

THE ART OF CRISIS: THE ART SCENE IN BRITAIN DURING WORLD WAR I
AND II AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE POST-WAR ART SCENE UNTIL 1960

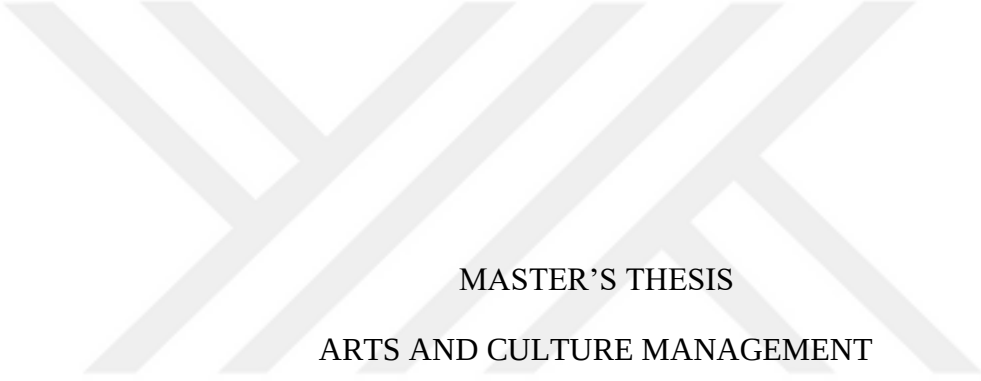


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JUNE, 2022

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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

Enduring and involving crises that humanity has encountered through generations has always been a triggering and inevitable effect on art scene over the world. Significantly, regarding two major wars World War I and World War II, twentieth century became a nest of these extraordinary changes since it did not just move the international capital of arts from Paris to New York City as a result of two major wars, but also pushed some major artists of the era to focus on the War scenes and has affected the artists in the Post-War Era in perspective, criticism, and practice. As a major actor in Europe, Britain and its government interfered by developing the war art schemes, establishing new Committees, Councils, organizations and museums while World War I was still going on, and forming a new Committee (WAAC) to create a well-organized collection and exhibiting the works of many artists in Britain including Paul Nash and Henry Moore. WWI, WWII and The Post War art scene in Britain also had a major impact on today's Contemporary Art, since it has led the establishment of many organizations and exhibitions which represents the artists' reaction on two catastrophic wars by bringing richness to creativity, perspective with educating the society, hence become the roots of today's contemporary art.

Thus, this thesis aims to focus on the shifts and establishments in the art scene, regarding the committees, councils, artists and the audience's needs and the role of the Government during the Post-War until 1960 in Britain during one of the roughest eras throughout the history in the first half of 20th century and to indicate how crises would enrich imagination and as a result of a social conflict.

Keywords: Wartime, Post-war, Art, Artist, World War I, World War II, Britain, Twentieth Century

ÖZET

İnsanlığın nesiller boyu karşılaştığı kalıcı ve kapsayıcı krizler, dünyanın her yerinde, sanat sahnesinde tetikleyici ve kaçınılmaz bir etkisi olmuştur. 20. yüzyılın, I. Dünya Savaşı ve II. dönemin belli başlı bazı sanatçıları belirli bir anlamda Savaş sahnelerine odaklanmaya itmiş ve zaman içinde ve Savaş Sonrası dönemde birçok sanatçıyı bakış açısı, eleştiri ve uygulama konularında etkilemiştir. Avrupa'daki ülkeler arasında önemli bir aktör olan İngiltere ve hükümeti, çeşitli organizasyonlar aracılığıyla, savaş sırasında üretilen sanata planlar geliştirerek, Paul Nash ve Henry Moore dahil olmak üzere İngiltere'deki birçok sanatçının eserlerini sergileyen iyi organize edilmiş bir koleksiyon oluşturmuştur. Britanya'daki Savaş Sonrası Sanat Sahnesi, sanatçıların yaratıcılığa, perspektife zenginlik katan ve dolayısıyla günümüz çağdaş sanatının kökleri haline gelen iki yıkıcı savaşa yaklaşımını temsil ettiğinden, günümüzün Çağdaş Sanatı üzerinde de büyük bir etkiye sahiptir.

