Modern Classicisms: Classical Art and Contemporary Artists in Dialogue

Friday 10 November 2017
Great Hall, King’s College London
Strand, London WC2R 2LS

Pre-booking required: tinyurl.com/modclassim
www.modernclassicisms.com
8.45–9.15  
Registration
Entrance Hall

9.25–9.40  
Introduction
Raphael Woolf
Michael Squire

9.40–10.30  
I: Fragments
Interview: Marc Quinn, interviewed by Michael Squire
Panel: Bruce Boucher, Jo Malt, Michael Craig Martin and Robin Osborne

Our opening session explores classical art as 'ruin' – that is, as something partial, incomplete or lost. Discussants explore how the very trope of fragmentation spurs gestures of recreation – how the classical lends itself to endless acts of re-assemblage, renewal and restoration. The session begins with an interview with Marc Quinn (20 minutes): discussed works include Quinn's landmark Complete Marbles series (including Alison Lapper Pregnant), Siren and his recent Drawn from Life show (featuring his twelve 'All about love' statues, at Sir John Soane's Museum). After a brief response by Michael Craig Martin, and a subsequent round-table (20 minutes), we hope to accommodate 10 minutes of questions from the floor.

10:30–11:00  
Intervention 1: Alexandre Singh, The Humans
Discussion: Donatien Grau and Alexandre Singh

The first 'intervention' of the day will present an excerpt from Alexandre Singh’s three-act play, The Humans – a Pygmalion-esque examination of artistry, creativity, and myth. The film will be followed by a conversation between the artist and Donatien Grau.

11.00–11.30  
Morning coffee break*
Old Committee and Council Room (2nd floor)

11:30–12:20  
II: The Classical Lens
Introduction: Russell Goulbourne
Speaker: Simon Martin
Panel: James Cahill, Charlotte Higgins, Jessica Hughes and Ursula Mayer

This session will address the classical as a lens through which modern artists have either magnified or refracted contemporary concerns (including, for example, shifting attitudes to gender and sexuality). It will begin with a short video on The Mythic Method: Classicism in British Art, 1920-1950 at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, followed by a talk by Simon Martin (curator of the exhibition and Director of Pallant House). Charlotte Higgins will then chair an informal conversation exploring the idea of the classical lens in modern and contemporary art. Why was there a ‘retour à l'ordre’ in post-World War 1 Europe? To what extent has the classical served as conduit for transgressive or taboo subjects? Is the antithesis of 'classical' and 'modern' necessarily useful or meaningful?
12:20–13:10

III: Classicism in two dimensions
Speaker: Christopher Le Brun
Panel: Ruth Allen, Nick Hornby, Minna Moore Ede and Elizabeth Prettejohn

Our third session addresses medium and dimensionality, focusing specifically on painting as both a classical and modern (or specifically Modernist) mode of representation. Exploring how modern painting has been defined in relation to the classical, discussants will question the prioritisation of sculpture in the modern reception of ancient art, asking how late-twentieth-century discourses on the 'death of painting' might be understood against a longer history of 'classicisms'. The session begins with a presentation by Christopher Le Brun on classical presences in his work. After a subsequent round-table, we hope to accommodate 10 minutes of questions from the floor.

13.10–14.30
Lunch
(provided for speakers only)*

14.30–15.00

Intervention 2: The Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins
Christian Levett, interviewed by Michael Squire

The day's second intervention is an interview with Christian Levett – an internationally renowned collector of both ancient and contemporary art, and owner of the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins. There will also be an opportunity for questions from the floor.

15.00–16.00

IV: ‘Liquid Antiquity’
Speakers: Constanze Güthenke, Brooke Holmes, Polina Kosmadaki and Christodoulos Panayiotou

This session examines the fluid relationship between classical antiquity and the present – as itself an object of curation, centred around the practice of 'care'. What does it mean to 'care' about/for antiquity today in ways that do not perpetuate the deep problems of classicism? The session includes short presentations by Brooke Holmes and Polina Kosmadaki, who collaborated on the 2017 project Liquid Antiquity (supported by the DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art); Liquid Antiquity is expected to travel to London as part of The Classical Now show at King's in spring 2018. There will also be readings by the artist Christodoulos Panayiotou, followed by a conversation with Constanze Güthenke. The session aims to combine the perspectives of contemporary art, curatorial practice and academic criticism. There will be time for discussion from the floor.

