



## THE BRITISH ART NETWORK

### Foreword by Penelope Curtis, Director, Tate Britain

We are happy to announce that the British Art Network has successfully secured renewed funding from Arts Council England for 2015-18. The Subject Specialist Network devoted to British Art was established three years ago and came behind the Networks in Portraiture and European Painting, despite the fact that it has much wider, if more nebulous, boundaries. When Nigel Llewellyn (formerly Head of Research, Tate) convened a round-table to discuss its potential formation, there was enthusiasm for any kind of professional network which linked regional and metropolitan colleagues, but a recognition that it might be hard to identify topics in British Art which had real purchase. How could we make this network meaningful in ways that spoke to curators on the ground, and not merely to those who assessed our bids and our 'impact'?

My sense, as a spokesperson for the network, and a fairly regular attendee at its seminars, is that we have made headway in finding ways to go beyond the conventional academic seminar, and have also got better in identifying topics which cross periods and thus speak to a wider range of curatorial needs and interests. We began with narrower subjects (WW1, Pop Art) which had topicality, but were perhaps less successful in suggesting longer-term participation. We have also got better in devising formats which allow people with little or no specialist knowledge, but very often with relevant responsibilities, to find ways into the discussion. We have increasingly emphasised the fact that these fora are unusual in bringing together people with different but equivalent professional concerns.

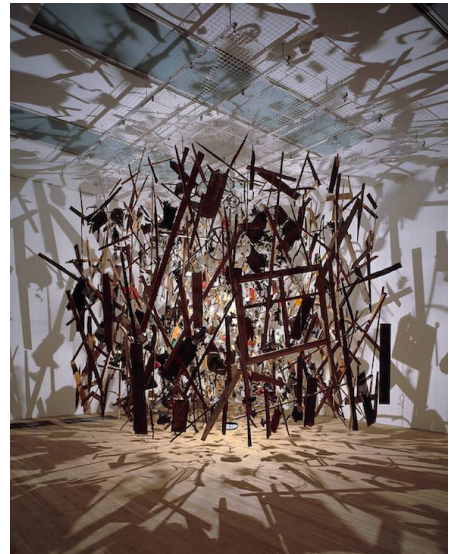
British Art Network seminars which began with one artist and one place (Wright in Derby; Hogarth in Bristol) opened up to the wider problems of the single-artist collection, or of the outsize picture. Given that many members are solo curators, or curators responsible for long periods, it has been really interesting to look at the material boundaries within collections, rather than focusing on art-historical periodisation. This is an unconventional approach, and one which has brought curators together from apparently diverse collections, such as G.F Watts, Alfred Munnings and Barbara Hepworth. The discussion may start with the material, but quickly moves into more conceptual areas. This was obviously the case in Newmarket, when we discussed what constitutes 'sporting art'.

Another fruitful approach has been to focus on neglected artists, a problem shared across the board, whatever the period. Moreover, the Steering Group has recognised the potential for follow-up seminars, so that neglected Victorian artists could be followed by neglected women artists, or the single artist collection in Derby by the artist-house in Sudbury. In 2015-18 we plan to combine a strategy which prioritises curatorial knowledges, 'problem' categories, object-based looking and academic input. We also intend to explore the ways in which the Network could help to foster networks of new generation curators with access to each other, and to senior expertise.

## AUDIO RECORDINGS FROM THE BASIC DESIGN AND ARCHIVES SEMINAR

### Past British Art Network event

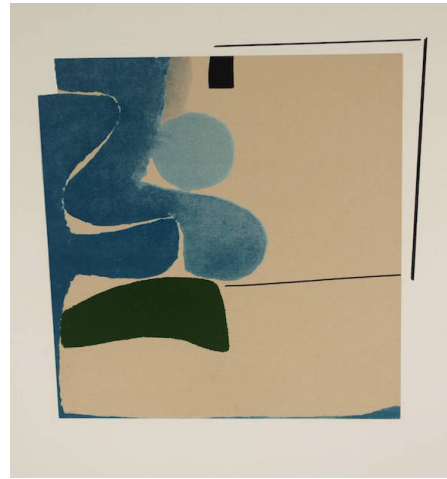
The British Art Network seminar 'Basic Design and the Hatton Gallery: researching, displaying and sharing archival resources' took place at the Hatton Gallery and Newcastle University on the 21 November



2014. Funded by the John Ellerman Foundation, the seminar took the revolutionary teaching known as Basic Design and the related archives and display on at the Hatton Gallery, as starting point for presentations and discussion about the ways in which researchers, academics and curators use, present and share archival materials with audiences.

