so you might want to look at them more closely later. Bonnard did not paint from life but drew his subject, which he sometimes photographed, and made notes on the colours. He then went back to his studio where he painted from his drawings and notes. He wrote, '**I take notes. Then I go home. And before I start painting I reflect, I dream.**' The dreaming is important as it takes us from a mere representation of a scene to the edgy, whimsical puzzles I mentioned. We can see from the sketches, for example, that he has explored different tilts of the head and we can also see that the figure on the right is a late addition. In his studio he worked on numerous canvases simultaneously, which he tacked onto the walls of his small studio. In this way he could switch between works, dream a little more, and more freely determine the final form of a painting.
3. **Marthe de Méligny.** The woman on the left is his wife Marthe ('Mart') de Méligny who he met when he was 26 and she was 16. At least she told him she was 16. It was not until they married over 30 years later that he found out that when they first met she had been 24. She was a compulsive washer and didn't like to go out or have company at home. She took an umbrella when they went out to hide her face from other people. Nevertheless, she did not object to being painted nude and she inspired his life and his work and was one of his main subjects for many decades. Bonnard was a quiet, idiosyncratic painter who worked quietly in his studio at home for sixty years.

## Notes on Pierre Bonnard, *Coffee*, 1915 (Room 2)

- Pierre Bonnard (3 October 1867 — 23 January 1947) was born in Northern France and his father was an important official in the Ministry of War. He studied law and briefly became a barrister but he studied art on the side and decided to become an artist. In 1891, aged 24, he met Toulouse-Lautrec and began showing his work at the annual exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants.
- He was a French painter and printmaker who, in the 1890s, was a founding member, with Maurice Denis and Édouard Vuillard, of the Post-Impressionist group of avant-garde painters Les Nabis (pronounced nah-BEE). Most of them studied at the Académie Julian in Paris.
- Bonnard preferred to work from memory, using drawings as a reference, and his paintings are often characterized by a dreamlike quality. The intimate domestic scenes, for which he is perhaps best known, often include his wife Marthe de Méligny (1869-1942, pronounced 'Mart de Melinee'), who he met in Paris in 1893 crossing a boulevard. He was a quiet man and his life never suffered from disasters and reversals in circumstances. Marthe's real name was Maria Boursin but she broke off contact with her family before moving to Paris. She came from a lower class family which is why Bonnard did not tell his family and did not marry for 30 years. Marthe died in January 1942 after fifty years of poor health.
- Bonnard wrote to a friend in 1930, 'For quite some time now I have been living a very secluded life as Marthe has become completely anti-social and I am obliged to avoid all contact with other people.'
- There are three preparatory sketches on display.



- Bonnard's record sale price at Christies in 2011 was £7 million.



## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bonnard-coffee-n05414>
- [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bonn/hd\\_bonn.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bonn/hd_bonn.htm)
- <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/arts-the-quiet-soul-1142324.html>

Gwen John 1876-1939, *Chloë Boughton-Leigh*, 1904-8 (Room 2)



1. The solitary figure, her downward gaze and the open book in her hand produce a sense of calmness and intensity that was typical of her work. Gwen John's quiet art with its subtle colour relationships, stands in contrast to her brother, Augustus John's, far more assertive work. She was once overshadowed by his work and his enormous reputation at the time but critical opinion now tends to view her as the more talented. Augustus predicted this reversal, saying **'In 50 years' time I will be known as the brother of Gwen John.'** And in 1952 she was described as 'one of the finest painters of our time and country' [John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters*].
2. Gwen John's work never exhibits any flashiness or contrived effects; it is always simple, plain yet deeply moving. This portrait was described by one critic [T. Martin Wood in *Studio*] as **'one of the greatest achievements in this exhibition because of its sincerity'** and in 1926 she was described as **'a sort of modern Vermeer'**. One reviewer [Nigel Gosling, 1968, *Observer Review*] **'The force of this almost obsessive reticence is astonishing ... the extreme subtlety and reticence of the exquisite tonal arrangements ... is a chief source of delight ... Its power within awesomely restricted means is reminiscent of Morandi's.'**
3. Ellen Theodosia Boughton-Leigh was known by her family as Chloë and met John through her sister Maude who studied at the Slade with John. Gwen John had to work as a model to survive in Paris and she posed nude for Auguste Rodin and became his lover. Rodin was much older and was the most famous artist of his time. John became fiercely attached to him and when the affair ended she became a Catholic and spent the rest of her life alone in a Paris suburb working as what she called **'God's little artist'**.
4. John added a strip of wood at the bottom of the picture to enable her to paint the whole of the hands.

## Notes on Gwen John 1876-1939, *Chloë Boughton-Leigh*, 1904-8

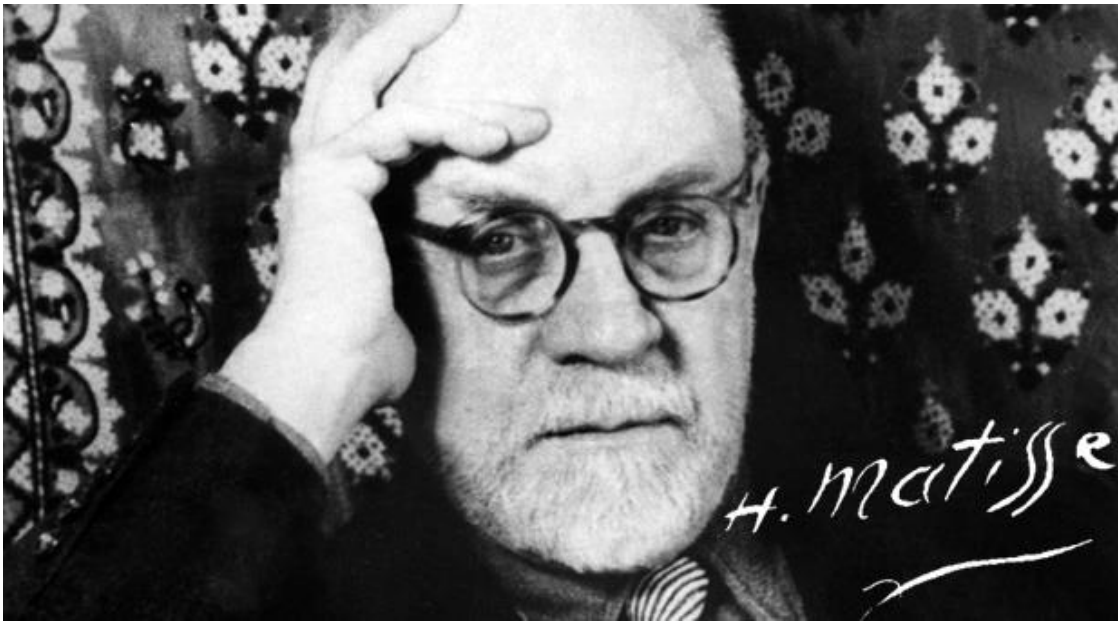
- The portrait shown here is of a Paris friend, Chloë Boughton-Leigh. The subdued colouring, short foreground and self-absorption of the sitter create a deeply intense atmosphere. John showed it in London, at the New English Art Club. Ellen Theodosia Boughton-Leigh (1868–1947), known by her family as Chloë, was, like Gwen John, a Catholic convert and latterly she and her sister Maude (q.v.) lived on Canvey Island. Maude was Gwen John's friend; both had studied at the Slade and probably met in Paris.
- Gwen John (1876-1939) was a Welsh artist who worked in France most of her life. She trained at the Slade School of Art where her younger brother, Augustus John, had already begun his studies. They lived together on fruit and nuts and even as students her brother's personal glamour made him a celebrity. Gwen was quieter and her reputation has steadily grown since her death. She neglected her health throughout her life and in 1900-01 she lived as a squatter in a derelict building.
- She and was taught in the traditional manner, which involved copying Old Master paintings. This training shows in the naturalism and carefully controlled colour range of this picture. As a woman in a career still largely dominated by men, including her successful brother Augustus, Gwen had to struggle for recognition. The self-scrutinizing intensity of this image, and the isolation of the figure, registers some sense of this struggle.
- She settled in Paris in 1904, working as a model, becoming Auguste Rodin's (1840-1917) mistress and immersing herself in the artistic world of the metropolis. She lived in France for the rest of her life, exhibiting on both sides of the Channel. From 1910 to 1924 nearly all her work was purchased by her patron John Quinn an American art collector and this freed her from having to work as a model, mostly for women artists. The majority of her work is portraits, mainly of female sitters and her oeuvre is small, consisting of only 158 oil paintings.
- She drew thousands of drawings and thought a painting should be finished in one or two sittings and **'For that one must paint a lot of canvases probably and waste them'**. Her meticulous preparation shows the influence of James McNeill Whistler who she trained under in Paris at the Académie Carmen.
- Like many women artists she tried drawing her own body in the mirror but she complained in a letter to her brother about how difficult it was. Even the Slade imposed restrictions of women drawing from female models and so friends would draw each other but kept silent about the practice as 'the respectability of these middle-class women students would have been jeopardized if they had acknowledged at the time that they had worked from studies of their own bodies rather than those of anonymous working-class models'.
- When she lived in Paris she had to work as a model to survive. She posed nude for Auguste Rodin and for other artists, mostly women. In her dairies she wrote of many occasions when, working as a model, she felt harassed or abused by both men and women artists. For example, one of her clients, a woman artist, was kissing a man all afternoon and then told her not to tell anyone if she wanted to keep her job as a model, treating her as a child and discussing her as if she was not there. As a model she would be kept waiting for hours, shouted at, ignored, given no breaks, and propositioned by male artists. She developed fierce attachments to both men and women that worried some people and she later became Rodin's lover.
- She added a strip of wood at the bottom of the picture to enable her to paint the whole of the hands.

