

TASO Study Day
Tuesday 18 January 2022
9.30 am – 3.30 pm

**'The Age of Augustus John :
Inspiration and Revolution in British Art'**

Speaker : Dr David Boyd Haycock

Dr Haycock is a freelance writer and curator based in Oxford. He is the author of a number of books, including *Paul Nash* (2002) and *A Crisis of Brilliance: Five Young British Artists and the Great War* (2009), which he turned into a major exhibition at Dulwich Picture Gallery in the summer of 2013. He is currently writing a new biography of the young Augustus John.

Summary

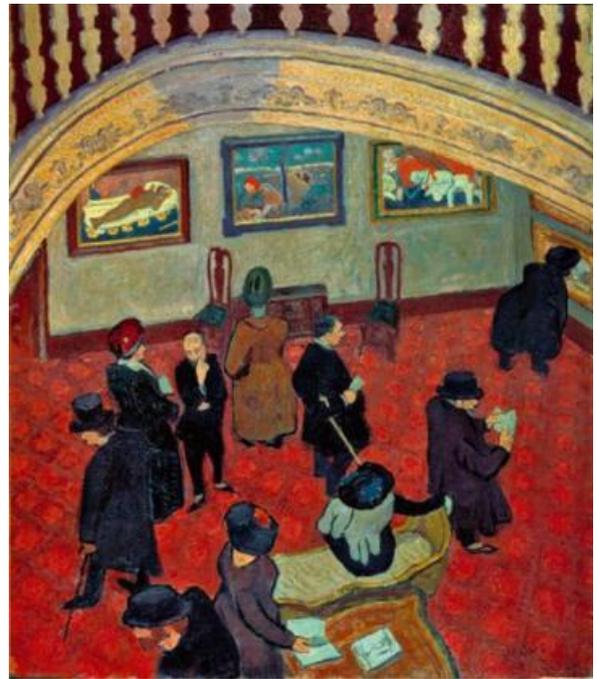
The students who studied at the Slade School of Art in London in the 1890s would go on to become some of the most significant names in early twentieth-century British art. They included Augustus and Gwen John, William Orpen, Ambrose McEvoy and Percy Wyndham Lewis. They lived at a point of change, between the traditional orthodoxies of Victorian art in England, and the transformation that would be wrought in the new century by dynamic developments in France. When the traditional canons established during the Renaissance were blown apart by waves of Modernism: Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism and the First World War, their reputations would be shattered, and the legacy of many of them forgotten.



Augustus John, *The Lyric Fantasy* (1913-14), Tate Collection, London



Augustus John, 'The way down to the sea', 1911



Spencer Gore, 'Gauguin & the Connoisseurs', 1911



Gwen John, 'A corner of the Artist's room', 1911.



William Orpen, 'Grace reading at Howth', 1910

The Lectures in Detail

These three lectures explore how in the space of just a few decades the art world changed forever, and they look at some of the leading British artists who were swept up in that revolution. Each one leads on to the next in a chronological order, looking at the chief themes and personalities involved, and focussing in on a range of particular works, from both national and private collections.

Lecture 1. 'The Slade Way'

British Art in the 1890s: this lecture will look at the status of British art in the 1890s, in particular ideas of the 'fin de siècle' and the influence of Aubrey Beardsley's 'The Yellow Book'. It will introduce the chief teachers at the Slade School – in particular Fred Brown, Philip Wilson Steer and Henry Tonks – and their leading students: Augustus John and William Orpen.

Lecture 2. The Crisis of '-isms'

Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism – and more. The 1890s and 1900s offered a crisis in how art was to be created and looked at, particularly when the influence of artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso and Gauguin began to be felt. This lecture looks at how Augustus John seemed to lead the way, and how his fellow Slade graduates responded to these shocks.

Lecture 3. The Great War

By 1914 Augustus John was widely considered the leading modern artist in Britain- but could his reputation survive the shock of war- and how did his fellow artists respond to the challenge of representing it. Whilst William Orpen and Henry Lamb seemed to rise to the challenge, the war marked a deep crisis for John, and a profound change in his life as a Bohemian artist.