16.00–16.30

Afternoon tea break*
Old Committee and Council Room (2nd floor)
16.30–17.10
**Intervention 3: Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley, The Thong of Dionysus**
Discussion: James Cahill, Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley

This third and final ‘intervention’ will be a screening of The Thong of Dionysus by Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley – the first presentation of the film in the UK. The New York-based artists have earned wide acclaim for their surrealist and darkly comic re-imaginings of ancient myth. Their films relate – and corrupt – ancient tales; they render them cartoonish psychodramas, accompanied by pun-laden narratives. In this film, Dionysus and three maenads discuss the nature of drunkenness, while propositioning Ariadne to join them on the island of Naxos...

17.10–18.05
**V: Dressing up Antiquity**
Speaker: Sarah Wilson
Panel: Tiphaine Annabelle Besnard, Léo Caillard, Alexandre Singh and Caroline Vout

Our final thematic session concentrates on the idea of ‘classical camp’, looking at the ways in which antiquity has been employed as a mode of performance, masquerade or dissimulation in modern and contemporary art. It will begin with a short (15-minute) presentation by art historian Sarah Wilson, comparing two very different, yet contemporaneous, instances of ‘classical camp’ in Britain and France in 1970 – Pierre Klossowski’s La Monniae Vivante and Britain’s hit television series Up Pompeii! (starring Frankie Howerd). This will be followed by a panel conversation focusing on the enduring appeal of ‘dressing up’ (as) the classical.

18.05–18.30
**Round-up discussion**
Final address: Evelyn Welch

18.30
**Drinks reception**
Entrance Hall
7.45pm: Dinner for speakers (Bush House, Eighth Floor [South Side])

* During coffee, lunch and tea breaks, all are invited to pay a guided ‘virtual visit’ to the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins in the Small Committee Room: please follow the signs from the Great Hall.
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Speaker biographies

(Compiled by Michael Squire & James Cahill)

**Ruth Allen** completed her doctorate at the University of Cambridge in 2016; since September 2017 she has been based in Los Angeles – where she is curatorial intern at the Getty Villa. As a doctoral student, Ruth co-curated two public exhibitions on the relationship between classical and contemporary art (both with James Cahill); she has also worked at the British Museum in London and the Museum of Classical Archaeology in Cambridge.

[www.modernclassicisms.com/about/](http://www.modernclassicisms.com/about/)

**Tiphaine Annabelle Besnard** is a doctoral student at the Université de Pau et des Pays de l’Adour, where she is preparing a thesis on ‘(Re)presenting Greek and Roman antiquity in contemporary art: The tribulations of ancient references in a globalized world’. She is heavily involved in Antiquipop: L’Antiquité dans la culture populaire contemporaine.

[www.antiquipop.hypotheses.org/](http://www.antiquipop.hypotheses.org/)

**Bruce Boucher** is Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum in London. He was previously in charge of European Sculpture, Decorative Arts, and Ancient Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Director of the Fralin Museum of Art (University of Virginia). Before embarking on his curatorial career, Bruce taught here in London (UCL) for over twenty years; he is the author of various books – including *Andrea Palladio: The Architect in his Time* (1994) and *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova* (2001).


**James Cahill** is Postdoctoral Fellow on the Modern Classicisms project at King’s (having recently completed his University of Cambridge doctorate on the relationship between contemporary British art and classical antiquity). He has contributed to publications including *Art in America, Apollo, The Burlington Magazine, Elephant, The Erotic Review, frieze, the TLS* and *The White Review*; James has also co-curated exhibitions of ancient and contemporary art in London and Cambridge (with Ruth Allen).

[www.modernclassicisms.com/about/](http://www.modernclassicisms.com/about/)

**Léo Caillard** is a contemporary artist based in Paris, whose work is best known for its provocative intertwining of past and present – as, for example, in his famous *Hipsters in Stone* series (which dressed classical figures in contemporary attire). Léo’s work will feature in *The Classical Now* show at King’s (March to April 2018), and in a parallel exhibition at the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins during the same period.