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/john-chloe-boughton-leigh-n04088>



Henri Matisse 1869-1954, *Studio Interior*, c. 1903-4 (Room 2)



Henri Matisse (1869-1954), *Studio Interior*, c. 1903-4 (Room 2)

1. This room is called 'In the Studio' and this work shows a corner of Henri Matisse's studio in Paris. On the small stand we can see a carefully arranged still life of a vase of flowers, jugs, a glass containing a long spoon and a lemon. It was painted in 1903-4 and around this time he was attending life drawing and sculpture classes and a lot of his work revolved around his classes. A photograph taken of his studio in 1904 shows many of the items recorded in this painting including the large canvas on the right. Even the casts on the cupboard have been identified. The cast which can be identified with the most certainty is the second on the left, which appears to be that for *Bust of a Woman* which he cast in bronze in 1900.
2. Matisse came late to art. He originally trained as a lawyer and it was only when he was 20 and was convalescing from an appendicitis operation that started to draw and paint and, in his words, discovered '**a kind of paradise**'. This painting was produced when he was about 35 and by that time he was a proficient and well-known artist but he was not yet commercially successful. This was produced at a financial low-point in his life. He got into debt because he bought the works of all the artists he most admired such as Rodin, Gauguin, van Gogh and Cézanne, and he had a wife and two young children to support. The paintings he produced at this period were comparatively sombre and reveal a preoccupation with form.
3. He had just met André Derain and the two of them founded what the critics called Fauvism or 'wild beasts'. His first exhibition of Fauvist work was in the summer of 1904 and his palette changed to the bright and expressive use of colour.



## Notes on Henri Matisse 1869-1954, *Studio Interior*, c. 1903-4 (Room 2)

- Henri-Émile-Benoît Matisse (31 December 1869 – 3 November 1954) was a French artist, known for both his use of colour and his fluid and original draughtsmanship. Matisse, Picasso and Marcel Duchamp are generally regarded as the three who helped define the revolutionary changes in the plastic arts throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century. Although he was initially labelled a Fauve (wild beast), by the 1920s he was increasingly hailed as an upholder of the classical tradition in French painting.
- He was born in Northern France, the oldest son of a wealthy grain merchant and went to Paris to study law. He started to paint when he was 20 following an operation for appendicitis and he discovered 'a kind of paradise'. In 1891 he returned to Paris to study art at the Académie Julian and became a student of William-Adolphe Bouguereau and Gustave Moreau, an artist who was a major influence on his work. Initially Matisse painted still lifes and landscapes in a traditional style, at which he achieved reasonable proficiency. Matisse was influenced by the works of earlier masters such as Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, Nicolas Poussin, and Antoine Watteau, as well as by modern artists, such as Édouard Manet, and by Japanese art. Chardin was one of the painters Matisse most admired; as an art student he made copies of four of Chardin's paintings in the Louvre.
- In 1896-7 he was introduced to the Impressionists and the work of van Gogh and his style changed dramatically. With the model Caroline Joblau, he had a daughter, Marguerite, born in 1894. In 1898 he married Amélie Noellie Parayre; the two raised Marguerite together and had two sons, Jean (born 1899) and Pierre (born 1900). Marguerite and Amélie often served as models for Matisse. In 1898, on the advice of Camille Pissarro, he went to London to study the paintings of J. M. W. Turner. Upon his return to Paris he met André Derain. Matisse went into debt buying work from artists he admired such as a plaster bust by Rodin, a painting by Gauguin, a drawing by van Gogh, and Cézanne's *Three Bathers*. In Cézanne's sense of pictorial structure and colour, Matisse found his main inspiration. Many of Matisse's paintings from 1898 to 1901 make use of a Divisionist technique he adopted after reading Paul Signac's essay, 'Eugène Delacroix a Neo-Impressionist'. Divisionism is the separation of colours into dots or patches that interact optically in the eye. In 1905, he held the first official exhibition of Vincent van Gogh's work, an artist who, with Gauguin, enabled him to break free from the restrictions of Divisionism. Matisse was 35 and his work was becoming more respected. At the Salon d'Automne in 1905 the public were still responding with laughter and sarcasm as if it were a freak show and Matisse's *Luxe, calme et volupté* caused a considerable stir. The critic Louis Vauxcelles disparaged Matisse, André Derain and others as 'fauves' (wild beasts).
- 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. Fauvism's contribution was to separate the descriptive use of colour from its use to convey feeling and emotional. The Fauves also simplified forms and their saturated colours drew attention to the materiality of the medium and the flatness of the canvas. Matisse's first solo exhibition was at Ambroise Vollard's gallery in 1904, without much success. His fondness for bright and expressive colour became more pronounced after he spent the summer of 1904 painting in St. Tropez with the neo-Impressionists Paul Signac. In 1906 he was introduced to his lifelong friend and rival Pablo Picasso by the collector Gertrude Stein. In 1917 he relocated to the French Riviera and his style softened in line with the 'return to order' that was characteristic of much post WWI art. After 1930 a new vigour and bolder simplification appeared in his work. His wife left him in 1939 and he spent the war in the south of France. In 1941 he was diagnosed with cancer and following the operation he was bedridden and developed a new form of art using paper and scissors.

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\*Edgar Degas 1834-1917, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1880 (Room 2)



Edgar Degas (1834-1917), *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1880

This is *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* by Edgar Degas and it is the only piece of sculpture he exhibited in his lifetime. Degas used reddish-brown wax made from a mixture of clay and oil, a bit like Plasticine™. This bronze version was cast after his death [in c. 1922]. Originally, he started by making drawings of the young ballerina and then made a nude model in wax which he clothed in muslin and silk and gave a horsehair wig. He coloured the exposed flesh to make it more realistic and added real ballet shoes and a ribbon in its hair. He then smeared the bodice and shoes with wax to blend them into the body.

When it was first exhibited the unprecedented realism shocked the critics although many critics appreciated his representation of the pain and stress of ballet training. Some critics compared the dancer to a monkey and referred to her as a **‘flower of precocious depravity’**, with a face **‘marked by the hateful promise of every vice’** and **‘bearing the signs of a profoundly heinous character.’**

After Degas’s death his heirs decided to cast nearly 30 bronze copies of the original and in these copies everything is bronze except for the tutu and the silk ribbon. The foundry also attempted to copy the tones of the 40-year old sculpture by rubbing wax on the bronze and applying pigment and animal glue to the tutu. The end result we see here is close to the wax original, now in America [in the National Gallery of Art, Washington].

The dancer was Marie van Goethem and she was admitted to the Paris Opera Ballet the year this was made. She came from a very poor family and her father had died sometime in the previous ten years. The family lived a few streets from Degas and he had started to paint, draw and sculpt her two years previously. She was dismissed from the ballet school the following year for failing to attend classes and for visiting a local tavern. No further trace of her life is known but her younger sister [Charlotte] became a dancer of distinction and later taught at the dance school during her 53-year career.

This is one of the most brilliant examples of what is called ‘Realism’, the accurate and honest depiction of modern life with all of its ugliness and beauty. Critics commented on the pale, sickly face contorted with the suffering necessary to become a ballet dancer. The combination of beauty and suffering caused one critic to write, **‘I experienced in front of this statuette one of the most violent artistic impressions of my life’**. Another critic described it as **‘the only truly modern effort in sculpture that I know of.’**

Let us move on to another work that introduces one of the key art movements of the twentieth century.

## Notes on Edgar Degas 1834-1917, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1880

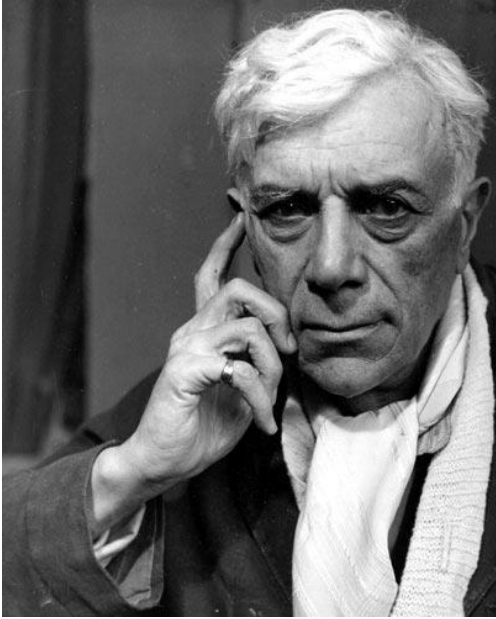
- Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings. More than half of his work depicts dancers. He is regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism although he rejected the term and called himself a realist. He was a superb draftsman who could depict psychological complexity and human isolation. He trained in the classical academic tradition but became an academic painter of modern life.
- He was born in Paris to a moderately wealthy family and enrolled at the Faculty of Law in Paris but did not apply himself. Two years later he was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts and the following year travelled to Italy for three years. He enlisted with the army in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 but it was found his eyesight was defective and his eyes caused him problems for the rest of his life. His father died in 1873 and he discovered his brother had huge debts so he sold his home and his belongings to pay off the debt and from then on had to sell paintings to survive. As his financial situation improved he began to collect Old Masters such as El Greco and modern artists such as Ingres, Delacroix and Daumier. In the late 1880s he developed a passion for photography and photographed many of his friends and often painted from photographs. As the years passed he became isolated and he never married and believed an artist could have no personal life. He was famous for his hatred of dogs and they had to be locked away before he arrived. The Dreyfus Affair brought his anti-Semitism to the fore and he broke with his Jewish friends. He was so argumentative that all his other friends slowly left him and one of the last to leave was Renoir. He never married and spent the last years of his life, nearly blind, restlessly wandering the streets of Paris before dying in September 1917. As his vision failed his fame grew but this gave him little comfort.
- Marie van Goethem (1865 – ?) mother was a laundress and her father a tailor who died when she was young. Her elder sister Antoinette was an extra at the ballet and a prostitute and her younger sister Charlotte became a successful dancer and went on to become a teacher. Marie was fired by the ballet in 1882 for poor attendance and all trace of her after that has disappeared.
- The figure was found ‘peculiarly disturbing’. One wrote, **‘The lecherous little snout on this barely pubescent young girl, this little flower of the gutter, is unforgettable.’** Another wrote, **‘With bestial effrontery she moves her face forward, or rather her little muzzle - and this word is completely correct because the little girl is the beginning of a rat.’** (the adolescent corps de ballet was known as *petits rats*). He continued, **‘Why is she so ugly? Why is her forehead, half covered by her hair, marked already, like her lips, with a profoundly vicious character?’**
- As Germaine Greer has written, **‘today’s public is not likely to make a lecherous interest in the body of a child the fault of the child herself’** and, Greer adds, she is **‘an undernourished child for whom dancing was a one-way ticket to prostitution’**.
- The original wax version is in the Paul Mellon collection and 23 bronze versions were cast.

