

Tate Modern

Artist and Society

Boiler House (North) Level 2 West

11:00-11:45

Laurence Shafe

Artist and Society

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Notes

- Each work is shown followed, optionally, by related images. This is followed by the talk itself (typically 3 to 5 minutes), followed by bullet point notes designed to answer possible questions.
- 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 the next work of the theme of 'Artist and Society'. Note that the tour question 'Can art change the world?' has been dropped. Avoid dates, movements and 'isms' unless directly relevant. Only refer to another work if it helps explain the work being presented and if an 'ism' is mentioned it should be defined in a sentence or two.
- Forty-five minutes is only enough time to cover nine or ten of the above works. The extra works are provided in case a work is removed at short notice or a crowd surrounds a work and it is inconvenient to return to it.

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 taking you through one of these called 'Artist and Society' and we will be looking at works relating to the role of the individual within society and asking the question 'Can art change the world?'
6. We will be looking at about ten works that I have selected as a useful guide. The next tour starts 15 minutes after this one ends [and there is then a one and a quarter 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.
- **Artist and Society.** 'This wing is concerned with the ways in which artists engage with social ideals and historical realities. Though some artists associated modernism with a utopian vision, art has also provided a mirror to contemporary society, sometimes raising awareness about urgent issues or arguing for change. Whether through traditional media or moving images, abstraction or figuration, militancy or detached observation, all the artworks in this wing highlight aspects of the social reality in which they were made, and try to generate a reaction and convey a more or less explicit message to their publics.'

Rachel Whiteread, *Demolished*, 1996 (Room 1)



Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963), *Demolished*, 1996

1. **Description.** The two works in this room are about the tower block in different social situations. The first is a set of twelve screen-prints of tower blocks being demolished in East London. The artist is Rachel Whiteread and she photographed each of three separate demolitions as a series of three stages from a single spot and, in addition, she took a single photograph of the context. The work is called *Demolished* and the photographs were taken between 1993 and 1995 [and the artwork is dated 1996].
2. **The artist.** Whiteread lived and still lives in East London, a historically poor area and she became the first woman to win the Turner Prize [of £25,000] for *House* [in 1993]. This was a concrete cast of the inside of a Victorian terraced house and, for the same work, she also won the £40,000 K Foundation art award presented to the 'worst artist of the year'. *House* symbolised the people who formerly lived there prior to the increasing gentrification of the area. She is well known as a sculptor who creates casts of the spaces inside, under or around many everyday objects such as baths, sinks and chairs.
3. **The meaning.** Multi-storey buildings were introduced by urban planners in the 1950s as a utopian dream to replace sprawling slums with clean, modern places to live. By the 1990s there was an economic recession, high unemployment and social unrest and a wave of rioting took place in 1991 and 1992. It was a period known as Thatcher's Britain. Whiteread is recording the end of a failed urban experiment but she is also recording the destruction of people's homes. Some of the photographs remind us of a war zone but the beauty of the screen-prints suggests hope for the future. Like her sculptural casts, they serve to record what she has referred to as '**something that is going to be completely forgotten ... the detritus of our culture**'. She is creating a memorial to the past in the hope of generating something better for the future.
4. **Can art change the world?** As a pragmatic artist Whiteread said, '**I don't think art changes the world in terms of stopping people dying of Aids or of starvation or being homeless. But for an individual ... it can enhance daily life, reflect our times and, in that sense, change the way you think and are.**' The images could be from any city and stand for social planning for the poor world-wide. I mentioned that some of these photographs remind us of a war zone. Let us turn to a work that represents an iconic tower block at the centre of a real war zone.

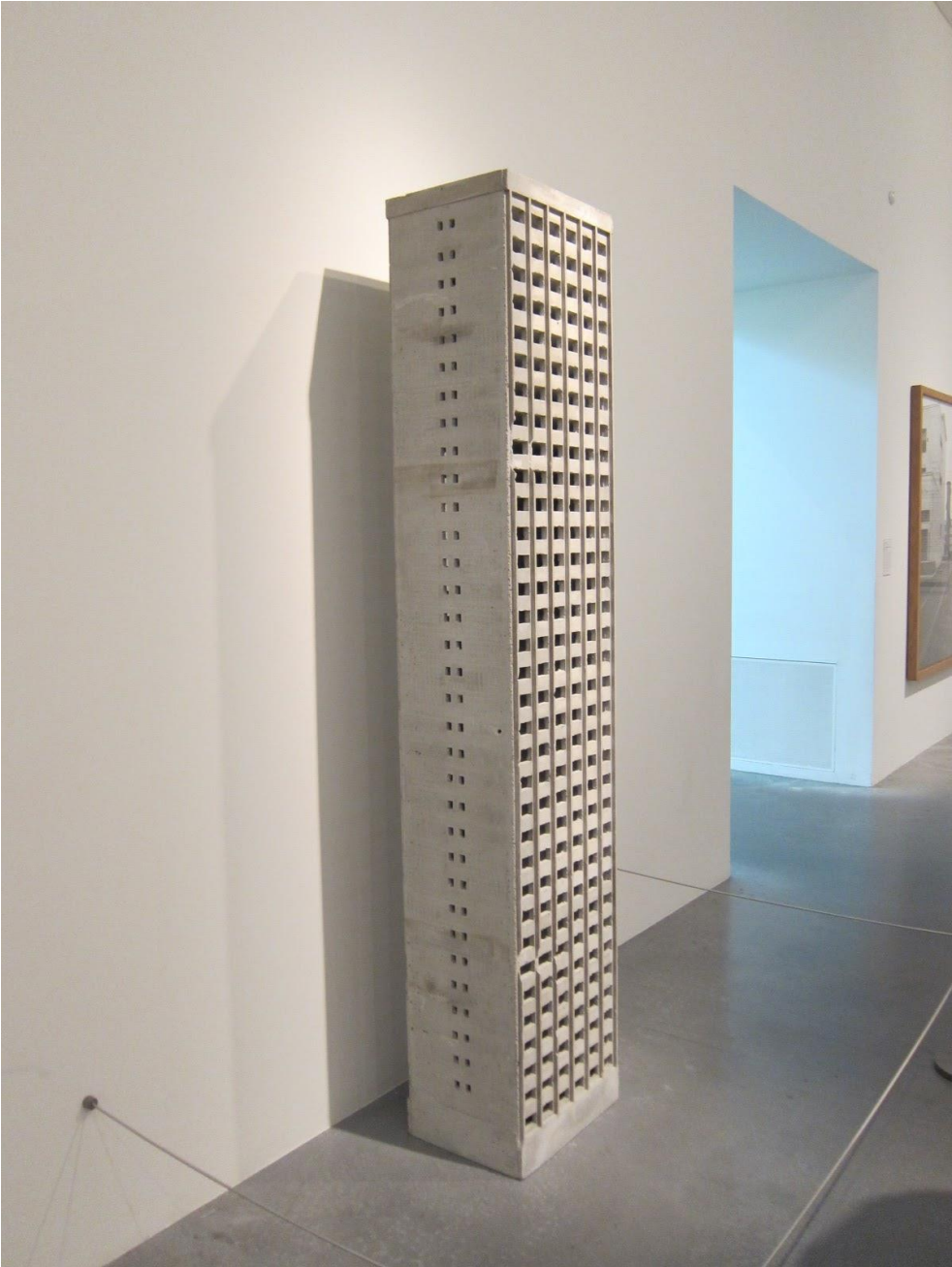
Notes on Rachel Whiteread, *Demolished*, 1996

- Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963) was born in Ilford, Essex and studied at Brighton Polytechnic and the Slade (1986-87). Her mother was an artist and her father a geography teacher and lifelong supporter of the Labour Party. She began to exhibit in 1987 and had her first solo exhibition in 1988. She lives in a former synagogue in east London with the sculptor Marcus Taylor and they have two sons.
- Whiteread employs casting methods using plaster, rubber and resin which are typically used as part of the process of making sculptures rather than in the finished work. She makes sculptures of the spaces within, around and under everyday objects from baths and sinks to houses, so called 'negative spaces'. This draws our attention to the forgotten spaces around and within our everyday world and fixes them in time as public monuments. The spaces around objects are normally occupied by human beings and so the solidified spaces become symbols for our human presence while refusing us entry. By removing the object and refusing its function the shapes express absence and loss. She says the casts carry '**the residue of years and years of use**'. Her early work was personal and biographical but her later works have become universal and their titles have become straightforward, down-to-earth and descriptive. For Whiteread her sculptures are metaphors for neglect of people.
- Whiteread was the first woman to win the Turner Prize in November 1993 for *House* (destroyed 1994) a life-sized replica of the interior of a condemned terraced house in Bow in London's East End. It took two years to plan and was made by spraying liquid concrete into the building's empty shell before its external walls were removed. *House* was completed on 25 October 1993 and demolished eleven weeks later on 11 January 1994. *House* also won the K Foundation award of £40,000 for the worst work of art of the year. K Foundation threatened to burn the money unless it was accepted so she gave some of the money to Shelter and the rest was allocated to young artists based on a competitive submission. K Foundation burned £1 million the following year.
- *Demolished* is a portfolio of twelve duo-tone screen-prints. The one shown is called 'B: Clapton Park Estate, Mandeville Street, London E5; Bakewell Court; Repton Court; March 1995'. The screen-prints are divided into three groups, A (A: Clapton Park Estate, Mandeville Street, London E5; Ambergate Court; Norbury Court; October 1993), B and C (C: Trowbridge Estate, London E9; Hannington Point; Hilmarton Point; Deverill Point; June 1995). The prints were scanned from photographs of the demolition of tower blocks on three separate estates in Hackney, East London. Whiteread took the photographs between October 1993 and June 1995. The transfer to screen-prints involved enlarging the black and white photographs which has increased the grain. The stages of the demolition are recorded in the form of three photographs taken from the same spot. A fourth photograph on each site records a pile of rubble (A), a dust-filled stormy sky (B) and tower blocks on a sunny day (C). The A-series is visually neutral but B and C are reminiscent of war photographs. In the early 1990s Whiteread lived in East London, a historically poor area.
- Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990 and when this work was produced John Major was Prime Minister (1990-97), followed by Tony Blair from 1997 to 2007.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/search?gid=66016&sort=acno>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-rachel-whiteread-embankment/rachel-whiteread-0>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whiteread-a-clapton-park-estate-mandeville-street-london-e5-ambergate-court-norbury-court-p77870>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Whiteread

Marwan Rechmaoui, *Monument for Living*, 2001-8 (Room 1)



Marwan Rechmaoui (b. 1964), *Monument for Living*, 2001-8

1. **Description.** The second reference to a tower block is this accurate scale model of a tower in Beirut called Burj El Murr (see Visual Aids). The tower has thirty-four floors, seven basement levels and 510 windows. Construction started in 1974 but it was not finished when the Lebanese Civil War started the following year. It was the tallest building in Beirut and during the war it was the centre of the 'War of the Hotels'. It changed hands a number of times and was used by snipers, as a prison for torture and many 'tossings' from the roof. Although the rest of Beirut was flattened by the war this tower remained. It is now uninhabited, too tall to knock down and too dense to implode, and so it continues to dominate the skyline. It is known as the 'Tower of Bitterness' and has become a memorial to horrors of war and a reminder to try to resolve the internal conflicts that still remain.
2. **The civil war.** The artist Marwan Rechmaoui has created a monumental work that highlights this enduring and sad memorial to the war. The war lasted from 1975 to 1990 and there were an estimated 250,000 deaths and almost one million people left Lebanon.
3. **All cities.** But the work is not just a monument to the war. Rechmaoui sees Beirut as divided by the same political and ethnic differences that drive conflict in all modern cities. He said, '**The whole world is moving in this direction. This is why Beirut is important. It's the future. Populations are moving wholesale into cities, and bringing with them their issues, their problems, which puts pressure on the city as a space ... All these issues about security and terrorism mean that Western societies, which believe they are free, are starting to lose the benefits of being free.**'
4. **Tolerance.** Rechmaoui remains positive, he said '**We are all strangers in the city,**' he says. '**That affects people's behaviour; they become more tolerant, more accepting of new ideas.**'

