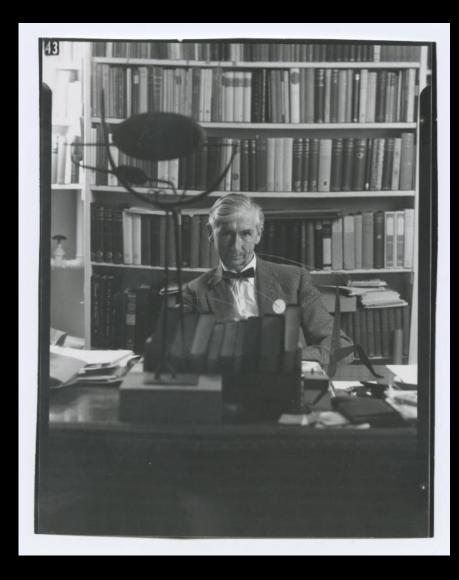
Herbert Read: A Legacy in British Art History': Curatorial research and Engagement

Layla Bloom Art Curator, University of Leeds I.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'."

Herbert Read in his study with a sculpture by Naum Gabo. Leeds University Library Special Collections BC Read

































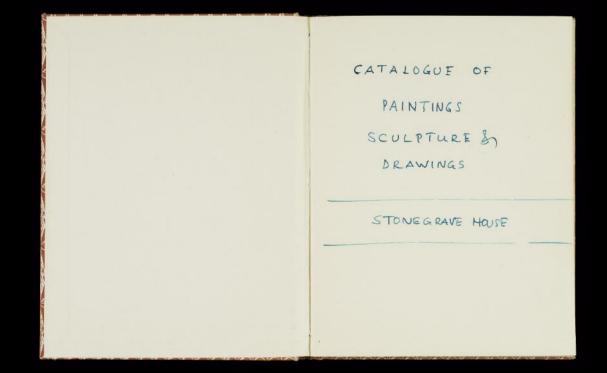
Curatorial research

"Dear Mr. Callan,

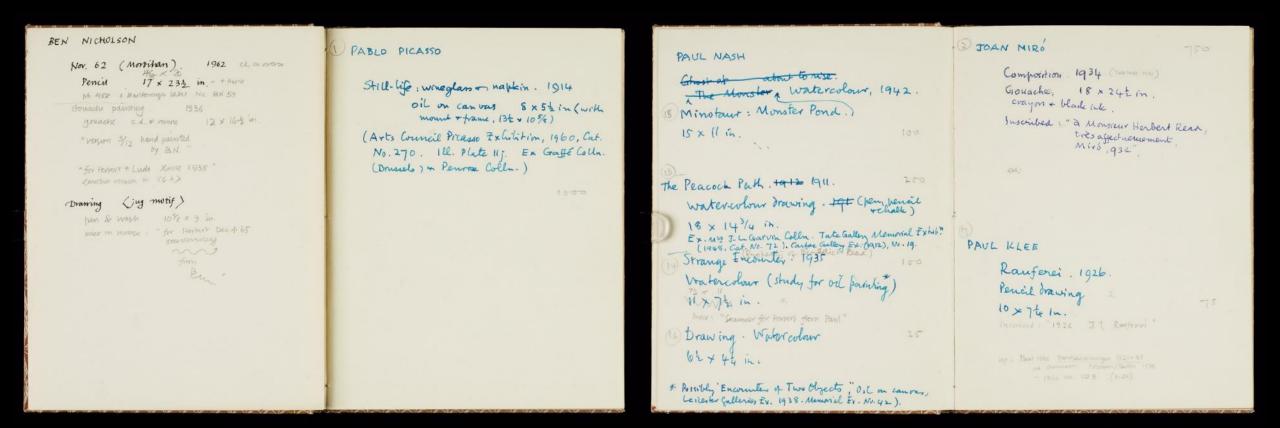
I have made a catalogue of my paintings and enclose a copy. I have put my own valuations against the items and sent another list to Mr. Charles Gimpel, and asked him to confirm or revise my estimates..."

