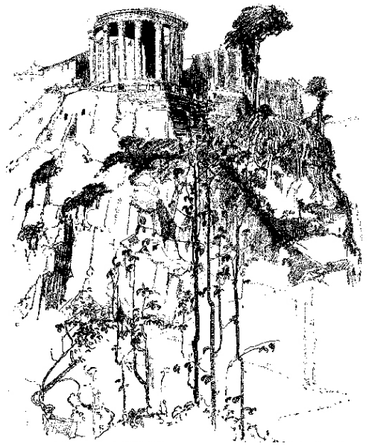


Temple of the Sibyl | Fred Richards

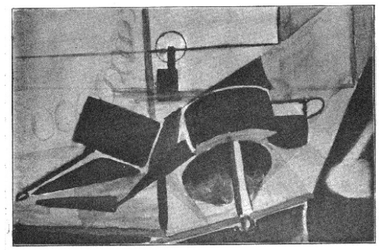
One of these market considerations might be what *The New Age* could actually afford to publish. It was too expensive to publish color plates, so the only artwork that could be printed was black-and-white line-drawings. Thus, the conversation about the modern is framed within the limited technological bounds of periodical publishing. It is no surprise that subject matter and content thus takes precedence over color and form.

The University of Tulsa provides a unique opportunity to watch this debate on art, commerce and aesthetics unfold in its rich cultural context. The McFarlin Library's Special Collections hold Cyril Connolly's (1903-1974) and Rupert Hart Davis's (1907-1999) complete personal collections; both were important critics and publishers in Britain during the period in which the critical debates of modernism were occurring. Thus, the library contains many rare, first-edition books and periodicals—a collection unparalleled for a research institution of this size. Among the many publications found in these libraries, one may find pristine copies of Wyndham Lewis's (1882-1957) *BLAST*, the famous, short-lived Vorticist publication, which showed a "violent discontent with the *status quo* and with all efforts to alter it. *Blast* is typography's closest approximation to dynamite" (Hoffman et al. 244).

The violence echoed in these two issues would roar like thunder with the beginning of the First World War later in 1914, which would tragically take the lives of many of *Blast's* contributors. Like *The New Age*, *Blast* contained drawings by artists like Jacob Epstein, who is part of T. E. Hulme's "Contemporary Art" series exhibited in this show, as well as advertisements, which are found on the last five pages of the first issue. Although the entire issue of *Blast* is printed in black and white, the advertisements for John Lane's Publications are framed by a thin line of blue ink—an added expense—to offset the commercial text from the rest of the editorial material in the magazine. It is important to note that all subsequent reproductions of the magazine have excluded this seemingly minor detail; it highlights, however, the complex market relations in these journals. Fortunately, through the continued work of the **Modernist Journals Projec**t, which is located here at the University of Tulsa and at Brown University, high-quality digital editions of these rare materials—periodicals like *Blast*—can finally come alive again in all of their glorious detail. You may find the complete digital edition of *Blast* at the computer kiosk in this gallery and the print editions from Special Collections in the glass cases on the lower level.

The archives at McFarlin Library also contain a complete run of John Middleton Murray's *Rhythm* (1911-13) and *The Blue Review* (1913). Both publications engaged in ongoing debates with *The New Age* as each periodical sought to define the changes occurring in art and to stake out an aesthetic understanding of the future. Murray writes that *Rhythm* seeks to find "an art that strikes deeper, that touches a profounder reality, that passes out the bounds of a narrow aestheticism" (Hoffman et al. 240). This is in direct opposition to the aesthetic values laid out at the end of the nineteenth century. Artists like Oscar Wilde advocated *l'art pour l'art*, or art for art's sake,

an ideology that sought to define art only through artistic values and that asserted it had no other meanings outside of simply being beautiful. One can sense dissatisfaction in Murray's words as he seeks to find a greater meaning in artistic endeavors in Britain at this time—a dissatisfaction more violently realized in *Blast* three years later. The short-lived *Rhythm* would be superseded by *The Blue Review* in 1913, a magazine "established on cooperative principles" that provided a nice mixture of text and drawings attempting to hammer out a modern aesthetic (Hoffman 243). *The Blue Review* became famous for publishing Katherine Mansfield (whose German stories are also published in *The New Age*) and D. H. Lawrence. Digital editions of these rare magazines will be available later this year through the **Modernist Journals Project**, but they are now available especially for you at the computer kiosk in the gallery. Also shown here is *The Open Window* (1910-1911), an "illustrated monthly magazine, whose purpose is 'the expression of that free vision of things which is more definitely associated with the word art…of a quality imaginative rather than controversial'" (Hoffman 239). This non-controversial position garners rebuke in the pages of *The New Age*, when Jacob Tonson (the pen-name of Arnold Bennett) declares, "I am disappointed with it. I believe I am disappointed with it because I found nothing in it to shock me. I know the difficulties which surround the production of a new periodical—especially one whose sincere aim is exclusively artistic; but



