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THE ROYAL ACADEMY
SUMMER EXHIBITION
(1869-2018)

Jenny Saville, *Reverse*, 2002-03, Gagosian Gallery

- This is Part 2 of the history of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. As I move into the modern world it becomes more difficult to shock, create controversy and bring about change, as everything is in flux, there are no absolutes, no foundations. I will come to this work by Jenny Saville later but let us begin where we left off in Part 1 in the middle of the Victorian period.

NOTES

- When the **Royal Academy** was founded in 1768 one of its key objectives was to establish an annual **exhibition**, open to all artists of merit, which could be visited by the public. The first **Summer Exhibition** took place in 1769; it has been held every year since without exception.
- The Royal Academy was founded on 10 December 1768 by King George III. The aim was to raise the status of artists in Britain by introducing a system of training and the annual exhibition of works of art judged to be of an appropriate standard of excellence.
- The instrument of foundation named 34 founder members and allowed for a total membership of 40. The founder members were **Joshua Reynolds**, John Baker, George Barret, Francesco Bartolozzi, Giovanni Battista Cipriani, Augustino Carlini, Charles Catton, Mason Chamberlin, **William Chambers** (architect and the first Treasurer), Francis Cotes, George Dance, Nathaniel Dance, **Thomas Gainsborough**, John Gwynn, Francis Hayman, Nathaniel Hone the Elder, **Angelica Kauffman**, Jeremiah Meyer, **George Michael Moser**, **Mary Moser**, Francis Milner Newton, Edward Penny, John Inigo Richards, **Paul Sandby**, **Thomas Sandby**, Dominic Serres, Peter Toms, William Tyler, Samuel

Wale, **Benjamin West**, **Richard Wilson**, Joseph Wilton, Richard Yeo, Francesco Zuccarelli. William Hoare and **Johann Zoffany** were added to this list later by the King and are known as nominated members. Among the founder members were two women, a father and daughter, and two sets of brothers.

- The first Royal Academy exhibition of contemporary art, open to all artists, opened on 25 April 1769 and ran until 27 May 1769. 136 works of art were shown and this exhibition, now known as the **Royal Academy Summer Exhibition**, has been staged annually without interruption to the present day.
- 1768, Royal Academy is founded
- 1769, the first exhibition, how pictures were hung, skied, on the line, *Somerset House etching of George III, cartoon of floating visitors from Punch*
- Thomas Gainsborough argument with the RA
- 1794, disillusionment, *The Morning Post* attacked the RA for descending "into a parade of the hackneyed and incompetent amongst the little dirty paltry aristocracy of the Royal Academy."
- David Wilkie, *Waterloo and the history of the railing off of pictures*
- Turner v. Constable, 1832, *The Opening of Waterloo bridge and Dutch ships in a gale, Helvoetsluys*
- 1849 Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents* was one of the most controversial paintings of the nineteenth century.
- Emily Osborne, *Nameless and Friendless*, highlighted the misogyny of the Academy.
- 1877, Grosvenor Gallery opened providing an alternative, prestigious exhibition space for modern art
- 1881, *A Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881 by William Powell Frith, depicting Oscar Wilde and other Victorian worthies at a private view of the 1881 exhibition
- 1914 John Singer Sargent, *Henry James*. One hundred years ago, on 4 May 1914, the Suffragette Mary Wood turned up on the opening day of the Royal Academy's annual Summer Exhibition and hacked at a painting by the esteemed Royal Academician John Singer Sargent with a meat cleaver while shouting "Votes for women!" The work was a portrait of the author Henry

James; Wood smashed the glass and managed to slash the canvas three times. The attack happened around half past one; the crowd in the gallery was thinning for lunch but still those civilised appreciators of culture turned on her. "Lynch her!" they shouted.

- 1947, *Winter Sunshine*, Chartwell by Churchill, submitted under name David Winter
- 1951, Alfred Munnings was an outspoken critic of Modernism; a clear demonstration that the RA was out of touch and out-of-date. In a drunken after-dinner speech given in 1949 he declared that if he saw Picasso walking down the street he would kick him up the backside.
- A watercolour of a Norfolk farm building by Prince Charles, submitted anonymously and signed "C" was chosen for the 1987 summer show.
- Over £70,000 prize money is awarded each year at the summer exhibition including the prestigious £25,000 Charles Wollaston Award for most distinguished work. Winners include
 - R.B. Kitaj (1997),
 - David Hockney (1999),
 - Jake and Dinos Chapman (2003) and
 - Jeff Koons (2008).
- There have been over a **quarter of a million** paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy over 250 years. If we try to narrow this down to those exhibited by Royal Academicians there have been **838 Academicians**.

OTHER ACADEMIES

- The first academy of art was founded in Florence in Italy by Cosimo I de' Medici, on 13 January 1563, under the influence of the architect Giorgio Vasari who called it the Accademia e Compagnia delle Arti del Disegno (Academy and Company for the Arts of Drawing).
- Another academy, the Accademia di San Luca (named after the patron saint of painters, St. Luke), was founded about a decade later in Rome.
- Accademia di San Luca later served as the model for the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture founded in France in 1648, and which later became the Académie des beaux-arts.
- The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture was reorganized in 1661 by Louis XIV whose aim was to control all the artistic activity in France.

- An important 'battle of styles' took place between supporters of Peter Paul Rubens and supporters of Nicolas Poussin ('poussinistes'). The later argued that line (disegno) should dominate art, because of its appeal to the intellect, while followers of Rubens ('rubenistes') argued that colour (colore) should dominate art, because of its appeal to emotion. The debate continued into the early 19th century with the distinction between Neoclassicism typified by the art of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres and Romanticism typified by the work of Eugène Delacroix. Debates also occurred over whether it was better to learn art by looking at nature, typified by the work of John Constable, or to learn by looking at the artistic masters of the past as typified by the work and lectures given by Joshua Reynolds.
- Academies using the French model formed throughout Europe, and imitated the teachings and styles of the French Académie.

REFERENCES

<https://chronicle250.com/> A summary of all the Summer Exhibitions from 1769 to 2018

'The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 – 19 August 2018'

Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public 1747-2001* (1999)

REFERENCES AND COPYRIGHT

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- If they use information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are inspired by an exhibition may use the booklets and books associated with the exhibition as a source of information.
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- If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl*, 1864, exhibited 1865, 76.5 × 51.1 cm, Tate



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl*, 1864, exhibited 1865, 76.5 × 51.1 cm, Tate

- This is *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl* by James McNeill Whistler and is an example of a popular art movement and fashion style called the Aesthetic Movement, well known for the phrase "art for art's sake". When I say popular it became a fashion statement by the trendy middle-classes. Whistler was not admired by most of the art establishment, particularly the art critic John Ruskin and this culminated in the famous Whistler-Ruskin trial of 1878. Ruskin accused Whistler of "**flinging a pot of paint in the public's face**" and although Whistler won he was awarded a farthing in damages in no costs. The legal costs bankrupted him and he left for Venice on a commission that when he returned from Venice restored his reputation—even his enemies conceded he was the finest etcher since Rembrandt.
- This painting is one of a series of three. The musical idea associated with the word 'Symphony' was suggested to him later and applied retrospectively to all three. The word emphasises the idea that they are intended to invoke a mood, like music. She looks sad and is wearing a wedding ring so we are inclined to start to create a narrative but such works are intended to invoke a mood rather than tell a story.

NOTES

- The model was Whistler's mistress Joanna Hiffernan and she is holding a Japanese fan and surrounded by fashionable accessories such as the blue and

white vase, the red pot and the azaleas.

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<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whistler-symphony-in-white-no-2-the-little-white-girl-n03418>

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Elizabeth Southerden Butler, Lady Butler (1846-1933) *The Roll Call*, signed and dated 1874, 93.3 x 183.5 cm, Royal Collection

Elizabeth Southerden Butler, Lady Butler (1846-1933) *The Roll Call*, signed and dated 1874, 93.3 x 183.5 cm, Royal Collection

- This is by **Elizabeth Butler**. Woman artists were exhibited but they had **many problems to overcome** to establish themselves as leading artists. In this case Butler chose military subjects and succeeded in becoming one of the leading artists but she was **never elected to Academician** despite her fame. Unlike male artists **she had no wife to manage her affairs**, she had to accompany her husband wherever he went, manage his affairs and raise six children.
- This is *The Roll Call*, exhibited in 1874 and it is **the work that made her famous**.
- We see the what remains of a battalion of **Grenadier Guards**, many exhausted and wounded. They are answering a roll call after a battle. While the artist **intended it as archetypal** of many occasions during the Crimean War (1854-6), it was generally assumed it was the aftermath of the **Battle of Inkerman** (5th November 1854). *The Roll Call* **captured the imagination of the country** when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874, **turning the artist into a national celebrity**. So popular was the painting that a policeman had to be stationed before it to **hold back the crowds** and it went on to **tour the country in triumph**.
- She was very popular as she painted scenes of battle at a time when Victorian pride and nationalism for the growing British Empire was at its height. She said, **'I never painted for the glory of war, but to portray its pathos and heroism'**.

Although the public had been exposed to other images of the Crimean War, mostly prints, photographs and newspaper illustrations, **never before had the plight of ordinary soldiers been portrayed with such realism.** I think the public appreciated the honesty they found in her work.

