

This course is an eclectic wander through art history. It consists of twenty two-hour talks starting in September 2018 and the topics are largely taken from exhibitions held in London during 2018. The aim is not to provide a guide to the exhibition but to use it as a starting point to discuss the topics raised and to show the major art works. An exhibition often contains 100 to 200 art works but in each two-hour talk I will focus on the 20 to 30 major works and I will often add works not shown in the exhibition to illustrate a point.

References and Copyright

- The talks are given to a small group of people and all the proceeds, after the cost of the hall is deducted, are given to charity.
- The notes are based on information found on the public websites of Wikipedia, Tate, National Gallery, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Khan Academy and the Art Story.
- If a talk uses information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are based on an exhibition use the booklets and book associated with the exhibition.
- Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under

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- If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.

ART HISTORY REVEALED

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impressionism in London 2. Modigliani 3. Gothic Revival 4. Charles I: King and Collector <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. A Century of Painting Life 6. The Birth of Art Photography 7. Picasso 1932 8. Monet & Architecture 9. The Invention of Antiquity 10. Rodin and Ancient Greece <p>Term 1: Wed 26 September, (half-term 24 October) to 5 December 2018</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Art after World War One 2. The Summer Exhibition 3. Mantegna and Bellini 4. Burne-Jones 5. Klimt and Schiele 6. Lorenzo Lotto and His Portraits 7. The Turner Prize 8. Gainsborough's Family Album 9. Van Gogh and Britain 10. Michelangelo versus Leonardo <p>Term 2: Wed 9 January to 13 March 2019 (no half-term)</p>
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Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September, half-term 31 October – 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 – 7 May 2018
- 2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 – 2 April 2018**
3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January – 15 April 2018
4. All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
6. Picasso 1932 - Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April – 29 July 2018
8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April – 29 July 2018
9. Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June – 16 September 2018
10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 – 19 August 2018
11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 – 27 January 2019

12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 – 24 February 2019
13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 – 10 February 2019
15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 - 3 February 2019
16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, March 2019. Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his relationship with Britain. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

Extras Not Based on an Exhibition

- Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period
- The Invention of Antiquity – refers to ideas in Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001, Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*, 1997 and John Boardman, *Greek Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo – buy the novel *Oil and Marble*, not released until 5 July, 2018, and *The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance*
- The Turner Prize

London Galleries

Wallace
 British Museum
 Hayward
 National Gallery
 National Portrait Gallery
 White Cube
 Serpentine
 Tate Britain
 Tate Modern
 Royal Academy
 Estorics



Week 2: based on 'Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 – 2 April 2018'

Content

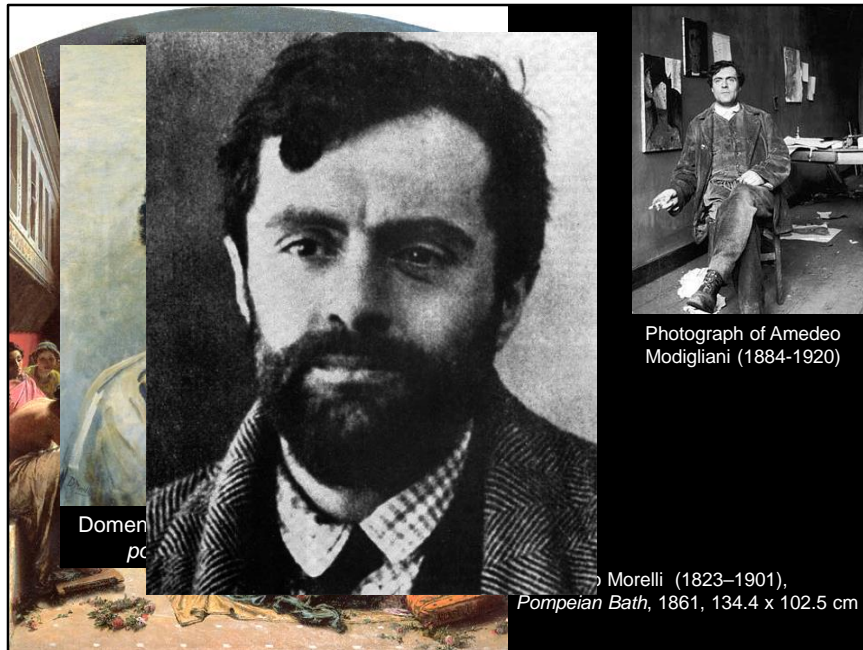
1. Introduction: Modigliani & Modernity
 - Self-Portrait and photograph of AM
2. The Excitement of Paris
 - Antisemitism, met leading artists Picasso, patron Dr Paul Alexandre
 - *Bust of Nude Woman with Hat*, 1908 with Dongen *Torso*
 - *Portrait Paul Alexandre*
 - Beatrice Hastings, lover and artist
3. Modigliani & Sculpture
 - Carved heads exhibited at Salon d'Automne
4. Modigliani & Cinema (?)
5. Modigliani & His Poetic Influences
6. Modigliani's Modern Women
 - Independent womanhood, dressed and undressed
 - *Elvira at a Table* and *Standing Nude (Elvira)*
 - *Marguerite and Female Nude*
 - *Nude*, 1917

7. Modigliani & the Riviera

- *The Little Peasant*, c. 1918 (Cezanne)
- *Nanic Osterlind photo and Boy in Short Pants*
- *Marie*, 1918
- *Rachel Osterlind*, 1919 and photo

8. Modigliani's Inner Circle

- Jeanne Hébuterne
- *Final Self-Portrait*



Photograph of Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) in his studio

Giovanni Boldini (1842–1931), *Portrait of Giuseppe Verdi in a Top Hat*, 1886, pastel on cardboard, National Gallery Of Modern Art, Rome

Domenico Morelli (1823–1901), *Pompeian Bath*, 1861, 134.4 x 102.5 cm, 27.5 x 40 cm, private collection. His ability took him from a poor family in Naples to become Professor of Fine Arts in Naples.

Domenico Morelli (1823–1901), *Self-portrait*

Photograph of Amedeo Modigliani in 1919

- Amedeo Modigliani was the fourth child, and his birth coincided with the disastrous financial collapse of his father's business interests. Amedeo's birth saved the family from ruin; according to an ancient law, creditors could not seize the bed of a pregnant woman or a mother with a newborn child. The bailiffs entered the family's home just as his mother, Eugenia went into labour; the family protected their most valuable assets by piling them on top of her.
- Modigliani drew from a very early age and considered himself a painter before he began formal training. When he was fourteen he was struck by typhoid fever and in his delirium he said he wanted to see the paintings in the Palazzo Pitti and the Uffizi in Florence. His mother promised that she would take him to Florence as

soon as he recovered. She fulfilled her promise and enrolled him with the best local painting master in his home town of Livorno, Guglielmo Micheli, where he studied from 1898 to 1900 (aged 14 to 16). He studied 19th-century Italian art and was influenced by the work of **Giovanni Boldini** (1842-1931, 'the Master of Swish'). He showed great promise but had to stop his studies because he developed tuberculosis when he was 16, a disease that eventually killed him and which he tried to hide all his life.

- In **1901**, he **travelled to Rome** and was influenced by the work of **Domenico Morelli** (1823-1901), a painter of dramatic religious and literary scenes. **Morelli was immensely influential** in the second half of the nineteenth century in Italy and he rebelled against many of the conventions of academic painting. In the late 1850s he participated in discussions with the **Macchiaioli** ('mac-a-ee-oli'), a group of Italian artists, who pre-dated the Impressionists and who, like them, **painted outdoors** to capture natural light and colour. Macchiaioli is derived from the word 'macchia' which means a **dash of colour** or, more **derogatively, stain** and, like the word impressionist was originally a criticism of their work. The Macchiaioli did not make the same impact upon international art but were an important early influence on Modigliani. Modigliani however reacted against it and **ignored their obsession with landscape** and preferred to paint indoors and **chose a palette closer to that of Cézanne** than to the Macchiaioli.

Bio:Modigliani

- Amedeo Modigliani (12 July 1884 - 24 January 1920, died aged 35 of tubercular meningitis). He was born in Livorno (on the Tuscan coast of Italy) to Sephardic Jewish family, his father was an engineer, timber merchant and also managed the family's metal mines and forests. His mother was from an intellectual and well established Sephardic family. Just before Modigliani was born the family went bankrupt and his birth saved the family from ruin as according to ancient law creditors could not seize the bed of a pregnant woman or the mother of a new-born child. His mother went into labour just as the creditors came into the house to seize their goods which his family piled on top of her bed to protect them from seizure. His bright and resourceful mother established a successful school and taught him at home until he was 10.
- Modigliani was beset with **health problems** as a child including pleurisy and typhoid fever and when he was sixteen tuberculosis which would eventually kill him. He had drawn from an early age and when he was 11 his mother wrote in her diary: "**The child's character is still so unformed that I cannot say what I think of it. He behaves like a spoiled child, but he does not lack intelligence. We shall have to wait and see what is inside this chrysalis. Perhaps an artist?**"
- When he was sick and feverish he dreamt of seeing Italian Renaissance paintings in Florence and despaired that he would die before seeing them. When he recovered his mother took him on a tour that included Naples, Capri, Rome and Amalfi, then

Florence and Venice.

- On his return his mother enrolled him with the best painting master in Livorno, Guglielmo Micheli (1866-1926) and he worked there from 1898 to 1900. He was steeped in the styles of 19th century Italian artists, such as **Giovanni Boldini** (1842-1931). In 1901 in Rome Modigliani admired the work of **Domenico Morelli**. Micheli encouraged landscape painting *en plein air* but Modigliani never really took to it and preferred painting in the studio. His preferred subject was the nude which was where he demonstrated his greatest talent and it also fitted his attempts to seduce the maid. His teacher's nickname for him was 'Superman' because he was always quoting Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.
- In **1902** he enrolled for **life drawing classes in Florence** and a year later **moved to Venice** where he first smoked hashish and frequented less desirable parts of the city. This seems to have been partly the result of his interest in Nietzsche's radical philosophical notions and his belief that the only true creativity was through defiance and disorder. He also developed an interest in the writings of **Charles Baudelaire and Gabriele D'Annunzio** and the Symbolists.
- In **1906, aged 21, Modigliani moved to Paris**, the centre of avant garde life. He moved there at the same time as the Italian artist **Gino Severini** (1883-1966) and the Spanish artist **Jean Gris** (1887-1927). He made **friends with Jacob Epstein** and planned to set up a studio together. Modigliani settled in **Le Bateau-Lavoir**, a commune for penniless artists in **Montmartre**, but he dressed like a wealthy person trying to slum it. When he first **met Picasso**, who at the time wore workmen's clothes, Modigliani said that even though he was undoubtedly a genius this did not excuse his uncouth appearance. Within a year, however, he had transformed **from a dapper bohemian to an alcoholic, drug addicted vagabond** and he set about destroying all his early work which he described as '**Childish baubles, done when I was a dirty bourgeois**'. He may have drunk and taken drugs initially to hide his tuberculosis which few of his friends were aware of. It was a leading cause of death and was easily communicated and there was no cure so sufferers were often ostracized.
- **From 1914 onwards his alcohol intake and drug taking increased** and his tuberculosis reached an advanced stage. His behaviour stood out even in the Bohemian world he inhabited and he had frequent affairs, drank heavily and used absinthe and hashish. He would **strip naked at social events** and died in Paris aged 35, **creating a legend** and at the time he was almost as well known as Vincent van Gogh. His friend described him as pedestrian when sober but a master of living art when drunk and his death led to many, during the 1920s, trying to emulate his success through drink and drugs.
- When he first arrived in Paris he worked at a furious pace making a hundred drawings a day but most of these drawings are now lost either destroyed by Modigliani as inferior, left behind when he moved or given to girlfriends who threw them out. He was at first influenced by the work of **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**

(1864-1901) but later became fascinated by the work of **Paul Cézanne** (1839-1906) before developing his own unique style.