Bu nedenle, bu tez, insanlık tarihinin en zorlu dönemlerinden biri olan 20. yüzyılın ilk yarısında İngiltere'deki sanat sahnesindeki ve sanatçılardaki değişimlere ve oluşumlara, sahnedeki değişimlere ve bakış açılarına odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Savaş sonrası 1960'a kadar sanatçıların üretimlerinde dönemin, Britanya halkının ve organizasyonların etkisini ve krizlerin hayal gücünü nasıl zenginleştirdiğini, nihayetinde sosyal bir çatışmanın sonucu olarak yaratıcılığı nasıl tetiklediğini belirtmek için oluşum ve organizasyonların etkisi incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Savaş dönemi, Savaş sonrası, Sanat, I. Dünya Savaşı, II. Dünya Savaşı, Britanya, yirminci yüzyıl



*For the ones whose compass always points towards the light,
even in the darkest times...*

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List of Abbreviations

ACGB: Arts Council of Great Britain

BWMC: British War Memorials Committee

CEMA: Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts

ICA: Institute of Contemporary Arts

IG: Independent Group

IWM: Imperial War Museum

MoI: Ministry of Information

WAAC: War Artists' Advisory Committee

WWI: World War I

WWII: World War II

1.INTRODUCTION

“Art is chaos taking shape.” - Pablo Picasso

As an artist who was born at the end of 19th century, right before two major crises to explode at the face of Europe, later the whole world in the beginning of 20th century, Picasso's identification of the relationship between chaos and art can be approached from different aspects, as chaos's ability to leak into various subjects that changes people's lives. The description can be interpreted as mentally and literally; while a mental chaos in artists' minds might lead them to reflect their crisis on their work, with their own use of shapes or colors, a chaos upon the world might also affect the artists' practice, which also carry the world of art into a different direction that hasn't been predicted before. Mind of an artist, which acts as if it is a processor in this case, has an impact of a great deal on how the effects of a chaos managed. Throughout the history of humanity and arts, this “processor” is mostly affected by the chaos created by religion, politics, ideologies and most significantly, a kind of chaos that shapes the world both geographically and ethically, wars. Art, as a solid representative of chaotic atmosphere of wars in different eras, without a doubt, has experienced one of the most underrated periods in the beginning of 20th century with World War I and World War II, later followed by the Post War Era, being a landlord of change right after those two major crises. Many countries of Europe such as Ottoman Empire in WWI years and later Turkish Republic, France, Germany and Russia have used various propaganda methods to persuade their civilians for the sake of national alliance, subsequently feeling this change in mostly organizational integrations followed by artistic

practice since the years of chaos had altered many experiences and acted as a nest to many new forms of art during and after the beginning of the century. For instance, the painters of Ottoman Empire had not been allowed to stay in France, a country which Ottoman Empire was in war with, instead, they were called back to their countries and practice the pieces with a theme of War in their country. Certain pieces were even commissioned to be exhibited in government buildings.

Undoubtedly, Britain, as one of the major actors of this period, since she was considered as a powerful country in the world that was involved in both Wars, took her own place in this change, regarding both the interpretation of the artists of the era, society, and the government's approach to arts. Having triggering impact on the artists who had a natural instinct to visualize crises were being experienced by the society, it immediately attracted the attention of the British government and made a way to enhance the contribution on arts. Wars acted as a glue factor for the artists, the government and the society, as opposed to the Wars' negative consequences throughout the world. With the formation of War Art, the experiences of not just military but also civilians and artists were visualized in a more permanent sense and acted as a journal of the conflict, unleashing the causes of Wars. Regarding this role of War Art and the sociological and artistic reasons behind it, triggered by both Wars in the beginning of 20th century, some important consequences was inevitable affecting Britain holistically. Therefore, formation of new organizations, committees and establishments in the subject of arts are the results of World War I and World War II, which directly affected The Post War Art in Britain, considering the increased financial and social support for artists of the era and last but not least, the ultimate change in artists' practices that was going hand in hand with the movements of the first half of the century. Having

