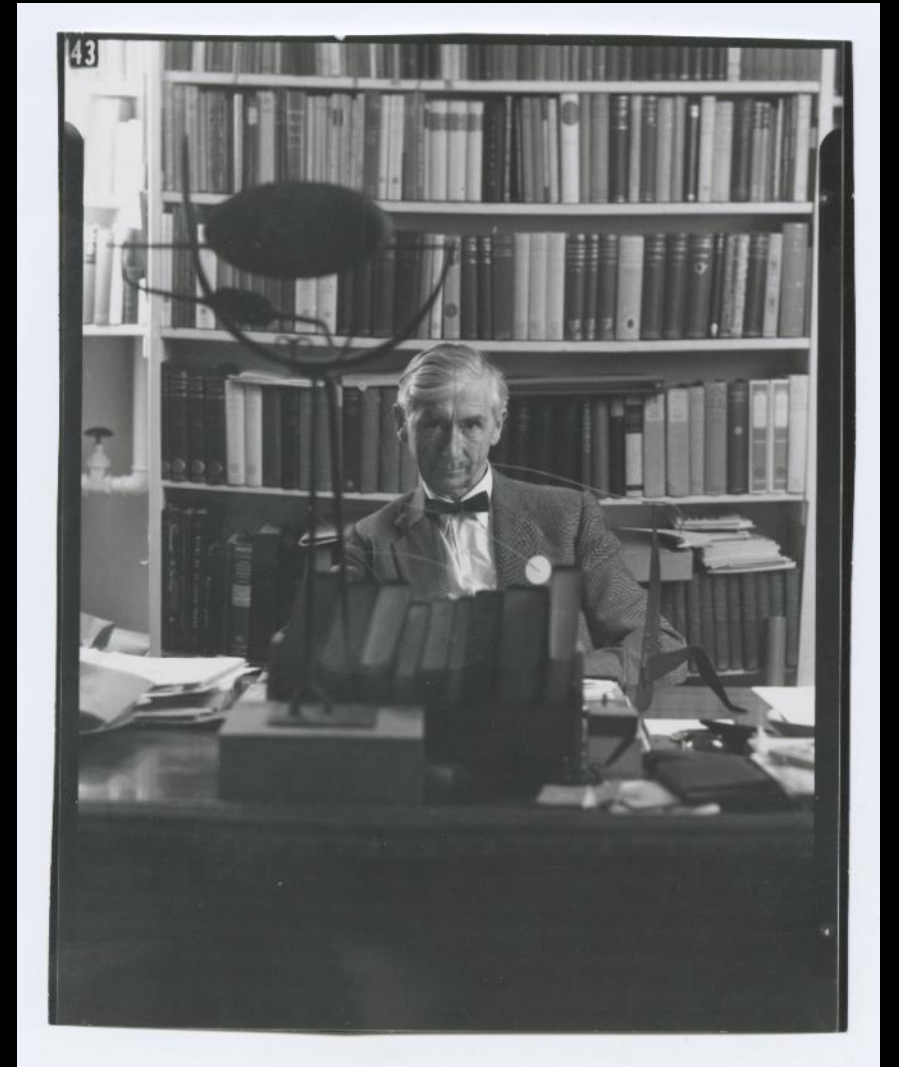


*'Herbert Read: A Legacy in  
British Art History':*  
Curatorial research and  
Engagement

Layla Bloom

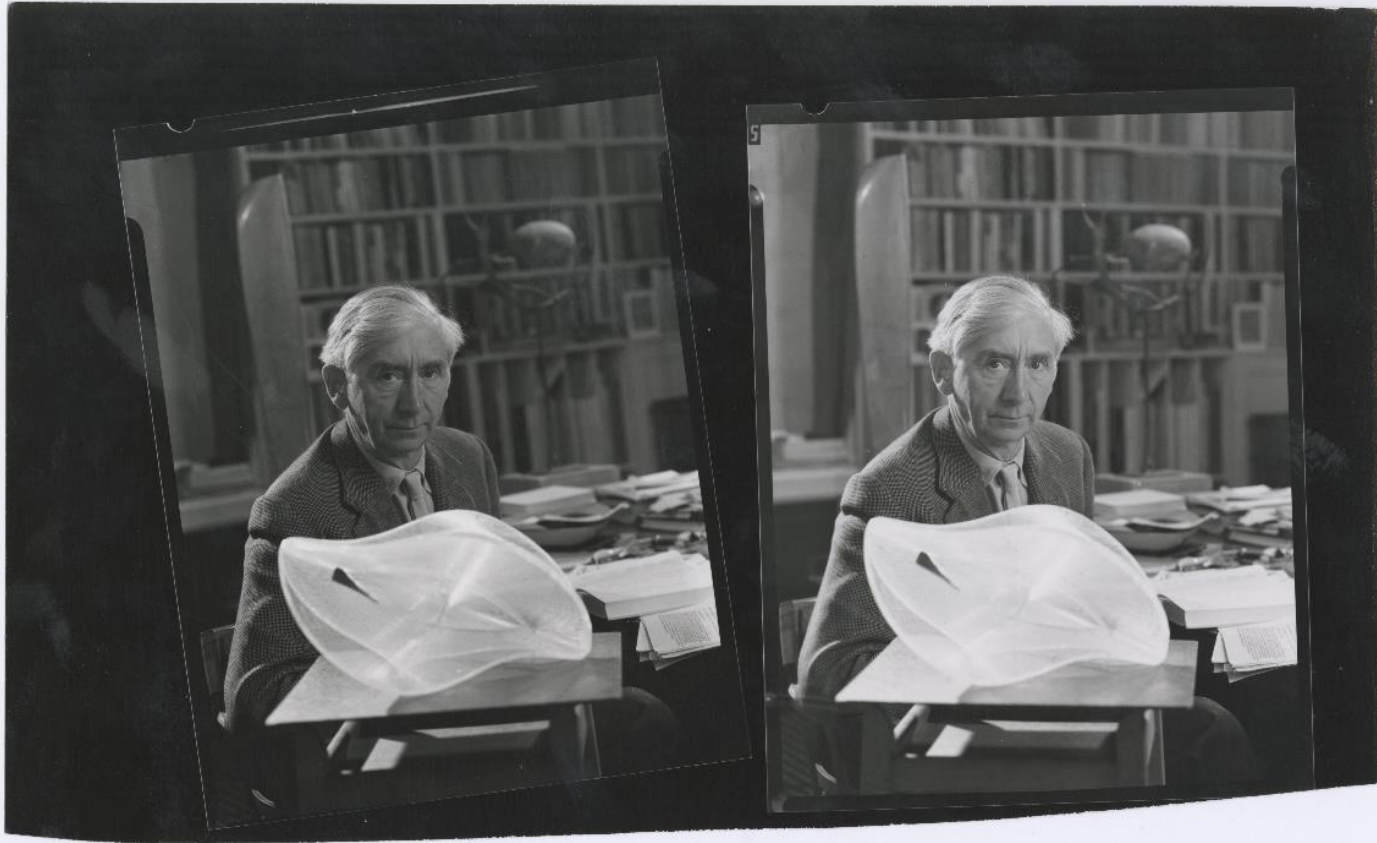
Art Curator, University of Leeds

[l.bloom@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:l.bloom@leeds.ac.uk)

