Diploma Lecture Series 2011
Art and Australia II: European Preludes and Parallels

Degenerates and perverts: the legendary 1939 Herald exhibition of modern masters

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Lecture summary:
In 1939 an exhibition of art came to Australia which became legendary. The 1939 Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art has been called the single most enlivening event in Australia's modern cultural development. Opening when Australia was undergoing profound change, not only in art but also socially, this exhibition became the focus for the opposing forces of cultural conservatism and innovation which marked the time.

This lecture will examine the many and competing claims made for this exhibition. It will examine how the show was organised and selected, where and how it was displayed in Australia and what reception it received. Finally, it will attempt to evaluate its impact upon Australian art and society, at a time when conservatives were accused of perverting progress and progressives were accused of degeneracy.

Slide list:
1. Title slide, showing people looking at works from the Herald exhibition.
2. Catalogue and works from Melbourne's '9 x 5 Impression Exhibition' in 1889.
3. Roy De Maistre's colour wheel and a work recalling the 1919 Colour in art exhibition.
4. Cover of catalogues to the exhibition, as printed in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.
5. Keith Murdoch, who secured the financial support of the Herald chain of newspapers for the exhibition.
6. Two pencil sketches of Basil Burdett, curator of the Herald exhibition.
7. Works being unpacked in Australia for the Herald exhibition.
8. Works by Australians and New Zealanders in the exhibition: Derwent Lees Banyuls 1913 (Southampton City Art Gallery) & Frances Hodgkins Pastorale 1929/30 (Auckland City Art Gallery).
10. Cezanne Interior of a forest (Sous-Bois) c.1885 (Art Gallery of Ontario).
13. Gauguin Petit Breton à l’oie 1889 and Willow by the Aven 1888. (Private collection)
15. Van Gogh Portrait of art dealer Alexander Reid 1887 (Glasgow Art Gallery).
17. Three paintings by Matisse in the Herald exhibition.

21. ‘Going all modern’: George Finey cartoon of visitors to the Herald exhibition.

22. Contemporary advertisements showing the influence of Cubism.

23. Leger *Femme au chat* 1921 (Kunsthalle, Hamburg).

24. Max Ernst *Le paysage au germe de blé* 1934 (Galerie Ernst Beyeler, Basel).

25. Bernard Smith *Pompeii* 1940 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne).

26. Surrealist inspired cover for the magazine *Pandemonium*.

* 27. Salvador Dalí *The memory of the child-woman* 1932, oil on canvas, collection of the Salvador Dalí Museum, Florida. This was the most ‘controversial’ painting in the Herald exhibition.


29. Paul Nash *The nest of the siren* 1930 (Government Art Collection, UK)

30. Edward Wadsworth *The English Channel* 1934 (Private collection, UK)

31. Wadsworth with John Wardell Power *A wreck on the shore* and Donald Friend *Mr Smythe’s Carriage*

32. Giorgio di Chirico *Scuola di gladiatori* 1927 & Jeffrey Smart *Strange street* 1955

33. Georges Seurat *Study for “Chahut”* 1889 (Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York)

34. Chaïm Soutine *Portrait of Madeleine Castaing* c.1929 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

35. Amedeo Modigliani *Female nude* c.1916 (Courtauld Institute, London) & *Portrait of Morgan Russell* 1919 (Private collection)

36. People viewing the exhibition in Melbourne


38. Ben Nicholson 1933 (*composition in black and white*) (Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, Bath, UK)

39. Stanley Spencer *Going to bed* 1936 (Private collection, Switzerland) & *View from tennis court, Cookham Dean* 1938 (Private collection, UK)

40. Christopher Wood *Tréboul, the blue sea* 1930 (Private collection, UK)

41. Jacob Epstein *Peggy Jean Epstein (twelfth portrait; the sick child)* 1928 Bronze (Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester) & *Rabindranath Tagore* 1926 Bronze (Private collection)