Speakers included Beth Williamson; Suzi Tibbetts, Leeds College of Art, Donald Smith, Chelsea SPACE; Liz Bruchet, Slade Archive Project; Jo Melvin, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL; and Polly Christie and Sally Davies, Archives and Access Project, Tate.

A selection of audio recordings from the event can be found on the British Art Network [webpages](#).



## ARTISTS' LIVES TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY Cathy Courtney, British Library

[Artists' Lives](#) is an oral history project run by National Life Stories at the British Library in association with Tate. 2015 marks its twenty-fifth year and there are currently 359 catalogued recordings. The life stories capture biographical material as well covering each person's working life in depth; the average length is between twelve - twenty hours and many are considerably longer. The first person to take part was Eileen Agar (1899-1991) and the most recent person to begin a recording is John Dunbar (born 1943), artist and founder of the Indica Gallery. Across the whole collection, differing perspectives are offered on key events, exhibitions and individuals. Each recording is summarised to help users navigate to the parts relevant to their research, and transcripts are available for some. The aim is to allow artists and those whose careers have been closely interwoven with them to narrate an account of their lives and work in their own words. Each person has the option of closing parts or the whole of their contribution during their lifetime to offer privacy in the first instance, but many of the recordings are open. By the end of 2016 the intention is to have open recordings online and available to everyone.

Meanwhile, recordings without access restrictions can be accessed onsite at the British Library in London and Yorkshire and copies of most are accessible at Tate Archive; recordings with many of the sculptors are available at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds. Some Artists' Lives recordings are available in their entirety on the [British Library sounds website](#). Staff and students at licensed UK higher and further education institutions can listen the recordings online using their Athens or Shibboleth authenticated password. Institution librarians can also request [a free licence](#).



x

## ARCHIVES AND ACCESS

### Tate publishes archives of key British artists online

This year Tate will be making 52,000 pieces from artists' archives available through its website as part of the Archives & Access project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

This will be the first time that online visitors can view the rich resources available in the Tate Archive alongside the Tate Collection and dig deeper into the inspiration and stories behind great works of art. Materials released will include sketchbooks, photographs, letters and diaries from artists such as [Barbara Hepworth](#), [Paul Nash](#), [Josef Herman](#), [Keith Vaughan](#), [Prunella Clough](#) and [Donald Rodney](#).



As part of this process of opening up access to the Archive, Tate has developed new ways of engaging with these materials. This includes an online 'Albums' feature which allows users to group together archive items and artworks that they are interested in, add their own content and insights and share their Album with others. A series of films exploring all aspects of the project are also being produced and a learning programme is taking place across the UK working in partnership with key art organisations including the [Laing Art Gallery](#) (Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums); [Turner Contemporary](#) and the [Josef Herman Art Foundation Cymru](#). Tate will also be the first fine arts organisation to collaborate with the Zooniverse team led by the University of Oxford to crowdsource full text transcriptions of

handwritten documents.

Further information about the project, related films and blogs can be found here: [www.tate.org.uk/art/archive](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive).

## ASPIRE: NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CONSTABLE STUDIES

### Gracie Divall, Tate Britain

In 2013 John Constable's [Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows](#), 1831 one of the greatest masterpieces of British art, was secured for the nation through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), The Manton Foundation and Tate Members. The acquisition was part of a ground-breaking new partnership, Aspire, between five national and regional galleries: [Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales](#); the [National Galleries of Scotland](#); [Colchester and Ipswich Museums](#); [The Salisbury Museum](#); and [Tate Britain](#).

Aspire is a five-year partnership programme enabling audiences of all ages to enjoy and learn more about the work of John Constable by touring Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows to partner institutions across the UK. Aspire is supported by the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) and the [Art Fund](#).

