

## **B2 Identities in Art and Architecture**

### **A Critical Anthology**

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## **Notes for Approaching Critical Texts in A Level Teaching**

Would recommend breaking this down into three stages:

- Comprehension   ● Analysis   ● Application

### **Comprehension**

The first stage of working with the critical texts might be to ensure that students have a grasp of what the text is saying, as well as information about its production, distribution and reception. Teaching might focus on exploring unfamiliar terminology and extracting the text's point or argument. In terms of contextualising the text, students might explore who has written it, when and where was it published, and who was its intended audience. If information is known about the text's reception or impact, that might be helpful too. This kind of information will feed into the next stage of critically analysing it.

**Exercise: Summarise the main argument of the text in no more than three sentences.**

**Exercise: Highlight specific areas of the text that you found difficult to understand. Try to unpack why you found them difficult.**

**Exercise: Pick out one sentence that you feel provides a particularly clear indication of the overall argument. Explain why you have chosen this sentence.**

### **Analysis**

This second stage is to encourage students to do more than paraphrase the text but to be able to say something about it and to make connections between it and their chosen art work(s). Reflecting critically about the text might be described as refusing to take it at face value, to assume it's right/accurate/helpful, so exploring the text *as a piece of writing* - **how has it been researched/argued/structured** - might be useful. Getting them to think about **how helpful is the text in understanding the art work(s)** might also be a good starting point, as well as commenting on similarities and differences between them. On a basic level, the 'formula' might go something like: both critical text and art work raise questions about/offer perspectives onto gender/race/class/history/painting/landscape/the artist etc [show evidence of how/if they converge] but.... [and then go on to explore the differences between them].

**Exercise: Highlight all of the ways the text attempts to persuade you of its argument. This should include all the evidence cited, including the work(s) of art discussed (*on which elements of the work does it focus?*). You should also think about the text itself, including the language used and the way it is structured.**

**Exercise: Pick out one sentence that you found particularly persuasive. What, specifically, made it stand out?**

**Exercise: Are you persuaded by the argument? If so, why?**

**Exercise: Can you think of anything that would unsettle some of the claims being made? For instance, are there other ways of thinking about or viewing the work(s) of art discussed? What does the author ignore or overlook?**

## Application

The final stage seeks to ensure the students know how to engage with the text in their own writing. Do they know the difference between paraphrase and quotation, and how each are referenced to avoid plagiarising the author's words and ideas? Thinking about how they decide **which parts of the text might make an effective quotation could be useful** (i.e. nothing too long, too bland, too obvious etc). Reminding them that it's important not to use a quotation to make a point but to make a point about a quotation could be helpful, and links back to the previous stage of demonstrating critical engagement with it. Quotations cannot do all the heavy-lifting in the essay.

**When referring to a text in an essay, students should aim to do all of the above:**

- Outline the relevant part of the argument, potentially including a quote
- Highlight what is persuasive/useful about the critical text – how it can help to illuminate the issues being discussed
- Reflect on the particular strengths and weaknesses of the text by looking at what it uses to substantiate its claims and what it ignores

*Guidance notes kindly provided by the Department of Art History, University of Sussex*

## Requirements for inclusion of critical texts from the Specification and Mark Scheme

*Candidates are only required to refer to their critical texts in the second 925 mark) question of each Theme section. They may, of course, choose to refer to them in the first, shorter question but this is not required for full credit.*

Level 1:	No relevant reference to critical texts
Level 2:	Some relevant use of view(s) from critical texts
Level 3:	Competent use of views from critical texts
Level 4:	Secure integration of view(s) from critical texts
Level 5:	Insightful integration of view(s) from critical texts.

## General critical texts relevant to the theme of Identities in Art and Architecture (or part thereof)

Nicholas Chare (2010) "Sexing the canvas" *Art History: Contemporary Perspectives on Method*, edited by Dana Arnold, pp. 9-33. Originally published in *Art History*, Volume 32, Issue 4, pp. 664–689. Extract, pp.16-18.

As the previous examples of Michelangelo and of the Willendorf Venus attest, the history of the study of gender within art history has been predominantly structured around analyses of the sex of the artist, the sex of the audience, and sexed subject matter, such as the female or male nude. The sexing of substance has been overlooked. Material is instead seen through. As David Peters Corbett suggests, 'too often the response to mark-making, the physical manipulation of paint, or surface is edited out of professional dialogue and confined to personal experience, as if the encounter with the object is somehow not a part of what art history is about.' The various media that have been employed in art-making are perceived by many art historians as vehicles of meaning, seen as superfluous to interpretation, rather than as possessing meaning in their own right. Artists' materials are, however, always invested with significance.

The meanings impressed upon, or within, these materials shift with time. In his life of Sebastiano Viniziano, for example, Giorgio Vasari famously quotes Michelangelo as having denounced oil painting as 'a woman's art and only fit for lazy well-to-do people'. By implication, fresco in the High Renaissance is man's work. By the late eighteenth century, however, such a view of oil painting had shifted. It was firmly established as masculine, whilst drawing and watercolour were sometimes coded as feminine. Fresco was still perceived as a man's medium at the time as practitioners of watercolour sought to assert watercolour's status by linking it to buon affresco. The watercolourist William Marshall Craig, for instance, contended that watercolour was fathered by fresco painting, an ancient medium which, in part, involved employing pigments suspended in water applied to wet plaster. This argument served to align watercolour paintings with 'masterpieces' of the past such as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes. Craig claimed that both fresco and watercolour painting required greater skill than oil. Watercolour, he stated, was 'founded in the soundest deductions of reason and philosophy'.

It seems unlikely that Michelangelo would appreciate Craig's comparison, however, for what differentiated oil from fresco for the Renaissance artist was not so much the reduced skills required for the former as the absence of endeavour. Frescoes on the scale of those in the Sistine and Pauline chapels were substantial physical undertakings. The humorous sonnet complaining of his body's woes which Michelangelo sent to Giovanni da Pistoia during the painting of the Sistine ceiling attests to this:

This miserable job has given me

a goitre like the cats in Lombardy

get from the water there – or somewhere else.

The force of it has jammed my belly up beneath my chin.

Beard to the sky, I feel

my seat of memory rests on a hump.

I've grown a harpy's breast.

Brush splatterings make a mosaic pavement of my face.

My loins have moved into my guts.

As counterweight, I stick my bum out like

A horse's rump.

