

A STROLL THROUGH TATE BRITAIN



This two-hour talk is part of a series of twenty talks on the works of art displayed in Tate Britain, London, in June 2017.

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- The talk is given to a small group of people and all the proceeds, after the cost of the hall is deducted, are given to charity.
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A STROLL THROUGH TATE BRITAIN

- The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1880
- Late Victorians, 1880-1900
- **The Edwardians, 1900-1910**
- The Great War and After, 1910-1930
- The Interwar Years, 1930s
- World War II and After, 1940-1960
- Pop Art & Beyond, 1960-1980
- Postmodern Art, 1980-2000
- The Turner Prize
- Summary



West galleries are 1540, 1650, 1730, 1760, 1780, 1810, 1840, 1890, 1900, 1910

East galleries are 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Turner Wing includes Turner, Constable, Blake and Pre-Raphaelite drawings

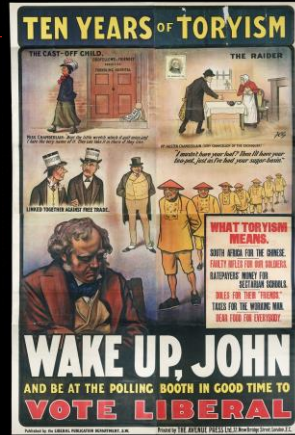
Agenda

1. A History of the Tate, discussing some of the works donated by Henry Tate and others.
2. From Absolute Monarch to Civil War, 1540-1650
3. From Commonwealth to the Start of the Georgian Period, 1650-1730
4. The Georgian Period, 1730-1780
5. Revolutionary Times, 1780-1810
6. Regency to Victorian, 1810-1840
7. William Blake (1757-1827) and his Influence
8. J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851)
9. John Constable (1776-1837)
10. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1840-1860
11. The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1880
12. The Late Victorians, 1880-1900

13. The Edwardians, 1900-1910
14. The Great War and its Aftermath, 1910-1930
15. The Interwar Years, 1930s
16. World War II and After, 1940-1960
17. Pop Art and Beyond, 1960-1980
18. Art in a Postmodern World, 1980-2000
19. The Turner Prize
20. Summary

THE EDWARDIANS: 1900-1910

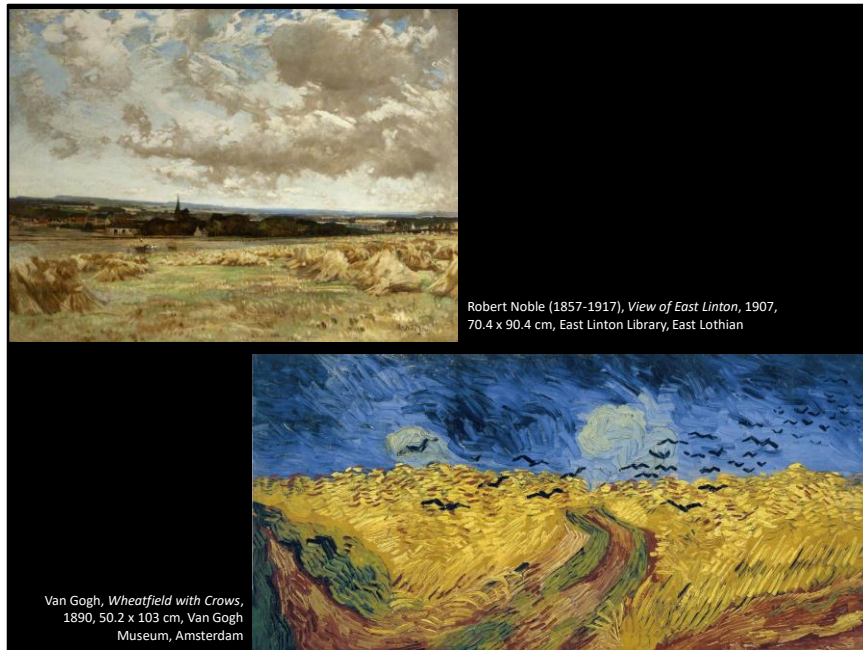
- Roger Fry's exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*
- The Liberal Reforms



- The Edwardian period describes the years 1901-1910, the brief reign of Edward VII although the period is sometimes extended forward to the First World War and backwards to the fin-de-siècle Victorian period. The new king Edward VII was already the leader of a fashionable elite that set a style influenced by the art and fashions of Continental Europe. The Edwardian Era was a **"leisurely time when women wore picture hats and did not vote, when the rich were not ashamed to live conspicuously, and the sun really never set on the British flag"**. Although the size of the US economy had overtaken that of the UK in the early 1890s the UK was still regarded as the leading power. The US economy was driven by a large unified home market, high productivity, investment in technology and the creation of brand's such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, American Express and Coca Cola, that still exist today. The UK was dependent on international trade and relied on commercial and political force to gain business rather than productivity. The First World War gave a huge boost the US economy and destroyed the UK economy. Britain financed the Allies until 1916, when it ran out of money and had to borrow from the US. The US took over the financing of the Allies in 1917 with loans that it insisted be repaid after the war. The victorious Allies looked to defeated Germany in 1919 to pay reparations that would cover some of their costs.
- Below the upper class, the era was marked by significant shifts in politics among

sections of society that had been largely excluded from wielding power in the past, such as common labourers. Women became increasingly politicised. The **Liberals returned to power in 1906** and made significant reforms including **regulating working hours** and the 'People's budget' of 1909 that **expanded welfare programs** by introducing new taxes on land and high income. However, the Liberal Party was a mixed bag of opposing views, nationalists and supporters of the Boars, near-socialists and laissez-faire classical liberals, suffragettes and opponents of women's suffrage, anti-war and supporters of the military, Irish Catholics and sectarians, middle-class business and aristocrats. The working class element was rapidly moving towards the new Labour Party.

- **Modern art.** Art historians take 1910, the year of Roger Fry's exhibition ***Manet and the Post-Impressionists***, as the big break from Victorian art to the 'modern'. It was a period of contradictions and artists differentiated themselves from **old-fashioned Victorian styles** while still drawing upon many elements of the period.
- In the above poster, 'South Africa for the Chinese' refers to the Tory plan to authorize the introduction of lowly-paid Chinese to work the gold mines in South Africa. It was seen as the 're-introduction of slavery upon British soil'.