NOTES

- “In the cold light of morning, the remnants of a battalion of Grenadier Guards, many exhausted and wounded, are answering a roll call in the aftermath of a battle. While the artist, Elizabeth Southerden Thompson Butler, intended the painting as an archetypal image of the Crimean War (1854-6), it was generally assumed that the scene represented the aftermath of the Battle of Inkerman, which took place on the 5th November 1854. The Roll Call captured the imagination of the country when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874, turning the artist into a national celebrity. So popular was the painting that a policeman had to be stationed before it to hold back the crowds and it went on to tour the country in triumph. The painting's focus on the endurance and bravery of ordinary soldiers without reference to the commanders of the army accorded with the mood of the times and the increasing awareness of the need for social and military reforms. Though the public had been exposed to other images of the Crimean War, primarily prints, photographs and newspaper illustrations, never before had the plight of ordinary soldiers been portrayed with such realism.” (Royal Collection website)
- **The Government School of Design** was founded in 1837 and in 1853 became the **National Art Training School** with the **Female School of Art** in a separate building. In 1896 it became the **Royal College of Art**. During the 19thC it was often referred to as the **South Kensington Schools**.
- **Female School of Art**. In 1866 students were allowed to draw the clothed figure for the first time. Also known as School of Design for Females/Female School of Design/Gower Street School/Metropolitan School of Art for Females/Royal Female School of Art/Queen Square School of Art/Royal Female School of Art/Government School of Art for Ladies. Originally (1842) in Somerset House, then Gower Street (1852) then Queen Square (1861). It became part of the Central School of Arts and Crafts whose successor institution is Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. If the pupils at the Female School of Art in Queen Square were good enough, they were sent for examination at South Kensington, hence the confusion in some

biographical sources, which mistakenly locate the school itself in South Kensington.

BIO: BUTLER

- **Elizabeth Southerden Thompson, Lady Butler** (1846–1933) was a British painter, one of the **few female painters to achieve fame for history paintings**, especially **military** battle scenes, at the end of that tradition. She was married to **Lieutenant General Sir William Butler in 1877**, and is still often referred to as Lady Butler. Some of her most famous military scenes come from the Napoleonic Wars, but she covered most major 19th-century wars and painted several works showing the First World War.
- She was born in Switzerland and received her art training in **Italy** and then **South Kensington**, London and she entered the **Female School of Art** where she met Millais and Ruskin. She initially concentrated on religious subjects and later switched to war paintings.
- On her husband's retirement they moved to Ireland. Despite being one of the most famous and leading artists of her day she was never elected an academician. She was short-listed in 1879 but lost by two votes.

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<https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/405915/the-roll-call>



William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *A Private View at the Royal Academy 1881, 1883*, Royal Academy of Arts, John Madejski Rooms

William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *A Private View at the Royal Academy 1881, 1883*, 60 × 114 cm (23 5/8 × 44 7/8 in), Royal Academy of Arts, John Madejski Fine Rooms

- I mentioned the fashionable Aesthetic Movement. This painting by William Powell Frith shows what was regarded as the **shocking** aspects of the new **aesthetic fashion**. You can see from some of the expressions that these new fashions were regarded as shocking and outrageous.
- It **contrasts** lasting **historical achievement**, as represented by the portrait of **Disraeli**, with ephemeral **fads**, represented by
- (CLICK) **Oscar Wilde** and the **women in the green and the orange dresses**. Every person was a well-known personality but let me pick out a few:
 - (CLICK) the actors Henry Irving and Ellen Terry with the writer Frederick Eaton, secretary of the Royal Academy
 - (CLICK) the actress Lillie Langtry with the Archbishop of York
 - (CLICK) the artists Frederic Leighton who was President of the Royal Academy looking down at Constance, Countess of Lonsdale with a self-portrait of William Powell Frith next to her,
 - (CLICK) the writers Anthony Trollope and George du Maurier
 - (CLICK) John Everett Millais, by then a pillar of the establishment
 - (CLICK) Frith described this group as "**A family of pure aesthetes absorbed in affected study of the pictures**" with Trollope affording "**a striking contrast to the eccentric forms near him.**"

- The painting was influenced by **Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Patience*** and the annoyance many artists felt about the fashionable and **'trendy' new art**. The operetta made fun of what was regarded as the effete fashion with its outrageous clothes and love of all things Japanese.

NOTES

- Behind Wilde to the right and glaring disapprovingly are the painters Philip Calderon and Henry Stacy Marks, sculptor Joseph Boehm, and journalist G.A. Sala (bare-headed, in white waistcoat). To the left, behind and immediately to the right of Wilde, are the actors Henry Irving and **Ellen Terry**, with Frederick Eaton. To Wilde's left are **Lillie Langtry**, in a white dress, beside the soberly-dressed William Thomson, **Archbishop of York**. The man with sideburns looking over Thompson's left shoulder is **William Agnew**, picture dealer and recently elected Liberal MP for South East Lancashire, next to Lord Chief Justice of England Sir John Coleridge.
- In the centre of the composition, bearded and dressed in a brown frock coat, stands **Frederic Leighton**, President of the Royal Academy, talking to a seated woman, **Constance, Countess of Lonsdale**. The head of surgeon Sir Henry Thompson appears between Leighton and the Countess. **Frith himself** appears in the centre of the painting, bare-headed and whiskered, directly below the painting of Disraeli, talking to two women behind the seat.
- One of the two women on the other side of the seat, facing away from Leighton, is the heiress and philanthropist **Baroness Burdett-Coutts**. Having remained a spinster until she was sixty-six, Baroness Burdett-Coutts provoked a scandal in 1881 by marrying her much younger secretary, the American William Ashmead-Bartlett, who became Mr Burdett-Coutts. Baroness Burdett-Coutts is shown in conversation with the younger Lady Diana Huddleston, daughter of William Beauclerk, 9th Duke of St Albans. Their husbands also appear among the standing figures behind the seat. Lady Diana's husband was Sir John Walter Huddleston, the last Baron of the Exchequer and a judge of Queen's Bench. He wears a top hat, and stands just behind and to the left of poet and playwright **Robert Browning**, the bare-headed and white-bearded figure seen talking to an unknown woman in a green dress. To the right, listening to Browning's conversation, is naturalist **Thomas Huxley** (probably included due to his trenchant support for Charles Darwin, who had died in 1882). **Mr Burdett-Coutts** stands

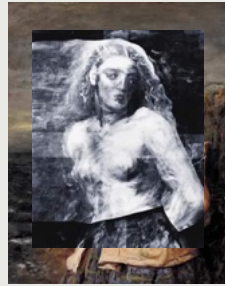
behind and to the right of Huxley, reading, with moustache and top hat.

- At the left of the painting stands the "homely figure" of **Anthony Trollope** (who died on 6 December 1882), with full white beard and top hat, noting in a book as he gazes at an "aesthetic" family in the foreground to the right, comprising a woman in green with sunflower buttonhole gazing at the artworks (a professional model, **Jenny Trip**), a woman in yellow reading her catalogue, and a girl in orange looking up at her. Frith describes them as "**a family of pure aesthetes** absorbed in affected study of the pictures" with Trollope affording "a striking contrast to the eccentric forms near him." Cartoonist **George du Maurier**, with moustache and hat, stands immediately behind; to the left, behind him, hatless, is illustrator **John Tenniel**. Further left, between Trollope and the edge of the painting, are novelist **Mary Elizabeth Braddon** and musician **Sir Julius Benedict**.
- To the right behind Trollope are a group of four politicians – the right-most, the **Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone**, faces a bearded **Sir Henry Stafford Northcote**; the tall hatless man behind Gladstone is Home Secretary **Sir William Harcourt**; behind and to the left of Northcote is Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster **John Bright**.
- **The paintings** on the wall accurately reproduce the exhibits at the 1881 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. A **second portrait of Disraeli** is visible on the wall behind Langtry. On the wall at the right, above Wilde's opponents, is the similarly angry-looking central figure in John Collier's **Last Voyage of Henry Hudson**. **John Everett Millais** at the extreme right is looking at Lawrence Alma-Tadema's painting *Sappho and Alcaeus*, accompanied by a myopic connoisseur. On the left wall are Heywood Hardy's *Sidi Ahmed ben Avuda and the Holy Lion* to the left; James Sant's *Daughters of Arthur Wilson, Esq.* further right, and J. W. Waterhouse's *A Summer's Day in Italy*.
- Frith was **inspired** by the satirical cartoons of **George du Maurier** (whose head is visible between the orange and green attired aesthetes at the left) and by **Gilbert and Sullivan's popular operetta Patience**, first performed in 1881. The aesthetic costumes are characterised by features such as gigot sleeves and the "Watteau pleats" seen in the figure to the left of Wilde, wearing pink. The women in the centre along with the one to the right of Wilde with the child represent normal fashionable clothing of the day. These aspects of dress and pose, along with the myopic figure next to Millais, show the influence of Watteau's painting *L'Enseigne de Gersaint*

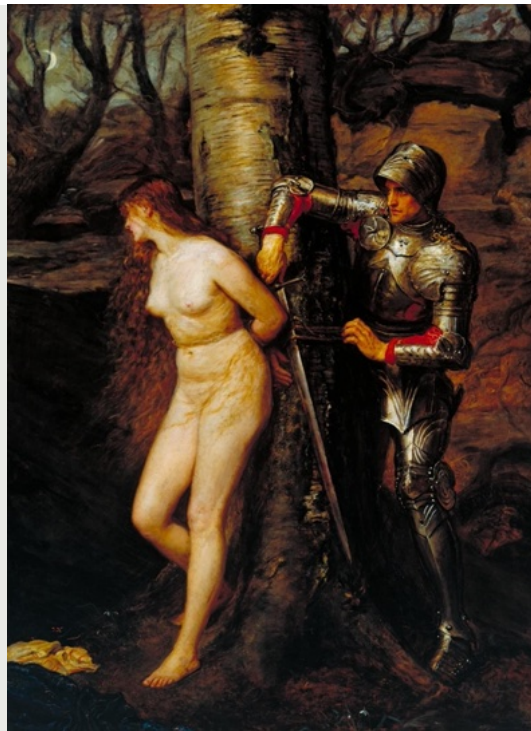
('The Shop Sign of Gersaint') of 1720-21, his last masterpiece.