This quotation emphasizes the manual, rather than mental, labour involved in fresco painting. Art-making is not here simply a mental exercise, a product of 'reason and philosophy', but of hard, deforming, graft. Fresco painting is man's work because it requires endurance, strength, the ability to tolerate and transcend discomfort. Michelangelo's gendering of oil painting as feminine should therefore be understood to stem from the relative lack of effort required to produce works in that medium when contrasted with the exertions necessary to create a fresco. And it is only when we understand the artist's criticism of oil in this context that we can comprehend the rhetoric of an image such as Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as an Allegory of Painting*. Gentileschi's depiction of herself as an allegory of painting is noteworthy for its breadth of gesture, particularly the height of the right hand poised to apply paint to canvas

### **From West, Shearer, *Oxford History of Art: Portraiture*, Oxford University Press, 2004**

*p. 11*

...The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines portraiture as 'a representation or a delineation of a person, especially of the face, made from life, by drawing, painting, photography, engraving, etc.; a likeness'. Other semantic roots of the term attach it to the idea of likeness: for example, the Italian word for portrait, *ritratto*, comes from the very *ritrarre*, meaning both 'to portray' and 'to copy or reproduce'. However, this simple definition belies the complexities of portraiture. Portraits are not just likenesses but works of art that engage with ideas of identity as they are perceived, represented, and understood in different times and places. 'Identity' can encompass the character, personality, social standing, relationships, profession, age, and gender of the portrait subject. These qualities are not fixed but are expressive of the expectations and circumstances of the time when the portrait was made. These aspects of identity cannot be reproduced, but they can only be suggested or evoked. Thus although portraits depict individuals, it is often the typical or conventional – rather than unique – qualities of the subject that are stressed by the artist....Portraiture has also been subject to major changes in artistic practice and convention. Even though most portraits retain some degree of verisimilitude, they are nonetheless products of prevailing artistic fashions and favoured styles, techniques, and media. Portraiture is thus a vast art category that offers a rich range of engagements with social, psychological, and artistic practices and expectations.

### ***pages 148-150 Women, beauty and allegory***

"Many portraits of women represent them in roles: goddesses such as Juno or Hebe, historical or religious figures like Mary Magdalene, Muses such as Euterpe (Music) or Thalia (Comedy), or allegorical embodiments such as 'Painting' or 'Beauty'. Such slippages between the portrayal of women and the embodiment of abstractions has been interpreted as denying women the kind of character and public roles emphasized so often in portraits of

men. This is the argument of Felicity Edholm, for example, who sees the roles of women in portraiture as a negative sign of their social repression in the past:

Behind many portraits... is an assumption of a biography, a known or knowable story, for men in particular a story of potential when young and achievement when middle-aged. Women's lives and faces cannot tell the same story... in terms of representation, it is beauty – or if not that, due modesty and gracefulness – when young, and the loss of beauty when old.

However, the sheer variety of these allegorical representations and their imaginative employment by both male and female artists can also open up the possibilities of seeing women outside the constraints of their domestic and social roles. Although the qualities of women that are valued have changed significantly, given the checks on women's public roles before the modern period, portraitists often chose to represent women in terms of these more abstract qualities.

“The origins of the tendency to view women allegorically can be traced to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy. Here several factors combined to inspire portraits of women that related them to abstract ideas of beauty rather than status or character. The use of profile portraits, the proliferation of paintings that veer between allegory and portraiture, poetic portraiture, and the growth of portrait collections of beautiful women were all facets of this imaginative tendency in portraits of women.”

From **John Berger 'Ways of Seeing', Penguin 2008**

*Extract p45-47:*

According to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome, the social presence of a woman is different in kind from that of a man. A man's presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies. If the promise is large and credible his presence is striking. If it is small or incredible, he is found to have little presence. The promised power may be moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual - but its object is always exterior to the man. A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. His presence may be fabricated, in the sense that he pretends to be capable of what he is not. But the presence is always toward a power which he exercises on others. By contrast, a woman's presence expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her. Her presence is manifest in her gestures, voice, opinions, expressions, clothes, chosen surroundings, taste - indeed there is nothing she can do which does not contribute to her presence. Presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation, a kind of heat or smell or aura... One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object - and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.

*Extract: p53-54*

We can now begin to see the difference between nakedness and nudity in the European tradition. In his book on The Nude Kenneth Clark maintains that to be naked is simply to be without clothes,

whereas the nude is a form of art. According to him, a nude is not the starting point of a painting, but a way of Seeing which the painting achieves. To some degree, this is true - although the way of seeing 'a nude' is not necessarily confined to art: there are also nude photographs, nude poses, nude gestures. What is true is that the nude is always conventionalised - and the authority for its conventions derives from a certain tradition of art. What do these conventions mean? What does the nude signify? Is it not sufficient to answer these questions merely in terms of the art form, for it is quite clear that the nude also relates to lived sexuality. To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognised for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. (The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object.) Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. To be naked is to be without disguise. To be on display is to have the surface of one's own skin, the hairs of one's own body, turned into a disguise which, in that situation, can never be discarded. The nude is condemned to never being naked. Nudity is a form of dress. In the average European oil painting of the nude the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man. Everything is addressed to him. Everything must appear to the result of him being there. It is for him that the figures have assumed their nudity. But he, by definition, is a stranger with his clothes still on.

To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men. The social presence of women has developed as a result of their ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space. But this has been at the cost of a woman's self being split into two. A woman must constantly watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually.

And so she comes to consider the *surveyor* and the *surveyed* within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.

She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another.

Men survey women before treating them. Consequently, how a woman appears to a man can determine how she will be treated. To acquire some control over this process, women must contain it and interiorise it. That part of a woman's self which is the surveyor treats the part which is the surveyed so as to demonstrate to others how her whole self would like to be treated. And this exemplary treatment of herself by herself constitutes her presence. Every woman's presence regulates what is and is not 'permissible' within her presence...

One might simplify this by saying: *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object - and most particularly an object of vision - a sight.

From **Angela Carr 'Leaders, Legends and Felons: negotiating portraiture, from veneration to vandalism'** Source: RACAR: revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review, Vol. 30, No. 1/2, The Portrait Issue / La question du portrait (2005), pp. 101

In 1991 Richard Brilliant wrote that the referentiality to a "human original" was what distinguished the genre of portraiture from other types of art..." In contrast, Shearer West, writing in 2004, described portraiture as a form of representation, invested with the processes of commissioning and production. Somewhere in the chasm between referentiality and representation, one must also be able to theorize images as repositories for perpetually negotiable layers of meaning, and at times as unintended vessels for inflammatory new texts.