- Robert Noble (1857-1917), *View of East Linton*, 1907, 70.4 x 90.4 cm, East Linton Library, East Lothian
- Van Gogh, *Wheatfield with Crows*, 1890, 50.2 x 103 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (one of Van Gogh's last paintings)
- As mentioned last week the major defining event has an exhibition organised by **Roger Fry in 1910 called 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists'**. This was a turning point for British art.
- **Manet and the Post-Impressionists, Nov 1910 - January 1911**
- The exhibition occupied 4-5 rooms.
- It was the turning point in the appreciation of French art in Britain. The impact was recognised at the time and was talked up afterwards. Virginia Wolfe said in 1924, "**On or about December 1910 human character changed**".
- Edward VI had just died and Irish Home Rule was being discussed. The Suffragettes had started their hunger strikes. There was a pervading fear of invasion by France (or Germany). So these artists had a resonance. It was seen by many as a violent assault on British society.
- The exhibition was prepared in just four weeks including a visit to Paris to find the

paintings.

- Oliver Brown, an art dealer, was told by a friend of his father, **"Don't go in there young man, it will do you harm. The pictures are evil."**
- Influential teachers such as Henry Tonks who had previously supported the new turned on the Post-Impressionists and at the 1912 exhibition begged his students not to go and see it to avoid contamination.
- There were few works by Manet but, nevertheless, his name was put in the title to add credibility as by this time his work was known and respected. The exhibition firmly established his reputation with the public. From 1880 to WWI he influenced John Singer Sargent, Wilson Steer, Walter Sickert, Henry Tonks, John Lavery, and William Orpen.
- Most of the major Paris art dealers supported the exhibition including Clovis Sagot, Ambroise Vollard and Daniel Kahnweiler.
- There were 20-21 works by Cezanne, two by Seurat, 40 by Gauguin, some by van Gogh which were supplied by Theo's widow, two by Picasso, three by Matisse. In fact, nearly all the paintings were from the 1880s and 90s and so were up to 30 years out of date. One exception was Picasso's *Portrait of Clovis Sagot* of 1909. Cezanne was still virtually unknown and Gauguin was acceptable as his work was categorized as 'exotic'.
- Critics wrote **"the output of a lunatic asylum", "the visualized ravings of a maniac", "a widespread plot to destroy the whole fabric of European art."** Even Augustus John said of a Matisse that it was **"devoid of every genuine quality - vulgar and spurious work"**, although he thought Picasso "wonderfully fine" and Cezanne "one of the greatest". It was ten more years before he came round to admiring Matisse. There was no positive press but a few critics thought it was the future.
- There was a Bateman cartoon 'Post Impressions of the Post-Impressionists' in *the Bystander* of 1910. It included Bateman's impression of van Gogh's *Portrait of the Postman* (1888).
- Roger Fry made his money purchasing Old Masters for American galleries. His uncle was one of the chocolate Fry's. It was a strongly Quaker family and so totally sincere but he was considered overly enthusiastic. He had become interested in modern art. Vanessa Bell bumped into him at Cambridge railway station and had spent the train journey arguing for an exhibition of modern art in London.
- There was a **huge attendance and most of the works were sold to American and private British individuals. So commercially it was a great success.**
- It was originally entitled the 'Expressionists' exhibition but his friends convinced him to change it. He **pulled the term Post-Impressionists out of thin air.**
- The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1910 was showing the Newlyn School, Alma-Tadema, and Scottish landscapes were very popular. It is interesting to compare Robert Noble (RA, RSA, 1857-1917) with van Gogh's *Crows over Cornfield*.
- Frank Dicksee, Charlotte Mary Emily Nugent-Dunbar (d.1951), *Wife of 3rd Baron*

Inverclyde, 1910 v. Matisse *Girl with Green Eyes*.

- Fry talked about the form and colour ('extraordinary intensity'). Bell's book *Art* describes how art's role is **to produce beauty by means of 'significant form'**. This was not clearly defined but depends on the work of Heinrich Wölfflin in the 1880s and 90s. Wölfflin (1864–1945) was a Swiss art historian, whose objective classifying principles ("painterly" vs. "linear" and the like) were influential in the development of formal analysis in art history in the early 20th century. He taught at Basel, Berlin and Munich in the generation that raised German art history to pre-eminence.
- There was another exhibition in 1912 which was far more radical but didn't sell well.

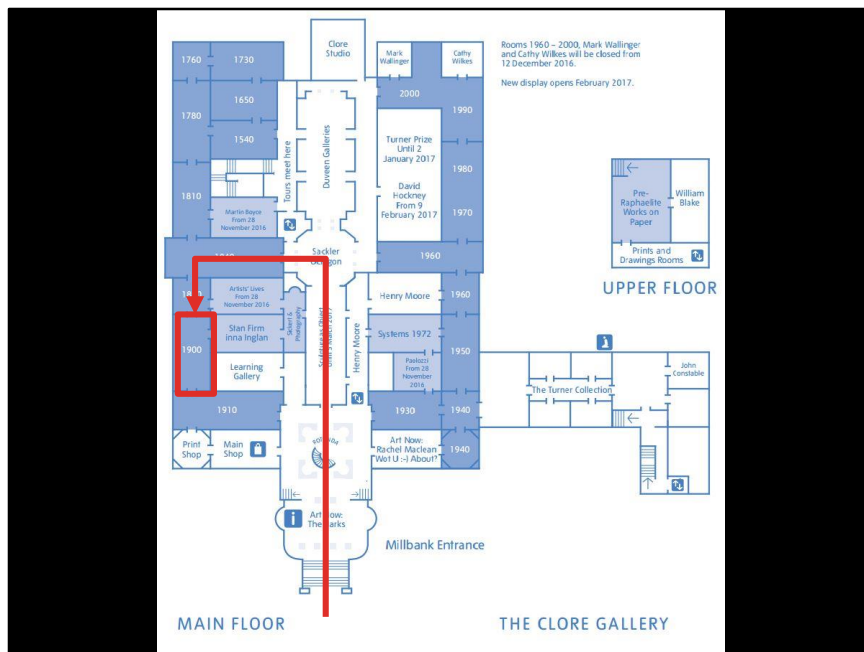


Slade School of Art picnic, circa 1912

Slade School of Art picnic, circa 1912. Front row (left to right): Dora Carrington, Barbara Hiles, Richard Nevinson, Mark Gertler, Edward Wadsworth, Adrian Allinson (with dog), and then Stanley Spencer. Second row: Dorothy Brett sits behind Nevinson and Gertler. Kneeling to the left is Isaac Rosenberg. Back row: David Bomberg (shirtsleeves) and Professor Fred Brown. Murihead Bone, Henry Tonks, Howard Gilman, Augustus John and the Nash's also appear but positions unknown. Presented by Angelica Garnett, 1981 and 1988-92 to Tate and part of the Vanessa Bell Collection. © Tate, London 2015 © Vanessa Bell/Tate, London 2015