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- <http://artdaily.com/news/95797/Stair-Sainty-exhibits-Edgar-Degas-s--Little-Dancer-Aged-Fourteen-#.WRFtevnymE> Dr Gregory Hedberg argues in his book *Degas's Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen: The Earlier Version That Helped Spark the Birth of Modern Art*, that he found a plaster cast of the original wax model as it was exhibited and before it was changed by Degas.



\*Georges Braque, *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece*, 1911  
(Room 2)





1. **Cubism.** We can now turn to one of the most important art movements of the twentieth century—Cubism. This is *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece* by Georges Braque and it was painted in 1911.
2. **Description.** 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.
3. **Why 'shattered'.** 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**'.
4. 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'.
5. 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.

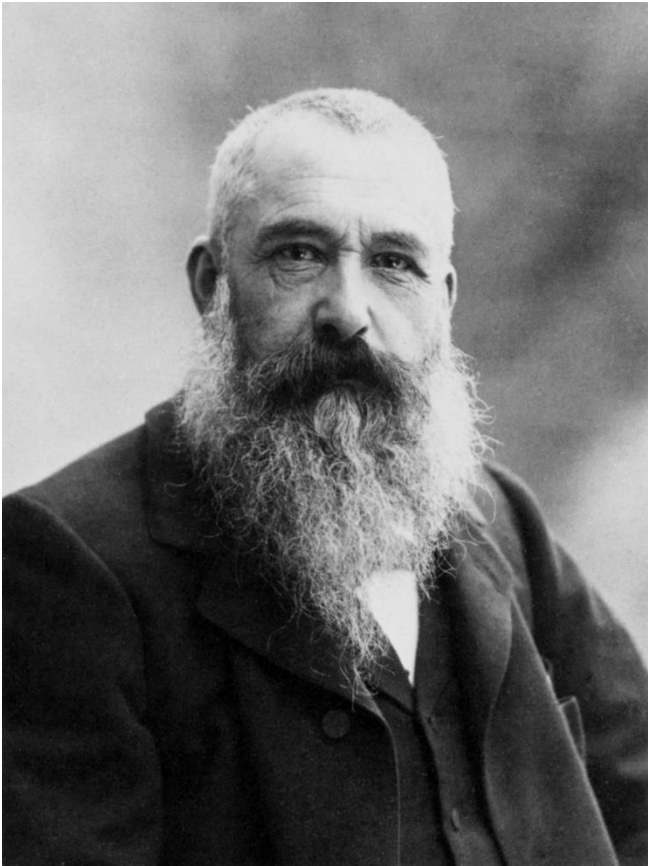
## Notes on Georges Braque 1882-1963, *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece*, 1911

- Georges Braque (13 May 1882 – 31 August 1963, pronounced 'brack') was a major 20th-century French painter, collagist, draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor. His most important contributions to the history of art were in his alliance with Fauvism from 1906, and the role he played in the development of Cubism. Braque's work between 1908 and 1912 is closely associated with that of his colleague Pablo Picasso.
- Braque started life as a house painter but moved to Paris and studied there. He met other artists and in 1905 was influenced by the 'Fauvres' ('Beasts') and adopted their style. In 1907 he saw the Cézanne retrospective in Paris (Cézanne died in 1906) and was influenced by his work. Between 1908 and 1913 he studied the effect of light, colour and the use of perspective as we see in his *Houses at l'Estaque* of 1908.
- In 1909, he began to work closely with Picasso who had been developing a similar proto-Cubist style. The two artists working together produced works in monochromatic colour with complex patterns of faceted form, a style that is now called Analytic Cubism. While their paintings shared many similarities in palette, style and subject matter, Braque stated that unlike Picasso, his work was 'devoid of iconological commentary,' and was concerned purely with pictorial space and composition. Picasso had been influenced by Gauguin, Cézanne and African masks. Braque sought balance and harmony in his compositions, especially through papier collés, a pasted paper collage technique that Picasso and Braque invented in 1912. Braque, however, took collage one-step further by gluing cut-up advertisements into his canvases. These foreshadowed modern art movements concerned with critiquing media, such as Pop art. Braque stencilled letters onto paintings, blended pigments with sand, and copied wood grain and marble to achieve great levels of dimension in his paintings. His depictions of still lifes are so abstract that they border on becoming patterns that express an essence of the objects viewed rather than direct representations.
- They worked together until Braque enlisted in 1914. He received a head injury resulting in temporary blindness. Braque resumed painting in late 1916 and continued in the Cubist style, producing luminous, other-worldly still life and figure compositions until his death in 1963, aged 81. Braque's quiet nature was partially eclipsed by the fame and notoriety of Picasso.

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\*Claude Monet 1840-1926, *Water-Lilies*, after 1916 (Room 3)



Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Water-Lilies, Sea-Roses (Yellow Nirwana)*, after 1916 (Room 3)

1. **Description.** Before entering the Rothko room let us remind ourselves of a much earlier work that verges on the abstract. This is *Water-Lilies* by Claude Monet which he painted sometime after 1916 in his garden at Giverny.
2. **250 paintings.** In the last 30 years of his life he produced over 250 paintings of his garden. He spent all his time planting, remodelling the landscape and painting or, as he put it, '**I'm good for nothing except painting and gardening.**' He imported water lilies from as far away as South America and Egypt and had to fight the local authorities who wanted the foreign plants destroyed. His neighbour also complained about the footbridge he built which he painted 17 times.
3. **Closer and closer.** Over the years Monet moved his viewpoint closer and closer to the water until the shoreline disappeared and his paintings became a studies of reflections and water. Early Impressionist paintings presented a view of nature that the viewer was outside looking in but Monet's late water lily paintings envelope the viewer who becomes immersed and lost inside the painting.
4. **Eyesight.** Many critics complained that the water lily paintings were messy and blurred and suffered from his failing eyesight. For 20 years after his death the water lily paintings were largely ignored until Abstract Expressionism renewed critics interest. Earlier Impressionist paintings were scenes that the viewer could encompass and control but the water lily series are larger than life and encircle the viewer. This immersion inside the work gives rise to new feelings about our place in nature and the joy of the natural world. Let us now go into the next room to see a painter that conveys pure feeling. The room is intentionally darkened and quiet and so when we arrive could you get closer as I shall be speaking more quietly.

## Notes on Claude Monet 1840-1926, *Water-Lilies*, after 1916

- Claude Monet (1840-1926) was born in Paris but moved to Le Havre when he was 5. His mother wanted him to become a painter but his father wanted him to join the family grocery business. He went to a local art school and met Eugène Boudin on the beaches of Normandy when he was 16. His mother died and he travelled to Paris and met other artists including Édouard Manet. After a period in the army he returned to Paris and met Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Frédéric Bazille and Alfred Sisley. Together they shared new approaches to art, painting the effects of light *en plein air* with broken colour and rapid brushstrokes. He married in 1870 just before the Franco-Prussian war and moved to London then Argenteuil. In London he was inspired by the works of John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner.
- At this time, he was very poor. The first Impressionist exhibition was in 1874 and Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* gave rise to the name of the style. His wife died in 1879 aged 32. In 1883 he was struck by the beauty of Giverny when he passed through on the train and rented a house there in 1883 which he bought in 1890. Giverny is in Upper Normandy about 50 miles from Paris on the right-bank of the Seine. He lived with Alice Hoschedé, her six children and his two sons from 1879 and he married her in 1892 after the death of her estranged husband. In the late 1880s Monet's fortunes began to change for the better as his dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, had increasing success in selling his paintings. By November 1890, Monet was prosperous enough to buy the house at Giverny where he remained for the rest of his life. His wife died in 1911 after which her daughter Blanche, by then his widowed daughter-in-law cared for him.
- During the last 30 years of his life he produced about 250 paintings of water lilies. The water lilies are from his garden at Giverny and many were painted after he started suffering from cataracts in 1912. The paintings are now scattered around the world although a few are sometimes united at exhibitions. At the recent 'Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse' at the Royal Academy three water lily paintings from Cleveland Museum of Art, the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri were united and displayed as a triptych.
- During the 1920s, the state of France built a pair of oval rooms at the Musée de l'Orangerie as a permanent home for eight water lily murals by Monet. The exhibit opened to the public on 16 May 1927, a few months after Monet's death and display the paintings as Monet intended by completely encircling the viewer.
- This painting, *Sea-Roses (Yellow Nirwana)*, is on long-term loan from the National Gallery.
- On 24 June 2008 another of Monet's water lily paintings, *Le bassin aux nymphéas*, sold for almost £41 million at Christie's in London although later sales failed to achieve a similar figure.

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\*Mark Rothko, *Seagram Murals*, 1958 (Room 4)



*Black on Maroon*, 1958 (vandalised in 2012)

1. **Four Seasons.** These nine paintings are by Mark Rothko and are known as the *Seagram Murals*. They were originally painted for the Four Seasons restaurant in New York in 1958 but after spending eight months producing them Rothko decided he would not supply them to the restaurant and returned the money he had been advanced. There is disagreement about the reason for this. Rothko's wife said he never knew it would become a restaurant but Philip Johnson, the building's internal designer said he always knew.
2. **Why did he stop?** By chance Rothko discussed the commission with a passenger on a transatlantic journey to Europe and the passenger wrote notes of the chat which he later published. Rothko told him he was painting large canvases for an expensive restaurant in the Seagram building, '**a place where the richest bastards in New York will come to feed and show off**'. He went on to say, '**I accepted this assignment as a challenge, with strictly malicious intentions. I hope to paint something that will ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch who ever eats in that room.**' He cancelled the contract on his return from Europe and after he had seen the near-completed restaurant for the first time. It is possible he realised his plan to ruin the appetite of the customers would not work with the layout and scale of the restaurant.
3. **Creates a mood.** Rothko painted the panels three times before he was happy with the result. He wanted an oppressive effect, darker and more sombre than anything he had tried before. He was always interested in his paintings creating a certain contemplative mood in the viewer and he might have felt this would never happen in the chatter and bustle of the restaurant and so refused to supply the paintings.
4. **Medici Library.** In Europe, Rothko was influenced by Michelangelo's staircase walls leading to the Medici Library in Florence, as they make the viewer feel they are trapped in a room where all the windows and doors have been bricked up. To create this feeling Rothko never wanted his pictures to be brightly lighted. In addition, he never wanted them to be shown with other pictures.
5. **Tate bequest.** Rothko first mentioned the possibility of making a gift to the Tate in 1965 and discussed it with the Director Norman Reid many times in the course of the next four years before making up his mind. He had a deep affection for England but was concerned his work would not be appreciated. The decisive factor was the thought that the pictures would be in the same building as Turner. His intention was that the works should form a homogeneous group and be seen alone in a space of their own. The final selection was made towards the end of 1969 when he chose eight paintings to accompany the one he had presented in 1968. He planned the arrangement himself with the aid of a mock-up of the space they were to occupy and even cut a sample of the wall colour from the studio. However, by a sad irony the pictures arrived in London on the very day of his death, and he was never able to see them in position. In 2012, *Black on Maroon* was vandalised with a black marker pen and it took eighteen months and £200,000 to repair.

