Seventy Years of Fine Art at Leeds
1949 – 2019
Lessons in the Studio Studio in the Seminar

Seventy Years of Fine Art at Leeds 1949 — 2019

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This exhibition – jointly presented in the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery and the Project Space in the Fine Art Building – reviews the past 70 years of Fine Art at this University. Through artworks, artefacts and multimedia, it explores a long conversation between making art and studying the history of art and culture, in the context of the radical social and cultural changes since 1949.

Fine Art at Leeds was proposed by the trio of influential British war poet and modernist art historian Herbert Read, Bonamy Dobrée (then Professor of English at the University), and painter Valentine Dobrée. The fledgling Department of Fine Art was first led by painter, art historian and pioneering theorist of modern art education, Maurice de Sausmarez — assisted by the distinguished refugee art historians Arnold Hauser and Arnold Noach. Quentin Bell, Lawrence Gowing, T. J. Clark, Adrian Rifkin, Vanalyne Green and Roger Palmer followed him as Chairs of Fine Art.

Read and the Dobrées believed that having Fine Art at the University of Leeds could challenge what they feared was the unfair privileging of science and technology over the arts and humanities. In 2019, again, the arts and humanities are under threat at universities and art, drama and music are disappearing from our schools. They are considered less economically valuable or useful subjects in higher education. Telling the story of Fine Art at Leeds through this exhibition aims to challenge this troubling trend.

What is now a School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies has become internationally-renowned for its critical projects in social, feminist and post-colonial questioning of art and culture and radical approaches to interdisciplinarity. It also has a longstanding programme in gallery and museum studies, working closely with local and regional museums, galleries and artist-led projects. Former students have gone on to be artists, musicians, screenwriters, film directors, teachers, curators, editors, and novelists. Several of them are highlighted in this exhibition, and across campus.

Calling on a range of voices and media, Sam Belinfante and Griselda Pollock have proposed an exhibition as a type of grand seminar, allowing trans-historical lessons across the University as it stands now.
1. Maurice de Saussure (1915-1969) 
Tuscan Summer
1955
Oil on canvas
Purchased with funding from the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund and the Friends of University Art and Music (Leeds), 2019.

Maurice de Saussure was an influential and widely exhibited modernist painter who was appointed the founding Head of Fine Art at the University of Leeds in 1949. Having been Head of the already famous Leeds College of Art, he took up his post on 1 January 1950. He then became Head of Fine Art at Hornsey College of Fine Art (1959-62) and Principal of the Byam Shaw School of Drawing and Painting (1962-69). A knowledgeable and astute art historian, he was also a major theorist of modernist art and his pioneering writings about a Northern working-class, consciously identifying older hierarchies of image and involving all students and creating a collective identity and a sense of a responsible community. His practice as an internationally renowned printmaker, often drawing on historical imagery, sustained a strong tradition in fine art graphics in the School. This print, part of his 'Argosy' series, is a photocollage. The punning ladies in the middle ground were from the cover of the magazine Bell. Herbert Bell's studio assistant in the 1960s and this image fascinated him; Bell gave him a copy which Herbert subsequently re-used in over 100 artworks. The artist figure in the foreground is taken from a Godfrey Bingley photograph; this 10,000-strong collection of 19th century photographs was in part preserved for Leeds University Specialist Collections by John Jones, another lecturer and artist in the Department. Herbert gave this experimental print to his colleague Ben Read, who was a leading expert in public sculpture. In the breadth of his work in founding Sculpture Studies in Leeds and his influential teaching, Read not only carried on his father Herbert Read's legacy at Leeds, but enriched the University collection with generous gifts and a significant bequest.

