

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.

Unless otherwise mentioned all works of art are at Tate Britain.

References and Copyright

- 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.
- My sponsored charities are Save the Children and Cancer UK.
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- Each page has a section called 'References' that gives a link or links to sources of information.
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A STROLL THROUGH TATE BRITAIN

- The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1880
- Late Victorians, 1880-1900
- The Edwardians, 1890-1910
- **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 GREAT WAR AND AFTER: 1910-1930

- The Great War
- The Spanish Flu
- Art Themes
 - 'Return to Order'
 - Abstraction



This was a period of enormous change - suffragettes fought for the rights of women, workers went on strike and the First World War resulted in 38 million dead and wounded followed by Spanish flu which killed 50-100 million people. The divide between rich and poor grew, but measures were also introduced laying the foundations of the modern-day welfare state. In art it was a critical period when modern art was fighting academic art.

Notes

- **World War I** began on 28 July 1914 and lasted until 11 November 1918. More than **70 million military personnel**, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilised in one of the largest wars in history. There were **38 million** military and civilian deaths and casualties. Over 11 million combatants and 7 million civilians died as a result of the war (including the victims of a number of genocides) and 20 million wounded making it one of the deadliest conflicts in history. The carnage was brought about by technical developments in warfare and industrial production.
- The war was between the Allied Powers which included Britain, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and in 1917 the United States and the Central Powers which included Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.
- The trigger (not the reason) for the war was the **assassination of Archduke Franz**

Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by Yugoslav nationalist **Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo** on 28 June 1914. This set off a diplomatic crisis when Austria-Hungary delivered an ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia, and entangled international alliances formed over the previous decades were invoked. Within weeks, the major powers were at war and the conflict soon spread around the world.

- The sponsorship of the arts during the First World War was unprecedented. It started in July 1916 by the Government propaganda department (later the Department of Information) in order to provide eye witness illustrations for propaganda publications. Amongst the artists commissioned at this stage were William Orpen, Paul Nash and C R W Nevinson. The Imperial War Museum was established in 1917 and collected a wide range of material including art and it commissioned its own artists.
- In February 1918 the Government planning a Hall of Remembrance devoted to 'fighting subjects, home subjects and the war at sea and in the air'. This was to be a record and a memorial to the Great War through paintings commissioned from the best and, on occasion, the most avant-garde British artists of the day, including Percy Wyndham Lewis, Stanley Spencer and John Singer Sargent. However, because of lack of funding after the war, the Hall of Remembrance was never built, and the collection of paintings was given to the Imperial War Museum.
- Britain did not need to enter the war but could have lived with a German-run Europe. This would have given it time to prepare for war later. Instead Britain made the catastrophic mistake of entering the war unprepared. This resulted in enormous casualties and a weakened British Empire with a massive debt and an irreplaceable loss of the skilled manpower needed to recover.
- Both sides believed that they would win and that victory would come quickly. Over one third of men between 19 and 22 when the war started were killed.

Spanish Flu

- The 1918 flu pandemic (January 1918 – December 1920) was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic, the first of the two pandemics involving influenza A virus subtype H1N1. It infected 500 million people around the world, including remote Pacific islands and the Arctic, and resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million (three to five percent of the world's population), making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. Disease had already greatly limited life expectancy in the early 20th century. A considerable spike occurred at the time of the pandemic, specifically the year 1918. Life expectancy in the United States alone dropped by about 12 years. Most influenza outbreaks disproportionately kill juvenile, elderly, or already weakened patients; in contrast, the 1918 pandemic predominantly killed previously healthy young adults. To maintain morale, wartime censors minimized early reports of illness and mortality in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. However, papers were free to report the epidemic's

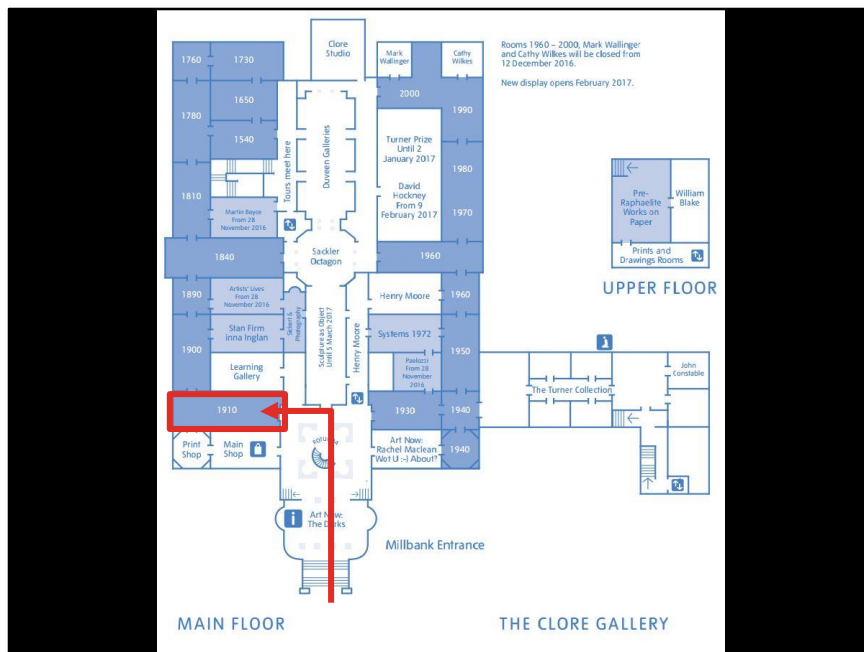
effects in neutral Spain. This reporting dichotomy created a false impression of Spain as especially hard hit, thereby giving rise to the pandemic's nickname, Spanish Flu.

Return to Order

- Following the First World War art took different directions. One group, the **Dadaists**, completely rejected everything that had gone before as they saw it as part of a social order that led to the death of millions of people. The other group were associated with the phrase '**return to order**' and they saw the war as an appalling episode to be forgotten and wanted to return to the figurative art that predominated before the war.

Abstraction

- Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect. Strictly speaking, the word abstract means to separate or withdraw something from something else. The term can be applied to art that is based on an object, figure or landscape, where forms have been simplified or schematised. It is also applied to art that uses forms, such as geometric shapes or gestural marks, which have no source at all in an external visual reality. Some artists of this 'pure' abstraction have preferred terms such as concrete art or non-objective art, but in practice the word abstract is used across the board and the distinction between the two is not always obvious. Abstract art is often seen as carrying a moral dimension, in that it can be seen to stand for virtues such as order, purity, simplicity and spirituality.
- Kasimir Malevich, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian developed abstract art at about the same time, between 1910 and 1920.



1910-1930

1. Copyright restrictions, Bruce Turner, Pavlova, c.1912
2. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, 'The Dancer', 1913
3. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, 'Singer', 1913
4. Duncan Grant, 'The Ass', c.1913
5. **Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, 'The Arrival', c.1913**
6. **David Bomberg, 'In the Hold', c.1913–4**
7. **Sir Jacob Epstein, 'Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'', 1913–4**
8. **Vanessa Bell, 'Abstract Painting', c.1914**
9. **Wyndham Lewis, 'Workshop', c.1914–5**
10. Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, 'La Mitrailleuse', 1915
11. **Walter Richard Sickert, 'Brighton Pierrots', 1915**
12. **Sir Stanley Spencer, 'Swan Upping at Cookham', 1915–9**
13. Sir Hamo Thornycroft, 'The Kiss', 1916
14. **Mark Gertler, 'Merry-Go-Round', 1916**
15. Harold Gilman, 'Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table', 1916–7
16. Charles Sargeant Jagger, 'No Man's Land', 1919–20
17. William Roberts, 'The Cinema', 1920
18. Eric Gill, 'St Sebastian', 1920

19. Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, 'The Soul of the Soulless City ('New York - an Abstraction')', 1920

20. Edward Reginald Frampton, 'Brittany: 1914', c.1920

21. Sir Jacob Epstein, 'Jacob Kramer', 1921

22. Dora Carrington, 'Farm at Watendlath', 1921

23. Frank Dobson, 'Sir Osbert Sitwell, Bt', 1923

24. Edward Wadsworth, 'Seaport', 1923

25. Sir Cedric Morris, Bt, 'Experiment in Textures', 1923

26. Frederick Cayley Robinson, 'Pastoral', 1923–4

27. Sir Stanley Spencer, 'The Resurrection, Cookham', 1924–7

28. Arthur G Walker, 'Christ at the Whipping Post', exhibited 1925

29. NO IMAGE Frank Dobson, Susanna, c.1925

30. Sir Jacob Epstein, 'The Visitation', 1926

31. Eric Gill, 'Inscription 'Ex Divina Pulchritudine'', 1926

32. Edward Halliday, 'Christian and Hopeful Arrive before the Celestial City', 1926

33. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie, Small Bottle, 1927

34. Ben Nicholson OM, '1928 (foothills, Cumberland)', 1928

35. Alfred Wallis, 'St Ives', c.1928

36. Eric Gill, 'The North Wind', 1929

37. Eric Gill, 'The East Wind', 1929

38. Henry Moore OM, CH, 'Mask', 1929

39. Christopher Wood, 'A Fishing Boat in Dieppe Harbour', 1929

40. Eric Gill, 'Model for Sculpture: The South Wind', 1929

41. Francis Bacon, 'Painted Screen', c.1929

42. Frances Hodgkins, 'Flatford Mill', 1930

43. Michael Cardew, 'Small Bowl', c.1930

44. Bernard Leach, 'Slipware Plate', c.1930



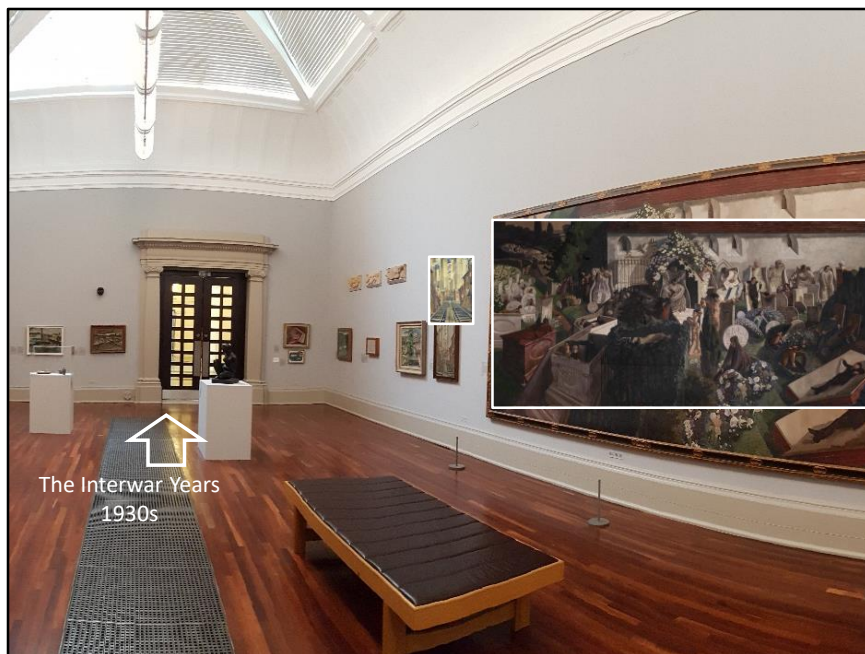
Bas relief is Charles Sargeant Jagger, *No Man's Land*, 1919–20
Head and shoulders is Sir Jacob Epstein, *Jacob Kramer*, 1921



