



**Art Appreciation Lecture Series 2014**  
**Realism to Surrealism: European art and culture 1848-1936**

**Reflections on British Modernism**

**Dr Victoria Carruthers**

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**Lecture summary:**

Modernism in Britain developed in a slower and more subtle way than it did in the more revolutionary European avant-garde. British art was influenced considerably by the 'primitive' aesthetic and expressive potential of Post-Impressionism, the dynamism of Cubo-Futurism, the Utopian abstractions of the Constructivists and the irrational dreamscapes of the Surrealists. In fact the first half of the twentieth century saw an explosion of formal experimentation across the visual, literary and musical arts in Britain in a successful attempt to steadfastly break with restrictive Victorian values and traditional Academy expectations. However, the strong cultural narratives of place, community and the notion of the individual in the historical context of the vast industrialised Imperial machine, bring the subject matter of modernist artists invariably back to landscape and portraiture. The innovation with which these artists approached such traditional genre painting has led to some of the most fundamental understandings of what it means to be a 'modern', human subject. This lecture is entitled 'reflections' on British modernism as I will pick up on these themes rather than attempting to provide a detailed overview of the period. We will examine some key works from around 1910 and finish in 1944 with Francis Bacon.

**Slide list:**

1. Walter Sickert (Camden Town Artists), *The Iron Bedstead*, c. 1905. Oil on canvas, Collection of the Earl and Countess of Harewood, UK.
2. Spencer Gore, *Gauguins and Connoisseurs at the Stafford Gallery*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 84 x 72cm, Private Collection
3. Roger Fry, *White Road with Farm*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 65 x 80cm, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.
4. Roger Fry, *River with Poplars*, 1912. Oil on wood, 56 x 70cm, Tate, London.
5. Harold Gilman, *Canal Bridge, Flekkefjord*, c. 1913. Oil on canvas, 46 x 61cm, Tate, London
6. Harold Gilman, *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 61 x 40cm, Tate, London.
7. Stanley Spencer, *Apple Gatherers*, 1912. Oil on canvas 71 x 92cm, Tate, London
8. \* Vanessa Bell, *Studland Beach*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 76 x 101cm, Tate, London
9. Vanessa Bell, *Portrait of Virginia Woolf*, 1912. Oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London.
10. Vanessa Bell, *The Tub*, 1917. Oil and gouache on canvas, 180 x 166cm, Tate, London.
11. Duncan Grant, *The Tub*, 1913. Watercolour and wax on paper on canvas, 76 x 55cm, Tate
12. Omega Workshop design flyer and dresses c. 1913
13. Omega Workshop design, c.1913
14. Wyndham Lewis, *Woman Ascending a Staircase*, 1911. Charcoal and gouache on paper, 95 x 65cm, Courtauld, London.
15. \*Wyndham Lewis, *The Crowd*, 1914. Oil and pencil on canvas, 200 x 153cm, Tate, London
16. Lewis, *Workshop*, 1914. Oil on canvas, 76 x 61cm, Tate, London

