



MONC
MODERNIST NETWORK CYMRU

**WORD AND IMAGE:
THE SECOND MODERNIST NETWORK CYMRU CONFERENCE**

National Library of Wales & Aberystwyth School of Art

12-13 September 2017

**GAIR A DELWEDD:
AIL GYNHADLEDD RHWYDWAITH MODERNIAID CYMRU**

Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru & Yr Ysgol Gelf, Prifysgol Aberystwyth

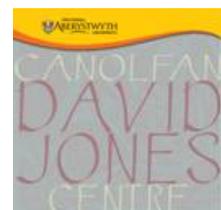
12-13 o Fedi 2017

Book of Abstracts | Crynodebau



**THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU**

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY – CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION
YR ACADEMI GENEDLAETHOL – YN DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDL



Keynote Address | Prif Anerchiad

Tony Brown (Bangor University): Ways of Seeing: R.S. Thomas's Responses to Modernist Painting

Chair | Cadeirydd: Diana Wallace (University of South Wales)

From the outset of his career R.S. Thomas's poetry is concerned with the act of perception: 'Look,' 'See' the reader is enjoined in his early poems. However, from his first collection Thomas was not looking just at the 'bare Welsh hills' but also at works of art. Ekphrastic poems (though usually published without the image to which they respond) form a thread through his work, from 'On a Portrait of Joseph Hone by Augustus John' (*Stones of the Field*, 1942) and 'Souillac: Le Sacrifice d'Abraham' (*The Bread of Truth*, 1963) to the ekphrastic poems in response to Impressionist paintings in *Between Here and Now* (1981). The presence of his wife, the distinguished artist Mildred Eldridge, was no doubt an important factor in Thomas's awareness of modern art.

The main subject of this paper, is the critically-neglected writing to modernist paintings in *Ingrowing Thoughts* (1985) and the newly-published poems in *Too Brave to Dream: Encounters with Modern Art* (2016). The poems in both collections, written later in his career in response to the images he found in Herbert Read's seminal books *Art Now* (1933) and *Surrealism* (1936), are deeply personal. They not only reveal a profound sense of insecurity of personal identity after his retirement from the Church, but anxieties about the nature of the menacing, violent, dislocated world around him. Drawing on recent theoretical work on the ekphrastic by writers including Elizabeth Loizeaux (*Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts*) and Stephen Cheeke (*Writing for Art*), the paper will consider the ways in which Thomas's ekphrastic poems do not merely comment on or 'give voice' to the works of art he is considering, but manifest a complex interplay between visual and verbal representation; they 're-present', rather than merely represent, the paintings and incite fresh ways of seeing.

Tony Brown is Professor Emeritus in the School of English and Co-Director of The R.S. Thomas Research Centre, Bangor University. He has written extensively on Welsh writing in English, especially on the work of Glyn Jones (ed. *The Collected Stories of Glyn Jones*, UWP, 1999) and R.S. Thomas (R.S. Thomas, *UWP Writers of Wales*, new ed., 2013). He was the founder editor of the journal *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays* (1995-2007). His most recent publication is as co-editor, with Jason Walford Davies, of R.S. Thomas, *Too Brave to Dream: Encounters with Modern Art* (Bloodaxe, 2016).



THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY – CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION
YR ACADEMI GENEDLAETHOL – YN DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDL



The Future of Art History in Wales | Dyfodol Hanes Celf yng Nghymru

The Drwm, National Library of Wales
12 September 2017, 5-6.30pm

Y Drwm, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
12 Medi 2017, 5-6.30pm

Followed by a wine reception at Aberystwyth School of Art

Derbyniad gwîn yn Ysgol Gelf Aberystwyth yn dilyn y drafodaeth

In 2016, the successful campaign to stop A-level Art History being dropped demonstrated the enthusiasm for art history among students, artists and educators across the UK. Yet the future of art history in all its forms – whether in schools, universities, libraries, galleries, arts centres or community groups – remains uncertain.

If, as the artist Jeremy Deller has argued, ‘Art history is the study of power, politics, identity and humanity’, the study and appreciation of art is more vital than ever in the tumultuous 21st century. In Wales, art history is inextricably linked with the political: the lack of critical attention has led to Welsh artists being marginalised or excluded from the canon altogether. How can art history in Wales work to recover movements, groups, individuals or works that have been lost? How can it consider, contextualise and celebrate Wales’s rich and diverse art history, bringing it to new audiences? What are the shared experiences with other humanities subjects (such as literary studies), and what can these disciplines learn from each other?

Amlygodd lwyddiant yr ymgyrch i achub Safon-uwch Hanes Celf rhag cael ei gollwng o’r cwricwlwm yn 2016 y brydfrydedd sydd yn bodoli am hanes gelf ymhlith myfyrwyr, arlunwyr ac addysgwyr, ledled y DU.

Serch hynny, mae ei ddyfodol- yn ei amryw weddau- mewn ysgolion, prifysgolion a llyfrgelloedd- yn ansicr o hyd.

Os, fel y dadleua’r artist Jeremy Deller, yw ‘Hanes celf yn astudiaeth o bŵer, gwleidyddiaeth, hunaniaeth a dynoliaeth’, yna mae’r broses o’i werthfawrogi a’i werthuso yn bwysicach nag erioed, yn yr 21ain ganrif dymhestlog hon. Mae hanes celf yng Nghymru yn annatod wrth y gwleidyddol: mae’r diffyg sylw beirniadol yn golygu bod artistiaid Cymreig wedi cael eu hanwybyddu, neu eu heithrio o’r canon yn gyfangwbl.

Sut y gall hanes celf yng Nghymru weithio i adfer y mudiadau, grwpiau, unigolion a gweithiau a gollwyd? Ym mha ffordd y gall ystyried, rhoi yn ei gyd-destun, a dathlu hanes cyfoethog celf Cymreig, a'i gyflwyno i gynulleidfaoedd newydd? Pa brofiadau sydd gan y dyniaethau eraill (megis astudiaethau llenyddol) yn gyffredin, a beth y gall y disgyblaethau hyn ddysgu wrth ei gilydd?

Join us for a free roundtable discussion with leading artists, curators and historians to discuss the future of Welsh art history/ art history in Wales.

The event will be chaired by Peter Wakelin (Independent writer and curator) and will feature contributions from:

Ymunwch â ni am drafodaeth ford gron ddi-dâl yng nghwmni artistiaid blaengar, curadwyr a haneswyr i drafod dyfodol Hanes celf Cymreig/ hanes celf yng Nghymru.

Peter Wakelin (awdur a churadur annibynnol) fydd yn cadeirio, gyda chyfraniadau wrth:

- Iwan Bala (Artist, University of South Wales | Prifysgol de Cymru)
- Morfudd Bevan (Curator, National Library of Wales | Curadur, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)
- Robert Meyrick (Head of Department, Aberystwyth School of Art | Pennaeth Adran, Ysgol Gelf Aberystwyth)
- Nick Thornton (Head of Fine and Contemporary Art, Amgueddfa Cymru | Pennaeth yr Adran Gelf Gain a Chelf Cyfoes, Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru)
- Sarah Tombs (Sculptor/University of Wales Trinity St David | Cerflunydd/Prifysgol y Drindod Dewi Sant)



THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY – CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION
YR ACADEMI GENEDLAETHOL – YN DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDL

Roundtable Participants | Cyfranogwyr y bwrdd crwn

Iwan Bala (Artist/University of South Wales)

Iwan Bala is an established artist, writer and lecturer based in Wales. He has held solo exhibitions annually since 1990, participated in many group exhibitions in Wales and abroad and is represented in public and private collections. His work was exhibited in four Chinese cities in 2009. He has published books and essays on contemporary art in Wales, including 'Certain Welsh Artists, Custodial Aesthetics in Contemporary Welsh Art' (Seren 1999) and is a frequent lecturer on the subject. He has often presented and been interviewed for television. Iwan Bala is cited in most published compilations on contemporary art in Wales. He is currently embarked on PhD research (three year bursary supported) at the University of South Wales.