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

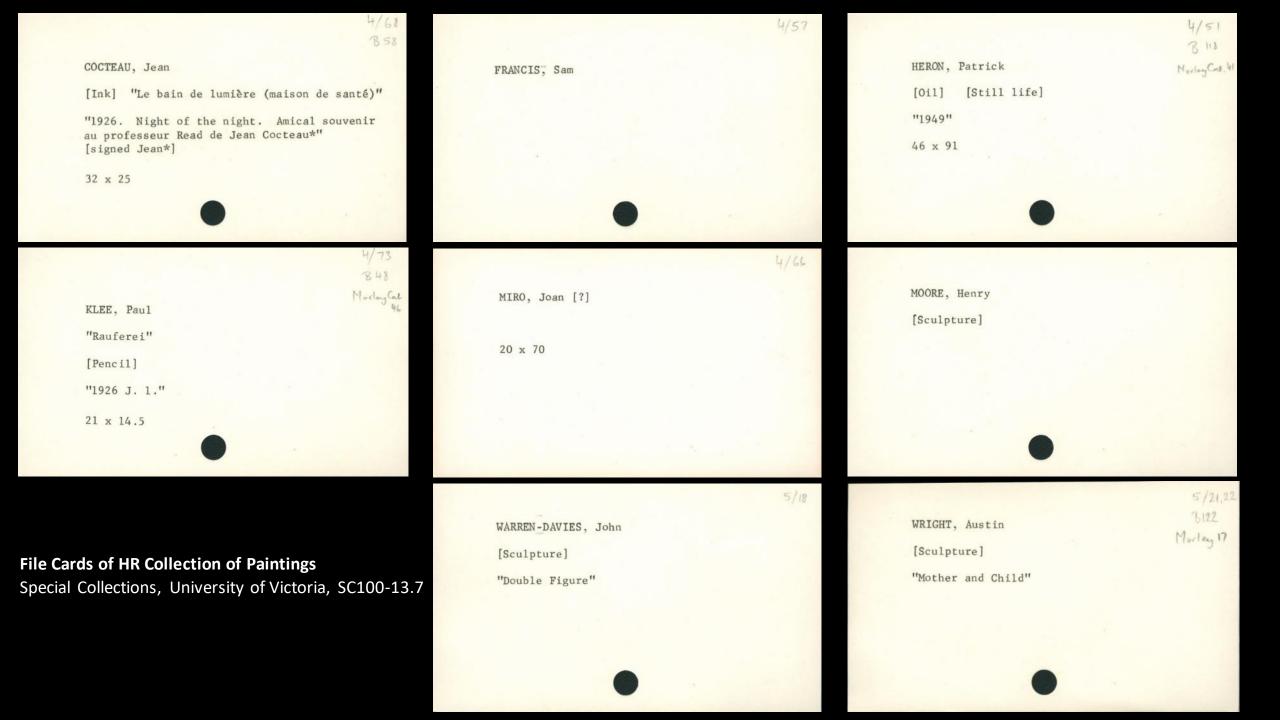
Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/14/5



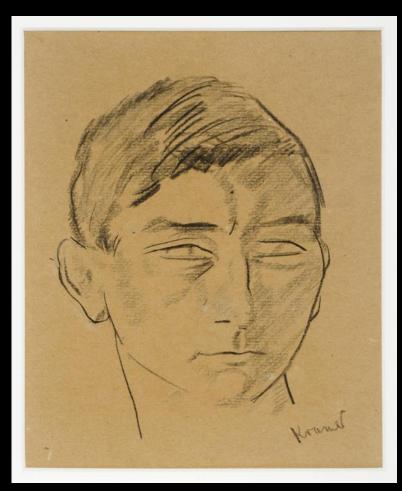
Inside cover page of Catalogue of Paintings, Sculpture & Drawings, Stonegrave House, 1963 Special Collections, Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Herbert Read/14/5



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



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

20 th Feb. 1928. my dear facol, I feel quite ashamed of not answering your letter of a forhight ago, sof thanking you immediately for the etching. I have had it frame? I brought it home to-day It looks very well twee all like it very much indeed. I would like to see you doing some more etchings. for I thrack the medium suits your kout of sensibility. But you know bet. Don't pricet about the traverige for the In Museum. And please book me up if you get a chance when you are in Londa ..

