BRUSHING AGAINST THE GRAIN OF HISTORY

As soon as works of art enter a collection they become one episode in a larger narrative, organised and displayed in particular sequences, with a cast of characters and developments. This narrative comes eventually to represent a history. In the case of the modern museum, such as MOMA, the Centre Pompidou or the Tate Gallery, that history has become the story of modern art. And as the artist Daniel Buren has commented it is a history transformed by the institution into nature.

In fact this seems to have been borne out by the reaction of some critics to the new display of the collection at Tate Modern. They point out that the works have been well, curated - as if for the first time. As if, in fact, prior to this reconfiguration, works of art had arrived on the walls by some process of natural selection, in a preordained order.

The notion of creating master narratives has of course been thoroughly under investigation by artists, critics and historians for some time; the canon of art history and the museum's relation to it has been debated in a wider theoretical context informed by semiology, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, analytical philosophy and the politics of identity. Most modern collections which have asserted aesthetic values and historical accounts as objective, autonomous and universal have been reappraised as subjective, contingent and western in their perspective.

The advent of Tate Modern, a new museum opening at the beginning of the 21st century, has provided a unique opportunity to examine the conventions and assumptions around the display of a collection, not only in terms of its organising principles, but also in consideration of the exhibition itself as a form of discourse.

The organising principle which has come to dominate most modernist collections around the world was inspired by Alfred H. Barr's flow chart. Devised in 1936 to accompany the exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art it does more than simply trace a chronology; Barr created a didactic diagram which charted a stylistic evolution of 'isms', a succession of European avant garde movements which suggested progress towards abstraction as point zero. In its neo-scientific style and its authoritative clarity it provided a paradigm for the understanding and display of modern and contemporary art which has dominated museum practice. Barr's assumption was that modern art developed in a series of self-determining advances towards a concentration of aesthetic experiences vested in form rather than content, isolated from the contingencies of the world. It is a system of categorisation which is still used to delineate art into periods and movements suggesting that individual practice can be encompassed in broad tendencies, which neatly begin and end, each in reaction to the last. This form of linear evolution cannot however account so neatly for individuals – for example where would one situate Francis Bacon? Nor does it reflect synchronicity – the fact that Picasso and Warhol are alive and active at the same time. Most art originating from beyond the NATO alliance countries, or art which adheres to pre-modernist traditions or radically challenges the modernist line, is also excluded. As Linda Nochlin has commented, we should not mistake chronology for history.

Another reason for us to explore alternatives to the linear chronology were informed by the actual architecture of Bankside. The galleries dedicated to the collection at Bankside are arranged on two floors and organised into four architecturally coherent suites. Each suite provides a series of peripheral galleries around one or two large central spaces and core service areas. The adjacent suites are separated from each other by the central concourse area, but are joined by linking gallery spaces behind Bankside's giant chimney. An incredible architectural vocabulary of spaces, ranging from the autonomous purity of the white cube, to rooms which suddenly admit exhilarating views across London, the complexity of the floor plan and the sheer size of each suite, demanded a new approach. There was a strong possibility that visitors might choose to visit only one of the four suites. The view, advocated by many voices throughout the consultation process was that each suite should offer some kind of rounded experience of the 20th century where the historic would be encountered in dialogue with the contemporary. This suggested that we either adopt four parallel yet distinct chronologies, or adopt four themes which were sufficiently flexible and provocative to contain displays from throughout the century.

Through a process of brainstorming and debate, key questions emerged. Working closely with the curator Frances Morris and with input from our education curator, Caro Howell, we came up with a number of alternative models some of which I thought I would share with you – these are in the nature of laboratory experiments.

Art and Society

If we were to stay within chronology we asked whether it was possible to reconnect art with social and cultural history, grouping works of art according to the prevailing themes of the century: The advantages were that art would be reconnected with the conditions of its production. The disadvantages that it could be misinterpreted as merely a symptom of its time. And how could we represent history on a global scale particularly within the confines of the collection in its primarily european and north american focus.

Defining Moments

Art meets the world through the medium of the exhibition, the publication, the manifesto: we explored the idea of plotting a chronology within the framework of an exhibition history. This model unites art, installation and ideas, showing how contemporaries emerged and peer groups were formed, and how institutions play a part in shaping histories. But how could we restage exhibitions – and would this be meaningful to a broad, uninitiated public?