From: **The Female Nude, Lynda Nead, first published 1992 (p. 15)**

"...even John Berger's challenge to Clark's account of the nude only succeeds in inverting the naked/nude opposition. In *Ways of Seeing* (first published in 1972) Berger takes up Clark's opposition but re-evaluates the terms. Whereas the nude is always subjected to pictorial conventions, 'To be naked', he writes, 'it to be oneself'. To be naked is thus to be without disguise to be free of the patriarchal conventions of western society. With this framework, Berger juxtaposes European oil paintings with photographs from soft-porn magazines, identifying the same range of poses, gestures and looks in both mediums. The particularity of the medium and cultural form is not important. What matters is the repertoire of conventions that *all* female nudes are believed to deploy, irrespective of historical or cultural specificity. But according to Berger, there are a few valuable exceptions to the voyeurism that is constructed through the European high-art tradition:

They are no longer nudes – they break the norms of the art form; they are paintings of loved women, more or less naked. Among the hundreds of thousands of nudes which make up the tradition there are perhaps a hundred of these exceptions. In each case the painter's personal vision of the particular woman he is painting is so strong that it makes no allowance for the spectator...The spectator can witness their relationship – but he can do no more; he is forced to recognise himself as the outsider he is. He cannot deceive himself into believing that she is naked for him. He cannot turn her into a nude. (p.57)

Berger's evocation of the hundred or so exceptions to the tradition of the female nude in European art assumes that the relationship between the male artist and the female model is inherently natural and good. Power, for Berger, is constituted as public. Private relationships lie outside the domain of power; love transforms the *nude* into a *naked woman* and prevents the male spectator, the outsider, from turning the female figure into a voyeuristic spectacle. So, for Berger, the naked is now the positive term and the nude is relegated to the inferior position within the opposition. What is undisturbed, however, is the implication that the naked is somehow freer from mediation, that it is semiotically more open and represents the body liberated from cultural intervention.

**Patricia Simons 'Women In Frames: the gaze, the eye, the profile in Renaissance portraiture'**

The history of the profile to c. 1440 was a male history, except for the occasional inclusion of women in altarpieces as donor portraits, that is, portraits of those making their pious offering to the almighty. But from c. 1440 nearly all Florentine painted profile portraits depicting a single figure are of women (except for a few studies of male heads on paper, probably sketches for medals and



sculpture when they are portraits and not studio exercises). By c. 1450 the male was shown in three-quarter length and view, first perhaps in Andrea Castagno's sturdy view of an unknown man whose gaze, hand and facial structure intrude through the frame into the viewer's space. Often this spatial occupation and bodily assertion were appropriately captured in the more three-dimensional medium of sculpture, using either relatively cheap terracotta or more prestigious, expensive marble. The first dated bust from the period is Piero de' Medici's, executed by Mino da Fiesole in 1453.

For some time, however, women were still predominantly restricted to the profile and most examples of this format are dated after the mid-century. Only in the later 1470s do portraits of women once more follow conventions for the male counterparts, moving out from the restraining control of the profile format, turning towards the viewer and tending to be views of women both older and less ostentatiously dressed than their female predecessors had been. Such a change has not been investigated and cannot be my subject here, which is to highlight the predominance of a female presence in Florentine profile portraits.

Painted by male artists for male patrons, these objects primarily addressed male viewers. Necessarily members of the ruling and wealthy class in patrician Florence, the patrons held restrictive notions of proper female behaviour for women of their class. Elsewhere in Italy, especially in the northern courts, princesses were also restrained by rules of female decorum but were portrayed because they were noble, exceptional women. In mercantile Florence however that women who were not royal were recognized in portraiture at all appears puzzling, and I think can only be understood in terms of the visual or optic modes of what can be called a 'display culture'. By this I mean a culture where the outward display of honour, magnificence and wealth was vital to one's social prestige and definition, so that visual language was a crucial mode of discourse. I will briefly treat the conditions of a woman's social visibility and then, having considered why a woman was portrayed, turn to the particular form of the resultant portrait.

To be a woman in the world was/is to be the object of the male gaze: to 'appear in public' is 'to be looked upon' wrote Giovanni Boccaccio. The Dominican nun Clare Gambacorta (d. 1419) wished to avoid such scrutiny and establish a convent 'beyond the gaze of men and free from worldly distractions'. The gaze, then a metaphor for worldliness and virility, made of Renaissance woman an object of public discourse, exposed to scrutiny and framed by the parameters of propriety, display and 'impression management'. Put simply, why else paint a woman except as an object of display within male discourse?

Only at certain key moments could she be seen, whether at a window or in the 'window' of a panel painting, seen and thereby represented. These centred on her rite of passage from one male house to another upon her marriage, usually at an age between fifteen and twenty, to a man as much as fifteen years her senior. Her very existence and definition at this time was a function of her outward appearance. Pleading for extra finery and household linen, rather than merely functional clothing, to be included in her dowry, one widow implored her children, when her brothers forced her into a second marriage, 'Give me a way to be dressed'. This woman virtually pictures herself as naked and undefined unless a certain level (modo) of (ad)dress or representation as well as wealth can be attained. Costume was what Diane Owen Hughes calls 'a metaphorical mode' for social distinction and regulation. The 'emblematic significance' of dress made possible the visible marking out of one's parental and marital identity. A bearer of her natal inheritance and an emblem also of her conjugal line once she had entered the latter's boundaries, a woman was an adorned Other who was defined into existence when she entered patriarchal discourse primarily as an object of exchange.

Without what Christiana Klapish-Zuber calls 'publicity', the important alliance forged between two households or lineages by a marriage was not adequately established. Without witnesses, the

contract was not finalised. By contrast, a priest's presence at this time was not legally necessary. Visual display was an essential component of the ritual, a performance which allowed, indeed expected, a woman's visible presentation in social display and required an appropriately honourable degree of adornment.

The age of the women in these profile portraits, along with the lavish presence of jewellery and fine costumes (usually outlawed by sumptuary legislation and rules of morality and decorum), with multiple rings on her fingers when her hands are shown, and hair bound rather than free-flowing, are all visible signs of her newly married (or perhaps sometimes betrothed) state. The woman was a spectacle when she was an object of public display at the time of her marriage but otherwise she was rarely visible, whether on the streets or in monumental works of art. In panels displayed in areas of the palace open to common interchange, she was portrayed as a sign of the ritual's performance, the alliance's formation and its honourable nature.

**Jorella Andrews, *Navigating Difference: Cultural Diversity and Audience Development*, (Arts Council England)**

**'Losing Labels and Liking It'**

Admittedly, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a number of British artists did organise themselves collectively around self-identifications of 'Blackness' – I'm thinking particularly of Eddie Chambers' BLK Art Group (1981-4), the Black Audio Film Collective (1983-98) and the Black-Art Gallery (opened in 1983). There was also Rasheed Araeen's venture Black Phoenix (1978-9); which re-emerged in 1987 as the academic journal Third Text.

