

ATTITUDES TO DRAWING IN BRITAIN, 1918-1964

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ABSTRACT

Numerous artists and theorists in Britain between 1918 and 1964 produced rich bodies of drawing-orientated work, yet these endeavours receive little analysis. In order to account for them as more than isolated anomalies, the nature and importance of drawing during the period needs to be reconsidered – not only within private practices, but also as a concept in the wider cultural field. When engaging with a medium that does not have a fixed identity, and so does not remain stable within a historical narrative, it is not enough to write figures back into history; it is necessary to excavate a history for figures to be written back into. The history of early-twentieth-century Britain must include the full spectrum of significant permutations of the concept of drawing, and this thesis takes steps toward uncovering these permutations and analysing their development in relation to each other.

The four chapters, approximately one from each decade, explore key concerns in the evolving significance of drawing. The introduction provides a theoretical foundation for the approach, historical evidence for the period's importance, and a methodology for treating drawing as a concept. The first chapter explores how Roger Fry and D. S. MacColl's 1918-1919 debate in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* introduced a theoretical conflict between modernism and drawing. The second chapter examines how reading for design in paintings led to increased awareness of drawings as material traces within other art-objects, notably watercolours. The third chapter explores the importance of the sketch aesthetic during the Second World War for conditioning a form of drawing literacy. The final chapter evaluates notions of objectivity in relation to William Coldstream's post-war experiments. These episodes combine to foreground the importance of understanding drawing's difficult relationship with modernism and to demonstrate how it underlies drawing's recent revival in current practice and theory.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	5
Acknowledgments	15
Introduction	16
Drawing: Terminological Distinctions	18
Drawing: A Working Vocabulary	20
Drawn-objects	20
Drawing-practices and Drawing-acts	21
Methodology	23
The Historical Period: 1918-1964 Britain	29
Literature Review	32
Drawing Literature	33
Historical Literature	36
Preview	38
CHAPTER 1	
Searching for the Noise in the Interior of a Drum:	40
Roger Fry, D. S. MacColl, and the Concept of Drawing, 1918-1919	
Fry, MacColl, and Their Literary Feuds	42
Roger Fry and Drawing	46
Fry, Tonks, and <i>Drawings by Deceased Masters</i>	51
Drawing as Art	55
D. S. MacColl and Drawing	61
MacColl's 'Mr. Fry and Drawing I-III'	63
MacColl and Design	69
Conclusion	75
CHAPTER 2	
Density and Depth:	76
Drawing, Watercolour, and Materiality in the 1920s and 1930s	
Watercolour and Drawing	78
The Importance of Watercolour	81
W. G. Constable and Materiality	85
The Growth of the Object and Looking Within Material Layers	90
Drawing and Materiality	95
Conclusion	101
CHAPTER 3	
Everywhere and Nowhere:	103
The Absent Draughtsman and the Sketch during the Second World War	
Drawing during the War	105
WAAC	107
Exhibiting Culture	112
Draughtsmanship	116
Popular Press	120
The Sketch-Aesthetic	125
The Sketch-Aesthetic as Performance	128
Sketch-Testimony	132
Sketch-Comment	136
Conclusion	144

CHAPTER 4	Objective Drawing:	146
	William Coldstream and Drawing-Practice in the Post-war Period	
	Sylvester and Drawing	149
	Coldstream and Drawing-Practice	157
	Coldstream's Life	158
	Coldstream's Method	163
	Distance, Space, Layering, and Duration	166
	The Objectivity of the Eye	176
	The Object of the Canvas	181
	Conclusion	183
	Conclusion	186
	Abbreviations Glossary	190
	Bibliography	191
	Illustration Gallery	216

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter 1

- 1.1. Henry Tonks, Untitled cartoon, c.1862-1936, ink on paper, 89 (h) x 114 mm (w), British Museum, London.
- 1.2. Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus* ('*The Rokeby Venus*'), 1647-51, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 177 cm, The National Gallery, London.
- 1.3. Henry Tonks, *Henry Tonks*, c.1900-1925, pencil on paper, 36.6 cm x 26.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 1.4. A. C. Cooper, *Portrait of Roger Fry*, 28 February 1918, sepia-toned vintage print, 19.8 x 15.0 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 1.5. Walter Stoneman, for James Russell & Sons, *Portrait of D. S. MacColl*, c.1916, bromide print, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 1.6. William Orpen, *Group Associated with the New English Art Club*, c.1904, pencil, black chalk (or charcoal), pen, ink, and watercolour on paper, 22.5 x 41.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 1.7. Eduard Manet, *La Toilette (recto)*, 1860, red chalk on laid paper, 29 x 20.8 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.8. Edgar Degas, *Two Seated Dancers*, c.1897-1901, charcoal on paper, 62.9 x 34.9 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.9. Antoine Watteau, *Satyr Pouring Wine*, 1717, black, red and white chalk on laid paper, 28.5 x 21.1 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.10. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Sketch for a Portrait of a Lady*, undated [nineteenth century], blue crayon on paper, 10.9 x 10 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.11. George Romney, *Woman with Child in her Lap* [eighteenth century], pen and brown ink, brown wash, and graphite on paper, 38.8 x 29 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.12. Joshua Reynolds, *Study for 'The Infant Hercules'*, c.1723-1792, brown wash over graphite on paper, 19.5 x 17.3 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.13. Thomas Gainsborough, *A Mossy Bank, with Bushes Above*, undated, graphite on paper, 15 x 19.5 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.14. Roger Fry, *Still life*, c.1917, graphite on paper, 23.4 x 35.2 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.15. Roger Fry, *Landscape*, 1925, graphite on paper, 24 x 35.1 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.16. Roger Fry, *Study of a Seated Woman*, 1922, black chalk on grey paper, 59.8 x 38.6 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.17. Exhibition Catalogue: *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, London: Grafton Galleries, 1910-1, Tate Archive, London.
- 1.18. Exhibition Catalogue: *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, London: Grafton Galleries, 1912, Tate Archive, London.
- 1.19. Paul Cézanne, *Study of Trees (Sous Bois)*, 1888-1890, watercolour and graphite on paper, 49.5 x 32.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

- 1.20. Paul Cézanne, *Hortense Fiquet (Madame Cézanne) Sewing*, c.1880, graphite, on pale cream wove paper, 47.2 x 30.9 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 1.21. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model (Nina Hamnett)*, 1918, pencil on paper, 36 x 24 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.
- 1.22. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model (Nina Hamnett)*, 1918, ink on paper, 36 x 23.5 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.
- 1.23. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model, Seated and Turned, in Profile Perdu*, c.1918, pencil on paper, 36 x 24 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.
- 1.24. Nina Hamnett, *Three Figures in a Café*, 1916, pencil and ink on paper, 10.5 x 13.6 cm, Charleston, Firlie.
- 1.25. Nina Hamnett, untitled, ink on paper, date and location unknown, published in: Roger Fry, 'Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art' II, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 34:191 (February 1919), [62-3, 66-7, 69] 67.
- 1.26. Duncan Grant, *Two Nymphs*, c.1925, pastel and graphite on paper, 35.5 x 26 cm, Charleston, Firlie.
- 1.27. Duncan Grant, *Study of a Man in a Hat*, c.1930, crayon sketch, 16.2 x 11.7 cm, Charleston, Firlie.
- 1.28. Amedeo Modigliani, *Seated Nude*, 1914, graphite and watercolour on paper, 54 x 41.6 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1.29. Amedeo Modigliani, *Woman in Profile*, 1910-11, charcoal and pastel on paper, 42.9 x 26.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1.30. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of Sir John Hay and His Sister Mary*, 1816, graphite on paper, 29.1 x 21.9 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.31. Raphael, *Heads of the Virgin and Child*, c.1509-1511, metalpoint on pale pink prepared paper, 14.3 x 11.1 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.32. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Lydia Lopokova*, 1919, graphite on paper, 35.6 x 25.1 cm, Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum collection (Photograph: James Beechey and Chris Stephens, eds., *Picasso & Modern British Art* (London: Tate, 2012), 91).
- 1.33. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Vladamir Polunin*, 1919, graphite on paper, 53 x 34 cm, private collection (Photograph: James Beechey and Chris Stephens, eds., *Picasso & Modern British Art* (London: Tate, 2012), 91).
- 1.34. Wyndham Lewis, *Two Mechanics*, c.1912, ink and watercolour on paper, 55.9 x 33.7 cm, Tate, London.
- 1.35. Wyndham Lewis, *Girl Reclining*, 1919, chalk on paper, 38.1 x 55.9 cm Tate, London.
- 1.36. Wyndham Lewis, *Crouching Woman*, c.1919, chalk and watercolour on paper, 27.9 x 38.1 cm, Tate, London.
- 1.37. Henry Tonks, *Auguste Rodin*, 1914, pastel on paper, 53.7 x 40 cm, Tate, London.
- 1.38. Alphonse Legros, *Study of an Old Man's Head*, c.1837-1911, red chalk on green prepared paper, 33.7 x 23.2 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.39. William Orpen, *Study of Bearded Man*, undated [possibly from his Slade years, 1897-1899], black chalk on paper, 52.8 x 40.7 cm, British Museum, London.
- 1.40. Augustus John, *Two Nude Studies*, c.1920-6, graphite on paper, 50.8 x 35.6 cm, Tate, London.
- 1.41. Augustus John, *The Artist's Children*, c.1915, ink on paper, 35.6 x 25.4 cm, Tate, London.

- 1.42. David John, *A Snake*, undated, details and location unknown, published in Roger Fry, 'Children's Drawings,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 30:171 (June 1917), [225-7, 231] 227, fig. D.
- 1.43. Walter Richard Sickert, title and details unknown, published in: Roger Fry, 'Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art' I, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 33:189 (December 1918), [201-3, 205-8] 203.
- 1.44. Duncan Grant, title and details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 203.
- 1.45. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait Monsieur Massine*, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 205.
- 1.46. Henri Matisse, ink drawing, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 207.
- 1.47. Henri Matisse, pencil drawing, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 207.
- 1.48. Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, c.1570, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 115.6 cm, The National Gallery, London.
- 1.49. D. S. MacColl, diagram and reproduction (with traced marks) of Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, published in: D. S. MacColl, 'Mr Fry and Drawing – III', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 35:196 (Jul 1919), [42-3, 45-6] 43
- 1.50. Albrecht Dürer, A Draftsman Making a Perspective Drawing of a Woman, woodcut; from *Underweysung der Messung*, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Photograph: Patrick Maynard, *Drawing Distinctions* (London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 34).
- 1.51. Unknown maker, 'Claude glass', 1775-1780, blackened mirror glass, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Chapter 2

- 2.1. Paul Nash, cloth covered sketch book containing drawings, watercolour sketches, and notes on miscellaneous topics, including the cottage at Oxenbridge', undated, 21.1 x 14.2 cm, Tate Gallery Archive, 8416.2.66.
- 2.2. Paul Nash, *Oxenbridge Pond*, 1927–1928, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 87.6 cm Birmingham Museums Trust.
- 2.3. Paul Nash, *Tench Pond in a Gale*, 1921-2, ink, graphite, and watercolour, 57.5 x 39.5 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.4. John Sell Cotman, *Doorway of the Refectory, Rievaulx Abbey*, 1803, watercolour and graphite on paper, 31.9 x 25.5 cm, [Purchased as part of the Oppé Collection, 1996] Tate, London.
- 2.5. John Sell Cotman, *Crowland Abbey*, c.1804, watercolour on paper, 21.6 x 15.9 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.6. *Benedictional of St Aethelwold: The Baptism of Christ*, c13101-49, British Library, Add. 49598 f.25v.
- 2.7. *Benedictional of St Aethelwold: Entry into Jerusalem*. Winchester, c.971-984 British Library Add. MS 49598, f. 45v, published in Herbert Read, 'English Art,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 63:369 (Dec 1933), [242-5, 248-9, 252-5, 258-61, 264-5, 268-71, 274-7] 245.
- 2.8. Howard Coster, *Laurence Binyon*, 1934, half-plate film negative, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 2.9. Felix H. Man (Hans Baumann), *Herbert Read*, 1940, bromide print, 38.4 x 25.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 2.10. Howard Coster, *Kenneth Clark, Baron Clark*, 1934, 25.4 x 20.3 cm film negative, National Portrait Gallery, London.

- 2.11. Blank & Stoller (New York, N.Y.), *W. G. Constable*, 1958, photograph, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- 2.12. Richard Wilson, *The Children of Niobe*, c.1755-60, black chalk and stump, heightened with white on grey paper, 26.3 x 39.6 cm, British Museum, London.
- 2.13. Richard Wilson, *A Fallen Tree Trunk, with a Seated Monk*, date not known, chalk on paper, 19.5 x 23.6 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.14. Francis Nicholson's four-part lesson on the stages of creating a watercolour from his *Practice of Drawing and Painting* (1820), published in: W. G. Constable, *The Painter's Workshop* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), plate 9.
- 2.15. Fresco under-drawing, king from *Adoration of the Magi*, Camposanto, Pisa; illustration in: Constable, *The Painter's Workshop*, plate 13.
- 2.16. Specially constructed easel at the National Gallery Laboratory, with panel under observation behind the fluorescent screen; published in: F. I. G. Rawlins, 'X-Rays in the Study of Pictures', *The British Institute of Radiology*, 12:136 (April 1939), [239-245] 240.
- 2.17. Anonymous Photographer, F. I. G. Rawlins, details unknown; published in: Anon. 'A Scientist among the Old Masters', *New Scientist*, 6:148 (17 Sep 1959), [456-7] 475.
- 2.18. Page of illustrations from: F. I. G. Rawlins, 'X-Rays in the Study of Pictures', *The British Institute of Radiology*, 12:136 (April 1939), [239-245] 244.
- 2.19. 'Simple Paint Structures' Diagram from: George L. Stout, 'Classes of Simple Paint Structure', *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts*, VI: 4 (April 1938), [220-239] 220.
- 2.20. Bernard Meninsky, *Standing Nude*, c.1930, chalk on paper. 24 x 9 cm; framed: 34 x 18.5 cm, Private Collection.
- 2.21. Bernard Meninsky, *Head of a Girl*, 1944, graphite on paper, 54.6 x 45.1 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.22. Walter Richard Sickert, *Portrait of Henri Rochefort* (recto), undated, pen and Indian ink on paper, 29.1 x 22.4 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 2.23. Walter Richard Sickert, *Sauce i aliste*, 1924, graphite, pen and ink, watercolour on paper, 27.9 x 21 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.24. Rodrigo Moynihan, *Study*, c.1935, watercolour, ink, and gouache on paper. 40.7 x 29.3 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.25. Rodrigo Moynihan, *Objective Abstraction*, c.1935-6, oil paint on canvas, 45.7 x 35.6 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.26. Adrian Stokes, *Landscape, West Penwith Moor*, 1937, oil paint on canvas, 60.9 x 50.8 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.27. William Coldstream, *Fort Burgoyne, Dover*, 1940, ink and graphite on paper, 26.3 x 19.1 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.28. Henry Moore, *Tube Shelter Perspective*, 1941, graphite, ink, wax, and watercolour on paper, 48.3 x 43.8 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.29. Barbara Hepworth, *Tibia Graft*, 1949, oil and graphite on paper, 52.2 x 37.3 cm, Wakefield Art Gallery, Wakefield.
- 2.30. John Piper, *Figure Drawing*, 1941, ink, crayon, and watercolour on paper, 37.6 x 27.5 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.31. John Piper, *Dungeness*, 1938, collage, blotting paper, lithographs, and coloured paper with black ink, 50 x 38 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), 13.)
- 2.32. Ben Nicholson, untitled, c.1932, graphite on paper, 49.8 x 39.0 cm, Tate, London.

- 2.33. Ben Nicholson, untitled (guitar), 1933, oil paint on board, 83.2 x 19.7 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.34. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen*, undated [possibly 1841], graphite, watercolour, bodycolour, scraping, pen, and red ink on paper, 23.3 x 29.6 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 2.35. David Jones, *Standing Figure*, 1921, graphite on paper, 41 x 33 cm, Tate, London.
- 2.36. David Jones, *Illustration to the Arthurian Legend: Guenevere*, 1938-40, graphite, ink, and watercolour, 62.5 x 49.5 cm, Tate, London.

Chapter 3

- 3.1. Feliks Topolski, cover of *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 November 1941).
- 3.2. Feliks Topolski, 'Convoy to Russia', *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 November 1941), [8-15], 8.
- 3.3. Unknown, photographer, *War Pictures by British Artists*, fifth touring exhibition (circulated by the Museums Association) at the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, January 1944 (Photograph: Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain, 1939-1945* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 170).
- 3.4. Unknown photographer, Percy Jowett and Muirhead Bone arranging paintings for the National Gallery War Exhibitions, *Evening Standard* (1 July 1940) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 179).
- 3.5. Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941: East End, Burnt Paper Warehouse*, 1941, gouache, pastel, graphite, and ink on paper, mounted on card, 67.3 x 113.7 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.6. Unknown photographer, Jane Clark (Kenneth Clark's wife) and Mary Agnes Hamilton (Vice-Chairman of the Women's Voluntary Services) with Graham Sutherland's *Twisted Girders* at reception for new room of WAAC pictures at the National Gallery, photograph originally published in *Tatler and Bystander*, 160 (21 May 1941) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 180).
- 3.7. Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941: East End, Wrecked Public House*, 1941, crayon, ink, pastel, and gouache on paper on plywood, 67.3 x 47.6 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.8. Anthony Gross, *A Ward for Plaster Cases*, 1942, ink and wash on paper, 34 x 51.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.9. Edward Bawden, *Siva Oasis: Aghurmi*, undated, watercolour on paper, 45.7 x 58.7 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.10. Edward Bawden, *Siva Oasis: The Village of Aghurmi*, watercolour and ink on paper, 56.9 x 69.9 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.11. Edward Bawden, *Sergeant W. Venes: Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester*, undated, watercolour on paper, 39.9 x 52 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.12. Henry Moore, *Women in a Shelter*, 1941, graphite, wax crayon, chalk, watercolour wash, pen, and ink on paper, 46.7 x 43.2 cm, Museum of London.
- 3.13. James Boswell, *NAAFI at No 1 Depot, RAMC, Crookham*, undated, ink and wash on paper, 33.3 x 52.8 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.16. Edward Ardizzone, *Sleeping in a Shelter*, 1940, watercolour on paper, 31.4 x 41.7 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.17. Feliks Topolski, *The Tube: October 1940*, 1940, ink and wash on paper, 35.1 x 48.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.18. Ethel Gabain, *Building a Beaufort Bomber*, 1941, lithograph, 29.2 x 46.9 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.

- 3.19. Engineering dimensioning drawing by Patrick Maynard (Photograph: Maynard, *Drawing Distinctions*, figure 41).
- 3.20. Unknown photographer, Meng and Jacqueline; published in: Anon. 'New Gorilla For The Zoo,' *The Times*, 48070 (11 Aug 1938), 7, column B.
- 3.21. Unknown photographer, Congo, details and location unknown (Photograph: Desmond Morris, *The Biology of Art: A Study of the Picture-making Behaviour of the Great Apes and its Relationship to Human Art* (London : Methuen & Co., 1962), plate 26).
- 3.22. Congo, drawing, November 1956, details and location unknown (Photograph: Morris, *Biology of Art*, figure 2).
- 3.23. Woodcut after Gardner's *The Battlefield of Antietam*, from *Harper's Weekly* (18 October 1862) (Photograph: Pierre Albert and Giles Feyel, 'Photography and the Media', *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998): [358-369] 361).
- 3.24. Alexander Gardner, *The Battlefield of Antietam*, 1862, Library of Congress, Washington (Photograph: Albert and Feyel, 'Photography and the Media,' 361).
- 3.25. Robert Capa, *Omaha Beach*, 6 June 1944 (Photograph: Fred Ritchin, 'Close Witness', *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998): [590-611] 33).
- 3.26. Dmitri Baldermants, *Attack*, 1941, Scott Hyde Collection (Photograph: Ritchin, 'Close Witness,' 33).
- 3.27. Feliks Topolski, 'Convoy to Russia', *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 November 1941), [8-15], 12-13.
- 3.28. Peter Lanyon, *Anticoli Hills*, c.1953, crayon and watercolour on paper, 41.6 x 51.9 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.29. John Piper, *All Saints Chapel, Bath*, 1942, ink, chalk, gouache, and watercolour on paper, 42.5 x 55.9 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.30. John Minton, *Summer Landscape*, 1945, pen and ink on paper, 62.2 x 78.7 cm, location unknown (Photograph: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 180).
- 3.31. John Craxton, *Reaper with Mushroom*, c.1944, conté crayon on blue paper, 43.2 x 61 cm, Christopher Hull Gallery, London (Photograph: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, between pages 192 and 193).
- 3.32. Detail of Stanley Spencer at a reception for a new room at the National Gallery, London, for WAAC art, in front of the Welders section of the 'Shipbuilding on the Clyde' series; published in *Tatler and Bystander* 160 (21 May 1941) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 180).
- 3.33. Leonard McCombe, Photographs of Stanley Spencer sketching a riveter at the Lithgow Shipyard, Clydeside, October 1943; published in 'A War Artist on the Clyde', *Picture Post*, 21:1 (2 October 1943), 7; Hulton Archive/Getty Images.
- 3.34. Unknown photographer, Feliks Topolski drawing in Levant, date and details unknown, Estate of Feliks Topolski Archive (Photograph: Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated).
- 3.35. Reg Speller, Photograph of Ethel Gabain painting air raid damage in London, November 1940, Hulton Archive/Getty Images.
- 3.36. Unknown photographer, still Paul Nash sketching at the Cowley aircraft dump from Jill Craigie's film, *Out of Chaos*, Tate Gallery Archive, London.
- 3.37. Lee Miller, still of Henry Moore sketching in the Holborn Underground Station in 1943 from Jill Craigie's film, *Out of Chaos* (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 74).

- 3.38. Feliks Topolski, *Polish General's Sister-in-Law*, 1941; published in 'Kiubyshev the New Capital', *Picture Post*, 9 (29 Nov 1941), [14-17] 16; and Feliks Topolski, *Russia in War* (London: Methuen, 1942), 81.
- 3.39. Feliks Topolski, *First Polish Review*, September 1941; published in 'Kiubyshev', 17; and Topolski, *Russia in War*, 83.
- 3.40. Edward Bawden, Detail of *Private G F Dunning, RASC*, 1943, watercolour on paper, 39.7 x 52.0 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.41. Anthony Gross, *The Guest Tent: Arab Legion*, 1942, ink and wash on paper, 33.6 x 50.8 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.42. David Bomberg, *Rhonda Bridge and Tajo*, 1935, charcoal on paper, 47.6 x 62.9 cm, Borough Gallery, London
- 3.43. David Bomberg, *Bomb Store*, 1942, charcoal on paper, 47.5 x 55.0 cm, Borough Gallery, London.
- 3.44. Ronald Searle, *In the Jungle - Self Portrait, Konyu, Thailand Jungle*, July 1943, ink wash on paper, 19.0 x 16.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.
- 3.45. Ronald Searle, *Siam 1943, Man dying of Cholera*, 1943, ink on paper, dimensions and location unknown; published in Ronald Searle, *To Kwai and Back: War Drawings 1939 – 1945* (London: Souvenir Press, 1986), 127.
- 3.46. Thomas Hennell, *The Tree*, c.1938-40, watercolour on paper, 31.8 x 48.3 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.47. Otto Dix, *Mealtime in the Trench (Loretto Heights)* [*Mahlzeit in der Sappe (Lorettoböhe)*] from *The War (Der Krieg)*, 1924, etching and aquatint from a portfolio of fifty etching, aquatint, and drypoints, 19.7 x 28.8 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 3.48. Feliks Topolski, German campaign diary, 1945, details and location unknown (Photograph: Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated).
- 3.49. Unknown artist (possibly Miriam ('Myra') Cendrars), drawing of Topolski, 15 May 1941, details and location unknown (Photograph: Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated).
- 3.50. David Low, untitled and unpublished, 1933, ink on paper, 28 x 31cm, Beaverbrook Foundation, London.
- 3.51. Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937, graphite and crayon on paper, 66.8 x 54 x 5.2 cm, Tate, London.
- 3.52. Gilbert Spencer, *Darling, What Have You Done with My Battledress?* 1941, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.
- 3.53. Gilbert Spencer, *I Wish I Wasn't Home-Guarding Tonight*, 1941, watercolour and graphite on paper, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.
- 3.54. Gilbert Spencer, *Dawn Patrol – the Converted Poacher*, 1942, watercolour and graphite on paper, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.
- 3.55. Unknown photographer, Detail of *Ernst Kris*, 1955, photoprint, Yale University. School of Medicine, New Haven.
- 3.56. Carolyn Djanogly, *Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich*, 3 May 1997, bromide fibre print, 33.8 x 26 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 3.57. Unknown photographer for International News Photos, *Mathilde Hollitscher (née Freud); Sigmund Freud; Alfred Ernest Jones*, 1937, vintage press print, 13.2 x 19.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 3.58. Illustration from E. Gombrich and E. Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 17, parts 3 and 4 (1938), [319-342] figure 10.

- 3.59. Honoré Daumier, untitled (a French lawyer reading a letter), c.1823-1879, pen and black ink with grey wash over black chalk on paper, 5.4 x 12.4 cm, British Museum, London.
- 3.60. Will Farrow, illustration for his *Practical Cartooning for Profit*, 3rd edition (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1931), 17.
- 3.61. Saul Steinberg, Untitled, 1948, ink on paper, 36.2 x 28.6 cm, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.
- 3.62. Max Beerbohm, *Significant Form*, c.1921, pencil and watercolour on paper, 32.5 x 21.5 cm, Charleston Collection, Firlle.
- 3.63. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*), plate 43 from *Los Caprichos*, c.1797-8, etching and aquatint, 21.5 x 15 cm, British Museum, London.
- 3.64. Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain, on 15 April 1834*, *L'Association mensuelle*, July 1834; 15 April 1834 [published early October], lithography; print on china paper, 28.5 x 44 cm, British Museum, London.
- 3.65. Thomas Rowlandson, *Evading the Broker's Man*, undated, pen and ink, watercolour on paper, 26.3 x 20.6 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.
- 4.66. David Low, caricature including the press baron and minister Max Aitken Beaverbrook (1879-1964), published in *Evening Standard News Letter*, Dec 1941, details and location unknown (Photograph: The British Cartoon Archive).

Chapter 4

- 4.1. Photographer unknown (probably Dr. John 'Jack' Rake), William Coldstream holding *Indian Soldier*, *Cairo* of 1944, date and size unknown, photograph, Tate Gallery Archive 8922.15.22.
- 4.2. William Coldstream, *Study for Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer)*, October 1959, pencil on paper, size and location unknown (Laughton, Coldstream, 205).
- 4.3. William Coldstream, *Nude Study [for Standing Nude]*, c.1977, graphite on paper, 27.9 x 20.3 cm, private collection (Photograph: Laughton, Coldstream, 285).
- 4.4. William Coldstream, *Reclining Nude*, 1953-54, oil on canvas, 87 x 134.5 cm, Arts Council Collection, Hayward Gallery, London (Photograph: James Hyman, *The Battle for Realism* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 154).
- 4.5. Lord Snowdon, *William Coldstream*, 16 April 1962, bromide print, 35.2 x 22.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 4.6. Ida Kar, *David Sylvester*, c.1960, vintage bromide print, 17.5 x 12.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 4.7. Lucian Freud, *Interior Scene*, 1950, pastel and conté crayon on paper, 57.1 x 48.2cm, location unknown (Photograph: Lucian Freud, *Lucian Freud On Paper* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), figure 89).
- 4.8. Lucian Freud, *Hercules*, 1949, 21.6 x 14 cm, location unknown (Photograph: Freud, *On Paper*, figure 97).
- 4.9. William Coldstream, *The Opera House Rimini, Interior (Bomb Damaged Theatre, Italy)*, c.1944, oil on canvas, 81.6 x 59.7 cm, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.
- 4.10. William Coldstream, *Preparatory Drawing (Study for Opera House, Rimini)*, 1944, graphite and ink on paper, 59.7 x 33.7 cm, private collection, (Photograph: St John Wilson, *The Artist at Work*, 23).
- 4.11 William Coldstream, *Broken Bridges over the Arno at Pisa*, 1944, pencil on paper, 17 x 23.5 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Euston Road School*, 246)

- 4.12. William Coldstream, *Ponte Vecchio, Florence*, June 1945, medium and size unknown, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Euston Road*, 252).
- 4.13. Victor Pasmore, *Nude*, 1941, oil paint on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm, Tate, London.
- 4.14. Victor Pasmore with *Hanging Relief*, 1965 (Photograph: Pasmore Estate website, accessed 13 Nov 2013, www.victorpasmore.com/html/cat_cons.htm).
- 4.15. Victor Pasmore, *Porthmeor Beach*, St Ives, 1950, ink on paper, 24.1 x 28.9 cm, Tate, London.
- 4.16. Victor Pasmore, *Points of Contact No. 3*, 1965, lithograph on paper, 63.5 x 86.4 cm, Tate, London.
- 4.17. William Coldstream, *Mrs. Winifred Burger*, 1936-7, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 54.6 cm, Tate Gallery, London.
- 4.18. William Coldstream, *Bolton*, 1938, oil on canvas, 71 x 91 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 54).
- 4.19. Humphrey Spender, *Photograph of Coldstream at Work on Bolton*, location and specifications unknown (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 54).
- 4.20. William Coldstream, *Nude Study*, 1955-7, graphite on paper, 29.6 x 38.1 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 196).
- 4.21. William Coldstream, *Nude Study*, 1955-7, graphite on paper, 29.6 x 38.1 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 196).
- 4.22. William Coldstream, *Standing Nude, Camberwell*, 1947, graphite and ink on paper, 27.4 x 15.4 cm, private collection, (Photograph: St John Wilson, *The Artist at Work*, p. 22).
- 4.23. William Coldstream, *Head of Sleeping Nude*, circa 1980, graphite on paper, size and location unknown (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 295).
- 4.24. William Coldstream, *Reclining Nude*, 1977, pencil on paper, 20.5 x 29.6 cm, private collection (Photograph: St John Wilson, *The Artist at Work*, 29).
- 4.25. William Coldstream, *Michael Reynolds*, c.1930, graphite on paper, 26 x 20.3 cm, private collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 20).
- 4.26. William Coldstream, *Temporary Bridge over the Volturno*, 1944, graphite on paper, 22.8 x 14 cm, Arts Council Collection, (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 96).
- 4.27. William Coldstream, *Sonia Brownell Asleep*, circa 1939-40, graphite on paper, 20.3 x 14 cm, private collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 65).
- 4.28. William Coldstream, *Study of Standing Nude*, c.1946, ink and graphite on paper, 20.3 x 13.8 cm, 'Sketchbook 9', TGA 89922.14.9, London.
- 4.29. William Coldstream, detail of *Reclining Nude Study*, 1 Feb 1946, ink and graphite on paper, 20.3 x 13.8 cm, 'Sketchbook 9', TGA 89922.14.9, London.
- 4.30-3. William Coldstream, three studies of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Santo Spirito, Florence, 'Sketchbook [10] (Italy, Florence)', 1945, graphite and black ink on paper, 17.5 x 25.5 cm, TGA 8922.14.10, London.
- 4.34. Michelangelo, *Awakening Slave*, 1516-19, marble, h. 267 cm, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.
- 4.35 William Coldstream, *Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer)*, 1959-1960, oil on canvas, 107 x 71 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 204).
- 4.36. Colin St. John Wilson, 'Work in Progress Photographs of Coldstream Portrait', 1981-2, photographed collage, size unknown, Tate Gallery Archive (Photograph: St. John Wilson, *The Artist at Work*, 25)

- 4.37. Detail of William Coldstream, *Sir Colin St. John Wilson*, c.1983, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127 cm, Private Collection, Pallant House, Chichester.
- 4.38. Francis Galton, *Composite Portrait by superimposition of photos seeking a generic portrait of the criminal*, from *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (J.M. Dent & Co., 1883) (Photograph: *New History of Photography*, 266).
- 4.39. William Coldstream, measurement study, (Sketchbook 16), 'Sketchbook (seated figure; birds)', undated, graphite and ink on paper, 26.3 x 21.3 cm, Tate Gallery Archive, London.
- 4.40. William Coldstream, demonstration drawing, graphite on paper, dimensions and date unknown, Strang Prints and Drawings Room, University College, London.
- 4.41. Illustration with original captions from Maurice de Sausmarez, *Basic Design: the Dynamics of Visual Form* (London: Studio Vista, 1964), 68.
- 4.42. Illustration with original captions from Maurice de Sausmarez, *Basic Design: the Dynamics of Visual Form* (London: Studio Vista, 1964), 75.
- 4.43. R. B. Kitaj, *Sides*, 1979, coloured chalks, on three separate sheets of yellow paper [framed together], 77 x 26.2 cm (average), British Museum, London.
- 4.44. David Hockney, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother, Mrs Laura Hockney, Bradford*, 1972, ink on paper, 43.2 x 35.3 cm, Tate, London.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores what it means to engage with a medium that does not have a fixed identity, and so does not remain stable within a historical narrative. The identity of drawing is decidedly volatile: the basic components of its practice are some of the oldest artistic ones known, and yet the materials, techniques, and functions associated with it are so varied that they are insufficient for establishing a logically discrete identity for the term ‘drawing’. Drawing is thus at once ahistorical, as it is not predicated upon technological progress in the way that something like photography is, and historical, as certain aspects of it appear beholden to the internal logics of individual epochs.¹ The history of drawing, then, appears both as a series of sharp ruptures and as a gradual conceptual reconfiguration, a dichotomy that presents a conundrum for art history, which as a discipline frequently relies on historical chronologies to locate progress and visual meaning: namely, How can a chronological history be uncovered without imposing a fixed identity on drawing? One possible answer – the method I have chosen – is to embrace the artificiality of the term ‘drawing’ within art history without dismissing its presence as a concept within history. The result approaches a translation experiment, excavating the permutations of what it meant to either invoke or subscribe to the concept of drawing at different cultural moments, and in turn looking at how these dialogues developed in relation to each other.

This approach can be directed toward many historical moments. I have chosen to look at its presence in Britain from 1918 to 1964 primarily for two reasons.² The first is a personal taste for marginalised drawn oeuvres within this period, and an initial curiosity as to why current historical narratives were insufficiently equipped to account for them and their importance outside of isolated biographies.³ The second motivation emerged from the first: if these histories can’t provide insight about particular drawn-objects and draughtsmen, there might be something fundamental lacking in painting- and sculpture-orientated histories of the

¹ In the interests of scope this thesis does not substantively engage with engineering or schematic drawing. For more on these, see: Clive Ashwin, ‘Drawing, Design and Semiotics’, *Design Issues*, 1:2 (Autumn 1984): 42-52; and Patrick Maynard, *Drawing Distinctions: the Varieties of Graphic Expression* (London: Cornell University Press, 2005). While technical aids, such as draughtsmen’s nets (discussed in chapter 1), could be considered forms of technological advancement, I consider these certain forms of representation rather than constituting the necessary conditions for drawing to be undertaken, as is the case with photography.

² Two further terminological clarifications: I use ‘Britain’ rather than ‘England’ or ‘London’ – despite putting much of my emphasis on the latter two – to allow for discussions of national character and an arena for reception that extended beyond English bounds. By titling the thesis ‘Drawing in Britain’ rather than ‘British Drawing’, I include non-British nationals who produced significant works during the period.

³ For list of examples see footnote 48.

period: drawing as an entity in these narratives appears to be so discordant that it falls outside the scope of any productive analysis. It is, however, precisely this awkwardness that can lead to elucidation when probed, as philosopher Philippa Foot advised: ‘Whenever I find myself tempted to pass over an odd thought, I press myself to do the opposite. So I’d say: stick with the odd thought, it’s gold. The philosophical interest is where the *trouble* is.’⁴ Drawing in Britain from 1918 to 1964 is just such an odd thought: it appears a cluttered, contradictory period, but beneath the confusion are strands of development that have resonance beyond Britain and beyond the historical period in question. That drawing does not seem to fit within the narratives of mid-twentieth-century British art is only because analysing it involves a complex system of values found in non-art historically conventional channels. When art production within an expanded cultural field is read for drawing, in light of the latter’s nature as a medium and as a concept, a rich family of preferences and dispositions emerges that condition the significance of drawing-practice.⁵ It is not enough to write figures back into history; it is necessary to excavate a history for figures to be written back into, and this history must include the full spectrum of significant permutations of the concept of drawing. The choice of time and place is thus fuelled by the particular need for an alternative history that can contribute to closing a gap in scholarship.

The four chapters that follow this introduction trace key manifestations of drawing from 1918 to 1964. For each chapter, roughly a decade in scope, I have selected a particular manner of engaging with drawing that reworks the concerns in the prior chapters, developing as it does into a continuous, if nebulous, collective sense of drawing. The sequential arrangement is not meant to isolate them within hermetically sealed periods, or to minimise the importance of the socio-political fault-lines that they bisect. Instead it is intended to show how they developed in relation to each other, providing the foundation for both the atrophy of the practice in the mid-1960s and its revival in the 1970s.⁶ What emerges is the paradoxical relationship between modernism and drawing-practice.⁷ As interest in

⁴ Quoted in: Alex Voorhoeve, *Conversations on Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 90.

⁵ The use of ‘family’ here nods to how drawing as a concept is like Wittgenstein’s ‘family resemblance’, which demonstrates that for some words it is futile to try to establish firm definitional boundaries or to locate a definitive core meaning. Just as genetic relationships in a family are evinced through shared features, no single feature of ‘drawing’ underlies its unity. See: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 31-2 [§65-6].

⁶ By ‘post-modern’ I refer generally to the avant-garde shift in the 1970s against modernism. See: Homi Babha, ‘Postmodern/Postcolonialism’, *Critical Terms for Art History*, Second Edition, eds. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 435-451.

⁷ I use ‘modernism’ throughout this thesis to refer generally to notions that art ought to engage with the conditions of industrialised Western culture from c.1850 to c.1950. Specifically it implies critical traditions, preoccupied with locating a property within a given medium (or practice) that can be distilled in order to reflexively engage with either aesthetics or experience – whether this be Roger Fry’s formalism or Clement Greenberg’s Formalism. See: Charles Harrison, ‘Modernism’, *Critical Terms*, 188-201.

asserting the intrinsic material properties of various mediums grew early in the period, more attention was directed to the identity of drawing. The resultant championing of its accessibility and raw expressivity, however, when combined with preferences for the demonstrative grandeur of painting and sculpture, ultimately devalued drawing, making it particularly vulnerable to the Pop and Conceptual Art attacks.⁸ This thesis does not offer a comprehensive history of this paradoxical relationship, nor is the scope of a PhD sufficient to present a comprehensive history of drawing concepts operating in mid-twentieth-century Britain. The aim of this research, instead, is to isolate one strand of drawing-practice within the period, without losing sight of the concept's shifting identity. In doing so, it provides a foundation for further research into understanding the conceptual terrain in which drawing-practice in the mid-twentieth century is embedded.

Drawing: Terminological Distinctions

The term 'drawing' has become so thinly spread that it lacks a clear definition, yet it is ubiquitous and the concept of drawing is immediately familiar.⁹ As a noun, it exists on a scale from functional notation to polished presentation drawings. Conceptually, the spectrum is porous: drawing can aspire to other mediums or be the object of such aspirations, rendering any set of technical or material properties insufficient for a logically valid definition, yet it can be recognised by its pictorial grammar, material traits, or in relation to extensions of its practice.¹⁰ Although it is unfashionable, and problematic, to assign a point on the scale of intentions where drawing becomes art or non-art, it is clear that it is an extendable skill that can be honed or left basic and can render exquisite likenesses, expressive marks, or simply a

⁸ By 'Pop Art' I refer to the international art movement, though only certain factions formed cohesive groups. Commonalities are predominantly the championing mass media tropes and images as well as often an ironic attitude to style and imagery. In Britain the movement is centred around the 'Independent Group' (including Richard Hamilton, Eduardo Paulossi, Lawrence Alloway among others) and the term 'Pop Art' originated at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. See: Anne Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945-59* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); and Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) and the Global Pop symposium, Tate Modern, London, 14-15 March 2013. By 'Conceptual Art' I refer to a term applied to works of the mid-1960s that foregrounded ideas over encounters with unique objects. For the arrival of and reaction against Greenbergian modernism in Britain, see: Alex Potts, 'Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s,' *Art History*, 27:2 (April, 2004): 283-304; and Jo Applin, 'When Form Became Formless: Art and Antagonism in the 1960s,' *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present*, eds. Dana Arnold and David Peters Corbett (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013): 180-198.

⁹ Much energy has been expended trying to define drawing; for surveys see: Deanna Petherbridge, 'Nailing the Liminal: The Difficulties of Defining Drawing,' *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research*, ed. Steve Garner (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2008): 27-41; and Edward Krcma, 'Drawing Time: Trace, Materiality and the Body in Drawing After 1940' (PhD diss., University College London, 2007), 16-27.

¹⁰ 'Mediums' is used throughout as the plural of 'medium' in order to avoid confusion with 'media', which here always refers to means of mass communication, such as television, newspaper, and radio.

directional arrow on a pavement.¹¹ What is considered a drawn-object or a drawing-process is accordingly broad, and has been extended ever further by conceptual, installation, performance, and computer art theorists.¹² Drawing is thus one of the most accessible forms of art, not only in regard to its materials and techniques, but also in public understanding – where oil painting requires specialist knowledge, sketching can be done by anyone with a mark-making implement. The scope of this category makes it susceptible to theoretical colonisation, with distinctions, when they gain hold, that can radically alter what it means to invoke the concept of drawing. Reading any particular drawn-object is conditioned by the values and dispositions circulating in the mind of the spectator at the moment of looking, a phenomenon Michael Baxandall called ‘the period eye’.¹³ The visual paradigm from which a spectator emerges influences the modes of relating to or interpreting a visual phenomenon, often spontaneously and subconsciously. In addition, drawn-objects’ public presences – or absences, remaining largely hidden in artists’ studios, private collections, and museum archives – also mean that their cultural capital subsists primarily as ideas, or representations, rather than in direct encounters with the objects themselves. It is these ideas and representations of drawings that are communicated between artists and between critical categories; they are what whet commercial appetites and pass through most of the art world’s channels of dissemination.

On a basic level it must be decided whether and how ‘drawing’ is an entity, or at least what notion is used for later analysis. The ontological concerns of this thesis are not to fix a definition of drawing, whether universally or during the periods in question, but to understand the constellations of meaning at a given time and place which serve as internalised systems of values inhibiting or empowering drawing production. Works that come under consideration are not only traditional products of the union of paper and graphite, but also the element in any artwork where there are underlying, tonal indications of a conceptual structure.¹⁴ I have intentionally left this criterion broad since drawing lies in the development, under the paint, and in the mind as much as in the product of the pencil or

¹¹ See footnote 9. Petherbridge argues that definitions unduly limit practice and interpretation: ‘Rather than arguing for reduction or proliferation of this rich theoretical humus [...] the urgencies and difficulties of defining drawing reflect its irresolute status – neither entirely medium nor message. The futility of attempting generalisations acts as an analogue of the very condition of drawing itself. Drawing is an immanence, always pointing to somewhere else – to a chain of serial development, another condition, another state, even when, as a gestural flourish it appears to have said everything in the most economical manner.’ Petherbridge, ‘Nailing the Liminal’, 37. See also: Krcma, ‘Drawing Time’, 16; and Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007).

¹² See: Angela Eames, ‘Embedded Drawings’, *Writing on Drawing*, 125-140.

¹³ See: Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

¹⁴ In this characterisation I borrow elements from Philip Rawson, *Drawing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 1.

pen. My interest is not in defining what is and what is not a drawn-object, but in discerning the recognised concepts of drawing in Britain between 1918 and 1964.

Drawing: A Working Vocabulary

Drawing as a concept is distinct from the term ‘drawing’. Where the former is a non-linguistic, psychological representation of a classification, the latter linguistically signifies this entity.¹⁵ The word ‘drawing’ has one set of meanings in its verb form (to draw) and another in its noun form (a drawing). To avoid confusion, the word ‘drawing’ (rather than the concept) is broken into three parts: ‘drawing-practice’, ‘drawn-object’, and ‘drawing-act’, a distinction I will clarify presently. When the concept is discussed, I refer to it simply as ‘drawing’.

Drawn-Objects

A drawn-object is an object that falls within the concept of drawing. It is not confined to fine art objects and as such resists expectations and notions of finish common to painting and sculpture. A model for approaching drawn-objects outside a fine art framework is provided by the scientific ‘working objects’ identified by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in *Objectivity* (2007).¹⁶ Their paradigmatic working objects are atlases and anatomical charts, which are created through a synthesis of perception, selection, and judgment and which serve as guides for further understanding and interpretation. They are, crucially, never complete, always evolving with increased knowledge. They are fundamentally functional reference objects: the viewer locates himself or herself in relation to their informational content. When drawn-objects are considered as working objects, their referential qualities are not always functional, but they are nevertheless present: because drawn-objects cannot, like oil paintings, be worked indefinitely by adding layers, the process of each mark as the trace of a gesture is emphasised. As a result, the viewer locates himself or herself in relation to the artistic processes, rather than with the figurative content as a window into another world, as in many oil paintings. This allows drawn-objects to escape direct comparison with the canons of painting and sculpture, from which they are distinct, and it also amplifies drawing’s role as social tool, as will be elaborated in relation to drawing-practices.

¹⁵ My understanding of the relationship of concepts and words follows from psychologist Gregory Murphy’s articulation of ‘representational theory of mind’ (RTM). Gregory L. Murphy, *The Big Book of Concepts* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2002), 385.

¹⁶ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone, 2007), 19.

Drawing-practice and Drawing-acts

The verb-form of drawing (to draw) refers to the artist's process of engagement with the activity of drawing. It also refers to how this endeavour relates to traces of the activity retained in the resulting object. There are therefore two distinct connotations: drawing-practice (an artist's engagement with drawing activities) and drawing-acts (the force and point of drawing activity).

Drawing-practice is the traditional sense of the verb 'to draw'. It is the prolonged, honed, and developed activity of the artist, and thus involves the particular manner and style of each artist. Like the term 'studio practice', it refers simply to the activity that is practiced. By accentuating the word 'practice', its relationship to social practices is also emphasised. Following Michel Foucault's notion of 'discursive practice' and Louis Althusser's notion of 'practices', this stresses drawing-practice's role within society as a transformative force.¹⁷ Like discursive practice, drawing-practices are part of dynamic relationship between thought (involving language and values) and practice. It involves manual dexterity, but it also embraces the conceptual structures that guide the manual and intellectual decisions, both conscious and subconscious. One of the connotations of drawing being a social practice, to follow Anne Bermingham's foundations in *Learning to Draw* (2000), is that drawing is a form of technology – not in the sense of technology as a tool or skill, but in the sense that it is a conduit through which the external world is encountered and processed.¹⁸ Changing fashions in how to draw become perceptual or technological innovations relating to how reality is encountered (or perceived) and interpreted (or aestheticised).¹⁹ I will discuss the relationship between practice and conventions more in relation to the methodology, but here it is important only to establish the ramifications of drawing as a social device.

¹⁷ The term, 'discursive practice' refers to a culturally and historically specific set of rules for producing and organising different forms of knowledge. Like the grammar of a language, this shapes and allows certain rules to be made rather than imposing external determinations on peoples' thought. See: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); it is discussed in relation to drawing-practice in Anne Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 247. Louis Althusser's 'practices' refers specifically to processes of transformation: 'By practice in general I shall mean any process of transformation of determinate given raw material into a determinate product, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means [of production].' This extends to ideological practices, which use ideology (a narrative or story we tell ourselves). See: Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1969), *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 166 (definition of ideology: 162).

¹⁸ Bermingham, *Learning*, x-xi.

¹⁹ My use of the term 'technology' adopts Nicholas Mirzoeff's conception of 'visual technologies', which includes both materials and techniques as 'the technology that enables and sustains the [visual] sign'. See: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), 13. Bermingham also applies a form of Althusser's notion of 'interpollation' to drawing-as-technology: the practice of drawing helps individuals negotiate their subjectivity in relation to external narratives (be they history or aesthetics). See: Bermingham, *Learning*, x-xi. Althusser, 'Ideology', 174. Unlike Bermingham, I see no reason to confine this type of analysis to socio-cultural historical studies – through the working object this also functions within fine art.

Within drawing-practice are drawing-acts. I use this term to refer on the one hand to the specific actions that bring forth a drawn-object. On the other hand they also characterise the drawn-object: they are the point and force of the drawn-object, rather than an element within it.²⁰ A drawing-act can be clarified in comparison to philosophical discussions of ‘speech acts’, particularly from the pioneering work of J. L. Austin and his student John Searle. A drawing-act is like a speech-act in that it is an assertion made by means of a (visual) utterance.²¹ Regardless of the content of the drawing, the artist is drawing something, and is thus putting forward marks and shapes that have representational or compositional meaning, akin to Austin’s ‘locutionary’ act (the act of ‘saying something’ in the full normal sense).²² The artist is also doing something *by* drawing. This ‘doing’ has both a point that either drives it or emanates from it, as well as an assertive force, akin to Austin’s ‘illocutionary’ act, the quality of assertion in the utterance.²³ The act relies on intention and reception, but the intention is not merely the intention *to* perform the drawing-act, but the intention *in* performing. This relationship to intention is key: it complicates intention, allowing for persuasive contextual factors that sway the speaker, or artist, in the midst of production. It

²⁰ Rawson adopts a form of this concept in *Drawing*: a drawing as a communication (as inspired by Marshall McLuhan) has a ‘topic’. This is not merely subject matter, but is made up of its ‘tenor’ (‘what promotes the extension of forms in space,’ or the visual arrangements that act like a plot or ‘tent-poles’) and its ‘special meaning’ (an aesthetic or intellectual significance arising from how the tone is treated, a ‘numinous power’ supported by the tent poles of the tenor): ‘That a Poussin drawing may represent a particular classical myth is certainly important. But it is important only as a beginning, a first step in the evolved statement. What actually conveys Poussin’s unique meaning is the complex of forms with which he invests that mythical subject.’ See: Rawson, *Drawing*, 5-6. For Rawson these are aesthetic moods communicated by facture. I use ‘force’ and ‘point’, in contrast, to emphasise a historical complexity: a critical and reflexive direction to the acts engaging with the historically specific conventions they operate within. This language (force and point) is adopted from Quentin Skinner, who holds that a text is the product of historically specific conventions, some of which are resisted and some adopted, subconsciously or consciously, to expedite persuasiveness. See: James Tully, ‘The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner’s Analysis of Politics,’ *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), [7-25] 7-13. The idea that the process is reflexive is also indebted to Julia Kristeva’s notion of ‘signifying processes’, which does not take the final state of a text for granted, but reads for what within the text resists the processes of its creation. See: Kristeva, ‘The System and the Speaking Subject,’ *Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 24-33.

²¹ This contrasts with popular analogies of drawing as either thinking or writing, such as those following the semiotic approach to drawing or the linguistic turn in art history. For more on the linguistic turn, see: Keith Moxey, ‘Visual Studies and the Iconic Turn,’ *Journal of Visual Culture*, 7:2 (2008), [131-146] 131-2. Although not consonant with my usage, which derives from Austin and Searle, Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses ‘utterances’ in ‘Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence’ (1952, republished in *Signs*, 1960) as a form of tacit or silent language, which provides a model for how to apprehend sensory, material meaning. For full discussion, see: Alex Potts, ‘Art Works, Utterances, and Things,’ *Art and Thought*, eds. Dana Arnold and Margaret Iversen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003): 91-110.

²² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 95. Austin was the founder of a general theory of speech acts. This work was first outlined in ‘Words and Deeds’, his William James lectures, which were first delivered at Oxford in 1952. They were later published as *How to Do Things with Words* at Harvard in 1955, and edited by J. O. Urmson, republished in 1962 (revised edn by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà, 1975). P. M. S. Hacker, ‘Austin, John Langshaw (1911–1960),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30505> (accessed 29 May 2013).

²³ ‘Assertoric force’ (or ‘Behauptende Kraft’) was introduced by Gottlob Frege in ‘Der Gedanke, Beiträge zur Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus’; reprinted in Gottlob Frege, *Funktion, Begriff, Bedeutung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 22. The notion was taken up by Austin in 1975. Austin, *How to*, 99–100.

also involves the content having meaning (the timeliness of the action as well as its referents). This refers to the artist as an agent – as someone capable of acting in the world (rather than having things done to them) – as well as to the limitations and conditions of action. In relation to the latter, it is not what the artist prepares to do, but what guides the doing and what the action achieves through the doing (rather than pure intention).²⁴ This nullifies the contention that drawn-objects not intended to be ‘presentation drawings’ are private acts for private purposes.²⁵ Like a speech act, a drawn-act is an external (and therefore public) action. It may be tempting to exclude some drawn-objects that the artist did not want viewed by others’ eyes, but even if the artist is only in dialogue with the paper, it is nonetheless a dialogue and thus a drawing-act, granting autonomy to the drawn-object. Each drawn-object, and drawing-act, are subject to subtle considerations about the relationship between an artist’s intention *to* act, an artist’s intention *in* acting, and the sets of underlying constitutive rules that mediate the action, which include both visual and conceptual conventions.²⁶

Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to excavate a history of drawing without imposing a fixed identity upon it. As discussed earlier, one way to do this is to embrace the variable nature of drawing by addressing its identity as a concept. Engaging with the operation of concepts through various epochs and collectivities requires looking for and positioning visual paradigms, etymological conventions, and the predispositions that shape common experience.

²⁴ The notion of drawing-act as speech-act distances drawing from analogies to writing since it is the expressive potential of the mark that primarily directs the mood of the image. For a discussion on drawing and writing, see: Martine Reid and Nigel P. Turner, ‘Editor’s Preface: Legible/Visible,’ *Yale French Studies*, 84 (1994), 1-12, and Claire Gilman, Melissa Gronlund, Kate Macfarlane, eds., *Drawing Time Reading Time / Marking Language* (London: Drawing Room/The Drawing Centre, 2013).

²⁵ One example of this view is A. A. Gill, who wrote: ‘Artists don’t see their drawings the way the public does. Or indeed the way critics do. Drawing is to an artist what scales are to a pianist, skipping is to a boxer, or a boyfriend is to lap dancers. They’re practice and preparation. And they’re personal. They’re the place the artist goes to work out possibilities.’ A. A. Gill, *From the Cradle to the Grave: Selected Drawings, Damien Hirst* (London: Other Criteria, 2004), quoted in Judith Winter, ed., *Draw: Conversations around the Legacy of Drawing*, (Middlesbrough: Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, 2007), 100.

²⁶ An extension of this for future research is to consider how this model of intention aligns with Searle’s ontologically distinct notion of collective intentionality, where humans have both a singular intentionality (I believe, desire, intend, etc.) and a collective one: ‘where I am doing something only as a part of our doing something’. The pre-Searle conception of collective intention held it to be a concert of overlapping or simultaneous individual intentions embedded with beliefs about what others believe and intend. Searle holds that embedded individual belief systems do not add up to collectivity: ‘No set of “I Consciousness” even supplemented with beliefs, add up to a “We Consciousness.” The crucial element in collective intentionality is a sense of doing (wanting, believing, etc.) something together, and the individual intentionality that each person has is derived from the collective intentionality that they share.’ John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 23-5.

Two crucial methodological decisions underpin what follows: a choice to concentrate on practice and a choice to situate the analysis in a social context. Accessing drawing's identity through concepts of drawing-practice arises on the one hand from the rich textual and aesthetic resources for doing so and on the other from the widespread twentieth-century belief that an essential trait of drawn-objects was the foregrounding of drawing-practice. In *Chats on Old English Drawings* (1923), Randall Davies described the appeal of a drawn-object as similar to that of an autograph – it provides insight into how artists 'laboured to alter and correct' – just as John Berger wrote in the late 1950s that 'in front of a drawing he [the spectator] identifies himself with the artist, using the images to gain the conscious experience of seeing as though through the artist's own eyes', rather than the identification with the subject elicited by a painting or statue.²⁷ The understanding has persisted: Louvre curator and scholar Françoise Viatte wrote in 1991 that 'to look at a drawing is to take hold of its temporal actuality, to become conscious of the suspended time of the painter's own irresoluteness'.²⁸ Norman Bryson extended this proximity to drawing's being perpetually in the 'present tense', which contrasts to oil painting's existence 'in the tense of the completed past'.²⁹ To read a drawn-object as suspending time or as in the present tense fundamentally involves anachronism – the projection of current paradigms onto a historical artefact. This is a historical fault, but one that has been appropriated in recent years to serve as a productive means of understanding the complex temporality of objects, such as Warburg's 'afterlife', or *Nachleben*, and more recently in Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood's *Anachronic Renaissance* (2010).³⁰ In the latter, certain objects, particularly icons, are attributed a double-history. According to Nagel and Wood, though objects were authored and singular, they were made to be effective surrogates for ur-representations, such as the body of Christ.³¹ In keeping with drawing being just such an example of broken time or performed continuum,

²⁷ Randall Davies, *Chats on Old English Drawings* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1923), 32. John Berger, 'The Basis of all Painting and Sculpture is Drawing' [c.1954-1959], *Permanent Red: Essays in Seeing* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1979), [23-30] 24-25.

²⁸ Françoise Viatte, 'Weaving a Rope of Sand', trans. Roland Racevskis, *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), [85-102] 87. Originally published as 'Tisser une corde de sable', *Repentir*, exh. cat. [12 March – 17 June 1991] (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1991).

²⁹ Norman Bryson, 'A Walk for a Walk's Sake', *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (London: Tate and The Drawing Center, 2003), [149-158] 149. For more on temporality, see: Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999); Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Limits of Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park: University of Pennsylvania, 2005); Moxey, 'Visual Studies'; Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010); and Hayden White, 'The Burden of History', *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27-50.

³⁰ For a sensitive discussion of Warburg, see: Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology', *Oxford Art Journal*, 25:1 (2002), 61-9. Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic*.

³¹ See: Hal Foster, 'Preposterous Timing', review of *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time*, by Alexander Nagel and *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum*, by Amy Knight Powell. *London Review of Books*, 34:21 (2012), 12-14.

Deanna Petherbridge hailed drawing (practice and objects) as spaces for artists to meet ‘outside the specificity of the period’, and thus outside the aesthetic and ideological demands on their painted or sculpted works, enabling Romney and Matisse, who are distinct as painters, to share drawn aesthetic affinities.³² Without devaluing the aesthetic experience of this present tense in drawn-objects, the foregrounding of practice must also foreground social context. To set aside Petherbridge’s aesthetic affinities for the moment, experiencing the performance of the draughtsman, while vitalising, *is* a historical experience, albeit one that encourages empathy. To step into the intentions, perceptions, and manual sensitivities of another, even of one’s past self, is to step into a historical moment. The experience of the present tense does not break history: the practice is the author and the author exists in a socially conditioned context.³³ Therefore, while I endorse Petherbridge’s claim that drawing is an alternative space to painting and sculpture, I reject the notion that this space is free from social pressures.³⁴

Recent debates about the nature of medium(s), particularly those centrally involving Rosalind Krauss and Hans Belting, have fed into notions of how mediums can be situated, or not situated, historically. These discussions also provide important precedents for my approach to drawing as a complex of self-conscious behaviours and dispositions through which artistic experience must pass.

Medium is a contentious notion: at its most etymologically basic it is the something that stands between two things (including a point of transformation). An expanded characterisation includes: material or physical kinds (e.g. graphite, paint, or bodily movement) or ranges of effects realisable in material or physical kinds (e.g. texture, tone, colour, or pitch), ways of purposively realising the specific effects (e.g. brushstrokes or

³² Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing: An Artist’s View* (London: Southbank Centre, 1991), 17. A form of this ‘transnationalism’ is reiterated in *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010), 12-3.

³³ This is related to notions of the historian as a subject of the historical product. See: White, ‘Burden of History’, and *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). See also: Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical*, 5-11.

³⁴ Petherbridge’s endorsement of ahistorical universalism for drawing-practice is problematic. First, Romney and Matisse were aesthetically quoting respective, historically-conditioned notions of classicism, and thus they were both quoting a similar root in reaction to exactly the social pressures that Petherbridge claims they escaped from. Part of the problem is that this binary notion of social and asocial (or historical and ahistorical) lacks subtly in light of recent art historical reflections into the past and the present as having a two-way dynamic relationship, from which a historical consciousness arises. Claims of ahistoricism run the risk of falling into what Mieke Bal calls ‘paranthocentrism’ (a historical version of ethnocentrism or phallocentrism, which assumes that one’s own position is normal and thus able to apprehend an ahistorical universal quality) – thus the continued popularity of Matisse’s drawn-objects should call into question the applicability of reading his aesthetic as ahistorical. See: Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (Oxford: Maxwell Macmillan, 1995); and Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, 19.

gesture), as well as systems of signs (e.g. languages).³⁵ In Anglo-American theory, medium remains associated with Clement Greenberg's notion of medium-specific theory, which advocated that avant-garde art should reflexively engage with properties inherent in a given medium.³⁶ Practitioners and theorists from the 1960s onwards countered this approach as elitist and simplistically materialist.³⁷ And with the simultaneous ascendancy of mass media and cybernetics, scholarship further expanded to account for new permutations and hybrids. Branches include media studies, founded upon Marshall McLuhan's theorisation of the means of communication trumping the content of the message, and 'intermedial theory', which emphasises the porousness of the nature and significance of medium, as proposed by Jürgen E. Müller, Éric Méchoulan, and Walter Moser.³⁸ A third is the 'iconic-turn' (or 'pictorial turn') in the art history of Gottfried Boehm, Hans Belting, Horst Bredekamp, James Elkins, and W. J. T. Mitchell. A counterpoint to the 'linguistic turn' (which holds that experience is filtered through language), the iconic turn proposed that a viewer can have a substantive and unmediated relationship to an art object.³⁹ In Belting's model, medium is the

³⁵ David Davies, 'Medium in Art,' *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 181-191.

³⁶ Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961). Stephen C. Foster, 'Clement Greenberg: Formalism in the '40s a '50s', *Art Journal*, 35:1 (Autumn 1975), [20-24], 21. For medium specificity as a purity of means, see also: Hans Hofmann, 'Painting and Culture,' in *Search for the Real, and Other Essays*, ed. Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr. (Andover: Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, 1948), [60-64] 63. For history of the term medium, see: Andrew Harrison, 'Medium', *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, *Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 1 Nov 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0347>.

³⁷ See: Potts, 'Tactility', 283-304; Applin, 'When Form Became Formless,' 180-198.

³⁸ McLuhan's well-known dictum that 'the medium is the message' refers to how the form of the message, rather than its content, directs how it is perceived. For Marshall McLuhan, see: *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962); *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 1964 [1999]); McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967); and *Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967). McLuhan's reflection reached Britain in part through the critic Lawrence Alloway, who imported a copy of *The Mechanical Bride* shortly after its publication and incorporated its notion of 'low' and 'high' art into one 'long front of culture' in an influential article: Lawrence Alloway, 'The Long Front of Culture', *Cambridge Opinion*, 17 (1959): 25-6. Additionally McLuhan was a former student of the seminal literary theorist I. A. Richards. Intermediality, in contrast, was characterised by Müller as a 'research axis' and a 'research concept'. Jürgen E. Müller, 'Intermedialität und Medienhistoriographie', *Intermedialität – Analog/Digital. Theorien – Methoden – Analysen*, eds. Joachim Paech and Jens Schröter (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008), [31-47] 31. See also: *Intermedialität. Formen moderner kultureller Kommunikation* (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1996); Jean-Luc Godard und die Zwischen-Spiele des Films', *Godard intermedial*, eds. Volker Roloff and Scarlett Winter, (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1997), 108-128; and Ágnes Pethő, 'Intermediality in Film: A Historiography of Methodologies', *Acata University Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*, 2 (2010), 39-72. For Eric Méchoulan, see: 'Intermedialités: Le temps des illusions perdues. Intermedialités' (Montreal: CRI, Université de Montréal, 2003), 9-27. For Walter Moser, see: 'L'interartialité: pour une archéologie de l'intermedialité', *Intermedialité et socialité*, eds. Marion Froger and Jürgen E. Müller (Münster: Nodus, 2007), 69-92.

³⁹ Moxey, 'Visual Studies', 135. For W. J. T. Mitchell, see: 'The Pictorial Turn', *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11-34; 'Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*, eds. Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Williamstown: Clark Art Institute, 2002), 231-50; *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1986); and *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994). For Gottfried Boehm, see: 'Die Widerkehr de Bilder', *Was ist ein Bild?* (Munich: Fink, 1994), 11-38. For Hans Belting, see: *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Fink, 2001), published in English as *An*

transfer point, wherein images manifest and are transmitted; it also is a proxy for the body, providing a home for the images in the absence of the performing or perceiving bodies. The most important aspect of this discussion for this thesis is the malleable nature of the concept of medium, which has become not merely a physical set of properties but an abstract concept defined by its property of mediating our visual experiences.

A fourth important contribution to the discussion of medium comes from Rosalind Krauss. Having announced the dawn of the post-medium condition of post-modernism in 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979) – in her words, seeking to 'draw a line under the word medium, bury it like so much critical toxic waste and walk away into lexical freedom' – she has recently returned to the concept of medium, calling instead for recognition of its importance and necessity.⁴⁰ In *Under Blue Cup* (2011) Krauss revives Stanley Cavell's 1970s discussion of medium, which he replaced with 'automatism'. Cavell held that the 'idea of medium is not simply that of physical materials, but of a materials-in-certain-characteristic-applications'; in other words, just as wood is not a medium without the art of sculpture, medium *is* the existence of discovered conventions that make expression possible (such as a march or a fugue within music), and so 'the task is no longer to produce another instance of art but a new medium [or means of expression] within it'.⁴¹ Cavell termed this new medium creation an 'automatism', a neologism that reflects how once discovered, its conventions for expression gain momentum and generate new instances of itself.⁴² Krauss draws primarily from the temporal connotations of 'automatism' while retaining the word 'medium'. She argues that medium is not simply a chain of reinterpretation from old to new, but that the rules at its heart deal with memory (bearing witness to possible material manipulations) and forgetting (since stultifying rules must be innovated beyond), leading artists to confirm the past and invent it anew. When the history and materiality of a medium are forsaken, then so

Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); 'Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology', *Critical Inquiry*, 31:2 (2005), 302-19; and *Das echte Bild: Bildfragen als Glaubensfragen* (Munich: Beck, 2005). For James Elkins, see: 'Art History and Images that Are Not Art', *Art Bulletin*, 77:4 (1994), 533-71, *The Domain of Images* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); and *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003). For Horst Bredekamp, see: 'Drehmomente – Merkmale und Ansprüche des Iconis Turn', *Iconic Turn: Die Neue Macht der Bilder* (Cologne: Du Mont, 2004); *Darwins Korallen Sie frühen Evolutionsdiagramme und die Tradition der Naturgeschichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2005); and Horst Bredekamp and Gabriele Werner, eds., 'Editorial', *Bilder in Prozessen Bildwelten des Wissens Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik* 1 (2003), 7-8.

⁴⁰ For the 'post-medium condition' see Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 277-284. For her volte-face, see: *A Voyage in the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000); Rosalind Krauss and Y.-A. Bois, Hal Foster and B.H.D. Buchloh, 'Roundtable: The Predicament of Contemporary Art' in *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004); *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010); and *Under Blue Cup* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).

⁴¹ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York: Scribner, [1969]), 221, and *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 103.

⁴² Cavell, *World Viewed*, 115. For more, see: J. M. Bernstein, 'Cavell on Film, Television, and Opera', *Stanley Cavell*, ed. Richard Eldridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) [107-142] 120.

too is the medium itself and the ability to generate new rules and new forms of art. Where this impacts my discussion is Krauss's resistance to essentialism and ahistoricism without imposing a material identity on the medium. My interests, in contrast to Krauss's, are primarily in *a* medium: not for what it offers but in how its inherent volatility makes it a rich historical resource. She provides an important precedent for sensitively approaching this subject – providing insight into the momentum of rules within a subtle notion of medium – but she does not offer a model for substantive engagement with a particular medium in history.

As this thesis is an experiment with tracking drawing through time, it is also concerned with concepts within a collective consciousness.⁴³ Rather than follow Krauss's narrow, fine art sense of pertinent visual sources, I look instead to an expanded cultural field. One means of gaining insight is Baxandall's 'period eye', as already mentioned, which looks to how perception of an object is conditioned by the values and dispositions circulating in the mind of the spectator at the moment of looking. Another method for tracking a concept is Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', which he defined in *An Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972) as a system of 'durable, transposable, dispositions [...] principles of the generation and structuring practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules'.⁴⁴ It is a set of dispositions that structure preferences and action without the stifling repression of a self-conscious system. A habitus emerges from informal, unconscious learning. A person (or 'agent') conforms to a habitus by experiencing the shape that it gives to shared practices. Bourdieu introduced another term, 'doxa', for the preconceptions that emerge from the habitus, which are unexamined preferences usually taken for granted.⁴⁵ This thesis is interested in notions of drawing that were taken for granted as well as those notions that were consciously experimented with. The particular import of Bourdieu for drawing scholarship lies in the weight he gives unquestioned preconceptions, which in drawing may greatly affect the practice. Agreed-upon, conscious, and fixed values can be traced through groups, such as exhibiting elites (e.g. academies), pedagogic institutions (e.g. art schools), and artist networks

⁴³ 'Collective consciousness' does not here refer to group solidarity, but to something akin to Hegel's 'objective spirit', understood as culturally distinct patterns of social interaction that emerge from individual self-consciousnesses within a collective and that form a matrix within which these individual self-consciousnesses can exist. I do not, however, import a rigorous understanding of such, or the rest of Hegel's framework for history. Further, I insist on a version of the concept that accepts individual agency, as will be discussed in relation to Bourdieu. See: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, [1807] trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), section B.B., chapter VI: 'Spirit', 263-409. See also: Paul Redding, 'Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/hegel/.

⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *An Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 72.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 164.

(e.g. self-conscious ‘movements’), but restricting scholarship to conscious tropes runs the danger of limiting history to avant-gardism and thus losing important historical details that lie along its margins.

The final noteworthy aspect of my methodology was the choice to look for the concept of drawing within textual sources, which were both less understood and more public than visual articulations of the concept during the period under analysis. Thus despite the emphasis on theory in this introduction, what follows in the ensuing chapters is primarily history and historiography. I have not, therefore, rigorously applied Bourdieu’s sociological methodology, but have used its theoretical groundings to open space for a thorough engagement with the manifestations of drawing within each chapter. In all cases I have endeavoured to evaluate compromising pressures whether they be commercial ones on publishing, private alternative agendas, or fashionable but misleading self-deprecation. My method of terminological-conceptual excavation, then, follows more closely on the precedent set by Viatte’s ‘Weaving a Rope of Sand’ and by Daston and Galison’s *Objectivity*.⁴⁶ The ensuing chapters track the concept of drawing-practice through public debates in journals, manuals, and lectures as well as the presence given to drawn-objects and drawing-practices within the culture. Often this takes the form of looking for values of drawing nested in larger debates, but it also frequently examines explicit public engagement.

The Historical Period: 1918-1964 Britain

Britain from 1918 to 1964 presented an enigmatic cultural moment for drawing, one of transition and fertile production and yet one that is also insufficiently accounted for by the dominant art historical narratives. The reasons why this period has been overlooked – Foot’s odd thoughts – are also the reasons why it is a fertile, if complex, period in which to consider drawing.

Britain is a rich cultural region for research into drawing in large part because of the complex relationship between drawing’s role as a social practice in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries and its utilisation as form of technical literacy in the mid-nineteenth century by Henry Cole in the introduction of nation-wide art education systems.⁴⁷ Amateur drawing-practice thrived in Britain, and its social and emotional importance formed a tradition that

⁴⁶ Viatte, ‘Rope of Sand’. Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, and ‘The Image of Objectivity’, *Representations*, 40 (Autumn, 1992), 81-128.

⁴⁷ See: Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2004, c1970), 129-142.

permeates numerous aspects of the culture. Although a gap had emerged between amateur production and fine art practices by the early twentieth century, the emotional importance remained. Where amateur production all but ceased in other European centres (such as Germany and France), it persisted in Britain as an indication of social status. As society industrialised, drawing joined other humanities subjects as enablers of social mobility. Between 1918 and 1964 all of these modes of engaging with drawing were in flux: amateur drawing became more isolated from self-consciously modernist practices, life drawing rooms and techniques for mimetic representation came under scrutiny, and practitioners and theorists examined its potential as a modernist as well as a socially radical art form. It is precisely this volatility that makes this period crucial, if opaque, in relation to both what came before and what came after. Drawing, in close proximity to water-colour drawing, never quite lost its gentility. This did not preclude it, however, from radical experimentation. Britain thus became a place where drawing was familiar and yet other, dangerous and advantageous, underpinning not only fine art values but also public visual consciousness. This accessibility makes it particularly sensitive to conceptual permutations and thus a fertile location to understand the ramifications of changing concepts. Its widespread appeal also means the number of drawing practitioners was significant, offering many disparate opportunities for examination.

But due in large part to later art historical developments, many of the artists who identified emotionally with drawing-practice during the period, such as Bernard Meninsky (1891-1950) and David Bomberg (1890-1957), have been overstepped, either entirely, as is the case with Meninsky, or with their drawn oeuvre minimised, as is the case with Bomberg. They are not alone in being overlooked by histories that read drawing (and draughtsmen and -women) through interests in painting or in sculpture. Others who have suffered from this treatment include Ernest Jackson (1872–1945), MacDonald ‘Max’ Gill (1884-1947), Scottie Wilson (c.1888/90-1972), Robert Austin (1895-1973), Claude Rogers (1907-1979), and Graham Bell (1910-1943), to name just a few. Even the drawn-works of more widely celebrated artists often remain eclipsed by other aspects of their oeuvre. Draughtsmen and draughtswomen who produced fertile bodies of drawn works whose contributions are rarely examined in light of a greater historical field include Duncan Grant (1885–1978), Nina Hamnett (1890–1956), John Piper (1903-1992), Edward Bawden (1903-1989), William Coldstream (1908-1987), Cecil Collins (1908–1989), Edward Middleditch (1923–1987), Frank Auerbach (b.1931), and Leon Kossoff (b.1926). Drawing scholarship is a gendered and politically charged subject, and too frequently émigré and female artists suffer neglect from the

systemic devaluation of drawn-objects.⁴⁸ Female artists burdened by other (frequently domestic) obligations could engage with it without the investments of time, money, and, space necessary for painting and sculpture. Similarly, its portability made it ideal not only for adventurers and explorers, but also for émigrés, refugees, soldiers, and prisoners. Too frequently, the marginalisation of drawn oeuvres becomes the marginalisation of an artist's importance or an entire career. As twentieth-century drawings increase in market value, and thus emerge from private collections, it is possible that new perspectives on the history of twentieth-century art will need to be reconsidered against what comes to light.⁴⁹ Understanding the spectrum of significant permutations of the concept of drawing took during this period is a step closer to constructing a framework that these artists can be written back into.

The beginning and end dates of the thesis, 1918 and 1964, mark points of transition rather than abrupt transformations. They circumscribe shifting attitudes and concepts. The period begins with a disruption of a relatively stable notion of drawing – the debate between Roger Fry (1866-1934) and D. S. MacColl (1859-1948) in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* (1918-9). The result was that the concept of drawing became a space that artists and theorists scrambled to colonise and resolve, battling with inherited social associations as well as apprehensions of modernism. On the surface, drawing-practice appeared to atrophy – the value of drawn-objects as commodities and as means of aesthetic communication was low – yet drawing values became the centre of nationalist debates during the 1930s and they erupted to the fore during the Second World War in both the media and exhibiting culture. When read together these cease to appear as anomalies and instead show a sophisticated, if volatile, collective experimentation with what drawing was and could be. The period closes with the intermingling of these influences in the work of William Coldstream, after which the ascendancy of modernism – a variant of Bauhaus design and art theory mandated for art colleges and Clement Greenberg's collection of influential essays made newly accessible in

⁴⁸ Such as Ethel Walker (1861-1951), Gwen John (1876-1939), Ida John née Nettleship (1877-1907), Dorothy Hepworth (1898-1978), Catherine Yarrow (1904-1990), Dorothy Mead (1928-1975), and Diana Cummings (b.1929), as well as those of émigrés, such as Martin Bloch (German-born, 1883-1954), Henryk Gotlib (Polish-born, 1890-1966), Fred Uhlman (German-born, 1901-1985), Erich Kahn (German-born, 1904-1979), Marian Kratochwil (Polish-born, 1906-1997), Feliks Topolski (Polish-born, 1907-1989), Zdzisław Ruszkowski (Polish-born, 1907-1991), Josef Herman (Polish-born, 1911-2000), and Stanisław Frenkiel (Polish-born, 1918-2001). For more émigré artists see: Jutta Vinzent, *Identity and Image: Refugee Artists from Nazi Germany in Britain, 1933-1945* (Weimar: VDG, Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2006), 249-293.

⁴⁹ The extent of the oeuvres of many marginalised, but talented and aesthetically powerful draughtsmen and draughtswomen is not yet verified in part due to a prevalent devaluation of their importance, which leads many private collectors not to realise the importance of their holdings. Drawings, however, are becoming more institutionally and commercially desirable, as evidenced by, among other bequests and exhibitions, the Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection presented to the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005), and the recent expansion of both the Drawing Room, London, and The Drawing Centre, New York.

Art and Culture (1961) – sparked a backlash against drawing among art students newly equipped with theoretical training.⁵⁰ Thus the period of experimentation opened by Fry in 1918 was closed in the mid-1960s, seemingly sinking from history. The relevance of this period, however, is not confined to its time and place. Though outside the scope of this thesis, the period laid the foundations for two important revivals: the Anglo-American drawing-practice revival of the mid-1970s championed by R. B. Kitaj (1932-2007) and David Hockney (b. 1937), among other Royal College of Art alumni, and by Lawrence Alloway (1926-1990), who through ‘Sol LeWitt: Modules, Walls, Books’ (1975) would play an important part in setting in motion much of the analytic framework for studying drawing that began in the 1970s and persists to this day.⁵¹ The ensuing chapters demonstrate that it is the conceptual turbulence of this period, the growing theoretical anticipations of how mediums operate and the exigencies of the inter-war and Second World War socio-political climate, that incubated the expanded conceptions of drawing, which would become visible during the 1960s and 1970s.

Literature Review

This thesis contains both theoretical claims, which aim to analyse drawing in light of its full spectrum of significance as a concept, and historical ones, which aim to excavate attitudes toward drawing. There are therefore two main bodies of literature that the thesis speaks to. The first is the treatment of drawing across history, which involves theoretical debates about the operation of medium. The second is historical analyses of drawings in Britain during the middle of the twentieth century.

⁵⁰ Greenberg’s call to pare down a given medium’s essence to irreducible qualities (though by 1960 this was predominately directed at painting) caused a backlash among art students newly equipped with theoretical training. See: Applin, ‘When Form’; and Potts ‘Tactility’. For more about the backlash of a newly theoretical literate art students, see: Lisa Tickner, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution* (London: Francis Lincoln Ltd., 2008).

⁵¹ Alloway’s 1975 article in *Artforum*, comparing American sculptor, printmaker, and draughtsman Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) to the sixteenth century Italian artist Federico Zuccaro (c.1540-2 – 1609), rewrote drawing history as intimately entwined with conceptualism, inspiring curator and writer Bernice Rose in her agenda-setting publication and exhibition, *Drawing Now* (1976). Rose’s work continues to frame notions of contemporary drawing-practices. This period in Britain is not only a moment of experimentation and questioning of what drawing was and could be among critics, theorists, collectors, and practitioners, but it also coincided with percolating ideas of what a medium could and should be. Rose in turn influenced later Museum of Modern Art, New York curators Laura Hoptman and Christian Rattemeyer. See: Lawrence Alloway, ‘Sol LeWitt: Modules, Walls, Books’, *Artforum* (April 1975): 38-43; Bernice Rose, *Drawing Now*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976); Laura Hoptman, *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2003); Christian Rattemeyer, *Compass in Hand: Selections from the Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, c2009); and Christian Rattemeyer, ‘Collecting and Exhibiting Drawings’, presented at ‘Travelling Lines: Drawing as an Itinerant Practice: International Conference’, Drawing Room, London (22 September 2011).

Drawing Literature

Sensitive scholarship into drawing as a concept has only recently developed, as interest in post-modern drawing theories filter into historical analysis. Two important drawing revivals have occurred in the past few decades. The first came in the 1970s, spurred primarily by Kitaj, Hockney, Alloway, and Rawson, as well as curator Bernice Rose.⁵² The second began in the late 1990s and though its momentum has slowed, it continues to develop today. Yet despite this interest, there is no widely accepted methodology for approaching drawing as a medium. Belting has criticised art historical uses of 'medium' in relation to drawing scholarship as focused either on 'the genre in which an artwork is produced or of the material used by an artist'.⁵³ With only a few inspiring exceptions, research into modern and contemporary drawing adheres to Belting's 'genre or technology' dichotomy.⁵⁴ While drawing is a technology for interpreting and processing reality, as previously discussed, this need not preclude approaching drawing beyond the scope of technical and material innovation.

Genre-orientated forms of drawing literature tend to categorise drawn-objects chronologically or stylistically. Recent examples include the Museum of Modern Art's three-part history of drawing, comprising Jodi Hauptman's *Drawing from the Modern, 1880-1945* (2004), Gary Garrels's *Drawing from the Modern, 1945-1975* (2005), and Jordan Kantor's *Drawing from the Modern, 1975-2005* (2005). Such studies often follow the structure of catalogues based on historical periods, geographies, styles, or biographies. Crucially for examining drawing in Britain from 1918 to 1964, these studies also include A. E. Popham's *A Handbook to the Drawings and Water-Colours in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum* (1939), and Geoffrey Grigson, *English Drawing from Samuel Cooper to Gwen John* (1955). Scholarship also traditionally involves either implicit or explicit hierarchical organisation of art-objects in relation to each other. While this is true for all mediums (as well as art content), drawing's historically humble status as one of the most technologically accessible forms of art, in addition to prejudices against its 'incompletion', almost inevitably demote the status of drawing in relation to other mediums.

⁵² See footnote 51.

⁵³ Belting draws instead from McLuhan's pioneering approach within what is now the field of media studies, treating medium as prosthesis, which improves the body's grasp on time and space. Belting, *Anthropology*, 18.

⁵⁴ Exceptions include: Viatte, 'Rope of Sand'. By 'genre', I refer to particular thematic or stylistic categories that describe art objects, such as drama, epic, lyric, landscape, still-life or animal painting. Helen Langdon, 'Genre', *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed 20 Nov 2012), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T031326>. See also Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), section 32.