[www.leocaillard.com](http://www.leocaillard.com)
Sir Michael Craig Martin CBE RA is a leading British artist, known for his innovative bridging between conceptual art and representational painting and sculpture. After studying at Yale, he returned to Europe in the mid-1960s – and was a key figure among the first generation of British conceptual artists. As a tutor at Goldsmith’s College from 1974–1988 and 1994–2000, Sir Michael has had a major influence on at least two generations of ‘young British artists’.

www.michaelcraigmartin.co.uk

Lindsay Fulcher is editor of Minerva (The International Review of Ancient Art & Archaeology). Previous appointments include assistant editor of The Lady and deputy editor of The Art Newspaper. Before moving into journalism, she worked as Librarian at the Museum of London and at the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art and Archaeology. She studied classical and Indian civilization and anthropology at the University of Durham, and has written widely on archaeology, ancient art and the classical tradition. Our Modern Classicisms event today is run in partnership with Minerva.

www.minervamagazine.co.uk

Russell Goulbourne is Professor of French Literature at King’s, where he is also Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (since 2014). Russell’s main research interests focus on early modern French literature – including the reception of classical antiquity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He is the author of numerous books and articles – on (among other writers) Voltaire, Diderot and Voltaire.

www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/french/people/academic/goulbourne/index.aspx

Donatien Grau is an alumnus of the École Normale Supérieure and the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris, he holds a doctorate from the Université Paris-Sorbonne and a DPhil from the University of Oxford. He is the author of Tout contre Sainte-Beuve (2013), The Age of Creation (2013), and Néron en Occident (2015). He is also curator of Plato Contemporary at the Getty Villa in 2018.

www.apollo-magazine.com/donatien-grau/

Constanze Güthenke is Associate Professor of Greek Literature at the University of Oxford (where she is also E. P. Warren Praelector at Corpus Christi College). Constanze is the author of Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840 (2008), and of a forthcoming book on Studying Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Classical Scholarship and the Language of Attachment, 1790-1920. From 2003–2014 she taught in the Classics Department at Princeton University. Constanze is also editor of the Classical Receptions Journal.

www.classics.ox.ac.uk/constanzeguthenke.html

Charlotte Higgins is the chief culture writer of The Guardian – and a member of the paper’s editorial board. She has served as a judge for the Art Fund museums prize, the Contemporary Art Society award and the Royal Philharmonic Society awards. She is a classicist by training – and, in 2010, she won the Classical Association Prize for her books and journalism. Her fifth book, Red Thread: On Mazes and Labyrinths,
will be published by Jonathan Cape in 2018. She is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

Brooke Holmes is Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities at Princeton University, where she also directs the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Humanistic Studies (IHUM) and the ‘Postclassicisms’ initiative. Monographs include *The Symptom and the Subject: The Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (2010) and *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*. Her recent project, *Liquid Antiquity*, experimented with the fluid relationship between classical antiquity and contemporary art – in the form of a multi-authored book and video installation (Benakí Museum, 2017); the project was designed by Diller, Scofidio + Renfro, and was realized with support from the DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art.

Nick Hornby is a British artist whose work is especially celebrated for its depth of art-historical reference and use of digital technology. He is a Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, and his work has been exhibited across the globe – including in London (at Tate Britain and Southbank Centre), New York (Museum of Arts and Design and Eyebeam), and Athens (The Hub).

Jessica Hughes is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University. After a degree in Classics at the University of Cambridge, Jessica completed her Master’s and doctorate at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Her latest book, *Votive Body Parts in Greek and Roman Religion*, was published in 2017; Jessica is the editor of the Open Access journal *Practitioners’ Voices in Classical Reception Studies* and book reviews editor of *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief*.

Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley work in collaboration to create video-works that combine painting, performance and poetry; their films tell surreal stories inspired by history and mythology. Played by the artists acting multiple roles, the characters of the films speak in poetic verse filled with wordplay and puns, and narrate stories that imagine unrecorded histories. From 17 November 2017–18 March 2018, Tate Liverpool will present the artists’ first solo exhibition in a UK museum. Mary Reid Kelley is a 2016 MacArthur fellow and received the Baloise Art Award at Art Basel in 2016. The artists live in upstate New York.

Polina Kosmadaki is curator at the Benaki Museum in Athens (where she has headed the Department of Painting, Engraving and Drawing since 2011) and lecturer of European Art at the Hellenic Open University. Polina completed her doctoral thesis at the Université Paris-Sorbonne in 2003 – on the subject of ‘Antiquity and contemporary Greek art in the second half of the twentieth century’. She has edited five books and curated numerous exhibitions of modern and contemporary art in Athens. She is currently directing the research programme ‘Christian Zervos au
miroir de la Grèce’ for the École Française d’Athènes; she also worked closely with Brooke Holmes on the *Liquid Antiquity* project at the Benaki Museum. [www.benaki.academia.edu/PolinaKosmadaki](www.benaki.academia.edu/PolinaKosmadaki)

