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From the Editor

This year we have changed our name to the London Art History Society, and have taken the opportunity to redesign our communications, including a new look for the Review.

This summer Tate Britain mounts the first major retrospective in London of the work of Barbara Hepworth for nearly fifty years and Sarah Turner, from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, puts her life and work into an international context. Many members will have enjoyed Paula Henderson’s recent course on landscape as art; here she writes about gardens of the East and their influence on English landscape gardening. Jacqueline Cockburn looks at self-portraits by Goya to accompany the exhibition of his portraiture at the National Gallery this autumn. To mark the opening of the new Drawings Gallery at the Courtauld we have asked the Director of the Institute, the architects, the Head of the Gallery and the Curator of Drawings to explain the thinking behind the creation of this new Gallery. This year celebrates the bicentenary of the Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, and Patrizia Di Bello, from Birkbeck, assesses her importance. And finally, Jacqueline Leigh marks our change of name from ULEMHAS to The London Art History Society.

At our last AGM we inaugurated an annual lecture in memory of Maria Shirley, a founder of the Society and an inspirational teacher. And lastly, we regret to inform you of the death of Ann Halliday, a loyal member and former editor of the Review.

I am grateful to our contributors for their excellent articles; to the staff at The Courtauld Gallery, the National Gallery, the Tate and the Victoria and Albert Museum for their help; and to my colleagues on the Editorial Panel for their invaluable support.

Barrie MacDonald

www.londonarthistorysociety.org.uk

Our website includes the history of the Society and information about our programme of activities, as well as past issues of the Review, and its cumulative index.

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affiliated to Birkbeck History of Art Society, and formerly known as ULEMHAS

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FRONT COVER: Barbara Hepworth in the Palais studio with unfinished wood carving, Hollow Form with White Interior, 1963

Photograph: Val Wilmer, © Bowness, Hepworth Estate
What can sculpture tell us about the world? This is a question that Barbara Hepworth explored recurrently throughout her career. Through the hard materials she sculpted, worked, shaped and constructed into new and different forms, Hepworth examined the resonant connections between the sculpture she created and the tumultuous world around her. Hepworth did not see her sculptures as isolated things standing remote and aloof in art galleries, but rather she envisioned them as connected to other works, places and objects, across different periods and places. The exhibition at Tate Britain, *Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World*, seeks to understand this worldliness of Hepworth’s sculpture, arguing that it is best understood when re-situated within the cross-currents of international exchange and the cosmopolitan networks of which she was very much a part. However, Hepworth’s sculpture has often been interpreted in terms of the local – as part of a somewhat isolated version of British art at the expense of the more global connections which connected modern art and artists in Britain to Europe, the United States and further afield. This work of reconnecting Hepworth and her contemporaries to the international art world was also very much in evidence at another Tate exhibition last year: *International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives 1915–65*, which opened at Tate St Ives in May 2014. As Tate St Ives artistic director Sam Thorne noted in his foreword in the exhibition’s catalogue: “Landscape, light and seclusion – these are the terms in which the story of the St Ives modernists is often narrated. But these artists were far from working in isolation”. Through a series of persuasive groupings of art works, this exhibition brought the St Ives’ artists out of isolation and put them back into conversation with European modernists, Russian Constructivists and American Abstract Expressionists. This year’s Tate Britain exhibition focusing on Hepworth – quite staggeringly the first monographic one for over fifty years in London – will also bring in the work and voices of other artists, putting Hepworth’s work into dialogue. The exhibition promises to be less of a monographic retrospective than a reassessment of an artistic career within the cultural formations and networks that shaped it.

Born in Yorkshire in 1903, trained in Leeds and London, and spending much of her later adult life in St Ives, where she moved with her second husband, the artist Ben Nicholson, in 1939 (living there until her death in 1975), Hepworth’s work – and her carving in particular – has often been claimed for a particularly English version of sculptural modernism in the twentieth century. This has privileged the technique and aesthetic credo of ‘direct carving’ and the use of natural and indigenous materials, such as stone which was often sourced from English quarries. Many of her early carvings celebrated their ‘stoniness’, such as the Hoptonwood stone *Torso* (1928) (Fig. 1) with its rough cutting left prominently visible at the upper edges. The grooves, scratches and scores made by the sculptor’s tools mark the limits of the body, running like arteries and veins where we imagine the arms to join these solid, stony shoulders. Hepworth exploited the flecks and marks which make up this creamy-grey carboniferous limestone formed during the hard press of geological time, polishing them up on the main part of the body to make a firm, taut and smooth skin. But for Hepworth and fellow stone carvers, such as her
contemporary and also Yorkshire-born sculptor Henry Moore, carving was not only part of an English tradition that connected them to the ancient carvers of ritual monuments such as Stonehenge. They were also fascinated by sculpture’s global history. The Torso undoubtedly referenced classical forms, but these researches took Hepworth beyond Europe as she became increasingly interested in the carved sculpture of Africa and the Pacific (widely described then as ‘the primitive’). This relationship between carving, seen as something which was avowedly modern but which also used methods of making and manufacture that had been employed for centuries, millennia even, across the globe, appealed deeply to Hepworth and other early twentieth-century sculptor-carvers, especially Moore, Jacob Epstein, Gertrude Hermes and Leon Underwood. They scoured the museum collections of London and art magazines to gain access to a non-European, world culture of sculpture.

