

COURTAULD

Press Release

18 September 2026

PAINTINGS BY PICASSO, MAGRITTE AND MAN RAY GO ON DISPLAY AT THE COURTAULD GALLERY AS PART OF A MAJOR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE REUBEN FOUNDATION



René Magritte (1898-1967), *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)*, 1958, Oil on canvas, 72.6 x 64.9 cm, Reuben Collection. All rights reserved, DACS 2026 © 2026 ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London. Image Courtesy the Reuben collection

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Still Life with Basket of Fruit and Flowers*, 1942, Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 92cm, Reuben Collection. All rights reserved, DACS 2026. © 2026 Succession Picasso/DACS, London. Image courtesy the Reuben Collection

Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), *Nude*, c. 1916, Oil on canvas, 92.4 x 59.8cm, Courtauld Gallery, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) Image: Courtauld

Press images: <https://tinyurl.com/courtauld-reuben-collections>

A new display, ***Modern Painting from the Courtauld and Reuben Collections***, made possible by the long-term partnership between the Courtauld and the Reuben Foundation, is now open at the Courtauld Gallery. Featuring outstanding works by Cézanne, Modigliani, Léger, Picasso, and Magritte, the display explores radical new approaches to painting in the first half of the 20th century.

The Courtauld's partnership with the Reuben Foundation, launched in 2025, enables works of art from the Reuben Collection to be made available to the public as part of the Courtauld Gallery's displays. It allows the Gallery to extend its celebrated presentation of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art into the modern period.

In October 2025, the Courtauld announced the largest financial gift in its history from the Reuben Foundation, echoing the extraordinary philanthropy of the Courtauld's founder, Samuel Courtauld. The Foundation is supporting the development of the Courtauld's new Strand campus, which, when it opens in 2029, will be one of the world's most important centres for the study of the history of art.

Modern Painting from the Courtauld and Reuben Collections begins with early 20th century paintings from the Courtauld, including Paul Cézanne's *Turning Road* (1905), a landscape conjured through near-abstract patches of colour, and Amedeo Modigliani's *Nude* (c.1916), a radically direct and expressive painting that upended conventional approaches to

the subject of the female nude. These set the stage for works from the Reuben Collection by painters who built on such innovations to chart new artistic directions.

Major Cubist works by Juan Gris and Fernand Léger from 1914-18, a period of significant avant-garde experimentation in Europe, took Cézanne's patchwork of brushstrokes to new extremes. They broke the illusion of representational painting by depicting their subjects as fragmented parts, seemingly still in the process of being formed. A highlight of this area of the display is Man Ray's monumental *Black Widow* [Earlier titled *Invention-Nativity* and *Nativity*], painted in New York in 1915, and last exhibited in the UK more than fifty years ago. Although celebrated as a modernist photographer, Man Ray began his career as a painter. With this, one of his most significant early works, he created an epic modern figure painting out of Cubism and painted collage.

A group of three paintings by Pablo Picasso demonstrate the artist's continual reinvention of the traditions of painting. Picasso's two portraits of his partners, *Portrait of a Woman (Marie-Thérèse in a Blue Beret)* [1937, and *Head of a Woman (Dora Maar)*], 1939, neither previously exhibited in this country, challenge and transform classical conventions of portraiture. The latter work offers a raw and unsettling image of Maar, whose photographic works remain icons of the Surrealist movement. They are shown alongside his remarkable *Still Life with Basket of Fruit and Flowers* (1942); its spiky and fraught depiction of its humble objects powerfully expressing the tenor of wartime Paris.

The Reuben Collection holds a significant collection of works by the Surrealist artist René Magritte. Some of Magritte's most famous compositions are included in this display, such as *L'empire des lumières (The Dominion of Light)* and *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)*. Both works date from the 1950s and are characteristically elusive juxtapositions that offer the promise of new and unexpected meanings, such as a nocturnal scene under a sunlit sky, or the artist's iconic bowler-hatted man, overlaid with a wine glass and baguette. Magritte's *Le Domaine d'Arnheim*, 1949, is a further highlight of this group. Its surreal image of a landscape seen through a shattered window is an encapsulation of the transformations and reinventions of modern painting since the time of Cézanne.

The Courtauld Gallery has grown historically through the generosity of private individuals who have endowed it with the remarkable collections they formed. This tradition of philanthropy, initiated at the Gallery by Samuel Courtauld in the 1930s, continues to extend and enhance the Courtauld Gallery's world-famous collections. In recent years, the Courtauld Gallery has also enriched its displays with works of art loaned to it from other collections, including a group of paintings from the Oskar Reinhart Collection and exceptional works from the Barber Institute of Fine Art in Birmingham.

Modern Painting from the Courtauld and Reuben Collections From 18 September 2026

Katja and Nicolai Tangen 20th Century Gallery, Floor 3

Learn more: courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/exh-modern-painting-from-the-courtauld-and-reuben-collections/

Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN

Opening hours: 10:00 – 18:00 (last entry 17:15).

Weekday and weekend tickets from £14. Courtauld Members and Under-18s go free. Other concessions available.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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L'empire des lumières (The Dominion of Light)
L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)

Courtauld

www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/press
media@courtauld.ac.uk

Bolton & Quinn

Erica Bolton | erica@boltonquinn.com | +44 (0)20 7221 5000
Daisy Taylor | daisy@boltonquinn.com | +44 (0)20 7221 5000

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in 1932, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld Gallery cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, presenting these works to the public at the Courtauld Gallery in central London, as well as through loans and partnerships. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces – such as Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. It showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, the Courtauld Institute is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and conducting research on subjects ranging from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital art forms – with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, the Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating, art and business and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, the Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role of art throughout history, across all societies and geographies, and to champion its importance in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; events bringing art history research to new audiences; accessible short courses; digital engagement, innovative school, family, and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. The Courtauld's ambition is to transform access to art history education, ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools it offers to better understand the visual world around us.

The Courtauld is an exempt charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

The collection cared for by the Courtauld Gallery is owned by the Samuel Courtauld Trust.

About the Reuben Foundation

Formed in 2002, the Reuben Foundation is a UK charitable foundation focused on the advancement of healthcare, education and the community both in the UK and globally.

Recent projects include the Reuben Scholarship Programme, which assists thousands of the most talented students from less advantaged backgrounds with financial support towards university living costs. The Reuben Scholarships Programme runs in partnership with the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Ark Schools. In 2020 the Reuben Foundation made a transformational gift to establish Reuben College at the University of Oxford, marking only the 39th college in the university's near-1,000-year history and the first new college at the university for 30 years.

In the healthcare space gifts include the creation of the largest centre for paediatric cancer treatment in Europe at Great Ormond Street Hospital, a world-leading treatment and research centre at The Royal Marsden Hospital, and a new maternity ward and neonatal intensive care unit at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital as well as a new young people's centre designed to provide immediate, specialist and integrated care to young people in mental health crisis.

Further information on the Reuben Foundation can be found at:
<https://www.reubenfoundation.com/>