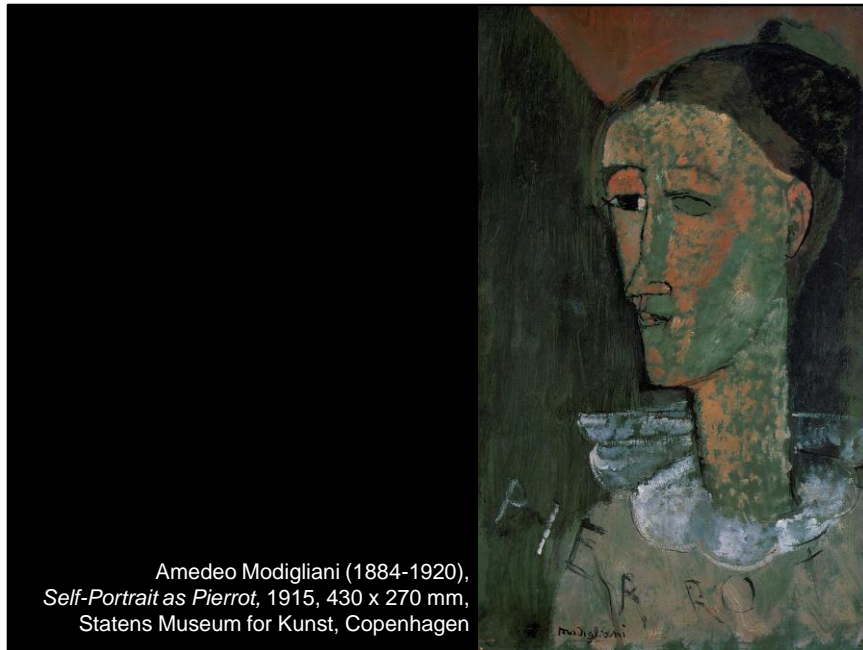
- He **never married** and the first serious love of his life was the married **Russian poet Anna Akhmatova** (1889-1966). He met her in 1910 when he was 26 and she was 21 but the affair only lasted a year because she returned to her husband.
- In **1909**, he returned home to Livorno sickly and tired but he soon returned to Paris where he rented a studio in **Montparnasse**. He took a deep interest in sculptor and was introduced to **Constantin Brâncuși** and became his pupil for a year. Although a series of Modigliani's sculptures were exhibited in the Salon d'Automne of 1912, by **1914 he abandoned sculpting** and focused solely on his painting, a move precipitated by the difficulty in acquiring sculptural materials due to the outbreak of war, and by Modigliani's physical deterioration. Modigliani painted a series of portraits of contemporary artists and friends in Montparnasse including **Chaim Soutine, Pablo Picasso, Diego Rivera, Juan Gris, Jacques Lipchitz and Jean Cocteau**.
- When **World War One** started in 1914 **Modigliani volunteered but was refused** because of his ill health. He was handsome and attracted many woman until **Beatrice Hastings** entered his life. She stayed with him for two years and was the subject of a number of paintings. When the British painter **Nina Hamnet** arrived in Montparnasse in 1914 he introduced himself to her the evening she arrived and they became great friends.
- In **1916**, Modigliani befriended the Polish poet and art **dealer Léopold Zborowski** and his wife Anna. Zborowski became Modigliani's primary art dealer and friend during the artist's final years, helping him financially, and also organizing his show in Paris in 1917.
- **The several dozen nudes** Modigliani painted between 1916 and 1919 were **commissioned by Zborowski** and have become his **best-known works**. The Paris show of 3 December 1917 was Modigliani's only solo exhibition during his life, and is notorious in modern art history for its sensational public reception and the attendant issues of obscenity. The **show was closed by the scandalised chief of police on its opening day**, but continued thereafter, most likely after the removal of paintings from the gallery's street-front window. *Nude Sitting on a Divan* is one of a series of nudes painted by Modigliani in 1917 that created a sensation when exhibited in Paris that year. *Nu couché* realized \$170,405,000 at a Christie's, New York, sale on 9 November 2015, a record for a Modigliani painting and placing it high among the most expensive paintings ever sold.
- In the **spring of 1917** he was introduced to the beautiful 19 year-old art student **Jeanne Hébuterne**. Despite her Roman Catholic family's objections they were soon living together and he ended his relationship with Beatrice Hastings. Towards the end of the First World War, early in 1918, Modigliani left Paris with Hébuterne to escape from the war and travelled to Nice and Cagnes-sur-Mer. They would spend a year in France. During that time they had a busy social life with many friends,

including Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Pablo Picasso, Giorgio de Chirico and André Derain. On the trip to Nice organised by Zborowski he produced many of his best known pictures although he only managed to sell a few. In fact, he sold few works during his life and those for little money which went immediately on funding his drinking and drug taking.

- In Nice **Hébuterne gave birth to a baby girl called Jeanne** (1918-1984) and in May 1919 they returned to Paris. He got engaged to her and officially recognised his daughter but his tuberculosis became worse preventing their marriage. He **quickly became worse** and had blackouts and a neighbour found him delirious holding on to Hébuterne. He died on 24 January in hospital. There was an **enormous funeral** attended by the artistic communities of Montmartre and Montparnasse. Hébuterne was eight months pregnant when he died. She **was inconsolable** and was taken to her parents home but **threw herself from their fifth-floor window**. Her family buried her in a **separate cemetery** and it was another ten years before they agreed to move her to rest beside him. His epitaph reads: "Struck down by Death at the moment of glory". Hers reads: "Devoted companion to the extreme sacrifice". He died destitute.
- Since his death, Modigliani's reputation has soared. **Nine novels, a play, a documentary, and three feature films** have been devoted to his life. Modigliani's sister in Florence adopted their daughter, Jeanne (1918–1984). As an adult, she wrote a biography of her father titled *Modigliani: Man and Myth*.

Notes

- Sephardic Jews descended from Jews who lived in Spain or Portugal in the late fifteenth century or more broadly Jews of a West Asian or North African origin who nonetheless use a Sephardic style of liturgy.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), *Self-Portrait as Pierrot*, 1915, 430 x 270 mm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

Notes from Tate Booklet

Room 1: Open to Change

- The Tate exhibition opened with a **self-portrait, painted around 1915**, in which Modigliani presents himself as the **tragic clown Pierrot**. His contemporaries would have recognised the reference instantly as, at the time, the figure **appeared in countless pictures, plays and films**. A young person shaping their identity could relate to Pierrot, a stock character open to interpretation, linked to the past and looking towards the future. Pierrot could be **comedic, melancholy or romantic**, played by any actor or painted by any artist. In a new place, among new people, the work signals that Modigliani was ready to invent himself.”
- When **Modigliani** was asked by one of his sitters why he had only given him **one eye**, the artist is said to have replied: “because with **one eye** you look at the world, with the other you look into yourself.”
- This portrait was painted in the middle of his two-year stormy relationship with the British poet and art critic Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943).

- “During his brief and turbulent life **Modigliani** developed a unique and **instantly recognisable pictorial style**. Though meeting little success during their time, his emotionally intense portraits and seductive nudes are now among the best-loved paintings of the 20th century. Modigliani’s nudes are a highlight of the exhibition – with 12 nudes on display, this is the largest group ever reunited in the UK. These sensuous works proved controversial when they were first shown in 1917, leading police to censor his only ever solo exhibition on the grounds of indecency. You will also discover his lesser-known but radical and thought-provoking sculptures, as well as his portraits of his friends, lovers and supporters, including Pablo Picasso, Constantin Brancusi and his partner Jeanne Hébuterne.” (Tate)
- In 1902 he moved to Florence where he studied sculpture and then to Venice to study. He spent more time in the bars than studying and when an artist friend told him about the exciting, bohemian art scene in Paris he was excited and wanted to go. In 1906 he inherited enough when his uncle died to go there. He lived in Montmartre from 1906 to 1909 and the area was a ‘laboratory’ for Cubism and Fauvism. He discovered the work of Pablo Picasso and said, ‘**Picasso is always ten years ahead of the rest of us**’.

Notes

- Pierrot is a stock character of pantomime and commedia dell’arte that originated in the late 17th century Italian Comédie-Italienne. He is a sad clown, pining for the love of Columbine who usually breaks his heart and leaves him for Harlequin, an astute, witty and romantic hero. Pierrot often has a whitened face, a loose white blouse with large buttons and a lace collar and is a naïve but loveable fool.



- The exhibition makes the point that the advent of cinema brought many changes to the art world and society at large. It enabled a wide section of society to see events and people from around the world which opened up new social possibilities. Charlie Chaplin took the Pierrot character to new extremes and the 'silver screen' turned actors into stars.
- Film was new and exciting and offered exciting new entertainment:
 - Cléopatra (1910) included an exotic dance by film star Stacia Napierkowska.
 - Gaston Modot, a painter and friend of Modigliani had a lead role in Abel Gance, *Torture of Silence* (1917) and a friend of his was involved in the epic anti-war film *J'Accuse* (1919) by Gance. It is said Modigliani played a minor part as an extra although he cannot be identified. Two of his friends were working on experimental film including animation, abstraction and colour.
 - By 1915 Pathé alone had released forty Pierrot-titled films. Modigliani loved the slapstick comedy and the **Charlie Chaplin released *The Tramp*, a Pierrot character**, the same year.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Bust of a Young Woman*, 1908, 57 x 55 cm, Lille Museum of Art

Compare

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), *Woman with Black Boa*, 53 x 41 cm, Musée d'Orsay, in terms of the model's direct look, and the subject matter of the nightlife at the *café-concerts*. Modigliani has a more 'modern' look with flat planes of colour and less naturalistic colouring.

Influences

- The second room of the exhibition shows how Modigliani developed his unique style and the various influences he absorbed.
- When Modigliani first came to Paris he was influenced by the other artists already there and I will look at a few examples to show how his personal style evolved.
- In 1908 Modigliani was living in **Montmartre** and like other artists, such as Pablo Picasso he was drawn to the **café and nightlife and drew dancers, singers and harlequins**. The influence of Montmartre nightlife can be seen in this painting of 1908. It is reminiscent of Toulouse-Lautrec with its **direct challenging gaze**.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Bust of Nude Woman with Hat*, 1908, 81 x 54 cm, Hecht Museum, Haifa, Israel

Compare

Kees van Dongen (1877–1968, 'case van dong-a'), *Torso (The Idol / Portrait of Guus van Dongen)* 1905, 92 x 81 cm, private collection, completed in 1905 and was one of two portraits of his wife, Guus Pretinger ('whoos pry-ting-a'), which he exhibited at that year's Salon d'Automne.

Also compare

Kees van Dongen (1877–1968), *Woman With a Large Hat*, 1906, 100 x 81 cm, source Galerie Daniel Malingue, 35ème anniversaire catalogue scan, not in the exhibition

- The same year Modigliani painted this nude woman with a hat. It shows the influence of Kees van Dongen and Picasso in terms of simplification, lack of perspective and juxtaposition of colours and strokes that are striking but not directional as in a Cézanne.
- In this work we can see the main influence is van Dongen whose work he could have seen in his studio, at the Salon d'Automne in 1906 or 1908 or at van Dongen's first exhibition in 1908.
- Modigliani also knew Picasso who was perhaps the most charismatic and

influential artists living in the area. Modigliani does not appear to have been part of Picasso's inner circle but Modigliani did later paint Picasso's portrait.