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Sir John Everett Millais RA (1829-1896), *The Martyr of The Solway*, 1872, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



Sir John Everett Millais RA (1829-1896), *The Knight Errant*, 1870, 184.1 x 135.3 cm

Sir John Everett Millais RA (1829-1896), *The Knight Errant*, 1870, 184.1 x 135.3 cm, Tate Britain (2020: currently on loan to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle)

Sir John Everett Millais RA (1829-1896), *The Martyr of The Solway*, 1872, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

- **After William Etty died the female nude was rarely exhibited at the Summer Exhibition.** Then, in 1870, Millais exhibited his **first and last female nude**.
- It is titled *The Knight Errant* and shows a knight who has just chased off two scoundrels shown at the top of the picture and is now cutting the bonds of a woman. Who has been tied to a tree.
- Unlike the continental practice of idealising the nude and placing it in a classical setting Millais has painted **an unclothed woman**. This **caused consternation** among the critics and in June 1870, the *Art Journal* claimed that **'the manner is almost too real for the treatment of the nude'** and assumptions were made about **the woman's probable loose morals**. Critics saw her as an immoral, fallen woman, even though **she was not responsible** for her predicament. Many poor reviews, coupled with the fact that the painting did not sell, compelled **Millais to cut out the head and chest** of the female figure and re-paint that part to show the woman turning modestly away.
- (CLICK) The original section was later sewn into another canvas and exhibited in 1872 as ***The Martyr of The Solway*** (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool).
- (CLICK) **X-ray photographs of this painting** reveal the original appearance

which I have superimposed here.

- (CLICK) If we show it as it was originally painted her head and torso were turned towards the Knight, establishing eye contact and making the picture less acceptable at the time.
- (CLICK) Following Millais's repainting, the *Knight Errant* was sold in 1874. When she had been repainted and shown as full of shame she was still seen as a fallen woman but one worthy of compassion.

NOTES

- Margaret Wilson (c. 1667 – 11 May 1685) was a young Scottish Covenanter (someone who upholds the Scottish Presbyterian Church), from Wigtown in Scotland executed by drowning for refusing to swear an oath declaring James VII (James II of England) as head of the church. She died along with Margaret McLachlan. The two Margarets were known as the Wigtown Martyrs.

THE FEMALE NUDE IN VICTORIAN ART

- **William Etty** (1787-1849, RA 1828) was a very early and enthusiastic painter of the nude but apart from Etty (and his student William Edward Frost) the nude was not shown in the RA until the 1860s. Some think this is because **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** (1780-1867) *La Source* (1862, based on a torso painted in 1823) was exhibited at the **1862 International Exhibition** in London. Although it caused a stir it did start to change views of what was acceptable in art.
- One of the first was in **1867** when **Frederic Leighton** caused a **sensation** at the Royal Academy with *Venus Disrobing for the Bath*.
- The *Art Journal* 1867 said a life-size undressed Venus is '**a little startling now-a-days ... His picture is eminently chaste ... the colour ... is absolutely naturalistic ... more to commend than censure**'. The critic of The London Review described the painting as 'positively sickly' and wrote, 'the smirk of the goddess is intolerable...while the flesh tints of the figure are idealized after a fashion which perverts instead of representing or even suggesting the colour of nature.' The accusation here appears to be that the flesh is not accurate enough and the painting therefore a perversion of nature. The terms 'pervert' and 'perversion' were often used to describe Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic works that failed to represent nature.
- **The key word regarding acceptable nudes was 'purity'**, if the figure was

thought to be **chaste and pure** then it was **acceptable**. One way to achieve this was by the use of classical props such as columns.

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<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-knight-errant-n01508>



Henrietta Rae (1859-1928), *A Bacchante*, 1885, 127 x 63.5 cm,



Punch 24 October 1885, *The Model 'British Matron'*, "Mr. H-rsl-y, R.A. (as the M.B. Matron), "Oh dear! Who Could Ha' Sat for That?"

John Maler Collier (1850-1934), *Circe*, 1885, oil on canvas, 132.7 x 220 cm, private collection

Punch 24 October 1885, *The Model 'British Matron'*, "Mr. H-rsl-y, R.A. (as the M.B. Matron), "Oh dear! Who Could Ha' Sat for That?"

Henrietta Rae (1859-1928), *A Bacchante*, 1885, 127 x 63.5 cm, private collection.

- Continuing the theme of the naked female form, 1885 was a controversial year at the Summer Exhibition because of the large number of female nudes exhibited.
- This is *Circe* (pronounced 'SUH-see') by John Collier who was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites.
- According to Greek mythology Circe was able to turn humans into animals but the painting received the following critique, "**It is as if one took a turn round the environs of an English country-house and came on a member of the family sitting naked on the damp grass, with a tiger by her side. The situation is improbable and chilly; and there is no look of 'Circe' in the side face turned towards us ... why could not he call it *Woman and Tiger*, instead of pretending to represent Circe, that wild conception of the old Greek mind.**"
- Instead of following the tradition of the idealised nude based on a motionless Greek statue Collier has followed the French fashion of showing a fleshy naked woman that was too real for the British critics.
- The criticism reached its peak with a letter published in *The Times*, titled '**A**

Woman's Plea' and signed by "**a British Matron**" although it was in fact written by Mr J.C. Horsley a powerful Academician who held strong views against exhibiting nudes. The previous year he wrote that "**at an exhibition purporting to be for general edification or entertainment, no picture should find place before which a modest woman may not stand hanging on the arm of father, brother or lover without a burning sense of shame.**"

- This was part of a broader campaign against what was called deviant behaviour that included homosexuality, incest and prostitution.
- (CLICK) The campaign associated the female nude with prostitution leading to a cartoon in Punch showing Horsley dressed as a 'British Matron' disapproving of the Medici Venus.
- (CLICK) There were also a large number of female nudes painted by women artists in 1885 including this one by Henrietta Rae, which led Horsley to complain that they were degrading their sex.

REFERENCES

<https://chronicle250.com/1885> The Female Nudity Debate



John Collier (1850–1934), *The Prodigal Daughter*, 1903, 166 x 217 cm, Usher Gallery, Lincolnshire

John Collier (1850–1934), *The Prodigal Daughter*, exhibited 1903, 166 x 217 cm, Usher Gallery, Lincolnshire

- In the early twentieth century there was a craze for slightly risqué 'problem pictures' as they were called.
- One of John Collier's most popular problem pictures, *The Prodigal Daughter* of 1903, draws on the **theme of the fallen woman** but with an unexpected twist: the young woman returning to her bourgeois home in **fancy dress** exhibits a notable **lack of repentance**, leading viewers to question whether she is leaving her home or returning to it, **a repentant fallen woman or a modern New Woman**.
- Lacking the conventional narrative of seduction leading to despair and suicide typical of earlier representations of the fallen woman, the moral message of this painting is unclear and it generated widespread debate.
- The competing interpretations of such problem pictures enabled society to grapple with the new social norms of the early twentieth century, in particular the **changing roles** of the **modern women**.
- The periodical press was critical in this debate as it reproduced pictures, **sponsored competitions for the best 'solution'**, and popularised the term 'problem picture'.

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<https://chronicle250.com/1903>

ed. David Peters Corbett, *English Art 1860-1914, Modern Artists and Identity*,

Laura Knight (1877-1970), *The Picnic*, 1912, exhibited 1913, 145 × 120 cm



Laura Knight, *Self-Portrait with Nude*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery



Laura Knight (1877-1970), *Self-Portrait with Nude*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery
Laura Knight (1877-1970), *The Picnic*, 1912, exhibited 1913, 145 × 120 cm
Elected RA 1936

- 1913 was a year many of the artists exhibiting were women nevertheless the suffragettes held an impromptu demonstration in the gallery calling for better recognition and rights for women in society.
- **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) painted this in 1913 but it was so controversial that it was rejected by the Academy.
- (CLICK) This is the uncontroversial painting by Knight that was actually exhibited, called *The Picnic*.
- (CLICK) Returning to the rejected painting. When Knight attended art school, female students were not permitted to paint live models, being restricted to copying casts and drawings. Nevertheless she painted this complex formal composition using mirrors so she could paint herself painting the model and artist Ella Naper. It was exhibited elsewhere (Passmore Edwards Art Gallery, Newlyn) and the *The Daily Telegraph's* art critic called the painting "**vulgar**", and suggested that it "**might quite appropriately have stayed in the artist's studio**". It remained controversial throughout her life but is now seen as a masterpiece and a key work in the history of female emancipation. In 1936, Laura Knight became the first woman to become a full **Academician** since its foundation 168 years before.