Morfudd Bevan (Curator, National Library of Wales)

1998-2001 Studied History BA (Hons) at Cardiff University
2002-2003 MA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies at Leeds University (School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies)
2003-2006. Exhibitions' Assistant with the Exhibitions Department at the National Library of Wales
2007-2013 Metadata Officer with the National Library's Digitisation Unit. One of the projects I worked on was digitising the National Library's Portrait archive which contains the largest collection of Welsh portraits in the world (ca.15,000 items)
2014-present. Art Curator at the National Library of Wales.

Robert Meyrick (Head of Department, Aberystwyth School of Art)

Robert Meyrick is Head of the School of Art at Aberystwyth University's School of Art and is also Keeper of the School of Art Museum and Galleries. He trained in fine art and art history and now writes on 20th-century British art, the history of printmaking, and the visual culture of Wales. Through building the art collection and archives at Aberystwyth, his research involves original investigation into the work of lesser known British artists and collectors. His books, catalogues raisonné and articles are accompanied by touring exhibitions that he curates for some of the UK's leading museums and galleries.

Nick Thornton (Head of Fine and Contemporary Art, Amgueddfa Cymru)

Nicholas Thornton is Head of Fine Art at Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales where he has particular responsibility for the Museum's post-1900 collection. Recent major collection-based displays include *Ni allaf ddianc rhag hon (I cannot escape this place)* (2011), *Pop and Abstract* (2013) and *Wales Visitation: Poetry, Romanticism and Myth* (2014). Prior to moving to Wales, he was Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery where he curated a wide range of exhibitions of modernist art including *Breaking the Mould: Twentieth Century British Sculpture from Tate* (2001), *Surface Tensions: Abstract Expressionism & its Influence* (2004), and *A Nest of Gentle Artists: Moore, Hepworth and Nicholson* (2009).

Sarah Tombs (Sculptor/University of Wales Trinity St David)

Sarah Tombs MA(RCA) graduated from the Royal College of Art (1987). She combines sculptural practice with the post of Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and Contextual Studies at University of Wales Trinity St David; and lecturer at the National Gallery, London (2007-). She has taught Foundation level (1992-5), BA and MA theory/practice at Keele University (1995-2003). Research interests include: Art-science collaboration; public and site-specific sculpture; material and process in Impressionism; materials in modern sculpture; and the work of Barbara Hepworth. She has produced 11 major public sculpture commissions, and is currently a principal artist on the Cross-Pollination project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Arts Council Wales.

Abstracts and Biographies | Crynodebau a Bywgraffiadau

Neal Alexander (Aberystwyth University): Landscapes and Seascapes: W.S. Graham

This paper will explore the late modernist poetry of W.S. Graham in light of the concepts of ‘place’ and ‘landscape’ as they have been developed in human geography and art history. Graham was born and raised in the shipbuilding port town of Greenock, on the south bank of the Clyde; but from 1943 to his death in 1986, he lived and worked in south-west Cornwall, part of a vibrant community of artists that included the painters Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon, and Brian Wynter, all of whom were close friends. Graham’s poetry is at once profoundly self-conscious of its linguistic character and deeply influenced by the work of visual artists, particularly in its depictions of place and landscape. A distinctive feature of his work is to move imaginatively between different places, collapsing spatial and temporal distances in the condensed geographies of the word. Another common trope is that of the voyage: from land to sea, present to past, self to other and back again. But such voyages are also informed by a distinctly modernist aesthetic, which finds expression in the reflexive meditations on the linguistic and textual ‘spaces’ of poetry itself. Graham’s richly patterned and inventive experiments with the poetics of place are distinctive for the way in which they fold attention back upon the poem itself as a space of turnings and equivocations, dialogues and silences. Yet, crucially, this pervasive self-reflexivity does not preclude an intense interest in bodily engagements with place, through work, walking, and a heightened sensory awareness of the things of the world. It is this characteristic movement between the concrete and the abstract, the particular and the universal that I wish to examine in Graham’s poetics of place and to parallel developments in the work of some of the St Ives artists, principally Lanyon and Wynter.

Neal Alexander is Lecturer in Twentieth-Century Literature at Aberystwyth University. He is the author of *Ciaran Carson: Space, Place, Writing* (2010); co-editor of *Poetry & Geography* (2013); and an editor of the *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English*. He is writing a book on late modernist poetry and the poetics of place.

Iwan Bala (Artist, University of South Wales): Text as Image, Image as Object

My own work has for the many years made use of text from various sources, but mainly from the work of Welsh poets, contemporary and historic. My influences have been David Jones and Ceri Richards from Welsh Modernism, but also contemporary art which has incorporated or been wholly text based.

Post-colonial art has, it seems to me, made great use of text, and in the Welsh context, with issues of language being much caught up with issues of identity, there is fertile ground to be explored in relation to art and text (both Welsh and English).

I am currently embarked on a PhD at the University of South Wales, examining the thesis of 'Custodial Aesthetics' in my own work and the work of others. I would like to propose an illustrated (Powerpoint) presentation examining some of the influences, Ceri Richards in the main, (particularly his work based on the poetry of Dylan Thomas) from the Modernist period, but also to explore some of my own text based works in reference to this subject.

Iwan Bala is an established artist, writer and lecturer based in Wales. He has held solo exhibitions annually since 1990, participated in many group exhibitions in Wales and abroad and is represented in public and private collections. His work was exhibited in four Chinese cities in 2009. He has published books and essays on contemporary art in Wales, including 'Certain Welsh Artists, Custodial Aesthetics in Contemporary Welsh Art' (Seren 1999) and is a frequent lecturer on the subject. He has often presented and been interviewed for television. Iwan Bala is cited in most published compilations on contemporary art in Wales. He is currently embarked on PhD research (three year bursary supported) at the University of South Wales.

Faith Binckes (Bath Spa University): The Kangaroo and the Fountain Pen: Nina Hamnett and the artist as autobiographer

In a 1952 review of Augustus John's memoir *Chiaroscuro*, Wyndham Lewis drew attention to the anomalous position of the artist-autobiographer:

Augustus John is an exceptionally good writer; and upon this most reviewers have dilated, with a tendency to compare him with other painters who have written books. This is the obvious reaction, it would seem, when a painter takes to the pen: to see a man of that calling engaged in literary composition, affects people as if they had surprised a kangaroo, fountain-pen in hand, dashing off a note.

This paper explores the position of another such disciplinary kangaroo: Augustus John's near contemporary, friend, and compatriot Nina Hamnett. Born, like John and his sister Gwen, in Tenby, Hamnett occupies a seemingly privileged position within the narratives of British artistic modernism. Her reputation as a modernist innovator and bohemian icon was assured during her lifetime, and has endured. This visibility facilitated the publication of her best-selling autobiography *Laughing Torso* (1932) and its less well-known sequel *Is She a Lady?* (1955), the former playing a prominent role in retrospective assessments of Hamnett's life and career. And yet, as Lewis understood, the tendency to read artist's autobiographies primarily for their historical content had produced a curious critical blind spot: Hamnett's status and location as a writer. This aporia is particularly visible given the level of attention paid to the graphic output of modernist writers, and to the framing of autobiographical texts by Hamnett's male contemporaries, including John himself.

Drawing on the contemporary reception to *Laughing Torso*, on Hamnett's own reflections upon its production in *Is She a Lady?* and on other examples from the genre, the paper will consider how a critical awareness of modernist literary discourse might open new possibilities for the interpretation of both Hamnett's autobiographical texts. It will argue that such a reappraisal

would not only provide a more nuanced understanding of Hamnett as a figure within modernist networks, but would encourage a wider acknowledgement of the role played by visual artists in the realm of the written word.