been a slow start in the subject of organizations and establishments related to arts in Britain, beginning of the First World War might be taken into consideration as the dark side of the moon, however, as the crisis progressed through the years, especially around the years of the establishment of the Imperial War Museum, British Government and the society engaged in arts and its practices in terms of their organizational integration. Regarding the Wars' psychological and sociological effects, Europe had already lost its many artists to United States at the end of those chaotic years, therefore, the steps that were being taken throughout those years have saved Europe's, most particularly Britain's position in arts.

Thus, this thesis aims to reveal the effects of WWI and WWII in British art scene and its relation to the British Government and the society, and the ways that these effects have impacted on the Post-War British art scene which includes the artworks, the artist practice and the audience's approach between the years 1945 to 1960. To understand the magnificence of these effects each organization that was established during the years of both Wars is focused on, by stating the indirect causes of their formation which carries out the series of events changed the course of art scene from the beginning of twentieth century and the middle of the century respectively.

Chronologically listed, this dissertation answers the questions that follows: How was British art scene affected by the chaos of Wars during the beginning of the century? How did the organizations, which was formed because of Wars, impact the artist practice and the exhibition of the works? How did the role of the artist and the arts change against the Government?

Considering these questions, the organizations established are examined one by one as the effects of the Wars and their impacts on the trio of the Government, the artist and the art scene respectively in the subjects of finance, artistic freedom and increase in recognition and progress in practice.



2. ART SCENE IN BRITAIN: WORLD WAR I (THE FIRST WORLD WAR) YEARS (1914-1918)

During the first years of WWI, right after the declaration of war against enemy forces, the British government did not give particular importance to the art practices which had highlighted the war as a subject. The considerably huge gap between the common people and the art scene before the war may be observed as one of the reasons of this ignorance of the government. The artists and its isolated society who were influenced and affected by war kept growing, yet they were unable to integrate with the rest of the society and have their voices heard due to lack of support by the officials and apprehension of the public in general. Fox says,

Before 1914 art had indeed played a relatively minor role in British public life. At the outbreak of war, the art world was admittedly large – it consisted of thousands of artists, dealers, organizations, museums, and critics that were proliferating by the day – but its public reach and official recognition remained limited (Fox, 2015, 2)

Although being the era of Modernism, which significantly liberated the arts both philosophically and in practice, in the beginning of twentieth century, there was still something missing between the common people, and the art scene which had been trying to burst out since the end of nineteenth century. Considering the division of entertainment perspective in the country as the arts considered as it belongs to the highbrow and the rest to the lowbrow, the connection between two were extremely limited, because of the difference between two in intellectual and socio-economic development.

After the first couple of years, WWI started to act as a stage initially. As the number of artists who attended the war increased after the first couple of years, which has brought the British society and its artists together day by day since the war created a common ground of crisis, the approach of the government towards the art scene and the power of art began to shift to a more conspicuous and progressive aspect that cannot be overlooked. Establishing the Imperial War Museum (1917), collecting and purchasing the specific artists' works related to the crisis that the whole society was going through and the Hall of Remembrance (1918) during the WWI are the most significant breakthroughs of the British Government which eventually put the arts under the spotlight. However, at first, with the contribution of the Department of Information under the purpose of War propaganda during WWI, the artists were being recruited to be sent out to France and produce drawings of British troops engaging in the War. Painting was one of the methods, used in war propaganda to document scenes, aside from for others which were film, recruitment posters, media coverage and literature. Aside from its initial aim to encounter civilians with the reality of the War and limited the artists' work in practice, it also supported era's artists economically, leading them to produce more by forming a stage of recognition. Wellington House (War Propaganda Bureau of Britain) joining the Department of Information has a significant impact on this recognition and production of the artists, since the artists started to be recruited by the government directly which built up a regular income for them, even though the artists were required to paint the reality of War for propaganda, as the department asked for. Brandon says,