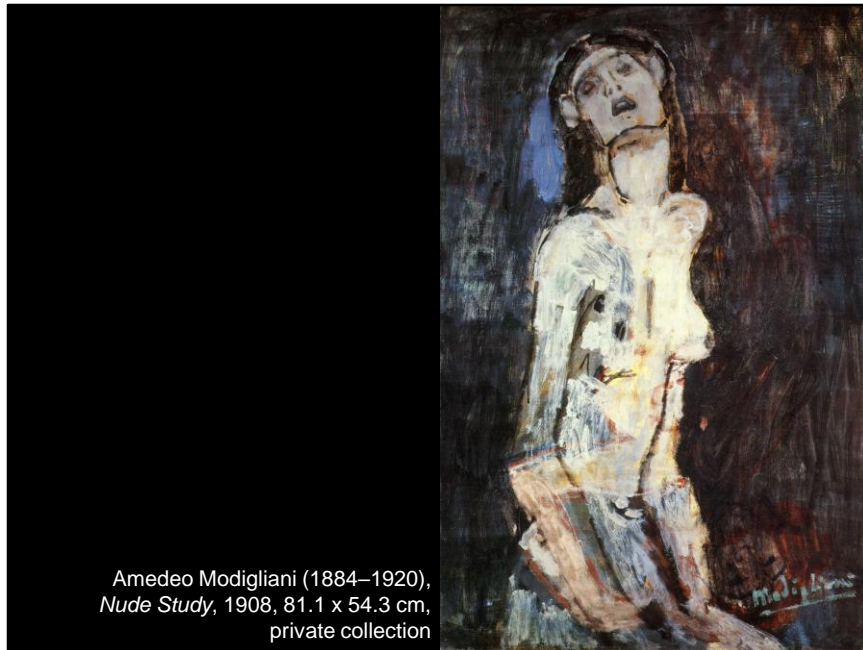
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- Cornelis Theodorus Maria 'Kees' van Dongen (1877–1968) was a Dutch-French painter who was one of the leading Fauves. Van Dongen's early work was influenced by the Hague School and symbolism and it evolved gradually into a rough pointillist style. From 1905 onwards - when he took part at the controversial 1905 Salon d'Automne exhibition - his style became more and more radical in its use of form and colour. The paintings he made in the period of 1905-1910 are considered by some to be his most important works. The themes of his work from that period are predominantly centred around the nightlife; he paints dancers, singers, masquerades and theatre. Van Dongen gained a reputation for his sensuous - at times garish - portraits of especially women.

References

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2002/oct/19/art>

<https://mydailyartdisplay.wordpress.com/2013/03/06/kees-van-dongen-his-life-his-family-and-his-art/>



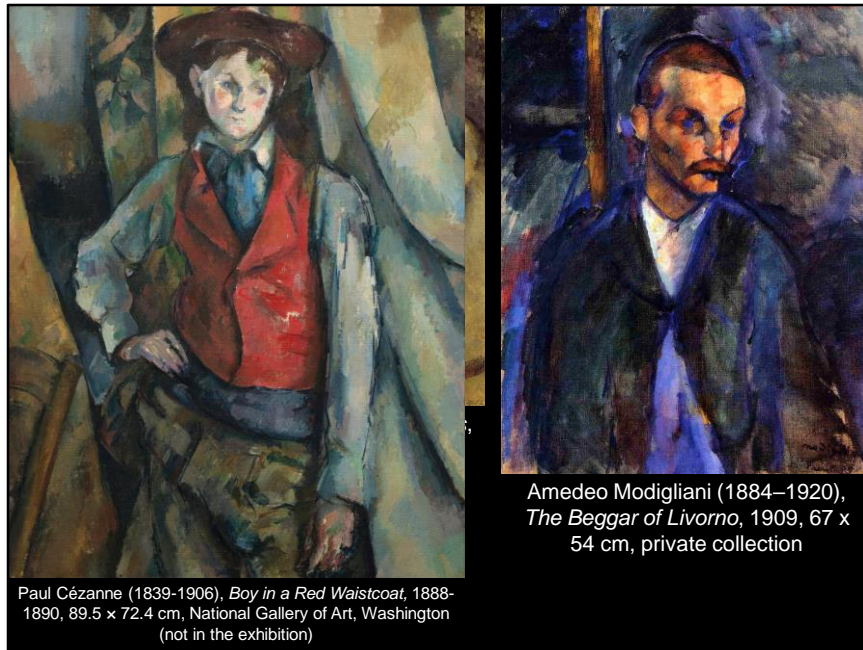
Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Nude Study*, 1908, 81.9 x 54 cm, private collection

- An early nude showing the influence of Kees van Dongen. Modigliani's brushwork becomes looser and there are visible brushstrokes. He abandons the more polished traditional way of painting which he was taught.

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 2: City Life

- Soon after his arrival in Paris, Modigliani began to look at progressive contemporary art. He absorbed the influence of the works he saw, by artists ranging from the recently deceased Paul Cézanne, to his near contemporary Kees van Dongen. Loose brushwork and bright colours made an appearance as he abandoned a more polished, traditional way of painting. Modigliani said, '**My Italian eyes cannot get used to the light of Paris... Such an all-embracing light... You cannot imagine what new themes I have thought up in violet, deep orange and ochre.**'



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *The Beggar of Livorno*, 1909, 67 x 54 cm, private collection

Compare

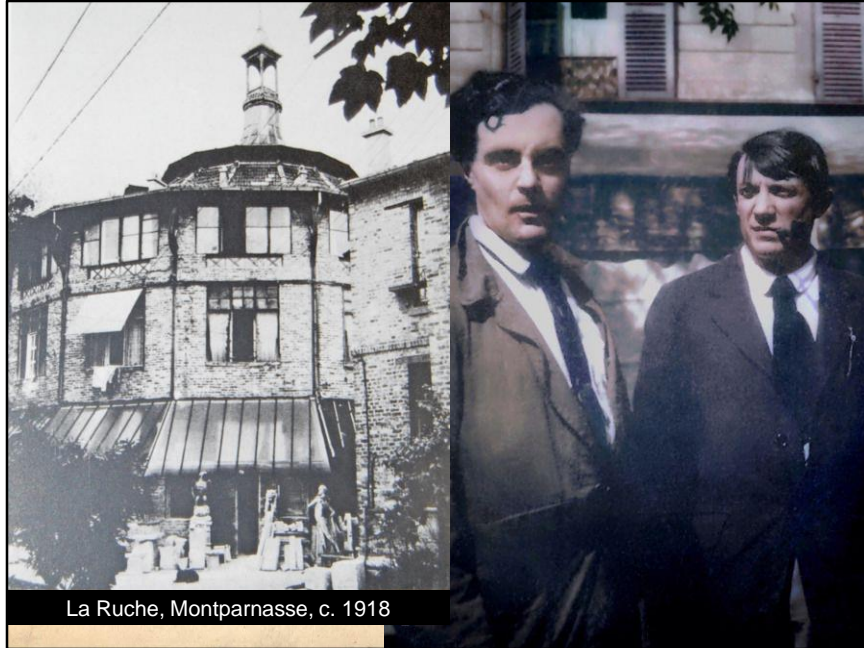
Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), *The Card Players*, 1892-96, Musée d'Orsay

Also compare

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), *Boy in a Red Waistcoat*, 1888-1890, 89.5 x 72.4 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

- Before Modigliani developed his personal style his work shows the influence of many artists as we have seen. Another strong influence was Paul Cézanne and in this work we can clearly see the strong influence of Cézanne, in particular his *The Card Players* or his *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (not in the exhibition).
- Modigliani lived at various addresses in the bohemian district of **Montmartre**. Artists including Pablo Picasso lived nearby. He started to exhibit his work and met his first major patron, **Paul Alexandre**, who bought many drawings and paintings. He also **began to paint female nudes**, something that would have proved more difficult in conservative Italy, where willing models were harder to come by."
- By **1909-10** many artist had left **Montmartre** as it became more expensive when new streets were built, the Sacre Coeur was completed and the metro station

opened.



The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris, commonly known as *Sacré-Cœur Basilica* and often simply *Sacré-Cœur*. Construction began in 1875 and was completed in 1914. The basilica was consecrated after the end of World War I in 1919. Moulin Rouge (Red Mill or Red Windmill) gardens, 1900. The elephant was said to contain an opium den.

Moulin Rouge, c. 1900

Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) in front of the **Café de la Rotonde** in **Montparnasse**, Paris, photograph by Jean Cocteau, August, 12th 1916.

Roger Fry (1866-1934), *Portrait of Nina Hamnett*, 1917, 82 x 61 cm, Courtauld

- **Café de la Rotonde** was founded in 1911 and was a notable gathering place for artists and writers. Picasso had his studio nearby although Picasso was not in his inner circle. They knew each other and Modigliani later painted Picasso's portrait. **In 1914**, when the English painter **Nina Hamnett (1890-1956)** arrived in Montparnasse, on her first evening the smiling man at the next table at La Rotonde graciously introduced himself as "**Modigliani, painter and Jew**". They became **good friends**, Hamnett later recounting how she once borrowed a jersey and corduroy trousers from Amedeo Modigliani, then went to La Rotonde and danced

in the street all night. **Hamnet was flamboyantly unconventional, and openly bisexual, and once danced nude on a Montparnasse café table just for the "hell of it"**. She **drank heavily, was sexually promiscuous, and kept numerous lovers** and close associations within the artistic community. Very quickly, she became a well-known bohemian personality throughout Paris and modelled for many artists. She became known as the **'Queen of Bohemia'**.

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 3: Modigliani's Paris: Film Projection

- **Montmartre** had a different character to the rest of Paris. When Modigliani arrived in 1906, it was still known as the 'village on the hill', located north of the city centre and without its own metro station. Though partly rural - its skyline **peppered with windmills** - Montmartre's famous **cabarets, theatres and dance venues** had earned the neighbourhood a **wild reputation**. A relatively new attraction — **the cinema** - became a novel way for Modigliani and his friends (and thousands like them) to spend their evenings. The famous Sacré-Coeur church was still under construction.
- In 1909, **Modigliani moved to Montparnasse**, after the sculptor **Constantin Brancusi found him a studio** near his own. Serviced by a **main train station**, the area felt distinctly urban, its wide boulevards accessible by car and important art galleries within walking distance. Fast becoming the **centre of the contemporary art scene**, Montparnasse attracted artists, writers and poets of all nationalities, who met to while away the hours in cafés such as Le Dôme, La Rotonde and La Closerie des Lilas. For Modigliani, the ramshackle studios of La Ruche (the 'beehive'), were a home away from home, where he visited artist friends to paint, drink, and sometimes stay the night."
- **La Ruche ('the beehive')**, Passage Dantzig, was the **home to more artistic talent than any other place in the twentieth century**. Artists included Guillaume Apollinaire, Alexander Archipenko, Marc Chagall, Max Pechstein, Nina Hamnett, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipchitz, Chaim Soutine, Robert Delaunay, Amedeo Modigliani, Constantin Brâncuși, Diego Rivera, and many others. It was originally built as a wine rotunda by Gustave Eiffel for the Great Exposition of 1900 and because of its shape it was called La Ruche ('the beehive'). It was due for demolition but the sculptor Alfred Boucher paid for it to be moved to Montparnasse as a **low cost studio space** for young artists. As rent was cheap and no one was thrown out for non-payment it became the **home of misfits, drunks and drifters** as well as artists. One Russian artist got off the train and the only words of French he knew were 'Passage Dantzig' but that was enough to get him there.