2. Maurice de Saussure (1915-1969) 
Whitelocks
1955
Oil on canvas
Purchase, 2007

Whitelocks Ale House, 6-8 Turk's Head Yard, off Bridgegate, opened in 1715 at the Turk’s Head. In 1867 it was taken over by John Lupton Whitelock becoming one of the most famous meeting places for theatrical performers. In 1955 it was originally opened as a single jointed building and received a blue plaque in 2008. Poet John Betjeman described it as 'the Leeds equivalent of Fleet Street's Old Cheshire Cheese, and far less self-conscious. Barry Herbert was Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Fine Art at Leeds for almost a decade of dedicated work to shape a unique space in Fine Art for the Yorkshire region. He went on to found the Yorkshire Luncheon Club that met at Whitelocks. In addition to his painting and exhibitions, he taught at the Leeds College of Art, later renamed after him (1968-1983). He drew and painted many portraits, including Mahatma Gandhi and Frederick Delius as well as drawing on modernist, notably Vorticist, forms to represent the war and its working visuals of Jewish ritual and spiritual life. This portrait serves to link the exhibition in the Treboruthen Gallery that celebrates the extraordinary range and importance of Herbert Read, founder of the Department of Fine Art.

3. Barry Herbert (b. 1937)
An Argosy of Beauty passing the Artist
1992
Print on paper
Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017

Barry Herbert was Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Fine Art in the uncertain period when the Chair was ‘mortgaged’ to the austerity cuts that the Department experienced in the 1980s. His judicious and kindly leadership provided the Department with settled artistic standards and historic norms and involving all students and creating a collective identity and a sense of a responsible community. His practice as an internationally renowned printmaker, often drawing on historical imagery, sustained a strong tradition in fine art graphics in the School. This print, part of his ‘Argosy’ series, is a photocollage. The punning ladies in the middle ground were from the cover of the magazine Bell. Herbert Bell’s studio assistant in the 1960s and this image fascinated him; Bell gave him a copy which Herbert subsequently re-used in over 100 artworks. The artist figure in the foreground is taken from a Godfrey Bingley photograph; this 10,000-strong collection of 19th century photographs was in part preserved for Leeds University Specialist Collections by John Jones, another lecturer and artist in the Department. Herbert gave this experimental print to his colleague Ben Read, who was a leading expert in public sculpture. In the breadth of his work in founding Sculpture Studies in Leeds and his influential teaching, Read not only carried on his father Herbert Read’s legacy at Leeds, but enriched the University collection with generous gifts and a significant bequest.

4. Maurice de Saussure (1915-1969)
Self Portrait
1966
Oil on canvas
Private Collection

The first Lecturer in Fine Art, at the University of Leeds (1950-59), Maurice de Saussure drew and painted many self-portraits in pencil and oil, some finely drawn in pen and ink. He was an avid collector of art, painting, as is this one, as studies in colour and form. His bold and affecting portrait of the Gregory Fellow in Poetry at the University of Leeds, James Kirkup, is also in the University’s collection. De Saussure consolidated the nascent project for Fine Art at Leeds by delivering many series of art history lectures to staff and students, then drawn from a General BA Honours while initiating concurrent practice classes. He departed for positions in London art schools after almost a decade of dedicated work to shape a unique project for Fine Art that reflected his technical and critical knowledge as much as his commitment to issues of art pedagogy. He wrote the foundational text on modern art education, Basic Design: The Dynamics of Visual Form (1964), and his collected writings on art and art education edited by former curator of the University, Hilary Diaper, reveal the range of his critical thinking and contribution to art education in Britain were published in 2016.

5. Valentine Dobrée (1884-1974)
Mon Semblable
Collage on board
Acquired 2000

Born in India as Gladys May Mabel Brooke-Pechell, Valentine Dobrée was a painter, poet and novelist whose fame is now forgotten. The Founding Director of the Fine Art Department, André Derain (1880-1954). After her marriage to literary scholar Bonamy Dobrée, she renamed herself. Having lived in France, she moved to England in 1920, making surrealist artists Roland Penrose and Dora Carrington, and exhibited with the London Group, an open submission group of artists formed in opposition to the Royal Academy. She was also associated with the Bloomsbury group and Mark Gertler painted a famous seated portrait of her in 1919. She had her first exhibition in London in 1931 and her collages were shown in 1963 at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Herbert Read was one of the initiators). She also was recognized for her published poetry and novels. A retrospective exhibition of her visual art was held at the Whitworth Art Gallery in 2009. She was part of the conversations between Herbert Read and Bonamy Dobrée that led to the founding of a Department of Fine Art at Leeds. Read owned several of her works. Shown here is an example of her interlaced constructed and colored rich collages, its title Mon Semblable translating as My Double/My Other. This suggests an indirect but somewhat alienated self-portrait. Its flatness contrasts with her earlier painting style which combined cubist planes with surrealistic hyper-reality.