Carving was also for Hepworth a method of experiment, a way through which to explore the vast variety of the material world. Explaining her preference in her early career for carving over modelling, she wrote: “Carving to me is more interesting than modelling, because there is an unlimited variety of materials from which to draw inspiration. Each material demands a particular treatment and there are an infinite number of subjects in life each to be re-created in a particular material. In fact, it would be possible to carve the same subject in a different stone each time, throughout life, without a repetition of form”.

International politics and world events including two world wars, the Holocaust, the collapse of the British Empire and the transition to Commonwealth, dramatic reconfigurations of European relationships, the atomic bomb, as well as the first decades of the Cold War do not simply form a backdrop to Hepworth’s career, but are woven into her aesthetic concerns and interests. An interest in international politics and ideas of internationalism were part of Hepworth’s milieu in 1930s London which was increasingly becoming a refuge for European émigrés. She and Nicholson frequently travelled, especially to Paris in this period, and they were both key figures within a network of international abstract artists that included Piet Mondrian, Jean Hélon, Alexander Calder and Alberto Giacometti. Evidence of the intertwining of internationalist ideals with a developing Constructivist aesthetic can also be found in Hepworth’s involvement in the publication Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art (1937) (Fig. 2).

Hepworth arrived in St Ives with Ben Nicholson and their triplets on 25 August 1939, only a few days after the Russian sculptor and close friend, Naum Gabo and his wife, the painter, Miriam Israels. Gabo observed poignantly of his situation in his diary a month after his arrival in St Ives: “I am one of the millions living in this terrible time. I am only a silhouette against the background of the volcanic conflagrations of history”, capturing the temporal maladjustment felt by many migrants. As many scholars have previously noted, Hepworth’s work executed in St Ives responded to the material features of the local landscape of Cornwall – the curving sweep of the bays, the deep blue of the sea. Hepworth’s increasing commitment to sculpting abstract sculpture from the 1930s onwards was never only about pursuing formal concerns, but rather conveying what she saw as the ‘vitality’, the unseen, dynamic forces of nature through the material constructions she made in sculpture. Here she is writing in Circle: “Vitality is not a physical, organic attribute of sculpture – it is a spiritual inner life”. It is these imagined force fields of what Hepworth would call ‘inner vitality’ which seem to structure the relationships between the material shapes in works such as Three Forms (Carving in Grey Alabaster) (1935) (Fig. 3).

Again, these were not ideas formed in isolation, but very much shared amongst her contemporaries. Gabo recounted how his Construction: Stone with a Collar (1933, this version 1936-7) (Fig. 4)

Fig. 2: Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art, 1937. Reproduced by kind permission of Faber and Faber

Fig. 3: Barbara Hepworth, Three Forms (Carving in Grey Alabaster), 1935. Alabaster on marble base, 26.5 x 47.3 x 21.7 cm. Tate. © Bowness, Hepworth Estate
came into being through his desire to express the ‘hidden forces of nature’, registering not only an interest in contemporary science, but a longer artistic interest in ideas about invisible, mystical forces which artists such as Wassily Kandinsky had done much to promulgate earlier in the century. Hepworth developed her interest in the spiritual and mystical via other channels too, including Christian Science (in which Ben Nicholson was also involved), and the Bahá’í faith through the potter Bernard Leach, also a resident of St Ives. In the 1950s, Hepworth became interested in Zen and Buddhist thought through books such as Zen in the Art of Archery by Eugen Herrigel – an interest shared by American abstract painters such as Mark Tobey and Jackson Pollock.

These interests in spiritual and vital forces did not, however, signal a retreat from public life into a hermetic realm. Far from it and Hepworth’s standing as a major international artist grew in the post-war period. This was an intense and productive time for her as an artist. From her studio in St Ives (now part of the Tate), she made works that won the major award at the 1959 Bienal de São Paulo and she exhibited her work across Europe and the United States. The huge bronze Single Form (Fig. 5) stands in the plaza outside the United Nations in New York as a memorial to the UN’s Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld who had died in an air crash in 1961 and it is one of her most avowedly international works. Hammarskjöld had been a huge admirer, and also owned some of her work, but it was not simply personal connections that led to this commission. Hepworth’s abstract language of form, often described in terms of its supposed universalism, was seen as particularly suitable for representing Hammarskjöld’s belief in finding a common ground between nations at a time of great political strife and rupture. Here sculpture comes to stand for international ideals of peace and progress, connection and friendship, whether between individuals, or, ideally, between larger structures such as international organisations, or between nations. This, as with so much of her work, was conceived as sculpture for a modern, if troubled, world.

Sarah Victoria Turner joined the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in November 2013 as the Assistant Director for Research. Prior to this, she was a lecturer in the History of Art Department at the University of York. She was educated at the University of Cambridge, holds an MA in Sculpture Studies from the University of Leeds, and gained her PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art. She has published widely on nineteenth- and twentieth-century sculpture, and British art in this period more broadly.

