



## Sussex Modern

Paintings and sculpture, artists and houses

**20–24 September 2022 (MI 498)**

5 days • £1,960

Lecturer: Monica Bohm-Duchen

**The heart of English modernism and the Romantic revival.**

**Artistic houses, magical gardens and the charismatic personalities who created them.**

**Exceptional collections of modernist art in award-winning galleries and museums.**

The light and topography of Sussex have drawn artists since the start of the eighteenth century. Turner made his first sketch at Petworth in 1809, while Constable, spurred to the coast by efforts to relieve his wife's tuberculosis in the 1820s, found the sea, towns and landscapes a source of inspiration – although Brighton he called 'Piccadilly by the sea'.

A century later, in autumn 1916, the artist Vanessa Bell, seeking a rural retreat from Bloomsbury, was struck by 'the extraordinary peace and beauty' of a spot beyond Lewes, and by 'the very warm, most lovely browns & warm greys and reds' of the countryside, combined with 'the chalk everywhere giving that odd kind of softness'.

She was not alone. The diverse and lovely natural environment of Sussex drew in a number of painters, sculptors, architects and writers in the mid-20th century. Free from urban constraints and ideological and moral judgements, they formed communities, formal and informal, in which social experiment was a stimulating impetus.

The flowering artistic output that ensued emanated from Eric Gill's Arts & Crafts guild at Ditchling; from Roland Penrose and Lee Miller's Surrealist farmhouse hub near Chiddingfold; from Eric Ravilious and John Piper's regular sojourns at Furlongs cottage near Fittlehampton; and, best known of all, from Charleston, the Bloomsbury retreat of Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Roger Fry *et al.*

Shared artistic and intellectual interests, coupled with turbulent events in Europe, propelled many Continental and transatlantic personalities to join them. Picasso, for example, was one of many art-world greats who paid visits to Farley Farm. The legacy of this creative vortex is celebrated in a number of first-class collections viewed on this tour, as well as in the homes, gardens, churches and institutions created and enhanced by these artists.



*Hastings, from 'Sussex' by Wilfrid Ball, publ. 1906.*

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Chichester.** The tour starts from the Chichester Harbour Hotel at 2.45pm. Pallant House Gallery in Chichester holds one of the finest collections of modern British art in the country. A large part was bequeathed by the collector and architect Sandy Wilson (British Library), whose final project was the sensitive extension of this gallery beyond its Queen Anne core. Overnight in Chichester.

**Day 2: West Sussex.** Chichester Cathedral houses a remarkable collection of modern artworks by John Piper, Chagall, Sutherland and others. West Dean Gardens includes the Dalí-inspired Artichoke House. In 1920 Eric Gill, Hilary Peplar and Desmond Chute founded a Roman Catholic art colony, the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, on Ditchling Common. A collection of work by its members and others is housed at the award-winning Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft. First of three nights in Horsted.

**Day 3: East Sussex.** Farleys House & Gallery is the former home of Surrealist artist and activist Roland Penrose and photographer Lee Miller, with works by them and their famous friends adorning the walls. In Bexhill-on-Sea, the once controversial, now iconic De La Warr Pavilion was designed in the mid-1930s by émigré architects Serge Chermayeff and Erich Mendelsohn. Hastings Contemporary opened

in 2012 to house the fast-growing Jerwood Collection of Modern British Art.

**Day 4: East Sussex.** In Charleston Farmhouse almost every surface is decorated by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, whose country residence it was, and the same pair painted murals at St Michael's, Berwick. Nearby, St Peter's Church in Fittlehampton has a John Piper stained-glass window, and Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant are buried in the graveyard. Leonard and Virginia Woolf's modest 17th-century country retreat, Monk's House, was occupied by the couple from 1919; as at Charleston, the garden is beautiful.

**Day 5: East Sussex, Tudeley.** The striking refurbishment of Towner Gallery in Eastbourne by Rick Mather opened in 2009. Highlights of its permanent collection include work by Eric Ravilious, Christopher Wood, Alfred Wallis and Edward Burra. All Saints in the village of Tudeley is the only church in the world to have all its windows designed by Marc Chagall – nothing short of a revelation. The tour ends at Tonbridge Railway Station by 4.00pm.

*The starting and finishing points of some UK tours are railway stations because it is quicker to travel through London by train than by coach.*

Sussex Modern  
continued

## Lecturer

**Monica Bohm-Duchen.** Lecturer, writer and curator specialising in 20th-century art in the context of the historical events that influenced the period. She studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before graduating in English Literature and History of Art from University College London, and obtained an MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art. She has lectured for the National Gallery, Tate, Royal Academy, Courtauld, Sotheby's and Birkbeck College. Among her publications are *Art & the Second World War* (2013).

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £1,960. **Single occupancy:** £2,305.

**Included:** hotel accommodation; breakfasts, three dinners and one lunch with wine, water and coffee; transport by private coach; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation.** **Harbour Hotel, Chichester** ([chichester-harbour-hotel.co.uk](http://chichester-harbour-hotel.co.uk)). A smart, boutique hotel in the centre of town. This 4-star hotel is within walking distance of the Cathedral and Pallant Gallery. **Horsted Place, Uckfield** ([horstedplace.co.uk](http://horstedplace.co.uk)). A 4-star, traditional hotel in the countryside. Rooms vary in size. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

**How strenuous?** Unavoidably there is quite a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 53 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.

**Combine this tour with:** *Footpaths of Umbria*, 12–19 September 2022 (MI 469); *Piero della Francesca*, 26 September–2 October 2022 (MI 503).