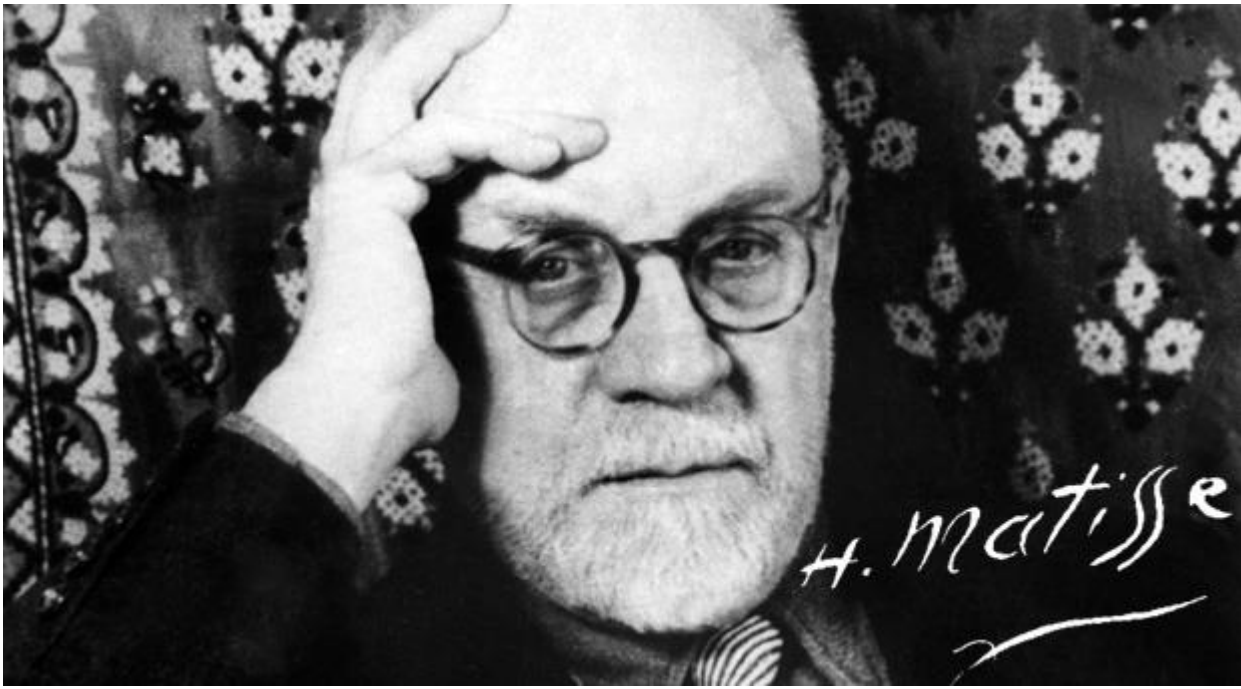
## Background Notes, Mark Rothko, *Seagram Murals*, 1958-59

- Mark Rothko (1903-1970) painted the nine paintings for the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building on Park Lane, designed by Mies Van der Rohe and Philip Johnson. However, The Four Seasons only had space for seven murals and Rothko painted 30 and it is not clear which ones were intended for the final selection. For his retrospective in New York in 1961 he identified five paintings *Mural Sections* 2-5 and 7. In 1969 Rothko bequeathed nine murals to the Tate which have been displayed almost continuously, in different arrangements, in the 'Rothko Room'. Five are titled *Black on Maroon* and four *Red on Maroon*. Three of the *Black on Maroon* are dated 1958 and the remainder 1959.
- Rothko was a Russian Jew whose parents were middle-class intellectuals. Because of the anti-Jewish feeling in Russia and the fear that his sons were about to be conscripted into the army his father (named Rothkowitz) fled to America. Rothko was very bright but a manic depressive. He got a place at Yale, married, divorced and married again, separated in 1969. He returned to Europe where he saw Michelangelo's Laurentian Library and was moved by the feeling of enclosure which he said influenced the *Seagram Murals*. He committed suicide when he was 66 by using a razor to cut open the veins in his wrist and elbow and by taking anti-depressants.
- Rothko hated people saying his paintings are beautiful as he wanted something more than that. They are intended to express deep emotions and provide a windows into a spiritual world. By the time of his death his work had become massively successful and sold for very high prices which he didn't like.
- The *Seagram Murals* were painted in the decade after the Second World War. They consist of 12 layers of paint built up on bare canvas and painted very slowly with the help of two studio assistants. The technique enables the viewer to see faint under layers and shapes. They were created as a space, an environment, a place of contemplation. The colours Rothko uses are darker than those he has used previously ... blacks, maroons, dark reds. He said that he feared the day 'the black swallows the red.' The murals are Rothko's first series. For a series to be a series there needs to be a common theme to unite them and here it is the floating frame. The edges are soft and blurred and this fraying and feathering gives a feeling of the frames expanding and contracting, gently and breathing. For Rothko they weren't about the colours or technique but about feelings, such as tragedy, doom and ecstasy.
- One critic has seen letters of the Hebrew alphabet in the paintings. Rothko was Jewish, born in Dvinsk, Russia, (now Latvia), spoke Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and English. He could be difficult but had a good deal of integrity. In New York in 1958 Rothko won a major commission to provide murals for the luxury Four Seasons Restaurant in the iconic Seagram Building. He was given a \$7,000 advance and produced some 30 works. He was delighted and set to work with real enthusiasm. Then he and his wife Mell dined in the restaurant and he withdrew the paintings and returned the advance. He said, 'no one who eats that kind of food for those kind of prices will ever see a painting of mine.' There are several stories but basically it seems it was a question of artistic integrity. The Four Seasons was not the right home for his paintings.
- What then was the right home? Rothko had a deep affection for Turner and so he donated them to the Tate with certain specific conditions, such as the low light, the specific wall colour and located in a separate room next to the Turners. On the day in February 1970 that the paintings were being unpacked at Tate came the news that Mark Rothko had committed suicide in New York.

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Henri Matisse, Back I-IV (Room 2)





1. **Four versions.** Henri Matisse's series of sculptures of the back is one of the great sculptures of the twentieth century. There are four versions Back I produced in c. 1909-10, Back II produced in c. 1913-14, Back III produced in c. 1916-17 and Back IV in 1930. Matisse did not conceive of the backs as a series but simply returned to the same theme over the years. One can see how he made a transition from relatively detailed naturalism to the near abstract forms of Back IV.
2. **Cezanne.** Matisse bought Cezanne's *Three Bathers* (see Visual Aids) and he used it as a starting point for a series of sculptures and drawings of monumental nudes seen from the back. The first work has a dynamic tension, and intertwined flowing lines; in the second the body is more erect and less fluid. Notice that the left leg has become a thick pillar; making the figure more solid. The third work leads to the fourth where Matisse suppresses physical detail, making the contours more fluid, the surface more homogeneous. The loss of expressiveness in the figure's features is made up for by the symmetrical harmony of the work as a whole.
3. **Concealed face.** Matisse's decision to show the back view of a woman on such a monumental scale was unorthodox. By concealing her face, he avoided the complexities of visual engagement between artist and model. This helped him to consider the nude as an arrangement of forms that he could simplify and stylize. In the final sculpture, the modelling of flesh has given way to the massing of androgynous bulk and the gently curved spine has been replaced by an abstracted plait.
4. Let us turn now to one of the most famous works in the Tate, follow me through the next room to the far wall.

## Notes on Henri Matisse, *Back I-IV*, 1909-1930

- Henri-Émile-Benoît Matisse (1869 –1954) was a French artist, known for both his use of colour and his fluid and original draughtsmanship.
- The Backs were Matisse's largest sculptures. Over twenty years, from 1909 to 1930, he progressively refined the original pose, based on a woman leaning on a fence, until he achieved a massive simplicity.
- Although Back I had been exhibited in 1913, the series remained almost unknown until 1949–50 when the plaster Backs I, III and IV appeared in exhibitions in Paris and Lausanne. Back II was only rediscovered after Matisse's death, while an even more naturalistic first version is now only known from a photograph. All were cast posthumously in bronze. Back I, III and IV were first cast in bronze in 1955-56 and Back II was discovered in 1955 and then cast in bronze. 12 copies were cast and nine are in nine major museums around the world.
- Matisse showed Back I at the two notorious exhibitions that first made modern art a sensation before the first world war: the second Postimpressionist show in London, and the Armory show in New York. Otherwise, none of the Backs was seen again in public until after the second world war.
- 'Cézanne was right and so am I' Matisse bought Cézanne's *Three Bathers* for the sum of 1,300 francs from the art dealer Ambroise Vollard. He later donated the Cézanne to the City Museum of Paris in 1936.