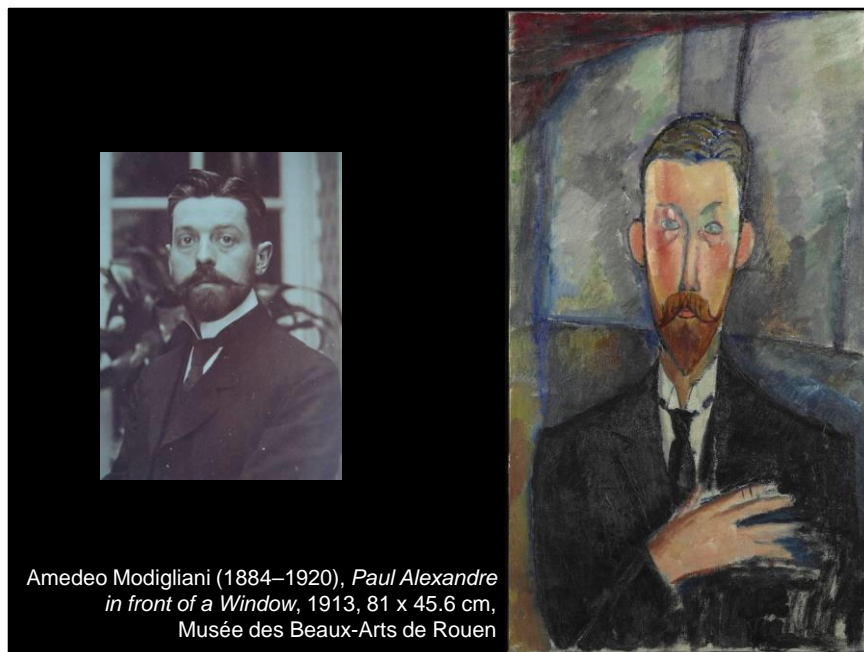


Room 10: His Studio

Notes from Tate Booklet

“Room 10: Modigliani VR: The Ochre Atelier

- In 1919 Modigliani **returned to Paris** from the south of France. The war was over; his health had improved. Zborowski found a studio and living space for Modigliani and Hébuterne on the rue de la Grand Chaumiére, near the cafés and meeting places of Montparnasse. Modigliani's friend Lunia Czechowska recalled: 'This was a very modest kingdom, but it was his. I'll never forget the day when he took possession of his new domain. **His happiness was enough to move us all.**'
- **Modigliani's final studio still exists**, but almost 100 years after the artist's death, its appearance has changed significantly. Through study of documentary material and of Modigliani's works themselves, the environment in which the artist made his last works is reimagined. In this room you can immerse yourself in a **virtual reality recreation** of Modigliani's final studio, which uses the actual studio space as a template.”

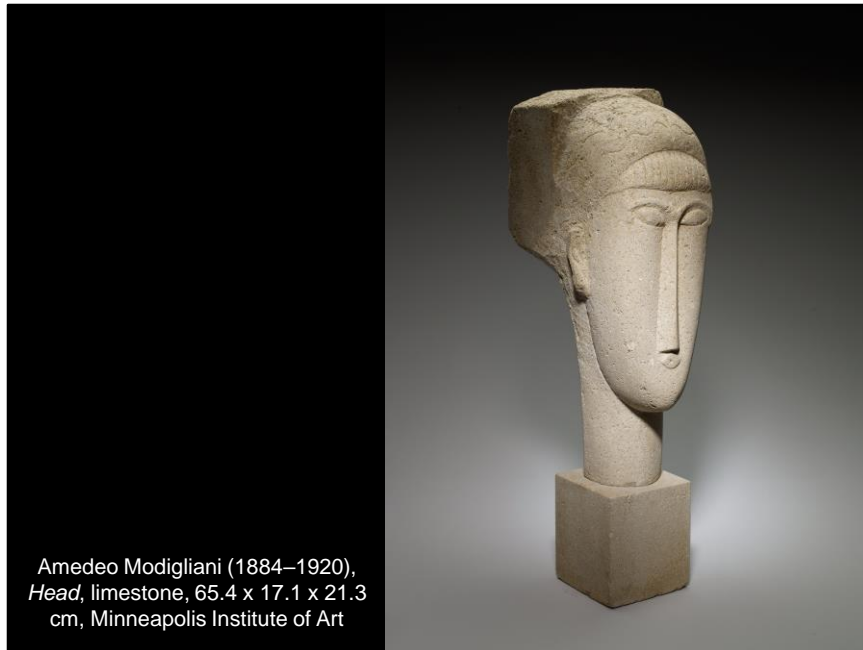


Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Paul Alexandre in front of a Window*, 1913, 81 x 45.6 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen

- “Modigliani’s first patron was **Paul Alexandre (1881-1968)**, a **young surgeon and would-be dealer** who ran a low-budget art colony of sorts in a run-down house on Paris’ Rue du Delta. Modigliani painted there rent-free and turned over his canvases to Alexandre for **10 to 20 francs each** (\$2 to \$4), and his **sketches for perhaps 20 centimes** (4 cents). It wasn’t much, but the doctor let the artist retrieve his work if he could get a better offer. Between 1909 and 1913, Modigliani painted **three oil portraits** of Alexandre. The first was a conventional portrait with the subject posing stagily, with hand on hip. **The last, which the artist painted from memory, is the most distinctively “Modiglian-esque,” with the rapid brushwork, elongated face and blank eyes that would become his trademark.**
- Modigliani had entered seven watercolours and oils in Paris’ Salon d’Automne exhibition in 1907 and five works in the Salon des Indépendants in 1908, but they’d attracted little attention. Other than Alexandre, **no one seemed interested in his art.**” (Smithsonian Magazine)
- Alexandre and Modigliani both shared an interest in non-Western art and did many other avant garde artists at this time. He knew Modigliani very well between 1907

and 1912 but they lost touch later as Alexandre served on the front line during the war. He later wrote a biography called 'The Unknown Modigliani' and wrote '**The resemblance [in his portraits] is remarkable and immediate. In his life studies he 'caught' the model with miraculous precision and perfection. His constant aim was to simplify while grasping the basic essentials. Unlike most contemporary artists, he was interested in the inner being, and his portraits were real characters**'. He described him as '**one of the principal influences on French art**'.

- "Modigliani's mastery lies in his ability to retain the essential likeness of his sitters while couching that likeness in his own circumscribed vocabulary of forms" (*Modigliani and His Models* (exhibition catalogue), Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2006, p. 31).



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Head*, limestone, 65.4 x 17.1 x 21.3 cm, Minneapolis Institute of Art

Rooms 4 and 5: Sculpture

- Modigliani met Constantin Brancusi in 1908 and he encouraged him to focus on sculpture.
- “A protagonist of the vibrant artistic community in Paris **around 1910**, the Italian Amedeo Modigliani sought to establish a **new sculptural language**, inspired significantly by **African and ancient Greek and Egyptian examples**. The present *Head* was one of seven that were **exhibited at the *Salon d'Automne*** in Paris in October 1912. A few months earlier, it was photographed in the artist's studio - which makes it one of his best-documented works. Modigliani intended for the heads to be parts of '**columns of tenderness**' within a primordial '**temple of beauty**' that remained unrealized. According to the account of his **close friend Jacob Epstein**, Modigliani used to place candles on top of these heads during the night. **Spurred on by marijuana**, he would give the totemic, illuminated sculptures affectionate embraces.” (Minneapolis Institute of Art, webpage)
- A friend recounted that **'Modigliani was infatuated with things Egyptian. He used to take me to the Louvre, to the Egyptian wing, assuring me that everything else**

, 'tout le reste', was unworthy of attention.'

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 4: Grand Ideas

- For a brief but **intense period between 1911 and 1913**, Modigliani focused **almost exclusively on sculpture**. He also made many **elegant sculptural drawings**. Perhaps these were preparatory sketches for sculptures he had in mind - he had plans to create a temple-like structure - although many appear as finished works of art. Caryatids were a recurring theme: the classical female figures who, with raised arms, also served as architectural supports.
- Visits to Paris museums, including the Louvre and the **ethnography museum at the Trocadéro** (across the river from the 22-year-old Eiffel Tower) allowed Modigliani and many other European artists to look at a wide range of historic art. They made liberal use of visual references from antiquities, old master paintings and sculpture from countries including **Egypt, Cambodia and Ivory Coast**. Egyptian styles were particularly fashionable. Modigliani's carved heads share their clean lines and elongated forms.
- **Paul Guillaume**, Modigliani's art dealer from 1914, was a **leading promoter of African art**. A self-made man, still in his early twenties, Guillaume also impressed Modigliani by supporting contemporary art in Paris. Portraits show him sharply dressed and confident."

"Room 5: Modigliani the Sculptor

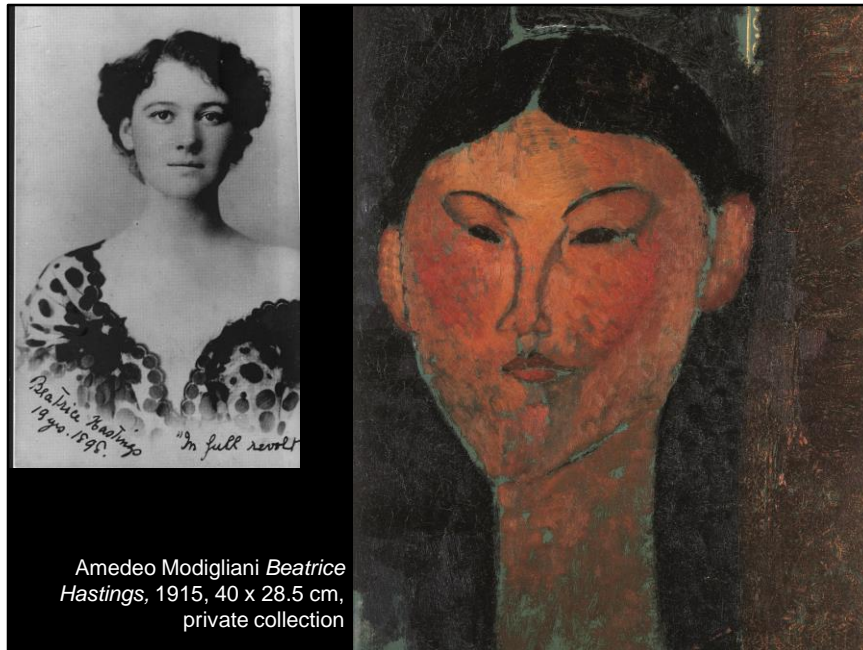
- Many who knew Modigliani recalled his early commitment to being a sculptor. His patron Paul Alexandre recalled how the artist worked around 1911-12: 'When a figure haunted his mind, he would **draw feverishly with unbelievable speed**, never retouching, starting the same drawing ten times in an evening by the light of a candle. He sculpted the same way. He drew for a long time, then he **attacked the block directly**.'
- Modigliani's sculptures found an audience. Several Heads displayed here belonged to a group of seven sculptures that featured in an important annual art exhibition, the Salon d'Automne, held from October to November in 1912. It was the only significant display of Modigliani's sculpture held during his lifetime,
- He would **abandon sculpture** soon after. Already troubled by **the after-effects of childhood tuberculosis, dust from carving** may have aggravated his breathing. Moreover, sculpture was **considerably more expensive than painting**, even if several contemporary accounts suggest Modigliani 'found' his limestone at local building sites. He could also better explore his developing style in two-dimensions. **Elongated faces with swan-like necks and blank, almond-shaped eyes would soon appear in his paintings.**



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Head*, c. 1911–12, limestone, 89.2 x 14 x 35.2 cm, Tate (transferred from the V&A in 1983)

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Head*, c. 1911–12, limestone, 89.2 x 14 x 35.2 cm, Tate (transferred from the V&A in 1983)

- In 1912 Modigliani met American-born British artist Jacob Epstein who was in Paris working on the tomb of Oscar Wilde. The following year Augustus John visited Paris and spent time with both Epstein and Modigliani and bought two of his sculptures which funded a trip to Italy. For a short while he shared a studio with the Mexican artist Diego Rivera. In 1914, a sculpture and a drawing were exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery and the sculpture is now in the Tate collection.