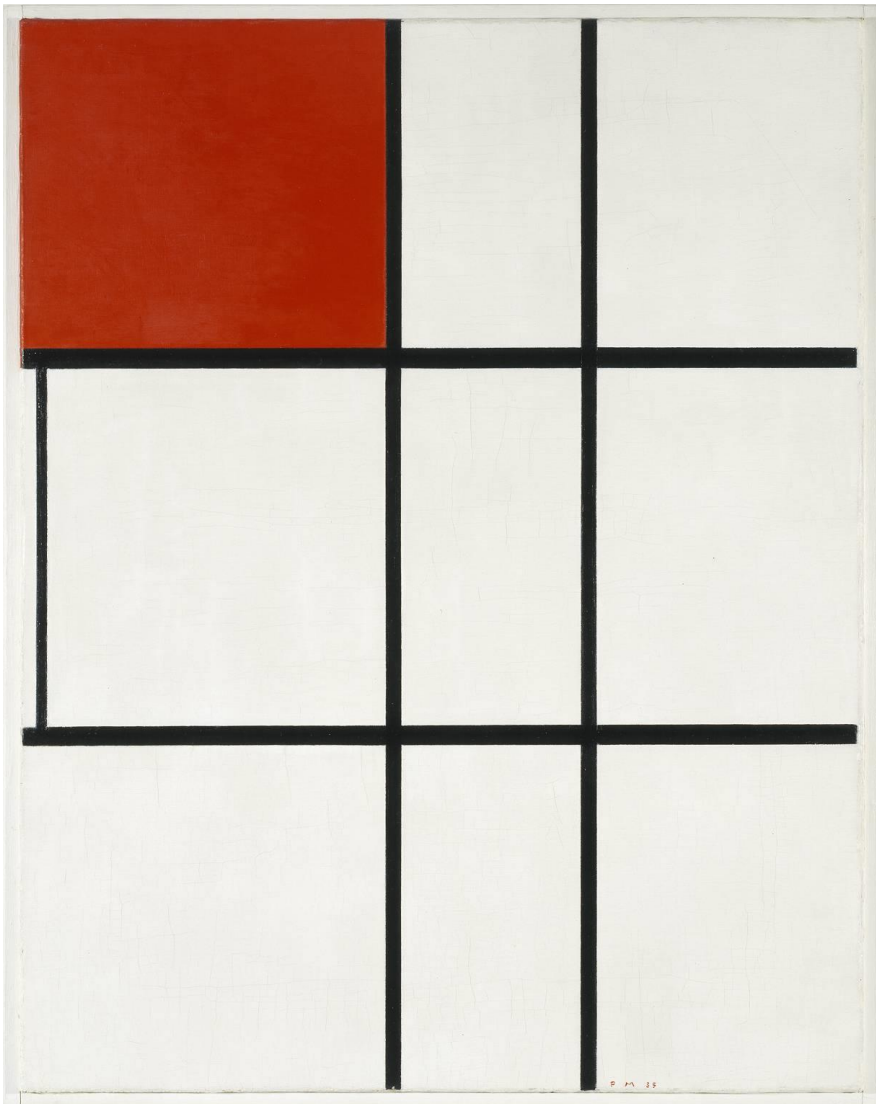
Notes on Marwan Rechmaoui, *Monument for Living*, 2001-8

- Marwan Rechmaoui was born in Lebanon in 1964 and trained in Boston and New York.
- He lives in Beirut and is annoyed by the sudden gentrification of the area he lives in. He spends his time observing the complex social and political dynamics of Lebanon and what they reveal in a country where propaganda and censorship are typical. Following the end of the war, he and other artists wanted to change society but by the end of the 1990s they had become disillusioned. Rechmaoui began to make semi-abstract works in which the shapes were ordered according to random rules, mirroring the chaos in society. He chose cement, tar and rubber; the materials of a country under reconstruction. Slowly his paintings became structures.
- *Monument for the Living* is a scale model of the Burj el Murr building in Beirut, Lebanon. It has thirty-four floors, seven basement levels and 510 windows.
- The tower was owned by members of the el-Murr family, a prominent political clan. Construction began in 1974 but it was left unfinished after the outbreak of civil war in 1975. Originally built to become the Beirut Trade Centre its name literally means 'tower of bitterness'. It was the tallest building in Beirut and during the war it was the centre of the 'War of the Hotels'. It changed hands a number of times and was used by snipers and for torture and many 'tossings'. The tower is now too tall to knock down and too dense to implode, and so continues to dominate the skyline. It is now seen as a memorial to the internal religious conflicts that have never really been resolved.
- Although most of Beirut was destroyed during the war this building remained standing. It cannot be converted and is not eligible for demolition. It has become a terrible memorial of war which reminds the inhabitants of Beirut of the horror of the confrontations, Marwan Rechmaoui has created a monumental work highlighting the persistence of this sad vestige within the urban development of the Lebanese capital.
- The Lebanese Civil War was a multifaceted civil war in Lebanon between Sunni, Shia, Christian and other groups. It lasted from 1975 to 1990 and there were an estimated 250,000 deaths. Almost one million people left Lebanon because of the war and, as of 2012, about 76,000 people are still displaced.
- Sunnis make up about 90% of Muslims worldwide and their name is derived from 'People of the Tradition' which is based on the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad. Shia Muslims make up only about 10% of the total but they are the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Azerbaijan and, some say, Yemen. They are the 'Party of Ali' who, they claim, was the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammed and there are three main branches that differ in their view of the true path of succession.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rechmaoui-monument-for-the-living-t13193>

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition B (No.II) with Red*, 1935 (Room 2)



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

1. **Description.** Piet Mondrian is one of the best known abstract artists but perhaps the most misunderstood. You might think he produced these painting in a few hours using a ruler and primary colours straight from the tube. In fact, he never measured or used a ruler, he carefully painted every area and line. What appear to be squares are often rectangles. This is *Composition C (No. III) with Red, Yellow and Blue* and the red square, for example, is slightly wider than it is tall and the vertical black line is not central. Mondrian would only use vertical and horizontal lines and he fell out with his friend Theo van Doesburg [whose work is on display round the corner] over the use diagonal lines. The colours are built up from layers of mixed paint, never squeezed direct from the tube. One day an art dealer (New York, Sidney Janis, 1932) came to his studio to buy a painting and Mondrian told him it was not quite finished as one small area of blue needed a further coat of paint. The dealer later said, '**I didn't get the picture for a whole year**'.
2. **Background.** So, how did he arrive at these grid-like paintings? His early work was representational and he painted conventional landscapes but in 1908 he came under the influence of the spiritual and philosophical writings of the Theosophy Society. He spent the rest of his life searching for a way to represent that spiritual knowledge in art. He simplified and simplified as he looked for the essence of the objects.
3. **The artist.** Looking at these black lines and flat areas of colour some people think of his paintings as 'cold' and 'calculated' but he was a deeply passionate artist. When he was 39 (1911) he left his fiancée and his job in Amsterdam to move to Paris and pursue a new type of art. In order to integrate with the Parisian avant-garde, he changed the double 'aa' in his name to a single 'a'. He had few personal contacts when he first moved but it was a very productive period artistically. The other influence on his art was music; he loved jazz and his use of the word 'composition' in the title invokes musical associations. Later, he was labelled degenerate by the Nazis and moved to London and then New York.
4. **Avoiding balance.** He thought long and hard about achieving balance but he also wanted to avoid symmetry and he often put a large area of colour on one side of the painting. He argued with other artists about this as they sometimes found his paintings unbalanced and the colours inharmonious, but this was intentional as he was seeking for a different form of balance. Balance is easy if it involves one thing cancelling another but he wanted to retain vitality and energy in the painting. Mondrian regarded the vertical as the spiritual, the male, the inner mind where the ideal resides and the horizontal as the material, women, the outward form, the sea, the horizon and nature. He thought that harmony could be achieved by combining the vertical and the horizontal in certain ways.
5. **Save the world.** Mondrian thought that we are all evolving to a higher state and his paintings would light a path that would help people achieve this state. Unlike Kazimir Malevich, who though abstract art would bring political reform, Mondrian believed his art would bring about spiritual reform and his abstract paintings were his mission to help save the world. Let us look next at a very different relationship between art and society.

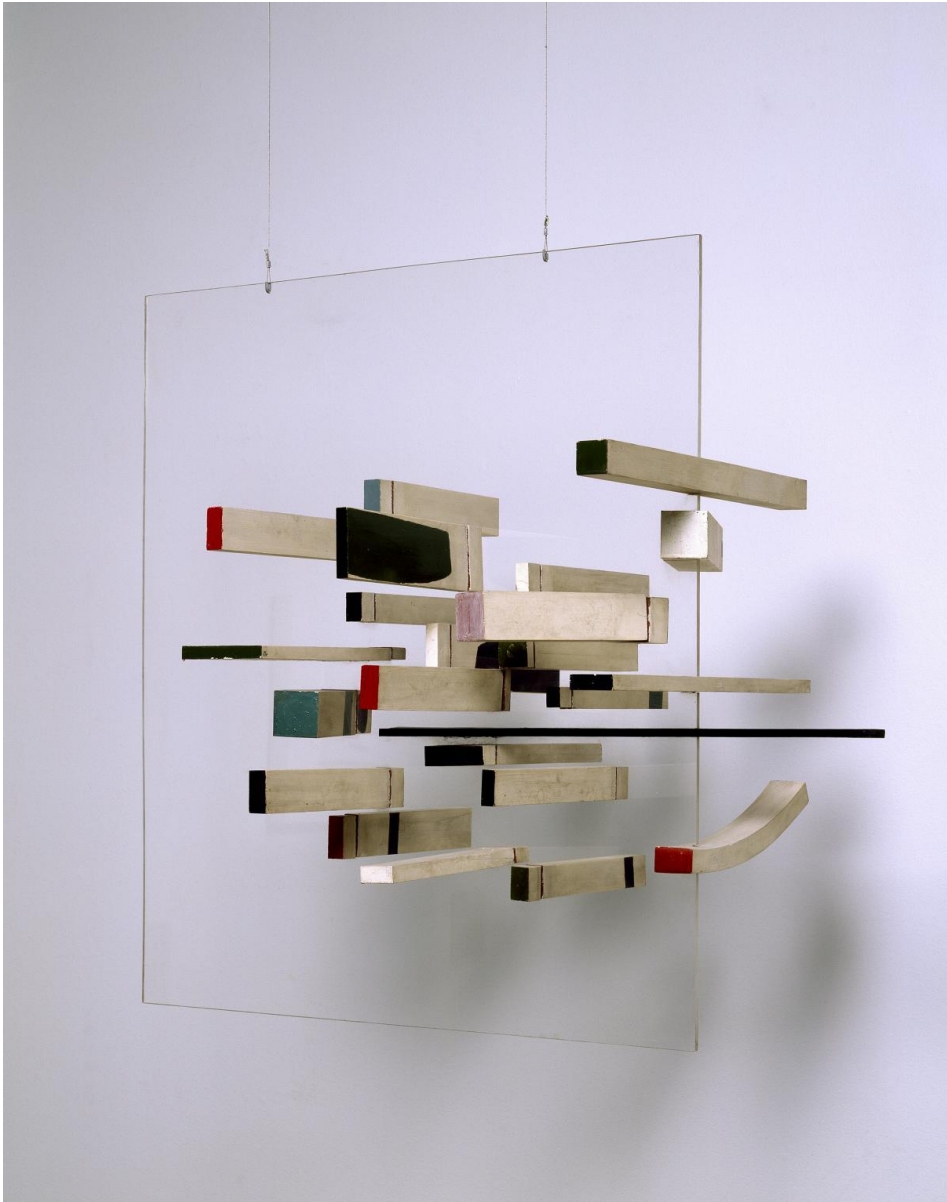
Notes on Piet Mondrian, *Composition C (No.III) with Red, Yellow and Blue*, 1935