Such collectives were strategically important for a short period. They brought together artists who had been relatively isolated and unsupported, enabling them to exchange ideas and develop their thinking in their art. Together artists produced work that exposed and addressed overt racism as it occurred on the streets and in the media – often by re-telling historical and current events from perspectives that were unacknowledged by the mainstream...

Collectivity around 'blackness' also empowered artists to address the more covert forms of institutionalised racism that dominated British social and cultural life, including the art schools. For, as Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper, Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid and other Black Britons coming of age in the late 1970s and early 1980s quickly learned, the art-educational institutions were often indifferent, if not antagonistic, to the experiences and concerns of their Afro-Caribbean and Asian students...

...But, important as collective ventures of this kind were, most had run their course by the mid 1980s. As Keith Piper put it, by now 'individual group members were itching to emerge from the collective entity' (Mercer K., 'Witness at the Crossroads: An Artist's Journey in Postcolonial Space', in *Relocating the Remains*: Keith Piper, InIVA, 1997, pp12-85). Furthermore, there were issues other than race that many of them wanted to address in their work.

...Also interesting, I think, is the dilemma that quickly became apparent with Chambers' venture: the black community didn't appear to be interested in what Black artists were trying to do on their behalf.

Ironically, though, it was just as collective ethnic and racial identifications were losing their usefulness for artists, that these designations were adopted with a vengeance by the arts institutions – in the form of equal opportunity policies for funding, and so-called multicultural agendas.

This wasn't all bad. As already noted, some important exhibitions opened in mainstream spaces. Like Rasheed Areen's *The Other Story* – even though its staging as other was seen by some as problematic. New funding opportunities also opened up possibilities for many artists and radically increased their visibility. However, as Rasheed Areen has observed, because artists were generally required to 'show their cultural identity cards' in order to obtain this backing many found this state of affairs restrictive and separatist rather than enabling... In any case, the question that arises is this: if a collective ethnocentric approach wasn't sustainable for artists in terms of their practice, how successful is it likely to be as a curatorial strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 1978**

[https://sites.evergreen.edu/politicalshakespeares/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2014/12/Said\\_full.pdf](https://sites.evergreen.edu/politicalshakespeares/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2014/12/Said_full.pdf)

*Introduction (page 9)*

On a visit to Beirut during the terrible civil war of 1975-1976 a French journalist wrote regretfully of the gutted downtown area that "it had once seemed to belong to . . . the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval."<sup>1</sup> He was right about the place, of course, especially so far as a European was concerned. The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity 'a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing; in a sense it had happened, its time was over. Perhaps it seemed irrelevant that Orientals themselves had something at stake in the process, that even in the time of Chateaubriand and Nerval Orientals had lived there, and that now it was they who were suffering; the main thing for the European visitor was a European representation of the Orient and its contemporary fate, both of which had a privileged communal significance for the journalist and his French readers. Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient, which for them is much more likely to be associated very differently with the Far East (China and Japan, mainly). Unlike the Americans, the French and the British-less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss-have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientation* a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West)

*Pages 14-15:*

This brings us to a third qualification. One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more a structure of lies or of myths which were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridical discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be). Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability. After all, any system of ideas that can remain unchanged as teachable wisdom (in academies, books, congresses, universities, foreign-service institutes) from the period of Ernest Renan in the late 1840s until the

present in the United States must be something more formidable than a mere collection of lies. Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many rations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied-indeed, made truly productive-the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture. Gramsci has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary (or at least rational and noncoercive) affiliations like schools, families, and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracy) whose role in the polity is direct domination. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far. Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more sceptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter.

Other suggestions include extracts from:

- **Judith Butler ‘Gender trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity’ Routledge, New York and London, Published in 1999**

**Specified Artist: Van Eyck**

### **Albrecht Durer 'Journey to the Low Countries' 1521**

"When I reached Ghent, I saw Johannes' panel, the Adoration of the Lamb; a splendid work and intelligently painted. The figures of Eve, Mary and God the Father are particularly fine."

### **Bartolomeo Facio 'De Viris illustribus' 1456**

« Johannes Gallicus is considered first among the painters of our century, thoroughly versed in the sciences, geometry in particular, and in those arts that may serve as a supplement to painting. He is credited with the discovery of new properties concerning colour, having studied the writings of Pliny and other ancient authors on the subject. One of his most notable works, which is housed in the private apartments of King Alonso, shows an astonishing beautiful and modest Virgin, and a radiant angel with hair so natural that it seems almost tangible, who announces the birth of the Son of God. Alongside this painting hang a St John the Baptist, whose holiness and austerity are palpable, and a wonderfully realistic St Jerome pictured in his study.

Other works of great renown are in the possession of the illustrious Ottaviano della Carda. They include women of extraordinary beauty coming out of the bath, the most intimate parts of their bodies delicately covered with thin cloths. In one of the figures, only the face and upper body are visible, but the entire body is shown in rear-view by means of a mirror, so that both sides can indeed be seen at once. This panel also shows an incredibly lifelike oil-lamp, a puppy lapping up water, minute horses and men, along with mountains, woods, villages and castles: seemingly thousands of different figures all painted with consummate skill. But the most beautiful thing of all in this picture is the mirror in which the entire work is reflected, just as if in a real mirror. He is said to have painted many other works, but I have been unable to verify this."

### **From Giorgio Vasari 'Lives of the Artists' 1550**

"That marvellous and useful invention in painting, that of painting in oils was first invented in Flanders by Johann of Bruges. He sent his work to Naples, to King Alfonso and to the Duke of Urbino, Federico II. He also made a St Jerome owned by Lorenzo de Medici, along with many other paintings of renown.

It came to pass that while working in Flanders, Johann of Bruges, a painted much esteemed in those parts by reason of the great mastery that he had acquired in his profession.... Began to look for a method of making a varnish that should dry in the shade without putting his pictures in the sun. Wherefore, after he had many many experiments with substances both pure and mixed together, he found at length that linseed oil and walnut oil dried more readily than all the others he had tried. These then, boiled together with other mixtures of his, gave him the varnish that he had long desired...

Rejoicing greatly over such a discovery, as was only reasonable, Johann made a beginning with many works and, assisted by experience from day to day, he kept on ever making greater and better works. The fame of this invention spread not only through Flanders, but to Italy and many other parts of the world, and great desire was aroused in other artists to know how he brought his works

to such perfection. And seeing his pictures, and not knowing how they were done, they were obliged to give him great praise.”