By war's end, the government had commissioned 130 artists, including sixteen enlistees released from active service. In February 1917, Wellington House joined

the Department of Information but continued the function as it had. By 1920, it had produced some 3,000 paintings, drawings, and sculptures, some of it among the most significant in twentieth-century British Art. (Brandon, 2007, Pt. II, Ch.3, para. 1)

This shows how the organizations which commissioned the artists and gathered their work affected the increase in productivity and the contribution of the artists, even if the organizations dominated the artists to practice in a certain subject. Having been able to observe the drastic and violent conflict, the artists, who were fed by the chaos of the Great War, were encouraged to create even more, not just for the propaganda but also to present their emotions and inner conflict caused by the reality of War. The more they produced, the more change occurred in their practice which later had its consequences on production in art scene during Post War Years.

2.1. First years of WWI (1914-1917)

In order to comprehend the Great War's effects on the art scene through the years of Wars in the beginning of 19th century and later the Post War Era, firstly the merging of some important organizations attached to the government should be discussed. The very first official step that the government took to integrate arts to the chaos of War was the establishment of War Propaganda Bureau of Britain, mostly known as Wellington House. Since Britain found out that Germany has its own war propaganda bureau, Wellington House was established in 1914 to promote Britain's involvement to the War. The importance of this consequence is that it later led the British government to find out various

ways to exhibit its stance in WWI by focusing on the visualization and illustration of War especially after Wellington House and the Department of Information were united by supporting many artists financially by recruiting them.

By the end of the war, the number of war artists had risen to ninety, and the new ones included Wyndham Lewis, John Sargent and Stanley Spencer. They were strongly backed by Lord Beaverbrook who had already employed artists in his capacity as Canadian War Records Officer for the Canadian War Memorial, a collection of paintings which recorded the wartime activities and achievements of the Canadian troops. As Minister of Information, he sought to initiate a similar collection relating British war efforts. (Sanders, 1975, 136)

As a result of WWI, the establishment that were formed and strongly supported by the authorities with an aim of war propaganda begin to orchestrate the art scene and prevented the artists from getting lost in the chaos of War. Even though the main purpose was to influence the society during the War and not supporting and organizing the art scene, in a roundabout way, the establishment comforted the artists financially, hence constituted a space where the artists can canalize their practice without thinking about how to get over these difficult times.

Another positive effect of the first war is the freedom to expose of the artists and their artworks. Even though the first years of the war were drastic in many ways, the conflict of warfare and inspiration feed the creativity of the artists, which enhanced and enriched the output and having become the documentation of the War, artists had many purposes to

create their art through those years such as protesting, exposing or sometimes appealing. Having the freedom and the opportunities to observe the scenes of war, they were encouraged to join the propaganda.

[Exhibitions] link with propaganda is tenuous in that the artists, [...], were allowed to act independently, to produce their own work and their own views. Masterman's belief was that they would convey accurate information about the war through the eyes of the artist, and this was all he sought. The works of Bone, Francis Dodd, Sir William Orpen and especially Paul Nash and C.R.W. Nevinson, are a permanent testament to that belief. (Sanders, 1975, 136)

Although the authorities' main purpose was to obtain the interpretation of artists in the subject of war and no other issues, the independence that is given in other terms such as opportunities, freedom to travel and observe and support, famous artists stated above were to be borne by having a chance to improve their practice merged with the chaos people experienced psychologically and physically.

To prove this freedom and independence that first years of WWI brought to the artists, Muirhead Bone can be shown as the first artist who caught the attention of Wellington House. Not yet joined to the Department of Information but was seeking ways to imply the experience of War and endurance of civilians, the authorities of Wellington House decided to recruit the artist. This was an initial and vital step towards the recruitment of the other war artists and the artists' will to contribute after figuring out the potential effect of artistic analysis of the War on the society.

