



The Painter John Golding and 20th Century Art History

14.00 – 18.00, Friday 4 December 2015 (registration from 13.30)
09.30 – 17.30, Saturday 5 December 2015 (registration from 09.00)

Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre, The Courtauld Institute of Art,
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN

Abstracts and biographies

Dr. John Elderfield (Princeton University)

Studio Talk: Cézanne, Matisse, de Kooning

John Golding belonged to a long tradition of painters who wrote on painting, running from Roger Fry and Walter Sickert all the way back to Leon Battista Alberti, whose statement of intention—*parlo come pittore* (I speak as a painter)—is one that John did not need to repeat because it was always evident in what he wrote. But let us not forget that a number of great painters who are less acknowledged as writers did speak (and often did write) a lot about their practice. Among such modern painters are Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Willem de Kooning. This short presentation will refer to some of the things that they said (and didn't say) about what they were doing (and not doing).

John Elderfield received B.A. and M.Phil. degrees in Fine Art from the University of Leeds, and a Ph.D. from The Courtauld Institute of Art. He is Chief Curator Emeritus of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Allen R. Adler, Class of 1967, Distinguished Curator and Lecturer at the Princeton University Art Museum; and a consultant at Gagosian Gallery.

He directed numerous exhibitions at MoMA, including Kurt Schwitters (1985), Henri Matisse: A Retrospective (1992), and De Kooning: A Retrospective (2011). He is now working on an exhibition of portraits by Paul Cézanne, to be shown in Paris, London, and Washington, D.C., in 2017-18.

Professor Elizabeth Cowling (University of Edinburgh)

John Golding : Curating Exhibitions

For John Golding, curating exhibitions was a creative activity that bridged the gap between his parallel careers as painter and art historian. He remembered *Léger and Purist Paris*, which he curated with Chris Green at the Tate in 1970-71, as one of the most satisfying of all, a work of art in its own right with a design, by Neave Brown, that perfectly matched the subject. Refining the selection of the works, plotting the installation, above all installing in the gallery were processes he found stimulating and absorbing. The impact of exhibitions on the visitor preoccupied him and he enjoyed opportunities to review exhibitions of artists who lay outside his usual field of study. His attitude to exhibitions and methods and priorities as a curator are the subject of this paper.

Elizabeth Cowling was a postgraduate student of John Golding's at The Courtauld Institute of Art and later collaborated with him on two exhibitions, Picasso: Sculptor/Painter (Tate, 1994), and Matisse Picasso (Tate 2002). In 1995 she interviewed him for the National Life Stories Collection. She is Honorary Fellow at Edinburgh University, where she taught in the History of Art Department for many years. Her publications include Picasso: Style and Meaning (2002) and Visiting Picasso: The Letters and Notebooks of Roland Penrose (2006).

Professor Christopher Green (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

The Eyes Have it: John Golding, painter/writer

Golding was a very different painter and art-writer from Adrian Stokes, but he admired both Stokes's painting and his writing. Though he did not wish to emulate Stokes's ability to evoke paintings in words, his experience as a painter encouraged him to project himself empathetically into the processes, both mental and visual, that took the painters he wrote about from one work to another. This paper will bring out some of the ways in which he does this and the insights thus afforded, when he writes about Cubism and abstract painting.

*Christopher Green is Emeritus Professor in the History of Art, Courtauld Institute of Art, and a Fellow of the British Academy. His doctoral thesis on Fernand Léger (1973) was supervised by John Golding, and his first experience as an exhibition curator was with Golding on the Tate exhibition Léger and Purist Paris (1970). Since 2000 he has co-curated four important exhibitions: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris* (London: Tate Modern, 2005); *Objetos vivos: Figura y natura muerta en Picasso* (Barcelona: Museu Picasso, 2008), *Modern Antiquity: Picasso, de Chirico, Léger, Picabia* (Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011) and, with Barnaby Wright, *Mondrian/Nicholson: In Parallel at the Courtauld Gallery* in 2012. Since 2000, he has also published *Art in France 1900-1940* (2000) and *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo* (2005), both published by Yale University Press. He is the curator of the exhibition *Cubism and War: The Crystal in the Flame*, which will open at the Museu Picasso, Barcelona, in October 2016.*

Dr. C.F.B. Miller (University of Manchester):

Metaphors of Cubism

In the preface to the third edition of *Cubism: A History and an Analysis*, John Golding described his own experience of high cubist painting as an aporia:

“After more than three decades my ideas about cubism have changed very little. Paradoxically, I now feel I understand it much less well than I did then. I enjoy Cubist painting as much as I ever did, but the more I look at it, particularly at the crystalline work of 1910-12, the more infinitely mysterious it seems to me.”