- Pieter Cornelis 'Piet' Mondriaan (after 1906 Mondrian, 1872–1944) was a Dutch painter who contributed to the De Stijl (1917-1928/31, pronounced 'duh style') art movement founded by Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931). Mondrian evolved a non-representational style which he termed Neoplasticism (or De Stijl). He was an artist of great integrity who wrote, **'the emotion of beauty is always hindered by particular appearance of an 'object'; the object must therefore be abstracted from any figurative representation.**
- His father was a drawing teacher and Mondrian started to draw at an early age. He began as a teacher and a landscape painter. His early work was representational but he became influenced by pointillism and Fauvism. Mondrian's work may be inspired by the horizontals and verticals of the hill-less Dutch landscape and he began to move towards abstraction in 1905-08. His art was linked to his spiritual studies and in 1909 he joined the Theosophical Movement founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and others. For the rest of his life his work was inspired by the search for spiritual knowledge underlying nature. He believed that his vision of modern art would transcend divisions in culture and become a new common language based on the pure primary colours, flatness of forms, and dynamic tension. He wrote, **'What art makes us see and feel ... is...beauty, truth, goodness, grandeur, and richness – the universe, man, nature...universal equilibrium.'**
- Mondrian gradually decluttered his home and studio and they became a place of pilgrimage. The artist Ben Nicholson described the astonishing quietness and repose. The paintings were never framed as they were extensions of the world; the world reduced to the simplest possible forms and colours.
- He was an artist who thought he could elevate us all and make the world a better place. He wrote, **'I wish to approach truth as closely as is possible, and therefore I abstract everything until I arrive at the fundamental quality of objects.'** As Maurice Denis said (in 1890), **'Remember that a picture, before being a battle horse, a nude, an anecdote or whatnot, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order.'** In the terminology of Clive Bell (1914, Bloomsbury Group) it is the **'significant form'** which he defined as **'lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, [that] stir our aesthetic emotions'**.
- He was labelled a 'degenerate' artist by the Nazis and just before World War II (1938) he fled Paris for London and then New York. Mondrian loved dancing, jazz and the energy of the Charleston. In the mid-1920s he bought a record player and began to collect records and his studio became a place to dance. Music is an abstract art and his paintings reflect a lot of the syncopation and energy of jazz. Mondrian called this his 'boogie woogie' and in New York he painted *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (1942-43, MoMA). He never married and thought women were put on earth to be dancing partners. Mondrian danced 'very stiffly, awkwardly and seriously', usually with the wives or mistresses of other artists and he never looked at his partner or spoke on the dance floor.
- The Greek philosopher Plato (c.429-347 BCE) wrote, **'I do not now intend by beauty of shapes what most people would expect, such as that of living creatures or pictures, but ... straight lines and curves and the surfaces or solid forms produced out of these by lathes and rulers and squares ... These things are not beautiful relatively, like other things, but always naturally and absolutely.'** Plato thought that world we directly experience is but a shadow of an absolute world of pure ideas, such a truth and goodness. Therefore, most representational art takes us further away from understanding this world by making a representation of a representation.
- See the article on 'Mondrian's Balance' by the University of Maryland. They have tested people using genuine Mondrian paintings and Mondrian-like paintings and people choose the Mondrian so his paintings are not as easy to copy as the naïve viewer might believe.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/mondrian-composition-c-noiii-with-red-yellow-and-blue-100097>
- <http://faculty.philosophy.umd.edu/jhbrown/mondriansbalance/index.html>

Victor Pasmore, *Abstract in White, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Grey and Pink*, c. 1963



Victor Pasmore (1908-1998), *Abstract in White, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Grey and Pink*, c. 1963

1. This is Victor Pasmore's *Abstract in White, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Grey and Pink* from 1963. It consists of 23 wooden blocks apparently passing through a Perspex sheet. The blocks are arranged asymmetrically and most are rectangular but one is curved. The blocks are painted white and their ends are painted in one of the colours mentioned in the title. One long thin wooden strip is painted black and runs horizontally across the sheet just below the centre of the Perspex. The wooden blocks do not actually pierce the Perspex but are held by wooden dowels. The horizontal strip is held in place by hidden nails. Pasmore made many such works between 1951 and 1966. Most were made to hang on the wall but this is one of a small group made to be seen from all sides. The title conforms to a formula he often used at this time with 'Abstract in' followed by the colours used.
2. Pasmore started as a figurative painter, one of the most talented of his generation. In the 1930s he briefly experimented with abstract painting but was dissatisfied. From 1947 he pioneered abstract art in Britain and was interested in the way in which abstract art simply represents itself. Representational art always refers to another object and the painter uses techniques to simulate the object. In the mid-1950s he started to develop these three-dimensional abstract forms. Two-dimensional abstract works can only suggest a third dimension through illusion. Abstract art, like this one, are actually three-dimensional; they are fully fledged objects in space. As Pasmore wanted to retain a reference to painting he transforms the canvas into this Perspex sheet.
3. After the Second World War Pasmore taught at Camberwell School of Art and in 1951 he contributed to the Festival of Britain. In the late 1950s the art course he developed while teaching at Durham became the basis for higher art education across the UK. He later began to combine sculpture and architecture and he represented Britain at the 1961 Venice Biennale. He is little known internationally as he is difficult to pigeon-hole into a single role or style. There is a consistency in his figurative and abstract art based on geometry and the golden mean.
4. When Pasmore looked back on his career he said that he felt he had witnessed the **'revolution of Painting ... (when) the naturalist painter has been forced to start completely again'**. The art historian Herbert Read described his abstract art as **'The most revolutionary event in post-war British art'**.

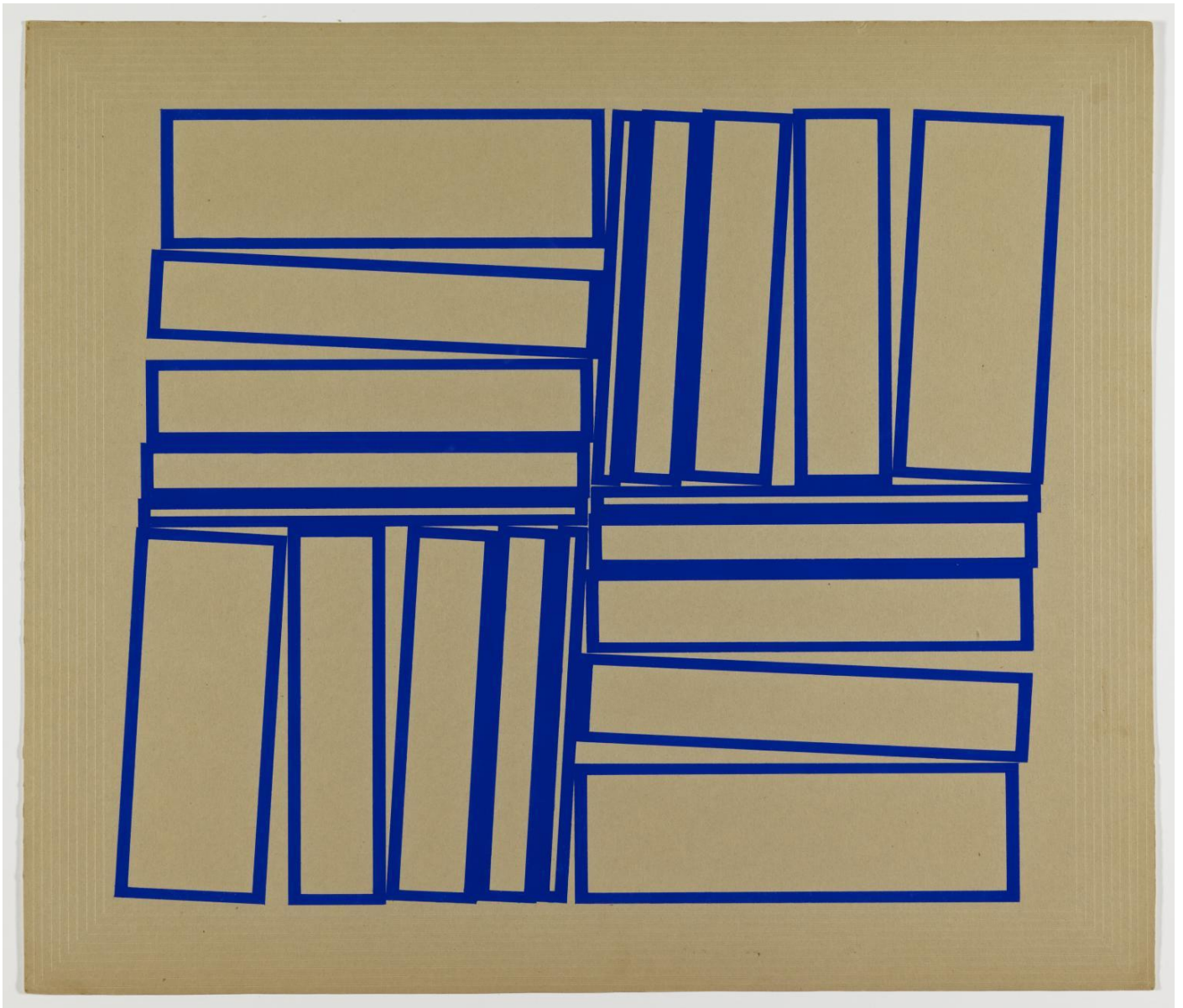
Notes on Victor Pasmore, *Abstract in White, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Grey and Pink*, c. 1963

- Edwin John Victor Pasmore (1908-1998) was a British artist and architect who pioneered abstract art in Britain in the 1940s and 50s. He was born in Surrey and with the death of his father when he was 19 he was forced to take an administrative job while he studied art part-time. He painted in a figurative manner in the style of Turner and Whistler and he was one of the most talented figurative painters of his generation. In the 1930s, he helped found the Euston Road School which emphasized working directly from nature and he was inspired by the work of Walter Sickert. In the Second World War, he was a conscientious objector. He was initially refused and was called up but refused to obey orders and was court martialled and imprisoned. This enabled him to appeal and he was then exempt from military duty. From 1943-49 he taught at Camberwell School of Art and he promoted abstract art. From 1947 he pioneered abstract art in Britain and he brought about a revival of interest in Constructivism. He was influenced by Ben Nicholson and Herbert Read described his new style as 'The most revolutionary event in post-war British art'. In 1950 he was commissioned to design a mural for a bus depot in Kingston-upon-Thames and in 1951 he contributed a mural to the Festival of Britain. From 1954-61 he developed an art course at Durham inspired by the basic course of the Bauhaus. He began to synthesize sculpture and architecture and his 'Apollo Pavilion' in Peterlee, County Durham proved controversial. He represented Britain at the 1961 Venice Biennale and became a trustee of the Tate
- In 1954 he explained that he worked in relief because abstract works stress their own status as objects whereas representational works refer to other objects. In 1961, Pasmore added, **'Whereas in representational art the spectator is confined to a point which is always at a distance from the object, in abstract form he must handle, feel, move around and get into the work if he is to fully apprehend the intentions of the artist.'**
- In the 1950s and 60s his work was often assembled rather than moulded or carved which broke with the tradition established by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/pasmore-abstract-in-white-green-black-blue-red-grey-and-pink-t11978>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/audio/late-tate-chris-stevens>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Pasmore