"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)

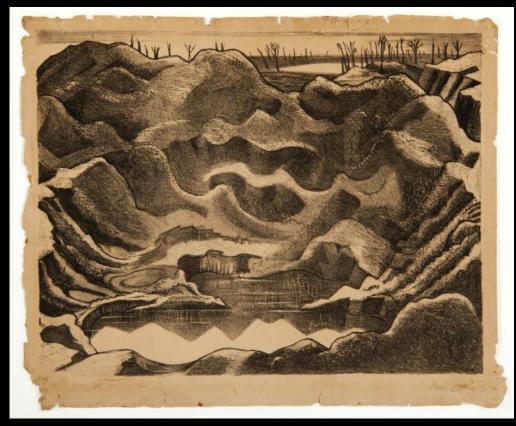


Edward Wadsworth, *Yorkshire Village*, **1914**, **woodcut** Bequest of Benedict Read, 2017. Image credit: University of Leeds



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 8717-1.2. 2689 BROOM HOUSE SEER GREEN BEACONSFIELD BEACONSFIELD 1268 28.4.45 Dear Ben, You will be relieved to bear 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 bown paper. I am afrid there is no chance of bringing

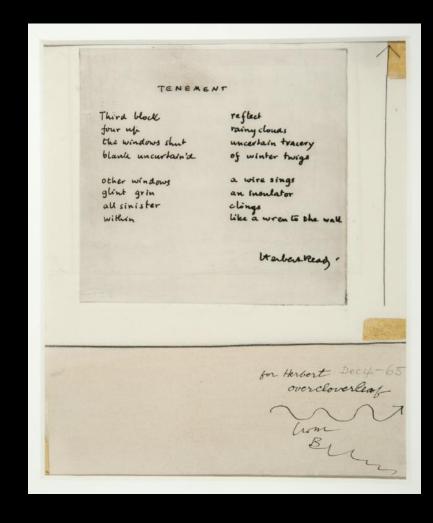
Letter from Herbert Read to Ben Nicholson, 28 October 1945 Tate Gallery Archives, TGA 8717/1/2/3689

I took The allage to Jok on Monday, in The way to thannover via Grimbel. There is some doubt about its title . "Collage will sharish hostcark" sounds rather dull to me. Why not "Le Petit Provencel", which is brinks quite distinct 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)



My dear Herbert---I do miss you very much---it would do me good if I would heer from you how you are getting on and what you are doing. Wr. Ivens has succeeded in foroing me into a new "racket", as he calls it. He nagged me so long to make wood-engravingsthat I gave in and once started, I was very much attracted by it---it is, after all, a kind of aculpture. 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 Christmes. I hope you like them.

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

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

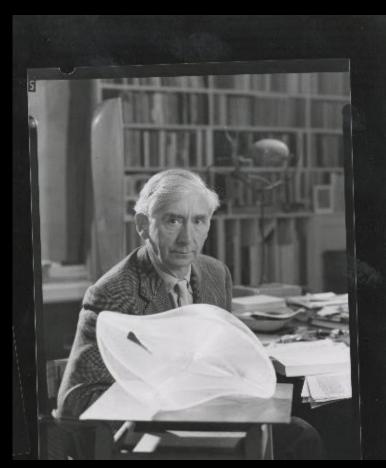
Letter from Naum Gabo to Herbert Read, 30 November 1950

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

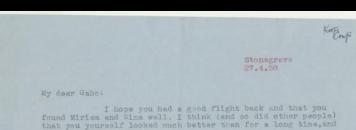
Naum Gabo, Op. 4, 1950, woodcut

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

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 arelyed here, and then what a revelation! We are all delighted with it, and so prout to possess " a real dabo". It is a particularly beautiful example of your work, and it gives pleasure to everyone who sees it. I did not realize 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.