Technology-orientated studies are a long-standing tradition in drawing scholarship, whether directed toward aspiring artists or for researchers keen to understand the mechanics of obsolete modes of production. Beginning with the manuals of technique, these occasionally overlapped with explicit ontological concerns, attempting to consolidate a single definition of what drawing is. Some early examples are Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scultura ed architettura* (1584), translated into the English *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge and Buildinge* by Richard Haydocke (1598); William Robson's *Grammigraphia or The Grammar of Drawing* (1799); John Ruskin's *The Elements of Drawing* (1857); and Joseph Meder's exceptionally influential *Die Handzeichnung: Ihre Technik und Entwicklung* (1919), whose contents were translated and further developed in Charles de Tolney's *History and Technique of Old Master Drawings: A Handbook* (1943). These were followed by works such as J. Watrous's *The Craft of Old Master Drawings* (1957), Heribert Hutter's *Drawing: History and Technique* (1966), and Jean Leymarie, Geneviève Monnier, and Bernice Rose's *Drawing: History of an Art* (1979).⁵⁵ This form of analysis has also extended in recent years to literature that caters to 'drawing as research'. Influenced by the incorporation of written components into tertiary fine art degrees, which reaches its apogee in the practice-based PhD, these publications frequently focus on how to become analytically conscious of artistic practice through 'watching' and analysing one's own creation process, and often incorporate neurology and aesthetics. Notable examples are Claudia Betti and Teel Sale's *Drawing: a Contemporary Approach* (1980), David Rosand's *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression* (2002), Jo Davies and Leo Duff's (eds.) *Drawing: The Process* (2003), Steve Garner's (ed.) *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research* (2008), and Patricia Cain's *Drawing: The Enactive Evolution of the Practitioner* (2010).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The latter came at a time in the 1960s and 1970s when drawing theory increasingly characterised the medium through theatrical processes of locating oneself in space by assessing distance and proximity, influenced in part by American 'Action Painting' and 'Process Art' as well as mapping experiments such as those published by Marxist theorist Guy Debord in his 1957 *The Naked City*. Guy Debord, *The naked city: illustration de l'hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographie* (Copenhagen: Permild & Rosengren, 1957). The 1960s and 1970s also marked the return to drawing of two generations of artists, including: John Hubbard (b.1931), Kitaj, Frances West (b.1936), Hockney, John Lessore (b.1939), John Wonnacott (b.1940), Maggi Hambling (b.1945), Peter Prendergast (1946–2007), Timothy Hyman (b.1946), and Ian Caughlin (b.1948), as well as well students of Bomberg, including Mead, Roy Oxlade (b.1929), and Dennis Creffield (b.1931). Hockney and Kitaj further attempted to stimulate a drawing tradition in Britain through an art education and exhibition agenda, such as: R. B. Kitaj, *The Human Clay: An Exhibition*, exh. cat (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976); David Hockney, *Travels with Pen, Pencil and Ink* (London: Petersburg Press, 1978); and later David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001). For process studies, see: Anita Taylor, 'Foreword – Re: Positioning Drawing', *Writing on Drawings: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research*, ed. Steve Garner (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2008), [9-11] 9; David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1; and Petherbridge, *Primacy of Drawing* (2010).

⁵⁶ Claudia Betti and Teel Sale, *Drawing: a Contemporary Approach* (New York; London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980); Rosand, *Drawing Acts*; Jo Davies and Leo Duff, eds., *Drawing: The Process* (Bristol: Intellect, 2003); Steve Garner, ed., *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research* (2008); and Patricia Cain, *Drawing: The Enactive Evolution of the Practitioner* (Bristol: Intellect, c.2010). These contrast with practical

Over the past half-century, technology-orientated studies have also come to encompass performative aspects of drawing, often under the aegis of conceptual art. The historical precedent for conceptualism in the Renaissance writings of Leonardo da Vinci and Federico Zuccaro quickly became a popular means of engaging with drawings from the mid-1950s onwards, culminating with Rose's exhibition and catalogue, *Drawing Now* (1976).⁵⁷ Rose hailed drawing as taking a conceptual turn, placing it within the 'radical history of modernist art' and arguing that significant mid-to-late twentieth century artists, such as Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997), Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), Cy Twombly (1928-2011), and Jasper Johns (b.1930) investigated the nature and function of the medium and its particular expressive possibilities.⁵⁸ Post-modern drawing scholarship has followed a predominantly semiotic or phenomenological avenue of exploration, often concerned more with analysing medium-transgressive artistic explorations.⁵⁹ Conceptual scholarship about drawing mirrored a trend in the mid-1950s for critical promotion of gestural and abstract drawing practices. These forms of enquiry into the nature of drawing include Rawson's *Drawing* (1969) and John Berger's *Drawing on Paper* (1987, 2005).⁶⁰ This budding canon soon expanded into artists' reflections on the philosophical components of the practice, such as Kitaj's *The Human Clay*, Fuller's *Rock and Flesh*, and Petherbridge's *The Primacy of Drawing: An Artist's View* (1991). These strands of historical enquiry and of philosophical exploration undertaken by practitioner-scholars recently came together in Petherbridge's elephantine *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (2010). Despite the sophistication of Petherbridge's tome, however, it divides concepts into loose themes – like Rawson's *Drawing* – and is thus susceptible to the faults of genre-scholarship.

philosophies of drawing, such as Maynard's *Drawing Distinctions*, which seeks to consolidate aesthetics, engineering, theories of perception and representation in light of drawing-acts.

⁵⁷ Rose, *Drawing Now*, 9. See also: Alloway, 'Sol LeWitt'; Erwin Panofsky, 'Mannerism' [1924], *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 71-99; Petherbridge *Primacy of Drawing* (2010), 189.

⁵⁸ Rose referenced Alloway as the first to make this connection as well as a formative influence on her drawing theory. Rose, *Drawing Now*, 9, 94. Alloway, 'Sol LeWitt'.

⁵⁹ Conceptualism and semiotics as general approaches to drawing continue to dominate modernist and contemporary art scholarship. Examples include: Ashwin, 'Drawing, Design and Semiotics', 42-52; Anna Lovatt, 'Ideas in Transmission: LeWitt's Wall Drawings and the Question of Medium', *Tate Papers*, 14 (2010); Ed Krcma, 'Liquid Language', *Graphology: From Automatism to Automation*, ed. Edwin Carels (London: Drawing Room, 2012), 51-57; Howard Riley and Amanda Roberts, 'Drawing, Gesture and Semiotics: An Exploration of the Semiotic Potential of Gesture Drawing' (paper presented at The Sense of Drawing panel, IADE conference, Lisbon, 6 October 2011). For more on semiotics, see also: Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, 'Semiotics', *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 200-222.

⁶⁰ Though Rawson had a larger agenda: namely, to make a lexicon of marks and manners to help make drawing legible to viewers for whom it had become unfashionable. Rawson, *Drawing*.

Historical Literature

Drawing in twentieth-century Britain is understudied. While some wide-ranging historical surveys include practices based in part in Britain, and biographies of significant artists often include pertinent (often preparatory) drawings, there is no integrated history of forms of drawing engagement focusing on this period. Despite the wealth of pertinent drawn-objects held in the Pallant House Gallery, the Courtauld Gallery, the British Museum, the University College London collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Imperial War Museum, and the Tate Gallery, little analysis has been undertaken in constructing an integrative history of the period. In addition to these institutions, smaller private collections are slowly coming to light, which in large part because of the undervalued status of drawn-objects have remained underpublicised or within families.

The most significant attempt to write a history of British drawing is Susan Owen's *The Art of Drawing: British Masters and Methods Since 1600* (2013).⁶¹ Owen argues for the importance of drawing within British art, but does so within the model of a historical, broad biographic survey. In this sense she builds upon the lapsed tradition of Grigson's *English Drawing from Samuel Cooper to Gwen John* (1955) and Michael Ayrton's *British Drawings* (1946), a trope that also includes the exhibition catalogues-cum-sensitive surveys Kitaj's *The Human Clay* (1976), Fuller's *Rock and Flesh* (1985) and Glenn Sujo's *Drawing on These Shores* (1994).⁶² A small cluster of drawn oeuvres by British mid-twentieth century artists has received attention, including Peter Lanyon (1918-1964) by Margaret Garlake, Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975) by Nathaniel Hepburn, Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) by Roberto Tassi, as well as the attention given to drawn-objects within the popular oeuvres of Stanley Spencer (1891-1959), Lucian Freud (1922–2011), and Henry Moore (1898-1986) – the latter includes a seven-volume catalogue raisonné of Moore's drawings.⁶³ The limitation of such biographic

⁶¹ Susan Owen, *The Art of Drawing: British Masters and Methods Since 1600* (London: V&A Publishing, 2013).

⁶² Geoffrey Grigson, *English Drawing from Samuel Cooper to Gwen John* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1955); Michael Ayrton, *British Drawing* (London: Collins, 1946). R.B. Kitaj *The Human Clay: an Exhibition* ([London]: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976); Peter Fuller, *Rocks and Flesh: an Argument for British Drawing* (Norwich: Norwich School of Art. Gallery, 1985); and Glenn Sujo, *Drawing on These Shores: A View of British Drawing & Its Affinities* (Preston: Harris Museum & Art Gallery, c.1993).

⁶³ For Lanyon see: Margaret Garlake, *The Drawings of Peter Lanyon* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). For Hepworth see: Nathaniel Hepburn, *Barbara Hepworth: The Hospital Drawings* (London: Tate Publishing in association with Mascalls Gallery, Kent and The Hepworth Wakefield, 2012). For Sutherland see: Roberto Tassi, *Sutherland: The Wartime Drawings*, trans. and ed. Julian Andrews (London: for Sotheby Parke Bernet by Philip Wilson, 1980). For Spencer see: David Sylvester, *The Drawings of Stanley Spencer*, exh. cat. ([London]: Arts Council, 1955); Anthony d'Offay and Richard Carline, *Stanley and Hilda Spencer* (London: Anthony d'Offay, [1978]); Duncan Robinson, *Stanley Spencer* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1990); Gilbert Spencer, *Stanley Spencer* (Bristol: Redcliffe, 1991); Keith Bell, *Stanley Spencer* (London: Phaidon, 1999); and Kitty Hauser, *Stanley Spencer* (London: Tate Publishing, c.2001). For Freud see: Angus Cook, *Lucien Freud, Recent Drawings and Etchings: Including an Interview with the Artist by Leigh Bowery*, (Angus Cook New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 1993); Lucian Freud, *Lucian Freud: On Paper* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008); and William Feaver, ed., *Lucian Freud - Drawings* (London: Blain/Southern, 2012). For Moore see: David Mitchinson, *Henry Moore Unpublished Drawings* ([S.l.]: Abrams, 1971); Kenneth

attention, however, is the inevitable perpetuation of flawed and opposing narratives of British art history, as identified by Lisa Tickner, which are either, first, to place British artists into a ‘continental shadow’ and thus evaluate their engagement in light of formalism and cosmopolitanism, ignoring discrepancies between British and Continental engagements.⁶⁴ Or, second and more pertinent for the treatment of drawn oeuvres, the danger is, in Tickner’s words, to ‘construct an eccentric genealogy of Englishness – Blake, Burne-Jones, Spencer, Bacon, Freud, but one guaranteed, implicitly, by the centrality of European modernism’.⁶⁵ The danger of degenerating into eccentric genealogy is that the rich historical field is reduced to narratives defined by unrepresentative, fine-art determined biographies.

The overlap between Tickner’s genealogical list and the above list of British artists whose drawings have been studied (i.e. Spencer, Bacon, Freud) highlights the particular importance for drawing scholarship of Tickner’s caution. Part of the reason for the inclination towards biography in mid-twentieth-century drawing scholarship can be found in the platitude that drawing-practice (and thus drawn-objects) are private and intimate – the prerogative of isolated experiments and of personal value, which neither communicate nor have significance for a wider field.⁶⁶ I have already discussed theoretical limitations of this position. Perpetuating it in relation to mid-twentieth-century drawing-practices in Britain is equally flawed. Through reading for drawing’s expanded existence as a concept, shared preoccupations can be accessed that break down the barriers inherent in biography. Historical analyses of drawing by Stonebridge, Wagner, and Garlake do successfully integrate their subjects into an expanded field, but in treating drawing as a refraction of other artistic mediums, they do not address how it functions as a field in itself and thus while provocative and sensitive their analyses remain fragmentary.⁶⁷ In part because they were ubiquitous and

Clark, *Henry Moore Drawings* (London: Thames and Hudson, [1974]); Alan G. Wilkinson, *The Drawings of Henry Moore* (London: Garland, 1984); Frances Carey, *A Shelter Sketchbook* (London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Publications, 1988); Ann Garrould, ed., *Henry Moore: Complete Drawings, 1950-76* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2003); Anne M. Wagner, *Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern British Sculpture* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005); and Andrew Causey, *The Drawings of Henry Moore* (Farnham: Lund Humphries, 2010).

⁶⁴ Lisa Tickner, ‘English Modernism in the Cultural Field’, in *English Art 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, eds. David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 13-30. Tickner’s modernism is part of recent school of British art history, also endorsed by Timothy Barringer and David Peters Corbett, and distinct from the October Group of Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson (as well as Hal Foster, Douglas Crimp, Laura Mulvey, Joan Copjec, Yve-Alain Bois, and Homi Bhabha) in relation to the importance of the avant-garde, which Tickner, Barringer, and Corbett contest in favour of analysing the importance of materiality and of a broader visual culture. See particularly: David Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England, 1848-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 12-15.

⁶⁵ Tickner, ‘English Modernism’, 30.

⁶⁶ As was discussed in relation to drawing-objects earlier in this introduction.

⁶⁷ Ann M. Wagner, ‘Drawing a Blank’, *Representations*, 72 (Autumn 2000), 123-144; Lyndsey Stonebridge, ‘Bombs, Birth, and Trauma: Henry Moore’s and D. W. Winnicott’s Prehistory Figments’, *Cultural Critique*, 46, Special Issue: Trauma and Its Cultural Aftereffects (Autumn, 2000), 80-101; Garlake, *The Drawings of Peter Lanyon*.

in part because they underpinned traditional fine art education, drawn-objects are difficult to excavate. If drawing is to escape eccentric genealogy, an attempt must be made to create a history of drawing during the period in question rather than simply gathering together case studies. Analysing the role of drawing for more than a circumscribed group of practitioners involves reading other histories through and for drawing – it cannot be inserted into the pre-existing categories and concepts of artistic movements. Drawing must be tracked like an ideology through diverse cultural details.

Preview

The concept of drawing from 1918 to 1964 traverses twisting paths of art pedagogy, critical writing, and exhibitions, as well as individual practices. The following chapters provide four readings of moments when aspects of the concept of drawing were publically analysed and debated.

The first chapter looks at a moment of transition in 1918-9, when Roger Fry published three articles in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* considering whether and how drawing-practice could be modernist, to which D. S. MacColl drafted a sequence of detailed rebuttals. Fry's intervention disrupted notions of drawing-practice within pedagogic tradition, as advocated by Henry Tonks (1862-1937), opening territory for theoretical consolidation and innovation. The chapter considers key terminological coordinates and concerns that emanated from this debate, which would remerge in the ensuing decades.

The second chapter examines the relationship between drawing and watercolours during a time when the latter became a celebrated part of a series of exhibitions concerning the aesthetic characteristics of an English national art. The cultural emphasis in reading art for formalist design led watercolours to be read for submerged drawn-objects, an activity consonant with the contemporaneous development of x-ray imaging that included reading drawings within layers of oil paint. This combination, alongside other theorists' interest in material components of art, resulted in a heightened sense of material sensitivity to the draughtsman's performance within the drawn-object.

The third chapter looks to the visibility drawing received through War Artist initiatives, sketch-reportage, and exhibiting culture during and after the Second World War. The chapter also considers how the anatomy-like materiality of the drawn-object developed during the 1920s and 1930s became a proxy for the absent body of the artist when exposed to the social and psychological conditions of wartime experience, emphasising not just

human labour but also human presence, a development that would feed into the flowering of process art and conceptions of drawing as a way of thinking in the post-war period.

The fourth chapter evaluates notions of objectivity in relation to William Coldstream's post-war experiments with drawing-practice. Championed by critic David Sylvester (1924-2001) as one of England's successors to Degas, Ingres, and Seurat, Coldstream was vilified after his death for idealising erroneous objectivity. Reading his practice against earlier discussions of layers and performance, what emerges instead is Coldstream probing the limitations of subjectivity, not in order to attain exact representation, but in order to strip away all extraneous detail, leaving only a hallucinatory memory of an object.

The discussions constitute a single thread of development in British art history. Drawing as design becomes the mark beneath the pigment, which becomes the trace of the absent hand, which became a conscious experiment with the limitations of such subjectivity. There are other strands that warrant attention, which remain outside the scope of this thesis, including Walter Richard Sickert's (1860-1942) legacy, drawing collecting, draughtsmanship within etching and woodblock printing, and the full momentum of those classed as Neo-Romantics. Drawing education has also been largely avoided due to its scholastic popularity.⁶⁸ These areas deserve further attention, and this thesis is undertaken with the intention of integrating them in future research.

⁶⁸ For more on art education, see: Quentin Bell, *Schools of Design* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); Christopher Frayling, *The Royal College of Art: One Hundred & Fifty Years of Art and Design* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1987); Paul Huxley, ed., *Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art*, exhib. cat. (London: Phaidon, 1988); Arthur Efland, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* (New York; London: Teachers College Press, 1990); Macdonald, *The History*; Stuart Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education: from Arts and Crafts to Conceptual Art* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2005); and Tate's ongoing research project 'Art School Educated: Curriculum Development and Institutional Change in UK Art Schools 1960-2000' (January 2009 – February 2014), led by Nigel Llewellyn, and comprising Victoria Walsh, Elena Crippa, Alex Massouras, Hester Westley, and Beth Williamson.

CHAPTER 1

Searching for the Noise Inside a Drum:

Roger Fry, D. S. MacColl, and the Concept of Drawing, 1918-1919

There is a small, undated ink sketch by Henry Tonks depicting art experts Claude Phillips, D. S. MacColl, and Roger Fry as they inspect Diego Velázquez's *The Toilet of Venus* ('The Rokeby Venus') (1647-51) (Figs. 1.1-5). In confused, rapidly sketched lines, the three critics storm through the picture's frame into the painted surface, distracting Venus herself. At the point of intrusion, the weave of paint strokes becomes slack inky lines – the very fibre of the materials is coming undone. Aesthetically, Tonks's Venus becomes little more than a coarsely outlined shape on a clinical examination bed, who, along with Cupid, reacts narratively as well as aesthetically: the goddess lifts herself on her right arm, her left one raised in delicate indignation, as she languorously responds to the unexpected interruption of her somnolent reverie. Phillips and Fry congregate by her feet, comically large magnifying glasses raised. Fry is prostrate as if in prayer, his back curved, his thin legs splayed. It is unclear from the rendering whether he is lifting the goddess's left calf or whether he merely stoops, but for the viewer a moment of visual indecision occurs: he and the leg loop over the same space, confusing an easy reading of distance and interaction. He is the only expert to appear to touch a body in the image, as if he is not only examining but also tidying its formal content. MacColl, in contrast, is upright. He holds aloft an indistinguishable object, perhaps a magnifying glass, perhaps lifting the mirror up and away from the goddess's gaze, or perhaps removing some drapery, saying to her as he does, '[Lie?] down my dear/it will soon be over'. Crowning the turmoil is Cupid. Hastily but vibrantly rendered, he rolls back in excitement; an inscription in a speech bubble by his head reads 'My/what a lark'.

Not only is Tonks's sketch a satirical comment on the Chantrey Bequest,¹ it is also a comment on the possibility of art criticism disturbing, or even damaging, the object of its analysis.² The goddess ceases to be a goddess at the moment of intrusion: she represents

¹ In 1906 *Toilet of Venus* became the first 'great work of art' acquired for the nation by the newly founded National Art Collections Fund, which presented it to the National Gallery. The Chantrey Bequest was a fortune left by the sculptor Francis Chantrey, who wished to encourage the establishment of a public national collection of British fine art. It is likely, therefore, that the sketch dates from around the time of the acquisition.

² Tonks also satirised the dangerous effects this criticism has on art-practice in another series of watercolour caricatures, *Mr MacColl Visits Heaven and Criticises* (c. 1914-1919), the second one of which depicts MacColl seated and criticising a bearded God, who pauses in kneading the plaster about to be applied to the unfinished statues of Adam and Eve. It is inscribed: 'He stays the hand of the Almighty and man remains unfinished.' Though friends, Tonks was so sensitive to MacColl's criticisms that MacColl recounted to Tonks's biographer Joseph Hone, that 'I dared say nothing; Tonks was hypersensitive to a breath of criticism [...] He came to

simultaneously the picture-object and the depicted subject. Her surprise in the drawn-object is implied as a strain against an otherwise single composition. Venus, the character in the narrative, is not separable from *Venus*, the image conveyed by its material components. In disturbing her, the picture is unravelled. It is a parable that seems to have appealed to MacColl, since it was he who donated it to the British Museum in 1938.³ The image of a critic unravelling a canvas appealed to Fry as well, though it is unlikely he had Tonks's sketch in mind when he wrote, of MacColl, in 'The Sad Case of Mr. D. S. MacColl' (March 1922): 'We implore him to return to his favourite occupation of picking holes, even though it be in Cézanne's canvases.'⁴ In this light, it becomes tempting to see the indistinct shape in MacColl's hands in Tonks's sketch not as imprecisely rent, but as capturing the critic in the midst of picking a hole in the canvas.

In 1917 Tonks described critical activity with another metaphor, this time attacking Fry's theoretical programme in the introduction to a Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition *A Collection of Drawings by Deceased Masters*, where he wrote that 'hunting for abstract form is as likely to meet with success as a child's search for the noise in the interior of a drum'.⁵ Tonks was not the only member of the art world at the time to treat critics as if they were children on fruitless, and perhaps even damaging, quests, but his vehemence was warranted, as it was a period in which critics, especially those who concerned themselves with drawing, had particularly far-reaching sway – and Fry was among the most powerful of them.

Tonks's use of the metaphor provides insight into some of the ways that the medium of drawing was considered by Fry and MacColl, not only in spatial terms, but also as something greater than its material components: the conceptual activity of the artist proceeding in reference not only to the material limitations for expression but also to the public understanding of the medium.⁶ Conceptions of drawing emerged from a rich, idiosyncratic tradition in Britain, and the satirical, critical, and personal volleys between Fry, Tonks, and MacColl represent a sensitive moment in this tradition: it was a point when conceptions of drawing-practice in Britain became subject to different frames of reference, and the nature of this moment is particularly vulnerable to misinterpretation. Fry censoriously responded to Tonks's Burlington exhibition introduction, attempting to place drawing within his own

avoid showing any work unfinished lest virtue should go out of him, and even cease to exhibit.' Joseph Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks* (London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939), images 138-9, quotation 137.

³ Acquisition notes, British Museum, London.

⁴ Roger Fry, 'The Sad Case of Mr. D. S. MacColl', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 40:228 (Mar. 1922), 152-153.

⁵ Henry Tonks, 'Introduction', *Catalogue of a Collection of Drawings by Deceased Masters* (London, Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1917), 8.

⁶ For more on recalcitrance of the medium, see: Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 36-43.

notion of modernism and thus within frameworks of medium specificity rather than a craft tradition. MacColl angrily replied to Fry, presenting a sensitive practical counterpart to Fry's formalist purity. Their debate marks the beginning of a particular epoch of conceptual vulnerability for drawing-practice, wherein the components of established, innovative, and imported conceptions alike were experimented with. To understand this complicated legacy, this chapter weighs the importance of Fry's and MacColl's disagreement before examining the details of the individual articles. What emerges is that Fry's propositions for drawing ultimately concentrated on the artist's mental decisions within drawing-acts. MacColl, in contrast, positioned drawing as a set of conventions for communication, which were nested within the particular recalcitrance of drawing as a medium. It is often Fry who is given credit as the author of a rupture in drawing's continuity, but the influence of MacColl and his circle (including Tonks) is underestimated.

Fry, MacColl, and Their Literary Feuds

MacColl and Fry's debate began with Fry's unfavourable review of a 1917 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition of drawn-objects.⁷ Fry reacted less to the exhibition's logic than to Tonks's introduction in the catalogue, and this consideration of drawing as a category sparked Fry's curiosity about the insidious perseverance of conservatism in conceptions of drawing.⁸ In December 1918 and February 1919 he published a two-part article expanding on the initial review, entitled 'Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art'. Beginning by extolling Picasso and Matisse for reinvigorating drawing-practice, Fry claimed that they had realised the potential of Cézanne's revolution in the use of line. Fixating on linear drawn-objects, Fry traced the potentials and dangers of this new genre of liberated, formal art. In May 1919 MacColl published the first of his retorts, 'Mr. Fry and Drawing – I', also in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*. The response was an attempt to question how Fry's 'plentiful theory' compared to 'actual production'.⁹ It struck at the logical coherence of Fry's writing, slipping in an attempted refutation of Bloomsbury aesthetic theory. The second article, called 'Mr. Fry and Drawing – II', published in June 1919, outlined the development,

⁷ Roger Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington Fine Arts Club', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 32:179 (Feb 1918), 51-53, 56-57, 60-63, 81.

⁸ The field of collecting and exhibiting drawings as a genre was relatively new at the time. Fry would have been familiar with this newness from his loans to an earlier Burlington Fine Art Club exhibition, whose catalogue included contributions emphasising the newness of the field by Randall Davies and Laurence Binyon – Davies later published *Chats on Old English Drawings* (1923), within which he described the increased popularity of drawing, which he partially attributed to 'the modern artists [...] in exhibiting so many drawings and sketches'. Randall Davies, *Chats on Old English Drawings* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1923), 34. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of the Herbert Horne Collection of Drawings* (London, Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1916).

⁹ D. S. MacColl, 'Mr. Fry and Drawing-I', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 34:194 (May 1919), 203-206.

components, and values of drawing, seeking to show that Fry's language was simply empty rhetoric that invoked drawing-practice without engaging with it.¹⁰ MacColl's third and final response, 'Mr. Fry and Drawing – III', in July 1919, attempted to illustrate his position through an examination of a painting, Paolo Veronese's *The Dream of Saint Helena* (c. 1570).¹¹ Fry published a measured response in August 1919, 'Mr. MacColl and Drawing'.¹² The latter argued, accurately, that MacColl had not grasped the essence of the aesthetics of Fry and his younger theoretical ally, Clive Bell (1881-1964), and yet Fry in turn did not engage with MacColl's accusation that he had not appreciated the implications of pre-existing practices.¹³

The debate occurred at an important juncture not only for Britain as a nation but also for Fry and MacColl personally. The articles appeared on the heels of the social and political turmoil of the First World War, with the first one printed just three months after the ceasefire and before the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. They emerged in a world of instability, where the political and social shape of life and of the European nations was unclear.¹⁴ As a pacifist, Fry had refused military service, avoiding the psychological damage with which many serving artists had to contend. After the war, the circle of artists and intellectuals around him, known as the Bloomsbury Group, came to a point of transition: their tastes centralised as they became a dominant artistic presence at the same time that Fry's popularity as a critic increased. He published an influential collection of essays, *Vision and Design* (1920), in addition to frequent contributions to *The Burlington Magazine*, *The Dial*, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, and the *New Statesman*.¹⁵ Yet there were signs of restlessness and dissent amidst the group and their peers: their joint endeavour, the Omega Workshops, was

¹⁰ D. S. MacColl, 'Mr Fry and Drawing – II', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 34:195 (Jun, 1919), 254-257.

¹¹ D. S. MacColl, 'Mr Fry and Drawing – III', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 35:196 (Jul, 1919), 42-3, 45-6.

¹² Clive Bell published a short, impassioned refutation of MacColl, which appeared at the foot of MacColl's June article. Clive Bell, 'Significant Form', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 34:195 (Jun, 1919), 257.

¹³ I use 'ally' lightly since their relationship was complex, and though there were similarities between their theories, they were not identical. See: David G. Taylor, 'The Aesthetics Theories of Roger Fry Reconsidered', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 36:1 (Autumn 1977), 63-72

¹⁴ David Peters Corbett divides the post-First World War period into three phases: the first, from Armistice to 1922, is characterised by uncertainty about what sort of world would be established in the aftermath; the second, from 1922 to 1926, was what Wyndham Lewis called the 'post-war' period proper, characterised by escapism and quietism in the face of change; and the third and final period, from 1926 to c.1936, was marked by a slow recovery. David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art: 1911-30* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 59-60. See also Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English* (London: Pimlico, 1992).

¹⁵ Bell had consolidated their theories into an aesthetic theory, called 'significant form' in *Art* (1914), as will be discussed further in relation to Fry. By 1918, Bell began to contribute greatly to Bloomsbury's prestige, writing regular reviews and, in 1922, publishing a collection of them, *Since Cézanne*.

in decline (it disbanded in 1919), and a band of younger artists succeeded from the London Group in protest to Fry's increasing influence over the exhibiting society.¹⁶

MacColl was in a very different position, enjoying professional success as a keeper first of the National Gallery of British Art (1906-1911), which was officially renamed the Tate Gallery in 1932, and then of the Wallace Collection (1911-1924). Always energetic, MacColl remained an active painter, poet, museum administrator, and critic throughout his life. Strongly associated with English impressionism, his theory positioned art-making as a direct response to sensual stimulation rather than as an intellectual activity.¹⁷ He had been influenced by his mentor, painter and critic R. A. M. Stevenson (1847–1900), whose 'direct painting' stressed material values and technique over resultant representational imagery. By 1918 the radicalism of MacColl's advocacy of impressionism had long since been eclipsed by more extreme aesthetic positions. A lament in the preface to his 1931 collection of essays *Confessions of a Keeper* supports the view that their disagreement was a clash of opposing disciplinary matrixes:

I have lived to see a striking revolution in the popular attitude to what is new. We had to fight, in the earlier period, for seniors and beginners who appeared eccentric against a background of mediocrity. The assumption is now all in favour of eccentricity, that is of an art which sets up on some one corner of the field with a super-Franciscan vow of poverty. The barriers are down, the doors are open, there is a welcome of trumpets and no resistance to what is called 'advanced art' (how advanced was the cave-draughtsman!). I find myself, therefore, once more rather solitary and unfashionable when I inquire how far actual production squares with plentiful theory.¹⁸

Although this sets up a notion of progress, it also demonstrates a common purpose in opposing what both men saw as the slick naturalism and sentimentality of the Royal Academy, especially Edward Poynter (1836-1919) and Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912). Both MacColl and Fry were modernists in a loose sense; where they differed were in the details of what should replace the naturalism of Poynter and Tadema. While Fry advocated

¹⁶ The London Group (founded 1913) was an exhibiting society, founded in opposition to the Royal Academy and the stagnation of the New English Art Club (founded in 1886); members included David Bomberg, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915), Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), Harold Gilman (president until his death in 1919) (1876-1919), Charles Ginner (1878-1952), Spencer Gore (1878-1914), John Nash (1893-1977), and Christopher Nevinston (1889-1946). The group that succeeded became Group X (26 March to 24 April 1920), a short-lived but radically motivated exhibiting society based at the Mansard Gallery; original members included Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957), Jessica Dismorr (1885-1939), Frederick Etchells (1886-1973), Cuthbert Hamilton (1885-1959), William Roberts (1895-1980), and Edward Wadsworth (1889-1949). They were later joined by Frank Dobson (1886-1963), Charles Ginner, and McKnight Kauffer (1890-1954).

¹⁷ See Jacqueline V. Falkenheim, *Roger Fry and the Beginnings of Formalist Art Criticism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, c.1980), 35; Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 18; and Matthew C. Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); 164.

¹⁸ D. S. MacColl, *Confessions of a Keeper and other Papers* (London: A. Maclehose & Co., 1931), vi.

expressive arrangement of form over illusionist detail and that artists and viewers alike attend to form (or design) and its constituent 'emotional' elements, including 'line', 'mass', and 'colour', MacColl emphasised exploration of optical and material phenomena.¹⁹

Literary feuds, such as the one over drawing, were common between the two critics, and each one appears to have resolved itself into renewed amicable personal relations. Despite MacColl's association with English impressionism and Fry's with Post-Impressionism, they were close in age and both members of the New English Art Club (NEAC) during the 1890s (Fig. 1.6). As Anna Gruetzner Robins has argued in 'Fathers and Sons' (1999) about Fry and another member of the NEAC, Walter Richard Sickert, they were not links on a historical chain but contemporaries with divergent views of progressive art.²⁰ A 6 March 1922 letter from Fry to MacColl provides humorous insight into their relationship. After the publication of a cutting verbal caricature, 'The Sad Case of Mr. D. S. MacColl', Fry refers to rumours that his article was 'regarded in some quarters as a personal affront' and that MacColl was 'seriously offended'.²¹ He assured MacColl:

You know quite well that not only I but all those who take my side in the controversy about modern art regard you personally with the highest esteem. I think you're perhaps the only one of what I may call the official group for whom we have warm feelings of personal respect and admiration. And I certainly have never had any other feelings towards you as a man. We both think the other quite misguided in our aesthetic judgements and as we both come forward before the public on opposite sides we both have the right or, rather, the duty to say what we think of each other's critical powers [...] I don't take it to heart when you say that my pictures are the utterly dismal performances of a theory-ridden painter.²²

Rather than compare the two positions in aid to understanding their personal motivations or disagreements, it is more valuable to treat the articles as lexical, public objects, which exist as resources for understanding conceptions of the medium of drawing.

Fry was astute in realising the prevalent devaluation of drawn-objects and the radical potential in drawing-acts, but his castigation of other drawing conventions does not do justice to their conceptual and technical sophistication or their persistent influence post-

¹⁹ 'They do not seek to imitate form, but to create form; not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life.' Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, ed. J. B. Bullen. (London, Oxford University Press, 1981), 167.

²⁰ This is not to argue that they did not supplant each other in fashionability, but it is problematic to assume that these fashions constituted a closed succession of disciplinary matrixes. Anna Gruetzner Robins, 'Fathers and Sons: Walter Sickert and Roger Fry', *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, ed. Christopher Green (London: Merrell Holberton in association with the Courtauld Gallery, 1999), 45-56.

²¹ Roger Fry, Letter to D. S. MacColl (6 March 1922), *Letters of Roger Fry*, vol 2, ed. Denys Sutton (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 521-522; Fry, 'The Sad Case', 153.

²² Ibid.

1919.²³ What does occur, however, is a moment of change for considering drawing not as a tradition that underwrites other branches of the fine arts, but as a medium with distinct, if enigmatic, properties of its own. It is therefore important to view Fry and MacColl's articles as a starting point for a fertile historical period of flux and experimentation as well as to examine the details of their individual stances as an opening onto sophisticated conceptions of and conventions for drawing. Beginning with Fry's opening articles before moving onto MacColl's, this chapter will provide an analysis of their articles in order to draw out the conceptual implications of their language and the conventions which they act within and at times against.

Roger Fry and Drawing

Fry's treatments of drawing contain elements of his broader aesthetic ambitions, but the articles were fundamentally enquiries into the potential of drawing as a medium-specific genre. His engagement with drawing was isolated to 1916-1919 and revisited in 1926, and appears, in places, to be at odds with his better-known theoretical propositions. His articles, 'Drawings at the Burlington Fine Art Club' (Feb 1918), and the two-part 'Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art' (Dec 1918 and Feb 1919) comprise a single, prolonged reflection on drawing as a practice and as an autonomous medium within radical art. Though key themes emerge, Fry's drawing articles do not present a consolidated theory of modern drawing. He rides an uncomfortable edge between advocating drawing-practice as a form of design and anticipating what this could mean for a genre of drawing-acts. The result is an emphasis on drawing-acts as internal processes, distinct from the craft of working with the external materials. The thrust of the articles is backward-looking: they react against Tonks and what he represented – specifically that honed drawing technique was a form of ethical agency. These considerations, however, opened ground for Fry to experiment with his own, by-then entrenched theoretical position, culminating in the early signs of his later, more subtle sense of medium, specifically what David Taylor has called 'aesthetic personality'.²⁴

Drawing appears to have played only an incidental role in Fry's intellectual development and programme before 1917, with the important exception of his own experiences as a practitioner. During his undergraduate years at Cambridge he took sketching trips with C. R. Ashbee, who was to become an architect, designer, and social reformer. After abandoning his plans for a scientific career shortly after a few unsuccessful fellowship applications, he

²³ It is important to emphasize the distinction between 'tradition' (the handing over or down of something) and 'convention' (a rule or practice based upon general consent, or accepted and upheld by society at large).

²⁴ Taylor, 'Fry Reconsidered,' 67.

began to study art, receiving private tuition from Francis Bate, studying at the Académie Julian in Paris (1892), and attending Sickert's evening classes (c.1893). Through Bate and Sickert, both prominent early members of the NEAC, Fry was inducted into the drawing and painting precedents of Degas and Whistler. He became a member of the NEAC in the spring of 1893, at the time when its radical 'London impressionist' phase was coming to a close: its inspirations shifted away from the earlier interest in Manet and Degas, realigning around eighteenth-century British artists, including Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough, as well as Turner and Constable and French masters Watteau and Toulouse-Lautrec (Figs. 1.7-13).²⁵ Fry, along with Charles Conder (1868-1909) and William Rothenstein (1872-1945), helped to usher in this shift – Fry through his production of tinted drawings, resonant of eighteenth-century picturesque traditions.²⁶ This Watteau-Degas axis of stylistic precedents was crucial for Fry. Watteau combined a rough chalk quality (popular with Impressionists as indicative of quick action sketches) with a gentile delicacy and sophistication of line akin to the technical brilliance of Ingres and Raphael (who were art school paragons). Degas's drawn-objects, in rich clusters of chalk or graphite hatching, emphasise what were only occasional tendencies in Watteau, allowing rhythmic line to emerge from rougher tonal marks. Between 1893 and 1912 Fry was in the midst of his own rebirth as a 'Post-Impressionist', severing from the precedents of the NEAC and prioritising the formal immediacy of Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso. Nonetheless Fry's own drawn-objects and those of his coterie remained indebted to the manner and style of Degas.²⁷ This fragmentary adoption of many varied styles suggests that drawing was a theoretically open 'space' in which Fry could experiment.

²⁵ The New English Art Club (NEAC) was founded in 1886 in emulation of the method of jury selection at the Paris Salon, in order to ensure a more democratic selection procedure than practised at the Royal Academy. Aesthetically the founders also looked to France, originally intending to call themselves the 'Society of Anglo-French Painters'. It became less radical by 1893 and has remained an exhibiting group to the present. Robins has called the NEAC a 'nursery' post-1900 for secessionist groups, including: the Fitzroy Street group, the Bloomsbury group, the Vorticists, and the English Surrealists. Anna Gruetzner Robins, 'New English Art Club,' *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 2 July 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T062123>. My use of the term 'London impressionists' refers to self-given name for the clique of painters who gained influence over the New English Art Club from 1888 and secured a monopoly over the selecting committee by 1890 (at first known as the 'progressive artists'). Under the leadership of Sickert, it included artists who modelled themselves on Degas and Monet. By not capitalising 'impressionism', I further intend to highlight the distinction of this group from its French cousins, following from Robins's argument that 'the clique knew far more about more recent developments in French art than is generally believed, but their idea of "Impressionist Art", or "Modern Art", as they sometimes called it, did not embrace the French model. Indeed, they had very particular ideas about French art and were suspicious of aspects of it [such as Pointillism].' Robins, 'Fathers and Sons', 46-7.

²⁶ Elements of this can still be seen in: Roger Fry, untitled drawing, 1925, graphite on paper, 24 x 35.1 cm, British Museum, London [no. 1933,1014.6].

²⁷ Such as Roger Fry, *Still Life* (c.1917), *Landscape* (1925) *Seated Woman* (1922) (Figs. 1.14-6); Duncan Grant, *Two Nymphs* (c.1925), and *Study of a Man in a Hat* (c.1930) (Figs. 26-7). See also: Vanessa Bell, *Roger Fry*, 1932, pencil on paper, 38.7 x 27, Art Gallery of Toronto.

The event that brought Fry to prominence and continues to be strongly associated with his legacy was the exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, which ran from 8 November 1910 to 15 January 1911 at the Grafton Galleries in London (Fig. 1.17). ‘Post-Impressionism’ was Fry’s neologism. It remains in large part a category grafted onto a range of movements in contemporaneous French art (including Symbolism, Fauvism, and Synthetism). Fry and Desmond MacCarthy (a critic and secretary to the Grafton Galleries) set forth its sole criterion, which was the rejection of Impressionism.²⁸ Fry presented Cézanne, whose twenty-one pieces on display emphasised his early expressionist phase, as the ideological founder of the ‘New Movement’. Previously exhibited in London in 1898, 1906, and 1908, Cézanne had been dismissed as an incompetent Impressionist (Figs. 1.19-20). Fry emphasised his formal immediacy and strength, which spoke to a finer aesthetic sense – he ‘thought form’ rather than emulated illusion.²⁹ This first exhibition, however, was not a consolidated statement of a strict modernist agenda.³⁰ As Benedict Nicolson has convincingly argued, for those outside Fry’s social circle, the nascent agenda veered more toward a Baroque form of romanticism than a strict discipline of formal relations, revealing Fry’s own split affinity to, in Maurice Denis’s words, Cézanne as a Persian carpet weaver on the one hand and, on the other, to Julius Meier-Graefe’s references to Van Gogh in relation to the ‘Holy ecstasy’ of design.³¹ Where design is a concept often disassociated from direct dialogue with physical materials, metaphors of weaving and knotting treat lines as threads, integrally involving the substance of the materials in play. This ambiguity was resolved, however, in the ‘Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition of English, French and Russian Artists’, which opened in October 1912, also at the Grafton Galleries (Fig. 1.18). Along with the established French Post-Impressionist paragons (what the catalogue called the ‘Old Masters of the New Movement’³²), Bell selected British artists that included Slade alumni Vanessa Bell (1879-

²⁸ The exhibition featured 228 works, which along with Édouard Manet (nine pieces) included other names that would not have been alien to London art aficionados – such as Vincent van Gogh (twenty-two pieces) and Paul Gauguin (forty-six pieces) – along with a younger generation associated with Fauvism: Maurice de Vlaminck (nine paintings from his Cézanne-like phase), Henri Matisse (three pieces), André Derain (three pieces), and Othon Friesz (three pieces). Roger Fry and Desmond MacCarthy, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, exh. cat. (London, Grafton Gals, 1910–11), 7.

²⁹ Fry wrote: ‘The artist of to-day has...to some extent a choice before him of whether he will *think* form like the early artists of European races or merely *see* it.’ Roger Fry, ‘The Art of the Bushmen’, *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* (1910), published in *Primitivism and Twentieth-century Art: A Documentary History*, eds. Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (London: University of California Press, 2003), [41-46] 46.

³⁰ See: Benedict Nicolson, ‘Post-Impressionism and Roger Fry,’ *The Burlington Magazine*, 93:574 (Jan 1951), 10-15.

³¹ An art historian, Nicolson (1914–1978) should not be confused with the painter Ben Nicholson (1894–1982). Maurice Denis, ‘Cézanne-I’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 16:82 (Jan 1910), [207-9, 212-5, 219] 214; and ‘Cézanne-II’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 16:83 (Feb 1910), [275-7, 279-80] 279. See also: Julius Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst: vergleichende Betrachtung der bildenen Künste, als Beitrag zu einer neuen Aesthetik*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann, 1904), translated into English as *Modern Art: Being a Contribution to a New System of Aesthetics* (London: W. Heinemann, 1908): vol 1, 202, 208.

³² Harrison, *English Art*, 62.

1961), Duncan Grant, Spencer Gore, Wyndham Lewis, and Edward Wadsworth, as well as Stanley Spencer (1891-1959), who was a Slade student at the time. Bell and Fry were unified in this exhibition and governed by the aesthetic ideas Bell would publicise in *Art* (1914), which became a Post-Impressionist manifesto. Key among its tenets was ‘significant form’, which is the quality that distinguishes art from other visual experiences: an artist encounters lines, mass, and volumes that trigger an aesthetic experience, and through art, the artist has a chance to isolate the dynamic elements that triggered this emotion in order to trigger a similar aesthetic emotion in the viewer. When the formal elements are successful, they are called ‘significant form’.³³

Aside from Tonks’s unwitting provocation, two events, one personal and one historical, are responsible for Fry’s interest in drawing. The first is his relationship from around 1916 to early 1918 with Hamnett, who had been working at the Omega Workshops and was a central younger member of the Bloomsbury circle. Fry’s drawing articles roughly correspond with the ending of their affair as well as with a series of linear experiments Fry made of Hamnett in 1918, now in the University of Leeds Gallery collection (Figs. 1.21-3). Hamnett’s linear drawings, with their loose, delicate lines and naïve contours, embodied a form of Fry’s ideal drawing and may have played a large part in turning Fry’s attention to minimal, calligraphic lines rather than focusing on the sculptural-relief quality of Cézanne or Degas’s use of clusters of short parallel lines (Fig. 1.24).³⁴ Her work was singled out and reproduced in the ‘Line as a Means’ articles (Fig. 1.25). By 1926, when ‘On Some Modern Drawings’ was published in *Transformations*, however, she was omitted from Fry’s lineage of linear draughtsmen.³⁵ Instead Fry endorsed the Bloomsbury orthodoxy of championing Duncan Grant as a British candidate for consideration within a wider theatre of European modernism – this despite Grant’s aesthetic resistance to purely linear drawing (Figs. 26-7).³⁶

The second event was the ‘return to order’ in France. Fry’s Francophilia brought him in contact with the shifts in response to the First World War, if not primarily from his travels

³³ Fry was sceptical of Bell’s spiritualism (see footnote 13), but the main elements were consonant for both men. See: Harrison, *English Art*, 58-9, and James Beechey, ‘Defining Modernism: Roger Fry and Clive Bell in the 1920s’ in Shone, *The Art of Bloomsbury*, 39-51. In his response MacColl’s criticisms, Fry distances himself from Bell: ‘With regard to representation [...] Whatever Mr. Clive Bell may have said, I personally have never denied the existence of some amount of representation in all pictorial art.’ Fry, ‘Sad Case’, 85.

³⁴ The relationship is reported to have lasted from 1916 until early 1918. Shone, *Art of Bloomsbury*, 259-60.

³⁵ Alongside his favourite grandfather of plastic form (Rembrandt) as well as fathers (Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin) and prodigal sons (Modigliani, Matisse, and Picasso), their heirs were also included: Bonnard, Maillol, and Duncan Grant. Roger Fry, ‘On Some Modern Drawings’, *Transformations: Critical and Speculative Essays on Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), 197-212.

³⁶ See Beechey, ‘Defining Modernism’, 44. John Rothenstein commented that excessive praise of Grant had ‘wearied a whole generation with his name’. John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters*, II (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956), 62. Grant’s popularity continued through the interwar period; see: Anonymous, ‘At the Leicester Gallery: The London Artists’ Association’, *Apollo* (Dec 1927); and Anonymous, ‘Agnew Galleries’, *Times* (23 Jun 1932).

then certainly from Hamnett and her friendship with Modigliani (Figs. 1.28-9). The 'return to order' reshaped the aesthetics of modern art in accordance with a classical, linear style believed to be a vital part of the French national spirit, as evolved from Hellenic and Latin civilisations. A comparable variant of nationalism would grip pan-British culture as the foretremors of the Second World War strengthened.³⁷ Handling of paint was devalued as symptomatic of the irresponsible individualism of the pre-war years. The painter André Lhote wrote a series of articles for *The Athenaeum* in which he praised David as exemplar of the French tradition and Cézanne as both its heir and as the 'avenging voice' of Greece and Raphael.³⁸ Ingres also enjoyed renewed prestige. His position within the Grand Manner was recast due to his classical clarity and appearance of rationality. His purely linear drawings, such as *Sir John Hay and His Sister Mary* (1816) (Fig. 1.30), inspired quickly classicising artists such as Picasso, who had begun his own linear experiments before the war with portraits of Max Jacob and Daniel Kahnweiler, a style he brought to England during his three-month stay in London in the summer of 1919, while accompanying Diaghilev.³⁹ As David Peters Corbett has argued in relation to Wyndham Lewis, this altered French modernism fit neatly into the British art climate, uniting the love of Ingres and the love of Cézanne.⁴⁰ By 1922 Bell was commenting on how Grant had absorbed this French precedent and was adapting it to the English tradition of Gainsborough and Constable, turning his earlier radical aesthetic toward a calm humanism.⁴¹ Even Wyndham Lewis, whose *Two Mechanics* (c.1912) (Fig. 1.34) abounds with violent exuberance, began experimenting in 1919 with his own form of mechanised calligraphy, reformulating the subtle classicism of his own student years at the Slade into a simultaneously anti-humanist and yet sensitive series of nude studies (Figs. 1.35-6). Fry was thus, in one sense, updating his promotion of French aesthetic fashions. The terms he found to defend it, however, highlight an essential discomfort in his theory between the internal and external realisations of formal beauty.

³⁷ For a thorough analysis of the relationship between post-First World War French classicism and British modernism, see David Peters Corbett, 'Wyndham Lewis and the *Rappel à l'ordre*: Classicism and Significant Form, 1919-21', *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880-1940*, ed. Corbett, David Peters, et. al. (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 115-140. Fry also endowed aspects of line with an English national spirit: in the beginning of 'Line as a Means' (2) he describes a tendency in English drawing for a calligraphic aspect: 'No doubt an inherited tradition [...] beauty of handling and quality have always been so much admired in England that even the cheap substitutes for them, brilliance and audacity of touch, have had at times a greater prestige than was their due.' Fry, 'Line as a Means' (2), 62.

³⁸ André Lhote, 'A First Visit to the Louvre', *The Athenaeum* (22 Aug 1919), 787-88; and 'Cubism and the Modern Artistic Sensibility', *The Athenaeum* (19 Sep 1919), 920.

³⁹ During the stay he produced fine linear portraits of Lydia Lopokova and Vladimir Polunin (Fig. 1.32-3). James Beechey, 'Picasso in Britain 1919', *Picasso and Modern British Art*, ed. James Beechey and Chris Stephens (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), 82-83.

⁴⁰ Corbett 'Wyndham Lewis,' 145-6. This linear clarity fitted into prior adoration of Ingres-as-draughtsman at the Slade, where he already associated with the tranquillity and linear acuity of Raphael. See: Clive Bell, *Since Cézanne* [1922] (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929), 36-37.

⁴¹ Corbett, 'Wyndham Lewis', 145.

Fry, Tonks, and *Drawings by Deceased Masters*

'Drawing as Art?' is the central question that Fry grapples with in all three of his drawing articles. His initial answer is yes, as long as it is disconnected from prior associations with skill, achievement, and naturalism. The thrust, at first, seems to be a defence of drawn-objects, wrestling them away from serving as mere traces of drawing-performances. Once Tonks is exorcised, however, Fry is disinterested in the autonomy of drawn-objects and instead attends to drawing-acts as pure designing, ignoring external factors such as materials or mark-making in favour the line and plane. He is ultimately concerned with the expressive capacity of drawing as part of a formal tool-kit.

Fry's consideration of drawing began with a confrontation with the numerous material possibilities of the medium. Reflecting on the Burlington Fine Art Club's *Drawings by Deceased Masters* (1917), which assembled a variety of pieces ranging from Dürer's pen-and-body colour *Stag Beetle* (1505) to Degas's pastel chalk on blue paper *Ballet Girl*, Fry wrote: 'The variety of material naturally stimulates one to hazard some general speculations on the nature of drawing as an art.'⁴² Thus it was working from material permutations that Fry attempted to decoct essential qualities. But his analysis was constricted by its refutation of Tonks, and Fry wrote from within Tonks's terms of engagement – namely, that drawing-practice was a tradition united by a shared passion for the practice and its craft.

Fry reacted primarily against championing drawing-practice as a set of conventions that compelled artists to think in terms of personal rather than aesthetic achievement. Among Tonks's controversial claims in his introduction is the sense of fraternity and exclusivity of draughtsmen. To his elitist audience of collectors, historians, critics, and gentlemen-practitioners, Tonks set himself up as a spokesmen for the draughtsmen-heirs of an unbroken tradition – an informal club – whose star member was Ingres.⁴³ A division was marked between draughtsmen and art writers at a time when non-practitioners' interest in drawing was only just beginning.⁴⁴ Tonks exploited the mystery of drawing, its connotations

⁴² Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 51-2.

⁴³ Michelangelo was however, also a favourite of Tonks, as evidenced in Wyndham Lewis's criticism of his former teacher: '[Augustus John] had had the scholarship at the Slade, and the walls bore witness to the triumphs of this 'Michelangelo'...fronting the stairs that lead upwards where the ladies were learning to be Michelangelos, hung a big painting of Moses and the Brazen Serpent...Professor Tonks...had one great canon of draughtsmanship, and that was the saints of the Renaissance. Everyone was attempting to be a giant and please Tonks. None pleased Tonks – none, in their work, bore the least resemblance to Michelangelo. The ladies upstairs wept when he sneered at their effort to become Giantesses.' Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment* (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984), 127.

⁴⁴ 'The pleasure of drawing is in the production of much by little means, and the pleasure grows with the development of the artist. A single line may mean nothing beyond a line; add another alongside and both disappear, and we are aware only of the contents, and a form is expressed. The beauty of a line is in its result, in the form which it helps to bring into being. *Draughtsmen know this, but writers on art do not seem to.*' [my italics] Tonks, *Drawings by Deceased Masters*, 8. Fry quotes a section of this in his 'Drawings at the Burlington', 52.

of intimacy, and its invocation of the absent body of the artist. For a writer and practitioner such as Fry, this would have rung of establishment exclusion.⁴⁵ Fry had conquered much of the critical and modern art world, but Tonks was laying claim to drawing-practice as an extension of his own teachings.

By 1917 Tonks was already a crucial figure for early-twentieth-century drawing-practice. Teaching at and then directing the Slade School of Art from 1892 to 1930, he insisted on a firm foundation of anatomical study and carefully-observed drawing from the model for successive generations of artists, both avant-garde and not.⁴⁶ Reported to have stated that 'to live with a bad drawing is to live with a lie', Tonks was a key proponent of what came to be known as the 'Slade Style'.⁴⁷ Founded by Alphonse Legros, it was a form of drawing based on a notion of a French fluency, which hinged upon the depiction of linear contours rather than tonal masses (Fig. 1.38).⁴⁸ Reflected light and chiaroscuro distracted a student from being able to see the full form accurately and thus were discouraged, resulting in what former student A. S. Harrick described as 'grey drawings'.⁴⁹ John Fothergill summed up the key aspects of the style in a 1907 essay on the Slade's concept of drawing, explaining that the

⁴⁵ Although Fry had become an establishment unto himself, he nonetheless remained sensitive to his opposition to an established old guard, as is evident in the above-quoted letter to MacColl.

⁴⁶ One example of Tonks's drawn-objects is *Auguste Rodin*, 1914 (Fig. 1.37). His students included William Rothenstein, Augustus John, Gwen John, William Orpen, Paul Nash, Wyndham Lewis, Dora Carrington, Dorothy Brett, Spencer Gore, Jacob Epstein, David Bomberg, Michel Salaman, Edna Waugh, Herbert Barnard Everett, Albert Rothenstein, Stanley Spencer, Mark Gertler, Ambrose McEvoy, Ursula Tyrwhitt, Ida Nettleship, and Gwen Salmond.

⁴⁷ Morris repeats Tonks's saying in: Lynda Morris, 'Tonks, Henry (1862–1937)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36535> (accessed 11 July 2013). Tonks's drawing instruction has been subsequently mythologised through its fragmentary propagation. It exists between the lines of student memoirs and in terse reports. Uncomfortable with describing in words what he felt only able to demonstrate, Tonks has left little behind of how he actually taught drawing at the Slade. What does survive has been sedulously collated and filled in by writings from his followers: Joseph Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks* (S.l.: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939); Lynda Morris, ed., *Henry Tonks and the 'Art of Pure Drawing'* (Norwich: Norwich School of Art Gallery, c.1985).

⁴⁸ The Slade School of Art opened in 1871 after the Felix Slade bequest of 1868. From its inception is was conceived as a conduit for professional fine artists. Its first professor was painter Edward John Poynter, who in 1876 handed over control to a friend of James McNeill Whistler, Alphonse Legros. The Frenchman impressed his students and the British public alike with regular demonstrations of his particularly French method of rapid, uncannily accurate drawing and oil sketches from live models. He credited his speed and accuracy to the memory training of Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1802–1897), who was his teacher when acting first as an assistant professor and then director at the École Royale et Spéciale de Dessin et de Mathématique. Boisbaudran's method involved isolating shapes and masses while gazing at a scene and then drawing them from memory. This allowed the artist to store fleeting moments in the mind as well as enabling an individual mind to later reconstitute the scene, possessing it afresh. In order to keep the memory sharp, drawing needed to be a regular practice, something undertaken first through visualising the contours and then later representing them on the page. Legros further had full-sized photographs of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael drawings framed and hung on the school walls. As Charles Ricketts reflected, 'Discipline, balance, design, a hatred for all exaggeration – such were the sober virtues he [Legros] valued and strove for.' Charles Ricketts and Campbell Dodgson, *Paintings, etc., by Alphonse Legros* (London: Grogsvner Galleries, 1922), 'Appreciation' section, quoted in Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy*, 273. Boisbaudran's students included Georges Bellenger, Jean-Charles Cazin, Jules Dalou, Henri Fantin-Latour, Alphonse Legros, Léon Lhermitte, Auguste Rodin, Guillaume Régamey, Félix Régamey, and Frédéric Régamey, and he indirectly influenced Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and James McNeill Whistler.

⁴⁹ Walter Shaw Sparrow, *Memories of Life and Art* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1925), 95.

focus was on form and contour (rather than outline or atmosphere or decorative calligraphy), and that draughtsmen sought to depict the character or ‘construction of the subject’ in the simplest terms, resulting in what were known as ‘sculptor’s drawings’, as exemplified by William Orpen’s *Study of Bearded Man* (undated) (Fig. 1.39).⁵⁰ Paul Nash (1889-1946) later described it as ‘a queer method of draughtsmanship’ where ‘everybody drew as if with a multiple pencil. Each line was reinforced again and again with nervous supports and follows. Curves and circles were a maze of concentrics.’⁵¹ This contrasted with the RA school’s tradition of softly textured, tonal drawings that were loosely based on High Renaissance models, otherwise known as the ‘South Kensington Style’ or what critic R. H. Wilenski (1887-1975) described in *The Modern Movement in Art* (1927) as the ‘vicious systems of “drawing by the shadows”’.⁵² It also contrasted with the rough, expressive experiments of Fry’s Bloomsbury circle.⁵³

Around the time that Tonks was involved in *Drawings by Deceased Masters*, Fry published ‘Children’s Drawings’ in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* (June 1917), which attacked the prioritisation of practice over product. In it he made a striking, and telling, territorial grab against Tonks. While the celebrity draughtsman Augustus John was the darling of the Slade Style (e.g. Figs. 1.40-1), emblematic of all its vices as well as virtues, Fry turned to the artist’s young son, David John, reproducing one of his drawings in the article (Fig. 1.42). Extolling the passionate expression and animistic visual experience accessible to children, Fry wrote: ‘No one can miss the intensity with which the boy has realised the snakiness of the snake – the peculiar intimate sympathy and vitality of the reeding such as no cold observation could attain to’, continuing later, ‘We have to recognise that our admiration of an artist’s skill is not aesthetic [...] We have to get rid of the idea that our favourable aesthetic judgement of a work of art is a kind of prize conferred on the artist for meritorious effort.’⁵⁴ This is a fuller account of Fry’s famous interaction with a young girl, who when asked how she drew,

⁵⁰ John Fothergill, ‘The Principles of Teaching Drawing at the Slade School’, *The Slade: A Collection of Drawings and Some Pictures Done by Past and Present Students of the London Slade School of Art*, MDCCCXCIII - MDCCCXCVII, ed., John Fothergill (London: Printed by R. Clay & Sons), 31-47.

⁵¹ Paul Nash, in the first draft of *Outline*, quoted by Andrew Causey, *Paul Nash* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 16; also quoted in Malcolm Yorke, *The Spirit of Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and Their Times* (London; New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001), 32.

⁵² R. H. Wilenski, *The Modern Movement in Art* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1927), 35.

⁵³ Such as: Duncan Grant, *Portrait of a Negro*, c.1918-19, pastel and charcoal on paper, 44.5 x 29.7 cm, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; Duncan Grant, *Study for ‘The Coffee Pot’*, c.1918, charcoal and pencil on paper, 52.7 x 34.9 cm, Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford; Vanessa Bell, *Julian Bell*, c.1928, pencil on paper, 33 x 24 cm, Charleston House.

⁵⁴ Roger Fry, ‘Children’s Drawings’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 30:171 (Jun 1917), [225-227, 231] 226 and 225 respectively.

responded, 'I think, and then I draw a line around my think.'⁵⁵ The intensity of David John's visual experience, the naïve immediacy, is his 'think'. And intellectualism is thus conjoined with the emotional intensity of aesthetic experience: thought becomes emotion and the formal organising component of line emanates from an internal processing of external reality in all its nuance – something Fry would develop further in the 'Line as a Means' articles.

Another aspect of Tonks's terms for engaging with drawing was a notion of tradition. Individuals with honed techniques were subject to the momentum and precedent of tradition. Fry did not deny the importance of tradition – claiming that realist concerns had ruptured an older tradition of formalist art⁵⁶ – but he did, however, view the older concepts as continuous through history, rather than a chain of developing techniques. The interloping concept that had ruptured the formalist tradition was an inhibiting one, wedded to naturalism. The enabling concept, in contrast, was based on medium specificity. In this sense Fry's move correlates with Thierry de Duve's distinction between notions of 'metier' (art-objects evaluated in relation to practice, i.e. a tradition of skills, rules, canons, etc.) and of 'medium' (art-objects evaluated in relation to particular materials, supports, tools, gestures, technical procedures).⁵⁷ Both Tonks and Fry were engaged in a revival that located broken traditions as recoverable through practice and being united from a universal urge toward engaging symbolically with the external world. What they disagreed upon, however, was what those symbols were. Fry's description of the inhibiting concept collapsed Tonks and the reviled RA under a single naturalist umbrella, where the subject was represented by measuring distances between points on the body that could be transferred to the page. In a later piece, 'On Some Modern Drawings', published in *Transformations* (1926), Fry further articulated this as an artist's manipulating aesthetics to prove his-or-her knowledge and dexterity, such as denoting musculature under drapery where unnecessary.⁵⁸ Such 'cardinal facts' or 'points de repère', according to Fry, stymied aesthetic experience.

⁵⁵ Eric Newton, 'Art Free and in Service,' *The Listener* (23 Jan 1935), [142-44], 142. Fry, 'The Art of the Bushmen' (1910), 45.

⁵⁶ Initially torn between his early admiration for the idealism of Joshua Reynolds and his Post-Impressionist appreciation for early Florentine linealists, Fry settled on the latter as his predecessors.

⁵⁷ Thierry De Duve, 'When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond,' *The Artist and the Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context*, ed. Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster (Highfield: University of Southampton and John Hansard Gallery, 1994), [23-40] 23.

⁵⁸ Fry, 'Modern Drawings', 197-9.

Drawing as Art

It is in relation to medium specificity where Fry begins to break free from Tonks's terms of engagement. The essential qualities of drawing were not dependent on physical materials or techniques, but on the abstract concepts of line and void. What Fry champions is self-consciously closer to design than drawing-acts. He claimed to value the grammar of the drawn-object over the process within drawing-practice, but he ultimately alights in his examination of drawing upon a mental engagement with line and void rather than their physical expressions.

The difference between drawing and design became, for Fry, the difference in where visual experience was explicated: on the page or in the mind. Fry is dismissive of the total experience of drawing-practice, which Tonks advocated as pursuing the economy of representation through hunting 'in the fields of his memory, imagination'.⁵⁹ Sketching and first thoughts (or any evidence of them within the drawn-object) are relegated to 'research' and their aesthetic result only as 'notation'.⁶⁰ Notions of framing or manipulating a sense of mass along the flattened plane are dismissed as pale painterly imitations: tonal manipulation and chiaroscuro, whether by stumping or hatching, and the way in which mass plays against the pigment and texture of the support become irrelevant. Degas, the draughtsman-hero of Whistler, Sickert, and the London impressionists – and who Fry called in 1912 'the greatest draughtsman since the Renaissance' – is by 1918 dismissed.⁶¹ 'It is hard to speak here of Degas's works as drawings', Fry writes in 'Drawings at the Burlington', concluding that 'they are essentially paintings'.⁶² The void of the page – where negative space acts within as well as around the positive marks – becomes a key counterbalance to line, making framing and compositional concerns also irrelevant. If drawing is to be art, however, it must be distinct from un-aesthetic research and notation. The notion of design-practice is thus established as a honed replacement for drawing-practice. Design-practice, however, is not a compositional

⁵⁹ 'The pleasure of drawing is the production of much by little means, and the pleasure grows with the development of the artist. [...] The model, though he may seem to all that the artist requires, will set him hunting in the fields of his memory, imagination, without which no drawing is done, is but the power to make use at the present moment of something put away in the past. The eye to see, the mind to retain, and the hand to express, are the means by which works of imagination are produced. [...] Hunting for abstract form is as likely as to meet with success as a child's search for the noise in the interior of drum.' Tonks, *Drawings by Deceased Masters*, 8.

⁶⁰ For 'research' see: Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 61; Fry, 'Line as a Means' (2), 67. For 'notation' see: Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 62; Fry, 'Line as a Means' (2), 67.

⁶¹ Fry, 'Sir Sidney', 201.

⁶² Fry conceded, however, that Degas pastels 'are of great beauty and show him victorious over his own formidable cleverness, his unrivalled but dangerous power of notation.' Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington,' 62. In preferring to deny tone and shading, Fry curiously aligns himself the precedent not only of Tonks but also of the earlier Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic approaches to drawings. For the latter, see: Colin Cruise, 'Drawing and Vision,' *Apollo*, 173:585 (March 2011), 122-125; and chapter three, 'Personality, Portraiture and Illustration: Charles Ricketts and Oscar Wilde' in Corbett, *World in Paint*, 129-168.

activity, but a mental stripping away of extraneous detail. Where Tonks describes forms through undrawn sectional lines and drawn contours emerged from the overlaid marks on the page, Fry advocates that these processes take place in the mind, so what emerges is a delicate and insightful statement of linear expression. Fry thus appropriates the underpinning of the Slade Style's memory training, which relies upon isolating shapes and their relationships, and makes it the crux of (linear) drawing-acts. Line as it describes 'plastic form' becomes paramount, regardless of whether it is executed with pencil on paper, brush on ceramic, or within the layers of paint on canvas.⁶³ This is not Clement Greenberg's formalism, where the implications of physical materials are critically experimented with; rather, Fry's treatment of drawing is limitless, material-less, mental analysis, or in his words, 'vision'. Against this terminological reorientation, even Ingres does not escape Degas's fate: 'In his [Ingres's] drawings he was too much preoccupied with the perfect description of facts, when he came to the painting he began that endless process of readjustment and balance of contours which make him so great and original designer.'⁶⁴ The morality represented by Ingres's form of drawing as research notation is attacked as an indication of rewarding effort rather than the result:

Ingres has long been accepted in the schools as *par excellence* the great modern master of drawing. His great saying '*Le dessin c'est la probité de l'art*' [drawing is the probity of art], has indeed become a watchword of the schools and an excuse for indulgence in a great deal of gratuitous and misplaced moral feeling. It has led to the display of all kinds of pedagogic folly. Art is a passion or it is nothing. It is certainly a very bad moral gymnasium. It is useless to try to make a kind of moral parallel bars out of the art of drawing. You will certainly spoil the drawing, and it is doubtful if you will get the morals. Drawing is a passion to the draughtsman just as much as colour is to the colourist, and the draughtsman has no reason to feel moral superiority because of the nature of his passion. He is fortunate to have it, and there is an end of the matter.⁶⁵

Fry calls his design-practice 'pure drawing', which is free from the restrictive morality of drawing-practice. Thus while Fry appreciates the potential for drawn-objects to be autonomous modern art-objects, it is a status they must earn by rigorous design-practice.

Fry saw the state of modernist drawing as a conundrum: Cézanne had reinvented aesthetic purpose in the late nineteenth century, and yet it was only with 'the artists of the present generation' that drawing was used 'in an entirely new manner prompted by the new

⁶³ Though he does discuss needing to train the hand to make fluid marks in 1926. Fry, 'Modern Drawings', 201.

⁶⁴ Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 61.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 52.

conception of what is implied in the artist's vision'.⁶⁶ Cézanne himself had been little interested in drawing, according to Fry, but had opened the conceptual territory for innovation. Picasso and Matisse were presented as successful 'modern' draughtsman, mining the 'few quintessential extracts' chosen through 'long and conscious study', which they allowed their unconscious genius to transform into meaningful line. Picasso's sparse *Portrait of Monsieur Massine* is reproduced (Fig. 1.45), but it is Matisse who is given the most scope, and through his work two types of line are established: calligraphic (which provides pleasure in rhythmic sequence) and structural (which suggests plastic form).⁶⁷ Design occurs in the pre-execution mental processes, as chaotic visual stimulus is reduced to essential pictorial elements. Two drawings by Matisse are published next to each other: an untitled pen-and-ink still life of flowers in a vase and a pencil drawing of a woman with a cat (Figs. 1.46-7). Fry's comments are worth reproducing at length for their prescience about British art as much as their relation to Matisse:

The peculiar exhilaration, the sense of excitement as of watching some incredibly difficult feat of balancing which one gets from such drawing as this of Matisse's comes, I think, from the fact that with such bold simplification of natural form one feels that the mechanical, the merely schematic is always lying in wait. For herein lies one of the great charms of drawing – namely, that the conflict between the infinite complexity and fullness of matter, on the one hand, and the bare geometric abstraction of mind, is brought, not, indeed, to a point, but literally to a line. In art these two incommensurable aspects of the world are somehow reduced to a common measure, and in a drawing this reconciliation is seen in its simplest, most impressive aspect. For the purely ideal, intelligible and logical drawing would be a mere mathematical diagram of straight lines and known curves, and on the other hand the purely literal accurate drawing would be exactly as chaotic and unintelligible as nature. The great draughtsman does obtain a lucid and recognisable order without losing the fullness, the compactness and infinity of life. The quality of line which, while having an intelligible rhythm, does not become mechanical is called its sensitiveness. And here the most obvious thing is clearly that the line is capable of infinite variation, of adapting itself to form at every point of its course.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ 'It also seemed to me likely that the revolution in art which our century has witnessed would, precisely because it has released the artist from his particular bond of representational accuracy, enable the artist to find fuller expression in line drawing than has been the case since the 14th century [...] Cézanne, though so definitely the originator of the new conception, never seems to have seen the possibilities it implied for line drawing.' Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 202; Fry was explicit that this was a change in the *conception of* drawing. By 'vision' Fry referred to the artist seeing for harmony and colour, whereas 'modern' denotes radical European experiments. For vision, see: Roger Fry, 'The Artist's Vision', *Vision and Design* [1920], ed. J. B. Bullen (London, Oxford University Press, 1981), [33-38] 34.

⁶⁷ Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 202, 206; and Fry, 'Line as a Means' (2), 62. See also: Fry, 'Modern Drawings', 200-1.

⁶⁸ Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 202

Drawing is thus evocative of the chaotic, complex fullness of appearances, but it is also limited to being evocative. The line should be economically deployed in order to suggest through absence: the chaos not recorded, the mass left undescribed, and the research-notations erased.⁶⁹

Line for Fry is a path-breaker and never a static mark. It operates in time (it has rhythm and tempo) and in space (it carries tension, either along itself or along its direction).⁷⁰ Contour is not a single line prey to manual impurity, but is a concept that has agency: it promises, it leads, it ends, it carries. Fry returns to this sense of progress and of end in his evaluation of other artists in 'Drawings at the Burlington', where he elaborates on his fear of contour, its possibility to strangle form, to loosen from descriptive intention and devolve into calligraphy, to drown its voids in fussiness, to pierce or rupture space. His conclusion emanates rawness and trepidation: 'It is felt by those who are sensitive to the interplay and movement of planes that the line must in some way, by its quality or its position, or by breaks or repetitions, avoid arresting the imagination by too positive a statement.'⁷¹ Handling line well is a form of lost innocence: 'It was almost the peculiarity of the early art that I have cited to be able to express a form in a quite complete, evenly drawn contour without this terrible negative effect of line.'⁷²

All line, all contour is thought. It is not observable – one can only observe the vital points of planar transition or points of stress where an imposed line captures the essence of the aesthetic experience. Internal contour is versatile analysis, but the drawn contour becomes a metaphor for creative angst. It is the fullness of matter meeting the selective power of mind, evoking and controlling absence. It was paramount for Tonks as a thing of beauty and information, but Fry replaces Tonks's pleasure in manipulating contour with his own fear of its power. The contour had an important role to play in Fry's conception of the 'infinite complexity and fullness of matter' meeting the 'bare geometric abstraction of mind'. It is not merely a line (or lines) with extent and direction, but it is an invisible edge.⁷³ Its circumscription of a space transforms absence into volume. In 'Drawings at the Burlington' Fry elucidated his understanding by quoting Pliny: 'For contour must go round itself and so

⁶⁹ British linear drawing toward the end of the 1930s experimented with both linear alternatives: the chaos and the logical. John Piper, Feliks Topolski, David Jones (1895-1974), and Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) improvised on the ebullient scribble of Daumier and even Samuel Palmer, whereas Henry Moore (1898-1986) and Ben Nicholson played in the realm of the logical with threadlike lines, grids, and balanced basic geometric shapes.

⁷⁰ 'Tempo' is invoked in Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 206; 'tension' in Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 61.

⁷¹ Fry, 'Drawings at the Burlington', 63.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See: James Elkins, 'Marks, Traces, *Traits*, Contours, *Orli*, and *Splendores*: Nonsemiotic Elements in Pictures', *Critical Inquiry*, 21:4 (Summer 1995), 822-860.

end that it promises other things begin and shows that which it hides.’⁷⁴ The invisible continuation of the ended contour-line continues in the mind, also known during the period as ‘sectional lines’.⁷⁵ As a practice, Fry’s design-drawing becomes the test of not just the skilled hand or acute mind but of a whole relationship to self and to one’s own creativity, whose component lines can reveal the creative distilling and battles with the self in the minute points of doubt and faltering marks.

While admiring what a drawn line could achieve, Fry was clearly nervous of its power to reveal the psychology beneath, perhaps due to personal artistic apprehensions of inferiority. It is important to note that despite reacting against notation-drawing, Fry was also uncomfortable with polished presentation drawn-objects: in a 1924 review of Detlev Freiherr von Hadeln’s *Zeichnungen des Tizian* (1924), he dismissed drawn-objects ‘made on purpose to look well as drawings’ as ‘wearisome’. He argued that the excellence of Titian’s clumsy draughtsmanship resides in ‘the very fact that he cultivated drawing so little. One may almost say that drawings are of value in proportion as they are “unconscious.” That is to say, it is a medium suited better to vehement impulse than a prolonged reflection.’⁷⁶ This appears to directly contradict his 1918-1919 assertions as well as his 1926 ones that the process of vision is one of roaming, systematising selection through the chaos of matter. It is possible that Fry’s tastes simply changed, but it is also likely that this emerged from a frustration with the gap between artistic expression as an internal vision and its external expression as corporeal, indelible, and potentially strangling material marks.

The importance of decisions in regard to material limitations emerges only as anxiety in the 1918-9 drawing articles, but Fry’s understanding of the tension between internal and external expression became more nuanced with age. In ‘The Aesthetic Theories of Roger Fry Reconsidered’ (1977), David Taylor argues that Fry’s early theory (c.1913-1924) has come to eclipse the more nuanced developments of its mature form. In his later theory, Taylor argues, Fry became increasingly interested in the individual artist’s sensibility as a transmutational force.⁷⁷ Part of Taylor’s argument is that Fry relies on the relations between

⁷⁴ Pliny, the Elder, *Natural History*, vol 9: Libri XXXIII-XXXV, trans. H. Rackham ([S.l.]: William Heinemann, 1952), 311. Fry, ‘Line as a Means’ (1), 52.

⁷⁵ For ‘sectional lines’ see Meninsky (not a term used by Fry). Bernard Meninsky, typescript entitled ‘The Art of Drawing’, (1948), First lecture, TGA 8225.3.1.3: 14; Second lecture, TGA 8225.3.1.4: 1, 5. An engineering term, it denotes the shape of the object cut into sections. Meninsky invokes it to denote the juncture between planes and volumes: ‘The way in which the life-giving area by which means the object drawn was given its appropriate weight and movement, was, as it were reinforced by, or evolved through the use of sectional lines describing the movement of the solid bodies in space, so that the precise angle of any object in its relation to the spectator, was unmistakably presented.’ Meninsky, ‘Second Lecture’, 1.

⁷⁶ Roger Fry, ‘Titian as Draughtsman’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 45:259 (Oct 1924), [160-5], 165, reviewing Detlev Freiherr von Hadeln, *Zeichnungen des Tizian* (Berlin: P. Cassirer, 1924). See also: Fry, ‘Modern Drawings’, 197-212.

⁷⁷ Taylor, ‘Fry Reconsidered,’ 63-4.

parts in a whole for meaning. This not only comprises the components of an aesthetic unit but also the relationship between the artist's vision and the available materials. Decrying 'a given medium' as a misnomer, Taylor argues that the physical constitution of painting mediums (i.e. pigment suspended in liquid) is always subject to the inclination of the individual artist:

The plastic potentialities of these media [variants of oil paint], in their specific [chemical] adjustments, are, however, clearly traceable to the artist according to whose executive insights such adjustments have been made. And in this light medium-potential becomes indistinguishable from artist-potential. It is this fact, which Fry clearly has in mind in his *Reflections on British Painting* (1934) when he stresses the rather tragic misapprehension of Reynolds that the possession of Rembrandt's *medium* would provide access to Rembrandt's characteristic manner of vision. Rembrandt's medium, as Fry emphasises, cannot be separated from Rembrandt's total manner of vision.⁷⁸

Executive decision and vision thus take on a specific relationship to the known and unknown variables of engaging with material supports. This was also around the time that Fry retreated from the strictures of Bell's 'significant form' (which Taylor calls a severely formalistic common denominator for plastic expression), and accepts the fundamental 'double' nature of painting as interweaving formal dynamics and narrative (or spatial and psychological imagination) for full aesthetic effect.⁷⁹ Drawing upon Fry's treatment of Rembrandt's *Boy at Lessons* in 'Some Questions in Esthetics', Taylor proposed that what became central for Fry post-1926 was the artistic, creative personality.⁸⁰ 'Aesthetic content' becomes the 'whole emotional import of the artist's unique sensibility, transmuting by means of its deep familiarity with the expressive resources of its medium'.⁸¹ Fry remains an idealist – matter is a way to access a form of spiritual experience – but he becomes concerned with material: the relationship between the matter of paint and the matter revealed by the paint is a valued dynamic. According to Taylor, within this relationship a distinction emerges between the artist as a social being (limited by material availability) and the artist as a being with individual creative dispositions.⁸²

Taylor's argument has the advantage of picking up the theoretical indecisiveness of the first Post-Impressionist exhibition, with its emphasis on expression and connotations of Denis's

⁷⁸ Taylor, 'Fry Reconsidered', 67.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 68-9. See also: Roger Fry, 'The double nature of painting', *Apollo*, 89 (1969), [362-71] 371. For 'psychological imagination' see Fry, 'Questions in Esthetics', 10-22.

⁸⁰ Taylor, 'Fry Reconsidered', 68. Fry, 'Questions in Esthetics', 1-43. *Boy at Lessons* is reproduced between pages 40 and 41 in Fry, 'Questions in Esthetics'.

⁸¹ Taylor, 'Fry Reconsidered', 68.

⁸² Ibid, 69.

weaving rather than constructing. It also implies that Fry did not completely refuse expression and materiality in his Post-Impressionist heyday: they were retained, if repressed, until he was able to recognise their role. In this light, though the drawing articles of 1918-9 advocated a sense of drawing stripped down to its bare mental compositional components, they can also be read as early indications of Fry attending to material needs. The fear of the mark is a form of persistent doubt that formalism in its pure sense was incomplete. Fry's emphasis on the subconscious and on the ultimate individuality of the artist at the moment of expression betrays the idealism of his purely formal conception of drawing. In denying this aspect of drawing-practice, its emotional charge is revealed.

Two layers of meaning emerge from the 1918-9 drawing articles. On the surface they set up an essentialist reflection on what drawing as a medium could be distilled into in order to turn it in to a reflexive and autonomous modern medium. The components are the line and the void; the activity is a process of internal, formal design. This simplified notion was appropriated and circulated within public understanding as an injunction to look for the design-decisions within all mediums. Underneath Fry's formalist propositions, however, is a discomfort with the totality of drawing, a discomfort with how the forms in the mind become the marks on the page. Fry glosses over this by focusing on drawing-practice even when he begins the endeavour by trying to wrest the aesthetic needs of drawn-objects from the craft-performance of drawing-practice. By alighting on design, he merely changes the terms of reference for performance as well as failing to differentiate drawing from other mediums, since in treating drawing-acts as pure composition, they are still defined in relation to an activity common to all fine art. What emerged through the 1918-9 drawing articles was an aspirational reflection, a hope not only of what drawing could be but what in a hypothetical universe it should be, and this was what sparked the response from MacColl, for whom drawing was a set of conventions for communicating in reference to both public understanding and material needs. That materiality was not entirely absent from Fry's articles – and indeed came back in his later theories – demonstrates both its importance and that Fry's ultimate contribution was not in the details of what he said in those articles but in opening the debate under the aegis of radical, modern art.

D. S. MacColl and Drawing

MacColl's articles disclose a more refined notion of drawing than Fry's. English impressionism was in many ways respectful toward drawn-objects and drawing-practice. It combined an Aristotelian sense of the ethics for art with an interest in optical perception over naturalism. As discussed in relation to Fry's early years, masters such as Degas

demonstrated the power of it to capture a fleeting image within a picture whose combination of raw and sensitive marks conveyed this transience to the viewer in the very vulnerability of its materials. When goaded by Fry, MacColl's defence of drawing-practice rallied this sense of artistry working through material and public literacy. The resultant whole transcended the individual parts. In his three articles, MacColl positioned drawing as a set of conventions for communication, which were nested within the particular recalcitrance of drawing as a medium. Historical narratives that adhere to a simple sense of progress have underplayed MacColl's influence after the advent of Post-Impressionism; the complexity and sensitivity of his conception of drawing provided a fertile practical understanding that, despite the apparent acrimony with Fry, was not mutually exclusive with the latter's design injunctions.

In 1919, when MacColl published his three responses to Fry's 'Lines as a Means' articles, he had spent the previous nine years as a consistent and outspoken opponent of Fry's aesthetics and the resultant New Movement.⁸³ In part because of this vociferous opposition, little attention has been paid to MacColl's presence after the decline of the NEAC's avant-gardism, other than as Fry's critical opponent. Charles Harrison in *British Art and Modernism* (1981) portrays MacColl as an almost comic figure, a rumbling castaway from an evolving avant-garde that no longer identified with the English impressionism of the NEAC, and angry at the idea of expression trumping technique.⁸⁴ The three drawing articles present a different view. MacColl emerges not as an institutional dinosaur frightened of artistic verve, but as keen observer of the pragmatic as well as metaphysical aspects of art production, who, while not humouring the jargon of successive movements, nonetheless presents a dynamic and subtle interpretation of the substance of drawing-as-medium.

Unlike Fry's isolated periods of interest in drawing, it was an important topic for MacColl over many years. But MacColl's treatment of it, like Fry's, was also limited. He veered towards drawing-as-technology: it is instrumental and yet constituted a form of understanding of self, materials, nature, mark-making, and design. Thus, as for Tonks, it was an ethical guide for good living, endowing a visual critical facility and professional discipline. Drawing-practice for MacColl existed primarily as a basic mode of visual communication, which some people refined into a craft, and which balanced the stylistic impulse of the artist,

⁸³ MacColl's challenges to Fry's activities helped the latter hone his theories as well as providing crucial contemporaneous insights for subsequent scholarship. In relation to Fry, Jacqueline Falkenheim described MacColl as 'by far the most determined and incisive judge that Fry the critic ever had'. Falkenheim, *Roger Fry*, 34. See also: Nicolson, 'Roger Fry', 14; and Taylor, 'Fry Reconsidered', 66.

⁸⁴ See: Harrison, *English Art*, 49-50. Associations of MacColl with anti-expressionism arise from his fixation on this aspect of the first Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910. This is, however, a highly context-dependent reading. Nicolson convincingly argues that the 1910 exhibition catalogue, with the introduction by Desmond MacCarthy, was potentially misleading: 'There was nothing there to indicate to anyone without an intimate knowledge of the Paris studios that the best contemporary art was at that moment submitting itself to a very strict [formal] discipline.' Nicolson, 'Roger Fry', 14.

the visual appearance of external objects, and the consciousness of the medium. In the three parts of MacColl's 'Mr. Fry and Drawing', he expands on the properties of the activity, from its childhood development to its subsequent refinement. He does not focus on drawn-objects, but on drawing-practice as a process. In doing so, however, he provides insight into the character of his 'idea' of drawing that encompasses the broader concept of the medium.