Amedeo Modigliani *Beatrice Hastings*, 1915, 40 x 28.5 cm, private collection

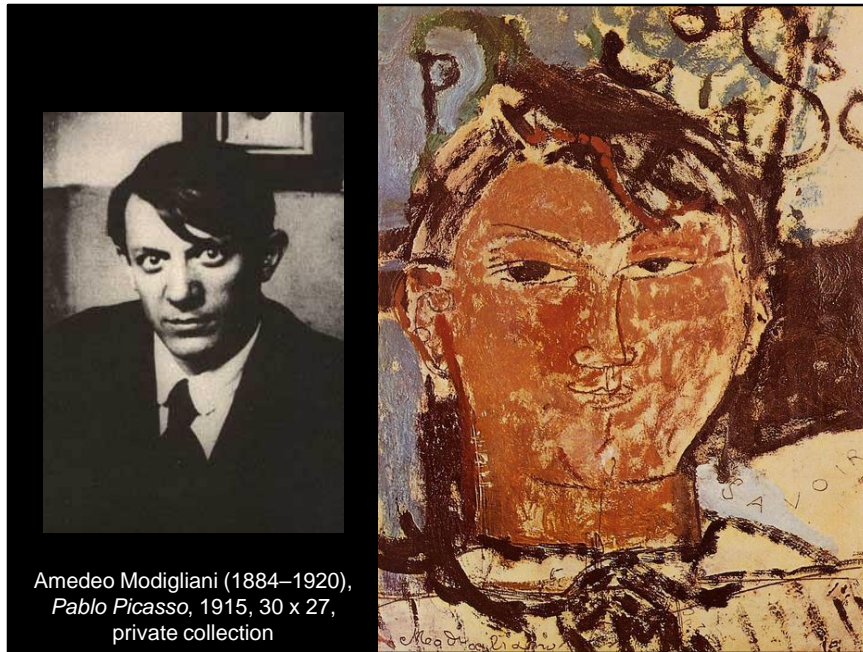
- **Beatrice Hastings** (1879-1943, aged 64), a British writer and critic whose other pen names were Beatrice Tina (poet), D. Triformis (essayist), Alice Morning (Parisian diarist), Minnie Pinnikin (eponymous narrator of a novella about her relationship with Modigliani), Robert á Field, and others.
- Beatrice Hastings was the pen name of **Emily Alice Haigh** (27 January 1879 – 30 October 1943) an English writer, poet and literary critic. Much of her work was published in *The New Age* under a variety of pseudonyms, and she lived with the editor, A. R. Orage, for a time before the outbreak of the First World War. Bisexual, she was a friend and lover of Katherine Mansfield, whose work was first published in *The New Age*. Another of her lovers was Wyndham Lewis.
- Her appearance in this portrait is strikingly similar to Modigliani's Pierrot self-portrait.
 “**When I know your soul I will paint your eyes.**” Amedeo Modigliani. During an intense two-year romance, he would paint the English writer and poet Beatrice Hastings many times. Charged with a dormant theatricality, his figures often resemble marionettes at rest. Among the portraits Modigliani painted in his short

lifetime, the least puppet-like were perhaps those of Beatrice Hastings, his partner from 1914 to 1916. In the two years of their stormy, brawl-filled romance, he painted her 14 times. For Modigliani, the two years with Hastings saw a surge in focus and creativity, and coincided with his return to painting. For Hastings too, their time together marked one of her most sustained productive periods.

- From their very first encounter, Modigliani was drawn to the English writer, referred to in Paris as 'la poétesse anglaise'. As a devoted reader of Dante, he was also seduced by Beatrice's name. Poets already featured in his life, and he'd painted them all: three years earlier, he'd had a romance with the melancholy Russian Anna Akhmatova; his drinking companion was novelist and poet Blaise Cendrars; and he knew the French writers Max Jacob and Jean Cocteau. By most accounts, he was never without a book in his pocket, usually Lautréamont's baroquely audacious narrative prose poem *Les Chants de Maldoror*. As for Hastings, her first impression was far from romantic: 'a pig and a pearl ... he looked ugly, ferocious, greedy'. Yet he improved upon second encounter, elevated from pig to 'pale and ravishing villain'.
- Even within the bohemian milieu of Paris in the 1910s, Hastings and Modigliani made a feral, wayward pair. He lived in a haze of intoxication – absinthe, wine, hashish – and would dance on tabletops, howl out lines of Italian verse, and rampage through the streets at night. Hastings, meanwhile, extravagant in dress and occasionally accessorised with a basket of live ducks as a handbag, had forged a reputation as one of the main voices of *The New Age*, a British socialist journal of art and politics whose publisher, AR Orage, had been her partner for seven years. (Contemporaries considered their set the dark avant-garde or, in Virginia Woolf's words, 'the literary underworld'.) Hastings's affairs with New Zealand author Katherine Mansfield and the writer and painter Wyndham Lewis contributed to her eventual split from Orage, and in 1914 she moved to Paris as the journal's correspondent.
- Her interest in theosophy deepened, particularly her devotion to the medium Madame Blavatsky, in her eyes a kindred spirit, and of whom in 1937 she published an impassioned defence: 'Civilised woman wants something more than to be the means to man's life: she wants to live herself.' Despite doing her best to honour this credo, Hastings ultimately faded into obscurity, ending her days in fevered, fragile solitude. In 1943, she gassed herself in a small house in Worthing, in the south of England, a pet mouse cradled in her hand. Her death hardly earned a mention in the press, apart from the local paper." (Tate)

References

- 'Modigliani's Women. Beatrice Hastings'
<http://modernartconsulting.ru/en/2013/03/modigliani-beatrice-hastings/>



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Pablo Picasso*, 1915, 30 x 27, private collection

Rooms 6 and 7: The Portraits

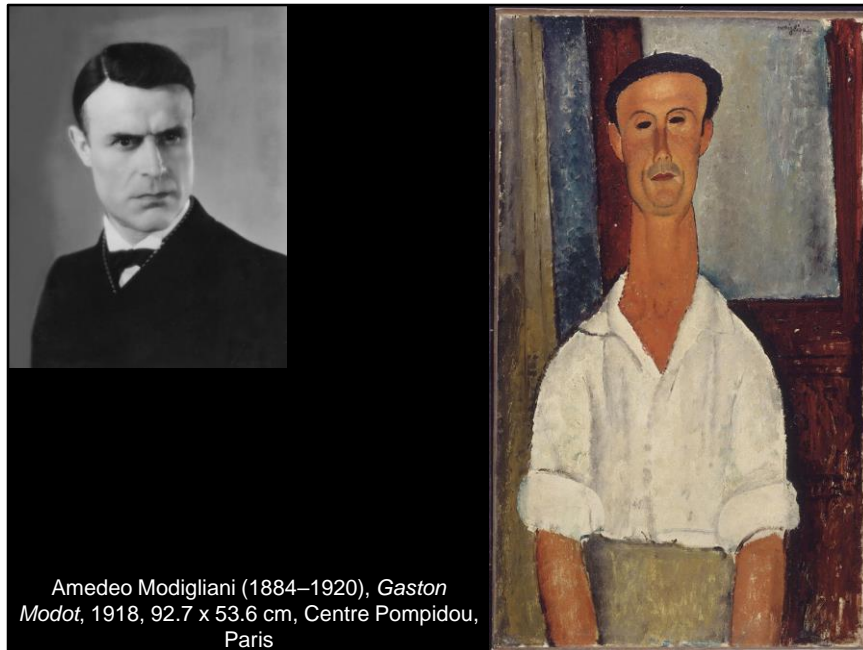
- 'Amedeo Modigliani and Picasso certainly **knew each other well**, having met when Modigliani first went to Paris in 1906 and lived in **Le Bateau-Lavoir artistic community**, where Picasso also had a studio and was working on works such as *Les Femmes d'Alger*.
- As well as sitting for Modigliani, Picasso owned several works by him, including *Girl with Brown Hair*, dating from 1918, which is being lent to the Royal Academy by the Musée Picasso in Paris. The Picasso portrait by Modigliani, which was owned by Picasso at one point in the 1930s, is being lent from a private collection.
- Both artists shared an **interest in African art**, which influenced their respective work. Picasso is reported to have once said that **Modigliani was the only man who knew how to dress and he tried to help him get a dealer**.
- But it appears they drifted apart. "From what one knows, it seems that after a while **Picasso found him a bit tedious, with all the drinking and the drugs**. He didn't approve of his lifestyle very much."
- Modigliani was not part of Picasso's inner circle. **Picasso, who affected a workingman's look with his patched clothes** and fisherman's sweaters, seems to

have admired Modigliani's wardrobe more than his paintings; needing canvas, he once painted over a Modigliani work he had acquired. Modigliani, for his part, recognized the Spaniard's genius but told a friend that **artistic talent was no excuse for not dressing decently.**' (PabloPicasso.org website)

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 6: Creative networks

- In a **series of expressive portraits**, Modigliani captured fellow artists from Montmartre and Montparnasse. Most worked in the radical new style of cubism, **flattening space** in their paintings and **abstracting the faces** of their models. Appropriately, when Modigliani painted Spanish painter Juan Gris and French artist Henri Laurens, he gave them angular profiles and stylised features. Although Modigliani experimented with cubism, he never rejected figurative representation, even if he remained impressed by Picasso. '**Picasso is always ten years ahead of us**', he said, inscribing his portrait with the word '**SAVOIR**' or '**knowing**'.
- Alliances formed regardless of nationality. A wealthy Franco-American painter, Frank Burty Haviland, helped his contemporaries by buying their works. Russian sculptor Léon Indenbaum **shared a studio** with Modigliani and sat for a portrait. 'He glanced at me at brief intervals and as he painted he hardly moved. His brush, held upwards like a bow, played out to perfection his wondrous vision ... At the end of the third sitting he signed this real masterpiece and held it out to me. 'It's for you', he said.'"

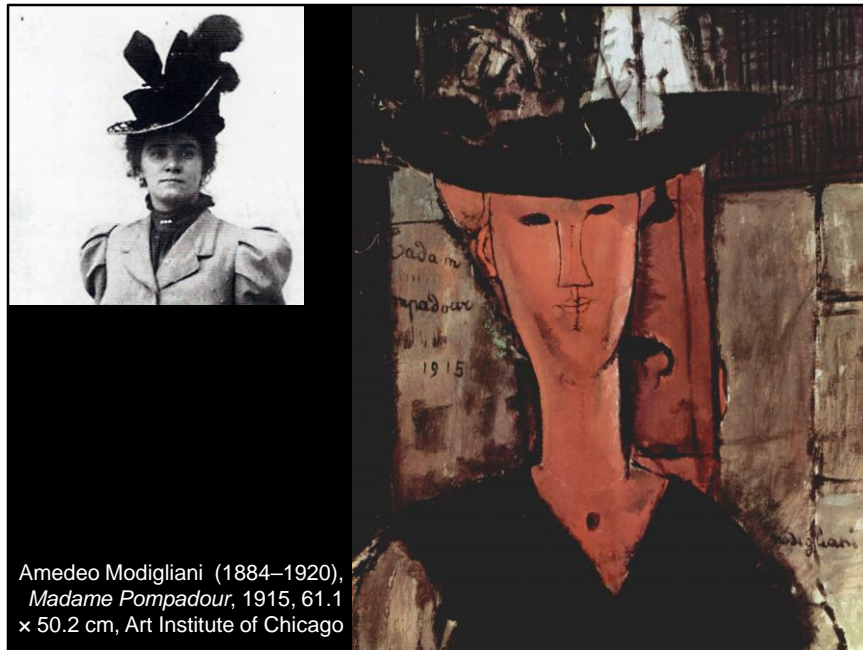


Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Gaston Modot*, 1918, 92.7 x 53.6 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris

- Gaston Modot (31 December 1887-1970, aged 82, years active 1909-1962) was a French actor. For more than 50 years he performed for the cinema working with a number of French directors.
- Modot lived in Montmartre at the beginning of the 20th century where he met Picasso and Modigliani. In 1909 he started his career with Gaumont and for the following 20 years he covered all silent film genres.
- The outstanding example in Picasso is the woman in the right-hand background of *Les Femmes d'Alger*; and in a succession of later works **blank eyes** serve as an alienation device to enhance the autonomy of the painting. They carry with them a message of depersonalization, which in **Modigliani's** work then comes into conflict with the individual identity of the portrait. **Modigliani** was well aware, of course, that the motif of **eyes** 'painted shut'
- In his portrait of Juan Gris **Modigliani** was still depicting **eyes** with pupils and irises, but in his painting of Henri Laurens he moved away from a uniform representation of the **eyes**, blinding one of them by blacking it out. This device made his subject

appear to be contemplating an inner being and perceiving truths denied to those who can see. The use of **blank eyes**, which are particularly important to characterization, was not **Modigliani's** own invention.