Faith Binckes is Senior Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Literature at Bath Spa University. She works on twentieth-century literature, with particular specialisms in periodical texts, visual culture, and gender. Her first book, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde* was published in 2010. She has just completed, with Dr Kathryn Laing, a monograph on the Irish author Hannah Lynch, to be published by Cork University Press. She is currently working on an edited collection on women and periodical culture (1880s-1920s) and on an edition of Wyndham Lewis's art writing after 1930.

Tom Bromwell (University of York): David Jones's *In Parenthesis* In Parenthesis: Reconsidering the frontispiece and tailpiece

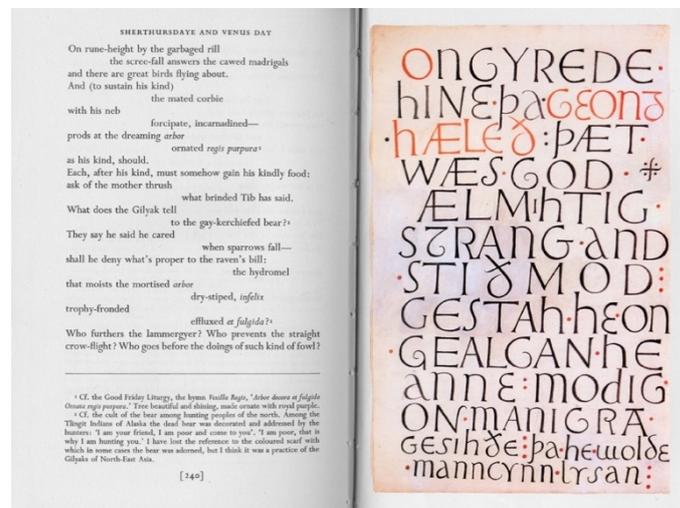
Religious belief in the writings and artworks of David Jones (1895-1974) has been widely appreciated, to the extent that it has become something of a cliché to refer to Jones as 'visionary'. Following his conversion to Roman Catholicism after the First World War, and a period as an acolyte of Eric Gill, James came to appreciate all processes of sign making as a religious act. However, Jones has become most remembered for an allegedly secular epic war poem.

The poem *In Parenthesis* (1937) has been identified as a masterpiece of English language modernist literature. Accordingly, literary critics have given significant attention to the fictionalised poem, which mirrors Jones's own service during the First World War. Yet for all the scholarly attention given to the work, there is a crucial aspect that has never previously been considered: Jones's paratextual illustrations from 1937 of a British soldier for the frontispiece, and a slain lamb as tailpiece.

Art historical scholarship has fleetingly touched upon the frontispiece and tailpiece as artworks by Jones in their own right. However, I argue that they are of crucial significance to the poem. I propose scholarship will benefit immensely from bringing together the written word and illustrations, which will uncover another dimension to Jones's complex sign making. The conceptual implication of a parenthesis as an interlude has a distinct relationship *with* beginnings *and* endings. The corresponding artworks are literally the parentheses to the poem; yet they also carry ecclesiastical implications, which relate to the beginnings and endings of Christian soteriology and eschatology. By reconciling the text and paratext, I argue that we can begin to reconceive *In Parenthesis* as an interdisciplinary religious work of art, which is more reflective of the multidisciplinary religious practitioner David Jones, artist-writer-poet.

Tom Bromwell is a History of Art PhD candidate at the University of York. His research interests are Inter-war-British art and apocalypse. He has previously published on Sir Stanley Spencer with the National Trust and *Apollo: The International Arts Magazine*.

Francesca Brooks (King's College London): Poet of the Medieval Modern: Visual and Verbal Medievalism in David Jones's *The Anathemata*



In the final passion sequence of *The Anathemata* (1952), 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day,' David Jones introduces us to the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood* through both verbal and visual allusion. In this way, Jones's engagement with the "dreaming arbor" of the *Dream of the Rood* reflects on the multimedia and multisensory contexts of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which encompasses the aural artefact of the poetry, a tenth-century manuscript, as well as a stone-carved monument, and an inscribed, silver reliquary cross. Jones's reworking of this Old English text and its associated artefacts represents a sophisticated reading of the past's own modes of representation and memorialisation. In this paper I will use new archival evidence from the Library of David Jones (a collection of around one thousand of Jones's personal books, now held in the collection at the National Library of Wales) to explore the ways in which *The Anathemata* draws on an archive of aural and visual artefacts from the early medieval past, in order to shape, preserve and communicate Jones's own vision of the contemporary cultural complex. My archival work has facilitated a new methodology for reading with David Jones: a means of seeing medieval literature and culture through the poet's own eyes, in order to trace its implicit and often unspoken influence on his poetry. Although I will focus primarily on Jones's interest in Old English and Anglo-Saxon texts and artefacts, in this paper, I argue that Jones rereads these materials in ways that make newly visible an Anglo-Saxon interest in engaging with, and assimilating, Welsh and Celtic culture (the culture of the native Britons) into the developing traditions of Anglo-Saxon England. If there is a historiographical narrative in *The Anathemata* it is one of continuity and hybridity: in this way, Jones reuses words and images from the past to present a new vision of the culture tangle of the "Atlantic archipelago."

Francesca Brooks is an AHRC-LAHP funded PhD student in English Literature, at King's College London. Her PhD thesis, 'Poet of the Medieval Modern: Reading Old English with David Jones,' uses new archival evidence from the National Library of Wales to illuminate the influence of Old English literature, and Anglo-Saxon culture, on the twentieth-century poet and artist, David Jones, and his long, late modernist poem *The Anathemata*.

Paul Cabuts (Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales): Church Crawling: John Piper, Photography and Wales

This paper focuses on the Shell Guide publication South-West Wales. One of a series it was first published in 1963 and combined text with almost two hundred photographs, many by the artist John Piper (1903 – 1992). Vyvyan Rees's high-spirited yet sensitive prose primarily focuses on architecture and landscape, providing cultural references including artists and writers such as David Gwenallt Jones and Dylan Thomas. Piper's black and white photographs appear austere and timeless in comparison. The paper explores Piper's response to locations featured in the Guide and the factors shaping the differing forms of photography he produced in Wales during the period. The interplay between word and image, and particularly points of disjuncture, will be examined.

During the 1960s Piper acquired a small cottage at Garn Fawr, Pembrokeshire that provided him with a base for creating many Wales-related artworks. Piper was already established as a leading British artist renowned for his painting, printmaking and numerous forms of design work including theatre sets. Throughout his extensive career Piper took photographs as a contribution to the development of his artworks, most often processing and printing them himself. Piper's keen interests in architecture and landscape, along with his distinctive craftsmanship, resulted in Sir Kenneth Clark commissioning him in the 1930s to work on the Recording Britain initiative and as an official War Artist.

A prolific collaborator, Piper worked with others including the poet John Betjeman, who shared Piper's passion for architecture (each had an encyclopaedic knowledge of churches). They jointly edited the Shell Guides, which provided a county-by-county illustrated gazetteer focussing on the notable architecture of towns and villages across Britain. John Betjeman described himself and Piper as a pair of 'Church Crawlers'. Piper's photography in Wales sees that focus extended to symbols of Welsh history including ancient monuments, castles and chapels using the great modernist medium of the century.

Dr Paul Cabuts is an Honorary Research Fellow at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales – and former Director of the Institute of Photography at Falmouth University. He completed his PhD at the European Centre for Photographic Research following an MA in Fine Art at Aberystwyth University and a BA (Hons) in Documentary Photography at the Newport School of Art and Design. The University of Wales Press published his monograph *Creative Photography and Wales* in 2012.