The book,too,was waiting for me here,and I think Feter has made a very good job of it - it is very impressive. Your reputation has always suffered scomewhat from a lack of general knowledge about it - it has been too scattered throughout the world, too thinly represented in any of the museums. Now that it can be seen altogether (though only in reproduction) it will make its full effect and it must convince people.

Incidentally, John Berger told me in a letter yesterday that he is writing an article about you. He is as you know, a communist and social-realist, but I shall be surprised if he is not convinced by your vision and integrity. I will send you the article as soon as it appears.

The children are all well - only Ben and Sophie at home.First has gone back to Paris and Thomas is still in Hang Kong. It is still very cold hare,but the sun is shining and there are thousands of deffodils in bloom. Twenty-four hours up here restores me to senity. I am sorry I was so "absent" and preoccupied when you saw me in London,but my life there is just imposable.

Ludo is away playing in a concert today, but she would join the in love to you all. All our affection.

ours avar

Anbert

"...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.

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With a little drawing, which siend of ours is going to send you from London, Doris and I wish to express our present jo

When sew I wish you and your family the very best for Christmas and New Year, in my memory that Christmas evening is vividly present when at one of the Mall Studios, Hampstead, I was invited to share with you your Christmaspudding and felt the haphic view of on the world. This was when for the first time I lived in Kondon t Hampstead, near you, Car Barbara, Kenry foore and Gab and at the moment when Strangt, Breuer and Moholy came from German and male mnor stay internal neighbourhos.

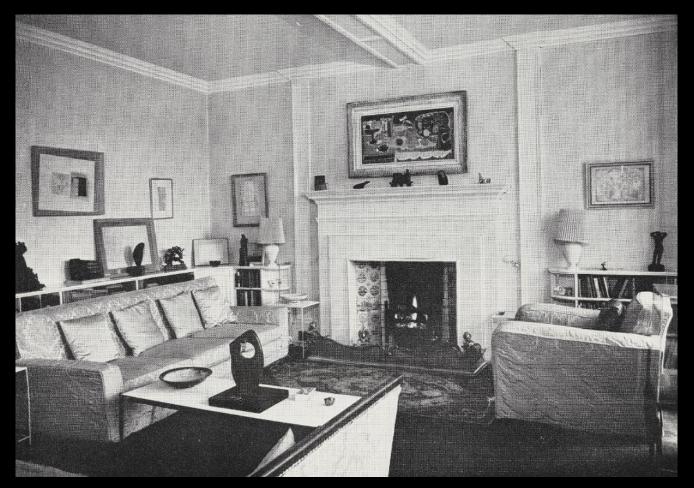
I sincerely hope to be able to see you soon again, perhaps when I at next in England. There are so many thing open to be discussed. Naturally it would be the greatest promoure for us to see you once here in our new home in Meggen.

"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

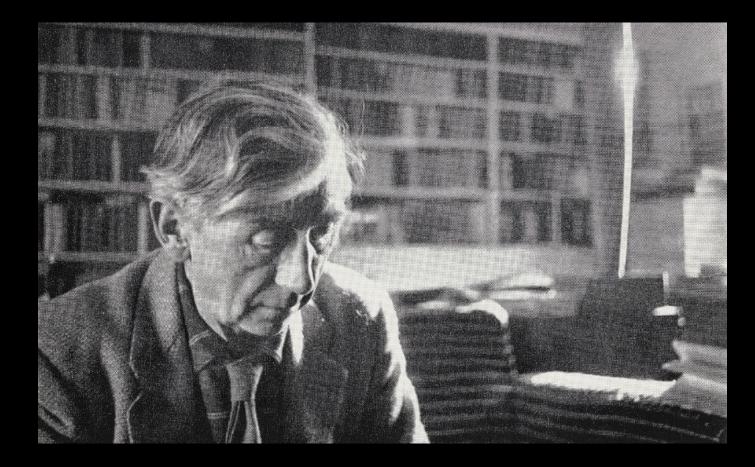
Stonegrave House



"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

East-end drawing room at Stonegrave House, 1970 © Harry Cartlidge/Courtesy of Hearst Magazines UK



