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978-1-107-10587-4 - British Art and the First World War, 1914–1924

James Fox

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British Art and the First World War, 1914–1924

The First World War is usually believed to have had a catastrophic effect on British art, killing artists and movements and creating a mood of belligerent philistinism around the nation. In this book, however, James Fox paints a very different picture of artistic life in wartime Britain. Drawing on a wide range of sources, he examines the cultural activities of largely forgotten individuals and institutions, as well as the press and the government, in order to shed new light on art's unusual role in a nation at war. He argues that the conflict's artistic consequences, though initially disruptive, were ultimately and enduringly productive. He reveals how the war effort helped forge a much closer relationship between the British public and their art – a relationship that informed the country's cultural agenda well into the 1920s.

JAMES FOX is a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107105874

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First published 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Fox, James, 1982–

British art and the First World War, 1914–1924 / James Fox (Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge).

pages cm. – (Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-10587-4 (hardback)

1. World War, 1914–1918—Art and the war. 2. World War, 1914–1918—Social aspects—Great Britain. 3. Art, British—20th century. 4. Artists—Great Britain—History—20th century. 5. Art and society—Great Britain—History—20th century. 6. Great Britain—Intellectual life—20th century. I. Title.

N9155.G7F69 2015

709.41'0904—dc23 2015010003

ISBN 978-1-107-10587-4 Hardback

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been working on this book intermittently since I began my doctoral thesis in October 2006. The project thus possesses the dubious honour of lasting twice as long as the war it chronicles. And yet it would not have been possible at all without the advice, support and assistance that I have been fortunate enough to receive over the last eight years. My gratitude must first go to my supervisor Duncan Robinson, who agreed to take me on as his PhD student in the first place. I am grateful to other colleagues at the University of Cambridge, particularly Jean Michel Massing, whose wisdom and friendship have proved invaluable throughout. I have also received advice from a legion of scholars in the field who have made the time to offer suggestions that helped shape (and reshape) this volume. Grace Brockington, Michael Walsh, Maria Tippett and David Peters Corbett have been especially charitable.

This project relied heavily on primary sources, and thus on the competence and benevolence of their custodians: my thanks go to Simon Fenwick at the Royal Watercolour Society; Mark Pomeroy at the Royal Academy; Monica Grose-Hodge at the Art-Workers' Guild; Emmanuel Minne at the Royal Society of British Sculptors; Emma Pearce at Winsor & Newton; Alan Crookham at the National Gallery; and to the staff at the Artists' General Benevolent Institution and the Professional Classes Aid Council, who opened their offices to me. I must single out Sandra de Laszlo and Caroline Corbeau at the De László Foundation in London for particular praise: they allowed me to pore over Philip de László's remarkable papers (many of which were uncatalogued at the time), and met my every request with generosity, enthusiasm and efficiency.

It goes without saying that this book would never have happened were it not for the support I received from various institutions in Britain and beyond. I am grateful to the Arts & Humanities Research Council, who funded my doctoral studies; to Churchill College, Cambridge, who gave me a base from which to work following the completion of my PhD; to the Yale Center for British Art, where a visiting scholarship allowed me to undertake further research in the

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autumn of 2010; to Hawthornden Castle for granting me an invaluable month of undisturbed writing time; and above all to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, whose generous four-year Research Fellowship gave me the necessary space to transform my doctoral thesis into the (very different) book that exists today.

Some of the material here has appeared in other places before. Parts of Chapter 2 were published as “‘Traitor Painters’: Artists and Espionage in the First World War, 1914–1918”, *British Art Journal* 10 (Spring 2009); and as “‘Fiddling While Rome is Burning’: Hostility to Art during the First World War, 1914–1918”, *Visual Culture in Britain* 10 (Spring 2010). Material that was published as ‘Conflict and Consolation: British Art and the First World War, 1914–1919’, *Art History* 36 (September 2013), pp. 810–33, reappears here in Chapter 5 and I am grateful to the Association of Art Historians for granting me permission to reproduce it. I must also thank the team at Cambridge University Press who converted my shabby manuscript into such an elegant volume. Michael Watson was a pleasure to work with; Christopher Feeney was a superb copy editor; Rosalyn Scott was a model of efficiency; and my anonymous readers scrutinized the text with diligence and insight – and saved me from embarrassment at several points. And last but emphatically not least I must express my gratitude to the series editor Jay Winter. An exceptional historian whose vast output is as terrifying as it is inspiring, Jay’s support has meant a very great deal to me. It is a pleasure and an honour to be published in the wonderful series that he edits.

Finally, I must thank my friends and my family: to Jessica Berenbeim, Tom Stammers and Kirty Topiwala for advising on (and tolerating) the banalities of ‘writing up’; to my grandfather for offering me a quiet space in Cyprus in which I was able to write this book’s introduction and conclusion; to my obsessively tidy mother, who somehow endured a dining-table littered with library books and laptop leads for the best part of eight years; and of course to my brother Josh, who – though I never tell him – is my greatest inspiration.