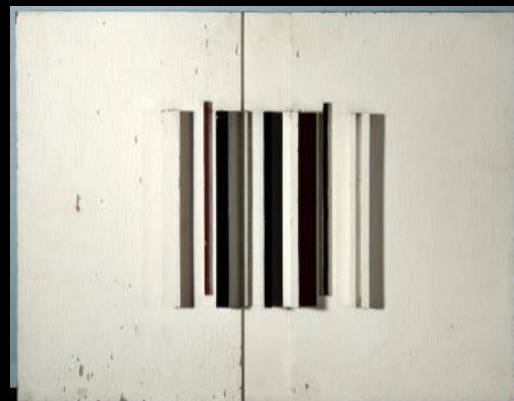
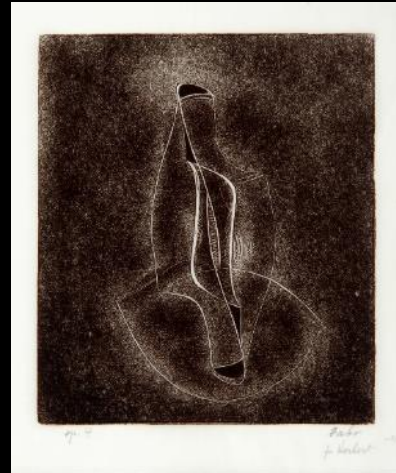
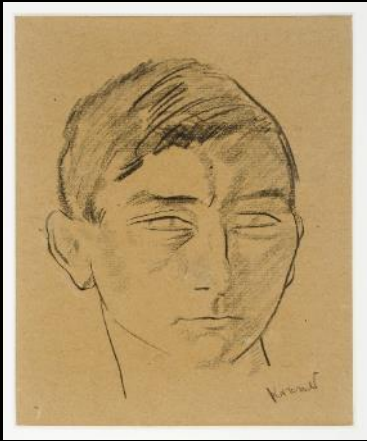


**Herbert Read at Stonegrave with Reg Butler's *Head*, c.1960s**  
Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c  
Herbert Read/13/16

# Sir Herbert Read (1893-1968)



*"[I]n dissipating my talents, I have made it difficult for my contemporaries to recognise the underlying unity of my purpose and my practice. I am left with the hope that someday someone will take the trouble to trace 'the figure in the carpet'."*



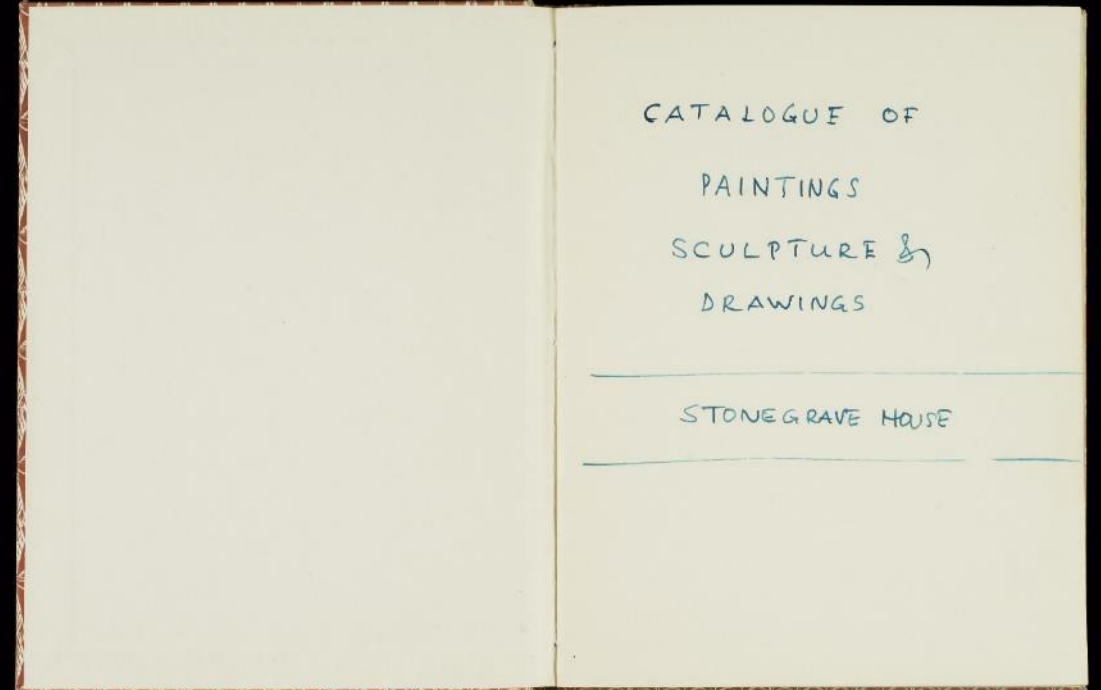
# Curatorial research

*“Dear Mr. Callan,*

*I have made a catalogue of my paintings and enclose a copy. I have put my own valuations against the items and sent another list to Mr. Charles Gimpel, and asked him to confirm or revise my estimates...”*

Letter from Herbert Read to F. Callan, Messrs. Glanvill Enthoven Bottomley Ltd.,  
25 March 1963

Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/14/5



Inside cover page of *Catalogue of Paintings, Sculpture & Drawings, Stonegrave House, 1963*

Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/14/5

BEN NICHOLSON

Nov. 62 (Mortimer). 1962 oil on canvas

Pencil  $17 \times 23\frac{1}{2}$  in. - + B.N.K.  
M 482 + Mortimer's label No. BN 59

Gouache painting. 1936  
gouache s.d. & reverse  $12 \times 16\frac{1}{2}$  in.

\* version  $\frac{3}{12}$  hand painted  
by B.N.

\* for Herbert + Luella Xmas 1938\*  
< earlier version in V&A >

Drawing < jug motif >

pen & wash  $10\frac{1}{2} \times 9$  in.  
water on reverse: "for Herbert Dec 4 65  
overdrawing  
from  
Ben"

① PABLO PICASSO

Still-life: wineglass + napkin. 1914

oil on canvas  $8 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  in. (with  
mount + frame,  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$ )

(Arts Council Picasso Exhibition, 1960, Cat.  
No. 270. Ill. Plate II; Ex Graffé Colln.  
(Brussels) + Penrose Colln.)