Cabuts uses photography to examine the visual history of Wales. His photographs have been exhibited in the UK and beyond including the Australian Centre for Photography, Germany's Treffpunkt Stuttgart and Kaunas Photography Gallery, Lithuania.

Ivor Davies (Independent Artist): Burnt Poetry

A brief introduction to 'visual poetry,' multi media and 'total art' and aspects of my work in relation to these, but with particular reference to one visual poem, comprised of handwriting, collage, drawings and marks, written in Welsh c. 1961, and certain later assemblages, installations and pictures, some of them being of Welsh political significance. The presentation will be illustrated throughout.

Ivor Davies is primarily an artist and also an art historian, whose doctoral thesis for Edinburgh University was on Russian art of the Revolutionary period. University appointments: Department of Art History, Edinburgh University, 1963-78, in charge of Modernism; Head of Cultural Studies, Newport College of Art (now USW), 1978-88; Founding Curator, Talbot Rice Art Centre, Edinburgh University, 1970-78. His scholarly art-historical publications include a major monograph on the Avantgarde in Italian, a study of the historiography of art, with special reference to Wales, in Welsh, and many articles, chapters and reviews, a major monograph on the Avantgarde, and a study of the historiography of art with reference to Wales in Welsh. A pioneer during the 50s and 60s in British 'happenings' and multi-media event art, in 1966 he helped Gustav Metzger organise the Destruction in Art Symposium, Davies being the first person in Britain to employ explosives in art performances. In the 1970s he joined the Davies brothers to reawaken Welsh cultural and political consciousness as fellow artists of the Beca movement. Exhibiting world-wide, his recent exhibition at the National Museum of Wales (2015-16) was the biggest one-person show ever held in Wales. The catalogue book, *Silent Explosion: Ivor Davies and Destruction in Art* (2016) was published by Occasional Papers. A collection of essays, *Encounters with Ivor* [ed. Iwan Bala, publ. Ali Anwar] is due to appear in 2018.

Imogen Durant (University of Manchester): The Cinematic Poetry of A.S.J. Tessimond and Dawson Jackson

The rise of the cinema in the 1930s captivated the imaginations of British poets, who began to see and depict the world through a camera lens. In a 1933 article of *Cinema Quarterly*, Herbert Read highlights the demands for visuality in literature of this period: 'If you ask me to give you the most distinctive quality of good writing, I would give it to you in this one word: VISUAL'.¹

Two poets whose work reveals the impact that this rise in visual culture had on literature are John Tessimond (1902-1962) and Dawson Jackson (1910-1994). Omitted from the canon of Twentieth Century British poetry, these writers offer a powerful example of what Lara Feigel has termed 'camera consciousness', in their verse.² Tessimond's interest in visual culture is explicitly indicated by the titles of several of his poems: 'Silent Cinema', 'Cinema Screen', and 'Chaplin'. Jackson, on the other hand, employs cinematic techniques in order to explore the relationship between visual culture and poetic mimesis. In his descriptions of landscapes and scenery from the 1930s, Jackson manipulates space and distance with a zoom-like effect. Writing immediately after the zoom lens was made available for popular use in 1932, Jackson's poetry demonstrates the revolutionary impact that technological developments had on visual perspectives of writers and audiences.³

In this paper I intend to show the ways in which the cinematic features of these two forgotten poets' works can offer new interpretations of mid-Twentieth Century British poetry.

¹ Herbert Read, *A Coat of Many Colours* (New York: Horizon Press, 1956), p. 231.

² Lara Feigel, *Literature, Cinema, and Politics, 1930-1940: Reading Between the Frames* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 122.

³ The first industrial production in 1932 was the "Varo" 40-120 mm lens, produced by Bell and Howell Cooke for 35mm film cameras.

Imogen is a first year PhD student at the John Rylands Research Institute, at the University of Manchester. Her research is centered on poetry of two mid-20th Century British poets, Dawson Jackson and John Tessimond. Using the Dawson Jackson Papers at the John Rylands, Imogen is exploring the ways in which these two poets' work can be used to rethink 1930s and 1940s British poetry. Imogen completed an MA in English and American Studies at the University of Manchester in 2015, focusing her dissertation on British and American Countercultural poets in the 1950s and 1960s.

Jennie-Rebecca Falcetta (Massachusetts College of Art and Design): Staging Word and Image: *In Parenthesis* Goes to the Opera

Equally adept at verbal and visual mediums; steeped in Old Welsh literature, Romance, and the sacred; and unafraid to experiment with pictorial and poetic form, David Jones (1895- 1974) practiced a singular modernism. *In Parenthesis* (1937), based on Jones' Great War experience, began as visual art with accompanying text, ultimately resolving itself into a modernist long poem—but retaining a complex and symbolic illustrated frontispiece and tailpiece. The dense, allusive poem juxtaposes references to the *Mabinogion*, *Y Gododdin*, *Morte Darthur*, the Bible, and a host of other texts with episodes of mechanized trench warfare. The 2016 adaptation of *In Parenthesis* for the opera stage reveals a deep attunement to Jones' visual art and offers a lens or prism through which to consider the poem as a modernist project.

For instance, the poem is notably multivocalic, slipping in and out of narrative voices, intertextual allusions, dialogue, and free indirect discourse attributable to various characters. While the mode of opera highlights the poem's several voices by featuring a range of singers, this production introduces two vocal roles not found in the poem: the Bards of Britannia (baritone) and Germania (soprano). The Bards, who largely assume the work of narration, operate both externally to the stage action, in the framing commemoration ritual, and within it, as characters. Furthermore, the figures point to Jones' work outside of *In Parenthesis*, as they derive from *Epiphany 1941*. *Britannia and Germania Embracing*, a drawing Jones made following the bombing of Coventry Cathedral.

By examining the opera's extra-textual incorporation of the Bards and other such examples of what Linda Hutcheon calls "adaptive transcoding," this paper will demonstrate that the operatic realization of *In Parenthesis* generates a new interpretive context in which to

explore not only *In Parenthesis* the poem, but the unique admixture of sacred and mundane, modern and mythical, visual and verbal that constitutes David Jones' modernism.

Dr. Jennie-Rebecca Falcetta is Associate Professor of Liberal Arts at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where she teaches courses in writing, modernism, word and image, and occasionally Shakespeare. Her interests in modernist aesthetics have led to publications on narrative form in Virginia Woolf, Marianne Moore's friendship with Joseph Cornell, and art and Evelyn Waugh, among other work. Her essay, "Let X=Professor; Now Solve for Y. Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Millennials" from *Generation X Professors Speak: Voices From Academia*, ed. Marc Shaw, John Kille, and Elwood Watson, was featured as the cover article on *Salon.com* in May 2013.

Anthony Huen (University of York): Displacements and the Visual Artists in the Poetry of Pascale Petit and George Szirtes

This paper shall investigate how Pascale Petit and George Szirtes explore their varied displacements through studying visual artists in their poetry. I shall demonstrate these

contemporary poetic appropriations of the visual arts as transformed acts of modernist poets' and visual artists' adaptations of past or contemporary artistic material.