Notes

The relationship between England and the gardens of Europe has been well studied by garden historians. Contact with the gardens of China, Japan and the Islamic world is less well documented, yet from the very earliest periods the gardens of these exotic lands cast their spell. Islamic gardens, with their powerful symmetry and bold hard landscaping, evolved out of the pairidaeza (‘walled enclosure’) of ancient Persia. The gardens at Passargadae (6th century BC) of the Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Great – much admired by both the Greeks and later by the Romans – were known for their beautiful water channels and magnificent garden pavilions. They formed the basis for later western gardens, as well as gardens of the Islamic world. Although England may have seemed very far away from that world, there was increasing contact from the end of the 16th century through diplomatic and commercial ventures. The grant of a charter to the East India Company in 1600 provided the opportunity for Englishmen to experience at first hand the full magnificence of the Mughal court. Peter Mundy, a factor in the company in the 1630s, kept a journal, not intended for his employers but “to pleasure such friends ... that are desirous to understand somewhat of foreign countries”. One copy of his journal contains very careful sketches of Mughal sites, including Akbar’s Tomb in Sikkandra with the pyramidal tomb at the centre, symmetrical tree-lined walks, geometric plantations of flowers, fine gateways and little pleasure pavilions (Fig.1).

Although Mundy’s informative diaries and sketches would have been known to some important Englishmen (one copy was owned by Sir Paul Pindar, merchant and diplomat), there is no evidence of direct influence on their gardens. Yet, Mundy’s observations and carefully executed sketches remain the most important contemporary record of the funerary gardens of the Mughals and are of inestimable importance to garden historians today.

The gardens of Islam, like those of the west (at least until the 18th century), were essentially based on a strong, symmetrical relationship to architecture, and the emphasis was on ‘nature tamed’. Gardens were complementary and, in some cases, subservient to the architecture; all combined to help reinforce the impression of man’s power and control over the landscape. In complete contrast were the gardens of China and subsequently of all the ‘oriental’ cultures, which were based on a far more reverential relationship with nature. Deep within the Chinese psyche was the belief in the ‘mystic isles of the blest’, a distant paradise of soaring mountain peaks, plunging rivers, and mist-enshrouded islands supported on great tortoises, all inhabited by hsien, immortal beings who rode on the backs of giant cranes. This vision of wilderness became the artistic and philosophical ideal. Artists and monks (often one and the same) sought to recreate this ideal through landscape painting and, inevitably, in garden design. As a result, the garden was not seen as an extension of architecture, but as an attempt to create an evocative, ideal, wild landscape in miniature with rocks (perhaps only one rock, sometimes referred to as a ‘scholar’s rock’) representing distant mountains, a small pool or stream for the rivers, clipped trees and perhaps a temple for contemplation (Fig. 2). With luck, there might be a ‘borrowed view’ beyond the wall. In addition to these microcosms were also extensive imperial gardens that interwove long, winding paths through natural landscapes interspersed with temples, pavilions and judiciously placed rocks. Such lack of formality was noted by many western travellers and it is within this context that we encounter one of the great controversies concerning the origins of ‘the English landscape garden’.

In his essay, ‘Upon the Gardens of Epicurus’ (1692), William Temple writes about gardening in his day, noting the strong adherence to symmetrical compositions, yet offering up alternatives, noting that “the Chineses [sic] scorn this way of planting” and that “their greatest reach of imagination is employed in contriving figures ... without any order or disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed.” In a period when Chinese porcelain and other arts were considered superior, these words were inspirational or, at least, supportive of the rejection of rigid formality (of the French or Baroque garden) in favour of a more ‘natural’ disposition of nature. Chinoiserie, the western imitation of Chinese style tempered by the
delicacy of the Rococo, found a place in the 18th-century landscape garden in the form of bridges and whimsical temples, just as it did in furniture design, for example, at Painshill and Woburn. In the same period, Jean Denis Attiret, a French missionary and artist, went to work at the Chinese court and wrote with enthusiasm about the gardens: “A beautiful disorder reigns almost everywhere. An anti-symmetry. Everything works on this principle: it is a pastoral and natural countryside that one wants to represent: a solitude and not a well-ordered palace following all the rules of symmetry and proportions.”

His letters, which proved very popular, were published in the early 1750s in both France and England, at the exact time that Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown began ‘improving’ gardens in England. As wildly successful as Brown became, there were some who abhorred the ‘artlessness’ of his gardens. Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy, wrote in his 13th Discourse on Art (1786), “So also Gardening, as far as Gardening is an Art, or entitled to that appellation, is a deviation from nature; for if the true taste consists, as many hold, in banishing every appearance of Art, or any traces of the footsteps of man, it would then be no longer a Garden”.

Sir William Chambers, also an active Royal Academician, was an equally severe critic of Brown, finding his landscapes dull and eventless. One solution, according to Chambers, was to introduce a wider variety of architectural ornamentation to the garden, which he based on his own experiences living in China from 1745 to 1747; these would inspire his work at Kew for Queen Caroline, including the authentic Pagoda, which remains one of the iconic garden buildings (1786), “so also Gardening, as far as Gardening is an Art, or entitled on the continent thought the Chinese should be given equal credit, thus preferring the term Jardin Anglo-Chinois.