The significance of drawing lay in its function for MacColl. As an educational basis, evidence of professional devotion to art, and a tool for invention, drawing contained the hope of vivifying a British school of art, in contrast to the dominance of French art. In MacColl's July 1910 review of 'Twenty Years of British Art' at the Whitechapel Gallery, he applauded 'the revival of the idea of drawing' as a promising sign for the full rejuvenation of British art, strengthened by Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon's 'designer's drawing', William Rothenstein's 'character drawing', and Legros, Frederick Brown and Tonks's 'lucid and vigorous teaching' of drawing at the Slade.⁸⁵ By 1919, however, MacColl had come to despair of the revival. Partial responsibility lay with the failure of drawing:

It is claimed for those who emerge from flirtation with those systems [Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Blue Rider Expressionism, and Futurism] that they do so strengthened in their grasp of drawing, in possession of what Mr. Fry calls a 'canon of form'. I am more struck with the sterilising effect on some men of promise. There had been a hopeful revival of drawing in this country, but it was unaccompanied by any strong intellectual impulse and direction. Poverty of content, the absence of a compulsion to expression, left the artist with the formal element of his art to play with, to pull to pieces, a making of nonsense pictures which leads nowhere, like the making of nonsense verse.⁸⁶

The contention that there was neither content nor expression in the drawn-objects of the late 1910s and early 1920s directly counters Fry's assertion that there was then a revolution in drawing. MacColl flatly rejects this interpretation; the idealism of the 'canon of form' was, for MacColl, sterilising in its fragmentary understanding of drawing-as-medium.

MacColl's 'Mr. Fry and Drawing I-III'

'Gentlemen,' MacColl wrote in the June 1919 article, 'if we ask, What is drawing? we shall find that in its full development it is not a simple act, but that several *drawings*, so to speak, are combined in the final stage.'⁸⁷ MacColl thus opens his discussion by positioning drawing-

⁸⁵ D. S. MacColl, 'Twenty Years of British Art' at the Whitechapel Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 17:88 (Jul 1910), 229.

⁸⁶ MacColl, 'Mr. Fry and Drawing – III', 45-46.

⁸⁷ MacColl, 'Mr Fry and Drawing-II', 254.

practice as the coordination of several act-product endeavours, touching upon a fuller understanding of the conditions of discussing a medium. Layering is examined as an aspect of medium-engagement over the course of childhood development and as the balancing of competing aesthetic and technical considerations, but as will be discussed in the next section it also involved the containing and defining conception of ‘design’ as a dynamic interaction between mark-making, perceived space, and containing support materials. This section focuses on the most important of the three articles, ‘Mr. Fry and Drawing – II’, which sets out the development and theory of drawing at length. It is the longest and most lucid of the series: the first was devoted to obstinate criticism, and the last was a brief demonstration of compositional design. This section will deal with each of three stages outlined in ‘Mr. Fry and Drawing – II’: gesture (subject to rhythm), language (subject to symbol), and image production (subject to representation and composition).

The first stage, gesture, begins in childhood. Here marks are the traces left by gesturing. With this stage comes a gradual ability to control the precision and fluidity of gesture in response to the quality of the mark. This is a stage he identifies as benefiting from instruction, but as an organic development; he likens it to ice-skating. MacColl describes the moment of trace-consciousness:

From helpless, floundering gesture the advance has been made to controlled gesture, and the trace of these gestures on the ice has the metrical constitution of *rhythm*. The goal of this stage of drawing is rhythmical gesture. It has no purpose outside of itself: it represents nothing; it is merely the graphic trace of a point moving under the laws of balance.⁸⁸

MacColl describes this physical activity of trace-making as ‘one of the fundamentals of drawing [...] what in fine drawing we call “swing”, “freedom”, “go” is the sense of natural gesture of hand and arm. It is called “calligraphy” in so far as it attains beauty; “the handwriting of the artist” in so far as it retains personal tricks and habits.’⁸⁹ Despite the implication that the gesture and trace co-develop toward mutually informed refinement (refining the movement of the skates in response to the sureness of the line cut in the ice), MacColl classes this still as an ephemeral choreography with little relation to its physical by-products. Just as rhythm guides the skater, the gesture of the hand (and its by-product of the trace) is guided by a similar rhythm that he later compared to sound as a by-product of gesturing lips, throat, and tongue. The calligraphic traces are only coincidentally meaningful phonemes of drawing.

⁸⁸ MacColl, ‘Fry and Drawing-II’, 255.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Self-consciousness mark-making gives way to apprehensions of marks as symbols. This is the second stage: drawing as language. The dawning of this stage is described as a crisis, where the marks become ‘other’ and their meaning elusive and consuming: ‘Accidental crossings of the lines have produced shapes, and the “infinite” curves have approximated here and there to a stricter geometry, to the straight line and circle.’⁹⁰ This stage is when ‘representation’ becomes ‘symbolic’, and with it ‘drawing has passed from gesture to language; its purpose is to convey meaning.’⁹¹ The possibility that marks could communicate comes with the startling realisation that they do contain some obscured meaning in themselves. MacColl gives the example of a child who gesture-traced and then asked MacColl what the resultant marks meant. An apprehension of drawing-as-medium, as embodiment rather than just act or object, is violent. The medium is a startling ‘other’, marked by non-recognition of self in one’s creation. Joyful gesture is thus filled with angst. MacColl does not credit the meaningfulness of these gesture-traces as valid art-activity in themselves. Rather this is the conduit to apprehending two elements of drawing. The first is a central ‘convention’, ‘by which a line represents the boundaries of the toned and coloured patches that make up objects’.⁹² The second is the power of ‘simplification’, where ‘rude symbols, persist, since no drawing can follow out the infinite flexions of boundary in nature’.⁹³ Here most people arrest their development; since drawing is now capable of symbolic referral and thus becomes a mode of communication, all subsequent development is craft refinement. It is only at this boundary, between communication and refined representation (or ‘direct representation’), that people speak of ‘learning to draw’: ‘This climax of which is reached in the school of art, the effort to get closer to the natural forms, to make the drawing less of a *symbol* and more of an *image*.’⁹⁴

The third stage is image production. This is the point when artistry is introduced. The would-be-draughtsman is subject to three sets of impulses and checks. One is from the artist’s character, her particular ‘adjustment’ and ‘fusion’ of ‘personal rhythm’ and ‘natural rhythm’. ‘Personal rhythm’ is established in the first stage of drawing (gesture and trace) and with proper training (not to subsume it entirely to accurate image-production) it dictates the drawn-style of an artist. ‘Natural rhythm’ is how elements in nature appear to relate to each other: it is the objects around us, but also how from a single viewpoint (personal perspective) they both appear in conjunction as well as how they are physically connected.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

These objects present the second set of impulses and checks, impulses emanating from how they inter-relate and checks in terms of limiting the artist's choices:

We have to draw not only in accordance *with our own rhythm*, but with that of the objects we represent; for each of these is a system of rhythm, whether the stem of a flower or disposition and shape of its petals, the build of land and mountains and course of rivers, the forms of waves and clouds, the limbs and bodies of man and animals; and the better we grasp them the richer is our drawing, because in these rhythms is the root and flower of life. Yet the personal rhythm persists and asserts itself in the quality of our line, a line not only obedient to the form imitated, but drawn with a suave continuity, a nervous decision, a sweeping or rigid movement.⁹⁵

The impulse of an artist's character decides to what degree these rhythms are balanced: 'A distinction may be made between those who show more humility and tentative research in the rhythm of the object, and those who sweep the object up in the wind of their own movement.'⁹⁶

MacColl's third set of impulses and checks come from the materiality of the medium, 'the grain of the paper, the breadth of the point, the texture of the marks'.⁹⁷ This MacColl calls technique, collapsing the ability *to* use with the limitations *of* that which is used, though he laments that it is a word 'commonly abused to include much else'.⁹⁸ At this point the narrative changes: MacColl slips between using the term 'impulse' and the term 'rhythm'. The three sets of impulses – artist, object (nature), and materials – become three rhythms: personal (artist), objects (nature), and design. That these two lists misalign at only one point – at material and design – tellingly implies a new understanding of material-design.

The language chosen in the impulse/rhythm shift draws upon two probable influences: English poet and art historian Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) and French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). MacColl's description of personal and natural rhythms translating and transforming each other is indebted to the aesthetics of Binyon, for whom 'rhythm' was an expression of the living spirit of objects in the visible world.⁹⁹ These object-rhythms were transformed through artistic, creative interpretation: resonances and harmonies between aesthetic components were recognised as they were filtered through artistic perception. The viewer's imagination in turn entered into the rhythmic space of the resulting aesthetic object.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ MacColl, 'Fry and Drawing-II', 255-256.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 255.

⁹⁹ See: Corbett, *Modernity of English Art*, and 'Laurence Binyon and the Aesthetic of Modern Art', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6:1 (2005), 101-119.

Both actions provided insight into another spiritual reality.¹⁰⁰ This rhythm is exemplified in Japanese and Chinese art and, according to Binyon, stood in contrast to the mimesis of post-Renaissance art, where the energy of ‘units of line or mass’ were denied power to act upon each other (their ‘rhythmical relations’) and instead were isolated in non-related units of mass, colour, and form and thus ‘robbed of their potential energy’.¹⁰¹ MacColl’s personal and natural rhythms are deeply indebted to this notion of rhythm as an invisible but artistically knowable dynamic force. One reason for MacColl’s switch between impulse and rhythm may derive from the translation of Bergson’s *élan vital* or vital impulse, often referred to as a rhythm. Along with Binyon, Bergson was influential in early- to mid-twentieth-century London, where his ideas were introduced as early as the winter of 1909 (which was after Binyon expanded his notion in *Painting in the Far East* (1908)).¹⁰² In *L’Évolution créatrice* (*Creative Evolution*) (1907) *élan vital* is an original vital principle that both sparked the creation of life and embraces the whole of life (and all evolved and diverse forms of it), a creative impulse that allows insight, by way of intuition and intelligence, into unification of spirit and matter.¹⁰³ Binyon’s sense of rhythmical vitality and Bergson’s sense of vital impulse were popularly reconfigured within British modernism by the Vorticists and the Rhythm group.¹⁰⁴ The importance of MacColl’s shift from impulse to rhythm could emanate from the epistemological difference between Bergson’s impulse and Binyon’s rhythm, for where the

¹⁰⁰ ‘Every work of art is thought of as an incarnation of the genius of rhythm, manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our sense of the visible world [...] the inner and forming spirit, not the outward semblance, is for all painters of the Asian tradition [i.e. in the ‘great school’ of Chinese and Japanese art] the object of art, the aim of which they wrestle.’ Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East: An Introduction to the History of Art in Asia, Especially China and Japan* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), 8-9. See also chapter 1, ‘Radical Modernism, 1914-18’ in Corbett, *Modernity of English*. In Corbett’s words: ‘Rhythm is the manipulation of physical reality in the work of art to effect spiritual expression: “it is a spiritual rhythm passing into the acting on material things” and “great art” is made when rhythm allows intellectual and sensuous elements to be ‘absorbed and unified in one complete yet single satisfaction.’ Laurence Binyon, *The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan* (London: John Murray, 1911), 13; Binyon, *Far East*, 20.

¹⁰¹ Binyon, *Flight*, 15.

¹⁰² Charlotte De Mille, ‘Bergson in Britain c.1890-1914’ (PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2008), 10.

¹⁰³ See: *Creative Evolution* in Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard, ‘Henri Bergson’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/bergson>; De Mille, ‘Bergson in Britain’; and Corbett, *Modernity of English Art*, 25, 28-9. Rhythm is a term with many connotations and mobilisations in ‘modern’ art. See also: French philosopher Henri Lefebvre’s (1901-1991) concept of ‘Rhythmanalysis’ as well as the Anglo-French political periodical *Rhythm* (1913).

¹⁰⁴ De Mille, ‘Bergson in Britain’, 29. The Vorticists (1914-8) were an artistic and literary avant-garde movement formed in London as a British alternative to Cubism, Expressionism, and Futurism, extolling the cathartic power of mechanisation and reacting against the culture of the Victorian era. Artists who showed at its first (and only UK based) exhibition at the Doré Gallery, London (1915) included: Wyndham Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska, Jacob Epstein, Frederic Etchells, William Roberts, David Bomberg, and Edward Wadsworth. In contrast to the Vorticists, the Rhythmists were a loose, predominantly social collection of intellectuals affiliated with the literary and artistic periodical *Rhythm* (1911-2), founded by Michael Sadler and John Middleton Murray (1889) with cover designs by J. D. Fergusson (1874-1961). It was a pseudo-Fauvist group strongly inspired by Bergson’s ideas of intuition. See: Mark Antliff and Scott Klein, *Vorticism: New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); for Rhythmist, see 126-7.

former is a compelling force or inclination acting upon the artist, the latter is a cultivated mode of knowing the world, or in other words a way of accessing something latent in the normal visual experience. Thus, while impulses are available to any who are sensitive to them, rhythms are refined practice.

MacColl further refines personal rhythm in 'Mr Fry and Drawing – II'. Though previously discussed as style, personal rhythm is then described as 'fundamental in order of time'. In other words, gestures are arranged primarily as sequences in time rather than space.¹⁰⁵ Object rhythms become 'fundamental for intimate significance' and control and conform to the limitations space.¹⁰⁶ In this sense, the rhythm of 'design' is the most important rhythm because it controls the other two.¹⁰⁷ This understanding of design adheres to the conventions established by Binyon as a force that reaches out and reconstitutes the world, but MacColl also emphasises the energy of the materials as a vehicle of reconstitution:

You have no sooner put a single mark on a sheet of paper than you raise this question [of composition and design]. It divides up the paper in a certain ratio, and all the succeeding marks will either make a comfortable proportion and pattern with the first and with the whole space, or an uncomfortable and annoying pattern.¹⁰⁸

It becomes clear why MacColl awkwardly glosses over the 'impulse of material' in favour of the 'rhythm of design': in collecting and containing the other elements, material-design emerges as a concept, and yet without becoming explicit it becomes a point of uncertainty. How is design 'drawing'? And why do the two need to be combined in order to encompass all other impulse-rhythms? As a single entity it presents a conceptual space that arises from the physical materials. It allows the space and needs of the supporting paper (its shapes, its texture) to unify with marks as they are made. By conflating technique, material, and design, MacColl describes under the umbrella term of 'design' a method of gathering and limiting in conscious response the sequence of marks as circumscribed by their material limitations (the dimensions, texture, colour, and orientation of paper, as well as the properties of the mark-making implement). We have here a more sophisticated view of the 'medium' of drawing:

This principle of design ramifies in all directions. It affects, for example, the character and distribution of the touches in a drawing; the groups of these should pattern harmoniously among themselves, and the quantity be pleasantly related to the whole space. The reason

¹⁰⁵ MacColl, 'Fry and Drawing-II', 256.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ 'If rhythmical gesture is fundamental in order of time, the rhythm of objects fundamental for intimate significance, that of design or composition is fundamental because it controls all the rhythms.' MacColl, 'Fry and Drawing-II', 256.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

why retouching usually spoils a drawing is that the additions do not flow from the original rhythmical impulse.¹⁰⁹

As he does elsewhere in the article, MacColl continues to subdivide, breaking ‘rhythm of design’ into three elements or ‘motives’: the geometrical and architectural motive of the frame, the geometrical motive of the picture (composition), and ‘the series of infinite curves that belong to the rhythms of living objects, or to dead matter under the play of forces [or, impulses and rhythms]’ (the representative content).¹¹⁰

To answer his question ‘what is drawing’, MacColl presents a wide-ranging discussion of practice and craft. On a simple level, this discussion is merely a tribute to the co-development of drawing-practice and human sentience. Humans grow into drawing-acts as they become aware of and hone a language, or in other words, artistic expression happens through harnessing certain visual and symbolic systems and refining them into a sophisticated practice of knowing and representing the external world as it resonates with an internal sensibility. This cannot escape, however, being limited by a public understanding. Expression is contingent on reception and thus visual conventions come into play. MacColl provides a concise definition of drawing-practice as two conventions: the first being that ‘by which a line represents the boundaries of the toned and coloured patches that make up objects’, and the second that of simplification.¹¹¹ When ‘definitions’ of drawings are reproduced (especially from past teachers) it is often something approximating MacColl’s ‘conventions’. By labelling them as conventions, however, he situates them as only a pragmatic covenant between parties, and in doing so establishes them as an agreement subject to revision and necessarily limited in scope. It is neither the necessity of simplification for rendering (given the infinite details in nature) nor the aesthetic basis (line and tone) that cuts to the heart of his initial question, ‘what is drawing’. Instead it is an artistic conceptual process that proceeds in constant reference not only to these changeable public understandings but also the rhythms of self, subject, and materials.

MacColl and Design

Fry and MacColl’s discussions of ‘drawing’ encompass all pictorial elements except pigment, and in the discussions both slip between notions drawn-acts and drawing-practice as a form of design. For Fry, design is a conceptual formalism; for MacColl, design is an all-encompassing motivation. Even with the latter’s sophisticated notion of materials, the third

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 256.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 255.

and final article, 'Mr Fry and Drawing – III' (July 1919) illustrates his theories by analysing the composition of not a drawn-object, but a painting, Paolo Veronese's *The Dream of Saint Helena* (1570) (Fig. 1.48). With design placed as the crucial element within MacColl's discussion of drawing, it is important to understand the contemporaneous meanings of 'design' and the nature of the term's relationship to drawing. Thus this section will first look into the etymological roots of 'drawing' and 'design' before analysing MacColl's construction of material-design and its implications in MacColl's choice of illustration.

The term 'design' has many meanings. It can be a stratagem, a scheme, a plan, or a symbolic representation.¹¹² Of these meanings only the last involves an existent object; the former are mental preparations for eventual execution. Drawing as discussed above is presented by MacColl as a compromise between the mental and the material, fundamentally a compound entity.

The English verb 'to draw' has its roots in the Old High German, 'zi-tragen', meaning to carry out to the very last; to carry to pieces.¹¹³ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* it first became the Old English 'drag' and then the Middle English 'to-drawen'. One of its earliest applications to art came in the form of verbal image-production in Chaucer's *Troilus & Criseyde* (c.1374): 'And sith thend is every tales strength. What should I paint or drawen it on length.'¹¹⁴ Thus the analogy for extracting an image became first a word for portrait likenesses (visually as well as verbally), and by 1530 it also referred to linear tracing and delineation, approaching MacColl's 'conventions'. Design, in contrast, had Romance language roots. Its etymology lies in the Middle French 'desain', 'desaing', or 'desseing', which differentiated into two branches: 'desseing' for drawing or sketching in 1529 and 'desain' for plans or projects in 1548. Under the influence of the Italian 'disegno' (meaning a preliminary sketch for a literary work in c.1400 and for a visual work in c.1444), in the early eighteenth century these two branches became 'dessein' (a plan conceived in the mind) and 'dessin' (an artistic sketch).¹¹⁵ It was from 'dessin' that the English 'design' emerged, and in William Hogarth's *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753), 'design' appears with its current connotations

¹¹² 'design, n.', *OED Online* (September 2012) Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/50840>.

¹¹³ † to-draw, v., *OED Online* (September 2012) Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/202833>.

¹¹⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus & Criseyde* (Troilus and Criseyde), ii. 213 (262); quoted in 'draw, v.', *OED Online* (September 2012), Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57534>.

¹¹⁵ The first dictionary to make consistent distinction between 'dessein' and 'dessin' was the Academy dictionary of 1798. 'design, n.', *OED Online* (September 2012), Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/50840>.

(conceptualising a structure, or how something will fit within criteria): ‘Variety uncomposed, and without design, is confusion and deformity.’¹¹⁶

In the lexicon of art history, ‘drawing’ and ‘design’ were complicated by the influential precedent of Giorgio Vasari’s (1511-1574) *Le vite* (The *Lives*) (1550, 1568) and its disbanded companion volume of drawings, known as the ‘Il libro de’disegno’ (‘The Book of Drawings’). ‘Disegno’ was used to denote both drawing and design. It is possible that its specific referent was denoted by context, but the unification of these terms echoed its status as connecting the three forms of ‘fine art’: painting, sculpture, and architecture.¹¹⁷ Since it sprang from the intellect and was the technical foundation for all three, disegno forged separate skill-sets into a single philosophical enterprise.¹¹⁸ Vasarian usage was interpreted by British and Continental philosophers between the two World Wars, when an upsurge in connoisseurship fuelled an increasing interest in drawing scholarship.¹¹⁹ The Austrian émigré art historian Otto Kurz (1908-1975) reminded the readers of *Old Master Drawings* in 1938 that:

A typical feature of the Renaissance was the broadening of the human mind; ever expanding in the direction of universal activity, it broke through the limitations imposed by but a single branch of artistic practice (Vasari himself, painter and architect in one, is a case and point), and thus *il disegno* became in the aesthetic theory of the period, the link joining the three sister arts of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, to the single conception of Fine Art.¹²⁰

This scholarly idealism also affected educators, such as Rowland W. Alston, who wrote in his practical manual on drawing, *The Rudiments of Figure Drawing* (1933) that ‘to the humanist, taking the measure of the body, does not necessarily exclude taking the measure of the

¹¹⁶ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty, Written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste* (London: 1753), ii. 17; cited in ‘design, n.’, *OED Online*.

¹¹⁷ Just as the fourth-century Vulgate’s confusion between Moses’s ‘karan’ (Hebrew for radiance) and ‘keren’ (Hebrew for horns) resulted in Michelangelo’s horned Moses (1513-5), Vasari uses ‘diségno’ in his *Lives* for both composition and drawing.

¹¹⁸ Robert Williams, ‘Vasari, Giorgio,’ *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0515>.

¹¹⁹ Drawing and connoisseurship were institutionalised together as national museums and companion drawing archives proliferated in the nineteenth century. Drawing enjoyed a boon in the wake of connoisseurs Giovanni Morelli (1819-1891) and then Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), who developed the principles of ‘inductive’ connoisseurship discussed in relation to autographic marks.

¹²⁰ Otto Kurz, ‘Giorgio Vasari’s “Libro de’ Disegni”’, *Old Master Drawings: A Quarterly Magazine for Students and Collectors*, 14 (June 1939-March 1940), [1-6] 2. Kurz was also a friend of E. H. Gombrich, and worked with E. Kris, who will be discussed further in chapter three. Kurz was one of the first Jewish intellectuals from their circle, who was helped to escape Austria with the aid of the Warburg after he was violently attacked. Louise Rose, ‘Daumier in Vienna: Ernst Kris, E. H. Gombrich, and the Politics of Caricature’, *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation*, Special Issue on Visual Documentation in Freud’s Vienna, XXII:1-2 (2007), [39-64] 49.

mind'.¹²¹ By the 1930s drawing/design lay not only at the basis of the arts but also of mechanics and science. A different semantic conflation between drawing and design emerged, as Irma A. Richter (1876-1956) wrote in 1932: 'In an age when the metrical aspect of things dominates science, when mechanism and machinery surround us on every side, we have become familiar with geometric forms [...] It is natural, therefore, that the artists have, so to speak, become engineers.'¹²² When MacColl embarked on his career as an art critic in 1890 (initially for *The Spectator*), 'design' had only recently been routed into the service of mechanics, first applied to machine design in 1877 by W. C. Unwin.¹²³

MacColl's discussion of design continues Vasari's compound usage, as a foundation of the other arts, through MacColl's choice of example in 'Mr Fry and Drawing – III'. The only image in the series of articles is a grey-scale reproduction of Veronese's *The Dream of Saint Helena* faintly traced over with compositional lines, which are labelled at each end by alphabetical coordinates. Alongside it is a rectangle of identical proportions, marked with compositional lines.¹²⁴ As the only illustration to a theoretical discussion of drawing, it does seem unusual that MacColl chooses this pair of pictures rather than a drawn-object. One reason for this choice is the conflation of drawing and design, but it is not a full explanation. Another possibility is in the combination of narrative and formal content. *Saint Helena* is a Renaissance painting of a traditional religious subject with a simple composition and sumptuously rent in a refined palate of greys, silvery pinks, and warm yellows. As a choice it is powerful for what it is not: it is neither evocative of Fry's early-Florentine paragons (such as Piero della Francesca and Fra Filippo Lippi) nor of colouristic works closer to MacColl's own impressionist interests. As a Venetian, Veronese could be associated with colourists in opposition to the Florentine linearists, but *Saint Helena* is not a flamboyant example of this group. The picture both rejects Fry's preoccupation with early Florentines and endorses an oblique reference to MacColl's involvement with British impressionism, while firmly avoiding aesthetic extremes. If we assume that this particular choice was conscious and not dictated by compromise, then its applicability for illustrating an engagement with drawing perhaps lies in its subject: a woman dreaming of a cross. As a symbol the cross is a potent referent in itself, but St. Helena did not dream about the cross as a symbol, but that she must seek the 'true cross', the actual material object upon which Christ was crucified. St. Helena

¹²¹ Rowland Wright Alston, *The Rudiments of Figure Drawing: A Handbook for Teachers and Students* (London: Pitman & Sons, 1933), 165.

¹²² Irma A. Richter, *Rhythmic Form in Art* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1932), v.

¹²³ Müller's *Ancient Art* established 'design' as an industrial technology when Richter was only an infant, but MacColl an eighteen year old.

¹²⁴ What MacColl referred to as *Vision of St. Helena* is Paolo Veronese (1528 - 1588), *The Dream of Saint Helena*, c.1570, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 115.6 cm, National Gallery, London [Inventory no.: NG1041]

dreams both of a symbol and its referent object, or in other words, she dreams of formal and non-formal detail. Next to her, as if representing how her slumbering mind might symbolically visualise her desires, is the corresponding diagram of the formal patterns (Fig. 1.49). *Saint Helena* embodies the compromise of formal design and figurative detail. The significance of its narrative content is evident in its subject (a woman dreaming and a cherub bearing a cross) and in its structure (what MacColl claims to be repeated crosses). *Saint Helena* in this context becomes a manifesto of conjoined purpose echoing through the components of the image. MacColl divides the ‘rhythm of design’ into three ‘motives’, as previously discussed: frame, composition, and representative content. His lament at the sterilising lessons of Continental art was that it was a dead end: ‘Poverty of content, the absence of a compulsion to expression, left the artist with the formal element of his art to play with, to pull to pieces.’¹²⁵ *Saint Helena*, in contrast, contains form, but also ‘the series of infinite curves that belong to the rhythms of living objects, or to dead matter under the play of forces’ and thus illustrates all three motives conjoined.¹²⁶ The question still remains how this design within the paint relates to drawing.

MacColl’s discussion of drawing in ‘Mr. Fry and Drawing – II’ involves first a discussion of the development of ‘drawing’ as a universal mode of visual communication then a discussion of ‘design’ as a encompassing rhythm that controls all other elements of picture production, whether it be drawn-objects or paintings. I suggested before that this could be understood in light of MacColl’s shift from the three impulses (of artist, object (nature), and materials) to the three rhythms (personal (artist), objects (nature), and design). In the creation of the impulse-rhythm compound of material-design, MacColl presents a notion of the artistic mind as anticipating the space of the supporting object and its ability to contain the image through design. The content of the picture can be represented by a grid, which reflects the units that echo from the containing edge, border, or frame. Thus by discussing design, MacColl is focusing on the nature of materials, sequence of marks, and momentum of vision. How this designing is also an act of drawing stems from its disassociation from figurative representation as something independent of its support, as an etched or printed image can be replicated on different supporting-substances. Design is the latter, but it is also the intimate dialogue between content and container. If we treat design as a leading component *within* a concept of drawing then we reach a characterisation of drawing as an integrated, but compound entity.

¹²⁵ MacColl, ‘Fry and Drawing - III’, 45-46.

¹²⁶ MacColl, ‘Fry and Drawing - II’, 256.

MacColl's discusses the motives of compositional content and frame, but what his diagram of *Saint Helena* touches upon is the particular potency of grids and diagrams in understanding the picture plane. Diagramming is a formalist venture, and MacColl engages with it fully in his plates of *Saint Helena*. Formalism can be thought of as the looking *for* form as well as valuing it. In 'On Formalism and Pictorial Organization' Richard Wollheim presents the popular conception: the artist extracts form from nature – as illustrated by Albrecht Dürer's 1525 woodcut of a 'Draftsman's Net' (Fig. 1.50) – and the critic extracts form from a picture, as MacColl did in diagramming *Saint Helena*.¹²⁷ The sequence of extractions involves two conceptual shifts that translate detail into systems composed of line and of void. When the artist looks through the grid, she divides the content of the to-be-picture into regular sub-spaces. This is neither an object nor an idea, but a lens, making physical the mental apprehension of the motives of content and frame and their limitations. The segmentation of space ripples inwards from the edge or frame. It fundamentally anticipates a hypothetical material support. The 'draughtsman's net' transfigures distance into space, much like a 'Claude glass' (or black mirror) transfigures optical detail into tonal gradations (Fig. 1.51). The critic's formal diagram is not necessarily regular space, but evident patterns. It presumes, as Wollheim argues, that form is manifest rather than latent.¹²⁸ What is implicit in MacColl's discussion is the grammar of syntactical analysis: the picture is made of accreted marks grouped in phrases of movement that are separated by time and arrangement and dissectible into shapes. In light of the discussion of the development of drawing, to see the diagram of *Saint Helena* as an end in itself, an example of formalist design, is to ignore his earlier discussions of rhythms of movement and space conjoining in temporally uneven 'impulses' that are the compromise between the artist, the subject, the marks, and the materials. This is a dynamic relationship.

Material-design comes to represent the entire entity of the drawing (whether in a painting or drawn-object). Drawing can be regarded as just the preparation and execution of figurative content, what MacColl called the 'the series of infinite curves that belong to the rhythms of living objects'.¹²⁹ This is discussed not only as a challenge to produce a recognisable representation but also a balance between impulses in placing marks upon the surface of the supporting material, what MacColl refers to as a continual compromise over time between all elements of the drawing-activity.

¹²⁷ Wollheim 'On Formalism', 130.

¹²⁸ Latent formalism holds that the essence of the picture is syntactical rather than geometric. Wollheim 'On Formalism', 129-130.

¹²⁹ MacColl, 'Fry and Drawing-II', 256.

In light of this dynamic conception of drawing-practice, MacColl demonstrates how he integrated formalist concerns with his own belief in the unity of the artist, subject, marks, and materials. He was not a comic and rumbling castaway from an evolving avant-garde, but a technical pragmatist, with a multi-faceted concept of drawing-practice. Just as the chapter opened with Tonks's allegories of a picture's substance – as canvas or drum – MacColl's conceptualisations of drawing-acts can be seen as a spoken language, where 'design' is an encompassing rhythm that harmonises competing impulses.

Conclusion

Fry and MacColl's disagreements set up key terminological coordinates for the ensuing decades. Their bitter disagreement over dominance was less a debate than it was a demonstration of possibilities: drawing-practice could be the moment of translation between vision and matter, as Fry would have it, or it could be a harmony of personal and material necessities, in MacColl's conception. The two most important themes that emerged for ensuing artists and art writers, were, first, the prevalence of the term 'design' for an expanded sense of drawing-practice, and second, the role of artistic expression through material impulses and checks. These two notions would intermingle in the late 1920s and 1930s, making looking for design within a range of art objects an automatic artistic literacy, which would result in viewers attending to traces of drawn-objects within other art objects, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Density and Depth:

Drawing, Watercolour, and Materiality in the 1920s and 1930s

The Tate Archives hold a battered, 21 x 142 mm linen sketchbook with thickly plied watercolour paper that once belonged to Paul Nash (Fig. 2.1). On the last remaining page is a drawing of a cottage at Oxenbridge, not far from where Nash and his wife, Margaret (née Theodosia), lived from the mid- to late-1920s.¹ The cottage is simplified into a slightly elongated rectangle, with a shallow pitched roof and lines suggesting a fence or porch at the front and back. Drawn in faint, sharp lines with a hard pencil, it appears to float above and beneath the surrounding cacophony of lines that coagulate into indications of brackish trees, overgrown grasses, and rippling water, all drawn in softer graphite, and thus darker marks, without losing their delicate deliberateness – it is a tightly rent calligraphy that denies any flourish or bravado. All the lines are firmly and slowly made, and small vibrations of the hand appear born of confident curiosity rather than tentativeness.² In order to create the thicker marks, Nash has not simply tilted the pencil or let it run blunt, but has drawn several lines so closely touching that in places they are almost indistinguishable. Frequently these lines are short curves, exaggerating the convex forms, much like Matisse's occasional use of similar curves, which was in keeping with Nash's brief experimentation with aspects of French aesthetics during the 1920s.³ Patterns emerge from the juxtaposition of lines, wherein their position as signifiers of a landscape gives way to different suggestions of alchemical or mystical symbols occurring only because of the collapse of distance and the dominance of the white, thickly woven paper left blank.⁴ Other ghosts seem to speak through manual handling: softly applied circular shading of tree branches behind the cottage appears to mimic Gainsborough's notation for trees. The attention to edges and geometry – the

¹ Possibly related to: Paul Nash, *Oxenbridge Pond*, 1927-1928, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 87.6 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust (Fig 2.2.).

² In part, this fits with Nash's known appreciation of Blake's description of line: 'The great and golden rule of art, as well as life, is this: that the more distinct, sharp and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art, and the less keen and sharp, the greater is the evidence of weak imitation, plagiarism, and bungling.' William Blake, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, No. XV (London: 1809); quoted in Yorke, *The Spirit of Place*, 33.

³ Malcolm Yorke has argued that Nash was relatively untouched by Fry's initial influence, having left the Slade before the more radical second exhibition and keeping his preference for Rosetti over other more radical options. Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 35.

⁴ Because of the thickness of the paper and other water-colour designs in the sketchbook, it is possible that this may have been intended to be a watercolour. Its sophistication in its current state, however, warrants treatment as a work in itself (though it reproduces poorly).

rectangles of the manmade structures particularly – evokes Cézanne, whose spirit, ever searching for the cube, sphere, cylinder, and cone, is never far away from British drawn-objects of the 1920s and 1930s. After this geometric quotation, however, reading Cézanne’s influence becomes difficult.⁵ Though he is present, the lines that cover the paper’s surface and flatten the depicted space do not mimic Cézanne’s clusters of line that pick out shapes by their edges, as if drawing a relief (a style often invoked by Duncan Grant during his interwar drawings). Instead, the lines fall on the surface like clipped hair, interacting with the more lightly drawn house, and appear to mimic the fibres left visible in natural papers or ripples of water, through which the geometric structures are glimpsed.

The 1920s was a period of distress, experimentation, and doubt for Nash, a time in which he experimented with images of water, particularly the ocean, seeing it as a sublime force of nature, as a threat, a salvation, or a mother.⁶ From a painting of a similar subject, *Oxenbridge Pond* (1927-28) (Fig. 2.2), it is probable that the horizontal lines in the lower section that are interwoven with those denoting trees, grass, and bracken represent water.⁷ As there are other watercolours in the sketchbook, it is possible that the drawing was intended to be worked into a watercolour, but what is most striking about the sketch as it was left is its resemblance to a watercolour in its facture: the layering of different types of marks evokes the overlap of watercolour washes, creating a sense of material space that adds to the representational content as well as the aesthetic impression. This resemblance was not merely Nash replicating the conventions of one medium in another, but aptly reflects a national preoccupation with the material components of pictures during the 1920s and 1930s.

The importance of design established by Fry and MacColl sensitised an artistically engaged public to read design within materials. Simultaneously, watercolours became increasingly popular as a symbol of the individualistic expression of a national culture. The result was an increased awareness of the interplay between composition and materiality. The viewer could only know the design – most obviously in a watercolour – through seeing the submerged drawn-object, and thus while looking for an abstract compositional structure, the viewer was forced to engage with the materiality of pictorial components. This attention to materials was experimented with by a range of artists as a way to use drawn-marks to unify their pictures, both materially and compositionally, from Nash to Hepworth and Nicholson and the Euston Road School. The role of line within watercolours was also emphasised by W. G.

⁵ Although Nash was opposed to French influence and has been held as separate from the force of Fry’s influence (see footnote 3), during the 1920s he did synthesise aspects of Cézanne and Derain into his work. For more about this uneasy period of experimentation, see, Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 44-46.

⁶ Ibid, 46-7.

⁷ See footnote 1.

Constable, particularly in the landmark Royal Academy exhibition he selected, *British Art* (1934), which looked to watercolours and their underdrawings for traces of national identity. This interest in looking at and through material layers was further reflected in imaging technology such as x-ray and infra-red, which were first deployed on art during the period and made it possible to see within not only transparent watercolours, but also opaque oil paint surfaces. The interest in layers extended to theorists as well, with Adrian Stokes and Laurence Binyon discussing the depths and densities of material supports.

Watercolour and Drawing

The categories of watercolour and drawing have a difficult relationship. Classed together as works on paper, the mediums often share conservation needs and thus both often appeal to collectors able to meet them. In part because of this, they are often conflated within the art market and museum archives, as well as in scholarship.⁸ This presents a difficult question: when is a watercolour a drawn-object and a drawn-object a watercolour? Even among drawn-objects there is a porous boundary between drawn-objects that rely on the crumble of friable sticks to rest or adhere to the topography of the support, and ones that use liquid pigment, be it a pen with ink or a brush with watercolour paint. A problematic spectrum emerges between line drawn-objects and opaque gouaches. The aesthetic affinity between watercolours and tinted drawings has led the former to be classed as essentially drawn-objects in contradistinction to oil paintings.

Resentment that watercolours overshadowed drawings existed during the period, eloquently articulated by scholar and collector Randall Davies (1866-1946) in his introduction to *Chats on Old English Drawings* (1923). Davies insisted on the distinction between the terms and categories ‘drawing’ and ‘watercolour’. The problem, he argued, was that by grouping together intimate, notational drawings and presentation watercolours, the former were given irrelevant consideration of intentions and contradictory aesthetic values. Collecting drawn-objects, for Davies, was more like collecting autographs: it was the intimacy, the incompleteness, and the closeness to the artist that made them powerful as aesthetic objects.⁹

⁸ See: Martin Myrone, ed., *Watercolour in Britain*, exh. cat (London: Tate Publishing, 2010).

⁹ ‘As to what we mean by a “drawing.” This is a little more than one sense. Its proper signification, for our purpose at all events, is, I feel sure, a sketch, study, or design, in contradistinction to a finished production. The French equivalent is *dessin*, and that is clearly something short of the completed work. With the drawings of paintings, this signification is perfectly clear. But with artists who never used oil paints at all, it is sometimes very difficult to maintain. In the case of illustrations for books, in particular, the drawing is made for reproduction by the engraver, but it is often meticulously finished, and quite of a different nature from the spontaneous sketches of designs that in most cases preceded it. Again, take the case of Rowlandson, who made

As one of a few significant early-twentieth-century collectors of works on paper in Britain (along with Laurence Binyon, Adolph Paul Oppé (1878-1957), and Thomas Girtin (1874-1961)), Davies fought for the distinction, seemingly with little immediate result: ‘So heavily have all sorts of drawings been overshadowed by water-colours,’ he wrote, that not only was the topic thus cursorily treated within the numerous contemporaneous publications on British watercolours (scholarship of British drawings was nearly nonexistent at the time), but Davies was also unable, despite himself, to ignore watercolours-as-drawings in his own survey of English drawings.¹⁰

A key feature of the confusion within the 1930s discussion of drawings and watercolours was that many saw the apotheosis of drawing-practice in Britain within watercolour-objects. Davies conceded the dominance of drawing within the Golden Age of British watercolour: ‘Until quite the end of the Georgian period the work of the water-colourists was essentially that of draughtsmen rather than of painters, so that these early “water-colours” are rightly regarded by collectors as drawings.’¹¹ Likewise, sixteen years later, scholar and curator ‘Teddy’ Croft Murray (1907-1980) described the watercolour landscape of the nineteenth century as ‘that most individual expression of British draughtsmanship’.¹² Tellingly, what is currently called a ‘watercolour’ was at this period often referred to as a ‘water-colour drawing’; a 1932 Tate Gallery memorial exhibition for W. R. Lethaby even titled itself an exhibition of ‘drawings in water-colour’.¹³ Aside from scholastic categorisations, Binyon also celebrated the structural example provided by British watercolourists for young artists, writing in 1933 that ‘there was no need to invoke Cézanne for Cotman was there to show the way by his mastery of structural design’. And Nash wrote of Cotman’s ‘truly architectural use of watercolour’ in a 1937 article (Fig. 2.4-5).¹⁴ After discussing Nash’s praise, Alexandra Harris writes of the incongruity of this description in *Romantic Moderns* (2010):

Architectural? This was not the obvious way to write about a medium

thousands of drawings with a pen, most of them coloured with water-colour, which were in some cases etched or engraved, but were nearly all of them sold as finished productions.’ Davies, *Chats*, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid, 20-1.

¹¹ Ibid, 20.

¹² A. E. Popham, *A Handbook to the Drawings and Watercolours in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum* (London: William Clowes and Sons, printed by order of the Trustees, 1939), 112. Though Deputy Keeper Arthur Ewart Popham (1889-1970) is pronounced the author on the title page, the section on Great Britain and Ireland was written by Murray and the project was begun by Keeper Arthur Mayger Hind (1880-1957), who also wrote the section on the Netherlands (after the school of Rembrandt).

¹³ Tate Gallery Imprint, *Memorial Exhibition of Drawings in Water-colour by Professor W R Lethaby, 1857-1931* (London: H.M.S.O., 1932). This was an earlier convention, see: Burlington Fine Arts Club Imprint, *Exhibition of Drawings in Water colour by Alfred William Hunt: Member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours* (London: Printed for the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1897).

¹⁴ Laurence Binyon, *English Water-Colours* (1933) 2nd edition (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1944), 167-8; Paul Nash, ‘A Characteristic’, *Architectural Record*, 7 (1937), [39-44] 40.

whose essential quality is transparency, and which tends towards insubstantiality rather than solid construction. But Cotman, it seemed, had been reborn as a modernist, and was described in the language that Roger Fry had developed after the advocacy of Post-Impressionism.¹⁵

Harris's objection does apply to some writers of the period, such as Irma Richter, who wrote of the importance of mathematics and the pentagram in order to discover the inbuilt architectural geometry of an all-powerful composition, as touched upon in the previous chapter.¹⁶ It is unnecessarily limiting, however, to describe this discussion of architectural watercolour as a creation of Roger Fry. What Nash and Binyon's descriptions of Cotman reveal is that this watercolour tradition integrally involved concerns for drawing: they were looking within the pigment for the pencil, which in Cotman's work not only delineated his planes of colour but also included calligraphic flourishes as well as stiff, solemn, linear descriptions of architecture, not dissimilar from Nash's own Oxenbridge cottage sketch.

The eye of the art aficionado in the 1920s and 1930s had been flooded with an emphasis on design, derived in part from both Fry and MacColl, so along with a wide-ranging sensitivity to design came also both conscious and unconscious sensitisation to line as the basic grammar of design. Even though younger artists by the 1920s had begun to turn their focus away from the austere, mathematical design described by Richter, a sense of line remained strongly engrained in the eye, as is evident in the language used by an anonymous critic in the periodical *Colour*, who described the situation in 1921 as artists 'clothing the skeleton of design'.¹⁷ The skeleton is clothed, but it was not abandoned – it was an underlying anatomy evident to its beholders, who were sensitive to lines within the art object, whether a product of manifest or of latent formalism.¹⁸ Even for those who disavowed Post-Impressionism, such as Nash and Michael Ayrton (1921–1975), among other Neo-Romantics, it was line that attracted them to Blake, Palmer, and Füssli. And line, while not the exclusive prerogative of drawing, is the mark most natural to it and thus is intimately implicated in its invocation.

A further clarification is necessary before proceeding. Even though the viewer may see the drawn-object in looking for the design within a watercolour (or any form of painting), drawing-acts and designing are equivalent. Binyon and Nash, in one sense, describe the design within the watercolour and thus perpetuate the older conflation of drawing-acts and

¹⁵ Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 132.

¹⁶ Richter, *Rhythmic Form*, v–viii.

¹⁷ These artists included Mark Gertler (1891–1939), John Nash, Paul Nash, Ethelbert White (189–1972), Elliott Seabrooke (1886–1950), Bernard Meninsky, Edward Wadsworth, William Roberts, Anne Estelle Rice (1877–1959), Hamnett, and even Grant. 'Notes of the Month', *Colour* (March 1921); quoted in Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, 68.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1, footnote 128. Wollheim 'On Formalism'.

designing. In another sense, what they describe is related to, but distinct from, associations with designing: when the pencil mark is within the pigment, as was the case with many of the watercolours popular at the time, the viewer understands the design only through seeing the drawn-object. To describe the role of drawn-acts within a watercolour as merely compositional activity turns away from precisely what Nash was experimenting with in his Oxenbridge sketchbook: the role of material layers in relation to drawn mark-making. The limited approach of equating drawing-acts and designing is a prevalent one in current scholarship, hindering the appreciation of their important symbiotic relationship. This is a particular danger to the study of the 1920s and 1930s because of the perceived importance of watercolour as a national tradition.¹⁹ Pencil remains an aesthetic part of a watercolour, rather than merely traces of intention. And, in the 1920s and 1930s, this ambiguity between the mediums enriched both traditions, necessarily involving the substance (and the potential of substance) in both drawings and watercolours. To extend Tonks's metaphor from the first chapter, what occurs is not looking for the noise within the drum, but examining the physical structure of the sound waves resulting from each drumbeat. A reintegration occurs between the material aspect of drawing-practice and the concept of drawing.

The Importance of Watercolour

Watercolour became a sensitive topic during the 1930s, as predispositions on the part of practising artists and scholars gravitated toward it as an example of genuinely British artistic excellence, a tradition that peaked in the eighteenth century and was strong within the national spirit of the 1930s practitioners. It was a genealogical and nationalistic exercise – relevant critical writings come with their fair share of jingoism and xenophobia – but it also presents a period of concentrated interest in what it means to be heirs to a particular set of skills and preferences within watercolour. Thus when scholars ranging from A. J. Finberg (1866-1939) in *The English Water Colour Painters* in 1905 to Binyon in 1933 reflect on why watercolour is so important to the British, the common denominator is the medium. Indeed, the medium is relevant for all those interested in notions of drawing in twentieth-century Britain because the scholarly and critical discussions of it during the 1930s frequently alighted upon drawing in a language of veiled references, while the critical output relating to drawing is reduced to being the prerogative of conservative pedagogy and antiquarians.²⁰ Yet

¹⁹ The crossover between the two mediums is often ignored, and where it is addressed it is reduced to designing, rather than seeing the drawn-object operating both separately as well as a part of the watercolour-object.

²⁰ Three exceptions are: John Piper, 'Aspects of Modern Drawing', *Signature: A Quadrimetrial of Typography and Graphic Arts*, 7 (Nov 1937), 33-41; Paul Nash, 'New Draughtsmanship', *Signature: A Quadrimetrial of Typography*

drawing was at the heart of a fierce debate and celebration, hidden from our current understanding of the medium within the language of watercolour, an embedded system of referents that would have been evident to those at the time at both conscious and subconscious levels.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the scholarly interest in watercolours was young but had been gathering momentum. Once an important art form, popularised by the technical feats of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, it had an important social collateral for amateurs, but scholars had long denigrated it. By 1900, however, a flowering of publications occurred that extolled its virtues both as a medium and as a proud British tradition.²¹ The same could not be said for publications regarding the British tradition of drawing, but both fields of scholarship had been greatly aided by the work (or what Fry called the 'reign') of Sidney Colvin (1845–1927), Keeper of the Prints and Drawings Department of the British Museum from 1884 to 1912, under whose supervision a number of scholarly catalogues emerged that began to focus on the merits of drawing, watercolour, and various print mediums.²²

and *Graphic Arts*, 1 (Nov 1935), 24–41; and Graham Sutherland, 'A Trend in English Draughtsmanship', *Signature: A Quadrimetrial of Typography and Graphic Arts*, 3 (July 1935) 7–13. All three, however, fixate on drawing-practice rather than drawn-objects, denying the full implications of the materiality of the enterprise.

²¹ Including: A. J. Finberg's *The English Water Colour Painters* of 1905, Gilbert R. Redgrave's *A History of Water-Colour Painting in England* also of 1905, Alfred W. Rich's *Water Colour Painting* of 1927, and special issues of *The Studio* were given over to featured Geoffrey Holme's *Masters of Water-Colour Painting* of 1922–1923 and Finberg's *Early English Water-Colour Drawings by the Great Masters* in 1919, as well as least of all, but not least Binyon's *English Water-Colours* (1933).

²² See the works of Campbell Dodgson, Lawrence Binyon, A. M. Hind and A. E. Popham, particularly: Laurence Binyon, *Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists and Foreign Origin Working in Great Britain Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (London: William Clowes and Sons Limited, 1898); Popham, *Guide to an Exhibition of the More Important Prints and Drawings Acquired during the Keepership of Mr. Campbell Dodgson, 1912–1932* (London: British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, 1933); and Popham, *A Handbook*. Fry remarked in commemoration of Colvin's retirement in 1912: 'By his unfailing courtesy and his genuine enthusiasm for art he [Colvin] has rendered the Print Room one of the most useful and accessible centres in England for the study of art. By organising the series of exhibitions in the White Wing he has stimulated an interest in drawing and design among many students who would never find an opportunity or excuse to penetrate into the sanctuary of the Print Room itself. Finally, in his period of office he has immensely increased the importance and value of our national collection.' Fry, 'Sir Sidney', 201. The department originally comprised the collections of Sir Hans Sloane (1753), William Fawkener (1769), the Rev. C.M. Cracherode (1799), and the printed ephemera of Sarah Banks (1818). For a list of bequests, see: Fry's 'Sir Sidney'. The department had split from the Library Department in 1808, becoming a separate entity devoted to works on paper, albeit one that still considered itself in 1898 as torn between the identity of a library and that of a gallery: 'The department [of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum] where these collections are preserved partakes of the double character of a library and a gallery department. It is in so far a library department that the main bulk of the collections have necessarily to be kept in the shelves and cases of the Print Room, where they are made accessible to students with as little restriction as possible, just as books are made accessible to them in the Reading Room. This is the permanent and only way of treating all those parts of the collections which, being of no high or general artistic interest, are of use mainly for purposes of reference, record and research. But from other parts, those at the upper end of the scale of artistic merit, it has always been the practice of the department to place selections varied from time to time, on exhibition in the public galleries; formerly in the King's Library, and of late years in the new exhibition gallery in the White Building.' Sidney Colvin, 'Preface', *Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists and Foreign Origin working in Great Britain Preserved in the Department of Prints*

By 1934, watercolour became so important that it was central to a series of exhibitions concerning the aesthetic characteristics of an English national art, which were organised around the Royal Academy of Art's (RA) exhibition *British Art* (1934). This exhibition not only heavily relied upon watercolours and their predecessors, illuminated manuscripts, but also emphasised a non-painterly alternative thread of artistic development, which in large part was intended to stimulate and consolidate a new national tradition, as Andrew Causey has eloquently argued in 'English Art and "The National Character", 1933-34' (2002).²³ Concurrent exhibitions across London included British drawings and engravings at the British Museum, sketches by John Constable at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, paintings in a re-hung British Room at the National Gallery, and art from 1550 to 1850 (particularly ceramics, silverwork, textile, furniture, and 'a special selection of Water-colours and Miniatures') at the Victoria and Albert Museum.²⁴ Additionally, from January through March of 1934, related lectures were held at the British Academy, Victoria and Albert Museum, University College, and at the newly opened Courtauld Institute, where speakers included R. H. Wilenski ('Blake and Modern Art') and Nikolaus Pevsner ('English Art: How It Strikes a Foreigner') and W. G. Constable gave three separate addresses on 'English Painting and English Life'.²⁵ Richly illustrated catalogues of the Royal Academy exhibition were published in 1935, and critical excitement (both high-brow and low) exploded into a debate over the accuracy of the projected national character and its trajectory.²⁶

The emphasis on craft evoked the nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement and its vision of the Utopian possibility of individuals taking creative responsibility for their labour. Created as a nationalistic initiative in response to the mounting tensions of the pre-Second World War political radicalism across Europe, it is this unit of the contained self that emerges when ceramics, silverwork, textile, and furniture are exhibited alongside

and Drawings in the British Museum, by Laurence Binyon (London: William Clowes and Sons Limited, 1898), [iii-v] iv-v.

²³ Causey argues that these various institutional framings were more than a scholarly and theoretical revisitation to a canon, in contrast to Alexandra Harris, and instead constituted an informally unified push across the London art world that sought to consolidate an aesthetic national identity. Andrew Causey, 'English Art and "The National Character", 1933-34', *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880-1940*, ed. David Peters Corbett, et al. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 275-302. Harris, *Romantic Moderns*, see chapter 6, 'The Canon Revisited', 128-147.

²⁴ Royal Academy of Arts, *British Art: An Illustrated Souvenir of the Exhibition of British Art at the Royal Academy of Arts London, 1st Edition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1934), xi.

²⁵ Royal Academy, *Illustrated Souvenir*, x.

²⁶ See: Herbert Read, 'English Art', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 63:369 (Dec, 1933), 242-245, 248-249, 252-255, 258-261, 264-265, 268-271, 274-277; Georges Duthuit, E. W. Tristram, A. F. Kendrick, J. G. Noppen, Basil S. Long, and W. W. Watts, 'The Exhibition of British Art', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 64:371 (Feb., 1934), 52-55, 58-61, 64-66, 68-70, 72-74, 76-78; Anonymous, 'Exhibitions of British Art at the Museums', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 64:371 (Feb., 1934), 95. See also: Roger Fry, *Reflections on British Painting* ([S.l.]: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1934).

watercolours and drawings.²⁷ In *The English Water Colour Painters* (1905), Finberg wrote of this self-reliance as fundamental to the appeal of watercolours: 'The remark has often been made that we are indebted to the water colour painters for the only adequate expression of the peculiar qualities of the English nation which is to be found in art.'²⁸ Although Finberg immediately countered that this was an exaggerated belief (akin to Binyon's and Dodgson's later reactions against the myth that watercolour was exclusively English), he did concede that 'on the whole the public seems to take almost greater interest and pleasure in the work of the water colour painters than in works in oil.' It was a taste that he attributed to an unsettled framework of society, implying that the emergent post-industrialisation individualist public found little pleasure in what he called 'the elaborate ritual of oil painting'.²⁹ Continuing, he wrote, 'We may compare the oil picture to the epic; and the epic does not flourish under modern conditions of life.'³⁰

Paintings were also well represented in the RA exhibition, but in keeping with Finberg's eulogy for them as an epic art form, an anonymous reviewer of the 1934 exhibitions in *The Burlington Magazine* described how it was the more intimate works on paper that attracted the most celebration. He-or-she singled out the British Museum's exhibition, whose sixty illuminated manuscripts included three of the Hiberno-Saxon school (c. 700-800) and nineteen of the Winchester schools and its satellites (tenth and eleventh centuries), one of which was the Lindisfarne Gospels. The exhibition also included a number of prints, drawings, and watercolours, demonstrating a clear link between calligraphy in illumination and more recognisable forms of drawing. Of these paper works, the reviewer wrote that they were 'admirably displayed, and give a much fairer impression of some aspects of English art than was possible at Burlington House [home of the RA]'.³¹ The emphasis on the link between national preference, the golden age of watercolour, and the medieval period (a perceived time of innocence and isolationist integrity) reinforced the notion that design lay at

²⁷ Individualism was already associated with Romantic art, as described by critic and theorist T.E. Hulme (1883-1917): 'Here at the root of all romanticism: that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities; and if you so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you will get Progress. One can define the classical quite clearly as the opposite to this. Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him.' T. E. Hulme, *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Kegan Paul, 1924; reprinted Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 116. For more on Hulme and Romanticism, see: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 39-41.

²⁸ Finberg, *English Water Colour*, 178.

²⁹ Crucially Finberg bemoaned this loss of a societal support (emotional as well as financial) for the work of the oil painting, writing that the artist must draw constant inspiration from his surroundings in order to take on such a task: 'Princes should egg him on and the hearts of the people chant a ready response to his strophes.' Finberg, *English Water Colour*, 178-9. See also: Binyon, *English Water-Colours*; and Campbell Dodgson, *Some Drawings of the English School* (London: The Baynard Press, 1946), 4.

³⁰ Finberg, *English Water Colour*, 178-9.

³¹ Anonymous, 'Exhibition of British Art', 95.

the heart of watercolour's aesthetic importance, a belief that art writer, poet, and literary critic Herbert Read (1893–1968) (Fig. 2.9) described in a special issue of *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* (1933) published in anticipation of the RA exhibition. Hailing watercolours – particularly those by Girtin and Turner – as a return to the grace of illuminated manuscripts, Read concluded a lengthy section extolling the genius of William Blake with a coquettish suggestion: 'It would be pushing one's categories once again to paradoxical limits to suggest that the English qualities of our water-colourists can be explained as a re-emergence of the basic linear signature of our race.'³²

Illuminations became a way to discuss drawing-practice within this ur-watercolour. Read alighted particularly upon the Winchester School as representative of the 'supreme vitality' characteristic to the whole range of medieval illumination: 'The freshness and freedom of these drawings, their incredible sureness, these qualities have often been noted and duly praised; but less than justice has been done to the high sense of form, the instinct for composition, displayed on every illuminated page.'³³ Art historian and collector Kenneth Clark (1903–1983) (Fig. 2.10) also addressed the importance of *The Benedictional of St. Aethelwold* (Figs. 2.6-7), contrasting its vitality and 'vigorous drawing' with the flaccid outline of the Continental academies.³⁴ The Middle Ages figured heavily in the 1934 RA exhibition based on similar ideas of local, ritualistic yet secular communities dating back not only to a pre-industrial Eden but to even before tensions around the English Reformation, to a time of rural innocence, of individualism, of networks of imagined Saxon villages expressing their routine and ritual creativity as intricate scrollwork and bold stylisation.³⁵ Thus at the nostalgic heart of the watercolour revival was linear design that depended on seeing a submerged drawn-object and was evaluated in the language of drawing-practice by figures such as Read and Clark, who saw precisely this linearity as a fundamentally British quality.

W. G. Constable and Materiality

The relationship between drawing and watercolour is not a simple reading of design through drawn components. The act of looking through the drawing has ramifications for both

³² Read, 'English Art', 270.

³³ Ibid, 244.

³⁴ Kenneth Clark, 'English Painting', *The Listener* 10 (20 December 1933), 947.

³⁵ This found a contemporary echo in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games. A rare voice of dissent to the nationalistic readings of drawing's legacy came in 1939 from Murray in his entry on British art in Popham's *A Handbook*, 105. Perhaps simply because the illuminations were housed elsewhere in the museum, he defies Constable, Read, and Clark by claiming that British draughtsmanship was not only young but from its inception in 1500 it remained the province of foreigners living in England for around two hundred years.

mediums. The dominance of the pencil or ink marks in watercolours by diverse artists of the period – such as Nash, Piper, Meninsky, David Jones, Edward Bawden, and Eric Ravilious (1903-1942) – demonstrates why the discussion of calligraphy and structure within watercolours was at the fore of consciousness of watercolour. The impact of watercolour and its materiality on drawing, however, involves a more complicated awareness of the treatment of materiality. A crucial figure for understanding the relationship between watercolours, drawing, and temporal-material layers is the understudied art historian and gallery director W. G. Constable (1887-1976) (Fig. 2.11).³⁶ Acting as selector and organiser of the RA exhibition, Constable's agenda in the catalogue set the tone for many of the subsequent reviews and, as a result, the terms for the country's engagement with its own re-emerging tradition. More importantly for notions of drawing, he had been a student at the Slade under Tonks, and had a multi-faceted role within the London art world, ranging from tertiary education and connoisseurial scholarship to galleries and museums. When Constable's engagement in the RA exhibition is read against his other concurrent endeavours, it is possible to observe the central role played by notions of materiality, revealing how it was transformed from an aspect of watercolour-design into an acute awareness of the relationship between facture and the physical growth of the art object.

Like Ruskin, Binyon, and Whistler before him, Constable's experience of art practice played a role in his impact on exhibiting and academic cultures. But unlike these distinguished predecessors he was not an innovative director of thought: he was very much in sync with the developments around him. This is not to say that he was dependent on others, but that his current scholarly neglect stems from his being an invisible orchestrator, organising and facilitating without deeply impacting any one area. However, because of this acute awareness of what surrounded him, there might be no better person in the British art world to demonstrate how materiality was conceived in relation to the prior discussions of watercolour and drawing.

Constable had originally trained in law, but after a near-death experience in the First World War, turned his attention to art. He began his new career by enrolling at the Slade, where although he never developed satisfactorily as an artist, he did begin to build a network of influential contacts, including critics Fry and George Moore, influential modernists Wyndham Lewis and Jacob Epstein, and those from an older generation, including John

³⁶ Causey gives space to Constable, but only briefly in relation to the RA exhibition agenda. Constable has not received art historical attention, other than an entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and his inclusion as example of history of art writing of the period in the forthcoming thesis: Samuel Rose, 'Formalism, Aestheticism, and Art Writing in England' (PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2014). This lacuna occurs despite the accessibility of Constable's extensive research archive, held at the Paul Mellon Centre, London, WGC - W. G. Constable Archive.

Singer Sargent and Degas. After beginning his critical career with the *New Statesmen* and the *Saturday Review* before joining the National Gallery (1923-1931), he also came to the attention of D. S. MacColl, whose support was crucial and who reportedly saw in Constable a younger version of himself.³⁷ From Constable's position at the National Gallery he continued to build his network, developing a friendship with art historian and connoisseur Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), as well as gaining extensive knowledge of British private collections and provincial galleries and museums. The latter he thought crucial to raising the general national engagement in, and understanding of, contemporary British art, which led to his involvement in the Art for the People project, which sought to decentralise the art establishment by sending art exhibitions to provincial venues. In 1931 he abandoned the strong prospect of succeeding Augustus Daniel (1866-1950) as director of the National Gallery to accept Samuel Courtauld's (1876-1947) invitation to become the first director of the Courtauld Institute of Art (est. 1932), from which position he pioneered the first university degree courses in art history. He utilised his former contacts to populate the faculty, which included a notable array of figures, from Fry and Clark to E. K. Waterhouse (1905-1985). When the Warburg Institute relocated to London from Hamburg due to concerns over National Socialist persecution, it became attached to the Courtauld and thus brought with it Fritz Saxl (1890-1948) and Rudolf Wittkower (1901-1971). Despite this strong beginning, Constable left the Courtauld in 1935 after his refusal to compromise the academic rigour of his curriculum led to a disagreement with the board of directors. He then went on to succeed Fry as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge from 1935 to 1937, during which time he was invited to become curator of painting at the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston, where he remained throughout the Second World War, while also maintaining his Continental contacts and continuing to publish on British art through UK publishers, notably in Routledge's 'English Master Painters' series under the editorship of Read, with whom Constable was on friendly terms.³⁸ Constable was thus well-placed to engage in the ebb and flow of intellectual fashions and lasting innovations in the 1930s.

The most important aspect of Constable's thought in relation to drawing qua drawing was his sensitivity to the influence of historiography. He understood that history was written by the victors (here, the academicians), and in order to generate mass engagement with art, he needed to identify preconceptions that inhibited the possibilities for understanding. Alongside his preparations for the RA exhibition, Constable also wrote an epistolary

³⁷ W. G. Constable Biography, Paul Mellon Centre, accessed 18 Nov 2013, <http://archivecatalogue.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/CalmView/record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WGC>

³⁸ Read and Constable's correspondence about the publication is held at the Paul Mellon Centre, London, Archive: 'Richard Wilson Publication, Planning and Administration – Correspondence with Publishers', WGC .1.2.1.

foreword for Rowland W. Alston's practical, but ambitious, manual on drawing, *The Rudiments of Figure Drawing* (1933). Both men combined practice and other interests, having become friends at the Slade.³⁹ In Constable's short endorsement of the manual, he repositioned the RA exhibition's nationalist agenda in relation to the concerns of aspiring draughtsmen:

It is quite possible to deny that English artists have ever been able to draw at all. But once admit that their drawing is drawing, it follows that any conception of drawing based on facts and not on theory, must admit the elements of pure calligraphy, of description, and of decoration; and must refuse to regard the third dimension as indispensable.⁴⁰

In one sense this alerted the intellectual sensibility of artists to expanded drawing possibilities – encouraging the new generation of draughtsmen to imagine the possibility of being both English and avant-garde – but in another sense he is encouraging his readers to seize the implications for drawing-practice, which emerged from the popularity of watercolours and illuminated manuscripts.

As discussed in relation to the tension between watercolour and drawing, drawing-as-design lay conceptually within watercolours, but drawn-objects also lay within the physical substance of a watercolour. Constable's art historical scholarship made him sensitive to the latter. He devoted much of the 1930s to an assiduous study of Welsh landscape painter Richard Wilson (1713?–82) within the 'English Master Painters' series (Figs. 2.12-3).⁴¹ The project also brought him close to scholar and paper works collector Brinsley Ford (1908–1999), who was simultaneously working on *The Drawings of Richard Wilson* (1951).⁴² The two visited private collections together and although Constable appears to have scrapped his original plans to include drawings within his own study, it is possible that this was merely a reaction to Ford's own focus.⁴³ From the numerous photographs of Wilson's drawings that Constable collected and his friendship with Ford, he would have been familiar with Ford's attentiveness to Wilson's particular layered technique, which deployed black chalk and a stump on tinted paper retouched with white, which was adapted from the French academic

³⁹ Alston kept up his art practice in addition to his work as a drawing master and a curator for the G. F. Watts Gallery. See: 'Mr R. W. Alston, the Watts Gallery', *The Times* (22 Dec 1958), 11. Alston is also mentioned by Brinsley Ford in connection with selling him some drawings by George Frederick Watts (1817–1904). Brinsley Ford, 'Sir Brinsley Ford', *The Sixtieth Annual Volume of the Walpole Society*, Special Issue: 'History and Catalogue of the collections of Sir Brinsley Ford', 60 (1998), Part II, [91-135] 105.

⁴⁰ W. G. Constable, 'Foreword' in Rowland W. Alston's *The Rudiments of Figure Drawing* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1933), [v-ix] viii.

⁴¹ Delayed by the Second World War, it was only published in 1953. W. G. Constable, *Richard Wilson* (Routledge & K. Paul, 1953).

⁴² Brinsley Ford, *The Drawings of Richard Wilson* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

⁴³ Traces of this development can be seen in Constable's Richard Wilson research files PMC, WCG.1.

precedents of L.-G. Blanchet (1705-1772) and C.-M. Challe (1718-1788). Crucially this relied upon careful preparation of paper: washing it with colour to achieve shades of brownish-yellow or lilac. As Ford wrote:

It is clear that it was not so much the colour of the paper that matters, but the fact that it should be of a middle tint. With this object in view Wilson sometimes used specially prepared papers washed with colour to the required shade of lilac or brownish-yellow. By using paper of a middle tint, Wilson could obtain a much wider and richer variety of tone, with gradations ranging from velvety blacks to pearly whites, than was possible when working in the simpler medium of black chalk on white paper.⁴⁴

Sensitivity to the importance of technique in creating the environment of the page was something Constable developed in a further publication, *The Painter's Workshop* (1954).⁴⁵ The text is an explication of how the material components of the art object could provide a window into an artist's practice, meaning that practice as a sequential performance could be glimpsed in the layers within the object. In the chapter entitled 'The Physical Structure of a Painting', Constable examines the component parts of a wide range of paintings, including a passionate section devoted to 'transparent' watercolours, part of which is given over to reiterating the 'remarkable burst of activity and achievement' surrounding the history of watercolours in Britain.⁴⁶

One of the first illustrations in *The Painter's Workshop's* chapter on watercolours is Francis Nicholson's four-part lesson on the stages of creating a watercolour from his *Practice of Drawing and Painting* (1820) (Fig. 2.14).⁴⁷ The layers of a watercolour are here separated, showing the interplay between drawing and washes as they build and come into focus in creating a picture: through layers, a transparent medium contains the same depth and accretion of time and energy as an oil painting. Citing Cotman and Turner, Constable fixates on this notion of layers, writing:

In water-colour used so that it is transparent, light is reflected not only from the particles of colour held in the medium, but penetrates the paint layer and is reflected back through it from the support, so increasing luminosity. In character, though not in intensity, the effect of the transmitted light is comparable to that from a stained glass window. Transparent water-colour also allows any preparatory drawing with chalk, pencil, pen, or brush to remain visible to an extent depending on the density of the paint layer.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ford, *Drawings of Richard Wilson*, 26.

⁴⁵ W. G. Constable, *The Painter's Workshop* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

⁴⁶ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid, plate IX.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 48.

Constable's discussion does not seek to retrieve under-drawing from within an opaque surface, but shows how drawing as part of a transparent surface is an essential component of the picture. Unlike oil painting, where opaque layers can be added indefinitely (concealing poor under-drawing), the evident drawing of a watercolour alters the entire experience, necessitating careful pre-planning: 'Fully to realise the beauty of transparent water-colour, the painter has to know from the beginning exactly what he wants to do, exactly how he is going to do it, and to do it directly and without fumbling.'⁴⁹ To approach watercolour as a form of layered drawn-object (or at least being in part reliant upon drawing) during the 1930s reveals not only painterly values but ones intimately related to drawing. Alongside Nicholson's four-part illustration, x-ray and infra-red images of under-drawings beneath more opaque mediums were also reproduced, a technology that opened up new perspectives onto the actual depths of apparently impenetrable substances and a form of enquiry that was influential on Constable among others (Fig. 2.15).

The Growth of the Object and Looking Within Material Layers

One enthusiastic reviewer of Constable's *The Painter's Workshop* was Francis Ian Gregory ('Fig') Rawlins (1895-1969) (Fig. 2.17), the Scientific Advisor to the National Gallery and the founder of its Scientific Department, which under his sole care during the 1930s was concerned predominantly with x-ray and infra-red examinations of paintings. Rawlins wrote passionately about Constable's publication for *The Burlington Magazine* in October 1954:

At one time it was commonly assumed that to enjoy pictures was an aesthetic experience largely unrelated to any other kind of cognition. Even the pioneers like Eastlake and Church, who made a deliberate study of the construction and components of painting, scarcely achieved a satisfactory coupling between subjective and objective values. The forging of this link has been a recent attainment, not complete as yet, but well on the way there. For much of this progress Mr Constable has been responsible: it is work in the backroom, but now he presents some of it to interested lay-folk, and a most valuable and welcome book is the result. The underlying theme is the author's sure instinct for structure [...] emphasis upon materials and how they are used to make the painter's workshop live in the mind's eye. To read these chapters on the various techniques (e.g. water-colours, tempera, oil, and so on) is to be conducted round the studio from the outside, and to be allowed to peep through many a window to see what is happening within.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid, 51. Also, during this time Sickert was experimenting with leaving pane-squaring visible under the paint, such as: *Miss Gwen Eftangco-Davies as Isabella of France*, 1932, oil on canvas, 245.1 x 92.1 cm, Tate See: Marianne Hollis, ed. *Late Sickert: Paintings 1927 to 1942*, exh. cat. (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, c1981); and David Peters Corbett, *Walter Sickert* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 2001), 54-69.

⁵⁰ F. I. G. Rawlins, Review of *The Painter's Workshop* by W. G. Constable, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 96:619 (Oct, 1954), 326-329 (326).

Constable had achieved in *The Painter's Workshop* what Rawlins aspired to: an alignment between physical laws and principles of aesthetics by using the new technological possibilities to tease out historical insights from newly available understandings of the materiality of a painting. Constable achieved this not only through examining preparatory drawings – the aged mainstay of connoisseurial practice – but also through infra-red and x-ray illustrations of under-drawings as well as subsumed paint layers. Constable's sensitivity to the growth of a painting through the sequential actions of the artist peeled away the layers of paint in order to reveal a narrative, like the unrolling of a film reel in order to read the stills. Thus technological developments honed during the 1930s (which paused during the war) and the associated attention given to scientific interference in the media, reconfigured the substance of pigment as layers, wherein long-submerged drawn-objects could be rescued (Fig. 2.19). It also replicated the experience of looking for the design within watercolours for more opaque paint mediums. In doing so it emphasised notions of materiality of art in terms of layers, bound up with and based upon drawing.

Public awareness of scientific engagement with art during the period primarily took the form of mounting pressure during the late 1920s and early 1930s for institutions, like the National Gallery, to justify their physical interference with paintings. Public pressure on the National Gallery is recorded in the trustee board meeting minutes from 9 March 1926 and 11 December 1934, which note (with hints of anxiety) public outcry over restoration projects, including retouching damaged areas and replacing discoloured varnish with newer clear varnish.⁵¹ It was along these lines that chemist Francis Howard wrote a letter to *The Times* (12 Jan 1934) acerbically demanding that there be a check for 'which of the "experts" – art historians, critics, museum trustees and official chemists, artists and dealers – have the knowledge they claim and which have not'.⁵² Howard followed up his article by visiting the newly appointed National Gallery Director Kenneth Clark, with a proposal for an in-house chemical laboratory in hand, as well as writing to one of the gallery's trustees, David Ormsby-Gore about the same.⁵³ Braving the possible publicity scandal, the trustees collectively decided against Howard, as his laboratory structure raised fears of fumes or fire endangering the collection.

⁵¹ National Gallery Trustee Board's Minutes: 9 Mar 1926 and 11 Dec 1934.

⁵² Francis Howard, 'An Art Laboratory', *The Times* (12 Jan 1934). Joseph Duveen of the international art dealing firm Duveen Brothers was the instigator of numerous highly public controversies over conservation, such as a 1927 controversy recorded in the Frank Simpson archive over the restoration of what was referred to as Holbein's *Portrait of an Old Man*. Duveen had whipped up a furore among experts (including Roger Fry) by calling for a cleaning before witnesses in order to shame the restorer, Paul Ganz. 'Holbein File,' Frank Simpson Archive, PMC, uncatalogued. For Duveen generally, see also S. N. Behrman, *Duveen* (London: Readers Union, 1954).

⁵³ Referenced in National Gallery Trustee Board's Minutes, NG (13 Feb 1934). See also: Kenneth Clark, Letter to Francis Howard, 'Clark Correspondence', box 16 (undated), NG.

Clark approached Rawlins instead, allowing him to tailor and install, with no expense spared, a laboratory geared toward physical imaging, rather than chemical experimentation.⁵⁴ Hired initially as the Superintendent of the Photographic and Publications Department (the latter of which he knew little about), he was taken on explicitly for his potential to develop an x-ray facility within the gallery. It is unsurprising that Rawlins began his career there with numerous publications that featured the laboratory's capabilities, culminating in 1940 with an affordable picture book for the general public, *From the National Gallery Laboratory*.⁵⁵ It showcased a series of x-rays, infra-reds, and macro-photographs of details from paintings, which like *Madonna and Child with Saints* (Fig. 2.18) reveal a ghostly inner world of inverted tones and uncannily similar and yet otherly representations of art history icons, aesthetically resonant of the photograph of the shroud of Turin.⁵⁶

Rawlins was one of the pioneers of the experimental field of applying x-ray, infra-red, and ultra-violet imaging and macroscopic photography to the study of art objects. Along with Alan Burroughs working at the Fogg Museum of Art in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and peers in Stockholm and Berlin, he was a leading researcher in the close but rapidly expanding field of scientists taking images of the invisible substance of paintings.⁵⁷ Rawlins did not conceive the research as violent dissection or as a scientific coup, but as an augmentation of the connoisseurial eye. Indeed, the x-rays revealed a world of hidden layers, of invisible substance, which made plain not only the anatomy of the painted surface but also insights into the method – the time and process – of the artist, and thus, as conservation scientists Joseph Padfield, David Saunders, John Cupitt, and Robert Atkinson have rightly argued,

⁵⁴ For Rawlins's hiring and the outfitting of the Laboratory, see: National Gallery Trustee Board's Minutes: 17 Apr 1934, 13 Feb 1934, 13 Mar 1934, 9 Oct 1934, 11 Dec 1934, 7 Feb 1935, 18 Jun 1935. See also: Anonymous, 'Profile: F. I. G. Rawlins: A Scientists among the Old Masters', *New Scientist*, 6:148 (17 Sep 1959), 456-7. Rawlins had entered the University of Cambridge as an undergraduate shortly after the First World War, then as a postgraduate specialised in infra-red spectroscopy in crystals and especially in the theory of colour and the absorption phenomena in crystals, working for a time with Schaefer in Marburg and with A. M. Taylor on *Infra-red Analysis of Molecular Structure* (1929). He split his time at Cambridge between interests in science and in art, conducting nocturnal studies into the interaction between matter and radiated energy and walking through the halls of the Fitzwilliam during the day. He thus emerged out of the same culture within Cambridge where chemist and physicist Ernest Rutherford was leading ground-breaking research in the Cavendish Laboratories and mathematician and poet Jacob Bronowski and poet William Empson were editing *Experiment* (1928-1931), a student run periodical intended to organically collapse boundaries between science and art.

⁵⁵ F. I. G. Rawlins, *From the National Gallery Laboratory* (London: Harrison and Sons, Ltd., 1940).

⁵⁶ The two images show the work of Costa in the ordinary photograph and beneath the x-ray 'shadowgraph' showing a hand believed to be Maineri. Rawlins, *From the National Gallery*, 16-17; also published in F. I. G. Rawlins, 'X-Rays in the Study of Pictures', *The British Institute of Radiology*, XII:136 (April 1939), [239-245] 244.

⁵⁷ By 1959 when *New Scientist* profiled Rawlins, he had attained success within the field of art conservation: Deputy Keeper and Scientific Advisor to the Trustees of the National Gallery, he had also become the advisor on paintings to all state-owned galleries in Britain, a former Secretary General and then Vice-President of the International Institute of Conservation, Technical Director of the Central Council for the Care of Churches, and a former editor of *Studies in Conservation*.

opened up new channels for conceiving the substance of the image.⁵⁸ Unravelling the substance of paint, or marks, into the autograph of the maker had long been a matter only of iconography and what could be read along the visible surface of the paint. Drawn-objects had been crucial for this endeavour: preoccupations that recur in doodles, sketches, and first-thought drawings could aid a connoisseur in identifying the autographic marks characteristic of a particular artist.⁵⁹ Work such as Rawlins's, as well as similar endeavours in the British Museum and Courtauld Institute Laboratories (founded around the same time), allowed drawings to be excavated from under the skins of paint layers, a significant advance in connoisseurial technique.⁶⁰

Rawlins is a strange and neglected figure in the history of the 1930s. He was an early proponent of Gestalt psychology's influence on the perception of art objects, and he was also an early proponent of collapsing the growing antipathy between science and the arts, which would become the 'Two Cultures' debates of the 1950s and 1960s.⁶¹ He was a prolific author, writing numerous books, reviews, and short articles not only on advances within painting conservation but also on the material traces of creative processes and the possibility of quantitative aesthetic measurement.⁶² In his preface to a collection of his critical work *Aesthetics and the Gestalt* (1953) he presents himself as a Romantic hero, wandering the Westmorland Fells for the divinity of nature.⁶³ Rawlins's sense of 'subjective' and 'objective' is revealing when read in relation to the simultaneous growth of Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism. Whether among hilly countryside or in the disused slate mine of Manod during the Second World War, Rawlins moves around the material spaces of the British landscape in order to have moments of personal revelation, akin to what Breton would call the recognition of the unconscious and Nash likened to encountering anthropomorphic animism in nature.⁶⁴ Read against Surrealism, this was a moment when an external object

⁵⁸ Joseph Padfield, David Saunders, John Cupitt, and Robert Atkinson, 'Improvements in the Acquisition and Processing of X-Ray Images of Paintings', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 23 (2002), [62-75] 62-3.

⁵⁹ See chapter 1, footnote 119.

⁶⁰ What primarily distinguished the National Gallery Laboratory from the earlier one at the British Museum or the one at the Courtauld Institute of Art was its emphasis on imaging rather than conservation.

⁶¹ The 'Two Cultures Debate' was begun in 1959 between physicist and novelist C. P. Snow and literary critic and academic F. R. Leavis over the fracturing of culture into two polarising bodies, the arts and the sciences. See: Guy Ortolano, *The Two Cultures Controversy: Science, Literature and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁶² These works had been published in a range of periodicals from *Nature*, *Science Progress*, and *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts*, to *Phenomenology and Philosophical Research*, *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, and *Transactions of the Faraday Society*. A collection of these works, *Aesthetics and the Gestalt* (1953), was scathingly reviewed in: Rudolph Arnheim, Review, *Aesthetics and the Gestalt* by Ian Rawlins, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 14:3 (Mar, 1956), 393-394.

⁶³ Rawlins, *Aesthetics*, vi.

⁶⁴ For more on Surrealism, see: William S. Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1968), 249; Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 24; and Matthew Gale, *Dada &*

could become a poetic messenger of inner self. When read against Neo-Romantic practices, it was the momentary revelation of the history and significance of a moment. Similarly, Rawlins reconfigures a painted picture as a complex of spaces and units through which unaided perception wanders, struck at times by an apprehension of some greater truth of its material structure or its facture, which was aided by the application of imaging technology. The complex spaces were likened to a mathematical equation, describing it as units of arranged variables, rather than likening it to an anatomical body.⁶⁵ Notions of witness and knowledge infuse Rawlins's idealism, and his view of Gestalt psychology involved a sense that the invisible could affect our apprehension of the whole. To look within the surface was thus to wander through spatial units for the revelation of hidden structure and significance, and in doing so the viewer could unify scientific and artistic analysis, approaching an experimental philosophy of paintings.

The benefits of imaging research, according to Rawlins, were threefold: to see beneath restoration(s), to discover different, or multiple, artistic signatures (in order to expose forgeries as well aid attributions), and finally to glimpse the 'technique of the great Masters'.⁶⁶ It is this last point that Constable and other art historians seized upon: the precise correlation between practice, time, and substance within the layers of an art object. In a series of lectures delivered to the Royal Society of Arts in March 1937, Rawlins described how a loaded brush spreads paint in its liquid state and the time taken in the stroke will lead to differing viscosities and textures.⁶⁷ This observation is in one sense an obvious restating of artistic method, but in another it is a detail that reveals novelty. In discussing this hypothetical brush stroke, Rawlins is illustrating a more complex physical character: the random distribution of pigment within the binding-medium, and how each stroke creates a paint film, which becomes layered. With the use of x-ray, infra-red, and ultra-violet imaging and macroscopic photography, these layers, strokes, and even pigment distributions could be analysed separately. The painting as an object could thus be mapped, or could be unwound as if a film

Surrealism (London: Phaidon, 1997), 225. Nash, who became involved in English surrealism, wrote in 1912: 'Again I turned to the landscape not for the landscape's sake but for the "things behind," the dweller in the innermost: whose light shines thro' sometimes. I went out to try and give a hint in my drawings of those sometimeses.' Paul Nash, Letter to Gordon Bottomley (1 Aug 1912), *Poet and Painter: Correspondence between Gordon Bottomley and Paul Nash 1910-1946*, eds. C. C. Abbott and A. Betram (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 42. For Nash and Surrealism, see: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 52-61

⁶⁵ Rawlins's mathematical emphasis should not diminish the profundity of the experiments, but indicates the way in which this interrelation of invisible details related to the visible whole. Rawlins, *From the National Gallery*.

⁶⁶ Rawlins, Review of *The Painter's Workshop*, 326.

⁶⁷ F. I. G. Rawlins, 'The Physics and Chemistry of Paintings', reprint of lectures delivered to The Royal Society of Art on 1, 8, 15 Mar 1937.

reel: when approached as a whole it is an impenetrable object, but when unrolled, its mass is revealed to be a precise sequence of actions.⁶⁸

Drawing and Materiality

Imaging technology replicated the experience of transparent mediums for opaque ones – that is, knowing hidden design through seeing submerged drawn-objects – and thus emphasised drawing’s physical function within a picture (rather than its compositional one) as binding different layers and conducting aesthetic energy, regardless of whether these under-drawings remained visible to the naked eye.