### **From Eugene Fromentin ‘The Masters of Past Time’ 1876**

Where had the Van Eyck brothers come from when they arrived in Ghent and joined the existing community of artists? What had led them there? What did they find when they got there? What was the true significance of their discoveries in the use of oil painting? What role did each of them play in the creation of the Ghent Altarpiece? All these questions have been discussed at length by scholars, but they remain as yet largely unanswered.

Superficially at least, some parallels can be drawn between van Eyck and Memling: both artists inhabit the same world of opulence and affluence, and their paintings are resplendent with touches of luxury: rich fabrics, gold, pearls, silks, velvets, marble, engraved metals. The art of painting was an art to rival that of the goldsmiths, engravers and enamellists. There is a virility about van Eyck’s portraits: the composition is strong, and the subjects themselves seem warm-blooded and muscular. They are similar to the portraits of Holbein in their precision and are at times equally penetrating and unforgiving. His palette of colours is richer and more robust than that of Memling, and his use of them is more varied and refined.... Van Eyck is more skilful than Memling because he seems more certain of his purpose, more confident, more determined. He is a master of imitation: when painting a carpet he chooses the most suitable colours and textures; when painting marble he creates a perfectly smooth, lustrous finish, and when painting a chapel his opaline windows shimmer in the dark interior in a perfect optical illusion.

### **From Erwin Panofsky ‘Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait’ (The Burlington Magazine, 1934)**

Thus our question whether or not the still-life accessories in our picture are invested with a symbolical meaning turns out to be no true alternative. In it, as in other works by Jan van Eyck, medieval symbolism and modern realism are so perfectly reconciled that the former has become inherent in the latter. The symbolical significance is neither abolished nor does it contradict the naturalistic tendencies; it is so completely absorbed by reality, that reality itself gives rise to a flow of preternatural associations. The direction of which is secretly determined by the vital forces of medieval iconography.”

### **From Erwin Panofsky ‘Early Netherlandish Painting’ 1963**

“As a portraitist, van Eyck is simultaneously one of the most meticulous and one of the most enigmatic observers of human nature. His portraits suggest both intimacy and distance; generally speaking they are descriptive rather than interpretative. But in van Eyck’s work, the descriptive process is one of reconstruction rather than simple reproduction, which puts his portraits in an altogether different category. It is difficult to comprehend the psychological make-up, thoughts, emotions and circumstances of his subjects. However, it is precisely this absence of information, or its potentiality, that gives them a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence which in itself is extremely powerful. As observers, we are both attracted to them and held aloof by them. They are characters whose psyches are hinted at, but not explored fully, whose intrinsic value remains independent of

time and place. Whatever the gaps in our own understanding of them. They are essentially and recognisably human.”

#### **From Charles D Cuttle ‘Northern Painting’ 1973**

If any artist of the 16<sup>th</sup> century achieved a perfect harmony of the real and supernatural, it was Jan van Eyck. In his art, the life of the spirit was truly embodied in its metaphorical vehicle, the physical world. The profundity of his intellect and the sublimity of his artistic expression, which combined an overwhelming verisimilitude with a spatial continuum, all painted in glowing colours, was quickly acknowledged on both sides of the Alps.”

#### **From Arnold Hauser ‘The Social History of Art’ 1960**

“The man of the late medieval middle-class epoch looks out on the world with different eyes and from a different standpoint than his forefathers whose interests were confined to the next world. He stands, as it were, on the edge of the road on which colourful, inexhaustible, relentlessly onward-flowing life unfolds itself, and he not only finds everything that happens there extremely interesting but also feels himself involved in all this life and activity. The ‘travel landscape’ is the most typical pictorial theme of the age, and the pilgrim procession off the Ghent Altar is to a certain extent the basic form of its world view. The onlooker no longer stands over against the work of art like the inhabitant of another world; he has been drawn into the sphere of the representation himself and this identification of the surroundings of the scene represented with the medium in which the onlooker is himself first, produces the complete illusion of space. The fact that the artist of the Middle Ages is able to represent real space – space in our sense – .... Is due to the ‘film-like’ view of things produced by the new dynamic attitude to life itself.”

#### **From Harold van de Perre ‘Van Eyck’ 1996**

The periphrase ‘Beauty in all its mystery’ is perhaps ideally suited to a discussion of van Eyck’s *The Mystic Lamb*. It combines beauty and perfection like no other work of art. That is why his work is complex, and evades definition; it is inspirational, and yet simple.

Van Eyck’s masterpiece does not actually evoke sentiments within us; it leaves us cold. Imposing and impenetrable, we can observe the magnificence of this panel without the slightest stirring of emotion within us: we can only lose ourselves in contemplation. It does not even seem to have been painted by human hand. There is no evidence of passion in the work, only an intensity, brilliance and nobility that lend it a supernatural dimension.”

## **Specified artist: Rembrandt**

From: **Rembrandt's Enterprise, Svetlana Alpers, 1988**

"Legal documents reveal the not surprising fact that the women who served as artists' models in Holland at the time were prostitutes or at least assumed to be such. This custom had ancient roots. In June 1654, Hendrijke Stoffels, living with though not married to Rembrandt, and five months pregnant...., was called in front of the church council. When she finally made the appearance in July, after a third summons, it was to admit that she had lived with Rembrandt like a whore....The year that Hendrijke admitted to practising prostitution was also the year Rembrandt painted the Bathsheba...Her appearance as Bathsheba.....fits neither the description of prostitute or wife, though the subject...Uriah's wife...clearly has a sexual aura involving desires pursued outside of the bonds of marriage. Her category was an exceptional one in social as well as pictorial terms. Hendrijke was celebrated by Rembrandt in what he construed as a separate domain. He entertained his desire for her in the studio and sustained it by capturing her in paint."

**Kenneth Clark, 'Rembrandt' 1978 John Murray publishers, London.**

*Chapter 1 'The Self Portraits' p. 11*

'I suppose that everyone who cares for painting would agree that Rembrandt was one of the greatest artists who have ever lived; and even those who don't care for painting are touched by some of his works - almost personally - in a way that they are by no other artist. Because, apart from his immense gifts as a pure painter and an illustrator, he digs down to the roots of life; and he seems to open his heart to us. We have the feeling that he is keeping nothing back.

To begin with, his own character - and, since this plays so important a part in his work, an introduction to Rembrandt may well begin by seeing how he looked at himself from youth to old age. He is, with the possible exception of Van Gogh, the only artist who has made the self-portrait a major means of artistic expression; and he is absolutely the only one to turn self-portraiture into an autobiography. To follow his exploration of his own face is an experience like reading the works of the great Russian novelists.'