In the meantime, little was known about what was going on in Japan, closed off from the west until the middle of the 19th century. Although initially inspired by China, Japanese gardens had become increasingly austere. Zen gardens were created from the simplest, most minimal materials: moss, carefully raked gravel or stone. The garden at Ryoan-ji is a sublime example of the kare-sansui (dry landscape). Meant to be viewed from a fixed vantage point on an adjacent veranda, this ancient garden (first constructed in the late 15th century) continues to mystify (Fig.4). In contrast were the stroll or promenade gardens of imperial estates with paths that wound through the landscape, crossed over bridges and led to teahouses, carefully constructed to provide views of lakes shimmering in the sun or moonlight. Just as Japanese prints exerted a powerful influence on western painting at the end of the 19th century, both of these types of Japanese gardens found wide appeal, despite the philosophy behind them remaining elusive. Books written on how to create a Japanese garden would inevitably include a chapter on ‘Where to put the rock’, while stone lanterns, moon gates and bamboo basins can still be purchased in modern garden centres today.

In the past decades there have been more concerted efforts to create authentic eastern gardens. In 1991, the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce commissioned and executed ‘The Kyoto Garden’ in Holland Park, allowing Londoners to experience a Japanese stroll garden on a small scale. In 2001 Prince Charles commissioned the Islamic ‘Carpet Garden’ for the Chelsea Flower Show, subsequently transporting it to Highgrove. Perhaps the most fascinating fusion of eastern and western garden art is Charles Jencks’ and his late wife Maggie Keswick’s ‘Garden of Cosmic Speculation’ at Portrack near Dumfries, with its emphasis on abstract natural symbolism, while its dramatic sculpted landscape links it to the greatest traditions of western – particularly English – garden art.

Paula Henderson is an independent architectural and garden historian. Her first book, The Tudor House and Garden: Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries (Yale, 2005), won the Berger Prize for British Art History.

Notes


2. The full text of Temple’s essay is available online: https://archive.org/details/sirwilliamtemp00tempuoft.

3. Attiret’s letters were translated by Joseph Spence, A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens (London, 1752).

4. Reynolds’ discourses are available online: https://archive.org/stream/sirjoshuareynold00reyuoft/sirjoshuareynold00reyuoft_djvu.txt.


Emerging from the Shadows: Goya’s Self-Portraits

NATIONAL GALLERY, 7 OCTOBER 2015 – 10 JANUARY 2016

Jacqueline Cockburn

The Goya exhibition coming to the National Gallery this autumn is the first ever to focus on his portraits. Two extraordinary self-portraits on show will enable the viewer to get a glimpse into the mind of one of the most psychologically revealing painters. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes’s face emerges from shadows, sometimes over painted, and at others embedded, peering at us, scrutinising the viewer or coyly reminding us that his authorial presence is undeniable. His many guises reinforce this subliminal advertising of self; he is a bird, a mythological god, a human corpse, a matador, a monk, a goat, a sneering aristocrat, a cuckolded lover, a ghost, a silhouette. During the course of his career he emerges from shadows and disappears back into them. Silhouetted or painted over, barely visible, tentatively entering or being born into his own paintings, eventually he will cover the canvas with his own face; he will be prepared to die on canvas.

In the 1790s Goya, as director of painting at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid and the king’s chief painter, was concerned with artistic status and individual freedom. In Self-Portrait in his studio (1793-5) (Fig. 2), Goya’s face emerges silhouetted against a stark white opaque background. Probably stone deaf by
this point he is no longer surrounded by palatial luxury but alone in the semi-dark, shut out from the light in his studio at 1 Calle del Desengaño (‘Street of Disappointment’), Madrid. The street name is perhaps apt at this point in his now disappointing life. With his increasing girth, he is a small fat man with a five o’clock shadow, tousled yet wearing a costume which resembles that of a matador or a majo.* He peers at the unseen viewer as if we were his mirror. Brooding and unsmiling, with his long hair tied back and an over-elaborate jacket, we wonder why he hasn’t dressed as a painter. His pot hat with its candle holders stuck in the brim (reminders of his need for light when working) suggests night time but the light is high noon. The studio seems more like a cell to escape to than a buzzing place of work. He hands us all the difficulties of the self-appraisal, the frank incredulity of an aging face and the disappointment in his own fragility. Self-portraits are autobiographical descriptions of ‘the whole truth’, if that is possible, and Goya, standing in the dazzling light from the window, does not shy away from the self which may seem ludicrous or self-pitying. It is hard to paint inner solitude or introspection and Goya’s tense inquiring gaze challenges the viewer. The paper and the expensive silver inkstand on the table remind us that he can pour out his secret thoughts in his letters.* Indeed one of his letters to Martín Zapater, dated August 1800, contains a caricature self-portrait with ‘así estoy’ (this is how I am) written beside the seated figure with exaggerated lips. By this point he had become adept at lip reading, so this may well be a wry comment on his state.

Goya’s Self-Portrait in Indian ink and wash (1795-7) (Fig. 3), displays a wild, leonine genius with hair like a halo or burning bush, unruly but parted, eyes staring yet lost and a bushy beard never seen in other self-portraits. He seems to search for his own face, to describe himself unsmilingly. Hirsute and animal-like, he may well have known the Leonine Heads by Charles Le Brun, in the Musée du Louvre.4 Outward performance and theatrical stance are replaced by close-ups, selfies if you like, which demand our attention. The life-sized study of the artist’s head Self-Portrait (1815) (Fig. 4), with head cocked on one side, hair even more untamed, shows us a face in conflict "capturing visually the weary toll of Goya’s long, intellectual struggle with…the ideology of the Spanish Enlightenment.” The face is half in shadow, there are no signs of décor and no costume. It is a record of his face modelled to give us a sense of fleshiness and three-dimensionality. This self-portrait is evidence of fear and suffering; humanity laid bare. It has seen the French Invasion at first hand. It is the same face which sleeps in The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters (1797) (Fig. 5) in the first design for one of his great series of prints, Los Caprichos.  