17. David Bomberg, *In the Hold*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 196 x 230cm, Tate, London.
18. David Bomberg, *The Mud Bath*, 1914. Oil on canvas, 152 x 224cm, Tate, London
19. Christopher Nevinson, *The Arrival*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 76 x 63cm, Tate, London
20. Christopher Nevinson, *Bursting Shell*, 1915. Oil on canvas, 76 x 56cm, Tate, London.
21. Nevinson, *La Mitrailleuse*, 1915. Oil on canvas, 61 x 50cm, Tate, London
22. Jacob Epstein, Torso from *Rock Drill*, 1913-14. Bronze, 70 x 58 x 50cm, Tate, London.
23. \*Mark Gertler, *Merry-Go-Round*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 193 x 142cm, Tate, London
24. Paul Nash, *We are Making a New World*, 1919. Oil on canvas, 71 x 91cm, Imperial War Museum, London
25. Paul Nash, *The Shore*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 86 x 111cm, Tate, London
26. Paul Nash, *Winter Sea*, 1925.
27. Paul Nash, *Wood on the Downs*, 1930. Oil on canvas, 71 x 91cm, Aberdeen art Gallery.
28. Ben Nicholson, *Dymchurch*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 30 x 40cm, Private Collection.
29. Barbara Hepworth, *Infant*, 1929. Wood, 43x27x25cm, Tate
30. Hepworth, *Figure of a Woman*, 1929. Corsehill Stone, 53cm, Tate.
31. Henry Moore, *Mother and Child*, 1924. Tate.
32. Hepworth, *Mother and Child*, 1934. Alabaster on marble, 23x45x19cm, Tate.
33. Hepworth, *Two Figures*, 1964. Slate on wooden base, 82x63x32cm, Tate
34. Ben Nicholson, *Trout*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 56 x 58cm, Private Collection
35. \*Ben Nicholson, *White Relief*, 1936, Tate, London.
36. Ben Nicholson, *White Relief Sculpture*, 1936, Tate, London.
37. \*Paul Nash, *Harbour and Room*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 91 x 72cm, Tate, London.
38. Roland Penrose, *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook*, 1936, Plaster, steel, paint on a wooden base, 70 x 66 x 82cm, Tate.
39. Francis Bacon, *Figures in a Garden*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 74 x 94cm, Tate, London
40. Graham Sutherland, *Welsh Landscape with Roads*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 61 x 91cm, Tate, London
41. Peter Lanyon, *Headland*, 1944. Oil on canvas, 50 x 77cm, Tate, London
42. Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, 1944. Oil on three boards, 94 x 73cm each, Tate, London

### Reference:

- Hammacher, A. M., Barbara Hepworth, Thames and Hudson, 1987.
- Harrison, C., *English Art and Modernism 1900-39*, Yale University Press, 1994.
- Remy, M., *Surrealism in Britain*, Ashgate, 1999.
- Spalding, F., *British Art Since 1900*, Thames and Hudson, World of Art Series, 1996.

Images:



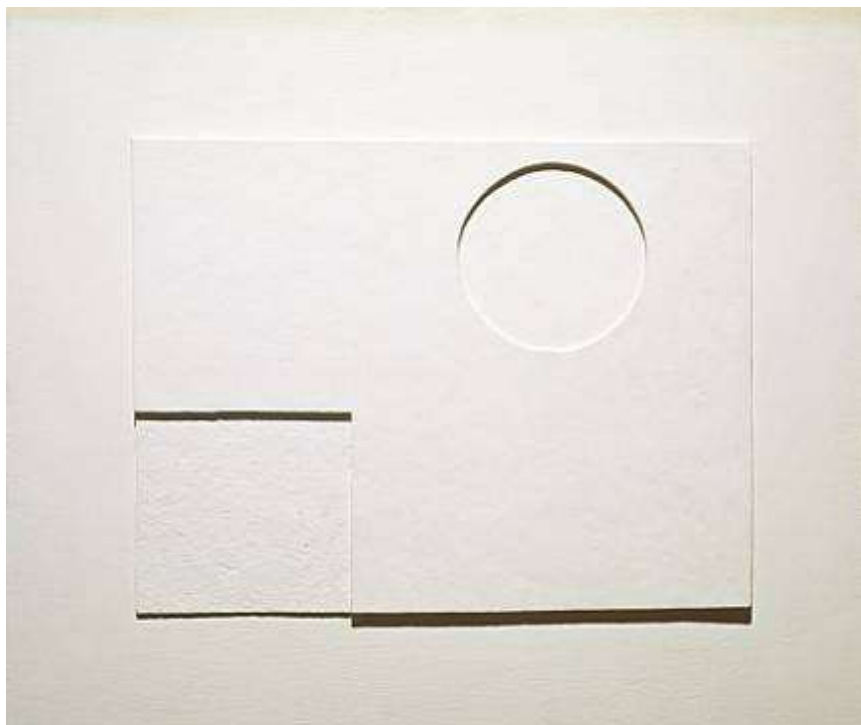
Vanessa Bell, *Studland Beach*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 76 x 101cm, Tate, London



Wyndham Lewis, *The Crowd*, 1914. Oil and pencil on canvas, 200 x 153cm, Tate, London



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