A Study | M. Ben Zies

I maintain nevertheless that the editor ought to have succeeded in shocking me" (The New Age, October 13, 1910). This highlights the fact that critics and artists were really looking for something new, something that would stun them out of complacency. Certainly, Hulme's contributions in "Contemporary Art Drawings" succeeded in creating that type of surprise. Another reason this periodical is included in this exhibition is that it clearly shows how periodicals were destroyed in order to bind them for library use. Here, the covers and advertisements are gone, forever lost to history.

This show is arranged thematically in order to provide the viewer with sense of the critical evolution that occurred in Britain during this time, as critics try to identify and define the future using the present-tense. Of course, we do not seek to provide an answer to the question of "what was modern?" We leave you to negotiate that question within the complex cultural web of materials before you.

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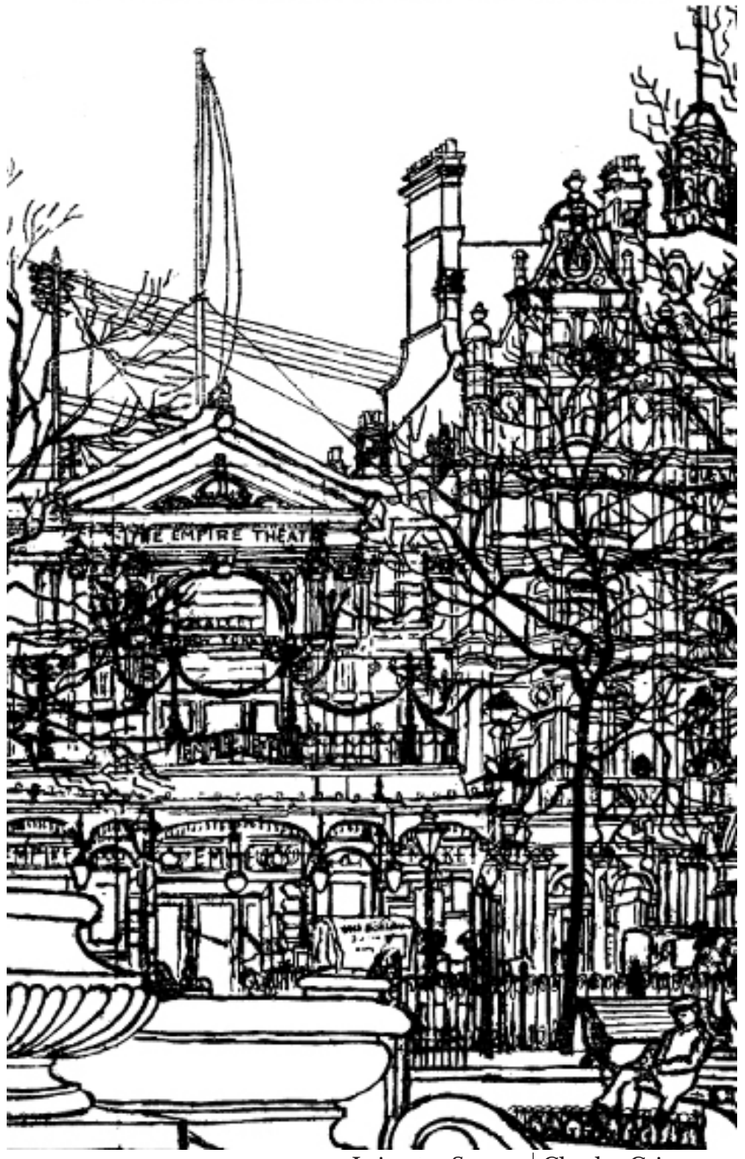
—Matt Huculak, The University of Tulsa

The University of Tulsa - Phillips Hall
Alexander Hogue Gallery | Exhibition: Sept 28-Oct. 20, 2006
600 South College Ave | Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104
Mon.-Fri. 8:30-4:30 | 918-631-2739
For more information, please visit: www.modjourn.org

The NEW AGE
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART.
New Series. Vol. VI. No. 10. Thursday, Jan 6, 1910. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] THREEPENCE.