Having practiced sculpture while writing poetry, Petit, the French-Welsh poet, has chosen to concentrate on the latter since 1992. As a poet, she retains her interest in the visual arts, and insists on sharpening poetic images just as she shaped sculptures. In her poetry, Petit explores the capacity of visual arts to transmute pain and suffering, confronting and transforming her childhood trauma through tapping into artistic material. Her collection, *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010) is, I shall consider, a unique bipartite trauma transformation project – conflating two artist's selves in the creation of a dual imaginary persona. Whereas Petit's artistic and psychological displacements manifest themselves in her poetry, Szirtes's poetry dwells on his spatial and temporal displacements. Born in Budapest, he came to England as a refugee with his family during the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. Spanning more than four decades, his poems deal with issues of uncertain identity and fragmented memories. Through reflections on still and moving images, Szirtes explores, in his poetry, the potential and limitations of photography and cinematography in representing the incomplete, unsettled historical and familial past. Trained as a painter, Szirtes has concentrated on poetry since his early years, but the veteran poet writes with a fascination with the artistic vision. Analysing his early imagination of his journalist photographer mother and more recent re-imagining of his wife's painterly observations based on her paintings, I shall demonstrate his creations of poetic surrogates, vehicles for his career-long quest for the momentous traces lost in time.

Antony Huen is a PhD student in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. His project investigates a group of contemporary poets based in the UK, examining their poetic appropriations of visual arts. He is one of Eyewear Publishing's Best New British and Irish Poets 2017.

Mary Jacob (Aberystwyth University): 21st Century Surrealist (Hu)man

While associated with modernism in the early 20th century, Surrealism is alive and kicking in Wales today. The Spring 2015 issue of *Planet: The Welsh Internationalist* features a history of Surrealism in Wales. Neil Coombs operates Dark Windows Press, a Surrealist publishing house based in Colwyn Bay. Based in Fishguard, artist John Welson curates Surrealist exhibitions in Wales and beyond, linking the local to the international community. These are only a few examples of self-identified Surrealist activity in Wales today.

This paper examines contemporary Surrealist practice by presenting a case study of David Greenslade, a poet-artist based in Bridgend whose work features a startling coupling of word and image, as a way of glimpsing the broader network of current Surrealist practice in Wales and beyond.

What makes Surrealism particularly relevant to the 21st century, and why is Wales a focal point for it now? What special affordances are available through digital media for communication and creative expression? Surrealists have always brought image and word together through collage, visual poetry, concrete poetry - now, both physical and digital creations are possible.

Partly due to new digital affordances, communication, collaboration and interchange with the global Surrealist community is much easier now than in the early days of Surrealism, and connects Welsh Surrealists with global networks. For example, outside of Wales, the Surrealist conjunction of word and image can be found in contemporary surrealist publications such as *Peculiar Mormyrid*,

Surreal Poetics, *Hydrolith*, the Papers of Surrealism archive (2003-2015), *Unt Poetry*, productions of the Leeds (*Phosphor*) and London Surrealist groups (*Arcturus* through 2013, *Robber Bridegroom* through 2016). Welsh practitioners are connected to these and more.

This paper looks at the contemporary expression of one aspect of modernism, focussing on how Welsh artist-poets who self-define as Surrealists interact with the international surrealist community to bring word and image together.

Mary Jacob is a Californian relocated to Wales, pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing focussing on surrealist practices for poetry writing. In 2008, she began organising Surrealist salons in which artists, musicians, poets, scientists and the general public play games, creating collaborative art and non-art. She has been published in literary journals in the US and UK such as *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *Visual Verse*, *Peculiar Mormyrid*, *Unt Poetry*, *Wales Within*, *Long Exposure* and more. She organises the Words&Words&Words poetry series at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre and records podcast book reviews for the *New Welsh Review*.

Sean Ketteringham (Independent researcher): Netherworlds: Graham Sutherland's illustrations for David Gascoyne's *Collected Poems 1937-42*

This paper is concerned with author-artist collaborations within *Poetry London*, the modernist literary magazine founded in 1939.

It takes as its focus *Poetry London's* 1943 edition of David Gascoyne's *Collected Poems*, which was illustrated by Graham Sutherland. Sutherland's lithographs for this edition are a neglected feature of his graphic work and provide vital clues for understanding his later career. Whereas his work in Wales for the War Artists Advisory Commission has received a good deal of attention, his close collaboration with Gascoyne, which immediately followed it, rewards detailed investigation.

Drawing on his recent experience of the Pembrokeshire landscape, Sutherland created a series of enigmatic images that do far more than simply illustrate or accompany Gascoyne's text. This paper will examine how Sutherland's images stage interruptions, pauses, injections of tone and tenor within the text, disrupting traditional hierarchies of illustration that follow a basic causality from word to image. The mutual, interdisciplinary exchange between word and image in this collection, supported by both artist's longstanding awareness of one another's work, enables them to share in an angst-ridden liminality between the ethereal and the material, the abstract and the concrete.

Together word and image, painter and poet, create a friable, contingent atmosphere enforced by phenomenological and spiritual doubt. Indeed, as this paper will demonstrate, the dovetailing of Sutherland's designs and Gascoyne's words evidences their shared concerns surrounding existential phenomenology and religion, an issue that directly manifests in the painter's later work, most notably his *Crucifixion* (1946) at St. James' Church in Northampton.

Ultimately, this paper will emphasize the importance of how philosophical and spiritual engagement in this *Poetry London* edition is specifically enacted through collaboration between poet and painter. This interdisciplinary grey area may well have contributed to the collection's neglect. However, an appreciation of the interaction it stages between word and image (beyond ekphrasis and illustration) allows for the activation rather than the negation of elements in British art and literature that showed an early investment in existential thought that began to emerge from the late 1930s.

Sean Ketteringham completed his BA in English Literature at the University of Liverpool and graduated from the Courtauld Institute of Art with an MA in modern art and visual culture in Britain. He works as a handling and research assistant on the Courtauld Gallery's collection of works on paper and has recently completed work as a research assistant to the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art for 'The Great Spectacle,' the upcoming exhibition at the Royal Academy celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Summer Exhibition.

Christopher Lewis (Bath Spa University): "You must talk with two tongues, if you do not wish to cause confusion": William Blake and the 'geometric idiom' of Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist Paintings

At one time regarded as the most advanced abstract painter in England and as an experimental writer at the forefront of the modern movement (later described by T. S. Eliot as 'the greatest prose master of style of my generation'), Wyndham Lewis presents one of modernism's most compelling attempts to master the expressive potential of combining word and image.⁴ Although he personally suggested that there had been no 'mixing of the *genres*' among his works, Lewis believed that his 'two arts [...] co-existed in peculiar harmony'.⁵ In this paper I aim to examine the influential role which his 'great English predecessor' William Blake played in shaping Lewis's aesthetic practices and the conceptual structure of his early paintings and writings.⁶ It is well known that Lewis derived a great deal of inspiration from Blake's oeuvre while studying at the Slade School of Art (1898-1901) and by the time the Vorticist movement was launched with the publication of *BLAST* in July 1914 it is possible to discern the nature of this influence in more detail. Blake's own Gnostic-inspired dualistic myth of Albion—found in arguably its most articulate form in *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (published in instalments between 1804-1820)—may be regarded as something of a palimpsest for Lewis's Vorticist works. Upon this Blakean structure, I shall claim, Lewis elaborated compelling new narrative possibilities with which to characterize the human situation in the modern world and further derived the rationale for an abstract 'geometric idiom' with which to express this in his paintings.⁷ Lewis's metaphysical play *Enemy of the Stars* especially demonstrates the rigorous dualistic structure to which Lewis adhered at this time and, as I hope to demonstrate, may be regarded as the central 'scripture' of Lewis's early thought, to which his abstract paintings relate as mandalas or talismanic images.

Christopher Lewis is a doctoral student and part-time lecturer in English Literature and Philosophy at Bath Spa University. He is currently awaiting the viva voce for his PhD thesis which explores Wyndham Lewis's engagement with (and contribution to) the critical philosophical tradition which has, since the Enlightenment, attempted to characterize and alleviate the moral excesses of rationalized modernity. He has published essays on the works and philosophical thought of Wyndham Lewis and the Bloomsbury Group. In 2014 he co-organised (with Faith Binckes) the BLAST 2014 Vorticist Centenary Conference at Bath Spa University and directed the first stage production of Lewis's 1914 play-text *Enemy of the Stars*, the script of which he co-adapted with Colin Edwards.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, 'A Note on *Monstre Ga?*', cited in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (Yale University Press, 2000), p.1.