Geographies

Inspired by the Centre Pompidou's Paris/ Moscow, or Paris/ New York shows, we looked at art in relation to cities as international centres. There is a powerful relationship between Modernism, modernity and the metropolis. Yet this arrangement not only highlighted the gaps in the collection but was also likely to reinforce a hierarchy of the west and the rest.

Strategies of Making

We invited a number of artists, curators, educators and academics to join in the brainstorming and to respond to some of our ideas. Without exception the invited artists plumped for this approach. The idea of concentrating on process puts the viewer in a very tangible relation with the work of art, reiterating Lawrence Weiner's dictum – 'Learn to read Art' . However we had of course to recognise that many artists can be categorised under all of these methodologies – and on a purely formal level it was clear that whole sections could look pretty homogeneous.

These are just some of the many options we explored. And in a sense all of them have in some way been folded into our final solution.

Ultimately we decided to focus on subject matter. We speculated as to whether form and content might fall into any particular categories and found ourselves considering a form of classification which is almost as old as the making of art itself – the genre. Although formally defined as genres in the 17th century, certain types of subject matter have prevailed throughout western art. Broadly speaking, for the purposes of this process, we have defined these as the still life, the landscape the human figure including portraiture and the nude and the historic narrative or allegory. We considered whether these typologies could have any relevance today. Certainly the supposed boundaries of conventional genres and their embededness in hierarchical social and political structures have inspired artists to acts of vanguardist transgression and departure. Yet even taking account of this trajectory towards the autonomous work of art that underlines the modernist sensibility, it appeared that these subjects or forms still adhered. If however, another overwhelming tendency within modern and contemporary art can be seen as a move from illustration and metaphor to a material and subjective reality, so these categories themselves can be seen in terms of an expanded field. This is not to suggest an evolution, but a radical expansion in time and space. For landscape therefore, one might read environment; for the nude, the body; for still life, real life; and for history, society.

Of course these broad themes overlap. It is also clear that many artistic practices are relevant to more than one. They are not being imposed however, as static, rigidly defining categories. Some artists may, over time, be shown in all four suites, reflecting both the broad resonance of their practice and the contingency of interpretation. The open-endedness of these thematic constructions in fact allows for an anthology of exhibition types, from the solo show, a single work in focus, the analysis of one movement or medium, to the use of a theme to bring together artist from across the century.

I wanted to look in a little more detail at each theme and to pick out certain displays; devised by Tate curators (who authored the specific room texts that follow) and which illustrate a range of exhibition strategies.

LANDSCAPE/ MATTER/ ENVIRONMENT

The genre of landscape is primarily understood as a representation of a rural or urban scene, which might be topographic, metaphoric or sublime. But it might also encompass the creation of phenomenal environments of space, light, texture and colour. A map is a form of landscape, a diagrammatic system for containment, ownership and territorial aggression. Mapping through walking brings out a performative approach. Artists have brought the actual substance of nature into the gallery, or have gone out to make work in and from the landscape, documenting their actions through photographs and texts. Scientific discoveries about the underlying patterns and structures in organisms have inspired new artistic languages. An exploration of growth and form as a means towards abstraction might feature here, as well as the notion of archaeology and geology, wherein the landscape becomes a historic sedimentation, an analogue for time. This genre reconceived at Tate Modern as Landscape/ Matter/ Environment, also includes the zone of the imaginary, uncanny dreamscapes, symbolic visualisations of anxiety and desire.

I've selected some individual displays from this suite to demonstrate a variety of approaches:. Perhaps one of the most controversial has been the juxtaposition of Claude Monet with Richard Long.

Richard Long And Claude Monet
Though born a century apart both artists convey a sense of immersion in landscape through their intense observation of nature. Their work suggests the dimension of time; of changing sensations made permanent through image and sculpture. Monet's mural-sized *Water-Lilies* (1916) and Long's mud wall-painting also share an expansive scale, enveloping the viewer in their atmospheric effects. From 1900 Monet's studies of lily ponds preoccupied him for the rest of his life. Water offered constantly shifting colours and reflections, a tension between near and far, surface and depth, stillness and flux. As my colleague ?? has noted, the lily pond, with its endless reflections, held intimations of infinity for Monet, which are also evoked by this horizonless, visual field.

Long experiences nature directly through the act of walking in the landscape, creating sculptures from materials such as twigs, leaves and stones that he finds. Sometimes his sculptures are made outside during the course of his walks, and exist only temporarily – documented through photographs. Ideas, observation, sensations or measurements recorded along the way are made into text works. Long also brings natural forms into the gallery, often placing stones on the floor in simple configurations, usually lines or circles. Over the past decade, he has used mud to make works in gallery spaces. These have a powerfully spontaneous impact and are intimately connected to the most ancient forms of human mark-making.

