

# ART HISTORY & VISUAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

October 2016

## Welcome to History of Art at The University of Manchester!

Our Department is packed with world-class researchers and talented and supportive lecturers, all of whom are passionate about Art History. The current Research Framework (a UK-wide benchmark for research excellence) placed us in the top three Art History Departments in the UK, and we achieved a 92% student satisfaction rating in the last National Student Survey.

As you may know, we are offering an Art History Insight Day on 9 November 2016. This hands-on event will introduce you to the study of Art History at university level and give you the chance to get an exclusive tour of the award-winning Whitworth Art Gallery. The day includes a taster lecture, a chance to meet our undergraduates, and an activity session in The Whitworth Art Gallery.

Our October newsletter is devoted to developments in teaching and learning. To this end, this newsletter is divided into two sections. The first section gives you a preview of our new course units, all of which will be taught this year. The second section spotlights the brand new joint honours degree in Art History and History. We are happy to report that the topics covered in this newsletter were well-received in our recent Open Days. By the way, do keep an eye on our website for details concerning the next round of the ever-popular Visit Days, which will take place between December and February.





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## Shortcuts:

*This section of the Newsletter is devoted to our new course units:*

### **The Painters of Modern Life, with Dr Colin Trodd**

How, why and for what reasons did nineteenth-century painters turn away from the pursuit of the beautiful and the ideal? Why did they spotlight 'nature' and 'life' over and above mythological and imaginary subjects? What did painters hope to find in this direct world of experience and sight, and how did they expect spectators to understand their works? What values and concepts supported these new attitudes and assumptions about the true function of painting? These are some of the questions we look at in a course designed to consider what happens to painting when it peers into the 'backside' of traditional ideas concerning picture-making, pictorial organisation – and subject matter.



Edouard Manet  
*Music in the  
Tuileries Garden*  
1862

On top of this, *The Painters of Modern Life* considers the complex relationships that existed between art and the rapidly changing conditions of life in the nineteenth century. We will consider how artists in this period responded to social, cultural, and technological change. We will go on to explore the ways in which changes in culture, technology and society affected artists and artworks, transforming the nature of perception, representation, and subjectivity. Key themes include: the idea of common or universal experience; the representation of everyday culture; expressions of The People in art and art criticism; Imagining communal life; painting, melodrama and popular culture; realism and social realism; models of pleasure and leisure; urbanism, work and social identity. These themes will be addressed by looking at a range of artists: Théodore Géricault, Gustave Courbet, Honoré Daumier, Adolf Von Menzel; William Powell Frith, Ford Madox Brown, George Cruikshank, Frank Holl, Herbert Herkomer, Luke Fildes, Gustav Doré; Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Pierre-Augustus Renoir, Alphonse Legros, Edgar Degas, Vincent Van Gogh, Georges Seurat and Paul Cézanne

## Magic in Modern and Contemporary Art

with Dr Charlie Miller

Western modernity has understood itself as a process of disenchantment, excluding magic as pre-modern, marginal and irrational. Yet magic has always haunted modernity, not least in the domain of art. In this course, by magic I generally mean ‘real’ magic – shamanism and occultism, say – rather than secular or stage magic, although this is not a hard and fast distinction. In our work together we will track the problem of magic from its classic formulations in nineteenth-century anthropology and sociology, through modernist occultism and primitivism, to surrealism, and the postwar American counterculture. We will interrogate the turn to magic in contemporary art, and consider the politics of enchantment. Artists we look at might include: Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Ithell Colquhoun, Maya Deren, Kenneth Anger, Susan Hiller, Tony Oursler, Marina Abramovic.