NOTES

- She was an artist who worked in the figurative, realist tradition and was an English Impressionist. She was created a Dame in 1929 (aged 52) and was elected a Royal Academician in 1936, the first since 1768. Her large retrospective at the RA in 1965 was the first for a woman.
- Her father died shortly after she was born and her mother struggled financially but managed to send her France to study in a Paris atelier. She returned and her mother managed to enrol her at the Nottingham School of Art aged 13. She started teaching art when she was 15 and her mother fell ill and won a scholarship and gold medal from the South Kensington Museum (which became the V&A in 1899). She met Harold Knight when she was 17 and they married in 1903 when she was 26.
- She became a central figure in the **Newlyn** artists colony with Alfred Munnings.
- In 1913 she painted a first for a woman, *Self Portrait with Nude* showing her painting the artist **Ella Naper**. Using mirrors she painted herself and the model as seen from the point of view of someone entering the studio. **As an art student she was not permitted to paint nude models, only casts, which she deeply resented.** It was first shown in Newlyn and was well received but **rejected by the RA**. The *Daily Telegraph* art critic called it '**vulgar**' and suggested it '*might quite appropriately have stayed in the artist's studio.*' She continued to exhibit it throughout her career and it continued to receive criticism but it was purchased by the NPG after her death and **is now considered both a key work in the story of female self-portraiture and as symbolic of wider female emancipation.**
- She painted the world of theatre and ballet and was a war artist during WWII. She was also interested in marginal groups, such as gypsies and circus performers.
- A woman artist painting a nude was very difficult during the nineteenth century as few art schools allowed women students to attend life classes. One of the first was the Slade towards the end of the century. It was one thing to paint a working class model another for a middle-class Slade woman student to pose naked. Women students painted themselves in the mirror and other women students but did not acknowledge this.

NOTES

- **Edward Poynter, first principal at the Slade, in his inaugural address in**

October 1871:

'There is unfortunately a difficulty which has always stood in the way of female students acquiring that thorough knowledge of the figure which is essential to the production of work of a high class; and that is, of course, that they are debarred from the same complete study of the model that is open to the male students...But I have always been anxious to institute a class where the half-draped model might be studied, to give those ladies who are desirous of obtaining sound instruction in drawing the figure, an opportunity of gaining the necessary knowledge...It is my desire that in all the classes, except of course those for the study of the nude model, the male and female students should work together.'

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John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Henry James*, 1913, 85.1 x 67.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery



John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Henry James*, 1913, 85.1 x 67.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery

Bequeathed by Henry James, 1916, Henry James (1843-1916), Novelist

Photograph of George Clausen's *'Primavera'*, 1914, current location of painting is unknown

- On the 4 May, the day the exhibition opened in 1914 the **Suffragette Mary Wood attacked this portrait of Henry James by John Singer Sargent.**
- (CLICK) She had taken a **meat cleaver** from under her coat and slashed the canvas three times. This was the first attack that had happened in the Royal Academy but the Council was worried and had closed the Winter Exhibition early.
- But it was the **famous attack by Mary Richardson on Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus*** at the National Gallery in March 1914 – in which she slashed the painting repeatedly with a meat cleaver – that perhaps galvanised other suffragettes to follow suit. There followed a **spate of attacks on works of art** at the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, British Museum and Royal Academy.
- Following Mary Wood's attack many of the visitors, who were predominantly **women shouted 'Lynch her!' and 'Turn her out!'** One man aimed a blow at her but she was protected by another man who was then mobbed and his glasses smashed.
- The Royal Academy moved the guard rails to prevent further attacks but on 26 May Sir George Clausen RA's painting, *Primavera* was attacked.

NOTES

- “The American-born novelist Henry James settled in England, at Lamb House, Rye, in 1898. By the time this portrait was painted he was at the end of a career which had seen the success of early novels such as *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), followed by the late masterpieces *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). This portrait was commissioned to celebrate James's seventieth birthday by a group of 269 subscribers organised by the American novelist Edith Wharton, although ultimately Sargent, a fellow American and friend, waived his fee. When it was completed James pronounced the portrait to be 'a living breathing likeness and a masterpiece of painting'.” (National Portrait Gallery website)
- The Suffragette, Emily Davison dies after stepping out in front of the King's horse as a protest at the Epsom Derby. In the same year the Liberal government passed the Cat and Mouse Act allowing them to release and re-arrest Suffragettes who went on hunger strike while in prison. Davidson, herself, had been on hunger strike and was force-fed while detained at Holloway Prison.

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John Nash (1893–1977), *Oppy Wood*, 1917, 1918, Imperial War Museums



John Nash (1893–1977), *Oppy Wood*, 1917, 1918, Imperial War Museums

- **John Nash was the younger brother of the more famous artist Paul Nash** (1889-1946). He first worked as a newspaper reporter and had no formal art training but was encouraged by his brother and they had a successful joint exhibition in 1913. He fell in love with Dora Carrington and was an important influence on her work. He painted landscapes and still-lives, and was a wood engraver and illustrator, particularly of botanic works. Eventually in 1951, at the age of 58 he became a Royal Academician.
- He served in the war stuck in what he called the "poor bloody infantry" frustrated by his inability to gain a commission as a war artist like his brother. He described sixty years later how he became hardened to life in the trenches and remembered sitting eating bully beef surrounded by the remains of men blown apart by a shell that fell into their trench.
- Here we see inside a trench with duckboard paths leading to a dug-out. Two infantrymen stand to the left of the dug-out entrance, one of them on a firing position, known as a firestep is looking over the parapet into No Man's Land. There is a wood of shattered trees littered with corrugated iron and planks at ground level to the right of the composition. The sky stretches above in varying shades of blue with a spectacular cloud formation framing a clear space towards the top of the composition.

BIO:NASH

- **John Northcote Nash** CBE, RA (1893–1977) was a British painter of landscapes

and still-lives, and a wood engraver and illustrator, particularly of botanic works. He was the younger brother of the artist Paul Nash. At first he worked as a newspaper reporter for the *Middlesex and Berkshire Gazette*, in 1910. His brother became a student at the Slade School of Art the same year, and through his brother Paul, met Cloughton Pellew and Dora Carrington. John Nash had no formal art training, but was encouraged by his brother to develop his abilities as a draughtsman. His early work was in watercolour and included Biblical scenes, comic drawings and landscapes. A joint exhibition with Paul at the Dorien Leigh Gallery, London, in 1913 was successful, and John was invited to become a founder-member of the London Group in 1914. He was an important influence on the work of the artist Dora Carrington (with whom he was in love), and some of her works have been mistaken for his in the past. He was elected RA in 1951.

- **Paul Nash** (1889–1946) was a British surrealist painter and war artist, as well as a photographer, writer and designer of applied art. Nash was among the **most important landscape artists of the first half of the twentieth century**. He played a key role in the development of Modernism in English art. Born in London, Nash grew up in Buckinghamshire where he developed a love of the landscape. He entered the Slade School of Art but was poor at figure drawing and concentrated on landscape painting.



John Singer Sargent, *Gassed*, 1919, 231 x 611.1 cm, Imperial War Museum



Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/30-1569), *The Blind Leading the Blind (or The Parable of the Blind)*, 1568, 86 x 154 cm, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples

John Singer Sargent, *Gassed*, 1919, 231 x 611.1 cm, Imperial War Museum
 Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/30-1569), *The Blind Leading the Blind (or The Parable of the Blind)*, 1568, 86 x 154 cm, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples

- John Singer Sargent witnessed this scene, the aftermath of this terrible gas attack. When it was displayed it was **voted picture of the year by the Royal Academy**. Not everyone liked it and E. M. Forster considered it too heroic. Winston Churchill praised its **'brilliant genius and painful significance'**, but Virginia Woolf attacked its patriotism.
- It shows the effects of mustard gas. These effects that only become apparent several hours after exposure. It attacks the skin, eyes and mucous membranes, causing large skin blisters, blindness, choking and vomiting. Death, although rare, can occur within two days, but suffering may be prolonged over several weeks.
- Sargent's painting refers to **Bruegel's 1568 work *The Parable of the Blind***, with the blind leading the blind. It also alludes to Rodin's *Burghers of Calais*.
- "A side on view of **a line of soldiers** being led along a duckboard by a medical orderly. Their **eyes are bandaged** as a result of exposure to gas and each man holds on to the shoulder of the man in front. One of the line has his leg raised in an exaggerated posture as though walking up a step, and another veers out of the line with his back to the viewer. There is another line of temporarily blinded soldiers in the background, one soldier leaning over vomiting onto the ground.