6. Maurice de Saussure (1915-1969)
Bonamy Dobrée
1955
Oil on canvas
Acquired, 1960

Born to a banking family in the Channel Isles, Bonamy Dobrée planned a military career and served in the First World War. As a veteran, he went to Cambridge University, a reference point for the Centre for Cultural Studies initiated at Leeds in 1985 and since 1990, an integral part of the School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies.

7. Jacob Kramer (1892-1962)
Portrait of Herbert Read
Pencil on paper
Gift of Benedict Read, 2010

Kramer was born into an artistic family—his father was a painter and his mother a singer — in the Russian Empire. They both returned to Leeds, founding the Yorkshire Luncheon Club that met at Whitelocks. In addition to his painting and exhibitions, he taught at the Leeds College of Art, later renamed after him (1968-1983). He drew and painted many portraits, including Mahatma Gandhi and Frederick Delius as well as drawing on modernist, notably Vorticist, forms to represent the war and its working visuals of Jewish ritual and spiritual life. This portrait serves to link the exhibition in the Treboruthen Gallery that celebrates the extraordinary range and importance of Herbert Read, founder of the Department of Fine Art.

8. Talking Head
T. J. Clark
Interviewed by Griselda Pollock
28 October 2019

T. J. Clark was appointed Professor of Fine Art in 1975 following the departure of Lawrence Gowing (1918-91) for the Slade School of Art. Gowing had succeeded Quentin Bell in 1967. Clark was thus the first art historian to hold the chair. Having studied at Cambridge and then completing his MA and PhD in art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, Clark taught at the newly founded University of Essex and then at Camberwell School of Art before taking up a position at the University of California, Los Angeles. After leaving Leeds, he went to Harvard University and then to Berkeley from which he has only recently retired.

9. From left to right
Stephen Chaplin (b. 1934)
Committee Room 1, on 3 December 1981

Senate on 4 Dec 1976
Emma Barelli and the examinees, Crabtree Lecture Theatre, 10 June 1983 2000-1
Examinees, Crabtree Lecture Theatre, 10 June 1983 2000-1

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Stephen Chaplin studied at the Slade School of Art. He is an artist and art historian who taught at the Leeds College of Art (1961-66) and then in the Department of Fine Art from 1966 to 1991. He was Head of Department in the 1980s. Ceaselessly observing and drawing, he has created a unique visual archive of a university community from its formal Senate meetings and committees to lectures and seminars, one featuring the Renaissance specialist Emma Barello. A donation of 40 archive boxes of his sketchbooks, diaries, notebooks and photographs trace his formation as a child, a student, a teacher, are now part of the University Art Collection.

The academic offices, seminar room, library and Professional studio of the Department of Fine Art were housed on the fourth floor of the Michael Sadler Building from the 1960s until 2001. The modernist architecture of the Sadler Building with its geometric-inclined windows opened up to a view of the Brotherton Dome – 3 inches in diameter larger than the dome of British Library Reading Room, a condition the Brotherton Dome – 3 inches in diameter larger than the dome of British Library Reading Room, a condition set down by Lord Brotherton, the building’s foremost donor. Room 404 was a popular seminar and lecture room. Next door, Room 403, was Diana Douglas’s, later Griselda Pollock’s office; this appears in the

Ken Hay completed his BA in Fine Art at Leeds (1973-77) writing his thesis on Howard Hodgkin and Linguistic Philosophy before doing an MA and PhD at the University College of Wales (Aberystwyth). He came back to Leeds in 1989 as Lecturer, and was Head of School 1997-2001, completing his career at Leeds as Professor of Contemporary Art Practice (from 2004). With a history of exhibitions as long as his academic publications, his multifaceted practice represents the University of Leeds Fine Art project to the fullest. His work explores invisible histories of classroom, studio and seminar, astute psychological understanding and total involvement of extraordinary women such as Phyllis Winning. Professors come and go. Phyllis Winning sustained the Department’s continuity across many decades. Her commitment to art is reflected in her donations of small, significant and intriguing works such as this Draped Figure and the drawing for Levitation.