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

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Man Behind the Mode the Art Collection of Herb

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

A nest of gentle artists



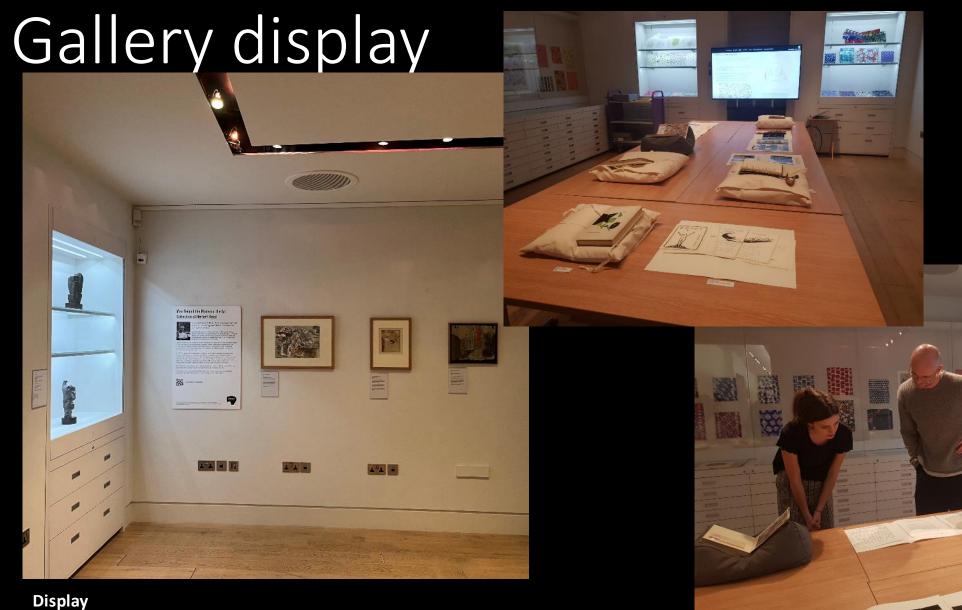
London Surrealist Exhibition

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

...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"

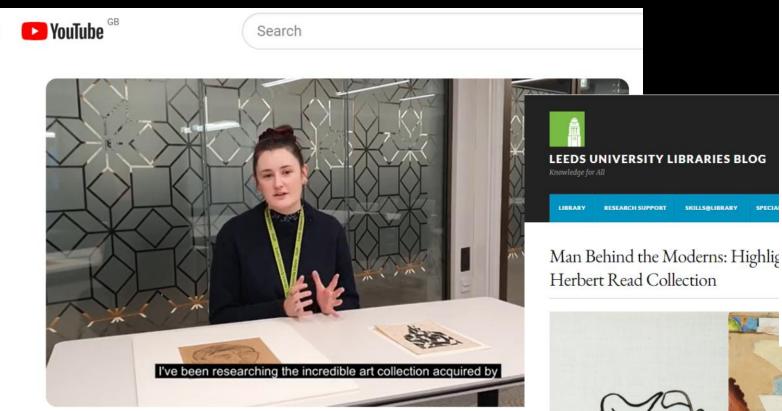
from "A Conversation with Herbert Read", broadcast on the Third Programme, if March 1965

writings



'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



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



∩ Subscribed ∨



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

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

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TAGSarchive art conservation digitisation

exhibition exhibitions John Evan Eedford 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