My talk addresses the relationship between the undecidable or contradictory in cubist painting, and the metaphors we have come to use for that painting: metaphors such as ‘the crystalline’, faceting, the diaphane, and others. Such metaphors for cubism point to the role of metaphor in cubism, where figure opens onto something like a deconstruction.

*Charlie F.B. Miller is Lecturer in Art History and Theory at the University of Manchester. His book, *Radical Picasso: Magic, Sexuality, Transgression, and the Interwar Avant-Garde*, is forthcoming with University of California Press.*

Trevor Stark (Harvard University)

Cubism, Industrial Colour, and the Rhetoric of Purity

In spring 1912, after two years of nearly monochrome paintings, colour returned to Georges Braque's and Pablo Picasso's cubist painting in the form of flags, posters, and handbills: flat coloured planes painted brightly in industrially produced enamel. Roughly contemporaneous with the invention of collage, cubist industrial colour ushered in a new conjunction between modernist art at its most hermetic and the commercial surfaces of the wider social world. However, the cubists and their most informed peers and critics described the new status of colour in their work not only as a challenge to the refinement of traditional artistic materials, but also, paradoxically, as embodying the “pure matter of painting,” as Max Raphael put it in 1912. This paper examines cubist colour in relation to the ambiguous period discourse of “purity” as a means to provide an account of the dialectic between aesthetic autonomy and social heteronomy in Picasso and Braque's work of 1912.

*Trevor Stark is a PhD Candidate in the History of Art and Architecture department at Harvard and a predoctoral fellow at the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is currently completing his dissertation, entitled *Total Expansion of the Letter: Cubism, Dada, Mallarmé*, which analyzes the status of language in the art of the European avant-gardes from Cubism to Dada in relation to contemporaneous debates about Stéphane Mallarmé's poetic and critical writing. Stark is also the author of ‘*Complexio Oppositorum: Hugo Ball and Carl Schmitt*’ in *OCTOBER* 146.*

Professor Michael White (University of York)

Parallel Lines: Mondrian the Painter/Writer

While many historians have delighted in the extraordinary, simultaneous appearance of Mondrian's Neo-Plastic idiom and his accompanying fully-developed theory of it, in 'Paths to the Absolute' John Golding noted what he saw as a disparity between Mondrian's writings, 'flawed by contradictions,' and his paintings 'which so uniquely reconcile visual oppositions.' This paper will consider this problem by examining in detail how Mondrian became a writer, in order to shed more light on the peculiar relation between his textual and painterly production.

Michael White is Professor of History of Art at the University of York, where he specializes in avant-garde European art. He is particularly well-known for his research on the Dutch De Stijl group and he has also published widely on Dada. His books include 'De Stijl and Dutch Modernism' (MUP 2003) and 'Generation Dada: The Berlin Avant-Garde and the First World War' (Yale UP, 2013). He was Consultant Curator of the exhibition 'Theo van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde' at Tate Modern in 2010 and co-curator of 'Mondrian and his Studios' at Tate Liverpool in 2014.

Professor John Milner (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Squaring Up: John Golding's Confrontation with Malevich

John Golding, my PhD tutor to 1979, turned my fascination with Russian art into inescapable engagement. When John published his first essay on the Black Square in 1975, he was addressing radical Russian art that still evoked, after half a century, the black flag of the anarchists.

Yet Golding discussed it as a painted object, oil on canvas, hand-made by Malevich, who, like Golding, was a theorist with a cultural position, a tutor, a curator, and an influential figure. How did Malevich reconcile the act of painting with theory? How did the painter Golding deal with the art historian?

Three generations here have Malevich in common. Each has a unique historical and cultural standpoint from which to view the bleak, blank, black-and-white painting that for Malevich was 'a living royal infant' and the Omega and Alpha of art. Golding finally elevated Malevich into a spiritual state.