Elizabeth Price was born in Bradford and raised in Leeds. She was appointed when Tim Clark took up a year's historic and theoretical study of Conceptual Art engaging with the feminist problematic. Kelly regularly visited the Fine Art Department, being a Visiting Professor in 2000-01 and a keynote speaker at the two-day event celebrating A Feminist Space at Leeds in 2017. The work shown here is an ink on paper created before Post-Partum Document. Fortiða refers to a game Sigmund Freud observed his grandson playing with a cotton reel that the boy repeatedly threw away (saying: fort: gone) and who was delighted at its return (da: here). Freud interpreted the child imagistically mastering its mother’s absence and symbolically alleviating the anxiety of abandonment.

A Library

Steve Bell (b. 1951) is an award-winning cartoonist who graduated from Leeds in filmmaking and Fine Art in 1974. He trained as an art teacher before becoming a free-lance political cartoonist in 1977. His best-known cartoons appear in The Guardian. His books and other projects reveal his deep art historical knowledge from Goya and Hogarth to Turner and Gustave Doré. He also wrote a moving obituary for his tutor at Leeds, the painter and filmmaker, John Jones.

FOURTH SHELF

Three Perspectives in Photography (1979)
The Pavillion: Four Photographs (1985)
Andrea Fisher Let Us Now Praise Famous Women (1987)
John Tagg The Burden of Representation (1988)

This section of the library addresses a major element of the Fine Art at Leeds project in the 1970s, the Historical and theoretical study of photography that was specifically initiated and led by John Tagg. He was appointed when Tim Clark took up a year’s research Fellowship and then a full-time position at Harvard University in 1979. Tagg's temporary post fell victim in 1984 to the massive financial cuts imposed on universities by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. The reference for Fine Art was exceptionally 'punished' by the University itself, being asked to find a 17% cut in its budget when 3% was the

10. Ken Hay (b.1955)

Falling Figure
2000

Digital print on laminated paper.

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Conditions of Artistic Creation 1974
This article by T. J. Clark was published in the Times Literary Supplement and it is part of his introduction 'On the Social History of Art' to his book Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution (1973), it outlines his concept of social history of art. Clark defines this as "the history of art in crisis, but that would have too strident a ring. Out of breath, in a state of genteel dissolution— those might be more appropriate verdicts. And in any case, such an ordinary diagnosis—stock accusation, stock depreciatory smile—that perhaps the first question to ask is: why should art history's problems matter? On what grounds could I ask anyone else to take them seriously? Turning back to the earlier twentieth century when art history was considered one of the major areas of serious historical investigation, Clark then reflects on the practical requirements for the celebration of great artists and beautiful things plotted into stylistic stories of art. The rollick of names—Warburg, Wolfflin, Panofsky, Saxl, Schönzer—is not what matters exactly. It is more the sense we have, reading the best art history of this period, of an agreement between protagonists as to what the important, unanswerable questions are. It is the way in which the most detailed research, the most arcane discoveries, lead back time and again towards the terrain of disagreement about the whole nature of art and art's relationship to what we call "artistic creation"? (Is that word "creation" allowable anyway? Should we substitute for it the notions of production or signification?) What are the artist's resources, and with whom?* Clark was teaching in 2010 at the School of Fine Art titled A Feminist Space at Leeds. Gill Parr wrote: ‘During the early 1980s, The Pavilion exhibited work by many important artists who were exploring the convergence between feminism and photography. This exhibition re-presented work that was shown at The Pavilion during the early 1980s by artists Jo Spence, Maud Suller and Marie Yates. It also featured Kali, a remarkable minimalist who decided he was a Fine Art student at the University of Leeds and, after graduation, a worker at The Pavilion.’ The Pavilion had three main aims: to exhibit critical, contemporary feminist work and artists who were exploring the intersections between feminism and art. It also aimed to develop community access for women to learn how to take and print photographs (in a predigital age when the technology and equipment was available). Photography was largely in the hands of men; to build links between the artistic and academic exploration of the role of photography and visual representation and the lives of women; and to create a space for the debate. It was known as the Feminist Photography Centre in Britain.