Sculpture on left is Arthur G Walker, *Christ at the Whipping Post*, exhibited 1925
 Sculpture on right is Eric Gill, *St Sebastian*, 1920

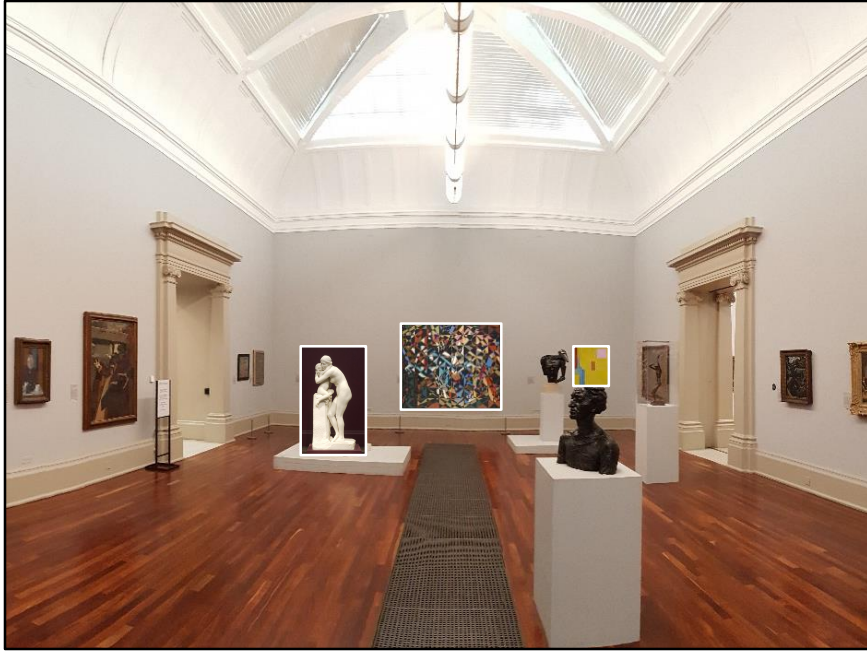
Paintings not covered are:

Edward Reginald Frampton, *Brittany: 1914*, c.1920, a young soldier praying
 Edward Halliday, *Christian and Hopeful Arrive before the Celestial City*, 1926, taken from John Bunyan's book *Pilgrim's Progress*, awarded a scholarship
 Frederick Cayley Robinson, *Pastoral*, 1923–4

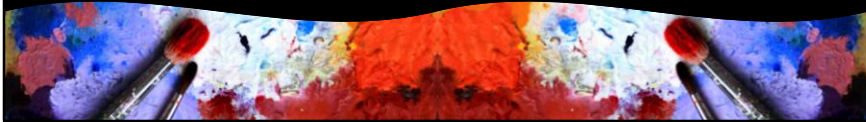


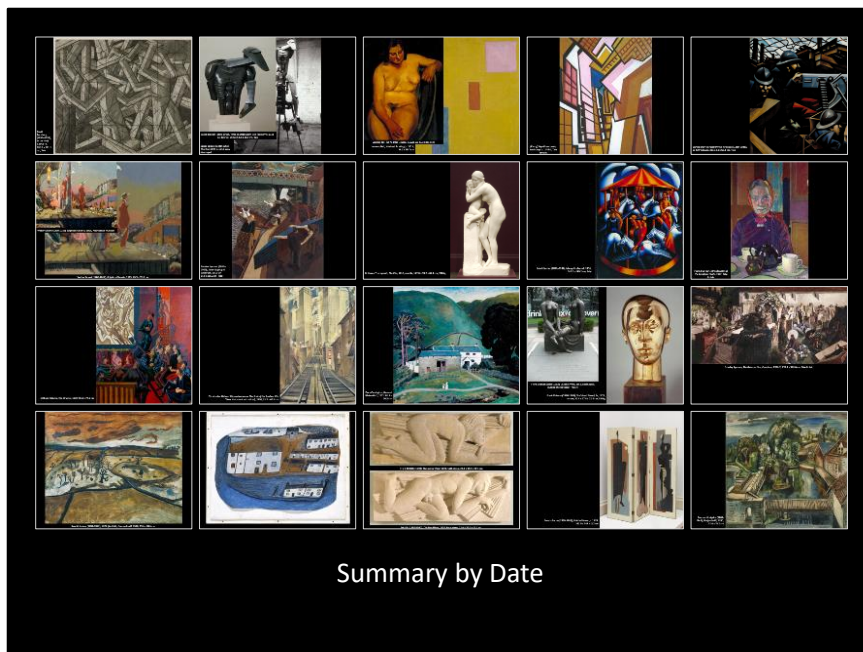


Sculpture is Sir Jacob Epstein, *The Visitation*, 1926, the Virgin Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth to share the news that she is to give birth to Jesus. When first exhibited it was called *A Study*.



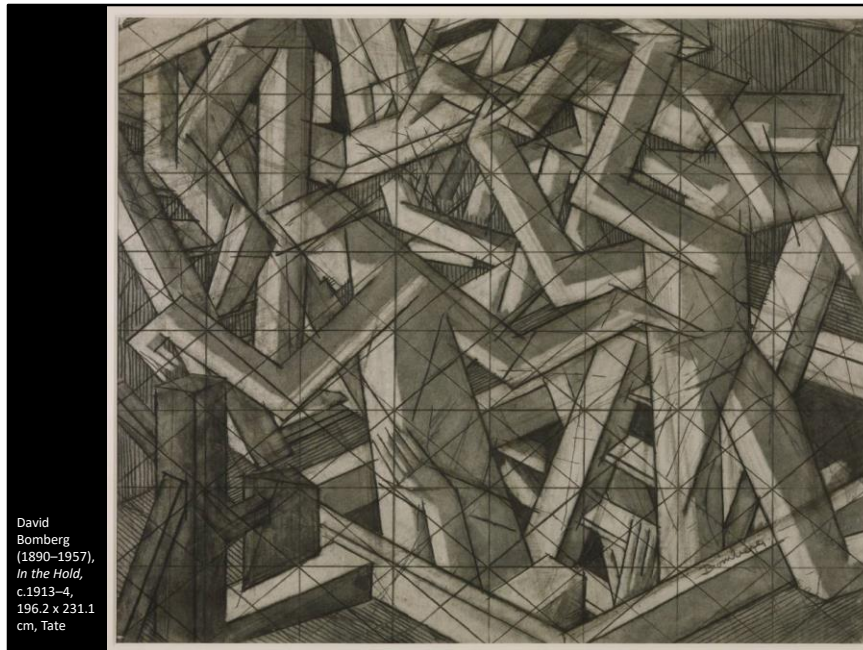
SUMMARY BY DATE





1. David Bomberg, 'In the Hold', c.1913–4
2. Sir Jacob Epstein, 'Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'', 1913–4
3. Vanessa Bell, 'Abstract Painting', c.1914
4. Wyndham Lewis, 'Workshop', c.1914–5
5. Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, 'La Mitrailleuse', 1915
6. Walter Richard Sickert, 'Brighton Pierrots', 1915
7. Sir Stanley Spencer, 'Swan Upping at Cookham', 1915–9
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15. Sir Stanley Spencer, 'The Resurrection, Cookham', 1924–7
16. Ben Nicholson OM, '1928 (foothills, Cumberland)', 1928
17. Alfred Wallis, 'St Ives', c.1928
18. Eric Gill, 'The North Wind', 1929 and 'The East Wind', 1929

19. Francis Bacon, 'Painted Screen', c.1929
20. Frances Hodgkins, 'Flatford Mill', 1930



David Bomberg (1890–1957), *In the Hold*, c.1913–4, 196.2 x 231.1 cm, Tate
 David Bomberg (1890–1957), Study for 'In the Hold', c.1914, charcoal on paper, 54.8 x 65.4 cm, Tate

- **C.R.W. Nevinson, David Bomberg, Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, Paul Nash and Stanley Spencer** - six of the **most important and distinctive British artists of the twentieth century** - had all been students together at the Slade School of Art in London. They formed part of what their **drawing teacher, Henry Tonks**, described as the **school's last 'crisis of brilliance'**. For young British artists working in the years immediately before the Great War it was an exciting and demanding time as various Modernist movements fought for precedence: Primitivism, Futurism, Cubism, Vorticism and Expressionism.
- Although it appears completely abstract *In the Hold* closely follows the outlines of a drawing that is in the Tate.
- *In the Hold* is based on a scene of dockers working in the hold of a ship. A ladder, seen in the lower right of the picture, connects the hold with the deck above. In the centre left one of the dockers can be seen, wearing a hat. Bomberg has left visible the squaring-up grid, used to enlarge accurately the preliminary drawing. He

has then used this geometrical framework to dissolve the subject of the picture into dynamic angular facets. Bomberg was aware of the militancy of the dockworkers which was much publicised at the time.