Long, Richard , England 1968
Monet, Claude 1840-1926, Water-Lilies after 1916

In his 1996 Neurath lecture, Nicholas Serota identified the dilemma of Museums of Modern Art as being split between experience or interpretation. The idea of experience is encapsulated in the notion of immersion in a single body of work.

The Joseph Beuys installation is one example of this approach. Shaman, showman, teacher, and politician, his most celebrated statement, 'everybody is an artist', acknowledged the creator in all people. Beuys was highly influential in shifting the emphasis from what an artist makes, to his personality, activities and opinions expressed through performance and debate.

Most of the objects in this room date from the final years of Beuys's life, when he returned to working with stone, wood and bronze. The display is dominated by two large installations, which both address themes of finality and death, but also ideas of regeneration through the transformative power of natural energies. The suspended slab representing lightning in *Lightning with Stag in its Glare* (1958–85) suggests a visionary charge of energy. In each of the basalt blocks of *The End of the Twentieth Century* (1983–5), cones are drilled out then reset with an insulating lining of felt and clay. These cavities with their plugs imply a potential for new growth, like the cracks in a wall where a plant might find a hold.

Beuys, Joseph 1921-1986
Board I (Spirit - Law – Economics) 1978
Board II (Everyone is an Artist) 1978

Board III (Capital = Art) 1978
Horns 1961
Lightning with Stag in its Glare
The End of the Twentieth Century 1983-5
Untitled (Vitrine) 1983

The envelope provided by this theme also enables us to explore tendencies outside of specific movements.

Structure And Form Is a display conceived by Jennifer Mundy, Catherine Kinlay and Paul Moorhouse which acknowledges the impact of scientific discoveries on understanding the natural world. In the early years of the twentieth century, magnified photographs of plants, films of rapidly dividing cells, and texts on the principles of biological form inspired a new artistic language that blurred the distinction between representation and abstraction. Jean Arp and Barbara Hepworth created amorphous stone and wood sculptures suggesting weatherworn boulders and the fluid shapes of amoebae. Naum Gabo was influenced by the mathematical regularity found in crystal patterns and spiral forms in shells. After the Second World War, parallels between art on the one hand and science and technology on the other encouraged hopes that the gap between the two cultures could be bridged. Geometric structures and patterns of growth in nature were adopted not only in art and design but also as models for social interaction and education. In the 1960s and 1970s, artists recognised the threat posed by technological and economic exploitation to an increasingly fragile ecology and began to integrate natural materials into their work.

Arp, Jean (Hans Arp) 1886-1966 Winged Being 1961
Brancusi, Constantin 1876-1957 Fish 1926
Deacon, Richard born 1949 For Those Who Have Ears #2 1983
Gabo, Naum 1890-1977 Red Stone 1964-5
Hamilton, Richard born 1922 Chromatic spiral 1950 Heteromorphism 1951 Microcosmos: plant cycle 1950 Self-portrait 1951
Hepworth, Dame Barbara 1903-1975 Pelagos 1946
Marden, Brice born 1938 Couplet III 1988-9
Matisse, Henri 1869-1954 The Snail 1953
Winters, Terry born 1949 Field Note (4) 1992

Inner Worlds
We are also able to explore movements but from different perspectives. To see Surrealism in this context , developed by Jennifer Mundy is to understand the landscape as symbol.

'There is nothing I love so much as that which stretches away before me and out of sight', wrote André Breton, leader of the French Surrealist group. For the Surrealists, the landscape was a favourite metaphor for the inner worlds of the mind and the imagination. The writings of Breton and other poets of the group were filled with allusions to deserted spaces, haunted forests and ruined chateaux. Surrealist artists used similar settings, often rich in autobiographical resonances, in their paintings. However, unnatural perspectives, an obsessive degree of detail and a defiance of the laws governing nature undermine the apparent realism of these images. Surrealist works depict a dream-like world in which the boundaries between the self and material reality, the subjective and the objective, are constantly called into question.
Dalí, Salvador 1904-1989 Forgotten Horizon 1936
Dalí, Salvador 1904-1989 Metamorphosis of Narcissus 1937
Dalí, Salvador 1904-1989
Mountain Lake 1938
De Chirico, Giorgio 1888-1978 The Uncertainty of the Poet 1913
Ernst, Max 1891-1976 Celebes 1921
Ernst, Max 1891-1976 Men Shall Know Nothing of This 1923
Giacometti, Alberto 1901-1966 Hour of the Traces 1930
Magritte, René 1898-1967 The Annunciation 1930
Magritte, René 1898-1967 The Reckless Sleeper 1928
Miro, Joan 1893-1983 Head of a Catalan Peasant 1925
Miro, Joan 1893-1983 Women and Bird in the Moonlight 1949
Smith, David 1906-1965 Home of the Welder 1945
Tanguy, Yves 1900-1955 Azure Day 1937