- David Bomberg, back row, in shirtsleeves
- Professor Fred Brown, back row, fourth from left
- Henry Tonks, back row, far right (he was 6' 4")
- Augustus John, back row, far left (with beard)
- Dora Carrington, front row, far left
- C.R.W Nevinson, front row, third from left
- Mark Gertler, front row, fourth from left (with feminine features)
- Stanley Spencer, front row, second from right
- **Bio: Tonks**

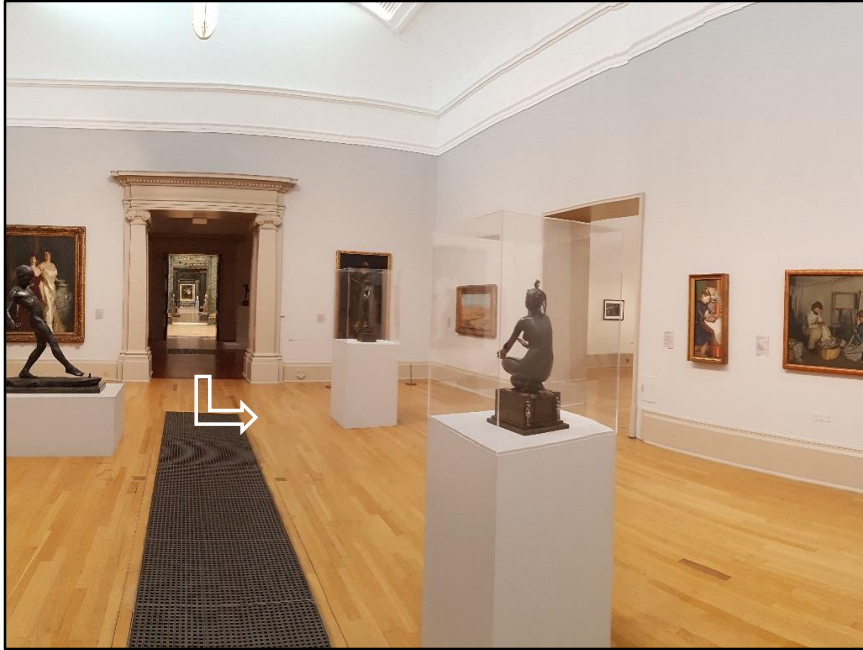
- **Henry Tonks** (1862-1937) was a surgeon and artist and teacher at the Slade. He exhibited at the **New England Art Club** which was **founded in 1885** and is still an active society. It was founded as an **alternative to the Royal Academy** by young English artists **returning** from studying in **Paris**. Among them were Thomas Cooper Gotch, Frank Bramley, John Singer Sargent, Philip Wilson Steer, George Clausen and Stanhope Forbes. Henry Tonks, Philip Wilson Steer and Frederick Brown became teachers at the Slade and they were all members of the New English Art Club. The **Slade School of Fine Art** is **part of University College** London and is consistently ranked the UK's top art and design educational institution. It was **founded in 1868** by **Felix Slade** who bequeathed funds to establish three Chairs in fine art at Oxford, Cambridge and London universities.
- Tonks became "**the most renowned and formidable teacher of his generation**". Two of its most important periods were immediately before, and immediately after, the turn of the twentieth century, described by Henry Tonks as its two '**crises of brilliance**'. The first included the students **Augustus John, William Orpen and Percy Wyndham Lewis**; the second – which has been chronicled in David Boyd Haycock's *A Crisis of Brilliance: Five Young British Artists and the Great War* (Old Street Publishing, 2009) – included the students **Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, Paul Nash, C.R.W. Nevinson and Stanley Spencer**. At the start of the war Tonks resumed his medical career in Dorchester, where he did drawing of the refugee Auguste Rodin, and then in France and later Italy. He became a lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1916, and produced pastel drawings recording **facial injury cases** at the Cambridge military hospital in Aldershot and the Queen's Hospital, Sidcup. Tonks became an official war artist in 1918, and he accompanied John Singer Sargent on tours of the Western Front. In August 1918, they both witnessed a field of wounded men near Le Bac du Sud which became the basis for Sargent's vast canvas, *Gassed*. Tonks went to Archangel in Russia in 1919 as a war artist with a British expeditionary force. He succeeded Frederick Brown as Slade Professor of Fine Art from 1918 to 1930, although he initially turned down the appointment in favour of Walter Sickert, only taking it up when Sickert declined the position.



1900-1910

1. Sydney Starr, 'Study in Blue and Grey', 1891
2. **Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'And the Sea Gave Up the Dead Which Were in It', exhibited 1892**
3. Edward Onslow Ford, 'Applause', 1893
4. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS Sir William Goscombe John, A Boy at Play, c.1895
5. **Thomas Cooper Gotch, 'Alleluia', exhibited 1896**
6. Edward Onslow Ford, 'The Singer', exhibited 1889
7. Sir William Rothenstein, 'The Doll's House', 1899–1900
8. **Sir Thomas Brock, 'Eve', 1900**
9. **Sir William Orpen, 'The Mirror', 1900**
10. Sir Alfred East, 'Golden Autumn', c.1900
11. **John Singer Sargent, 'Ena and Betty, Daughters of Asher and Mrs Wertheimer', 1901**
12. Marianne Stokes, 'Candlemas Day', c.1901
13. **Gwen John, 'Self-Portrait', 1902**
14. James Havard Thomas, 'Lycidas', 1902–8
15. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS Mary Sargent Florence, Children at Chess, c.1903
16. Charles Wellington Furse, 'Diana of the Uplands', 1903–4