More gas-affected men lie in the foreground, one of them drinking from a water-bottle. The crowd of wounded soldiers continues on the far side of the duckboard, and the tent ropes of a dressing station are visible in the right of the composition. A **football match** is being played in the background, lit by the evening sun." (Imperial War Museum website)

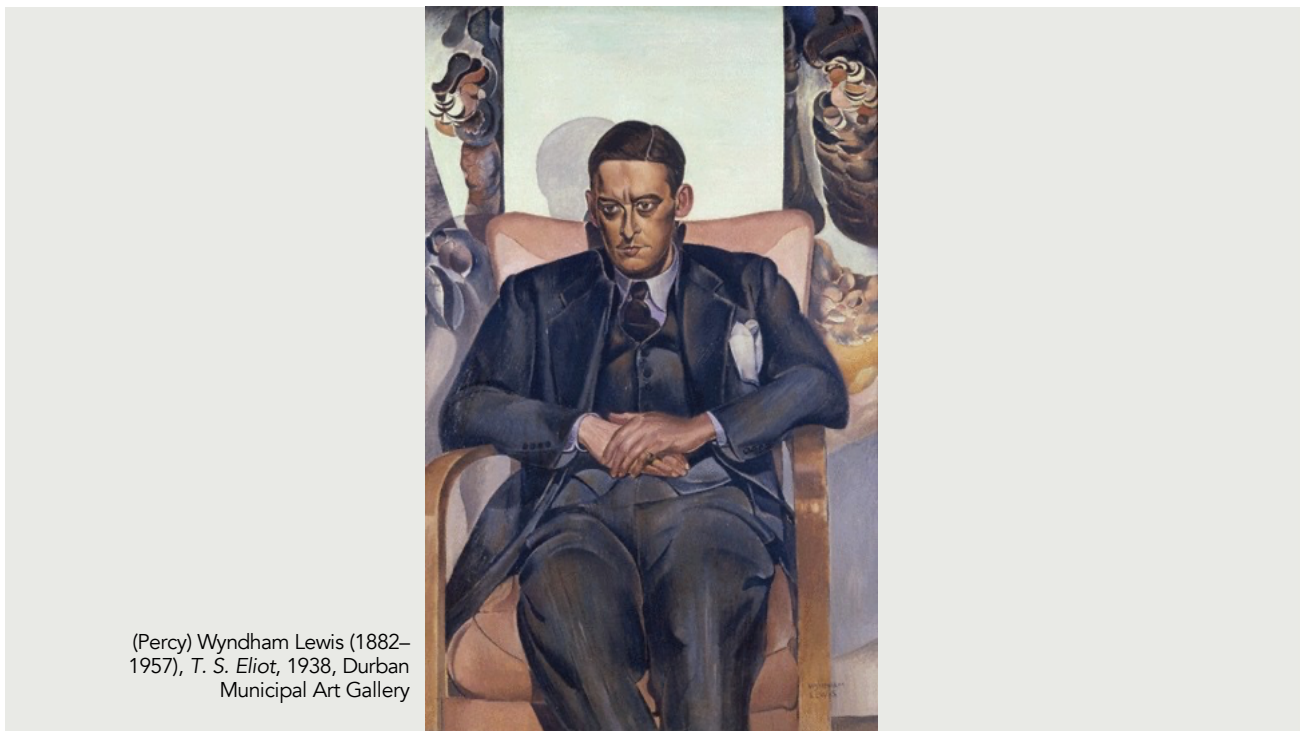
- Sargent received a **£600 commission** from the Ministry of Information for an epic work commemorating **Anglo-American co-operation** (as he was an American). He could not find a suitable subject but made a lot of sketches of lines of gassed soldiers and the War memorial Committee agreed to change the subject of the commission.

BIO:SARGENT

- **John Singer Sargent** (1856-1925) 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.

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(Percy) Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957), *T. S. Eliot*, 1938, Durban Municipal Art Gallery

- In 1938 one of the most discussed works was not even displayed at the Royal Academy. The Academy had rejected Wyndham Lewis's portrait of T. S. Eliot creating outrage in the press. Lewis dismissed the Academy as a 'foul institution' and claimed he had submitted it to test the committee. Augustus John resigned in protest and later wrote to Laura Knight '**It seemed pretty hopeless to oppose the predominant junta of deadly conservatism ... If by my beastly action I shall have brought some fresh air into Burlington House I shall feel justified.**'
- **The conservatism of the Academy was by then well entrenched** and was supported by Winston Churchill.

BIO:LEWIS

- **Wyndham Lewis** was an English painter and author. He **co-founded the Vorticist movement** and was editor of the **Vorticist magazine BLAST**. He said he was born on his father's yacht off Nova Scotia and he went to Rugby School following his parents separation. He later went to the **Slade School of Art** and then spent most of the 1900s **travelling around Europe** and studying **art in Paris**. He lived in **London from 1908** and was a founder of the **Camden Town Group in 1911**. In 1912 he exhibited at Roger Fry's second Post-Impressionism exhibition. He met Roger Fry and Clive Bell but soon fell out with them. In 1913-15 he developed a form of geometric abstraction that his friend **Ezra Pound**

called 'Vorticism'. He wanted to **combine the solid structure of Cubism with the liveliness of Futurism**. He joined Roger Fry's Omega Workshop but fell out with him and created the Rebel Art Centre and although this only lasted three months it gave rise to the Vorticist Group and *BLAST*. In 1917 he was posted to the front in a forward post directing artillery fire. In December he was made an official war artist. One of his best known works is *A Battery Shelled* (1919, Imperial War Museum) which we will look at later.

- Lewis had what has been called a **thorny personality** and he **managed to offend all those who might have helped his career**. Lewis went to war unlike the other literary men, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and James Joyce and the experience embittered him. During the 1920s he developed a public persona, known as '**The Enemy**', who shot at popular ideas and art, left-wing artists and intellectuals. He even went so far as to **state the case for Hitler**, a position he **later recanted** after visiting Berlin in 1938, but only after the damage had been done. Few understood that his motivation at the time was **avoidance of another war**. Lewis **attacked everyone**, Virginia Woolf (for copying James Joyce), the Bloomsbury set, the Sitwells, the 'romantics' D. H. Lawrence, Gertrude Stein and even Joyce and his close friends Pound and Eliot. He wrote 23 books between the wars and was one of the foremost portrait painters. However, his attacks meant he had no steady employment and he suffered from a **stream of libel actions**.

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Winston Churchill (1874-1965), *Winter Sunshine, Chartwell, 1947*

Winston Churchill (1874-1965), *Winter Sunshine, Chartwell, 1947*

- Churchill was an amateur artist and he submitted this work using a **pseudonym, David Winter**, in 1947. Both his paintings were accepted including *Winter Sunshine* and eventually the title of **Honorary Academician Extraordinary** was conferred on him in 1948.
- Churchill **started painting** during one of the lowest points in his life, following **the failed invasion of Gallipoli** in WWI. He was 40 years old and the First Lord of the Admiralty (basically the political head of the navy). The Gallipoli campaign was Churchill's brain child and resulted in catastrophic loss of life and was a monumental failure. Churchill was demoted and ultimately resigned his position in the government to become a **infantry soldier** and went to the front lines in France. Churchill returned to politics but the failed Gallipoli campaign haunted him the rest of his career, with opponents and hecklers shouting out reminders to him.

NOTES

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haunted him the rest of his career, with opponents and hecklers shouting out reminders to him. The "British Bulldog" embraced Gallipoli as a brilliant failure. "The Dardanelles might have saved millions of lives. Don't imagine I am running away from the Dardanelles. I glory in it," he responded. Churchill painted roughly **500 paintings** over the course of his life. He preferred **landscapes. Monet, Van Gogh, and William Turner** were his biggest influences. In the 1920's Churchill sent five of his painting to Paris for exhibition under the pseudonym Charles Morin. They were sold for 30 pounds each. Churchill's bodyguard, Murray, was also an oil painter. His worked was rejected from the Royal Academy. Churchill told Murray, "you know, your paintings are much better than mine, but yours are judged on their merit." In 1947 church submitted several paintings to the Royal Academy under the pseudonym Mr. Winter. Two were accepted and he earned the title Honorary Academia Extraordinary." (imgur website)

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Alfred James Munnings (1878–1959), *Does the Subject Matter?*, 1953-56, 76.2 x 108.6 cm, The Munnings Art Museum, donated by the artist

Alfred James Munnings (1878–1959), *Does the Subject Matter?*, 1953-56, 76.2 x 108.6 cm, The Munnings Art Museum, donated by the artist

- By the late 1940s there was **open hostility between the national art institutions**. There was a major clash between **the modernisers** and the **Royal Academy** and a House of Commons committee concluded in 1946 that the national art galleries should be reorganised. It recommended that the **Tate should be made independent of the National Gallery, receive the Chantrey Bequest directly** and be divided between **British Art and Modern Art**.
- **Alfred Munnings**, the horse painter and traditionalist, was **elected president** of the Royal Academy in **1944**. He was **incensed** by the Government report and tried to rally support for his cause. He wrote **criticising the 'silly amateur' visitors crowding into the Picasso exhibition** at the V&A. He felt the mood was swinging against him and **made his friend Winston Churchill** an **'Academician Extraordinary'**, the first and only time this title had been granted.
- On the evening of 28 April **1949** Churchill and Munnings attended the banquet held before the Summer Exhibition and their speeches were broadcast live.
- Churchill spoke first and made jokes about his paintings. Then Munnings, by then **a little drunk**, rose and **criticised all the Academicians present**, describing them as failing to produce great art, 'shilly-shallying' around and believing there is something in **'this so-called modern art'**. The speech was **broadcast live to millions**. He went on to say he would rather have a **'damned**

bad failure’ than all this **‘School of Paris’**. He describe the ‘foolish men’ who supported modern art and **named Anthony Blunt, Henry Moore and Matisse**. He then quoted Churchill as once saying ‘Alfred, if you met Picasso coming down the street, would you join with me in kicking his ... something, something, something?’ to which he replied ‘Yes, sir, I would’. The **BBC switchboard was jammed with complaints** not about his views on modern art but because of his use of the word **‘damned’**.