Scholarly approaches to composition also reflected the sense of substance within painting. In the case of Peter Brieger this involved reading arrangements of units as either conducting energy through their surface (like nerves along muscle, akin to Binyon’s rhythm) or creating dynamism by opposing arranged units (such as the mechanics of bones and joints).⁶⁹ Read also discussed a similar sense of alternative forms of ordering in his review of the illuminated manuscripts in the 1934 exhibitions, with the important exception that he saw them as successful when co-existing: the two compositional types were the ‘fixed and symmetrical, a rigid but crisp scaffolding’ and one that was ‘free and floating through the framework like a careless banner’.⁷⁰ For Read this appears simply as a reiteration of attention paid to drawing as design, disconnected from the emerging connotations of layered materiality, unless it is read against Meninsky’s more sensitive evaluation of line within composition in his two-part lecture, ‘The Appreciation of Drawing’ (1948), where the careless banner becomes the binding line, akin to a three-dimensional version of Brieger’s nervous system.⁷¹ In answer to the question, ‘how is it possible to confine within clearly defined limits a form which can move, expand, contract and take on a multitude of aspects?’, Meninsky conceives the contour ‘not as a boundary line, but as a binding line – a line which holds within itself a shape expressive of the static fact and its dynamic potentialities’.⁷² This line is like the trail

⁶⁸ Though it is difficult to ascertain whether Rawlins discussed these views with figures such as Clark and Constable, it is evident they were in some form of contact. Clark as director of the National Gallery from 1934 to 1935, was most likely at the trustee meeting that approved Rawlins equipment in 1934, and a friendly, if reserved, personal letter exists from Clark to Rawlins from October 1949 (‘Correspondence between Kenneth Clark and W G Constable’ (07 Nov 1928 to 31 Mar 1944), TGA 8812.1.3.812-814).

⁶⁹ See: Peter H. Brieger, ‘Principles of French Classic Painting,’ *The Art Bulletin*, 20:4 (Dec 1938): 339-358.

⁷⁰ Read, ‘English Art,’ 244.

⁷¹ Examples of Meninsky’s drawn-objects are *Standing Nude*, c1930 (Fig. 2.20) and *Head of a Girl*, 1944 (Fig. 2.21).

⁷² Bernard, Meninsky, Published copy of Meninsky article, “‘The appreciation of drawing’” with notes on reprint’ (originally published in the exhibition catalogue for the Arts Council’s, *The Art of Drawing* exhibition at which Meninsky gave a lecture in 1948) (no date), TGA 8225.3.2.3, 10.

left behind in wandering through a landscape: it conducts us through the complexity of matter, making, for Meninsky, the tonal layers within the enclosures and bound strata irrelevant.⁷³ Here we come close to the discussion in the first chapter of Maurice Denis's likening of Cézanne to a carpet weaver, and indeed his watercolours involved laying line both under and over patches of pigment – binding and knotting it among the layers of paint, as Meninsky describes. Although Meninsky's sense of drawing-acts is dependant on notions of design, which Meninsky valued highly, it is also dependant on line as a mark rather than as a de-materialised grammatical component. Writing of the Altamira cave paintings, Meninsky is sensitive to deviations of thickness and to the momentum of hand, all corporeal and material aspects of drawing-practice.⁷⁴

Walter Richard Sickert also extolled a form of binding line, but his form of drawing-practice framed it entirely within the context of accreted layers. The image was honed through a sequence of layers, which used patches of line spread across the picture plane in order not only to pick out the tone but by corresponding to the direction of movement, to create a quick, vital sketch of a moving scene.⁷⁵ Surviving transcripts from six lectures Sickert delivered to the Thanet School of Art in Margate, Kent between October and November 1934 – taken by an audience member in shorthand – provide insight into the content, and rhetorical idiosyncrasies, of these much-celebrated events.⁷⁶ Sickert described the method of rapid sketching that he developed over a lifetime of interest in urban, figurative subject matter in the third Thanet lecture, entitled 'Underpainting' (9 November 1934).⁷⁷ The aspiring draughtsperson needed to look for certain sequential aspects of her subject, he said. She first needed to identify the essential subjects, and then simplify them into overlapping shapes along a flat plane in the imagination, creating a network of forms.⁷⁸ Once the subjects were chosen and understood, a light, simple, 'tentative line' blocks in the shapes. Tone is

⁷³ Meninsky discusses this form of line explicitly in relation to the Altamira cave art, but reiterated throughout. Ibid, 2. This resonates with Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's introduction to the English translation of Paul Klee's *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch* (1925): 'The Symbolic Expressionists and the Cubists during the first decade of the Twentieth Century had already questioned the validity of Academic Naturalism. Their painting had looked below the surface with the analytical eye of psychology and x-ray. But the multi-layered figures of Kirchner and Kokoschka or the simultaneous views of Braque and Picasso, were analytical statements, resting statically on the canvas. Klee's figures and forms are not only transparent, as if seen through a fluoroscope; they exist in a magnetic field of cross currents: lines, forms, splotches, arrows, colour waves.' Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, 'Introduction', *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, by Paul Klee, trans. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (London: Faber & Faber, 1953), [7-12], 7.

⁷⁴ Meninsky, 'The Appreciation of Drawing', 2.

⁷⁵ Examples of Sickert's drawn-objects are *Portrait of Henri Rochefort*, undated, and *Sauce à l'ail*, 1924 (Figs. 2.24-3). Sickert has scratched away sections of the paper in *Portrait*, activating the depths of the paper.

⁷⁶ The Thanet transcripts are reproduced in *Walter Sickert: The Complete Writings on Art*, ed. Anna Gruetzner Robins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁷⁷ Sickert, 'Underpainting', (third of six Margate School of Art, Kent, 9 Nov 1934) in *Complete Writings*, 640-649.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 643.

added, and from the mingling of tone and shape on the page, the artist would be able to see where to place the 'definite line'. As Sickert poetically summarised in the fourth Thanet lecture (19 November 1934): 'If you were training a pear tree against a wall you would not tack the branches on to the wall with tin because that would break all the little sensitive shoots, you would tack them against the wall with little strips of flannel – something soft.'⁷⁹ What emerges on the page, the definite line, is like the organic growth of the tree, guided from nature by the artist's observations.

Sickert was hugely influential for aspiring artists in the interwar years, notably to one group of friends, collectively known as the Euston Road School, who developed his form of accretive drawing-practice.⁸⁰ This younger group of artists experimented with layers in several ways. Before they founded the school, whose name would come to encapsulate their collective developments, Geoffrey Tibble (1909-1952) and Rodrigo Moynihan (1910-1990) attempted to develop a new form of facture, 'Objective Abstraction', which was first exhibited in the London Group show in November 1933 (Figs. 2.24-5).⁸¹ The movement attempted to produce a stream-of-consciousness form of painting which involved only unrepresentative marks on the canvas. Victor Pasmore (1908-1998), Graham Bell (1910-1943), Edgar Hubert (1906-1985), Ivon Hitchens (1893-1979), and Ceri Richards (1903-1971) joined in the 1934 Zwemmer Gallery exhibition. William Coldstream was invited to participate and reportedly produced a canvas, but dissatisfied with the results, pulled out, destroying the work.⁸² In the catalogue for the Zwemmer exhibition the principal artists responded to questions about how they produced their paintings. In response to the question 'Do you work from nature?' Moynihan responded, 'Indirectly, in so far as all visible experience is derived from the eye, but it is not necessary, nor need it be wrong, to limit these sensation to particular aspects of nature.'⁸³ When asked 'Have you a clear conception

⁷⁹ Sickert, 'Colour Study: Importance of Scale', (fourth of six Margate lectures, 19 Nov 1934) in *The Complete Writings*, [649-657] 653.

⁸⁰ The name, 'Euston Road School' was coined by Raymond Mortimer in a review of an exhibition at the Storrer Gallery in 1938, curated by Graham Bell, which featured paintings by pupils and teachers at the School of Drawing and Painting at 316 Euston Road. Harrison, *English Art*, 339. As will be discussed more in the fourth chapter, Coldstream attended Sickert's lectures in the 1930s as well as in later years lecturing on Sickert's life and works at the Institute of Education, London University (15 Jul 1951). William Coldstream 'How I Paint' typescript for article in *The Listener* (15 September 1937), Tate Gallery Archive 8922.9.5, 2. Oddly, given Sickert's influence in the 1930s over drawing-practice, from the mid-1920s he had transitioned away from using drawn-objects and drawing-practice as the basis of his paintings, preferring photography to the memory techniques. His new working method drew material from newspapers and periodicals, inspiration by Victorian illustrations, which he called 'echoes'. The results include the flattened proto-pop art of his 1936 portraits of Edward VIII. These recent works were kept on view throughout the 1930s at the Leicester Galleries and the Beaux Arts Gallery (the latter run by Frederick Lessore (1879-1951), the brother Sickert's third wife, Elaine Thérèse Lessore (1884-1945)).

⁸¹ Bruce Laughton, *The Euston Road School: A Study in Objective Painting* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1986), 97-99.

⁸² Bruce Laughton, *William Coldstream* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 29.

⁸³ *Objective Abstractions*, exh. cat. (London: Zwemmer Gallery, 20 Mar – 14 Apr 1934), 9.

of the picture before you begin? Does it grow while working?’ Bell responded, ‘No. The evolution is intimately bound up with the canvas and the medium.’⁸⁴ What emerges is an emphasis on gestural painting building from itself. As such it is independent of nature and of close observation. The eye could contaminate by pulling the painter toward unintended figuration or replication of physical forms.⁸⁵

It also introduced a reverence for materials, which took hold in another to-be-Euston Roader, poet, painter, and writer Adrian Stokes (1902–1972), who construed material layers in a picture as alive, a vitality activated through the method of creation. A friend of Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), Ben Nicholson, and Kenneth Clark, he both absorbed and defined attitudes around him. Stokes published three crucial works in quick succession in and amongst his frequent trips to Italy: *The Quattro Cento* (1932), *Stones of Rimini* (1935), and *Colour and Form* (1937). Superficially the latter two are an extended poetic and scholarly ode to the neglected Tempio Malatestiano (c.1450) in Rimini and the tradition of relief carving it encapsulated.⁸⁶ But in *The Quattro Cento* and *Stones of Rimini* he first articulated his aesthetic theory, which gave prominence to layers by contrasting the carving he admired against ‘modelling’.⁸⁷ In *Stones of Rimini* he articulated this distinction succinctly:

The difference between carving approach and modelling approach in sculptural art can be illustrated as follows. Whatever its plastic value, a figure carved in stone is fine carving when one feels that not the figure but the stone through the medium of the figure, has come to life. Plastic conception, on the other hand, is uppermost when the material with which, or from which, a figure has been made appears no more than as so much suitable stuff for his creation.⁸⁸

Modelling was, for Stokes, the act of transforming the formless into an artistic vision. The immanence of the materials was thus denied, dominated by an imposed artistic idea. Carving, in contrast, was born from a ‘deep and imaginative communion with the significance of the material itself’.⁸⁹ It was an awareness that the materials were somehow alive, and through

⁸⁴ *Objective Abstractions*, 4.

⁸⁵ Moynihan, Bell and Tibble, *Objective Abstractions* (London: Zwemmer Gallery, 20 March 1934), quoted in *ibid*.

⁸⁶ Artist and critic Julian Bell (son of Quentin Bell and Anne Popham, the latter of whom was Graham Bell’s lover in the 1930s and 1940s) dismissively called it ‘an extended obeisance performed by a young Englishman before some marble panels in an Italian church’. Julian Bell, ‘Into the Southern Playground’, Review of ‘*The Quattro Cento*’ and ‘*Stones of Rimini*’, by Adrian Stokes and *Art and Its Discontents*, by Richard Read. *London Review of Books*, 25:16 (2003), 10-12. For a less acerbic account, see: Stephen Bann ed., *The Coral Mind: Adrian Stokes’s Engagement with Architecture, Art History, Criticism, and Psychoanalysis* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), and Richard Read, *Art and its Discontents: the Early life of Adrian Stokes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

⁸⁷ Though Stokes’s theory was informed by prolonged psychoanalysis sessions with Melanie Klein during the 1930s, it was only fully developed after the Second World War. Due to limitations of scope in this chapter, I will not discuss these later works or the psychoanalytic aspect of his work.

⁸⁸ Adrian Stokes, *Stones of Rimini* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 110.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 119.

being carved were set free, or given their internal form. Carving involves working the entire plane of the reliefs away in layers, never fixating on one detail – and thus the elements of the image, its composition and forms, emerge as one.⁹⁰

In the third book of the series, *Colour and Form*, Stokes makes this relationship with non-sculptural art explicit, arguing that carving need not be merely a method of sculpting.⁹¹ Canvas or paper could possess the immanence of stone: the artist only needed to respect and gently set free the image within the materials.⁹² According to this logic, he counts Piero della Francesca, Pieter Bruegel, Giorgione, and Cézanne among the brethren of carvers. Though resonant with Greenbergian formalism and its concern for solely responding to the properties of the medium, Stokes differs in that his influence became methodological as well as ideological.

The influence of materials involved more than an imaginative communion with the nature of the materials in hand. For Stokes, it also involved a rational understanding of their physical properties. A section of *Stones of Rimini* is given over to discussing the geologic properties of limestone, particularly how when exposed to light, it often possesses a ‘luminosity’ or ‘flesh-like glow’.⁹³ This was due to the suspension within its substance of a particular proportion of siliceous minerals (quartz or clay), which produced an opacity wherein light would enter the substance and rebound off these particles – much as Constable had described light reflecting within watercolour pigment.⁹⁴ This geologic phenomenon was, for Stokes, symbolic of how the stone was itself formed over time: ‘Symbols of life concreted into static objects, of Time concreted as Space’.⁹⁵ Before the stone was a solid object to be carved into, it was formed in nature by a gradual hardening of accumulated sediment, so awareness of the materials was also thus awareness of invisible strata within the solid object, which represented the time necessary to create it.

Stokes affected an array of artists, including those within the Euston Road School, who developed a method of drawing by working across the entire surface of the page, gently shading until layer after layer revealed the image within the support, just as Stokes prescribed.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 144.

⁹¹ An example of Stoke’s painting is *Landscape, West Penwith Moor*, 1937 (Fig. 2.26).

⁹² It is important to note, however, that Stokes equated calligraphy with modelling: ‘All sculptural modellers should primarily be such draughtsmen. I do not mean that they should be able to draw, but further that their modelling should be but a projection of this primary penmanship. The true carver’s power to draw, on the other hand, is a secondary power: for it is inspired by his attitude to stone.’ Ibid, 121.

⁹³ Ibid, 52.

⁹⁴ ‘Although light penetrates most limestone’s readily, it becomes scattered and diffused in passing from one grain to another’. Ibid, 54.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 52.

The drawing method was alighted upon by Coldstream, but was also honed by his peers Claude Rogers and Graham Bell (e.g. Fig. 2.27). It involved measuring the space between points in his subjects over a number of prolonged sittings.⁹⁶ Each measurement would be verified against different points and then a corresponding line would be made on the page, digging the pencil into the paper to indicate a stop-start point for the next measurement. The layered marks were key, building upon each other – each series of observations constituted a different exposure, or a different sweep of marks that would be overlaid upon the next sitting. Digging the pencil repeatedly into the same point as the sweeps of tone are added also functions as a reconstitution of the binding line: rather than uniting units along the picture plane, it digs into the depths of the paper, anchoring the sweeps of layers as dots are overlaid upon each other, creating a line invisible unless viewed as a cross section under a microscope.

The leap that Coldstream's drawing method creates is to reconfigure drawing-acts in the light of watercolour. The linear emphasis of Fry and even of MacColl (in relation to the skill of underdrawing) becomes the binding line that works in depth as much as across the picture plane, but the graphite distributed over its surface (regardless of whether in tonal shading or clusters of line) operates like the pigment of paint. This is drawing emulating watercolour in order to tap into the vital essence of material depths. The Euston Road School artists were not alone in experimenting with configurations of line and depth in relation to the terms through which drawn-objects were being revealed or celebrated within paint; other powerful examples include Nash's watery layers in the Oxenbridge cottage sketch, Meninsky's discussion of the binding line, John Piper's 'papier collé' interwoven by lines, Henry Moore's wax crayon and washes of ink drawings, Ben Nicholson's scratching and drawing by turns into the surface of his 1930s oil paintings, and Barbara Hepworth's later Hospital Drawing Series where coagulations of paint on board are pierced by scratches and graphite marks (Fig. 2.28-33). All of these experiments take the principle of watercolour that Binyon eulogises as the 'living space' of Turner's late watercolours, such as *Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen* (Fig. 2.34), in *English Water-Colours* (1933):

Where the mountains retain their sculptured form yet seem built of light and air; the lakes are unfathomable, the valleys recede into an infinite distance. The design is all in depth; whorls of curling cloud lead the eye on and on into a vibrating mystery of light, which unifies the whole fabric of earth and air and water. Never had painting communicated with such subtlety the sense of infinity. For it is not merely the sense of infinite recession that gives the attraction of a final peace, such as we find in the Umbrian painters; it is space conceived as something living, as a power which draws our spirits into itself but also wells out in

⁹⁶ Discussed in full in chapter 4.

impalpable radiance from the picture and absorbs and envelops our minds.⁹⁷

This living space is not actual distance represented on the page, but the way the material layers reveal the bare paper that caused light to enter into its substance, just as Constable wrote of the sparkle of watercolours reflecting light, and Stokes wrote about the condensed minerals of limestone absorbing and refracting light. This encrustation of layers is a trace of the time imbued in the surface by the artist, and the viewer, in turn, remains aware of each layer or stage.

Space within the watercolour – space enclosed and bound by drawn marks – became something profound and living, something harness-able through playing layers and substance off each other, and through communing with the materials. It is something shared by the young painters Binyon heralded as watercolour revivalists, whose watercolours contain a flatness, but it is a flatness based on the condensation of depth, of substance layered in thin strata.⁹⁸ It also brings new meaning to the context of Nash's drawing of the cottage at Oxenbridge. The quality of layers of water, of lines like clipped hair receding or emerging from the fibres of the paper, play (as is the prerogative of sketchbooks) with the duality of *representing* plastic layers while *manipulating* material layers. The wateriness reaffirms associations with the elusive depths of bodies of water – their capacity for infinity, to shelter lurking creatures as well as in folklore, like the pool of ink or crystal ball, to provide a mirror to the future or to the soul. The cottage at Oxenbridge becomes just such a portal. As Meninsky later wrote, 'The great draughtsman preserves a form whilst endowing it with a sense of infinity.'⁹⁹

Conclusion

An awareness of the materiality of layers within art-objects not only veiled an engagement with submerged drawn-objects, but also created a sense of drawing-acts as three-dimensional activities. It is something Piper recognised in 'Aspects of Modern Drawing' (1937) by describing the 'the best of contemporary drawing' as a 'three-dimensional arabesque'.¹⁰⁰ Whether the object grew in relation only to its internal material (e.g. Objective Abstraction) or compositional properties (e.g. Piper and the Neo-Romantics) or comprised layers of

⁹⁷ Binyon, *English Water-Colours* (1933), 119.

⁹⁸ Binyon, *English Water-Colours* (1933), 168-170. One exemplary revivalist was David Jones, with his complicated watery pieces, such as *Illustration to the Arthurian Legend: Guenevere*, 1938-40 (Fig. 2.36).

⁹⁹ Meninsky, 'Appreciation of Drawing' (TGA 8225.3.2.3), 11.

¹⁰⁰ Piper, 'Aspects of Modern Drawing', 33-41

images from nature (e.g. Sickert and Coldstream), sensitivity to the art object's depth and density in relation to drawing-practice was fore-fronted. This represented a wide enquiry into the properties of materiality, particularly recognising the drawn-objects within the paint, whatever its transparency or opacity. This in turn resulted in a heightened sense of material sensitivity to the draughtsman's performance within the drawn-object. As will be explored in relation to the Second World War, this was an important conceptual foundation for the rise of the sketch-aesthetic and the demonstrative presence of the absent artist within both its composition and its materials.

Everywhere and Nowhere:

The Absent Draughtsman and the Sketch during the Second World War

In November 1941, the *Picture Post*, a photography-focused British periodical, featured a drawing on its cover (Fig. 3.1). Rent in fine but hasty pen lines and cast into shallow relief by layers of ink wash, the image was a portrait sketch of a commander on the first Arctic Convoy to Russia. A caption identifies it as the work of Feliks Topolski, who had been sent to Russia by the *Picture Post* for ‘two months with the instructions to make a sketch book of reports on what he saw’.¹ Inside the issue is an extended and captioned visual essay, which depicted the steps taken by Polish Army-in-exile generals Władysław Anders and Władysław Sikorski toward forming a Polish army on Russian soil shortly after the 1941 German invasion. The first image of the essay, which gives context not just to the issue but to all four further instalments in later issues, is a photograph of Topolski, his cap rakishly tilted (Fig. 3.2). The sketches on the following pages are not just any sketches, the layout seems to say: they are sketches by this man, who here appears almost heroic, just the sort of artist who is able to provide captivating, worthwhile impressions.

The photograph of Topolski depicts him before propaganda posters, which are drawn-graphics emphasising the anatomically correct corporeality, simplified facial features, and dramatic postures of Socialist Realist draughtsmanship, and thus invoking the traditional techniques of early twentieth-century periodical illustrations and caricatures.² The aesthetic is distinct from Topolski’s own, and a hastier-than-usual sketch of Wing-Commander Isherwood by Topolski is placed at the bottom left corner of the page (Fig. 3.2). Its conjunction with the propaganda posters brings the stylistic difference into full contrast. In rounded, undeveloped lines Isherwood is depicted with his brow furrowed and mouth tightly pursed as he reads a booklet on Russia. He is caught in a private moment. Around him are notes, jotted in crabbed handwriting, crossed out in places, smudged, disturbed, and blotted. Topolski’s sketch embodies an image of piquant witness – the smudging, the errant

¹ *Picture Post*, issue 7 (15 Nov 1941). Text from display advertisement for the *Picture Post*, *The Times*, 49081 (12 Nov 1941), 2.

² By ‘Socialist Realism’ I refer to the officially sanctioned idealised style of Soviet Russia and other Communist countries, particularly from 1924–53, see: James Vaughan, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1973). Not to be confused with ‘Social Realism’, a term coined by James Hyman for the socially conscious figurative art in post-war Britain. See: James Hyman, *The Battle for Realism: Figurative Art in Britain during the Cold War, 1945-60* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 2.

line, the indecisive moment all plucked from the monotony and weariness of life on the ship. In the photo, Topolski is presented as commanding, inspiring, heroic – lips pursed and open in the middle of speech – with the receiver of a telephone in the poster behind artfully close to his mouth. The emphasis of the design operates like a caption. The entire page layout, and especially the angle and extent of Topolski's portrait, explains and modifies the meaning of what will follow. If each element of the page is read against the others, the message becomes clear: here is our heroic correspondent, who physically (and so perhaps psychologically) resembles the personifications of Russia herself and thus probably has specialist knowledge, and who is right now in Russia, where the rules of art-reportage are different.³ It is a country where not only our cameras cannot penetrate but are also not valued – a place of grandeur, necessity, and struggle. And this heroic artist is the reader's direct link. His sketches are like the words from his mouth, direct, un-mediated, and raw. The telephone receiver is like the pages of this magazine, quickly conveying exclusive information of what is happening a continent away. Through him, the reader is there: the reader doesn't merely witness his impressions, she enters his experiences.⁴

Drawing-reportage had fallen out favour in journalism by the start of the First World War and yet during the Second World War picture-periodicals such as the *Picture Post* and the *Illustrated London News* in Britain, *Signal* in Germany, and *Life* and *Fortune* the United States commissioned 'artist-correspondents' (or 'special artists') to move within key theatres of the war and depict their experiences.⁵ This was neither illustration nor journalism (the latter fell to photographers): it was an embrace of subjectivity, of artists' immediate experiences documented in a manner that emphasised their physical witness of events, and an embrace of a sketch aesthetic, which in being transmitted back to the home front became a self-conscious exercise in communication. Present in the November 1941 *Picture Post* is the

³ Some readers would have known that Topolski was born in Russia-controlled Warsaw – he was a popular figure, who advertised his origins.

⁴ An advertisement for the November 1941 *Picture Post*, described this as such: 'There are some things which the camera cannot capture... There are many things which the censor will not pass... They are the very things which are essential to form a real impression of the Russian Scene... So we engaged the services of Feliks Topolski, the brilliant Polish artist. We sent him off for two months with the instructions to make a sketch book of reports on what he saw. He has come back with drawing of the things which cannot be photographed, descriptive sketches of the things which cannot be described in words.' *The Times*, 49081 (12 Nov 1941), 2.

⁵ An American periodical, *Life* (1883 to 1936) sent twenty-eight 'special artists' into Second World War battlefields, the most notable: Bernard Perlin (b.1918), David Fredenthal (1914-1958), and Aaron Bohrod (1907-1992). Literal reporting was left to photographers and thus these artists could concentrate on conveying emotional responses to what they witnessed. *Life's* rotary offset printing (the same used by *Picture Post*) allowed for any form of painting, watercolour, or drawings to be reproduced. In the United States these mass-circulating artistic reports took over from the Federal government's war recording programme, which was abandoned in 1942. *Fortune* commissioned several of *Life's* team for special assignments as well as commissioning European refugees resident in the United States (including Zdzislaw Czermanski (1896-1970) and Ferdinand Leger (1881-1955)) as well as American artists, such as Philip Guston (1913-1980) and Richard Lindner (1901-1978). Russia also had artist-correspondents following the action: Dementy Shmarinov (1907-1999) and Aleksandr Deyneka (1899-1969). Paul Hogarth, *Artist as Reporter* (London: Fraser, 1986), 140.

emphasised subjectivity of an absent artist, framed and disseminated to the nearly two million weekly recipients through a language of ‘objective’ mechanical reproduction.⁶ It thus encapsulates two phenomena related to drawing within the Second World War: increased visibility of drawings, and the emphasis on the sketch-aesthetic as a material trace of a drawing-performance.

Just as photojournalism engages with a pictorial language of witness and testimony, so too does the sketch. The subject of this chapter is the cultivation of a particular sketch literacy that emerged from the increased visibility of drawn-objects and the emphasis of the role of the absent artist within these objects. It was a taste that had long-term ramifications on the art world: although drawing enjoyed greater visibility – through War Artists, exhibiting culture, discussions of practice, and the popular press – the result was a lasting devaluation of the presentation drawn-object in favour of the intimate, reflexive sketch. The sketch-aesthetic that emerged emphasised the subjective experience of the artist as a proxy for a national experience. In relation to increasingly strident debates of its close relations, caricature and cartoons, the psychological aspects of sketching will be addressed in terms of conviction and compulsion. This chapter is thus separated into two sections. The first is socio-cultural, exploring how the circumstances of the war period directly affected drawing, particularly through the War Artists Advisory Committee, exhibiting culture, discussions of draughtsmanship, and drawing’s incorporation in the popular press. The second section looks at how the anatomical materiality of the drawn-object that developed during the 1920s and 1930s became a proxy for the absent body of the artist when exposed to the social and psychological conditions of wartime experience.

Drawing during the War

The Second World War presented political and economic strains that altered the patterns of production, dissemination, and reception of drawings that had been created in the preceding decades. The armed conflict was the most obvious challenge, whether for those deployed to foreign theatres of war or for those at home labouring to supply the troops while fighting off aerial attacks and espionage.⁷ In direct response to the demands of mobilisation, older economic pressures on cultural institutions intensified and new ones emerged. During the

⁶ Notions of objectivity will be discussed further in relation to William Coldstream in the fourth chapter.

⁷ The exception to the near collapse of many of the art world organs was the St. Ives art scene, which remained lively throughout the war.

period many artists' societies suspended activities or closed altogether,⁸ London-based art schools were closed or relocated to the countryside,⁹ periodicals suffered from paper rationing and shortages,¹⁰ and urban museums' collections were often relocated to less threatened (and often publically inaccessible) holding sites.¹¹ In the build-up to the war and during its first months, artists faced a large-scale loss of public patronage as well as the call of the enlistment office. According to a survey by the Artists International Association (AIA) between late September and early October 1939, seventy-three percent of respondents lost their jobs or had commissions cancelled. Mass Observation data indicated that in those early months 'Art Production and Consumption practically ceased'.¹² If an artist were deployed, his art production would slow considerably. And if the artist were traumatised or killed, the nation would be deprived of his future artistic efforts. These national and personal conundrums were all too familiar from the First World War, during which notable artists were killed (such as the poet Wilfred Owen and the composer George Butterworth) and others never psychologically recovered (such as Siegfried Sassoon). In addition to these concerns, the influx of European refugee artists introduced fresh forms of radical art and design. Their presence, however, further strained the commercial organs of the struggling British art scene in the first months of the war.¹³ This initial crisis soon transformed into a renaissance for artists living in Britain with specially created commissioning bodies, such as the War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC), seeking to aid struggling artists, and

⁸ Those which were not able to remain active include the British Water-colour Society, the London Group, the NEAC, the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, the Royal Cambrian Academy, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the Saint Ives Society of Artists, the Society of Wood Engravers, and the Women's International Art Club. Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain, 1939-1945* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 12.

⁹ The Royal College of Art (RCA) and the Chelsea School of Art relocated to the countryside (the RCA relocated to Ambleside in autumn of 1939); by July 1941 only three art institutions remained open for day classes in London: the Polytechnic School of Art, St Martin's School of Art, and Goldsmiths' College School of Art. 'Notes and News: ...London Art Schools', [Central Institute of Art and Design] *Bulletin*, 1 (Jul 1941), 50. Gilbert Spencer (1892-1979), a teacher at the RCA, complained that 'the wholesale slaughter of the art schools [in the UK] on the outbreak of war equals many of Hitler's bloodless victories'. Gilbert Spencer, in Maxwell Armfield, Adrian Bury, et al., 'Carried Unanimously', *Studio* 119 (Jan 1940), 24.

¹⁰ Paper rationing began in April 1940. The Greynog Press, Perpetua Press, and Corvinus had survived the economic recession of the 1930s only to close down during the war and be replaced by Nonesuch Press and Cruwen Press, which moved away from expensive wood engravings and limited editions. Foss, *War Paint*, 11.

¹¹ Within ten days of the war declaration on 3 September 1939, the National Gallery's collection was distributed among the University of North Wales at Bangor, the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, Caernarvon Castle, Trawsgoed (Crosswood), and Penrhyn Castle, with a few additional paintings in Gloucestershire. Around the summer of 1940 the collection was moved into a disused slate mine near Blaenau Ffestiniog at Manod, where it was monitored by Rawlins. Suzanne Bosman, *The National Gallery in Wartime* (London: National Gallery, 2008).

¹² Data referenced in Foss, *War Paint*, 9. Mass Observation was a social research organisation founded by anthropologist Tom Harrisson (1911-1976), sociologist and poet Charles Madge (1912-1996), and filmmaker Humphrey Jennings (1907-1950) in 1937.

¹³ In June 1940, however, both 'friendly' and 'dangerous' aliens from Axis countries were placed in interment camps. See: Shulamith Behr and Marian Malet, eds., *Arts in Exile in Britain 1933-1945: Politics and Cultural Identity* (New York: Rodopi, 2005), 14.

commercial galleries giving unprecedented space to regional artists in the face of trade-restrictions and bombing risks. These tensions and opportunities created an environment that complemented the drawn-object's portability, cheap production, legibility in monochrome printing, and even drawing-practice as a transferable skill.

The war period is too often treated as a cultural-economic bubble that popped once peace – and the concomitant international travel and trade – was re-established. But it was, of course, not a free-floating segment broken off from British cultural history. As Brian Foss proposed in *War Paint* (2007), the war presented space for a trial run of state-regulated and state-financed art that had lasting effects on how the social service programmes of the reconstruction era were enacted.¹⁴ It equally aided transnational exchanges, as many people and peoples moved through or relocated across the British Isles. Most importantly for the present argument, it brought new visibility to and placed greater emphasis on drawing. The physical conditions of wartime life for artists – displacement, travel, and service, as well as the scarcity of some painting and sculptural materials – contributed to the need felt by fine artists to return to drawing-practice. For some artists, such as Anthony Gross (1905-1984) and Feliks Topolski, this was a reinforcement of previous interests. For others, such as William Coldstream, Peter Lanyon (1918-1964), and Paul Hogarth (1917-2001), it constituted a reacquaintance with drawing-practice that would have a lasting impact on their artistic development.¹⁵ The results for drawing were manifold: a high proportion of drawn-objects and watercolour drawn-objects in the War Art collections and displays; the return of popular magazines reproducing artwork; commercial galleries discovering an exploitable appetite for contemporary British art, often drawn-objects; and the publicity of the national need for industrial draughtsmanship. All of these factors interwove to form a particular, but not historically disconnected, context for drawing in this period.

WAAC

The British art scene during the war comprised various parts, of which the most programmatic and best known was the War Artists Advisory Committee, established within

¹⁴ Foss convincingly makes the argument that the WAAC was not a break in visual expression, as it is sometimes characterised, but rather was a continuation of much of what had gone before, and through its ideological bias in integrating artists and the greater society, it became a precedent for what was to come, especially in its respect for the individual. 'Aside from supporting large numbers of artists,' Foss writes, 'it helped to articulate national values and beliefs when they were most needed, and established a framework of state support for the visual arts.' Foss, *War Paint*, 1.

¹⁵ In relation to Coldstream this will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail. For Lanyon and Hogarth, see: Garlake, *Drawings of Peter Lanyon*; and Paul Hogarth, *Drawing on Life: The Autobiography of Paul Hogarth* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1997).

the Ministry of Information in 1939.¹⁶ Its goal was to compile through commissions and purchases a documentary and artistic history of Britain through the Second World War. Under the chairmanship of Kenneth Clark, it spanned six years and ultimately involved more than 400 artists and 6,000 items of various mediums. It included popular figures such as Paul Nash, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, and Carel Weight (1908–1997). Its reach, however, also included more diverse figures, from Mervyn Peake (1911–1968) to Charles Cundall (1890–1971), while excluding those who tended towards abstraction, such as Ben Nicholson.¹⁷

The WAAC was a wide-reaching national programme. Although nominally part of the Ministry of Information, it maintained a certain level of autonomy, resulting in occasional acrimonious disputes between the committee and the ministry. One of the most influential aspects of the programme's propaganda was the association of creativity with the tenets of liberal democracy, specifically with art as a demonstration of flourishing individual rights and freedom. This not only affected future developments but also facilitated the association of sketching and rough drawing as raw evidence of personal devotion to a creative life and thus also the ideals of the state. It is possible that elements of this ideology aided the public connecting sketching and drawing with creativity, and the association is affirmed by an array of cultural figureheads, including Clark, Read, Cyril Connolly (1903–1974), and Sacheverell Sitwell (1897–1988), who identified personal creativity with the civilising standards that Britain had claimed to be entering the war to defend.¹⁸ The government's Council for the Encouragement of Music released pamphlets intoning that democracy, tolerance, and kindness had 'little meaning in the abstract but are actual and concrete when expressed through national literature, music and painting'.¹⁹ Read went further in an article in *The Times* of October 1939, writing that art is 'the most serious, the most fateful and the most essential activity upon which a nation can engage. It is, in fact, the definition of its civilisation – of its conception of the purpose of life and the meaning of existence.'²⁰ This fits neatly within the

¹⁶ The WAAC was not alone in offering support in the early days of the war to struggling artists. Others included the Artists International Association (AIA) (1933–1971), the National Mural Council (est. 1943), the Central Institute of Art and Design (CIAD) (est. Oct 1939), the Art and Entertainment Emergency Council (AEEC) (est. Dec 1939), Paul Nash's Arts Bureau in Oxford (1939–1940, when it was transferred to the CIAD), the Sussex Committee of Artists and Churchmen (which inaugurated a pilot project to encourage churches to commission memorials, rolls of honour, and paintings) (est. 1939), the Brewers' Association employment of thirty-five artists in its *Londoner's England* (1944), and the National Buildings Record (photography only) (est. 1941). See: Foss, *War Paint*, 12–13.

¹⁷ For list see: 'Appendix: The WAAC's Artists', *ibid*, 196–204.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 157–8.

¹⁹ Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) [Harold Macmillan and Lord De La Warr], 'Memorandum in Support of an Application to the Treasury for Financial Assistance to the Arts,' (6 Mar 1940) Victoria and Albert Museum, Archive of Art and Design (AAD), EL ½.

²⁰ Herbert Read, 'Art in War-time', *The Times*, 48433 (11 Oct 1939), 9.

complex rhetoric of the sketch as associated with ardour, inspiration, and spirit, all qualities that Topolski, along with Edward Ardizzone (1900-1979), Sutherland, Stanley Houghton (1881-1913), and Clifford Hall (1904-1973), employed in their drawings.

The WAAC's public impact came in two main forms: its display at the National Gallery, which was augmented continually by new acquisitions, and its publications (Figs. 3.3-4). The entire initiative was, fundamentally, an integration project, attempting to reconcile the public with artists, both self-consciously 'fine' and otherwise, who despite the emergence of Neo-Romanticism and Neo-Realism in the late 1930s still retained public associations with Roger Fry's elitism.²¹ In this light the National Gallery display was an unequivocal success, attracting large numbers of visitors and travelling abroad with much acclaim. The publications were not as successful. The committee had hoped for a periodical of 'outstanding artistic quality' that they imagined would have appeal for a small group of influential people, leaving 'cheap illustrated papers' (like the *Picture Post*) to provide reproductions to the public.²² This was in keeping with Clark's belief that war art would fall under the category of 'serious entertainment', especially since many of the artists involved focused on the home front mobilisations or allegories for emotional trauma rather than front-line battle subjects. The goal was that war art would affect those attuned to fine art appreciation, who would also be the people in positions of power, and thus the broader public would be influenced indirectly. The periodical never materialised, and portfolios of original lithographs by artists such as Ethel Gabain (1883-1950), A. S. Hartrick (1864-1950), and Hubert Freeth (1913-1986) at the National Gallery War Art shop sold with disappointing infrequency. Lucrative avenues emerged to photographically reproduce colour posters, some of which by Paul Nash, Barnett Freedman (1901-1958), Edward Ardizzone, and Stanley Spencer sold well to messes and other armed services' and war workers' facilities.²³ Another profitable product was cheap (2/3d apiece), small paperback booklets with approximately fifty black and white reproductions in each, entitled *War Pictures by British Artists*. In 1942 the first series of four booklets (*War at Sea*, *Blitz*, *R.A.F.*, and *Army*) ran to 24,000 copies and sold out within six months. This popularity led to second series of four booklets in 1943 (*Women*, *Production*, *Soldiers*, and *Air Raids*). A hardback compilation, selected by prominent critic Eric Newton (1893-1965), was published in 1945. It included some

²¹ By 'Neo-Romantic' I refer to Malcolm Yorke's usage for a group of artists in England during a roughly datable period (1920s-1940s) with certain stylistic and ideological features in common, rather than a coherent, artist-led movement. Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 11-27. See also: Stuart Sillars, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991).

²² Sue Malvern, *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War: Witnessing, Testimony and Remembrance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 21-2; Foss, *War Paint*, 160.

²³ WAAC, 'Committee Paper No. 54. Reproductions for Canteens etc.' (IWM: GP.72.E(2)), and Olive Cook (Publications Officer, National Gallery) to E. L. Paterson (MoI) (5 Mar 1943), IWM Archive, GP.46.50.

colour reproductions and was titled *War through Artists' Eyes*, which stressed the need to prod artists into the service of the state by encouraging them to produce war work, albeit with a balance between documentary observations and personal interpretations.

This balance was crucial to the WAAC initiative. It carried over principles of Neo-Romanticism, a popular aesthetic position from the late 1930s onwards, which associated the artist with a romantic hero who selects the key elements of an event through an emotional as well as visual experience and gives these elements their fullest expression through his or her personal style.²⁴ Clark had publically maintained that draughtsmen, painters, and sculptors could combine historical documentation with artistry in order to recreate the subjective 'feel' of the war, leaving photographers to document military history and supply newspapers with images.²⁵ With the exceptions of the blossoming rise of professional photojournalists – such as Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and David ('Chim') Seymour – the difficulty in acquiring a photograph that emphasised the key components of an event was still significant enough to make such images relatively rare.²⁶ A representative memorandum in 1940 criticised official photographs for being 'too static' and for a 'lack of massed power'.²⁷

The importance of drawing within the WAAC was an indirect result of the remit to both document and interpret. The dual emphases implicitly and explicitly encouraged artists to travel. Coldstream went first to Italy and then to Egypt, all the while retuning to the use of sketchbooks for the first time since his Slade days. Gross travelled in Atlantic Convoys (1941-42) and to India (1943) and was present at the Battle of Egypt (1942), the Battle of Arakan (1943), and the liberation of France (1944), while producing numerous fine lined, tinted sketches of his experiences (e.g. Fig. 3.8). Bawden also travelled, primarily in the Middle East, returning to the WAAC his characteristic delicately pencilled watercolours (e.g. Figs. 3.9-11). At home, Moore's pre-war experiments with wax crayon drawing took on a new resonance with his popular and haunting *Tube Shelter Drawings* series (e.g. Fig. 3.12), the demand for which, he described to Kenneth Clark in a March 1941 letter, was greater than the supply, adding 'it's never been like that with me before'.²⁸ Similarly, Sutherland's ink and gouache *Devastation* series met with success (e.g. Figs. 3.5-7). Non-official war artists with

²⁴ Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 11-27.

²⁵ See: Peter Quennell and Gail Buckland, *Cecil Beaton War Photographs* (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981), 14; and Foss, *War Paint*, 19.

²⁶ Photographs, however, continued to have a novelty as proofs to shock the viewer with irrefutable truth. Despite these assertions and their endorsement by critics such as Newton, Clark commented in later life that he 'was not so naïve as to suppose that we should secure [...] a record of the war that could not be better achieved by photography'. Kenneth Clark, *The Other Half: A Self-portrait* (London: John Murray, 1977), 22.

²⁷ Quennell and Buckland, *Beaton War Photographs*, 1.

²⁸ Henry Moore, Letter to Kenneth Clark (30 Mar 1941), TGA 8812.1.3.2004.

opportunities to sell to the collection, such as James Boswell (1906–1971), Hogarth, Lanyon, and Ronald Searle (1920–2011), also reappraised the role of drawing because of the convenience of carrying a notebook and pen or pencil at a time when making art was not their primary responsibility. Boswell described his own situation, negotiating between the needs of his regiment and the desires of the WAAC, as follows: ‘The War Artists Advisory Committee wrote to the Unit asking that I should be given facilities to draw and as a result I spend a day each week drawing,’ explaining later that he was allowed to use the X-ray department in the hospital as a studio during evenings and weekends in order to produce pieces such as *NAAFI at No 1 Depot, RAMC, Crookham*, (undated) (Fig. 3.13).²⁹ Faced with these limitations he reflected that ‘painters must find it a difficult problem’.³⁰

The caption printed inside the front cover and again in its entirety facing the title page of each of the eight instalments of the *War Pictures by British Artists* series makes clear how the public was intended to read this emphasis on drawn-objects as documentary and personal experience:

What did it look like? they will ask in 1981, and no amount of description or documentation will answer them. Nor will big, formal compositions like the battle pictures which hang in palaces; and even photographs, which tell us so much, will leave out the colour and the peculiar feeling of events in these extraordinary years. Only the artist with his heightened powers of perception can recognise which elements in a scene can be pickled for posterity in the magical essence of style.³¹

The key word is ‘pickled’.³² The War Artist project was established as a communication experiment not only across space, sharing regional experiences and those from foreign theatres of war, but also self-consciously across time: ‘they will ask in 1981’. These were publications, however, *of* their time. In the material sense they are cheaply produced paperback booklets, that in 2013 are held together only by acid-free ribbons or cardboard pockets. What was pickled was the raw data (the artworks) rather the coherence of the collection; the guides were a way for the public within the moment to understand and order this data. In this capacity it is clear that the instalments in the series were a guide to how war art might be read as a narrative. A thematic progression is established, told through various series by different artists. In *Blitz* the viewer is shown stills: Ardizzone’s comic pathetic

²⁹ Quoted at length in a letter in Jan Gordon, ‘Art and the Army’, *ALA Bulletin*, 71 (May 1942), TGA 7043.20.18, 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ J. B. Morton, *Blitz* [*War Pictures by British Artists*, vol. 2] (London; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), inside cover.

³² Clark was widely quoted in the press as saying that ‘in order to preserve truth for posterity one must pickle it in style’. Example of press reproduction: Anonymous ‘War Artists’ Exhibition’, *Flight* (9 Oct 1941), [242–243] 243.

Londoners as they tramp through sandbagged streets to get to their shelters, where the residents are depicted in the ensuing pages by Topolski and Moore, before the visual narrative returns to the surface where bombs explode, buildings fall, and the artist's hand shakes.³³ The narrative is two-fold. On the one hand, it aligns sketches and watercolours on a common monochrome plane as a result of photogravure reproduction, making all appear like ink and wash, which adds immediacy and rawness to the scenes depicted. In so ordering them and in selecting sketchy works, personal experience is also emphasised, presenting, as it were, 'a day in the life'. On the other hand, the introductory caption reminds the purchasers in 1942 and 1943 that their experiences will soon be dreamlike.³⁴ The experience of war will be unimaginable by 1981.³⁵ A conflict emerges for the reader of the caption. It frames the sketches as a conclusive insight into the total experience of the war (more effective than history painting), and yet the very cheapness of the production emphasises that the narrative framework will dissolve and only the artwork, like unbound particles dispersing, will survive. Thus people read a book of their period in order to be reminded that the period is containable and will soon be remote. By starting with a question from the future ('what did it look like?') the author assumes that the reader in 1942-3 has survived, conjures an image of grandchildren and thus is not only emphasising historical documentation but also personal documentation. The phrasing emphasises artistic personal experience in the collection in order to promise personal remembrance for the public.

Exhibiting Culture

In December 1940 the art critic for the *Manchester Guardian*, Eric Newton, wrote in the *Sunday Times* that he believed 'that the best of these war pictures mark the beginning of a Renaissance in English art'.³⁶ In 1941 Euston Road artist Graham Bell wrote that English painting was flourishing 'as it had not done since the gay boom years of the twenties',

³³ Examples of such pieces are Moore's *Tube Shelter Perspective* (1941) (Fig. 2.28), Ardizzone's *Sleeping in a Shelter* (1940) (Fig. 3.14); and Topolski's *The Tube: October 1940*, 1940 (Fig. 3.15); published in Morton, *Blitz*.

³⁴ This dreamlike-ness was a common feeling at the time, as Inez Holden described: 'One morning I walked back through the park, and saw the highest branches of a tree draped with bits of marabout, with some sort of silk, with two or three odd stockings and, wrapped around the top of the tree, like a cloak quick-thrown over the shoulder of some high-born hidalgo, some purple damask. Below it, balanced on a twig as if twirled around a finger, was a brand new bowler hat. They had all been blown across the road from the bombed hotel opposite. A surrealist painter whom I knew slightly was staring at this too. He said: "Of course we were painting this sort of thing years ago, but it has taken sometime to get here."' Inez Holden, *It Was Different at the Time*; quoted in Lyndsey Stonebridge, 'Bombs, Birth, and Trauma: Henry Moore's and D. W. Winnicott's Prehistory Figments', *Cultural Critique*, 46 (Autumn 2000), [80-101] 80.

³⁵ Perhaps an inspiration for George Orwell's particular choice of date in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

³⁶ Eric Newton, 'The Poetry of War: Fine Achievement of Modern Painters; Beginnings of Renaissance', *Sunday Times* (29 Dec 1940).

explaining that Rogers and Moynihan had finally begun to receive the attention they deserved and that both Sutherland and Piper's shows at the Leicester Galleries 'sold right out'.³⁷ This was certainly related to the WAAC, but its roots are more complex.³⁸ During the first six months of the war, the ranks of the unemployed increased. But unemployment began to decrease in March 1940, with dramatic results for the vulnerable art market. Though the market had come close to collapse in the first two months of the war, when the worst of its effects had not yet manifested at home, by November 1940 eight of the premier West End galleries (the Leicester Galleries, Read & Lefevre, P&D Colnaghi, Arthur Tooth & Sons, the Nicholson Gallery, the Stafford Gallery, the Fine Art Society, and the Cooling Galleries) publicised their intentions to stay open.³⁹ Agnew's and the Leger Galleries joined Zwemmer's, Arthur Tooth & Sons, the Leicester, Redfern, Warren, and Mayor Galleries in focusing their attention on new and recent British art in light of the difficulty of importing art – old or new – from abroad. In May 1940 an AIA reviewer described the retrospective 'British Painting since Whistler' exhibition at the National Gallery, where he likened London to a desert of 'closed and emptied museums' within which the exhibition was not only an important step toward looking at British art but was also an oasis that 'the public has jumped at'.⁴⁰ By February 1942 the opportunities for British contemporary art had become more widespread, as Herbert Read wrote to W. G. Constable in Boston: 'Art activities still go on, and the Exhibitions at the National Gallery and elsewhere have been crowded. There is no doubt that if we had started a Museum of Modern Art here at the beginning of the war it would have been a great success.'⁴¹

The war created a specific climate for exhibiting art objects. While the National Gallery was limited to the exhibitions of quickly accumulating war art acquisitions and the 'Picture of the Month' scheme, it was the private galleries and exhibitions that took a disproportionate weight of presenting art to the public. The war engendered a nationally focused culture of display, critique, and sales. Although unemployment nearly vanished as the war progressed and thus personal incomes and savings increased, the opportunities to spend this newfound prosperity on consumer goods were curtailed by rationing, shortages, and the impossibility of leisure travel. Art objects emerged as one of the few luxury goods available. In 1943, an

³⁷ Graham Bell, 'Art in the "Island Fortress": A Review of Contemporary British Painting' *Studio*, 120 (Oct 1941), 108-9.

³⁸ Clark visited the United States and wrote of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's implementation of the New Deal cultural programs and their potential adaption for the United Kingdom's needs. Foss, *War Paint*, 19.

³⁹ Anonymous, 'Carrying On', *The Studio*, 118 (Nov 1939), [216-7] 217.

⁴⁰ 'British Painting since Whistler', *A.I.A. Bulletin*, 61 (May 1940), TGA, 7043.20.6, 4. For praise for similar exhibitions of British drawing, see also: 'Exhibition of Contemporary British Drawing', *A.I.A. Bulletin*, 61 (May 1940), TGA, 7043.20.6, 4.

⁴¹ Herbert Read, Letter to W.G. Constable (9 Feb 1942), PMC, WGC.1.2.1.

article in *The Times* triumphantly announced that the RA Summer Exhibition, which had just closed, had had its most successful selling year since 1936 (of the 416 works, forty percent had sold, grossing £11,725).⁴² By the time of the article, the Blitz and its bombings had become more or less normalised, and the *Times* writer, while acknowledging the economic stimulus for the resurgence in art buying, ultimately concluded that art in the home fulfilled the role of brightening the space where people were increasingly confined in stress and isolation. Art represented a private luxury and comfort in a time of need for the citizens: according to the *Times*, it ‘takes the form of acquiring something which will give him aesthetic satisfaction, which will make his home a pleasanter, more enriching and stimulating place’.⁴³ What was implied but unsaid was that bodies such as the CEMA and the WAAC had also lauded art as a symbol of the creative liberalism and freedom that the country was fighting for. Bringing an example of such a symbol into the place of increasing confinement not only added aesthetic pleasure but also moral comfort.

The 1943 *Times* article highlighted one additional reason for this renaissance: smaller and cheaper works. It described the Summer Exhibition sales primarily constituting ‘little decorative, unpretentious things – landscapes, flower pieces, small subject pieces, small pictures and so forth – and it takes a good many sales of such things to produce noticeable income.’⁴⁴ Just as many War Artists turned to drawings, the Royal Academy’s ‘small’, ‘decorative’, ‘unpretentious’ works most likely included drawn-objects and watercolours. The sketch-aesthetic tenor set by the WAAC was fed into and complemented by this commercial attention.

Thematic groupings around the war emerged in private galleries. One form was photographic exhibitions that functioned like expanded photojournalist essays.⁴⁵ Another form, however, comprised submissions from amateurs (sometimes in addition to professionals) whose experience made their works worthy of public display. A few examples are the October 1941 Architectural Association exhibition of wartime sketches by their members and the July 1941 Free German League of Culture’s ‘Children’s Art from all Countries’.⁴⁶ More sensationally, Selfridges hosted an exhibition of work by British prisoners

⁴² ‘Buying a Picture’, *The Times*, 49622 (12 Aug 1943), 6.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Exhibitions included the Institute of British Photographers’ exhibitions of Sep 1939 and Oct 1940; ‘The War for Freedom – Civilian Front’ at Charing Cross Underground Station (Apr 1940); ‘Railways in War-time’ at Paddington Station (Jun 1941); and the Camera Club’s exhibition by London regional civil defence workers (Oct 1944). These culminated in *The Family of Man* (MoMA Exh. no. 569, Jan 24-May 8, 1955).

⁴⁶ For more on the Free German League of Culture, see: Carel Wreight, review, ‘Children’s Art from all Countries at the Free German League of Culture’, *ALA Bulletin*, 66 (Jul 1941), TGA 7043.20.11, 3.

of war (November 1942) and Knoedler Gallery hosted a similar exhibition of over 100 pieces by British prisoners being held in Italian and German camps – primarily crayon drawings, and watercolours (June 1943).⁴⁷ Certain experiences expressed through art became intrinsically valuable, unlike most photographs, which were anonymous documents. This carried through into topical themes for exhibitions such the Leger Galleries' showcasing drawings of bomb damage in Chelsea by Clifford Hall (May 1941) or Continental émigré artists (July 1941).⁴⁸

An important consequence of this blossoming of drawing exhibitions was that it provided material for critical discussions of drawn-objects and drawing-practices. Exhibition reviews continued to celebrate the early twentieth-century icons of draughtsmanship Walter Richard Sickert and Augustus John. The latter's reputation had always relied upon virtuoso draughtsmanship, and though his painting reputation had been in decline since the 1920s, exhibitions of his drawn-objects were both numerous and appreciated during and around the Second World War. One reviewer of his shared exhibition with Gilbert Spencer at the Leicester Galleries in May 1943, wrote, 'It is a commonplace that Mr. John is our greatest living draughtsman. His force and freedom, and variety are unequalled to-day, and he has a remarkable gift of suggesting, in a few lines and washes, not only movement and solidity but also the romantic world in which the people of his imagination live.'⁴⁹ In a similarly glowing review of John's retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery in 1940, which contained more than one hundred drawings, Read wrote:

It is an astonishing record, and it is doubtful if any other contemporary artist in Europe could display such virtuosity and skill [...] some of the drawings in the exhibition are copies after old masters like Rembrandt and Watteau which, as drawings, are hardly distinguishable from the originals but such imitative skill does not in itself make an interesting artist, any more than an ability to imitate the lyrics of Herrick or the sonnets of Milton would make an interesting poet. We require a personal contribution from each artist – not merely an individual idiom, but some evidence that he has looked at the world with enquiring eyes.⁵⁰

In calling John a fine 'instrument' of draughtsmanship, Read establishes a counterpart to the WAAC's emphasis on experience: it matters who is doing the experiencing. This echoes

⁴⁷ This comes close to the current notion of the 'citizen journalism' facilitated by grassroots media platforms of YouTube and Twitter. 'Art by British Prisoners of War', *The Times*, 49575 (18 Jun 1943), 6.

⁴⁸ 'Art Exhibitions: Air Raids and Regimental Uniforms', *The Times*, 48924 (13 May 1941), 6; and 'Continental Artists: Exhibition in London', *The Times*, 48962 (8 Jul 1941), 6.

⁴⁹ Though the review is not all praise: 'It is however, impossible not to regret that Mr. John should employ so much of his virtuosity in the portrayal of mere prettiness as he does in many of his portrait drawings of young women, chiefly done in red chalk.' 'Leicester Galleries: Mr. Augustus John and Mr. Gilbert Spencer', *The Times*, 49543 (12 May 1943), 6.

⁵⁰ Hebert Read, 'Drawings by Augustus John', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 78:454 (Jan, 1941), 28.

earlier discussions by Read's critical predecessor, R. H. Wilenski, who in *The Modern Movement in Art* (1926) emphasised both the need for artists to hone and perfect themselves as instruments of expression as well as the need to differentiate between imitation of past styles and those artists seized with genuine purpose.⁵¹ This cannot be read only against the emergence of Neo-Romantic emotive engagement with the world, if for no other reason than Wilenski's scathing appraisal of Romanticism's influence. Even if art followed Fry's formalist conceptualism (think form rather than imitate it), the emphasis on the thinker or feeler is an emphasis on the artist rather than the art as the primary expressive component. Read's 'more subtle questions' of how John expressed an engagement with the world constitute a further dissection of this artistic-being into a distinction between capabilities and willingness⁵². Thus while personal experience became a central component for drawn-objects within the WAAC, the actor behind them and his or her ability to experience and what this meant for draughtsmanship is highlighted by Read's mixture of admiration and disappointment with the then believed to be 'greatest living draughtsman'.

Draughtsmanship

Debates about draughtsmanship were not limited to fine art criticism. Whether as a creative skill, an industrial tool, or as basic human impulse, understandings of 'drawing' involve more than the artist's studio, gallery wall, or commissioning patron. The ramifications of these extended and diffuse discussions feed into the collective sense of and thus a collective sensitivity to drawing. During the war years these other facets of drawing became particularly visible, as military and industrial bodies canvassed the public for people with necessary talents and skills.

When the war broke out in September 1939 and contributions to the common cause were considered, draughtsmanship increasingly became associated with technical skills, which would precipitate a revival of the nineteenth-century association of drawing as a form of literacy. A 1943 article described how a group of female artists had offered their draughtsmanship skills to the government and been denied, instigating their founding a training centre to make draughtsmen from artists, with the words: 'Four thousand drawings are needed for the building of one type of bomber.'⁵³ The AIA also included regular articles

⁵¹ Wilenski, *Modern Movement*, 7-8. The volume was reprinted with fresh introductions in 1935 and 1945.

⁵² It is important to keep in mind that Read had an agenda for socially engaged art. It was expressed in this case by critiquing how vision and skill can be separated within draughtsmanship.

⁵³ The centre is described as having both evening and day courses, the latter of which ran for three months and culminated in a final exam. 'Careers for Women: Training Courses for Draughtsmanship', *The Times*, 49630 (21

on the various opportunities for artists, which in addition to map-making and camouflage, also included calligraphy, sign writing, and ENSA stage decoration, as well as machine drawings, which were described as drawn-objects in perspective for various machine parts.⁵⁴ This form of industrial draughtsmanship involved strict, replicable perspectival fluency. Qualifications for this form of drawing-practice generally came through a series of exams that tested for aptitude in machine drawing, sketching theory, and geometry which required standardised, two-dimensional visual coding for representing complex interrelated parts. The training centre was just one example that made it clear that for many outside of self-consciously modernist circles, draughtsmanship emerged not as a personal statement but as a functional, technical skill.⁵⁵

The thin line between artistic drawing and functional drawing was also revealed in sketching permits. Edward Wadsworth, a renowned painter and printmaker, was refused a sketching permit on the basis that his son-in-law was a German national.⁵⁶ The documentary power of a quick sketch in conveying information could become the intermediary of espionage, both between Allies and Axis powers as well as between the British public and their own government. A literary equivalent of taking sketches, Mass Observation, an organisation intended to merely research aspects of popular culture, came under pressure from the popular press in 1940 for circulating its data among government ministries.⁵⁷ Topolski recounted an anecdote in his autobiography of how while sketching the natural shelters of the Chislehurst Caves, he was attacked by locals frightened that the resultant drawn-objects would reach enemy hands and alert bombers to their location.⁵⁸ Fears that spies would pretend to be plain air artists caused additional tensions over sketching permits, which was clarified by a publicised 3 May 1940 letter from the War Office to the Permits Committee,

Aug 1943), 7. For an image of women manually constructing a bomber, see Gabain's *Building a Beaufort Bomber*, 1941 (Fig. 3.16); and for an example of engineering, dimensioning drawing, see Patrick Maynard's recent image (Fig. 3.17).

⁵⁴ 'War Work and National Service for Artists', *ALA Bulletin*, 67 (Oct 1941), Tate Gallery Archive, 7043.20.12, 2. See also: *ALA Bulletin*, 62 (Jul 1940), Tate Gallery Archive, 7043.20.7, 1.

⁵⁵ Attention has been given to artists working within the WAAC and camouflage units, but as yet little attention has been paid to who took up these calls in regard to a suppression of the self for the precision of the skill. For the former see: Henrietta Goodden, *Camouflage and Art: Design for Deception in World War 2* (London: Unicorn Press, 2007) and Foss, *War Paint*.

⁵⁶ Wadsworth's daughter, Barbara, married J. A. von Bethmann-Hollwegg, who was among those arrested and interned during the war. Barbara Wadsworth, *Edward Wadsworth: A Painter's Life* (Salisbury: Russell, 1989), 268. See also: Potter, *Inspirational Genius*, 266.

⁵⁷ Judith M. Heimann, *The Most Offending Souls Alive* (London: Aurum Press, 2002), 164.

⁵⁸ Feliks Topolski, *Fourteen Letters* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), unpaginated [56].

which allowed artists to work outside unless they were an enemy alien or working in a restricted zone, in which case they needed to obtain a permit.⁵⁹

The refusals of the draughtswomen's and Wadsworth's sketching permits represent a key emergent divide between the artist as technical instrument and the artist as creative instrument. Though even within the realm of creative expression, the war triggered calls for a wide-scale return to simplicity and technique. A scheme to employ artists and to compile an archive of 'places and buildings of characteristic national interest, particularly those exposed to the danger of destruction' in England and Wales, the *Recording Britain* project (1939-1943), stipulated that the ninety-seven artists involved limit themselves to small format 'water-colour drawings'.⁶⁰ The resulting 1,549 pieces conform to technically conservative and mimetic draughtsmanship (with a few restrained exceptions, such as those by Piper and Thomas Hennell (1903-1945)).⁶¹ This return to 'straight draughtsmanship' was echoed by the President for the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colour, Norman Wilkinson (1878-1971), who just days after the war declaration called for the utilisation of artists in making public posters to boost morale. The aesthetic was stipulated to be clean and sombre in a similar vein to *Recording Britain*: 'No "modernism" is wanted; just good straight draughtsmanship, honest humour, and patriotism.'⁶²

The importance of the divide between the technical and creative capacity was also debated from a different angle on the eve of the Second World War. In February 1939 a small discussion ignited about the seeds of draughtsmanship and mammalian sentience. A young

⁵⁹ 'Sketching Permits', *ALA Bulletin*, 62 (Jul 1940), TGA 7043.20.7, 4.

⁶⁰ It was funded by the Pilgrim Trust (est. 1930 by Edward Stephen Harkness) and run by a committee (consisting of P. H. Jowett (Principal of the Royal College of Art), Kenneth Clark (Director of the National Gallery), and W. Russell Flint (representing the Royal Academy) with Arnold Palmer as Secretary). Their remit was to 'make a number of topographical water-colour drawings of places and buildings of characteristic national interest, particularly those exposed to the danger of destruction by the operations of war [...] Quite apart from the havoc wrought by the enemy and by own necessary defensive measures, and despite the protective work of the National Trust, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and similar bodies, the outward aspect of Britain was changing all too quickly before the War at the sinister hands of improvers and despoilers.' Hugh Pattison Macmillan [Chairman of the Pilgrim Trust], 'Introduction', *Recording Britain*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press in association with the Pilgrim Trust, 1946), v-vi. Ninety-seven artists worked for the project (sixty-three were specially commissioned, six presented works, and others were purchased by the committee); artists were selected according both to their ability as well as to their financial need, and engagements were for four-week periods at £24 a week. A separate Pilgrim Trust-funded scheme, *Recording Scotland*, captured Scottish landmarks. Hubert Llwellyn Smith 'Artists in War-time: A Pictorial Record of Britain', *The Times* (1 Feb 1940); Thomas Jones to Llwellyn Smith (20 Dec 1939), National Gallery Archive, 16/37; [Arnold Palmer], quoted in 'The Pilgrim Trust Scheme for Recording Britain', [AIA] *Bulletin*, 67 (Oct 1941), [1-2]; Arnold Palmer, *Recording Britain*, 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press, in association with the Pilgrim Trust, 1946-9); and James B. Salmond, ed., *Recording Scotland* (Edinburgh; London: Oliver and Boyd, for the Pilgrim Trust, 1946-9); all referenced in Foss, *War Paint*, 13. The *Recording Britain* archive is at the Victoria and Albert Museum. *Recording Scotland's* document archive can be found in: 'Pilgrim Trust Recording Scotland Papers', Papers of Sir David Russell, 1942-1953, University of St. Andrews, ms38515/2

⁶¹ Palmer, *Recording Britain*.

⁶² Norman Wilkinson, 'A Task for Artists', *The Times*, 48419 (25 Sep 1939), 4.

gorilla named Meng (1937-1941) (Fig. 3.18), a relatively new arrival at the London Zoo, had begun to display an unusual fascination: tracing the outline of his shadow as it was cast by the strong electric light against his enclosure's wall. A piece in *The Times*, titled 'The Artistic Gorilla', reflected on this curious preoccupation alongside speculation about the birth of drawing and the ramifications for our own identity as a species if Meng progressed from shadow-tracing to mark making.⁶³ Meng's keepers soon aided his artistic development: by dipping his fingers in lampblack they facilitated his crossing the threshold into drawing-acts. The story was picked up in the United States shortly thereafter, reported as a light news bulletin in the *Borger Daily Herald*, where the writer jokingly referring to the result as 'quite a creditable drawing, something like an early Picasso'.⁶⁴ It occurred at a time when scientists were searching for insight into the birth of human behaviour, particularly civilised and cultural compulsions. Experimentation on apes as human proxies was a still nascent avenue of exploration, which received increasing attention throughout the 1930s, including the direct analogy made in 1938 in England by psychologists E. F. M. Durbain and John Bowlby between the aggressive impulses that led the female apes on Monkey Hill in the Regent's Park Zoo to be torn limb from limb and the impulses that leads children to rip apart their toys.⁶⁵ Until Meng, the only creative impulses then recorded were little more than increasingly controlled scribbles, which appeared to be primarily expressive compulsions. Meng's interest was not so much in mark-making but in the impulse behind art making – trying to feel the parameters of absence and presence as describable in a tracing motion. This compulsion resonates in part because it echoes Pliny's famous account of drawing's origin: when the daughter of the Corinthian potter Butades traced a line around the shadow on the wall of the young man she was in love with in order to preserve his presence.⁶⁶ It is an

⁶³ 'The Artistic Gorilla: Shadow Tracings by Meng', *The Times*, 48227 (11 Feb 1939), 10. It is also possible that this inspired novelist Vladimir Nabokov, who wrote in the afterward to *Lolita* (1955) that 'the initial shiver of inspiration' for the book 'was somehow prompted by a newspaper story about an ape in the Jardin des Plantes who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: this sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage'. Nabokov, 'On a Book Entitled Lolita,' *Lolita* [1955] (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), [311-317] 311. Though the account is likely apocryphal, Nabokov could also have glamorised the accounts of Meng – changing the shadow of the captive in the cave into a drawing of the bars, lampblack fingertips into sticks of charcoal, and London to Paris.

⁶⁴ It is likely that the writer wrote the piece, and thus made the comparison, sight unseen. There were precedents for ape artistic behaviour, see: Desmond Morris, 'The History of Ape Picture Making' in *The Biology of Art: A Study of the Picture-Making Behaviour of the Great Apes and its Relationship to Human Art* (London: Methuen, 1962), 15-44. Meng's drawings were reported in: Yerkes *Borger Daily Herald*, 13:98, ed. 1 (16 Mar 1939); *Indiana Evening Gazette* (23 Mar 1939), 4; *Evening Huronite* (16 Mar 1939), 4; and *Circleville Herald* (18 Mar 1939), 4. In the 1950s, Congo, a male chimpanzee at the London Zoo, and his art-making became the mascot of Desmond Morris's BBC television series *Zoo Time* (1956-1968) (Figs. 3.19-20); see: Morris, *Biology of Art*.

⁶⁵ Experiments mainly involved chimpanzees. As a gorilla Meng was an unusual test subject and mark-maker. E. F. M. Durbain's and John Bowlby's essay, 'Personal Aggressiveness and War' (1938); discussed in Lyndsey Stonebridge, *The Destructive Element: British Psychoanalysis and Modernism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 12.

⁶⁶ Petherbridge, *Primacy of Drawing* (2010), 19.

impulse of enclosure and of transforming absence into presence that lies at the heart of genesis stories of drawing. *The Times* was clear in its initial article that draughtsmanship consisted in ‘copying objects with a pencil or similar instrument’ and taking ‘the further step of combining these into a design, or a copy of any object’.⁶⁷ A responding letter to the editor attempted to distance human-draughtsmanship and ape-mark-making:

The fact [is] that the power of actual drawing (as distinct from decoration) appears to be the great dividing line between animal and human development. That is, whereas certain powers of speech, music, science, and mathematics are common to man and brute creation, it is only when primitive man shows the beginnings of draughtsmanship as the earliest cave drawings, that he takes a definite step on the side of the angels.⁶⁸

Whether apocryphal or not, Meng came dangerously close to the angels and yet is disbarred, at least by the *Times* letter-writer, by his lack of turning his representative impulse into a corresponding technical impulse. Nonetheless, as emerges in Read’s discussion of Augustus John, an uncomfortable division is in play between the artist as instrument of vision and the artist as an instrument of skill. Where industrial draughtsmanship emphasised the latter, Meng approached the former.

Popular Press

One important channel that was championing artistic vision at the expense of conventional notions of skill was the popular press. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, one of the most visible signs of the changing relationship to drawn-objects was their re-incorporation into photojournalistic periodicals.

Drawings as interpreted by lithography and wood-block engraving were the backbone of the illustrated press until the end of the nineteenth century, when developments within both photography and printing processes priced out drawing as the most convenient illustrations, which in turn waned even from satirical publications. By 1907 photo-telegraphy had been invented, wherein photographs could be transmitted by electrical signals in normal telephone lines, facilitating photojournalism. By the start of the First World War drawing-reportage had fallen out of favour with editors catering to the burgeoning appetite for illustrated news. Yet by the middle of the Second World War countries as diverse as Britain, Germany, and the

⁶⁷ ‘The Artistic Gorilla’, 10.

⁶⁸ A.W. Carter, ‘Points from Letters: The Artistic Gorilla’, *The Times*, 48231 (16 Feb 1939), 10.

United States were commissioning artist-correspondents to visit key theatres of the war and depict their experiences.⁶⁹

The seeds of twentieth-century drawn-journalism emerged in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. The turning point was the rapid development of photo-mechanical engraving (or photogravure) and offset lithography. Before these developments, drawn-objects destined for publication had to be translated into a woodblock engraving, transferred onto a lithography block (usually limestone or a smooth-surfaced metal), or later processed through a form of lithography called zincography.⁷⁰ In the process only the image was transferred, leaving out the full range of the medium's subtleties. The work lost its identity as a drawn-object during the process, and was reborn as a print. Despite the nuances possible through lithography, it was a representation rather than a reproduction of a drawn-object. Photogravure, in contrast, involved photographing a drawing, coating a copper plate with light-sensitive gelatine tissue, exposing the plate to the film positive (containing the image of the drawn-objects) and then etching the plate in acid. The result through photography could faithfully replicate not only the image but also quirks of the original materials in a monochrome print. It was a mere echo of the original, but it gave a separate identity to a drawn-objects and remained a dominant technique throughout much of the twentieth century, used to produce the illustrations in *War Pictures by British Artists* among other publications. Offset lithography was a return to transformation, but at speed and in combination with photo-mechanical processes with increasing fidelity (by 1910 speeds reached 5,000–6,000 sheets an hour).⁷¹ It relied upon three cylinders: one a curved metal printing plate automatically inked, one a rubberised 'blanket' that relayed the image, and the final one a surface on which rested the sheet of paper which would become the print. Where photogravure produced greyscale duplications of the picture in its material, subtly offset lithography produced the dramatic, dark black contrasts of *Lilliput* and the *Picture Post*.

Drawing as such thus had a delicate relationship with photography. While photographic printing processes were giving images of drawn-objects unprecedented distribution, drawing-practitioners were being driven from visual-journalistic positions. The *Illustrated London News* (ILN) was originally illustrated by artists who were either witnesses of events (artists such as Guys, Gavarni, and Chandelier were in the midst of the 1848 Paris revolution) or worked in

⁶⁹ See footnote 5 for further details.

⁷⁰ Lithography represents a grey area, as one can use a special crayon on prepared paper that can be transferred to the stone in a manner that preserves the quirks of the crayon. Pat Gilmour, 'Lithography', *Grove Art Online*, *Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 8 May 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T051371>.

⁷¹ Gilmour, 'Lithography.'

a studio, like John Gilbert, who made drawn-objects from second-hand information, such as eyewitness accounts, press-cuttings, and rough photographs (Figs. 3.21-2).⁷² Paul Hogarth, who became an influential sketch artist in the 1950s, has argued that the aesthetics of twentieth-century sketch-reportage emerged from a different source: namely, the concert of early photographic processes and French Impressionism.⁷³ The difference between art-testimony and mere illustration lay in valuing the practice of capturing the fleeting visual phenomena. Such impressions could be expressed in colouristic, painterly canvases, but equally could be conveyed by hasty or linear chalk or ink sketches, which first began to be faithfully reproduced by zincography in the weekly *La vie moderne* (launched by George Charpentier, a patron of Impressionists) and in Britain by *The Graphic* (1896).⁷⁴ With the rise of a newly affluent and socially engaged middle class and the development of cheap and convenient photographic alternatives, satirical periodicals, such as *Punch* in Britain, *Simplicissimus* in Germany, and *Le Charivari* in Paris, began to shelter the artists being driven out of other forms of visual publications. The sketch-aesthetic as a form of presentation drawn-object was thus born from drawing-practice in combination with mechanical reproduction. The more removed from the 'aura' and materiality of the physical drawn-object, the more important the demonstrative marks became that signified the corporeality and psychology of the absent artist, whether it was the roughness or calligraphic verve of the excited state in which it was originally drawn or the psychological preoccupation contained in the image, as was the case within the satirical political comment desired by the periodicals which welcomed them. The eventual movement back to the war imagery of Constantine Guys in the Crimean War (1853-1855), however, also relied on a public willingness for 'sketch-testimony' rather than 'sketch-comment'.⁷⁵

The rise of photography also triggered the rise of the pictorial periodicals. The *ILN* was at the forefront of magazines using photogravures (along with *Harper's Weekly* (New York), *Illustrierte Zeitung* (Leipzig), and *Le Monde illustré* (Paris)). At the turn of the twentieth century, methods of fully mechanising photogravure were in place so that by the end of the First World War a new generation of photographic magazines emerged, such as *Arbeiter Illustrierte*

⁷² Pierre Albert and Giles Feyel, 'Photography and the Media: Changes in the Illustrated Press', *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998), [358-369] 369.

⁷³ Hogarth, *Artist as Reporter*, 73-83.

⁷⁴ Artists included: Jules Cheret, Jean-Louis Forain, Giuseppe de Nittis, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Jean-François Raffaelli, Georges Rochegosse, Paul Rénouard, and Steinlen Hogarth, *Artist as Reporter*, 73. British newspapers began to use halftone processes as early as 1892. The *Daily Graphic* began in 1895, followed by the *Daily Chronicle* in 1898. Daily photographic instalments using halftone began in the *Daily Mirror* in 1904.

⁷⁵ 'Sketch-testimony' and 'sketch-comment' are my neologisms. Such artist reportage tactics were also used during the American Civil War (1861-1865), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and the Boer War (1898-1902). Albert and Feyel, 'Photography and the Media,' 369.

Zeitung (1925), *Vu* (1928), *Life* (1936) and *Match* (1938). Offset was developed and perfected between 1904 and 1910 but was not used in the press before 1914. Britain had long had a healthy tradition of pictorial journalism, but of the three most important periodicals of the Second World War (the *ILN*, the *Picture Post*, and *Lilliput*), both *Picture Post* and *Lilliput* were founded and initially edited by a Hungarian immigrant, Stefan Lorant (1901-1997). Lorant had experience in photography and early cinema and had worked for the *Münchner Illustrierte Press* before emigrating after Nazi reorganisation of the German press. He arrived in Britain, founding first the *Weekly Illustrated* (which featured three significant photographers, Felix Man, Kurt Hutton, and James ‘Jimmy’ Jarché), going on soon afterwards to found *Lilliput* and *Picture Post*. Lorant introduced the dynamic layout of assembled images that emphasised sequences of shots (such as of politicians mid-speech) while giving visual space to each photograph. Although Lorant involved draughtsmen and non-photographers in *Lilliput*, he was hesitant about involving them in *Picture Post*. Topolski had applied to Lorant before the war, offering his services as a correspondent, but had been politely rebuffed.⁷⁶ Increasingly concerned about the threat of a Nazi invasion, however, Lorant fled Britain, handing over his editorship of *Picture Post* to Tom Hopkinson (1905–1990), with Edgar Ainsworth as artistic director. Hopkinson and Ainsworth were more sympathetic to a sketch presence in the periodical, perhaps in part because Ainsworth himself was a sketch artist, and soon *Picture Post* included sketch correspondents such as Topolski and Terence Cuneo.⁷⁷

Photojournalism had a great appeal, as the photographer could integrate with those who were being depicted, allowing for complex combinations of bravado and compassion – or, action and empathy – encapsulated by Capa’s maxim, ‘If your pictures aren’t good enough, you aren’t close enough.’⁷⁸ By the 1930s, Britain, the United States, France, and Germany all had mass-circulation publications relying upon photography. One of the ways of discussing photojournalism’s appeal was that it replicated an experience of human sight, seeming to place the viewer in the shoes of the photographer, as in the December 1938 *Picture Post* article ‘This is War’, which reproduced twenty-six images, one of which featured the caption, ‘You can almost smell the powder in this picture.’⁷⁹ The converse side of the empathic experience was the objectivity of the camera, as photographic historian Fred Ritchin has argued: ‘The key component of photography was its apparent mechanical “objectivity”, the

⁷⁶ Topolski’s relationship with Lorant appears to have been professionally cool: Lorant mentioned Topolski to his biographer Michael Hallett years later only as ‘a little man who I wanted to help’. Michael Hallett, email correspondence with author (14 Apr 2013).

⁷⁷ For Ainsworth’s own sketch-reportage see: Edgar Ainsworth, ‘Victim and Prisoner’, *Picture Post*, 12 (22 Sep 1945), 13-16; and ‘Notebook on Mayo’, *Picture Post*, 4 (26 Jul 1947), 23-27.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Fred Ritchin, ‘Close Witness: The Involvement of the Photojournalist’, *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998), 591 [590-611].

⁷⁹ ‘This is War’, *Picture Post* (3 Dec 1938).

sense that had anyone else been there they would have seen basically the same scene. The image, it was thought, did not come from the creator's imagination, but primarily from reality itself.⁸⁰ Yet photojournalists operating at this time, such as Capa and Seymour, began to exploit the 'objective' medium of photography to effect sketch-like subjectivity, publishing blurred action shots that emphasised the witness-experience of the photographer armed with his relatively new range of light, portable cameras (such as the Leica and the Ermanox). A striking example of this effect is Capa's blurred images of the Normandy landing (Fig. 3.23). Although there is speculation that the degree of blurring was unintentional, it has made them iconic, and Capa is presented as a man of action in a December 1938 *Picture Post* essay. Just as with the WAAC drawn-objects, Capa's blurred photographs (and Topolski's febrile sketches (Fig. 3.25)) place emphasis on the experience of the artist as much as on the experiences of those whose likenesses appear in their images.

The pressures put on drawing by the demands of the popular press had great ramifications in the post-war years. Among the younger generation who emerged as key figures after the war, documentary draughtsman and illustrator Paul Hogarth and Peter Lanyon, a talented draughtsman and abstract landscape painter, are two examples of those whose fascination with experience and their translation of it into emotive, multiplied, dynamic lines present art historical conundrums.⁸¹ Lanyon, who claimed to be primarily influenced by Constable and Turner, nonetheless developed a visual language that transposed the fluctuating instability of Turner yet relied on the use of lines (whether in paint or in his powerful drawings).⁸² The Neo-Romantic tradition intimately involved drawn-testimony that created numinous mind landscapes, rent in sweeping matrices of line over and under tonal sections – and thus was indeed influential through figures such as John Minton (1917-1957), Prunella Clough (1919–1999), Robert Colquhoun (1914-1962), Keith Vaughan (1912-1977), Michael Ayrton, and John Craxton (1922-2009) – but their tradition was eclipsed by the post-war measuring of Coldstream and the linear convulsions of Lanyon and Francis Bacon (1909–1992).⁸³ The Neo-Romantics held in common a Palmer-esque foreboding of arrested time in a de Chirico-like image of strangeness. They created hermetically sealed pictorial universes, without the

⁸⁰ 'Fred Ritchin, 'Close Witness: The Involvement of the Photojournalist', *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998), [590-611] 594.

⁸¹ Hogarth writing in *Artist as Reporter* (1986): 'That art should find its way into galleries and museums surprises no one. That it should also find its way into magazines and newspapers might. Journalism, like detective fiction, weighs lightly on the scales of art criticism. Yet nowhere is the essential restless spirit of the artist revealed more graphically than in the role of reporter.' Hogarth, *Artist as Reporter*, 7.

⁸² A beautiful example of Lanyon's work is *Anticoli Hills*, c.1953 (Fig. 3.26).

⁸³ For examples of Neo-Romantic drawn-objects, see: John Piper's *All Saints Chapel, Bath*, 1942; John Craxton's *Reaper with Mushroom*, c.1944; John Minton's *Summer Landscape*, 1945 (Figs. 3.27-9).

violent unification of the picture and the world pressing in on it in constant reference to each other.

Other examples of independent features of drawings (rather than reprints in collaboration with the WAAC) included *Lilliput's* publication of Moore's shelter drawings in 1942, the *Leader* commissioning Peake to document Germany and France in 1945, and Searle's ordeal in a Japanese prisoner of war camp reproduced in the 9 February 1946 *Picture Post* article, 'Artist Triumphed over Prison Camp Life'.⁸⁴ Though the great majority of drawings reproduced in these pages of pictorial periodicals were clearly illustrations, a distinction should be maintained between dramatic reconstructions of military actions (often when photographs were unavailable) and artist-correspondents, especially in the cases when an artist, such as Topolski, Peake, or Bryan de Grineau (*ILN*), created sketches that upheld the standards both of documentary interest and fine art ambition. Where it might be fair to lump G. H. Davis, E. Byatt, C. E. Turner (*ILN*), and Terence Cuneo (*ILN* and *Picture Post*) with illustrators, others such as de Grineau (*ILN*) and Topolski (*ILN* and *Picture Post*) were not acting as illustrators but as artists who were sensitive to experience – and particularly in the case of Topolski, also to style.⁸⁵

The Sketch-Aesthetic

From the historical contexts so far discussed a central preoccupation arises: experience and the performance of experience. The caption discussed in *War Pictures by British Artists* fostered the humility of everyday experience rather than grandiose commemorations – and in doing so rhetorically contained the strangeness and the horror with the promise that they would be unthinkable by 1981. Exhibiting culture not only brought drawings into greater visibility but also sparked discussions of how the artist was an instrument for art. Discussions of draughtsmanship also pivoted on the conflict of technique and compulsion where the popular press, like the War Art publications, exploited the raw authenticity of sketch-aesthetics to emphasise the experience of the front.

Just as photojournalism engages with a pictorial language of witness and testimony, so too does the genre of the sketch. While sketching activities are aspects of drawing-practice and a

⁸⁴ See: David Allen Mellor, 'And Oh! The Stench: Spain, the Blitz, Abjection and the Shelter Drawings', *Henry Moore*, exh. cat., ed. Chris Stephens (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), [52-63] 56. Hopkinson also published some of Henry Moore's shelter drawings after being shown one of his war sketchbooks at a social lunch (*Lilliput*, 1942). Ronald Searle, 'Artist Triumphed over Prison Camp Life', *Illustrated London News* (9 Feb 1946). Mervyn Peake 'Hitler's Problem Children', *Leader*, 37 (30 Jun 1945); 'European Notebook', *Leader*, 42 (4 Aug 1945); also 'Paris Celebrations', *Leader*, 39 (11 Jul 1945).