Hélio Oiticica, *Metaesquema*, 1958 (Room 2)



1. **Description.** These three works are part of a series of 350 works called *Metaesquema* by Hélio Oiticica, which he produced in 1958. They are all opaque watercolour paint, called gouache, on cardboard. The series are all monochrome, geometric forms, often in primary colours and they were inspired by the abstract art of Piet Mondrian and Kazimir Malevich. In the case of this blue painting the flatness of the simple, two-dimensional rectangles is energised by the tilt of some of the shapes, which suggest piles of books on a shelf. Oiticica often introduced elements of instability into his works in contrast to the rigorous order and structure of both European artists. The forms appear to jostle and bump together as though they are moving.
2. **The series.** The title of this series, *Metaesquema*, comes from the Portuguese meaning meta-schema, a higher-level scheme that was used to produce the complete set of paintings. Oiticica considered these works as '**something that lies in-between that is neither painting nor drawing. It is rather an evolution of painting**'. Oiticica was seeking, in his own words, to '**escape the constraints of painting while remaining in dialogue with it**'. By reducing his work to a series of squares and rectangles in a single colour he creates an interplay between shapes and their background that generates a sense of instability and movement, challenging their two-dimensionality. This is partly achieved by the use of the 'mirror effect'. Whatever rhythmic sequence the artist achieves on one side of the grid he repeats on the other side. This creates a dynamic composition, and a sense of ambivalence as to which are the painted forms (the 'figures') and which are the in-between areas (the 'background'). By the end of 1958, this series evolved into even simpler forms in which the squares and rectangles had been eliminated. A series of white-on-white paintings were the end of this investigations and the beginning of a new series of works by the artist.
3. **Art as play.** Oiticica was born in Rio de Janeiro and spent most of his life there. His early work was produced before the military coup [in 1964] but from the age of 27 his artistic life was part of a utopian counterculture that was opposed to the military dictatorship. His aim was to remove the division between high art and popular art by deconstructing the art object. This is demonstrated by Oiticica's work *Parangolés* (1964-79, pronounced 'par-an-go-lay') which was shown at the Tate in 2007. These brightly coloured forms show the wide variety of his art and the way he broke away from the conventional art object. He had become involved with a famous samba school in [Manguera] a favela [a shanty town] in Rio and he combined colour, form and dance in a way that involved the viewer in the action. The word means 'habitable paintings' and it consisted of coloured materials that were worn by visitors in the Turbine Hall who danced to the rhythm of the samba. They are the culmination of Oiticica's exploration of colour and the environment; the dancers wearing the cloth appeared as 'colour-in-motion' to the spectators. His intention was to use his art to bring people together in a collective, playful event that had a mystical element. His interest in dance was a way to liberate our capacity to play.

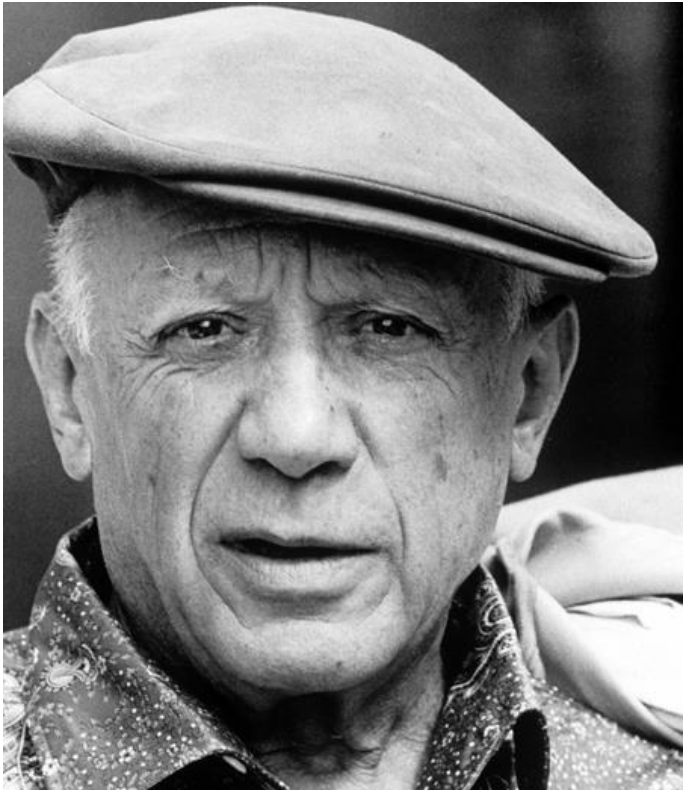
Notes on Hélio Oiticica, *Metaesquema*, 1958

- Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980, pronounced 'Ellio Oi-chi-see-ka') was a Brazilian visual artist, best known for his participation in the Neo-Concrete Movement, for his innovative use of colour, and for what he later termed 'environmental art'. Oiticica was one of the most important exponents of contemporary art in South America. He created multimedia room installations which intertwined social themes, experimental elements, and appropriations from popular culture, film, and music.
- There was a military dictatorship in Brazil from 1964 to 1985 and there was censorship and the torture of dissidents.
- Throughout his life Oiticica pushed the limits of art. He was born in Rio de Janeiro and spent most of his life there until he died of a stroke caused by hypertension when he was only 43. His father was an entomologist and painter and his grandfather an anarchist. From the age of 18 he was a member of the Neo-Concretist group, Grupo Frente (pronounced 'Frenchy'), that sought to reject realistic and representational art and, in particular, he was influenced by Piet Mondrian. Grupo Frente was founded in 1954 by Ivan Serpa in Rio de Janeiro. There was no single style only a rejection of contemporary Brazilian art. Some of the artists in the group, such as Lygia Clark (whose first name is pronounced the way Americans say 'leisure'), went on to form the influential neo-concrete movement in 1958, which Oiticica joined in 1960. The neo-concrete artists were a splinter group of the concrete art movement and called for greater sensuality, colour and poetic feeling. It was inspired by the new Brazilian capital, by cybernetics, gestalt psychology and the work of Bridget Riley. Oiticica produced his ground-breaking series of red and yellow painted hanging wood constructions.
- Concrete is art that is entirely free from any basis in observed reality and has no symbolic meaning. The term was first used by Theo van Doesburg in his *Manifesto of Concrete Art* (1930). He stated that there was nothing more concrete or more real than a line, a colour, or a plane (a flat area of colour). Concrete art is very close to constructivism, an art movement founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko in Russia in 1913-15. They believed art should be completely abstract but made from industrial materials. It was the technical mastery and organisation of materials. It was suppressed in Russia in the 1920s but brought to the West by Naum Gabo (pronounced 'now-m garbo', he changed his name from Pevsner to avoid confusion with his brother). Gabo knew Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, the de Stijl group and the Bauhaus.
- *Metaesquema* (pronounced 'metaskema') means meta-scheme, i.e. a higher-level scheme or structure that was used to produce the 350 individual works.
- An unknown amount of Oiticica's work and his correspondence, notes and sketches were lost in a fire in his brother's flat in 2009. The fire was investigated by the Government but its cause is still unknown.
- Oiticica was frustrated with painting and wanted to take colour off the walls of the gallery. In 2007, Tate held a major exhibition *Helio Oiticica: The Body of Colour*. In the Turbine Hall, Oiticica's *Parangolés* (habitable paintings, pronounced 'par-an-go-lay') was performed. Visitors dressed in brightly coloured drapes and danced to the rhythm of the samba. This work came out of his involvement with the famous samba school in the Mangueira Hill favela in Rio de Janeiro.
- Oiticica's work *Tropicália* was a series of enclosures that involved the viewer with the work. It gave rise to the Tropicálismo cultural movement that emerged from a liberal period in Brazil's history, a period that was abruptly cut short by a military coup in 1964. *Tropicália, Penetrables PN 2 'Purity is a myth'* is a reference to Mondrian's hope of understanding reality through pure colour and geometric forms. Oiticica engages the viewer by combining art and lived experience to achieve political change. *Tropicália* is now on display in the Tate Blavatnik Building.

References

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- <https://youtu.be/dJTr8l2M6Ps> (Parangolés, extracts from Tate Modern exposition, 2007)

Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937 (Room 3)



1. **Description.** There are four paintings in this room connected with the Spanish Civil War. This is Pablo Picasso's *Weeping Woman*, one of the most famous paintings in the Tate. I would like to start by asking you how it makes you feel? Despair? Sadness? Misery? Many people still find it upsetting. Picasso's distortion of her face accentuates the pain and anguish. The jagged black lines seem to be revealing the bones underneath the skin and the handkerchief she stuffs in her mouth could be a shard of glass. Picasso uses slightly repellent, acidic colours that make us feel uncomfortable and, to me, her clothing looks like the black mouths of hell we find in medieval religious paintings. Her eyes have even left their sockets in horror at what she has seen and float in little boats.
2. **Guernica.** But what has she seen and why is she weeping? The clue is the year it was painted, 1937. It was the year after the Spanish Civil War started. Picasso had just heard that General Franco had asked the German and Italian air forces to bomb the quiet Basque town of Guernica in northern Spain on market day. There were about 10,000 people in the town which was destroyed by the bombing. Later women and children were machine gunned as they tried to run away. If you look closely at her pupils, they are an odd shape and some think they show a reflection of the German bombers.
3. **Can art change the world?** Before the bombing Picasso rarely painted in response to political events but once he heard the news he responded by painting *Guernica*, now in the Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid. He wrote, '**Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It is an instrument for offensive and defensive war against the enemy.**'
4. **Weeping women.** After finishing *Guernica*, Picasso became obsessed with images of weeping women as a symbol of suffering Spain, of which this is the last and the most famous. The weeping Virgin has always been a traditional image in Spanish art. The model for the painting was his lover Dora Maar who was a gifted photographer, poet and artist who helped Picasso paint parts of *Guernica*. Picasso said '**Dora, for me, was always a weeping woman...And it's important, because women are suffering machines**'. I am reminded of a line from a Victorian poem [by the poet, Charles Kingsley], '**For men must work, and women must weep**'. Both sentiments express a particular Victorian attitude—that women are emotional creatures whose role is in the home—and this reflects another way 'art can change the world', by reinforcing stereotypes.
5. **Is there hope?** One puzzle presented by this weeping woman is whether Picasso intended there to be any sign of hope. The ear, for example, is represented by a tiny bird, possibly a symbol of hope and the flower on her hat could be another indication of a hopeful future. However, I think it is more likely that she is wearing a hat because it is market day and she wants to look her best, making the image even more poignant and hopeless.
6. **Donations.** When the dealer Roland Penrose (on 9-10 November 1937) first saw it he was so keen to acquire it that he agreed the price immediately and rushed down the street with it while it was still wet in case Picasso changed his mind. Penrose kept it all his life and gave it to his son who donated it to the Tate. The Tate still depends on donations both large and small, even buying a cup of coffee helps us.