The work is currently on show at [Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich](#), situated in 'Constable Country', and home to the most significant collection of Constable's work outside of London. This is the first time that a 'six-footer' has been shown at Christchurch Mansion. The display in Ipswich runs in three 'phases' with the second phase 'Constable's Gardens: 200th Anniversary Exhibition' opening to the public on 23 May 2015. This display will celebrate the bicentenary of [Golding Constable's Flower Garden](#) and [Golding Constable's Kitchen Garden](#), two gems of the permanent Constable collection at Christchurch Mansion, and will include additional loans from Tate, the V&A and the Fitzwilliam Museum. The third phase, opening in September 2015, will reflect both upon Constable's career as an artist and his legacy, displaying two Freud works from the Tate collection alongside Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows, reflecting Lucian Freud's acknowledgement of Constable as an early influence.

Accompanying activities in Ipswich continue throughout 2015 and additional resources including an audio description of the work and a tactile image will be made available at the mansion (and future Aspire venues) enabling blind and partially-sighted visitors to experience Constable's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows.

In 2014 the work was displayed at National Museum Cardiff, and as part of the five-year touring period it will also be shown at: Oriely Parc, St David's, Pembrokeshire; The Salisbury Museum; the Scottish National Gallery and Tate Britain. Following this partners will continue to have special access to the painting for their exhibitions, whilst also ensuring that this extraordinary work is lent to other institutions so that it can be enjoyed by a wide public.

Further information about the painting and Aspire can be found here: [www.tate.org.uk/aspire](http://www.tate.org.uk/aspire).



## OTHER BRITISH ART RELATED EVENTS

### Artists at Home and at Work

Until 31 May 2015

Gainsborough's House, Sudbury

Eighteenth century British artists often chose to work in domestic studios, known as 'painting rooms'. Inspired by this practice, the exhibition 'Artists at Home and at Work' of portraits by Anne Purkiss, examines the 'painting rooms' of some of Britain's most well known contemporary artists.

Further details, including how to book, can be found on the [Gainsborough's House website](#).



**William Hogarth: Painter and Printmaker**

16 May – 31 August 2015  
Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

From portraiture to satire to history painting; this exhibition will introduce the diverse range of subjects that were tackled by this iconic painter and printmaker. Included in the exhibition will be his well-known satirical prints from Bristol's permanent collection. This will be the most comprehensive show of the artist's work ever in the South West. Bristol is also home to Hogarth's 28ft high altarpiece for St Mary Redcliffe currently on housed at [St Nicholas Church, Bristol](#). This exhibition has been developed in partnership with Tate Britain.

Further details, including how to book, can be found on the [Bristol Museum and Art Gallery website](#).

**Collecting and Conserving Moving Image Seminar**

CAS National Network  
M Shed, Bristol, 14 May 2015

How to present and preserve artist film and video works held on digital formats can be problematic for many museums, numerous challenges regarding their conservation and display need to be faced. This seminar is an opportunity to learn from a range of case studies about the acquisition, presentation and maintenance of artist film and video works, whilst speculating on future trends and technologies.

Further details, including how to book, can be found on the [Contemporary Art Society National Network website](#). Please note spaces are limited for non CAS National Network members.

**Louise Jopling: Victorian Artist and Teacher**

Until 13 September 2015  
Hunterian Art Gallery

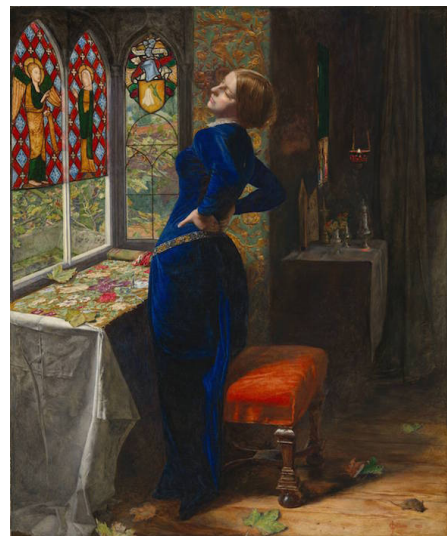
Louise Jopling (1843-1933) was a leading painter, society figure, and friend of James McNeill Whistler. This free display at the Hunterian Art Gallery introduces a new research project, based at the University, which is delivering the first substantive investigation into her life and achievements.