From Kenneth Anger's  
*Lucifer Rising*, 1972







Castle Howard,  
Yorkshire

## **‘The Sister Arts’: The British Landscape, 1700-1840 with Dr Samuel Smith**

This *‘The Sister Arts’: The British Landscape, 1700-1840* is a module running for the first time in Semester One, 2016/17. Using the ‘Sister Arts’ of painting, poetry and landscape gardening, the course investigates the relationship between philosophies of Nature and one of its aesthetic forms, landscape, between 1700 and 1840 in Britain. It examines how landscape paintings and landscape gardens were both literally and metaphorically sites of economic, cultural, political and religious value. Seminars focus on significant artists (Gainsborough, Constable and Turner) poets (Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray and John Clare) and landscape designers (Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown) and aestheticians and philosophers contemporary to them (John Locke, Edmund Burke and John Ruskin). Through an interdisciplinary approach this course highlights often overlooked artistic genres and raises central questions in the philosophy of art: What is nature? What is imitation? What is beauty? And what is the relationship between beauty and use?

# 6

## The Neo-Avant-Garde and the Crisis of Medium, 1945-1974

with Dr Luke Skrebowski

This course examines major developments in artistic practice and theory from the mid-1940s until the mid-1970s, situating them in their social, political and economic context. In particular, it treats the challenge to painting and sculpture mounted by the neo-avant-garde and, most comprehensively, by Conceptual art. In the 1960s an explosion of artistic innovations contested the idea that art was medium-specific and sought to overturn the dominant discourse of formalist modernism. This challenge to medium-specificity continues to present a challenge for the definition of art up to the present day. The course focuses on the highly-influential North American art of the period while also exploring the wider global artistic context.

Carl Andre

*Equivalent VIII*

1966







Liam Gillick

*The commune itself  
becomes a super state*

2007

## Art After Modernism: Approaching Contemporary Art Since the 1960s with Dr Luke Skrebowski

This course examines major developments in artistic practice and theory from the mid-1960s up to the present day, situating them in their social, political and economic context. It considers art produced after the exhaustion of modernism and the failure of the (neo-)avant-garde. This period is characterised by the disappearance of conventional historical movements and the emergence of looser categories of practice such as Performance, Installation, Video and Relational art. The course compares and contrasts the earlier discourse of “the postmodern” and the more recent discourse of “the contemporary” as accounts of art after modernism. Particular attention is paid to the multifarious, increasingly globalised nature of art since the 1960s and the methodological challenges this presents to the discipline.

# 8

## Dress and Adornment in Renaissance Italy

with Dr Cordelia Warr

*Dress and Adornment in Renaissance Italy* investigates the visual culture of clothing and adornment in renaissance Italy. The study of dress has been described as 'hybrid'. Daniel Roche, in his influential *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the 'ancien régime'* (Cambridge, 1994) put forward five headings under which dress could be interrogated: the artefact, textiles, pictorial representation, social and economic sources, and philological sources. Lou Taylor's *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester, 2002) also sought to look at dress through a number of lenses, including artefact-based approaches, ethnographical approaches and those using oral history, social and economic history, and material culture, as well as the use of visual and literary sources.

Using visual and written sources we will consider topics including the rise of 'fashion', religious clothing, secular clothing, jewellery, legislation regarding dress and adornment, clothing and morality, and dress and nationality in order to understand the importance of dress and adornment in the Renaissance.

Dress and Adornment in Renaissance Italy aims to provide a framework for understanding dress and adornment within a specific cultural context through detailed examination and discussion of specific types of evidence, both visual and written.

Topics covered in seminars include:

- ⇒ Dress and undress
- ⇒ Legislation and dress
- ⇒ Rulers, masculinity and armour
- ⇒ Religious vestments and meaning
- ⇒ Dress and nationality
- ⇒ Dress and morality
- ⇒ Female religious dress
- ⇒ Male religious dress
- ⇒ World dress
- ⇒ Dress and the afterlife



Widow, from Cesare Vecellio's

*De gli abiti antichi e moderni*, Venice, 1590



## Sixteenth-Century Italian Art: A History of Art History

with Dr Luke Uglow

This course has a double focus. First is an investigation into artistic production in sixteenth-century Italy. Second is an exploration of the changes in the way art historians have responded to this the sculpture and painting of this period through time. Renaissance art can be understood as a paradigm of art history itself, as a history of art history. By concentrating on *cinquecento* artists working in the cities of Florence, Rome and Venice, this course will examine not only some of the most famous artists in the history of European art, but also how our response to their works has changed, how our understanding has developed, and how art historical methods have evolved over five hundred years. Ultimately, this course poses questions about the practice of writing art history and the significance of art historiography for our contemporary understanding of sixteenth-century Italian art.



