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**British Art Network Seminar
John Deakin – Before Bacon, Beyond Soho**

Thursday 25 May 2017 10.00-18.00
Tate Britain (Duffield Room, Clore entrance)

The British Art Network brings together professionals working with British art from the 16th century to the present day. The aim of the network is to contribute to the sharing of expertise, research and ideas across cultural organisations; to enable improvements in curatorial skills and collection knowledge; and to foster greater collaboration between partners leading to enriched understanding and enjoyment of British art for audiences across the UK.



John Deakin, Portrait 1930s © The John Deakin Archive

The seminar will be a new and wider examination of photographer John Deakin before he met Francis Bacon and the work that he produced beyond his strong association with Soho, especially during the Second World War and in Europe, most notably Paris, Rome and Genoa. The impetus for the seminar is current research being undertaken by Paul Rousseau of the John Deakin Archive (which is owned by James Moores), advised by Gill Hedley. The long term aim of the current project is to have the first full career overview exhibition in the UK, and the first Deakin exhibition outside UK.

Programme

10.00 – 10.30 Registration and welcome tea and coffee at Tate Britain

10.30 – 10.40 Welcome from Sarah Victoria Turner, Deputy Director for Research at the Paul Mellon Centre

Session One: “A BORN SOPHISTICATE” (Dan Farson about John Deakin)

10.40 – 11.05 Introduction to the seminar by Gill Hedley

Not many facts are known about John Deakin’s life before he became linked with Francis Bacon and the years he spent beyond Soho although there are hundreds of photographs as powerful evidence. Dan Farson and Deakin both tell tall tales and provide glimpses of events; some turn out to be true. The basic facts are not as exciting as the images but are helping to build a clearer picture of Deakin and his interest in painting, his travels as collector and jet-setter with Arthur Jeffress in the 1930s, his war career and time in Africa as well as a flâneur with a camera in London, Paris, Genoa, Rome and Athens. This introduction looks into archive and legend and then leaves Deakin just before Bacon and Soho.

11.05 – 11.30 Introduction to the John Deakin Archive by Paul Rousseau

John Deakin is best known – if known at all - for a striking series of portraits he took when working for British Vogue magazine in the early 1950s, and for providing Francis Bacon with photographs of some of their shared Soho circle to use as base images to paint from.

Yet in The John Deakin Archive we have thousands of negatives and hundreds of prints un-related to these projects. What are these other images, who are they of and what do they tell us about Deakin, his working practice and his time? Can they add anything to our understanding of the war’s influence on post-war media culture? What can we extract from previously unidentified faces and places, and what help might they give to other scholars of the period? This other Deakin, Before Bacon and Beyond Soho, presents his pre-war roots, war years and European career as deserving equal attention as his definitive portraits of 50’s Soho Bohemia. The John Deakin Archive holds nearly four thousand negatives and hundreds of vintage prints – but no letters or personal items. The material was rescued from under Deakin’s bed by his close friend Bruce Bernard. Nearly four hundred are photographs of Paris, including portraits of Christian Bérard, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Picasso, with around another 100 vintage prints of street scenes, beggars, and surreal visions of circuses and shop windows. Hundreds of others show his work and travels in Rome, Genoa, Tangier and Athens.