- Bomberg was searching for a visual language to express his view of the modern urban environment. He wrote: **‘the new life should find its expression in a new art, which has been stimulated by new perceptions. I want to translate the life of a great city, its motion, its machinery, into an art that shall not be photographic, but expressive’.**

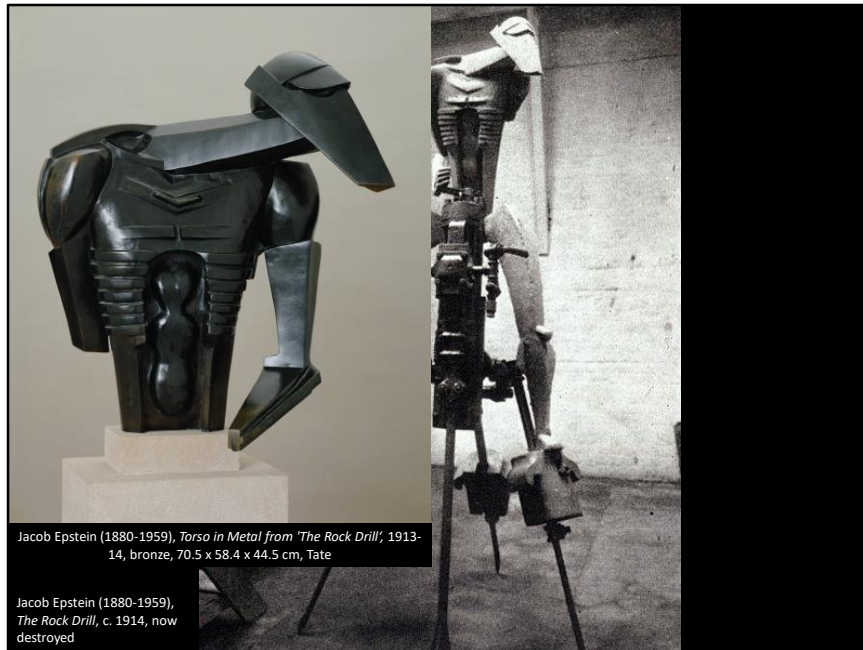
Notes

- **David Bomberg** (1890–1957) was an English painter who was **born in Birmingham** as the seventh of eleven children. He had **Polish-Jewish parents** who moved to Whitechapel when he was a child. Between 1908 and 1910 he **studied under Sickert** and was deeply **influenced by Roger Fry’s 1910 exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists***. He was one of the **‘Whitechapel Boys’**, a term applied much later to a loose group of Anglo-Jewish writers and artists including Mark Gertler. He was **helped by John Singer Sargent** and the **Jewish Education Aid Society** to get into the **Slade**. Bomberg was one of the **most audacious** of the exceptional generation of artists who studied at the Slade School of Art under Henry Tonks. So audacious that he was **expelled from the Slade** after one year because of his radical style despite the fact that he was a brilliant draughtsman.
- He went to France and Italy **with Jacob Epstein and met Modigliani, Derain and Picasso**. On his return he had an acrimonious relationship with the Omega Workshop and worked with Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism. He joined the **London Group in 1914** which had been formed in 1913 from the Camden Town Group and the Fitzroy Street Group. The London Group still exists today. Bomberg combined **Cubism and Futurism** although in the 1920s he changed back to a more figurative style. Between **1945 and 1953 he was a teacher** at Borough Polytechnic and taught Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossof.
- Bomberg painted a series of complex geometric compositions combining the influences of Cubism and Futurism in the years immediately preceding World War I; typically using a limited number of striking colours, turning humans into simple, angular shapes, and sometimes overlaying the whole painting a strong grid-work colouring scheme. He was **expelled from the Slade School of Art in 1913**, with agreement between the senior teachers Tonks, Frederick Brown and Philip Wilson Steer, because of the audacity of his breach from the conventional approach of that time.
- Whether because his **faith in the machine age had been shattered** by his experiences as a private soldier in the trenches or because of **the pervasive retrogressive attitude towards modernism** (the so-called ‘return to order’) in Britain Bomberg **moved to a more figurative style in the 1920s** and his work became increasingly dominated by **portraits and landscapes drawn from nature**.

Gradually developing a more expressionist technique **he travelled widely** through the Middle East and Europe.

References

- Tate website <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bomberg-in-the-hold-t00913>



Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *The Rock Drill*, c. 1914, now destroyed

Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), *Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill'*, 1913-14, bronze, 70.5 x 58.4 x 44.5 cm, Tate

- 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 later said "**Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No Humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into...** later I lost my interest in machinery and discarded the drill. I cast only the upper part of the figure."
- Epstein often produced **controversial works** which challenged taboos on what was

appropriate subject matter for public artworks. He also made paintings and drawings, and often exhibited his work.

- The figure is sharp-edged, its limbs square in profile, and its head is a long beak-like armoured visage. The torso has what looks like armoured ribs, and in the abdomen area is an indentation containing an **embryonic form**. The extraordinary thing about this mechanised abstracted human figure is that it sat on top of a **real miner's rock drill**, with the name of its American manufacturer emblazoned on its side. The whole assembled sculpture was **over three metres tall**, giving it an amazing brooding and threatening physical presence. Of course, with the enormous drill jutting out from the figure's loins, it has an **extraordinary phallic power** about it. Writing about the piece in his autobiography Epstein said: "**I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced.**" (Tate)
- Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) was born and studied as an art student in New York. From the sale of one of his early works he moved to Paris in 1902 to study. He moved to London in 1905 and married the following year. He became a British citizen in 1911 and joined the 'Jewish Legion' but following a breakdown he was discharged in 1918 without having left England. He was well known on the art scene and rejected pretty, decorative art in favour of rough-hewn realism. His often overt sexuality was controversial and in 1908 18 nude sculptures for the British Medical Association building on the Strand (now Zimbabwe House) outraged Edwardian society as well as artists who were shocked by the rejection of the European tradition of Greco-Roman sculptural forms in favour of classical Indian postures and hand gestures.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/story-jacob-epsteins-rock-drill>



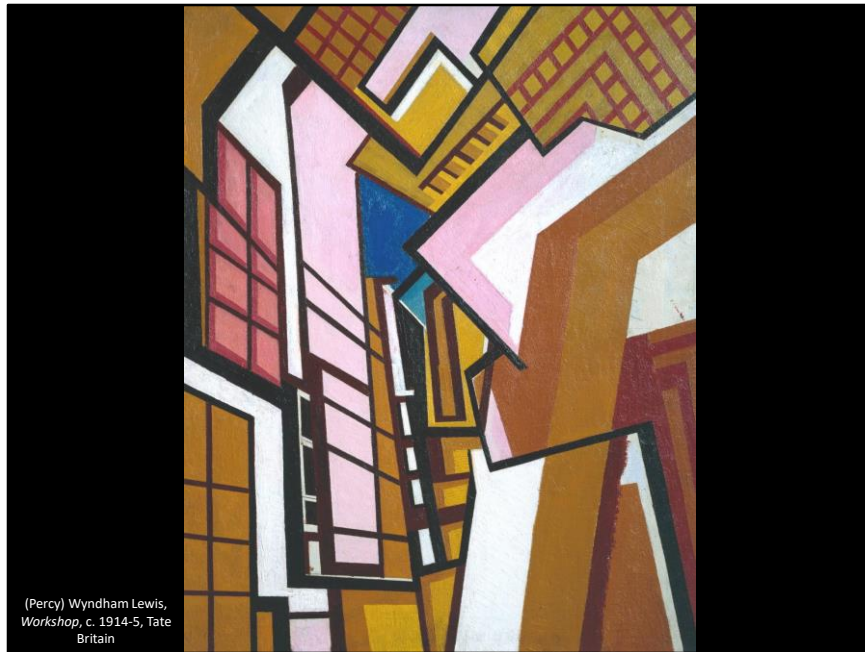
Vanessa Bell (1879-1961), *Abstract Painting*, c.1914, 44.1 x 38.7 cm

Vanessa Bell (1879-1961), *Nude*, c.1922-23, 81.3 x 65.4 cm, not on display

- This is one of the earliest abstract works by a British artist. It is one of **only four non-representational works by Bell** and it is an **experiment in 'significant form'**, a concept proposed by her husband Clive Bell and her friend and former partner Roger Fry.
- She was asked by her son, Quentin Bell, why she **gave up abstract painting** and she said, '**having done it, there seemed nothing else to do ... and then one discovered that one was, after all, in love with nature**'.
- *Nude* was probably painted as an exercise when she returned to painting after bringing up her daughter. She had recently visited Paris where she had admired the monumental nudes of Picasso.
- It is not clear which way up *Abstract Painting* should be shown but this orientation has been determined by the Tate based on brushstroke direction and the slightly thicker paint at the lower point of the canvas. After Bell died a white spot was added to the painting but was later removed by the Tate.

- Vanessa Bell (1879-1961, neé Stephen) was born into a famous and wealthy family and was educated at home. She attended art school and entered the Royal Academy School in 1901. When her parents died she sold the family home at Hyde Park Gate and moved to Bloomsbury where she and fellow artists and writers formed the Bloomsbury Group. They included Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Desmond MacCarthy, and later on, Maynard Keynes, Leonard Woolf, Roger Fry, and Duncan Grant. They met in Clive Bell's house and Vanessa married him in 1907 and they had two sons. They had an open marriage and both took lovers. She had affairs with the art critic Roger Fry and the painter Duncan Grant with whom she had a daughter that Clive Bell raised as his own child. She began to think of herself as an artist in 1906 and formed the Friday Club and encouraged Roger Fry to hold the Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1910. **In 1914 she turned to abstraction.** She designed the book jacket for *To the Lighthouse* written by her sister Virginia Woolf. Vanessa Bell was one of the most celebrated artists of the Bloomsbury Group and exhibited in Paris and London throughout her life.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bell-abstract-painting-t01935>



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

- English painter and author. Co-founder of the Vorticist movement and edited their magazine BLAST.
- **Vorticism** was a relatively **short-lived style** that was seen as an alternative to Cubism and was based on the ideas of Italian Futurism.

Notes

- Lewis was born on his father's yacht off Nova Scotia and educated, first at Rugby School, then at the **Slade School of Art**, University College, London, before spending most of the 1900s travelling around Europe and **studying art in Paris**. He is known as both a painter and a writer and wrote 40 books and in 1951 he went completely blind and gave up painting but continued to write.
- He was a founder-member of the **Camden Town Group** in 1911. In 1912 he exhibited his **Cubo-Futurist illustrations** to *Timon of Athens* and three major oil-paintings at the **second Post-Impressionist exhibition**. This brought him into close contact with the **Bloomsbury Group**, particularly **Roger Fry** and **Clive Bell**, with whom he soon fell out.
- Vorticism (named by his friend Ezra Pound) combined the strong structure of

Cubism with the liveliness and dynamism of Futurism.

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

Tate

- Vorticism was a short-lived but radical movement that emerged in London immediately before the First World War. '**The vortex is the point of maximum energy**', wrote the American poet Ezra Pound, who co-founded the Vorticist journal *Blast* with Wyndham Lewis in June 1914. The journal opened with the 'Blast' and 'Bless' manifestos, which celebrate the machine age and Britain as the first industrialised nation. Lewis's painting *Workshop* epitomises Vorticism's aims, using **sharp angles and shifting diagonals to suggest the geometry of modern buildings**. Its **harsh colours** and lines echo the **discordant vitality of the modern city** in an '**attack on traditional harmony**'.
- The group's aggressive rhetoric, angular style and focus on the energy of modern life linked it to **Italian Futurism**, though it did not share the latter's emphasis on speed and dynamism. Artists associated with Vorticism included William Roberts, Edward Wadsworth, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, **CRW Nevinson** and **David Bomberg**. The First World War demonstrated the devastating reality of pitting men against machines and Lewis's attempts to revive the movement in 1919 came to nothing.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/lewis-workshop-t01931>



Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson (1889–1946), *La Mitrailleuse*, 1915, 61 x 50.8 cm, Tate

- As a Futurist, Nevinson initially celebrated and **embraced the violence and mechanised speed** of the modern age. But his experience as an **ambulance driver in the First World War changed his view**. In his paintings of the trenches, the soldiers are reduced to a series of angular planes and grey colouring. They appear almost like machines themselves, **losing their individuality**, even their humanity, as they seem to fuse with the machine gun which gives this painting its title.
- The painting shows three soldiers in the trenches wearing metal Adrian helmets, one firing a machine gun. A fourth soldier lies dead beside them. Around them are wooden beams and barbed wire. The subjects are abstracted into angular geometric blocks of colour, becoming dehumanised components in a machine of death. Nevinson later wrote: **'To me the soldier going to be dominated by the machine ... I was the first man to express this feeling on canvas.'**
- Nevinson knew trench warfare from his time in the ambulance service including the First Battle of Ypres, October-November 1914. By then, Nevinson's worsening rheumatism resulted in his return to London. He **painted *La Mitrailleuse* in November 1915, during the last two days of a honeymoon** with his (remarkably

understanding) new bride.

