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Art History & Visual Studies
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UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Introduction

Welcome to the Art History and Visual Studies Newsletter!

This Art History Newsletter has been devised to offer multiple views of our undergraduate programme, provide an introduction to the broader cultural life at the University of Manchester, as well as review some of the more interesting exhibitions and displays at leading art galleries in London and elsewhere. To that end, it showcases student experience of the unique European Fieldtrip Course Unit, points out some of the student events held within the School of Arts, Cultures and Languages, and invites you to a talk on William Blake and Modern culture.

If you have any questions please do get in touch — Dr Colin Trodd, Senior Lecturer and Admissions in Art History & Visual Studies (colin.trodd@manchester.ac.uk).

Course: European Fieldtrip

This is a dedicated field-trip course unit where students get to experience world-famous art works in fabulous continental galleries. The trip costs the university well over £60,000, so you will have an ideal environment in which to study and relax. To give you a taste of what happens on the trip, and to establish a picture of how students write about the experience, here are some examples of materials written by Miles Knapp and Emilia Ujejski.

Miles Knap — Paris Reflection— Friday 11 November 2016:

DAY 1: After a long day of travelling, we arrived at the hotel, checked in and had a bite to eat around the corner to a very traditional Parisian restaurant with a few others, went back early to get a good night of sleep for the busy day tomorrow.

DAY 2: An early start to the day, my group that were heading to the Musée de Quai Branly with Danielle met downstairs at 8.45 and arrived at the museum with some time to spare. I was first to give my presentation on the ideology and architecture of the museum, which I believe went well. I got nervous at the beginning of the presentation, stumbled over a few words and even though I had looked up the plan of the museum in advance, it was still a bit of a challenge to stick directly to my intended path and allotted time slots for each section of the presentation. In my group Kirsty and Nadia were also delivering their presentations on African art installation and Cubism and Primitivism. Both of these presentations were really insightful and very well delivered. When arriving at the Musée de Quai Branly I was in two minds about the curation of the museum and did find many of the collections lacking in description and in my opinion poorly displayed.



After the Musée de Quai Branly Sam's trip of Napoleonic Paris convened by the Louvre's pyramid. I really enjoyed this walking tour. We started out by the Arc du Carrousel, eventually we made our way down to the Rue de Rivoli and ended up in the Place des Vosges. I was extremely intrigued to learn of this place's rich history. Established initially under the reign of Napoleon, the place was later reclaimed as an elite residence after the reinstatement of the Bourbon king who made his own alterations on the square. The tour finished at La Madeline which was one of the most unusual churches I have seen, as its exterior adhered to the architectural order of an ancient Greek temple, whilst the inside bore many features associated with Catholicism. In the later afternoon, I got a chance to have a look around the Saint Eustache church just outside the Marais, which had a very impressive and ornate gothic ceiling

DAY 3: We started the day with a group excursion to the Louvre where we all split off into our own groups. I was pleased to get a chance to see the Winged Victory of the Samothrace and the Venus de Milo along with the raft of the Medusa and the Oath of the Horatii by David.



In the afternoon I met Darin's group to go to the Ile de la Cité, we visited the Hotel de Cluny, The Notre Dame, and the Sainte Chapelle, which left a very lasting impression on me. The Chapelle was far smaller than I had imagined, however the stained glass windows showed off a brilliant array of colours when the sunlight hit them, filling the room with coloured light.

DAY 4: Our last full day in Paris! Heading off once again at an early start, we all walked down to the Musée d'Orsay, where I got a chance to look at the Second Empire exhibition in an attempt to draw inspiration for my long essay topic. The exhibition accurately conveyed the wealth and excess that surrounded aristocratic society in the latter half of nineteenth century France and as I had hoped, the portraits of women were dynamic and interesting. Having also stated my interest in the depiction of women in

Impressionist art, I then browsed through the large collection of Manets, Degas and Renoirs in search of further inspiration, meanwhile amassing the vast difference between the formal and informal styles of the Second Empire art and that of the Impressionists. One specific painting by Manet that really caught my attention was called 'La Dame aux éventails', this showed a striking depiction of a woman who holds a very strong gaze whilst dressed in a lavish black dress against an oriental background of fans.