Mary Kelly (b.1941) is an American artist represented in by the University of Leeds and she was highly influential Visiting Professor in the Fine Art studios. Fred Orton, curating the gallery’s exhibition programme was very radical in showing several parts of Mary Kelly’s major conceptual work, Post-Partum Document (1973-80) at Leeds, thus introducing our students to her meticulous minimalist aesthetic and the geopolitical overlap to one of the major feminist constructed works of art of the twentieth century. As significantly, her artistic practice and writings formed the aesthetic and theoretical backbone of major debates studied and discussed within the university’s degree programmes and seminars up to the present. As a conceptual artist, working in the wake of the politics and theories of the ‘new social movements’ of ca.1968, Mary Kelly’s feminist critiques and the way she challenged the social construction of women’s roles, and later became a specialist in Anglo-Saxon art history— hence the small volume carrying a drawing of Orton and work on the project with the artists and the eraser on the shelf. Griselda Pollock engaged with feminist film theory and cultural studies, creating a dedicated feminist film and media programme in the Department of the MA in Cultural Studies. She was also attempting to make a means of reconciling the Clark/Orton masculinist models of social history, notably of New World America, with her own radical feminist analysis of ideology and gender in the context of her own life and other women’s lives.

The Cuban artist, Antonela Roccuzzo (b.1979), has worked in the wake of the politics and theories of the ‘new social movements’ of ca.1968, Mary Kelly’s feminist critiques and the way she challenged the social construction of women’s roles, and later became a specialist in Anglo-Saxon art history— hence the small volume carrying a drawing of Orton and
feminist questions because this new kind of art defined itself as ‘investigation, inquiry, reflection’. Encountering and seeking to understand Kelly’s mode of working and the development of her art, art historian and feminist scholar Griselda Pollock into the study of contemporary art, making possible her work in Fine Art as an artist historian of current art. Once aware of the challenges artists v...
obliquely registers and deflects the impact of feminist questioning of the representation of women in modernist painting, notably Matisse’s.

Lawn and Raincoat (1918-1919), educated in Quaker schools, was a conscientious objector during World War II. Gowing studied art with William Coldstream at the Euston Road School of Art and was a self-taught art critic. 

In 1949, he became Professor of Fine Art at King’s College Durham, now Newcastle University, Principal of Chelsea College of Art (1958-1965) before being appointed Professor of Fine Art at Leeds (1965-1975) following Quentin Bell, who had lectured (1952-59) under Gowing at King’s College Durham before becoming the first Professor of Fine Art at Leeds (1965-75). Bell’s time was briefly discussed in his memoir Bloomsbury Recalled (1996).

Stephan Chaplin Notebook open at the page which notes a presentation to T. J. Clark and Terry Atkinson. Art student Andy Gill (b.1956) on the political theory of the music and performances of his band, Gang of Four (Don King, Hugo Burgham and Dave Allen) which can be heard on the record player. In an interview in 2009 with Andy Gill by the music journalist also called Andy Gill, the latter writes that coming on to Gang of Four was the lightbulb moment that had already 'inquisitive attitudes were further fostered by the most radical art department at any British university, a hotbed of Situationism and Structuralism.' Quickly signed to S & M Records, the band released The Euskera and The Thin Black Line, albums that on one hand was a long conversation between these artists with feminist 

which declares the ‘impossibility of history as the object of knowledge’ and the ‘reduction of multiperspectival identities to a single, discursive object of knowledge.’