10.00

PAUL NASH

~~Ghost at about 5 rise.~~  
~~The Abolisher~~ Watercolour, 1942.

⑮ Minotaur: Monster Pond.  
 $15 \times 11$  in. 10.00

⑯ The Peacock Path. ~~1911~~ 1911. 20.00  
watercolour drawing. ~~1911~~ (pen, pencil  
& chalk)

$18 \times 14\frac{3}{4}$  in.  
Ex. M12 J. L. Garvin Colln. Tate Gallery Memorial Exhib.  
(1948, Cat. No. 72). Cairns Gallery Ex. (1912), No. 19.

⑭ Strange Encounter. 1935 10.00  
(Peacock Path, 1911)

Watercolour (study for oil painting\*)

$11 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  in. =  
Inscr: "Souvenir for Herbert from Paul"

⑰ Drawing. Watercolour 25  
 $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$  in.

\* Possibly "Encounter of Two Objects"; Oil on canvas,  
Leicester Galleries Ex. 1938. Memorial Ex. No. 42.

② JOAN MIRÓ

750

Composition. 1934 (Tate 1934)

Gouache,  $18 \times 24\frac{1}{2}$  in.  
crayon + black ink.

Inscribed: "à Monsieur Herbert Read,  
très affectueusement,  
Miró, 1934".

oil:

⑦ PAUL KLEE

Rauferei. 1926.

Pencil drawing

$10 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  in.

Inscribed: "1926 J. J. Rauferei"

ref: Paul Klee Handzeichnungen 1921-33  
"da. 1926" Museum/Berlin 1934  
- 1926 no. 103 (p. 24)

75

Inside pages of Catalogue of Paintings, Sculpture & Drawings, Stonegrave House, 1963  
Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/14/5

4/68  
B58

COCTEAU, Jean

[Ink] "Le bain de lumière (maison de santé)"

"1926. Night of the night. Amical souvenir  
au professeur Read de Jean Cocteau\*"   
[signed Jean\*]

32 x 25

4/57

FRANCIS, Sam

4/51  
B 113  
Morley Cat. 41

HERON, Patrick

[Oil] [Still life]

"1949"

46 x 91

4/73  
B48  
Morley Cat 46

KLEE, Paul

"Rauferei"

[Pencil]

"1926 J. 1."

21 x 14.5

4/66

MIRO, Joan [?]

20 x 70

MOORE, Henry

[Sculpture]

5/18

WARREN-DAVIES, John

[Sculpture]

"Double Figure"

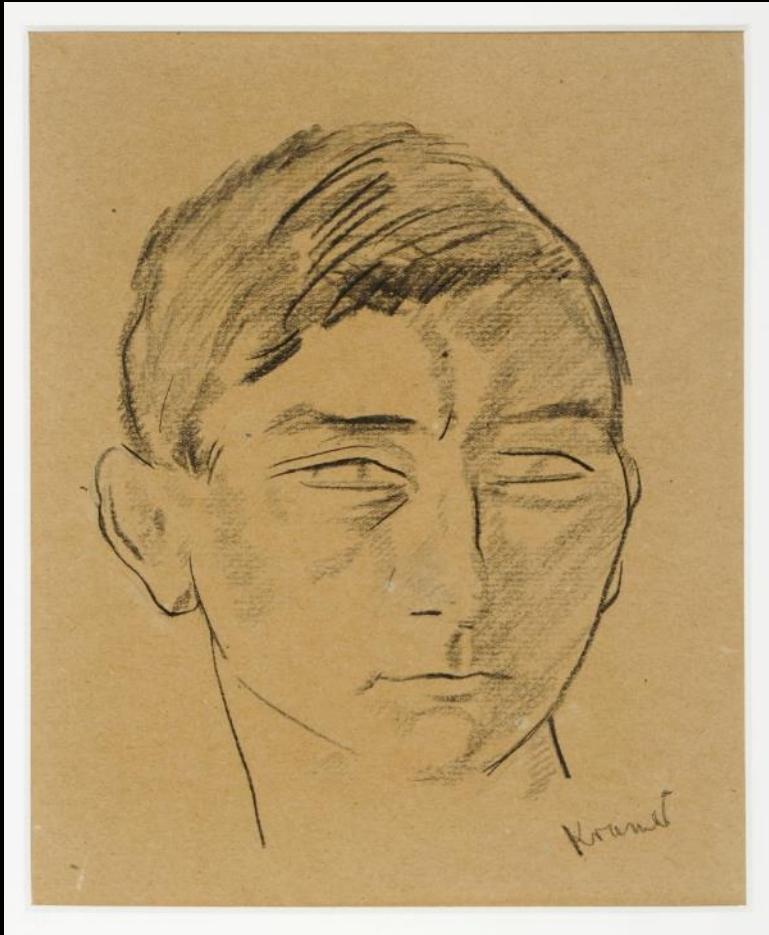
5/21,22  
B122  
Morley 17

WRIGHT, Austin

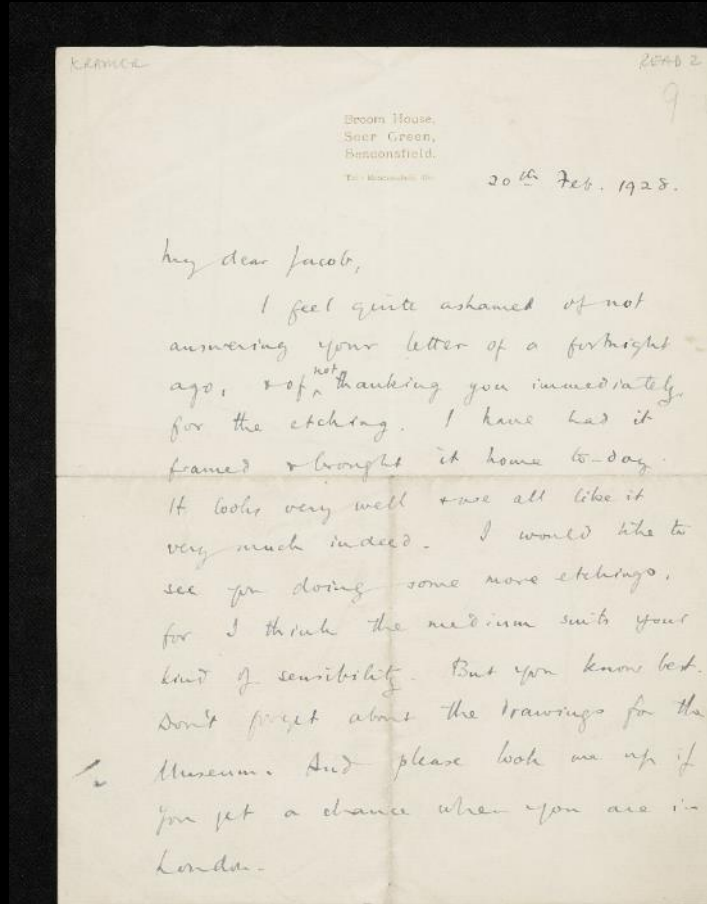
[Sculpture]