We observe Goya as part of the dream amongst strange animals, a lynx, a dog, bats with faces like his, grimacing and peering down on his unconscious self, exploring himself. He is the truly Enlightened Man, aware of the boundaries between imagination and reason, dream and reality, light and shadows. Obliterated in the second version, wiped out, the stuff and the content of his dreams have gone, as has his face, replaced with a void. The inscription reads ‘The author dreaming. His only purpose is to banish harmful ideas commonly believed and to perpetuate with this work of Caprichos the solid testimony of truth’.  

In The Family of Carlos IV (1800) (Fig. 6), light falls on Queen María Luisa as nurturant mother queen. In this timely advertisement for the functional Spanish royal family, citing Velázquez’s Las Meninas (1656), Goya stands quietly, one might think shyly at the
back but our eyes are led towards the woman’s face in shadow; the future wife of the prince of Asturias, not shown yet due to the uncertainty of who she might be. We might leave it there, as so many art historians have done, but we question why she is looking directly at the vast expanse of black which is the painting on the left. Restoration of the painting in 1967 by Xavier de Salas revealed a painting within a painting precisely where the not-yet-unveiled woman looks. The cleaning exposed a bacchanal consisting of three figures; two are women and the other, a male figure, appears engrossed in the women. It is clearly Goya himself. “Goya without a doubt” claimed Salas. The Romantic genius, Goya, has portrayed himself twice; the reticent ever-discreet observer in the shadows, and the Classical god of mystical ecstasy and artistic and sexual inspiration, namely Bacchus.

But where has the genius gone in Self-Portrait with Doctor Arrieta (1820) (Fig. 7), Goya, at the height of his international fame, is apparently on his death bed. From Bacchus to a sickly weak man surrounded by shadowy representatives of the church or friends or neighbours who are there to witness the moment. The bald inscription reads, ‘Goya, in gratitude to his friend Arrieta: for the compassion and care with which he saved his life during the acute and dangerous illness he suffered towards the end of the year 1819 in his seventy-third year.’ He painted this in 1820. It is not a priest protecting Goya, it is the doctor, as if Goya is claiming, as was the case, that medicine is emerging from the shadows of the Church. Goya is in green, the symbolic colour of hope, although not as bright a colour as Arrieta the healer. Goya’s face is half in the shadows to suggest internal contradictions – or perhaps he is half-alive and half-dead. The Pietistic format, the glass with wine (or is it medicine), the crimson blanket, the counterpane he nervously plucks at, all point us iconographically towards some kind of relinquishment or sacrifice. Once God, he is now Christ enshrining himself. Goya has finally emerged from the shadows and is stripped of all myth; he is humble, pathetic and near death. Although he will not die for another eight years it appears that his journey in self-portraits has finally come to a conclusion.

Dr Jacqueline Cockburn lectured at Birkbeck College, University of London from 1997 to 2013 concentrating on European Art 1790-1950 but also running undergraduate programmes in Spanish Art and Art in the City: Paris and Berlin. She also taught at MA level and ran the PhD writing groups. She is Director of Art and Culture Travel (www.artandculturetravel.com), and runs residential courses in Spanish Art from her villa in the south of Spain. As a fluent Spanish speaker she has published translations of Spanish songs and contributed to publications on Federigo Garcia Lorca, the topic of her Doctorate.

Notes
1. J. J. C. Lavater. Translated into French from the German under the title ‘Essai sur la physiognomie’ (1781-1803). Lavater’s Essays on Physiognomy were probably studied by Goya in the French edition of 1781-6.
3. Dates differ for this painting from 1775-1795 which would make a great difference regarding his illness.
4. Robert Hughes suggests he might have represented himself as a manolo, “the kind of majo found in the back streets of Madrid, the eponymous hero of one of Ramon de la Cruz’s most popular sainetes.” Robert Hughes, Goya (London: The Harvill Press, 2003), p. 81.
Have you ever wondered what happens on the mezzanine floor of the Courtauld Gallery? You pass it on the staircase to enter the first and second floor galleries, but it has always seemed to be closed. In the past used as lavatories and as a picture store, it now has a spectacular new life as the Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Drawings Gallery.

Liz Newlands invited four of the key people involved in this project to explain some of the thinking behind the creation of the gallery and how it will take shape.

Professor Deborah Swallow
Director, The Courtauld Institute of Art

What is the background to the decision to invest in this new gallery?
The opening of the new Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Drawings Gallery in January was the realisation of many years of hard work and planning by the Head of The Courtauld Gallery, Dr Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen and Curator of Drawings, Dr Stephanie Buck.

We house one of the most significant collections of works on paper in Britain and until now there has been no dedicated space to display our extraordinary set of works. Visitors have had to make an appointment to see the collection in the Prints and Drawings Study Room. The opening display, Unseen, drew attention to the range and depth of the collection by focusing on works which have not been exhibited in the last 20 years, often by fascinating lesser-known artists.

