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# SYMPOSIUM

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**FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER, 9.30am – 4.45pm**

**The Barber Institute of Fine Arts**

This full day of papers and a round-table discussion, from European and US academics and curators, explores how Bellows and other Ashcan School artists approached the body.

9.30 – 10am

## **Registration and refreshments**

10.15 – 10.30am

## **Welcome**

**Nicola Kalinsky**

*Director, Barber Institute of Fine Arts*

10.30 – 11am

## **George Bellows's Body**

**Dr John Fagg**

*Director of American and Canadian Studies Centre,  
University of Birmingham*

George Bellows was a big, tall man. He was ungainly and awkward in social settings and slightly out of place in the art world, but graceful and athletic on the basketball court and baseball diamond. This paper considers *Nude, Miss Bentham*, 1906, in relation to Bellows's body. It shows the way that the painting contains traces of the encounter between the very different bodies of the artist and his subject, and of Bellows's sense of himself. It then looks more broadly at photographs, drawings and paintings of Bellows to explore the way that his bodily experiences shaped the art he made in the early stages of his career. This relationship, between lived experience and representation, was emphasised by Bellows's friend Emma Goldman who in 1911 urged painters to celebrate the body as it is "the nearest thing to us in all the world."

11 – 11.30am

## **Miss Bentham's Body in Art and Law**

**Dr Amy Werbel**

*Associate Professor, History of Art Department*

*State University of New York - Fashion Institute of Technology*

1906 was a propitious year to begin painting nudes in America. In August that year, the nation's first federally-appointed censor, Anthony Comstock, raided the Art Students League in New York, and seized copies of a student magazine featuring life drawings

with full frontal nudity. George Bellows' choice to paint *Nude: Miss Bentham* in 1906 should be understood as a defiant affirmation of American free speech rights in the face of over-reaching obscenity prosecutions. The painted body of Miss Bentham is a statement not only of Bellows' right to depict her, but also of her right to exhibit her body, and to work at a time when "New Women" were battling for educational and professional opportunities, and the right to vote.

11.30 – 11.45am

### Refreshments

11.45am – 12.15pm

## Body/Building: New York City around 1910

**Dr Adam Greenhalgh**

*Associate Curator*

*National Gallery of Art, Washington*

This paper will consider depictions of bodies and buildings by George Bellows, John Sloan, John Marin, and other New York artists around 1910, noting slippages between the two—bodies as buildings, buildings as bodies. The city's rapidly increasing population and its towering skyline were a source of pleasure and anxiety; this paper will situate their depiction in a broader culture of uncertainty and risk—risk of bodily contagion and architectural collapse.

12.15 – 12.30pm

### Questions

1 – 2pm

### Lunch

University Staff House

2.15 – 2.45pm

## Commercial Illustration's Immaterial Bodies

**Professor Jennifer Greenhill**

*Associate Professor of Art History*

*University of Southern California*

What strategies did the commercial illustrators of Bellows's day develop to articulate the body in the context of the mass press? How did the particular material contexts of illustration inform their techniques for appealing to modern consumers whose own bodies were on the move as they flipped through a magazine, for example, or rushed past a newsstand? This paper explores these questions by focusing on imagery that sought to tap into the multi-sensorial conditions of consumption, often by leaving bodily contours out of view.

2.45 – 3.15pm

**“How does that help the working classes?”  
Nudity and Feminism in *The Masses***

**Dr Rachel Sanders**

*Lecturer in Art and Design History  
Oxford Brookes University*

Women’s rights were a central concern of *The Masses* – suffrage, birth control, sex education and free love were among the causes the magazine championed. Female artists and writers were given a voice as regular contributors, and women were frequently the focus of news articles, editorials, poetry, fiction and lengthy social and political commentaries. These ran alongside depictions of women in realist drawings, symbolic illustrations, cartoons and nude studies. This paper examines this imagery within the context of the ‘woman question’ that emerged unresolved following the Second International, and *The Masses*’ artistic aims and left-wing politics.

3.15 – 3.30pm

**Questions**

3.30 – 4.15pm

**Roundtable Discussion**

Chair: Robert Wenley, Deputy Director

- Christopher Riopelle, *Curator, National Gallery, London*
- Dr Katherine Bourguignon, *Curator, Terra Foundation for American Art*
- Dr Frances Fowle, *Senior Curator, Scottish National Gallery*
- Nicola Kalinsky, *Director, Barber Institute of Fine Arts*

4.15 – 4.45pm

**Closing Remarks**

**BOOKING:**

**Delegate fee: £30; £25 Concessions; £10 Students (includes lunch and refreshments)**

**To book by credit/debit card, please call 0121 414 2261. Enquiries: [education@barber.org.uk](mailto:education@barber.org.uk)**

**STUDENT TRAVEL BURSARIES: Available for undergraduate or postgraduate students whose place of study is more than 50 miles from the University of Birmingham. For application form:**

**<http://barber.org.uk/bellows-and-the-body/> (OR CAN WE ATTACH THE WORD DOC to the microsite?)**