



## SPORTING ART; 'THE BUSINESS OF THE HISTORIAN OF ART?'

**An Introduction to the British Sporting Art Seminar by Cicely Robinson, Assistant Curator of Sporting Art, Newmarket and Tabitha Barber, Curator, British Art 1550-1750, Tate Britain.**

When Ellis Waterhouse first published *Painting in Britain 1530 to 1790*, now over 60 years ago, he dismissed the genre of British sporting art as of no concern to the art historian. '*The general run of sporting painting, although of absorbing interest to the social historian and to the student of the turf, he wrote, is 'no business of the historian of art'.* Sporting art has received relatively little scholarly interest in subsequent years, perhaps a sign of tacit agreement; and in museums and galleries across the country sporting pictures feature more in reserve collections than on the wall in permanent collection displays.



A major redevelopment project, currently underway in Newmarket, prompts a re-examination of this somewhat marginalised (and arguably unfashionable) genre of British art. Situated in the centre of the town, Palace House, the remaining portion of Charles II's racing palace, is being converted into a new gallery dedicated to the display and exhibition of sporting art. Due to open in spring 2016, the opening displays will bring together works from national and private collections including the British Sporting Art Trust and Tate.

The process of developing this new gallery has provoked a number of key questions, the most crucial being the definition of the genre. What exactly do we mean by 'sporting art'? And what exactly was it that Ellis Waterhouse was dismissing as of '*no serious concern*', while dedicating several pages to Stubbs? In fact, is not the notion of sporting art as a separate genre considerably problematic? Established auction house classification of sporting art sees it as encompassing depictions of traditional rural pursuits (mainly hunting and racing), particularly during the long eighteenth century. But is this a useful definition, and does sporting art in fact have much wider chronological and thematic parameters? Should it not include representations of all sports from all periods? Finally, does the tradition of sporting art, and the notion of the dedicated 'sporting artist', have relevance for contemporary art practice?

It is hoped that the next British Art Network seminar in Newmarket, details below, will begin to unravel some of these key questions and help to reinvigorate interest in and critical debate about this aspect of British art.

### BRITISH SPORTING ART SEMINAR Next British Art Network event

**The National Heritage Centre for Horseracing & Sporting Art  
Newmarket, Friday 6 February 2015, 11.00 – 17.00**

For decades, the genre of British sporting art has existed on the periphery of modern art historical discourse. To coincide with the development of a National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art, due to open in Newmarket in spring 2016, the British Art Network is hosting a seminar dedicated to the examination of what seems to have become a marginalised genre of British art. We hope that a day of short presentations and extensive round-table discussion will provoke new interest in the genre and highlight the rich research potential that this area of British art can offer. Programmed by Cicely Robinson, Assistant Curator (British Sporting Art), National

Horseracing Museum, in collaboration with Tabitha Barber, Curator, British Art 1550-1750, Tate.

To reserve your place at the seminar and to request travel funds please contact [Helen Woodfield](#), Network Coordinator for British Art.

For further details please visit the [British Art Network events webpage](#).



## JOINT SUBJECT SPECIALIST NETWORK SEMINAR Events in 2015

### Audiences, Authority & Collaboration in Museum Research London, 12–13 March 2015

The two-day seminar represents a collaboration between three Subject Specialist Networks; the [British Art Network](#); [European paintings pre-1900](#); and the [Understanding British Portraits](#) network. The seminar will aim to examine and investigate a range of subjects relevant to museum professionals and their collections through three overarching subjects: the role of cataloguing, research partnerships, and disseminating research findings.

The seminar will take place at Tate Britain, National Portrait Gallery, and The National Gallery. The full programme, booking and travel fund details for British Art Network members, will be announced in January 2015.



### AUDIO RECORDINGS FROM THE BRITISH ART NETWORK SEMINAR IN BRISTOL Past British Art Network event

The British Art Network seminar *William Hogarth's Triptych for St Mary Redcliffe: How to deal with enormous artworks in public collections* took place at St Nicholas Church and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery on the 10 October 2014. Programmed by Dr. Jenny Gaschke, Curator of Fine Art, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in collaboration with Martin Myrone, Lead Curator, pre-1800 British Art, Tate.