Tanning, Dorothea born 1910 Eine Kleine Nachtmusik 1943

STILL LIFE/ OBJECT/ REAL LIFE

Still life was traditionally regarded as the most humble and conservative of genres. Over the last hundred years, however, it has become the focus of many of the most radical innovations in art. It is the ubiquity, and on one level, the timelessness of foodstuffs and vessels that make them both immediate and economical for artists to work with, and at the same time capable of evoking a universal chord of recognition. Still Life/ Object/ Real Life shows the still life as a springboard for the sculptural analysis of ideal forms, or for optical adventures in the effect of colour., In their deployment of the latest methods of production, design and style, the works here might provide a picture of an era. For some arists they represent a celebration of the everyday, or a rejection, through the use of the ready made of aesthetic value, or a critique of consumer capitalism. Their forms can be both erotic and melancholy, as much signifiers of desire as intimations of mortality. As symbols of the process of labour, the utilitarian objects of the still life have also been deployed as the tools of revolution.

The Desire For Order
The gradual progression from the depiction of real things to the presentation of the artwork as a self-contained object can be seen in this room, which introduces the Still life/Object/Real Life suite. Still lifes by three artists working at the beginning of the twentieth century – Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso and Amédée Ozenfant – are juxtaposed with works by three artists active at its close: Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre and Donald Judd.

Curator Paul Moorhouse has identified how artists like Cézanne, Picasso and Ozenfant who have defiantly challenged traditional modes of representation, were also concerned to establish a new sense of order. Being rooted in ideas of arrangement, balance and harmony, still life subjects provided them with an ideal vehicle for pictorial experiment. And, while the self-sufficient objects made by LeWitt, Andre and Judd appear more extreme, they demonstrate the continuity of this desire for order.
Andre, Carl born 1935 Steel Zinc Plain 1969
Cézanne, Paul 1839-1906 Still Life with Water Jug circa 1892-3
Judd, Donald 1928-1994 Untitled 1980
LeWitt, Sol born 1928 Five Open Geometric Structures 1979
Ozenfant, Amédée 1886-1966 Glasses and Bottles circa 1922-6
Picasso, Pablo 1881-1973 Still Life 1914

Intimate Lives
In 1912 the English art critic Roger Fry wrote that the modern artists of his time did not seek to imitate reality in their paintings, but to find equivalents for it. This approach is especially true of the artists in this room selected by

The artists here – Auerbach, Bonnard, Derain, Hodgkin and Vuilard pay homage to the genre of still life objects set in domestic interiors; by including figures in their paintings they to explore the psychology of both the space and its inhabitants. Each composition is a highly contrived assemblage or narrative, which is more than the sum of its parts. Each purports to capture a fleeting moment of life, whilst being in actuality a rich accumulation of sensations and emotions.

Auerbach, Frank born 1931 The Sitting Room 1964
Bonnard, Pierre 1867-1947 Coffee 1915 The Bowl of Milk circa 1919 The Table 1925
Derain, André 1880-1954 The Painter and his Family circa 1939
Hodgkin, Sir Howard born 1932 Dinner at Smith Square 1975-9
Vuillard, Edouard 1868-1940 The Laden Table circa 1908

Subversive Objects
With the Subversive Object surrealism re-emerges, not as a movement but as a tendency centering around the object as fetish - from Lobsters and telephones to dolls, mannequins, wax figures and automatons, which can seem both animate and inanimate, waking and sleeping, exerted a special fascination for the Surrealists. This display conceived by Jennifer Mundy and Christoph Gruneberg, also includes Pop Art and New Realism's celebrations of the beauty of mass-produced articles. Some artists, present a bleaker vision of consumer society, creating objects out of discarded or manipulated goods to evoke alienation, aggression and mortality