- Those that are awake appear calm and unconcerned or have **blank eyes** and are lost in an introspective world, undisturbed by the observer. **Modigliani** is primarily interested in the shapes of the bodies of the models, not their characters, and the **blank** or closed **eyes** emphasize this disengagement. **Blank eyes** also represent the inner directed gaze and introspection that fascinated **Modigliani**; they also constitute a comment on the nature of voyeurism and observation
- Unlike Edgar Degas who liked to show his models as unaware that they were being watched. Modigliani sometimes makes it clear that the model is looking back at the viewer.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Madame Pompadour*, 1915, 61.1 × 50.2 cm, Art Institute of Chicago

- “In this portrait, Modigliani's emphasis is on a strong formal structure dominated by the grid in the background and the echoing curves of the sitter's hat, shoulders, and features. There is none of the pathos often associated with his work. The artist seems instead to have invested this portrait with a note of ironic detachment, even humour, reflected in both the title of the painting (which refers to **Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV** of France) and the expression of amused inscrutability worn by the sitter. Were painter and sitter perhaps both amused by the **flamboyant hat**? Modigliani's skill in rhyming forms, while at the same time keeping us visually interested and slightly off-balance, is evident throughout the picture, which resonates with the lessons of Paul Cezanne, Cubism, and African sculpture. The sitter for this portrait may well have been **Beatrice Hastings**, an English poetess who was Modigliani's mistress at the time. Because of the artist's tendency to generalize his sitter's features, however, a comparison of this portrait with others of Hastings is inconclusive.” (The Art Institute, Chicago)

References

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/27281>



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Paul Guillaume, 'Novo Pilota'*, 1915, 105 x 75 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie

- Amedeo Modigliani met **Paul Guillaume** through the poet Max Jacob (1876-1944) in 1914. Guillaume started his legendary career when he was just nineteen. When he was just starting out as an art dealer he rented a studio for Modigliani in Montmartre. In 1915 and 1916 Modigliani produced four portraits of his patron. The portrait in the Musée de l'Orangerie was painted at the home of the artist's mistress, the British poet, Beatrice Hastings (1879-1943), who also lived in Montmartre.
- Paul Guillaume (1891-1934), aged just 23, is shown as an elegant young man, sure of himself, looking directly at the viewer. His figure stands out against the red background. His dark suit and hat contrast with his face and his white shirt. The planar rendering of the face and his well-defined features attract the eye, while his left hand is barely sketched.
- In this portrait Modigliani pays **tribute to the young art dealer describing him as 'Novo Pilota' or guiding star**. Guillaume was already regarded as the "new helmsman", like a sailor or one of the wise men guided by a star, a patron and visionary supporter of modern art in the years after 1910." *Paul Guillaume*,

Domenica Walter)

- Guillaume opened his first fine art gallery in 1914 when he was just twenty-two and by then he already knew Pablo Picasso well. He was later to transform modern art and was a central figure in Modigliani's life.
- He met Modigliani in 1914 and quickly signed him up as he was quick to spot talent. When they met Modigliani was still a sculptor and although Guillaume was eight years younger he encouraged Modigliani to return to painting. Guillaume was Modigliani sole dealer from 1914 to 1916 and tirelessly promoted him securing his inclusion in a number of exhibitions, including one in New York.

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 7: Kindred Spirits

- A decade after moving to Paris, Modigliani had made the city his own. He was a well-known figure in Montparnasse's close-knit artistic community and counted artists, poets, actors, musicians and writers among his friends. He captured their colourful personalities while experimenting with mark-making techniques and lettering. In some cases he even wrote a sitter's name across the canvas.
- Modigliani made several paintings of the writer and editor Beatrice Hastings. Lovers between 1914 and 1915, their volatile romance was marked by drunken arguments, though it was a source of creative energy for both. Yet as much as Modigliani was part of this vibrant international community, in other ways, he was an outsider. Ever committed to portraiture - at a time when it was relatively unfashionable - he did not gain vocal support from the critics with whom he socialised. And as a Jew in France, where anti-Semitism was commonplace, he would have faced prejudice."



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Jean Cocteau*, 1916, 81.3 X 104 cm, Princeton University Art Museum
 Jean Cocteau, 1924

- Modigliani moved from his native Italy to Paris in 1906 and soon became part of the city's vibrant artistic and literary culture. His portraits often portray friends from this bohemian world, such as the poet, playwright, and filmmaker Jean Cocteau. Cocteau's elongated head, neck, and nose, as well as his simplified features, recall the artist's sculptural work, which was informed by his study of the so-called "primitive" forms of non-Western sculpture. The colour tonalities, drawing style, and overall composition of the portrait reflect the strong influence of Cézanne.
- Jean Maurice Eugène Clément Cocteau (1889–1963, aged 74) was a French writer, designer, playwright, artist and filmmaker. Cocteau is best known for his novel *Les Enfants Terribles* (1929), and the films *The Blood of a Poet* (1930), *Les Parents Terribles* (1948), *Beauty and the Beast* (1946) and *Orpheus* (1949). His circle of associates, friends included Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Gertrude Stein, as well as Yul Brynner, Marlene Dietrich, Coco Chanel, Erik Satie, Igor

Stravinsky, Édith Piaf and Jean Genet.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Portrait of Léopold Zborowski*, 1916-19, 100 x 63cm, MASP (Museu de Arte São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand)

- This is his loyal friend and dealer Léopold Zborowski (1889-1932) known to his friends as 'Zbo'. He was a Polish poet who moved to Paris in 1913 and became one of the great Parisian art dealers. When they met in 1916 Modigliani was contracted to **Paul Guillaume (who we saw earlier)** but he represented many artists and so let Modigliani go. Modigliani's posthumous fame made Zborowski wealthy but the financial crash of 1929 ruined him and he died in misery in 1932.



Amedeo Modigliani, *Nu couché (sur le côté gauche)*, signed Modigliani (lower left), 89.5 x 146.7 cm. Painted in 1917.

Sold for \$157.2 million (£116 million), courtesy Sotheby's

Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, 88.9 x 162.6 cm, Louvre

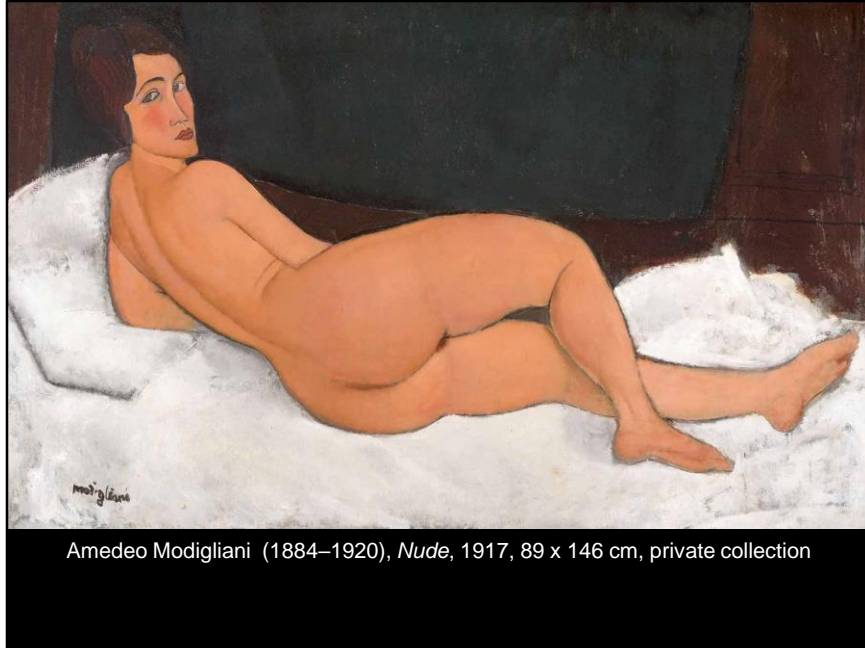
Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)*, 1907, 243.9 x 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Room 8: Modigliani's Nudes

- Modigliani is best known for his portraits and his nudes. A Modigliani nude is instantly recognisable and to some extent he was representing the new woman. However, this does not mean he was a champion of women's rights. On the contrary, he painted the women as **objects of desire** rather than as individuals but he did often paint their portrait as well.
- "Sotheby's unveiled Amedeo Modigliani's stunning *Nu couché (sur le côté gauche)* (*Reclining Nude (on the left side)*) to a packed audience of collectors and media, who are the first ever to view the masterpiece on exhibition in Asia. The painting sold for **\$157.2 million in Sotheby's** Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale on 14 May 2018 – the highest estimate ever placed on a work of art at auction. [The

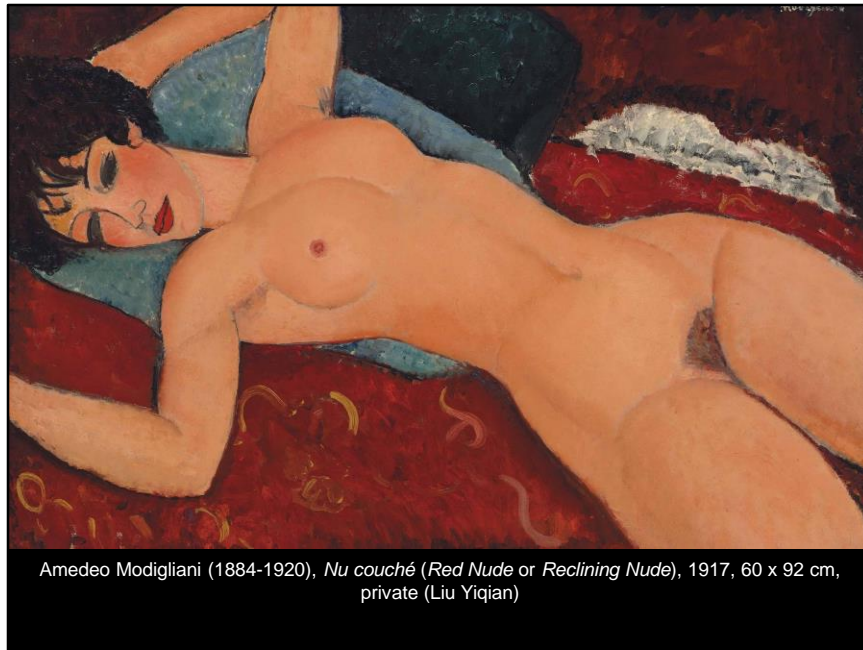
price was guaranteed by a firm of dealers and was underpinned by the Tate which exhibited it in the exhibition.] *Nu couché* was acquired by the present owner at auction in 2003 for \$26.9 million. In 2015, another reclining nude from the series (*Nu couché*) sold at auction for \$170.4 million, at the time marking the second-highest price ever paid for a work of art at auction.

