London Art History Society
Affiliated to Birkbeck History of Art

STUDY DAY

German modernist women artists: in and against the avant-garde

Date/Time	Tuesday 18th May 2027 11am to 4.30pm	**Price**	£49 in person £44 post-event recording
Venue	Meeting Room, The Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BF	**Lecturer**	Dr Emily Christensen

In early twentieth-century Germany, radical new ideas were transforming the nature of art. Everything was being challenged: subject matter, forms, use of colour, and the very materials from which it was made. To what extent were women artists, long excluded from the institutions of art, able to participate in this cultural revolution?

Adding context to the National Gallery *German Expressionism* exhibition this study day examines the role played by women artists in Germany's avant-garde from around 1905 to 1930. We begin by exploring the social and cultural assumptions that shaped women's participation in this experimental milieu, and how they played out in the life and work of Marianne Werefkin and Gabriele Münter. Lecture 2 introduces the *Neue Frau* (or New Woman), a new subject in art which became a way of exploring what it meant to be a modern woman and professional painter. Lecture 3 turns to the female body and its changing role in modern art, exploring how women artists challenged its traditional representation as a passive object for male consumption and invested it with new meanings and purposes. Our final lecture shows how innovators such as Florence Henri, Alice Lex-Nerlinger and Hannah Höch experimented with photography and photomontage, harnessing new media to give form to provocative ideas about art, politics and modern life.

1. Against the Grain: The Avant-Garde's Problem with Women
2. The *Neue Frau*: Reinventing the Modern Woman
3. Taking back the body: Women and the Politics of Representation
4. New Media, New Opportunities? Women and the Technologies of Modernism

Lecturer

Dr Emily Christensen is an art historian of European nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, specialising in German modernism and questions of representation in Orientalism. She has recently published *Kandinsky's Abstract Orientalism: Colonial Contexts and Early Abstraction* (Routledge, 2026) and has contributed essays to major exhibition catalogues, including the forthcoming National Gallery exhibition catalogue, *German Expressionism* (2027). Emily co-curated two exhibitions at The Courtauld Gallery. She spent several years as an Associate Lecturer at The Courtauld Institute of Art.