Leicester Square | Charles Grinner

Mind the Gap: Modern versus Contemporary Art in *The New Age*, 1910-1914

The University of Tulsa - Phillips Hall
Alexandre Hogue Gallery | Exhibition: Sept 28-Oct. 30, 2006

The New Age: A Weekly Review of Politics, Literature and Art was published under the careful editorship of A. R. Orage from 1907 to 1922—a tumultuous period of artistic, cultural and political change in Britain we now loosely identify with "modernism." Orage's magazine quickly became one of the leading venues for discussion and debate, a place where multiple points of view could enter into raucous and provocative dialogue. Unlike its contemporary "coterie" magazines, such as *Rhythm* (also shown in this exhibition)—whose main goals were to further one particular point of view or philosophy—*The New Age* was ecumenical in its approach to culture and political ideas. Although it was mainly a Guild Socialist publication, A. R. Orage would publish any well-reasoned argument on the subject of politics, literature and art in its pages. This editorial policy allowed *The New Age* to create a dynamic and influential open forum where ideas could be freely discussed in a weekly conversation between writers, readers and artists. The journal was unusual in allowing visual artists and critics alike to share their work and ideas in its pages. Often, conflicting art movements and artistic philosophies were side-by-side in the pages of *The New Age*. Because of this historical openness, *The New Age* was able to play an important role in shaping some key debates about modernism.

What we now refer to as "Modern Art" had no such name in the early twentieth century, because artists and critics tried to define the various kinds of "new" art that were flooding Britain from the Continent. The years 1910-1914 were chosen to be the boundaries of this exhibition because of the unusual richness of artistic debate in Britain during this time. In 1910, the Bloomsbury art critic Roger Eliot Fry opened the "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" exhibition, a highly publicized event that generated both outrage and praise. For the first time, British audiences were publicly introduced—or subjected—to the work of Cézanne, Gauguin, Manet, Picasso and other avant-garde artists. Some critics felt this new art exemplified the degeneracy of the modern period, while others celebrated the conceptual break with Victorian realism, thereby opening up new vistas for artistic exploration. This radical shift in representation went much further than the moribund Impressionist movement, which still painted identifiable forms and subjects. The camera had liberated the Impressionists from painting exact replicas of subjects; however, it was not until the Post-Impressionists—introduced to Britain by Fry—that a radical break between reality and representation occurred. The geometrical forms of the Cubists were a far cry from the water-lilies of Monet.

The terminal boundary of this exhibit, 1914, marks the beginning of World War I, a shattering event that would permanently alter pre-war conceptions of art and culture by dissolving "old" Europe. The four-year butchery would forever change political, social and artistic institutions. Moreover, it would create massive paper shortages, as well economic crises that would reverberate throughout the publishing system—not to mention the sudden shift of readerly publics and artists who were now consigned to the trenches. Thus, the four-year period between 1910 and 1914 offers an unusually rich, if often overlooked, moment in British artistic history in which modern art began to take recognizable shape.

This exhibition focuses primarily on the work of artists published in *The New Age* during this exciting period of British cultural history. Art critics who contributed regularly to *The New Age* closely followed the openings, gallery spaces and art movements that were springing up on English soil; thus, *The New Age* was positioned to provide its readership a particularly detailed and careful critique of the various art movements, becoming a critical platform for discussing the "modern."