⁵ Wyndham Lewis, 'Beginning', in *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change: Essays on Art, Literature and Society 1914-1956*, ed. by Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989), pp.262-267 (p.266).

⁶ Paul Edwards, "'Creation Myth': The Art and Writing of Wyndham Lewis", in *Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957)*, (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2010), pp.21-33 (p.22).

⁷ Miranda B. Hickman, *The Geometry of Modernism: The Vorticist Idiom in Lewis, Pound, H.D., and Yeats* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), p.xv.

David Moore (Independent researcher): Ray Howard-Jones: The Image is the Word

This is a presentation which will explore the association between image and word in the output of Ray Howard-Jones (1903-1996). One of the most enigmatic twentieth-century artists who has worked primarily in Wales, she has left a substantial legacy. Often misunderstood and under-appreciated, she is overdue critical reappraisal.

Brought up in Penarth, Ray Howard-Jones studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in the early 1920s. Her career was slow to take off, however, due to serious illness and family commitments. While exploring rhythmic abstract forms in the early 1940s, she was also determined to make a full and useful contribution to the war. This culminated in the War Artists Advisory Committee commissioning her to record military installations in the Bristol Channel and purchasing work of preparations for the D-Day landings.

Despite moving to London, she is particularly associated, from 1949, with the Pembrokeshire coast and is known for her sensitive use of colour in impressionistic, and profoundly-spiritual seascapes and island works as well as for studies of wildlife. She continued to be interested in abstraction, notably in the early 1960s, and a strong design sense manifested itself in outstanding mosaics.⁸ A deeply-held Christianity underlies her work.

Ray Howard-Jones had a complex relationship with both image and word. Despite a relaxed approach to spelling and adopting an idiosyncratic style of writing, she demonstrated a fascination for words and writing in her titles, poetry, journals and letters which illuminate intrinsic themes in her visual art.

Having known Ray Howard-Jones in her last decade, I have, in recent years, been researching her life and work in preparation for a biography and illustrated historical account of her artwork. This has involved examining and relating archives at both the National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales.

David Moore is from Brentwood in Essex. After working for a housing department, he read geography at Keble College, Oxford, and then researched upland historic landscapes as a resource. Having worked extensively for Welsh museums and art galleries, he has organised numerous art exhibitions and, with support from an art trust, developed a nationally-significant regional art collection at Brecon. Currently working independently, he researches, writes and publishes mainly about post-war art and public art collections in Wales, often under the Crooked Window imprint (www.crookedwindow.co.uk). In 2012 he wrote *A Taste of the Avant-Garde: 56 Group Wales, 56 Years*. He also spends time supporting a mental health charity.

Roula-Maria Dib Nassif (University of Leeds): The Surreal and the Sacred: Mimetic Representation of Alchemy in the Works of T.S. Eliot and Salvador Dali

This study examines the intimate connection between works from two different mediums of art: the poetry of T. S. Eliot and the paintings of Salvador Dali. Regarding theme, techniques, motifs, allusions, and imagery, Dali's Surrealist paintings are highly mimetic of the poetry of T.S. Eliot.

⁸ David Moore, 'Bleeding Fingers & Bach Fugues: The Mosaic Work of Ray Howard-Jones', *Andamento: Journal of the British Association for Modern Mosaic*, Volume 4 (2010)

Through their works, both Dali and Eliot reflect the fragmented state of the modern psyche and man's palpable spiritual barrenness, which resulted after the outbreak of World War I. Both Eliot and Dali's works convey a "collage-like" shattering of images followed by a completely new reconstitution of the fragments. This method of transformation is analogous to the "alchemical" style used in both the poetry of Eliot and the art of Dali, expressing the need for renewal and the need for "spiritual alchemy." Alchemical symbols appear in the poetry of Eliot and the paintings of Dali as recurrent motifs in both artists' works. Hence, the paintings of Dali and the poetry of Eliot are to be presented as very intimately related in terms of style, theme, and content.

Despite the avalanche of critical studies the works of Eliot and Dali have generated, the intimate connection between alchemical symbolism in their works has remained relatively undetected until now. Moreover, the works of Dali and Eliot were both produced when the post-World War I revolutionary energies were channelled into different movements and artistic forms, but the principles of Surrealism seem to be completely opposed to those of Eliot. As a result, no comparative studies have been conducted to illustrate any link between Eliot and Surrealism. However, Dali's surrealist menagerie that juxtaposes both the ordinary and the extraordinary is reflected in Eliot's poetry, for the latter's "mythic method" juxtaposes both the antiquity of mythology and fertility rites with the contemporaneity of modern life.

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Leeds in the UK., currently writing my PhD thesis, which examines the contribution of the theme of alchemy (in light of Jungian psychoanalysis) to the field of literary modernism, namely in the works of Hilda Doolittle, W.B. Yeats, and James Joyce. I've presented a few conference papers, some of which are "Hilda Doolittle's Venus: From Venereal to Venerous" (Durham University, March 2014), "Alchemy and the Divine Feminine in Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha*" (Durham University, June 2014), and "Sacred Geometry: Vorticism as Alchemical Symbolism in W.B. Yeats's Poetry" (Bath Spa University, July 2014).

Betsy Porritt (University of Kent): Plastic poetry & classic sculpture: Hierarchies of narrative in the works of Susan Howe and Carl Andre

In 1967 Michael Fried attacked a group of artists, poets and performers as 'Literalists', claiming that "materials do not represent, signify, or allude to anything: they are what they are and nothing more" (Fried, 'Art and Objecthood'). I will argue that contrary to Fried's accusation, their concern with the 'literal' materials with which they worked, rather than distancing themselves from the issues of the highly politicized 'long 1970s', was a direct response to socio-economic changes. I will examine to what extent they were addressing the birth of the conceptual art-market, which itself signified a global shift in cultural economics and creative practice.

Robert Snowden wrote of Susan Howe that, "whatever poetry may prove to be, Howe's is a material construction". I will unravel Howe's concerns with the problem of linguistic and material hierarchy. Through the course of the 70s Howe transferred her work from the gallery space to the page. However, her works still foreground the principals of visual art. I will investigate the parallels between the works she made when she first transitioned to 'poetry' and the most recent of her "material constructions", hoping to demonstrate how her disregard for the borders between disciplines is itself a subversive act.

The comparison of Howe and Andre will seek to draw parallels between a socio-political concern with the creation of the text object, and the setting of that within a specific space, or

site. Andre's investigations into "a kind of plastic poetry which retained the qualities of both poetry and painting" (Andre, *12 Dialogues*) will inform my examination of his text-art collections *Shape & Structure*, and *Words*. I will argue that though his visuo-poetic works "originate with shape" (Murray, 'Impossible Objects'), ultimately they exist as linguistic objects. They reach for a language that can carry the visual significance of an object while addressing differing forms of 'usefulness', value and narrative.

Betsy Porritt is a PhD candidate at University of Kent Canterbury, where she is working on a 'Poetry: Text, Practice as Research' PhD. Her final project will involve an exhibition of poem sculptures that address ideas of the economy and language as a quantifiable material. She gained an 'Issues in Modern Culture' Masters from University College London in 2013 following her American and English Literature BA at University of East Anglia. During her BA she studied at Tulane University in New Orleans for one year and worked with the art and creative writing schools. She writes, performs and publishes poetry and contributes reviews to online art magazines.