Over the last decade, contemporary artists have continued to explore the legacy of the Surrealist object. They have released repressed fantasies and irrational energies in their sculptures of severed body parts, and in their portrayals of the sexual act as a monstrous, mechanical operation. Women artists, such as Sarah Lucas, Cathy de Monchaux and Dorothy Cross, have created works that investigate physical and psychological aspects of gender and eroticism, turning the Surrealists' objectification of the female body to their own ends.
Agar, Eileen 1899-1991 Angel of Anarchy 1936-40
Bellmer, Hans 1902-1975 The Doll 1936/1965
Bellmer, Hans 1902-1975 The Doll circa 1937-8
Broodthaers, Marcel 1924-1976 Casserole and Closed Mussels 1964
Chapman, Jake and Chapman, Dinos born 1966, born 1962 Little Death Machine (Castrated) 1993
Cross, Dorothy born 1956 Virgin Shroud 1993
Dalí, Salvador 1904-1989 Lobster Telephone 1936
De Monchaux, Cathy born 1960 Erase 1989
Gober, Robert born 1954 Untitled 1989-92
Koons, Jeff born 1955 Vest with Aqualung 1985
Lucas, Sarah born 1962 Bunny Gets Snookered No.7 1997
Man Ray 1890-1976 Indestructible Object 1923-65
Manzoni, Piero 1933-1963 Artist's Breath 1960
Self, Colin born 1941 Leopardskin Nuclear Bomber No. 2 1963
Trockel, Rosemarie born 1952 Balaklava Box 1986-90

Susan Hiller
Susan Hiller combines words and images, high art and popular culture, objective analysis and private memories to explore ideas about language, gender, desire, memory and death.
A number of her works take collections of objects as their starting point, using the conventions of museum display to challenge cultural assumptions about truth and value. *From the Freud Museum* (1991-6) developed from an earlier work that Hiller exhibited at the former London home of the psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. She was drawn to Freud's collection of rare classical and ethnographic art and artefacts, which she saw as representing a view of Western civilisation typical of his class, background and times. In contrast, Hiller's alternative 'museum' concentrates on 'what's unspoken, unrecorded, unexplained and overlooked – the gaps and overlaps between content and context, dream and experience; the ghosts in the machine; the unconscious of culture'.
The carefully labelled archaeological collecting boxes in this display case frame the processes of excavating, salvaging, sorting, naming and preserving. As Hiller points out, these are as intrinsic to art as they are to psychoanalysis and archaeology.
Hiller, Susan born 1940 From the Freud Museum 1991-6

NUDE/ ACTION/ BODY

A preoccupation with the human figure has and will remain a constant through art. In the modern period however it has been increasingly animated, ritualised and deconstructed, as artists have made the body both subject and object. Within an overall framework titled Nude/Action/Body, the conventions of the nude as a means of exploring anatomy, movement and formal composition within the hermetic space of the studio is juxtaposed with a range of works that rupture and fragment idealised beauty. Here we encounter the body as a symbol for states of being, from alienation to abjection, from jouissance to mortality. The female body is reclaimed from the objectification of the male gaze to the assertion of an active, subjective female identity. In the movement of art from representation to reality, artists use their own bodies, staging and recodring actions that test physical endurance or confront social taboos. The body in question might be an absent presence, signified only by traces; it might be that of the viewer. As audience we might find ourselves performing a work, participation in its meaning by virtue of our own actions and field of perception.

The Naked And The Nude
Curators Jennifer Mundy and Matthew Gale have taken an article of 1910 titled 'Naked and Nude', where the artist Walter Sickert attacked the Victorian practice of painting idealised nudes divorced from a realistic context. The trace a kind of chronology of attitudes toward the figure whereby artists challenge gender and use the nude to explore themes of mortality, desire, impotence, exoticism and intimacy. Through works by Bonnard, Corinth, Freud, Picasso, Rodin, Schad and Spencer they also trace the notions of nakedness and nudity as elaborated by art historians such as Kenneth Clark, who writing in 1956, defined the naked as to be 'deprived of … clothes', 'defenceless', while the nude as the naked body 'clothed' in art.

Bonnard, Pierre 1867-1947 The Bath 1925
Corinth, Lovis 1858-1925 Magdalen with Pearls in her Hair 1919
Freud, Lucian born 1922 Naked Portrait 1972-
Freud, Lucian born 1922 Standing by the Rags 1988-9
Picasso, Pablo 1881-1973 Nude Woman with Necklace 1968
Rodin, Auguste 1840-1917 Crouching Woman 1891
Schad, Christian 1894-1982 Agosta, the Pigeon-Chested Man, and Rasha, the Black Dove 1929
Schad, Christian 1894-1982 Self-Portrait 1927
Sickert, Walter Richard 1860-1942 La Hollandaise circa 1906
Spencer, Sir Stanley 1891-1959 Double Nude Portrait: The Artist and his Second Wife 1937