"Mother and Child"

# Jacob Kramer (1892-1962)



Jacob Kramer, *Drawing of Herbert Read*, 1914, pencil  
© Estate of John David Roberts. By permission of the  
Treasury Solicitor. Image credit: University of Leeds



*"My dear Jacob,  
I feel quite ashamed of not  
answering your letter of a  
fortnight ago and of not  
thanking you immediately for  
the etching. I have had it  
framed and brought it home  
today. It looks very well and  
we all like it very much  
indeed. I would like to see you  
doing some more etchings,  
for I think the medium suits  
your kind of sensibility. But  
you know best..."*

**Letter from Herbert Read to Jacob  
Kramer, 20 February 1928**  
Special Collections, Leeds University  
Library, BC MS 20c Kramer

# Edward Wadsworth (1889-1949)



Edward Wadsworth, *Yorkshire Village*, 1914, woodcut  
Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017.  
Image credit: University of Leeds



Sir Herbert Read, *Figure Composition No. 1*, 1916,  
watercolour and ink  
Private collection. Image credit: University of Leeds



# Paul Nash (1889-1946)



Paul Nash, *The Crater, Hill 60 (Mine Crater)*, 1918, lithograph  
Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017. Image credit: University of Leeds

*“I had myself just returned from the Front, and it is perhaps worth recording that my interest in Paul Nash’s work dates from this time. I wanted to see and hear the truth told about our hellish existence in the trenches...”*

Sir Herbert Read, *Paul Nash*, 1944 (London, Penguin)

Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC Read C2136

# Ben Nicholson (1894-1982)



Herbert Read by Howard Coster at No. 3 The Mall, Parkhill Road, Hampstead, 1934  
© National Portrait Gallery, London

HR44  
8717.12.3689  
BROOM HOUSE SEER GREEN BEACONSFIELD  
BEACONSFIELD 1268  
28.10.45

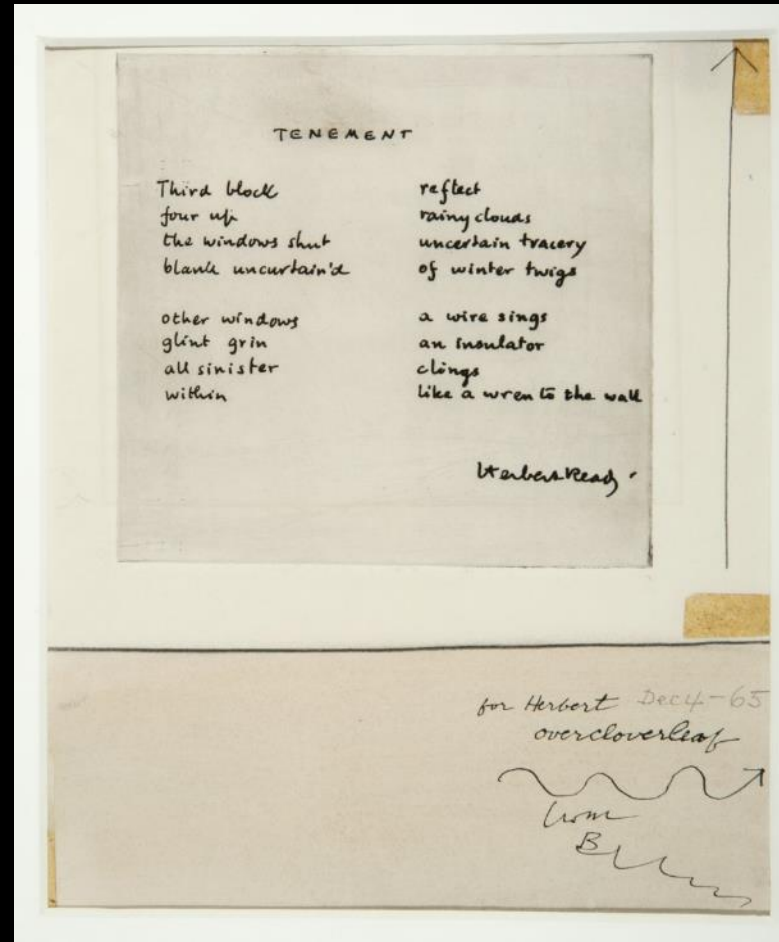
Dear Ben,  
You will be relieved to hear that the missing relief is here - It was safely stored in the loft, and there was some excuse for my not remembering it because it is pasted all over with brown paper - I am afraid there is no chance of bringing

Letter from Herbert Read to Ben Nicholson, 28 October 1945  
Tate Gallery Archives, TGA 8717/1/2/3689

I took the collage to Jode on Monday, on the way to Hannover via Gimpel. There is some doubt about its title - "Collage with Spanish hostess" sounds rather dull to me - Why not "Le Petit Provençal", which is printed quite distinctly across it? I am leaving the question of

Letter from Herbert Read to Ben Nicholson, 25 January 1959  
Tate Gallery Archives, TGA 8717/1/2/3729

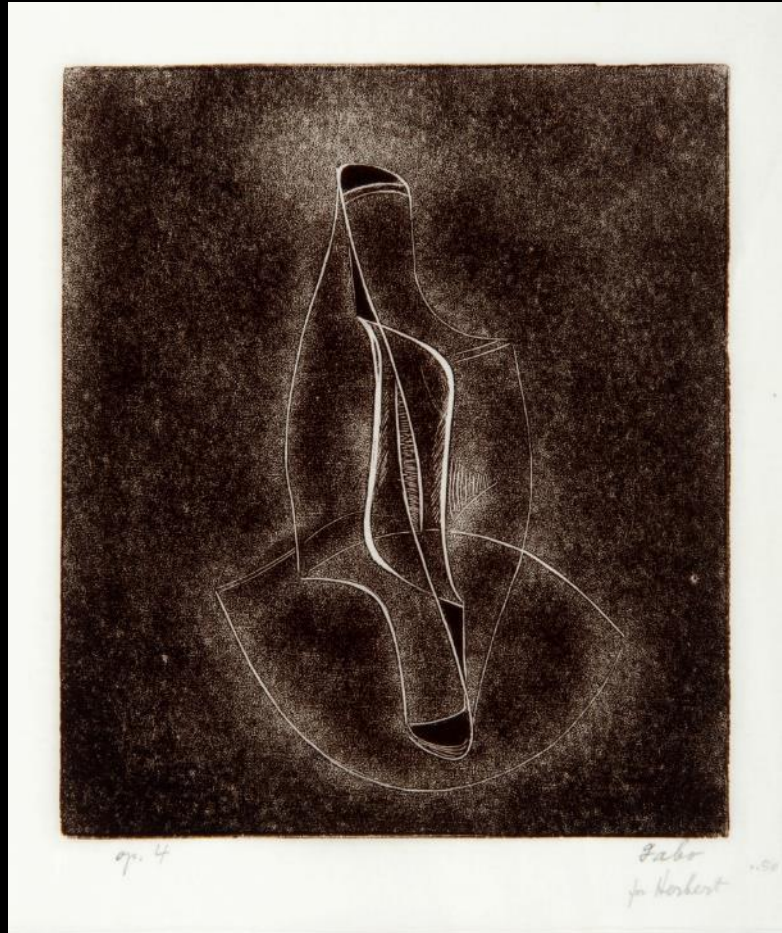
# Ben Nicholson (1894-1982)