42. Visitors to the Herald exhibition in Melbourne

43. Claims made for the Herald exhibition

44. & 45. Installation shots of the exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia

46. Morland Lewis *Ferryside, South Wales* c.1930 (Art Gallery of South Australia)

47. Stanley Spencer *Garden view, Cookham Dean* 1938 (Art Gallery of South Australia)

48. Henry Tonks *Preparing for the Christening* c.1910 (Art Gallery of South Australia)

49. Charles Despiau *Madame Paul-Louis Weiller called ‘The Greek’* 1935 Terra-cotta (Art Gallery of South Australia)

50. The exhibition on display in Melbourne

51. & 52. Holman Hunt’s Light of the World on display in Sydney

53. Hugh Ramsay portrait of James Stuart MacDonald, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1939

* 54. Vincent van Gogh *Portrait of a man* 1886/7, oil on canvas on panel, NGV, purchased from the Herald exhibition for £2,196

55. Felix Vallotton *Le Point du Jour* 1901 (National Gallery of Victoria)
56. Derain *Roses dans un pot* c.1931-1932 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, selected by a committee of artists from the Contemporary Art Society)

57. Stanley Spencer *Parents resurrecting* 1933 (National Gallery of Victoria)

58. Herbert Vere Evatt with the portrait of Morgan Russell by Modigliani which he and his wife, Mary Alice Evatt, purchased from the exhibition

* 59. Fernand Leger *La bicyclette* 1930, oil on canvas, AGNSW, presented by Mary Alice Evatt in 1966 in memory of her husband, the late Dr. H. V. Evatt

60. Cartoon of the exhibition at the AGNSW

* 61. Charles Camoin *The tavern keeper* 1899, oil on canvas, AGNSW, purchased from the Herald exhibition by the AGNSW for over £2000 as a Gauguin and later discovered to be by Charles Camoin.

* 62. Albert Marquet *The Pont Neuf bridge under snow* late 1920s, oil on canvas, AGNSW, purchased from the Herald exhibition

63. Henry Tonks *The pearl necklace* 1909 (AGNSW)

64. Wilson Steer *Knaresborough* 1900 (AGNSW)

65. Leslie Hunter *Blue houseboat, Loch Lomond* (AGNSW)

66. Derain *Paysage aux rochers* c.1928-1930 (AGNSW)

67. & 69 & 73 Claims made for the Herald exhibition

68. Selection of Herald works on display at the AGNSW during 1942

70. Works by Juan Gris, Picasso and Braque in the Herald exhibition

71. Photograph of Clarice Zander with Jacob Epstein and a view of her 1933 exhibition of Contemporary British Art

72. Cover of the catalogues to Zander’s 1933 exhibition and Penleigh Boyd’s 1923 *European Art Exhibition for Australia*

74. Duncan Grant *The dancers* c.1910-11 (Tate Gallery, London)

75. Raoul Dufy *Le manoir du Vallon* 1934 (Private collection)

76. Elaine Haxton *Elizabeth Bay House* 1940 (Private collection)

77. Joy Hester *Nude* 1939 & Modigliani *Nude* c.1916

78. Georges Braque *Woman before her easel* 1936 & Jean Appleton *Woman at Easel* 1939

* 79. Cezanne’s *Portrait of Madame Cézanne* 1888-90 Oil on canvas. Now in the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, with a study of the painting made by Australian artist Joshua Smith

80. Van Gogh *Wheat field* 1889 & Arthur Boyd *Rosebud landscape* 1939

81. Peploe *Still life* 1913 & Margaret Preston *Thea Proctor's Tea Party* 1924

82. Photograph of a meeting of the AGNSW Board in 1938

83. Photographs of Mary Alice Evatt with Picasso and at George Bell’s studio

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Salvador Dalí, *The memory of the child-woman* 1932, oil on canvas, collection of the Salvador Dalí Museum, Florida. This was the most 'controversial' painting in the Herald exhibition.
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