The Perceiving Body
My proposition in this room was explore how a generation emerging in the US in the 1960s sets in motion a dynamic interplay between the process of the work's fabrication, the elemental forces of the physical world and the body of the viewer. Artists such as Donald Judd and Robert Morris stressed the specificity of the objects arguing that scale, proportion, shape and mass should be dictated by the materials they used and the space the work occupied. Judd's serialised stacks and boxes reveal the unexpectedly gorgeous colours and surfaces of their industrial components. Eva Hesse employs the austere logic of repetition to rationalise completely opposing sculptural forms. Both Morris and Richard Serra harness matter with gravitational force. Morris uses the tensile strength and lightness of fibreglass to create a floating mass. By contrast, Serra deploys the dead weight of rolled steel to engineer a gravity-defying balancing act. Vertical and horizontal planes are propped against each other in a dramatic state of suspended animation. For all these artists, the gallery itself is a part of the work – as a load-bearing agent, as the interval between components, as the environment to be activated by the spectator. Carl Andre's floor piece leads us across the gallery and we find ourselves incorporated as reflections in Morris's mirrored cubes. Expanding their investigations through writing, dance, performance and film, artists of this generation worked to shift sculpture, in Serra's words, 'from the memorial space of the monument' to 'the behavioural space of the viewer'.

Andre, Carl born 1935 Venus Forge 1980
Hesse, Eva 1936-1970 Addendum 1967
Judd, Donald 1928-1994 Untitled 1972 / Untitled 1990
Morris, Robert born 1931 Untitled 1965/71 / Untitled 1967-8 1967-8
Serra, Richard born 1939/ Trip Hammer 1988

What this suite also demonstrates is both the persistance of the figurative tradition and its disappearance, or rather its shift away from representing the model to the artist using their bown body as subject and object.

The display titled Acting Out curated by Frances Morris also addresses the difficulty of presenting performance art within the museum. Certainly this area of art has tended to be avoided as the subject for collections. The artists presented here are concerned with the expressive possibilities of the body. Performance allowed them to confront the viewer and to explore psychological perceptions of the body and its innate physicality. They use photography in an equally economic way, as a document of their performances, considering it a less intrusive intermediary than painting or sculpture. Directing attention to the artist as protagonist, often in a humorous or ironic way, was part of a wider response to questions about the value of the art object and the role of the artist. For example, in 1970, Gilbert and George declared themselves 'living sculptures', while Bruce McLean's balancing act *Pose Work for Plinths* (1971) parodies traditional types of sculpture, but is also a form of self-parody.
Since photography enabled artists to record ephemeral, time-based actions, their work was often made in a serial format. Klaus Rinke's *Mutations* (1970), for example, records stages of an improvisation in front of the camera. Most of the performances shown here were not originally intended as live actions before an audience. In such works, the artists have in effect returned to traditional studio practice in order to examine the human figure.
Gilbert and George (Gilbert Proesch; George Passmore) born 1943, born 1942 A Portrait of the Artists as Young Men 1972 Gordon's Makes Us Drunk 1972
McLean, Bruce born 1944 Pose Work for Plinths 3 1971
Nauman, Bruce born 1941 UNTITLED 1970
Rinke, Klaus born 1939 Mutations 1970

One solo presentation in this suite also testifies to the emergence of video installation as a pre-eminent medium at the turn of the century. *Bear* (1993) was Steve McQueen's first major film work. Although not

overtly political, for many viewers it raises sensitive issues about race, homoeroticism and violence. Two naked men – one of whom is the artist – tussle and tease one another in an encounter that shifts between tenderness and aggression. Extreme close-up shots are used to suggest the camera feeling its way across the surface of two protagonists one of who is the artist.
McQueen, Steve born 1969 Bear 1993

HISTORY/ MEMORY/ SOCIETY

The history painting, as contested a genre as the nude, is perhaps more difficult to define from a contemporary standpoint. Its conventions can, however, be seen as a fundamental dynamic behind two prevailing tendencies in modern and contemporary art – autonomy and engagement. The 'painting of modern life' to use Baudelaire's term, might be understood as picturing history. History/ Memory/ Society draws together works which picture both the epic and the everyday, from the great convulsions of our times encompassed by was, exile and the ruthless pursuit of ideology, to the celebration of systems of belief and the power of cultural icons. The rise of the media and mass communication might be seen as an undercurrent informing and shaping these representations. At the same time, this framework embraces both realist and abstract artists who have sought to change history itself, by erasing what had gone before and creating a new present. Their utopian strategies included breaking down boundaries between form and function, offering a synthesis of fine art, product design, architecture and graphics, the latter a potent medium in the circulation of ideas through the form of the manifesto. The call for revolution resonates here and might be encountered as protest or play.