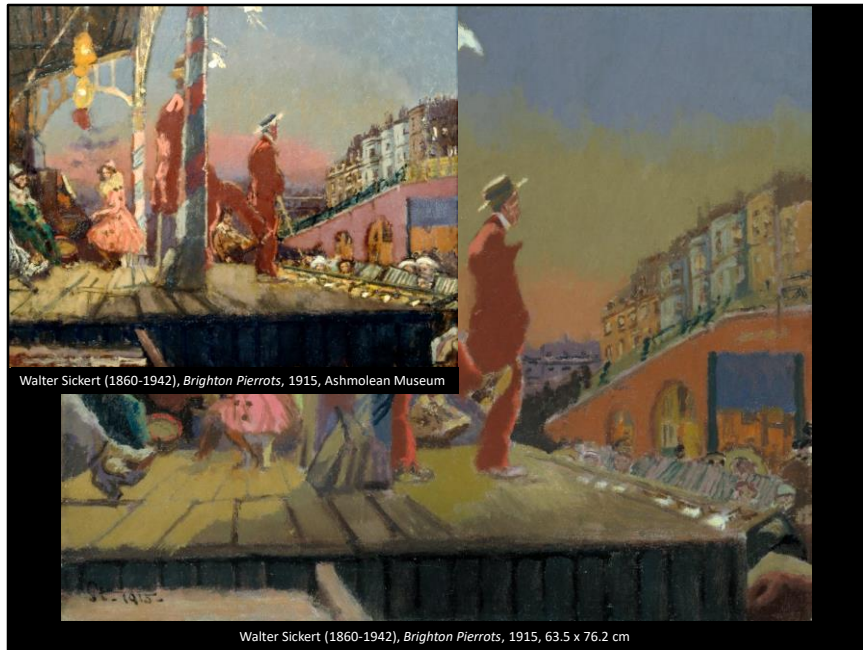
- Towards the end of the war, Nevinson began to **loose his artistic bearings** and Evelyn Waugh's brother cruelly described his greatest post-war contribution as the **invention of the British cocktail party**. He was attacked by critics for producing 'pictorial cartoons' and, in 1925 **he bizarrely attacked himself** by writing to the Tate asking them to take down and burn *La Mitrailleuse* calling it the '**World's Worst Picture**'. Walter Sickert called the work '**the most authoritative and concentrated utterance on the war in the history of painting**'. (*Burlington Magazine*, 1916)
- Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson (1889–1946) was born in Hampstead the son of a war correspondent and a suffrage campaigner. He attended the Slade and for a time Mark Gertler was his closest friend until they both fell in love with Dora Carrington. At the Slade Professor Henry Tonks advised him to give up art which led to a life-long feud between them and to Nevinson imagining conspiracies against him. After the Slade he studied in Paris and knew Pablo Picasso and Vladimir Lenin and shared a studio with Amedeo Modigliani. Back in London he joined forces with Wyndham Lewis until they fell out and Lewis founded the Vorticists from which Nevinson was excluded. During the war he was in the ambulance service and helped clean the sheds and dress wounds of the injured at Dunkirk railway station. Three thousand French troops had been taken from the front to Dunkirk and then abandoned and were left for weeks to die of their wounds. His rheumatism rendered him unfit to drive and he returned to England and worked in a hospital with shell shock victims and those with severe facial injuries. He married in 1915 and the following year was invalided out of the service with acute rheumatic fever. He returned as an official war artists and became one of the best known war artists. His work *Paths of Glory* showing two dead soldiers was ordered not to be shown but he exhibited it with brown paper across it with the word 'Censored'.
- After the war he went to New York where he was initially well received but his boasting and exaggerated claims about the war made him enemies and his depressive personality escalated the situation. One critic wrote, '**It is something, at the age of thirty one, to be among the most discussed, most successful, most promising, most admired and most hated British artists.**'

Notes

- *Mitrailleuse* is the French word for machine gun.

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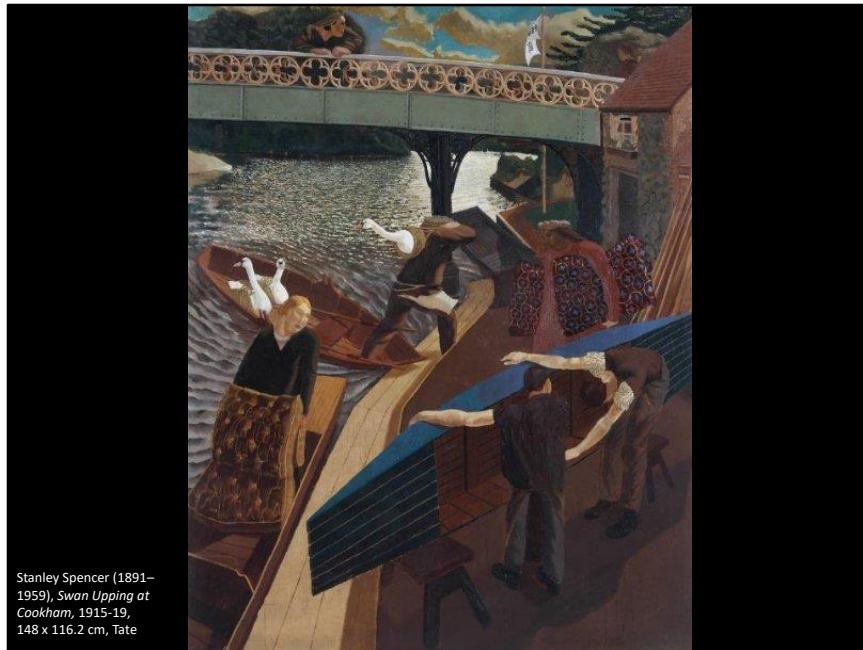
Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *Brighton Pierrots*, 1915, 63.5 x 76.2 cm, second version

Walter Sickert (1860-1942), *Brighton Pierrots*, 1915, Ashmolean Museum, first version

The Tate has the second version. The first version is at the Ashmolean Museum.

- 'Sickert painted this work during the early part of the First World War, and it has a pervasive atmosphere of strangeness and melancholy. A party of vaudeville entertainers perform on the Brighton seafront under the setting sun and artificial stage lights. Many of the deckchairs are empty, perhaps hinting at the absence of so many men in the war; the gunfire of the Western Front could sometimes be heard along the south coast of England. Against that and the deep pink of the sky, the performers seem a bit ridiculous, if not pathetic.' (Tate display caption)
- Sickert spent much of the late **summer of 1915 in Brighton** as the guest of his patron, the painter Walter Taylor. For five weeks he went to see the Pierrot's perform on a small, temporary stage erected on Brighton beach every evening, making as he did so several preparatory sketches for a painting. On his return to London, Sickert produced the first of his *Brighton Pierrots* and was immediately asked by another of his patrons for a copy. Though Sickert rarely accepted such

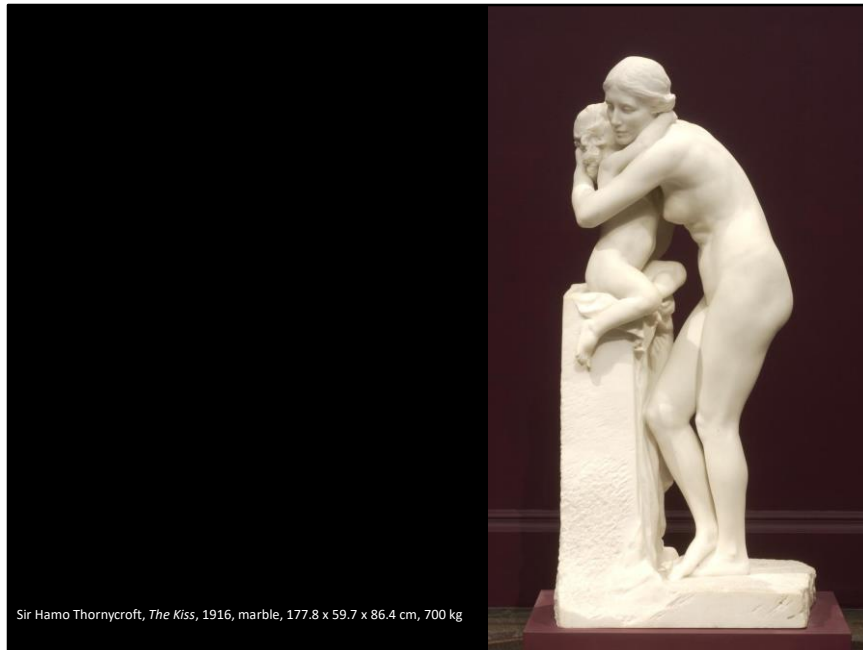
commissions, on this occasion he did. The **second version is the painting at the Tate**. The major compositional difference between the two is that in the first the actor at the front of the stage holds a short golden cane, which is omitted in the second painting. In addition, the colouring is generally brighter and more acid in the later version. The two people with what looks like bandages around their heads have gone.



Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), *Swan Upping at Cookham*, 1915-19, 148 x 116.2 cm, Tate

- This is one of his more famous works which was started in 1915 and he continued working on it after he was discharged in 1918. He finished after he was demobilised in 1919.
- Swan upping was an annual ceremony held at the end of July between London and Henley. It is undertaken by the Royal Swanherd and the Swan Wardens of the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies in the City. Young swans are caught and marked in the same way as their parents, with one nick in their beak to mean the bird is owned by the Dyers and two nicks for the Vintners. The Queen's swans are not marked and all unmarked swans on the Thames are hers by right.
- Throughout the war Spencer thought he would die and his main regret was that he would not be able to return to his little bedroom in Cookham to finish this picture. As an **infantry** man every assignment he was given was **more dangerous than the last**. He said you can imagine what he felt when **at long last he entered his bedroom** and saw this **half-finished picture** turned towards the wall of his bedroom. He went over to the painting and **turned it round** so they were at long last looking at each other again, '**it seemed unbelievable but it was a fact**'.