In May 1916, following a conversation with Muirhead Bone, who drew attention to his call-up, A.S. Watt, literary adviser to Wellington House, proposed that Bone's services should be taken up by the propaganda department. Both Gowers and Masterman were very quick to see the possibilities. Bone was provided with a car and given freedom to sketch what he wished at the Front. Other artists were soon invited to join Bone in producing similar work and there was a steady expansion in the use of artists right to the end. (Sanders, 1975, 135)

Regarding the statement of Sanders, the artists including Bone were limited in subject, yet endowed by many opportunities including freedom to unleash their creativity just to contribute the propaganda. With these opportunities, the artists were able to expand their knowledge, experience and in the middle of a visual bombardment that enrich their creativity for their follow-up artworks not just about the war but in general which later impacted the art produced in the Post War.

Many artists focused on various problems occurred as a result of war, however the most particular issue that was observed and locked on was the significant loss of life during the war, especially the soldiers' lives. The absence of soldiers was the triggering source for the artists' creativity, which enabled them to produce artwork related to both propaganda and exposing their artwork to civilians with the reality of War, presenting the side of troops which were fighting against the enemy. Bone's drawings of *Western Front*, which revealed the destruction of the front directly by portraying its impacts on soldiers not just brought literacy and the artwork together in one subject of loss, but also with its number of copies, reached out to the civilians of Britain by illustrating the psychology of soldiers who kept fighting there. In the era which the communication and reaching out to visuals were not

easy, the images of Bone was the result of how a non-combat artist can blend the reality with his own strokes merging his emotions, relating people to arts and being a bridge between arts and individuals in a chaotic scene. The success and the support of this series of artwork were pointed out in following,

Encouraged by figures within the art world, [Minister Lord Beaverbrook] moved towards sponsoring official war artists, the first of whom was Muirhead Bone, a Scottish landscape artist, in July 1916. A literary agent who had been negotiating with publishers on behalf of Wellington House had recommended Bone. Some 300.000 copies of Bone's ten-part series, *The Western Front*, were printed in 1916-17. (Beckett, 2013, 630)

As Beckett says, Bone was sponsored by Wellington House that supports war propaganda, which might be considered as limiting the artist practice since the requirement of organization only allows the artists to draw the scenes from war, however, the number of the copies published indicates how art starts to be a key factor in the society, reaching out the civilians and allowing the artists of the era to expose and increase the recognition of their artworks and the conflict which are the ultimate results of War in terms of practice and sponsorship of the government.

2.2. Establishment of The Imperial War Museum (IWM) (1917)

As creativity of the artists' and experiences during the WWI were still unfolding, the need of a national museum was exposed. Founded on March 5, 1917, by the leading of Sir Alfred Mond, The Imperial War Museum's establishment was the very first step to organize

recording the events in all aspects, including military and civilian and additionally to form a place to exhibit not just artistic pieces but also real materials to support the sacrifices of humanity. The establishment of a museum was necessary as WWI was coming to an end, since there was a need to approach the audience with the reality of War, merged with an artistic vision by collecting pieces that are produced by the official war artists such as John Singer Sargent and Christopher Nevinston. Firstly, founded as *The National War Museum*, its name changed to *Imperial War Museum* after resolving several conflicts within the British Empire (IWM, 2019).