17. Gwen John, 'Dorelia in a Black Dress', c.1903–4
18. John Singer Sargent, 'The Mountains of Moab', 1905
19. Albert Rutherston, 'Laundry Girls', 1906
20. Walter Richard Sickert, 'Girl at a Window, Little Rachel', 1907
21. Stanislaw De Karlowaska, 'Fried Fish Shop', c.1907
- 22. Augustus John OM, 'Woman Smiling', 1908–9**
- 23. Sir Jacob Epstein, 'Nan', 1909**
24. James Pryde, 'The Doctor', exhibited 1909
25. Spencer Gore, 'Rule Britannia', 1910
26. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS J.D. Fergusson, Blue Beads, Paris, 1910
27. Jacques-Emile Blanche, 'Ludgate Circus: Entrance to the City (November, Midday)', c.1910
28. Mabel Nicholson, 'The Harlequin', c.1910
29. Robert Bevan, 'The Cab Horse', c.1910
- 30. Eric Gill, 'Ecstasy', 1910–1**
31. Harold Gilman, 'Madeleine Knox', c.1910–1



Left of door John Singer Sargent, *Ena and Betty, Daughters of Asher and Mrs Wertheimer*, 1901

Right of door, behind statue, Sydney Starr, *Study in Blue and Grey*, 1891

Further right, John Singer Sargent, *The Mountains of Moab*, 1905

Right of door, Mary Sargent Florence, *Children at Chess*, c.1903

Furthest right, Albert Rutherston, *Laundry Girls*, 1906



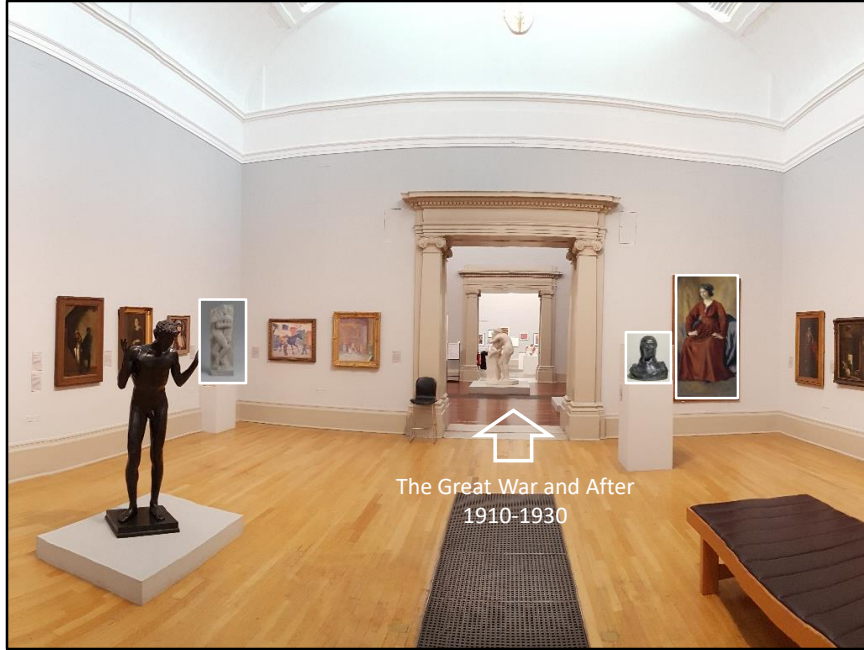
On the left Mary Sargant Florence, *Children at Chess*, c.1903

Next left, Albert Rutherston, *Laundry Girls*, 1906

Top picture, Stanislaw De Karłowska, *Fried Fish Shop*, c.1907

Bottom picture, Marianne Stokes, *Candlemas Day*, c.1901

Large picture, Charles Wellington Furse, *Diana of the Uplands*, 1903–4



Featured:

1. Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ecstasy*, 1910–1, Hoptonwood stone, 137.2 x 45.7 x 22.8 cm
2. Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Nan*, 1909, bronze, 44.5 x 38.1 x 22.9 cm, 15.8 kg
3. Augustus John (1878-1961), *Woman Smiling*, 1908–9, 221 x 123.8 cm

All pictures

- On left, Sir William Rothenstein, *The Doll's House*, 1899–1900
- Gwen John, *Dorelia in a Black Dress*, c.1903–4
- J.D. Fergusson, *Blue Beads, Paris*, 1910 (no image, behind statue)
- Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ecstasy*, 1910–1, Hoptonwood stone, 137.2 x 45.7 x 22.8 cm
- Robert Bevan, *The Cab Horse*, c.1910
- Spencer Gore, *Rule Britannia*, 1910
- Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Nan*, 1909, bronze, 44.5 x 38.1 x 22.9 cm, 15.8 kg
- Augustus John (1878-1961), *Woman Smiling*, 1908–9, 221 x 123.8 cm
- Mabel Nicholson, *The Harlequin*, c.1910
- James Pryde, *The Doctor*, exhibited 1909



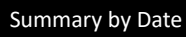
- Walter Richard Sickert, *Girl at a Window, Little Rachel*, 1907
 - Harold Gilman, *Madeleine Knox*, c.1910–1
1. Thomas Cooper Gotch (1854-1931), *Alleluia*, exhibited 1896, 133.3 x 184.1 cm
 2. Gwen John (1876-1939), *Self-Portrait*, 1902, 44.8 x 34.9 cm
 3. William Orpen (1878-1931), *The Mirror*, 1900, 50.8 x 40.6 cm



1. Thomas Brock (1847-1922), *Eve*, 1900, marble, 175 x 49 x 43, 225kg
2. Frederic Leighton, *And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it*, 1892, 228.6 x 228.6 cm
3. John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Ena and Betty, Daughters of Asher and Mrs Wertheimer*, 1901, 185.4 x 130.8 cm

The two paintings not covered are:

- Jacques-Emile Blanche, *Ludgate Circus: Entrance to the City (November, Midday)*, c.1910
- Sir Alfred East, *Golden Autumn*, c.1900





Frederic Leighton, *And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it*, 1892, 228.6 x 228.6 cm

- This dramatic painting shows the dead rising from their graves on the day of **Last Judgement** (Book of Revelations). It was originally created as one of eight to decorate the spandrels around the dome of **St Paul's cathedral** but was **abandoned** as **unsuitable for a Christian church**. This reduced version was commissioned by Henry Tate for his new gallery. The main group shows a husband, wife and child reunited but still in various stages of life. The man is alive, the women still has a greenish hue of death and the boy is half-alive.
- The painting is **influenced** by Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* from the Sistine Chapel and his *Entombment*, Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) in his use of colour and Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) *Raft of the Medusa* (1819).
- It met with only modest praise. One critic described its '**a cold - almost oppressive - dignity**' but did add that it displayed his '**loftiness of thought**'.