Tutor, painter, writer, and exhibition organizer, John Milner specializes in nineteenth and twentieth century art in Russia and France. He studied at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London University, and took his doctorate there in Russian Constructivism. Currently he tutors PhD students at The Courtauld Institute, while preparing books and exhibitions, currently including El Lissitzky at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands, and a projected Royal Academy major exhibition in 2017. He has also been closely associated with the GRAD gallery in London, and is a founder of the Cambridge Courtauld Russian Art Centre (crrac.org).

He has led many study visits to Russia and also to France, which includes numerous and remarkable model constructions of unrealised Lissitzky projects, made in collaboration with architectural model maker Henry Milner. John Milner is an Honorary Professor at The Courtauld Institute of Art.

He is co-curator of a major exhibition Revolution. Russian Art 1917-1932 at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, February to April 2017.

His publications include: A Slap in the Face! Futurists in Russia, (2007), published in connection with the exhibition organised by John Milner at the Estorick Collection, London, and at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University; Kazimir Malevich and the Art of Geometry, (1996); A Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Artists, 1420-1970, (1993) and Art, War and Revolution in France, 1870-1871: myth, reportage and reality, (2000)

Dr. Gavin Parkinson (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Rise From the Ground like Feathered Mercury: Narrating Abstract Expressionism

This paper is concerned with 'narrative' in two senses: the one by which the passage of abstract expressionism in New York in the 1940s and 1950s has been relayed and the one by which the appearance of individual paintings has been conveyed. In the first sense, I look at the interpretation of American abstraction made by Robert Rosenblum, Lawrence Alloway and Allan Kaprow in the early 1960s in conflict with Clement Greenberg's preferred reading; in this, I follow John Golding by taking Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still as a coherent sub-group of that larger body of American artists. In the second sense, I question the role of writing on abstraction by assuming a critical position endorsed by those artists themselves. That is to say, using the writing of Edmund Burke – read by Newman, Rothko and Still – I ask what it means to look at such varieties of abstraction and, beyond this, I wonder about the plausibility of the kind of looking towards which, apparently, all three artists aspired.

Gavin Parkinson is Senior Lecturer in European Modernism at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, Reviews Editor of the Association of Art Historians' flagship journal Art History and Series Editor of Ashgate Studies in Surrealism. He lectures and writes on European and American art and culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His books are Futures of Surrealism: Myth, Science Fiction and Fantastic Art in France 1936-1969 (Yale University Press 2015); Surrealism, Art and Modern Science: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology (Yale University Press 2008); and The Duchamp Book (Tate Publishing 2008). He is also the editor of the collection of essays Surrealism, Science Fiction and Comics (Liverpool University Press 2015). He has just completed a book on the Surrealist reception of late nineteenth-century art, titled Enchanted Ground: André Breton, Modernism and the Surrealist Appraisal of Fin de Siècle Painting.

Professor Sarah Wilson (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Matisse: Apocalypse, Circus, Jazz

Matisse's famous illustrated book 'Jazz' published by Skira in 1947 with his brilliant cut-outs looks forward to his Vence Chapel which I first discovered thanks to John Golding's seminars. The text and images of 'Jazz' also contain memories of the Cirque Medrano (the book was once going to be called 'Cirque'). More importantly, Matisse's paper cut-outs as an entire enterprise are deeply informed by his contact with the Apocalypse of St Sever, reproduced in *Documents*, shown at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1937, but also produced during the French Occupation in a little-known facsimile by the Éditions de Cluny in 1943. When working at the Centre Pompidou, my 'discovery' of the Apocalypse link was pre-empted by finding the painter Avigdor Arikha's 1972 exhibition brochure: Two books: *The Apocalypse of Saint Sever* and *Matisse's Jazz*, (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, reprinted 1994). The recent Tate Gallery Matisse retrospective wilfully precluded discussion of this key influence or reproduction of Arikha's essay in its catalogue. Here I redress the balance.

Sarah Wilson, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, was educated at Oxford and at The Courtauld Institute of Art where she joined the faculty in 1982. Her first book Matisse, for Ediciones Polígrafa, Barcelona, was indebted to John Golding's teaching and published in 1992 in English, American, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, and Chinese - the latter published in Taiwan was the first monograph on Matisse in Communist China at the time of great artistic ferment (Matisse was reformatted and updated in 2009, English and Spanish editions.)