Figure 1: The Opening of the Imperial War Museum, 9 June 1920

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205021441>

Opened to public in 1920, as a museum which concentrates on the endurance, and the drastic experiences of both civilians and soldiers, with its dual aspect on exhibiting pieces of the front and the artists, it allows people to come face to face with the reality of war

with a touch of art, enabling them to flee towards the artists' reverie by leads to the different perspectives of reality. Pearson indicates,

The traditional disciplinary approach of museums to their visitors was no longer appropriate in an era of total war. Just as the government had to revise its opinion of the civilian population in the face to face of the public's stoicism under war conditions, so museums had to accept that their survival depended on their audiences as much as on those in authority, and that they would have to become more responsive to their audiences' needs. Visitors were still looking for museums to play a cultural role in wartime and curators found that it was as important to provide an escape from reality as to engage with the war effort if audience were to support the museum service. (Pt. II, Chapter. 5)

This points out the change in not just in practice, but also in curating the exhibitions with WWI. With the conflict and chaos that War caused, due to the society's needs and authority's awareness of it, the common people and art brought together, shifting the exhibitions to satisfy the audience's needs. While the exhibitions were concentrating on artistic imagination before WWI, after that, it started to blend the reality of War with the analysis of artists' interpretation which consequently made people to feel that they were indeed a part of the art scene. By achieving this, the authorities, the art scene and the people in the country all benefited from the formation of a museum of War. While authorities fulfilled their aim to support the propaganda, the artists had a government supported space to exhibit their analysis influenced by the conflict and reached out the society by increasing their recognition, in addition to the individuals' needs to be justified that they were eventually contributed to the war with great losses by being able to see their memories and

experiences visualized in one place. Brandt supports this by combining the operation of propaganda which goes hand in hand with the wishes of the society with art exhibitions,

Propaganda functions only if it satisfies the need for information and coincides with already existing structures of interpretation. This was the case regarding the presentation of the war years. The war, which they wanted to make everybody's concern, already was everybody's concern; young men were potential soldiers; families had fathers, brothers or sons in the war; women had to be prepared to do men's jobs and support their families; civilians had to sign war-loans, to suffer from air-raids [...]. All these items which might visualize these experiences [...] were collected and displayed in the museums and exhibitions. (Brandt, 1994, p.98)

Aside from the wish to see the great sacrifices that was made during the war, there was another reason which caused by WWI, as a result of the formation of the IWM. The society needed to hold on to the future to escape the reality of the magnificent conflict that they were facing, hence, the immortality. The authorities used this unconscious will of the citizens to achieve their goal of war propaganda to be more efficient, nevertheless, while the propaganda was just for during the war years, art scene in Britain was the one which took advantage of this goal, since IWM is still standing with its branches to exhibit chaos and conflict that the humanity have been going through even if after hundred years.

The museums therefore also conveyed the message that if civilians and soldiers wanted to be part of history, they had a task to perform in the present. If the War was won, immortality was promised, for the objects that testified to the sacrifices

made would remain in the museums forever [...]. They would never be forgotten.
(Brandt, 1994, p.99)

Having connected the individuals with art against the war as well as the enemy forces during those years, this also indicates the role of IWM and the power of art not just as a propaganda, but also the unity it creates among the people by promising immortality and reminding of the society that they eventually need to focus on the bigger picture, which is the future of the country and next generations.

2.3. British War Memorials Committee (BWMC) (1918)

Through the end of the war, the British Government shifted its attitude on the Art Scene, from using arts only for the sake of wartime propaganda to a more foresighted and open-minded sight. Having become the Ministry of Information, with its previous name the Department of Information, it had to consider what could be permanent regarding the dreadful events that the War had brought upon humanity in the beginning of the century. Ministry of Information which was led by the Minister Lord Beaverbrook, Max Aitken, who had also established Canadian War Memorials Fund, did not just guide the propaganda focused Government towards envisioning of arts in a more long lasting cultural foundation, but also supported the formation of British War Memorials Committee with his experience that he had had in another Commonwealth country with a similar cultural perspective, Canada, by exposing some talented artists of the time, who has the need of both reaching out the British at the point of an artistic frame and earn their living through the time of crisis. Brandon states,

Under the Beaverbrook's stewardship, the British programme [BWMC] identified the topics for paintings: army, navy, airforce, merchant maine, clerical and other work by women and so-called public manifestations. While the intention was to create a legacy of achievement in war, the goal was also to use the most talented people to reflect the best art of the day. The programme offered £300 plus expenses for a single painting intended for the Hall of Remembrance. The earlier scheme had given the same sum as an annual salary in exchange for a person's entire wartime output. (Brandon, 2007, Part II, Ch. 3, para.7)

With the formation of BWMC, which was a necessary result of requirement in organizing the art production of the WWI years, the British art scene and the artists who belongs to it, not just became more independent in terms of the production of artworks, moving away from propaganda art and getting one step close to integrating the analysis into the practice emphasizing the movement of Modernism, but also were being aided by the Government, more than before the establishment, in the subject of monetary.