- Spencer had begun the painting by making a small oil study and several drawings from memory before visiting Turks Boatyard beside Cookham Bridge to confirm his composition. Spencer **worked systematically from top to bottom** on the canvas but had only completed the top two-thirds of the picture when he had to leave it in 1915. Returning to the work Spencer **found it difficult to continue** after his war-time experiences, often stating "**It is not proper or sensible to expect to paint after such experience.**" It was exhibited at the new English Art Club in 1920 and bought by J. L. Behrend.



Sir Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925), *The Kiss*, 1916, marble, 177.8 x 59.7 x 86.4 cm, 700 kg

- An entry in Thornycroft's diary dated 'Sunday night, April 2 1916' reads: 'This evening at my studio I finished carving my group of Mother and Child ("The Kiss" I think I shall call it). For months I've been carving at the marble, **the loveliest one my chisel ever cut**, & am quite sorry the statue will be out of my reach tomorrow. It goes to the R.A. **I am generally glad to get rid of a work, but not this!**'
- "Thornycroft was the leading figure in the **New Sculpture**, a movement which sought to inject a **new naturalism** into the classical tradition. He carved much of this work himself, relying less than usual on assistants. He worked from a **full-size model** which he first made in **clay** and then **cast in plaster**. The statue was a great success when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1916. The subject of mother and daughter was acceptable while opening up the new possibilities of touch and physical engagement in sculpture." (Tate)
- Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925) was born into a family of sculptors. His sister was the mother of the poet Siegfried Sassoon. His primary influence at art school was the painter-sculptor Frederic Leighton. In 1884 he married Agatha Cox who

Thomas Hardy described her as 'the most beautiful woman in England' and she was one of the inspirations for Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Thornycroft was only 32 when he was made an Academician, his reputation was secure and he became a central member of the sculptural establishment. Although he helped establish New Sculpture and break away from traditional neoclassical and academic styles in later life he became increasingly resistant to change.

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<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/thornycroft-the-kiss-n03153>



Mark Gertler (1891–1939), *Merry-Go-Round*, 1916, 142.2 x 189.2cm, Tate

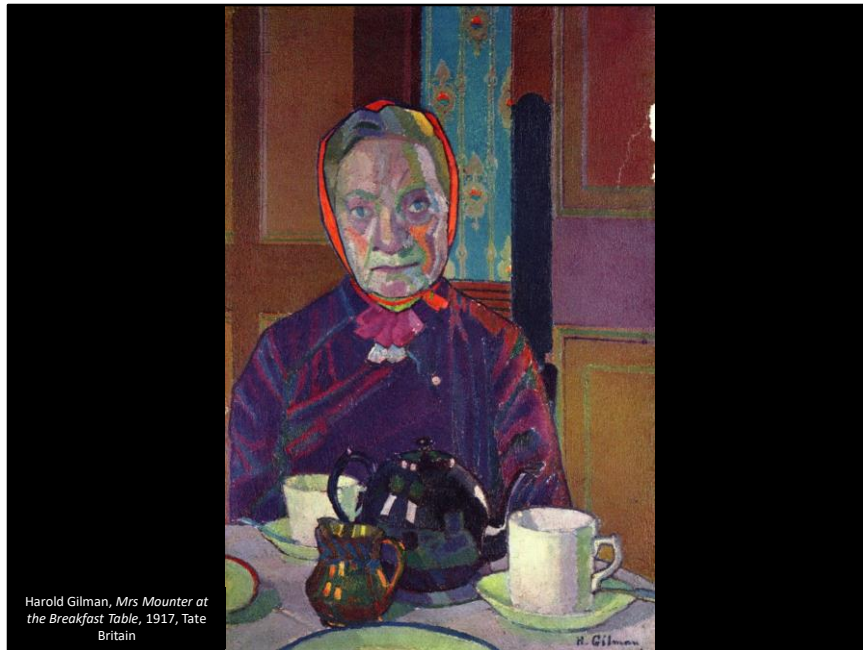
- **Mark Gertler** (1891–1939), born Marks Gertler, was a British painter of figure subjects, portraits and still-life. His early life and his **relationship with Dora Carrington** were the inspiration for Gilbert Cannan's novel *Mendel*. The characters of Loerke in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Gombauld in Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow* were based on him.
- He came from a **poor Jewish-Polish** family that settled in London. He could **draw from a young age** and enrolled at Regents Street Polytechnic but had to leave because of his family's poverty. He started work at a stained glass company, which he hated, but the following year he came **third in an national art competition** and was awarded a **scholarship from the Jewish Education Aid Society** and enrolled at the **Slade School of Art**.
- At the Slade he met **Dora Carrington** who he pursued for years without success. Carrington spent most of her life living with the homosexual author Lytton Strachey, with whom she was **deeply in love**. Carrington's unconventional relationship with Strachey, of whom Gertler was extremely jealous, and her eventual marriage to Ralph Partridge, destroyed her equally complex relationship with Gertler. He had been so distraught when he learned of Carrington's marriage

that he tried to purchase a revolver, and **threatened to commit suicide**.

- Gertler became acquainted with the Bloomsbury Group through his patron **Lady Ottoline Morrell**. She **introduced him to Walter Sickert**, the nominal **leader of the Camden Town Group**. Gertler became successful as a painter of **society portraits**, but his **temperamental manner** and devotion to advancing his work according to his **own vision** led to increasing personal frustration and the **alienation of potential sitters** and buyers. As a result, he struggled frequently with **poverty**.
- In 1914 the polymath art collector **Edward Marsh became Gertler's patron**. The relationship between the two men proved a difficult one, as Gertler felt that the system of patronage and the circle in which he moved were in direct conflict with his sense of self. In 1916, as World War I dragged on, Gertler ended the relationship due to his **pacifism and conscientious objection** (Marsh was secretary to Winston Churchill and patron to some of the war poets). **Gertler's major painting, *Merry-Go-Round***, was created in the midst of the war years and was described by Lawrence as "**the best modern picture I have seen**" (Letters, 9 October 1916).
- In 1920, Gertler **suffered from tuberculosis** which **killed his friend D.H. Lawrence**. He married in 1930 but they were both ill and he felt constrained. He became a part-time art teacher and **in 1939** he had **financial difficulties**, his **wife had recently left him**, an **exhibition was badly received**, his **mother had died** in 1932, the same year **Carrington committed suicide** and he was filled with **fear over the imminent war** and he **gassed himself in his London studio**. *The Times* described his death as a serious loss to British art and rated him one of the **top half-dozen artists under fifty working in England**.

Notes

- A record price for his work is £542,500 for *The Violinist* (1912) in 2015.
- Dora Carrington shot herself in 1932 as Lytton Strachey had just died of stomach cancer and she saw no point in living.



Harold Gilman (1876-1919), *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1917, Tate Britain
There is a larger version in the Walker Art Gallery with a William Morris chair on the right.

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

Notes

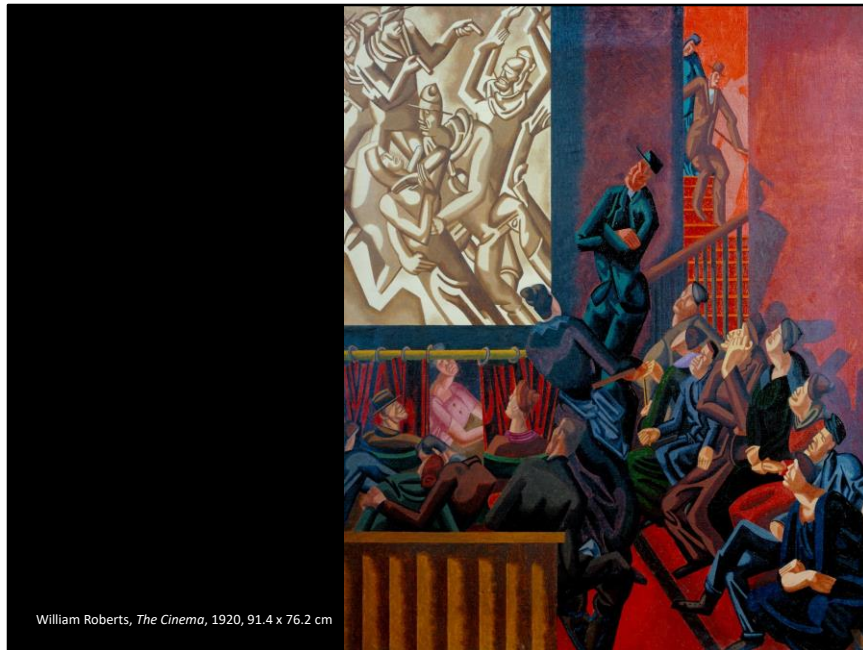
Harold Gilman

- Harold Gilman's father was a Rector in the Romney Marshes and he was educated in Kent, Berkshire, Rochester and Tonbridge and for one year at Brasenose College, Oxford University which he had to leave because of ill health. He studied at the Hastings School of Art and transferred to the Slade School in London where he met Spencer Gore. He met Walter Sickert in 1907 and became a founding member of the **Fitzroy Group** (1907) and then the **Camden Town Group** (1911). His interest in Post-Impressionism took him further and further away from Sickert. He **died in 1919 aged 43** of the Spanish Flu.
- **Tate:**
 - "Gilman uses a psychologically sophisticated composition to draw us into Mrs Mounter's space. The foreground consists only of the tea table, cutting the nearest plate in half, and it is as if we are sitting opposite her. Placed against the wooden doors, the lack of background recession further reinforces this personal proximity ... Gilman's sympathy with ordinary people found expression in socialist beliefs, which reputedly irritated Sickert on occasion. His move to Letchworth Garden City was partly an expression of his political outlook, as it was a model community which attracted a mixed bag of idealists, fresh-air fanatics and vegetarians.
 - This meeting of artist and sitter is, as the art historian Andrew Causey has written, '**a confrontation that dignifies without flattering and is not limited by any class condescension**'."
- **Liverpool Museums:**
 - "Harold Gilman was born in Somerset to the Reverend John Gilman, a Rector of Snargate with Snave in Kent. After studying at Oxford for a year in 1894 he decided to become an artist. In 1897 he went to study at the **Slade School of Art** alongside Frederick **Spencer Gore** (who became his lifelong friend) under the instruction of Tonks, Wood, and Steer. The strong foundation in **draughtsmanship** encouraged at the Slade is evident throughout Gilman's artistic career.
 - Gore introduced Gilman to **W.R. Sickert** and his circle at Fitzroy Street in 1907 and it was here that the **colour of Lucien Pissarro** began to filter through into Gilman's painting. In 1910 Gilman travelled with Charles Ginner - another member of the Fitzroy Street Group - to Paris where he became familiar with the recent advances in French art made by **Signac, Gauguin, Matisse and Van Gogh**. In particular, he began to admire the work of the Post-Impressionist **Cézanne**. However it was not until **Roger Fry's infamous 1910 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition** and later **1912 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' held at the Grafton Galleries** in London that Gilman really began to **admire the art of Van**