⁸⁵ Foss, *War Paint*, 11.

sketch is a form of drawn-object, the activity and aesthetics of the sketch are distinct. They emphasise qualities of fragmentation, doubt, and lack of finish that while associated with drawn-objects are distinct from the effort and planning represented in presentation drawn-objects. Sketch-aesthetics would continue to expand during the post-war period, while the more complex presentation drawn-objects would wane. A large part of this displacement resulted from the emergent preference across British institutions for a form of art that invoked experience, and the sketch was promoted as a conduit to the absent body of the artist-performer and thus served as testimony of human experience in addition to the more rarefied artistic experience or vision. In part this was a continuation of the developments discussed in the previous chapter, where scholarship, occasionally aided by technological imaging, examined the connection between layered depths and sequences of drawing-acts. Time and performance were contained in the substance of the art object. During the Second World War the subtle, infinite depths of watercolour drawing were rivalled by the immediate, psychological rawness of the sketch. It represents a crucial moment of tension for British conceptions of drawing

The 1920s and 1930s, as discussed in the previous chapter, were a promising period for the development of presentation drawn-objects. Nash and Meninsky both began and largely sustained their careers in the interwar period with their drawn-objects (even when it was embedded in watercolour). Bomberg had been strongly encouraged in the 1930s to develop his charcoal portraits rather than his oil ones, and Topolski's successful English oeuvre was predominantly a drawn one.⁸⁶ Additionally, the dominance of the Neo-Romantics from around the mid-1930s through the early 1950s included a preponderance of the presentation drawn-object. Piper's brooding, ink wash and watercolour *All Saints Chapel, Bath* (1942), Minton's intricate pen, ink, and body colour *Summer Landscape* (1945), and Craxton's vibrant conté crayon on blue paper *Reaper with Mushroom* (c.1944) all use the language of layers and line to raise drawing to a contained pictorial universe worthy of the same representational and formal contemplation that oils were (Figs. 3.27-29). The Neo-Romantics remained a strong influence throughout the war, and the popularity of Sutherland and Piper in the early reconstruction period demonstrated the relevance of this mode of engaging with drawn-objects.⁸⁷ Where these artists contained promise for developing notions of presentation drawn-objects, however, they did so largely in reference to notions of pictorial totality and 'finish' that relied upon terms established by paint mediums, and their post-war reception

⁸⁶ Cork Richard, *David Bomberg* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), 188-9. Topolski, despite his lifelong efforts, was most accepted when producing his idiosyncratic drawings. See James Laver, 'Poland's War Artist', *Picture Post* (21 Dec 1940): 30-32.

⁸⁷ As mentioned in the thesis introduction, the Neo-Romantics deserve to have their own chapter in a study of drawing, but they are not essential for this particular strand of history.

and commissioning reflected this.⁸⁸ During the Second World War the further development of this notion of drawing was checked by the rise of the sketch-aesthetic. Reading the picture *as* a ‘mind-scape’ extended to reading the picture *for* testimony encoded in the manner of execution. This was in turn honed in terms of the drawing as a material witness to an artistic experience. This involves drawn-objects shifting from being cultivated pictures to records of conscious as well as unconscious performances.

By the immediate post-war period the convention that seeing a drawn-object was seeing the mind as well as the hand of the artist was prevalent.⁸⁹ Practitioner-theorists such as Ayrton and Berger translated Fry’s notion of drawing as having a grammatical language into drawing-practice being equivalent to thought.⁹⁰ Berger wrote of it as a universal language that cut across class as well as national barriers.⁹¹ And his realist rival, critic David Sylvester, also launched an ambitious drawing campaign inspired by the direct link between the artistic mind and the drawn-object, hinging it, in contrast to Berger, on notions of preparatory work, as will be discussed in the fourth chapter. Both critics did much to further public sensitivity to the philosophical and psychological experience of drawing-practice, but they represent a demotion of more polished presentation drawn-objects, even while they promoted a form of drawing-practice as a critical, progressive aspect of art-production. A paradox emerges: while the cultural-political demands made upon draughtsmen during the Second World War offered new visibility for drawn-objects, these demands also hurt the burgeoning taste for them as autonomous art objects. Thus in lieu of highly finished, almost-painterly drawn-objects, notions of sketching developed that directly responded to the physical and mental exigencies of war as well as the particular material possibilities of the medium.

Ultimately, reading the sketch for the absent artist is a convention within drawing literacy. It involves reading the steadiness of the mark for the steadiness of the hand, as well as its extension: reading for environmental as well as psychological tensions at play. This section explores some of the ways that this literacy emerged through debates, exhibitions, and

⁸⁸ The Neo-Romantic impact on drawing was also eclipsed in the post-war era by the popularity of Paul Klee’s *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1925, translated 1953) and its particular form of linear abstraction as well as by others, such as Bomberg’s heady charcoal expressionism, Coldstream’s clinical drawing-by-measuring, and critics David Sylvester and John Berger’s interest in the sketch.

⁸⁹ See: Claude Rogers, ‘Notes on Drawing Lecture’, (1948-9) TGA 8121.8.3, 3; Meninsky ‘Appreciation of Drawing’, 3; Michael Ayrton, *British Drawing* (London: Collins, 1946), 9; David Bomberg, Syllabus: Series of Lectures on Drawing & Painting, Drawing - Part II (1937), TGA 878.4.23, 5, transcription reprinted in Roy Oxlade, ‘Bomberg’s Paper: The Spirit in the Mass’ (PhD diss., Royal College of Art, 1980), appendix; and to a lesser extent as an extension of Romanticism: Geoffrey Grigson, *English Drawing: From Samuel Cooper to Gwen John* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1955), xii.

⁹⁰ See: John Berger, ‘Life Drawing’ [1960], *Berger on Drawing*, ed. Jim Savage (Aghabullogue: Occasional Press, 2005), [3-9] 4; and John Berger, Foreword, ‘Looking Forward: an Exhibition of Realist Paintings and Drawings by Contemporary British Artists’ (London: Arts Council, 1953).

⁹¹ John Berger, ‘Sheets of Paper Laid on the Grass’ [1996], *Berger on Drawing*, [57-63], 60.

conceptualisations of drawing. The first part looks at the different aspects of the absent, performative artists within sketch-objects, whether drawn-objects disseminated as performances, performances of drawing-practices, or encoding references to performance in the object. What this performance conveys can also be broken into two types: sketch-testimony, which involves the sketch as a material witness of exposure and experience, and sketch-commentary, which involves the psychological connotations of sketch-practices, and how the particular experience of war shaped and cultivated these debates.

The Sketch-Aesthetic as Performance

In a 1944 *ALA Bulletin*, writer and librettist Monagu Slater (1902-1956) described the central subject of James Boswell's war drawings as 'the man who doesn't appear – or who appears everywhere', Boswell himself.⁹² Sketching within drawing-practice is a tool. When valued for its particular aesthetic attributes, and when these preferences inform artistic intentions, it becomes a genre. As a genre, the sketch-aesthetic integrally references the absent body of the artist. The man who appears nowhere and everywhere is the crucial component to the sketch having the authority of testimony or of commentary. Slater does not shy away from the documentary quality or narrative, explicitly invoking both as the vehicles for the pictures' power. Boswell's artistic reflexes are key, since they convey 'the first thoughts of a soldier'.⁹³

Slater's emphasis on a form of sketch-realism needs to be contextualised within the ideology of the AIA, which was founded in 1933 to promote united action among wide array of artists and designers, but contained a core commitment to championing socially conscious realism. A sketch can affirm its realist methodology by emphasising the omnipresence of the artist's physical presence rather than his imagination – as was honed by Hogarth and Berger in the post-war years. The importance of traces of the absent performative body, however, was not restricted to those acting in concert with hard-line members of the AIA. Emphasis on the absent body took different forms, whether it was re-framing to emphasise performance (whether visual, textual, or self-promotional), actual performance (that is, demonstrating that the creative process happens in a non-private space), or aesthetic emphasis of performance supplying meaning.

⁹² 'There are War Artists and war artists. James Boswell comes in the second set. That is to say, he draws the war not as an official visitor, but as an official participant. [...] The central figure of these drawings is the man who doesn't appear – or who appears everywhere' for they are above all a record of how a soldier thinks and feels in the modern wars, in battles far away, and in campaigns in the desert.' Monagu Slater, Review of James Boswell Exhibition at Charlotte Street Centre, Conference of Foreign Artists in London, *ALA Bulletin*, 83 (May-Jun 1944), TGA 7043.20.34, 3.

⁹³ Ibid.

Promotion of the performance within the art-object came across the many active vehicles for promoting the arts. As discussed earlier, the WAAC and the popular press were two strong examples. Both had financial motivations behind convincing the public that an expensive artist was a more adept correspondent than a cheap amateur photographer, and this was often emphasised through framing the art-object in order to emphasise the risks or expertise of their artists. The opening page of Topolski's November 1941 *Picture Post* essay, discussed at the beginning of the chapter, is a clear case: the conjunction of a portrait photograph and a rough sketch create a visual link between the artist's physical risks and the informal graphic notation of a sketch. In addition, text-captions are a powerful force for images in times of conflict, as cultural theorist Susan Sontag observed in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003): 'To the militant, identity is everything. And all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by their captions.'⁹⁴ Other War Artists were given similarly heroic visual captioning within the pages of the *Picture Post*. One photo-essay captures a re-deployed veteran War Artist, Stanley Spencer, in the shipbuilders' yard on the Clyde with his shirt untucked and eyes squinting, surrounded by at times amazed and at times indifferent workers as he drew on a roll of toilet paper (Fig. 3.31). The result was a scroll of continuous drawings that would become the material for his painted *Shipbuilders on Clyde* series.⁹⁵ In 1941 *Tatler and the Bystander* published a photograph of Spencer in front of the *Welders*, appearing like a hesitant Christ just descended from the half cross-shaped panels (Fig. 3.30).⁹⁶ In the painting the figures twirl in dizzying contortions of perspective. In the *Picture Post* photographs, in contrast, it is Spencer who twirls around the toilet paper as it drags behind him. Unlike Topolski, Spencer's drawings did not receive public exposure (though he did become one of the headlining draughtsmen for Sylvester's drawing exhibitions in the 1950s), yet the *Picture Post's* emphatic presentation of both artists as performers mediates their drawing-activity and unites them despite their stylistic differences.

Actual performance emerges through the numerous photographs in War Art collections of artists such as Topolski, Gabain, and Nash among the rubble (Fig. 3.32-4), and for Gabain and Spencer, children or workers peering over their shoulders disturbing their peace of pure reflection. The crowd is influenced by the act of artistic looking, and the artist is influenced by their reaction. For Topolski particularly, continual drawing – compulsive sketching – was a significant part of his self-promotion. He was sensitive to the self-branding that captioning

⁹⁴ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 9.

⁹⁵ Unpublished at the time, but noteworthy, 'outsider artist' Madge Gill was then making drawn-objects in a similar scroll format in East London. See: Eleanor Birne, 'At the Nunnery Gallery', *London Review of Books*, 35:2 (2013), 37; and James Birch, *Madge Gill: 1882-1961* (London: James Birch Gallery in association with The Grosvenor Gallery, 1985).

⁹⁶ Reproduced in Foss, *War Paint*, figure 203, page 180.

entailed, crafting his own persona as the witness draughtsman through articles and lectures as well as embedding visual traces of his work's performative facture. Topolski became a high-profile draughtsman during the Second World War in part because of his promotion of and the repeated evidence of his continual sketching and drawing. In a short article by Topolski for *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* in July of 1943 titled 'Contemporary Comment and Caricature', the role of the reflex sketch is emphasised as the foundation of all his later art (as it also is in Maurice Collis's introduction to Topolski's *Three Continents* (1946)).⁹⁷ Topolski was not alone in his sensitivity to being perceived as a performer.⁹⁸ Henry Moore's initial claims that his lauded *Shelter Drawings* series was created in the Tube alongside the people and the concerns that inspired it positions him as a performer (Fig. 3.35). This is particularly poignant given recent evidence that suggests he did not work from life in the Tube: David Allen Mellor has traced one of the first of these drawings, *Women and Children in the Tube* (1940), to its source material in a *Picture Post* article, 'Bombed Out', which was published a month after Moore claimed the drawing had been made in situ (though he did make notes from life for later works).⁹⁹ That this image was worked up in private is visually evident in the still and numb quality of the marks as they knit into a mesh of lines that describe and consume the petrified humanoids within. Moore's attempt to frame these works by placing himself within the context of performance emphasises the power of Slater's description of the artist as 'the man who appears nowhere and everywhere'.¹⁰⁰ Moore's *Shelter Drawings* as presentation drawn-objects thus were framed to be like Topolski's reflex sketches, which code the artist's presence in the moment and the crowd through rapid, broken lines overlaid upon each other amid signs of dangers through ripped segments and smudges, and an erratic line where jostled, with water damage evident in parts.¹⁰¹

The aesthetics of performance, can, as with Topolski's work, become crucial to the reading of the art-object. This is a subtler form of emphasising performance. It is also intimately involved with the aesthetics of sketching. Françoise Viatte eloquently discusses how a sketch

⁹⁷ Feliks Topolski, 'Contemporary Comment and Caricature', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 83:484 (Jul., 1943), 164-168. Maurice Collis, Introduction in Feliks Topolski, *Three Continents* 1944-45 (London: Methuen, 1946), [3-13], 4.

⁹⁸ There was a precedence for performance art in Dada and Surrealism and as émigrés began to enter Britain it is possible that the presence of figures such as Kurt Schwitters aided, albeit minimally, a sense of performance.

⁹⁹ Moore told Alan Wilkinson after his first experience in Belsize Park that the drawing was made on 12 Sep 1940, yet the imagery in *Women and Children in the Tube* (1940) comes from 'Bombed Out' *Picture Post* (Oct 1940), 10. Mellor, 'And Oh!', 55.

¹⁰⁰ Slater, Review of Boswell, 83.

¹⁰¹ This is an aspect of his work that was sadly enhanced by a studio fire (arson suspected) on 7 October 1968, which left many edges charred and ink works destroyed by the fireman's hose.

can derive meaning from the precariousness of its forms and lack of compositional framing in her influential study 'Weaving a Rope of Sand':

To look at a drawing is to take hold of its temporal actuality, to become conscious of the suspended time of the painter's own irresoluteness, to grasp [quoting Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)] this 'kind of fear that restrains the soul, as if suspended among several actions.' It is to take account of the time of 'deliberation'.¹⁰²

Viatte goes on to argue that what is erased becomes less important than what is partially erased; what is conspicuous in its absence is less intriguing than the tentative emergence of a coherent whole through layers of marks that accumulate like sediment over time. This emphasis on duration is central. Notions of start and finish become less important than the accumulation of marks or of ideas. The result creates an effect, as Delacroix observed, of placing the viewer at the crossroads of artistic production and thus transplants the viewer into the artist's rather than the spectator's position.

Topolski's sketch of Isherwood in the November 1941 *Picture Post* aesthetically positions the viewer within the artist's experience. This becomes an explicit element of its pictorial power and is achieved not only through the heavy-handed juxtaposition of the magazine layout. The drawn-object's support becomes a palimpsest for compounded ideas and impressions inspired by the experience being captured. This is developed further still in sketches such as *First Polish Review, September 1941* published in the third *Picture Post* instalment: the quick, broken lines place the viewer within a compounded sequence of snap decisions as to key lines of weight and interest as well as where a model has shifted position (Fig. 3.37). This emulates the linear confidence of Picasso's inter-war line drawings but in the language of a Renaissance sketchbook; there are no visual notes toward a perfected and refined composition. By working with ink (the inerasable), Topolski chose to enter a visual vocabulary where each mark would be laid bare to viewers. *Polish Review* is a sketch for sketch's sake. It, like its numerous siblings, was made to be presented, published, and sold. Thus, its marks are not naïve jottings, but indications for viewers about how it should be read against older traditions of sketching, like those Viatte addresses. Topolski was not alone in sending home drawings that emphasised a sketchy aesthetic, which invoked the artist's physical witness of events.¹⁰³ Pictures such as Bawden's *Private G. F. Dunning* (1943) and Gross's *The Guest Tent* (1942) (Figs 3.38-9) also exploit a naïve, rapid style that add emotional testimony to the imagery they convey. In *Polish Review*, *Dunning*, and *Guest Tent* the figurative content is compelling, but the naïve-style sacrifices an empathic connection with them in

¹⁰² Viatte, 'Rope of Sand', 87.

¹⁰³ Such as Ardizzone's shelter series (1941), Edgar Ainsworth's 'Victim and Prisoner' drawings (1945), or Ronald Searle's prisoner of war sketchbooks.

favour of a connection to the artist and to the experience of the artist who is depicted, in Slater's words, 'everywhere and nowhere'. To view the drawing is to step into a performance.

Sketch-Testimony

The sketch-act necessarily involves leaving traces of a performance, but a distinction must be made whether the performance is an act of testimony (personal documentary evidence) or an act of comment (an ideological annotation or critique) and what the ramifications of each are. These two aspects of the sketch-aesthetic will be explored in the following sections: the first in relation to material and artistic exposure and the second in relation to the slide from sketch-comment as light-hearted humour to that of psychologically motivated critique.

A draughtsman may witness an event, but it is the drawn-object that testifies to this experience. Sketches, as 'first thoughts', include the elements of accident and revision, which are purged from the ensuing stages between them and presentation drawn-objects. The production of each sketch, therefore, becomes a moment of prolonged exposure. For most works of art, this exposure stretches from its birth as an object for the remainder of its physical existence. Although the viewer may not consciously read for meaning in the scars of non-intentional marks, they become part of the picture. A complication arises when such drawn-objects are photographed for dissemination, as was the case for sketch-objects promoted by the WAAC or in *Picture Post*, which was a dominant or at least primary point of exposure for many. One example are Moore's *Shelter Drawings*, which were published before their exhibition in Britain. *Seated Figures in a Tube Shelter* was reproduced in *Horizon* in March 1941 and exhibited a month later at the National Gallery.¹⁰⁴ The primary point of contact with the drawn-object for many was therefore first in the form of a print. As discussed in relation to the popular press, as the modes of reproduction became more sophisticated what was desired in an image was also an indication of its original embodiment as a drawn-object. What was once a drawn-object becomes the image of the print, rather than the image from the drawn-object being transferred to the print. The Second World War was a period of print media saturation: *Picture Post* in particular inundated consumers, mediating their experiences of the war.¹⁰⁵ The image conveyed by the medium of photography is thus an idea of drawing, where the notions of drawing-practice or drawn-objects are the subject of the image, the more raw, the more absorbent during the period of exposure, the more the

¹⁰⁴ Mellor, 'And Oh!', 59-60.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 56.

image depicts 'drawing' for the consuming public.¹⁰⁶ A sketch-object in this context is thus like light-absorbent paper: it is exposed from the moment it emerges from the safety of the sketchbook or folio until the moment it is captured by photography, at which point its exposure ends. Though exposure in its new form of object-hood continues, as a part of a cheap disposable periodical, the traces of damage done to the paper are not the subject of the work in the same way that it was in the original drawn-object. The result in the early twentieth century was a polarisation: drawn-objects became sketchier as the printing technologies became more sophisticated and prevalent.

It is possible that artists at the time responded to their own corporeal vulnerability through emphasising the vulnerability of their materials, transferring the experience of being exposed to the act of exposing the delicate body of their paper. Paper, whether loose or protected in a bound sketchbook, has always been a vulnerable support. It was also a support that was changing during the period: cheaper, thinner, and possibly more acidic options entered the market. There were some concerns that corners cut in production might not prove as durable, that chemicals within the supports might begin to break down the marks.¹⁰⁷ And despite the cheapness of paper in relation to other art materials (such as oil paint or stone), it was also rationed. The war brought artists into a confrontation between past and current qualities of their materials. For some artists active at this time this constituted a different relationship with the foundation of their drawing-practice. Coldstream was one of the artists who turned to keeping sketchbooks during his travels as a War Artist, and he played with the thinness of the paper – tracing sketches through sheets and changing them as he did – sometimes transforming a figurative sketch into an abstract composition or threatening biomorphic forms. For Bomberg, his use of thick-ply paper in the 1930s (even during times when his family could not afford enough to eat), such as in *Rhonda Bridge and Tajo* (1935) (Fig. 3.40), was disrupted. In his WAAC-rejected *Bomb Store* series, he was forced to play with a more simplistic, yet compensatory dynamic, the interplay between smooth paper and grains of charcoal and chalk (Fig. 3.41). An extreme example comes from the accounts of Ronald Searle's time in a Japanese prisoner of war camp and the resultant sketchbooks, published shortly after peace was declared, which emphasised the triumph of his art as a triumph of materials: paints smuggled to him by Korean guards and brushes made from tail hairs of cats

¹⁰⁶ Topolski writes of the persistent downsides of the press: 'Lithography was a help and a guide to a splendid phalanx of draughtsmen headed by Daumier. Reproduction was the obedient servant of the artists; to-day, the draughtsman who is not secluded in his ivory tower but active and therefore connected with the Press is a tortured slave. Our period of simplified techniques, the necessity of line reproduction have killed the purpose of drawing. The fact that it has been drowned in a flood of advertising, a complete lack of respect, a reduction in size to the limits of the absurd has made it imperative to simplify a drawing and make of it at times merely a symbol.' Topolski, 'Contemporary Comment', 166.

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth Clark, Letter to F.I.G. Rawlins (26 Oct 1949), TGA 8812.1.2.5408.

(e.g. Figs. 3.42-3).¹⁰⁸ Thus the collective sense of artworks as objects that developed in the 1930s was compounded with the trauma to materials encountered during the war, whether at home with shortages or abroad in extreme circumstances. The role of the drawn-object as a witness to the circumstances of its creation was thus visceral at that time, perhaps stimulating Thomas Hennell's lament about the interference of rain and mud in his creative process in 1943: 'And here comes the rain [...] the jealous god Jupiter Pluvius and his minions soon wash the drawing into shapelessness, rip it off the board and flap it in the mud.'¹⁰⁹ The vulnerable physicality of the drawn-object, with its delicate paper, smudge-able graphite, and smear-able ink becomes linked to the vulnerable human body – an aesthetic of scarring the materials that had a possible precedent with the tortured biting and violence of German Expressionist artist Otto Dix's (1891-1969) fifty intaglios depicting the horrors of the First World War, titled *Der Krieg (The War)* of 1924. Hennell's *The Tree* (1938-40) (Fig. 3.44) with its twisted, shattered wood under bruised clouds is a subtler more pastoral and mundane horror than Dix's *Mealtime in the Trench (Loretto Heights)* (Fig. 3.45), but both utilise the possibilities of the medium, whether it be burnt sharpness of aquatint etching or the absorptive vulnerability of wet paper. And this reference to the materiality of their works – just as Topolski, Gross, and Bawden emphasise linear marks on scarred paper – brings the confrontation of materials into the viewers' (as well as the artists') experiences of the art-object.

The aesthetic emphasis on testimony involves the artist as a uniquely skilled observer whose traces of artistry in the resultant drawn-object affirm rather than diminish its power as a drawn snapshot. Returning to Topolski's *Polish Review* as an example, the paper and ink have a story to reveal about the conditions of the drawn-object's occurrence, its travels, and its survival. The relationship between the marks and the figurative content, however, does not emphasise a particular scene as much as testify to the physical experience of a particular situation. This is evidence of performance, but it also involves a sense of drawing as a synthesis of subjective experiences, probing the chaos of vision for coherent patterns that are captured almost in a reflex, involving the entire 'instrument' of the draughtsman, including skills honed by practice and sense of figures honed by observation and study. This

¹⁰⁸ 'We were so hungry in the Japanese camps that we ate cats [...] The tails were always saved to make my brushes.' 'Captive Artist Baffles Japs', *Reynolds News and Sunday Citizen* (2 Dec 1945). In a later book, Searle reacts against the rumours that the brushes were made with human hair: 'But they were made with sweat, fear and, at the outset at least, a wide-eyed noble intent [...] these drawings were not made by an observer-reporter with time to reflect and digest before pronouncing. They were made by an unwilling (albeit self-appointed) participator-recorder.' Ronald Searle, *To the Kwai – and Back: War Drawings 1939-1945*, (London: Souvenir Press, 2006), 7, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Hennell, 'In Praise of Water-Colour', *The Old Water-Colour Society's Club* 21 (1943), 53-56, reprinted in Michael MacLeod, *Thomas Hennell: Countryman, Artist and Writer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 122-24.

rhetoric, both visual and verbal, was fundamental to Topolski's working method and self-promotion. In 'Contemporary Comment and Caricature', Topolski described the ideal action of the artist, at his or her most basic, in this way: 'Photography catches a fragmentary glimpse of truth; the artist selects, composes and gives a synthesis of truth, therefore a higher and truer picture than the camera.'¹¹⁰ It is this 'synthesis' or grouping of elements gathered from experiencing the world that forms a final work, one composed of incidents, but able to represent the essence of the subject. In order to achieve this, wrote Topolski, artists need to sketch while 'passionately observ[ing] the world not only with open eyes but also open hearts and minds'.¹¹¹ The sketching of details was combined with the experience of witnessing, or of being present in the moment with the entire being of the witness. Thus rather than seeing composed works as tainted by artistry, they were able to 'synthesise' and process the full power of the moment. This resonates with military historian Yuval Noah Harari's recent distinction between eye-witnesses and flesh-witnesses, inspired by a quotation from a First World War veteran, who wrote, 'The man who has not understood *with his flesh* cannot talk to you about it.'¹¹² And despite artists' claims involving composition and cultivation, this is fundamentally the result of refined reflex. Topolski does not process, but explicates. He experiences and he produces. It is a process that required trusting the body – both its manual reflex and honed skill – in order to represent normal experiences. The ramifications for the marks on the page lie in the paradoxical confidence of line, which is at the same time fragmented, multiplied, or absent. The result is that Topolski's subjects appear in an arrested negotiation between a solid identity and their momentary particularities. Each line could be seen as a single testimony, and through their conjunction an image emerges, but the image is messy, mobile, fragile. Synthesis in a composed presentation drawing could mean a developed image, but in a sketch it means the opposite: a destabilisation by creating a composite image of sub-sketches that record events, as if a movie-camera recorded a sequence of actions over the same still.¹¹³ It is a personal, corporeal testimony.

With Topolski, the corporeal testimony of the artist-performer and of the materials come together to revel in exposure. Topolski emphasises the delicacy of his materials (by being cavalier about their preservation) as well as his own emotional and physical openness to

¹¹⁰ Topolski, 'Contemporary Comment,' 116.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Quoted in Samuel Hynes, *The Soldier's Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 2 [Harari's italicisation]; quoted in Yuval Noah Harari, 'Armchairs, Coffee, and Authority: Eye-witnesses and Flesh-witnesses Speak About War, 1100-2000', *The Journal of Military History*, 74:1 (2010), [53-78] 57.

¹¹³ James Holland's review of Topolski's 1945 exhibition at the Wildenstein Gallery, London, interprets Topolski as a devotee of the human scene. Holland distinguishes between the raw materials, 'the accumulated experience' represented in his sketches, and the 'synthesis in his paintings'. James Holland, 'Feliks Topolski', *Our Time*, no. 8, vol. 4 (Mar. 1945) 10.

potential trauma – he was badly injured by a bomb in London while drawing (Fig. 3.46-7).¹¹⁴ The resultant aesthetic demonstrates how he stepped away from safety in order to open himself as well as his delicate drawing materials to unknown experiences. Similarly, sketches produced by other travelling War Artists cannot escape from demonstrating similar vulnerability, and in cases such as Gross and Ardizzone they also incorporate the physical exposure and fragility. Physically fragility is one aspect of the absent body, but another crucial part is the psychology behind sketch-commentary.

Sketch-Comment

The sketch was not only an act of testimony, of witnessing and absorbing, but also an act of internal explication, of doodling or jotting undeveloped or unbidden visual thoughts. This final section addresses the mental acts within the sketch-aesthetic, particularly how humour during wartime was connected with a darker psychological turbulence. The jotted thoughts, especially dangerously critical ones, often took the form of humour. The satirical sketch and the cartoon shared a visual language of simplicity and immediacy – turning loose notation into an expression of laughter. In this capacity it remained a form of seismic reading. Even within the guise of humour, what was registered were the mental rumbles of discrepancy, paradox, and frustration that spurred the unbidden joke.

For many artists aesthetic affinity with caricatures and cartoons was a problematic aspect of engaging with documentary sketching during the war, and indeed to current eyes some pieces by Ardizzone, Boswell, and Topolski can appear comic, even when at their most serious, chaffing against the gravity of their subjects. Distortion could reveal visual insights or enfeeble the work, making it petty, something Nash warned of in 1935 as a by-product of being forced to conform to ‘the insidious decorative treatment’ of commercial commissions. Although positive about what such commercial avenues could provide financially and aesthetically, he cautioned, ‘Gradually, something like a charming mask descends upon the natural features of his expression.’¹¹⁵ Picasso relied upon distortion, but so did the popular cartoonist David Low (1891-1963): where the first was internationally celebrated, the second

¹¹⁴ He described the moment before the attack in his autobiography: ‘Two unremarkable pub-goers, two tarts *en pantouffles*, a dosser, and I, hazily making up my mind whether to pull out my small sketchbook – the scene is not very drawable. And a thought limps through my head that the ordinariness of us exposed here gives the lie to my neat concept of dividing the vulnerability of common shelters from the bland swagger of “us” others’. The damaged air raid helmet remains in the Feliks Topolski Estate Archive. Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated [71].

¹¹⁵ Nash, ‘New Draughtsmanship’, 25.

was a tolerated scamp (Figs. 3.48-9).¹¹⁶ The division between the serious and comic for many artists was a grey-scale between classifications of their distortions. As the government encouraged artists to sketch their experiences, this blurred line became even less distinct. In an opening address for Gilbert Spencer's 1944 AIA exhibition of fifteen large satirical 'water-colour drawings', Low noted 'the difference between Spencer's "serious" work and his "comic" drawings is not as fundamental as these superficial categories suggest'.¹¹⁷ They emanated from Spencer's 'power of observation', but most of all they were 'brilliant and convincing comments on the artist's personal experiences' which created 'authentic historical documents' of a shared experience of national struggle and so were 'in the direct line of descent from the great tradition of English popular art, which is permanently significant as art, precisely because it was profoundly conscious of its social responsibility' (Figs. 50-2).¹¹⁸ Slater's man who appears nowhere and everywhere could not only manifest himself in the indications of exposure and witness, but also in how his inner convictions and compulsions warped his transfigured subjects.

Terms and titles such as 'cartoonist', 'satirist', and 'caricaturist' and the types of humour employed, whether irony, exaggeration, or ridicule, have changed in emphasis over time. While they did not then contain the pejorative sting which would continue to steadily develop, there were already dialogues that positioned this psychological translation as a unique means of accessing mental depths.¹¹⁹ In 1926 Fry devoted part of his 'Questions in Esthetics' to caricature as 'the most central and typical example of graphic art used for psychological expression'.¹²⁰ Conceding that 'we are, as it happens, accustomed to regard it as a somewhat trivial and insignificant art, as a mere diversion', Fry defended it as a means of conveying spiritual and moral earnestness through merely 'a few disjointed dots and dashes', concluding:

The art of caricature, then, forces us to admit that drawing can envisage directly and by a specific mode psychological phenomena – it can, that is to say, from its own angle, with its own specific aptitudes and

¹¹⁶ For more about the problems for artists arising from Picasso search for the pure or cliché image, see: Hal Foster, 'Roy Lichtenstein, or the Cliché Image', *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012): 62-108.

¹¹⁷ F. D. Klingender, 'John Bull's Home Guard: Gilbert Spencer's Drawings at 84 Charlotte Street', *ALA Bulletin*, 82 (Mar-Apr 1944), TGA 7043.20.32, 2. See also: F. D. Klingender, ed., *Hogarth and English Caricature* (London: Transatlantic Arts, 1944).

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Topolski's disillusionment with the term is evident in: Feliks Topolski, draft letter to Ransom Collection, University of Texas at Austin, regarding the commissioning of portraits of English writers, titled 'Twenty Greats' (c.1960), Estate of Feliks Topolski Archive, London, un-catalogued.

¹²⁰ Fry, 'Questions in Esthetics', 11.

limitations, handle the same stuff as literature: it can [...] model psychological volumes.¹²¹

These psychological volumes could portray the character of a subject, but their realisation necessarily involves reconfiguration through the visual language of sketching, whether it be disjointed dots and dashes or through the laughing line of Thomas Rowlandson. The central tension is reconfiguration: an image is seized and violence is done to it by reducing it, distorting it, or deploying it. This could be either a positive catharsis or a dangerous precedent. It could also gravitate toward whimsy or moral critique. At a time when the government was carefully monitoring morale while also encouraging artists, both explicitly and implicitly, to testify to experience through a sketch-aesthetic, such concerns became central.

The magical capacity of sketchy cartoons and satire was enhanced in the immediate pre-war years by the immigration of two Viennese art historians with psychoanalytic interests, E. H. Gombrich (1909-2001) and Ernst Kris (1900-1957) (Figs. 3.53-4).¹²² The two had launched a joint research project that directly connected concerns about the operation of the artistic subconscious with the history of caricature, with a particular emphasis on Daumier. The general research into psychology and history of caricature was begun in 1934, and it resulted in two publications and one exhibition.¹²³ The project dealt with the compulsions toward magical mark making as well as compulsions to scapegoat, set against the politics of representation during the rise of fascist propaganda. In Vienna it was expressed in an unpublished 254-page manuscript and an exhibition of Daumier's artwork at the Albertina (1936), but both endeavours were complicated by the Anschluss.¹²⁴ The project intimately involved the relocated Warburg Institute, and thus the first of the two resultant publications was presented in London, and the second article was published as 'Psychology of Caricature' in *British Journal of Medical Psychology* (1938) and was later republished as a Penguin book (1940). In 'Psychology of Caricature' Gombrich and Kris limn caricature as a tradition with

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Kris, however, was only passing through and ended up in the United States.

¹²³ The first was a collaborative essay was presented initially at the Warburg Institute in London and published in the Viennese Psychoanalytic Journal, *Imago: Journal for the Application of Psychoanalysis to the Cultural Sciences* (1934). Alongside this work, Kris, with Gombrich's assistance, organised an exhibition in 1936 of Daumier's work at the Albertina, Kulturbund, titled *Honoré Daumier: Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, Lithographien, Kleinplastiken*. Catalogue for exhibition held in Vienna, 21 November – 21 December 1936 (Vienna: J. Weiner, 1936). The third publication, 'Psychology of Caricature', was published in *British Journal of Medical Psychology* (1938), and latter republished as a Penguin book (1940). *Imago*, 20 (1934) – reprinted in Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1952), 173-188. 'Psychology of Caricature' in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 17 (1938); *Caricature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940). The 254-page book manuscript was abandoned at the onset of the war. A condensed book draft that dates from pre-war period is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Rose, 'Daumier in Vienna', 39-64.

¹²⁴ The Anschluss was the political union of Nazi Germany and Austria in 1938.

three developmental but inter-related stages: the first is 'hostile action' that is 'carried out on the person through the picture'; the second is hostile action 'carried out on the picture instead of on the person'; and the third (which they called caricature) is hostile action 'carried out by altering the portrait only'.¹²⁵

Gombrich and Kris translated their mentor Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) view of word-play, developed in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), into the visual play of caricature. Familiar images could be mediated through the instincts and impulses of the subconscious, enhancing distortion and exaggeration and fusing like or contrary symbols (Fig. 3.55). Fundamentally this was humour as aggression.¹²⁶ This aggressive drive should be understood in relation to Kris's own psychoanalytic theory of 'regression in the service of the ego'.¹²⁷ In the 1920s Freud had established the tripartite model for psyche, involving the ego (the conscious thinking subject), the super-ego (the self-critical conscience or censor), and the id (the inherited instinctive impulses).¹²⁸ Where Freud discussed these elements in tense opposition, Kris's model of controlled regression involved the creative potential of Freud's 'primary process', which is the id's reaction to frustration by producing a reduced memory image through which it can satisfy some of its desire.¹²⁹ This image generation for displaced emotion could strengthen rather than undermine the ego, by integrating psychological functions with impulses and thus strengthening the self at a moment of crisis. The manipulation of images was thus a form of play that could contain deep psychological release.

The worlds of the subconscious and of the external world converge as wit revives a childlike pleasure in playing with the meaning and nonsense in words; Gombrich and Kris compare caricature to playing with the meaning and nonsense of marks and recognisable content. The basic material of this, however, is the impulse, the containment and expression of a compulsion to toy with, deface, or distort the object of the caricature. It is possible to

¹²⁵ E. H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 17 (1938): 319-42.

¹²⁶ Although discussions of conviction, impulse, or compulsion, aggressive humour or positive critique, and morale or defeatism are connected to Melanie Klein's (1882-1960) and John Bowlby's (1907-1990) respective studies into the child psychology and aggression in Britain, I am more concerned with how the aesthetics of a sketch intersects with notions of sublimated desires – whether magical or aggressive.

¹²⁷ This was a much-used phrase by Kris and his followers; see: Ernst Kris and Abraham Kaplan, 'Esthetic Ambiguity', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 8 (1948). 415-435; and Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1952), chapter 10.

¹²⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Das Ich und das Es* (*The Ego and the Id*, 1923). Susan Austin, 'Freud, Sigmund', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online edn., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55514> (accessed 6 Aug 2013).

¹²⁹ The 'primary processes' are the psychoanalytic unconscious or irrational thought processes, such as condensation or displacement, which are governed by the pleasure principle (which in turn is the drive to achieve pleasure and avoid pain as the chief motivating force in behaviour).

extrapolate from Gombrich and Kris's discussion that the compulsion within the third stage of caricature is not an urge toward murder or iconoclasm, but to violence against an image by using the medium: 'See, this great man is nothing but a lot of lines; I can grasp his personality in a few strokes' (Fig. 3.56-8).¹³⁰ The compulsion is thus an impulse to the medium as much as it is a compulsion to the image or its subject. The bounds of caricature join with the bounds of fine art sketches. Topolski advocated his need to draw continually, and Searle described his drawing during imprisonment in a similar way: 'I had to do something to preserve my sanity.'¹³¹

The question of whether visual satirisation was in fact whimsical play or aggressive reconfiguration took on an increased importance in light of concerns for wartime morale. In two immediate post-war articles for *Graphis*, writer Arnold Lunn (1888–1974), citing Oswald Spengler's (1880–1936) civilisation model, described absurdist humour as a condition of the 'winter of civilisation', embracing 'a conviction that moral indignation is absurd, and that the only philosophy for a sane man is to accept with humorous resignation the follies and absurdities of mankind'.¹³² This, according to Lunn, was the atrophy of critical intellectual and political engagement, exemplified by the cartoon-culture of *The New Yorker*, whose humour he called nihilist (Fig. 3.59). Though scathing toward Low, he was more lenient with British humour, remarking on its kindness and tolerance: 'It does not see the world in terms of black and white, but in varying shades of grey. Even in war our humorists find it difficult to be bitter about the enemy [...] Most of our cartoonists were more anxious to discover the funny than to reveal the satanic side of Hitler.'¹³³ Thus while light-hearted detachment was praised, humour itself was a potentially dangerous endeavour, a view shared by psychoanalyst Edward Glover (1888–1972) in his wartime BBC broadcasts.¹³⁴ On the one hand, he identified the British tendency to treat leaders 'with a curious combination of criticism, respect and tolerance' as well as dictators as 'figures of fun' as a luxury of peace and stability no longer existent in Blitz-besieged London. On the other hand, he praised humour as a natural defence against defeatism, making his point clear with an anecdote from a café:

¹³⁰ Gombrich and Kris, 'Caricature', 324. See also E. H. Gombrich and E. Kris, *Caricature* ([S.l.]: Penguin, 1940), 24.

¹³¹ Searle quoted in 'Captive Artist Baffles Japs'.

¹³² Arnold Lunn, 'American Humour', *Graphis*, 13:2 (1946), [62-78] 63. See also: Arnold Lunn, 'British Humour', *Graphis*, 14:2 (1946): 145-159. Oswald Spengler was a German historian who allocated seasons to the cycles of civilisation: spring was marked by agrarian and warrior values; summer was a ripening of consciousness, critical and early urban environments; autumn was a zenith of urbanity and metaphysics; and winter was the onset of cosmopolitanism and conceptualism where morality begins to break down. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Munich: Becksche verlasbuchhandlung, 1924).

¹³³ Lunn, 'British Humour', 147.

¹³⁴ Republished in: Edward Glover, *The Psychology of Fear and Courage* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940).

When the capitulation of Belgium took place and news came through that Hitler had given orders as to the movements of King Leopold, a waitress standing near the loud-speaker was heard to remark with a gasp of astonishment ‘Oh, the cheeky monkey!’ No doubt there was a trace of outraged royalism in the remark. It certainly did not suggest a very realistic appreciation of the importance of Belgium’s defection from the Allied cause. Yet from the point of view of moral it was a potent victory. Without any training in political history, knowing nothing of the philosophy of Nazism, she reacted to an absolutism she could not understand by putting it in its place. She invoked human standards that apply naturally to the behaviour of children and adolescents. She deposed Hitler from the throne of infallible dictator to which he has laid claim, a claim which, incidentally, many apprehensive mortals are ready to grant with almost a superstitious fatalism.¹³⁵

Irreverence could thus express the existence of standards for action that transcended the mire of military conflict. This view was carried into D. B. Wyndham Lewis’s (1891–1969) anthology of caricature, *I Couldn’t Help Laughing!: An Anthology of War-time Humour* (1942), where he implied that it was one of the greatest characteristics of the English to laugh when things go wrong and in moments of strain and crisis.¹³⁶ It is ‘the quality above all others which helps to carry them through’.¹³⁷ While admitting this was a roughly accepted idea, William Plomer (1903-1973) responded in a *Listener* review with concerns about the accuracy of Wyndham Lewis’s claims about the place of humour:

[The statements] convey roughly an accepted idea. But are they exact? Certainly many of the English, perhaps most of them, have some sense of humour – ‘a flower’ according to Mr. Harold Nicholson, ‘which blooms only upon the soil of deep self-confidence’ – and we are inclined to laugh at some of our national characteristics, especially when they are pushed to extremes. But surely it is only idiots who ‘laugh when things go wrong’ or ‘in moments of strain and crisis’. At its best it is a cause of strength this can also be a weakness when it is the sign of a facetious indifference to matters of vital or ominous importance.¹³⁸

Transferring tension into laughter is a form of weakness, a sign of underlying hesitancy and a lack of self-knowledge which could hamper more than help in a moment of actual crisis. This cuts to the heart of humour as unconscious and subversive, something Glover also spoke of as a danger. For comic or satirical drawing-practice as well, divisions emerged between facetiousness, nerves, and the grim seriousness of heroic conviction.

In exhibiting culture, there is evidence of a gentle slide from viewing caricature as light humour to emphasising the convictions therein. This is evident through the course of the

¹³⁵ Glover, *Fear*, 37.

¹³⁶ D. B. Wyndham Lewis (not to be confused with the artist and writer Percy Wyndham Lewis) was a writer, humorist, and journalist.

¹³⁷ D. B. Wyndham Lewis, ed., *I Couldn’t Help Laughing: an Anthology of Wart-time Humour* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1942), 7-8.

¹³⁸ William Plomer, ‘War-time Humour’, *The Listener*, 676 (24 Dec 1941), 843.

war as a subtle shift, traceable from the groupings and emphases of pertinent exhibitions, evident in the collective preferences that emerged from overlapping tastes in production and consumption. Oddly, these preferences and popularisations appear to have occurred without violent debate. It was a polite and subtle shift. In exhibiting culture, the popularity of Daumier on the eve of war represents a collective fixation: he appeared to intrigue and perplex beneath a more superficial Francophilia.¹³⁹ Praise was pitched toward two aspects of his work: his skill as a draughtsman and its critical deployment. His skill was taken as a positive example for British caricaturists. Where the fine artist could employ abstract linear creations, the caricaturist needed to first master anatomy and linear representation in order to achieve the ambiguity of being both believable and distorted.¹⁴⁰ Beginning with displays in Paris and London that stressed eighteenth-century caricature and the visual affinities between France and Britain, these exhibitions sparked further exhibitions that approached the history of caricature and how it could create a continuum ‘from followers of Leonardo da Vinci to the late Professor Tonks, Mr. Max Beerbohm, Mr. George Belcher, and Mr. David Low’.¹⁴¹ An article published in *The Listener* by Frank David in 1940 outlines the psychological as well as draughtsmanly necessities: ‘Your true satirist must possess enormous technical ability, plus moral indignation – and he must use his pencil like a rapier.’¹⁴² The moral indignation creates a foil to the previously popular, self-avowedly unaggressive visual jokes of Max Beerbohm (Fig. 3.60). Of Rowlandson, Davis continues, ‘In his case fine draughtsmanship makes up for a certain lack of sincerity: he is the laughing philosopher, not a true satirist at all in the grimly serious sense.’¹⁴³ A gap emerges between playful jokes and the grim seriousness and moral indignation of the wartime satirical values (Fig. 3.61-3). This is also evinced in the slide of Daumier exhibitions. Beginning in 1939 with ‘Century of French Caricature (1750-1850)’ organised by Anglo-French Art and Travel Society at the New Burlington Galleries, caricature is presented as a contained aesthetic form. By the summer of 1942 the emphasis of Daumier exhibitions transitioned from moral indignation as part of his caricatures to moral indignation as vital political commentary. This is also reflected in his exhibition groupings. In the August 1942 Victoria and Albert Museum show,

¹³⁹ Such as: ‘Century of French Caricature (1750-1850) organized by Anglo-French Art and Travel Society at the New Burlington Galleries; Frank Davis, ‘A Page for Collectors: A Century of French Caricature’, *The London Illustrated News* (18 Mar 1939), 442

¹⁴⁰ Nash complains of the growing divide between ‘fine’ and ‘applied’, and voices restrained praise for the freedom of the latter. Nash, ‘New Draughtsmanship,’ 25, 27.

¹⁴¹ ‘The Development of Caricature, Exhibition at British Museum’, *The Times*, 48270 (3 Apr 1939), 10.

¹⁴² Davis goes on to say: ‘Our Cruikshank and Gillray, for all their vigour and inventiveness, use a bludgeon. They are gross, coarse, downright knock-about comedians (and could be yet more coarse than is allowed to appear in this exhibition), and could be very, very funny, but there is little of the Attic salt of wit in their broad humour, and though they shout loudly at vice, they are not really indignant. Nor indeed, is Rowlandson, but in his case fine draughtsmanship makes up for a certain lack of sincerity.’ Davis, ‘Century of French Caricature’.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Daumier was accompanied by Jacques Callot and Francisco Goya. In the July 1943 Czechoslovak Institute exhibitions all three were accompanied by contemporaneous War Artist Geza Szobel's (1905-1963) pen and ink drawings on vellum, and by January 1943 a review of Szobel's war atrocity drawings at the Fine Art Society applauded the influence of Goya and the power of Szobel's conveyance of anger and horror.¹⁴⁴ The movement away from satire as a gentle antiquated genre to it being the vehicle of anger and horror lay in part with the mounting parallels between the political and social disorder Daumier criticised and the increasing need to find an art form that could express not only a stylistic power, but also connect this power to the pressing, everyday concerns of those weathering war.

The conviction of an artist extended beyond her political engagement; it lay at the roots of more practical artistic concerns in the pre-war, wartime, and post-war periods. The importance of this mental state of being convinced grew, as the aesthetic style became the means of securing exhibitions and critical success. The war reoriented much of the art market around commissions, but these works were still subject to similar valuations of needing to be stylistically dynamic as well as affecting. Claude Rogers reflected on this tension in a 1947 exhibition opening:

One of the effects of the School of Paris has been to liberate the artist from the necessity of accurate representation. We know, today, that it is perfectly possible to paint a good picture which, though it derives from external nature, transposes and distorts appearances. But to many of us, who have only sensibility and judgement to rely on, it is difficult to distort with complete conviction. I may make a shape that pleases me – which, at first seems to be entirely adequate – and yet, as the painting proceeds doubt begins to creep in. Would it not be better to change the shape, to add a bit on this side or that? And at once that feeling of complete conviction is gone.¹⁴⁵

On the one hand, a sketch or drawn-object could preserve the conviction of the moment, being, as Rogers wrote, 'begun – and carried through – in the same breath. – Or thrown aside & another started.'¹⁴⁶ Wilenski also picked up on this as a central concern in *The Modern Art Movement* (1927), which was re-edited in 1945. He wrote of the need for conviction to replace the vacuum left for artists by the absence of religious fervour:

I am yet to be convinced by aesthetic critics who tell me the savage carving an image to scare the devil or bring down rain is engaged in the same kind of activity as the sculptor who looks at a woman who attracts him and makes a statement of her form's attractiveness [...] or that Fra Angelico painting a pink blue and gold Paradise on his knees was doing

¹⁴⁴ 'Szobel's 'Drawings of German Atrocities'', *The Times*, 49453 (26 Jan 1943), 8.

¹⁴⁵ Claude Rogers, Draft notes for an address given when opening the Annual Exhibition of students' work at Bristol Art School, 4 July 1947 (1947), TGA 8121.8.2, 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

the same thing as the young lady who paints a pink blue and gold picture because she thinks pink blue and gold are pretty colours and because she wants to paint pictures that look rather like the Italian paintings of the early Renaissance.¹⁴⁷

Artists had once gained conviction from religious fervour or from naturalist curiosity, but when the 'look' or style of such works was invoked without the accompanying spiritual drive, the danger was that, as Meninsky described it, without a 'sense of life, of vitality, of great delicacy of feeling, of the exquisite and evanescent' to make a piece evocative of a 'dynamic impulse', the art-object could remain 'lifeless' and 'immobile'.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

Within the contexts of caricature, humour, and conviction, drawn-objects – especially those carried out under the ideology of the sketch – had particular collateral. They penetrated physically and psychological to regions more composed art objects could not. Their intimacy and rapid execution invested them with a personal significance made public. This exposure was also present for a public forced by bomb destruction to conduct intimate domestic rituals in communal settings.¹⁴⁹ One result was a rise in the popularity of the sketch-aesthetic. The drawn-object as the proxy for the absent body of the artist was evident in its emphasis on delicate materiality and seismic readings of the hand under strain. As Gombrich and Kris highlighted, it also became a magical conduit for primal acts of freedom against all that limited and repressed expression, whether it be the superego or the governing powers. The trauma and stresses of war thus, in part, closed the gap between Wilenski's 'savage' carver and the libidinous sculptor. To draw in war is to assert presence. It documents and makes experience tangible, but not in a detached and categorical manner, as a photograph might. It asserts the physical and emotional vulnerability of the people involved and thus reclaims them from being numbers in a war room. As the war progressed, the impulse toward humour as a mental defensive wall slipped into a desire for drawn-objects that carried the ideology of intimacy and subjectivity of the sketch into the grim seriousness of heroic conviction, in order to emphasise psychological strength rather than vulnerability. It is

¹⁴⁷ Wilenski, *Modern Movement*, 8.

¹⁴⁸ Meninsky, 'The Appreciation of Drawing', TGA 8225.3.2, 3-4. Sensibility is defined as follows: 'It is a quality in the artist, the excess of which is his special endowment, and which, projected into his work, is its sole justification. Its presence in a work of art is in some way linked up with a sense of life, of vitality, of great delicacy of feeling, of the exquisite and evanescent; it points to the evocation and realisation of a dynamic impulse. Without it there remains the lifeless, the immobile; it is the unique element in all great drawing, as indeed, of all art. The greater the sensibility, the more in evidence is the mysterious sense of life it evokes, and as we have already seen, it can even imbue concepts in the field of science with elements of the greatest beauty, when drawn by and artist of genius.'

¹⁴⁹ See: Allen. 'And Oh!', 56.

possible this was a compensatory preference for a slipping morale, which resulted in the absurdist, nihilistic humour of the post-war period, but within the language of drawings such as Topolski, Gross, and Lanyon, the encoding of conviction and critical emotional engagement suffused their drawn-objects. This period and its component debates paved the way for the post-war association of drawing with and as a way of thinking, albeit a visual or manual mode of intellect. Thus the whole Second World War offered new visibility for drawn-objects, both among public and artistic networks alike, and it emphasised a particular literacy, one of reading the absent artist into the lines.

All of the factors at play during the Second World War opened the metaphorical space for the post-war years' small revival of drawn-objects as the subjects of focused exhibitions, such as Colnaghi's exhibition of Edward Seago's drawn-objects 'with the Allied Armies in Italy' of November 1945, the Beaux Arts Galleries general exhibition of drawings of December 1945, the influential National Gallery exhibition of Klee in 1946 (organised by Tate),¹⁵⁰ and the 1947 First International Festival of Documentary Film featuring a film on the draughtsmanship of Matisse. In the 1950s, oppositional critics John Berger and David Sylvester began to showcase drawings and demonstrate how to read drawn-objects in series of exhibitions, which coincided with a rise in publications exploring the technical details of long-lapsed drawing methods and practices. Drawing was brought to the surface of artistic thought during the war, and as peace brought energy for reflection, rebuilding, and healing it also brought a refreshed intellectual curiosity for the operation of the medium.

¹⁵⁰ For Klee, see: Margaret Garlake, *New Art, New World: British Art in Postwar Society* (London: Yale University Press, c.1998), 13.

Objective Drawing:

William Coldstream and Drawing-Practice in the Post-war Period

A photograph of William Coldstream in the Tate Archive shows him as an old man, holding in weathered but gentle fingertips a mounted portrait drawing of a young Indian soldier (Fig. 4.1). The square picture is raised in front of him as if it were a shield, intervening between camera and artist. The gaze of the soldier is both piercing and inward, animated despite its simple, linear constructs. The drawn-object manifests an uneasy tension between sharp, almost abstract shapes and portraiture. Like the *Mona Lisa*'s enigmatic interiority, the young soldier's lips seem poised to resolve into an ambiguous expression, fluctuating between sadness, curiosity, resolve, and boredom. The most likely photographer is Coldstream's lifelong confidant and friend, country doctor John 'Jack' Rake, a talented amateur painter himself.¹ It was undoubtedly intended to document *Indian Soldier, Cairo* (1944). The photograph becomes, when left uncropped, a striking portrait of Coldstream alongside one of his rare paper-based drawn-objects. Drawn during wartime, it demonstrates the meticulous transcription of space and line, characteristic of Coldstream's drawing-practice, which was branded 'objective' or 'analytic' in 1964 by Maurice de Sausmarez (1915-1969) in *Basic Design*.² Due in part to Euan Uglow's (1932-2000) own adoption of a variant of his teacher's strict measurement, Coldstream's legacy is haunted by such references to objectivity. What is latent within *Indian Soldier* but explicit in later works such as *Study for Seated Nude* (1959) and *Nude Study* (c.1977) (Figs. 4.2-3), is a direct experimentation with the issues of subjectivity raised during the Second World War: how the consciousness of the artist moulds the action of transcription. Rather than aiming to expunge the taint of subjectivity, Coldstream manipulated process and materials in order to make that subjectivity the focus of his work. If Coldstream's practice can be called 'objective', it is thus not in the sense that it reproduced an unmediated image of reality, but in the sense that it fixated on distilling permutations of vision within drawing-practice. Reading his practice against earlier discussions of layers and performative artists, what emerges is Coldstream's creation of a stripped-down and hallucinatory memory of a loved one, something created from imprecise and shifting juxtapositions of different experiences. Thus *Indian Soldier*, held between artist

¹ John Rake. Letters to William Coldstream, TGA 8922. For a discussion of the friendship, see Laughton, *Coldstream*, 13.

² Maurice de Sausmarez, *Basic Design: The Dynamics of Visual Form* (London: Studio Vista, 1964), 44-47, 65.

and beholder, is not a mirror for reality or for Coldstream's emotions, but rather a proxy for his understanding, an external memory.

In an article entitled 'Dark Sunlight' in the 10 June 1963 *Sunday Times* magazine, David Sylvester wrote, 'Almost anyone in the British art world who is neither highly established nor a maverick must, I imagine, experience moments of disorientation when he doubts his own existence other than as part of a dream in the mind of Coldstream.'³ Sylvester's remark reflects Coldstream's encompassing influence as a spokesman, teacher, and bureaucrat, but also as an artist. A celebrated figurative painter, Coldstream first found national recognition as a formative member of the Euston Road School and its controversial advocacy of representational art. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s his fame grew as he continued to develop what he called his 'straight' pictures, distinguished by a seemingly impersonal, precise representation of simple subjects, such as portraits, cityscapes, and nudes. His distinctive aesthetic involved a visible armature of under-drawing (often marked in red, ochre, or blue paint) competing for visual attention with a sombre palette of plangent, linear brushwork, as can be seen in *Reclining Nude* (1953-54) (Fig. 4.4). A year before Sylvester published the above *Sunday Times* quotation he wrote a short review in which he described how these marks, born of Coldstream's innovative method of drawing in paint, caused the 'picture' to dominate the 'subject':

The stars, barbs and lines with which those very measurements are registered becomes an elaborate abstract design in red and blue which overlays the image [...] despite the painter's refusal to shape the subject according to his will, his distinctive mark, his handwriting intervenes conspicuously between the image and the spectator: the painter may not *impose* himself; he does *interpose* himself. [...] He leaves it [the subject] intact and at the same time uses that web of spiky marks to fence it off from the outside world.⁴

It is this method of creation – of drawing-practice – that is the focus of the present discussion. In Coldstream's artwork, drawing lies under and in his paint as well as in more traditional drawn-objects, those executed with graphite or ink on paper. The visual power of his work is a direct result of his method of drawing. It was a means of channelling will power and interest and of exploring his subject, but most importantly it was a means of sensitively responding to the limitations of the mind, specifically how to break down the preconceptions of the eye through the activity of creation. Though his drawings were not viewed explicitly as 'process art' in the 1950s, they were appreciated and exhibited because of

³ David Sylvester, 'Dark Sunlight', *Sunday Times Magazine* (10 Jun 1963), 8.

⁴ David Sylvester, 'Fences', *New Statesman* (25 May 1962), 770.

their process of creation.⁵ As such they provide a glimpse into the development of drawing from a diaristic, emotional practice to a patient exploration of process and materials.

Drawing's identity as a concept became especially strong in the post-war period. The emphasis on subjective experience during the Second World War, as discussed in the previous chapter, created an awareness of artistic process within the drawn-object. It was within the terms of this literacy that Coldstream developed a challenge to the prevalent taste for demonstrative sensibility. Coldstream also engaged with the full momentum of previous discussions of drawing: he attempted to alter the foundation of drawing-practice against the terms of engagement that had been in the public spotlight since 1918-1919, both the linear conventions of Post-Impressionism as well as the fluid contours of his former teacher, Henry Tonks. For this Coldstream was celebrated, notably by Sylvester, but also by a former pupil Lawrence Gowing (1918–1991), who recognised in his introduction to Coldstream's 1962 retrospective exhibition catalogue the monumentality of this move against persistent notions of drawing:

Coldstream needed only a functional technique for drawing the simplest visual distinctions that the eye can register. Everything superfluous to it had to be discarded. Artists agreed that thick paint was more richly artistic than thin; Coldstream abandoned it. It was common ground that colour, at least, was in some sense an end in itself in all painting worth the name; it was not for him. Even the current kinds of drawing and linear convention of the reputable post-impressionist figurative styles had to go. Indeed the realisation of form in a rhythmical, cursive line that aped the substance of life with a flaccid mock-caress was the worst of all, the most foreign to his purposes. It pretended to create life, it affected to possess it, it contaminated life with 'art'. The whole value of the living subject was that it was *not* art, *not* the painter, but separate and independent. That was its virtue that was what was *interesting*. It was as if Coldstream had, at the back of his mind, a new idea (yet a very old one) of the confrontation of painting with its living subject, a confrontation which neither condescended, neither pretended, each remained itself, disdaining to compromise its status.⁶

The confrontation between painted-object and living subject needed to be realised in practice, and this chapter tracks Coldstream's development of his characteristic method before examining the implications for the tensions between subjectivity and objectivity. But first the context for Coldstream needs to be set, principally through Sylvester's programme of drawing exhibitions from 1948 through the 1960s, which demonstrates how Sylvester's promotion of Coldstream's intelligent facture fit into the theorist's agenda of removing

⁵ 'Process Art' here refers to David Thistlewood's name for the mature period of constructive art ('process-dominant art'), which denotes an intellectual approach and stresses the importance of the process of facture for the final object. David Thistlewood, *Herbert Read: Formlessness and Form: An Introduction to His Aesthetics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 129. See also: 'Geometry and Gesture' in Garlake, *New Art*, 102-31.

⁶ Lawrence Gowing, Introduction, *William Coldstream*, exh. cat. (London [touring]: Arts Council, 1962), [5-13] 7-8. Sylvester archive, TGA uncatalogued.

drawing from discussions of raw expressionism and positioning it instead as a form of visual thought.

Sylvester and Drawing

In the decade following the 1945 Armistice, many of the figures discussed during the 1920s through 1940s published or delivered lectures on the art of or appreciation of drawing. The most significant among them were Michael Ayrton's *British Drawings* (1946) and *Golden Sections* (1957), Claude Rogers's opening address at a Bristol Art School exhibition (1947), Bernard Meninsky's two-part lecture, 'The Appreciation of Drawing' (1948), David Bomberg's 1953 untitled manuscripts on drawing, and Geoffrey Grigson's *English Drawings: From Samuel Cooper to Gwen John* (1955).⁷ In many ways these works share a certain conservatism, consolidating earlier experiments delayed by the war. Alongside these Sylvester began to showcase drawn-objects as a type of visual thought – emphasising how drawing-practice was an explication of visual thought, which could either be a study for a painting or sculpture or a parallel practice, but either way it provided a conduit to the mental machinations of the absent artist. He crafted three exhibitions during the period to champion the medium of drawing as a fine art activity: *Drawing for Pictures* (1953), *Recent British Drawings* (1954), and *Drawing Towards Painting* (1962). In all three Coldstream plays a prominent role, called in one accompanying article an heir of Degas, Ingres, and Seurat.⁸ Sylvester's classification of Coldstream not only speaks to the artist's historical context but also to the importance of drawing-practice for his contemporaries.⁹

In a 1954 article, 'Contemporary British Drawings', Sylvester established three categories of drawn-objects based on their facture: drawing done with care, intellectual; drawing done with care, manual and optical; and direct and spontaneous notation.¹⁰ The latter category is self-evident: comprising the work of Elinor Bellingham-Smith (1906–1988), Matthew Smith (1879-1959), Stanley Spencer, and Graham Sutherland, 'the artist tries to trap the sensation of something seen in all its transience'.¹¹ Despite Sylvester's later focus on Spencer, it is the variants of drawing done with care that occupy the majority of the drawing exhibitions. Drawing done with manual and optical care refers to works by Diana Cumming (b. 1929)

⁷ Ayrton, *British Drawings*; and, *Golden Sections* (London: Methuen, 1957); Rogers, Bristol Art School, lecture draft; Meninsky, 'The Art of Drawing,' TGA 8225.3.1.3-4; Bomberg, notes on drawing and draughtsmanship (Sep 1953), TGA 878.4.33; Grigson, *English Drawings*.

⁸ David Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing,' *Britain To-day*, 216 (Apr 1954), [24-27] 25.

⁹ For images of the two men see Figs. 4.5-6.

¹⁰ Ibid, 24-27.

¹¹ Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 27.

and Lucian Freud (1922-2011), characterised by distortions to the figure and brought about by drawing what is felt about form rather than seen.¹² This form of drawing emphasises and revels in the intervention of corporeality, from the eye to the brain through the nerves to the hand. The tight obsessiveness and subjectivity drove the otherworldliness of images such as Freud's *Interior Scene* (1950) and *Hercules* (1949) (Figs. 4.7-8).¹³ In contrast, drawing done with intellectual care replaced emotional compulsion with rational meticulousness. It was a label assigned to both Coldstream and Victor Pasmore. Although Sylvester was deeply impressed with the spontaneous notation of Spencer and the tenor of Freud, it was Coldstream and Pasmore who he singled out for inclusion in a genealogy of modernist drawing, writing in 1954 that they came nearest to being the successors of the young Degas, of Ingres and Seurat 'in this country today'.¹⁴

Sylvester's engagement with exhibiting drawn-objects began while working as Henry Moore's private secretary in 1948, with a series of exhibitions showcasing the sculptor's drawn-objects and maquettes.¹⁵ In 1951 an exhibition of Moore's sculpture at the Tate spurred the polarising debate between Sylvester and Marxist critic John Berger (b. 1926) over the significance and character of British 'realist' art. Though the focus of the debate was not about the role or significance of drawings, it did involve the question of whether realism should consist of evocative documentation or the construction of emotional equivalents. In *Battle for Realism* (2001) James Hyman coined the terms 'Modernist Realist' for the milieu advocated and influenced by Sylvester, and 'Social Realist' for those represented by Berger.¹⁶ Hyman further argued that Sylvester articulately summarised his position in a 1955 obituary for Henri Matisse, wherein Sylvester created the distinction between 'two vital qualities'.¹⁷ The first was 'Interpretative Imagination', which was a documentary facility: 'The ability to find the appropriate gestures to convey the dramatic content of the work, the ability to make the figures in a composition behave in such a way as to convince us that the artist actually saw it happen'.¹⁸ The second lay closer to Sylvester's values, 'Pictorial Imagination',

¹² The approach was largely developed under Cedric Morris's (1889-1982) anti-academicism teaching at the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing (run by Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines), where drawing led by feeling rather than appearances was key. Spalding, *British Art*, 149, 151.

¹³ See: Freud, *On Paper*, figs. 87, 89.

¹⁴ Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 25.

¹⁵ *A Retrospective Exhibition of Drawings by Henry Moore*, exh. cat. (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1948); *Henry Moore: Drawings & Maquettes from 1928 to 1948*, exh. cat. (London: Roland, Browse & Delbanco, 1948); *Sculpture and Drawings by Henry Moore*, exh. cat. (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1951).

¹⁶ Hyman, *Battle*, 2.

¹⁷ Hyman, *Battle*, 133, in reference to David Sylvester's 'Death of a Wild Animal,' *Encounter*, 4:1 (Jan 1955), 60-62.

¹⁸ Sylvester, 'Wild Animal', 60-62. Sylvester's choice of the word 'gesture' here indicates how this understanding grew from the discussions in chapter 3.

representing ‘a recreation of life’ that was an autonomous aesthetic statement.¹⁹ It was the artist’s ability to create an image whose reality is contained and beholden only to itself – a reality rather than an illustration *of* reality – and this parallel entity garnered power from the authenticity of the artist’s experience of the external environment as well as the possibility of presenting an ‘analogy for a natural structure or situation [...] forms born out of nature and evolved towards a life of their own, nature is reborn’.²⁰ The ability to produce such an image came from the artist’s unique ‘vision’. Sylvester’s sense of art as analogous to life and understanding of vision are indebted to Roger Fry, but Sylvester’s particular conception of the human condition was also influenced by his visits to Paris in the mid-1940s, which introduced him to phenomenology and existentialism.²¹ Drawing-acts were a means of understanding personal experience and translating it into equivalent forms. They provided moments of exploration on the border of internal and external worlds, and thus they provided insight into the mechanism and subtlety of artistic vision.²²

The first of Sylvester’s major drawing exhibitions, *Drawing for Pictures* in 1953, was a complex reply to Berger’s *Looking Forward*, exhibited a year earlier at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Like the political-realist exhibitions that immediately preceded it, *Looking Forward* developed from the Second World War-era attention to sketch-aesthetics. It continued popular associations of drawings as authentic documents and introduced the accessibility (and thus classlessness) of their production. These preceding exhibitions included the AIA’s *The Coalminers: An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Coalminers and Professional Artists* (1950) and *Realism in Contemporary Art: Paintings on the Life and Struggles of the Working Class Produced by Northern Artists* (CPGB, 1951).²³ Both exhibitions integrated drawings by amateurs as authentic records. *Looking Forward* crowned this gathering momentum in 1953 with Berger’s own agenda.²⁴ That same year, Sylvester began to lecture at the Slade. Entering tertiary art education thus coincided not only with preparing his first general drawing exhibition but also with his rival’s

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ David Sylvester, ‘Victor Pasmore’, *Britain To-day*, 176 (Dec 1950), quoted in Hyman, *Battle*, 134.

²¹ Fry’s influence upon Sylvester is evident in the latter’s regard for Cézanne, prefacing his notion of painting as an imaginative recreation of life analogous to nature on Cézanne’s example. See David Sylvester, ‘Paul Cézanne’, *The Listener*, 52:1337 (14 Oct 1954), 632. Through Sylvester’s affiliation in Paris with Michael Leiris, he was influenced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his discussions of phenomenology centred around the stress of movement and space on the consciousness of self. Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Bibliothèque de Idées, 1945), 235; quoted in Hyman, *Battle*, 23. I use the term ‘existentialism’ to refer to the philosophical movement that denies that the universe has any intrinsic meaning or purpose and requires individuals to take responsibility for their own actions and shape their own destinies. Steven Crowell, ‘Existentialism,’ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/existentialism/>.

²² Fry had described this as a moment of tension, whereas Sylvester did so as a rich creative resource.

²³ Hyman, *Battle*, 115.

²⁴ Both Spencer and Rogers were exhibited in Berger’s *Looking Forward* as well as in Sylvester’s exhibitions. See also: Lynda Morris, ‘The Beaux Arts Years, 1948-57’, *Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art*, exh. cat., ed. Paul Huxley (London: Phaidon, Christies and the RCA, 1988), [31-39] 34.

drawing debut. It is possible that Sylvester's exposure to drawing-practice as a fine art skill – honed through training and critique – provided the fodder to counter *Looking Forward* and its perpetuation of the branding of drawn-objects as social documents.

Beginning with *Drawing for Pictures* (1953) and *Recent British Drawings* (1954), Sylvester portrayed drawing-acts as intersections between vision and technique. This was later continued in *Drawing towards Painting* (Arts Council, 1962) and *Drawing towards Painting 2* (Arts Council, 1967). Sylvester did not exhibit drawn-objects at first as autonomous artworks (viewing them predominantly as forms of preparatory work), but he did introduce them as a compelling focus for thematic, modernist art exhibitions. As the 1950s progressed, several documents in Sylvester's archive betray an increasing interest in how artistic creativity developed in relation to the limits of the materials, such as an annotated copy of H. Ruhemann and E. M. Kemp's *The Artist at Work* (1951) and Gowing's 'The Place and the Materials' in *The Sunday Times* (1956).²⁵ Under 'Style and Task' in *The Artist at Work*, a distinction is made between types of artistic limitation:

Style and technique are interdependent. The painter chooses and develops the right technique to express his individual vision; but the limitations of the material at hand also modify his style and even his approach. When setting out to draw with a pencil he will tend to 'see' nature in terms of outlines; when handling a wide brush, he will see rather in broad masses.²⁶

The task is thus to achieve a physical manifestation of vision through seeing with pertinent limitations. The methods chosen, however, have immediate and real feedback on how the subject is perceived. In short, anticipating the needs of the materials shapes the experience of reality.²⁷ *Drawing for Pictures* (1953) and *Recent British Drawings* (1954) attempted to acquaint the public with this relationship. It did so through exhibiting 'the intimate correspondence between an artist's method of working and his vision of reality'.²⁸ Specifically, it demonstrated how drawn-objects were used in various ways to clarify vision. They provided evidence for how each artist compromised between looking for and expressing vision.

²⁵ H. Ruhemann and E. M. Kemp, *The Artist at Work* (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951); and Lawrence Gowing, 'II – The Place and the Materials', *The Sunday Times* (18 Mar 1956), 14 in Sylvester papers, TGA, uncatalogued.

²⁶ Ruemann and Kemp, *Artist at Work*, 12.

²⁷ This ability for art to alter perception was something Gombrich and Kris wrote about as a form magic: 'It may then happen that when we meet the victim [of a caricature] in real life we are forced to laugh at him, because his picture is linked inseparably in our minds with the caricature we have seen. We have been taught by the artist to see him anew, to see him as a ridiculous creature. This is at bottom the true and hidden aim behind the portrait caricaturist's art. He is a dangerous fellow; his work is still somewhat akin to black magic. With a few strokes he may unmask the public hero, belittle his pretensions, and make a laughing stock of him. Against this spell event the mightiest is powerless. Even he takes his caricature with him wherever he goes: he is bewitched.' Gombrich and Kris, *Caricature*, 13.

²⁸ David Sylvester, *Drawing for Pictures*, exh. cat. (London: Arts Council, 1953), 4.

Sylvester began *Drawing for Pictures* with the lament that ‘drawings beyond number are made by most painters in the course of their careers, but for all that we see of them we might suppose they were of interest only to their makers’.²⁹ In *The Drawings of Stanley Spencer* (Arts Council, 1955) Sylvester fully articulated what had rumbled beneath the prior exhibitions: ‘The vital act of creation occurs’ in the process of drawing, which was the ‘real act of externalising vision’.³⁰ Thus as Ayrton wrote in *Golden Sections* (1957) and painter Bryan Wynter (1915-1975) attested, drawing-practice is a method of thinking.³¹ Understanding the vision of the artist without understanding the development of the art object was therefore an incomplete understanding.

In all three exhibitions, Sylvester engaged with a particular notion of drawing. In *Contemporary British Drawings* he seized the term and redefined it through clarifying the traditional distinction between Delacroix as a *coloriste* and Ingres as a *dessinateur*, writing that when invoking this contrast ‘we are not thinking about Delacroix as someone who could not draw and of Ingres as someone who could not colour’.³² Rather, the answer lay in the double meaning of the French and Italian words for drawing, *dessin* and *disegno*, where the ‘same word does service for both “drawing” and “design”’. A whole conception of drawing is implied thereby, according to Sylvester: ‘Drawing as an architectonic construction perpetuating, in the most selective and economical way, the structure of something seen’.³³ This definition does not describe drawing as a window into vision (as was put forward in the Spencer exhibition), nor is it solely a limitation on vision (as established in *Drawings for Pictures*). It becomes something independent, combining a way of seeing *with* and a construction to house and perpetuate what was seen. Despite Fry’s evident influence over Sylvester, ‘design’ is broken away from the former’s discussions with MacColl. It remains a part of the traditionally intellectual aspect of drawing-practice, though its function as an optical device – an active, chosen alteration of perception – is emphasised. It is not something on the border of optics and expression, as Fry positioned it, nor an encompassing rhythm that controls all other elements in a picture, as MacColl did, but is instead a grammar for experiencing the world. It is a way of seeing all of vision as bound by invisible interacting units, much as had been popularised by the translation of Paul Klee’s *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1953, orig. 1925), which characterised man as an arrow of energy, propelling himself into infinite space, wherein illusions of depth are only a symbol-system imposed upon the plane

²⁹ Ibid, 3.

³⁰ David Sylvester, *The Drawings of Stanley Spencer*, exh. cat. ([London]: Arts Council, 1955), 1.

³¹ Bryan Wynter quoted by Chris Stephens in *Bryan Wynter* (London: Tate Publishing, 1999), 50; Ayrton, *Golden Sections*, 67.

³² Sylvester, ‘Contemporary Drawing’, 25.

³³ Ibid.

of optical information, no more real than drawn lines cutting up a picture plane.³⁴ When considered as a construction to house and perpetuate what was seen, drawing-acts become a navigation system for locating objects in space. An expressively distorted image of subjective alienation, though evocative, could not express this fundamental experience of self and world. Drawing done with intellectual care involved an analytic statement of key object-self relations. If visual experience is only the application of a symbolic system, then to see *for* drawing's own symbolic system adds weight to positing it as a way of processing or thinking through visual experience.

Coldstream's rigour of observation and architectural construction of layered measurements fed into Sylvester's agenda that drawing was not an easily produced document of experience or emotions, but a carefully constructed 'perpetuation' of something experienced.³⁵ Within the exhibitions Coldstream's work was championed for its precise, intelligent execution. He formed a significant focus within the shows as well as within the explanatory companion article for *Recent British Drawings*. It is possible that had Coldstream been able to supply a larger body of paper drawn-objects (rather than the mere nine Sylvester admitting seeing by 1954), he might have been the focus of a solo show of drawn-objects, as Stanley Spencer was in 1955: evidence in Sylvester's archive indicates that he attempted to instigate an exhibition for Coldstream's drawn-objects in 1989 through a private London gallery, Browse and Darby, to complement the Tate's larger retrospective in 1990-1.³⁶ As it was, Sylvester took Coldstream's paper-based drawn-objects as an important contribution to fine art as well as an influential paragon of drawn works produced during the 1950s.

The Coldstream drawings Sylvester exhibited in the early 1950s were sourced predominantly from his war works. The images thus occupy the aesthetic borderlands between the outlined shapes of *Indian Soldier, Cairo* (1944) and the indistinct immanence of *Study for Seated Nude* (1959). It is noteworthy that the exhibitions came at a time when Coldstream was producing

³⁴ 'Man uses his ability to move freely in space to create for himself optical adventures. What are railroad ties? Functional cross-beams, occurring at regular intervals. Yes, but they are also subdivisions of infinite space, capable of bisecting the third dimension at a hundred different angles. Man precariously balanced on two unstable legs, use optical illusion as a safety devise. Horizon as concrete fact, and horizon as imaginary safety belt that has to be believed in, are exemplified on the graceful examples of the tightrope walker and his bamboo pole. The purely material balance of the scale finds its counter-part in the purely psychological balance of light and dark' Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Introduction to Paul Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (originally published as *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1925) (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), [7-12] 9. Rather than Berlin Expressionists' or Parisian Cubists' analytic statements that rested on the canvas, Moholy-Nagy's introduction to the translation described Klee's figures and forms as 'not only transparent, as if seen through a fluoroscope; they exist in a magnetic field of cross currents: lines, forms, splotches, arrows, color waves'. Moholy-Nagy, Introduction, 7.

³⁵ For images that show Pasmore's progression, including a Cornwall drawn-object, *Porthmeor Beach, St Ives* (1950), see Figs. 4.13-6. Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 25.

³⁶ Ruth Rattenbury (Tate Head of Department of Exhibitions), Letter to William Darby (Browse and Darby) (19 Oct 1989), Sylvester papers, TGA uncatalogued.

sophisticated paintings, which began to subjugate the model to what Sylvester would call in 1962 the ‘spike’ and ‘barb’ under-drawing (such as *Seated Nude (Miss Mond)* of 1952-3, *Reclining Nude* of 1953-4, and *Two Nudes* of 1953-4), thus focusing his drawing-practice within painting. In *Drawing for Pictures* Sylvester intended to reveal the variety of preparatory drawn-objects. Coldstream, however, avoided painting from drawn-objects, with the exception of a handful of pieces produced for the War Artist collection. Two of these, *Rimini* (1945) and *The Opera House, Rimini* (1945), were exhibited alongside their preparatory sketches in *Drawing for Pictures* (Figs. 4.9-10).³⁷ It is possible that Sylvester might have preferred studies for *Seated Nude (Miss Mond)* of 1952-3 or for *Reclining Nude* of 1953-4, but that such works were either not produced or not preserved.

When Sylvester expanded his agenda in *Recent British Drawings* to showcase drawn-objects as autonomous ones rather than objects defined by their function, he chose works by Coldstream that contained the aesthetic seeds of averaging and of *Study of Seated Nude*.³⁸ Though name changes and undocumented distribution make it difficult to be certain which pieces were exhibited, it is likely that two of the five works were *Broken Bridges over the Arno at Pisa* (1944) (possibly the renamed *Pisa, Ponte di Mezzano*) and *Ponte Vecchio, Florence* (1944) (possibly the renamed *Florence, Ponte Vecchio*) (Figs. 4.11-2).³⁹ In the companion article ‘Contemporary British Drawings’ Sylvester describes the effect of these works as

a sense of stillness, of life suspended, which is yet without serenity, because that stillness is uneasy, threatened by a possibility that something might move and irretrievably break their silent echo of the silence in which they are contemplated.⁴⁰

The anxiety of the delicate, timid drawn marks on fragile paper heightens the beholder’s apprehension of Coldstream’s meticulous methodology of observation and the emotions that drove him. The stillness is partially that of elusive recognition, of war, of craft, of a man sitting by an Italian river watching. All drawn-objects contain the aura of proximity to the

³⁷ These are some of the few paintings produced from drawn-objects after 1936. *The Opera House Rimini, Interior (Bomb Damaged Theatre, Italy)* (c.1944) (Fig. 4.9) and *Preparatory Drawing (study for Opera House, Rimini)* (1944) (Fig. 4.10) were possibly exhibited in *Drawing for Pictures* as no.35, *The Opera House Rimini* (1945), ink on paper, 29.1 x 22.2 cm, lent by Andrew Forge. The dates and dimensions, however, do not correlate. This could be a transcription error by Sylvester, but warrants further investigation. The piece referenced could also have been: William Coldstream, *Rimini: The Opera House*, 1945, oil on canvas, 65 x 79 cm, Government Art Collection, London; and its preparatory drawing: William Coldstream, *The Opera House, Rimini*, 1944, ink on paper, 190 x 241 mm, Lady Coldstream collection. For latter see: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 107.

³⁸ Sylvester, *Drawing Towards Painting*, exh. cat. (London: The Arts Council, 1962), 6.

³⁹ *Broken Bridges over the Arno at Pisa* (1944) is probably the work referred to in *Recent British Drawings* as no.13, *Pisa, Ponte di Mezzano* (1944), lent by Lavender Lowndes; and *Ponte Vecchio, Florence* (June 1945) is probably the work referred to as no.14, *Florence, Ponte Vecchio* (1944), lent by John Rake. The other works named in the catalogue are: *Sleeping Sailor* (1940), lent by Edward Le Bas; *Rimini* (1944), lent by Brinsley Ford; and *Head of a Woman* (1947), lent by Brinsley Ford. David Sylvester, *Recent British Drawings: An Anthology*, exh. cat. (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1954), 3.

⁴⁰ Sylvester, ‘Contemporary Drawing’, no. 216, 25-26.

artist, and yet what is remarkable, particularly about *Ponte Vecchio*, is not only glimpsing the intersection of vision and materials and thus glimpsing the mind – or vision – of the artist, but also the carefully arranged forms. Without paint to fill the void with patches of colour, the blank page across the centre of the image takes on visual immediacy. Like *Indian Soldier, Cairo*, the buildings seem poised and resigned, waiting and watching. The emptiness of the central section could represent the illumination of Mediterranean sun eliminating detail or it could represent bomb damage ripping buildings at unnatural junctures. The image is whole; it is not dependent on (though it is resonant of) Coldstream's experience. As such the impenetrable stillness of the fractured lines and bare page rejects the possibility of transparency to another world and becomes an independent construction perpetuating rather than illustrating something 'seen'. If drawn-objects are read as architectonic constructions, as Sylvester advocated, then it is also seen to be an autonomous, aesthetic activity dictated by design priorities. *Ponte Vecchio* is thus an apt example for Sylvester's agenda. It incorporates observational accuracy without illusion, exemplifying pictorial imagination, while also being aesthetically constructed.

It is significant that Sylvester conjoins Pasmore and Coldstream in the category 'drawing done with care, intellectual'. In 1954 when this grouping was proposed, Pasmore had already defected from realism to abstraction, having started working in relief and increasingly after 1951 with architects. Regardless of Pasmore's move away from what Coldstream dismissed as 'impressionism' in a letter to Rake, Pasmore argued that there was no break in his practice: he simply continued his fascination with the object.⁴¹ In keeping with this continuity, Sylvester places the erstwhile Euston Road colleagues on a single scale: 'The visual music of Pasmore's drawings is more sonorous than that of Coldstream's practice. Nevertheless, if Coldstream's "untrammelled observation" does not hinder his creation of abstract forms, neither – in the Cornwall drawings – does Pasmore's deliberate designing cut off his contact from the object.'⁴² Sylvester's placement of Coldstream, the pseudo-realist, alongside a constructivist-abstractionist is not an artificial imposition. The nature of Coldstream's method aptly combines a model for mind (of actively regularising his way of interacting with observation in order to create a proxy for his memory) and a composite image of how objects appear when stripped of transient detail, as will be argued in the ensuing sections. *Ponte Vecchio*, like *Study for Seated Nude*, is a careful construction perpetuating a distinct and

⁴¹ William Coldstream, Letter to Jack Rake (17 Nov 1941), TGA 787.191, quoted in Laughton, *Euston Road School*, 211. Pasmore wrote to Laughton insisting that the 'two developments' in his career (1930s away from Objective Abstractions for Euston Road realism and then in the 1940s-1950s from realism for constructivist-abstractions) were not breaks: 'The difference lay in the nature of the object and not in the idea.' The uniting factor was an interest in object – whether it be through direct representation or emphasising the object-hood of the piece of artwork. Laughton, *Euston Road*, 329, 332. See also Victor Pasmore, *Victor Pasmore: Writings and Interviews*, ed. Alastair Grieve (London: Tate, 2010).