As a British Government body which was strongly supported by the Minister of Ministry of Information – formally the Department of Information - Lord Beaverbrook, who had paved a way for commissioning contemporary art in Canada as well during the WWI, BWMC aimed to change the course of the art scene by employing younger artists which is one of the most significant factors of this effect of the War. By doing this, the Committee embraced a futuristic perspective towards art which slowly eliminates the force of war propaganda on the production of art and the artists' practice, however, the War was still subject to the pieces produced.

Operating in three schemes, BWMC has separated the artists by their work and practice, which ensures the expectations from them in terms of production and organization of the pieces. Scheme one, which consists of the artists producing large scales of art for a promised income, was for the contribution to Hall of Remembrance established in the same year as BWMC. First Scheme can be considered as the artistic support and vision for evidence of the experiences that Britain went through during the war, allowing the civilians to remember the traces of War. Aside from the traces' drastic memories, this scheme to support Hall of Remembrance was still needed, since the pain of the War was still tender, and the society was not ready to let go of it for an ultimate change in arts. Scheme one might have ungirded scheme two, which included younger artists. Still expected to produce war-related art and illustrating memories that comes with it, scheme three was offering the artists facilities and access for their artworks. Brian Foss explains the Committee's role with the words below by mentioning some important artists commissioned by it,

Intending to create a compelling visual collection that would serve as a benchmark for twentieth-century aesthetics, the BWMC offered its patronage to, among others, Colin Gill, Charles Sargeant Jagger, Henry Lamb, Wyndham Lewis, Paul Nash, C.R.W. Nevinson, William Roberts, John Singer Sargent, Gilbert Spencer and Stanley Spencer. In the process it amassed a remarkable collection of history paintings and sculpture reliefs, including several that have remained touchstones not only of the depiction of war, but of British art in general. (Brian Foss, 2007, p.18)

As a result, although its first intention was to collect and create art pieces of the conflict, this indicates the profound intention of the Committee, organizing and leading the art scene

affected by WWI which would eventually plant the seeds of Post-War Art among young artists. Moreover, with its schemes and regulations which tied up the artists and the state by using the goals and urges of both parties, it has acted as a template for its successor WAAC, which would finally bring the audience into the fold of the British art scene and slowly leave the state off, not as a controller of the art practice regarding their purpose to use the art for propaganda, but only the source of income which would endorse the art scene for the education of the audience with the effectuation of the demands of both the artists and the audience.

2.4. London Hall of Remembrance (1918)

Hall of Remembrance is another important consequence of WW1, which was planned to be constructed by the British War Memorials Committee in 1918. Although it was never built and the blueprints of the structure has been lost, it was to exhibit the artworks to mark the end of the War, dedicated to the lives that had been lost throughout the War years. The significance of this attempt might be related to the wish of authorities to put a remarkable ending to the War that was nearly over by using large scale paintings of famous war artists of the era.