Background Notes Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937

- Pablo Ruiz y Picasso (Málaga 25 Oct 1881 - April 1973). First trip to Paris in 1900. His friend Carlos Casagemas (1881-1901) shot himself after failing to kill Germaine, the girl he loved. 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). Picasso met Fernande Olivier, a bohemian artist who became his mistress, in Paris in 1904. 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 1973 when she killed herself by gunshot aged 59. He created over 400 portraits of her, more than any of his other loves.
- In 1937, Picasso was working on an assignment to produce a work for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition (June 1937). On April 26 1937 during the Spanish Civil War General Franco asked the Italian and German air forces to bomb the peaceful Basque town of Guernica. Guernica was revered as Basque's Holy City and guardian of liberty and democracy. It was Monday which was market day and there were an estimated 10,000 people in the small town. Official Basque figures say 1,654 people were killed although German air force figures put the number at 300. Reports of the damage vary but this photograph from the German Federal Archives shows the total destruction that took place. The number of deaths is now estimated to be between 170 and 300 people. There were five waves of 21 German and 3 Italian bombers from 16:30 to 18:30 followed by 29 planes that bombed from 18:00 to 18:45 and strafed civilians in the fields fleeing the town.
- Dora Maar was his tragic muse. She couldn't have children, and they had many rows. She was often depressed and had to have electro-convulsive treatment. She was however a photographer, poet and artist who assisted Picasso with *Guernica* and she was the official photographer who recorded its production.
- There are 9 paintings, 21 drawings and 6 small drawings on matchboxes of single female heads expressing anguish produced by Picasso between May and the end of October 1937 but the Tate's version is the last and the most famous.
- Picasso's mother wrote to him from Barcelona telling him of the burning of a local convent which had produced acrid, eye-watering smoke. The weeping Virgin (Mater Dolorosa), a traditional image in Spanish art, is often represented in sculptures with glass tears, like the one that flows towards this woman's right ear. 'The Weeping Woman' (La Llorona) is a legendary ghost in the folklore of Hispanic America. According to this tradition, she is the ghost of a woman who lost her children and cries while looking for them by the river, often causing misfortune to those who hear her.

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Salvador Dalí, *Autumnal Cannibalism*, 1936 (Room 3)



1. **Description.** This is one of Salvador Dalí's greatest works. It is called *Autumnal Cannibalism*. There is what could be a beach on which we see a chest of drawers and on top two torsos. If you look closely you can see that the two figures are eating each other using bright silver cutlery. The one on the left looks female with soft milky skin and the one on the right wearing a suit could be male. The female figure has her right arm round the neck of the male and is slicing what at first looks like his flesh with a knife. However, if you look more closely you can see it is her own breast she is cutting. Her elongated breast flows across the other figure and over its shoulder and she is carving a slice from it. Sadism and masochism are combined with cannibalism and self-cannibalism. The painting is about unrestrained consumption and Dalí draws us into the horror by adding detail upon detail, encouraging our eyes to penetrate further and further until we find ourselves visually consuming the painting.
2. **So what is going on?** It was painted in 1936, the year the Spanish Civil War started. There were atrocities on both sides—half a million people died and a similar number fled the country but Dalí took little interest in politics. Here, he is representing the civil war as an orgy of consumption, the Spanish people are eating themselves. Dalí wrote about, '**These Iberian beings mutually devouring each other**' and saw it as a '**pure phenomenon of natural history**'. He compared his view with '**Picasso who considered it a political phenomenon**'. In other words, he observed it as a scientist might observe the behaviour of ants and in the painting you can see a group of ants surrounding a hole in the skin of the female figure. She has a flap of skin hanging off but her flesh looks like the inside of a fruit. Dalí though was not an impassionate observer, for from it, as a child he was fascinated and repulsed by watching ants consume his still living, pet bat, so for him ants represented decay and decomposition and he also said they refer to enormous sexual desire. So, for Dalí, it could be death and decay or two lovers destroying themselves through their overwhelming sexual attraction.
3. **Symbols.** Ants are just one of the many symbols Dalí used. The drawers in the table, for example, store sins, unconscious and secret, often sexual desires. The apple on the figures head could represent the apple used by William Tell. Tell was a Swiss hero who resisted Austrian rule and was made to fire a crossbow bolt at an apple resting on his son's head. This was relevant to Dalí as in 1930 his father had broken off their relationship and Dalí described William Tell as '**the man whose success depends on his son's heroism**'. William Tell represents a dangerous family conflict which in Freudian terms represents a father castrating his son.
4. **Can art change the world?** Dalí is representing the Spanish Civil War using themes of sex, violence and consumption. Two figures suck, chew, cut and eat each other surrounded by food products, such as apples, nuts, bread, slices of Spanish sausage and soft pieces of meat. For Dalí the war was a lesson in natural history and so was unavoidable; to his countryman Picasso, by contrast, it was a terrible political reality and could be resolved through conflict.

Background Notes Salvador Dalí, *Autumnal Cannibalism*, 1936

- Salvador Dalí i Domènech (Figueres, Catalonia 11 May 1904-23 January 1989). Dalí had an elder brother also called Salvador who had died the year before he was born. His parents saw him as a reincarnation of his dead brother and dressed him in the same clothes and gave him the same toys. Dalí believed his father had been responsible for his brother's death and Dalí rejected and provoked his father by deliberate bed-wetting, simulated convulsions, prolonged screaming, feigned muteness and acts of random aggressiveness towards other children. Dalí first exhibited when he was 14 and even then was recognised as someone who could become a great painter. Dalí's mother died when he was 16 leaving him devastated. The following year his father remarried his aunt and Dalí was accepted as a student at the prestigious San Fernando Academy. He disagreed with a lot of the teaching but established a relationship with Luis Buñuel and Federico García Lorca. Lorca adored Salvador Dalí, and wanted a physical relationship that Dalí was too frightened to consummate.
- In 1925 (aged 21) Dalí held his first one-man exhibition and in 1929 (aged 25) he met his muse Gala (1894-1982), a Russian immigrant who was married to the Surrealist Paul Éluard. Dalí is most often associated with the Surrealists but he was formally expelled in 1934 for his reactionary political views. She divorced and married Dalí in 1934. Because of Dalí's purported fear of venereal disease and female genitalia he was said to have been a virgin when they met and he appears to have preferred masturbation to sexual intercourse. Gala was a nymphomaniac and shared Dalí's love of money, power and notoriety. Dalí was a candaulist, that is he liked to watch Gala make love to other men (the word is based on King Candaules, pronounced can-doe-lees, who exposed his wife to one of his Ministers). Dalí was also an enthusiastic masturbator who was aroused not just by women but by objects such as church towers. He was worried about the small size of his sexual organ which he claimed gave rise to '**inextinguishable laughter**' and he was also worried about the sexuality of women and he admitted to being a premature ejaculator who could achieve an orgasm just by looking.
- *Autumnal Cannibalism* was painted the year before *Guernica*. The Spanish Civil War had, on one side, General Franco's Nationalist army fighting the evils of communism and on the other the Republicans were fighting the evils of fascism. The Spanish Civil War was won by General Franco and the Nationalists and he became a dictator of a one-party state in which the only legal party was the Falangist, a form of fascism that was anti-communist, nationalistic and supported the Roman Catholic Church. Franco remained in power until his death in 1975 when Juan Carlos became King.
- Dalí said, '**My entire ambition in the pictorial domain consists in materializing the images of concrete irrationality with the most imperialistic rage of precision.**' In other words, Dalí's aim is to turn his fantasies and dreams into a real physical landscape by making them submit to his will through precise, detailed painting. Freudian theory underpins all of his interpretations of dreams and hallucinations. Dalí draws upon autobiographical material, childhood memories and his fetishes and animal symbolism. Dalí subscribed to André Breton's theory of automatism, but he opted for a method he called '**critical paranoia**', a state in which one can cultivate delusions while maintaining one's sanity.
- What is Surrealism? André Breton defined it as '**Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations**'. Surrealism seeks to subvert the rational basis of society and Dalí uses surrealism to attack and undermine sexual and social conventions. He had a number of personal symbols he used to represent his ideas, such as soft watches (eternity), burning giraffes (a monster of the Apocalypse), thin-legged elephants (man shackled to the earth but reaching for higher things), open drawers (the secret, hidden sins and complexes described by Freud), crutches (weaknesses but also instruments enabling superhuman performance), eggs (hope and love), ants (death, decay and immense sexual desire), snails (the

human head), grasshoppers (fear, as Dalí was very scared of grasshoppers), butterflies (the soul), silhouettes (imagination, dreams, good thoughts and motivational power as well as evil inner conflicts and inhibitions) and lion's heads (sexual savagery).

- In this painting we see the Spanish countryside in the background but with disturbing changes. The mountain on the horizon looks like a sleeping dog and a gnarled tree looks like a man with branches for arms and legs. The long shadows of the setting sun suggest an end is coming and the end is also suggested by the title, 'autumnal'. But we don't know what is coming to an end is it the war or is it the lives of everyone involved?
- There is an apple on the head of the male figure and another half-peeled apple on the table top perhaps representing William Tell's son's feelings after his father had fired a bolt at him—emotionally stripped. It could also represent the fruit of the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden and its consumption as the beginning of sin.
- The merging of the male and female heads could relate to Dalí's description of when he first kissed Gala. He wrote, '**And this first kiss, mixed with tears and saliva, punctuated by the audible contact of our teeth and furiously working tongues, touched only the fringe of the libidinous famine that made us bite and eat everything to the last! Meanwhile I was eating that mouth, whose blood already mingled with mine**' (see John Richardson, *Sacred Monsters, Sacred Masters*).
- Dalí made two films with Luis Buñuel, *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'Or*. In *Un Chien Andalou* there is a man's hand coming round the edge of a door that a woman is pushing closed. The hand has a hole in the palm and is covered in ants. The hand could be linked to masturbation and the door edge to the 'castration' of the hand. The French phrase for pins and needles is to have ants in the hand ('avoir des fourmis dans la main') and 'ants in the pants' ('avoir des fourmis dans son pantalon') means to be excited or agitated. The repeated close-ups in which the frame cuts off a hand at the wrist evokes the age-old paternal threat to sons found masturbating. Fingers are often bandaged in the film and the French word for bandage ('bander') also means 'to have an erection'.

References

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André Fougeron, *Martyred Spain*, 1937 (Room 3)



André Fougeron (1913-98), *Martyred Spain*, 1937

1. **Description.** This is André Fougeron's *Martyred Spain* and shows a raped female body alongside a dead horse whose hoof is in front of her vagina. This is one of the paintings with which he made his debut at the Salon of Independents in Paris in 1937. This painting positioned him on the political left in the Spanish Civil War. The horse and the woman embody Spain. The green horse takes on the form of the landscape into which the faceless and prone woman is plunged. The horse has buckled limbs and a decayed head suggesting a grim struggle. The horse's black and white hoof covers and points to the woman's sex and links the title 'martyred' with the woman's rape. The painting went through five revisions when he changed the position of the horse's hoof to clarify the link.
2. **Background.** The painting was produced at the same time as *Guernica* and Fougeron may have visited the Spanish Pavilion and revised his work afterwards. Fougeron was a political science student with no artistic training and this is an early painting when he was just learning to express himself artistically. He was one of the younger generation committed to Socialist Realism recently declared the official style of the International Communist Party.
3. **Picasso.** In the 1950s he exhibited *Transatlantic Civilization*, which is on display upstairs [on Level 4], in Media Networks [Room 3]. It is a caricature of the Americanisation of Europe which was then a major target of Communist Party propaganda. However, he became embroiled in internal Party struggles and with Joseph Stalin's death [in 1953] he lost out to the personal modernism of the Communist Pablo Picasso.