From: **Kenneth Clark, The Nude, 1956**

"The composition is derived from the combined memories of two antique reliefs which Rembrandt had seen in engravings, but his conception of the nude is entirely unclassical, and in fact must represent his beloved Hendrijke. Now, when the dogmatic insistence of his early etchings has been abandoned, we feel the value of Rembrandt's humble and scrupulous honesty. For this ample stomach, these heavy, practical hands and feet achieve a nobility far greater than the ideal form of, shall we say, Titian's Venus of Urbino. Moreover, this Christian acceptance of the unfortunate body has permitted the Christian privilege of a soul. The conventional nudes based on classical origins could bear no burden of thought or inner life without losing their formal completeness. Rembrandt can give his Bathsheba an expression of reverie so complex that we follow her thoughts far beyond the moment depicted and yet these thoughts are indissolubly part of her body which speaks to us in its own language as truthfully as Chaucer or Burns."



## Specified Artist: Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun

Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, I.B. Tauris, first published 1981. Chpt 1: '*Critical stereotypes: the essential feminine or how essential is femininity*', pp. 21-25

'Historians are clearly discomforted by the dramatic and characterful images of women in Gentileschi's canvases of *Susanna and the Elders*, *Cleopatra*, *Lucretia*, *Mary Magdalen* and *Judith*. As Amanda Sebestyen and Caroline Dees have pointed out in an article on Gentileschi (*Shrew*, 1973), the women in Gentileschi's paintings have frequently been described 'gory', 'animalistic', 'buxom', 'sullen'. Her celebration of great women is characterized as 'irreligious', and the Judith subjects were described by the nineteenth century writer, Mrs Jameson, as 'proof of her genius, and, let me add, of its atrocious misdirection'. Confronted by the expressive, powerful or victimized images of Gentileschi's women, writers have been unable to fit her paintings into the usual feminine stereotype, they turn to dramatic events of her life, resurrecting the opposite category, that of whore, thus suggesting that she was an unnatural woman. This is turn is used to explain the problematic character of violent images painted by a woman. Her repeated rape by her teacher, Agostino Tassi, and her torture at the trial to ascertain the truth of her allegations are frequently cited in sensationalised accounts of her life, and she is stigmatized, in the words of Margot and Rudolf Wittkower, as a 'lascivious and precocious girl'.

It is impossible to assess from this distance in time the impact of these early experiences on Gentileschi, but many have been tempted to read her paintings as evidence of a dislike of men, a notion contradicted by the same writers' gleeful accounts of her 'armours' which produced four daughters, also painters. It is only when we escape this disturbing fascination with her life and return her work to its context within a specific time, place and school of painting that we can full appreciate her activities as a painter....

Gentileschi's manipulation of this Caravaggist mode of representation [dramatic chiaroscuro, as seen in *Judith*) suggests that there have been particular historical styles which women have most effectively used to introduce their own different nuances and meanings. Gentileschi's paintings of celebrated heroines should not be seen as evidence of an individual woman's proto-feminist consciousness reflected in art, but rather as her intervention in an established and popular genre of female subjects through a contemporary and influential style. It is only against this specific background, this prevailing climate, that the character of Gentileschi's work can be distinguished. It is by relating the contradictions inherent in the seventeenth-century's fascination with confrontations between male and female protagonists to this woman's treatment of those stories and styles that we can begin to produce useful insights for a theory of how women have fully participated in and altered dominant forms of art practice.'

pp. 96-97

'Her self-portrait in the National Gallery, London carefully depicts the rich stuffs of her dress, the neat pleats of trimmings, the textures of her soft hair and feathers. She holds her brushes and palette with an elegant and unworkmanly gesture, the paint colours neatly arranged to echo the decorative arrangement of flowers on her hat. She offers herself as a beautiful object to be looked at, enjoyed and admired, but conveys nothing of the activity, the work, the mindfulness of the art that she purports to pursue. As an image of an eighteenth-century artist it is wholly unconvincing; it's known source and intended reference is to a painting by Rubens, *Chapeau de Paille*, which Vigée-Lebrun had recently admired in Antwerp. The coquetry and sensual feeling of that painting is hardly an appropriate model for an artist to use as a basis for a self-portrait, but is a typical

representation of woman, not just a woman, but Woman, sexual, physical, the spectacle of beauty. Vigée-Lebrun's self-portrait was therefore constructed on the meaning of 'Woman' as a sign carries in the language of art, meanings quite opposite to the notion of artist, being instituted by critical discourse of the late eighteenth-century but by very different criteria than those applied to men. She was acceptable only in so far as her person, her public persona, conformed to the current notion of Woman, not artist.

This contradiction between Woman as beauty or sexual object and artist even more acutely represented in a painting of a male artist by Vigée-Lebrun, a prophetic image which intimates a new romantic phase in artistic identity. Her portrait of Hubert Robert shows the artist in casual workmanly attire, his cravat is carelessly knotted, his jacket wrinkled and worn. He leans on a parapet, prominently displaying his painting hand, while his left confidently and comfortably holds his palette and used brushes. These signs of his artistic practice in the foreground are complemented by the force of his torso turned to the right. His face is strongly lit, his eyes directed away from the spectator towards an invisible point, conveying his distant, unseen source of inspiration as well as his profound mental preoccupations. He sees beyond, unlike Vigée-Lebrun herself, who directly engages with the gaze of the spectator. A new artistic persona, anti-social, self-contained, seeing with the eyes of the imagination, is coupled unproblematically with palette and brushes, the means to give visual form to his ideas. Constrained by the codes for representing Woman, Vigée-Lebrun's image of herself is radically different.'

**Gill Perry, Gender and Art, Yale University Press, 1999, pp114-117**

'In order to develop our analysis, we need to consider Vigée-Lebrun's *Self Portrait in a Straw Hat* in relation to the painting that provided the inspiration for it. As she records in her memoirs, she recently seen a celebrated portrait by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), known as *Le Chapeau de Paille* or 'The Straw Hat', though the hat is actually made of felt – a detail that Vigée-Lebrun 'corrected' in her own work! It's great power, she explains:

*lies in the subtle representation of two different light sources, simple daylight and the bright light of the sun. Thus the highlighted parts are those lit by the sun and what I must refer to as shadow, is, in fact, daylight. Perhaps one must be a painter to appreciate the brilliance of Rubens' technique here. I was so delighted and inspired by that painting that I completed a self-portrait in Brussels is an effort to achieve the same effect... When this picture was exhibited at the Salon, I must say that it did much to enhance my reputation. (Memoirs, p.38)*

Parker and Pollock consider that the 'coquetry and sensual feeling' of the Rubens make it an inappropriate model for a self-portrait since it offers up 'Woman' as an erotic spectacle for the male viewer.