During our timely lunch break I headed down to the Church of St. Merri, which I had also been eager to see. Not only was the Church's interior spacious, light, tall and gothic, but an incredible installation had been hung in the ceiling to commemorate and remember those who had passed away in the Paris terror attacks, which was very moving. The Pompidou centre was an incredible building, and housed an impressive selection of modern and avant-garde art ranging from the turn of the century through to works produced in the last ten years. That evening me and a couple of others took a stroll up to Montmatre to watch the sun setting over Paris, catching some incredible views. I have thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Paris, not only has it been academically enriching, but also a pleasure to get to grips with another culture.



Emilia Ujejski—Paris Reflection—Thursday 10 November 2016

On Tuesday, we went on a walking tour of monuments originally created in dedication to Napoleon. Napoleon created a lasting effect on the architecture of the city, suggesting he remains an important historical figure in French history. The first thing we saw was the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, situated parallel to the Louvre on the Place Carrousel. Liz pointed out that this should not be mixed up with the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, designed in the same year (1806). The arch commemorates Napoleon's diplomatic and military victories. This includes the Battle of Austerlitz, which I refer to in my presentation in this series. Sam pointed out that there is the relief of a pyramid on side of the Arc in one of the narrations. It was suggested that this is a sign of imperial power for the French under Napoleon, who ventured to Egypt and became fascinated by all things Egyptian. The Arc displays how Parisian architecture works with its historical surroundings as both the Louvre and the Obelisk in the Place de Concorde as directly parallel to the central arc. In my opinion, the finite details of urban Parisian architecture make it one of the most attractive cities in the world.



Next, we ventured to the Place Vendôme where I had my presentation. The classical column also was erected to commemorate Napoleon's victory in the Battle of Austerlitz. It is based on the similar victory column in Rome called 'Trajan's Column'. Interestingly there was a modern art instillation in the square at the time involving white painted trees by Ugo Rondinone. We discussed the concept of the piece 'white-washing' the turbulent history that has taken place in the square. It was suggested that the artist was trying to display Revolutionary beliefs in restoring the political system to a more natural rule, related to the overgrowing of the Bastille after it was burnt down.

We then went to Le Madeleine, a building of classical structure designed to be a temple to honour Napoleon's army. Sophie discussed the transformations of the building that took place. It is now a catholic church, which one would not perceive from it's exterior. Walking through the colonnade and inside the building, I was immediately drawn to the 'History of Christianity' mural above the altar. One can note how Napoleon is placed in coronation

robes in the front of the painting, where Christ is in fact distanced at the back. This suggests that Napoleon is superior to God, deifying him but at the same time his robes indicate he is a monarch. There was an interesting modern art piece where Jesus was decorated in a bright silver sheet in the Church, which seemed quite controversial among the group.



Events

Talks, seminars, Public Lectures and Performances at The University of Manchester:

Here are a few of the many exciting public events in the coming months:

MARCH 23: Nicholas Penny (Visiting Pilkington Professor & former Director of the National Gallery): *Raphael's Rebirth* (Whitworth Art Gallery, 5.30-7.00)

MARCH 30: ART X MAGIC: Study Evening—Lucy Stein: NEO-PAGAN BITCH-WITCH! and Dr Charlie F.B. Miller: Mapping Magic in Contemporary Art (Whitworth Art Gallery, 5.30-7.00)

MAY 4: David Lomas: *A Language of Flowers: Modern Artists and the Botanical Imagery* (Whitworth Art Gallery, 5.30-7.00)

MAY 11: Matthew Walker (University of Oxford), *Antiquarian Writing on Roman Architecture in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Samuel Alexander A.112, 5.30-7pm)



"Neo-Pagan Witch-bitch!", at Evelyn Yard (11/2/16 - 20/3/16) - Curated by Lucy Stein & France-Lise McGurn

See also CIDRAL (Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts and Languages) www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/cidral for current details on their fascinating public lecture programme.