Notes

- 'And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their

works.' (*Revelation* 20:13)

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/leighton-and-the-sea-gave-up-the-dead-which-were-in-it-n01511>



Thomas Cooper Gotch (1854-1931), *Alleluia*, exhibited 1896, 133.3 x 184.1 cm

- 'After studying in Italy, Thomas Gotch painted works on the theme of motherhood and childhood. Here the jewel-like colours and gold background recall early Christian altarpieces. 'Sing praises to God, sing praises: Sing praises unto our King, Sing praises, For God is King of all the earth: Sing praises with understanding', from Psalm xlvii: 6 and 7, is inscribed in Latin along the top. Gotch was a founding member of the Royal Colonial Society of British Artists and the array of clothing may have been intended to communicate the universality of worship, but the painting follows European tradition in representing the angelic singers as pale skinned.' (Tate display caption)
- The year following the exhibition of the painting, was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee which celebrated the imperial splendour of the British Empire. It is possible that the painting is intended to represent the 'diversity of nations' when the colonial expansion of the Empire was at its peak. However, the diversity is represented by the wide range of hair colours and all the girls are white.

Bio:Gotch

- **Thomas Cooper Gotch** or T.C. Gotch (1854–1931) was an English Pre-Raphaelite

painter and book illustrator, and brother of John Alfred Gotch, the architect. Gotch studied art in London and Antwerp before he married and studied in Paris with his wife, Caroline, a fellow artist. Returning to Britain, they settled into the Newlyn art colony in Cornwall. He first made paintings of natural, pastoral settings before immersing himself in the romantic, Pre-Raphaelite romantic style for which he is best known. His daughter was often a model for the colourful depictions of young girls. His works have been exhibited at the Royal Academy, Royal College of Art and the Paris Salon. 1896 was a good year for Gotch. This painting was hung 'on the line' at the Academy and purchased by the Chantrey Fund.

Note:Chantrey Bequest

- On his death Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841) left £150,000 to the Royal Academy for the purchase of 'works of Fine Art ... executed in Great Britain'. The first purchase was made in 1877 following the death of Lady Chantrey. Although the Trustees of the RA still decide on the selection of the purchases, the exhibition and preservation of the collection has become the responsibility of the Tate Gallery.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gotch-alleluia-n01590>



Thomas Brock (1847-1922), *Eve*, 1900, marble, 175 x 49 x 43, 225kg

- 'Brock exhibited this life-size female nude as a plaster cast at the Royal Academy in 1898. He completed the marble in the following year, and showed it at the Paris Universal Exhibition. Critics praised its combination of naturalism and spiritualism, as well as its subtlety in modelling and expression of feeling. Unusually, Eve is not presented as a sensual temptress. Instead she is shown as thoughtful, her head bowed and her left arm placed protectively across her chest, as if in shame. ' (Tate display caption)
- Remember, I mentioned that **Frederic Leighton's** sculpted *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1877) with the assistance of **Thomas Brock**. Thomas Brock (1847-1922) was an English sculptor whose most famous work is the statue of Queen Victoria outside Buckingham Palace. It is said that when it was unveiled in 1911 George V was so moved he called for a sword and knighted Brock on the spot.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/brock-eve-n01784>



William Orpen (1878-1931), *The Mirror*, 1900, 50.8 x 40.6 cm

- The sitter in this portrait is **Emily Scobel**, a model from the Slade School of Art. Orpen was **briefly engaged** to her. The room is apparently an accurate portrayal of Orpen's lodgings, but the shallow pictorial depth and decorative, or 'aesthetic,' arrangement of objects is **based on Whistler's famous portrait of his mother** in profile. The concave mirror on the wall reflects the artist painting at his easel. This is a device which Orpen borrowed from a 15th-century painting by Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, which he would have seen on display at the National Gallery.
- Orpen's ***The Mirror***, shown at the NEAC in 1900, references both **Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*** of 1434 and also elements of seventeenth-century Dutch interiors, such as muted tones and deep shadows. Orpen depicted the 'Arnolfini' convex glass in several other paintings, including *A Mere Fracture* in 1901, during this period.
- Whilst at the Slade, Orpen became engaged to **Emily Scobel, a model and the subject of *The Mirror***. In 1901, **she ended their relationship** and Orpen married Grace Knewstub, the sister-in-law of Sir William Rothenstein. Orpen and Knewstub had three daughters together but the marriage was not a happy one and, by 1908,

Orpen had begun a long running affair with Mrs Evelyn Saint-George, a well-connected American millionairess based in London, and with whom he also had a child.

- **Bio:Orpen**
- **William Orpen** (1878-1931) an Irish artist who worked mainly in London. William Orpen was a fine draughtsman and a **popular, commercially successful, painter of portraits** for the well-to-do in Edwardian society. During the First World War, he was the most prolific of the official artists sent by Britain to the Western Front and as a Major he was allowed to stay longer. As an Irishman he could he returned to Ireland to avoid conscription as many Irish artists did but he insisted on enrolling. After the war he donated most of his 138 works to the British government. He narrowly avoided a court-martial with the help of Lord Beaverbrook for calling a portrait of a young Red Cross worker, *The Spy*. He had invented a story about a young, female German spy who had revealed herself naked to avoid being shot by a French firing squad.
- He was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1918 King's birthday honours list, and also elected a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, his determination to serve as a war artist cost him both his health and his social standing in Britain. After his early death, a number of critics, including other artists, were loudly dismissive of his work and for many years his paintings were rarely exhibited, a situation that only began to change in the 1980s

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/orpen-the-mirror-n02940>



John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Ena and Betty, Daughters of Asher and Mrs Wertheimer*, 1901, 185.4 x 130.8 cm

- 'This is one of a series of portraits Sargent was commissioned to make of the family of the art dealer Asher Wertheimer (1844–1918). Sargent befriended the family and Wertheimer helped Sargent obtain commissions. This portrait shows Wertheimer's eldest daughters, Elizabeth (Betty) on the left and Helena (Ena). Sargent was attracted by the charm of the Wertheimer family, especially the vivacity of Ena (right), something which is clearly revealed in this portrait. The different textures of the sisters' dresses are skilfully evoked, the rich depth of Betty's red velvet contrasting with the shine of Ena's white damask.' (Tate display caption)
- In 1900 Sargent was at the height of his fame and between 1900 and 1907 he painted dozens of oil paintings and hundreds of portrait drawings that he sold at about \$400 each. In 1907, aged fifty-one, he officially closed his studio, saying '**Painting a portrait would be quite amusing if one were not forced to talk while working...What a nuisance having to entertain the sitter and to look happy when one feels wretched**'. He continued to paint landscapes.