Ben Nicholson, 1963 (drawing), 1962, pen and wash

© Angela Verren Taunt. All rights reserved, DACS 2021. Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017. Image credit: University of Leeds

# Naum Gabo (1890-1977)



**Naum Gabo, *Op. 4*, 1950, woodcut**

The Work of Naum Gabo © Nina & Graham Williams/Tate.  
Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017. Image credit: University  
of Leeds

My dear Herbert---I do miss you very much---it would do me good if I would hear from you how you are getting on and what you are doing. Mr. Ivens has succeeded in forcing me into a new "racket", as he calls it. He nagged me so long to make wood-engravings that I gave in and once started, I was very much attracted by it---it is, after all, a kind of sculpture. I am very much attracted by it---in fact I like doing it very much. I am intending to make eight or ten wood-engravings and then sell them as a set. I have done five up till now and I am sending you some of them for Christmas. I hope you like them.

I wish we knew what the children would like---we have sent them a little maple sugar and nuts---but if there is any particular shortage of something they like---don't hesitate to write to us and Miriam will arrange it.

I hope everything is all right with you at home and I send my warmest love to you both,

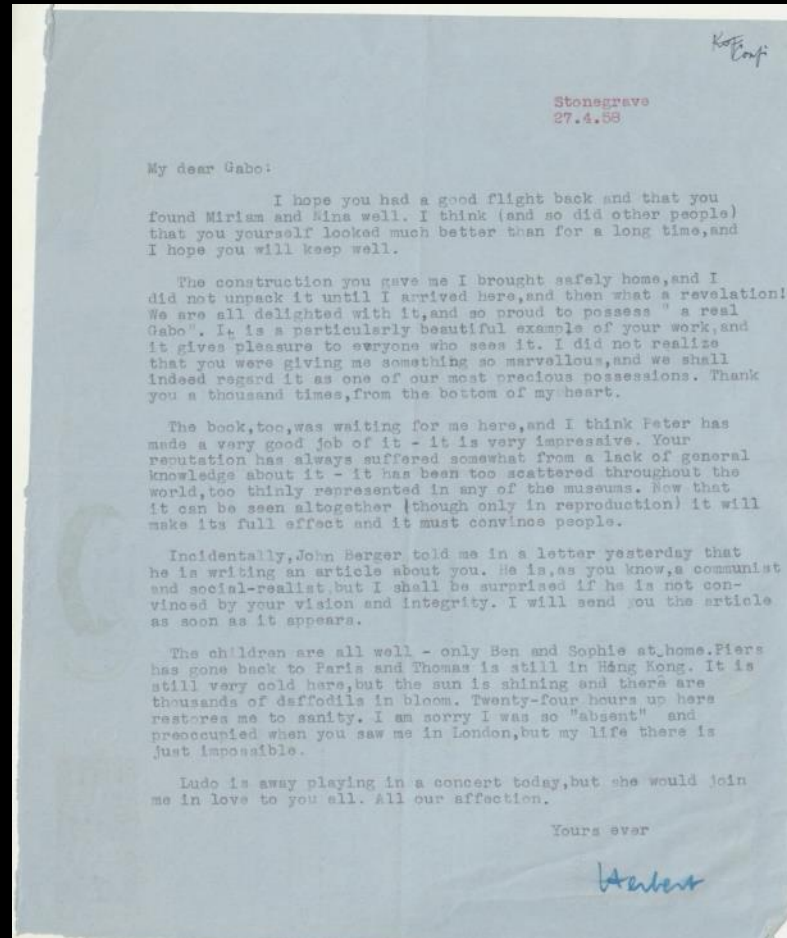
**Letter from Naum Gabo to Herbert Read, 30 November 1950**

Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Naum Gabo Papers, YCAL MSS 541, Series I

# Naum Gabo (1890-1977)



Herbert Read at Stonegrave with Naum Gabo's  
*Linear Construction II*, c.1960s  
Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC  
MS 20c Herbert Read/13/16



*"...The construction you gave me I brought safely home, and I did not unpack it until I arrived here, and then what a revelation! We are all delighted with it, and so proud to possess "a real Gabo". It is a particularly beautiful example of your work, and it gives pleasure to everyone who sees it. I did not realise that you were giving me something so marvellous, and we shall indeed regard it as one of our most precious possessions. Thank you a thousand times, from the bottom of my heart...*