The event took its starting point at St Nicholas Church, the offices of the Bristol & Region Archaeological Services and the current home of William Hogarth's *Triptych for St Mary Redcliffe*. The altarpiece, which has been in the care of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery since 1955, is of considerable cultural significance nationally and particularly for the City of Bristol, but in its current location has limited public access. The morning session enabled speakers and delegates to discuss the truly enormous William Hogarth painting (the central canvas alone measures 873 – 685 cm), and consider the financial and practical challenges and possible solutions to reintegrating the altar into public display.

During the afternoon session at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, invited speakers introduced a number of case studies of successful national and international projects featuring large artworks. These included the Rijksmuseum's highly successful new displays of seventeenth-century Dutch masterpieces, such as Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*, the National Trust's recent conservation of Guido Reni's painted ceiling in Kingston Lacy, and the challenges of moving, travelling and installing large artworks from the Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives collection such as the recently acquired *Delhi Durbar* by Roderick Mackenzie. The day ended with a short walking tour of Bristol and a visit to St Mary Redcliffe, the church for which the William Hogarth altarpiece was originally designed.

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



## REGISTER OF EXPERTISE How to find British art expertise across the UK

The register of expertise is a database of professionals engaged with British art, designed to enable the exchange of knowledge and expertise and facilitate contact between those with common interests or areas of research. The register enables network members to locate those with expertise in areas in which they may have an interest but not specialist knowledge. A downloadable, searchable PDF of the register is available on the [British Art Network webpages](#).

The register of expertise can be searched using a table of key terms relating to period, from the 16th and 17th century to 20th century post-1945 British art; medium, from books and costume to sculpture and video; and a wide range of genres, as well as by institution and by individual name.

The register is continually updated and we recommend that you always refer to the live version online. Should you wish to join the register, or to update your entry, please get in touch by emailing [BritishArtNetwork@tate.org.uk](mailto:BritishArtNetwork@tate.org.uk).

## OTHER BRITISH ART RELATED RESOURCES, ACTIVITY AND EVENTS

### Beyond the British Art Network

#### Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

The *Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning* project at the University of Glasgow is the largest study of Mackintosh's architectural works ever undertaken and has led to a revaluation of this remarkably under-researched area of Mackintosh's output. The findings from the project are being made available to the public via a new [website](#).

#### Richard Wilson Online Catalogue Raisonné

Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

[Richard Wilson Online](#) is the outcome of ongoing intensive research undertaken since October 2009 with a view to re-establishing the artist's true status and redefining his authentic oeuvre. The project aims to update and assimilate the magisterial catalogue raisonné published by Professor W.G. Constable in 1953 and Sir Brinsley Ford's *The Drawings of Richard Wilson* of 1951 (still the only book on the subject). In addition it is intended to add a commentary on the prints after Wilson's works, which were a crucial instrument in their public reception. By its nature such an undertaking is lengthy and for this reason Richard Wilson Online is presented as a work-in-progress.

#### Call for Papers: Impassioned Britain: Familial and Divine Depictions of Feeling, 1707-1907

University of Liverpool  
15-17 July 2015

This conference will explore familial and divine feelings in art, history, and literature. With reference to modern psychological and philosophical accounts of emotions, scholars, curators and creators are invited to discuss relevant topics. The conference will include workshops for literary critics and art historians and a session for those specifically interested in literature and painting, literature and portraiture. Further details regarding the Call for Papers can be found on the [Embodiments Research Group website](#).

The deadline for abstract submissions is the 25 December 2014.

#### This Time in History: What Escapes, by Rose Frain (WWI)

Victoria and Albert Museum  
Until 1 February 2015

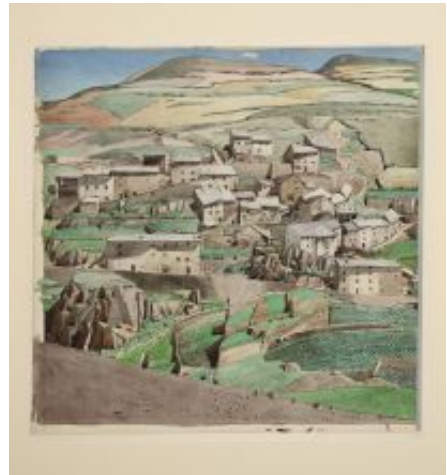
As a contribution to the V&A's centenary reflections on the outbreak of war, the distinguished artist Rose Frain has created an installation for the National Art Library. A selection of objects from the V&A's collections are juxtaposed with her new original pieces, including an artist's book created for the occasion.