The architect, Stephen Witherford, Partner at Witherford Watson Mann, winners of the 2013 Stirling Prize for Architecture

What were the challenges for adapting this space?
The challenges lay in the making of an architecturally-coherent room. It takes a lot of imagination and careful detailing to draw the existing Grade I Listed historic classical architecture of William Chambers into a contemporary gallery space with all of its requirements for access, environmental control and lighting.

How have they been resolved?
We started with what already existed and used this to characterise our new work. As one example, it would have been crude (but it is often done) to simply make a flat plasterboard ceiling with recessed lights within a classical historic room. We therefore had to introduce a border, with a stepped edge that locates all of the working services and plaster panelled centre to create a ceiling which binds the room together. The ceiling has an important visual relationship to the floor where we again introduced a border, this time in narrow oak parquet blocks. This allowed us to accommodate the existing openings within the room and create a simple and calm central panel of herringbone oak parquet. There is a lot of architecture in this modest space and it has had to be carefully judged to create a calm visual field in which to allow the drawings to sing.
How flexible can the displays be?

We have worked closely with the curatorial team to make the gallery as flexible as possible. However, the historic door openings and windows affect the curation of the Gallery, and in a modestly-sized room this needs to be carefully considered in relation to the overall narrative and individual works.

Dr Ernst Vegelin van Claebergen, Head of The Courtauld Gallery

How will this new gallery add to the visiting public’s appreciation of the Gallery as a whole? How do you see its role in adding to the identity and status of The Courtauld as a university art museum?

The new gallery promises to be a revelation in every respect. It will not only add an important extra dimension to visitors’ experience of The Courtauld, but will also give us a new platform to showcase our great drawings collection in a dynamic and creative way. As a university museum, it is critical – not just physically but intellectually – that we have this space. It will allow us to take more risks and be more experimental with our display programme.

Dr Stephanie Buck, Curator of Drawings

How do you envisage making selections from the huge amount of material available? What are possible problems of hanging and conservation?

We are currently putting the final touches to our display programme for 2015 and 2016. Once the topics are finalised it is very exciting to make long lists, take the drawings out of their boxes, discuss the selection with colleagues, test the visual and intellectual strength of the groupings and then, step by step, come to a final selection for each display.

Hanging the works will be exciting. Our paper conservator prepares the drawings for display by placing them in frames with museum grade glazing that protects them from any UV light. Additionally, the LED lights installed in the new Drawings Gallery have 0% UV.

Furthermore, by rotating the drawings regularly and monitoring the periods of light exposure carefully, we ensure the best possible protection of the works. In *Unseen* we have chosen to display the drawings on the walls for the enjoyment of this gorgeous new space but the gallery is also equipped for the installation of plinths to allow the viewing of double sided drawings. We are greatly looking forward to experimenting with different possibilities of installation. This might also include the use of vitrines in the future.

2015 Display Programme

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<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unseen</td>
<td>15 January-29 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renaissance Modern</td>
<td>22 April-7 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Richardson by Himself</td>
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<td>Panorama</td>
<td>September-December (dates tbc)</td>
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Note: The illustrations to this article indicate the range of works presented.
This year marks the bicentenary of the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron’s birth, and 150 years since her first exhibition at the South Kensington Museum in 1865. The Victoria and Albert Museum is celebrating these anniversaries with an exhibition of her photographs. It includes correspondence and photographs acquired directly from Cameron, to shed new light on her relations with that institution and her experiments to make photographs that would “electrify you with delight and startle the world”, as she wrote to Henry Cole, the museum’s first director.¹

Controversial in her lifetime, admired by ‘Pictorialist’ photographers at the end of the nineteenth century, Cameron’s reputation was cemented in the twentieth by Roger Fry, the art critic who championed modern art in England, and by Virginia Woolf, her great-niece, who reclaimed the family stories about ‘Aunty Julia’, chasing sitters in her “clothes stained with chemicals from her photographs (and smelling of them too)”², as that of a woman artist single-mindedly pursuing her own artistic vision (Fig. 1).

A pioneer of the close-up, Cameron’s portraits of eminent intellectuals such as astronomer and chemist John Frederick William Herschel (Fig. 2) have been praised as “the most vigorous and expressive portraits we have of the great Victorians” by Helmut Gernsheim,³ whose writings secured her place in the history of photography, even if he found her allegorical compositions problematic, and her photographic technique poor. This is how many writers have gone on to represent her: an enthusiastic amateur, making up for her technical carelessness – blurred photographs, marred by fingerprints, light or chemical streaks, and stray hairs – with a commitment to photography as high art, immortalising not only appearances but inner truth. In her portrait of Herschel (one of four taken at the same sitting) she draped over his contemporary clothing, tousled his hair and left it out of focus, creating an aura around his face glowing like the rays of the stars he was famous for having studied. His concentrated expression might be the result of having to hold the pose for several seconds, but his blurred gaze into the distance and the directional illumination from top right ensure that we read it as thoughtfulness inspired by light, both divine and scientific.