Further details can be found on [The Hunterian website](#).

**ART DETECTIVE****Andrew Greg, University of Glasgow**

Since the last mention in the November 2014 British Art Network newsletter, [Art Detective](#) is continuing to grow with great success. This innovative and productive public forum now has over 2,000 registered public users (i.e. excluding museums). There have been 118 public discussions about paintings in UK public collections, of which 56 have been concluded with new information among attributions, subject matter and dating. Each discussion is linked to at least one of twenty-seven special interest groups, all of which have a leader drawn from across worlds of curatorship, academia and the art trade. This broad spectrum is reflected in the range of enthusiastic participants, many of whom are experts at digging out information from a wealth of online resources, as well as multiple trips to libraries.

The project relies on the support of collections, in responding to the initial request for a public discussion and to any final recommendations. We also want to encourage many more collections to use Art Detective to crowd-source information about their problem paintings, as many museums and galleries from Jersey to Stirling have already done. The recently announced Arts Council England grant to the PCF from the Museums Resilience Fund will allow it to fully integrate Art Detective with a re-launched 'Your Paintings', improve IPR issues and make Art Detective even more user-friendly.



Should you have any comments or wish to contribute to the content of the next newsletter please email [BritishArtNetwork@tate.org.uk](mailto:BritishArtNetwork@tate.org.uk).

The British Art Network is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.



If you have any questions or want to update your contact details please contact [Helen Woodfield](mailto:Helen.Woodfield@tate.org.uk), Network Coordinator for British Art, via [Helen.Woodfield@tate.org.uk](mailto:Helen.Woodfield@tate.org.uk) or +44 (0)20 7887 3930.

Top image: Cornelia Parker, Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View 1991, Wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, Unconfirmed: 4000 x 5000 mm, Presented by the Patrons of New Art (Special Purchase Fund) through the Tate Gallery Foundation 1995, ©Cornelia Parker

Second image: Victor Pasmor, Points of Contact No. 8 1966, Screenprint and mixed media on paper, support: 811 x 772 mm image: 550 x 540 mm mount: 890 x 839 mm, on paper, unique, Presented by Rose and Chris Prater through the Institute of Contemporary Prints 1975, ©Tate

Third image: Peter Blake, Self-Portrait with Badges 1961, Oil paint on board, support: 1743 x 1219 mm frame: 1792 x 1265 x 70 mm painting, Presented by the Moores Family Charitable Foundation to celebrate the John Moores Liverpool Exhibition 1979, ©Peter Blake 2015, All rights reserved, DACS

Fourth image: Keith Vaughan, Drawing of men working in a landscape 1941–1942, TGA 9013/1/27, Image released under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND (3.0 Unported), ©The estate of Keith Vaughan

Fifth image: John Constable, Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows 1831, Oil paint on canvas, frame: 1800 x 2187 x 105 mm unconfirmed: 1537 x 1920 mm painting, Purchased by Tate with assistance from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Manton Foundation, the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation) and Tate Members in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service, National Galleries of Scotland, and The Salisbury Museum 2013, ©Tate

Sixth image: Thomas Gainsborough, Giovanna Baccelli, Exhibited 1782, Oil paint on canvas, Support: 2267 x 1486 mm, frame: 2810 x 1830 x 155 mm, Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1975 ©Tate

Last image: Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, Mariana 1851, Oil paint on mahogany, support: 597 x 495 x 15 mm frame: 876 x 767 x 55 mm painting, Accepted by HM Government in lieu of tax and allocated to the Tate Gallery 1999, ©Tate

To ensure our emails reach your inbox add [BritishArtNetwork@e.tate.org.uk](mailto:BritishArtNetwork@e.tate.org.uk) to your address book. 2011Tate e-bulletinSP. We will never sell, rent or exchange your details with any other organisation. Our full privacy policy is available on [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)