..Most obviously, Vigée-Lebrun's painting differs from Rubens' because she shows herself with palette and brushes. Parker and Pollock don't think this counts for much (she only 'purports' to be a painter, in their view) but you could say that they serve to show not just that she paints but that she is responsible for this very work. This is emphasized by the way that the colours on the brushes in her hand echo the colours elsewhere in the painting with the blue brush, in particular, picking up the bright colour of the sky behind her. Given what Vigée-Lebrun says about trying to emulate Rubens's painting was precisely to show off her own skills as an artist rather than depicting herself in a flattering way. As IN THE Rubens but even more noticeably, the effects of light and shade are signalled by the dividing line between them running down her face and neck. Turning to the pose, an

important difference is that Vigée-Lebrun looks directly out at us while Rubens' sitter lowers her head and looks up coyly. Also, the former holds out her hand as if to address the viewer while the latter folds hers, thereby drawing attention to her wedding ring (this sign of wifely dependence points to the contrast with the self-possessed artist). This woman's tight corset pushes up her breasts whereas Vigée-Lebrun wears a loose dress which is both demure and flattering though hardly, you may feel, appropriate working attire for an artist.

However, it can be argued that Vigée-Lebrun's self-portrait conforms to a general convention for artists to depict themselves as affluent, successful and well-dressed. In a self-portrait shown at the Salon of 1785, for example, Labille-Guiard shows herself seated at her easel in an elaborate satin gown, which she would surely not actually have worn while working. Vigée-Lebrun's less formal 'chemise' dress conforms to a new fashion for simplicity that was adopted by some of the greatest ladies in France.'

From **Whitney Chadwick, 'Women, Art, and Society'** pp. 168–171

On Vigée-Lebrun's Portrait of Marie Antoinette with Her Children (1787)

The Salon of 1785 was a key exhibition for both Labille-Guiard and Vigée-Lebrun. The former's portraits consolidated her reputation and the critical competition between the two women painters turned toward her. As a result of her success in this Salon, Vigée-Lebrun received the commission for her Portrait of Marie Antoinette with Her Children, a monumental work of political propaganda which has been called one of the great works of eighteenth-century political painting and the last serious attempt to revive the Queen's reputation.

Vigée-Lebrun had been painting Marie Antoinette since 1778. Her many portraits of the Queen – whose marriage represented a political alliance between the royal families of France and Austria and who was by 1778 already widely distrusted by the French citizenry – reveal her ability to transform the far from beautiful queen into a memorable likeness through the power of her idealizing abstraction.

By 1784, after the birth of her third child, Marie Antoinette had realized the extent to which she had alienated the population, as well as powerful factions in the court, with her frivolity and profligacy. Widely held in contempt as queen and as the mother of future kings, Marie Antoinette had withdrawn into a small circle of family and friends. Her claim that 'I wish to live as a mother, to feed my child and devote myself to its upbringing' convinced no one in the face of widely circulated attacks on her virtue in clandestine publications with titles like *The Scandalous Life of Marie Antoinette* and *The Royal Bordello*, the latter a pornographic tract ascribing depraved tastes to her and treating her children as bastards.

The spectacle of the Queen as courtesan led Louis XVI's ministers to a decision to counter the bad press by projecting a positive and wholesome image of her with her children at the next Salon. The result, a painting by the young Swedish artist Adolphe-Ulrich Wertmuller, pleased no one. Exhibited at the Salon of 1785, the painting was widely denounced for depicting 'an ugly queen frivolously dressed and gambolling in front of the Temple of Love at Versailles with her two children.' Two critics, however, called for a painting which would present the Queen as a mother 'showing her children to the nation, thus calling forth the attention and the hearts of all, and binding more strongly than ever, by these precious tokens, the union between France and Austria.'

A new painting was commissioned from Vigée-Lebrun before the Salon of 1785 had closed its doors. The political importance of it was indicated by the fact that it issued from the office of the King's Director of Buildings and Vigée-Lebrun was paid the colossal price of 18,000 livres, more than was

paid for the most important historical paintings and far more than the 4,000 livres that Wertmuller had received for his painting.

Following David's advice, Vigée-Lebrun based her pyramidal composition on the triangular configuration of certain High Renaissance Holy Families. The painting depicts Marie Antoinette dressed in a simple robe and sitting in the Salon de la Paix at Versailles surrounded by her children. The play of light and shadow across the figures blends their individuality into personages who transcend their historical context. The

monumental and imposing image of the mater familias is softened by the presence of the children grouped around her, her son pointing at the empty cradle which commemorates a recently deceased daughter, her older daughter leaning affectionately against the royal arm. The grouping of the children around Marie Antoinette emphasizes the central role of women in the generational representation of class power at the same time that it points toward the new ideology of the loving family.

By the time the 1787 Salon opened, the political situation had deteriorated. The work was hung only after the official opening from fear of a hostile public reaction. Critical ambivalence about the work, however, centered around the impossibility of resolving two different ethos: the divine right of kings transferred from the image of the pater familias to the figure of Marie Antoinette as queen, and the new bourgeois ideal of happy motherhood. This iconographic confusion was widely noted and contrasted with the universally popular image of motherhood presented in the same Salon in Vigée-Lebrun's self-portrait with her daughter Julie. This touching image of young motherhood perfectly illustrates the contradictions between idealized representation and lived experience. Not only was Vigée-Lebrun herself sent away to a wet nurse as a child, but she remarks in her memoirs that the day she went into labor with her daughter, she took pride in not allowing incipient motherhood to interrupt her at her professional activity and continued to paint between labor pains.

Vigée-Lebrun's Portrait of Marie Antoinette with her Children (1787) was hung almost beside, and on the same level, as Labille-Guiard's Portrait of Madame Adélaïde. The fact that the paintings were of identical size further called attention to them as studies in royal opposites: Vigée-Lebrun's an attempt to resuscitate a vilified queen, Labille-Guiard's a portrait of one of Louis XVI's aunts representing the virtues of the old court.

