



## Press Release

Royal Academy of Arts

# Making Modernism

Paula Modersohn-Becker, Käthe Kollwitz,  
Gabriele Münter and Marianne Werefkin

### Making Modernism:

Paula Modersohn-Becker, Käthe Kollwitz, Gabriele Münter, Marianne Werefkin  
The Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries

12 November 2022 – 12 February 2023

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In November, the Royal Academy of Arts will present *Making Modernism*, the first major UK exhibition devoted to women artists working in Germany in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will include 67 paintings and works on paper primarily by Paula Modersohn-Becker, Käthe Kollwitz, Gabriele Münter and Marianne Werefkin, with additional works by Erma Bossi, Otilie Reylaender and Jacoba van Heemskerck. Most of these artworks have never been exhibited in this country before. Although less familiar than their male counterparts, these artists were central to the development and dissemination of modernism. Seen through the lens of its female practitioners, key themes of modernism such as self-portraiture, still-life and urban and rural scenes will be re-evaluated, and attention will be focussed on the female body, childhood and maternal experience.

The exhibition will be arranged thematically. The opening section, *Ourselves and Others* will feature self-portraits and portraits, showing the increasing participation of women artists in public life and revealing their crucial role in creating and sustaining the networks that supported various aspects of emergent modernism in Germany. Through the making and exhibiting of their artwork, these artists challenged prevailing ideals of feminine roles as confined to the home, and through their searching portraiture, questioned how they saw themselves and others. Paintings include Erma Bossi's *Portrait of Marianne Werefkin*, 1910 (Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich) and Gabriele Münter, *Portrait of Anna Roslund*, 1917 (Leicester Museums and Galleries, UK).

The second section, *The Century of the Child*, titled after Swedish writer Ellen Key's influential 1900 publication, will explore how each of the artists depicted children. Although domestic themes were part of an established genre, modernist treatments of such subjects depart from

sentimental works in which children symbolised simplicity, joy, hope and innocence, to explore melancholy, tension, curiosity and unfulfilled desire. Artworks depict babies, girls and boys as sites of complicated emotion and conflict, reflecting the fact that women artists' desire to work was frequently tested by the pull of social expectation that demanded they marry and devote themselves to producing a family. Paintings and drawings will include Werefkin's *Twins*, 1909 (Fondazione Marianne Werefkin, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Ascona), Kollwitz's *Woman with Dead Child*, 1903 (Käthe Kollwitz Museum, Köln) Modersohn-Becker's *Girl with Child*, 1902 (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague), and Münter's *Portrait of a Boy (Willi Blabb)*, 1908/09 (Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich).

Building on the previous section, *Sites of Intimacy* will delve into the inner lives of Modersohn-Becker and Kollwitz, further exploring maternal instinct as well as the female body, intimate relationships and eroticism. In these works, the mother and child theme is secularised, modernised and recalibrated to reflect the physicality and psychological depth of the choices surrounding motherhood. Images established through masculine representations of the female nude are overturned. Key works in this section will include Kollwitz's *Love Scene I*, c.1909/1910 (Käthe Kollwitz Museum, Köln), Otilie Reyaender's *Beta naked*, c. 1900 (Worpsweder Kunststiftung Friedrich Netzel, Worpsweder Kunsthalle) and Modersohn-Becker's *Mother with Child on her Arm, Nude II*, autumn 1906 (Museum Ostwall im Dortmunder U, Dortmund) and *Self-portrait as a Standing Nude with Hat*, summer 1906 (Paula-Modersohn-Becker-Stiftung, Bremen, on loan from a private collection).

A section entitled *City and Country: Journeys and Migrations* will present paintings of urban life and explore changing roles for women in a variety of contexts; at leisure, at work, while rural subjects reveal the need to take refuge away from the metropolis to produce art that celebrated the natural beauty of the countryside. These works will signal perspectives of female experiences of modernity and will chart the various 'journeys' that many of the artists included in the exhibition undertook, both material and spiritual, either as a result of personal circumstances or due to the chaos and destruction brought on by the First World War. Works will also highlight the importance of a sense of place, for example, the artist's colony of Worpswede for Modersohn-Becker, Murnau for Münter and Ascona for Werefkin. Key works in this section include *Landscape with Windblown Trees*, 1900 (Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, Oxford); *Still-life on the Tram (After Shopping)*, c.1912 (Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich), and *Circus – Before the Show*, 1908/10 (Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren).

The final part of the exhibition will consider the important role of still life in the work of these artists. The concept of 'still lives' brings to mind quiet moments of reflection and meditation recorded by the artists in their letters, diaries and journals. Dramatic modernist compositions executed with fluid brushwork and bright hues, challenge the academic tradition and act as vehicles for the exploration of form, colour and spiritual meaning. Highlights within this section include Münter's *Apples on the Wall*, 1908 (Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich) and Modersohn-Becker's *Still-life with Goldfish Bowl*, 1906 (Von Der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal).

## Organisation

Exhibition organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. It is curated by Dorothy Price, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Courtauld Institute of Art and Sarah Lea, Curator, Royal Academy of Arts.

## Accompanying Publications

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated publication written by Professor Dorothy Price, Chantal Joffe RA, Dr Shulamith Behr, Sarah Lea and Rhiannon Hope.

## Dates and Opening Hours

Press view: Wednesday 9 November 2022, 10am – 1pm  
Open to public: 12 November 2022 – 12 February 2023  
10am – 6pm Tuesday to Sunday (last admission 5.30pm)

## Admission

From £17; concessions available; under 16s go free ([T&Cs apply](#)); Friends of the RA go free.

## Tickets

Advance booking with pre-booked timed tickets is recommended for everyone, including Friends of the RA. Tickets can be booked in advance online ([royalacademy.org.uk](https://royalacademy.org.uk)) or over the phone (0207 300 8090).

## BNP Paribas AccessArt25

Through their multi-year partnership with the RA, the BNP Paribas AccessArt25 programme will offer 1,000 young people, aged 16 to 25, free access to the exhibition via a free ticket scheme. Tickets will be available to book online for dedicated timeslots over the run of the exhibition.

## Images

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### **Safety measures**

The health and safety of visitors and staff is paramount. Safety measures for visitors can be found on the RA website: [royalacademy.org.uk/visiting-and-safety-during-coronavirus](https://royalacademy.org.uk/visiting-and-safety-during-coronavirus).

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#MakingModernism

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The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate. The Royal Academy is an independent charity. It does not receive revenue funding from the government so is reliant upon the support of its visitors, donors, sponsors, patrons and loyal Friends.

**For public information, please print: 020 7300 8090 or [www.royalacademy.org.uk](https://www.royalacademy.org.uk)**

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