- **“This is a nude of a very self-possessed, sexually self-confident woman” who is “absolutely meeting our gaze”,** said Sotheby’s co-head of worldwide impressionist and modern art, Simon Shaw.
- Although Sotheby’s present it as exhibiting female power it is based on Ingre’s *La Grande Odalisque* of 1814 which is an oriental fantasy of male power. Ingre’s painting was chosen by the Guerrilla Girls as the embodiment of the oppressive nude in their poster **‘Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum’**.
- Modigliani’s nudes are better described as a new variation of an old theme, the submissive, erotic female nude.
- Sotheby’s goes on to say, **“there is the nude before Modigliani, and there is the nude after Modigliani.”** This description would be better applied to Pablo Picasso’s *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, 243.9 x 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Simon Shaw, Co-Head Worldwide of Sotheby’s Impressionist & Modern Art Department, commented: **“This painting reimagines the nude for the Modern era. Modigliani depicted his models as confident and self-possessed in their sexuality. *Nu couché* is an incredibly sensual image, with the sitter’s gaze meeting the viewer’s head-on in truly mesmerizing fashion. While situating itself within a classical canon of nude painting, the work is radically innovative in style: Modigliani assimilates a world of visual cultures across the centuries, from Egyptian, Japanese, African, Indian and Iberian sculpture, from Renaissance frescoes through Romanticism to the cutting-edge of Cubism. Together these pictures signal a watershed in perhaps the greatest tradition in art – there is the nude before Modigliani, and there is the nude after Modigliani.”** This description would be better applied to Pablo Picasso’s *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, 243.9 x 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Nude*, 1917, 89 x 146 cm, private collection

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Nu couché (sur le côté gauche)*, 1917, 89.5 x 146.7 cm, private collection



Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), *Nu couché (Red Nude or Reclining Nude)*, 1917, 60 x 92 cm, private

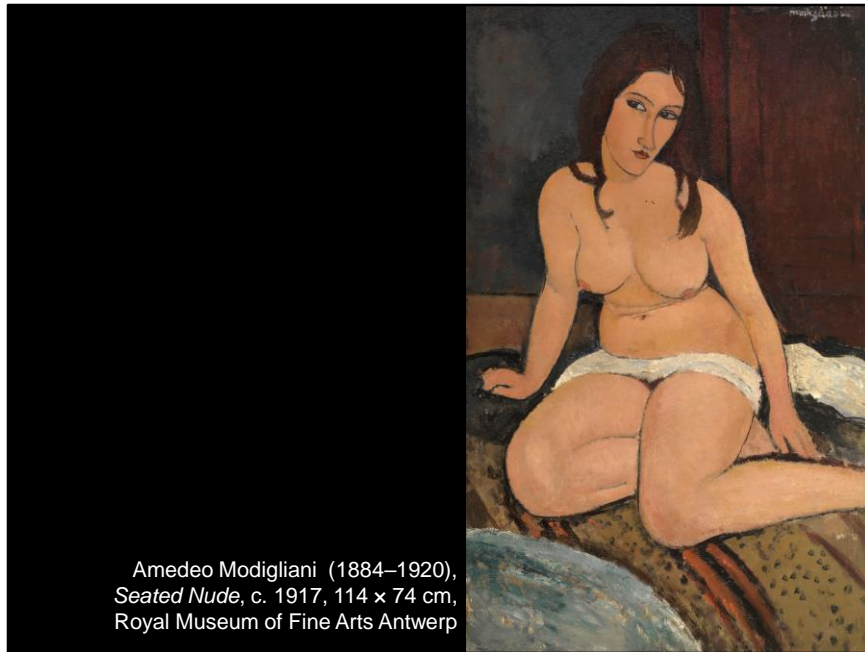
- The painting realized \$170,405,000 (Hammer price & Buyer's premium) at a Christie's New York 9 November 2015 sale. This was the second highest price ever paid for a work of art at the time.
- It was not until **Zborowski** stepped forward with both **a space and paid models that Modigliani embarked on his great series of nudes**. Zborowski provided the artist a stipend of 15 Francs a day, and paid the models five Francs to pose in an apartment just above his own at 3 Rue Joseph Bara.
- Draped in sheets, perched on chairs, reclining on sofas or beds, the models are relatively anonymous – Modigliani did not paint his prime paramours in the nude. But while he may have had emotional distance from the sitters, he certainly did not have physical distance: the women dominate their space, filling the frame with stretching hands and feet, forearms and calves literally off of the edges of the canvas. **Their nudity is self-assured and proud**, not cloaked in myth or allegory.
- At the request of Zborowski, Parisian dealer **Berthe Weill staged an exhibition** of Modigliani's paintings and works on paper. In the window of her gallery – by some

accounts directly hung in the window, and by others clearly visible through it – were a number of the nudes.

- Upon opening, **crowds immediately gathered** in the exhibition to witness the strikingly-real works, and **traffic began to build up outside**. Across from Weill's gallery was a **police station**, and the commotion did not go unnoticed. An officer traipsed across the road and asked for the **removal of the offending canvases, which he considered indecent**. Weill's refusal to do so found her in the police station speaking with the police chief. **The usual art historical story was that the show was closed** although it seems more likely it remained open but with Zborowski only selling two drawings at 30 Francs each.
- In total, Modigliani completed 22 reclining nudes and 13 seated nudes between 1916 and 1919. The majority of the 22 reclining nudes from the series are found in museums, with particular depth in the United States: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York each hold three examples. Outside of the United States, institutions with reclining nudes include the Long Museum in Shanghai and The Courtauld Gallery in London.
- Modigliani began painting nudes in 1908, but it was only after he abandoned sculpture in 1914 that he developed the unique idiom evident in *Nu couché*. His aesthetic was gleaned from the artistic precedents of Italian Renaissance and Mannerist painting, the linear simplicity of African carvings and the earth-toned palette and geometric modelling of Cubism – all of which can be seen in the present work.
- The majority of Modigliani's output was based in portraiture, which, more often than not, depicted those who surrounded him: fellow artists, poets, lovers and patrons. Aside from a veritable who's who of the more bohemian artistic circles in Paris, Modigliani would also seize upon chances to find other sitters – though the opportunities for unpaid models were few and far between.

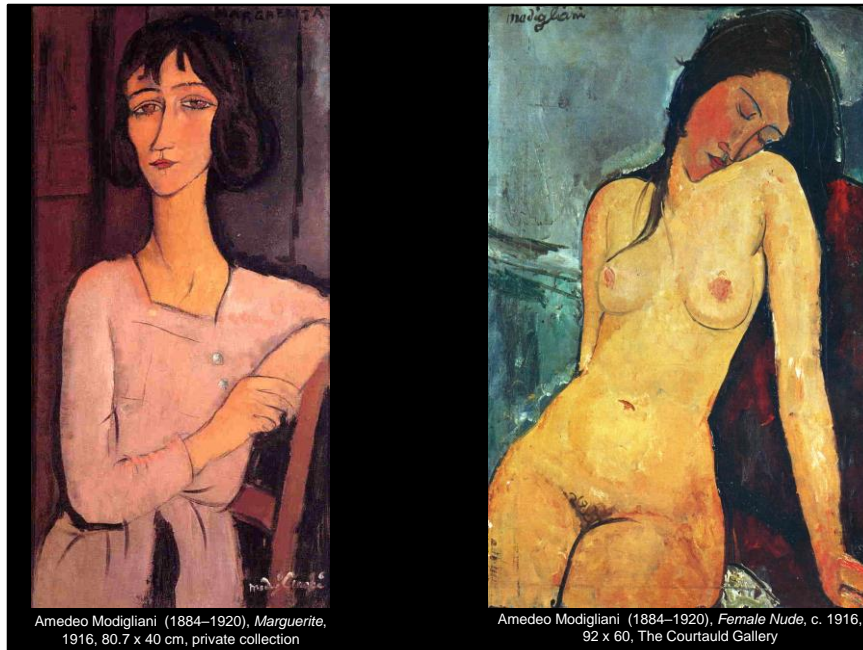
References

<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/12/13/modigliani-fevered-life-pure-line/>



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Seated Nude*, c. 1917, 114 × 74 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

- Modigliani painted his nudes on a horizontal and a vertical canvas although the horizontal were the most effective.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Marguerite*, 1916, 80.7 x 40 cm, private collection
 Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Female Nude*, c. 1916, 92 x 60, The Courtauld Gallery

Hair

- **Marguerite, Elvira and Almaisa** were three of the models used by Modigliani but despite research their **biographies have been lost**. They were paid five francs a sitting, a good wage at that time for a morning or afternoon's work when a factory worker would receive two or three francs a day. Modigliani was paid fifteen francs a day by his dealer Léopold Zborowski.
- It was a time when many men were at war and the money gave women a new independence. The cinema was new and presented a glamorous, exotic lifestyle that many women and men sought to emulate.
- Most nudes in art had been shown hair-free but by 1914 attitudes to female bodily hair were changing and depilatory creams and razors were entered the market as the 'hygienic' hair-free body became popular. In 1921 the artist Leonard Foujita was surprised to find that the most famous model in Paris, Kiki de Montparnasse, had no body hair at all. So Modigliani's nudes were showing bodily hair for the first time just as it was going out of fashion. He was therefore shocking one section of

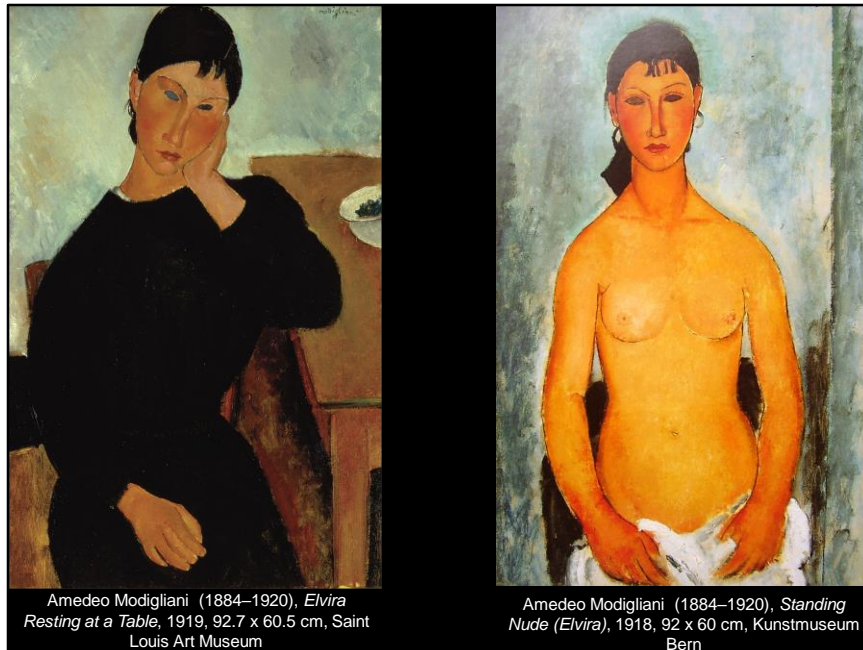
society that expected conventional hair-free nudes and surprising another section of society that were expecting fashionable hair-free nudes.

- The police intervention that allegedly closed the show seems like an exaggeration perhaps aimed at gaining more publicity to promote the it. A few works were sold but the exhibition was not a success.

Notes from Tate Booklet

“Room 8: Modern Nudes

- Thanks to the support of a new art dealer, Léopold Zborowski, in 1916 Modigliani returned to painting the female nude. His professional models earned five francs per sitting, around twice the daily wage of a female factory worker during the First World War, and comparable to the daily 15 franc stipend that Modigliani received from his dealer.
- While Modigliani made these paintings for male buyers, their sensuality suggests changes in the lives of young women, who were increasingly independent in the 1910s. The models dominate the compositions, often making eye contact with the viewer, their made-up faces hinting at the growing influence of female film stars.
- At the time, these modern nudes proved shocking. In 1917, when some of the paintings were included in Modigliani's only lifetime solo exhibition, a police commissioner asked for their removal on the grounds of indecency. He found their pubic hair offensive. Traditionally, in fine art, nudes were hair-free.”
- Alice Prin (1901-1953) was nicknamed the Queen of Montparnasse and was often known as Kiki de Montparnesse. She was a model, muse, nightclub singer, actress and painter who helped define the liberated culture of 1920s Paris.