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Pablo Picasso 1881-1973, *The Three Dancers*, 1925 (not on display)



Not on  
Display



1. **Description.** This is Pablo Picasso's *The Three Dancers*. The shadowy figure on the right whose profile is shown against the window is a man. The central figure that looks like a woman is probably a man for reasons I will explain and the figure on the left is a woman with two faces like a new Guinea mask.
2. **Pichot.** We know from X-ray analysis that the painting started out as three classical figures but the violent distortions signal a break with his classical period. Picasso told his dealer friend Roland Penrose, '**While I was painting this picture an old friend of mine, Ramón Pichot, died and I have always felt that it should be called "The Death of Pichot" rather than "The Three Dancers"**.' According to Picasso, the shadowy figure on the right behind the dancer is his friend Pichot. The figure on the left is female and has two faces based on a mask from New Guinea that Picasso owned. She is associated with a young model in Paris, called Germaine, who married Pichot. Although the central figure retains the female form of one of the original three classical female figures the pose and position suggest it represents Casagemas crucified between Germaine and Pichot. The cross on which he is crucified is indicated by the darker blue background behind the central figure and the closeness of the central railings which look like wood grain.
3. **Background.** In 1900, Picasso had gone with Pichot on his first long visit to Paris together with another young painter, Carlos Casagemas. In Paris, Casagemas fell in love with a young woman friend of Picasso named Germaine Gargallo. She rejected him and Casagemas committed suicide, after first taking a shot at Germaine, who soon after married Pichot. This drama greatly affected Picasso and *The Three Dancers* can be read as a reference to the affair. Pichot shot himself in front of his friends. Picasso wrote, '**My work is like a diary, to understand it you have to see how it mirrors my life.**' Picasso never forgot Germaine Pichot and four decades later he took his very young lover [Françoise Gilot] to see her. She later wrote that Picasso spoke with her and left her some money. After they left she asked him why he had taken her there and he said, '**I want you to learn about life**'. '**She's old and toothless and poor and unfortunate now but when she was young she was very pretty and she made a painter friend of mine suffer so much that he committed suicide ... She turned a lot of heads, now look at her**'.
4. **Guernica.** This therefore, is a work expressing his deep feelings about the death of his friend Casagemas. *The Three Dancers* is the first work he sold to a gallery. He kept it for 40 years and sold it to the Tate through his friend Roger Penrose [in 1964]. It was the first work of modern art to be purchased by the Tate. Picasso said that he had not sold the work before as it was important to him as it showed the first traces of his famous anti-war painting *Guernica*. If you visit the 'Artist and Society' gallery you will find Picasso's *Weeping Woman*, an equally emotional but much more planned and distilled work based on his reworking of the woman in *Guernica*.



## Notes on Pablo Picasso 1881-1973, *The Three Dancers*, 1925 (Room 6)

- Pablo Ruiz y Picasso (Málaga 25 Oct 1881-8 April 1973). Blue Period (1901–1904), Rose Period (1904–1906), African-influenced Period (1907–1909), Analytic Cubism (1909–1912), and Synthetic Cubism or Crystal Period (1912–1919). In 1899 he met his closest friend Carlos Casagemas (1881-1901) who shot himself in 1901 and this precipitated Picasso's Blue Period. In 1904, Picasso met Fernande Olivier, a bohemian artist who became his mistress. Picasso left Olivier for the frail and enigmatic Eva Gouel, who called herself Marcelle Humbert when she arrived in Paris, and he was devastated when she died of tuberculosis or cancer in 1915 aged 30. After the loss of Eva Gouel, Picasso had an affair with Gaby Depeyre (later Lespinasse) and, in 1918, he married the respectable and elitist Ukrainian ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova and they had a child Paulo. In 1927 Picasso met 17-year-old Marie-Thérèse Walter and began a long affair and fathered a daughter Maya. To avoid splitting his estate he never divorced and was married to Khokhlova until her death in 1955. In the 1930s and 40s the artist Dora Maar (born Theodora Marković) was a constant companion and lover and she documented *Guernica*. In 1944, aged 63, he began an affair with Françoise Gilot aged 23. Dora Maar famously said, '**After Picasso, only God**' and when he left her in 1946 she became a Roman Catholic. Their split was painful and Picasso found ways to inflict pain but she outlived Picasso and continued to paint into the 1990s and was still exhibiting two years before she died aged 89. When Picasso grew tired of Dora Maar he and Gilot began to live together. They had two children: Claude, born in 1947 and Paloma, born in 1949. She described his abusive treatment and many affairs including Geneviève Laporte. He met Jacqueline Roque in 1953 and she became his second wife in 1961 until his death in 1973. She shot herself in 1986 aged 59.
- The pattern on the wallpaper mirrors the stance of the dancers crossed by the bar of the balcony. The figures each have two faces. The one on the left has a tiny crescent-moon shaped face looking inwards and forming part of an aggressive mask-like face with sharp teeth. The vertical slit against blue could be part of the railings or a reference to female genitalia. The central figure can be read with the head upright or on its side. Read vertically the eye becomes a gaping, grinning mouth. The reading of the central figure as his friend Carlos Casagemas is contradicted by the female breasts but it has been suggested that this is a reference to Casagemas's impotence. The head on the right has a small, neat profile surrounded by a second darker more naturalistic silhouetted profile. The two faces could refer to the figures' social face or, in Jungian terms, their persona and their true nature.
- Picasso in here in the Surrealist room but he claimed he was not a Surrealist. The Surrealist though loved him. This is a key work which some describe it as the most important work in Britain.
- In 1925, Picasso was designing sets for Serge Diaghilev in Monte Carlo with his wife Olga Khokhlova. At first glance this painting might appear to be a celebration of the joy of dance. But it is associated with hate and violence. Picasso's old friend Ramon Pichot (pronounced 'Pee-cot', in French 'Pee-show') had just died, reviving memories of 25 years earlier when Picasso's friend Carlos Casagemas had had an affair with Germaine Gargallo (born Laure, pronounced 'law', Gargallo had, when she was very young, married a man named Florentin and changed her first name to Germaine). Germaine had an affair with Casagemas who fell deeply in love with her. Germaine slept around and Casagemas became impotent because of the drugs he'd been taking. As a result, he tried to shoot her when he arrived for a meal at a restaurant called *L'Hippodrome* with seven others present. He hit Germaine but did not kill her and then shot himself in the head and died later. Picasso had had an affair with her friend Louise Lenoir, known as Odette, and later he had an affair with Germaine before she married Ramon Pichot who was also a friend of Picasso.

- Other historians have equated the suppressed violence with the anger Picasso was feeling for his wife Olga Khokhlova. Olga was a dancer for Diaghilev's Ballet Russe.
- *The Three Dancers* was based on the classical composition of *The Three Graces*.

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\*Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937 (Room 6)



Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937

- The painting is in four parts. In the distance on the right there is a figure on a pedestal on a chess board. This is Narcissus who is isolated as he is only in love with himself. To his left in the background is a group of eight naked figures Dalí called the 'Heterosexuals'. There are eight women he described as Hindu, Catalan, German, Russian, American, Swedish and English, who we assume are former lovers of Narcissus. In the foreground, we can see Narcissus on the left with his head in his hands in warm colours and on the right, there is a hand in cold colours holding an egg, the symbol of life. From the egg is sprouting a narcissus plant.
- The story of Narcissus is from ancient Greece. He was such a great beauty that all the women fell in love with him including the nymph Echo. He never returned their love as he was only in love with himself and Echo was so distressed she retreated to a secret place and all that could be heard was the echo of her voice. The Gods became annoyed at his behaviour and decided to punish him by allowing him to see his reflection. This was the first time he had seen himself and he immediately fell in love with his own image. He could not embrace himself and died of frustration. The Gods then felt sorry for him and changed his body into a narcissus (daffodil) flower.
- So we can interpret the painting as representing Narcissus fixated by his reflection in the water with the fire of his passion shown behind him. The head resting on the knee becomes fossilized as a hand with an egg resting between a finger and thumb. Although some say it is Echo's fossilized hand holding the last remnant of Narcissus reborn as a flower. Dali wrote 'There remains of him only the hallucinatingly white oval of his head ... his head held up by the tips of the water's fingers ... When that head splits when that head splits when that head bursts, it will be the flower, the new narcissus'.
- Dali described his painting style as 'hand-painted colour photography' and it is photographic but not of any scene you have ever seen except in a dream or a nightmare. He called this ability to rationally paint his dreams his paranoiac critical method and this was the first painting where he used the approach to the full.
- The background is a cove in Cap de Creus [pronounced 'crayous'] in northern Catalonia which can only be reached by boat. There is a photograph taken by Gala of Dalí bending over a pool near Cap de Creus.
- Dalí wrote a book the same year whose title was the same as the painting. The book contains a poem that he intended the viewer should read while looking at the painting.
- His death is emphasized by the ants crawling up the thumb on the right. Ants symbolized death and destruction for Dali. He claimed that his was because when he was young he found an injured bat and looked after it. One morning when he went down to feed it was being eaten alive by ants.

## Notes on Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*

- Dalí had an elder brother who died a year before he was born and his parents believed Dalí was the reincarnation of the earlier boy. They gave him the same name, the same clothes and the same toys. As Dalí grew up he blamed his father for his dead brother's death and there were episodes of bed-wetting, convulsions, screaming, muteness and aggression towards other children. His first exhibition was when he was only 14. His mother died when he was 16 and his father married his aunt. Dalí went to the prestigious San Fernando Academy and spent the time arguing with his tutors. There he met Louis Buñuel and Federica Garcia Lorca (who fell in love with him). At 21 he had his first one-man exhibition and at 25 he met Gala, a Russian immigrant who was married to Paul Éluard. She divorced and married Dalí in 1934 the year he was expelled from the Surrealist movement because of his reactionary views during the Spanish Civil War. In 1937, he painted *Metamorphosis* on his return to Paris from the USA where he achieved great acclaim.
- Dalí showed the painting to Freud in 1938. He was impressed and it changed his view of the work of the Surrealists but he did not think it was relevant to his theory of dreams.
- Dalí described his 'paranoiac critical method' as a 'Spontaneous method of irrational knowledge, based on the critical-interpretative association of the phenomena of delirium' (*The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 1942). This painting meant a great deal to Dalí, as it was the first Surrealist work to offer a consistent interpretation of an irrational subject.
- The story of Narcissus is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 3, 339-494. A water nymph called Liriope had Narcissus by the river god Cephissus. Tiresias prophesized that 'if he shall himself not know.' 'Many a damsel sought to gain his love' but 'none gained his favour'. Echo who had already been cursed to repeat what others said fell in love with him one day. He rejected her and she retreated to a cave and pined away until all that remained was her bones and her voice. Narcissus stops for a drink and sees himself for the first time reflected in the pool. He is transfixed like a 'statue carved of Parian marble' and dies of love and frustration. Echo heard and echoed his final words and 'He laid his wearied head, and rested on the verdant grass'. His Naiad [a water nymph] sisters mourned and all the Dryads [a wood nymph] mourned and Echo made lament anew. They started to make his funeral pyre but in the place of his body 'a sweet flower grew, golden and white, the white around the gold.'
- In his book of the same name as the painting Dalí asks us to stare at the figure which he claims will disappear. He calls this 'distracted fixation'. He writes, **'The metamorphosis of the myth takes place at that precise moment, for the image of Narcissus is suddenly transformed into the image of a hand which rises out of his own reflection. At the tips of its fingers the hand is holding an egg, a seed, a bulb from which will be born the new narcissus - the flower. Beside it can be seen the limestone sculpture of the hand - the fossil hand of the water holding the blown flower.'**