Christopher Le Brun PRA is a British painter, sculpture and printmaker. Since the early 1980s he has exhibited extensively in an international context. The subsequent evolution of his painting is based on a romantic-classical repertoire of forms, not as an interpretation of those forms but as a continuing process of transformation. His work addresses the classical not only through citation but more fundamentally through the poetic and structural processes of its making. In 2000 he was elected the first Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy, where he has been President since 2011—the 26th since Sir Joshua Reynolds and the youngest since Lord Leighton (in 1878). [www.christopherlebrun.co.uk/](www.christopherlebrun.co.uk/)

Christian Levett opened the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins in 2011 – based on his own private collection of ancient and contemporary art (as well as the classical tradition at large). Christian sits on the Board of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, as well as on the Arms and Armour Commitee at The Metropolitan Museum in New York; he owns Vigo Gallery in London, which specialises in modern and contemporary art. Our *Modern Classicisms* project has been devised in close consultation with Christian and the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins. [www.mouginsmusee.com/en](www.mouginsmusee.com/en)

Jo Malt is Reader in French Literature and Visual Culture at King’s (where she is also Vice-Dean for People and Planning in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities). Her research interests lie especially in the literature, visual art and theory of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – as reflected, for example, in her 2004 book on *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*. [www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/french/people/academic/malt/index.aspx](www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/french/people/academic/malt/index.aspx)

Simon Martin is Director of the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester. He has overseen the institution’s growth into one of the UK’s most significant collections of modern British art; he has curated various exhibitions, including on Edward Burra (2011), *Eduardo Paolozzi: Collaging Culture* (2013), *British Artists and the Spanish Civil War* (2014), and most recently *The Mythic Method: Classicism in British Art 1920-1950* (2016). [www.chichester.co.uk/whats-on/arts/simon-martin-is-confirmed-as-new-director-of-chichester-s-pallant-house-gallery-1-7851894](www.chichester.co.uk/whats-on/arts/simon-martin-is-confirmed-as-new-director-of-chichester-s-pallant-house-gallery-1-7851894)

Ursula Mayer was born in Austria, and graduated in 1996 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna; in 2005 she completed her MFA here in London (at Goldsmiths). Her work spans a range of media, including film, video and sculpture; it is known for its crystalline circuits of images, composed of motifs borrowed from architecture, fashion, literature, politics, mythology, geology and science. Recent exhibitions include those in London (Hayward Gallery), Stockholm (Moderna Museet) and Paris (Centre Pompidou). She was the recipient of the 2014 Derek Jarman Award for experimental film, and the 2007 Otto Mauer Prize. [www.ursulamayer.com](www.ursulamayer.com)
Bénédicte Montain works at the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins, where she is responsible for communications and development. Before moving to Mougins, she spent nine years at the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. During the workshop Bénédicte will be part of a team leading a ‘virtual tour’ of the museum at Mougins in the Small Committee Room.
www.mouginsmusee.com/en

Minna Moore Ede is a curator at the National Gallery in London. She has overseen ambitious interdisciplinary exhibitions, centred above all around the dialogue between different art forms. In *Metamorphosis: Titian* (2012), she invited three contemporary artists and the Royal Ballet to create choreographic responses to three paintings by Titian – themselves based on passages of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. In *Soundscapes* (2015), a variety of musicians and sound artists were invited to compose audio responses to paintings in the National Gallery. Her most recent curated exhibition is *Chris Ofili: Weaving Magic* (2017).
www.list.co.uk/event/669161-byre-world-in-conversation-with-minna-moore-ede/

Robin Osborne is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Cambridge (where he is Fellow of King’s College). He is the author of 9 monographs that range widely across ancient Greek history, archaeology and visual culture – most recently, *The Transformation of Athens: Painted Pottery and the Creation of Classical Greece*. He has has edited over 20 volumes, and was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2006.
www.classics.cam.ac.uk/directory/robin-osborne

Christodoulos Panayiotou is a Cypriot-born artist, whose work has ranged across various visual and literary media (including performance). Christodoulos was born in Limassol in 1978, and went on to study dance and performing arts in Lyon and London. He was awarded the 2005 DESTE Prize, and has been artist in residence at (among other places) the Platform-Garanti Center for Contemporary Art in Istanbul, Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin and IASPIS Stockholm. His work is represented in London by the Rodeo Gallery.
www.christodoulospanayiotou.com