⁴² Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 26.

deliberate way of seeing the world. Coldstream's paper drawn-objects were not, for Sylvester, examples of raw expression, but products of intelligent facture, which had a legitimate place in the fine art world.

Sylvester's grouping together of Coldstream's and Pasmore's drawn-objects demonstrates an insightful indifference to their different art world allegiances. Pasmore's claim that there was no break in his practice correlates to both practitioners being aligned with 'objectivity', though they had different applications of the notion. Where Coldstream's interest in direct, straight, and precise observation is frequently branded as 'objective', Pasmore was among a group of constructivists during the later 1940s and 1950s that courted a form of intellectually detached application of systems in order to do away with the taint of subjectivity. 'I had worked direct from nature,' fellow constructivist Kenneth Martin (1905-1984) reflected in a 1969 article, 'and now I was concerned with the problem that it was necessary for abstract art to be objective in its own way.'⁴³ Anthony Hill (b. 1930) also extolled forms of constructivism as resilient to being 'undermined with latent associations' and to the 'abyss of subjectivity'.⁴⁴ 'Systems' presented a solution. Nature and natural laws were examples of mathematical (primarily geometric) and organic systems, whose laws could be replicated as forces applied to the matter of the canvas or construction.⁴⁵ In whatever medium, this merited Sylvester's label 'drawing done with care, intellectual'. Both Pasmore and Coldstream emerged from similar pre-war realist roots that took to heart Sickert's injunction to sketch from the street and to draw from external reality. Over the course of the Second World War, however, both Coldstream and Pasmore reacted against the prevalent celebration of the subjectivity within sketch aesthetics, and in seeking alternatives, they turned to two very different modes of pursuing a common aim.

Coldstream and Drawing-Practice

Drawing was central to Coldstream's practice, though few drawn-objects were created to be finished works of art in their own right.⁴⁶ As discussed earlier, Coldstream's drawing-practice

⁴³ Gillian Wise, Kenneth Martin, and Mary Martin, 'Notes on Biederman', *Studio International*, 178:914 (Sep 1969), 60.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Alastair Grieve, 'Charles Biederman and the English Constructionists 2: An Exchange of Theories about Abstract Art during the 1950s', *The Burlington Magazine*, 126:971 (Feb 1984), [67-77] 72.

⁴⁵ In this direction, they were influenced by D'Arcy Wentworth Thomspon's *On Growth and Form* (1917), and Charles Biederman's *Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge* (1948) as well as Amédée Ozenfant's *Foundations of Modern Art* (1931), Wassily Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), and art historian Alfred Barr's pre-war catalogues. See: Garlake, *New Art*, 107, 113.

⁴⁶ A difficulty in discussing Coldstream is that 'finished' was and is a difficult term. Few drawings have survived, and it is difficult to distinguish between some of his studies for the sake of drawing and his studies with the intention of making a related painting. That said, all of Coldstream's artworks were developed, so that

both intimately drew from and reacted against many of the preoccupations discussed in the previous chapters: he mirrored MacColl's mentor Stevenson's interest in 'direct' paintings; he fashioned his technique around a notion of layers of materials; and he reacted against the emotive subjectivity of the sketch popularised during the Second World War. His method of practice also became a strong negative as well as positive influence on ensuing generations.⁴⁷ His drawing legacy remains under-examined, stuck within the pejoratives of 'objective' and 'measurer', which ran contrary to the expressionism of the 1970s drawing revival. Understanding his acclaim in the 1950s and 1960s and the nuance of his practice not only reveals how a key player in later twentieth-century art reacted to the topics of the previous chapters but also retrieves some of the context-dependent meaning in his drawn-objects.

Coldstream's Life

The mind that Sylvester described as dreaming the British art world in 'Dark Sunlight' was not sealed inside a fantasy but was an active participant in important developments in pre-war painting, as well as various cultural committees and intellectual circles.⁴⁸ Coldstream the painter first reached success through his involvement in the School of Drawing and Painting at 316 Euston Road, which Raymond Mortimer (1895-1980) lastingly recast in a 1938 exhibition review as the 'Euston Road School'.⁴⁹ Coldstream developed his manner of painting from pseudo Post-Impressionism into a sombre palate of carefully layered vertical brush strokes over taught tonal shapes, either bounded by black outline or laced by graphite lines. The manner and subjects of these paintings were calculated to be humanistic and recognisable, to endorse urban scenes, and to be meticulously truthful to observation. Together these preoccupations defined a socially committed form of British realism, in opposition to the esoteric and alienating shifts in modern art. This association overshadowed much of Coldstream's subsequent activity. As a group, the Euston Road School were united by a shared sense of purpose rather than an aesthetic.⁵⁰ Coldstream's main contribution to the school and its subsequent revivals was his system of measuring with fixed points. This

their point of finish was often when they no longer interested Coldstream or the sitter was tired of posing, rather than the final, fully realised instantiation of an idea in a painting or drawn-object. For a full description of Coldstream's process of creation, see St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*.

⁴⁷ For examples of negative turn against Coldstream in the early 1990s, see: Giles Auty, 'Review of William Coldstream at the Tate Gallery', *The Spectator* (17 Nov 1990), 49; Brian Sewell, 'His Master's Voice', *The Tatler* (7 Oct 1990), unpaginated.

⁴⁸ Sylvester, 'Dark Sunlight', 8.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 2, footnote 80.

⁵⁰ It was a preoccupation whose aesthetic results were derided by Harrison in 1981 as a 'kind of meretricious bravura in the mediation between the observed world and painted surface'. Harrison, *English Art*, 341.

produced the impression of unmediated record.⁵¹ During the Second World War Coldstream was a War Artist, predominantly painting portraits and cityscapes. After the war, in 1945, William Johnstone (1897–1981) hired Coldstream to teach painting at the Camberwell School of Art. Once there, Coldstream was quickly reunited with a coterie of Euston Road teachers and pupils, and a revival of the school soon followed.⁵² His commitment to an accessible realism endured, but it was no longer interpreted as humanistic, due largely to Sylvester's inclusion of Coldstream's work with those of the British existentialist painters for the meat-like, inanimate quality of his meticulously drawn human still-lives.⁵³ He was known not only for an aesthetic, however, but also for his seriousness and scrupulous professionalism. Having introduced his method of measuring into the Camberwell classrooms, Coldstream moved to the Slade in 1949. Soon afterward, the 'Slade style' changed from its prior associations with Tonks to refer to interpretations of Coldstream's drawing-practice, which seemed to be true to appearances and empirical. Though Coldstream's paintings received acclaim during his lifetime, with a major retrospective in 1962 and multiple solo exhibitions before his death, he produced very few canvases. He preferred to paint in front of a model and spent as many as ninety-six sittings for a single painting.⁵⁴ Disliking the pressure of gallery representation, it was not until 1972, three years before his retirement from the Slade, that Coldstream gained a regular art dealer in Anthony d'Offay.

Coldstream's popularity as a painter was augmented and even eclipsed by his growing momentum as a cultural official. Beginning with an initial appointment as a trustee of the National Gallery in 1948 (until 1963), Coldstream soon after moved from his new position as head of painting at Camberwell (1948-9) to become head of school at the Slade (1949-1975). In 1950 he joined the Art Panel of the newly formed Arts Council (created from the wartime CEMA in 1946). He succeeded Kenneth Clark in his chair in 1953 and became its Vice-Chairman in 1962 (until 1970). In 1956 he joined the boards of the Tate and Whitechapel Galleries as well as joining the Minister's Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Works of Art to advise on contemporary art purchases for government offices at home

⁵¹ Laughton, *Coldstream*, 49, 51.

⁵² The revival was spurred by the Arts Council's 1948 exhibition. Hyman argues, however, that it conflated the actual Euston Road School with the new and evolved practices of the Camberwell faculty in order to emphasise the continuity of figurative painting as a British tradition. Hyman, *Battle*, 63. Coldstream complained about this myth of unity of the Euston Road School in an unpublished typescript, further noting that the name had become a critical adjective for 'any artist whose style appeared to resemble, or to have been influenced by those who had worked in the studios [of the school]'. William Coldstream, *Untitled* typescript about the Euston Road School, undated, TGA 8922.9.14, 1.

⁵³ Existentialism as a philosophical movement was distinct from Sylvester's interpretation, which was used primarily to reference the horror of life.

⁵⁴ This number is from Colin St. John Wilson's sittings. St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 11.

and abroad. Recognition of these endeavours came officially in 1956 with a knighthood, and in 1957 he began art education tours, which took him to Kampala, Uganda and various cities across the United States. Appointment as chairman to the National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE) soon followed in 1959. Coldstream's career also included a position on the board of directors of the Royal Opera House (1956-1962), chairmanship of the British Film Institute (1964-1971) and being Painter to the Society of Dilettanti in 1965.⁵⁵ Sylvester summed it up in a 1962 review of Coldstream's first solo exhibition: 'As some people are accident prone, so is he prone to attract official handles [...] he has become not merely a pillar, but a veritable colonnade of the Establishment.'⁵⁶

Coldstream was interested in various intellectual circles and fostered an intentionally eclectic teaching presence at the Slade. His early influence grew amid friendships with W. H. Auden (1907-1973) and Roger Fry. The 1937 founding of the Euston Road School was under the patronage of Kenneth Clark and was supported through visiting artists Vanessa Bell, Augustus John, Duncan Grant, and John Nash, while historical figures he invoked as influential included Sickert, Degas, and Cézanne.⁵⁷ Coldstream frequented the Cranium Club, an offshoot of the Bloomsbury group, and in the mid-1950s he fostered contact with academics A. J. Ayer (1910-1989) and J. B. S. Haldane (1892-1964). Coldstream's early years at the Slade involved seeking out and incorporating many prominent intellectuals and artists as well as reintegrating marginalised, avant-garde students, such as Patrick George (b. 1923) and Martin Froy (b. 1926), who were put off by the previous incarnation of the Slade Style. Coldstream appointed new staff members John Aldridge (1905-1983), Sam Carter (1909-2006), Thomas Monnington (1902-1976), and William Townsend (1909-1973). He later added Lucian Freud and Reg Butler (1913-1981) to the arts faculty. Victor Pasmore, Edward Ardizzone, Fernand Léger (1881-1955), Henry Moore, Robert Medley (1905-1994), John Piper, Graham Sutherland, and Keith Vaughan were also invited as visiting lecturers.⁵⁸ In addition, Rudolf Wittkower and Ernst Gombrich served terms as resident art history lecturers; J. Z. Young (1907-1997) taught classes on growth and form; and in the early 1960s Harold Cohen (b. 1928) taught 'recording cerebral processes' and a special course on examining abstract shapes, which he called 'notation', as well as leading discussions on the problems of language. Sylvester undertook a series of lectures during the 1950s that Francis

⁵⁵ Coldstream's friend and colleague throughout most of his career William Townsend recorded in his diary that Coldstream commented on the build-up of his committees as 'completely ridiculous'. William Townsend, Journal 30 (7 Dec 1960), referenced in Laughton, *Coldstream*, 207. Laughton also suggested that such an accumulation was a way of avoiding painting and the guilt of not painting. Ibid.

⁵⁶ David Sylvester, 'Grey Eminence', *New Statesman* (27 Apr 1962); reproduced in David Sylvester, *About Modern Art: Critical Essays 1948-2000* [1996] (London: Pimlico, 2002), 159.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2, footnote 80.

⁵⁸ Laughton, *Coldstream*, 160.

Bacon frequented while the latter also assumed an informal presence at the school. And at the heart of the Slade's growing role as a burgeoning art circuit stood Coldstream. Dennis Creffield, a Slade student from 1957 to 1961, wrote later of Coldstream: 'I never saw him in the studios but he was there before we arrived – and probably after we left – working in his own studio and he kept an eagle eye on everything that was going on from a distance – like God.'⁵⁹

The image is dizzying: Coldstream – the exhibition organiser, art buyer, judge, teacher, museum trustee, and, finally, artist – who, like God from within the containment of his mind, dreamt the British art world. It is difficult to discuss the oeuvre of an artist so imbricated in the official structures of his time, someone who clearly felt a social duty that could not be fulfilled in aesthetic terms alone. His diplomatic role in the art world extended beyond his exposure to contemporary developments: it mediated his own creation of a public persona. It is therefore difficult to accept much of his humility and self-description, and his public testimonies require careful weighing. Nevertheless, his words across a selection of interviews and articles are instrumental to understanding how Coldstream packaged himself, like a ringleader, to suit his differing audiences – an artist for official representatives and a civil servant to other artists. In order to access less problematic reflections on his artistic choices, I have drawn heavily from the private letters to a lifelong confidant removed from his metropolitan concerns and persona, Dr. John 'Jack' Rake.⁶⁰ It is also important to note that his artwork developed in the post-war period predominantly free from financial pressures. His professional responsibilities were administrative after 1949. He thus transformed his pre-war desire for 'representative art' into representative advocacy. The efficacy and sensitivity of these administrative aims, however, are not the focus of this discussion. In between committee meetings he snatched time to create the artwork that has an arresting and intense presence.⁶¹ It is possible that when Phillip James, director of the Arts Council, described Coldstream's drawn-objects as being marked by 'incandescent sincerity of untrammelled observation' at the opening of Sylvester's exhibition *Recent British Drawings*, the praise was tempered by an awareness that he was speaking of an influential colleague on his council.⁶² It is equally possible that in organising the exhibition Sylvester felt

⁵⁹ Dennis Creffield, letter to Bruce Laughton (21 Apr 1997); reprinted in Laughton, *Coldstream*, 195.

⁶⁰ John Rack letters, TGA 8922.

⁶¹ Coldstream professed that the episodic nature of his creation process sharpened his focus: 'The time it takes to look at what's on the canvas, at what one has done, to put it away and come back to it – the *lapse* of time [...] You don't start a painting thinking it is going to turn out like this or that . . . You do it. When it is over it has happened. After all, you are not producing some sort of artefact otherwise you ought to be in some other line of business.' William Coldstream, 'A Nonconformist', interview with Rodrigo Moynihan, *Art and Literature*, 4 (Spring 1965): 202-221.

⁶² Quoted in Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 25.

a temptation to flatter the man who controlled so much of the quickly developing superstructure of the British art world, not to mention Sylvester's own contemporaneous lectureship at the Slade (1953-1957). But despite the cynical possibilities, which surround these and other examples of his promotion, Coldstream became an important pitch-post for discussions and characterisations of drawing and the ideals around drawing-practice from the 1940s through to the 1960s and a point of departure for many practitioners.

Critical appraisal of Coldstream has focused on his art educational impact, with few scholars devoting prolonged attention to his art historical significance, let alone his drawn-objects. Two notable exceptions are the sedulous documentation of Bruce Laughton, an art historian and former pupil who published a biography of Coldstream in 2004, expanded from his research in *The Euston Road School* (1986); and Peter Rumley's D.Phil thesis at the University of Sussex, 'Sir William Coldstream: Catalogue Raisonné 1926-83 and Artistic Career 1908-45' (1986).⁶³ Despite the informative and thorough research involved in both projects, the engagement is documentary rather than analytical. In Laughton's impressive biography, Coldstream the man eclipses his own artistic oeuvre despite Laughton's prophecy that it will ultimately be Coldstream's artwork for which he will be remembered. Purely artistic analyses such as Colin St. John Wilson's *The Artist at Work* and Lawrence Gowing's catalogue introductions to Coldstream's 1962 and 1990-1 retrospectives revel in the impact of his technical innovations and nonconformity, consonant with their own artistic perspectives, rather than approaching his art historical effect or context.⁶⁴ Coldstream's reputation has been largely shaped by generations of art students' disillusionment with his educational role, particularly his bureaucratic involvement as chairman to the National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE). Two reports were issued, in 1960 and 1970, commonly referred to as the 'Coldstream Reports' despite their numerous authors. The proposed educational reforms in the first report led to a decade of turmoil and discontent, which included the 1968 Hornsey College of Art occupation.⁶⁵ Since then Coldstream and the report have been frequently conflated.⁶⁶ Coldstream's exacting, technical drawing methods became tainted by

⁶³ Laughton, *Coldstream*; Laughton, *Euston Road*; and Peter T. J. Rumley, 'Sir William Coldstream: Catalogue Raisonné 1926-83 and Artistic Career 1908-45' (D.Phil, University of Sussex, 1986); predominantly reproduced as 'Catalogue' and 'Chronology', in Gowing and Sylvester, *The Paintings of William Coldstream*, 73-115.

⁶⁴ St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*; Gowing and Sylvester, *The Paintings of William Coldstream*; Gowing, *William Coldstream* (1962).

⁶⁵ The effects were largely conditioned by the individual art colleges' interpretations. Hornsey reacted predominately against principal Harold Shelton, whereas the protests at Brighton, Guilford, and St. Martins were less severe. Marie McLoughlin 'The Textile Student Needs No Giotto' (paper presented at the Tate Britain, London, 4 Oct 2011); and Tickner, *Hornsey*.

⁶⁶ McLoughlin, 'The Textile Student'.

associations with authoritarian subjugation.⁶⁷ It was the very success of his drawing-practice that ultimately villainised him, as appreciation turned into domineering preferences within art schools. Scholarly interest in Coldstream's precise involvement in art education debates is growing, spurred in large part by the Tate Research Initiative 'Art School Educated', and by the ongoing scholarship into the compartmentalisation of art history and art education by scholars such as Lisa Tickner, Lynda Morris, and Marie McLoughlin.⁶⁸ As reactions against Coldstream are reappraised and the fashion for his drawing methods is reduced to historical interest, like those of Henry Tonks and Augustus Johns, it is now possible to recognise qualities of Coldstream's artwork and particularly his drawn-acts and drawn-objects that were previously distorted by associations with other aspects of his life and of the art world.

Coldstream's Method

Coldstream's relationship to drawing cannot be examined only through his paper-based drawn-objects, but also must be considered as a practice evident in his painted works. As the discussion of layers in the second chapter explored, his technique was first developed in the 1930s as a means of taking an accurate optical impression of the subject, by disavowing distance and treating vision as comprising shapes along a plane. Until the mid-1950s the armature of under-drawing was constructed with pencil. Paint layers were laid over it, as if 'carving' the image in relief by patiently darkening the recessions. This responded directly to the tradition of layers and watercolour, evident in the visible pencil lines showing through the thin layers of many of these works, such as *Mrs. Winifred Burger* (1936-7) (Fig. 4.17).

Coldstream's drawing technique is best known by the name bestowed by a former pupil: 'comparative measurements'.⁶⁹ It was a system of coordination that Coldstream likened to

⁶⁷ In terms of drawing, the 1960 report represents a shift between two educational pictures: a notion of the scientific, disciplined drawing-practice of Aphonse Legros, Henry Tonks, and Frederick Brown, and its eclipse by a notion of design garnered from Paul Klee's and László Moholy-Nagy's Bauhaus ideals. As such it is popularly implicated in the demise of life drawing in higher art education. Laughton, *Coldstream*, 244-245.

⁶⁸ 'Art School Educated', Tate and London Consortium; Tickner, *Hornsey*; McLoughlin, 'The Textile Student'; and Lynda Morris, who first sought a reappraisal in 1984 and has remained an advocate for Coldstream's conceptual reappraisal, recently expressing interest in a orchestrating a revival exhibition through the Norwich Art School. Lynda Morris 'Coldstream and Representational Painting', *Art Monthly*, 79 (Sep 1984), 6-11; and interviews with author (14 Sep and 13 Oct 2011).

⁶⁹ From conversation between Laughton and Pinset (10 Feb 1982), reproduced in Laughton, *Euston Road*, 157. Evidence for these methods dates predominantly from Coldstream's time teaching at the Camberwell School of Art from 1945 to 1949, as Coldstream's role at the Slade was more supervisory and administrative than directly instructive. Comments about Coldstream's methods, in addition to those of Pinset, are drawn from Francis Hoyland, Letter to Bruce Laughton (23 Aug 1997); Anthony Eton, Interview with Bruce Laughton (1997); and excerpts from Eton diary (1947), all quoted in Laughton, *Coldstream*, 129. Additional information can be found in Jennifer Somerville's Camberwell diary, and in Coldstream's broadcast on Holbein published in *The Listener* (5 Feb 1947), in addition to the evidence in the drawn-objects and paintings themselves. Ibid.

completing a crossword.⁷⁰ He began by drawing a series of faint parallel horizontal lines on the paper or canvas, starting with the one bisecting the head or focal point. Points of reference from the subject would then be plotted along the lines. The natural edge was often disregarded as a frame.⁷¹ This did not treat the canvas or paper as a Cubist grid, divided in order to emphasise its flatness and expanse. Instead the support was merely a screen for layers of juxtaposed projections as the space between points was measured and re-measured over a number of prolonged sittings. In 1939 Coldstream was measuring his subjects with little cards, marked with calibrations, but in 1981 St. John Wilson recorded Coldstream using a pencil sometimes augmented by a tape measure or ruler.⁷² In the 1940s, Pinset described Coldstream extending his arm straight in front of him with the brush (or other implement) firmly gripped in his fingers, so that the thumb was left free to move the nail up and down in order to read the distance between points. Each measurement would be verified against different points and then a corresponding mark would be made on the page, digging the pencil into the paper to indicate a stop-start point for the next measurement. Humphrey Spender's photograph of Coldstream on the roof of the Bolton Art Gallery shows the artist, brush gripped in an extended hand, measuring for *Bolton* (1938) (Figs. 4.18-9). The image is a heroic one of a man forcing mist, illusion, and discord to adhere to simple principles of coordination.

The first visible painted stars, barbs, and lines appear in portraits painted at 'kilo 6 Camp', an Indian Army Transit Camp near Cairo – evident particularly in *Subedar Jaggat Singh* (1943) and *Havildar Ajmer Singh* (1943) – and their prominence increased throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The Second World War was also a period during which Coldstream was forced to fall back upon traditional practices due to the space and time constraints imposed on him by the war. The extent of Coldstream's drawn oeuvre other than paintings is unconfirmed. Many pieces are unattributed or appear to have been given away to small, private collections, or have been destroyed or lost. In early 2011 four unsigned drawings, rendered in Coldstream's distinctive manner (tentative outline and delicate, linear shading), were found by the curator of the Strang Prints and Drawing Room, University College of London, which has an extensive collection of Slade artwork. The unattributed works were in a cardboard box filled with office papers, discarded on Coldstream's retirement in 1975. The sensitivity of these renderings, the gentle play between the blankness of the page and the carving-like shading make it astonishing that they were abandoned, yet it was not out of character. Laughton, a

⁷⁰ See Laughton, *Euston Road*, 119.

⁷¹ Frequently the natural edge of the support was used as the border, though paper-based drawn-objects were occasionally cropped once complete. A beautiful example of this is William Coldstream, *Pencil drawing: Study portrait / pane squared*, pencil on paper, size unknown, TGA 8922.14.36.

⁷² Laughton, *Euston Road*, 207, and St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 22.

friend as well as his biographer, once noticed Coldstream standing upon a drawing. When Laughton retrieved it protectively, it was offhandedly gifted to him.⁷³ Similar destruction occurred one Saturday morning at the Slade during the late 1950s, when student Michael Woods was joined by Coldstream in drawing from a model. When Coldstream finished, he promptly tore up his drawings and threw them in a bin. As Laughton had, Woods retrieved them, finding to his surprise loosely rendered, calligraphic studies which might have resembled the rare manner of the nude studies of 1955-7 (Figs. 4.20-1).⁷⁴ This differed greatly from the tight, tentative works commonly associated Coldstream, such as *Standing Nude, Camberwell* (1947), *Head of Sleeping Nude* (c.1980), and *Reclining Nude* (1977) (Figs. 4.22-4), and his architectural studies, such as *Ponte Vecchio, Florence* (1945) and *Temporary Bridge over the Volturno* (1944). It is thus difficult to plumb the full character of Coldstream's drawn-objects. Most of his publically accessible ones are contained in fourteen confirmed sketchbooks, dated between 1940 and 1960, in the Tate Archive, twelve of which were used during Coldstream's posting as a War Artist during World War II. Even in the sketchbooks, works are undated and disorganised. Pages are ripped, removed, and occasionally clipped. Studies are compounded, left fragmentary, inverted, and subsumed to encroaching calculations and colour notes (yet rarely are they rendered in anything but a graphite pencil or black ink). Drawing for personal or public record was not a habit, as it was for his Euston Road peers Graham Bell and Claude Rogers. The photograph of Coldstream with *Indian Soldier*, discussed in the opening of this chapter, suggests another submerged narrative to this trail of destruction and unwillingness to draw. In the private photograph, Coldstream's habitual horn-rimmed glasses frame what could be a hint of a smile in the lower eyelid. Holding the drawing up high, peeking over its edge at his lifelong friend, the image suggests sentimentality towards the work, even a reticence about sharing.

Coldstream, like many artists of his generation, matured under the shadow of Tonks and Sickert. He professed to learn little from Tonks at the Slade, claiming that his professor despaired of Coldstream's lack of development toward the Slade's hybrid drawing ideals, strung between Ingres and Michelangelo. His early drawings were instead indebted to Cézanne. Pictures such as *Michael Reynolds* (c.1930) replicate the graphite mosaic of clustered line evident in Cézanne's *Portrait of Hortense Fiquet* (c.1880) (Figs. 4.25, 1.20). According to Laughton's account, Coldstream came into contact with Continental, Modernist drawings as early as 1926, at age 18, when editor Gerald Reitlinger (1900-1978) began to reproduce drawings by Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Picasso, among others from the School of Paris, in his

⁷³ Bruce Laughton, email to author (14 Aug 2011).

⁷⁴ Laughton, *Coldstream*, 196.

magazine *Drawing and Design*.⁷⁵ It is perhaps because of the stubborn predisposition for the School of Paris that Tonks referred Coldstream first to an elderly coach-sign painter, to learn how to make firm marks with a steady, slow hand, and then eventually to Sickert.⁷⁶ Coldstream attended Sickert's lectures at the Bow and Bromley Evening Institute in 1929, where he absorbed the elder draftsman's interest in drawing as a tool for capturing urban life, and also his technique of accreted lines for doing so.⁷⁷ As discussed in the second chapter, Sickert advised his students to apply three successive layers of marks once the essential forms within the subject were identified.⁷⁸ The first was a light, simple, 'tentative line' that blocks in the shapes. The second is tone, and from the mingling of tone and shape on the page, the artist would be able to see where to place the 'definite line'. It is an organic conception of a sequence of drawn-acts resulting in the 'growth' of the image. Evidence of this influence can be seen in Coldstream's *Temporary Bridge over the Volturno* (c. 1944) (Fig. 4.26), where line gathers in clusters, overlapping at points of interest. A sense of outline develops distinct from either pure description or the pattern-like lines of Cézanne. Coldstream's outline does not follow form, just as the pencil's darkness does not follow line. Dark marks are congregations of smaller points, which grow larger toward the foreground of the subject, and smaller and shorter as they recede into the distance. The salient impression is one of forms known through outline, yet the outline is only a correlation, a shepherding of smaller components, which collect around important planes. Similarly, in *Sonia Brownell Asleep* (c.1939-40) (Fig. 4.27), the clear shapes of her face appear to be repeatedly retraced – utilising Sickert's accretive technique – but with a freedom to display the lines involved in this process, reminiscent of Cézanne. In some unfinished sketches, like a standing nude in one of the 1945 sketchbooks, this retracing takes on a compulsive momentum, swallowing the subject (Figs. 4.28-9).

Distance, Space, Layering, and Duration

Coldstream's practice of measured drawings allowed for the traditionally fecund resources of the mind – memory and imagination – to be dismissed along with the illusion of distance. Coldstream explores drawing-acts as sequences of individual exposures ordered through

⁷⁵ Laughton, *Euston Road*, 84.

⁷⁶ Laughton, *Coldstream*, 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 18.

⁷⁸ Sickert, 'Underpainting,' 643. As discussed in the second chapter, Sickert described the growth of the picture as like a tree in the fourth Thanet lecture (19 No 1934): 'If you were training a pear tree against a wall you would not tack the branches on to the wall with tin because that would break all the little sensitive shoots, you would tack them against the wall with little strips of flannel – something soft.' Sickert, *The Complete Writings*, 653.

time. This was a preoccupation throughout his career, but it was during the war that he experimented with possibilities of layered observations, toying with his own technique, which after the war developed into his distinct practice.

In the sketchbooks from the Second World War and immediate post-war period Coldstream experimented with the possibility of combining Sickert's layering of tentative lines and his own comparative measurements. In Italy during the war, he was a long way from home and the recognition he had achieved there for his strict measurement techniques. He was also re-exposed to the country of the Renaissance masters.⁷⁹ In his numerous sketchbooks from this time he allowed himself to experiment with different types of interaction between observations and mark making. It is thus possible that the war reintroduced Coldstream to the inherent limitations of sketching, which awakened his curiosity about how to expand his method. One notable aspect of this method, noticed by St. John Wilson in 1981-2, was allowing the notation on the canvas to 'average' different observations.⁸⁰ Based on his sketchbook experimentations, it appears likely that his peculiar process of 'averaging' grew gradually from practical experiments with the limitations of his mediums, which was backed up by personal preoccupations for understanding the essential in his subjects and was reinforced by intellectual developments during the 1950s.

Coldstream's measuring techniques allowed the image to be flattened through imagining a grid, aided by a manoeuvred pencil held at arm's length, which was transferred to the coordinates on the page or canvas. In a 1982 interview on the BBC's Third Programme with Edward Lucie-Smith, Coldstream created an important distinction between distance and space. Distance was illusion, he said: it was simply guesswork aided by the imagination and by the rules of perspective.⁸¹ His own form of measurement, in contrast, relied on the spacing between registration points. It was denial of perspective, a denial of anything inferred by looking. It was essentially an acknowledgement of the entrapment of the self within itself, a solipsism that denied the reliability of the senses to convey reality. This did not mean that realism was impossible. In order to achieve meaningfulness, however, realism had to limit itself to what the mind was capable of apprehending rather than inferring. Thus, as articulated in the 1982 interview, the space between points – the intervals of height and width – could be plotted and mapped through careful, patient observation. And so through rendering these measurements as either delicate touches or violent stabs made across the

⁷⁹ Coldstream had travelled in Italy twice before the war, in 1929 and 1930, but his tour during the war appears to have had a particular impression on him.

⁸⁰ St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 24.

⁸¹ Edward Lucie-Smith interview with Coldstream, broadcast in the series 'Conversations with Artists' on the third programme (1 Nov 1982), quoted in Morris, 'Representational Painting', 9.

entire plane of the page or canvas, the image was built up, like carving a relief in reverse. Whereas his pre-war work left visible pencil under-drawing, replicating the dynamic of drawn-objects in watercolour, his post-war works became more violent. In the mid-1950s he substituted red ochre paint for graphite, making the points of reference appear like wounds in the flesh of the canvas – each line was an incision in space and substance.

This consciousness of the corporeality of the supporting materials was challenged and expanded during the war and immediate post-war period by the properties of sketchbooks. Coldstream's wartime experiments appear to have picked apart layers into series, playing with sequence in an unfamiliar way. The Tate's Sketchbook 10 contains an example of three graphite studies of a single view of the interior of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Santo Spirito in Florence (1945) (Figs. 4.30-3). Separate pages, sometime with studies and sometimes blank, are in between them, making it impossible to trace or see the previous study. These were not 'straight' images, precisely transferred from observation to page, but carefully developed selections. The first is sketchy, the lines quick, caustic, blocking in shapes, while the second simplifies and arranges the subject for formal effect rather than representational accuracy. In the third, the forms elongate; line and direction become precise; the outline and depth of touch dance along the relevant planes rather than describing elements of the scene. It appears to be like a form of scientific representation termed 'truth-to-nature', which encouraged scientists to create 'reasoned images' by compiling knowledge through numerous observations.⁸² From the reservoir that was the trained mind, a scientist could select, perfect, and produce a reasoned representative image, whose subject embodied its type or category. The deceptiveness of appearances could thus be pierced by the mind's processing and storing of observations. In the autumn of 1945, after Coldstream had returned from the war, Pasmore presented him with a copy of John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing* (1857), and in a journal of the time, Coldstream describes taking on a 'reading plan' and purchasing smooth paper and a mapping pen to follow Ruskin's exercises in retraining his hand.⁸³ Ruskin enjoins the reader to train himself or herself to notice the 'vital facts of form', those essential details that show where a building's weight is distributed and thus can be simplified into the most informative and pleasing representative lines.⁸⁴ Though Coldstream's 'comparative measurements' do not use vital facts of form to convey a believable illusion, the interior of Santo Spirito selects and reselects vital aspects of the scene. Sketchbook 10 does not reveal the insincerity of Coldstream's attachment to carefully

⁸² Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 55-113.

⁸³ He wrote of his reading plan and exercises in a letter to friend (and possible lover) Edith Canning in 1945, whom he met in Egypt during the war. Other books in the reading plan were H. A. L. Fischer's *History of Europe* and Ricordi Londonesi's *Italian Self-Tuition Course*. Laughton, *Coldstream*, 123.

⁸⁴ John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing* [1857] (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1971), 94, 97.

observed plotting of height and width, but instead shows a fresh curiosity about how to interact with fluctuating appearances.

In the post-war years, Coldstream began to use sketchbooks and notebooks with thinner paper, perhaps due to the prolonged rationing, and with them came experimentations in layering images. Sketches can take on new life in this context, juxtaposing and interacting with each other as pages are turned and they become layered. A Camberwell life room model's abdomen coincidentally reveals the aged simplicity of a gothic, church door from rural Shenningdon. Coldstream overtly plays with this effect in Sketchbook 16 (undated but probably used during in his early years at the Slade). A small, naturalistic sparrow on a twig is drawn, and in the successive pages the bird metamorphoses into a series of caricatures or monsters, similar to Sutherland's biomorphic creatures, before resolving into entirely abstract, pseudo-Cubist composition.⁸⁵ The transformation occurs sometimes through tracing and sometimes through a redrawing to one side of the prior composition. What is revealed is an experiment resonant of Kenneth Clark's later reproduction in *The Nude* (1956) of four of the eighteen 'stages' of Picasso's lithograph series *Les deux femmes nues* (*Two Nude Women*) (1945). When read as a sequence, as Clark does, the sitting figure slowly turns to meet the beholder's gaze, uncurling from a naturalistic, reflective pose, reminiscent of Édouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-3); as her body swells, contours turn into lines and features turn into symbols. A series on a theme is thus established and becomes, as a group, the stand-in for a single piece. If Sketchbook 16 is considered next to Picasso's precedent, Coldstream's sketchbook series is another form of his earlier experiments in how layered marks can be sequences, articulating an image through superimposing observations. It has many similarities to Charles Biederman's description of film in *Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge* (1948) as liberating 'numerous time-space aspects' from the confines of artificial simultaneity, or what he called the 'mold of a single time-space static context'.⁸⁶ This sense of embracing dynamic sequence, among other of Biederman's tenets, was influential for an array of abstractionists, including Pasmore. But sequential abstraction was an exception for Coldstream: close observation of visual images was dominant throughout his practice. Drawn-objects, such as those in Sketchbook 16, however, do demonstrate how Coldstream used his sketchbooks to play with the extensions of his pre-war ideas – experimenting with various forms of palimpsest, which would be turned towards composite practices after the war.

⁸⁵ William Coldstream, 'Sketchbook 16 (seated figure; birds)', undated, pencil and ink on paper, 26.3 x 21.3 cm, TGA 8922.14.16.

⁸⁶ Charles Biederman, *Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge* (Red Wing: Charles Biederman, 1948), 184-5.

Part of Coldstream's commitment to close observation was his desire to maintain interest. It is an intellectual engagement that parallels the notion of 'conviction' discussed in relation to Claude Rogers in chapter three.⁸⁷ Coldstream described his careful observation of nature as being of paramount importance to maintaining his interest and was something he had founded his pre-war career upon. This 'interest' was both a type of witness that kept the artist within rather than removed from society as well as a way to maintain his focused energetic involvement in the process of creating. He described it in his 1937 *Listener* article 'How I Paint':

But I believe that my own reactions to facts are much freer, more unexpected and more genuine, when my attention is occupied with the manifest problem of more or less accurate representation. I never consciously try to make things fit into any preconceived plan or form and find I lose interest unless I let myself be ruled by what I see.⁸⁸

When taken in conjunction, the examples in Sketchbooks 10 and 16 show a continued preoccupation with how observations vary as well as how marks on a page interact with each other. By the end of the 1950s, Coldstream's drawn-objects, such as *Study for Seated Nude*, show a sensitive compromise. Threadlike lines placed at points of outline are evident, but their use is restrained, thoughtful, and lain over carefully drawn, linear tone. The subject, Slade model Monica Hoyer, is rendered in a cluster of points that cause her to emerge from the weave of the paper as a whole, like Michelangelo's *Awakening Slave* (1520-1523) (Fig. 4.34) or a figure emerging from a mist. The tactility of this surface plays against the weave of the paper itself, emulating the woven fibres of its production, layering in patches and unbounded shapes of modulated tone. She conveys a weight of actuality beyond and yet within the manner of her rendering. In places, such as above her ear and under her left arm, lines show where the registration marks noted horizontal and vertical coordinates. Rather than relying on Sickertian outlines, which he and others from the Euston Road School employed before the war, Coldstream allows the coordinated, observed relationships to build as layers across the surface of the page, and thus compound into this misty, carved image. Careful observation of this change in Coldstream's paper-based drawn-objects makes it almost possible to observe the point in the late 1950s when this composite approach transformed precisely rendered portraits like *Mrs Winifred Burger* (1936-7) into those like *Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer)* (1959-1960) (Fig. 4.35) with its eclectic light directions.

The unsettling intensity of Coldstream's paintings like *Seated Nude* attracts poetic analogy. Sylvester's invocation in 1962 of the barb, the spike, and the web conjures associations with the violence inherent in capturing a likeness and imprisoning it in paint. In 1999 when St.

⁸⁷ Rogers, Bristol Art School Lecture Draft, 1-2.

⁸⁸ Coldstream, 'How I Paint', 4.

John Wilson published *The Artist at Work*, his analogies were gentler, orbiting the magic of artistic invention.⁸⁹ While Coldstream captured St. John Wilson's likeness in 1981-2, the latter returned the artist's close observation, jotting notes and sketching Coldstream's movements and impressions, which became the material for his book. Between sittings St. John Wilson secretly defied Coldstream not only in viewing the unfinished portrait but also in photographing it in stages of completion (Fig. 4.36). The result was his observation that Coldstream's method averaged the impressions from a single sitting against those begun afresh in each of the other ninety-five ones. 'Every time you start you've got to be willing to risk everything,' he quoted Coldstream from his sittings, 'and if there is a passage you happen to like, but which doesn't check out, you've got to be prepared to put your brush through it.'⁹⁰ The image was worked up as a whole, patches of colour or line in tight linear clusters being applied across the entire surface of the image. This treatment was augmented by Coldstream's patient darkening of the canvas in gradual stages, reluctant to 'paint out' or lighten a section.⁹¹ Rather than contradicting St. John Wilson's averaging, this heightened it: borders became multiplied or hazy and the image accrued the uncanny presence of nineteenth-century polymath Francis Galton's superimposition photographs (Fig. 4.38).⁹² St. John Wilson likened this averaging to 'Bonnard's *durée*'.⁹³

St. John Wilson's invocation of Bonnard references an article written by Sylvester in 1961-2 about the French artist's painting *The Table* (1925). Sylvester described the properties of the painting leading the mind towards identification through gradual recognition in mimic of how we see in ordinary life:

My awareness of its identity as a thing and my awareness of its shape and colour and texture – builds up, rather as when we wake up in the morning and see a vague shape over there which gradually acquires more and more substance, more clarity and definition and more overtones of meaning. And my inability to fix my own bearings in space in relation to the whole scene in front of me corresponds to the fact that in reality I am not necessarily conscious of where I am standing as I look at something: my consciousness is what I am looking at and my thoughts about it and my thoughts about my thoughts (which could include thoughts about the distance). Bonnard, then, does not paint something seen as if seen in an instant of time. He causes the spectator to have the

⁸⁹ These gentle analogies were no doubt also influenced by St. John Wilson being the subject of Coldstream's analysis rather than naked female Slade models. St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 7.

⁹⁰ St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 24.

⁹¹ Gowing, *Coldstream*, (1962), 8.

⁹² Michel Frizot, 'Body of Evidence', *The New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Köln: Könemann, 1998), [258-271] 266-7.

⁹³ St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 24.

same kind of experience in front of the painting as he has in and of the real world.⁹⁴

This is not only a way of seeing for Sylvester, but a recreation of the mental reactions to the ‘continuous and cumulative’ nature of time. What Bonnard creates is a replica of how humans ‘build up a picture in our minds of something we remember seeing in the past’.⁹⁵ It becomes a composite of memories. Unlike Bonnard, who painted from memory in order to recreate its experience, Coldstream refused memory. Duration in this sense is evocative of a way of reading the artwork, but does not encompass the particulars of Coldstream’s approach. Coldstream does not create an experience of perception in looking at the work as Bonnard does. Instead he uses self-conscious experiences of perception to structure his practice. The result does not remind us of what we experience, but of the stripped and hallucinatory memory of a loved one – something created from imprecise and shifting juxtapositions of multiple experiences. The result does not give form to a feeling, but confronts us with the formlessness of memory. It is an unsettling effect that Sylvester described in a 1976 letter to d’Offay: ‘I knew and said all along, while I loved these pictures, I felt foxed by them.’⁹⁶

With the French word for duration, St. John Wilson can’t help but also invoke Henri Bergson and his understanding of *la durée*, originally formulated in *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889, translated into English in 1910 as *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*). Duration formed an integral part of Bergson’s ‘concept of multiplicity’.⁹⁷ As a way to understand human consciousness, Bergson proposed that time and space needed to be unmixed. Duration was Bergson’s term for the experience of constant movement through time in contrast to arrangements in space. Consciousness depended on the thoughts unravelling through time, so thought was thus a matter of duration. When objects are discernable in space they are capable of being counted, arranged, juxtaposed. Duration negated these ordering activities – in duration all is homogenous and indistinguishable except through the action of memory on that particular moment of conscious thought. Through invoking *durée*, St. John Wilson implies that Coldstream’s activities were the meeting between the axes of time and space. Each measurement, as an observation and thus a raw datum of consciousness, was subject to duration and was

⁹⁴ David Sylvester, ‘Bonnard’s *The Table*’, *The Listener* (15 Mar 1962), reproduced in Sylvester, *About Modern Life*, 108-109. Originally the third of a three-part series ‘Still Life: Cézanne, Braque, Bonnard’, written for the BBC Home Service’s ‘Painting of the Month’.

⁹⁵ Sylvester, ‘Bonnard’s *The Table*’, 109.

⁹⁶ David Sylvester, Draft letter to Anthony d’Offay (16 Sep 1976), TGA, uncatalogued.

⁹⁷ Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard, ‘Henri Bergson’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/bergson/>.

therefore unquantifiable. As the measurement is transformed onto the page it takes on a spatial existence. As the different observations are layered, the picture becomes a thing suspended between temporal and spatial identities – like a form of external memory or a diagram of a mind freed from duration. St. John Wilson’s usage does not strictly correlate to the Bergsonian sense, however, since the image is not equivalent to duration, but formed from combining ways of experiencing reality. The images are not representations of continuous progress, but depict what happens when data is plucked from progress. More precisely, Coldstream is depicting Bergson’s ‘quantitative multiplicity’ (or sense of objects in space). It is possible Coldstream was influenced by Bergson, who affected many artists of Coldstream’s acquaintance, such as Duncan Grant and Virginia Woolf, and whose theories rapidly spread through the pre-war British intelligentsia. It is unlikely that Coldstream was responding to any rigorous notion of duration or Bergson’s concept of multiplicity. As evidenced in his sketchbook experimentations, it is more likely that his peculiar process of ‘averaging’ grew gradually from practical experiments with the limitations of his mediums, which was backed up by a personal preoccupation with understanding the essential in his subjects. Understanding these senses of duration, however, not only throws light upon Coldstream’s appeal to contemporaries such as St. John Wilson but also elucidates possible readings of these enigmatic images. Layering is no longer carving into an imaginary depth in order to release vitality, as discussed about the 1920s and 1930s in chapter two, but is collapsing sequential experiences to form an object that is the proxy of consciousness.

The sketchbooks demonstrate how Coldstream experimented with his materials to arrive at both his distinctive, delicate touches, and his superimposed layers of observations. Coldstream’s development of comparative measurement as well as his averaging were not only devised in a spirit of pictorial innovation but also reflect his treatment of each subject as a unique pictorial challenge. Friend and Slade colleague William Townsend recorded Coldstream’s reactions to the challenge of representation in his journal entry of 17 October 1947:

Bill, pointing to a crane, folded against one of the warehouses across the canal, stated like this the fundamental difference between the painter interested first in a world outside himself and a painter interested in a world of his reactions with only the picture as his outside objective. ‘They start where we leave off. They believe they can draw that crane without any difficulty, the only problem is where to place it and in what picture. We are not sure we can draw it as we see it and the whole picture is our attempt to do so and we consider we have done well if we get somewhere near it.’⁹⁸

⁹⁸ William Townsend (17 Oct 1947), Journal XVII, TGA 75, quoted in Laughton, *Coldstream*, 151.

This sentiment has led to analogies between Coldstream's painting method and the rules of sport, even by Coldstream himself in a 1965 interview with Moynihan.⁹⁹ What Coldstream is responding to is not a sense of honesty and dishonesty, but the level to which one allows sensations, unchecked, to become the subject of the picture. In a letter to Rake on 17 November 1941, the newly recruited Coldstream discussed his desire to paint seascapes in relation not to possible limitations from representational rules but in regard to the inherent limitations of perception:

All the weather changes would not matter – I never think the changes in the weather matter – Pasmore hates any change in the light – But I am not an impressionist – and one uses light and its changes only to break down the conventional conception of a subject which is what every naturally conceptual artist must get away from – and that is why impressionism was such a wonderful conscious theory for such artists as Cézanne Seurat and Degas – because by cutting across the stock conceptions of subjects it enabled them to make new ones of particular unexpected freshness.¹⁰⁰

In effect, the seeds of his later sketchbook experimentations were planted in regard to the tension between notation from a single observation and averaged notations from multiple observations. Perhaps ironically, it was Pasmore who painted water-scapes in 1949-1951, isolating the essential abstract forms that would become potent symbols throughout his work.¹⁰¹ Coldstream appears not to have tackled the subject, remaining with the subtler properties of human figures and cityscapes. What emerges through Coldstream's reflections, however, is an articulation of how the impermanence of some features illuminates what is essential and unchangeable. Where the Impressionists used light to cut through form, he used time to cut through light – demonstrating critical engagement with both optics and experience.

Traditionally bountiful resources of the creative mind – memory and imagination – were thus dismissed by Coldstream, a decision not unlike developments in the intellectual circles of the time. Austrian philosopher Karl Popper (1902-1994) dismissed the 'bucket theory of mind', which likened the mind to a dumping ground of sensations that are then processed. Coldstream would have been exposed to Popper's ideas through working alongside Gombrich when the latter took up his position as Durning-Lawrence Professor at University College, London (1956-1969). It is possible, however, that they were in contact prior to the

⁹⁹ Coldstream, 'Nonconformist', 220.

¹⁰⁰ William Coldstream, Letter to Jack Rake (17 Nov 1941), TGA 787.191, quoted in Laughton, *Euston Road School*, 211.

¹⁰¹ Victor Pasmore's: *Spiral Motif: The Wave*, 1949-50, 81.5 x 106.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; *Spiral Development in Green, Violet, Blue and Gold: The Coast of Inland Sea*, 1950, 81.5 x 101.5 cm, Tate, London; and *Ceramic Mural: The Waterfall*, 1951, Festival of Britain, London, disassembled.

appointment. Gombrich was self-professedly indebted to Popper, his mentor in Vienna, whose ‘critical-rationalism’ included replacing the bucket theory with the ‘search-light theory’, which in Gombrich’s words from *Art and Illusion* described organisms as never ceasing to probe and test their environment: ‘There is no rigid distinction between perception and illusion. Perception employs all its resources to weed out harmful illusions, but it may sometimes fail to “disprove” a false hypothesis.’¹⁰² The idea of a searchlight implied that each mind was predicated upon hypothesis and falsification. Even when constantly testing, observations and thoughts were conditioned by and employed along a specific framework – an impartial, innocent look was mentally impossible. In 1943 Herbert Read published *Education Through Art*, in which he defined observation as a desire to record sense impressions, to clarify knowledge, to build memory.¹⁰³ In 1951 Tom Hudson, a friend of Pasmore’s, began to apply Read’s theory about childhood creativity as painting master at Lowestoft School of Art. He reinterpreted Read’s activity of observation as the activity of ‘construction’, which was a segment-by-segment assemblage of awareness learnt through trial and error.¹⁰⁴ Perceiving was thus not looking and recording, but a matter of utilising creatively constructed frameworks. Coldstream was aware of aspects of Hudson’s theories from the committee discussions of the NACAE, where Pasmore proposed Hudsonesque ideas of creative development as integral to redesigning tertiary art education.¹⁰⁵ It is thus important to note that while Coldstream was searching for a way to represent the essential in his subjects, intellectual and artistic thought supported his desire to weed out contaminating illusion through rigorous methodology or construction. Through his innovative techniques he was not reliant on Gombrich’s illusions, but was able to verify his perceptions through superimposing contained, direct looks that accrued on the page. Thus like the weather being unimportant to the essence of painting the sea, Coldstream was able to pierce appearances as well as preconceptions in representing his subjects. What emerges is not a document of an impression, but what has endured through prolonged sittings. Paint became the medium of executing these drawing-exercises more as he grew older, perhaps because of paint’s ability to allow a near infinite addition of layers.

¹⁰² Ernst Gombrich *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* [first published in 1960, from Gombrich’s lectures for the A.W. Mellon Lectures in Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1956] (London: Phaidon, 1994), 23-24. For Popper, see: Stephen Thornton, ‘Karl Popper’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/popper/>>.

¹⁰³ David Thistlewood, *A Continuing Process: The New Creativity in British Art Education 1955-65* (London: ICA, c.1981), 8-9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Victor Pasmore, comments recorded by committee secretary, Wilma Harte, in: ‘National Advisory Council for Art Education Minutes: A.E. 2/59’, NA, ED 46/T424 (14.30, 5 Mar 1959), paragraph 4i.

The Objectivity of the Eye

Coldstream's minimisation of interfering, unreliable mental faculties was called by his contemporaries direct, straight, or precise observation. It was also sometimes called 'objective'. This term's meaning in the 1950s was threefold: the physical materials of the medium, the actual subject of a painting, and a direct, impersonal representation. In relation to the latter, the term 'objective' is misleading. Its historical malleability confuses and thus easily reframes a discussion that seeks to tame it. It has hijacked discussions of Coldstream's methods in past scholarship, repositioning them as whether objective art is possible or whether Coldstream believed his methods to be objective and untainted. I prefer to examine Coldstream's methods during the 1940s and 1950s in relation to Sylvester's contemporaneous dichotomy: imposition and interposition. I am not concerned with whether Coldstream sought objectivity as an abstract purity, but rather how he reacted against as well as utilised the inherent limitations within consciousness and within art processes. It is not a question of removing the self, which is impossible, but of managing the type and level of imposition. The second sense of objectivity I will address is the objective autonomy of the canvas or paper. Coldstream first experienced this notion of objective during his experiments with the Objective Abstractionists in the late 1930s, and the persistent association of 'objectivity' with abstraction sheds light on the connotations of the term at the time. If Coldstream's layered measurements are evaluated in light of these historical conventions, a connection can be made between his composite, layered images and the immanence of the subject within the materials.

Coldstream's layered measurements created artwork that led philosopher A. J. Ayer to call him a true Logical Positivist, and for Patrick Heron (1920-1999), Denys Sutton (1917-1991), and Adrian Stokes to characterise his work as 'uncontaminated realism'.¹⁰⁶ Unlike other realist artists of the 1950s such as Jack Smith (1928-2011), John Bratby (1928-1992), Lucien Freud, and Francis Bacon, Coldstream appeared to respond to the subject without expressionistic distortion, hence Sylvester classing his drawings as 'done with care, intellectual'. Occasionally this discussion of direct looking turned into 'objectivity'. In part this division between objective and subjective was a remnant of the earlier battle lines between the realists and surrealists that culminated in the 16 March 1938 public panel with Herbert Read, Roland Penrose (1900-1984), and Julian Trevelyan (1910-1988) representing

¹⁰⁶ A. J. Ayer quoted by Slade archivist and former pupil, Stephen Chaplin, from a conversation between the two in 1952-5. Stephen Chaplin, Interview with James Hyman (Feb 1994); referenced in Hyman, *Battle*, 154, 240. A similar view by an unnamed 'well-known philosopher' is quoted in John Russell and Lord Snowdon, *Private View* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), 68. Andrew Forge, Interview by Bruce Laughton (20 Apr 1980); quoted in Laughton, *Coldstream*, 188-189.

the surrealists and Coldstream, Graham Bell, and Alick West the realists.¹⁰⁷ Contemporaneous discussions divided art into subjective and objective, such as Graham Sutherland's in 'A Trend in English Draughtsmanship' or Claude Rogers's 1947 manuscript for a lecture, in which he wrote: "There is this great division in painting today – more marked than at any other time in history. In fact, if we look backwards, we see that hitherto painting has always been subjective or objective."¹⁰⁸

Sylvester used 'objectivity' to characterise Coldstream in his 1954 article 'Contemporary British Drawing': '[Coldstream's drawn-objects] are unemphatic and diffident – diffident in that the artist has not used them as a means of asserting his personality but of recording objectively what he has seen.'¹⁰⁹ By 1962, however, Sylvester came to attribute these qualities to Coldstream's emotional impulse, particularly Coldstream's treatment of distance as threatening, writing in 'Grey Eminence':

The sense of the subject's apartness from the artist is no simple matter of detachment. It can include actual painful awareness of the promise of sensuous pleasure implicit in the subject – Italian space and light no less than naked girl. The separateness may signify a holding back from pleasure (which is after all, exactly what the continued act of painting is). Or it may signify the artist's recognition that something of the pleasure which the subject has to offer always eludes him¹¹⁰

From earlier discussions of Coldstream's drawn-objects, whether in paint or on paper, it is evident that the instability and experimentation of the Second World War years altered Coldstream's own engagement with his pre-war 'direct' pictures. What emerges in the post-war years is a slow fulfilment of his inclinations to compound imagery. If Sylvester only saw this emotional drive in Coldstream's 1960s works it is likely this was due to the momentum of his pre-war reputation. Even in the 1930s, however, there was a more nuanced view of objectivity. Sutherland's characterisation of it is perhaps a more accurate view of Coldstream. Rather than describing it as a mechanical accuracy, he wrote:

I have said that the objective outlook depends on the experience of the eye. Such experience may lead an artist of this type to make a representation of what he sees, or it may induce him to make a painted pattern derived from the forms before his eyes. In either case his inspiration is limited objectively, and his enjoyment is bound up with his choice and apprehension of the rhythms which he abstracts from the visual field. [...] The real difference, however, between the objective and

¹⁰⁷ See: Lynda Morris, *The Story of the ALA 1933-1953* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1983). Brief summaries also in: *English Art*, 334; Spalding, *British Art*, 118-9; Laughton, *Euston Road*, 18.

¹⁰⁸ Sutherland, 'A Trend', 7-13. Rogers, Bristol Art School Lecture Draft, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Sylvester, 'Contemporary Drawing', 25.

¹¹⁰ Sylvester, 'Grey Eminence', 162.

the subjective artist lies in the fact that the function of the latter is akin to that of the poet, since he is essentially creative.¹¹¹

The opposition of poetry and prose was a division Coldstream welcomed, as Gowing wrote in the 1962 exhibition catalogue: '[Coldstream] scorned anything less. "Prose painting!" he once exclaimed, looking at J L David, anyone can get away with poetry.'¹¹²

Gowing saw revelation in Coldstream's repression. What he described as the 'possibility of a very direct relationship of art with appearances' was not antithetical to a different mode of emotional engagement. The lack of obvious emotion in the images grew from a mature understanding of his emotional needs, which could be achieved through the process of creating. He eloquently summarised this in the introduction to Coldstream's first retrospective: 'The aim was realism – and it was the veritable realism of modern art; it was based on a realistic understanding of himself [...] nothing exposes him like the straight transcription of what is seen.'¹¹³ During the 1950s, Coldstream's web of drawn barbs and handwriting under the paint began to dominate his subjects and made ignoring his subjective presence in the creation of the work more difficult. Nonetheless it is under the ideology of objectivity that Coldstream has remained categorised. Laughton's 1986 study of the Euston Road School is subtitled 'A Study in Objective Painting'. Lynda Morris's 1984 *Art Monthly* article refers to Coldstream's 'objectivity of flat measurements of height and width'.¹¹⁴ Even if we could comfortably characterise Coldstream's Euston Road School as objective, with the development of layered measurement it loses relevance as a term.

The very possibility that the eye could be an independent agent, which could minimise the interference of the mind, was an idea born alongside the nineteenth-century ideal of scientific representation known as 'mechanical objectivity'. This way of looking at the world was a drive to repress the intervention of the self in gathering information and images from nature. The goal was to move nature directly to the page through various mechanisms of representation, including tracing, and it culminated with photographic processes.¹¹⁵ The idea that objectivity is antithetical to 'subjective' judgement has been advanced by the catchy but mythical maxim that 'photography does not lie'. Historically, objectivity is a problematic concept. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have sought to tighten the terminology in relation to scientific representation. 'To be objective,' they wrote in *Objectivity* (2007), 'is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower – knowledge unmarked by prejudice

¹¹¹ Sutherland, 'A Trend', 8.

¹¹² Gowing, 'Introduction' (1962), 8.

¹¹³ Ibid, 7-9.

¹¹⁴ Morris, 'Representational Painting', 11.

¹¹⁵ As argued by Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*.

or skill, fantasy or judgment, wishing or striving. Objectivity is blind sight, seeing without interference, interpretation, or intelligence.¹¹⁶ It is also a young concept, emerging in the mid-nineteenth century and quickly assuming the mantle of scientific norms and thus societal authority. According to Daston and Galison, 'objective' originally had a sense counterintuitive to contemporary associations, referring to 'things as they are presented to consciousness, whereas 'subjective' referred to things in themselves'.¹¹⁷ This correlates with current metaphysical notions of subject: the essence of a thing – the qualities that are inherent – whereas subjective refers to the mind's consciousness of itself; a conscious being that thinks, knows, and perceives.¹¹⁸ Daston and Galison argue that the term objectivity came to refer to idealised vision and direct sensations as evidence, which in turn needed to be verified. It appears to have been used imprecisely during the 1950s and beyond. Coldstream's contemporaries such as Sylvester in the 1954 article, used it to refer to his recording what he saw rather than asserting his personality. It is unclear which precise sense of objectivity this entailed, particularly since Coldstream does not conform to Daston and Galison's ideal of uncritical re-representation. Objectivity's weight, its implication of either specific, scientific application or a complete denial of the self, makes it a problematic descriptive of Coldstream's work. As evident in the Sutherland quotation, objectivity could also pertain to the subjective experience of the eye, and thus as different notions of objectivity mixed during the 1950s, its meaning was insufficiently clear to found analysis on Coldstream's drawing-practice as aspiring to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower.

An alternate concept for evaluating Coldstream's directness or emotion is the degree of imposition. In 'Grey Eminence', Sylvester wrote that Coldstream's 'refusal to shape the subject according to his will' was mediated by the traces of Coldstream's drawing process – 'his distinctive mark, his handwriting'.¹¹⁹ The result was that although Coldstream did not try to shape the picture's subject, his presence was nonetheless felt. The will to not impose was most likely Coldstream's own word for his degree of involvement. In Sylvester's 1976 interview of Coldstream, almost every question about artistic intention was deflected, so that practical constraints were the primary motivation, with the end being not imposing himself.¹²⁰ Practical limitations were time (both how frequently he painted and when he declared a piece finished), subject arrangement (professing that he accepted available models and wanted them to make themselves comfortable rather than directing them to pose), his

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 17.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 29.

¹¹⁸ 'subject, n.,' *OED Online* (Jun 2013) Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/192686>.

¹¹⁹ Sylvester, 'Fences', 770.

¹²⁰ Quoted in David Sylvester, 'Painting a Given Subject', Interview with William Coldstream, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 119:889 (Apr 1977), [262-271], 271.

switch in the early 1950s to predominantly painting nudes (he was at Slade with its heated studios and numerous models), and even, though suspiciously, his artistic method (not feeling confident to depict figures in movement).¹²¹ Each subject becomes a type of representational problem, something tricky to take as found and understand fully, and after the war Coldstream appears to drop his pretensions towards genre subjects as social document. Each painting instead represents a sample of the time and place in the artist's life. Not imposing becomes a way of eliminating rogue variables in an experiment. Coldstream prepared the scene to be drawn by carefully noting the exact interrelation of its components, marking the position of furniture and easel on the floor, and in two surviving sketches, precisely measuring the distance between them (Fig. 4.39-40).¹²² He essentially freezes the scene in space; all variables are fixed. Coldstream creates a control group, a standard entity of statistical, experimental science, in which all mitigating factors are minimised, isolating the subject of the experiment. The real subject becomes the tension between what is absent and present through the passing of time. Not imposing himself becomes a rigour of approach that comments on the very nature of limitations. It echoes the articulation of maturation by Coldstream's friend Auden, which involved 'learning the difference between accidental limitations which it is our duty to outgrow and the necessary limitations of nature beyond which we cannot trespass with impunity'.¹²³ Coldstream's directness is not objectivity, but a rigorous approach to understanding the conditions of artistic representation.

Sylvester contrasts imposition with interposition. The constant presence of the process of creation evident in the final image forces the viewer to be conscious that he is approaching the artwork through the artist's craft. In Sylvester's words from 'Fences':

Despite the painter's refusal to shape the subject according to his will, his distinctive mark, his handwriting intervenes conspicuously between the image and the spectator: the painter may not *impose* himself; he does *interpose* himself. [...] He leaves it [the subject] intact and at the same time uses that web of spiky marks to fence it off from the outside world.¹²⁴

The result becomes an awareness of the experiment and the experimenter through the traces left behind during drawing-practice. Sylvester commented on this being present in all drawings, using language that recalls the sketch aesthetic of the war. In an article accompanying the opening of *Recent British Drawings* (1954), he praised drawn-objects as

¹²¹ Ibid, 269-271.

¹²² Evidence for this can be seen in the a floor plan in Tate Sketchbook 16 and Coldstream's 'demonstration drawing' in the Strang Prints and Drawing Room (Figs. 4.39-40).

¹²³ W. H. Auden, 'Reading,' *The Dyer's Hand* [1962] ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage International, 1989), [3-12] 5.

¹²⁴ Sylvester, 'Fences'.

‘possibly the best of all means of attaining an insight into his [the artist’s] mental processes’.¹²⁵ Coldstream withheld imposition, but he could not (and possibly did not want to) withhold interposition. He was, after all, the self-conscious creator of his artwork – his attraction to their subjects, his prolonged interest (sometimes over multiple years) in completing them are the reasons for their being. Thus it is not their objectivity, but what and how they tested, what limitations they sought to prod, and what traces remained from his motivations, which frame and suffuse the image.

The Object of the Canvas

Despite the awkwardness of using objectivity as either a criterion or a description of Coldstream’s work, competing notions of it helped to shape his artwork. A third sense of it, in addition to knowledge without trace of the knower and Sutherland’s optical experience, is that of the canvas or paper. This also involved the objecthood of the image as an entity capable of willing itself into being. Coldstream’s coterie in the 1930s, many of whom had graduated from the Slade and were soon to become Euston Road School founders, took an often unacknowledged side step into Objective Abstraction. As Coldstream was beginning his involvement in John Grierson’s (1898-1972) GPO Film Unit and just before he met Auden, he was exposed to Geoffrey Tibble and Rodrigo Moynihan’s conception of Objective Abstraction. It was their sense of the canvas as an object that Coldstream reacted against, asserting the fundamental importance of observation in art, and yet it is also their ideas about the autonomous objecthood of the canvas that fed into Coldstream’s development of layered measurements. As the canvas became an external equivalent to memory – creating a representation of the core of its subject (depicting what would not vary with time) – it is the image that grows and develops.

‘Objective Abstraction’ pieces were first exhibited in the London Group show in November 1933.¹²⁶ Initiated by Tibble and Moynihan, the movement attempted to produce a stream-of-consciousness form of painting, as discussed in chapter two, which involved only unrepresentative marks building from each other on the canvas. What emerges is an image developing in reference primarily to materials and formal concerns. As such it is independent of nature and of close observation. The eye could contaminate by pulling the painter towards unintended figuration or replication of physical forms.¹²⁷ Though this went against

¹²⁵ Sylvester, ‘Contemporary Drawing’, 24.

¹²⁶ Laughton, *Euston Road*, 97-99.

¹²⁷ Moynihan, Bell, and Tibble, *Objective Abstractions* (London: Zwemmer Gallery, 20 March 1934), quoted in Laughton, *Euston Road*, 99.

Coldstream's persistent reliance on the model in front of him, it introduced a reverence for materials, a form of personification. Objectivity in this sense is thus not disinterested reproduction of nature but a respect for the immanence of materials. This echoes Stokes in *Stones of Rimini* (1932), where he likens the canvas to the wall, and the wall to an animal, the living component of which needed to be carved into in order to be released. Coldstream was influenced by Stokes, as discussed in chapter two, and works such as *Study for Seated Nude* operate like Stoke's wall, combing thin layers of observed relationships in order to access the vitality of the image. This also echoed Sickert's analogy between drawing and training a pear tree up a wall. Objective Abstraction was not only a method of creating an engaging image, but also a form of 'objectivity' backed by the associations of pseudo-scientific authority.

Immanent life was a contentious definition of objectivity and clearly confused some visitors to the exhibition. Hugh Gordon Porteus reviewed it for *The Listener*, hailing Pasmore and Hitchens as the most successful objectivists, since they produced images closer to the starting point of their subject matter. This provoked the ire of another friend of the group, Townsend, who replied in *The Listener*.¹²⁸ He claimed that Porteus had misunderstood 'objective'. Rather than the representation of the object undiluted by the interference of the self, the 'objectivity' was found in relation to the canvas and paint:

According to these painters, the artist should rule out, in favour of the purely pictorial demands which the picture itself makes, any personal preferences or preconceptions of what the picture should look like when finished, and any claims of the subject-matter, when any of these are in conflict with the first. He should let the picture grow with his brush as though from the start it had a life of its own ready to unfold.¹²⁹

The heirs of the Objective Abstractionists were the 'process-artists' of the 1950s, of whom Pasmore was a prominent representative.¹³⁰ As discussed in relation to Sylvester's drawing programme, key members considered their art objective, because it aspired to an engagement with materials purged of 'latent associations' and the 'abyss of subjectivity'.¹³¹ Their usage of the term is also split between the purging of the subjective and a sense of the material objects. Deserving of his inclusion within Sylvester's 'drawing done with care, intellectual', Pasmore, among others, sought a rational application of natural laws in order to create art.¹³²

¹²⁸ Hugh Gordon Porteus, *The Listener* (Apr 1934), referenced in Laughton, *Euston Road*, 100.

¹²⁹ William Townsend, untitled, *The Listener* (18 Apr 1934), 674, quoted in Laughton, *Euston Road*, 100-101.

¹³⁰ The term for this group of artists was applied in: Thistlewood, *Read*, 129.

¹³¹ Quoted in Grieve, 'Biederman', 72. This movement was related to 'Concrete Art', a term introduced by Van Doesburg's 'Manifesto of Concrete Art' (1930), which called for a form of abstract art reliant on the 'concrete' properties of line, a colour, or a plane and entirely free from observed reality and symbolic implication.

¹³² 'Proportion and analogy are at the base of such a pictorial architecture. The painting grows according to these laws and these have their counterpart in the laws of nature. Not painting which imitates the illusory and transient aspects of nature, but which copies nature in the laws of its activities.' Victor Pasmore, *The Artist Speaks*, quoted in Grieve, 'Biederman', 67.

Along with discussions of objectivity, the object-ness of the material was also invoked. In 1951 Kenneth Martin wrote, 'The object which is created is real and not illusional in that it sets out to represent no object outside the canvas, but to contain within itself the force of its own nature.'¹³³ Aspirations to objectivity and object-ness became enmeshed. Thus although Coldstream was and is frequently hailed as objectivist, his concerns aligned him with a very different aesthetic expression of objectivity and object-ness.

The ambiguous meanings of 'objectivity' thus enable it to equally be seen as the directness of precise observation or the shamanistic bestowing of form to life already within the materials. Both qualities are present in Coldstream's work. The image is at once an experiment with limitations, defined by its process of creation, and an artist's double – a form of simulacrum to contain Coldstream's memories and perceptions. Purely visually Coldstream's paintings invoke both aspects. *Seated Nude* appears careful, tentative, and plainly representative – noting the position of the limbs in relation to each other within a room stripped of all dramatic artifice. Aesthetically it is also flat, claustrophobic, vertiginous, and rendered in a Cézanne-like weave of linear marks. It simultaneously draws the beholder closer to look through the frame as if through a window, while rejecting the possibility of transparency to another world. It unsettles our expectations through simplicity so deft that the paintings are often passed over as mere anachronistic, academic studies.

That Coldstream's work inspired vocal evaluations of the place and possibility of objectivity and subjectivity – such as Sylvester and Gowing – speaks not only of its relevance, but also its importance in synthesising key aspects of drawing-practice over the past decades: the sense of design being a structure within perception, a distrust of illusionistic depths, an emphasis on layers and immanence of the material objects, and finally an overriding concern with the role of the draughtsman within drawing-practice.

Conclusion

'New territory seems to be opened for the draughtsman by this encompassing of all sensational experience,' Maurice de Sausmarez (1915-1969) wrote in *Basic Design* (1964), continuing:

Drawings should be made by all accumulations of marks made as instantaneous reaction to the experience of watching figures moving about; the marks should be made at speed and without deliberation should, nevertheless, be genuine attempts to grasp a fragment of

¹³³ Kenneth Martin, 'Abstract Art', *Broadsheet No. 1 Devoted to Abstract Art* (May/Jun 1951), unpaginated.

contour, a directional movement, a point of pivotal emphasis, a 'felt' mass, the rise and fall of the shapes, the intuited flow.¹³⁴

De Sausmarez describes the educational culmination of the process-artists, articulating the Basic Design principles developed by Harry Thubron, Richard Hamilton (1922-2011), and Pasmore. De Sausmarez's *Basic Design* reduced Coldstream's drawing-practice of comparative measurements to an unreflective notion of 'objective drawing', a term de Sausmarez uses as interchangeable with 'analytic drawing', which was valued for how it could help hone the student's perception of external forms.¹³⁵ Coldstream's legacy was thus rewritten by the very approach he helped to disseminate through the so-called Coldstream Committee's proposed reforms.¹³⁶ Paradoxically, just as photography had both promoted images of drawn-objects and ultimately marginalised them, emphasis on medium specificity within Basic Design diverted more attention towards drawing-as-a-medium while also ultimately cutting the foundation out from under it as a field. Drawing as a concept was subsumed within Basic Design, which toppled it from Vasari's celebration as the technical and philosophical foundation for all art.¹³⁷ Drawing-practice was thus not only removed from the school, but unwritten from artistic values. It became another form of presentation art-object, like painting or sculpture, but lacking the other two's robust expressiveness, especially given the taste for working on a monumental scale. Drawing-practice withered. The students of the mid- to late-1960s who rebelled against Basic Design also struck a blow against drawing by turning to conceptual and performance art. Kitaj and Hockney revived it, and though this revival was undertaken with fresh energy and purpose, the rebirth was reactionary.¹³⁸ Drawing became a polemical movement rather than an underlying concept, and its adoption by others would be haunted by suspicions of conservatism or regression. Coldstream is thus a fitting ending for a period of experimentation with the concept of drawing. It is within his practice that we have the apotheosis of technical rigour: borrowing the morality of observation from MacColl and Tonks, incorporating the strictures of conceiving the flat plane as a geometric entity cut by line from Fry as well as an intense sensitivity to drawing-

¹³⁴ De Sausmarez, *Basic Design*, 74.

¹³⁵ For illustrations of such analytic drawing from de Sausmarez's *Basic Design* see Fig. 4.41-2.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Though Coldstream was the chairman of the NACAE, the degree of his influence over its outcome is contentious. In 1985 and thus after decades of backlash, Coldstream is recorded to have said, 'While the committee was sitting Victor Pasmore organised the Developing Process exhibition with Harry Thubron, Richard Hamilton and Tom Hudson, at the ICA. They were very successful with the Bauhaus idea and there was little I could do against the tide of opinion . . . It should have been called the Pasmore Report, then people would have understood what was happening.' William Coldstream in interview with Lynda Morris (1985), from 'The Hornsey Project', <http://thehornseyproject.org/modules/wakka/LindaMorrisPaper>, accessed 9 Nov. 2006; quoted in Tickner, *Hornsey*, 171. Though Coldstream's contributions in the minutes of the meetings are infrequent and mostly attempt to broker compromises between parties, he did exert significant soft power through his composition of sub-committees and in his monitoring of the agendas.

¹³⁷ Robert Williams. 'Vasari, Giorgio', *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0515> (accessed 5 Apr 2012).

¹³⁸ See R. B. Kitaj, *Sides*, 1979; and David Hockney, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* (1972) (Figs. 4.43-4).

practice within slow, careful deployment of material layers and an overriding fixation with the subjective experience of artist within the drawing-acts. Though celebrated, vilified, and feverishly debated during his lifetime, he brought many of these issues into critical focus, with a nuance that has sadly been blanched in the passage of time. He is a fitting figure to end on, because it was by his hand that, unbeknownst to him, a chapter closes on mid-twentieth century drawing exploration. It would be born again, but not within the conceptual frameworks discussed here.

CONCLUSION

When de Saumarez described new artistic opportunities for draughtsmen as ‘new territory’ in *Basic Design* (1964), he foregrounded space as a means of imagining the theoretical pressures that affect practitioners. It was this theoretical space, in the early twentieth century, that Fry, Tonks, and MacColl scrambled to colonise; this space that was conquered by watercolours in the interwar period; this space that was utilised by government and the media in order to replicate the subjective experience of World War II; and this space that was reclaimed by post-war artists, one important example of whom was Coldstream. The concept of drawing is not merely a space, but, more precisely, a terrain: it is distinguished by culturally created landmarks that shift slowly over time, which are then claimed, named, negotiated, or altered by theoretical incursions. Understanding both of these layers – the slowly shifting topography and the theoretical developments to it – is a crucial foundation for understanding drawing. As I argued in the introduction, the mythological placement of drawing-practice at the foundation of fine art, as a compositional device as much as a set of material manipulations, methodologically compels one to treat ‘drawing’ foremost as a concept. Analysing drawing’s historical manifestations is therefore particularly dependant on historically specific dialogues between shifting terrain and theoretical colonisation.

The aim of this thesis is, in part, to direct attention to these methodological concerns and to explore other ways of historically negotiating drawing. Primarily this has involved diverging from the tradition of treating drawing either as a subsidiary of other mediums (such as painting or sculpture) or as a genre or technology. Instead, I began with the premise that the conceptual aspect of art practice is as important as the material – in other words, what a given artist believes herself to be doing while she is in the act of doing it (whether consciously or subconsciously), plays a significant role in determining the meaning of both the practice and resultant object.¹ Although the term ‘drawing’ has predominantly remained the same for centuries, at least in English, the concept that underwrites its meaning has been volatile. Drawing must therefore be treated as an artificial classification, akin to Bourdieu’s ‘doxa’ in that its meaning is contingent upon a set of culturally conditioned preconceptions,

¹ In being so, the drawing-act is akin to a speech act as discussed in the introduction and further is akin to Searle’s ‘collective intention’.

which are subconsciously as well as consciously internalised.² Toward this aim I have undertaken this thesis as a retrieval of some of the meanings that sway notions of drawing. This has involved both the scrutiny of working vocabularies (as is the first and fourth chapters) and the examination of how artistic activity and reception is embedded within an expanded cultural field (as in second and third chapters).

This type of analysis of drawing is particularly important in mid-twentieth century Britain because of both the social familiarity of drawing practice and the self-conscious and often awkward relationship it has to European modernist drawing-practices. To return to philosopher Philippa Foot, this period in Britain is the historical equivalent of her ‘odd thought’, for in history as well as philosophy ‘interest is where the *trouble* is’.³ That drawing does not seem to fit within the narratives of mid-twentieth century British art is only because productively analysing it involves a complex system of values fed into by non-art historically conventional channels.

The historical content of this thesis provides the beginnings of an alternative history of drawing in 1918-1964 Britain. From more traditional perspectives, drawing during this period can appear unimportant or eclectic, and yet, when treated as such, many gifted and influential draftsmen are written out. The research for this thesis from the beginning was undertaken as a step toward excavating a conceptual history for otherwise marginalised figures to be written back into, and such a history must include the full spectrum of the significant permutations of the concept of drawing. This includes public literacy of it and beliefs about its information capacity as well as its social function as a tool for interpreting mental or optical phenomena. Therefore, although this thesis has predominantly developed into an intellectual history, it is hoped that it could enrich future analysis into the role of drawing within marginalised practices such as those of Meninsky, Bomberg, Ayrton, Rogers, Bell, Searle, Hogarth, Topolski, and Coldstream.⁴ Due to the limited scope of a PhD thesis, I have provided a glimpse into the contested theoretical terrain of drawing during a period of

² Bourdieu, *Outline*, 64

³ ‘Whenever I find myself tempted to pass over an odd thought, I press myself to do the opposite. So I’d say, ‘Stick with the odd thought, it’s gold [...] If you are working with a therapist, and you find yourself about to say something disreputable, the last thing you should do is substitute something respectable for it. It is the same with our philosophical thinking: the philosophical interest is where the *trouble* is.’ Quoted in Voorhoeve, *Conversations*, 90.

⁴ This thesis has only scratched the surface of this material. Issues of process over product as a national trait or as ethical practice – as advocated by Tonks and Coldstream – as well as the particular form that medium specificity takes in relation to drawing practices within British theory all deserve separate chapters, as do the influence of Sickert, the Neo-Romantics, and drawing-acts within interwar etchings.

particular fluidity and experimentation – a scramble opened by Fry and rumbling alongside key twentieth-century artistic developments.

The episodes in drawing's history that are explored in each chapter comprise, when combined, a single strand of development. The thesis begins with Fry's attempt to align his notion of modernist practice and drawing by championing essential properties of the medium: stylistic linearity and compositional design. The second chapter elaborates how the popularity of reading manifest formalism into art objects led to a simultaneous reading of drawn-objects within paintings, which alongside scientific imaging developments and emphasis on the material properties of art, developed into an acute awareness of the materiality of drawing. The line became the mark. Both of these modes of engaging with drawing involve intense experiences of subjectivity: the mind that composes into line and the body that leaves the mark. During the Second World War the aesthetic of the sketch gained resonance as it became the proxy for the absent body, or the vehicle of psychological release in a time of trauma. Drawn-objects gained increased visibility, and more importantly the way that they were presented to the public and artistic networks alike emphasised a particular literacy: one of reading the artist into the marks, which in part paved the way for the post-war association of drawing with and as a way of thinking. This appearance of gestural rawness and its relationship to emotional subjectivity fuelled Coldstream's rebellion, which though it was generally developed under the aegis of realism in the late 1930s, was diverted to drawing-practice by the exigencies of war only to emerge in the post-war period as a preoccupation with testing the limitations of subjective experience. Though celebrated, vilified, and debated during his lifetime, Coldstream brought many of these concerns from previous chapters into critical focus, with a nuance that has been sadly diminished by the passage of time. He is an apt figure to end with, because it was his complicity with efforts to academicise and modernise tertiary art education that, unbeknownst to him, brought to an end the conceptions of drawing that underwrote early- to mid-twentieth century drawing-practice.

By reading visual culture for the nature and existence of drawing as a concept, the paradoxical relationship between drawing and modernism emerges as an important theme, particularly where modernism involves notions of medium specificity. Emphasis on modernism, be it Fry's formalism, watercolour materiality, reportage, or the tenets of Basic Design all brought brief attention to the essential properties of drawing only for this line of visual enquiry to be rejected by Pop and conceptual artists in the 1960s. It was reborn in the mid-1970s amid the figurative second wave of Pop-Art and specifically championed by Kitaj and Hockney, a rebirth that was a conscious return to late-nineteenth-century figurative

traditions. On Kitaj's part this was a return to the source of modernism and denouncing what had come between.⁵ And yet despite his beliefs, when Kitaj selected drawn-objects for his seminal Arts Council exhibition *The Human Clay* (1976), among them were works by Coldstream, Gowing, Freud, Moore, and Carel Weight.⁶ The period of 1918 to 1964 was a fertile, if problematic, time for drawing and a springboard for its future.

⁵ Marco Livingstone, *R. B. Kitaj* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985), 29-30. Richard Morphet, 'The Art of R.B. Kitaj: To Thine Own Self be True', *R. B. Kitaj: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., ed. Richard Morphet (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), [9-34] 20.

⁶ Kitaj, *Human Clay*.

ABBREVIATIONS GLOSSARY

AAD	Archive of Art and Design, Victoria and Albert Museum
AEEC	Art and Entertainment Emergency Council
AIA	Artists International Association
CIAD	Central Institute of Art and Design
CEMA	Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
DES	Department of Education and Science
NEAC	New English Art Club
ENSA	Entertainments National Service Association
GPO	General Post Office
ICA	Institute of Contemporary Arts
ILN	Illustrated London News
IWM	Imperial War Museum, London
MoI	Ministry of Information
NA	National Archives
NACAE	National Advisory Council on Art Education ('Coldstream Council')
NG	National Gallery
PMC	Paul Mellon Centre
RA	Royal Academy of Art
RCA	Royal College of Art
TGA	Tate Gallery Archive
WAAC	War Artists Advisory Committee

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leisure, and wartime attitudes

The National Archives (Kew)
National Advisory Council on Art
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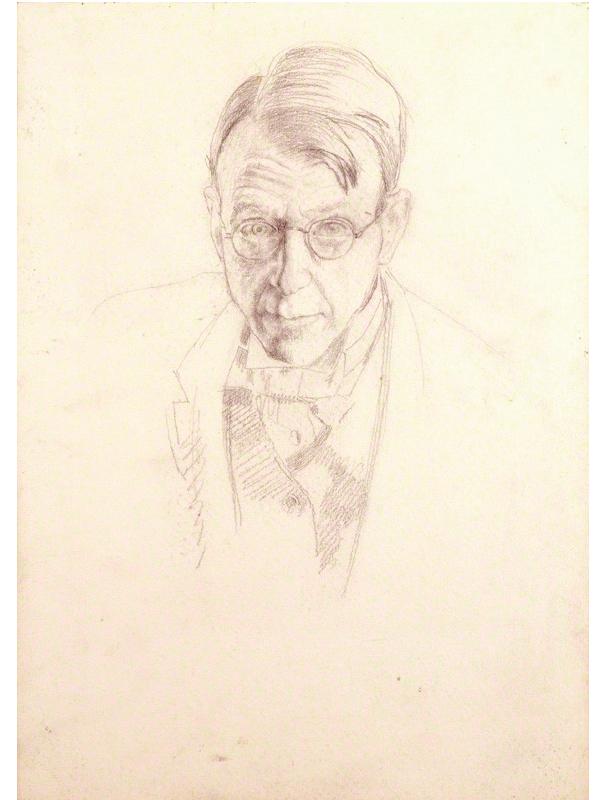
ILLUSTRATION GALLERY



1.1. Henry Tonks,
Untitled cartoon, c.1862-1936,
ink on paper, 89 x 114 mm,
British Museum, London.



1.2. Diego Velázquez, *The Toilet of Venus* ('*The Rokeby Venus*'), 1647-51, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 177 cm, The National Gallery, London.



