



Course details

Course title

Art Appreciation: Who's the Muse? Eileen Agar, Claude Cahun and Isabel Rawsthorne

Course code

Q00017374

Course date

Start: 26/06/25

End: 10/07/25

Number of classes

3 sessions

Timetable

Thu 26th Jun, 10:30 to 12:30

Thu 3rd Jul, 10:30 to 12:30

Thu 10th Jul, 10:30 to 12:30

Branch

Enfield and Southgate

Tutor

Chantal Condron

Fee range

Free to £36.00

How you'll learn

You'll join a small group of fellow learners for classes at the venue indicated. Some materials may be provided in our virtual learning environment.

Got it!

In venue

Venue

Enfield Baptist Church (Enfield) (Enfiel
Cecil Road
Enfield
EN2 6TG

Course overview

What is a muse? How and why has this convention endured for centuries? On this focused course, we explore the identity and representation of the muse through the lives and work of three female artists: Claude Cahun (1894-1954), Eileen Agar (1899-1991) and Isabel Rawsthorne (1912-1992). Each week we focus on one artist, examining their individual backgrounds, training and a range of influences that helped to shape their practice across either painting, photography or sculpture. By exploring their work and artistic intentions we will discuss how the traditional concept of the modern muse was powerfully subverted by each of the artists.

Course description

The concept of the muse is centuries old: originating in ancient Greece, it has endured as a powerful symbol, predominantly of female identity in art and literature. On this course we examine questions around the origin of the muse particularly in the visual arts of the early to mid-20th century, with special focus on three artists: the French photographer, sculptor and writer Claude Cahun; British Surrealist painter and sculptor, Eileen Agar; and British painter, Isabel Rawsthorne. Through an in-depth exploration of one artist's work each week, we discuss how and why the female muse has been perpetuated by (often male) artists across the visual arts. In recent years, the work of each of these three artists has seen a revival in British and European art, as practitioners of dynamic works across painting, photography and sculpture. Cahun and Agar escaped comfortable backgrounds to pursue independent paths amid the avant-garde of the 1920s and '30s; while Rawsthorne was long regarded solely as the beautiful silent muse of modern artists Jacob Epstein, Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon. We discover how Cahun, Agar and Rawsthorne upturned social and cultural conventions of their day to produce some of the most startling artworks of modern art.

What financial support is available?

We don't want anything to stand in your way when it comes to bringing Adult learning within reach so if you need anything to support you to achieve your goals then speak to one of our education experts during your enrolment journey. Most of our courses are government funded but if you don't qualify or need alternative financial help to access them then let us know.

What other support is available?

All of our digital content, teaching and learning activities and assessments are designed to be accessible so if you need any additional support you can discuss this with the education experts during your enrolment journey and we will do all we can to make sure you have optimal access.

Source URL: <https://www.wea.org.uk/courses/languages-culture/art-history/26-june-art-appreciation-whos-muse-eileen-agar-claude-cahun>