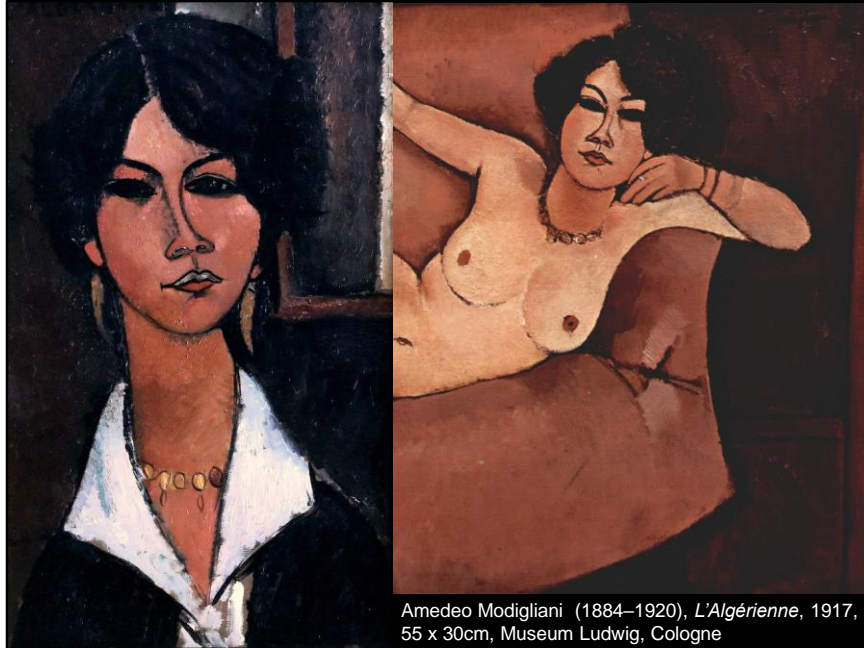
Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Elvira Resting at a Table*, 1919, 92.7 x 60.5 cm, Saint Louis Art Museum

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Standing Nude (Elvira)*, 1918, 92 x 60 cm, Kunstmuseum Bern

Cosmetics

- The new women of the 1910s were becoming emancipated in many ways. The year it was painted a woman's right to vote was supported in places as distant as New York State and the Russian Republic. The First World War meant that men were away fighting and many women worked in factories. This meant that had increased spending power and independence and many married later or not at all.
- Cosmetics had always been used but they had previously been a guilty secret and marketed as 'medicinal'. The advent of the cinema meant that silent film actresses created a role model. Many female film stars shocked traditional values and vampish sirens with heavy makeup brought new excitement and new possibilities.
- The over use of makeup, such as rouge was condemned but when Elizabeth Arden visited Paris in 1912 she noted the heavy use of makeup. The red cheeks of this nude may have sexual connotations but it may also have indicated economic status as in the 1910s cosmetics were still expensive and could not be afforded by a

factory worker.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Nude on a Divan (Almaisa)*, 1917, 81 x 116cm, private collection

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *L'Algérienne*, 1917, 55 x 30cm, Museum Ludwig, Cologne

The Body

- The 1910s was the decade when women's fashion became more widely followed. Corsets were already going out of favour and new fashions in underwear were developing. Ideas that had sprung out Charles Darwins theory of evolution led to a new interest in the ideal body, physical fitness and a greater awareness of the body and the way it was presented. Previously men had engaged in fitness regimes but now, for the first time, women were encouraged to try the new fitness machines and weight control became a pressing new issue. New attitudes to sex were encouraged along with knowledge of birth control but misogynists were quick to exploit these new trends.
- Art historians have contrasted the voluptuousness of these nudes with the broken male bodies of the Western front.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *The Head of Jeanne Hébuterne*, 1918, 46 x 29, private collection

Notes from Tate Booklet

“Room 11: An Intimate Circle

- **Modigliani met the teenage French art student Jeanne Hébuterne in 1917.** She became the most important person in Modigliani’s life and he painted her more times than any other sitter although never nude. When they met she was 19 and he was 33, a change from his previous girlfriend Beatrice Hastings who was five years older than him. They quickly moved in together and lived in a ramshackle studio made from materials left over from the Exposition Universelle of 1889. It was on the top floor and the light was good and it had a view across the rooftops of Paris. Modigliani was thrilled about the space. They lived together; she was the **mother of their child and the two were engaged to be married.** The paintings show her in different guises, from a girlish figure with her hair tied back, to a self-assured pregnant woman. If Modigliani had by now found a distinctive way of working, in subtle ways, he continued to experiment. The treatment of Hébuterne's features varies greatly in the works gathered here. He painted more pictures of her than anyone else, more than twenty, and they were his most

coveted paintings.

- In the grip of addiction, with his health ever weaker, Modigliani died in January 1920 at the age of 35. Hébuterne - expecting their second child. Their relationship was intense but they only knew each other for two and a half years from mid-1917 to 1920. She was pregnant more than half the time and their second, unborn child, died when she committed suicide after Modigliani's death.
- Jeanne Hébuterne (1898-1920, aged 21, 'Jan Ay-boo-turn') was a French artist, best known as the frequent subject and common-law wife of the artist Amedeo Modigliani. She was described as **gentle, shy, quiet, and delicate**.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *The Little Peasant*, c. 1918, 100 x 64.5 cm, Tate

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), *The Card Players*, 1890-95, 47.5 x 57 cm, Musée d'Orsay

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), *Boy in a Red Waistcoat*, 1888-90, 89.5 x 72.4 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Room 9: The French Riviera

- World War One forced Modigliani into exile in Nice in the south of France. He was concerned about the impact on his art but in the event it encouraged him to experiment with new pictorial choices.
- He had stayed in Paris most of the war and although there were food shortages conditions were tolerable. He even held his first and only public exhibition which although it marked a breakthrough in his career.
- On 23 March 1918 Germany started to bombard Paris from 70 miles away using 'Big Bertha'. This caused panic in Paris and Modigliani was persuaded by his dealer Léopold Zborowski to leave for Nice. He may have been concerned with Modigliani's health and his excessive substance abuse. However, the damp air did little for his tuberculosis and the new environment did little to curb his drinking. Despite his misgivings he found the centre of Nice had a vibrant artistic life with cafes and bars visited by artists from Britain, Russia and Italy. He found some of his

Parisian friends who had escaped wartime Paris and the aging Pierre-Auguste Renoir and the modernist Henri Matisse lived nearby. Modigliani was accompanied by Jeanne Hébuterne and her mother, his dealer and Modigliani's close friend the Belarusian artist Chaïm Soutine.

- Although most of his party returned to Paris later that year Modigliani remained in the Midi for almost fourteen months during which he produced some 60 to 70 oils. Two-thirds of these were painted on large marine canvases size 30 (92x60cm) or 40 (100x65cm) used vertically for three-quarter length portraits.
- He painted many pictures of Jeanne and his friends and acquaintances as models were expensive and hard to come by.
- It was during this period that Cézanne's influence reappeared in his work and he kept a copy of Cézanne's *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (1888-90) in his pocket. This painting of a peasant boy shows that influence.
- In the south of France Modigliani no longer had his models paid for by his dealer and so he often used children as they were cheaper and more readily available. In most cases the names of the children are not specified

Notes from Tate Booklet

"Room 9: Heading South

- In the last months of the First World War, with Paris suffering air raids and with Modigliani's health growing worse, Zborowski decided to send his artist to the French Riviera. Modigliani was anxious about the move: 'All these changes, changes of circumstance and the change of the season, make me fear for a change of rhythm and atmosphere.' However, given the number of his city friends who had also headed south, he would still find plenty of company. Even his new partner, the painter Jeanne Hébuterne was there, together with her mother as a chaperone. By this stage she was pregnant with the couple's first child.
- Modigliani made some of his strongest works in Nice. He worked quickly, as one of his sitters, Germaine Meyer, recalled: 'The portrait was finished after a few hours without him stopping even for a minute.' In the absence of professional models, he **painted local children and his friends**, capturing them in warm Mediterranean colours."

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/modigliani-the-little-peasant-n05269>



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Cagnes Landscape*, 1919, 46 x 29cm, private

- Another low-cost subject was landscape. Modigliani never showed any interest in painting outdoors when he was in Paris. In fact, a friend confided that he disliked nature intensely. In the south of France he painted four landscapes. He was encouraged by his friends but he said, 'there is nothing to express in landscapes'. This is at Haut-des-Cagnes ('oat-de-can') looking towards the small farmhouse in which he stayed with Soutine when he first arrived.
- By the spring of 1919 wrote to his dealer Zborowski 'I cannot wait to get back to Paris'. He was encouraged to return by the war ending and normal life resuming as well as the sale of some of his works at an exhibition. He also knew he could readily find models and many of his friends had already returned.
- In the south his style had changed; his interaction with normal people had brought a new dimension of empathy and dignity to his portraits. His figures became less angular and more sinuous and confident.
- On his return he painted a final series of portraits before his untimely death in January 1920.



Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Self-portrait*, 1919, 100 x 64.5 cm, Museu de Arte, San Paulo

Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), *Jeanne Hébuterne* (1898–1920), 1919, 91.4 x 73 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art

- Here we see Modigliani the year before his death and his final self-portrait and one of his final paintings. We can still see the influence of Cezanne with the flat planes and visible brushstrokes. The head is at an odd angle, the neck wrapped tightly in a scarf and mask-like face has narrow, black pits for eyes reflecting his forthcoming death. **A death sentence that he had lived with since the age of sixteen when he was first diagnosed with tuberculosis.** Despite the illness he working on this painting with his palette in his right hand and his left hand in his lap for the composition (Modigliani was left-handed).
- 'Modigliani was known as "Modi" to his friends, no doubt a pun on *peintre maudit* (accursed painter). He himself believed that the artist had different needs and desires, and should be judged differently from other, ordinary, people — a theory he came upon by reading such authors as **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844 1900), **Charles Baudelaire** (1821—1867), and **Gabriele D'Annunzio** (1863-1938). Modigliani had **countless lovers, drank copiously, and took drugs.** From time to time, however, he

also returned to Italy to visit his family and to rest and recuperate.' (Modigliani, Victoria Charles)

- His drunkenness and drug taking was the means by which he hid his tuberculosis from his friends, few of whom knew about it. Tuberculosis was highly contagious and those with the disease were ostracized, feared and pitied. The drugs alleviated the pain and prevented the coughing fits. The disease reached an advanced stage by 1914 when his use of drugs and alcohol increased. He died on 24 January 1920 and his lover, **Hébuterne** who was nearly nine months pregnant, was brought to her parents home but was **inconsolable and threw herself from their fifth floor window** two days after Modigliani's death (see *Smithsonian Magazine*, at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/modigliani-misunderstood-84411676/#BOj4yhHgGHylSq4G.99>). She was buried separately by her embittered family but moved into the same grave ten years later. A single tombstone now honours them both. His epitaph reads: "*Struck down by Death at the moment of glory.*" Hers reads: "*Devoted companion to the extreme sacrifice.*"
- **Their orphaned daughter, Jeanne Modigliani** (1918–1984), was adopted by her father's sister in Florence, Italy. She grew up knowing virtually nothing of her parents and as an adult began researching their lives. In 1958, she wrote a biography of her father, ***Modigliani: Man and Myth***.

Notes

- Tubercular meningitis is a rare complication of tuberculosis (TB) that affects the brain and it is normally associated with poverty.



NEXT WEEK

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impressionism in London 2. Modigliani 3. Gothic Revival 4. Charles I: King and Collector 5. A Century of Painting Life 6. The Birth of Art Photography 7. Picasso 1932 8. Monet & Architecture 9. The Invention of Antiquity 10. Rodin and Ancient Greece 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Art after World War One 2. The Summer Exhibition 3. Mantegna and Bellini 4. Burne-Jones 5. Klimt and Schiele 6. Lorenzo Lotto and His Portraits 7. The Turner Prize 8. Gainsborough's Family Album 9. Van Gogh and Britain 10. Michelangelo versus Leonardo
<p>Term 1: Wed 26 September, (half-term 24 October) to 5 December 2018</p>	<p>Term 2: Wed 9 January to 13 March 2019 (no half-term)</p>

Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September, half-term 31 October – 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 – 7 May 2018
2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 – 2 April 2018
3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January – 15 April 2018
4. All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
6. Picasso 1932 - Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April – 29 July 2018
8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April – 29 July 2018
9. Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June – 16 September 2018
10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 – 19 August 2018
11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 – 27 January 2019

12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 – 24 February 2019
13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 – 10 February 2019
15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 - 3 February 2019
16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, March 2019. Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his relationship with Britain. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

Extras Not Based on an Exhibition

- **Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period**
- The Invention of Antiquity – refers to ideas in Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001, Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*, 1997 and John Boardman, *Greek Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo – described in the novel *Oil and Marble*, released on 5 July, 2018, and *The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance*
- The Turner Prize

London Galleries

Wallace
 British Museum
 Hayward
 National Gallery
 National Portrait Gallery
 White Cube
 Serpentine
 Tate Britain
 Tate Modern
 Royal Academy
 Estorics