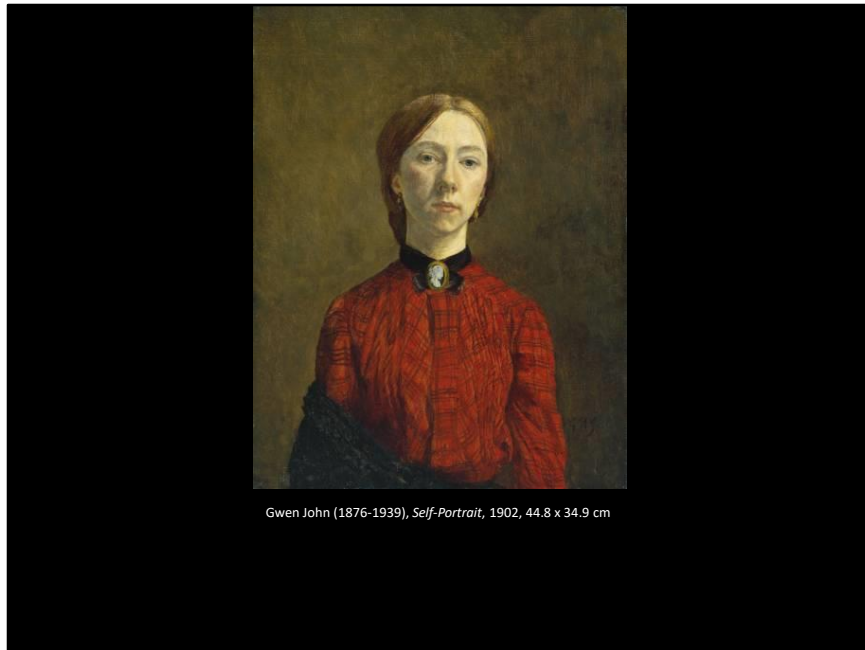
Bio:Sargent

John Singer Sargent

- John Singer Sargent was an American artist who was considered the '**leading portrait painter of his generation**' specialising in Edwardian aristocracy. He was prolific and painted about 900 oil paintings and 2,000 watercolours.
- He was **trained in Paris** before moving to London. His early submission *Portrait of Madame X* (1884) caused a scandal rather than the positive publicity he was expecting.
- He was a master of **drawing with the brush** and his portraits were painted in the grand manner but his landscapes were influenced by Impressionism.
- His father was an eye surgeon but when Sargent's older sister died aged two his **mother** (Mary née Singer) **had a breakdown** and they **travelled through Europe** for the rest of their lives. Sargent was born in Florence in 1856. He had no official schooling but grew up speaking **fluent French, Italian and German** and accomplished in art, music and literature.
- He began his art studies with Carolus-Duran a French portrait painter with bold techniques and modern teaching methods. He taught painting *alla prima* working directly on the canvas with a loaded brush derived from Diego Velázquez. In 1874 he gained entry to the École des Beaux-Arts at his first attempt and won a silver prize.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sargent-ena-and-betty-daughters-of-asher-and-mrs-wertheimer-n03708>



Gwen John (1876-1939), *Self-Portrait*, 1902, 44.8 x 34.9 cm

- 'Gwen John trained at the Slade School of Art in London. As a woman in a career still largely dominated by men, including her successful brother Augustus, Gwen had to struggle for recognition. It has been suggested that the self-scrutinising intensity of this image, and the isolation of the figure, registers this, but the figure retains its privacy. In recent years, her reputation has grown and now eclipses that of Augustus.' (Tate display caption)
- Gwen John's work never exhibits any flashiness or contrived effects; it is always simple, plain yet deeply moving. This portrait was described by one critic [T. Martin Wood in *Studio*] as **'one of the greatest achievements in this exhibition because of its sincerity'** and in 1926 she was described as **'a sort of modern Vermeer'**. One reviewer [Nigel Gosling, 1968, *Observer Review*] **'The force of this almost obsessive reticence is astonishing ... the extreme subtlety and reticence of the exquisite tonal arrangements ... is a chief source of delight ... Its power within awesomely restricted means is reminiscent of Morandi's.'**
- Bio:John,Gwen

- **Gwen John** (1876-1939) was a Welsh artist who worked in France most of her life. She trained at the Slade School of Art from 1895 to 1898 where her younger brother, Augustus John, had already begun his studies. They lived together on fruit and nuts and even as students her brother's personal glamour made him a celebrity. Gwen was quieter and her reputation has steadily grown since her death. She **neglected her health** throughout her life and in **1900-01** she lived as a **squatter** in a derelict building.
- She and was taught in the traditional manner, which involved copying Old Master paintings. This training shows in the naturalism and carefully controlled colour range of this picture. As a woman in a career still largely dominated by men, including her successful brother Augustus, Gwen had to struggle for recognition. The self-scrutinizing intensity of this image, and the isolation of the figure, registers some sense of this struggle.
- She settled in **Paris in 1904**, working as a **model, becoming Rodin's mistress** and immersing herself in the artistic world of the metropolis. She lived in **France** for the **rest of her life**, exhibiting on both sides of the Channel.
- From **1910 to 1924** nearly all her work was purchased by her **patron John Quinn** an American art collector and this freed her from having to work as a model, mostly for women artists. The majority of her work is portraits, mainly of female sitters and her oeuvre is small, consisting of only 158 oil paintings.
- She drew **thousands of drawings** and thought a painting should be finished in **one or two sittings** and '**For that one must paint a lot of canvases probably and waste them**'. Her meticulous preparation shows the **influence** of James McNeill **Whistler** who she **trained under** in Paris at the Académie Carmen.
- Like many women artists she tried drawing her own body in the mirror but she complained in a letter to her brother about how difficult it was. **Even the Slade imposed restrictions** of women drawing from female models and so **friends would draw each other** but **kept silent** about the practice as 'the **respectability** of these middle-class women students would have been jeopardized if they had acknowledged at the time that they had worked from studies of their own bodies rather than those of anonymous working-class models'.
- When she lived in Paris she had to work as a model to survive. She posed nude for Auguste Rodin and for **other artists, mostly women**. In her dairies she wrote of many occasions when, working as a model, she felt **harassed or abused** by both men and women artists. For example, one of her clients, a woman artist, was kissing a man all afternoon and then told her not to tell anyone if she wanted to keep her job as a model, treating her as a child and discussing her as if she was not there. As a model she would be kept waiting for hours, shouted at, ignored, given no breaks, and propositioned by male artists. She developed fierce attachments to both men and women that worried some people and she later became Rodin's lover.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/john-self-portrait-n05366>