Jack Quin (University of York): T.S. Eliot and Edward McKnight Kauffer: Illustration as Collaboration in the *Ariel Poems*

In a speech to the American Institute of Graphic Art, a somewhat out-of-place T.S. Eliot recalled the 'great gifts' of the artist and graphic designer Edward McKnight Kauffer, who illustrated three of the 'Ariel Poems'. Eliot praised 'not only [...] his powers as an artist, but the gift of sympathy and understanding which made him a good illustrator.' His endorsement of Kauffer contradicts later comments – and a received wisdom in Eliot studies – that the poet would 'not allow any artist to illustrate' his work, because 'I want my readers to get their impressions from the words alone and from nothing else'.⁹ From 1927-1931 Kauffer provided a series of cubist drawings alongside Eliot's Christmas poems.

This paper will consider the illustration of Modernist poetry and the significance of writing poetry *to be* illustrated. Adapting what Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux calls the 'bibliographic codes' of ekphrastic poems, I will consider the surrounding articles and images that inform these poems in their original published contexts. A magazine's textual *and* paratextual contents, editorial strategies, and pairing of poets and illustrators necessarily informs a poem's engagement with the visual arts. Eliot's 'Ariel poems' were not orthodox ekphrastic poems, nor was Faber and Gwyer's *Ariel Poems* series (1927-1930) – which paired one poet and one artist-designer in each of its twenty-seven pamphlets – a Modernist 'little magazine' project in the strictest sense. However, with reference to the archive papers of Kauffer and Eliot,¹⁰ and close attention to the original *Ariel Poems* pamphlets, this paper will propose that the pairing of Eliot and Kauffer became collaborationist, fostering an inter-art aesthetic that developed from 'Journey of the Magi' to 'Marina'. Beyond ekphrastic theory, which risks reifying the primacy of poet over illustrator, this paper incorporates an interdisciplinary approach with recourse to art history's 'curation theory' and 'illustration theory'. Applied to the study of Eliot and Kauffer, these recent theoretical interventions allow us to reassess the nature of illustrated works, what it means for a poem to anticipate its illustration, and the wider interplay of word and image.

⁹ Unpublished letter from T. S. Eliot to the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, 9 November 1962, Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

¹⁰ McKnight Kauffer papers, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Jack Quin is a final-year PhD candidate in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. His thesis research explores the relationship between poetry and sculpture in the modernist period. He is currently working as a Research Assistant at Trinity College Dublin on an interdisciplinary project entitled 'W.B. Yeats and the Writing of Art'.

Rose Simpson (Independent scholar): Berta Ruck (1878-1978): Welshness and the anti-Modernist agenda

Berta Ruck's training and subsequent career as commercial artist pre-dated Modernism but, in London, Europe and the USA she became familiar with its products and its practitioners. She exploited the opportunities offered by Hollywood film, advertising and mass-publishing and relished the bohemian world of 'champagne and morphia'.¹¹ Her significant commercial success was achieved, however, by writing escapist fiction which largely ignored contemporary ideological traumas. Her novels present modern art as interior décor and experimental life-styles as a rite of passage for middle-class youth.

In both autobiography and fiction, Ruck claimed Welshness for herself and developed a critique of Modernism, which presents Wales as the visual and moral antithesis of a nihilistic modern world. The farmhouse kitchen, oak-furnished, slate-paved, harmoniously sited in the eternal landscape, is the home to which her heroines will return from the transitory life of bedsits. The innocent Welsh girl, rosy-cheeked and clear-skinned is the image of desirable womanhood, to become dutiful wife and mother of sons for the nation. Close contact with Welsh earth creates a connection with the primordial sources of Being, lost in the fragmented city life which Ruck describes in shades of New Objectivity. Return to Welsh roots restores what Ruck presents as the moral stability of an ancient land and the blood of the race is invoked as the dynamic force which will ensure the hopeful future. Despite clichés and careless writing, a contemporary review deemed Ruck 'a link between the Dead Army and the new democracy'.¹² Her best-seller status ensured a wide international readership for her writing and her influence on images of Wales is worth consideration.

A first degree in English from York University was followed by a career in popular music, teaching, arts administration and other sidelines. Following another first degree in French and German from Aberystwyth University, I recently completed a PhD on the popular novels of Vicki Baum, iconic Modern Woman of the early twentieth century, and the, essentially conservative, German novelist Ina Seidel. I considered the dilemmas of women caught in the conflict between modernity (Weimar) and radical anti-modernism (Nazism) and the ultimate failure, of a "non-progressive" emancipation project for women. I have published articles on Vicki Baum in the Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies. A paper on Ina Seidel has been accepted for the journal *Germanistik in Ireland* and I have been asked to contribute a chapter to: *Enchanted, Stereotyped, Civilized: Garden Narratives in Literature, Art and Film* (essay collection) to be published by Dr. Feryal Cubukcu and Dr. Sabine Planka of the University of Siegen. My chapter is entitled 'By the Waters of Babylon: the gardens of exile'. I am also currently working on a book-project, focusing on Vicki Baum's letters and travel-writing. My interest in Berta Ruck was sparked by research on the friendship between the Baum and Ruck and I hope to pursue this alongside the other work.

¹¹ Ruck, B. *Journal*, Dec 13 1945, Berta Ruck Archive, NLW, MS 23744D

¹² Whyte, F. 'The Book World of Stockholm' *The Bookman*, May 1920, 281.

Nicholas Thornton (Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales): Miners versus Monochromes: Locating Abstraction in Post-war Wales

Modernist art in Wales has been received little critical or academic engagement which has led to the marginalisation of important aspects of twentieth century British visual culture. Traditional constructionists of Modernism, exemplified by Alfred Barr's flow diagram for *Cubism and Abstract Art* (MOMA, 1936), can be used to support an argument that abstraction in Wales disregarded and even suppressed the specificities of Welsh culture and geography in favour of a slavish alignment to centres such as Paris, New York and London. This is contrasted with the perception of social-realism in Wales being open and responsive to particulars of Welsh culture and identity, and thereby supporting wider social and political agendas.

This paper looks at the way such 'high' and 'low' modernisms have been constructed in the visual arts in Wales and explores how they variously appealed to artists in the post-war period. It argues that abstraction in Wales was more complicated than simply a provincial devotion to a distant avant-garde. It merged an awareness of international modernism with sensitivity to location to create unique work that readily responds to the critical attention directed at other modernist schools such as St Ives. This is contrasted with the way social-realist artists are often romanticised through their connection with place, in a way that often exaggerates the true extent of their engagement with cultural and political identities.

By drawing on postcolonial art-historical approaches to other 'peripheral modernisms', this paper will suggest new ways to engage with Wales-based abstraction that properly recognises its interest to histories of British modernism. The paper will include discussion of work made in the context of the south Wales coalfield including paintings by John Selway (b.1938) and Josef Herman (1911-2000).

Nicholas Thornton is Head of Fine Art at Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales where he has particular responsibility for the Museum's post-1900 collection. Recent major collection-based displays include *Ni allaf ddianc rhag hon (I cannot escape this place)* (2011), *Pop and Abstract* (2013) and *Wales Visitation: Poetry, Romanticism and Myth* (2014). Prior to moving to Wales, he was Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery where he curated a wide range of exhibitions of modernist art including *Breaking the Mould: Twentieth Century British Sculpture from Tate* (2001), *Surface Tensions: Abstract Expressionism & its Influence* (2004), and *A Nest of Gentle Artists: Moore, Hepworth and Nicholson* (2009).

Luke Thurston (Aberystwyth University): Blossom and Cringe: Modernist Entomology

This paper will explore the preoccupation of modernist writers with insects, seen as an aspect of a wider modernist engagement with life as such, in its supposedly non-anthropocentric 'truth'. Reading texts by Woolf, Yeats and Kafka, I argue that modernist figurations of insect life point to a radical divergence in the overall aesthetic and political orientation of modernism as artistic practice, which can be traced back to its ambivalent relation to Romanticism. My argument takes up De Man's reading of Yeats to conclude by contrasting two possible modernist poetics: one rooted in the redemptive potential of art as naturalistic *Bildung*, the other, closer to surrealism, rooted in the otherness of the unconscious drive as irredeemable force.