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

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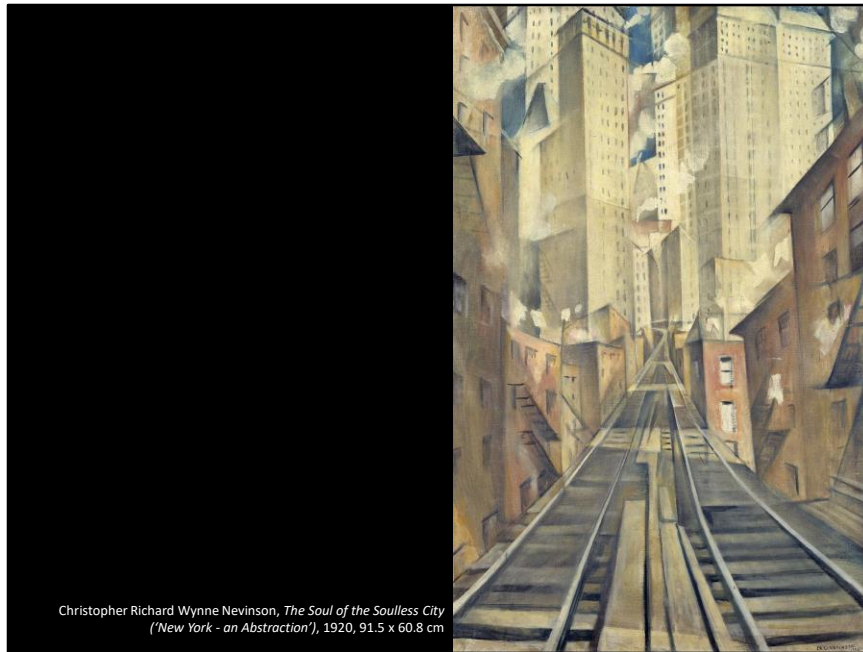
William Roberts (1895-1980), *The Cinema*, 1920, 91.4 x 76.2 cm

- “Roberts’s early work was abstract and he joined Wyndham Lewis’s Vorticist group. After the First World War, he made a name as the painter of everyday modern scenes. While film had been invented in the late 19th century, it reached new heights of sophistication and popularity in the 1920s, the age of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and the rise of Hollywood. Movies were silent until 1927 and were accompanied by live music. Many music halls, traditional places of popular entertainment, were adapted to show films” (Tate display caption)
- Based on a small cinema in Warren Street which is now used as a television studio. A squared up drawing for it in pen, pencil and wash belongs to the Manchester City Art Galleries.

Bio:Roberts

- **William Roberts** (1895-1980) was born to a working class family in the East End of London and he showed an outstanding talent from an early age. He started an apprenticeship as a poster designer but won a scholarship to the Slade where he won the prize for figure composition. He travelled to France and became a pioneer in abstract art before the First World War. He became friends with Roger Fry and

Wyndham Lewis and signed the Vorticist Manifesto although he called his own work Cubist. He enlisted as a gunner and went to the front. He successfully applied to become a war artist on the condition he did not paint Cubist works. His work *The First German Gas Attack at Ypres* shows the horror of a gas attack. After the war he married and became a successful portrait painter.

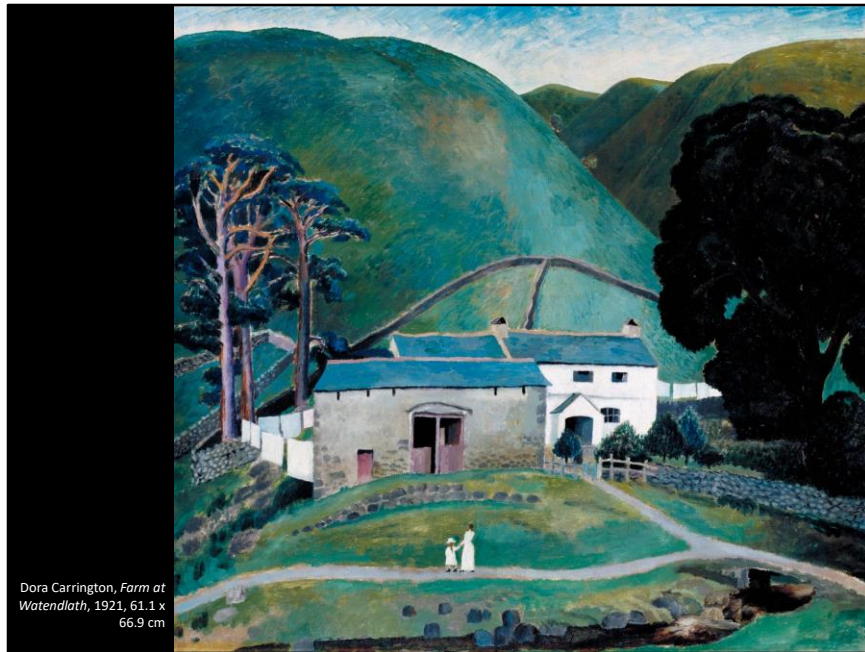


Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, *The Soul of the Soulless City* ('New York - an Abstraction'), 1920, 91.5 x 60.8 cm

- Nevinson first visited New York in 1919 and his work was well received. He was impressed by the architecture (he said the city was 'built for me') and made numerous sketches. On his return to England he produced this and other works before his next visit the following year for a second exhibition. However, this **second exhibition was poorly received** and Nevinson became **bitter** and may explain the **change in title**. The new title may have been a reference to Karl Marx's comment that religion was the 'heart of a heartless world'.
- The painting depicts an imaginary section of the elevated railway running through Manhattan. The image described by one American critic as 'hard, metallic, unhuman' shows elements of Cubism, including the narrow range of colours, and Futurism through the interest in speed and modernity.
- The taste for painting modern cities and for modernity as a subject waned in the aftermath of the First World War with a shift known as the 'return to order', a renewed interest in the classical style and in nature and the countryside. A growing number of Nevinson's **later paintings were of nature**, such as *A Winter Landscape* (1926).

- In a 1920s catalogue it said of Nevinson, “***...It is something, at the age of thirty one, to be among the most discussed, most successful, most promising, most admired and most hated British artists...***” He was becoming disliked for his outbursts, he suffered from **depression, was volatile**, had an unfortunate habit of **bragging and embellished his war experiences**. His autobiography displays **right-wing xenophobia** and some of his correspondence is **explicitly racist**.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nevinson-the-soul-of-the-soulless-city-new-york-an-abstraction-t07448>



Dora Carrington, *Farm at Watendlath*, 1921, 61.1 x 66.9 cm

- This painting depicts Watendlath Farm where Carrington spent a holiday from 6 August to 10 September in 1921. The hamlet of Watendlath is five miles south of Keswick in the Lake District. There is a beck at the bottom edge of the painting. The trees on the left of the painting are Scots pines and those on the right are sycamores.
- The National Trust, which now owns the farm, has renamed it Steps End Farm. The whitewashed farmhouse with an attached barn on its right side was probably built in the mid-seventeenth century.

Notes

- **Dora Carrington** (1893-1932) was the daughter of a Liverpool merchant who attended an all girls that specialised in art before attending the Slade where she won a scholarship. Her fellow students included **Paul Nash**, **Christopher R. W. Nevinson** and **Mark Gertler**. All at one time or another **were in love with her**, as was **Nash's younger brother John Nash**, who hoped to marry her. Gertler pursued Carrington for a number of years, and they had a brief sexual relationship during the years of the First World War. From her time at the Slade onwards, she was

commonly known simply by her surname. She had, for that time an unusual pageboy hairstyle and was always eager to please, active, bustling and inquisitive. She was **not a member** of the **Bloomsbury Group** although closely associated with it.

- She had a **long relationship with the homosexual writer Lytton Strachey** (1880-1932) and she had a **brief affair with Henrietta Bingham**. In 1921 Carrington **agreed to marry Ralph Partridge**, not for love but to secure the three-way relationship. He left Carrington in 1926 for Frances Marshall and Carrington had an affair with Bernard Penrose, brother of Roland Penrose. In 1928 she became pregnant, had an abortion and left Penrose. She **committed suicide two months after Strachey's death** in 1932 after borrowing a gun from a friend. **Strachey** himself had been much **more interested sexually in Partridge**, as well as in various other young men, including a secret sadomasochistic relationship with Roger Senhouse. She was **not well known as a painter** during her lifetime, as she rarely exhibited and did not sign her work. She worked for a while at the Omega Workshops, and for the Hogarth Press, designing woodcuts. Tate Director, John Rothenstein (1901-1992) described her as 'the most neglected serious painter of our time'.
- In 1918, Virginia Woolf described Carrington in her diary, '**She is odd from her mixture of impulse & self consciousness. I wonder sometimes what she's at: so eager to please, conciliatory, restless, & active.... [B]ut she is such a bustling eager creature, so red & solid, & at the same time inquisitive, that one can't help liking her**'.