For further details please visit the [Victoria and Albert Museum website](#).

#### REALITY: Modern & Contemporary British Painting

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art  
Until 1 March 2015

This exhibition brings together over fifty works celebrating the strength





of British painting with some of the best and most influential artists of the last sixty years. REALITY testifies to the survival of painting as a medium and the impact of British painting today. Major 20th Century artists are represented such as Walter Sickert, Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and David Hockney, alongside contemporary painters including Ken Currie, George Shaw and Caroline Walker.

For further details please visit the [Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art website](#).

#### **The Horse at War: 1914-1918**

The lightbox, Woking  
Until 1 Mar 2015

This exhibition explores how the horse was depicted in war, both heroically and as a beast-of-burden, by some of the leading British artists of the day, including William Roberts, Sir Alfred Munnings and Lucy Kemp-Welch.

For further details please visit [The Lightbox website](#).

#### **The Real Tudors: Kings & Queens Rediscovered**

National Portrait Gallery  
Until 1 March 2015

This special display allows visitors to rediscover the well-known Tudor monarchs through the most complete presentation of their portraiture staged to date. Works from the National Portrait Gallery's collection are presented alongside exceptional loans and a prized possession of each monarch, as well as recent research undertaken as part of the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* project, to help visitors understand how and why such images were made.

For further details please visit the [National Portrait Gallery website](#).

### **ART DETECTIVE SEEKS GROUP LEADER FOR NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH PAINTING**

#### **Andrew Greg, University of Glasgow**

[Art Detective](#) is the new online forum connecting public art collections with members of the public and providers of specialist knowledge in order to improve knowledge of the UK's public art collections. Initiated by the Public Catalogue Foundation, funded initially by the Arts Council and partnered by the University of Glasgow, Art Detective is supported by all the relevant Subject Specialist Networks, many curators, academics and dealers as well as genealogists, local historians and amateur sleuths. In particular, its specialist groups are guided by leading scholars and experts in their fields.

Art Detective is dealing with fifty-six problem paintings and has completed thirty-five more, identifying artists, subjects and sitters from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Hundreds more potential discussions are in the pipeline.

We are still seeking a long-term Group Leader for the '*British nineteenth century (except portraits)*' group, which has eight ongoing discussions ranging through maritime paintings to a possible John Dunthorne, an academic nude study and an anonymous topographical scene of an unidentified cotton mill.

If anyone would like further information about what is involved in being a Group leader with Art Detective (not onerous!) please contact [Andrew Greg](#) at the University of Glasgow.



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).

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

Top image: James Seymour, A Kill at Ashdown Park 1743, Oil paint on canvas, Support: 1803 x 2388 mm, Frame: 2030 x 2618 x 80 mm, Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Tate Gallery and subscribers 1969, ©Tate  
Second image: Mark Wallinger, Half-Brother (Exit to Nowhere - Machiavellian) 1994–5, Oil paint on canvas, Displayed: 2300 x 3000 x 35 mm, Purchased 1995, ©Mark Wallinger  
Third image: Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, The Arrival c.1913, Medium Oil paint on canvas, Support: 762 x 635 mm, Frame: 895 x 775 x 60 mm, Acquisition Presented by the artist's widow 1956, ©Tate  
Fourth image: William Hogarth, Mrs Salter 1741, Oil paint on canvas, Support: 762 x 635 mm, Frame: 1037 x 916 x 122 mm, Purchased 1898, ©Tate  
Fifth image: Patrick Heron, Azalea Garden: May 1956, 1956, Oil paint on canvas, Support: 1524 x 1276 mm, Purchased 1980, ©The estate of Patrick Heron  
Sixth image: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Fetges c.1927, Watercolour on paper, Support: 474 x 480 mm, Frame: 688 x 688 x 28 mm on paper, unique, Presented by Walter W. Blackie 1929, ©Tate  
Last image: Walter Richard Sickert, Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford 1892, Oil paint on canvas, Support: 765 x 638 mm, Frame: 915 x 787 x 69 mm, Purchased 1976, ©Tate

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