

History, Society, and the Power of Creativity: Five German Artists



Gerhard Richter, Anselm Kiefer and Georg Baselitz are among the best-known and influential artists of the second half of the twentieth century, and are still very active today; the charismatic Joseph Beuys (d.1986), was among the first German artists emerging after the second World War to gain international recognition. Less popularly known, August Sander (d.1964) ranks among the most important twentieth-century portrait and documentary photographers. His *People of the Twentieth Century*, a photographic project of unprecedented ambition, provides unique insight into the various facets of German society during the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era and its immediate aftermath.

While German art of any period is not well represented in British public collections, these artists have been the

subject of intense scholarly and public interest in this country, particularly in more recent years, and have been represented by well-attended retrospectives, thematic exhibitions, and a sizeable number of books and articles.

Our series of five lectures is delivered by leading scholars in the field and aims to give an in-depth introduction to the work of these artists. Differing greatly in background and temperament, working methods and philosophical outlook, they nonetheless share a sustained engagement with Germany's dark past – and, in Sander's case, its troubling present.

Provisional timetable:

24 April	Dr Christian Weikop	<i>Anselm Kiefer Through a Glass Darkly: Myth, Medium, Material, and Memory</i>
1 May	Dr Sarah James	<i>August Sander's Social Portraiture – Reactionary or Revolutionary?</i>
8 May	Dr Victoria Walters	<i>Working with Substance: the Expanded Art of Joseph Beuys</i>
15 May	Dr Niccola Shearman	<i>Georg Baselitz and Neo-Expressionism: from Pandemonium to Refiguration</i>
22 May	Dr Mark Godfrey	Gerhard Richter, title tbc

Suggestions for preliminary reading: [* particularly recommended]

*Stephanie Barron, Sabine Eckmann et al. *Art of Two Germanys/Cold War Cultures*, Abrams, 2009

[this provides strong context for all the artists, except Sander]

**Anselm Kiefer*, exhibition catalogue, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2014 [with Christian Weikop's essay for the VLE]

August Sander, *Citizens of the twentieth century: portrait photographs, 1892-1952*, edited by Gunther Sander, text by Ulrich Keller, translated by Linda Keller, Cambridge Mass., MIT Press, 1986

*Claudia Mesch, *Critical Lives: Joseph Beuys*, Reaktion Books, 2017

*Allan Antliff, *Joseph Beuys*, London, New York, Phaidon Press, 2014

*Norman Rosenthal et al., *Baselitz: A Retrospective*, Royal Academy exhibition catalogue, 2007

Toni Stooss (ed.), *Georg Baselitz: Gemälde und Skulpturen/Painting & Sculpture: 1960-2008*, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Köln, DuMont, 2009

*Mark Godfrey and Nicholas Serota (eds.), *Gerhard Richter: Panorama. A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Publishing, 2012

Darryn Ansted, *The artwork of Gerhard Richter: painting, critical theory and cultural transformation*, London, New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group 2017

Online resources:

Anselm Kiefer:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/heroic-symbols-anselm-kiefer>

This is a 30,000 word project on his early work, mostly written by Christian Weikop, but also includes two essays (on Kiefer and Beuys) by his post-doctoral students

August Sander:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/19>

A cluster of 5 essays on Sander edited by Christian Weikop for this issue of Tate Papers. There are also descriptions of some Sander works here <http://www.tate.org.uk/search?q=Sander+Weikop>

For Sander, please also have a look at Tate's website here

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/august-sander-5319/lists/five-things-know-august-sander>

And see the material relating to Tate Liverpool's 2017 exhibition *Portraying a Nation: Germany 1919-1933* <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/portraying-nation-germany-1919-1933>

Georg Baselitz:

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/georg-baselitz-artist-and-collector>

Richter has an informative website of his own: <https://www.gerhard-richter.com/en/>