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Frank Dobson (1888-1963), *Sir Osbert Sitwell, Bt*, 1923, bronze, 31.8 x 17.8 x 22.9 cm, 9.8 kg

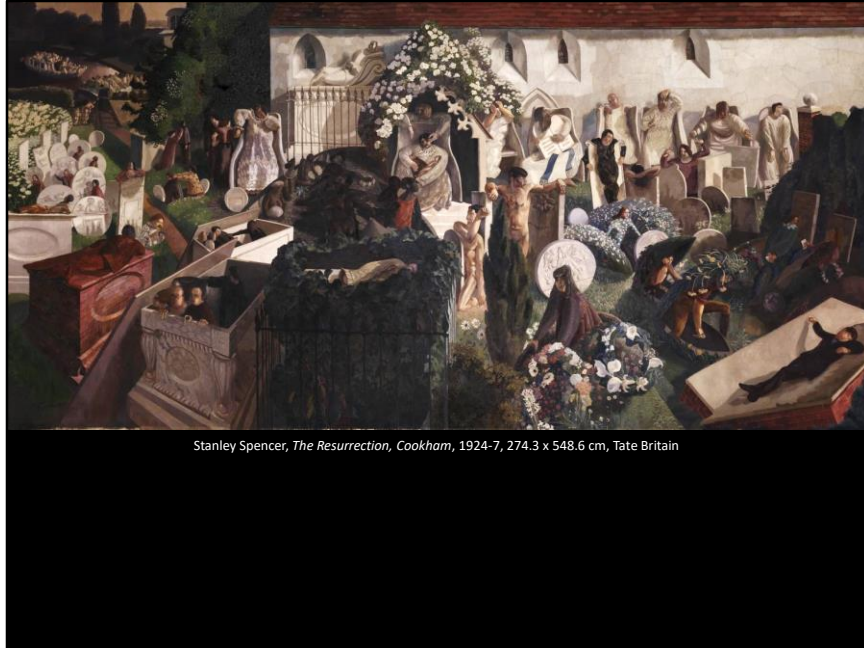
Frank Dobson (1888-1963), *London Pride*, 1951, Southbank, outside the National Theatre

- 'Frank Dobson was a sculptor and painter associated with the post-impressionist and, briefly, Vorticist movements in Britain. In 1921 he met Osbert Sitwell (1892–1969), an establishment figure and writer of short stories, travel books, essays, poetry and art criticism, who sat for him for three months. During one of the sittings, Sitwell met TE Lawrence, known as '**Lawrence of Arabia**', who bought the **bust** and later bequeathed it to the Tate. Lawrence described it as '**appropriate, authentic and magnificent, in my eyes. I think it's his finest piece of portraiture and in addition it's as loud as the massed bands of the Guards.**' (Tate display caption)
- Frank Dobson was born in Camberwell, the son of a commercial artist. His father died in 1900 when he was 12 and he was brought up by an aunt in Hastings. He went to art school in Hastings and moved to Devon and then Cornwall selling landscape paintings. He obtained a scholarship and studied further before going to

Newlyn where he met Augustus John who used his influence to get him a one-man show in London. In 1915 he sculpted his first work in wood. He enlisted in the Artists Rifles and served in France until he developed a duodenal ulcer. He was invalided out and made a war artist but the painting, *The Balloon Apron* was not approved. He took a studio in Chelsea and lived there until WWII. In the 1920s he specialised in sculpture and was President of the London Group for three years. He exhibited at the 1924 and 1926 Venice Biennales and had his first major one-man exhibition in 1927. He moved to Bristol in WWII and received a few war commissions for portrait heads. After the war he was appointed as head of sculpture at the Royal College of Art and for the Festival of Britain in 1921 he created *London Pride*, originally in plaster but cast in bronze after his death. After his death his wife destroyed his sketches and models as she considered the work too erotic. The art critic Brian Sewell saw the work before it was destroyed and described it as explicit as that by his old friend Eric Gill. It is possible he would have a more lasting reputation today if it had not been destroyed.

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Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection, Cookham*, 1924-7, 274.3 x 548.6 cm, Tate Britain

Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), *The Resurrection, Cookham*, 1924-7, 274.3 x 548.6 cm

- *The Resurrection* is perhaps Spencer's most famous painting. The resurrection is one of the most challenging of all traditional Bible subjects but Spencer, by the power of his personal approach, has created a triumphant masterpiece. The picture **created a sensation** when shown in his one-man exhibition at the **Goupil Gallery** in London in 1927 and was **bought immediately** for the **national collections** for **£1,000**.
- The critic of *The Times* called it '... **the most important picture painted by any English artist in the present century** ... What makes it so astonishing is the combination in it of careful detail with the modern freedom of form. It is as if a **Pre-Raphaelite had shaken hands with a Cubist**.' and even the Bloomsbury critic Roger Fry, who generally disapproved of narrative painting, wrote 'it is highly arresting and intriguing ... a very personal conception carried through with unflinching nerve and conviction.'
- Spencer believed that the divine rested in all creation. He saw his home town of Cookham as a paradise in which everything is invested with mystical significance. The local churchyard here becomes the setting for the resurrection of the dead. **Christ is enthroned in the church porch, cradling three babies, with God the**

Father standing behind. Along the wall of the church is a **row of prophets** including **Moses**, with a **dark beard**, holding the tablets of the **Ten**

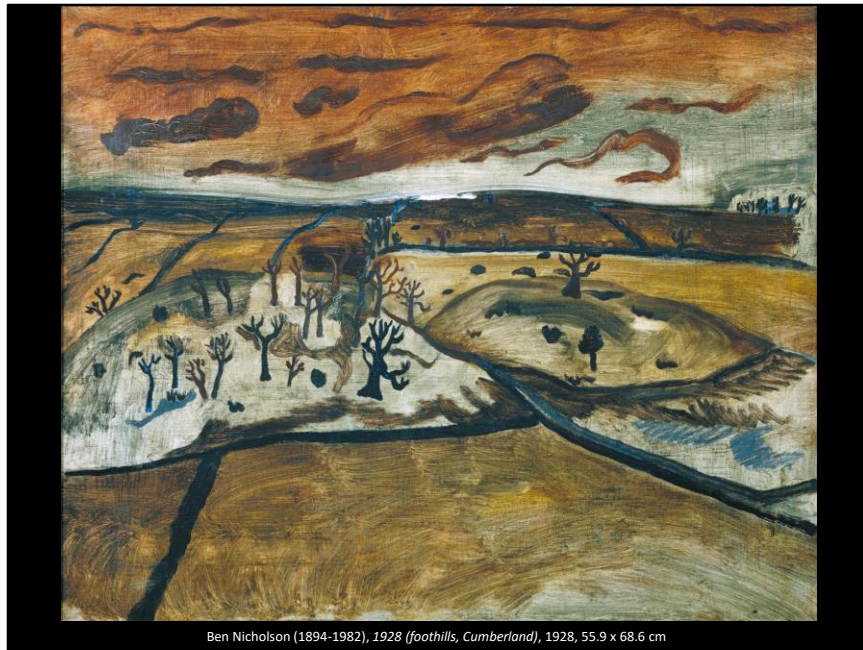
Commandments. The rest of the churchyard is filled with people resurrecting from their tombs. The **group of black people** emerging from sun-baked soil implies that Spencer's conception embraces the whole of humanity. Spencer made it clear that his Resurrection was a **joyous event** and that the resurrected are already in Heaven: '... in the main they resurrect to such a state of joy that they are content ... to remain where they are.' Even '**the punishment of the Bad**', said Spencer, '**was to be no more than that their coming out of the graves was not so easy** as in the case of the Good'.

- Spencer himself appears near the centre, naked, leaning against a grave stone; his fiancée Hilda lies sleeping in a bed of ivy. At the top left, risen souls are transported to Heaven in the pleasure steamers that then ploughed the Thames.
- Following the Great War it was a time of crisis and self-doubt. All the old certainties of what it means to be British had disappeared. Stanley's younger brother Sidney had been killed on the front but Spencer and his family did not hear any news until he returned to Cookham three months after the event. He found the whole village had changed and he started to paint the old Cookham he remembered as a boy but transformed in a series of Biblical stories. The local brewery hosts the Last Supper and Jesus carries the cross past Spencer's home. The biggest event took place in the village churchyard. He painted *Resurrection* which depicts the moment at the end of days when everyone awakes and travels to Paradise. Everyone is reborn into Stanley's childhood village of Cookham.
- Spencer described the painting as a scene of great happiness. Spencer shows himself in the centre and on the book-like grave on the right and Hilda Carline three times, coming over the stile on the left, pushing a sunflower joyfully against her face and lying on the grave in the centre, Hilda was the love of his life and although Spencer was later seduced by the charms of Patricia Preece he continued to visit and write to her for the rest of his life. Spencer was led on by Patricia but she was a lesbian so he must have been very naïve or seeking the impossible. He divorced Hilda and three days later married Patricia. After the wedding Patricia left for the 'honeymoon' with her partner and Spencer stayed behind with Hilda.
- Spencer stayed in Cookham until 1920 when he **moved to Bourne End**, just over a mile away, to stay with the trade union lawyer Henry Slessor and his wife. He worked on a series of paintings for them before **moving to Steep in Hampshire** where he worked on murals for the village hall. In 1923 he **stayed in Poole**, Dorset, with Henry Lamb (1883-1960, British painter and founder of the Camden Town Group) and worked on another mural scheme. This work convinced the **Behrend's** to commission Spencer to design murals for a chapel at **Burghclere** in memory of Mary Behrend's brother, Lieutenant Henry Willoughby Sandham.
- In **1925**, Spencer **married Hilda Carline**, then a student at the Slade and daughter,

Shirin, was born in November of that year and a second daughter, Unity, in 1930. In October 1923, Spencer started **renting Henry Lamb's studio in Hampstead** where he **began work** on ***The Resurrection, Cookham***.

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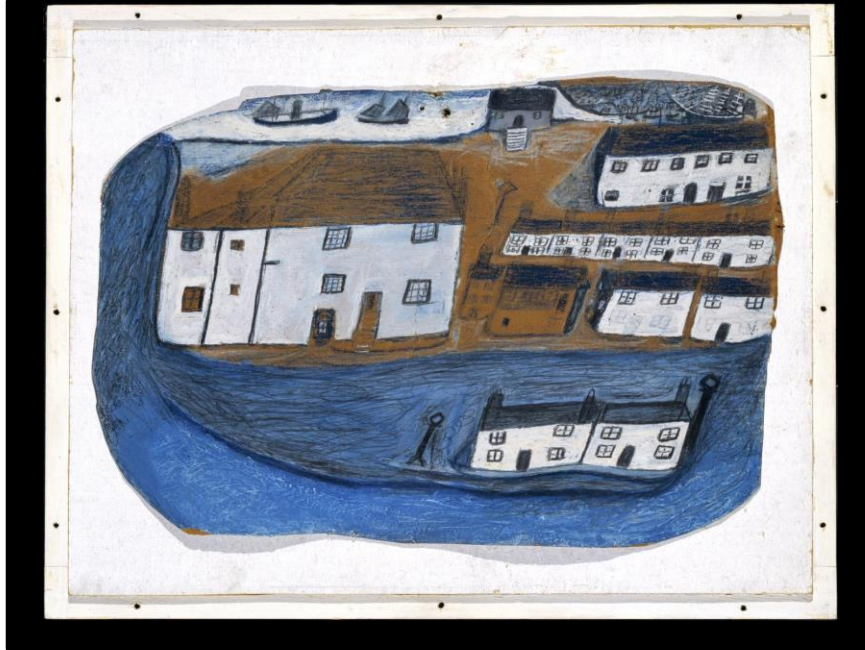
Ben Nicholson (1894-1982), 1928 (*foothills, Cumberland*), 1928, 55.9 x 68.6 cm