Manifestos

The story of modern art is inextricably bound up with the story of the avant-garde. At the beginning of the twentieth century, European avant-garde artists worked in a context of political and social volatility. Industrialisation, new technologies and the growth of the cities gave rise to prolific consumerism, labour unrest and political revolution. These conditions fuelled an aesthetic and ideological programme for numerous groups of artists. Dedicated to technical and imaginative innovation, their experiments became the basis of internationally recognised movements such as Cubism or Futurism. Artists shared ideas and aesthetic strategies, introducing them to an often-hostile public through publishing and exhibitions. Many deliberately set out to antagonise the spectator in an attempt to disrupt social convention. The manifesto was a potent vehicle for disseminating new concepts and confronting the public.

These ideas could be expressed in the form of a newspaper notice, such as Filippo Marinetti's announcement of the birth of Futurism on the front page of *Le Figaro* in 1909; a simple hand-printed leaflet, such as Kasimir Malevich's *From Cubism to Suprematism in Art...* (1915); or a magazine such as the Surrealists' *La Revolution Surrealiste* (1924-9), which was consciously modelled on a scientific journal, presenting photographs and illustrations as 'evidence'. Each of the works of art in this room is an example of an important early twentieth-century avant-garde.
Boccioni, Umberto 1882-1916 Unique Forms of Continuity in Space 1913, cast 1972
Ernst, Max 1891-1976 Pietà or Revolution by Night 1923
Kandinsky, Wassily 1866-1944 Cossacks 1910-11
Lewis, Wyndham 1882-1957 Workshop circa 1914-5
Malevich, Kasimir 1878-1935 Dynamic Suprematism 1915 or 1916

Weeping Woman

The National Gallery has pioneered a display strategy of focusing on just one work. Frances Morris has taken Picasso's Weeping Woman of 1937 as the fulcrum for an exploration of the historic conditions from which this work emerged. Born out of the trauma of the Spanish Civil War in 1937 Picasso produced over forty images of a woman engulfed in tears, of which this is the culmination. Weeping Woman is both an intensely personal image – the features are modelled on Picasso's lover, Dora Maar – and an emblem of the suffering of the Spanish nation.

War broke out in Spain in July 1936, when a reactionary force within the Spanish military, led by the Fascist General Franco, took arms against the democratically elected Republican government. Picasso, a fervent supporter of the government, agreed to paint a mural for the Spanish Republican Pavilion at the 1937 International Exhibition in Paris. His mural was intended to express what he called the 'horrors of war' and in particular the devastating aerial bombardment of the small Basque town of Guernica. A key image in *Guernica* (1937) is an anguished woman clutching her dead child, the origin of Weeping Woman.

In 1938, the artist and collector Roland Penrose, who had bought *Weeping Woman* from Picasso, organised an exhibition of Guernica and related works to tour Britain for Spanish War Relief. It is the only time *Guernica* has been shown here. *Weeping Woman*, by contrast, has remained in Britain since Penrose acquired it, and has become one of the nation's greatest treasures. Picasso made few explicit declarations of political affiliation until 1945, when he was asked to justify his decision to join the Communist Party. In a unique written statement, he declared that painting is 'an instrument of war'. After Franco's victory in 1939, he remained an exile from his native Spain for the rest of his life.
Dalí, Salvador 1904-1989 Autumnal Cannibalism 1936
Miro, Joan 1893-1983 Aidez l'Espagne 1937
Picasso, Pablo 1881-1973 Dora Maar Seated 1938 Dream and Lie of Franco I 1937
Dream and Lie of Franco II 1937 Weeping Woman 1937

Although Tate has bifurcated in London into Tate Britain and Tate Modern, British art remains a vital presence at Bankside. The presence of Stanley Spencer here also enabled us to address issues of spirituality and systems of belief. This is one of several large pictures in which he imagined how crowds of ordinary men and women might react as they emerged from their graves at the Resurrection. Spencer set religious events in humble, contemporary surroundings, since he felt that God was present in the everyday world. He hoped to install these unusual paintings in a special chapel. The curator David Fraser Jenkins has traced the geneaology of this work,

The Resurrection: Port Glasgow (1947–50) which as begun two years after the end of the Second World War and drew on Spencer's experience of the trenches in the first world war. Here, the scene is based on his memory of a civilian churchyard in Port Glasgow, Scotland. He had stayed in the town while working as a war artist, painting the shipyards on the Clyde, and had been impressed by the local sense of community. Everything except the setting is imaginary, and the picture was, in fact, painted in the English village of Cookham, in Berkshire, where he spent most of his life.
Traditional images of the Resurrection made a point of distinguishing between good and bad people. In this work, however, all of the dead wake to a heavenly life, couples are reunited and embrace affectionately in a utopian world.