Go to www.manchester.ac.uk/mhc for an overview of the spring season at the Martin Harris Centre, which hosts many musicians, performers and prize-winning authors. On top of that, the Centre provides an excellent space for contemporary and classic theatre. The highly popular reading series has featured such literary luminaries as Jeanette Winterson, Martin Amis, Will Self and John Banville.

Art History Student Workshop

There are a few spaces available at our next student workshop, described in detail below. Please email Colin Trodd (colin.trodd@manchester.ac.uk) if you wish to book a place.

William Blake: The Man from the Future? Whitworth Study Centre 5 May (12.30- 16.00)



Jaume Plensa: *Blake in Gateshead*; Patrick Proctor: *Lullaby for William Blake* (The Whitworth Art Gallery); King Mob; Blake: *Ancient of Days* (The Whitworth Art Gallery)

William Blake, the most protean figure in British culture, is always in the process of being re-born, re-worked and re-conceived. It is simply a fact of historical life that he is an omnipresent influence in fine art, visual culture, music, literature - and the wider cultural scene. This process, which began with the critical recovery of Blake within Pre-Raphaelitism and Aestheticism, intensified in the first four or five decades of the last century, when Arthur Symonds, W. B. Yeats, Laurence Binyon, G. K. Chesterton, Stanley Spencer, Paul Nash, Eric Gill, Hubert Parry, Vaughan Williams, Herbert Read, Humphrey Jennings, Cecil Collins, Kathleen Raine, Anthony Blunt and many others turned him into a persistent and vital part of the cultural fabric of national life.

This informal student workshop spotlights Blake's impact upon the critical sensibilities of British art, culture and letters. It chronicles and explains the nature and trajectory of that impact, and accounts for the multiple and contradictory impulses with which Blake was identified throughout a period in which diverse groups battled to appropriate what they saw as his 'message.' For avant-gardists, his message was inspirational affirmation of the body, intoxicated experience and the worship of energy; for Socialists his message was cultural cooperation, social emancipation and the abiding authority of folkic and craft wisdom; for neo-Romantics, his message was the authority of individual genius and the human imagination, the revolt against materialism, the industrial-technological order and mass society; for traditionalists, his message was the authority of the universal symbolic order underpinning Western Civilisation.

Works by Blake and Blake-inspired artists will be displayed at this event. On top of that, there will be plenty of time for open discussion in which we can review how Blake has become a major force in modern and contemporary cultural life through exhibitions, films, multi-media events and other literary, musical and artistic activities.

Speakers include: Naomi Billingsley (John Rylands Research Institute, University of Manchester), Keri Davies (Independent Scholar), Sibylle Erle (English Studies: Bishop Grosseteste University), Doug Field (American Studies: University of Manchester), Michael Sanders (English Studies: University of Manchester), Colin Trodd (Art History and Visual Studies: University of Manchester), Nick Tromans (Watts Gallery) and Jason Whittaker (English Studies: University of Lincoln).

William Blake: The Man from the Future?

The Whitworth Art Gallery Study Centre 5 May (12.30- 16.00)

Schedule:

12.30	Introduction.
12.40	Naomi Billingsley: Blake in the Whitworth: <i>Europe</i> , Unity and Division.
1.00	Nick Tromans: Blake and GF Watts.
1.20	Sibylle Erle: Blake, Ludwig Meidner and Expressionism.
1.40	Questions.
1.50	Doug Field: "Blake could transmit his basic consciousness and communicate it to somebody else after he was dead; in other words build a time machine"(Allen Ginsberg). Visions of Blake in the Counter-culture.
2.10	Keri Davies: Blake and the Fugs.
2.30	Blake, Patrick Proctor and the Life Dream.
2.50	Questions.
3.00	Michael Sanders: God Save the Ecchoing Green: the uses of imaginary nostalgia in William Blake and Ray Davies.
3.20	Talk from a curator at Tate Liverpool on Blake/ Emin show
3.40	Jason Whittaker: Blake and the New Jerusalem: A very British form of Modernism.
4.00-4.30	Questions, closing remarks and opportunity to see Blake and Blake-related works in the Study Centre.