## References


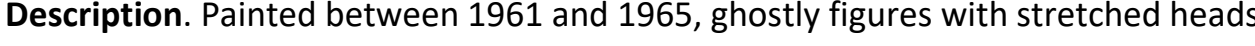
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Ibrahim El-Salahi born 1930, *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams I*, 1961-5 (Room 7)





1. **Masks.** This is Ibrahim El-Salahi's *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams I* and it was painted between 1961 and 1965. You can see what look like figures and what look like African masks although, according to the artist Ibrahim El-Salahi '**these elongated, black-eyed, glittering facial shapes might represent the veils our mothers and grandmothers used to wear in public, or the faces of the drummers and tambourine players I had seen circling wildly during funeral ceremonies and chants in praise of Allāh**'.  

2. **History.** He started working on this with a friend but because their collaboration was not working he cut the work and continued working on one piece in his home in Sudan. He then transferred it to New York where he continued working on it and shipped it back to Africa where it was stored for 35 years. During this time El-Salahi became Deputy Under Secretary of Culture in Sudan but was then accused of anti-government activities and imprisoned without trial. After prison he moved to Qatar and then Oxford and back in Sudan the work was rediscovered and put on display. His first exhibition for nearly 30 years in Sudan and had a great impact.
3. **Description.** Painted between 1961 and 1965, ghostly figures with stretched heads, long limbs and sunken eyes emerge from a pale yellow ground. The dark blue, black and grey bodies are made up of intertwining lines that converge in oil and enamel on damouriya, a narrow textile, hand-woven in Sudan. El-Salahi wrote, '**The colour which I work for some years, burnt sienna, ochre, yellow ochres, white and blacks – it's the colour of the earth in the Sudan, which I cared a great deal about.**'  

4. **Civil War.** After returning to Sudan when it was in the throes of the First Sudanese Civil War (1955–72), El-Salahi began to teach and his work went on to integrate traditional African, Arab and Islamic visual sources with European art movements. *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams 1* epitomizes this unique merging of cultures and traditions.
5. **Audience.** For El-Salahi there are three people the artist needs to address when making work: '**self, the ego...others, the people in your own culture... And the third person is all human beings, wherever it might be.**'

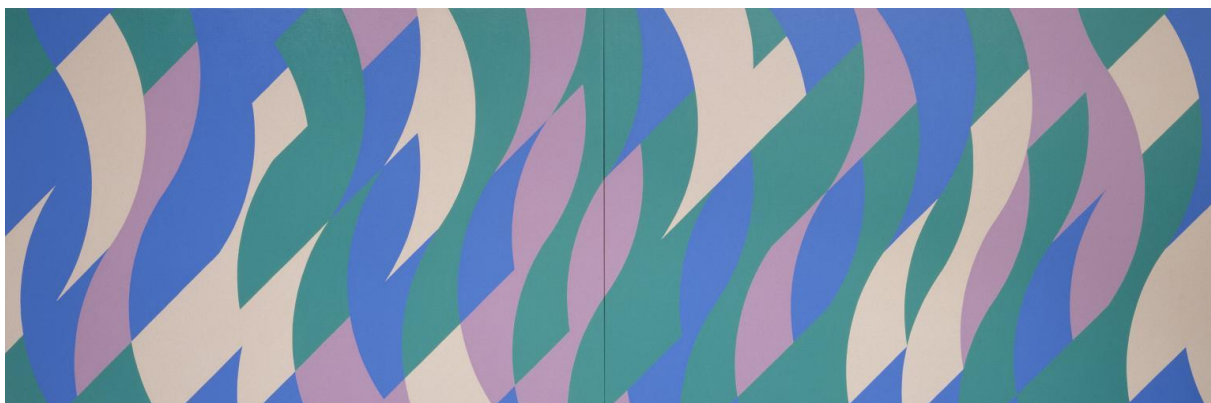
## Notes on Ibrahim El-Salahi (born 1930), *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams I*, 1961-5

- Ibrahim El-Salahi was born in the Sudan in 1930 and trained in Khartoum from 1949 to 1952. In 1952 he came to London to study at the Slade School of Fine Art and this cultural shock revolutionized his art and his life. He saw Western modern art for the first time and quickly jumped through a number of styles from Impressionism to Cubism. When he returned to Khartoum to teach he became a lead artist in what became known as the 'Khartoum School'. Sudan had just gained its freedom from British colonial rule and artists were looking for a new Sudanese voice. His London work was rejected by Sudanese critics and so he travelled the country seeking inspiration from Sudanese sources. 1958 to 1961 was a period of feverish activity as he searched for individual and cultural identity. Following this intense period, he painted *Reborn Sound of Childhood Dreams* (1961-5), which integrates the crescent, a motif of Islamic art, and this continues to recur frequently throughout his work.
- In the early 1970s, El-Salahi was made Deputy Under Secretary of Culture at the Ministry of Information in Sudan. At the time the country was under a military dictatorship and after a failed military coup he was arrested for anti-government activity and was imprisoned for six months. The harrowing prison conditions changed him personally and his work changed at this time. It changed again in the late 1980s when he started to incorporate futuristic figures, machine-like, solid and heavy. In 1998 he moved to Oxford and produced a series of landscape paintings utilizing vertical parallel lines invoking the form of trees. The paintings invoke ideas of Mondrian but none of El-Salahi's paintings are dependent on any Western artist or style.

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\*Bridget Riley born 1931, *Evoë 3*, 2003 (Room 9)



1. **Description.** The curved shapes recall the outline of leaves or petals, and the sense of movement conveyed in the painting suggests the cadences of ocean waves. Riley has spoken about her great love of nature and although the forms in *Evoë 3* are not directly representational, they suggest shapes and rhythms familiar from the natural world.
2. **Matisse.** In its clear, bright palette and sense of joyous movement, the painting evokes the work of Henri Matisse (1869-1954). The rich colours and sharply delineated forms in *Evoë 3* suggest the influence of Matisse's late cut-outs. The undulating rhythm of Riley's shapes also recalls images Matisse made throughout his life of dancing figures. She said, '**the only way anyone can enter my painting is by looking; there's no theory in them ... The very habit-ridden public, and I'm not blaming them, want something that looks like a painting.**'
3. **Figure painter.** As a student she was such a good figure painter that she won a place at Goldsmiths College but she rejected '**the direct depiction of people, which I had loved and enjoyed ... to find out about this new world**'.
4. **Works alone.** Bridget Riley's studio is on an upper floor of a west London terrace house where she lives and works. She gets out of bed and goes straight to the studio every day. Riley has lived alone for decades, never married, has no children. She works on her own but since the 1960s, assistants have painted Riley's works from her preparatory notes and studies.
5. **Revelry.** Riley always conceived of this painting as a festive revelry or bacchanalian cry. The title is a shout of joy at the festivals of Bacchus. She wrote that '**When I had finished *Evoë* and was thinking about its title I toyed with the idea of calling it "Bacchanal without Nymphs" ... But then I remembered, just in time, that I am after all supposed to be an abstract artist**'.
6. **Constrained but free.** Her range of work may be considered narrow but she quoted Stravinsky who said, '**The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit.**'

### Notes on Bridget Riley born 1931, *Evoë 3*, 2003 (Room 9)

- Bridget Louise Riley (born 24 April 1931 in Norwood, London) is an English painter who is one of the foremost exponents of Op art. She spent her early years in Cornwall, and studied in London at Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art. She first drew critical attention with the black-and-white paintings she made from 1961, and her international breakthrough came four years later in *The Responsive Eye* at MoMA, New York, which celebrated the Op art movement.
- In 1966 Riley began her explorations of colour and form through stripes or bands across the canvas, and more recently shorter units cut by vertical, diagonal or curved lines. Her reputation was further enhanced at the 1968 Venice Biennale when she became the first woman – and the first contemporary British painter – to win the International Prize for painting.
- Although Riley's work is consistently abstract, it is founded in natural experience. As she has written: **'The eye should feel caressed and soothed, experience frictions and ruptures, glide and drift.'**
- She currently lives and works in London, Cornwall and the Vaucluse in France.



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\*Gerhard Richter, *Cage (1)-(6)*, 2006 (Room 10)



1. **John Cage.** In this room there are six abstract paintings by the German artist Gerhard Richter. They are called Cage 1, to the right when facing the door inside the room, round the room clockwise to Cage 6. The name 'Cage' does not refer to a prison but to the American composer John Cage. Cage is best known for his work 4' 33" which consists of three movements during which the musician or musicians are instructed not to play their instruments. The piece makes us aware that silence is impossible to achieve and that we are always surrounded by the sounds of our environment. Although Richter never met Cage he was inspired by his ideas and created this work in response. He quoted Cage's statement '**I have nothing to say and I am saying it**'.
2. **Blurring.** Richter painted portraits and landscapes when he was younger but started 'blurring' his work by dragging his brush or using a squeegee. He wrote, '**I blur things to make everything equally important and equally unimportant. I blur things so that they do not look artistic or craftsmanlike but technological, smooth and perfect. I blur things to make all the parts a closer fit.**' If we look around these paintings, they start out entirely abstract and without forms or shapes. But images appear. It is as if there is an image there but it is hidden by a type of interference of the sort you get on television or if you are not wearing your glasses. We feel that if only we could put on the right glasses everything would come into focus and be clear.
3. **Images.** Many of the paintings look like landscapes, or city streets reflected in a wet road. Look at Cage 4, a child asked his parents if that was a reflection of a red London bus? The child's thought frees us to see whatever we wish in each painting. For me, Cage 1 is like a gently running river. Cage 2 is a grey, misty morning with buildings in the distance and the sun breaking through. Cage 3 is a concrete wall covered in graffiti that has been partly obliterated. Cage 4 is the London bus reflected in a wet road. Cage 5 is a grey river with the trees on the far bank reflected in its surface and Cage 6 returns again to the green river but with what for me are white and bright blue and yellow houses reflected in its surface. There is a type of progression in colour from the warm greens of Cage 1 through the cadmium yellow of Cage 2 veiled in grey like a thin mist to the steely grey of Cage 3 like a concrete wall which is then energized by the reds of Cage 4. In Cage 5 the reds retreat until in Cage 6 the greens return in combination with blues and yellows.
4. **On loan.** In 2015, one of Richter's abstract paintings sold for over £30 million so we are delighted to have these works here as they are on loan from a private collection. The Tate does not charge an entry fee so depends on donations. With 4.7 million visitors last year a few pounds from everyone makes an enormous difference and even buying lunch here or a cup of coffee helps.