Notes on André Fougeron, *Martyred Spain*, 1937

- André Fougeron (1913-1998) was born to a working-class family and was trained as a metallurgist at a Renault factory. Like many left-wing intellectual Fougeron welcomed the 'Maison de la Culture' which was founded after the riots of February 1934 and whose aim was to make art accessible to the people. His work at this time was influenced by Andre Masson, German expressionism and Pablo Picasso. He joined the Communist Party and during the war printed clandestine journals criticizing Hitler and the concentration camps.
- After the war Fougeron became the official Communist Party artist. In 1953, he exhibited *Transatlantic Civilization*, a massive canvas exhibited only once at the Salon d'Automne which marked both his apotheosis and downfall. The Communist Party realized that Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger were its keys to intellectual acceptance and Fougeron tumbled from grace. The painting is dominated by an electric chair used to execute the Soviet spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. A dialogue between left and right, male and female, good and evil, joy and despair, new life and death revolves around a blue American car. Fougeron specifically tries to connect American capitalism and the Nazi occupation of France. In the background the American NATO building in Paris is plastered with recruitment posters for the Korean war; French mothers mourn their dead babies, children play in polluted fields, pensioners sit on a bench after being evicted while an American soldier lounges reading a salacious magazine.
- Pablo Picasso joined the French Communist Party in 1944 and never left. Artists, such as Fougeron and Picasso, are rarely seen as having a valid political viewpoint. As Barnet Newman, the anarchist and abstract expressionist, noted caustically, **'The artist is approached not as an original thinker in his own medium but, rather, as an instinctive, intuitive executant, who, largely unaware of what he is doing, breaks through the mystery by the magic of his performance to "express" truths the professionals think they can read better than he can himself.'**

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David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Cosmos and Disaster*, 1936 (Room 3)



David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-74), *Cosmos and Disaster*, 1936

1. **The artist.** This is *Cosmos and Disaster* by David Siqueiros and it was produced in New York as a comment on the Spanish Civil War. He was a revolutionary Mexican artist and activist in the first half of the twentieth century. With Diego Rivera he was one of the leading muralists. The murals they produced were sponsored by the Mexican government and were deliberately propagandising. There was political and artistic rivalry between the Trotskyist Rivera and the Stalinist Siqueiros.
2. **Description.** Siqueiros was a radical Marxist who believed modern art should use modern materials and so this picture is painted with fast drying cellulose car paint mixed with sand and painted on fine copper mesh because of the weight. The mesh and the grit are clearly visible as are the splinters of wood he embedded in the paint surface. He avoided paintbrushes and used an airbrush and dripped paint. This results in a syrupy surface with complex suggestions and allusions. He would also put the painting flat on the ground and pour thinner on the paint which he then swirled around, a technique we see used on the left. The thin triangles were produced by spraying paint after fixing stencils to the surface. The red drop was probably produced by dropping red paint from a stick. All these techniques were being used to fulfil his political purpose.
3. **Influenced Pollock.** The painting was produced in New York in his Experimental Workshop which was regularly visited by Jackson Pollock. Some say that it was Siqueiros that introduced Pollock to the idea of drip painting.
4. **Went to fight.** *Cosmos and Disaster* has a rich, dark quality appropriate to its apocalyptic vision which reflects the artist's response to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War that year. Its near abstraction adds to the horror and despair. The glued on wood in the foreground conveys the picture of a shattered world. It is possible that photographs of First World War trenches were a point of reference. The following year, in early 1937, Siqueiros volunteered for the International Brigade fighting Franco in Spain.

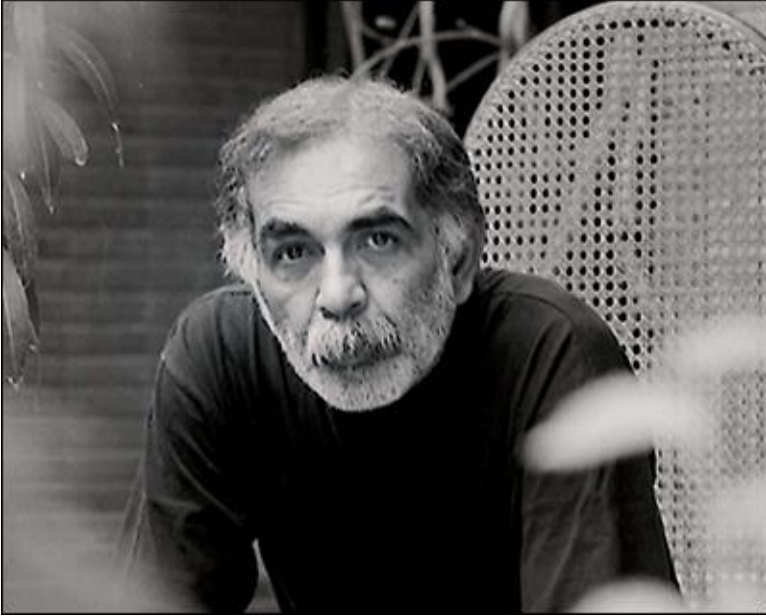
Notes on David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Cosmos and Disaster*, 1936

- David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974, pronounced 'si-care-os') was a revolutionary Mexican artist and activist best known for his large murals. Along with Diego Rivera (1886-1957) he established 'Mexican Muralism'. He was a Marxist-Leninist in support of the Soviet Union and a member of the Mexican Communist Party who participated in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Leon Trotsky in May 1940.
- Like Picasso he adopted his mother's name and he was born José and changed it to David when his first wife used it to compare him to Michelangelo's *David*.
- He travelled to New York in 1936 and has been credited with teaching drip and pour techniques to Pollock that later resulted in his "allover" paintings, made from 1947 to 1950, and which constitute Pollock's greatest achievement.
- The Mexican Revolution lasted from 1910 to 1929 and in that year the National Revolutionary Party took power. This one party ruled the country through the 'Mexican Miracle' (1940-1980), the 1982 crisis and economic collapse and the total economic collapse in 1994 when Mexico had to be rescued by Bill Clinton.

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Kaveh Golestan, *Untitled (Prostitute series)*, 1975-77



Kaveh Golestan (1950-2003), *Untitled (Prostitute series)*, 1975-77

- This is *Untitled (Prostitute series)* by Kaveh Golestan, an Iranian artist who grew up in Tehran and was later educated in England. He is an important pioneer of Iranian documentary photography and he has influenced later generations of Iranian artists. In 1974 he published an educational book for children about the ancient Iranian art of woodblock printing on fabric. Between 1975 and 1977 he created a number of socially motivated projects such as this one *Prostitutes* as well as *Workers* and *Mental Asylum*. In 1979 the Iranian revolution took place which Golestan recorded and later publicised the photographs in a photobook entitled *Rebellion*.
- In 1991 he made a film about media censorship in Iran which resulted in house arrest for two years. This marked the end of his photographic period and the beginning of his documentary filmmaking. He travelled the world recording historical events from the conflict in Northern Ireland to the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war for CNN and BBC. He won a Pulitzer Prize while reporting on Saddam Hussein's chemical attacks on the Kurds in 1988. In 2003, aged 53, he was killed by a landmine while working for the BBC in Iraq.
- These photographs were taken in Tehran's red-light district which was known as the Citadel. Women sold their bodies with a frankness and bleakness that is illustrated in these harsh black-and-white images that contrast the flesh of the women with the oppressive marked walls of their rooms. Two years after these photographs were taken the Citadel was burned to the ground by religious militants and many of the women perished. Following the revolution women were forced to cover their hair and bodies. Prostitution, however, remained and to this day clerics issue licenses for 'temporary marriages' that last an hour. Today, many prostitutes are married and work with their husband's knowledge to make money in a struggling economy. When Golestan took these photographs, the prostitutes were mostly in their 30s and today they are teenagers trying to make money to eat. These photographs of the Citadel are the only record remaining as it has been erased from the public memory and the area has been converted into a park.

Notes on Kaveh Golestan, *Untitled (Prostitute series)*, 1975-77

- He was the son of a famous Iranian filmmaker, Ebrahim Golestan. He was educated at Millfield public school in Somerset which he found repressive. He formed a pop group and after the headmaster confiscated a recording they had made he hitchhiked back to Teheran.

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Lorna Simpson, *Five Day Forecast*, 1991 (not on display)



Lorna Simpson (b. 1960), *Five Day Forecast*, 1991

1. **Description.** This work is called *Five Day Forecast* and is by Lorna Simpson. It consists of five large photos of a woman's torso. She is standing with her arms folded, which could be in self-protection or in defiance. They remind us of criminal mugshots but they are missing the most important feature, the face. Instead of a head each photo has a plaque with 'Monday' to 'Friday' on, and under the photos a number of words such as 'Misdescription', 'Misinformation' and 'Misidentify'. 'Mis-' is an Old English root meaning bad or wrong so it introduces negative associations and combined with the folded arms might indicate a breakdown in communication. The 'Mis' could also refer to the name of the woman – 'Miss' or 'Ms' so and so, in which case all the views on all the days are negative.
2. **The artist.** This is an early work by Lorna Simpson, an Afro-American conceptual photographer, who is concerned with race and gender. She was part of a movement in the 80s and 90s called 'Identity Politics'. When we see photos in a magazine or even art works in a museum there is often a caption or title which we use to interpret the picture. The caption and the photo usually fit together to complete the picture, giving us verbal clues and amplification so that we know how to read the photograph. Here the text and the photos make us think twice about what is going on, as the information that we need to complete the story is omitted. The title suggests a five-day weather forecast, but in this case it is what will happen at work. The repetitious images suggest boredom and an element of drudgery. As a child, Lorna Simpson was allowed to hold her parents' camera but not carry it around. She recalls having a cold and collecting coupons from Kleenex boxes to obtain a free Polaroid camera, which she then carried everywhere. She produced this installation when she was doing various secretarial and receptionist temp jobs in the 1980s to earn money to support her art. As anyone who has done these jobs knows, the person employed is often treated as a machine for carrying out the work.
3. **The photographs.** Originally, these photographs were taken using a Polaroid camera but she remade the work later using a large format professional camera. The model was Alva Rogers. At first glance one could think it was the same photo, but if you look more carefully you can see that they are all slightly different. The arms are folded differently, the model had swayed slightly from side to side, the shoulders and collar bone are different, and there are different wrinkles in the garment. The model is wearing a simple white cotton shift, which may be a reference to the clothing worn by slaves, which obliterated their individual identity, although on closer examination there is a small work of embroidery on the shift.
4. We will next pass through a darkened room with 12 monitors showing *Workers Leaving the Factory in 11 Decades*, a work by Harun Farocki ('HAH-roon fah-RAH-key'). We will cross it diagonally and stop in the middle of the large room after that.