Notes on the Speakers:

Naomi Billingsley, who completed her PhD in 2015, is preparing *Blake's Christology* for publication.

Sibylle Erle is the author of *Blake and Lavater and Physiognomy* and co-editor of *The Reception of Blake in Europe* (2018).

Keri Davies has published many important essays, articles and book chapters on Blake, Blake recovery criticism and Blakean networks.

Doug Field is the author of *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin* (2015), co-curator of *Off-Beat: Jeff Nuttall and the International Underground* (2016-17), founder of the *James Baldwin Review*. His new research project examines British and American avant-garde writers of the 1960s and 1970s.

Mike Sanders is the author of *Chartist Poetry: Aesthetics, Politics and History* (2009) and numerous articles on British culture and cultural politics in the nineteenth century

Colin Trodd is author of *Visions of Blake: William Blake in the Art World, 1830-1930* (2012) and co-editor (with Jason Whittaker) of *William Blake: The Man from the Future?*, a Special Edition of *Visual Culture in Britain* (2018).

Nick Tromans is the author of *Hope: The Life and Times of a Victorian Icon* (2011), *The Art of GF Watts* (2017) and many other books on British art and artists.

Jason Whittaker is the author of *William Blake and the Myths of Britain* (1999) and co-editor of many publications

Exhibitions

If you are out-and-about this spring, there are plenty of exhibitions to see. Here is an overview of some of the best exhibitions in London and elsewhere:

The American Dream (The British Museum). The past six decades have generated huge social, cultural and political changes in the US; this exhibition, which starts with the explosion of pop art in the early 1960s, spotlights works by a number of leading artists. Do you want to know more about Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Ruscha and others? If so, then this is your kind of show.

Revolution: Russian Art, 1917-1932 (The Royal Academy) do you know the difference between Russian Constructivism and Russian Futurism? A rare opportunity to see works by revolutionary artists working at a key moment in modern culture.

America After the Fall (The Royal Academy) There may be little in the way of revolutionary struggle or revolutionary consciousness here, but this show is packed with plenty of oddball paintings by representatives of American Scene painting and American Regionalism. Look out for a rare visit by Grant Wood's famous *American Gothic*.

Eduardo Paolozzi (The Whitechapel Gallery) Paolozzi was a big gun in The Independent Group, a pioneering bunch of artists, designers and writers dedicated to engaging with popular culture. He, Richard Hamilton and others set out to trample all over the values of neo-Romanticism, the dominant art movement in '50s Britain.

Basquiat (The Barbican) Hip-hop graffiti street-art meets Paul Klee in The Once and Future Tagland.

Vanessa Bell (Dulwich Picture Gallery) Genteel modernism all the way in this celebration of the well-connected Bloomsbury artist.

David Hockney (Tate Britain) The Vanessa Bell of British Pop Art? You decide at this epic overview of the Great Bradfordian's career as painter, etcher, photographer and designer.

Madonnas and Miracles (Fitzwilliam, Cambridge) This intriguing exhibition brings the Renaissance back home – to the house. An important example of how exhibitions can tell us something about the material conditions (and environments) in which art works were produced.

Places of the Mind: British Watercolour Painting 1850-1950 (The British Museum) Great opportunity to see (for free) 125 work from the British Museum's remarkable but little-known collection, many of which have never been on display before. The show includes works James McNeil Whistler, Edward Burne-Jones, John Singer Sargent, Muirhead Bone, Paul Nash, John Minton, Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland.

Michelangelo & Sebastiano (National Gallery). See the Renaissance big-gun and his trusty follower in a new light at this inventive show.

Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave (The British Museum) Hokusai was the Japanese artist universally admired by The Impressionists and The Post-Impressionists. This exhibition explains how he is a key figure in the story of world art.

Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahn (National Portrait Gallery) Britpop YBAer melds with dark angel of Surrealism in doppelganger heaven.

Tracey Emin and William Blake: In Focus (Tate Liverpool) The Spiritual Form of William Blake visits Liverpool, but Tracey is still in bed. Or something...

Finally, wherever you go to study, enjoy the next stage in your career!



Contacts

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degree programme, please contact:

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