**11.30 - 11.45 Film screening “Only Those With a Daemon”
 British Art Studies Issue one 2014**

- Session Two: *"FATALLY DRAWN TO THE HUMAN RACE" (John Deakin about himself)*
- 11.45 – 12.05 Dr Hilary Roberts *John Deakin and the Army Film and Photographic Unit*
- This talk will explore the general role and remit of the AFPU and Deakin's specific contribution in the Mediterranean theatre, which is of a rather different nature to that of his post war photography.
- 12.05 – 12.25 Prof Jean Wainwright, *The Imprisoned Stare: John Deakin's portraiture*
- A Deakin portrait, unknown in the UK has just been found - hidden in full sight - on a US postage stamp. The subject is poet Theodore Roethke ; fellow photographer and poet Gerard Malanga, friend and major Warhol collaborator, wrote two poems about the Roethke photograph and has recorded a reading especially for the seminar. The portrait will be discussed in relation to Deakin's portraits of David Lean and George Barker.
- 12.30 - 13.15: Delegates break for lunch (provided) in Clore Foyer
- 13.00-13.15 Film screening *"Double Exposures and Modernism"*
 British Art Studies Issue one 2014
- Session Three: *"THE SECOND NASTIEST MAN I EVER MET." (Barbara Hutton about John Deakin)*
- 13.15 – 13.35 Carol Jacobi *Portraits of Isabel Rawsthorne*
- Rawsthorne and Deakin, exact contemporaries, grew up a few miles from each other in Wallasey near Liverpool and got to know each other in pre-war Paris. Deakin's 1965 series of pictures of Rawsthorne are well known, but this paper will consider an earlier set taken in 1952 for a *Vogue* spread in 1953. It will suggest an artistic, social and personal context for the unusual archaic imagery Deakin adopted for the portraits.
- 13.35 – 13.55 John Christie *The making of "John Deakin: Salvage of a Soho Photographer" 1991*
- Christie will give a brief outline of the genesis and the ups and downs of making the 1991 film for Channel Four 'The Salvage of a Soho Photographer - The Life and Unsteady Times of John Deakin'. The film, which will be shown straight after the introduction, features interviews with key Soho characters connected with Deakin including Dan Farson, Ian Board of the Colony Room, columnist Jeffrey Bernard, Henrietta Moraes, picture editor Bruce Bernard, Gaston Berlemont of the French House, Tom Hawkyard of *Vogue* and George Melly.
- 13.55 – 14.25 Film screening *"John Deakin: Salvage of a Soho Photographer", 1991*
 directed by John Christie

- 14.25-14.35 **Gill Hedley *John Deakin: Appearances in Barbara Ker-Seymer photograph albums, Tate Archive***
- Barbara Ker-Seymer is a neglected photographer whose archives in Tate are probably better known for the wealth of material they contain about Edward Burra than her own work. Seven albums show her life amongst her fellow 'Bright Young Things' and throughout are many images that show the extent to which John Deakin became a close friend in the 1930s, introduced by Arthur Jeffress, and that they kept in touch after the Second World War. Her influence on Deakin remains unexplored. The albums also hold the secret of Deakin's 'drag' photos.
- 14.35-14.45 **Elena Crippa *All too Human***
- This talk will focus on Deakin's inclusion in the "All too Human" forthcoming exhibition at Tate Britain
- 14.45-15.05 **Dominic Janes *John Deakin and the Male Mannequin***
- This talk will introduce a series of images produced by John Deakin that focus on shop windows. It will then look back at the photographer's earlier life so as to situate the shop window, particularly that of the menswear store, as potentially queer space in the interwar period and after. The talk will explore the associations of shop work and window-dressing with effeminacy and homosexuality. It will look at some of the ways in which male mannequins can be seen to have provided inspiration for Deakin in his exploration of bohemian street life.
- 15.10-16.10 **Visit to *Queer British Art 1861-1967* exhibition curated by Clare Barlow**
- During the visit to the exhibition, Paul Rousseau and Clare Barlow will introduce the Deakin works in the Queer British Art exhibition
- 16.10- 16.25 **Break for tea and coffee (provided)**
Film screening "*Queer Looks*" British Art Studies, Paul Mellon Centre online journal
- Session Four: **PANEL DISCUSSION and audience Q&A**
- 16.25-16.50 **Panel discussion chaired by Gill Hedley. Panel: Paul Rousseau, John Christie, Jean Wainwright, Hilary Roberts, Dominic Janes**
- 16.50-17.00 **Reflections by chair, next steps and thanks**
- 17.05-17.45 **Drinks in Duffield Room; three British Art Studies (PMC online journal) films shown again**
- Opportunity to look at John Deakin Archive material**
- 17.45-18.00 **close**



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Resources:

British Art Studies Journal - Deakin: Double Exposures

In this series of short films made by Jonathan Law, the art historian James Boaden, and the curator of The John Deakin Archive, Paul Rousseau, discuss the double-exposure images made by John Deakin (1912-1972) in the 1950s and 1960s.

British Art Studies is the joint publication of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (PMC), London, and the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA), New Haven. The journal provides an innovative space for new research on all aspects of British art, architecture and visual culture.

<http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-1/deakin-double-exposures>

The John Deakin Archive

The John Deakin Archive is part of James Moores Organisation and includes James Moores' Collection and Bruce Bernard Collection of 100 Photographs.

<http://thejohndeakinarchive.co.uk/aboutdeakin.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheJohnDeakinArchive/>

John Deakin: Tate archive

John Deakin is featured in the photograph albums of Barbara Ker-Seymer which are able to view via the Tate Archive pages and at Tate and feature some fascinating images from the 1930's-40's era.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/tga-974-5-7/ker-seymer-photograph-album/8>