A Study | Auguste Herbin

The New Age introduced the Cubist works of Pablo Picasso, the neo-realist/Impressionists Walter Sickert and Charles Ginner, and the geometrical and avant-garde work of Jacob Epstein, David Bomberg and Gaudier-Brzeska. The culmination of these critical debates occurred in 1914 when Sickert and T.E. Hulme squared off in a critical dialogue about new art—the debate that frames this exhibition. On January 1, 1914, the more traditional critic, Sickert, started editing a series called "Modern Art Drawings," which would appear sporadically throughout volume 14 of *The New Age*. The images he selected, however, are not as "modern" as you might expect. Sickert was a neo-realist and his conception of the new involved a break with the traditional or classical selection of subjects, such as still-lifes or portraits of wealthy individuals. He argued, in fact, that all subjects, and particularly modern city life, should be the topic of the new art. On the other end, T. E. Hulme's contribution, "Contemporary Drawings," began in March, 1914, and can be seen as a critical riposte to Sickert's distrust of avant-garde artists. Hulme believed that abstract and geometrical art was the wave of the future—art that was not based on recognizable reality, but on odd, mechanized forms and shapes where the human body seems part of some great machine. Hulme played a pivotal role in introducing some of Britain's most experimental artists to the reading public—including Gaudier-Brzeska, William Roberts and C. R. Nevinson. This "contemporary" series might thus more closely resemble the mode of artistic expression that would later be called "modernist" art.

The title of this exhibition, "Mind the Gap," calls attention to the various "gaps" in culture and definitions of art at this time. First, there are the gaps between what constitutes "modern" art or "contemporary" art. Second, there is the gap between received history and the actual history of the person on the street at this time. Periodicals, in particular, allow the contemporary viewer a glimpse into the daily lives the people living in the complex social fabric of Britain at the time. It is often said that newspapers are the "first draft of history." Not only are they the first draft, but also they are the most complete draft, since they allow us to view a slice of culture as it actually appeared at this time. Thus, not only did artistic discussions appear in *The New Age*, but the rise of German militarism is commonly treated in *The New Age's* political columns, appearing typically as a threat to the Empire shored-up by Victoria in the previous century. Difficult debates about Irish Home Rule also simmered in the pages, as Irish nationalists fought for sovereignty from the centuries-old occupation by the English. Thus, this is also a time of great anxiety among the British reading public, which brings us to another artist who is presented in this exhibit. Throughout the entire four-year run of this show, you will find the work of the cartoonist Tom Titt who contributed regularly, albeit sometimes obliquely, to this debate. His skillful parodies of all the artists shown in *The New Age* suggest not only a satirical response to the artistic debates occurring in the magazine's pages, but also reveal the anxiety as a community and a nation face real national and international changes.

A Dancer | Gaudier-Brzeska

In Titt's work, we find some humor and laughter in moments that were actually quite unsettling.

What all of these things suggest is that the conversation about what was modern or contemporary did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, these artistic debates, anxieties and discussions occurred in a complex, interlocking social matrix. Thus, the medium of the periodical affords us a special glimpse across the cultural spectrum into the artistic and political minds of English culture. The digital kiosk located in this gallery allows you to view the entire contents of *The New Age*, so keep in mind these other cultural concerns about defining the modern in relation to the market (advertising) and other editorial pieces in the periodical. The only thing for certain during this period was that Britain was in a time of rapid transformation, and the intellectuals of that moment where trying to chart a course for the future in all forms of English culture—particularly that of art. This exhibition attempts to capture a snapshot of these discussions through the lens of periodical publishing.

Because that lens is so wide, *The New Age* allows us to reveal—but not to close—the "gaps" in the traditional narratives of modernism.

Why were the magazines so popular?

Britain at the turn of the century had a large educated public thanks to the Education Reform Bills passed in the second-half of the nineteenth century, as well as to advances in printing technology that made vast amounts of reading material available to a seemingly insatiable—if increasingly diverse—audience. This is the cultural moment when magazines assumed cultural ubiquity, becoming a regular presence in the home, the café and the commuter train. With these magazines, furthermore, came a boom in advertising. Large-scale periodical publications could afford to offer their magazines at below-market cost, since advertising could make up the difference and add great profits to the journal. Yet advertisers were often viewed with suspicion, because it was feared an advertising agency could hold some power over the editorial choices made in a magazine. Later, so-called "little magazines" would pride themselves on being free from advertisements, as they sought to cultivate cultural credibility among the intellegensia who viewed advertisements as a pollutant to real ideas and social commentaries. We see this struggle within *The New Age* itself. In 1910, ads for sewing machines, cocoa, pens and "socialist cigarettes" appear regularly. By 1914, these advertisements had all but ceased. On July 31, 1913, a reader notes the absence of advertisements. Orage confirms that *Advertisers' Weekly* suggested *The New Age* had a "dangerous character." This occurs at the very moment when the debates concerning the "modern" and the "contemporary" in art take place in the pages of *The New Age*, implying that larger questions concerning commerce and culture are at play. This suggests that the market is at the very heart of the beginning of modernism.