She has also taught in France at the Sorbonne and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. She has curated exhibitions, the most significant being Paris, Capital of the Arts, 1900-1968, (Royal Academy London, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao) and Pierre Klossowski and the Vicious Circle (Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 2006, Cologne and Paris). In 2014 she was appointed to the curatorial team of the 1st Asian Biennale /Fifth Guangzhou Triennale (China-Guangzhou). Her major publications include The Visual World of French Theory: Figurations, 2010 and Picasso/Marx and socialist realism in France, 2013. In October 2015 she was awarded the AICA International Prize for Distinguished Contribution to Art Criticism

Dr. David Anfam (Clyfford Still Museum, Denver)

John Golding, American Art & A Personal View

This paper seeks to offer both a brief personal view of John Golding and a summary of some of the essential aspects of his relationship to modern American art. Having known John from 1973 until his death in 2012, both as a teacher and a friend, his influence upon my development as an art historian was profound. Of even greater importance, however, was John's singular role in the UK as an advocate of American art and specifically Abstract Expressionism. Grasping the movement from the perspective of a painter rather than an academic, John's insights into it were many and varied. In particular, he evinced a special affinity with those Abstract Expressionists who were both draftsmen and colourists, such as Arshile Gorky. Of special note in this context was John's remarkable perception of Clyfford Still's importance – a sign of both his critical prescience and his singular ability to identify, as a painter, with the visions of other artists.

David Anfam holds BA and PhD degrees from The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. He is the Senior Consulting Curator at the Clyfford Still Museum, Denver, and Director of its Research Centre. Anfam's writings include the seminal survey of Abstract Expressionism (Thames & Hudson, 1990), which has been translated into three languages; Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas – A Catalogue Raisonné (Yale University Press, 1998), now in its fifth printing, which won the 2000 Mitchell Prize for the History of Art; Anish Kapoor (Phaidon, 2009); and over fifty catalogue essays on artists ranging from Howard Hodgkin to Edward Hopper and Franz Kline. Anfam's focus show around Jackson Pollock's epochal Mural (1943) opened at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, in April 2015, and concludes its tour in 2016 at the Museo Picasso, Málaga. Anfam is also a regular contributor to The Burlington Magazine and has lectured at numerous institutions globally, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the University of São Paulo; Tate Modern; and the Musée d'art Moderne, Paris. Next year, Anfam's major survey of Abstract Expressionism opens at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

Professor Neil Cox (University of Edinburgh) and Professor Dawn Ades (University of Essex)

In conversation: *Duchamp and other directions*

Departing from Golding's important 1973 book on Duchamp's *Large Glass*, this conversation will explore how Golding's reading informed our own work on this artist before reflecting again on the Glass, the related paintings, the Readymades and *Etant Donnés*. We will consider the question of painting in Duchamp, and also the wider role that such a perspective plays in readings of Dada and Surrealism.'

Dawn Ades is Professor Emerita of the History and Theory of Art at the University of Essex, where she taught from 1968 to 2008. Her research concentrates on Surrealism and on Latin American Art, and her books include Photomontage (Thames & Hudson 1976/1981), Salvador Dalí (1982), André Masson (1994), Siron Franco (Brazil 1996) Marcel Duchamp (with N. Cox and D. Hopkins, 2000), Selected Writings on Art and Anti-Art (2015). She has organized or co-curated many exhibitions in the UK and internationally, and written, edited or contributed essays to their catalogues, including Dada and Surrealism Reviewed (1978); Art in Latin America: the Modern Era 1820-1980 (1989); Dalí's Optical Illusions (2000); Salvador Dalí: the Centenary Exhibition (2004); Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents (2006); Close-Up: Proximity and Defamiliarisation in Art, Photography and Film (2008); The Colour of my Dreams: the Surrealist Revolution in Art (2011). She was Associate Curator for Manifesta 9 (2012). She is a former trustee of Tate (1995-2005) and of the National Gallery (2000-2005), a Fellow of the British Academy and Professor of the History of Art at the Royal Academy. In 2013 she was made CBE for services to higher education.

Neil Cox is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of Edinburgh. Before this he taught for twenty years at the University of Essex along with Dawn Ades. He has published extensively on French modern art, especially on Cubism and Surrealism, Braque, Duchamp and Picasso. His most recent contributions include Richard Serra 2014 (Gagosian, 2015) and 'A is for Aesthetics', (Enclave 13, 2015). He has curated exhibitions of works by Constable, Picasso and most recently on the still life form in Modernity. He is Director of the ARTIST ROOMS Research Partnership, working with Tate and National Galleries of Scotland.