- This painting by Munnings was his last public criticism of modern art in 1956. It shows Sir John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery on the left; Miss Patricia Potter, an assistant buyer at Selfridge's, wearing a pink Selfridge's Dress; Humphrey Brooke, Secretary of the Royal Academy; a Professor (John Mavrogortado) from Oxford University all examining a sculpture intended to be a work by Barbara Hepworth with parodies of works by Picasso on the wall.

NOTES

- He claimed he received many letters supporting him and there were many cartoons illustrating the fight between the modernists and traditionalists without really taking sides. The debate continued with Munnings maintaining that ‘the man in the street’ is a ‘good judge when it comes to a really fine picture’. One critic pointed out there were excesses on both sides, modern artists could produce ‘wild nonsense’ and traditionalists ‘dull nonsense’. He went on to point out that at least modern art had rediscovered there is **‘more to do with man than with the things which man merely sees with his two eyes’**.
- **Munnings last broadside** was **this painting** prepared for the Summer Exhibition of 1956 entitled *Does the Subject Matter?* The three men are a **Jewish looking John Rothenstein, Humphrey Brooke**, now Secretary of the Royal Academy and **John Mavrogordato** (Professor of Greek at Oxford) and a well-dressed woman. They are **gazing appreciatively** at a **lump** intended to **caricature a work by Barbara Hepworth**. In the rear stands Professor Bodkin and an unknown figure. On the wall are some accurate transcriptions of works by Picasso. The painting was exhibited in response to the Tate’s ‘Modern Art in the United States’ of January 1956.
- "This painting, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1956 as no. 283, shows from left to right: Sir John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery; Miss Patricia Potter, an assistant buyer at Selfridge's, wearing a pink Selfridge's

Dress; Humphrey Brooke, Secretary of the Royal Academy; Professor John Mavrogortado from Oxford University and in the background to the left Thomas Bodkin, Professor of History and Fine Arts, Trinity College, Dublin. The artist's dog Toby sits in the foreground to the right, and the paintings seen hanging on the wall are parodies of Picasso paintings." [1]

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[1] <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/does-the-subject-matter-3681>



Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), *The Blue Boy*, 1770, 177.8 x 112.1, The Huntington, California



Peter Blake (born 1932), *Self-Portrait with Badges*, 1961, 174.3 x 121.9 cm, Tate

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Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), *The Blue Boy*, 1770, 177.8 x 112.1, The Huntington, California

- We now move into Pop Art.
- Peter Blake's self-portrait shows his equal respect for historical tradition and modern popular culture.
- (CLICK) He may have based this image on **Thomas Gainsborough's famous portrait *The Blue Boy***. But Blake's blue fabric is not silk but denim – a material associated at the time with American youth culture.
- (CLICK) Blake's fascination with American popular culture is further emphasised by his **baseball boots, jeans and denim jacket**, the badges, and the **magazine dedicated to Elvis Presley**, who had just become well known in Britain. Blake uses these objects like a traditional portrait painter, to suggest his interests or achievements. The flatness of many areas, such as the badges on the jacket, emphasizes the painted surface. His American clothes are bright and new compared to the drab and indistinct British garden behind him. This painting brings together **the explosion of consumerism in the US, of fashion and music in the UK, and of youth culture in both countries.**

NOTES

- Perhaps Gainsborough's most famous work, it is thought to be a portrait of Jonathan Buttall (1752–1805), the son of a wealthy hardware merchant,

although this has never been proven. It is a historical costume study as well as a portrait: the youth in his 17th-century apparel is regarded as Gainsborough's homage to Anthony van Dyck, and in particular is very close to Van Dyck's portrait of Charles II as a boy. The painting was a response to Joshua Reynolds' lecture in which he said that even a Rubens or Titian could not make a picture 'splendid and harmonious' if the main mass of the picture was a blue or grey and the background a 'warm, mellow colour'.

- **Peter Blake** (b. 1932) was born in **Dartford**, Kent and educated at Gravesend Technical College and the **Royal College of Art**. In the late 1950s he became known as one of **the leading British Pop artists** and exhibited alongside David Hockney and R. B. Kitaj (pronounced ki-TIE). His paintings included advertisements, musical hall entertainment and wrestlers. In the 'Young Contemporaries' exhibition of 1961 he exhibited alongside David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj. He won the (1961) John Moores junior award for *Self Portrait with Badges*. He came to wider public attention when, along with Pauline Boty and others he featured in Ken Russell's Monitor film on pop art, *Pop Goes the Easel*, broadcast on BBC television in 1962. From 1963 Blake was at the centre of swinging London and came into contact with leading figures of popular culture. He often refers to the work of other artists in his work and is best known for designing the sleeve for Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band with his wife Jann Haworth, the American-born artist whom he married in 1963 and divorced in 1979; they had two daughters, Liberty and Daisy. In 1969, Blake left London to **live near Bath**. His work changed direction to feature scenes based on **English folklore** and characters from Shakespeare. In the early 1970s, he made a set of **watercolour paintings** to illustrate Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*. In 1979 he **returned to London** and working with popular culture. In 1980, Blake met fellow artist Chrissy Wilson, they married in 1987, and have a daughter, Rose. Blake became a **Royal Academician in 1981**, and a CBE in 1983: in **2002 he was knighted** as a Knight Bachelor at Buckingham Palace for his services to art. Retrospectives of Blake's work were held at the Tate in 1983 and Tate Liverpool in 2008.

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David Hockney (b. 1937), Views of Hotel Well III, 1984-85, Tate

David Hockney (b. 1937), Views of Hotel Well III, 1984-85, Tate

- **David Hockney was one of the leading Pop artists** although he rejected the term as too restrictive.
- In 1985 he was made an Associate Royal Academician and the following year he exhibited this work along with two other lithographs.
- Typically a Royal Academician would charge £5,000 to £10,000 for a painting and prints were seen as a low cost way for visitors to acquire the work of a famous artist. They would sell for £40, £50 or £100 each.
- The big news of the 1986 Summer Exhibition was **David Hockney's lithograph prints were on sale for £10,925 and £12,075 each**. Multiplying by the print run gave Hockney over £2.8 million for the print run. Hockney claimed it was his assistant who set the prices and to deflect criticism he gave his local Bradford newspaper the right to include one of his prints in every copy of the newspaper they sold. The newspaper was 18p and the free Hockney print inside was free.
- The following year in 1987 at the Summer Exhibition he sold *A Bounce for Bradford* (from Bradford Telegraph & Argus supplement 'Bradford Bouncing Back', 1987), web-offset litho newsprint (edition of 110,000: 18p each available from RA shop)

BIO: DAVID HOCKNEY (B. 1937)

- Born in **Bradford**, went to Bradford Grammar School and Bradford College of Art. He was **born with synaesthesia** and sees colours in response to music. At

the **Royal College of Art** he met R. B. Kitaj (pronounced ki-TIE).

- **1961 Young Contemporaries exhibition** announcing the arrival of **British Pop art**. His early work shows expressionist elements similar to some Francis Bacon. He exhibited alongside Peter Blake (born 1932), Patrick Caulfield and Allen Jones. He met Ossie Clarke and Andy Warhol.
- He featured in **Ken Russell's Pop Goes the Weasel with Pauline Boty** (pronounced 'boat-ee')
- Hockney had his **first one-man show** when he was **26 in 1963**, and by 1970 (or 1971) the Whitechapel Gallery in London had organized the first of several major retrospectives.
- He moved to **Los Angeles in 1964 to 1978, London 1968-73** and then **Paris 1973-75**. He produced 1967 paintings *A Bigger Splash* and *A Lawn Being Sprinkled*. **Los Angeles again in 1978** rented then bought the canyon house and extended it. He also bought a beach house in Malibu. He moved between New York, London and Paris before **settling in California in 1982**.
- He was openly gay and painted many celebratory works. In **1964 he met the model Peter Schlesinger** and was romantically involved. In **California** he switched from **oils to acrylic** using smooth, flat and brilliant colours.
- He made prints, took photographs and **stage design work for Glyndebourne, La Scala and the Metropolitan Opera House** in New York.
- From 1968 he painted portraits of friends just under life size. David Hockney, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, 1970–71, Tate
- In the early 1980s he produced a series of photo collages which he called 'joiners'. First using Polaroid and then 35mm. An early work was a portrait of his mother. As he took photographs from different angles the resulting work is related to Cubism. His aim was to discuss the way human vision works.
- In 1976 he created a portfolio of 20 etchings based on themes in a poem by Wallace Stephens. In 1985 he designed the cover page for *Vogue*.
- In 1985 he used a computer program that enabled him to sketch directly on the screen.
- In the 1990s he returned to Yorkshire every three months to see his mother. Who died in 1999. From 1997 he started to capture the local surroundings, some from memory. By 2005 he was painting *en plein air*. He created large paintings from multiple smaller canvases, 9 or 15 placed together.