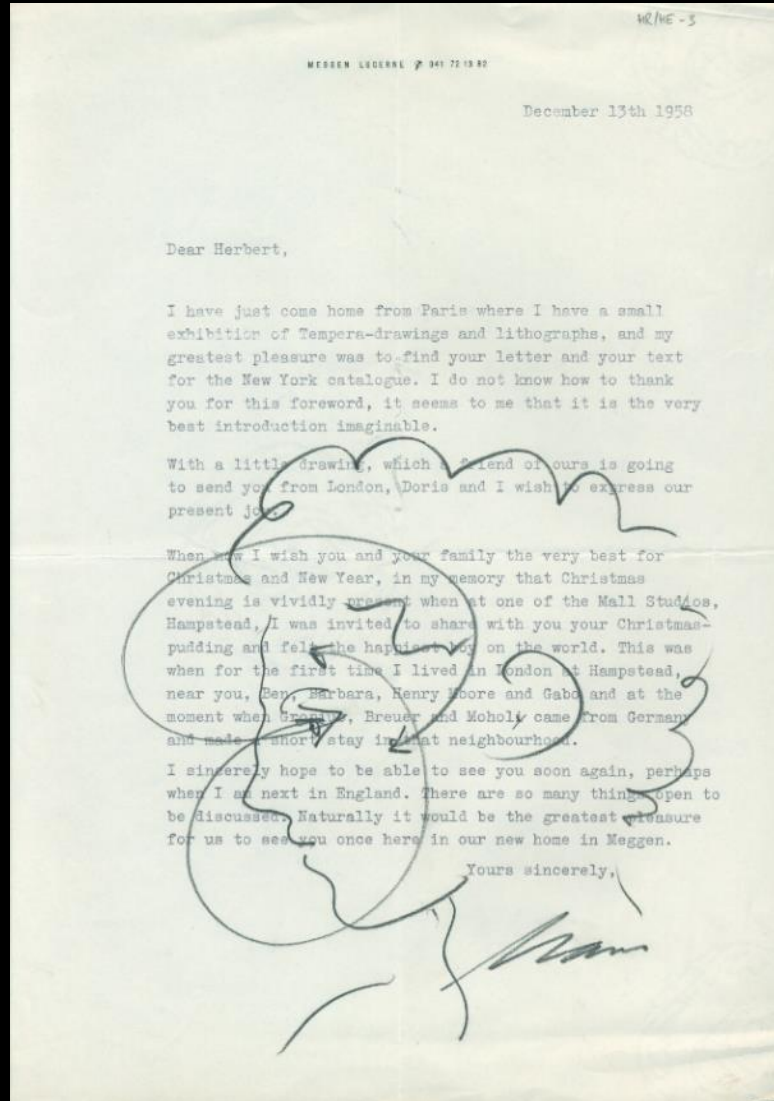
**Letter from Herbert Read to Naum Gabo, 27 April 1958**

Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Naum Gabo Papers, YCAL MSS 541, Series I

# Hans Erni (1909-2015)



Hans Erni, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, 1958, print  
© Sucession Hans Erni, Lucerne. Bequest of  
Benedict Read, 2017. Image credit: University  
of Leeds



*“Dear Herbert,  
I have just come home from Paris  
where I have a small exhibition of  
Tempera-drawings and lithographs,  
and my greatest pleasure was to  
find your letter and your text for the  
New York catalogue. I do not know  
how to thank you for this foreword,  
it seems to me that it is the very  
best introduction imaginable.  
With a little drawing, which a friend  
of ours is going to send you from  
London, Doris and I wish to express  
our present joy.”*

**Letter from Hans Erni to Herbert Read, 13  
December 1958**

Special Collections, University of Victoria,  
SC100-8.36

# Stonegrave House

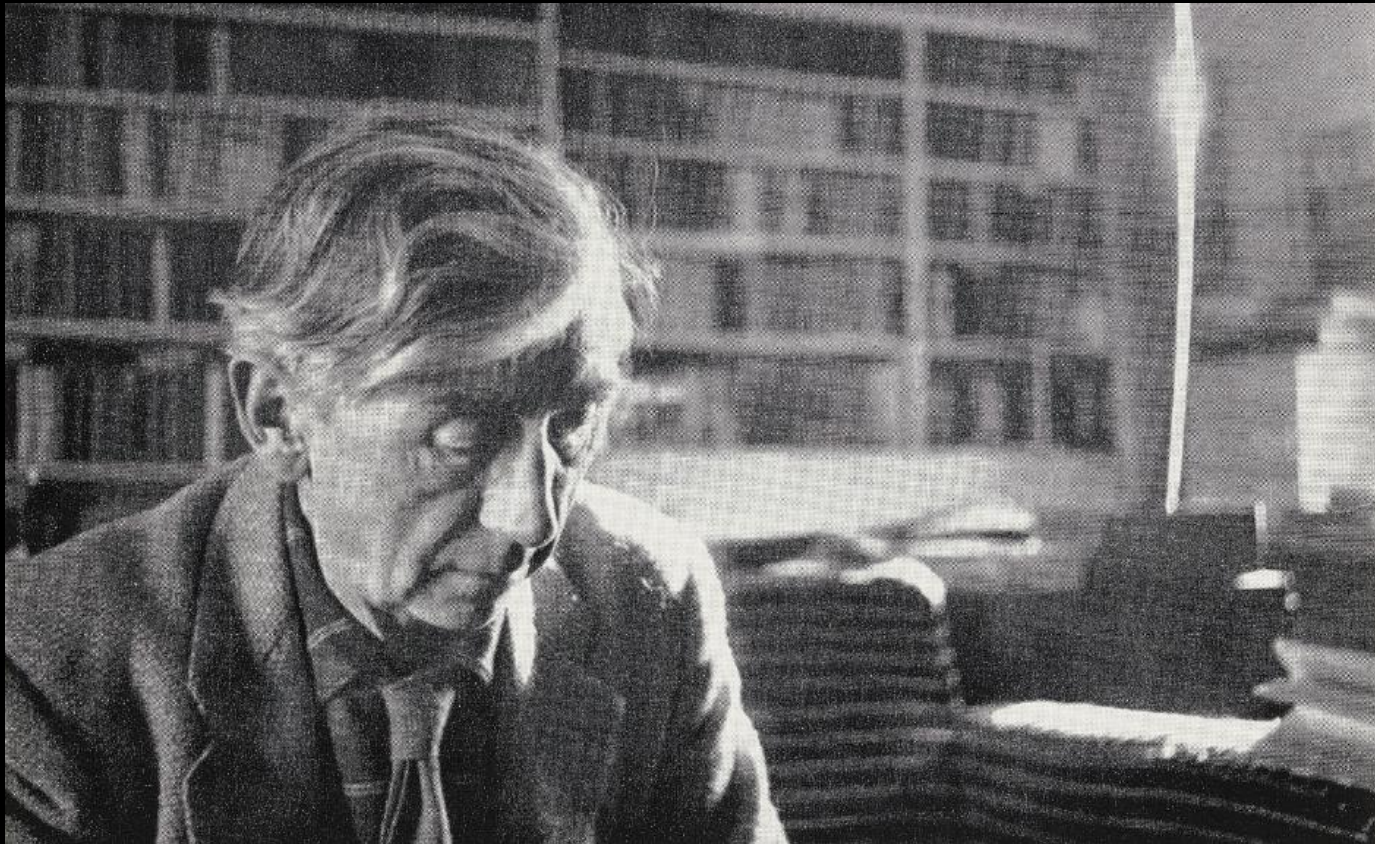


East-end drawing room at Stonegrave House, 1970

© Harry Cartlidge/Courtesy of Hearst Magazines UK

*“As I write two pictures face me on the wall, one a pure abstraction by Ben Nicholson, the other a surrealist fantasy by Paul Delvaux. By chance their colours harmonise, if there is any contradiction in their forms, it must correspond to a contradiction in my own mind, for both appeal to me with equal force.”*