More recently, photography historians have re-evaluated Cameron’s allegorical compositions as being in dialogue with the poetic, aesthetic and religious debates of her time.⁴ Feminist writers have made intelligible their peculiarly matriarchal take on dominant narratives of femininity – maternal love and sorrow in Devotion (Fig. 3), but also agency and moral strength – constructing narratives of longing and desire that seem to exceed or problematise received notions of Victorian sentimentality.⁵ Beatrice (Fig. 4), alternatively titled Study of the Beatrice Cenci from May Prinsep, refers to the tragic story of the sixteenth-century Italian noblewoman executed for the murder of her abusive father. The composition is based on a painting attributed to the Italian artist Guido Reni (c.1600), which also inspired the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and had since been popular in prints. May Prinsep, however, is not just modelling. This is also – and Cameron realises it cannot but be – a photograph of her, the daughter of Julia’s sister Sarah. The close framing on the face and the simplicity of costume avoid the theatricality of other nineteenth-century allegorical photographs such as those by Henry Peach Robinson or Oscar Rejlander. The differential focus, urging the eye and mind of the viewer to rest on the few important details, blurs the tensions between allegory and portrait, photographic realism and poetic idealism, the time-specific beauty of the young woman and the timeless beauty of the sentiments inspired by her features or evoked by the story.

We might think of Cameron’s polarisation of subjects – old male intellectuals and young female beauties – as ‘Victorian’, but where in
in the 1860s. Unlike them, Cameron also needed to make some money, as the family was living on loans while their plantations in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) were failing. She systematically registered her photographs with the copyright office to sell them through Colnaghi, the London gallery specialising in fine-art prints, and used her connections to court art critics for reviews of her exhibitions, and persuade famous people to sit for her, getting them to autograph the prints to increase their market value. At the same time, she was at pains to differentiate her portraits from those of commercial photographers and to place her work in important collections such as the British Museum to emphasise the point. It wasn’t entirely unusual for women to work in photography, as ‘lady’ operators or hand-retouching prints in portrait studios, and in the laboratories that serviced the demand for thousands of portraits of celebrities. The South Kensington Museum, for example, employed Isobel Agnes Cooper as an in-house photographer. Cameron, however, also wanted to ‘revolutionise photography’, to achieve critical and financial success without compromising her rather avant-garde artistic vision – an audacious ambition for any artist, even today, never mind a woman in her middle age.8

Technically, too, she knew what she was doing. As she made it clear in her Annals of My Glass-House,9 she responded not to received notions of what a photograph should look like, but to what she saw on the ground glass of her camera, a rather modern ‘seeing photographically’ later codified by Edward Weston.10 Her differential focus and blurred effects eliminated the over-detailed quality that many at the time argued barred the medium from the realm of fine art, as it was generated by the apparatus rather than by a conscious decision of the artist – as in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Cameron’s use of unorthodox, even experimental techniques is purposefully effective. In Devotion (Fig. 3) the chemical streaks across the surface of the image add to the otherworldly quality of the photograph, foregrounding the medium by making it more visible in its supposed imperfections. Is the Madonna-mother hovering over the sleeping child, or just in his dreams? A lock of hair, still a common maternal keepsake, is the only sharp detail, responding to sunlight with a golden glow of its own, evoking the silky feel and scent of the hair of a baby, tired after playing outside on a sunny afternoon. The artist’s touch, the print as a construction of the imagination in response to the camera image, rather than the result of correctly operated apparatus, is further emphasised by using two separate negatives printed on the same sheet.

Fig. 4: Julia Margaret Cameron, Beatrice, 1866. Albumen print from wet collodion on glass negatives, 35.8 x 28.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

contemporary media are old women of genius allowed to look as unkempt as Cameron’s Herschel? Given the chance, she was as responsive to male beauty, as can be seen in her portrait of the artist Sir Coutts Lindsay (Fig. 5). Perhaps men didn’t need allegorical titles as they were all acting out the same role of ‘Inspired Genius’.

Julia Margaret Pattle was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) and educated in Europe, gaining a good knowledge of languages, literature, art and the sciences. In 1848, at the retirement of her husband Charles Hay Cameron from the Council of India, she returned to England where she moved in literary and artistic circles connected to her sister Sarah Prinsep’s salon at Little Holland House. This was frequented by the poet Alfred Tennyson, many Pre-Raphaelite artists, writers, models, and photographers, and presided over by the painter George Frederick Watts, who lived there as a kind of artist in residence. In the 1850s, new collodion plates made photography easier, portrait studios were expanding with the profits from the sale to the public of photographs of celebrities, and publishers were testing the market for photographically illustrated books.4 Exhibited in shop windows, art galleries, and the albums made by society women, photographs were having an impact on all aspects of life, from copyright laws to the price of silver, and photography’s status as an image – mechanical or artistic – was hotly debated at the Photographic Society and in the general press.

Cameron started experimenting with photography in the late 1850s, commissioning photographs and making albums as gifts for friends and relatives. Her interest intensified after she moved to Freshwater on the Isle of Wight in 1860, where she assisted Rejlander who was there to photograph Tennyson. Her photographic practice might have started with making prints from negatives she obtained from him or other photographers.7 When her daughter gave her a camera for Christmas 1863, her passion blossomed quickly. By the next year she was exhibiting at the photographic societies in London and Scotland, then all over Europe. Other upper-class women were committed photographers – Clementina Hawarden and Frances Jocelin, for example, exhibited their work at the Photographic Society for friends and relatives. Her interest intensified after she moved to Freshwater on the Isle of Wight in 1860, where she assisted Rejlander who was there to photograph Tennyson. Her photographic practice might have started with making prints from negatives she obtained from him or other photographers.
Cameron’s photographs are a crucial moment in the ongoing dialogue in the history of photography between photos as sharp, detailed, untouched by human hands, machine-made images for a footprint of the world, mingle with the actions of human hands that mark it with fantasy, desire and imagination. It will be interesting to see how her work continues to speak to the twenty-first century, when all silver-based photographic prints, sharp or blurred, have become nostalgic antiquities, and photographs exist mainly to be taken and sent, rather than gazed at pensively.