Notes on Lorna Simpson, *Five Day Forecast*, 1991

- Lorna Simpson (b. 1960) is an African-American artist and photographer.
- A series of five plaques, engraved with upper-case text in a simple sans serif font, is installed above the photographs. The plaques are positioned directly above each of the photographs, and bear the names of the days of the week from Monday through to Friday. As the title of the work emphasizes, this structure suggests a diary of sorts, or at any rate a 'forecast', to use its meteorological metaphor. Underneath the images are ten additional plaques, each featuring a single word. From left to right they read: 'Misdescription', 'Misinformation', 'Misidentify', 'Misdiagnose', 'Misfunction', 'Mistranscribe', 'Misremember', 'Misgauge', 'Misconstrue' and 'Mistranslate'. The words, with their negative connotations, imply a repeated breakdown in communication, within personal, professional and racial relationships. At the same time, the pun on 'mis/miss' raises questions of gender and identity and the exchange of power within such relationships. Curator Okwui Enwezor has described the effect of the catalogue of words: **'Simpson deploys a staccato devise, a kind of mechanistic action of repetition and differentiation. One feels as if doused with a shower of recriminations.'** (Okwui Enwezor, 'Repetition and Differentiation – Lorna Simpson's Iconography of the Racial Sublime', in Whitney Museum of American Art 2007, p.122.)
- *Five Day Forecast* is typical of Simpson's work of the mid-1980s, with its formal combination of image and text and examination of the processes through which meaning and understanding take place. In these early works Simpson often used the image of a black woman, photographed cropped, or from behind, against a stark background, and accompanied by text panels. Both text and image are deliberately austere in style. *Five Day Forecast* was first conceived in 1988, at which time Simpson made two versions of the work using Polaroid photographs; one of these was subsequently damaged. In 1991 she decided to remake the work in an edition with silver gelatin print photographs which she shot with a large format 5 x 4 camera. This later version exists in an edition of three plus one artist's proof; this is the second in the edition.
- The work may be a comment on the relationship between the individual and a society in which many of us have to carry out boring work which goes unrecognised.
- Tate website: *Five Day Forecast* 1991 comprises five large-scale framed black and white photographs depicting the torso of a black woman clothed in a loose-fitting white shift. The photographs are displayed close together in a horizontal row. In each one the subject is seen from the front, cropped so that her head and legs are out of the image. She stands with her arms folded tightly across her chest, emphasizing the wrinkles in the fabric of her clothing. This pose appears both guarded and defiant. The sequence of photographs, with their subtle variances in the subject's posture, suggests a series of time-lapse photographs of a figure shifting slightly from side to side.
- In the 70s Simpson went to The School of Visual Arts in New York, first working in paint before moving to photography. Her course was rather 'old school' and taught documentary photography, such as street scenes. She was working as a graphic artist, designing visual aids for use in court rooms, when a friend suggested she enrolled in graduate school in California. For her first year she admits she was more interested in wine and dinner on the beach but then started working more seriously, moving from documentary style photography to pared down studio work, constructed rather than observed. Also, her photos are very slick and devoid of emotion, unlike much documentary photography.

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Joseph Beuys, *Lightning with Stag in its Glare*, 1958-85 (Room 7)



1. **Description.** This is called *Lightning with Stag in its Glare* by Joseph Beuys. The title is slightly misleading as it suggests we should find a realistic stag with antlers lit by a bolt of lightning. However, objects were not important to Beuys who wanted to represent the elemental forces of nature and our relationship to them. The large bronze object at the back is the lightning strike and, like lightning, it is powerful and potentially dangerous. The lightning is an elemental force and illuminates a group of creatures. The stag is the silver object which was originally made from an ironing board but Beuys remade it using cast aluminium to suggest the glare. Since childhood, Beuys had been interested in northern European folklore, in which certain animals are endowed with mystical power. The stag had particular significance for him as a spiritual guide that appears in times of distress and danger. Its annual shedding and regrowth of its antlers made it a symbol of rebirth and renewal. The cart represents a humble goat, one of the first animals to be domesticated and the lumps of bronze on the floor are primordial, blind worm-like creatures. The box with a small compass on top is mounted on a tripod and is called '**Boothia Felix**'. This is the northern most part of Canada as was named after Felix Booth and was the location of magnetic north – another reference, with the lightning flash itself, to the natural energies of the earth
2. **Meaning.** To understand Beuys work it is necessary to know more about Beuys. He said that '**Everybody is an artist**' and what he meant was that the way we choose to live our lives is our artistic statement. He felt that all art is intrinsically revolutionary and he wrote '**The revolution is us**'. If we could pay attention to our relationship with nature, then it would transform society. Our lives all depend on vast forces of nature that are completely outside our control. If a tsunami hits our shores, or an earthquake destroys our buildings or a volcano erupts then we are powerless to control or resist it.
3. **History of this work.** In 1982, Beuys took part in an exhibition in Berlin, where he installed a huge mound of clay and surrounded it with sculptures as well as furniture and tools from his studio. Afterwards he made casts of some of the elements to create *Lightning with Stag in its Glare* 1958-85. The bolt of lightning itself was a bronze cast from a section of the clay mound, while the stag was cast in aluminium as if illuminated by a sudden flash of light. Made towards the end of Beuys's life, this major installation could be a scene from a primordial jungle or a nightmare future world. It addresses themes of finality and death, but also ideas of regeneration and the transformative power of nature.
4. **Influence.** Beuys is now regarded as one of the most influential artists of the second half of the twentieth century. He was one of the founders of the Green Party in Germany and he wants us to appreciate the interconnectedness between all life forms and so create a path towards an ecologically sustainable future. He founded the Organization for Direct Democracy which believes that all political decision should take place using referendums.

Notes on Joseph Beuys, *Lightning with Stag in its Glare*, 1958-85

- Joseph Beuys (1921-1986, pronounced like 'Boyce') was born in Germany in 1921 and so his teenage years were overshadowed by the rise of the National Socialist Party and Hitler youth. According to Beuys, when the Nazis burned books in his schoolyard he rescued Carl Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae*. In 1941 Beuys volunteered for the Luftwaffe as a radio operator and he later became a rear gunner and was shot down over the Crimea. This became a defining moment in his life as he claimed he almost died and was saved by the nomadic Tartars who covered him in fat and wrapped him in felt. Some people claim that although the pilot died shortly after the crash, Beuys was conscious, recovered by a German search team, and there were no Tatars in the village at that time. Nevertheless, the incident was traumatic for Beuys and was a defining moment in his life.
- After the war he had a nervous breakdown and dedicated his life to healing society as he had been healed. He turned himself into a work of art and was one of the earliest performance artists. He always wore blue jeans, a white shirt, a fishing vest covered in useful pockets and a felt trilby hat from Lock & Co of St James to insulate the two metal plates in his skull from extremes of temperature.
- From 1947 to 1951 he studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and was interested in Rudolf Steiner, Christianity, mythology, botany and zoology. This led him to evolve a rich and complex symbolism, including archetypal animal images of hares, sheep, swans, and bees. His first one-man exhibition was at the Städtisches Museum, Kleve in 1961. He moved from Kleve to Düsseldorf in 1961 and became professor of sculpture at Düsseldorf Academy. He participated in the Fluxus movement from 1962 and started in 1963 to give action-performances using such elements as dead hares, fat and felt. A conflict developed over his teaching methods and he was dismissed in 1972 leading to student strikes and widespread protests. Beuys said, **'teaching is my greatest work of art' and 'Objects aren't very important any more. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it'**.
- Beuys was a member of Fluxus, an international network of artists, composers and designers in the 1960s. It was anti-commercial and anti-art and was influenced by John Cage. Cage said that the process of creating was more important than the finished product. Another important influence was Marcel Duchamp, a French artist who was active within Dada and whose 'ready-mades' influenced Fluxus.
- Beuys first public performance in 1965 was **'How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare'**. He spent three hours explaining his art to a dead hare that he carried round the exhibition. Beuys wrote, **'everyone consciously or unconsciously recognizes the problem of explaining things, particularly where art and creative work are concerned ... even a dead animal preserves more powers of intuition than some human beings with their stubborn rationality. The problem lies in the word "understanding" and its many levels which cannot be restricted to rational analysis. Imagination, inspiration, and longing all lead people to sense that these other levels also play a part in understanding ... my technique has been to try and seek out the energy points in the human power field, rather than demanding specific knowledge or reactions on the part of the public. I try to bring to light the complexity of creative areas'**. Beuys argued that social decision-making should be made by the people through referendums rather than elected political parties. It was this concept of 'direct democracy' that he explored in his Information Action at the Tate in 1972, from which three of the blackboards shown here are taken.
- Antony Gormley said, **'he realized that art was about in a way understanding who we are, by understanding our roots' and 'we only understand who we are through the making of these otherwise useless objects that in someone chart our passage through time'**.
- The long date range of the piece is because it is based on ideas he started to develop in 1958. It is based on a work he produced for the 1982 exhibition *Zeitgeist* but in that exhibition he used a

mound of clay and furniture from his studio. He cast the bronze representation of lightning from the clay he used and the rough texture of the clay can still be seen. The work is suspended from a girder and just touches the floor but is not resting on it. It represents elemental forces and energy. The aluminium structure represents the stag and was originally an ironing board. The stag is a symbol from Christian mythology and from shamanism, both areas of deep interest to Beuys. It represents the initiation of the hunter/gatherer, life itself and stag act as guides through the spirit world. The stag was also used as a symbol for Christ. Beuys said that when he was in trouble he was visited by a stag which gave him hope and inspiration. The lumps of clay represent primordial creatures, tools and the earth and civilization. Beuys wrote that the stag appeared '**in times of distress and danger**' bringing '**the warm positive element of life.**' He concurred with earlier Christian myths that it was '**endowed with spiritual powers and insight.**'

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

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Theaster Gates, *Civil Tapestry 4*, 2011 (Room 9)



Theaster Gates (b. 1973), *Civil Tapestry 4*, 2011

1. **Description.** This is *Civil Tapestry 4* by the Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates. Look closely and you will see writing on these beige coloured vertical stripes. This may give you the clue to what they are. They are firehoses.
2. **Why fire hoses?** In 1963, a group of black school children and students were marching peacefully for equal rights in Birmingham, Alabama. Police used powerful fire hoses to break up the march, injuring many of the young protestors. The public outcry was so great that fire hoses are no longer used in America for crowd control. You can see along the side of the hose the pressure to which it has been tested.
3. **Abstract.** We can also look at the whole work as an abstract painting. As such it looks like the work of the artist [and abstract expressionist painter] Barnet Newman. Newman's paintings are often one overall colour with a 'zip' of another colour going from top to bottom. Although the combination of shades and colours creates a harmonious wall covering the message behind this piece is far from harmonious.
4. **The artist.** Gates is an American artist who studied in Japan and made his name by holding soul food dinners in Chicago in honour of a Japanese potter who came to America, married a black woman, and created a unique Asian and African-American ceramics style. However, Gates had invented the potter in order to raise the profile of his project to revitalize Chicago. Gates's aim is to bridge the gap between art and life by selling his work in order to fund the Rebuild Foundation in his home city of Chicago. This is a non-profit organization whose aim is to rebuild and refit unused facilities in deprived areas to create cultural spaces. He lives in one of the poorest area of Chicago and spends the money he makes from art on renovating the area.
5. **Can art change the world?** We have been considering the question 'Can art change the world?' In this case Gates is literally changing the world. His most ambitious project is the Dorchester Project which has converted old buildings into cultural institutions. Gates purchased an abandoned bank on Chicago's South Side, and created 100 works of art in marble that he sold for \$5,000 each to help raise the money to renovate the building. His buildings have become a hub for cultural activity and house a book and record library that he bought when the stores went bust. He has also built venues for dinners, concerts and performances. Gates describes this project as 'real-estate art' since the renovations of the buildings are financed entirely by the sale of sculptures and artworks that were created from the materials salvaged from their interiors.