Leisa Paoli is President and director of the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins, where she works in close partnership with Christian Levett, managing his museum and its collection. During the workshop Leisa will be part of a team leading a ‘virtual tour’ of the Mougins museum in the Small Committee Room.
www.mouginsmusee.com/en

Elizabeth Prettejohn is Professor of History of Art at the University of York. Among classicists, she is especially known for her innovations in the field of ‘reception studies’ (e.g. *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture: Greek Sculpture and Modern Art from Winckelmann to Picasso*, 2012) – above all, the reception of classical art in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She delivered the 2017 Rumble Lecture in Classical Art at King’s (now available online), and recent curated shows include
www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/staff/liz-prettejohn/

Marc Quinn is widely recognized as one of the leading British artists of his generation. He rose to prominence in the 1990s, as part of the group of so-called ‘young British artists’. Celebrated works include Self (a series begun in 1991), Alison Lapper Pregnant (2005 – part of his series on The Complete Marbles) and Siren (2008 – displayed in the British Museum as part of the 2008–2009 Statuephilia exhibition). His recent work – a series of sculptures ‘All about love’ – was on show at Sir John Soane’s Museum until September 2017.
www.marcquinn.com

Alexandre Singh is an artist based in Paris and New York. His work is characterized by its protean medium, alternating between writing, performance, collage, installation and sculpture: it includes multiple points of reference, ranging from popular culture (drawn from the worlds of advertising and television) and classical or classicizing drama (from Aristophanes to Molière – and beyond). In 2012 he directed The Humans, a three-hour film-cum-performance first presented at the Rotterdamse Schouwburg, the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York and 2014 Avignon Festival. He was awarded the 2012 Meurice Prize for Contemporary Art.
www.artspace.com/alexandre_singh

Michael Squire is Reader in Classical Art at King’s (where he has taught since 2011), and Principal Investigator of Modern Classicisms. His research crosses the disciplinary parameters between classics and art history; recent books include The Frame in Classical Art (with Verity Platt, 2017), Rethinking Lessing’s Laocoon (with Avi Lifschitz, 2017) and The Art of Hegel’s Aesthetics (with Paul Kottman, 2017).
www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/classics/people/academic/squire/squire.aspx

Caroline Vout is Reader in Classics at the University of Cambridge (where she is a Fellow of Christ’s College). She is the author of numerous books on classical art and Roman history, and she has curated exhibition on Antinous: The Face of the Antique (2006, Henry Moore Institute) and Following Hercules: The Story of Classical Art (2017, Fitzwilliam Museum). Her latest book, Classical Art: A Life History From Antiquity to the Present, will be published in 2018.
www.classics.cam.ac.uk/directory/caroline-vout

Evelyn Welch is Professor of Renaissance Studies at King’s, where she is also Provost & Senior Vice President (Arts & Sciences). She has written on all aspects of Renaissance art (and its reception of classical traditions), including books on Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan (1995), Art in Renaissance Italy, 1350-1500 (2000) and Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1350-1600 (2005).
www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/history/people/staff/Academic/welche/welche.aspx

Sarah Wilson is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Her interests extend from post-WWII and Cold War Europe and the USSR to contemporary global art. She is the author – among numerous other

www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/sarah-wilson

**Raphael Woolf** is Professor of Philosophy at King’s, where he also serves as Vice-Dean for External Relations in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. His research has explored various aspects of ancient philosophy and their reception, in particular Plato, Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophy.

www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/philosophy/people/staff/academic/woolf/index.asp

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**Please do be sure to complete and submit the questionnaire contained in this pack during or at the end of the day. We appreciate the effort involved here, but your feedback is absolutely crucial for measuring the impact of our project. Thank you for your help!**
THE CLASSICAL NOW
2 March – 29 April 2018
Bush House Arcade and Inigo Rooms (Somerset House East Wing),
King’s College London

Spring 2018 sees the culmination of the first stage of Modern Classicisms: an exhibition of ancient, modern and contemporary art. The project will feature artists including Christopher Le Brun, Léo Caillard, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Damien Hirst, Yves Klein, Louise Lawler, Bruce Nauman, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Giulio Paolini, Grayson Perry, Pablo Picasso, Marc Quinn, Mary Reid Kelley. The Classical Now is presented by the Department of Classics, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Cultural Programming at King’s College London, in partnership with the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins.

www.modernclassicisms.com
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