1.3. Henry Tonks, *Henry Tonks*, c.1900-1925, pencil on paper, 36.6 cm x 26.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



1.4. A. C. Cooper,
Portrait of Roger Fry,
28 February 1918,
sepia-toned vintage
print, 19.8 x 15.0 cm,
National Portrait
Gallery, London.

1.5. Walter Stoneman,
for James Russell &
Sons, *Portrait of D. S.*
MacColl, c.1916,
bromide print,
National Portrait
Gallery, London.





1.6. William Orpen, *Group Associated with the New English Art Club*, c.1904, pencil, black chalk (or charcoal), pen, ink, and watercolour on paper, 22.5 x 41.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London. From left to right: Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), Henry Tonks (1862-1937), Frederick Brown (1851-1941), William Rothenstein (1872-1945), Augustus John (1878-1961), Charles Condor (1868-1909), and D.S. MacColl (1859-1848).



1.7. Eduard Manet, *La Toilette* (recto), 1860, red chalk on laid paper, 29 x 20.8 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



1.8. Edgar Degas, *Two Seated Dancers*, c.1897-1901, charcoal on paper, 62.9 x 34.9 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



1.9. Antoine Watteau, *Satyr Pouring Wine*, 1717, black, red and white chalk on laid paper, 28.5 x 21.1 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



1.10. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Sketch for a Portrait of a Lady*, undated [nineteenth century], blue crayon on paper, 10.9 x 10 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



1.11. George Romney, *Woman with Child in her Lap*, undated, pen and brown ink, brown wash, and graphite on paper, 38.8 x 29 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



1.12. Joshua Reynolds, *Study for 'The Infant Hercules'*, c.1723-1792, brown wash over graphite on paper, 19.5 x 17.3 cm, British Museum, London.



1.13. Thomas Gainsborough, *A Mossy Bank, with Bushes Above*, undated, graphite on paper, 15 x 19.5 cm, British Museum, London.



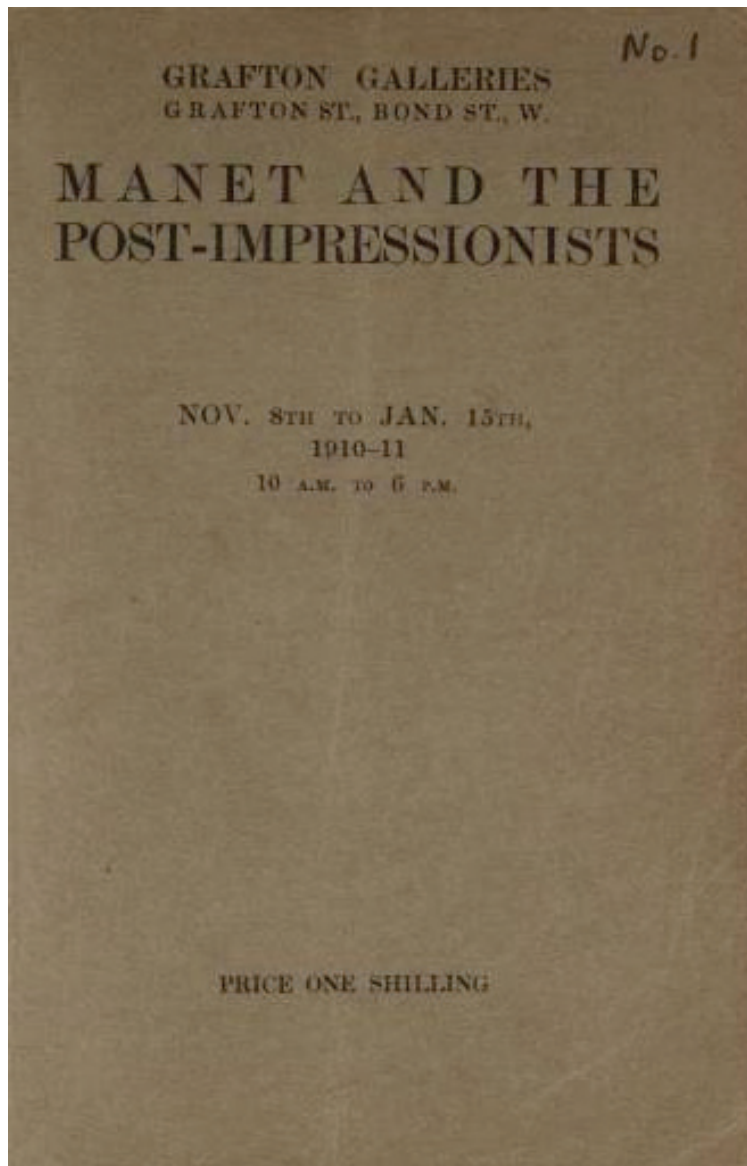
1.14. Roger Fry, *Still life*, c.1917, graphite on paper, 23.4 x 35.2 cm, British Museum, London.



1.15. Roger Fry, *Landscape*, 1925, graphite on paper, 24 x 35.1 cm, British Museum, London.



1.16. Roger Fry, *Study of a Seated Woman*, 1922, black chalk on grey paper, 59.8 x 38.6 cm, British Museum, London.



1.17. Exhibition Catalogue:
Manet and the Post-Impressionists,
London: Grafton Galleries,
1910-1, Tate Archive, London.

1.18. Exhibition Catalogue:
*Second Post-Impressionist
Exhibition*, London: Grafton
Galleries, 1912, Tate Archive,
London.





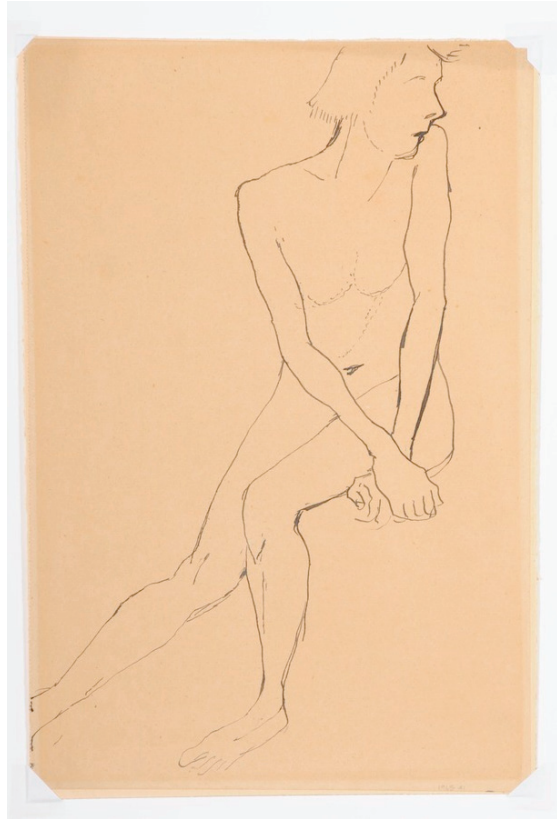
1.19. Paul Cézanne, *Study of Trees (Sous Bois)*, 1888-1890, watercolour and graphite on paper, 49.5 x 32.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

1.20. Paul Cézanne, *Hortense Fiquet (Madame Cézanne) Sewing*, c.1880, graphite, on pale cream wove paper, 47.2 x 30.9 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.





1.21. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model (Nina Hamnett)*, 1918, pencil on paper, 36 x 24 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.



1.22. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model (Nina Hamnett)*, 1918, ink on paper, 36 x 23.5 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.



1.23. Roger Fry, *Half Clothed Model, Seated and Turned, in Profile Perdu*, c.1918, pencil on paper, 36 x 24 cm, University of Leeds, Leeds.



1.24. Nina Hamnett, *Three Figures in a Café*, 1916, pencil and ink on paper, 10.5 x 13.6 cm, Charleston, Firle.



1.25. Nina Hamnett, untitled, ink on paper, date and location unknown, published in: Roger Fry, 'Line as a Means' (2), 67.



1.26. Duncan Grant, *Two Nymphs*, c.1925, pastel and graphite on paper, 35.5 x 26 cm, Charleston, Firlie.

1.27. Duncan Grant, *Study of a Man in a Hat*, c.1930, crayon sketch, 16.2 x 11.7 cm, Charleston, Firlie.





1.28. Amedeo Modigliani, *Seated Nude*, 1914, graphite and watercolour on paper, 54 x 41.6 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1.29. Amedeo Modigliani, *Woman in Profile*, 1910-11, charcoal and pastel on paper, 42.9 x 26.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.





1.30. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of Sir John Hay and His Sister Mary*, 1816, graphite on paper, 29.1 x 21.9 cm, British Museum, London.

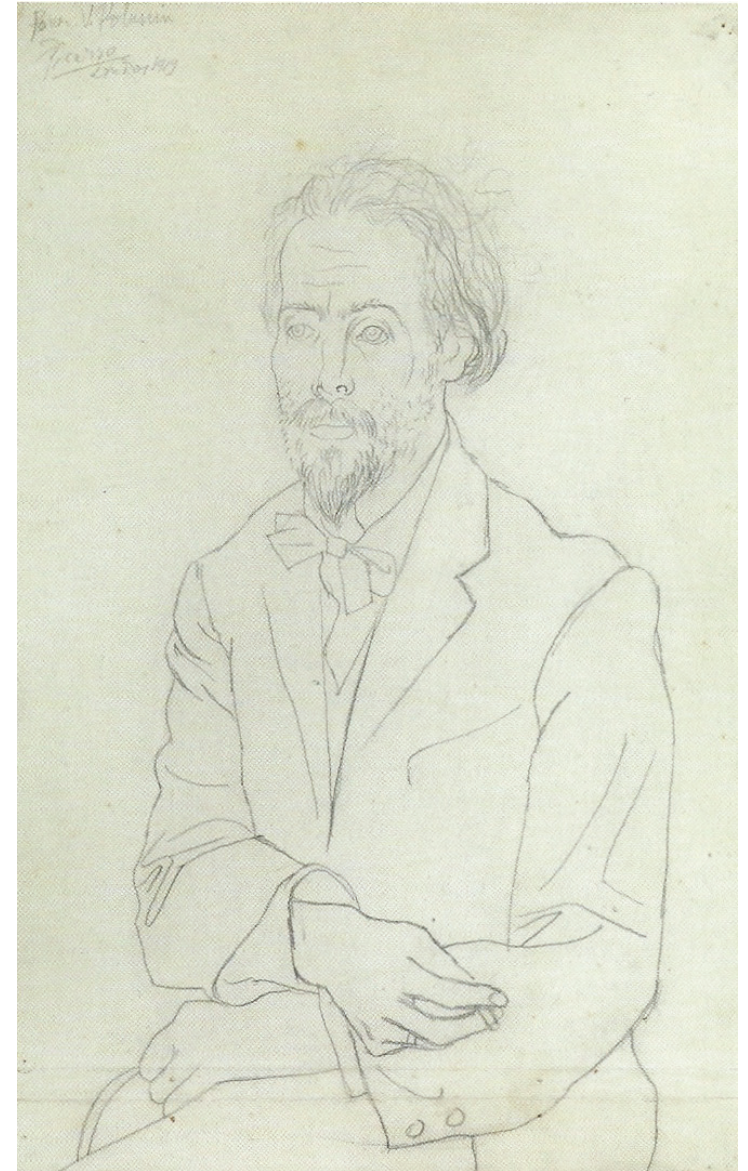


1.31. Raphael, *Heads of the Virgin and Child*, c.1509-1511, metalpoint on pale pink prepared paper, 14.3 x 11.1 cm, British Museum, London.



1.32. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Lydia Lopokova*, 1919, graphite on paper, 35.6 x 25.1 cm, Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum collection (Photograph: Beechey and Stephens, *Picasso*, 91).

1.33. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Vladamir Polunin*, 1919, graphite on paper, 53 x 34 cm, private collection (Photograph: Beechey and Stephens, *Picasso*, 91).





1.34. Wyndham Lewis,
Two Mechanics, c.1912,
ink and watercolour on
paper, 55.9 x 33.7 cm,
Tate, London.



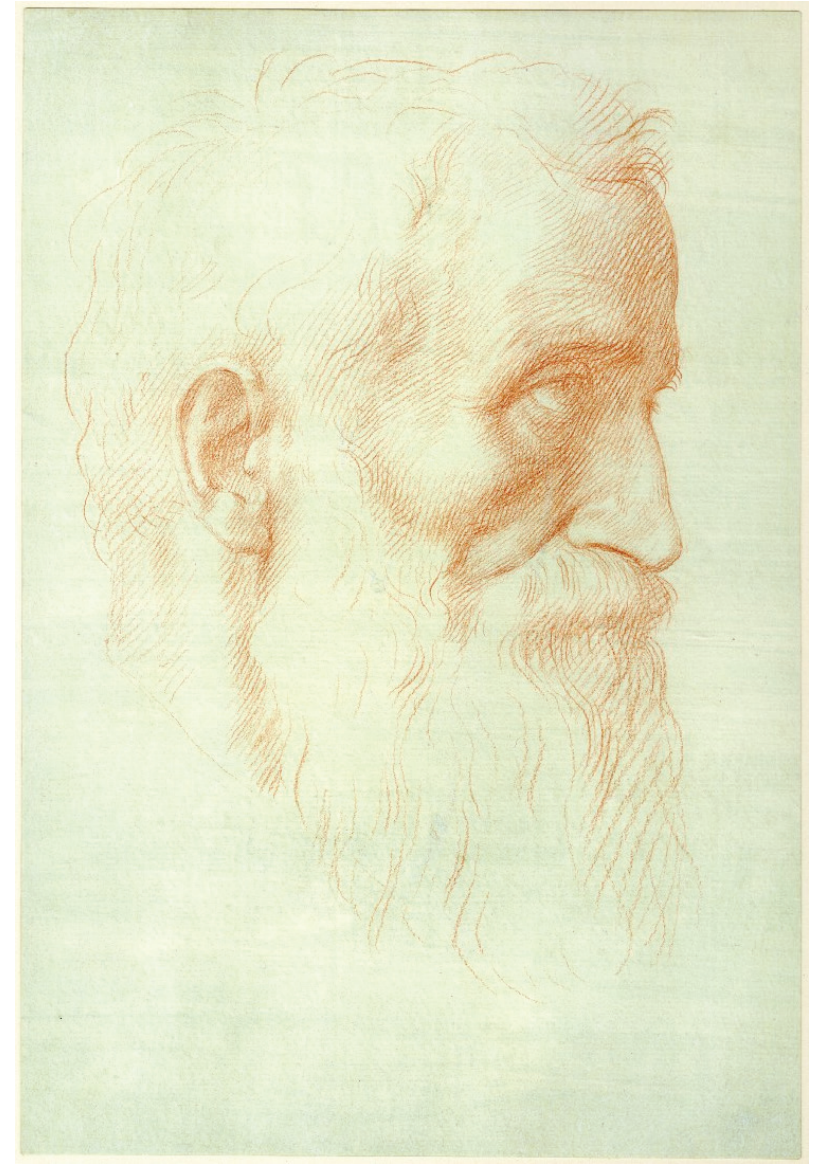
1.35. Wyndham Lewis,
Girl Reclining, 1919,
chalk on paper, 38.1 x
55.9 cm Tate, London.

1.36. Wyndham Lewis,
Crouching Woman,
c.1919, chalk and
watercolour on
paper, 27.9 x 38.1
cm, Tate, London.





1.37. Henry Tonks,
Auguste Rodin, 1914,
pastel on paper, 53.7 x
40 cm, Tate, London.

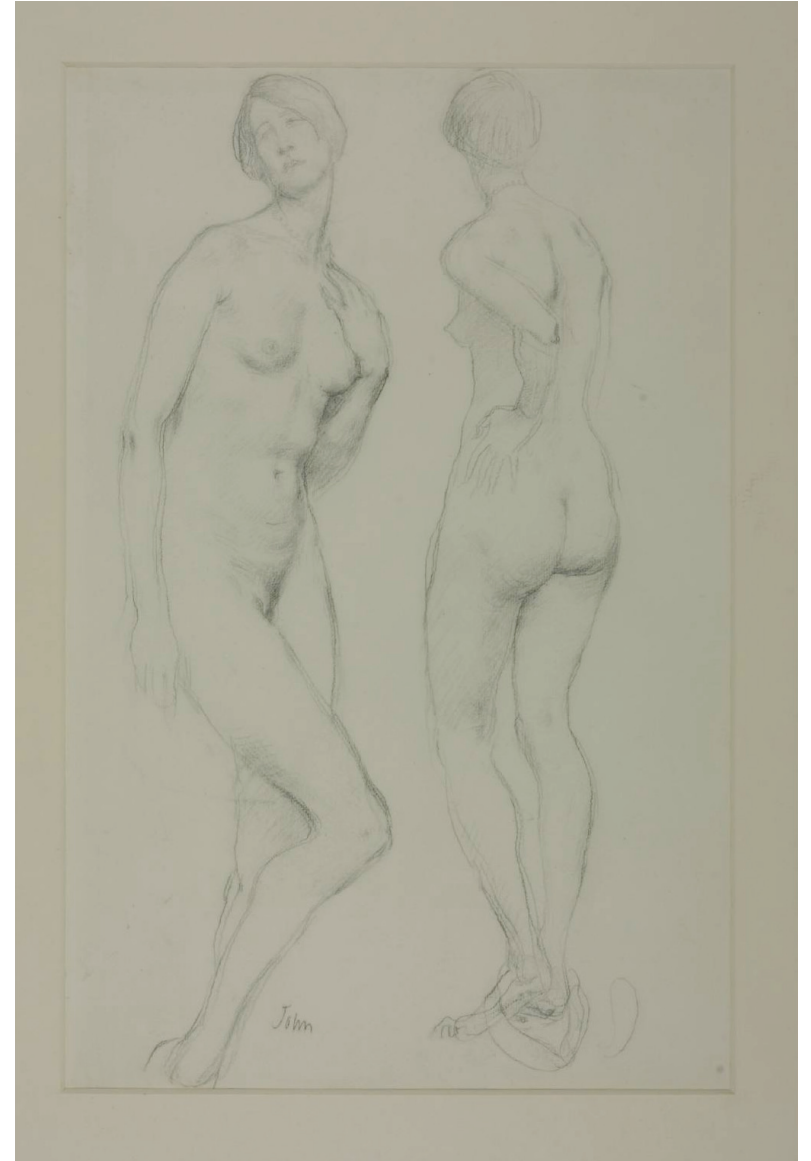


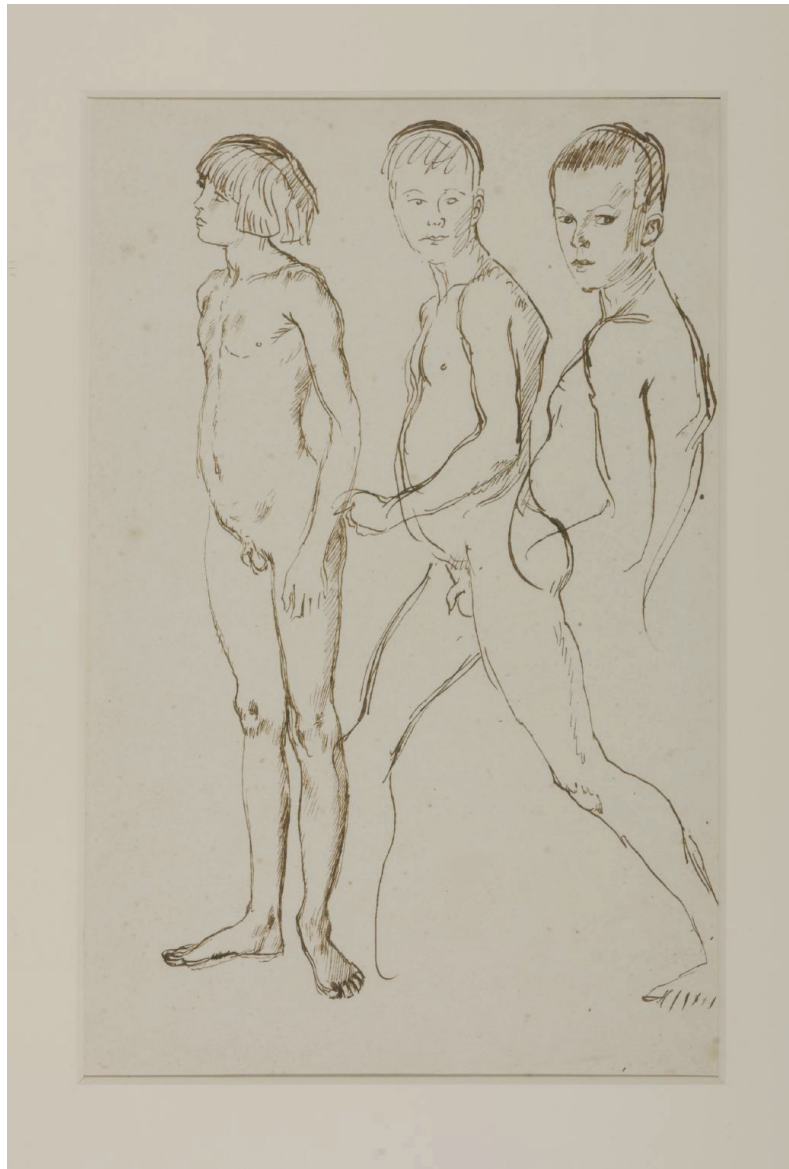
1.38. Alphonse Legros,
*Study of an Old Man's
Head*, c.1837-1911,
red chalk on green
prepared paper, 33.7
x 23.2 cm, British
Museum, London.



1.39. William Orpen, *Study of Bearded Man*, undated [possibly from his Slade years, 1897-1899], black chalk on paper, 52.8 x 40.7 cm, British Museum, London.

1.40. Augustus John, *Two Nude Studies*, c.1920-6, graphite on paper, 50.8 x 35.6 cm, Tate, London.





1.41. Augustus John, *The Artist's Children*, c.1915, ink on paper, 35.6 x 25.4 cm, Tate, London.



1.42. David John, *A Snake*, undated, details and location unknown, published in Roger Fry, 'Children's Drawings', 227.



1.43. Walter Richard Sickert, title and details unknown, published in: Roger Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 203.



1.44. Duncan Grant, title and details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 203.



1.45. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait Monsieur Massine*, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 205.



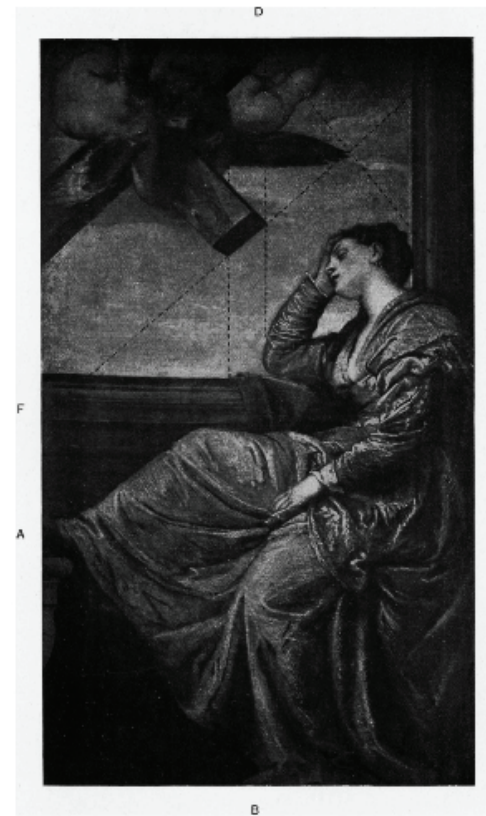
1.46. Henri Matisse, ink drawing, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 207.

1.47. Henri Matisse, pencil drawing, details unknown, published in: Fry, 'Line as a Means' (1), 207.

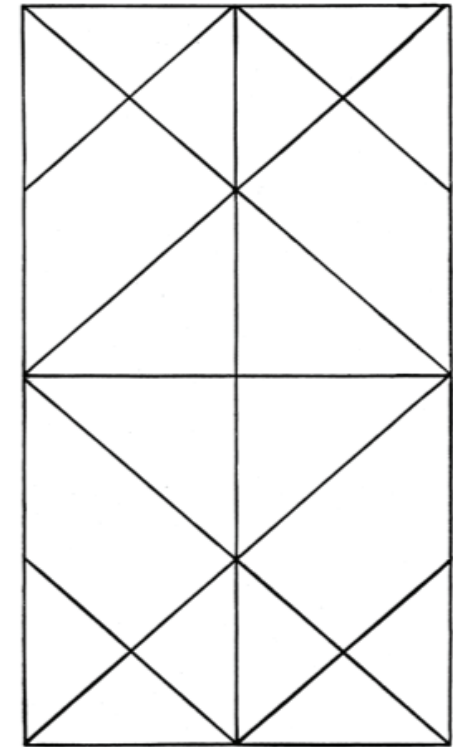




1.48. Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, c.1570, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 115.6 cm, The National Gallery, London.

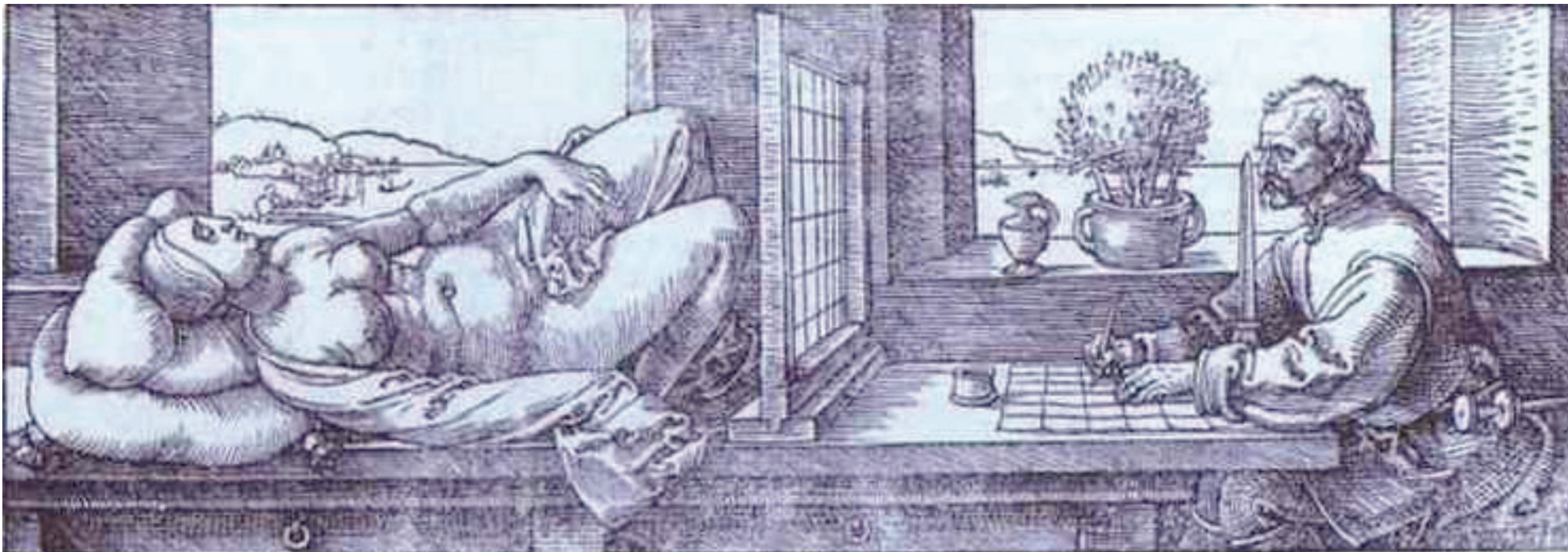


A.



B.

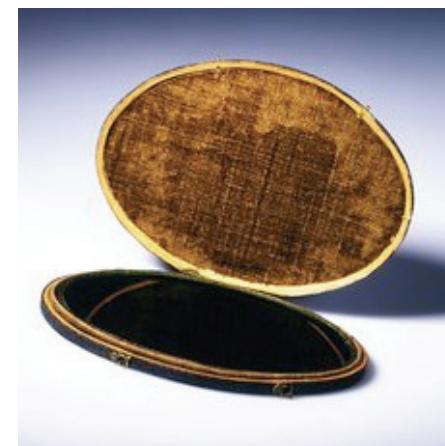
1.49. D. S. MacColl, diagram and reproduction (with traced marks) of Paolo Veronese, *The Dream of Saint Helena*, published in: D. S. MacColl, 'Mr Fry and Drawing – III', 43.



1.50. Albrecht Dürer, *A Draftsman Making a Perspective Drawing of a Woman*, woodcut; from *Unterweysung der Messung*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Photograph: Maynard, *Drawing Distinctions*, 34).

1.51. Unknown maker, 'Claude glass', 1775-1780, blackened mirror glass, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

A slightly convex blackened mirror that is held up to the eye and reflects the surrounding scenery, giving it the appearance of the Italian landscapes by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682).





2.1. Paul Nash,
Cottage at Oxenbridge,
in cloth-covered
sketch book
containing drawings,
watercolour sketches,
and notes, undated,
graphite on paper,
21.1 x 14.2 cm, TGA,
8416.2.66.



2.2. Paul Nash, *Oxenbridge Pond*, 1927–1928, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 87.6 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust.



2.3. Paul Nash, *Tench Pond in a Gale*, 1921-2, ink, graphite, and watercolour, 57.5 x 39.5 cm, Tate, London.



2.4. John Sell Cotman, *Doorway of the Refectory, Rievaulx Abbey*, 1803, watercolour and graphite on paper, 31.9 x 25.5 cm, [Purchased as part of the Oppé Collection, 1996] Tate, London.



2.5. John Sell Cotman, *Crowland Abbey*, c.1804, watercolour on paper, 21.6 x 15.9 cm, Tate, London.



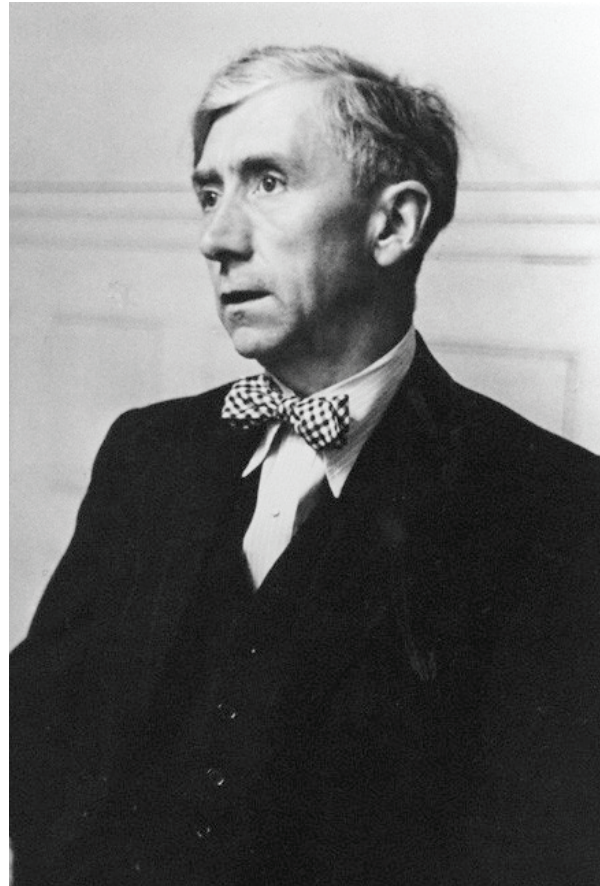
2.6. *Benedictional of St. Aethelwold: The Baptism of Christ*, c.971-984, British Library, Add. 49598 f.25v.



2.7. *Benedictional of St. Aethelwold: Entry into Jerusalem*. Winchester, c.971-984 British Library Add. MS 49598, f.45v, published in Herbert Read, 'English Art', 245.



2.8. Howard Coster, *Laurence Binyon*, 1934, half-plate film negative, National Portrait Gallery, London.



2.9. Felix H. Man (Hans Baumann), *Herbert Read*, 1940, bromide print, 38.4 x 25.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



2.10. Howard Coster, *Kenneth Clark, Baron Clark*, 1934, 25.4 x 20.3 cm film negative, National Portrait Gallery, London.



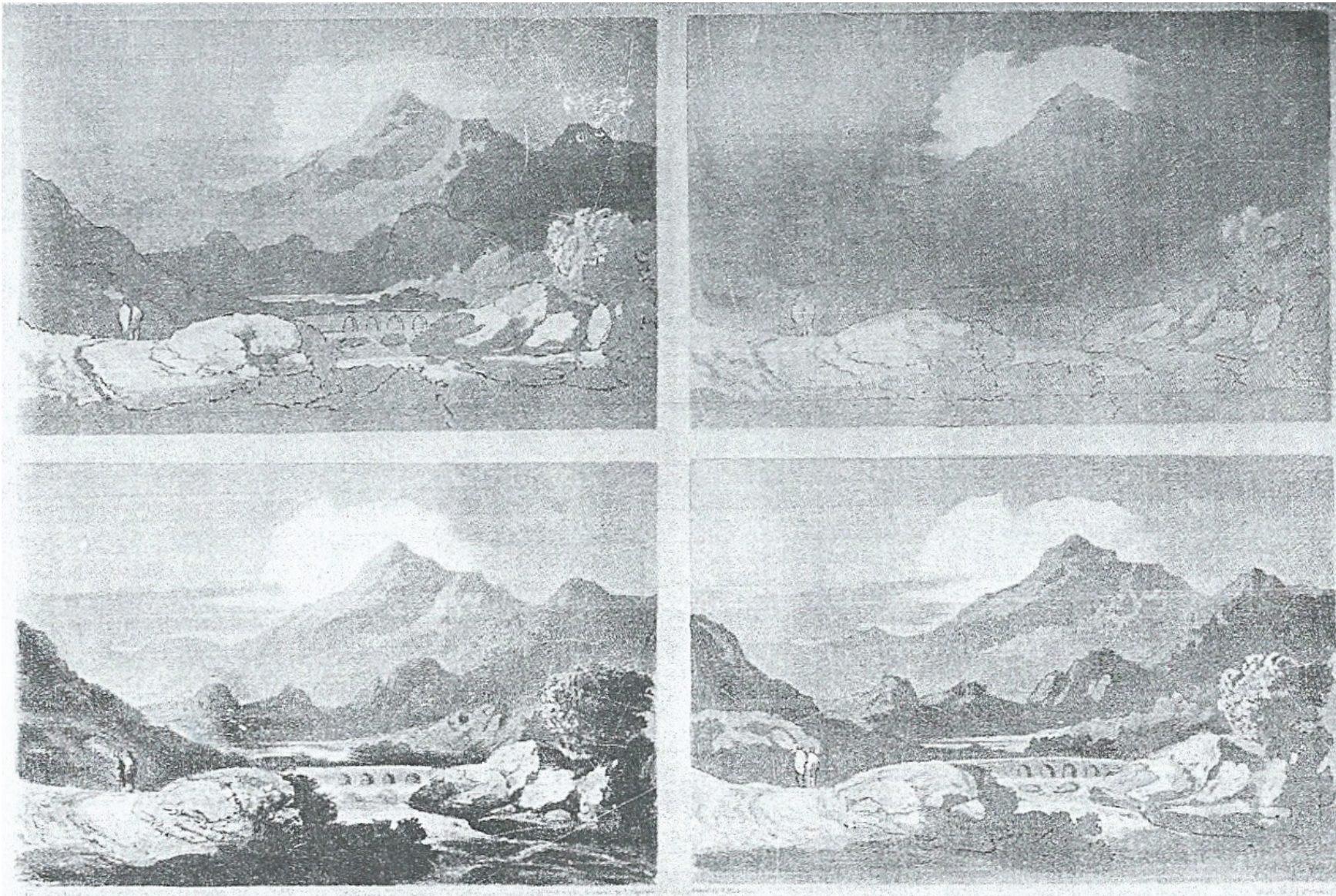
2.11. Blank & Stoller (New York, N.Y.), *W. G. Constable*, 1958, photograph, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



2.12. Richard Wilson, *The Children of Niobe*, c.1755-60, black chalk and stump, heightened with white on grey paper, 26.3 x 39.6 cm, British Museum, London.



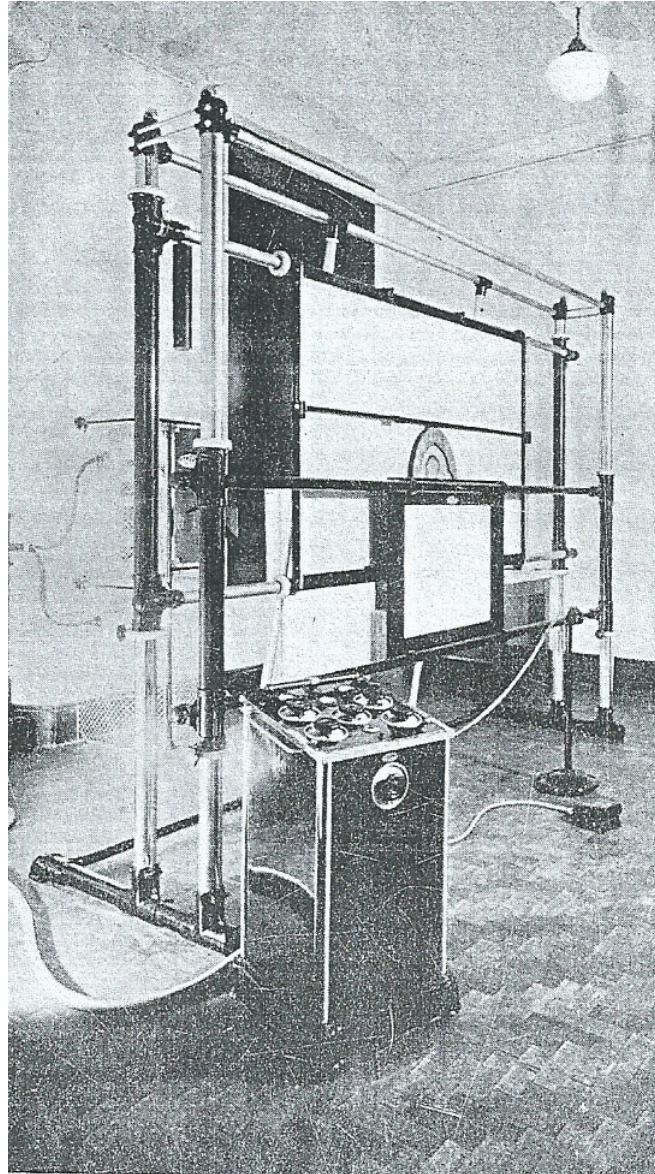
2.13. Richard Wilson, *A Fallen Tree Trunk, with a Seated Monk*, date unknown, chalk on paper, 19.5 x 23.6 cm, Tate, London.



2.14. Francis Nicholson's four-part lesson on the stages of creating a watercolour from his *Practice of Drawing and Painting* (1820), published in: Constable, *Painter's Workshop*, plate 9.



2.15. Fresco under-drawing, king from *Adoration of the Magi*, Camposanto, Pisa; illustration in: Constable, *Painter's Workshop*, plate 13.



2.16. Specially constructed easel at the National Gallery Laboratory, with panel under observation behind the fluorescent screen; published in: Rawlins, 'X-Rays', 240.



2.17. Anonymous Photographer, *F. I. G. Rawlins*, details unknown; published in: Anon. 'A Scientist among the Old Masters', *New Scientist*, 6:148 (17 Sep 1959), [456-7] 475.



FIG. 5A.



FIG. 5B.

"*Ercole Grandi*"—"Madonna and Child with Saints." The ordinary photograph shows the work of Costa, and the X-ray shadowgraph the work of Maineri underneath. (25 mA. at 30 kV.)



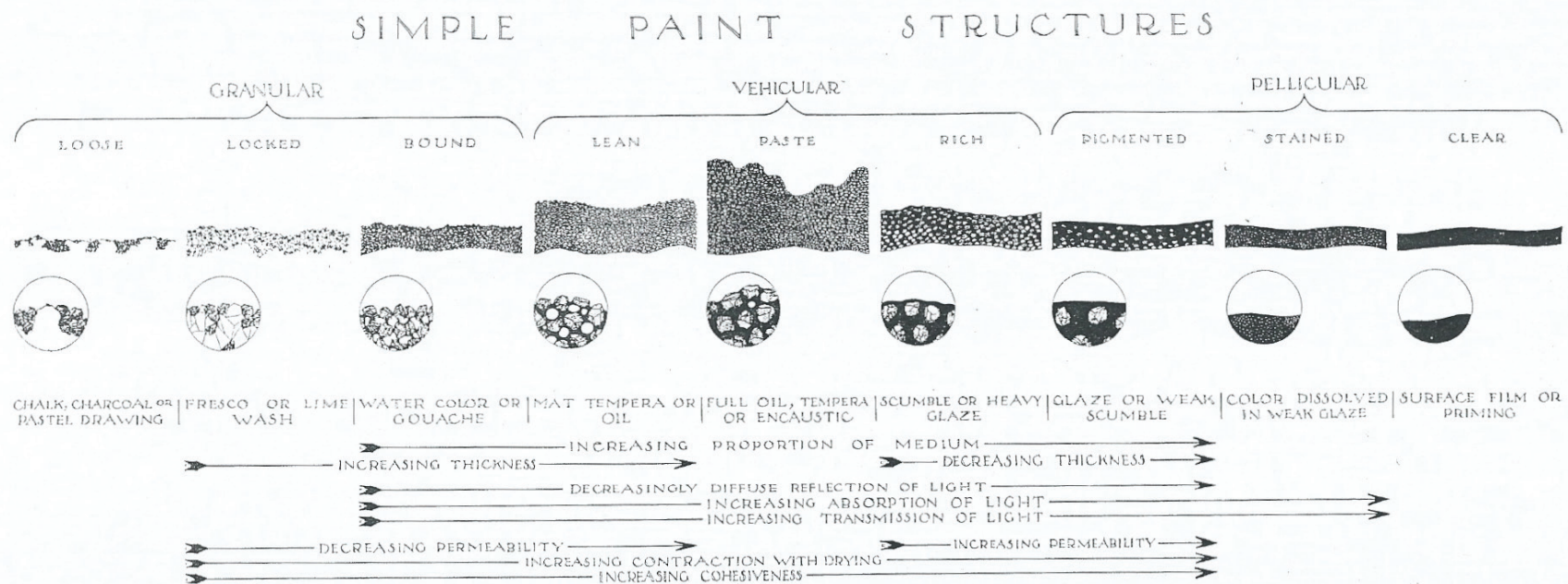
FIG. 6A.



FIG. 6B.

Memling—"The Duke of Cleves." Netherlandish School. Compare and contrast techniques in Figs. 4B and 1B (15 mA. at 12.5 kV.).

2.18. Page of illustrations from: Rawlins, 'X-Rays', 244.



In the diagram of simple paint structure, the names of the three principal classes appear at the top. Under each are the sub-classes illustrated by cross-section diagrams of paint at a magnification of about 150 X. In the circles are details as they might be seen at a magnification of about 400 X. The differences in structure are largely gradations along the horizontal line and in both directions. Beneath the drawings of sections are listed the usual names or types of paint which can be approximately associated with the sub-classes. Below these are shown some of the gradations—those in the general working qualities, the optical characteristics, and the physical and mechanical attributes. The arbitrary names of the principal classes can be somewhat clarified as follows:

GRANULAR
PIGMENT GRAINS WITH
PRACTICALLY NO MEDIUM

VEHICULAR
PIGMENT RELATIVELY
BALANCED WITH MEDIUM

PELLICULAR
MEDIUM WITH LITTLE
OR NO PIGMENT

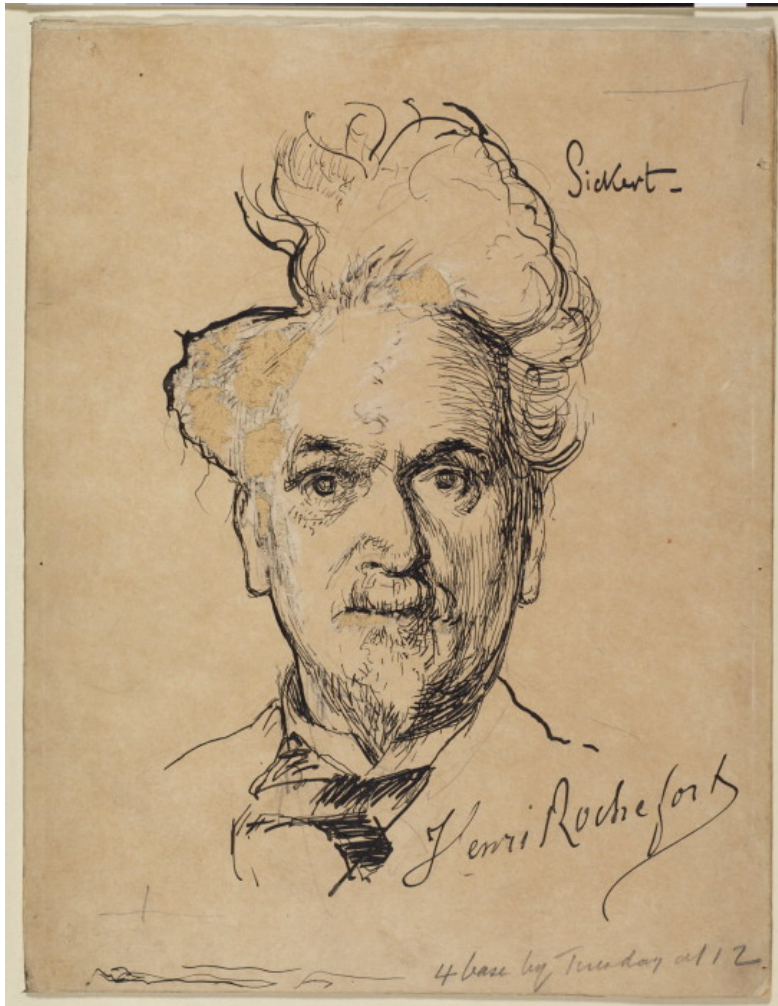
2.19. 'Simple Paint Structures' diagram from: George L. Stout, 'Classes of Simple Paint Structure', *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts*, VI: 4 (April 1938), [220-239] 220.



2.20. Bernard Meninsky, *Standing Nude*, c.1930, chalk on paper. 24 x 9 cm; framed: 34 x 18.5 cm, Private Collection.

2.21. Bernard Meninsky, *Head of a Girl*, 1944, graphite on paper, 54.6 x 45.1 cm, Tate, London.





2.22. Walter Richard Sickert, *Portrait of Henri Rochefort* (recto), undated, pen and Indian ink on paper, 29.1 x 22.4 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



2.23. Walter Richard Sickert, *Sauce i aliste*, 1924, graphite, pen and ink, watercolour on paper, 27.9 x 21 cm, Tate, London.



2.24. Rodrigo Moynihan, *Study*, c.1935, watercolour, ink, and gouache on paper. 40.7 x 29.3 cm, Tate, London.



2.25. Rodrigo Moynihan, *Objective Abstraction*, c.1935-6, oil paint on canvas, 45.7 x 35.6 cm, Tate, London.



2.26. Adrian Stokes, Landscape, *West Pennine Moor*, 1937, oil paint on canvas, 60.9 x 50.8 cm, Tate, London.

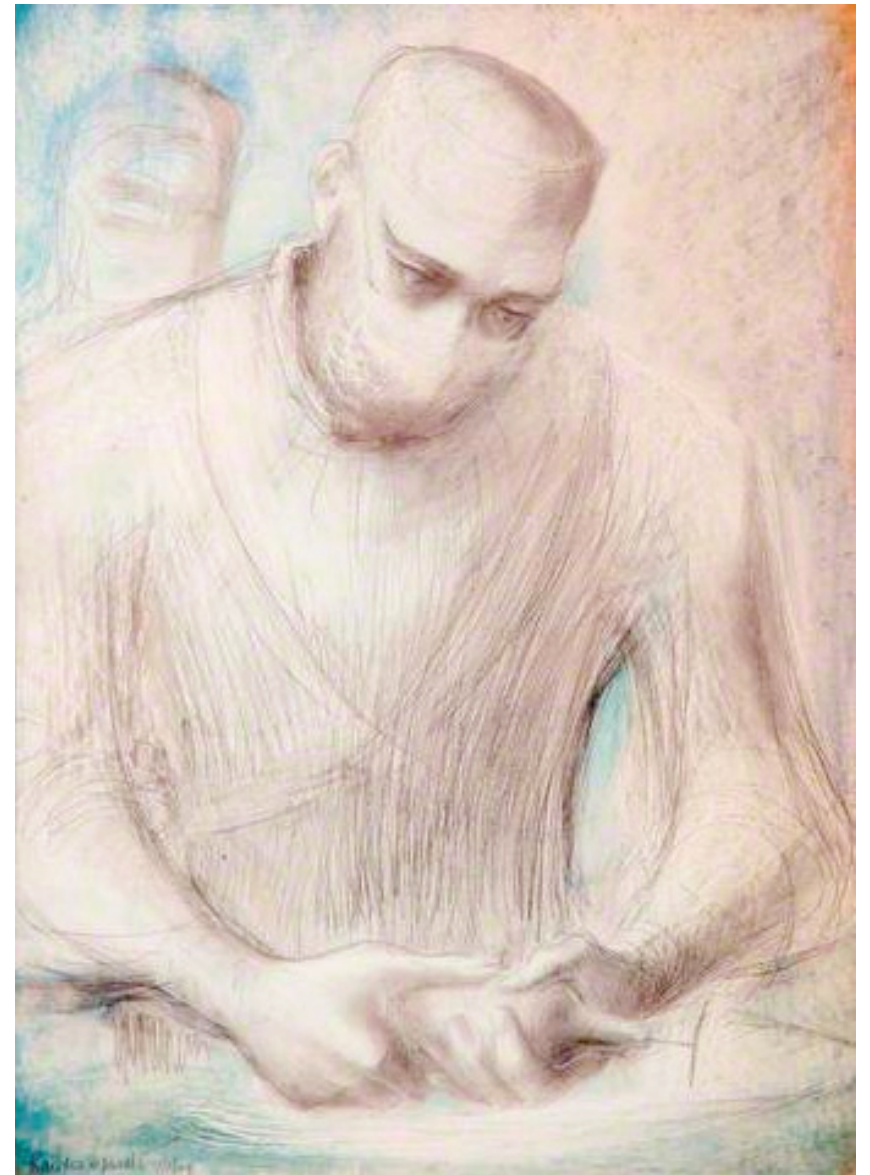


2.27. William Coldstream, *Fort Burgoyne, Dover*, 1940, ink and graphite on paper, 26.3 x 19.1 cm, Tate, London.



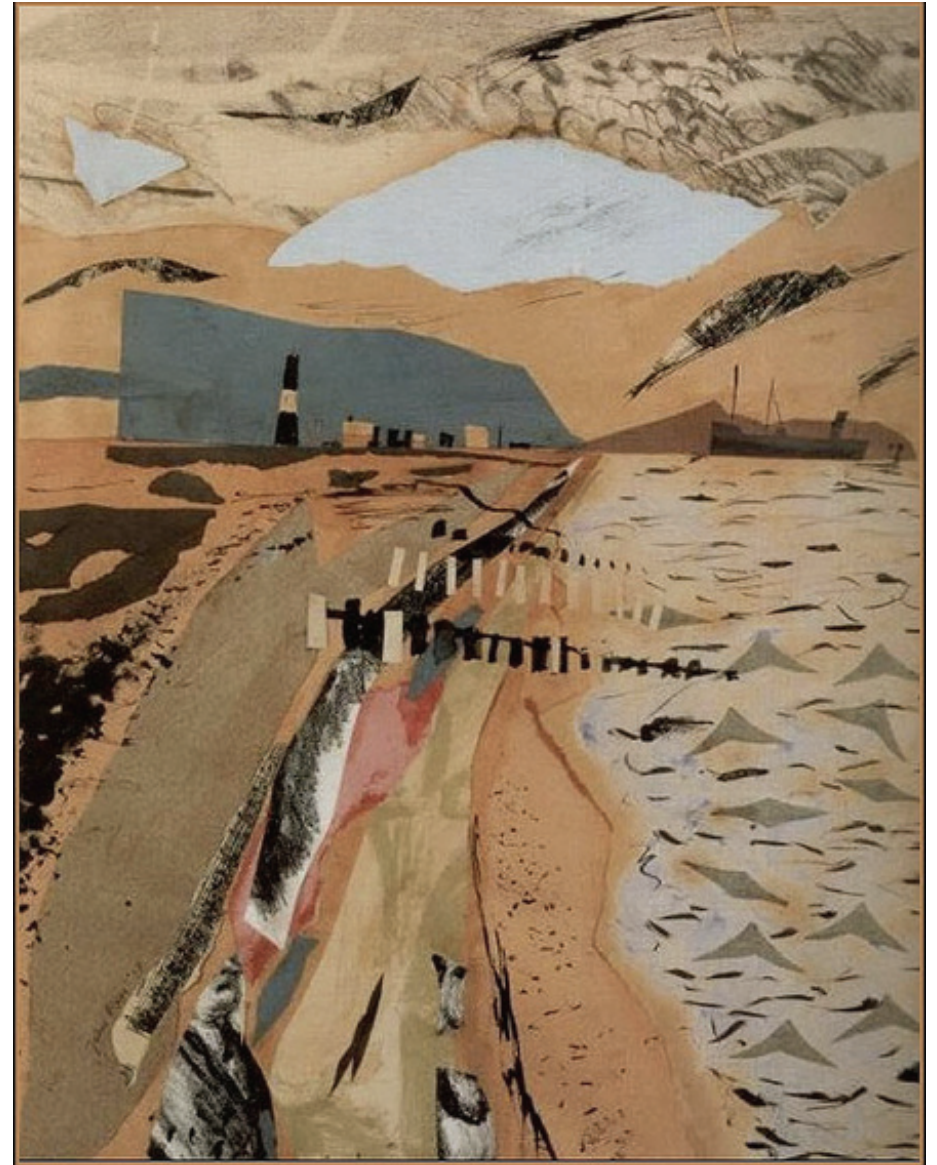
2.28. Henry Moore, *Tube Shelter Perspective*, 1941, graphite, ink, wax, and watercolour on paper, 48.3 x 43.8 cm, Tate, London.

2.29. Barbara Hepworth, *Tibia Graft*, 1949, oil and graphite on paper, 52.2 x 37.3 cm, Wakefield Art Gallery, Wakefield.





2.30. John Piper, *Figure Drawing*, 1941, ink, crayon, and watercolour on paper, 37.6 x 27.5 cm, Tate, London.



2.31. John Piper, *Dungeness*, 1938, collage, blotting paper, lithographs, and coloured paper with black ink, 50 x 38 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Harris, *Romantic Moderns*, 13.)



2.32. Ben Nicholson,
untitled, c.1932, graphite
on paper, 49.8 x 39.0 cm,
Tate, London.



2.33. Ben Nicholson,
untitled (guitar), 1933,
oil paint on board,
83.2 x 19.7 cm, Tate,
London.



2.34. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen*, undated [possibly 1841], graphite, watercolour, bodycolour, scraping, pen, and red ink on paper, 23.3 x 29.6 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.



2.35. David Jones, *Standing Figure*, 1921, graphite on paper, 41 x 33 cm, Tate, London.



2.36. David Jones, *Illustration to the Arthurian Legend: Guenevere*, 1938-40, graphite, ink, and watercolour, 62.5 x 49.5 cm, Tate, London.



3.1. Feliks Topolski, cover of *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 Nov 1941).

3.2. Feliks Topolski, 'Convoy to Russia', *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 Nov 1941), 8.





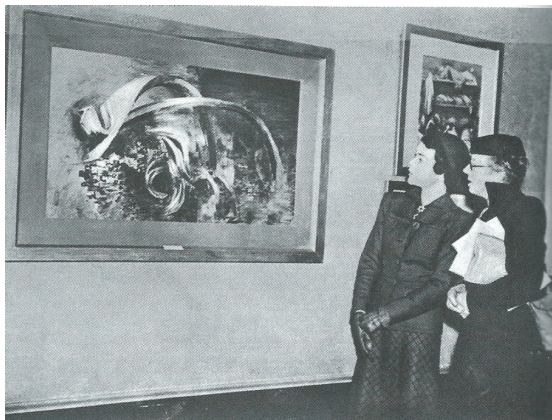
3.3. Unknown, photographer, *War Pictures by British Artists*, fifth touring exhibition (circulated by the Museums Association) at the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, January 1944 (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 170).



3.4. Unknown photographer, Percy Jowett (l) and Muirhead Bone (r) arranging paintings for the National Gallery War Exhibitions, *Evening Standard* (1 July 1940) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 179).



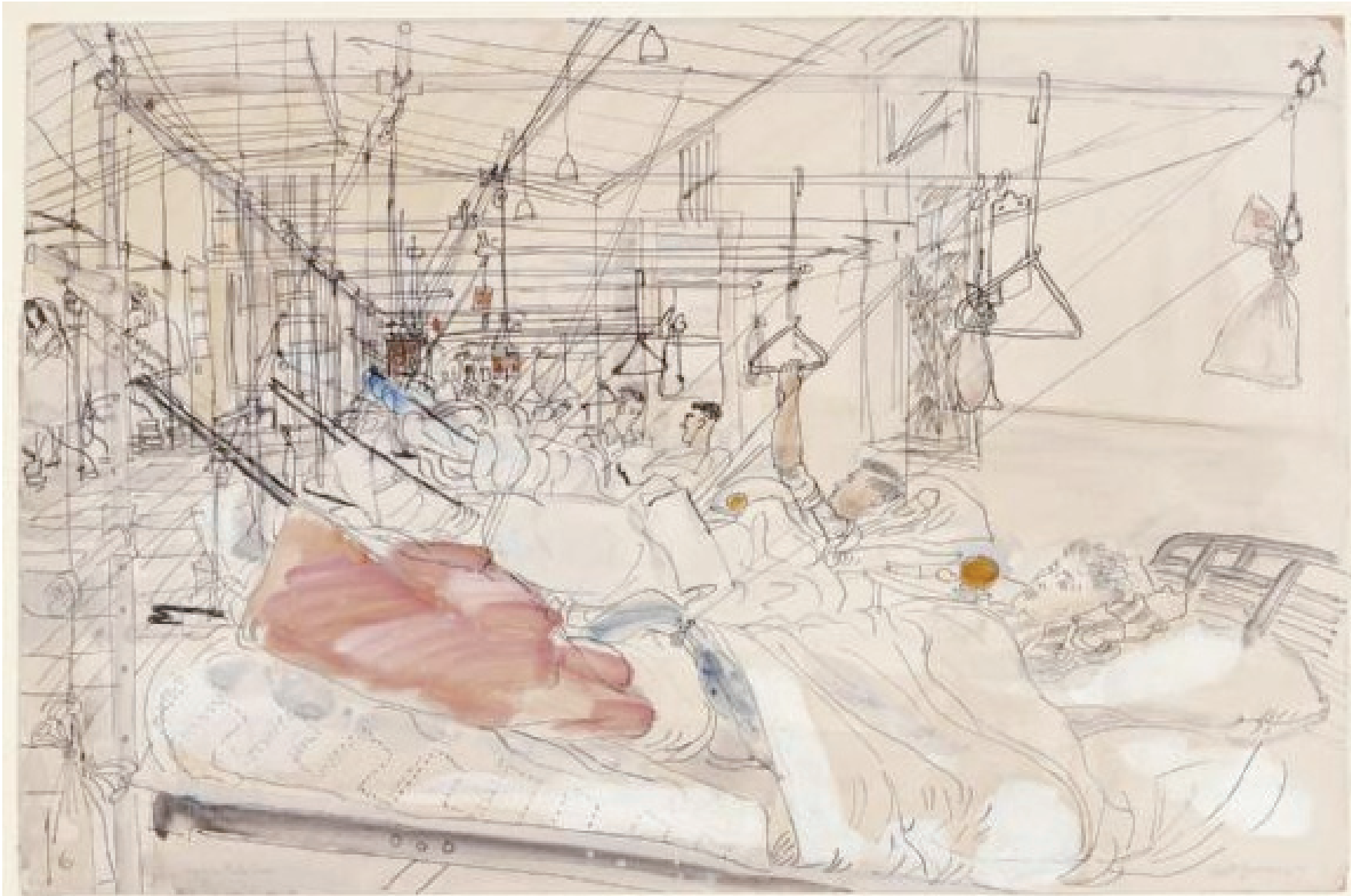
3.5. Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941: East End, Burnt Paper Warehouse*, 1941, gouache, pastel, graphite, and ink on paper, mounted on card, 67.3 x 113.7 cm, Tate, London.



3.6. Unknown photographer, Jane Clark (Kenneth Clark's wife) and Mary Agnes Hamilton (Vice-Chairman of the Women's Voluntary Services) with Graham Sutherland's *Twisted Girders* at reception for new room of WAAC pictures at the National Gallery, photograph originally published in *Tatler and Bystander*, 160 (21 May 1941) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 180).



3.7. Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941: East End, Wrecked Public House*, 1941, crayon, ink, pastel, and gouache on paper on plywood, 67.3 x 47.6 cm, Tate, London.



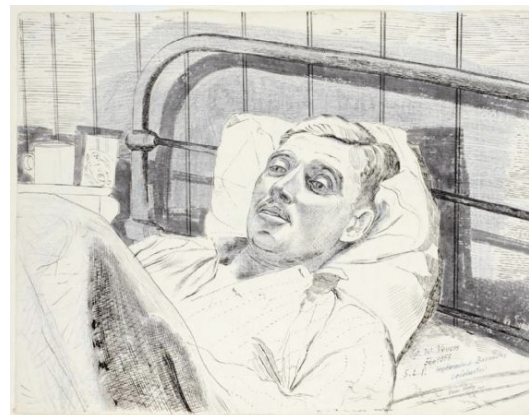
3.8. Anthony Gross, *A Ward for Plaster Cases*, 1942, ink and wash on paper, 34 x 51.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.9. Edward Bawden, *Siva Oasis: Aghurmi*, undated, watercolour on paper, 45.7 x 58.7 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



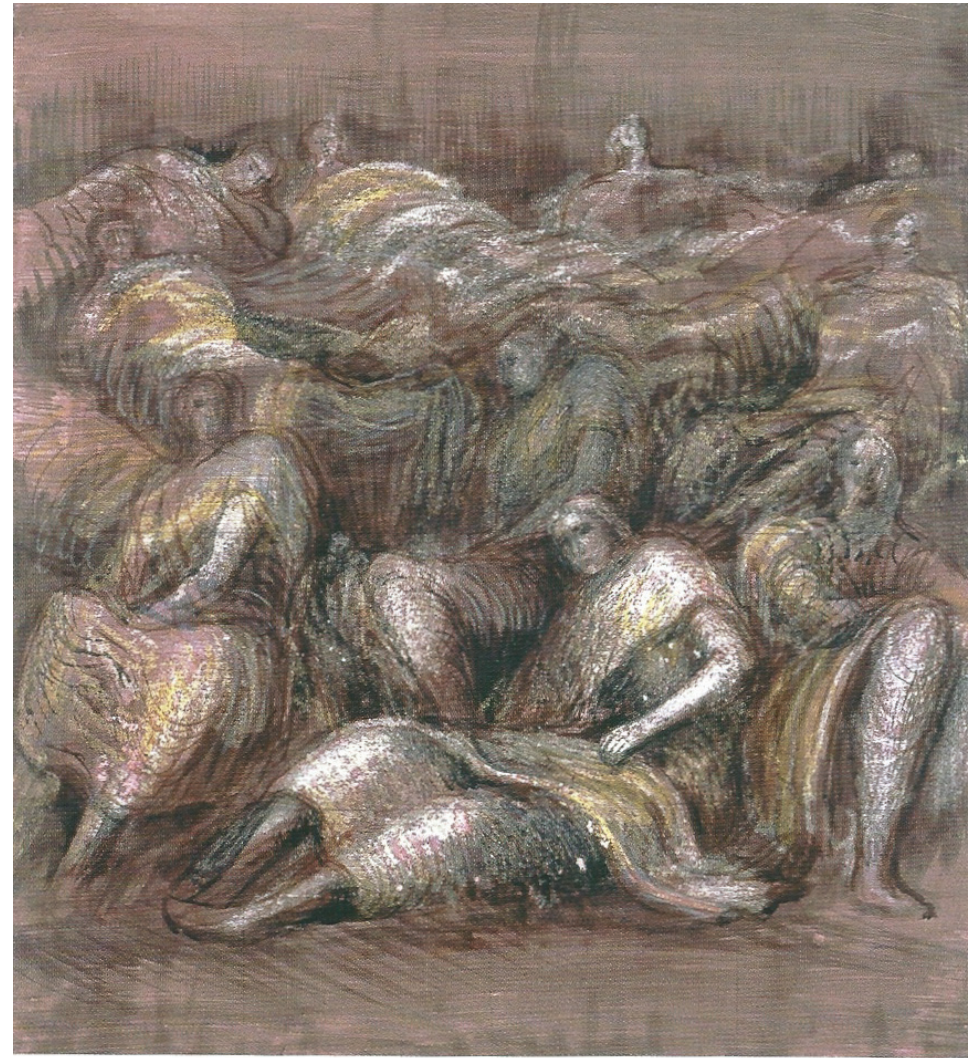
3.10. Edward Bawden, *Siva Oasis: The Village of Aghurmi*, watercolour and ink on paper, 56.9 x 69.9 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.11. Edward Bawden, *Sergeant W. Venes: Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester*, undated, watercolour on paper, 39.9 x 52 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



[2.28.] Henry Moore, *Tube Shelter Perspective*, 1941, graphite, ink, wax, and watercolour on paper, 48.3 x 43.8 cm, Tate, London.



3.12. Henry Moore, *Women in a Shelter*, 1941, graphite, wax crayon, chalk, watercolour wash, pen, and ink on paper, 46.7 x 43.2 cm, Museum of London.



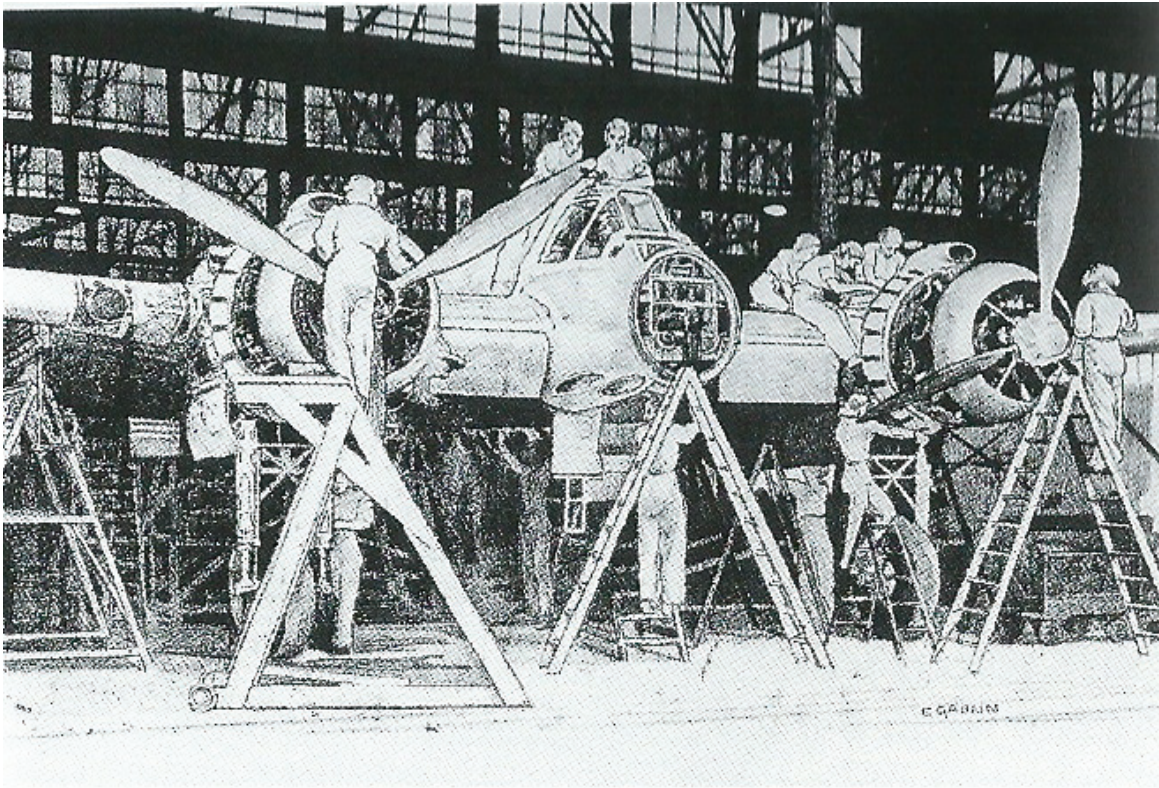
3.13. James Boswell, *NAAFI at No 1 Depot, RAMC, Crookham*, undated, ink and wash on paper, 33.3 x 52.8 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



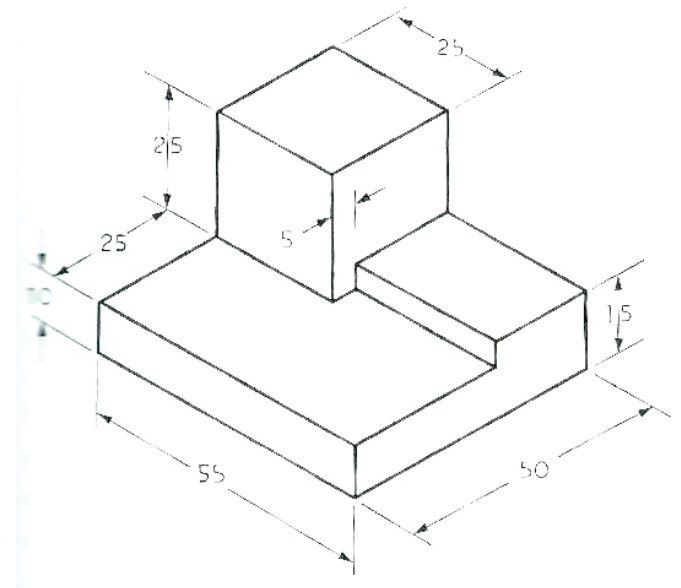
3.14. Edward Ardizzone, *Sleeping in a Shelter*, 1940, watercolour on paper, 31.4 x 41.7 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.15. Feliks Topolski, *The Tube: October 1940*, 1940, ink and wash on paper, 35.1 x 48.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



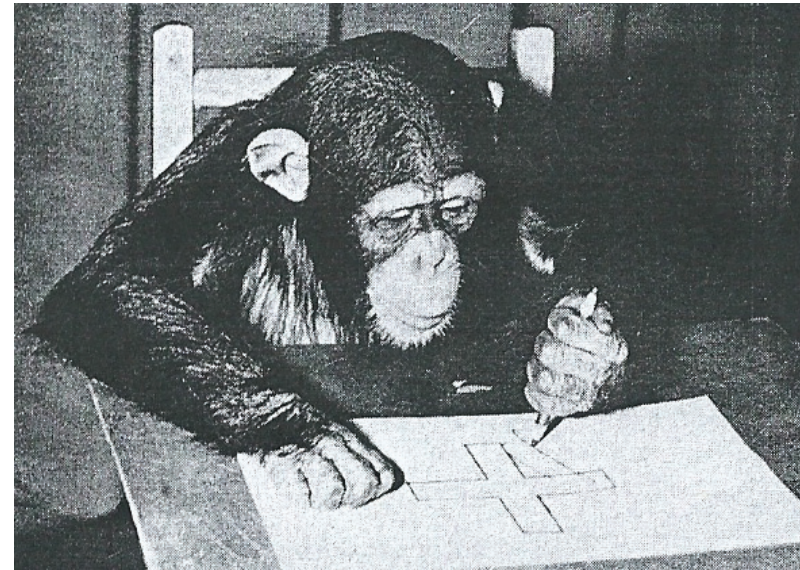
3.16. Ethel Gabain, *Building a Beaufort Bomber*, 1941, lithograph, 29.2 x 46.9 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.17. Engineering dimensioning drawing by Patrick Maynard (Photograph: Maynard, *Drawing Distinctions*, figure 41).



3.18. Unknown photographer, Meng (r) and Jacqueline (l); published in:
Anon. 'New Gorilla For The Zoo,' *The Times*, 48070 (11 Aug 1938), 7, column B.



3.19. Unknown photographer, Congo, details and location unknown
(Photograph: Morris, *Biology of Art*, plate 26).



3.20. Congo, drawing, November 1956, details and location unknown
(Photograph: Morris, *Biology of Art*, figure 2).



3.21. Woodcut after Gardner's *The Battlefield of Antietam*, from *Harper's Weekly* (18 October 1862) (Photograph: Albert and Feyel, 'Photography and the Media', 361).



3.23. Robert Capa, *Omaha Beach*, 6 June 1944 (Photograph: Ritchin, 'Close Witness', 33).



3.22. Alexander Gardner, *The Battlefield of Antietam*, 1862, Library of Congress, Washington (Photograph: Albert and Feyel, 'Photography and the Media', 361).

3.24. Dmitri Baldermants, *Attack*, 1941, Scott Hyde Collection (Photograph: Ritchin, 'Close Witness', 33).





R.A.F. Parades Break the Monotony of Life at Sea
The Convoy nears even more dangerous waters. Members of the R.A.F. Wing on their way to Russia parade on deck. Every man wears his life-jacket.



The Crew on the Fore-Deck
Most of them are used to the dangers of war by this time. Some have been torpedoed.



Passengers Watch Distant Activity
Some say there is firing in the distance. Others maintain it is only a school of whales.



The Crew Put on Life-Jackets
They stand by the life-boats, ready to man them. Most of the boats are kept outboard.



A Polish Officer Relaxes
A Polish Army is being formed in the Soviet Union. A Polish Military Mission goes out.



Army and Air Force Conduct a Debate
The Wing-Adjutant, left, and an Army Colonel, right, debate the problems of air and land warfare. Vernon Bartlett is the Chairman for their discussion.



The Cook Appears
He cooks for the crew. He has already served on a ship that was mined.



ON THE LAST NIGHT A CONCERT IS HELD: Members of the R.A.F. Sing in their Life-jackets
The convoy has reached its most dangerous stage. Its passengers sing and play during the night. A sergeant from Croydon plays on the spoons. Behind him a banjo is energetically strummed. All the members of the audience wear life-jackets.

one of whose plays was produced in London only a few weeks ago. The ship's adjutant was an indefatigable Englishman who had lived all his youth in St. Petersburg, and who had fought before in Northern Russia—with the British troops against the Bolsheviks.

The sea was calm and, for much of the way, the sun was so warm that some of us sunbathed, even when we were north of the Arctic Circle. And at no time have I travelled with so cheery a bunch of passengers. One had forgotten how varied people might be.

An R.A.F. officer on board, who was always referred to as "the Plumber," had apparently earned the title during the Battle of Britain, when he became famous for patching our damaged fighters with bits of biscuit tin so that they could go up again next day to play their part in inflicting upon Hitler the worst disappointment he had suffered until the Russians refused to collapse before his attack.

In the lounge one morning I discovered a quiet elderly officer studying a map of Russia. He was wondering, he told me, which way they would come out again, and was hoping it would be by way of Tashkent. Why, I asked, and he explained that he would then see a wonderful variety of rhododendron. He had a great collection at home, he confessed, but he feared many of them would



A Passenger Who Enjoyed the Party
The officers celebrate, too. They dress as Volga boatmen, wear cotton wool for beards. They sing Russian songs, try Russian dances. Now everybody gets some sleep before the entry into Soviet Russia.

3.25. Feliks Topolski, 'Convoy to Russia', *Picture Post*, 13:7 (15 Nov 1941), 12-13.



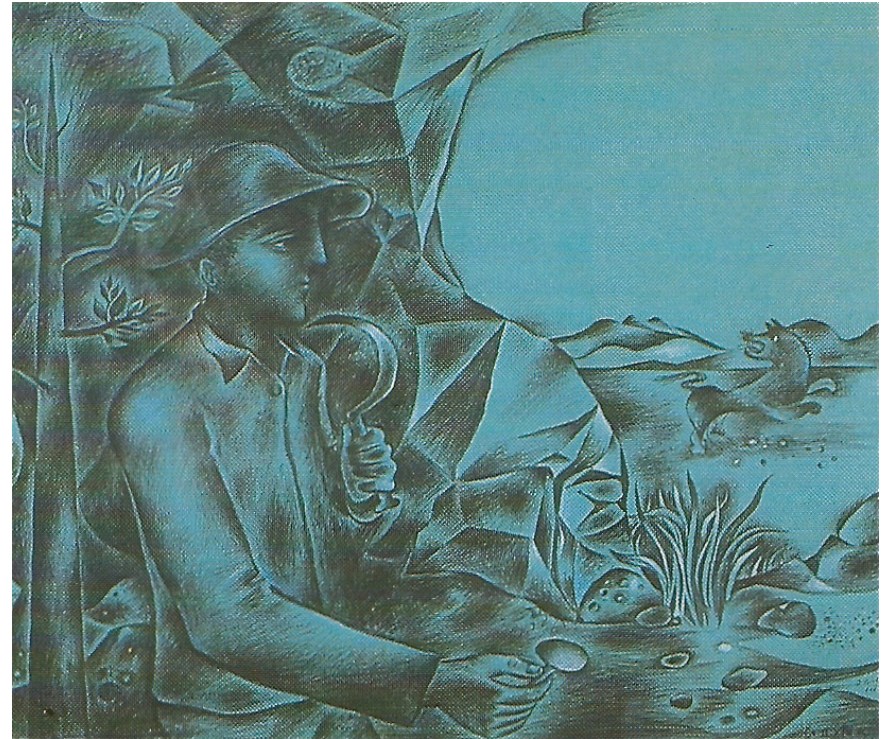
3.26. Peter Lanyon, *Anticoli Hills*, c.1953, crayon and watercolour on paper, 41.6 x 51.9 cm, Tate, London.



3.27. John Piper, *All Saints Chapel, Bath*, 1942, ink, chalk, gouache, and watercolour on paper, 42.5 x 55.9 cm, Tate, London.



3.28. John Minton, *Summer Landscape*, 1945, pen and ink on paper, 62.2 x 78.7 cm, location unknown (Photograph: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, 180).



3.29. John Craxton, *Reaper with Mushroom*, c.1944, conté crayon on blue paper, 43.2 x 61 cm, Christopher Hull Gallery, London (Photograph: Yorke, *Spirit of Place*, between pages 192 and 193).



3.30. Detail, Stanley Spencer at a reception at the National Gallery, London for WAAC art, in front of the *Welders* section of his 'Shipbuilding on the Clyde' series; published in *Tatler and Bystander* 160 (21 May 1941) (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 180).

3.31. Leonard McCombe, Photographs of Stanley Spencer sketching a riveter at the Lithgow Shipyard, Clydeside, Oct 1943; published in 'A War Artist on the Clyde', *Picture Post*, 21:1 (2 October 1943), 7; Hulton Archive/Getty Images.



3.32. Unknown photographer, *Feliks Topolski drawing in Levant*, date and details unknown, Estate of Feliks Topolski Archive (Photograph: Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated).

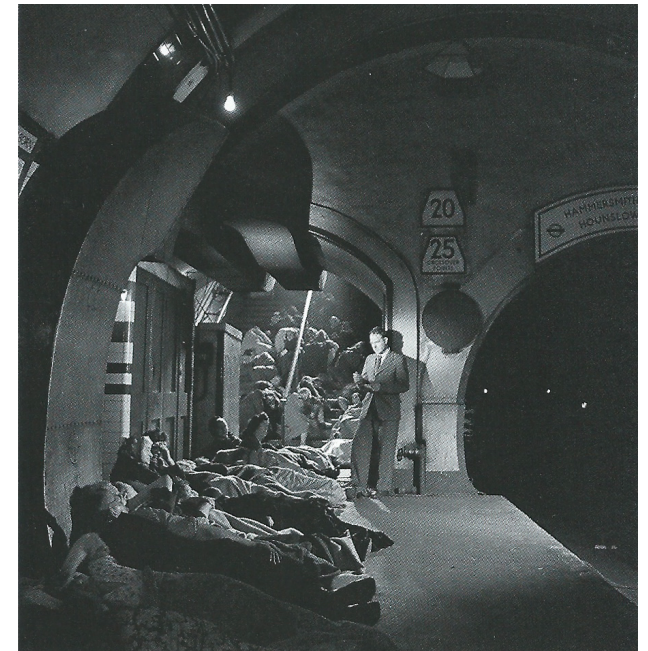


3.34. Unknown photographer, still of Paul Nash sketching at the Cowley aircraft dump from Jill Craigie's film, *Out of Chaos*, TGA, London.

3.33. Reg Speller, Photograph of Ethel Gabain painting air raid damage in London, November 1940, Hulton Archive/Getty Images.



3.35. Lee Miller, still of Henry Moore sketching in the Holborn Underground Station in 1943 from Jill Craigie's film, *Out of Chaos* (Photograph: Foss, *War Paint*, 74).





3.36. Feliks Topolski, *Polish General's Sister-in-Law*, 1941; published in 'Kiubyshev the New Capital', *Picture Post*, 9 (29 Nov 1941), 16; and Topolski, *Russia in War*, 81.



3.37. Feliks Topolski, *First Polish Review*, September 1941; published in 'Kiubyshev', 17; and Topolski, *Russia in War*, 83.



3.38. Edward Bawden, detail of *Private G F Dunning, RASC*, 1943, watercolour on paper, 39.7 x 52.0 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.39. Anthony Gross, *The Guest Tent: Arab Legion*, 1942, ink and wash on paper, 33.6 x 50.8 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



3.40. David Bomberg, *Rhonda Bridge and Tajo*, 1935, charcoal on paper, 47.6 x 62.9 cm, Borough Gallery, London



3.41. David Bomberg, *Bomb Store*, 1942, charcoal on paper, 47.5 x 55.0 cm, Borough Gallery, London.



3.42. Ronald Searle, *In the Jungle - Self Portrait, Konyu, Thailand Jungle*, July 1943, ink wash on paper, 19.0 x 16.1 cm, Imperial War Museum, London.



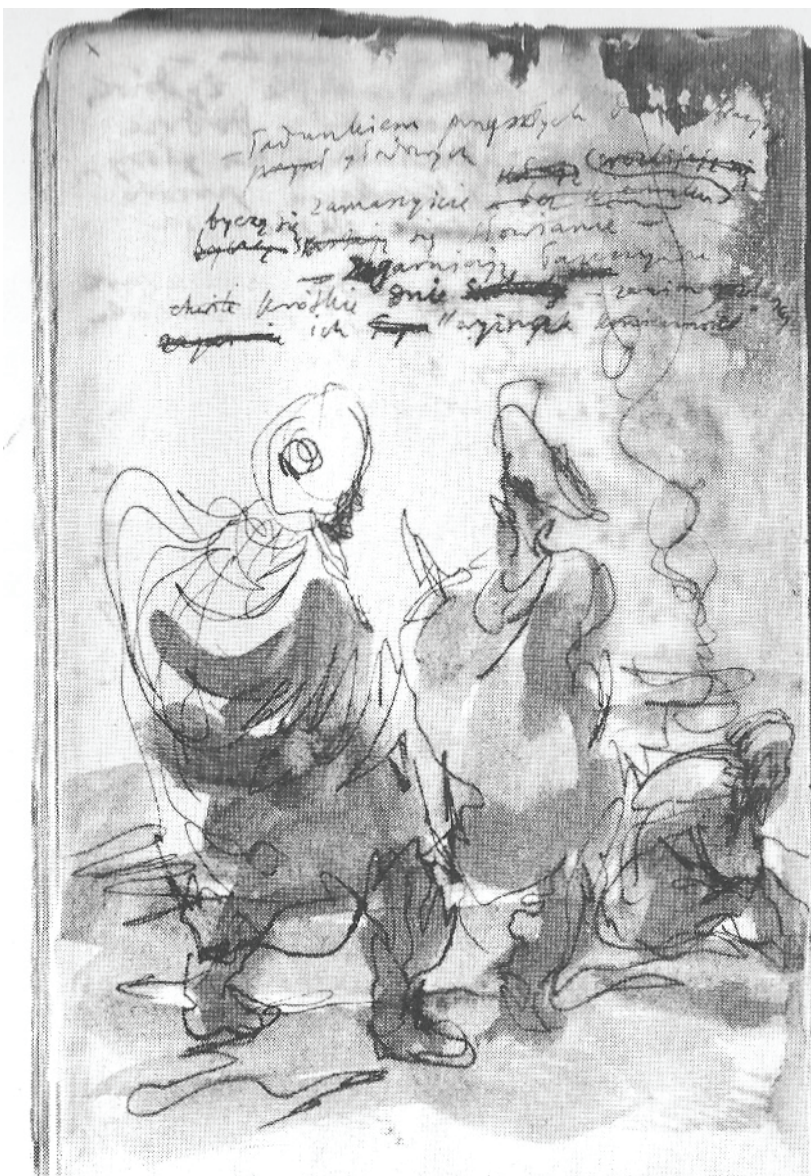
3.43. Ronald Searle, *Siam 1943, Man dying of Cholera*, 1943, ink on paper, dimensions and location unknown (Photograph: Searle, *To Kwai*, 127).