## Notes on Gerhard Richter, *Cage (1)-(6)*, 2006

- Gerhard Richter (born 9 February 1932) is a German visual artist. Richter has produced abstract as well as photorealistic paintings, and also photographs and glass pieces. His art follows the examples of Picasso and Jean Arp in undermining the concept of the artist's obligation to maintain a single cohesive style. In February 2015, Sotheby's sold *Abstraktes Bild*, one of Richter's squeegee-style paintings, for £30.4 million making him the most valuable living artist in Europe.
- Richter was born in Dresden and escaped to West Germany two months before the Berlin Wall was built in 1961. In the early 1960s, Richter was exposed to both American and British Pop art, which was just becoming known in Europe, and to the Fluxus movement. Richter consistently regarded himself simply as a painter. He began to paint enlarged copies of black-and-white photographs using only a range of greys.
- *Cages* was inspired by the work of the composer John Cage (1912-1992) who wrote *4' 33"* (1952). *4' 33"* has three movements and was composed for any instrument or combination of instruments. Richter never met Cage but was influenced by his ideas. *4' 33"* was described by Cage as his most important work and he said it had been inspired by Zen Buddhism. Cage wrote, 'I have nothing to say/ and I am saying it.' (*Lecture on Nothing*, 1949). Richter interprets this as saying that none of us can know or say very much at all.
- Richter spend six months on these six paintings which were exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2007. He specified they be hung in bright light or daylight. He was born in 1932 in Dresden and is a prolific artist, now in his 80s. He did not escape to the West until the 1960s and so was unaware of Western art. He went to Dusseldorf and met Joseph Beuys but they did not get on as Beuys was outgoing and Richter reserved.
- He used a squeegee with a serrated edge and approaches art methodically. There are two types of artist, the messy, like Francis Bacon and the methodical whose studio is like an operating theatre. He painted with the canvas vertical and the red is increasingly used from #1 to #4. A child visitor thought #4 was a reflection of red London buses in the rain. #6 reintroduced green like #1. Richter did not accept Monet but was inspired by Barnett Newman.

## References

- <http://www.theguardian.com/arts/audio/2008/apr/25/gerhard.richter> 7-minute Podcast, mentions Cage 4' 33", facts of birth, painted portraits, landscapes, abstract, colour charts. One type was using a squeegee to drag paint across under-layers that were dragged out. Lot of grey and white, green and cadmium yellow that erupts, red and black laid with a brush. Colours become infected. Up close it is a blizzard. It's as if there is an image in there that has been hidden by a type of interference. We think that if only we could wear the right glasses it could all become clear. We cannot avoid imagining images in abstract images. Collectors imagine it is about the sublime. He is not interested in a religious interpretation. After a while they begin to look like trees, and vistas but each day the image changes. Perhaps, they are mirrors? He has exhibited mirrors. They reflect what we project. Like trying to capture reflections in a river. You can never drink from the same river twice.

## Visual Aids

- The following images can be used to clarify points made during the tour or to show a work mentioned. However, visual aids detract from the flow of the presentation and cannot always be easily seen so **the aim is to use no visual aids at all.**
- The images are:
  - Giovanni Bellini, *St Francis in Ecstasy*, 1479-85
  - Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North*, Gateshead, 1998
  - Paul Cezanne, *Three Bathers*, 1879-82
  - Michelangelo Buonarroti Simoni, Laurentian (Medici) Library, 1559
  - Henri Matisse, *The Snail*, 1953
  - Gerhard Richter, *Ema-Akt auf einer Treppe (Ema - Nude on a Staircase)*, 1966, 200 x 130cm, Museum Ludwig, Cologne





Giovanni Bellini, *St Francis in Ecstasy*, 1479-85









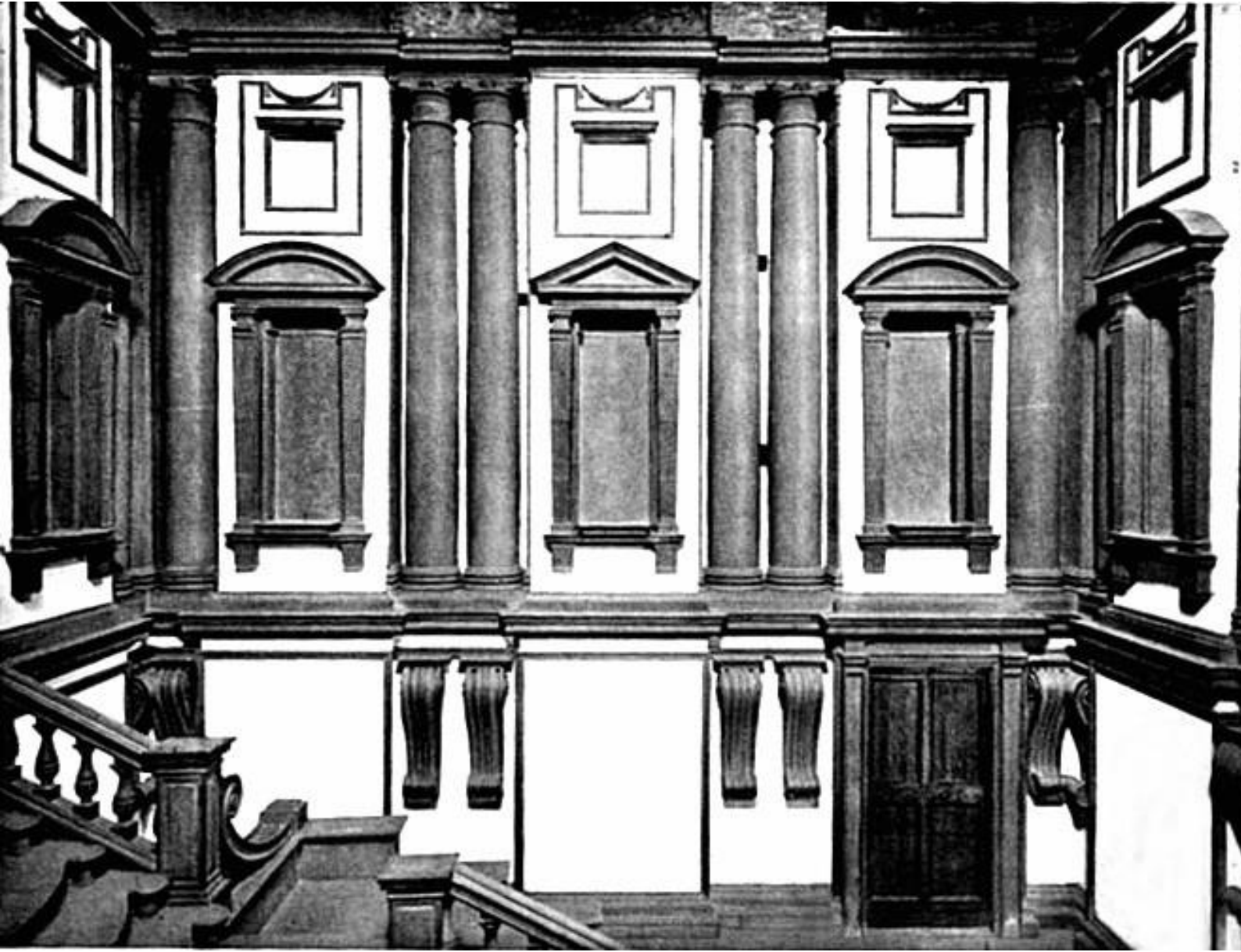
Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North*, Gateshead, 1998