Luke Thurston is Senior Lecturer in Modern Literature at Aberystwyth University, where he is also Director of the David Jones Centre. He has many publications on modernist literature, psychoanalysis and the ghost story, including most recently *The Routledge Handbook to the Ghost Story* (co-edited with Scott Brewster: forthcoming), *Literary Ghosts from the Victorians to Modernism: the Haunting Interval* (2012) and “Demonic Joyce” (*James Joyce Quarterly*, 2016). He is currently translating Jean Laplanche’s *The Unfinished Copernican Revolution*.

Helen Tyson (University of Sussex): Between ‘private stress’ and ‘public disaster’: Virginia Woolf at the National Gallery

In Virginia Woolf’s 1931 novel, *The Waves*, refusing the ‘lily-sweet glue’ of poetry in the aftermath of Percival’s death, Bernard turns to paintings—he goes to the National Gallery:

I will go up these steps into the gallery and submit myself to the influence of minds like mine outside the sequence. [...] Here are pictures. Here are cold madonnas among their pillars. Let them lay to rest the incessant activity of the mind’s eye [...]. Mercifully these pictures make no reference; they do not nudge; they do not point. Thus they expand my consciousness of him and bring him back to me differently.¹³

‘This is my funeral service,’ claims Bernard, standing before ‘the blue madonna streaked with tears’: ‘We have no ceremonies, only private dirges and no conclusions [...]’¹⁴ ‘We sit in the Italian room at the National Gallery picking up fragments.’¹⁵ Bernard echoes, of course, *The Waste Land*: ‘These fragments I have shored against my ruins.’¹⁶ Although Bernard rejects the consolatory temptations of poetry, apparently laying claim to a singularly modern mourning rite, he nonetheless describes how ‘Lines and colours almost persuade me that I too can be heroic,’ lamenting that, unlike his hero Percival, he cannot ‘clench’ his ‘fist’, recalling the encounter in terms of a ‘conquest’.¹⁷ Bernard’s desire to find his own Percival-like imperialist splendour reflected back at him by the paintings can hardly be read as a positive alternative to the evasions of the eulogistic elegiac poetry which he claims to eschew.

Visiting the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery in 1918, Woolf herself was critical of a policy which positioned the public gallery as both a cog in the wheels of propaganda and a consoling space for the bereaved and injured of the First World War. Finding the one gallery ‘shut, save to soldiers and nurses in uniform’, Woolf found the other ‘shut, save to the widows of officers’, and, when she finally made it inside, Woolf was dismayed by a ‘room devoted to battle portraits’ and ‘the glory of war’. Reading Bernard’s encounter with paintings alongside Woolf’s accounts of visiting the London art galleries, this paper examines Woolf’s critical response to an aesthetics of redemption attributed to the visual arts in this period.¹⁸ Reading this section from *The Waves* as part of Woolf’s critical engagement with the Post-Impressionist critics, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, I argue that, while Woolf condemns an attempt to use art as a means of bolstering a masculine imperial identity, nonetheless, Woolf also hints at an entirely different kind of aesthetic encounter—one which might at least forestall, and open up a space to question, the evasive and conservative temptations of a culture of redemption.

¹³ Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, ed. by Michael Herbert and Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 122-3.

¹⁴ *The Waves*, p. 123.

¹⁵ *The Waves*, pp. 123-4.

¹⁶ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, (1922), *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), pp. 59-80 (v. 431).

¹⁷ *The Waves*, p. 123, p. 212.

¹⁸ Virginia Woolf, *Letters*, II, p. 259.

Helen Tyson is a Lecturer in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century British Literature in the School of English at the University of Sussex. Having completed her PhD at Queen Mary University of London in 2016, Helen is working on a monograph entitled *Reading Modernism's Readers: Modernism, Psychoanalysis, and the Early-Twentieth-Century Romance Novel*. Beginning in the early twentieth century, this book tracks the figure of the reader in modernism, popular culture, literary criticism and psychoanalysis through to the early 1940s.

Peter Wakelin (Independent writer and curator): Ceri Richards and the Word

Ceri Richards was the archetypal Modernist of Welsh visual art. He went beyond art teaching of his own day to find new modes of expression; he was international in his influences; he committed himself to lifelong experimentation and development; and he relished the cross-fertilization of art-forms. All his life he was fascinated by making visual responses to written, oral or lyric sources. No Welsh artist has more richly assimilated the word into visual imagery.

His use of verbal sources ranged across his interests in folklore, his connection to the Classical stories tackled in the great art of the past and his responses to the music of Beethoven and Debussy and the poems of his friend Vernon Watkins. Perhaps most powerful were his visceral reactions to the poems of Dylan Thomas exploring the atomised life-force, which he returned to in drawings, paintings and prints over a period of some thirty years. Equally deeply felt and original were his highly abstracted responses to the Breton story of the flooded cathedral of Ys, as transmitted through Debussy, which for Richards may have evoked familiar flood myths in the Welsh tradition. Kandinsky's writing on synaesthesia was among the influences on these later works.

Richards' Modernism and his fascination with the word were carried forward by a generation of students he taught in Cardiff in the 1940s, including Glenys Cour, Bert Isaac and Glyn Morgan.

Dr Peter Wakelin is an independent writer and curator with a particular interest in Welsh modern and contemporary art. His latest book is a critical biography of the abstract artist Roger Cecil (1942-2015), published by Sansom in association with an exhibition at MOMA Machynlleth in April. His previous exhibitions and publications include *Creating an Art Community* (for the 50th anniversary of the Welsh Group), *Romanticism in the Welsh Landscape* and *Ffiniau: Four Painters in Raymond Williams' Border Country*. He is currently working on the impact of refugee artists over the past century as vectors for international influence and stylistic change.

Acknowledgements | Diolchiadau

Conference organisers | Trefnwyr y Gynhadledd

Elaine Cabuts (Amgueddfa Cymru/Aberystwyth University)

Elizabeth English (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

Lucy Jeffery (University of Reading)

Amber Jenkins (Cardiff University)

Luke Thurston (Aberystwyth University)

Emma West (Cardiff University)

Diana Wallace (University of South Wales)

Sponsors | Noddwyr

The Learned Society of Wales

The School of Art, Aberystwyth University

Paul and Elaine Cabuts

The organisers would like to thank: Nathan Llewelyn Munday (Cardiff University) and Elen Rees (National Library of Wales) for translating our call for papers, programme and roundtable description; the advice of the MONC Advisory Board; Luke Thurston for being our point of contact in Aberystwyth; Peter Wakelin for his help in organising and chairing the roundtable; Matthew Jarvis for liaising with publishers; Elen Rees and Nia Daniel at NLW for their tireless assistance; Jennifer Loffman at Aberystwyth Arts Centre; Sioned Fflur and the team at Aberystwyth Conference Office; LSW for sponsoring Professor Brown's keynote lecture and the roundtable discussion; Robert Meyrick and Aberystwyth School of Art for sponsoring the wine reception; the Department of English and Creative Writing, Aberystwyth University for supporting our student volunteers; Lucy Thompson and Alice Vernon for helping with registration and the delegate packs; and Paul and Elaine Cabuts for supporting the entire conference.

Modernist Network Cymru (MONC)

Modernist Network Cymru (MONC) aims to bring together scholars and professionals working on modernism in Wales to encourage collaboration and communication.

For more information, please visit modernistnetworkcymru.org, or follow us on twitter @ModNetCymru. The conference hashtag is #monc2017.