3.44. Thomas Hennell, *The Tree*, c.1938-40, watercolour on paper, 31.8 x 48.3 cm, Tate, London.



3.45. Otto Dix, *Mealtime in the Trench (Loretto Heights)* [*Mahlzeit in der Sappe (Lorettöhöhe)*] from *The War (Der Krieg)*, 1924, etching and aquatint from a portfolio of fifty etching, aquatint, and dry-points, 19.7 x 28.8 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



3.46. Feliks Topolski,
German Campaign Diary,
1945, details and location
unknown (Photograph:
Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*,
unpaginated).



Feliks Topolski après le bombardement.
Le dessin, ça va tellement plus vite que la photo!...

Tous mes vœux,

Myra Cendrars.

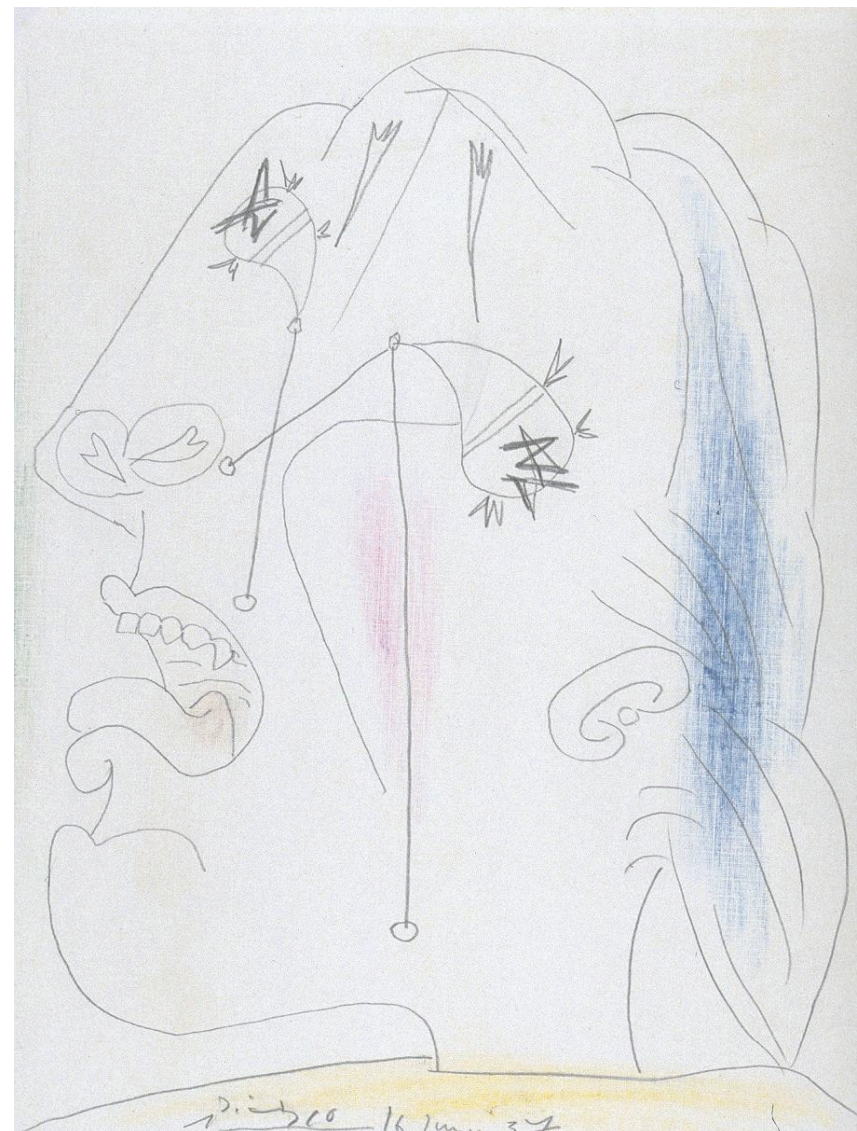
(without apologies)

15 Mai.

3.47. Unknown artist (possibly Miriam (Myra) Cendrars),
drawing of Topolski, 15 May 1941, details and location
unknown (Photograph: Topolski, *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated).



3.48. David Low, untitled and unpublished, 1933, ink on paper, 28 x 31cm, Beaverbrook Foundation, London.



3.49. Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937, graphite and crayon on paper, 66.8 x 54 x 5.2 cm, Tate, London.



3.50. Gilbert Spencer, *Darling, What Have You Done with My Battledress?* 1941, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.



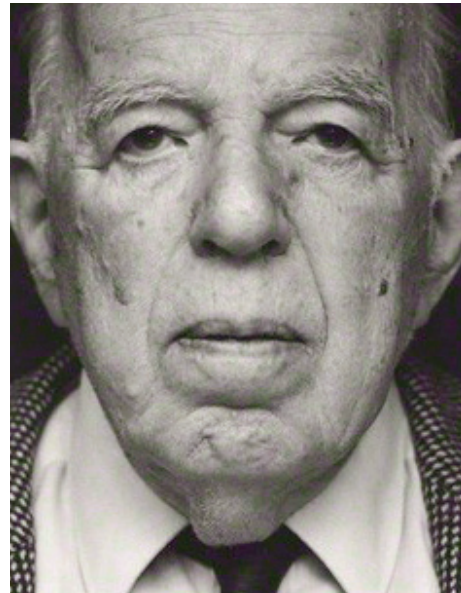
3.51. Gilbert Spencer, *I Wish I Wasn't Home-Guarding Tonight*, 1941, watercolour and graphite on paper, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.

3.52. Gilbert Spencer, *Dawn Patrol – the Converted Poacher*, 1942, watercolour and graphite on paper, 74.5 x 54.5 cm, Private Collection.





3.53. Unknown photographer, detail of *Ernst Kris*, 1955, photoprint, Yale University. School of Medicine, New Haven.



3.54. Carolyn Djanogly, *Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich*, 3 May 1997, bromide fibre print, 33.8 x 26 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



3.55. Unknown photographer for International News Photos, *Mathilde Hollitscher (née Freud); Sigmund Freud; Alfred Ernest Jones*, 1937, vintage press print, 13.2 x 19.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.

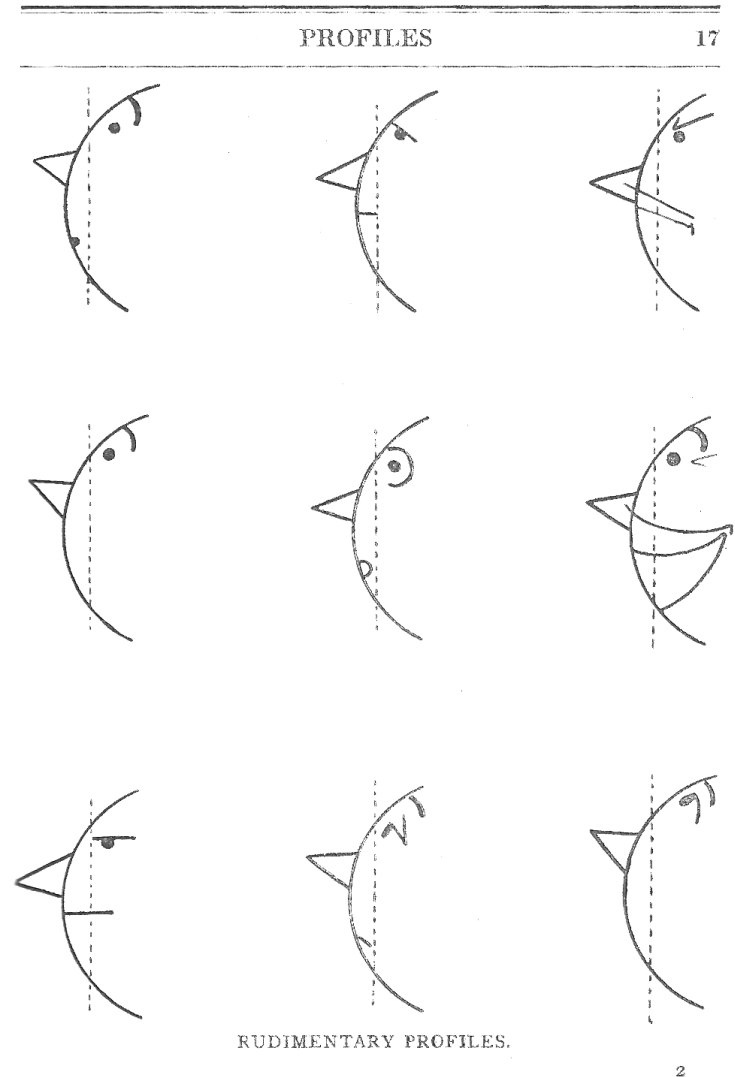


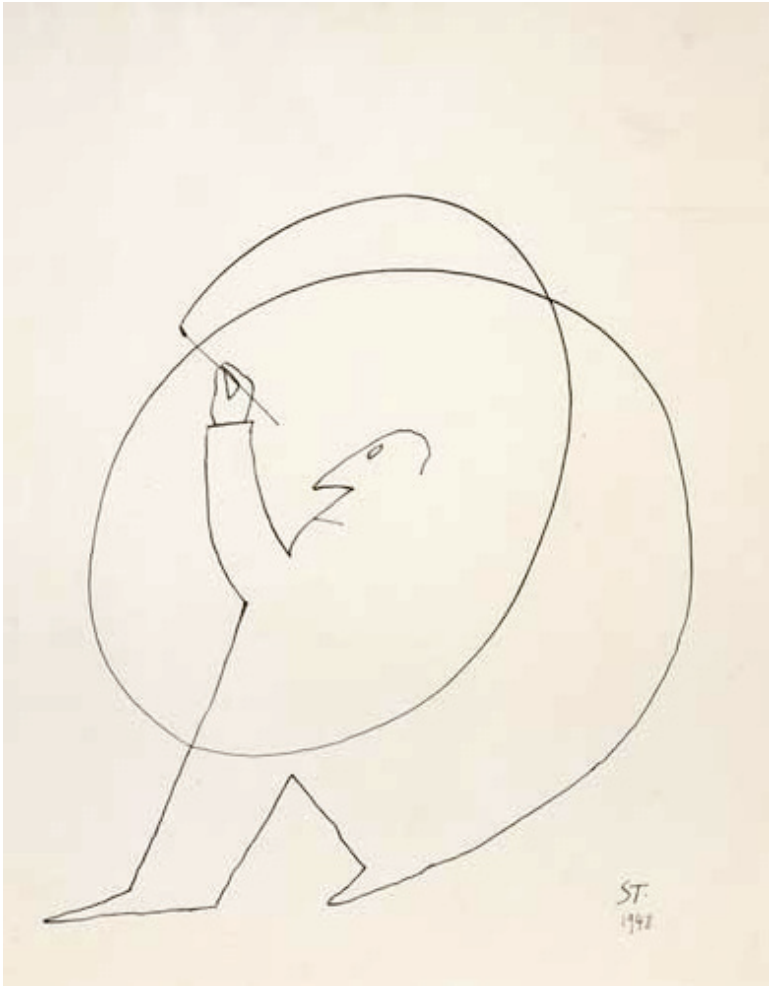
3.56. Illustration from E. Gombrich and E. Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', figure 10.



3.57. Honoré Daumier, untitled (a French lawyer reading a letter), c.1823-1879, pen and black ink with grey wash over black chalk on paper, 5.4 x 12.4 cm, British Museum, London.

3.58. Will Farrow, illustration for his *Practical Cartooning for Profit*, 3rd edition (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1931), 17.





3.59. Saul Steinberg, *Untitled*, 1948, ink on paper, 36.2 x 28.6 cm, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.



3.60. Max Beerbohm, *Significant Form*, [Roger Fry and Clive Bell], c.1921, pencil and watercolour on paper, 32.5 x 21.5 cm, Charleston Collection, Firl.



3.61. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*), plate 43 from *Los Caprichos*, c.1797-8, etching and aquatint, 21.5 x 15 cm, British Museum, London.



3.62. Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain*, on 15 April 1834, *L'Association mensuelle*, July 1834; 15 April 1834 [published early October], lithography; print on china paper, 28.5 x 44 cm, British Museum, London.



3.63. Thomas Rowlandson, *Evading the Broker's Man*, undated, pen and ink, water-colour on paper, 26.3 x 20.6 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London.

Evening Standard News Letter

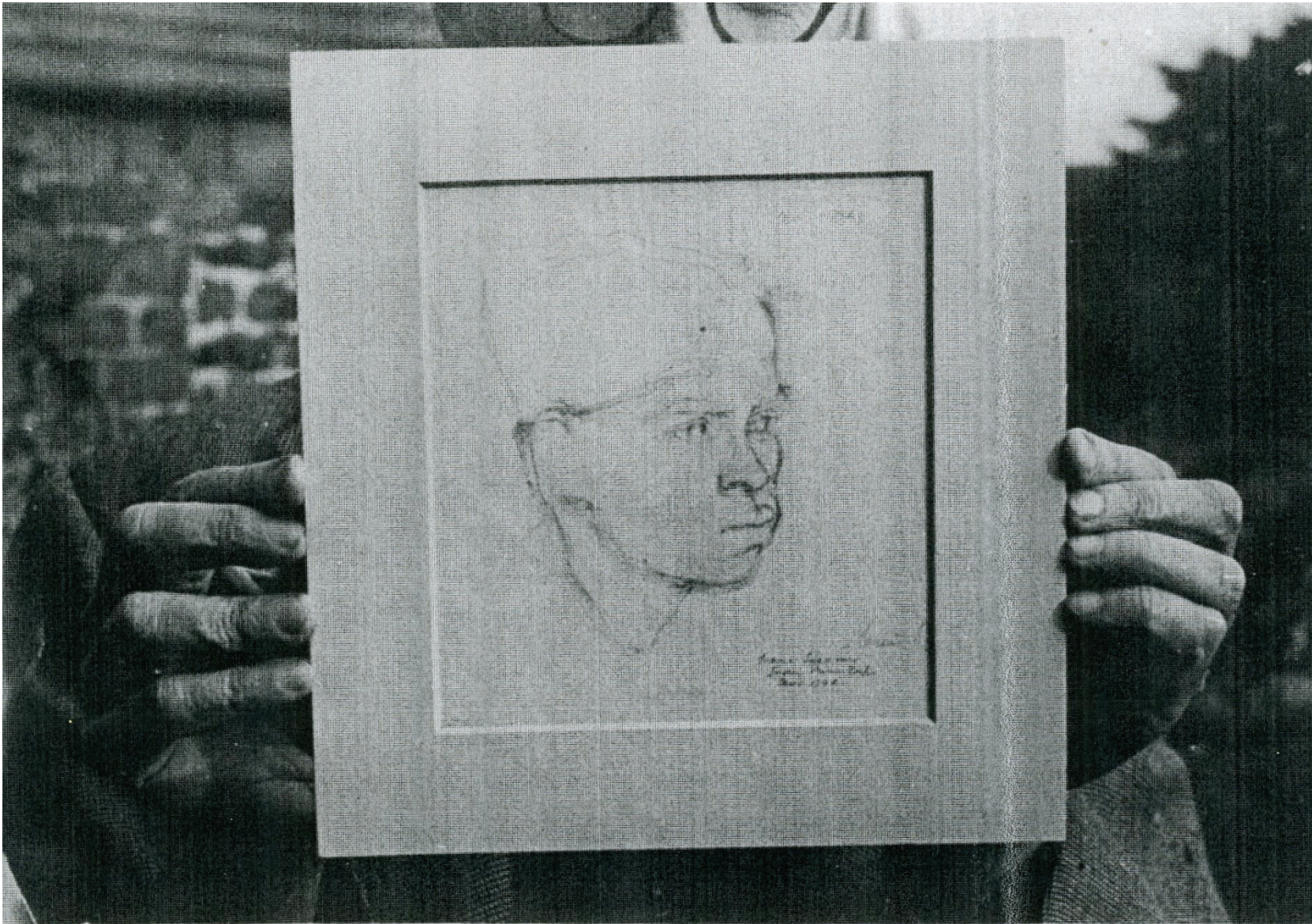
No. 5

[Compiled by Percy Cole and Fred Kyse, for circulation
among members of the Staff in the Services.]

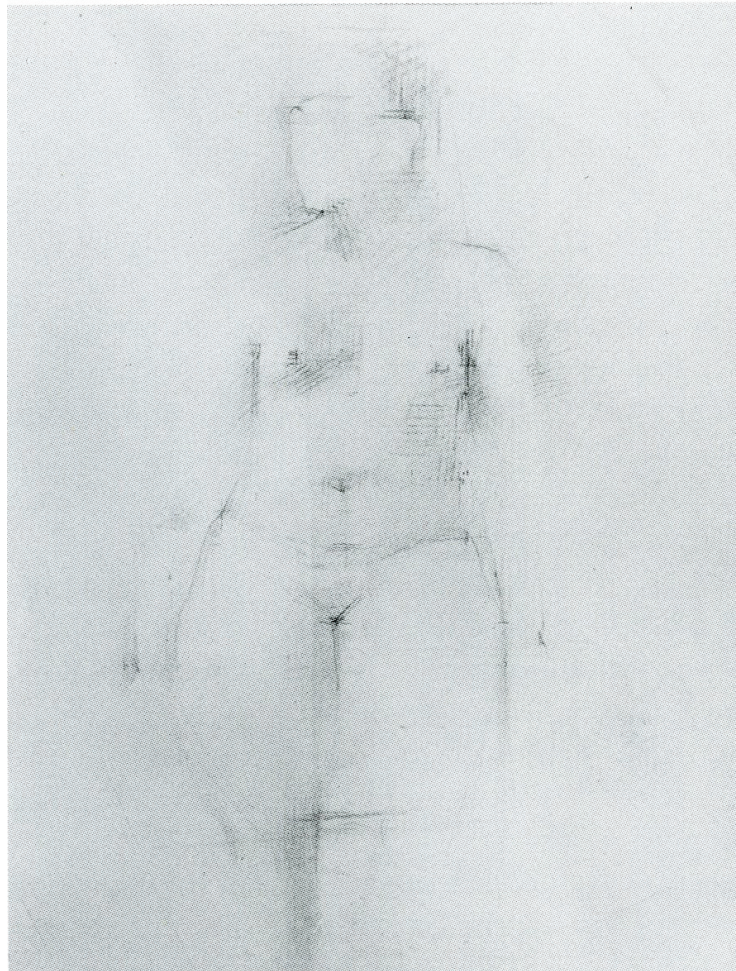
December 1941



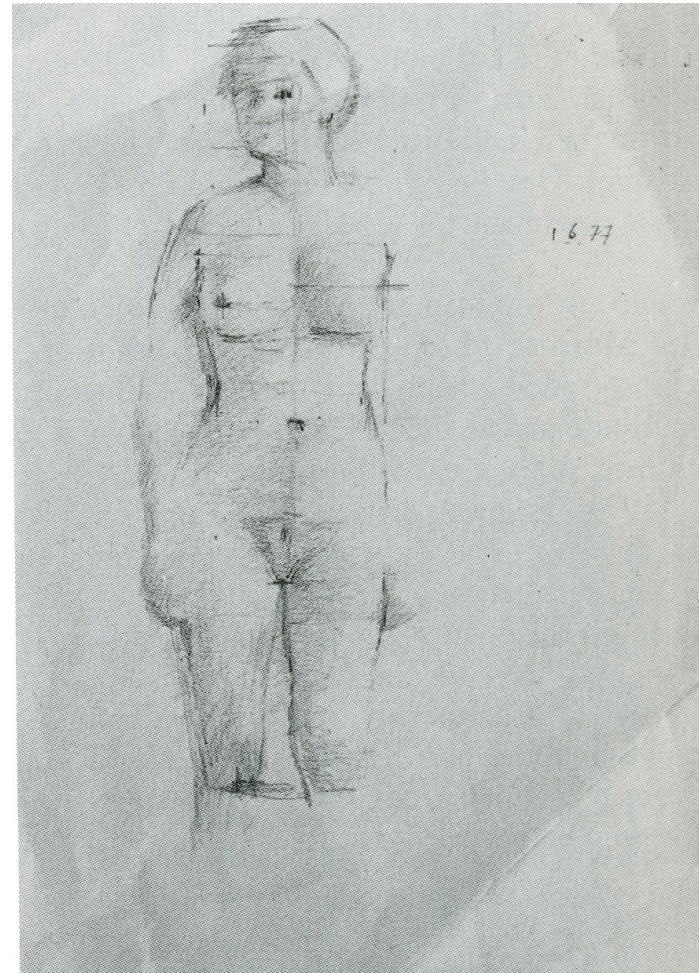
4.64. David Low, caricature including the press baron and minister Max Aitken Beaverbrook (1879-1964), published in *Evening Standard News Letter*, Dec 1941, details and location unknown (Photograph: The British Cartoon Archive).



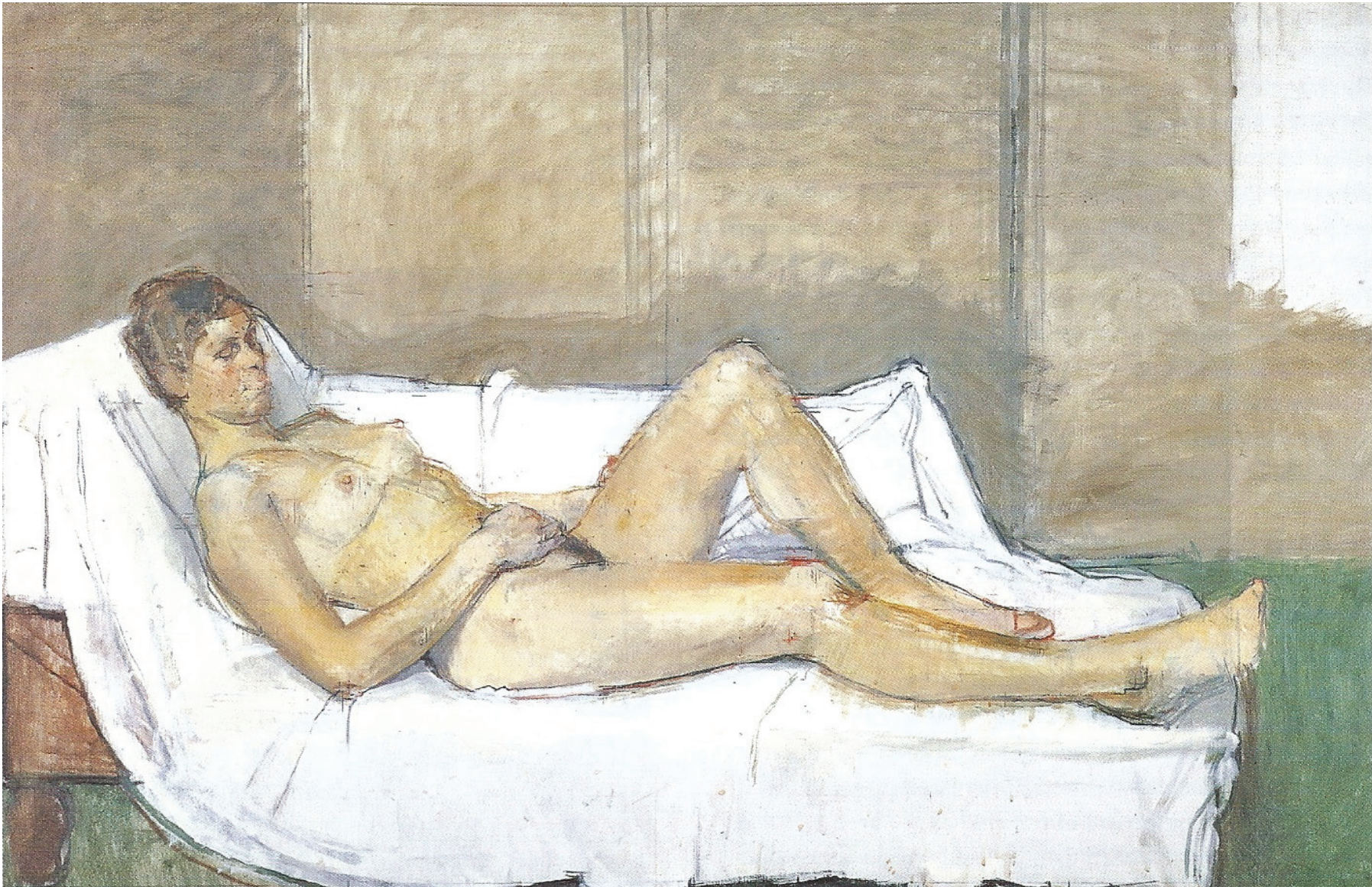
4.1. Photographer unknown (probably Dr. John 'Jack' Rake), William Coldstream holding *Indian Soldier*, *Cairo*, 1944, date and size unknown, photograph, TGA 8922.15.22.



4.2. William Coldstream, *Study for Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer)*, October 1959, pencil on paper, size and location unknown (Laughton, *Coldstream*, 205).



4.3. William Coldstream, *Nude Study [for Standing Nude]*, c.1977, graphite on paper, 27.9 x 20.3 cm, private collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 285).



4.4. William Coldstream, *Reclining Nude*, 1953-54, oil on canvas, 87 x 134.5 cm, Arts Council Collection, Hayward Gallery, London (Photograph: Hyman, *Battle for Realism*, 154).



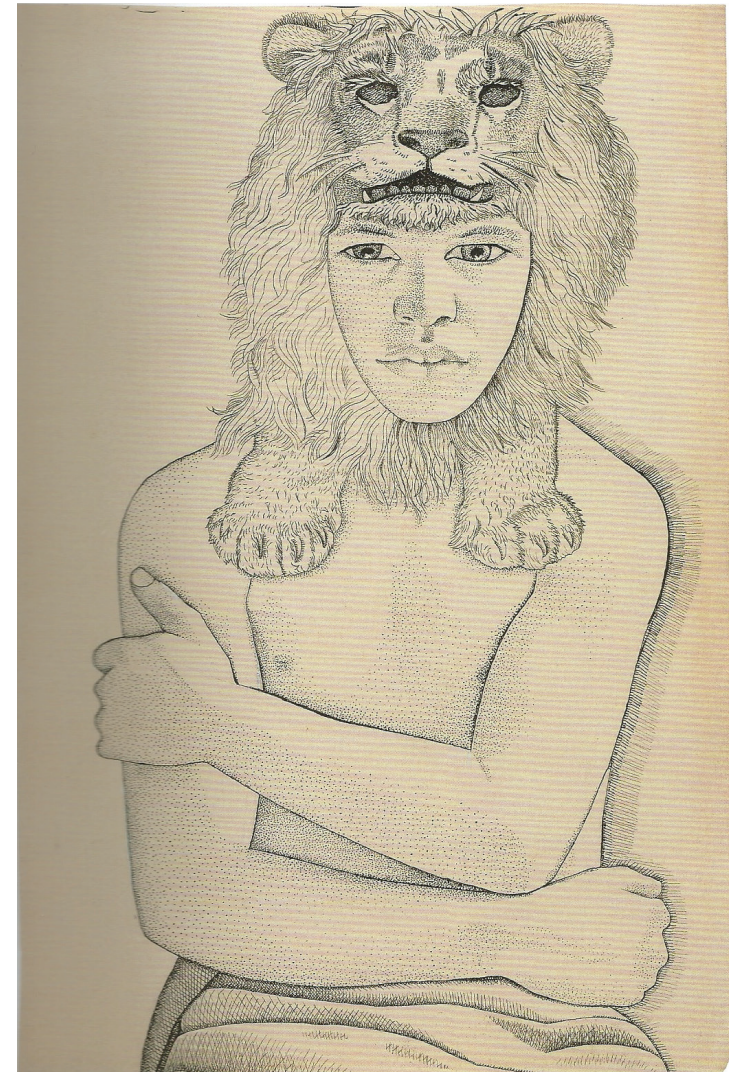
4.5. Lord Snowdon, *William Coldstream*, 16 April 1962, bromide print, 35.2 x 22.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.

4.6. Ida Kar, *David Sylvester*, c.1960, vintage bromide print, 17.5 x 12.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.

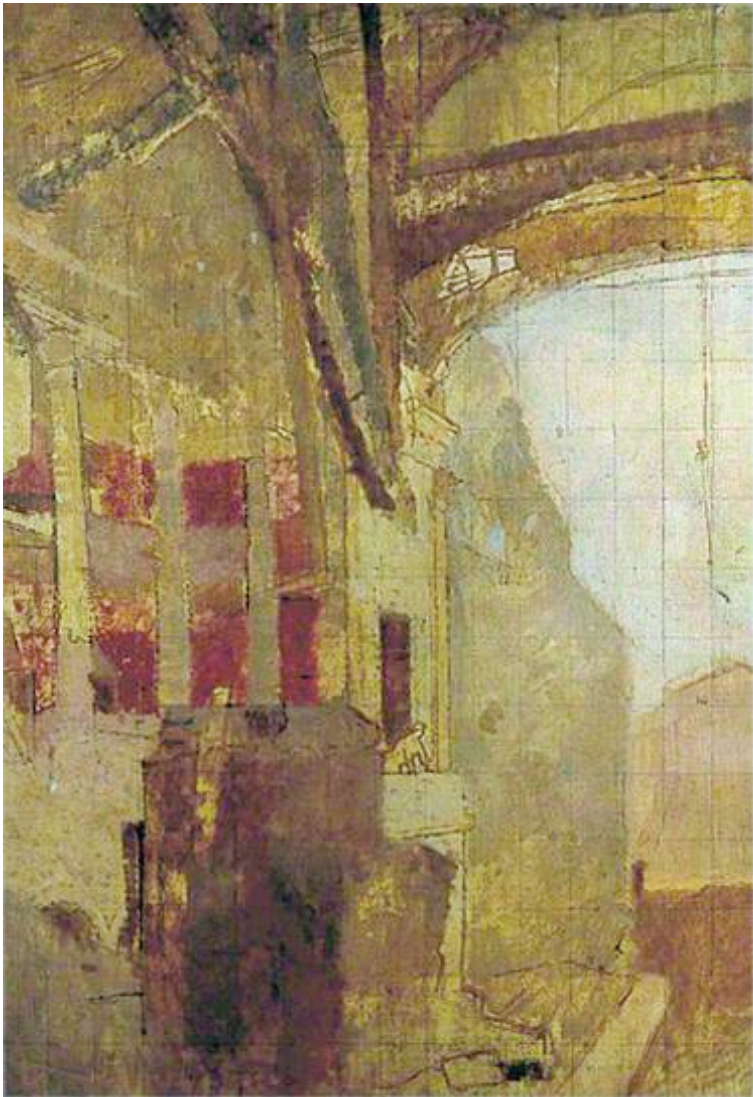




4.7. Lucian Freud, *Interior Scene*, 1950, pastel and conté crayon on paper, 57.1 x 48.2 cm, location unknown (Photograph: Freud, *On Paper*, figure 89).



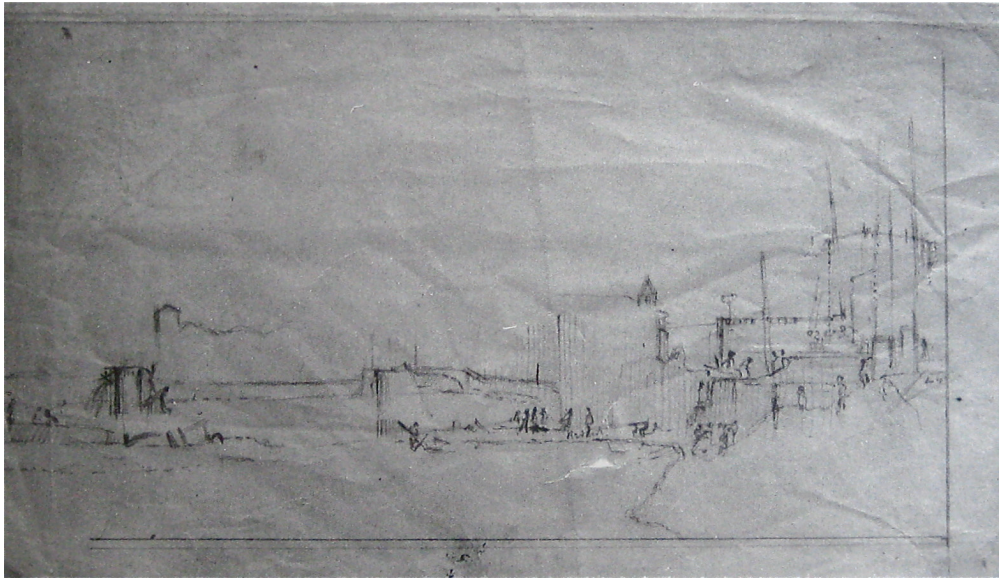
4.8. Lucian Freud, *Hercules*, 1949, 21.6 x 14 cm, location unknown (Photograph: Freud, *On Paper*, figure 97).



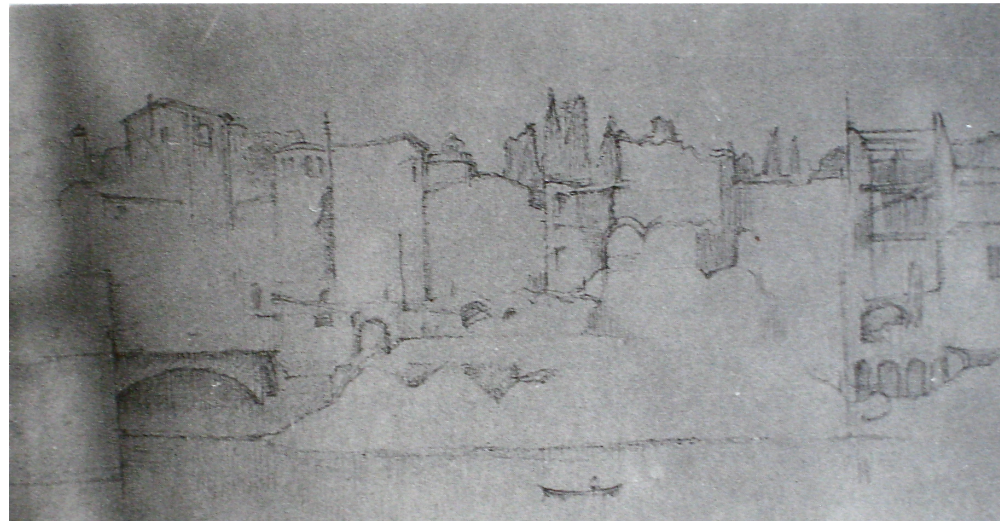
4.9. William Coldstream, *The Opera House Rimini, Interior (Bomb Damaged Theatre, Italy)*, c.1944, oil on canvas, 81.6 x 59.7 cm, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.

4.10. William Coldstream, *Preparatory Drawing (Study for Opera House, Rimini)*, 1944, graphite and ink on paper, 59.7 x 33.7 cm, private collection, (Photograph: St John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 23).





4.11 William Coldstream, *Broken Bridges over the Arno at Pisa*, 1944, pencil on paper, 17 x 23.5 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Euston Road School*, 246)

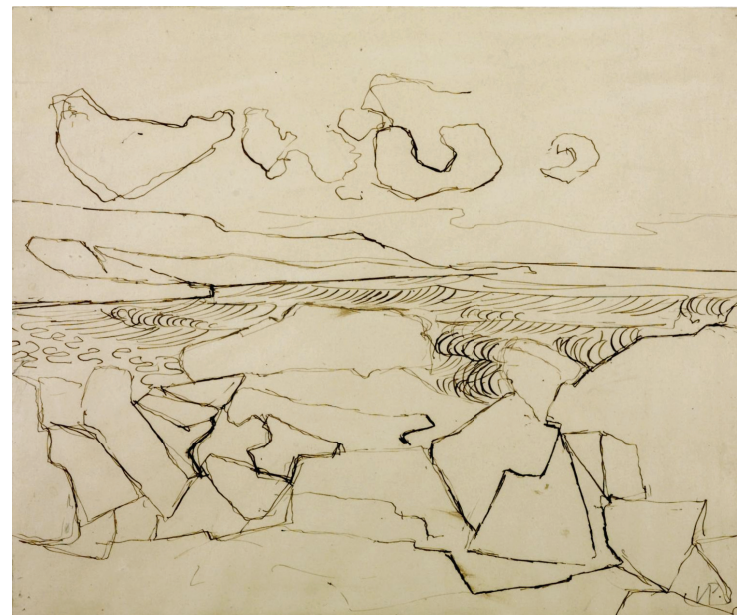
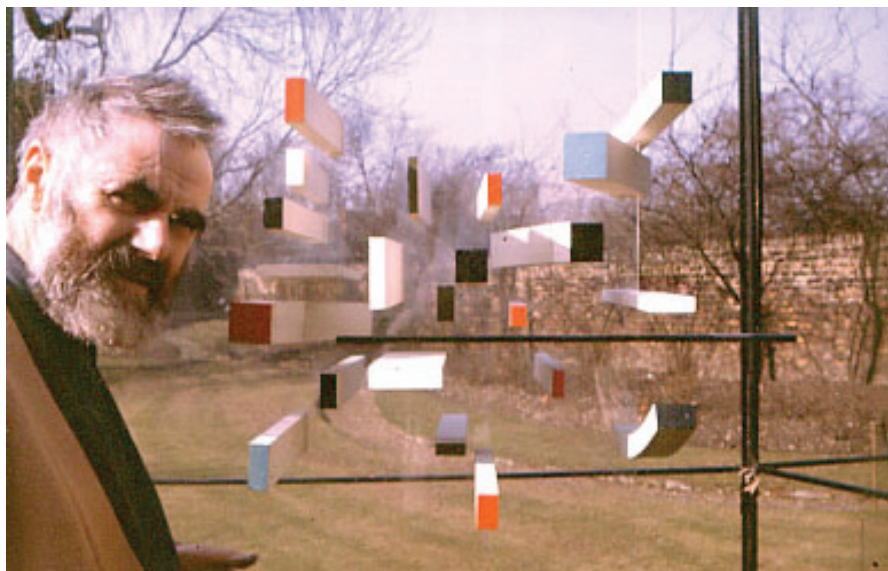


4.12. William Coldstream, *Ponte Vecchio, Florence*, June 1945, medium and size unknown, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Euston Road*, 252).



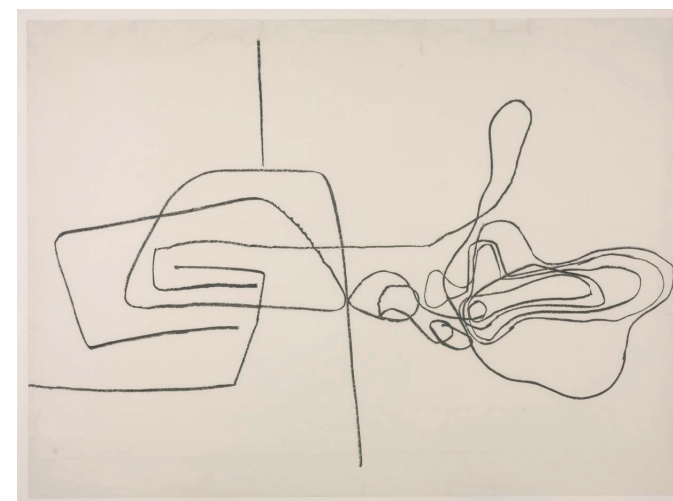
4.13. Victor Pasmore, *Nude*, 1941, oil paint on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm, Tate, London.

4.14. Victor Pasmore with *Hanging Relief*, 1965 (Photograph: Pasmore Estate).



4.15. Victor Pasmore, *Porthmeor Beach, St Ives*, 1950, ink on paper, 24.1 x 28.9 cm, Tate, London.

4.16. Victor Pasmore, *Points of Contact No. 3*, 1965, lithograph on paper, 63.5 x 86.4 cm, Tate, London.



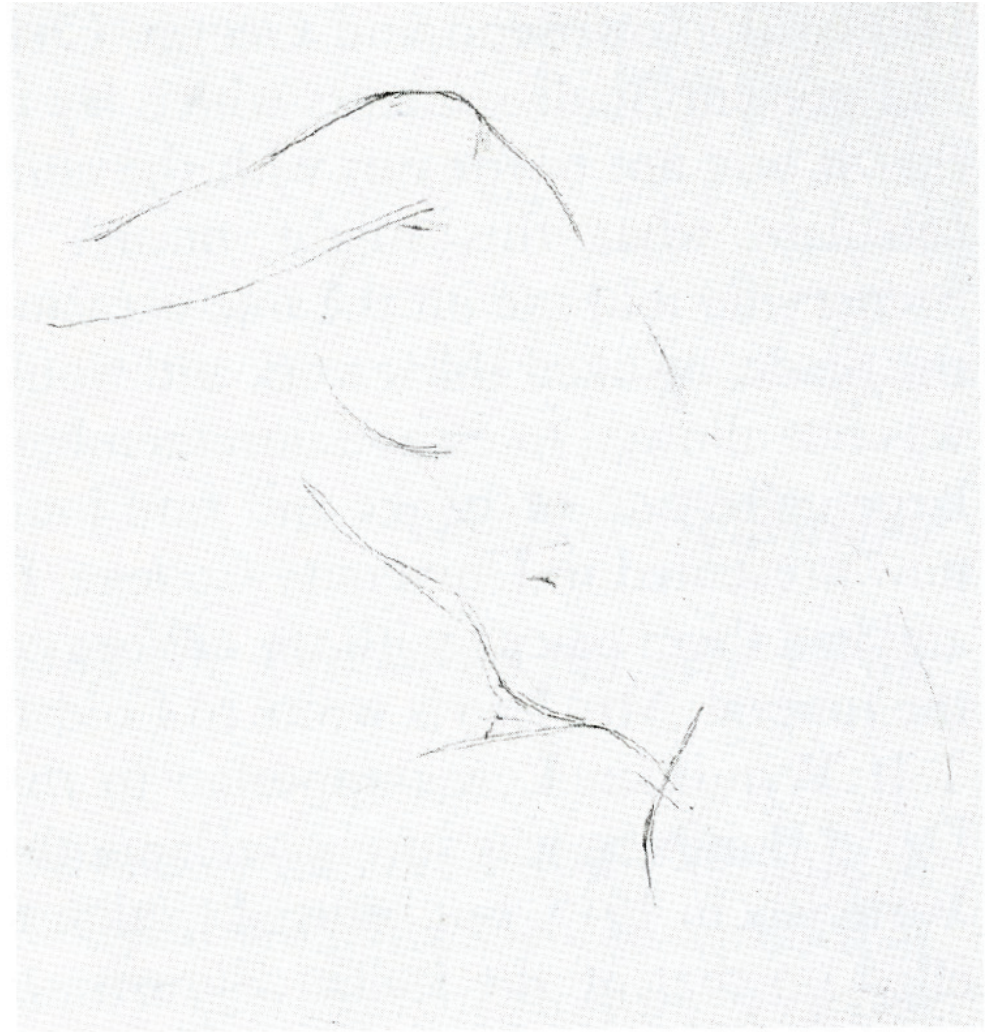
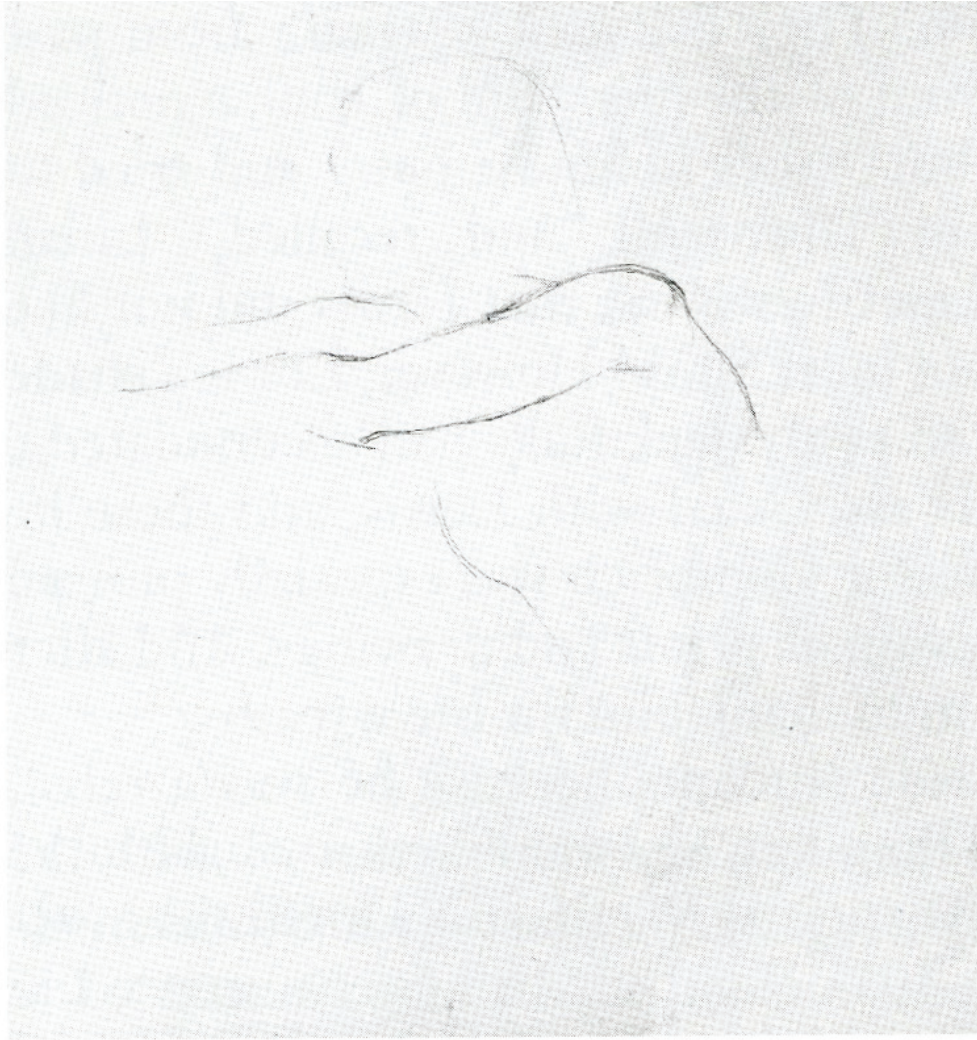


4.17. William Coldstream, *Mrs. Winifred Burger*, 1936-7, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 54.6 cm, Tate, London.

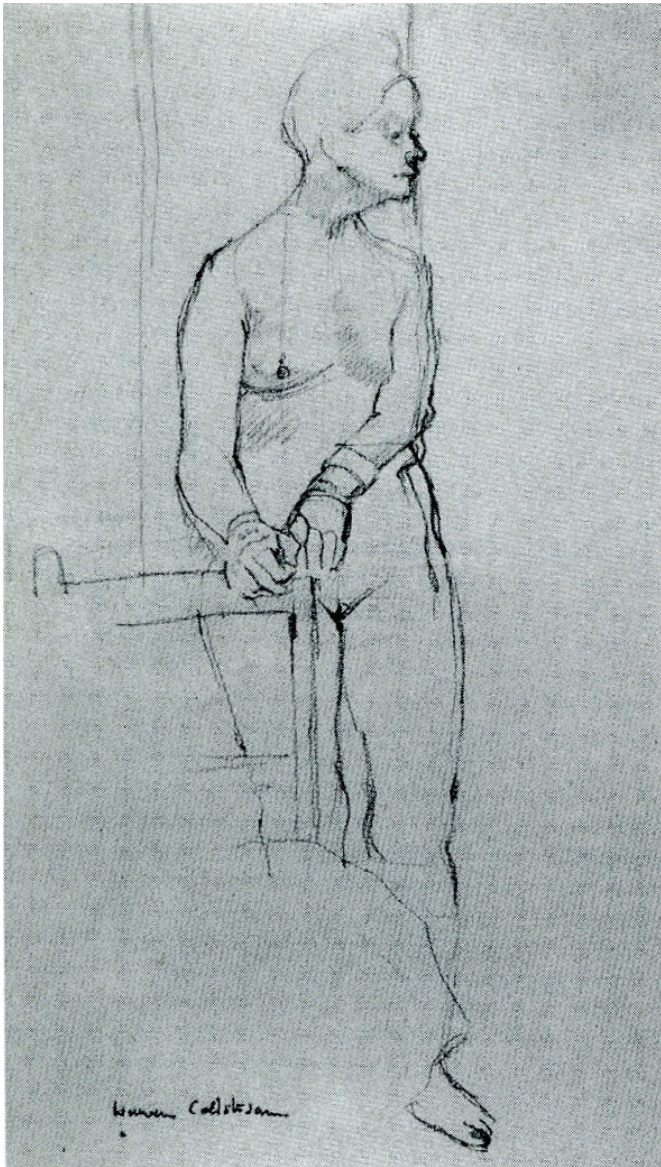
4.18. William Coldstream, *Bolton*, 1938, oil on canvas, 71 x 91 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 54).

4.19. Humphrey Spender, *Photograph of Coldstream at Work on Bolton*, location and specifications unknown (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 54).

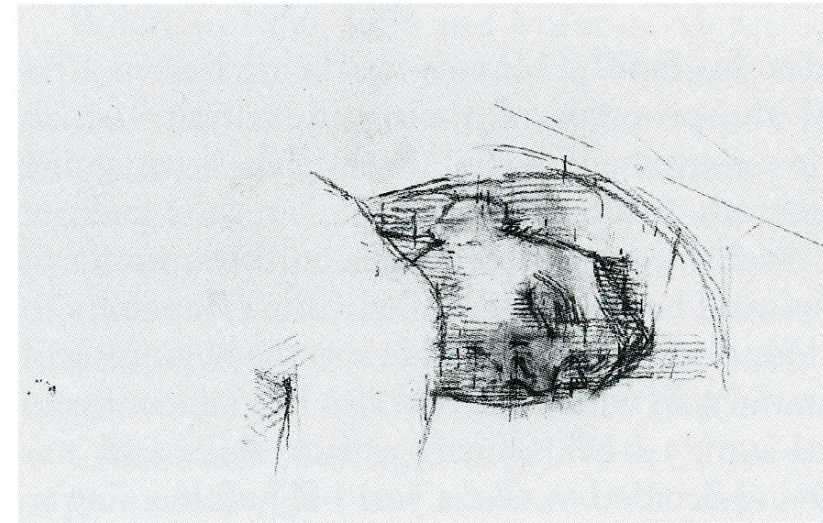




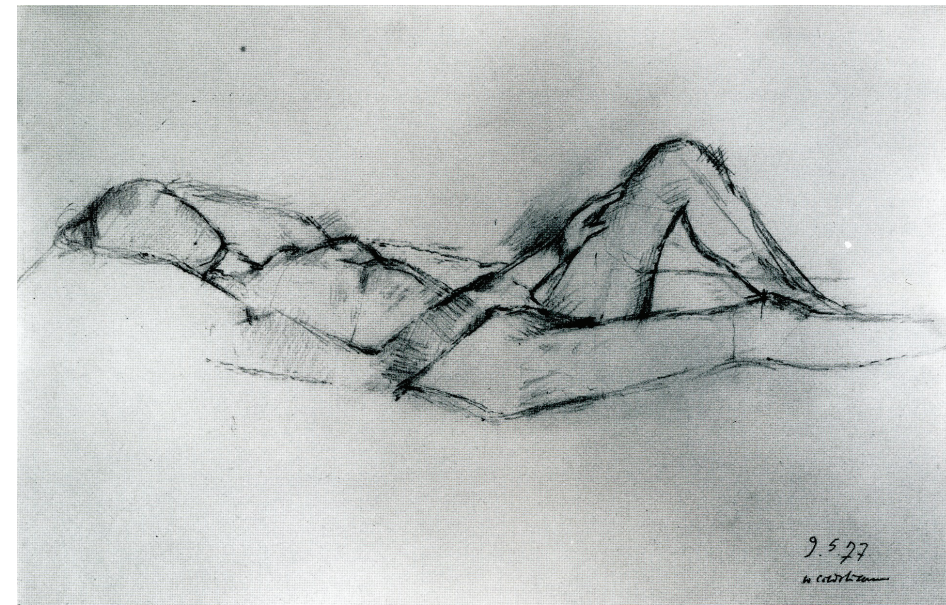
4.20-1. William Coldstream, *Nude Studies*, 1955-7, graphite on paper, each 29.6 x 38.1 cm, Private Collection (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 196).



4.22. William Coldstream, *Standing Nude, Camberwell*, 1947, graphite and ink on paper, 27.4 x 15.4 cm, private collection, (Photograph: St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, p. 22).



4.23. William Coldstream, *Head of Sleeping Nude*, c.1980, graphite on paper, size and location unknown (Photograph: Laughton, *Coldstream*, 295).



4.24. William Coldstream, *Reclining Nude*, 1977, pencil on paper, 20.5 x 296 cm, private collection (Photograph: St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 22).



4.25. William Coldstream,
Michael Reynolds, c.1930,
graphite on paper, 26 x
20.3 cm, private collection
(Photograph: Laughton,
Coldstream, 20).

[1.20] Paul Cézanne,
*Hortense Fiquet (Madame
Cézanne) Sewing*, c.1880,
graphite, on pale cream
wove paper, 47.2 x 30.9
cm, Courtauld
Gallery, London.

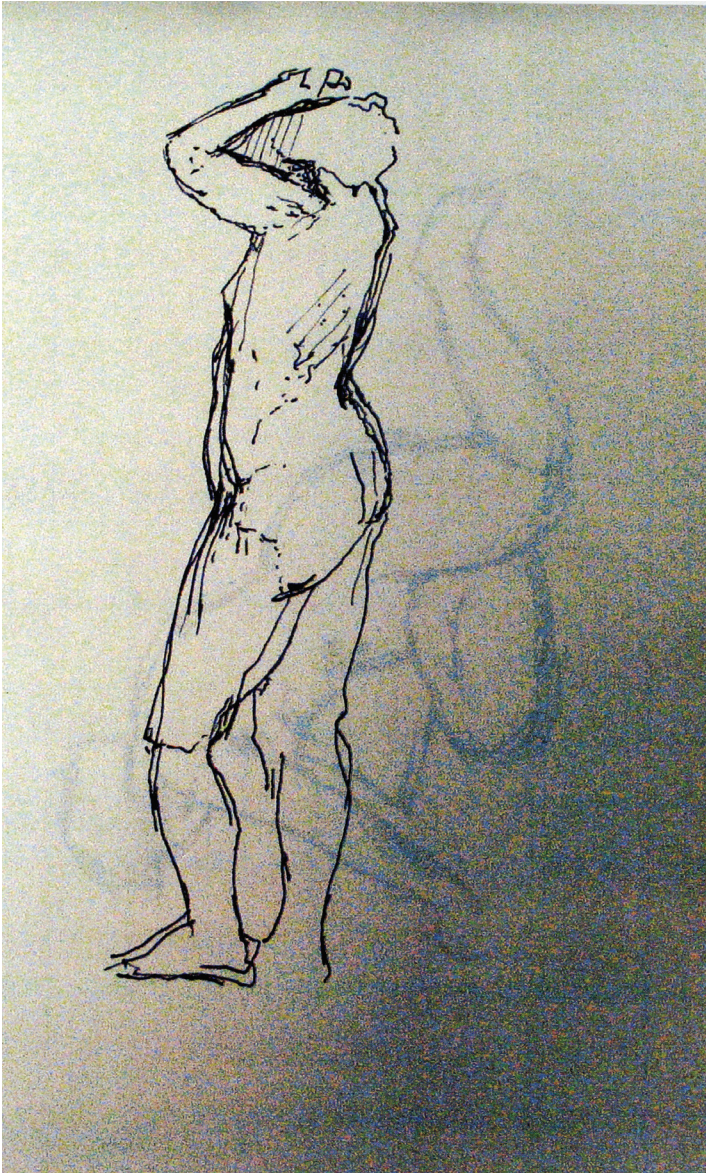




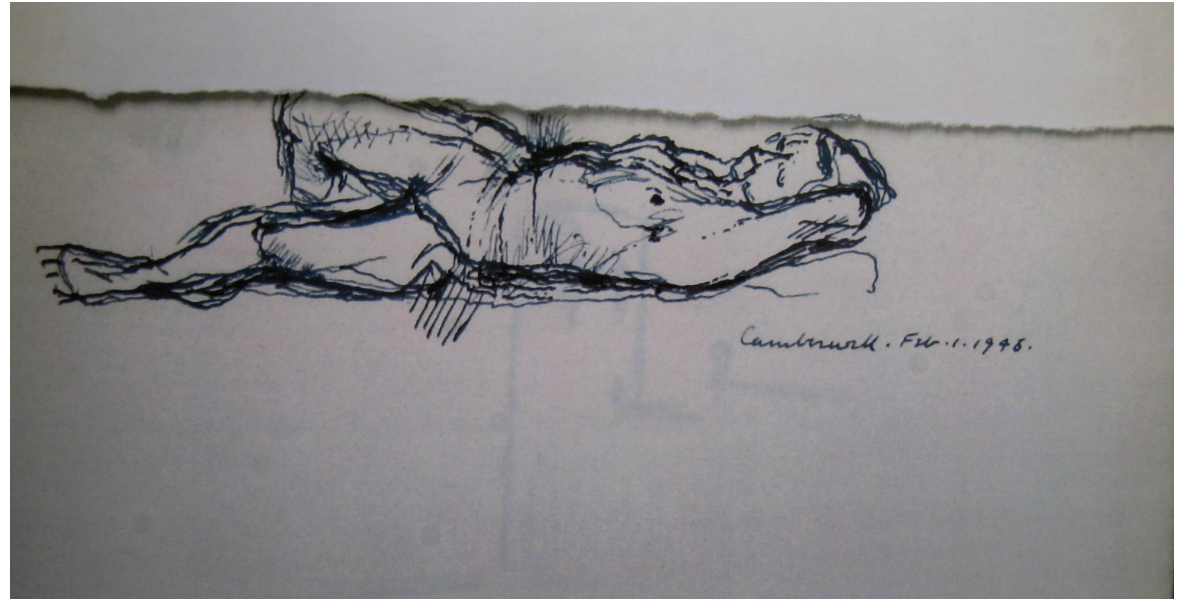
4.26. William Coldstream,
*Temporary Bridge over the
Volturno*, 1944, graphite
on paper, 22.8 x 14 cm,
Arts Council Collection,
(Photograph: Laughton,
Coldstream, 96).

4.27. William Coldstream,
Sonia Brownell Asleep,
c.1939-40, graphite on
paper, 20.3 x 14 cm,
Private Collection
(Photograph: Laughton,
Coldstream, 65).

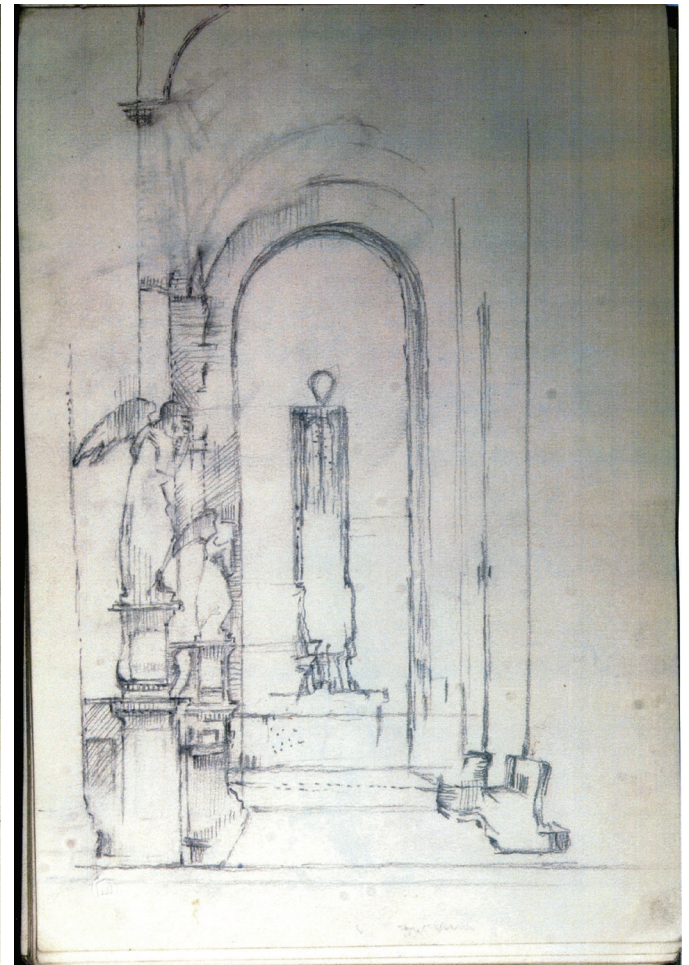
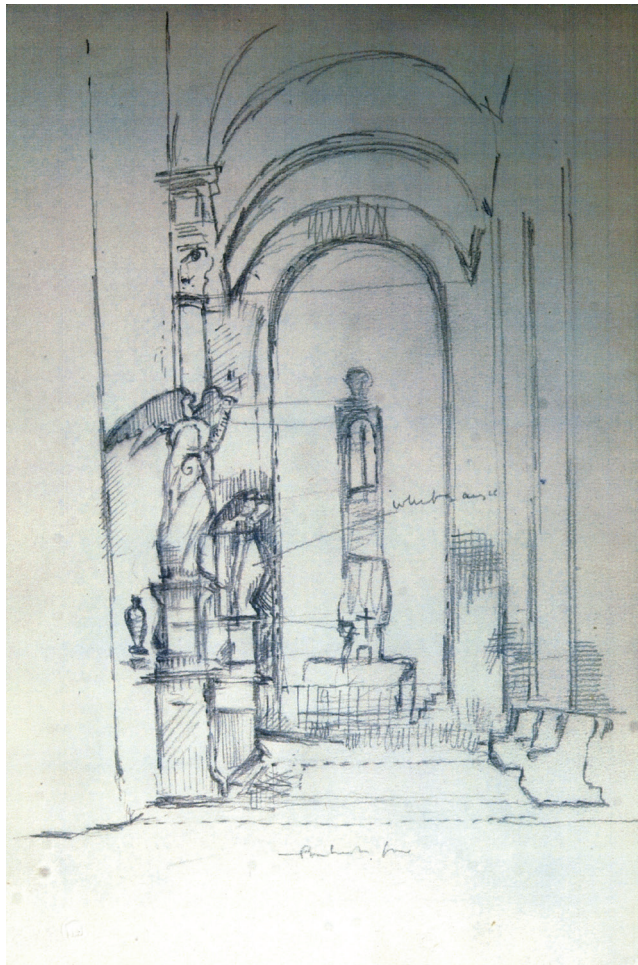
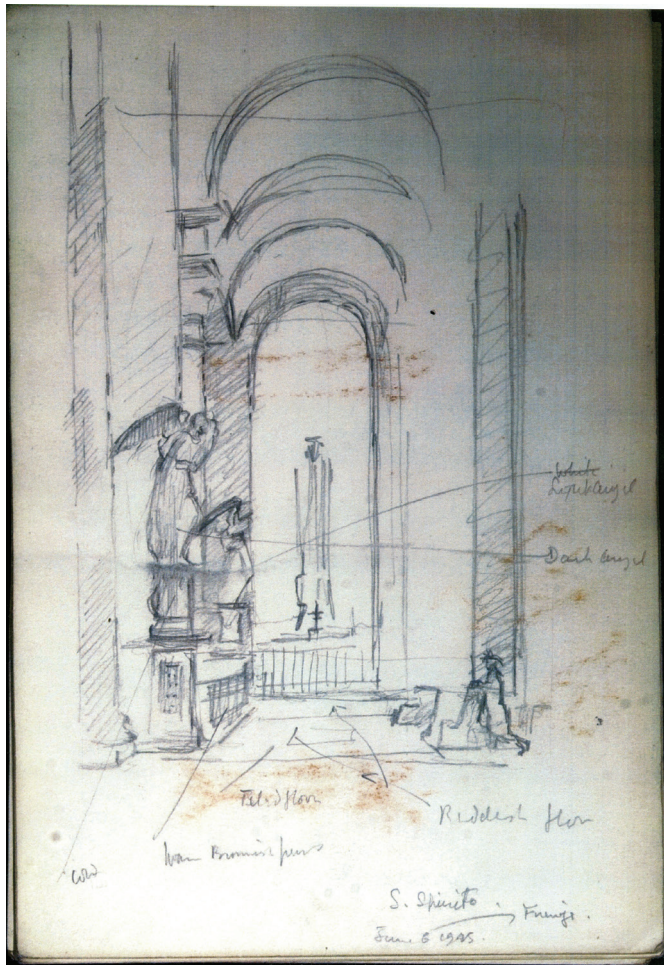




4.28. William Coldstream,
Study of Standing Nude, c.1946,
ink and graphite on paper,
20.3 x 13.8 cm, 'Sketchbook
9', TGA 89922.14.9, London.



4.29. William Coldstream, detail
of *Reclining Nude Study*, 1 Feb
1946, ink and graphite on
paper, 20.3 x 13.8 cm,
'Sketchbook 9', TGA
89922.14.9, London.

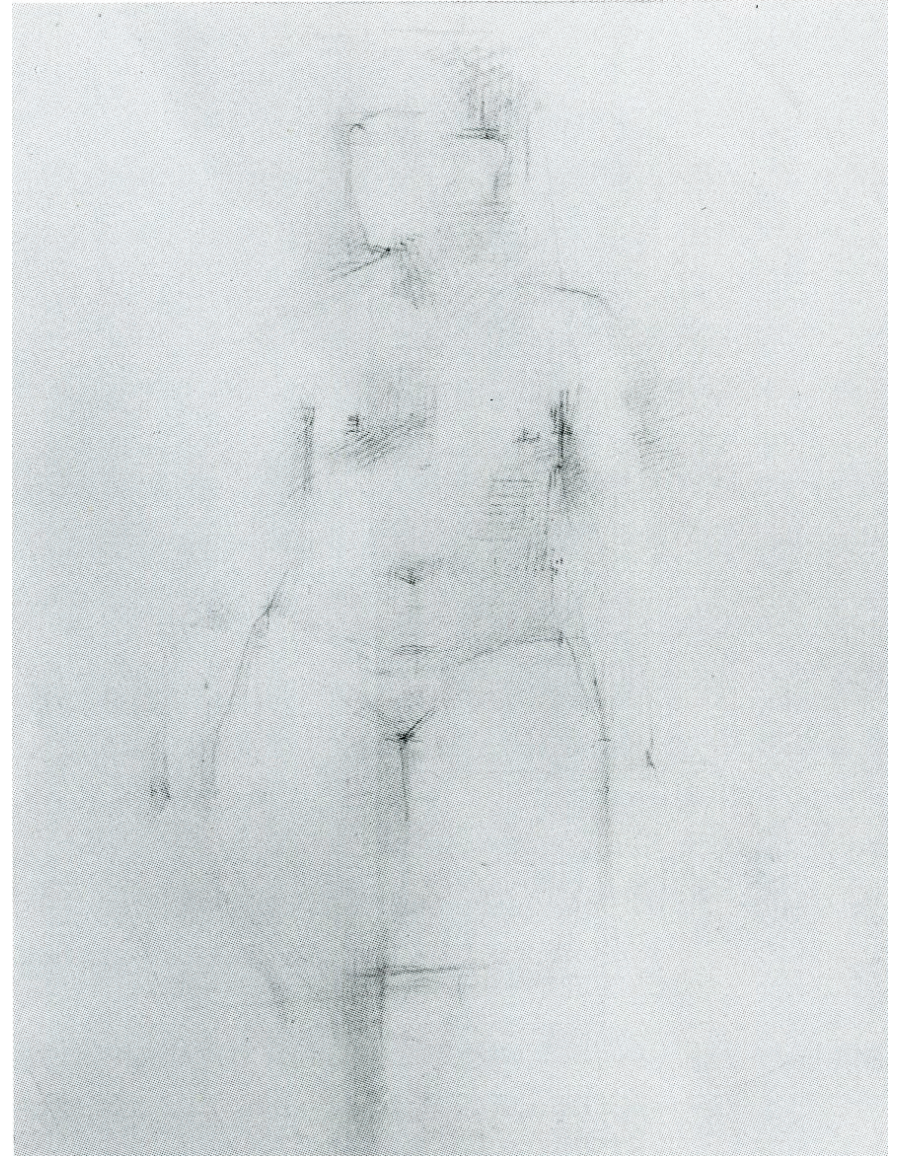


4.30-3. William Coldstream, three studies of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Santo Spirito, Florence, 'Sketchbook [10] (Italy, Florence)', 1945, graphite and black ink on paper, 17.5 x 25.5 cm, TGA 8922.14.10, London.



4.34. Michelangelo, *Awakening Slave*, 1516-19, marble, h. 267 cm, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.

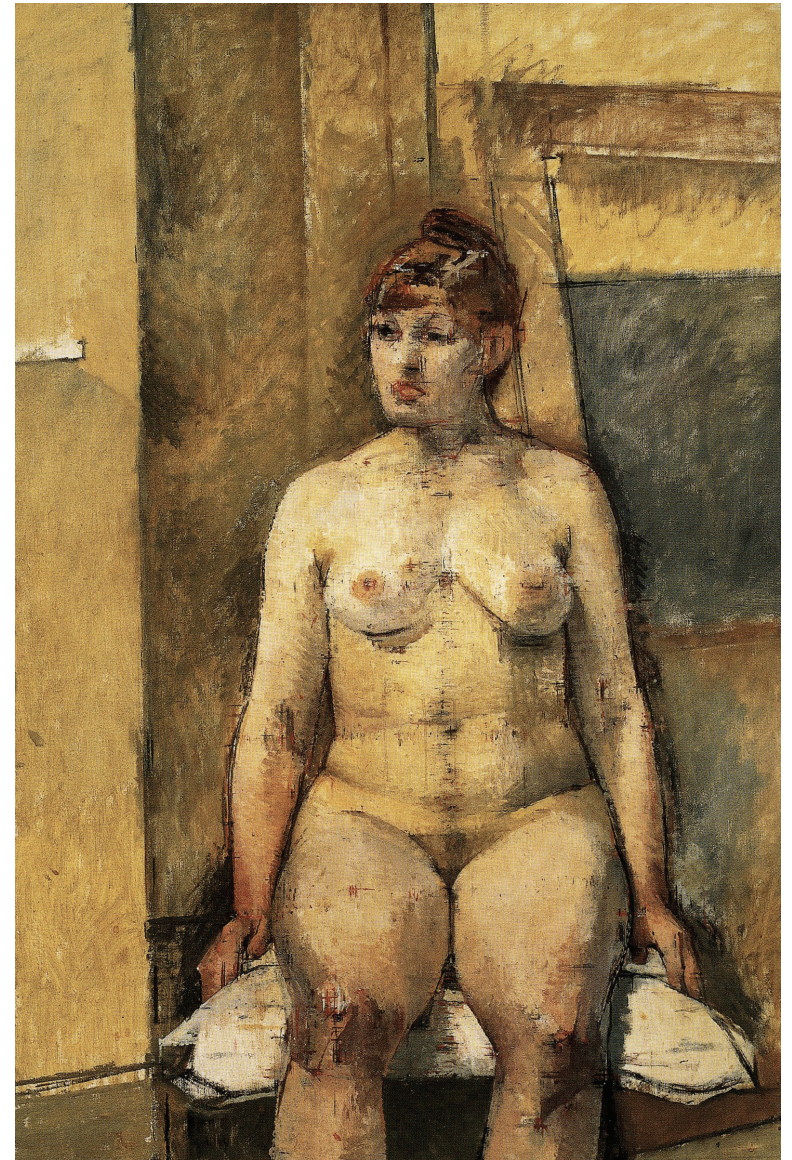
[4.2.] William Coldstream, *Study for Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer)*, October 1959, pencil on paper, size and location unknown (Laughton, *Coldstream*, 205).





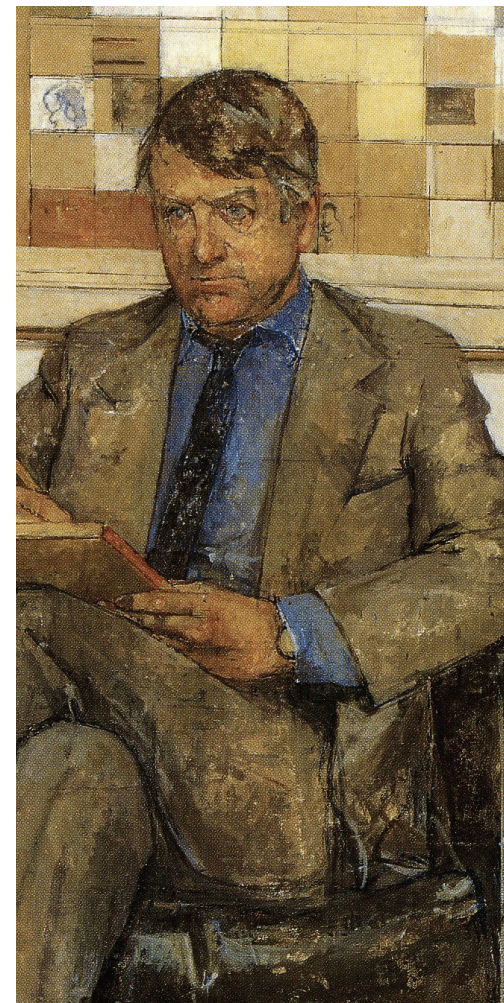
[4.17.] William Coldstream,
Mrs. Winifred Burger, 1936-
7, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 54.6
cm, Tate, London.

4.35 William Coldstream,
Seated Nude (Monica Hoyer),
1959-1960, oil on canvas,
107 x 71 cm, Private
Collection (Photograph:
Laughton, *Coldstream*, 204).





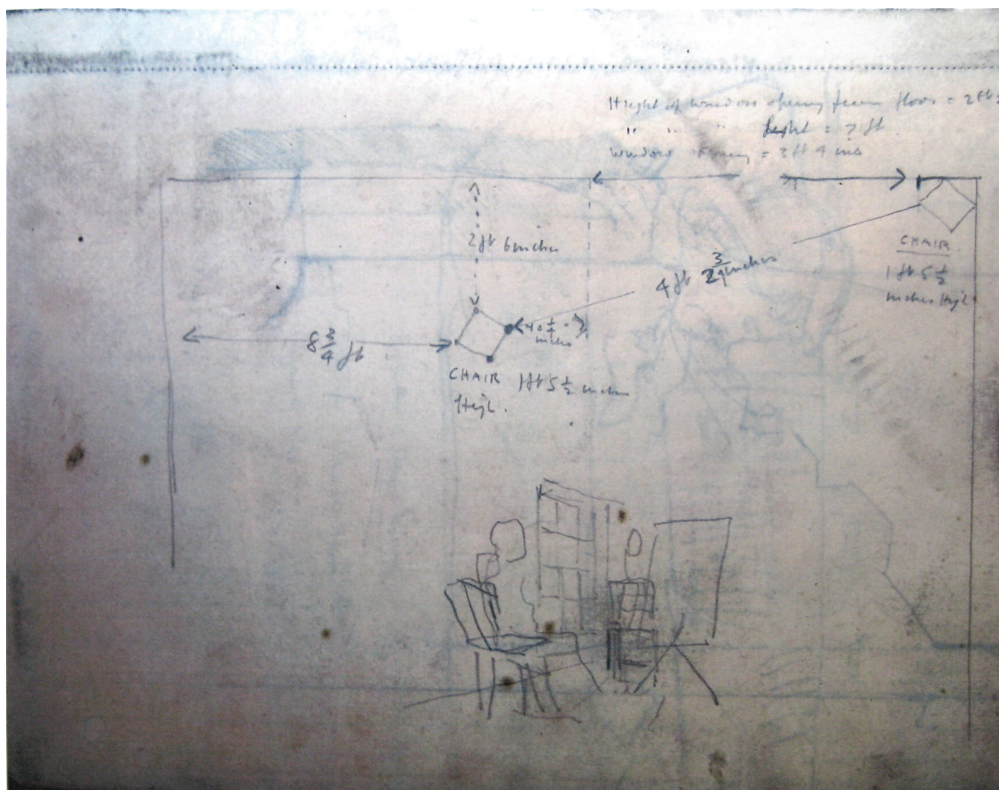
4.36. Colin St. John Wilson, 'Work in Progress Photographs of Coldstream Portrait', 1981-2, photographed collage, size unknown, Tate Gallery Archive (Photograph: St. John Wilson, *Artist at Work*, 25)



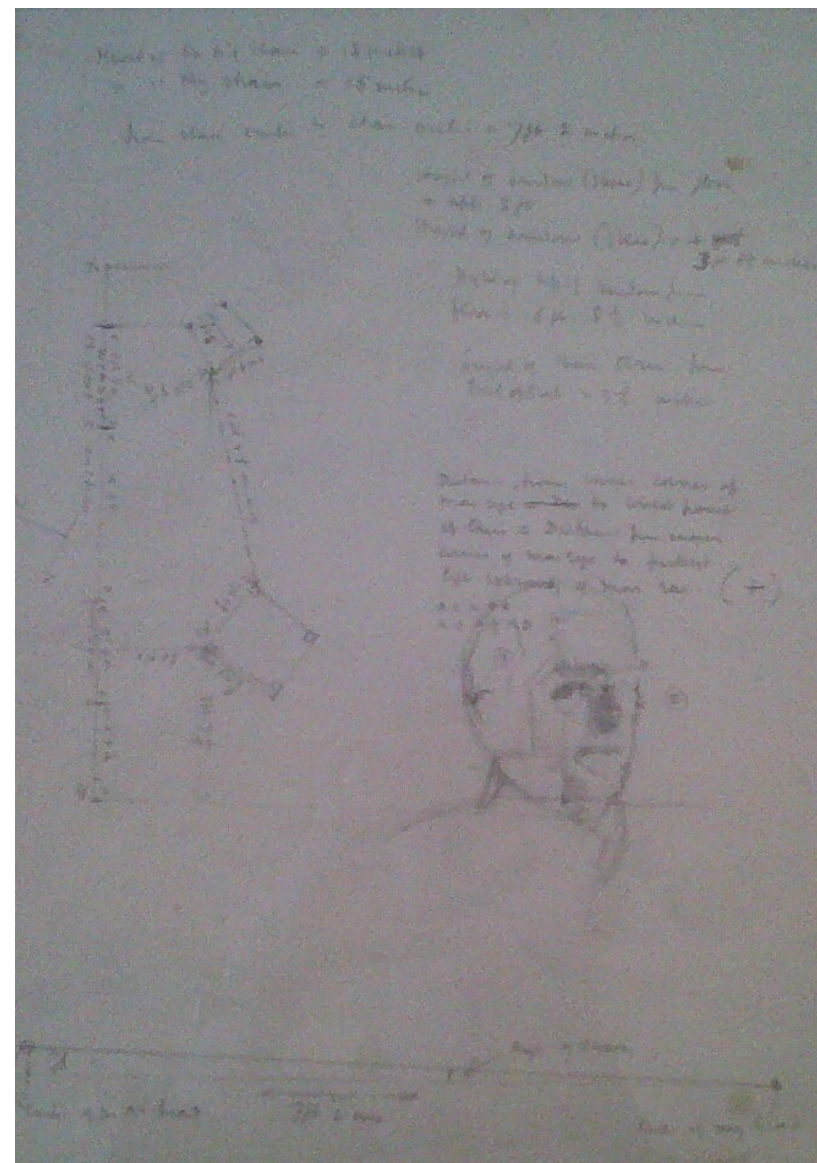
4.37. Detail of William Coldstream, *Sir Colin St. John Wilson*, c1983, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127 cm, Pallant House, Chichester.



4.38. Francis Galton, *Composite Portrait by superimposition of photos seeking a generic portrait of the criminal*, from *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (J.M. Dent & Co., 1883) (Photograph: *New History of Photography*, 266).



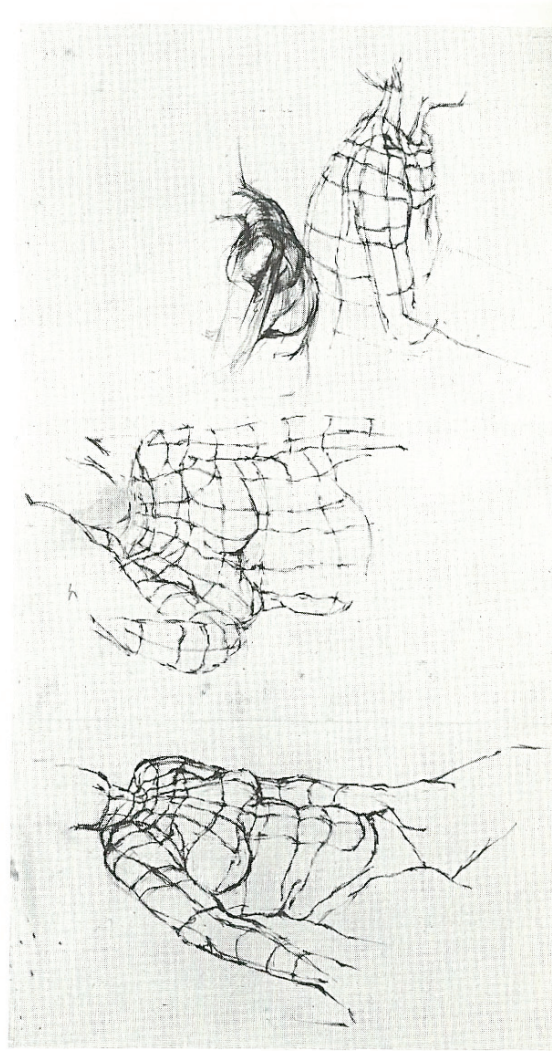
4.39. William Coldstream, measurement study, (Sketchbook 16), 'Sketchbook (seated figure; birds)', undated, graphite and ink on paper, 26.3 x 21.3 cm, Tate, London.



4.40. William Coldstream, demonstration drawing, graphite on paper, dimensions and date unknown, Strang Prints and Drawings Room, University College, London.

plate 61

In order to clarify and make more intense the solid structure of the nude form, lines were drawn on the model representing the outer-contours of sections through the form. The student was encouraged to continue to imagine these sections through the form as the drawing developed



4.41-2. Illustrations with original captions from de Saumarez, *Basic Design*, 68, 75.



plate 67

An image compounded from fragments selected intuitively and at speed from the sequence of 'phases' of a moving nude figure



4.43. R. B. Kitaj, *Sides*, 1979, coloured chalks, on three separate sheets of yellow paper [framed together], 77 x 26.2 cm (average), British Museum, London.



4.44. David Hockney, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother, Mrs Laura Hockney, Bradford*, 1972, ink on paper, 43.2 x 35.3 cm, Tate, London.