Leonardo

*Study for the*

*Head of Leda*

(detail)

c1504-1506

## Painting in Renaissance Venice: Practice and Reception

with Dr Luke Uglow

The course focuses on one of the most spectacular cities in the world, and explores the principal developments of painting in sixteenth-century Venice. Studies of individual artists and specific genres are linked to major themes such as gender, sexuality, religion, literature and individualism. Aiming to understand the special characteristics of Venetian painting, the course examines the exceptional social, economic, political and topographical conditions that influenced artistic production in this unique city. Finally, this course will also investigate the reception of Renaissance Venetian painting from the sixteenth century to the present day by evaluating a variety of art historical methods.



Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, c1514

**ART HISTORY AND HISTORY**

This new programme combines expertise in two subject areas to encourage detailed understanding of the past and the present. Students choose from a wide range of course units which examine different cultures, societies, practices and objects. Art History explores European, North American and non-Western art, architecture and art-writing from the Ancient Greek world to our own day. History offers pathways designed to suit individual interests: from Ancient, Medieval, Modern History, Economic, Social and Cultural History, to History of Science, Technology and Medicine. The emphasis is on flexibility and choice within a joint degree which also offers opportunities for field trips, workshops and visits to local, national and European art galleries and cultural institutions.

**Year One**

Acquire KEY skills in argument formation, critical reflection and essay writing. Core units spotlight how to interpret specific aspects of historical and contemporary cultures through the examination of art works, ideas, and other forms of material evidence.



*Sample course units include:*

- ⇒ Ice Age to the Baroque
- ⇒ Rococo to Today
- ⇒ Constructing Archaic Greek Identity
- ⇒ History in Practice
- ⇒ Forging a New World: Europe, 1450 – 1750
- ⇒ Capitalism in Historical Perspective

## **Year Two**

Explore critical debates within both disciplines, and contextualise them through particular case studies; develop specialised critical knowledge through optional units.

*Sample course units include:*

- ⇒ Renaissance and Discovery
- ⇒ The Painters of Modern Life
- ⇒ Politics and Society in Classical Society
- ⇒ A History of Europe in 100 Objects: Material Culture and Daily Life, 1450-1800
- ⇒ The Making of the Modern Mind: European Intellectual History from Rousseau to Freud

### **Year Three**

Enhance your historical and analytical skills by selecting from a wide range of optional units designed to encourage independence in thought, argument and critical evaluation; showcase ideas in a dissertation based on your own independent research.

*Sample course units include:*

- ⇒ Dissertation
- ⇒ History of Latin America
- ⇒ The Global Renaissance
- ⇒ Romanticism
- ⇒ 'A Nation in the Making': Nationalist Consciousness and 'Indian' Imaginings 1800-1947
- ⇒ Power, Culture and the Modern European City 1840-1940
- ⇒ London and Modernity 1880-1960

### **Entry requirements**

AAA-AAB, including A in History. General Studies is welcomed but not included as part of the offer

We conclude this newsletter with a short list of some current exhibitions on at Manchester University's world famous art gallery, many of which relate to subjects included in our undergraduate programme:

## ***Whitworth:***

### **"Idris Khan"**

British contemporary artist Idris Khan opens a solo exhibition this October.

**(Until 19 March 2017)**

### **"Marcantonio Raimondi and Raphael"**

This exhibition features the work of one of the radical originators and innovators of the European tradition of printmaking, Marcantonio Raimondi.

**(Until 23 April 2017)**

### **"Revolutionary Textiles 1910-1939"**

In the early decades of the 20th century textile design took off in new directions throughout the Western world.

**(Until 29 Jan 2017)**

### **"Portraits"**

A glimpse of the people behind the collections, the artists, collectors and individuals who shaped the Whitworth we know and love today.

**(Until 26 February 2017)**

### **"Visions of the Front 1916-18"**

In commemoration of the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, this display brings together works from the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery.

**(Until 20 November 2016)**





## CONTACT US

For more information about our History of Art degree programme, please contact:

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