- 'During the 1920s, Ben and Winifred Nicholson lived in a house close to Hadrian's Wall in Cumberland. Their lifestyle was simple and traditional; they shared at that time a belief in Christian Science. In their art too they sought to escape the sophistication of established artists, including Ben's father William Nicholson. Painting mostly landscape, they cultivated a deliberately naïve style which was reinforced by an encounter in 1928 with the untutored amateur painter Alfred Wallis.' (Tate display caption)
- Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) was born in Buckinghamshire the son of two painters and an artistic family. He trained at the Slade between 1910 and 1911 but spent most of his time there playing billiards. He was married three times, to the painter Winifred Roberts (1893-1981), to Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) and to Felicitas Vogler, a German photographer. He was exempted from WWI military service because of asthma and travelled to America. He exhibited figurative work on his return to London, he was then influenced by Synthetic Cubism and later by the primitive style of Rousseau. After marrying Barbara Hepworth he visited Paris and met Mondrian and Picasso and was influenced in an abstract direction. He first

visited St Ives, Cornwall, in 1928 with his fellow painter Christopher Wood, where he met the fisherman and painter, Alfred Wallis. He was able to incorporate all these influences into a unique style of his own.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nicholson-1928-foothills-cumberland-n05951>



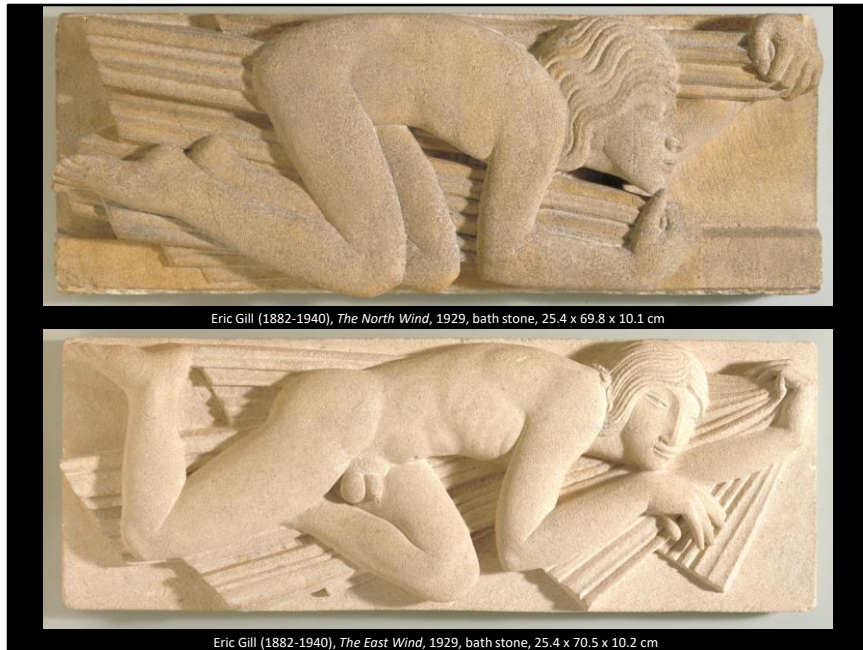
Alfred Wallis (1855-1942), *St Ives*, c.1928, 25.7 x 38.4 cm

- **'Wallis had worked as seaman, ice cream vendor and scrap merchant before he took up painting as a hobby in his retirement.** He lived in St Ives, Cornwall, a fishing community and artists' colony. There he encountered the painters **Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood** (1901-1930) and his work was shown with theirs in London. Most of his paintings are of his local environment or of places and events remembered from his past.' (Tate online caption)
- The painting is mounted on white-painted board, measuring 31.1 x 41 cm inscribed on the reverse by Ben Nicholson: **'St Ives/by Alfred Wallis/(painted before Aug – 1928) – on first visit with Kit Wood –/ (&given to BN in [arrow here points back to "Aug. 1928"] by Wallis/belonging to Nicholson/Chyankerris/Carbis Bay/Cornwall'.**
- Ben Nicholson has recorded in his memoir on 'Alfred Wallis' (Horizon, January 1943, pp. 50–54), that 'In August 1928 I went over for the day to St. Ives with Kit Wood: this was an exciting day, for not only was it the first time I saw St. Ives, but on the way back from Porthmeor Beach we passed an open door in Back Road West and through it **saw some paintings** of ships and houses on odd pieces of

paper and cardboard **nailed up all over the wall**, with particularly large nails through the smallest ones. We knocked on the door and **inside found Wallis**, and the paintings we got from him then were the first he made.'

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wallis-st-ives-t00881>



Eric Gill (1882-1940), *The North Wind*, 1929, bath stone, 25.4 x 69.8 x 10.1 cm

Eric Gill (1882-1940), *The East Wind*, 1929, bath stone, 25.4 x 70.5 x 10.2 cm

- Gill pioneered a return to traditional craft skills, in particular stone carving. In 1928 he led a team of sculptors commissioned to carve reliefs symbolising the four winds for the exterior of the new London Underground headquarters at St James's Park station. These are copies he made later. The style of the reliefs demonstrates Gill's admiration for English and French medieval sculpture. Jacob Epstein's *Day and Night* drew most of the criticism from the London public.
- **Arthur Eric Rowton Gill** ARA was born in **Brighton**, one of 12 children and in 1897 the family moved to **Chichester**. He studied at Chichester Art School and in 1900 moved to London to study as an **architect**. In 1903 he gave up his architectural training to become a calligrapher, letter-cutter, and monumental mason. He was associated with the Arts & Crafts movement and was **controversial**, particularly his **erotic art** and his sexual abuse of his daughters. In 1904 he **married** Ethel Moore and had three daughters and an adopted son. Gill was named **Royal Designer for Industry**, the highest British award for designers, by the Royal Society of Arts. He also became a founder-member of the newly established Faculty of Royal

Designers for Industry.

- His **1989 biography** by Fiona MacCarthy was based on his **detailed diaries** and revealed his **sexual activity for the first time** including extramarital **affairs, incest** with his two eldest **teenage daughters**, incestuous relationships with his **sisters**, and sexual acts on his **dog**. His daughter Petra, who was alive at the time of the biography, described her father as having '**endless curiosity about sex**' and that '**we just took it for granted**'. The biography resulted in publicity and reassessment which resulted in a strengthened artistic reputation and a reputation as one of the twentieth century's strangest artists.



Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Painted Screen*, c.1929, 182.9 x 183 x 122 cm

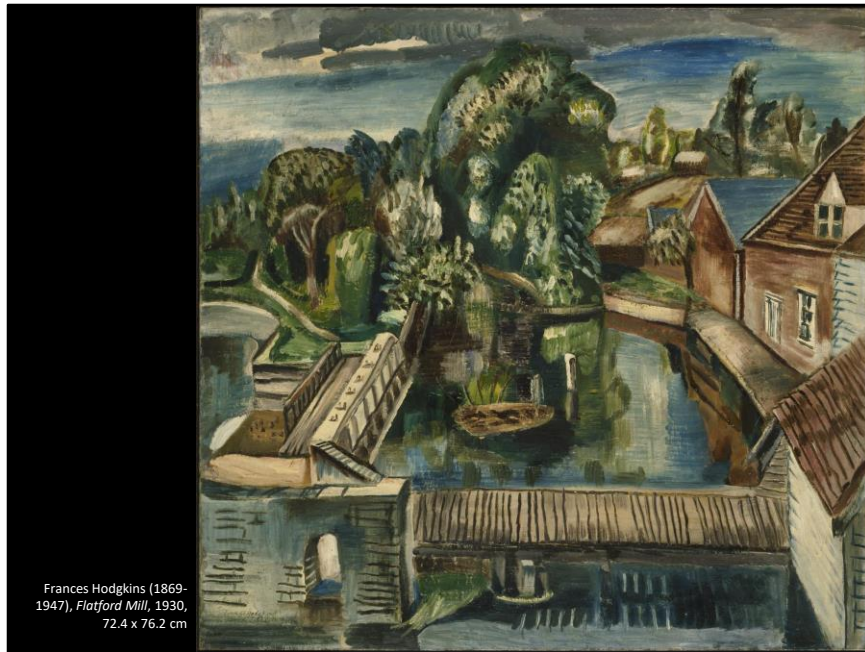
- 'Bacon worked as an interior designer before becoming a painter. This screen is a rare survivor of the period of transition from one career to the other. As a designer, Bacon had conceived interiors with a modern look, including tubular steel furniture and white rubber curtains, in the style of Eileen Gray. His early paintings were influenced by forms of late cubism, then fashionable in Paris, by such artists as Fernand Léger and Jean-Charles Jeanneret (Le Corbusier).' (Tate display caption)
- Francis Bacon (1909-1992) was an Irish-born British figurative painter known for his raw images of popes, crucifixions and close friends. His work can be divided into periods beginning with the 1930s Picasso-informed Furies, moving on to the 1940s male heads isolated in rooms or geometric structures, the 1950s screaming popes, and the mid-to-late 1950s animals and lone figures, the 1960s portraits of friends, the nihilistic 1970s self-portraits, and the cooler more technical 1980s late works. His breakthrough came with the 1944 triptych *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, which sealed his reputation as a uniquely bleak chronicler of the human condition. After this work he tried to repurchase and destroy his

earlier work but this early work survives.

- Bacon in person was highly engaging and charismatic, articulate, well-read and unapologetically gay. He was a prolific artist, but nonetheless spent many of the evenings of his middle age eating, drinking and gambling in London's Soho with like-minded friends such as Lucian Freud. Following the 1971 suicide of his lover George Dyer, his art became more sombre, inward-looking and preoccupied with the passage of time and death. Since his death his reputation has slowly grown and in 2013 his *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* set the world record as the most expensive piece of art sold at auction at \$142 million (now the 17th most expensive work based on adjusted price).

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bacon-painted-screen-l02867>



Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947), *Flatford Mill*, 1930, 72.4 x 76.2 cm

- 'Hodgkins was a New Zealander who came to Europe in 1901. Based mainly in Britain, she also spent time in Paris. She was a member of the Seven & Five Society. In the 1920s, its members developed an art that was both modern and returned to traditional motifs such as landscape and still life. A strong fascination with British landscape and traditions was evident. This is signalled, perhaps, by the fact that this scene was closely associated with John Constable who painted Flatford Mill in 1816.' (Tate display caption)
- Frances Hodgkins stayed at Flatford Mill, in the Constable country, from the end of June to November 1930, painting and preparing for her exhibition to be held at the St George's Gallery that autumn. One of the pictures in that exhibition was entitled 'Flatford Weir', but she painted a number of pictures of Flatford Mill, Willy Lott's Cottage and other subjects in the neighbourhood.
- **Frances Mary Hodgkins** (1869–1947) was a painter chiefly of landscape and still life, and for a short period was a designer of textiles. She was born in New Zealand, but spent most of her working life in Britain. She is considered one of New Zealand's most prestigious and influential painters, although it is the work from

her life in Europe, rather than her home country, on which her reputation rests.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hodgkins-flatford-mill-n05978>

NEXT WEEK

- The Interwar Years, 1930s