Augustus John (1878-1961), *Woman Smiling*, 1908–9, 221 x 123.8 cm

- **'Augustus John, the most highly-regarded British artist of his day**, painted this jaunty portrait of his second partner, Dorelia McNeill, for the annual exhibition, 'Fair Women' organised by the International Society. These exhibitions included old masters as well as modern portraits, and reviewers compared John's picture to works by van Dyck and Manet. McNeill designed her own dress with high waist and long skirt and **set a fashion for bohemian costume**. This portrait was the first purchase by the Contemporary Art Society, although it was not allocated to Tate until 1917. Roger Fry dubbed it a 'gypsy Gioconda', mixing together McNeill's Romany costume with the 'Mona Lisa' (Tate display caption)
- **Bio:John, Augustus**
- **Augustus John (1878-1961)**, was a Welsh painter who for a short time around **1910** was an **important exponent of Post-Impressionism**. He was the **younger brother** of the acclaimed artist **Gwen John**. He briefly attended the **Tenby School of Art** before leaving for the **Slade School of Art** in London. He became the **star pupil** of the drawing teacher Henry Tonks and was recognised as the **most talented draughtsman of his generation**.

- In 1897 he was **seriously injured** while swimming and his lengthy convalescence accelerated his artistic development. He studied in Paris, married in 1901 and started teaching at the University of Liverpool. He fell in love with the town Martigues in Provence and lived there from 1910 to 1928. Throughout his life he was interested in **painting the Romani people** (whom he called gypsies) and for a short time **travelled round Britain in a caravan** with his **wife, mistress** (who in 1907 became his second wife on the death of his first) and the **children of both women**.
- During **World War I** he painted **two huge murals** but they remained **unfinished**. The bulk of his later work consist of **portraits**. He was known for the psychological insight of his portraits, many of which were **considered 'cruel'** for the truth of the depiction. There was an international outcry when **Lord Leverhulme cut out the head of his portrait** to hide it in his vault. Perhaps Lever was shocked because he appears not confident and bold but reflective and sad. The painting was reassembled in 1954 and is in the Leverhulme Gallery, Liverpool.
- **By the 1920s Augustus John was the leading British portrait painter** replacing John Singer Sargent. His most famous portrait is of Dylan Thomas.
- One critic has claimed that "the **painterly brilliance** of his early work **degenerated into flashiness and bombast**, and the **second half of his long career added little** to his achievement."
- **Augustus John's promiscuity** gave rise to rumours that he had **fathered as many as 100 children** over the course of his life.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/john-woman-smiling-n03171>



Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Nan*, 1909, bronze, 44.5 x 38.1 x 22.9 cm, 15.8 kg

- 'Epstein grew up in New York, and studied in Paris before settling in London in 1905. Before the First World War he pioneered 'direct carving' and abstract art. In later years, he became celebrated as a portraitist, and modelled busts in clay. The sitter for this early bust was Nan Condron, a professional artist's model, whom Epstein met at the Café Royal in Regent Street. Epstein worked from her for several years and sought a lively likeness that was expressive of her presence and character as well as her appearance.' (Tate display caption)
- **Bio:Epstein**
- **Jacob Epstein** (1880-1959) helped pioneer modern sculpture. He was **born in the US**, moved to **Europe in 1902** (aged 22) and became a British citizen in 1911. He **married** Margaret Dunlop in 1906 and had **many affairs** and fathered five children. His longest relationship with **Kathleen Garman** lasted from 1921 until his death. Margaret tolerated all his affairs except that with Garman **who she shot** and wounded in 1923. Margaret died in 1947 and **Epstein married Kathleen**. Their **eldest daughter**, also called Kathleen or 'Kitty', **married Lucien Freud**.
- He reacted against ornate and pretty art and often made **bold, harsh** and massive

forms in bronze and stone. He often **shocked** his audience because of the **explicit sexual content** and his experimentation with **non-Western** sculptural traditions. His **male nude** over **John Lewis's** department store in Liverpool was called 'Dickie Lewis'.

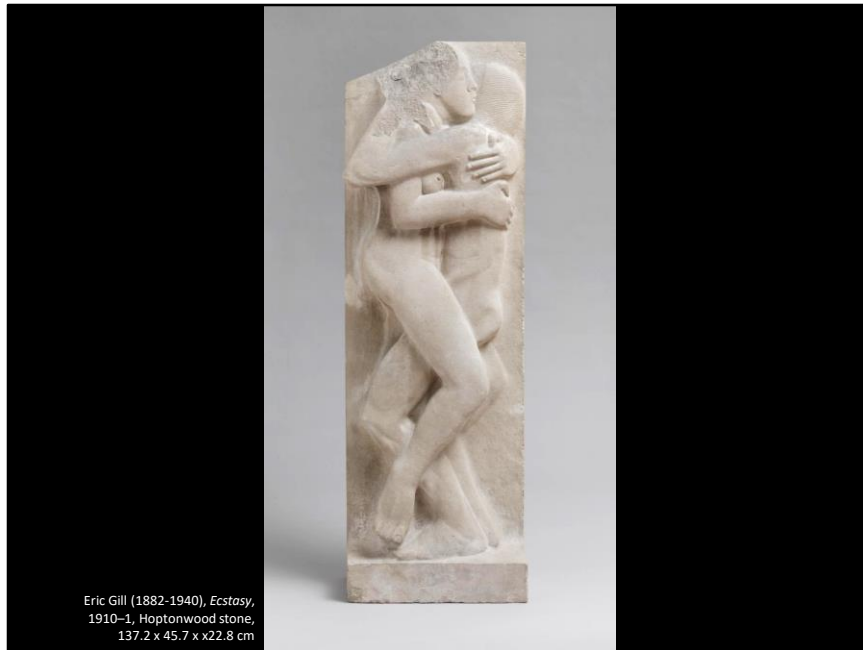
- His **first major commission** was **18 large nude sculptures** made in 1908 for the façade of Charles Holden's building for the British Medical Association on **The Strand** (now Zimbabwe House) were initially considered shocking to **Edwardian sensibilities**, again mainly due to the perception that they were over-explicit sexually. In art-historical terms, however, the Strand sculptures were controversial for quite a different reason: they represented Epstein's first thoroughgoing attempt to break away from traditional European iconography in favour of elements derived from an alternative sculptural milieu – that of **classical India**. In the **1930s** some **pieces fell off** the figures and they were all mutilated allegedly to protect the public but it is not clear whether it was from falling masonry or from the naked figures.
- Through Epstein's 1908 figures for the façade of the new British Medical Association building in the Strand, now Zimbabwe House, the British public had its first and formative encounter with a version of Modernism. The encounter was unsettling because it took place in a street and it combined classical nudity with the eroticism of Indian sculpture.
- Between 1913 and 1915, Epstein was associated with the short-lived Vorticism movement and produced one of his best known sculptures *The Rock Drill*.
- This is a photograph of ***The Rock Drill in its original form***. This work appeared at the London Group exhibition in 1915. By the time of its second outing in summer 1916, however, he had dismantled it. He discarded the drill, dismembered the figure and cut it in half, leaving a one-armed torso which was then cast, initially in gun metal and ultimately in bronze. Epstein, it seems, took an expression of masculine aggression and then emasculated it. Obvious conclusions may be drawn from the fact that he is doing this at the time of the Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Verdun.
- **Epstein's second commission was the Tomb of Oscar Wilde**. His original sketches, which he abandoned, show two young men mourning Wilde's death. new focus on Wilde's poem *The Sphinx*. However, a number of influences began to play on Epstein around this period, including that of fellow sculptor **Eric Gill**. The two artists were deeply interested in what they saw as the more **primal sexuality of Indian** and Egyptian art, as opposed to British art. Pennington refers to this period in the Epstein's work as the Sun Temple period and claims that, having been unable to follow this path with some of his works in Britain, Epstein transferred his new passion onto the Wilde tomb. It has also been claimed that the work was partly inspired by the ***Winged Assyrian Bulls*** in the British Museum.
- It began as a **single 20 tonne block** of Hopton Wood stone from Derbyshire. In Epstein's original sketches there are five figures in the headress of the Sphinx,