On this shelf is the affectionate and deeply respectful obituary for the painter, filmmaker and long-time backbone of the studios of the Fine Art Department, John Jones (1926-2010) written by his student, the artist-cartoonist Steve Bell (see top shelf). John Jones was appointed in 1962 by Quentin Bell, first Professor of Fine Art. Having studied under William Coldstream at the Slade School of Art in London after his military service, he also won the art history prize there. Jones was also a filmmaker and introduced a series of short-making strands into the Fine Art degree. He made art documentaries including a film on Matisse (1969), topic of books both by John Elderfield and Lawrence Gowing. On his sabbatical year in 1965 he made a series of historic filmed interviews with contemporary New York artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Larry Rivers, Louise Bourgeois and the writer William Burroughs. In 1969, Jones had built a film suits for Yoko Ono, who was the only invited to Leeds by the College of Art; she stayed with the Jones family in Headingley. Way ahead of exhibitions and general support for Lubaina Himid by the ICA, but was ultimately allocated only the corridor space: hence the painfully ironic title. In 1985, as Sutapa Biswas, the Ione Black artist in her Fine Art degree at Leeds he has shared the students the sense of shock and excitement the teaching there created. He did his undergraduate thesis with Fred. Orton.

Peter Morgan is now an internationally reputed screenwriter and producer of what may be called political dramas, which focus on the complexity of positions of black artists. 

The Lost Honour of Christopher Jeffries (2016), The University of Leeds conferred an Honorary Doctorate on Peter Morgan in recognition of his contribution to drama and screen writing in Britain.

Son of a Yorkshire mining family, Terry Atkinson was born in Thorncroft, near Barnsley, after studying at the University of Leeds, he graduated Chancellors Gold Medal of Art. In London he was exposed to the new work of Jasper Johns, Larry Rivers and Jackson Pollock as well as American rock and roll. This was radically changing the art world that was at odds with the tradition of painting at Slade, formerly represented at Leeds by Lawrence Gowing.
In a long-term collaboration with the radical landscape poet Harriet Tanar, she has worked, since 2013, with a contested coastal community on one of the UK’s last exhuasted lands, the Humberston Fitties in Lincolnshire. Here, since the 1930s, local people and visitors have erected their diverse dwellings, in order to enjoy the simple, restorative pleasures of seaside life. In this painting from the series Night Fitties Tucker explores the play of light and dark and the uncanny transformations of the chalets that take place after hours.

In the shadow of recent dramatic political convulsions in British politics after the 2016 referendum, her paintings allow us to consider how place and identity are constructed on domestic and larger scales. Here this is reflected by the play on flags and other indications of Englishness. Many of the inhabitants of the Fitties come from Yorkshire mining communities evicerated after the defeat of the 1984 Miners’ Strike. The painting enters into a fortuitous conversation with the neighbouring work of Terry Atkinson, a miner’s son whose paint-drawings of British World War I soldiers refer to an earlier traumatic history which miner-soldiers passed onto their sons.

Judith Tucker (b.1960)
Ahibeck 1932
2006
Charcoal and white pigment on paper
On loan from the artist

Like Elizabeth Price opposite, painter Judith Tucker studied Fine Art at Oxford University (Ruskin) before completing an MA and her PhD in Fine Art at the University of Leeds. She was an AHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at CentreCATH in the School of Fine Art 2001-03 when she developed a body of work titled Resort. Over a combination of large-and small-scale drawings and paintings of different sizes she worked from two sources: family photographs of a moment in 1932 when her Jewish grandmother and mother enjoyed the seaside on the North coast of Germany months before the National Socialist regime banished Jewish visitors from such places.

Judith Tucker visited Ahibeck to draw in this formerly East German resort where she was drawn to the beach chairs – the Strandkorb (lit. beach basket) – visible in her family photos, still in use. Tucker evokes the concept – postmemory – formulated by Marianne Hirsch to elucidate the affectivity of photographs of lost European worlds on the generations born elsewhere to displaced survivors and refugees. Her richly material drawings seek to touch on the uncanniness of places once associated with freedom and pleasure that now carry a heavy burden of unspoken historical trauma. Tucker is deeply involved in landscape, ecological and environmental art practice and cultural theory.
Lessons in the Studio
Studio in the Seminar

4 December 2019 - 4 April 2020

The Stanley & Audrey Burton
Gallery and Fine Art Building,
University of Leeds

Curated by Sam Bellinfante and
Griselda Pollock

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