## **Specified 3D Artist: Marc Quinn**

**From Richard Rogers, Marc Quinn, Fourth Plinth, Steidl Mack, Gottingen, 2006**

The sculpture Alison Lapper Pregnant is the culmination of a body of work begun by Marc Quinn in the late 1990's. 'I was walking around the British Museum and the Louver and noticing how the crowds admired the fragmented classical statuary. For example, the Venus de Milo is a cultural short-hand for feminine beauty, and I thought that if someone whose real body was that shape came into the room the same people would probably react in a completely opposite manner. That gap between Art and Life, what is acceptable in art and unacceptable in life, seemed like an interesting area to explore. I decided to make a marble portrait of a real person whose body was of a similar form, but obviously they were not fragmented but a whole person.' The first sitter for the artist was Peter Hull, a Paralympic athlete who won a gold medal for swimming at the Paralympics. He was born with no legs, significantly shortened arms and no hands. Quinn then went onto make a series of eight marble portraits of 'subjects with similar bodies'. The complete suite of works were initially shown at a Prada Foundation in Milan in 2000, followed by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2001., where they were mixed with neo-classical sculptures in the museum's collection, such as Canova's Three Graces.

'When I made the portraits, I realised that part of the work was about what we see as beautiful. Disabled bodies are hardly represented in the history of art and when they are, they are usually interpreted as something 'other' or negative. To see these different bodies reproduced in the material of beauty and heroism, marble, involved a celebration of the wider notion of beauty and humanity.'

After the eight initial sculptures, the artist made a portrait of Alison Lapper when she was eight months pregnant. A year later he made another portrait of Alison with her son, Parys, on her knee. They were shown at the White Cube gallery in London in December 2000.

'When making these sculptures, one of the things which I keep feeling was that they were like sculpture, especially public sculpture, from the future. When the Fourth Plinth competition came along in 2003, it seemed one of these pieces would be the right thing to enter. I looked at Trafalgar Square and I realised that whilst Nelson himself had lost an arm and his sight in one eye, he was never thought of as disabled and it seemed more relevant to reanimate this dormant aspect of the square. Most public monumental sculpture is celebrating dead, male, military heroes, and Alison seemed to me to be the opposite. The other sculptures commemorate an event that has happened, they commemorate the past, but Alison is pregnant in this sculpture and for me, she commemorates the future potential of humanity, possibility and hope. I also felt that motherhood was an ignored achievement in general, in terms of public art.'

The artist was among 120 artists asked to submit a proposal. He was shortlisted and asked to create a maquette in March 2004 and won the competition.

The sculpture took over a year to make, three months to find the right piece of stone, then ten months of carving. The sculpture was carved in the same way in which marble sculpture has been carved since antiquity. The model, in this case the life cast of Alison, is carefully marked with hundreds of pencil dots which serve as reference points and annotations for changes which the artist requires. Using a compass and a pointing device, the distance between the dots is increased and the new measurements transferred to a new block of stone. After a period of months the result is a copy of the model with an outer layer of about 2cm of stone. At this point the artist and the stonemasons work more closely together and using photography and drawing create the final surface of the work.

The sculpture was finally installed on the plinth on 15th September 2005....

Sculpture is a public art and this sculpture, in a square that was once the heart of the British Empire, and is today a meeting place for all of London, has a constantly changing dialogue with the viewer. Approaching the sculpture from behind, across the...pedestrianised expanse you are stunned by the epic size of the figure. Standing underneath her, all that is actually visible is a slice of her head with sternly cropped hair a broad forehead of almost ancient nobility. But then turn away, and the proud soldier disappears and you see the voluptuously pregnant torso of a naked, vulnerable woman. A few steps later the absent arms are glimpsed - yet this is not a sculpture of a disabled person, but of a proud Hellenic warrior. The very absence of limbs allows us to focus on the beauty of her head and torso.

The power of the sculpture lies in the fact that both of these impressions - ancient and modern, mythic and realistic - continue after the initial surprise to exist in tandem, resulting in a wonderful series of paradoxes. The dialogue of opposites also exists, crucially, between the sculpture and the square. The other figures are statesmen, generals, clothed in the regalia of their public personae and status: this is the only female, the only nude, the only figure left unadorned.

## **Specified architect: Zaha Hadid**

**From Philip Jodidio , 'Zaha Hadid 1950-2016, the Explosion Reforming Space' Taschen 2016**

In a time of fluid uncertainty that envelops health and security, the economy , environment , politics, it would seem natural that contemporary architecture should reflect a state of flux, and most

probably take no discernible direction, wavering between ascetic minimalism, green proselytism, and neo- baroque decoration. Some though are courageous enough to make a wholehearted grasp at continuity, to dare say that there can be, indeed is, a new paradigm worthy of interest, even emulation. Few may have been more qualified to issue this rallying call than Zaha Hadid, winner of the 2004 Pritzker Prize. Her untimely death in March 2016 was universally mourned. It is Patrik Schumacher, Hadid's long time collaborator, who signed a text in the 2008 catalogue of the Venice Architecture Biennale that reads in part: "There is an unmistakable new style manifest within the avant-garde architecture today. Its most striking characteristic is its complex and dynamic curve-linearity. Beyond this obvious surface feature one can identify a series of new concepts and methods that are so different from the repertoire of both traditional and modern architecture that one might speak of the emergence of a new paradigm of architecture. The shared concepts, formal repertoires, tectonic logistics, and computational techniques that characterise this work are engendering the formation of a new hegemonic style: parametricism. Parametricism is the great new style after modernism. Postmodernism and Deconstructivism were transitional episodes that ushered in this new, long wave of research and innovation. Modernism was founded on the concept of space. Parametricism differentiates fields. Fields are full, as if filled with a fluid medium. From compositions of parts we proceed to dynamic fields of particles. This sensibility has been both radicalised and refined over the course of 30 years of work. New modes of representation played a crucial part in making this possible."

Whether the name "parametricism" sticks and indeed, becomes that of a style or a recognized school of contemporary architecture or not remains to be seen, but it is clear that Zaha Hadid Architects has called attention to a method and an approach to architecture that has challenged many of its fundamental assumptions, beginning just over 30 years ago. Aside from the willingness to question geometry, or more precisely the very organisation and spatial disposition of architecture, Hadid showed a remarkable consistency and continuity in her thought over the entire period of her professional activity... Her built work and projects do resemble each other in terms of the fluidity of their plans and the movement of space and surface that she generated, but from the angular the Vitra Fire Station (Weil am Rhein, Germany 1991-93); to the more recent Dune Formations series of objects, there is a spirit that casts doubt onto architecture and the furniture of the past. What if the many assumptions of architecture and design, from the rectilinear form to the ways that buildings and furniture function, were all subject to question and indeed, to profound renewal? If nature is capable of generating an endless variety of objects that have a fundamental legitimacy beyond any conceivable question, might architecture, the art of creating the built environment, not also be able to attain a similar legitimacy by reading context and function in new ways, by wilfully creating voids as well as solids, by doubting the primacy of the right angle, itself very rare in nature? Would this be the artificial nature that many architects and thinkers have imagined?