one with a crucifix, perhaps referring to Wilde's martyrdom and a small angel behind its ear. However, in the finished version there is just the personification of Fame being trumpeted in the Sphinx's headdress.

- When it was imported into France the **custom's officials rejected it as a work of art** and imposed a punishing **£120** for the value of the stone. The **nakedness** caused the Parisian officials to **cover it with tarpaulin** and one evening Epstein found the **testicles** had been **covered with plaster** as they were considered unusually large. Eventually a **bronze plaque** shaped like a **butterfly** was placed over the testicles and it was **unveiled in August 1914** by the occultist and poet **Alistair Crowley**. Epstein was **furious** and refused to attend the opening. A few weeks later Crowley approached Epstein with the bronze butterfly round his neck and told him the tomb was now as he had intended. In 1961 the testicles were removed in an act of vandalism and in 2000 a silver replacement was made.
- A tradition arose that mourners (mostly women) should apply lipstick and **kiss the tomb** so in 2011 a **glass barrier** was erected to stop the stone becoming damaged.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/epstein-nan-n03646>



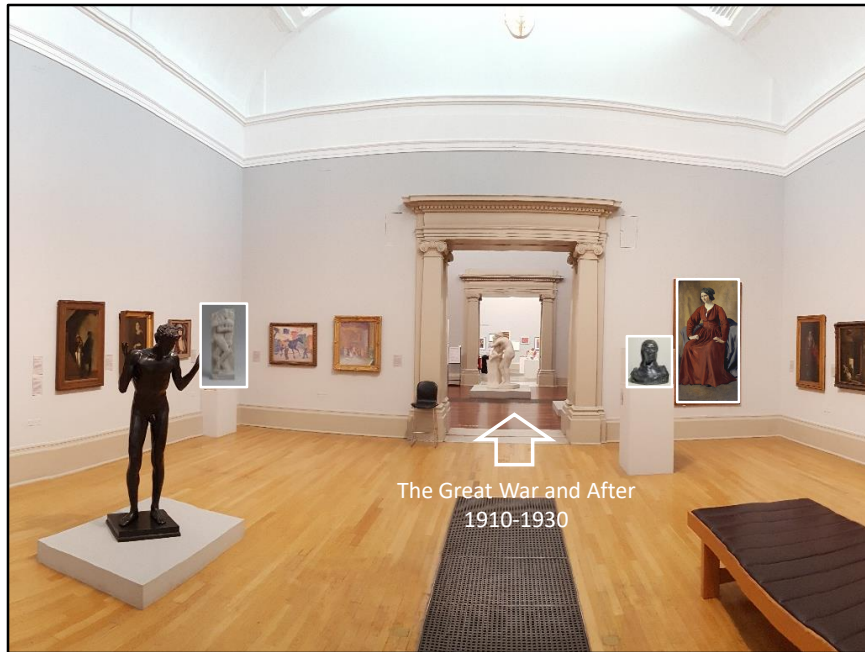
Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ecstasy*, 1910–1, Hoptonwood stone, 137.2 x 45.7 x x22.8 cm

- 'Gill wanted to return to 'direct carving' of stone and worked on this relief over a period of seven months. He was influenced by the graceful, simplified forms of carved, medieval religious sculptures in Europe and India. Some Indian temple sculpture showed embracing couples and British artists such as Gill became more informed about such sculpture through the India Society, founded in 1910. Gill did not exhibit this work, selling it in 1912 to Edward Warren, who already owned a version of Rodin's *The Kiss*.' (Tate display caption)
- Hopton Wood stone (sometimes Hopton-Wood stone or Hoptonwood stone) is a type of limestone quarried west of Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire, England. Described as "very fine, almost like marble" and as "England's premier decorative stone", it is particularly suited to carving, making it popular for tombstones (including many thousands for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission), sculpture and building. Buildings and structures made using Hopton Wood stone include the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Albert Memorial, Lichfield Cathedral, Chatsworth House and Oscar Wilde's tomb. It is a carboniferous limestone. Carboniferous refers to the geological period, from 350

million to 290 million years ago, its name deriving from the coal seams that were created during it. Coal occurs close by the limestone, as does the tough building stone of the North, millstone grit.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gill-ecstasy-t03477>



1. Eric Gill (1882-1940), *Ecstasy*, 1910–1, Hoptonwood stone, 137.2 x 45.7 x 22.8 cm
2. Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Nan*, 1909, bronze, 44.5 x 38.1 x 22.9 cm, 15.8 kg
3. Augustus John (1878-1961), *Woman Smiling*, 1908–9, 221 x 123.8 cm