Theaster Gates, *Civil Tapestry* 4, 2011

- Theaster Gates (b. 1973) was born in Chicago and is an installation artist. He has exhibited internationally and deals with urban planning, religious space and craft issues. He is committed to the revitalization of poor neighbourhoods through combining urban planning and art practices.
- In May 1963, a group of black school children and students were marching peacefully for equal rights in Birmingham, Alabama. Police used powerful fire hoses to break up the march, injuring many of the young protestors. Gates has arranged 94 strips of decommissioned fire hoses to resemble the composition of a 1960s American abstract painting – a form that pointedly failed to engage with the Civil Rights movement. Gates also questions whether the protestors' goals have been fulfilled. **'Some of us are slightly better while others are a great deal better', he has reflected, 'but... things are far from equal'.**
- Gates is the founder of the Rebuild Foundation and one of its most celebrated projects is the Dorchester Project. This includes the Archive House holds 14,000 books on architecture and the Listening House holds 8,000 records. In 2013, he purchased the Stony Island State Savings Bank from the city of Chicago using an art work consisting of 100 'bond certificates' which were engraved marble slabs pulled from the bank that he sold for \$5,000 each. This was part of a \$3.5 million campaign to turn the 1920s building into a thriving cultural hub.
- In 2007 he arranged a dinner for 100 guests. Gates then regaled his audience with the story of how in 1985 he met a master Japanese ceramicist, Shoji Yamaguchi, who had settled in Mississippi after WWII, married a local black woman and civil rights activist, then developed a plate especially suitable for the preferred cuisine of black people. The Yamaguchis died in a car accident, leaving their pottery collection to their son, who founded the Yamaguchi Institute to carry on his parents' work. However, the whole story was a fabrication to expose the artifice of art and reveal the world as it is rather than as we wish it were.
- In January 2014, he designed a million-dollar installation for a subway terminal. It is the largest public art project in the history of the Chicago Transit Authority.
- In October 2015 he created an installation called *Sanctum* in the bombed out shell of Temple Church, Bristol with English Heritage that provided 24 hours of music and performance continuously over a 24-day period.

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Teresa Margolles, *Flag I (Bandera I)*, 2009 (Room 9)



Teresa Margolles (b. 1963), *Flag I (Bandera I)*, 2009

1. **Description.** We see what looks like a dirty flag. The flag is dirty because it contains traces of human blood and soil from the sites of murders around the northern border of Mexico. It represents the thousands of murdered citizens the Mexican government ignored.
2. **The artist.** Teresa Margolles, is a Mexican artist who investigates the social causes and consequences of death. She was trained in forensic medicine and worked in a morgue. Her art is made from materials from the morgue and from crime scenes and she comes from one of the major drug areas.
3. **Monument.** Originally her work symbolised the horror and violence of the Mexican drug trade. It set out to shock and it used our squeamishness to gain our attention. Her work is now less symbolic as it contains the actual remains of those she honours and mourns. It has become a monument to the dead.
4. **Other work.** A lot of her work appears, initially, to offer a pleasant aesthetic experience. For example, in another work, called *In the Air*, soap bubbles float across the room but they are made from water used to wash the corpses in the morgue. Another work consists of bloody floor tiles from a building in which one of her friends, a promising young artist, was murdered and a third work has water which was used to clean bodies in a morgue dripping and hissing on to hotplates.
5. **Can art change the world?** Mexicans are horrified about what is going on in their beautiful country and Margolles work is a scream of despair. Her aim is to expose the social factors that make violent death an accepted normality. She has been praised for her courage and integrity and for speaking truth to power through public exposure of government complicity in violence and poverty, not only in Mexico, but throughout the world.

Notes on Teresa Margolles, *Flag I (Bandera I)*, 2009

- Teresa Margolles was born in Culiacán (pronounced 'coolya-can') in 1963. Culiacán was the birthplace of an economy based on illegal drug export to the United States.
- As an artist she researches the social causes and consequences of death. She began by producing gruesome images of corpses in city morgues. Her contact with the families of the victims led her to a deeper social engagement. For Margolles the morgue is an accurate reflection of the local society with its poverty, drug-related crime and brutal military presence. She has developed a restrained approach to speak for the nameless victims counted as 'collateral damage'. Her work is no longer symbolic but contains the remains of those she honours and mourns.
- Another version of this work was shown at the Venice Biennial in 2009, where Margolles represented Mexico with an exhibition titled *What Else Could We Talk About?* As the government failed to intervene in the drug wars, the blood-stained cloth was hung outside the Mexican pavilion as a memorial for citizens that the nation ignored.
- In 1999 she created a video, *Bathing the Baby*, of her tenderly washing a foetus donated by a friend who had miscarried but could not afford a funeral. She later buried the foetus in a white cement block (*Burial*, 1999) making the child's grave into what appeared to be a work of minimalist sculpture.

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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:
 - Rachel Whiteread, *House*
 - Burj al Murr, 'Tower of Bitterness', Beirut, Lebanon
 - Piet Mondrian, *Houses on the Green*, 1900 (aged 28)
 - Piet Mondrian, *Evening; Red Tree*, 1908-10
 - Piet Mondrian, *The Tree*, c. 1913
 - Hélio Oiticica, *Parangolés*, 1964-79
 - Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937
 - Dora Maar
 - *Guernica* (from Luftwaffe files)
 - Walter Crane, *The Workers' May-Pole*, 1894, engraving
 - Barnett Newman, *Adam*, 1951-52
 - Theaster Gates, *Dorchester project*, 2010



Burj al Murr,
'Tower of Bitterness',
Beirut, Lebanon



Piet Mondrian, *Houses on the Grain*, 1900 (aged 28)



Piet Mondrian, *Evening: Red Tree*, 1908-10



Piet Mondrian, *The Tree*, c. 1913



Hélio Oiticica, *Parangolés*, 1964-79





Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937

Dora Maar



Guernica (from Luftwaffe files)





Theaster Gates, Dorchester Project, 2010



Summary of 'Artist and Society' (11:00-11:45), North Level 2 West

Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963), *Demolished*, 1996.

Hackney, East London, Thatcher's Britain (PM 1979-90), rioting 1991-2. Photos taken 1993-5. Memorial to detritus and what is lost. Turner Prize winner 1993 for *House*. **'I don't think art changes the world in terms of stopping people dying of Aids or of starvation or being homeless. But for an individual ... it can enhance daily life, reflect our times and, in that sense, change the way you think and are.'**

Marwan Rechmaoui (b. 1964), *Monument for Living*, 2001-8.

Burj El Murr (1774). 'Tower of Bitterness'. Tallest building in Beirut. Snipers, prison, 'tossings'. 'War of the Hotels'. Civil War (1975-90) 250,000 deaths, 1 million left. Sunni, Shia, Christian and others. Increased security means we are losing our freedom but we are all strangers leading to tolerance.

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition B (No. II) with Red*, 1935.

Argued with Theo van Doesburg over diagonals. Blue took a year. Started with conventional landscapes. Theosophy. Deeply passionate, left fiancée for Paris. Vertical = male, horizontal = female. Liked jazz, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. Avoided balance. Save the world. **'The emotion of beauty is always hindered by particular appearance of an 'object'; the object must therefore be abstracted from any figurative representation.'**

Victor Pasmore (1908-1998), *Abstract in White, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Grey and Pink*, c. 1963.

23 wooden blocks. Pasmore said, he saw a **'revolution of Painting ... (when) the naturalist painter has been forced to start completely again'**. Art historian Herbert Read described his abstract art as **'The most revolutionary event in post-war British art'**

Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980), *Metaesquema*, 1958.

Inspired by Mondrian and Malevich. 350 works. Dynamic and symmetry. Military dictatorship 1963-85. *Parangolés* (1964-79, 'par-an-go-lay') shown in Tate in 2007. Samba school in favela. 'Colour-in-motion'. Art and play.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Weeping Woman*,

1937. Spanish Civil War (1936-39). *Guernica*. General Franco asked German air force to bomb. Now in Reina Sofia. Painting 'instrument for offensive and defensive war'. **'Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It is an instrument for offensive and defensive war against the enemy.'** Dora Maar (1907-1997), lover, 'weeping women', 'women are suffering machines'. Hope? Roland Penrose donated. Donations.

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), *Autumnal Cannibalism*, 1936.

'Iberian being mutually devouring each other'. **'pure phenomenon of natural history'**. Ants, decay and sexual desire. Bat story. Observed as scientist. Symbols – drawers, apple, William Tell and father.

André Fougeron (1913-98), *Martyred Spain*, 1937.

May have been influenced by Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*. Political science student, no artistic training. Committed to Socialist Realism. Painted propaganda but dropped in 1953 in favour of the internationally famous Picasso.

David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-74), *Cosmos and Disaster*, 1936.

Mexican Marxist artist, muralist with Diego Rivera. Cellulose car paint, copper mesh, wood splinters. Influenced Jackson Pollock. Response to Spanish Civil War, inspired by photos of WWI trenches, volunteered for International Brigade to fight in Spain.

Kaveh Golestan (1950-2003), *Untitled (Prostitute series)*, 1975-77.

Pioneering Iranian artist. Very influential. Created *Prostitutes* as well as *Workers* and *Mental Asylum*. 1979 Iranian revolution he published photobook *Rebellion*. 1991 made film about Iranian censorship and was put under house arrest. Tehran's red-light district was called the Citadel and it was a walled area that was burned by religious militants. Women were forced to cover their hair and bodies. Today, there is still prostitution but clerics provide one-hour temporary 'marriage licences'. In the 70s prostitutes were in their 30s they are now teenagers selling their bodies for food.

Joseph Beuys (1921-86), *Lightning with Stag in its Glare*, 1958-85. Lightning, stag – ironing board, primordial creatures were tools covered in clay, goats in trolley, Boothia Felix and compass. **‘Everybody is an artist’. ‘The revolution is us’.** 1982 exhibition was clay then cast in bronze. Founded Green Party and Organisation for Direct Democracy. Was one of the most influential artists of the second half 20th century. Beuys said, **‘teaching is my greatest work of art’ and ‘Objects aren’t very important any more. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it’.**

Theaster Gates (b. 1973), *Civil Tapestry 4*, 2011. 94 strips of decommissioned firehose. Fire hoses were used on a peaceful march that included black school children in 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama. Hoses are no longer used in the USA. References Barnet Newman ‘zip’ paintings and their lack of political relevance. Gates is African-American and studied in Japan. He invented a Japanese potter who married a black American. Chicago South Side Rebuild Foundation. He found a derelict bank and created 100 works of art from its marble walls and sold them for \$5,000 each to part-fund the project. Book and record libraries, cafes, concerts. ‘Real estate art’. In 2014 he designed a \$1m subway terminal. In 2015 he played music in bombed out Temple Church, Bristol, 24 hours a day for 24 days.

Teresa Margolles (b. 1963), *Flag I (Bandera I)*, 2009. The flag is dirty as it contains the dirt and blood from murder scenes in Mexico. She worked in a morgue and her work investigates the social causes and consequences of death. She initially set out to shock but has now toned down the horror and creates monuments to the dead. *In the Air* soap bubbles made from water used to wash corpses. Another work uses the bloody floor tiles on which her friend was murdered. She is horrified that violent death has become the norm in Mexico and wants to expose the government’s complicity.