Paul Cézanne, *Three Bathers*, 1879-82



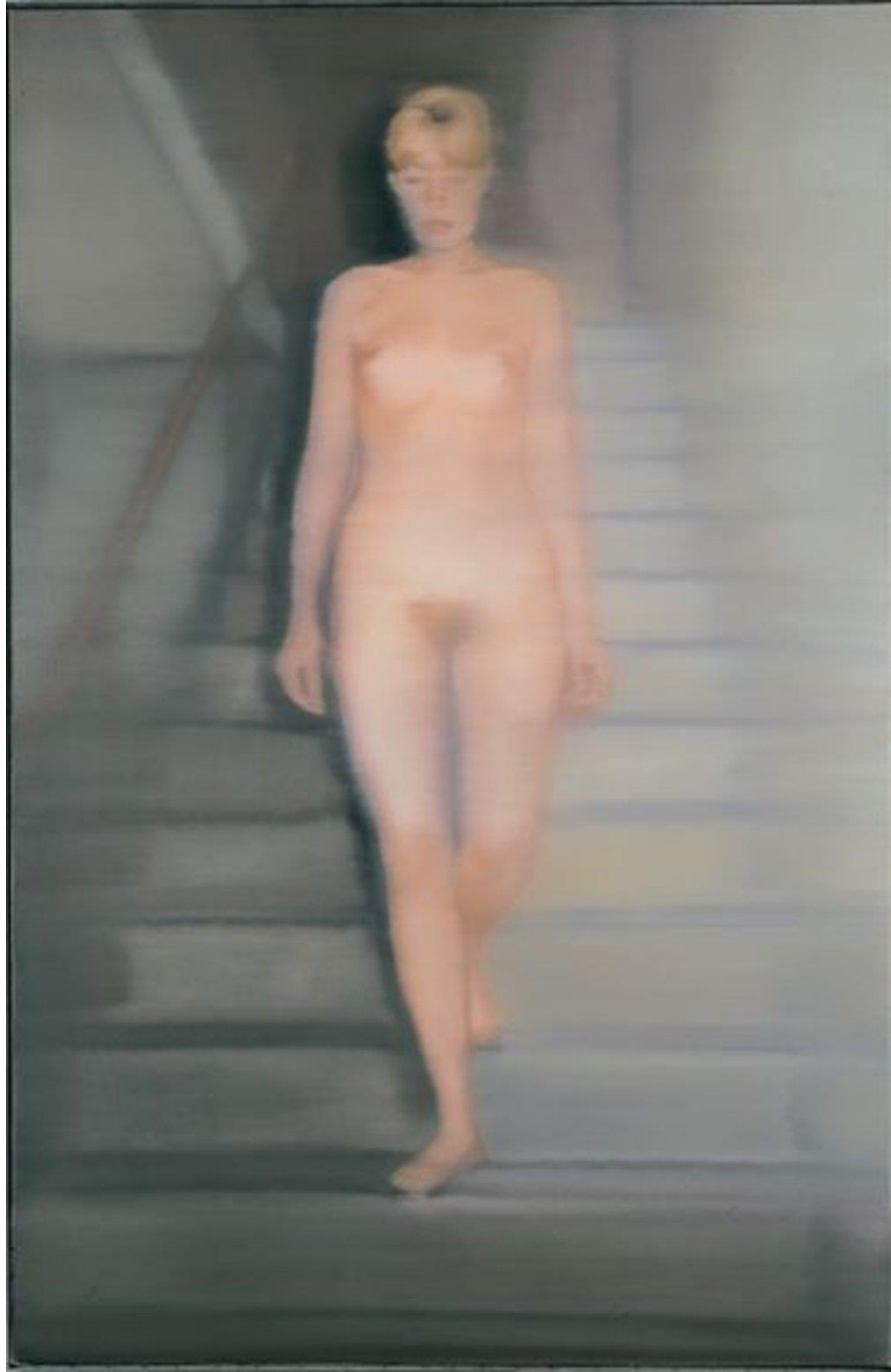


Michelangelo Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564), Laurentian (Medici) Library, 1559



Henri Matisse, *The Snail*, 1953





## Summary of 'In the Studio' (12:00-12:45), North Level 2 East

**Antony Gormley (b. 1950), *Untitled (for Francis)*, 1985.** Creating awareness of our interior life versus our external appearance. Clingfilm, plaster, fibreglass, 24 sheets lead. St. Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226) stigmata 1224, the wounds of Christ. Giovanni Bellini's *St Francis in Ecstasy* (c. 1479-85). An openness to outside experience. Gormley is a Buddhist. Gormley says, '**sculpture, for me, uses the physical as a means to talk about the spirit ... a visual means to refer to things which cannot be seen.**'

**Agnes Martin (1912-2004), *Faraway Love*, 1999.** 5' square. Pencil guidelines. Blue Liquitex. Mark Rothko '**reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth**'. New York to New Mexico. Reclusive. Not read a newspaper in 50 years. Buddhism. '**beauty, innocence, and happiness**'. '**almost a saint**'. '**our most subtle feelings**'. She said, '**Beauty and perfection are the same, they never occur without happiness**' and added '**Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not just in the eye, it is in the mind. It is our positive response to life.**' Figurative and abstract are close, exploring what it means to be human.

**Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), *Coffee*, 1915.** Curtain? Table top angled. Vertical bar. Dog staring. Whimsy with taste. Sketches - '**I take notes. Then I go home. And before I start painting I reflect, I dream.**' He met Marthe de Méligny when he was 26 and she was 16 (actually 24) but they did not marry for 30 years. Compulsive washer. Hid from people. '**I have been living a very secluded life as Marthe has become completely anti-social and I am obliged to avoid all contact with other people.**'

**Gwen John (1876-1939), *Chloë Boughton-Leigh*, 1904-8.** Calmness and intensity. In contrast with Augustus John ('**In 50 years' time I will be known as the brother of Gwen John**'). One of the finest painters of our time (1952). Never flashy or contrived. Simple, plain and deeply moving. '**A sort of modern Vermeer**'. Discarded many canvases, oeuvre 158 oils. Survived as a model but mistreated. Became Auguste Rodin's (1840-1917) lover.

**Henri Matisse (1869-1954), *Studio Interior*, c. 1903-4.** Matisse's studio 1903-4 in Paris. Like a photo of 1904. Cast is his *Bust of a Woman*. Originally a lawyer, like Bonnard. Painted when convalescing, discovered '**a kind of paradise**'. Financial low-point as he bought Rodin, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cézanne plus wife and two children. Just met André Derain and would found Fauvism or the 'wild beasts' in 1904.

**Edgar Degas (1834-1917), *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1880.** Originally reddish-brown wax. Only sculpture exhibited. 30 bronze copies after death. Like a monkey, '**flower of precocious depravity**', '**marked by the hateful promise of every vice**'. Marie van Goethem was the model and Degas started to draw her when she was 13. She failed to attend classes and was dismissed in 1882 but her younger sister Charlotte became a famous dancer and teacher. One critic described it as '**the only truly modern effort in sculpture that I know of.**' Degas was discharged from army with defective eyesight. Father died 1873 brother's debts made him poor so he had to paint to survive. Argumentative, lost friends, nearly blind, died 1917.

**Georges Braque (1882-1963), *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece*, 1911.** Cubism invented with Pablo Picasso. VALSE means 'Waltz'. RHU is rum. Clarinet. Corbel of mantelpiece. Shattered object helps get close and establish space and movement. '**Like mountain climbers roped together**'. Analytical Cubism, then Synthetic Cubism. Anomaly of nail, illusion, joke? Braque described, '**objects shattered into fragments ... a way of getting closest to the object ... Fragmentation helped me to establish space and movement in space**'.

**Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Water-Lilies*, after 1916.** 1874 *Impression: Sunrise*. Last 30 years painted 250 views of his garden at Giverny. '**I'm good for nothing except painting and gardening**'. Over the years, he got closer to the water surface. Eyesight problems from 1912. Largely ignored until Abstract Impressionism.

**Mark Rothko (1903-1970), *Seagram Murals*, 1958.** 9 paintings known as Seagram Murals. Four Season restaurant in Seagram Building, New York. Took 8 months. **'a place where the richest bastards in New York will come to feed and show off'**. He went on to say, **'I accepted this assignment as a challenge, with strictly malicious intentions. I hope to paint something that will ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch'**. Was he exaggerating. Michelangelo's staircase, Medici Library in Florence, trapped in a room. From 1965, discussed gift to Tate with Norman Reid, Tate Director. Decision based on proximity to Turner. Together, on their own, quiet, subdued light. Arrived at Tate the day he committed suicide.

**Henri Matisse (1869-1954), *Back I-IV*, 1909-1930.** Four 1909-10, c. 1913-14, c. 1916-17 and 1930. Unknown as a group until 1949-50. Back II only discovered in 1955. Cast posthumously in 1955-56. 12 copies cast, in 9 museums. Not a series but a theme he returned to. Paul Cezanne *Three Bathers*, he bought. Back view unorthodox but avoids complexities of visual engagement and reduces the nude to an arrangement of forms.

**Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *The Three Dancers*, 1925.** Started as classical but Ramón Pichot died, so **'should be called "The Death of Pichot"'**. In 1900 Picasso went to Paris with Carlos Casagemas who fell in love with Germaine Gargallo but she married Pichot and Casagemas committed suicide after trying to shoot her. In 1925 Pichot shot himself in front of friends. He visited Germaine when she was old with the very young Françoise Gilot (63 v. 23), **'I want you to learn about life'**. **'She's old and toothless and poor and unfortunate now but when she was young she was very pretty and she made a painter friend of mine suffer so much that he committed suicide ... She turned a lot of heads ... look at her now'**. The figure on right is Pichot. Figure on left is Germaine, New Guinea masks. The figure between them is Casagemas. Sold through Sir Roland Penrose in 1964, first sale to a gallery and most modern purchase made by Tate.

**Ibrahim El-Salahi (b. 1930), *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams I*, 1961-5.** African masks, veils our mothers wore or drummers wildly circling during a funeral. Started with a friend in Sudan, stopped, moved to New York, shipped back and stored for 35 years. He became Deputy Under Secretary of Culture in Sudan but imprisoned without trial. Then moved to Qatar, then Oxford. In Sudan work was found and put on display. ghostly figures with stretched heads, long limbs and sunken eyes emerge from a pale-yellow ground. Oil and enamel on damouriya, a narrow textile, hand-woven in Sudan. **'burnt sienna, ochre, yellow ochres, white and blacks ... the colour of the earth in the Sudan, which I cared a great deal about'**. First Sudanese Civil War (1955-72). Combines African, Arabic, Islamic and European sources. Audience.

**Bridget Riley (b. 1931), *Evoë 3*, 2003.** Leaves or petals. Ocean waves. Shapes and rhythms of nature. Rich colours evoke Henri Matisse cut-outs. **'the only way anyone can enter my painting is by looking; there's no theory in them ... The very habit-ridden public, and I'm not blaming them, want something that looks like a painting'**. Excellent figure painter but she rejected direct depiction. Works alone, never married, no children. Since 1960 uses assistants. Revelry or **'Bacchanal without Nymphs'**. The more constraints the freer one is.

**Gerhard Richter (b. 1932), *Cage (1)-(6)*, 2006.** Six reference to American composer John Cage, famous for 4' 33" and for saying **'I have nothing to say and I am saying it'**. Richter said, **'I blur things to make everything equally important and equally unimportant. I blur things so that they do not look artistic or craftsmanlike but technological, smooth and perfect. I blur things to make all the parts a closer fit'**. Images appear from TV-like interference. Wet roads? Progression from warm greens to bright cadmium yellow to steely grey, then energized by red in #4. Reds then retreat and in #6 greens return with blues and yellows. 2015 one Richter sold for £30 million so we are pleased to have these on loan from a private collection. 7.9 million total Tate visitors 2014/15 so buy a coffee to help us.