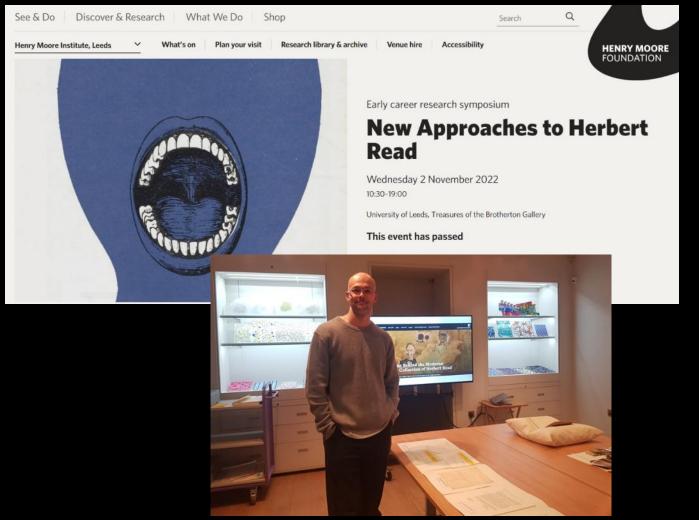
The impetus for this research season is the forthcoming launch of the University of Leeds' digital exhibition on Herbert

Reassessing Herbert Read

Winter 2022 & Spring 2023

This research season aims to give scholars, both emerging and established, a chance to work from a contemporary perspective. It also seeks to revisit his achievements and inc direct and virtual access to his archive.

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



ART AND INDUSTRY 10

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

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NEWS

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Exploring the lasting legacy of art champion

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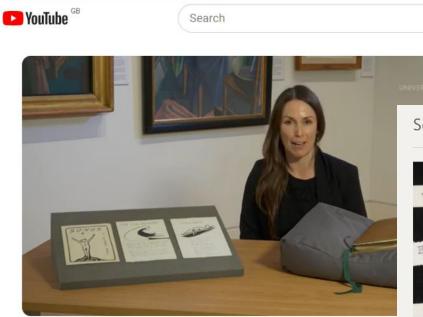




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'Man Behind the Moderns' - archive show-and-tell event (28 February 2023) with Yorkshire Post coverage

Imagined archives



Ruth Burton discusses the Herbert Read collection at the Star Burton Gallery

See & Do Discover & Research What We Do Shop Victor PASMORE - Construction Max ERNST - Forest (1927) Hepworth, drawing Harry THURRON CABO STIEGER - Drawing Paul NASH - A Cafe Scene ALDED HORSEM J. Ridgewell CALDER - Mobile

Discussion Imagined archives: transatlantic conversations about the Read collections

Q

Wednesday 8 March 2023 18:00-19:00

Search

Online

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

Touch-Space conference



Touch-Space Conference (29 March 2023) Courtesy of Henry Moore Institute



Conference

Touch-Space: The Tactile Imagination in Contemporary Sculpture

Wednesday 29 March 2023 10:30-19:00

University of Leeds, Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery



Thank you!

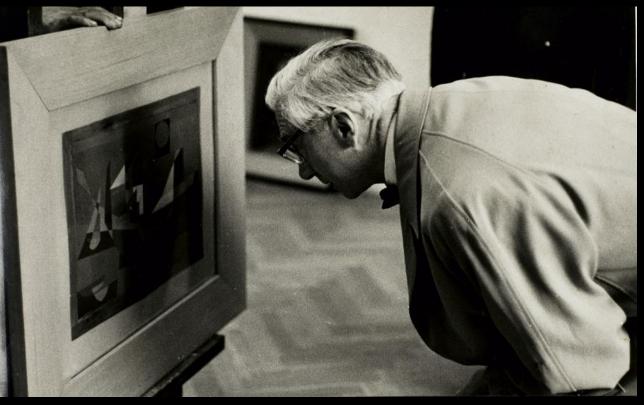
Digital exhibition

'Man Behind the Moderns: the Art Collection of Herbert Read' <u>https://spotlight.leeds.ac.uk/herbert-</u> <u>read</u>

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

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