Spencer, Sir Stanley 1891-1959
The Resurrection: Port Glasgow 1947-50

Fluxus
This final display was a way of revisiting the treasures of the Tate's archive and was compiled by curator and Fluxus expert, Adrian Glew. The Fluxus Collective was a radical group of over forty international artists who, from 1962, collaborated in Europe, the USA and Japan. Led by George Maciunas, a Lithuanian-born American artist, Fluxus reacted against the social, cultural and artistic climate of the time – especially the seriousness of Abstract Expressionism and the horrors of the Vietnam War. In a manifesto they proclaimed their intention to 'purge the world of bourgeois sickness' and 'dead art', and instead to 'promote living art, anti-art' and 'non-art reality'. The name Fluxus, taken from the Latin 'to flow', aptly expressed the way in which they set about this task. They merged different art forms – including performance, music, film and publishing – and blurred the boundaries between art and life, questioning the very nature of what an artwork might be. Combining elements of Futurist theatre and Dadaist irrationality with the philosophy of the artist Marcel Duchamp and the Zen-based ideas of composer and teacher John Cage, Fluxus created work that was functional, conceptual, inexpensive, ephemeral and funny.

The room is divided into six Fluxzones. The Orientation zone contains reading material that places Fluxus in a wider art-historical context. In the Performance zone, instruction 'scores' explain how to re-enact Fluxus events. The Food zone examines the artists' interest in the basic functions of life, while the Music zone highlights their important connections with avant-garde musicians. In the Shop zone some of the many Fluxproducts are displayed, together with Fluxus newspapers and posters. Finally, the Games zone reveals their absurdist approach to sports and pastimes, and offers visitors the chance to try a game of Fluxpingpong.

Writing History
For centuries, history painters were enlisted by the Church, the State and the elites to portray the power of their patrons, the glory of their wars and the splendour of their possessions. By contrast, artists in the twentieth century have tended deliberately to undermine symbolic representations of power and authority. The artists shown here also demonstrate the impact of the mass media – they mimic forms ranging from advertising to popular culture, borrowing their look, but subverting their message. Hans Haacke appropriates a car advertising campaign and inserts texts and documentary photographs of

South African military brutality to expose the manufacturer's complicity in apartheid. Barbara Kruger's seductive film noir stills are ruptured by superimposed texts that contest the power of such images to categorise and stereotype us according to class and gender. The slippery, ambiguous nature of language is explored by Christopher Wool. His painted text sounds like a slogan, but its emphasis and its meaning remain unclear. Is this a statement about coercion, or about completeness? Jenny Holzer's electronic messages flash a series of 'truths', each a momentarily definitive comment on human nature and society, each neatly contradicting the others.

Mona Hatoum's exchange of letters with her mother, living in her native Lebanon, becomes the basis for an exploration of female relationships, cultural identity and exile. All of these artists read between the lines of the official narratives of history to reveal alternative viewpoints and hidden stories.

Haacke, Hans born 1936 A Breed Apart 1978
Holzer, Jenny born 1950 Truisms 1984

Kruger, Barbara born 1945 Untitled (We Will No Longer Be Seen and Not Heard) 1985
Wool, Christopher born 1955 Untitled (You Make Me) 1997

The challenge for the museum of art today is twofold. Can we create the museum envisaged by artists, critics and the range of communities that constitute our public, one that can, in the works of Andreas Huysen, work with changes, refine its strategies of representation and offer its spaces as sites of cultural contestation? Can we also create conditions of viewing which reflect artistic intention, celebrate the aesthetic and intellectual achievement of those artists whose works are part of our national patrimony and provide lucid and informative critical frameworks for their enjoyment and understanding? Over a five year period we will see not one, but many stories of the 20th and 21st centuries, understood through a shifting and multifaceted perspective. They will allow flexibility, dynamism and a continued commitment to new scholarship and new ways of seeing and of understanding the past in relation to the present.