Patrizia Di Bello is a photography historian, Senior Lecturer in the History of Art Department, Birkbeck, University of London. She is also co-director, with Professor Lynda Nead, of the Birkbeck History and Theory of Photography Research Centre.

Notes
1 Letter from Julia Margaret Cameron to Henry Cole, 21 February 1866: www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/j/julia-margaret-cameron-a-bicentenary-exhibition.
2 V. Woolf, ‘Julia Margaret Cameron’ in Julia Margaret Cameron, Victorian Photographs of Famous Men and Fair Women (London: L. & V. Woolf, 1926), p. 15. This also includes an introduction by Roger Fry.
6 Including A. Tennyson’s Idylls of the King, and Other Poems Illustrated by Julia Margaret Cameron (London: H.S. King, 1874-5), two volumes of original photographs.
9 1874; first published in the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition Mrs Cameron’s Photographs (London: Camera Gallery, 1889).
PROGRAMME 2015-2016

LECTURES
Lectures are held at The Art Workers’ Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT, starting at 18:00, except for the lecture following the AGM on 21 November.

Wednesday 7 October 2015
‘The picture was my stage’:
William Hogarth and the Conversation Piece
Kate Retford, Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at Birkbeck, will discuss Hogarth and the development of small group portraiture in early eighteenth-century England

Saturday 21 November 2015
(The Maria Shirley Lecture after the AGM)
Classical polychromy: the lost colours of ancient Greek & Roman sculpture
Christina Grande, Senior Lecturer in Classical Art at Winchester University, will look at colour as an important facet of marble and metal classical sculpture

Monday 11 January 2016
Glorious Gothic: A. W. N. Pugin’s designs for textiles, glass and metalwork
Ayla Lepine, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Essex, will explore the decorative arts career of one of Britain’s most famous Victorian architects

Tuesday 9 February 2016
Artemisia and the bodies of Lucretia
Kasia Murawska-Muthesius, Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck, will consider the female nudes of biblical and Roman heroines by Artemisia Gentileschi, and the imagery of The Rape of Lucretia

Wednesday 9 March 2016
85 portraits of war
Suzannah Biernoff, Senior Lecturer at Birkbeck, will talk about portrait masks made by sculptors in London and Paris for severely disfigured servicemen in the First World War

Monday 11 April 2016
The Grand Tour and the creation of the country house in eighteenth-century Britain
Jonathan Yarker is a leading authority on the Grand Tour, and works for British art dealers Lowell Libson Ltd

Monday 5 October 2015
10:30-16:30
Study Day: Goya
Leader: Jacqueline Cockburn
Venue: The Keynes Library, Birkbeck School of Arts, 43-46 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD

Tuesday 3 November 2015
14:00-15:30
Study Visit: Pre-Raphaelites
Leader: Private Guide
Venue: Tate Britain

Tuesday 24 November 2015
11:00-16:30
Study Day: J. M. W. Turner: the man, the myth and the magic
Leader: Nicola Moorby
Venue: Conway Hall

Saturday 5 December 2015
10:30-16:30
Study Day:
Opus Anglicanum – the glory of English medieval embroidery
Leader: Glyn Davies
Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

Additional study days will be organised during the year and members will be notified.

SHORT COURSES
Short courses will be held in the Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP.

1-29 October 2015
Thursdays 10:45-12:45
Art and society in late nineteenth-century Paris
Leader: Diane Silverthorne

5 November-3 December 2015
Thursdays 14:00-16:00
London’s architecture since 1945
Leader: Chris Rogers

11 November-9 December 2015
Wednesdays 14:00-16:00
Mythology in Greek and Roman art
Leader: Christina Grande

6 January-9 March 2016
Wednesdays 10:45-12:45
Late Romanesque
Leader: John McNeill

21 January-18 February 2016
Thursdays 10:45-12:45
Baroque architecture and decoration in Central Europe
Leader: Joachim Strupp

25 February-24 March 2016
Thursdays 14:00-16:00
The Flemish invention of landscape in the sixteenth century from Patinir to Paul Brill
Leader: Clare Ford-Wille

STUDY DAYS, VISITS AND WALKS

Thursday 3 September 2015
14:30-17:30
Walk: South Kensington and Albertopolis
Guide: Ayla Lepine

Monday 11 November 2015
(The Maria Shirley Lecture after the AGM)
Classical polychromy: the lost colours of ancient Greek & Roman sculpture
Christina Grande, Senior Lecturer in Classical Art at Winchester University, will look at colour as an important facet of marble and metal classical sculpture

STUDY TOURS

16-20 September 2015
Study Tour: Copenhagen
Local Guides

23-27 May 2016
Study Tour: Welsh Marches
Leader: John McNeill

FUTURE TOUR PLANS

September/October 2016
Study Tour: Holland
Leader: Clare Ford-Wille

April/May 2017
Study Tour: Munich
Leader: Tom Abbott

September/October 2017
Study Tour: Medieval Art and Architecture in Provincial France
Leader: Alexandra Gajewski