

# ART HISTORY INSIGHTS

## APRIL 2020

The monthly newsletter that brings you selected articles of interest and opinion from the world of art history and visual culture. April would have hosted our 46th Annual Conference. In this issue of Insights we are breaking with form slightly and bringing together articles and recordings related to the 2020 Annual Conference that never was.

### EXERCISES WITH PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

Lynda Nead, Pevsner Professor of History of Art at Birkbeck, University of London would have delivered our opening 2020 Annual Conference keynote. Instead, here is a recent online project by Lynda Nead and John Wyver that comprises two short films and essay about Bert Hardy's wartime and post-war photography for Picture Post. In this project Nead and Wyver suggest that 'Digital moving images and sound [ ] expand our potential understanding and analysis of Hardy's work, in ways in which traditional written modes of criticism cannot. We use the poetic and expressive possibilities of our medium to highlight and examine those material qualities, along with the historical atmosphere of post-war visual media'.

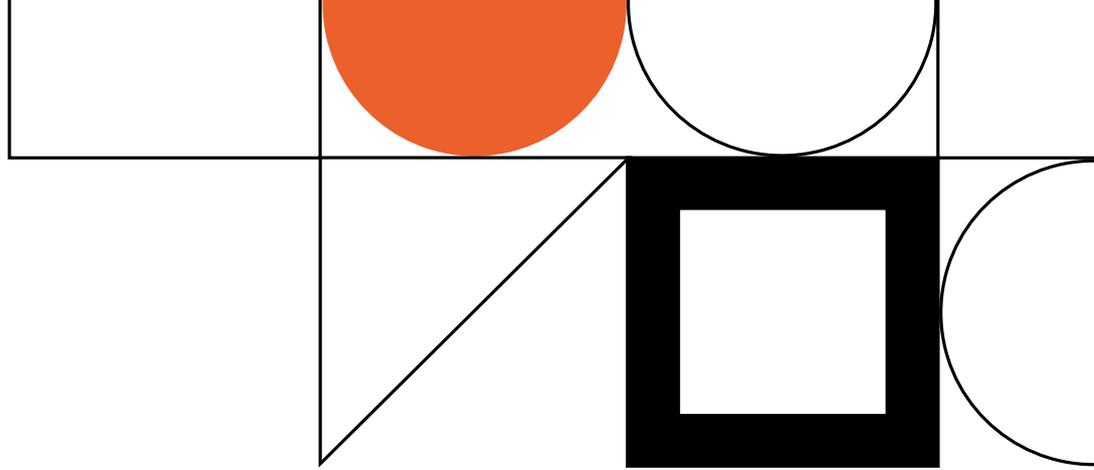
<http://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-15/exercises-with-photography-and-film>

### BRITISH IDENTITY AND THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL

Courtney J. Martin, Director of the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA), was due to deliver our second keynote. Instead, here is her article on [Britishness, Identity, and the Three-Dimensional: British Sculpture Abroad in the 1990s](#). In this essay Martin considers 'how sculptural discourse was absent from British art shown outside of Britain in the 1990s, despite the international prominence of two distinct groups of British artists: the so-called Young British Artists (YBAs) and other British artists folded into a postcolonial or identity-based construction'.

### A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE NEGATIVE

*"What exactly is a photograph...when exactly does a photograph begin, or end?"* Geoffrey Batchen, Professor of Art History, University of Oxford, would have delivered our closing Annual Conference keynote. Instead, you can now watch an online recording of Geoffrey's keynote ["Light and Dark: A Little History of the Negative"](#) which he gave at the Art Gallery of NSW in October 2019. In this fascinating



40 minute talk Batchen offers a condensed history of the negative, looking at work from a range of artists including William Henry Fox Talbot, Man Ray, Dorothea Lange, Richard Avedon and Andreas Gursky.

### **JUDY CHICAGO**

'Judy Chicago likes to pull the curtain back on things we'd rather keep hidden'. The 2020 Annual Conference was set to include a curator-tour of the Judy Chicago retrospective exhibition at The Baltic, along with a tour of the archives. Alas we cannot offer you this same experience remotely, but here is a review of that exhibition which looked to explore the breadth and impact of Chicago's work over the last fifty years.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/nov/15/judy-chicago-review-baltic>

### **EVELYN AND WILLIAM DE MORGAN**

Evelyn and William De Morgan were the art power couple of the Victorian era. The 2020 Annual Conference would have included a wine reception and curator tour of the *William and Evelyn De Morgan: Two of the Rarest Spirits of the Age* exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery. The exhibition brought together work by both British artists. William De Morgan was an inventive ceramic designer who was friends with William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. His designs had strong mathematical grounding and he always underpinned his elaborate designs with geometric structures, often borrowed from medieval design and Islamic art. Evelyn De Morgan's paintings bear the influence of early Italian Renaissance art as well as that of her Pre-Raphaelite contemporaries. Her unique style and compositions also tell her political concerns. Find out more about Evelyn De Morgan.

<https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/about-us/artists-village/de-morgan-collection/evelyn-de-morgan/>

If you have enjoyed this brief snapshot of the Annual Conference that never was, you will be pleased to hear that we are making our **2021 Annual Conference** even bigger, and even broader. Taking place over four days in April 2021 it will bring together international research and critical debate about art, art history and visual cultures. Open to all, anyone can propose a paper and anyone can attend.

<https://forarthistory.org.uk/our-work/conference/2021-annual-conference/>

### **YOUR INSIGHTS**

We promote a broad and inclusive art history, and look to engage with as wide an audience as possible. Please get in touch with articles you think may be of interest for our newsletter. We welcome all content suggestions.

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