- In June 2007, Hockney's largest painting, *Bigger Trees Near Water*, which measures 15 feet by 40 feet, was hung in the Royal Academy's largest gallery in its annual Summer Exhibition. It uses 50 canvases painted over five winter months.
- In October 2006, the National Portrait Gallery in London organized one of the largest ever displays of Hockney's portraiture work, including 150 paintings, drawings, prints, sketchbooks, and photocollages from over five decades.
- Since 2009 he has painted hundreds of portraits of friends using iPad and iPhone *Brushes*.
- In 2011 he visited Yosemite to paint on his iPad.
- From 21 January 2012 to 9 April 2012, the Royal Academy presented *A Bigger Picture*, which included more than 150 works, many of which take entire walls in the gallery's brightly lit rooms. The exhibition was dedicated to landscapes, especially trees and tree tunnels. The exhibition attracted more than half a million visitors, making it one of the Academy's most successful shows ever.

NOTES

In 1977, in celebration of her 25th year as Queen, Elizabeth II toured the British Isles and there were 4,000 street parties in London alone. Elvis Presley died of a heart attack aged 42.



R. B. Kitaj (1932-2007),
*The Killer-Critic
 Assassinated by His
 Widower, Even, 1997,*
 152.4 x 152.4 cm
 Astrup Fearnley
 Collection, Oslo, Norway

Ronald Brooks Kitaj (1932-2007), *The Killer-Critic Assassinated by His Widower, Even, 1997*, 152.4 x 152.4 cm

Astrup Fearnley Collection, Oslo, Norway

R. B. Kitaj was elected RA in 1991.

- This painting by Ronald Kitaj (pronounced 'kit-EYE') was **part of his Sandra Three installation** which consisted of two paintings, collage, photos and quotes on two red and yellow panels.
- It was produced as part of **a long running battle with certain British critics** who had tried to destroy his reputation in 1994 and in his view **led to his wife's death from a cerebral haemorrhage** a few weeks later.
- What happened in 1994 was that **the Tate ran a retrospective exhibition of his life's work**, a great honour for a living artist and certain critics who had been full of praise before the exhibition opened described his work as **fake, adolescent trash, puffed up, slushy and "unworthy of a footnote in the history of figurative art"**. Even more significantly some of the critics appear to have been **motivated by anti-semitism**.
- Kitty began a **Sandra series, the name of his wife**, starting with One and Two and in 1997 Three of which this work was the most significant. On the right to men with rifles fire at a multi-headed monster, the critics. The men have erect penises from which a yellow fluid enters the monster's mouth out of which comes a long tongue made of rolled up newspaper and which is written "yellowpressyellowpress killkillkillkill the heretic always kill heresy". The one-

legged man on the right has a dripping pen in a holster like a gun. Kitaj explained that the two men were himself and Eduard Manet. At the bottom left are Penguin paperbacks concerned with murder, death and revenge.

- There is far more in the painting but it is **basically an all out attack on the critics** he believed killed his beloved wife.
- **The violence of the critics response was even greater than in 1994**, within a month twenty features had appeared. The basic line of the critics is that all artists are criticised and he should **turn the other cheek**. What they failed to address is that **the original criticism was an ill-considered emotional outburst against a well-respected artist** even, a few weeks before, by the same critics. Some say that in 1994 the critics objected to the labels Kitaj had written for each work as they were seen as trite, if this was the case then that is what they should have said. Critics have a duty to explain why they don't like a work.

NOTES

- Winners of the £25,000 Charles Wollaston Award for most distinguished work include R.B. Kitaj (1997), David Hockney (1999), Jake and Dinos Chapman (2003) and Jeff Koons (2008). A watercolour of a Norfolk farm building by Prince Charles, submitted anonymously and signed "C" was chosen for the 1987 summer show.
- RB Kitaj's greatest act of revenge was this painting, displayed at the Royal Academy's 1997 Summer Exhibition.
- ...a controversial exhibition at the Tate gallery in 1994 dramatically changed the course of the rest of Kitaj's life, and his art.
- That 1994 show, a landmark for a living painter, became known to Kitaj as the "Tate war", and letters and documents that have now come to light reveal that the phrase was not an exaggeration. What had been planned as the culmination and crowning glory of a life's work proved to be something quite different. On one side of the battlefield back then were the art critics of the British press, who seemed to have lined up to outdo one another in destroying Kitaj's claims to attention. And facing them were Kitaj, then 64, and his friends and fellow British painters – Lucian Freud, David Hockney, Howard Hodgkin, Frank Auerbach and others – who, letters now reveal, disagreed among themselves about how this savage and apparently highly personal broadside might best be countered.
- The real casualty of this battle, in Kitaj's eyes, was his beloved wife and

muse, Sandra Fisher, who died of a brain aneurysm aged 47, two weeks after his Tate show opened, and whose death the painter blamed directly on the shock of his very public critical humiliation. The fallout from this tragedy led to Kitaj's self-imposed exile from his adoptive London, along with his young son, Max, back to America, and to a studio in Los Angeles, where he nurtured an obsessive loathing for particular British critics that involved splenetic death threats and fantasies of violence.

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Gillian Wearing (b. 1963), *Self Portrait as My Sister Jane Wearing*, 2003, 130.7 x 105.2 cm



Gillian Wearing (b. 1963), *Self Portrait as My Sister Jane Wearing*, 2003, 130.7 x 105.2 cm

- 'Wearing's photographs explore how **public and private identities of ordinary people are self-fashioned**.
- For her series **Album 2003**, she reconstructed **old family snapshots using silicone masks** fabricated with the help of experts from **Madame Tussauds**. By putting a version of someone else's face on hers she is metaphorically '**seizing their identity**'. Here Wearing wears a dress her sister wore in the 1980s. The only bits of Wearing that can be seen are her eyes and teeth.' (Based on the Tate online caption)
- They start the mask in clay from a two-dimensional image into a three-dimensional object. In an article for *The Guardian* she explains that the **process takes four months per mask**, and how at first 'some people tried to direct me to use prosthetics, but I was adamant it had to be a mask, something that transforms me entirely, something that was not grotesque but real, like a trompe l'oeil.'
- These **expensive silicone masks deteriorate** easily after use, turning the photo shoot into a **performative act** where the action is unrepeatable. This process becomes paradoxical because of the difficulties that are encountered while recreating these casual snapshots. Wearing is exploring her own persona by capturing her relationship with her family members appearance.

NOTES

- In 2003-2006, Gillian Wearing recreated photographs of her relatives that were found in her family album. She created masks out of silicone of her mother, her father, her sister, her uncle, and a mask of herself with help from experts that were trained at Madam Tussauds in London.

BIO:WEARI

- **Gillian Wearing** (b. 1963) was born in Birmingham and moved to Chelsea to study at the Chelsea College of Art. She is known for documenting everyday life through photography and video and for her concern with personal identity, both personal and private. She is an English conceptual artist, one of the Young British Artists, and winner of the Turner Prize, in 1997. In 2007 Wearing was elected a Royal Academician. She lives and works in London with her partner, the British artist, Michael Landy (b. 1963). He is best known for the performance piece installation *Break Down* (2001), in which he destroyed all his possessions. In 2008 he was elected an Academician.

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Jenny Saville, *Reverse*, 2002-03, exhibited 2004, 213.4 x 243.8 cm, Gagosian Gallery



Jenny Saville, *Reverse*, 2002-03, exhibited 2004, 213.4 x 243.8 cm, Gagosian Gallery

- The 2004 Summer Exhibition was curated by **David Hockney and Allen Jones** and they made the conservative but radical decision to focus on drawing as the theme of the exhibition. They wanted to draw everyone's attention to the **marginalisation of drawing at art school**. They made the epigraph of the exhibition Ingres' statement, "Drawing is the true test of art".
- However, one painting stands out for me and that is Jenny Saville's *Reverse*.
- (CLICK) It is a large painting like much of her work and it is a self-portrait.
- She said, "**I'm not trying to teach, just make people discuss, look at how women have been made by man. What is beauty? Beauty is usually the male image of the female body. My women are beautiful in their individuality.**" (*Independent*, 1994)
- 'There is a thing about beauty. **Beauty** is always associated with the male fantasy of what the female body is. I don't think there is anything wrong with beauty. It's just what women think is beautiful **can be different**. And there can be a beauty in individualism. If there is a wart or a scar, this can be beautiful, in a sense, when you paint it.'
- **This looks like a wound** and she was allowed to sit and **watch a plastic surgeon at work** to understand how the body works and what lies beneath the outer surface to which we attach labels such as "beautiful" or "deformed". **This does not mean she is showing an operation**. She creates unromantic views of

women to escape from the idea of what the **male's perceptions of the way women look or should look**, by painting them in unusual ways.

- Jenny Saville, elected RA in 2007 and is one of the youngest Royal Academicians.