**Letter from Herbert Read to Eric Finlay, 22 May 1960**  
V&A National Art Library, 86.NN.59



**Herbert Read at Stonegrave with Barbara Hepworth's *Single Form*, c.1960s**


© Photographer unknown. Image credit: University of Leeds



# Digital exhibition

Introduction Early life 1930s Later life Legacy Acknowledgements Image descriptions

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



## Man Behind the Moderns the Art Collection of Herbert Read

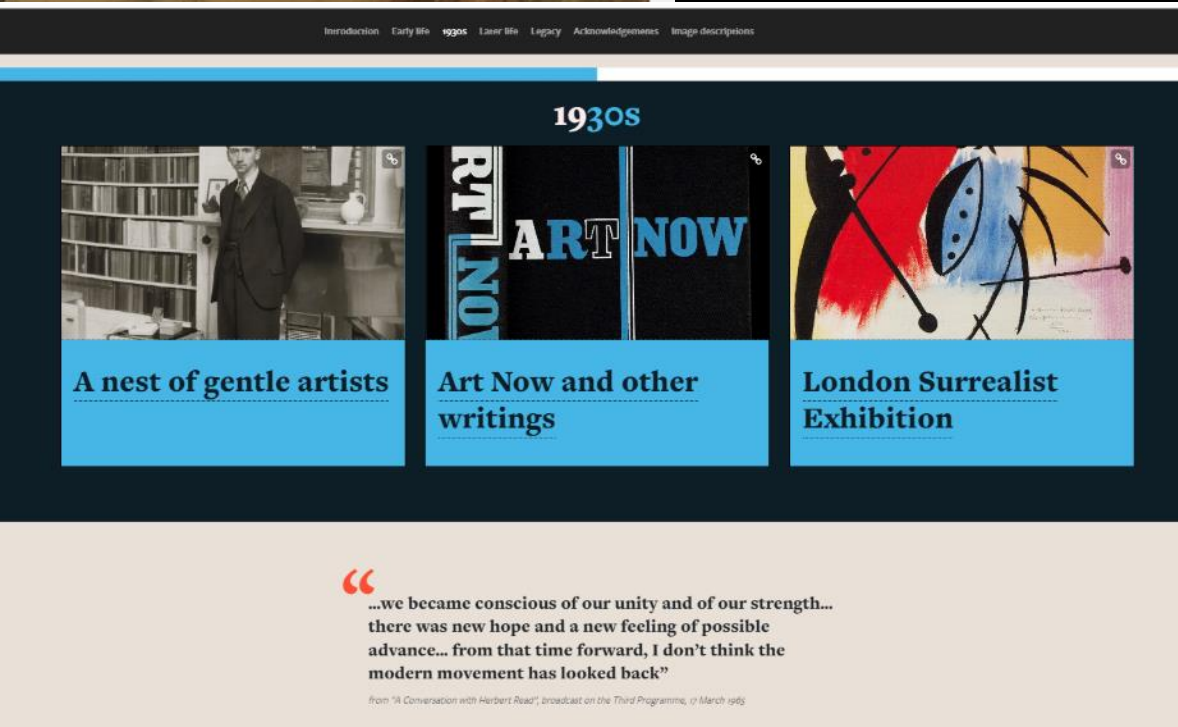
Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled (Homage to Sir Herbert Read)*, 1944, collage. Image credit: Sotheby's/ArtDigital Studio. Image description

## Digital exhibition

*'Man Behind the Moderns: the Art Collection of Herbert Read'*

Introduction Early life 1930s Later life Legacy Acknowledgements Image descriptions

1930s



A nest of gentle artists

Art Now and other writings

London Surrealist Exhibition

“...we became conscious of our unity and of our strength... there was new hope and a new feeling of possible advance... from that time forward, I don't think the modern movement has looked back?”

from 'A Conversation with Herbert Read', broadcast on the Third Programme, 17 March 1963


# Gallery display



## Display

*'Man Behind the Moderns: the Art Collection of Herbert Read'*; with special display of additional material for early career research symposium, November 2022

# Public engagement



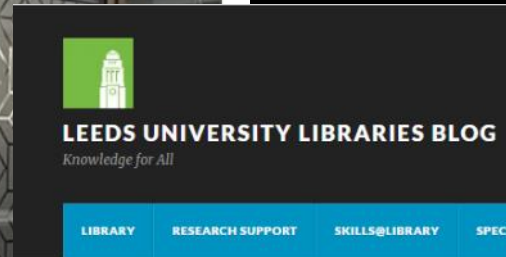
I've been researching the incredible art collection acquired by

Two Minute Treasure - Man Behind The Moderns: The beginning of Herbert Read's art collection

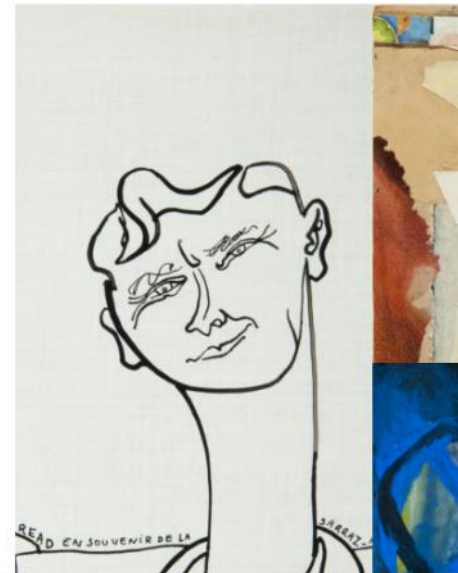
Leeds Uni... 111... Subscribed

1

Two-Minute Treasure video (above), blogs and social posts (right)



## Man Behind the Moderns: Highlighting Herbert Read Collection




Post

Leeds Lib Galleries @LULGalleries

Curatorial Researcher @beckyhiggins\_ has chosen today's #FridayFavourite:

William Congdon's 'Piazza San Marco No 2', which belonged to Sir Herbert Read

The painting was a 70th birthday present from none other than Read's close friend American art collector Peggy Guggenheim



4:25 PM - Mar 10, 2023 - 725 Views

- Research Support
- Skills@Library
- Special Collections and Galleries
- Uncategorized

TAGSarchive art conservation digitisation

exhibition exhibitions John Evan Bedford Library of Furniture History Leeds Leeds University Library Galleries Library Liddle collection literary archives medical collections new accessions openaccess Open Lunch open research openresearch poetry rdm research data management roadmap skills Skills@Library Special Collections The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery Treasures of the Brotherton gallery University of Leeds

# Collaborative Research Season: *'Reassessing Herbert Read'*

Organised in collaboration  
with the Henry Moore  
Institute and the Paul  
Mellon Centre for Studies  
in British Art



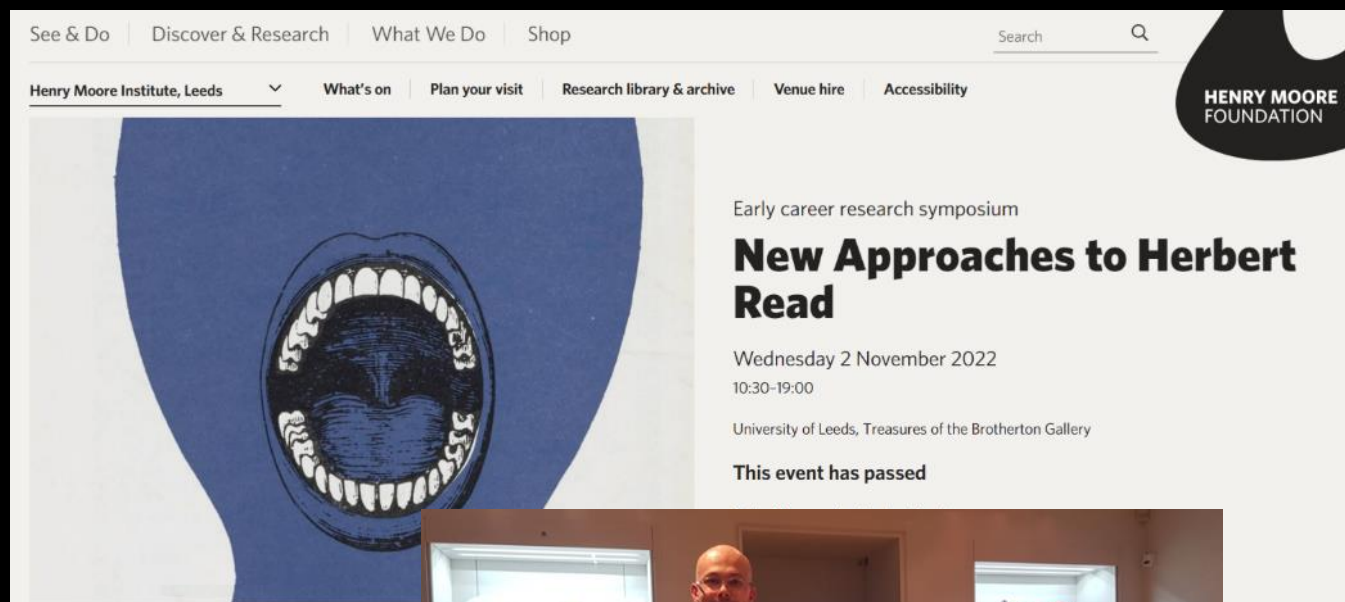
[this season](#) [Organisers](#) [Previous events](#)

## About this season

The impetus for this research season is the forthcoming launch of the University of Leeds' digital exhibition on Herbert

Read (1893-1969) and his work in the fields of psychology, psychoanalysis, and the history of ideas. The exhibition is a collaboration between the University of Leeds and the Henry Moore Foundation.

# Early Career research symposium



'New Approaches to Herbert Read' early career research symposium (2 November 2022), in collaboration with the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art



Lecture

**Dr Shantel Blakely, 'The Architect as Universal Man: Herbert Read's Ideal of the Architect as an Aesthetic Polymath'**

Wednesday 30 November 2022  
18:00-19:00

Online



Film screening

**To Hell with Culture**

Thursday 9 February 2023  
18:00-20:00

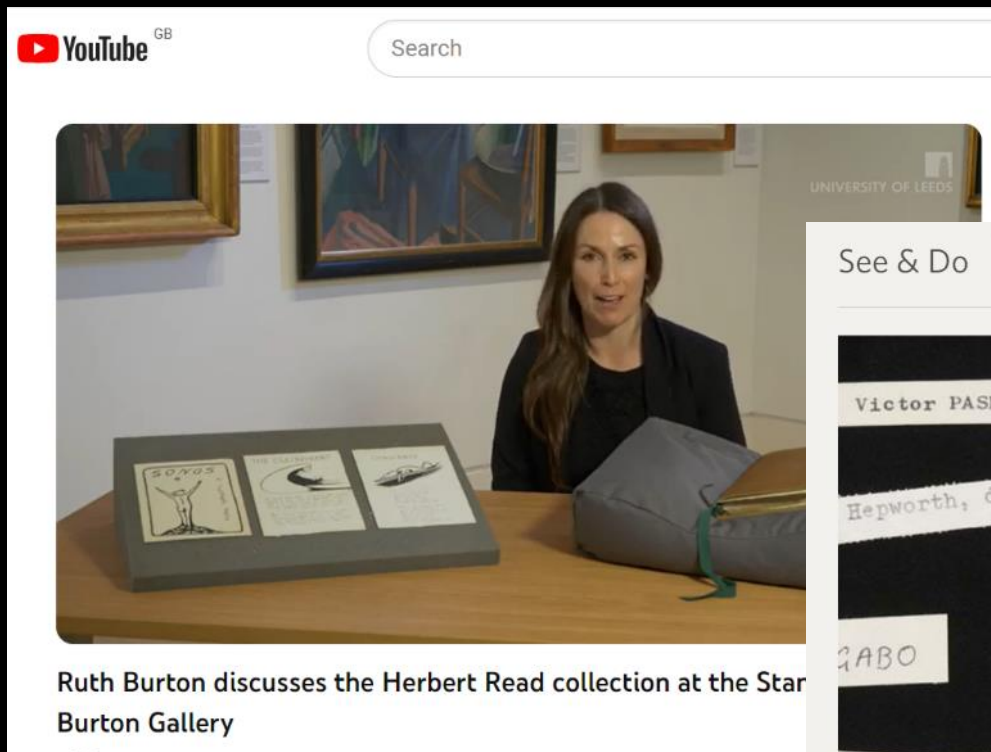
Leeds Central Library



Online talk by Dr Shantel Blakely (Rice University School of Architecture, Houston); Film screening of 'To Hell With Culture' with talk with film maker Huw Wahl and Alice Miller (Hyde Park Picture House) – held at Leeds Central Library



# Imagined archives



Ruth Burton video for 'Archives Revealed' project (above) and 'Imagined Archives' event ( 8 March 2023 - right)





# Thank you!

## Digital exhibition

'Man Behind the Moderns: the Art Collection of Herbert Read'

<https://spotlight.leeds.ac.uk/herbert-read>

## Collaborative research season

['Reassessing Herbert Read'](#)

## With thanks to

Rebecca Higgins (Curatorial Researcher – Herbert Read Project), Ruth Burton (Archives Revealed and AHRC-RLUK Professional Practice Fellow) and the team at the Henry Moore Institute: Clare O'Dowd, Sean Ketteringham and Kirstie Gregory



Herbert Read admiring Paul Klee's *Resting Ships* at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1962

© Estate of Sameer Makarius. Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/13/16