NOTES

- One critic wrote in *The Guardian* about her work *Rosetta* '**She is sightless, and yet you feel, somehow, that she sees right into you.** Art critics, anxious to emphasise the resonance or beauty of a particular work, have a tendency to exaggerate. They will tell you, for instance, that a canvas seems almost to vibrate, such is its power. But this painting moves well beyond vibration. **No superlative I can think of seems to do it justice. It's uncanny. If I heard its subject softly breathing, I would hardly be surprised.**' Rosetta lives in Naples and was so determined not to be on the receiving end of pity she interviewed Saville at length before agreeing to sit for her
- Jenny Saville, elected RA in 2007 and is one of the youngest Royal Academicians. The youngest is Conrad Hartley Pelham Shawcross (b. 1977), a British artist specializing in mechanical sculptures based on philosophical and scientific idea.
- Jenny Saville (b. 1970), one of the **Young British Artists**, large scale depictions of **nude women**.
- British figure painter Jenny Saville was born in **Cambridge** and began her course of study at the **Glasgow School of Art** in Scotland in 1988.
- Upon graduating in 1992 with a successful senior show, the young artist's career was off to an **explosive start; every painting was sold**, including one to British gallery owner and art collector, Charles **Saatchi**. Saatchi **purchased all her work** and commissioned her for the next few years. She quickly established herself in part through this patronage.
- Saville exhibited at the controversial **Sensation show** at the Royal Academy of Art in London in **1997**.
- Saville's technique is **traditional** and seemingly outmoded, she has found a way to **reinvent figure painting** and regain its prominent position in the context of art history. Known primarily for her large-scale paintings of nude women, Saville has also emerged as a major contemporary artist and leading figure of the Young British Artists (YBA).

- Her blatantly feminist subject matter, of **obese and sometimes faceless women** with vast bodies, partly originates from a trip to America. It was while studying at Cincinnati University in Ohio, that Saville's lifelong fascination with the workings of the human body began to affect her artwork. Much of her work features distorted flesh, high calibre brush strokes and patches of oil colour, while others reveal the surgeon's mark of a plastic surgery operation.
- Saville has been **influenced by Cindy Sherman** a contemporary conceptual photographer who uses herself as model. Saville collaborated with photographer Glen Luchford (b. 1968) to create images of herself using a sheet of glass to squash and distort her flesh. These self-portraits were exhibited as photographs (shot from underneath the glass) rather than paintings.
- Saville's art, which is frequently compared to contemporary British painter **Lucian Freud**, has always focused on the human form and how it can be represented. Currently, Jenny Saville lives and works in London, England, where she is a **teacher** of figure painting at the **Slade School of Art**. (Much of the above is taken from Invaluable.com)

QUOTATIONS FROM JENNY SAVILLE

- "There is a thing about beauty. Beauty is always associated with the male fantasy of what the female body is. I don't think there is anything wrong with beauty. It's just what women think is beautiful can be different. And there can be a beauty in individualism. If there is a wart or a scar, this can be beautiful, in a sense, when you paint it."
- "I'm not anti conceptual art. I don't think painting must be revived, exactly. Art reflects life, and our lives are full of algorithms, so a lot of people are going to want to make art that's like an algorithm. But my language is painting, and painting is the opposite of that. There's something primal about it. It's innate, the need to make marks. That's why, when you're a child, you scribble."
- "The art I like concentrates on the body. I don't have a feel for Poussin, but for Courbet, Velasquez - artists who get to the flesh. Visceral artists - Bacon, Freud. And **de Kooning, of course. He's really my man**. He doesn't depict anything, yet it's more than representation, it's about the meaning of existence and pushing the medium of paint."

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Tracey Emin (b. 1963), *Ruined*, 2007, exhibited 2008

Tracey Emin (b. 1963), *Ruined*, 2007, exhibited 2008

- **Tracey Emin was elected Academician in 2007** and she was given a room (Gallery VIII) to curate. She chose to exhibit the work of her friends such as **Rachel Kneebone** with *In the Midst of Quietness Branched Thoughts Murmur and Pink Narcissus* a group of pink penises by **Tim Noble and Sue Webster**. She displayed her own work *Ruined* shown here. The work "TIN" was originally meant to spell "TINY" one of her favourite words and the name she gave to her unborn child.
- Her work **no longer created controversy**. Ten years **previously the Sensations** exhibition (at the Royal Academy in 1997) taught the art world to expect anything. The artists who exhibited were known as the YBA, Young British Artists, and the work included Damien Hirst's shark suspended in formaldehyde *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, Tracey Emin's tent titled *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–1995*, Marc Quinn's self-portrait bust made from a pints of his own blood and Sarah Lucas's explicitly sexual images and sculptures. The most controversial works were Marcus Harvey's portrait of the child killer Myra Hindley and Chris Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary* that included elephant dung and pornographic images.

BIO:EMIN

- **Tracey Emin**, CBE, RA (born 1963) is an English artist known for her autobiographical and confessional artwork. Emin produces work in a variety of media including drawing, painting, sculpture, film, photography, neon text and

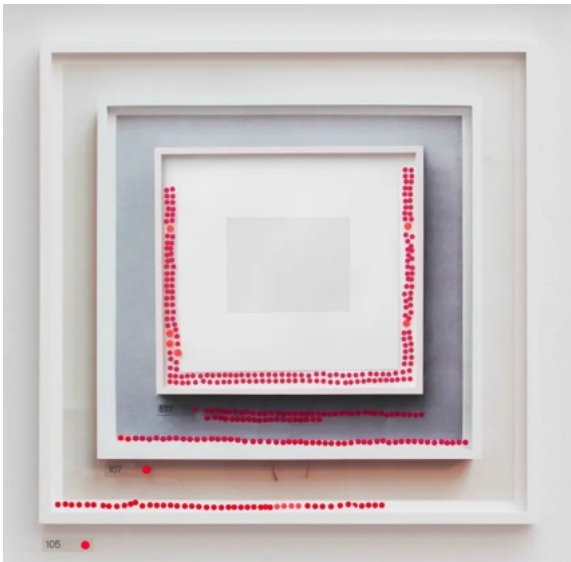
sewn appliqué. Once the "enfant terrible" of the Young British Artists in the 1980s, Tracey Emin is now a Royal Academician of the Royal Academy of Arts.

NOTES

- Kitaj died in 2007 and the first room was allocated to his work at the Summer Exhibition.

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Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), *Stolen Thunder III (Red Spots)*, 2015, 956, *Cold Dark* 300 gsm Somerset Photo Satin. 85.4 x 84.3 cm, edition of 100, private collection Frith Street Gallery, London
Jed View, 1991, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 400 x 500 x 500 cm, Tate



Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), *Stolen Thunder III (Red Spots)*, 2015, 300 gsm Somerset Photo Satin. 85.4 x 84.3 cm, edition of 100, private collection Frith Street Gallery, London

Cornelia Parker (b. 1956), *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991, Wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 400 x 500 x 500 cm (unconfirmed), Tate

- The works at the Summer Exhibition are for sale and the Royal Academy takes 30% commission. To indicate a work has been sold the Academy put a red dot on the work and if it is a print there can be many red dots, one for each sale.
- In this case Cornelia Parker has reproduced a very popular print and erased the print leaving a blank image with a lot of red dots around it. An amusing work but before I move on I wanted to show you
- (CLICK) this work perhaps her best known work.
- It is a **garden shed that was blown apart** by Cornelia Parker at the Banbury Army School of Ammunition. She then picked up all the pieces and meticulously suspended them as if in mid-flight. She was **exploring cartoon deaths** at the time such as things falling off cliffs, things being run over by a steam roller, things being blown up, shot full of bullets, like Roadrunner or Tom and Jerry.
- "The garden shed came about because I was trying to find something **universal and archetypal** and that we all **identified with** and that was **familiar** to us. It's not the house but it's this kind of attic-y private place at the bottom of the garden which we put all our left-over stuff in. And so it seemed like a depository

rather than the place that you live.

- The point of **suspending** it is to **rob it of its pathos**. After it was **blown up** and all the objects were **lying on the floor**, all **very distressed**, they **had a pathos** and somehow putting it back in the air where they were a little while before, it sort of re-animates them." (Cornelia Parker)

NOTES

- It inspired an orchestral composition of the same name by Joo Yeon Sir.
- *Mass (Colder Darker Matter)* (1997), Parker suspending the charred remains of a church that had been struck by lightning in Texas.
- She wrapped Rodin's *The Kiss* sculpture in Tate Britain with a mile of string (2003).
- In 2016 she was the first female artist to be commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met) in New York to create a work for its roof garden. *Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)* is a scaled down replica of the house from the 1960 Hitchcock film *Psycho*.

BIO:PARKER

- **Cornelia Parker** (b. 1956) studied at Gloucestershire School of Art and Wolverhampton Polytechnic. MFA from Reading University. She was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 1997 and was Artist in Residence at the Science Museum in 1998-99. She became a Royal Academician in 2010 and received three honorary doctorates in 2000, 2005 and 2008. She won Artist of the Year Apollo Award in 2016.

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- **The 2018 Summer Exhibition was special as it was the 250th to be held. Grayson Perry was asked to curate the exhibition.**
- He painted the walls of the **biggest room bright yellow** and packed them with pictures. One of the great strengths of the Summer Exhibition is that anyone can be selected and hang alongside the great and good. To make the point Perry created a **great jumble of work from all social classes**. He selected work that in previous years would have been rejected to demonstrate the diversity of art in Britain today.
- Behind Perry in his fun outfit is the **professional artist Olga Lomaka's elongated fibreglass sculpture of the Pink Panther**, strung sideways through an abstract blue canvas. **To the left is a serious portrait of Nigel Forage** by David Griffiths.
- The tongue-in-cheek amusement created by the wild assortment of art undermines and liberates any definition of what art is today. **It is whatever you want, it is good, bad, conservative and shocking reflecting the diversity of expression and culture in today's Britain.**

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- I thought I would end in 2018 after 250 years of British art. I hope you enjoyed this quick overview of the history of British art as told by a few of the works selected for exhibition at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.
- Goodbye for now and I hope to see you again soon.