After Wellington House become part of Beaverbrook's Ministry of Information, a British War Memorials (later Pictorial Propaganda) Committee within it continued to sponsor art with the ultimate intention of displaying it in Halls of Remembrance in Britain and Canada. Indeed, several large paintings were commissioned for the

London Hall of Remembrance including John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* and Paul Nash's *The Menin Road*. (Beckett, 2013, 630)



Figure 2: The Menin Road, 1919, Paul Nash

Source: <http://www.radcliffeontrentww1.org.uk>

This ultimate intention that Beckett mentions in his book is backed up by the size of pieces and distinctive landscape paintings of the artists. The pieces that were produced for the Hall of Remembrance aimed to present the massive outcomes, determination of the soldiers lost their lives and bitter experiences of the civilians of War. Therefore, the pieces created should have been huge, mostly dark and strong with a respectable presentation. Although it has never been opened due to various reasons such as finance and time and all the paintings that were selected for Hall of Remembrance are now in IWM, it is still an amazing example of the power of curation which parallels with the artwork of the era. The

virtual tour of the digital Hall of Remembrance can be found on IWM's website (<https://hall.iwm.org.uk>) Above and below, the works of Nash and Lewis can be observed, which are the representatives of their era. The artists who were sent to the fronts mostly focused on visualizing the landscapes with their authentic technique which has done what a photograph could never do, infusing artistic emotions to the scenes of the War.



Figure 3: Percy Wyndham Lewis, 'A Battery Shelled' (1919)

Source: www.iwm.org.uk

Especially Lewis' *A Battery Shelled* (1919) was controversial, due to his practice that challenges the traditional approach of painting. Even this controversy implies the artists' ability to look forward in production, breaking out of the boundaries of the conflict they need to focus on by using non-traditional techniques. Carefully selected from the artworks of artists in scheme one by BWMC, the Hall of Remembrance was a project that gathered the most avant-garde in British Art scene and widened the aspect by sponsoring artists by

paying them a certain amount for each piece they had produced for the Hall, which was a valuable source of income for the artists who needed support in the years of conflict.

On the other hand, the project which was first initiated by Lord Beaverbrook and had a mission to put a visual end to the WWI by honoring the dead by giving them immortality with magnificent artworks was never completed because of the financial difficulties. However, since there was a scheme of BWMC for the artist only to produce for the Hall, therefore this was a huge income for the artists whose works were specially commissioned under careful considerations since the artist were paid up to 600 pounds for a single super-picture and smaller amounts for smaller pieces which was a large amount of money during the beginning of the century.

As a result, though the Hall of Remembrance project was unsuccessful due to lack of funding and the pieces which was created for only focused on the painful scenes and difficulties of War limited in subject, it generated a great source of motivation for the artists since they were free to challenge traditional approaches of art with the chaos that they were fed and this challenging approach was supported by the government indirectly, as the Committee was seen as purchasing the paintings as the memorials of war but actually supporting the artists to survive in those tough times.

3. ART SCENE IN BRITAIN: WORLD WAR II YEARS (1939-1945)

Following the outburst of WWII, the crisis in Britain alongside Europe started once again only after twenty years. To focus on the art scene in Britain during the WWII, first and foremost identifying the difference in occurrence and its impact on Britain from the WWI is essential, since this occurrence and impact have affected the production of art, creativity of the artists and the reason for establishment of organizations directly. Unlike WWI, WWII was based on ideological differences and the crisis that countries experience financially. It was, therefore, inevitable to be able to impress the people by using British art in a more political approach than the WWI.

Practically speaking, being exhausted from WWI, the artists started to re-examine avant-garde styles which are Cubism and Futurism, regarded as the core of artistic scene in Europe. The artists embarked to new leading forms such as Classicism, satire and abstraction to replace the previous movements. Since the dark atmosphere and the burden of both Wars were upon the people, introducing the audience with new forms of art was undergirded by formation of two important Committees which changed the course in the art scene of Britain and later some Commonwealth countries such as Australia, The War Artists' Advisory Committee and the Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts. While WAAC was encouraging the artists to practice in the subject of War, funding them and locked on mostly on spreading out Britain's 'democracy and freedom' political attitude during the years of WWII within the country and overseas, CEMA was an organization which aimed to concentrate on the exhibition of the arts of all forms, not just visual arts but also music and performing arts.

The contributions of a certain individual, Sir Kenneth Clark, cannot be overlooked in relation to the establishments of both organizations. His ambition and studies to bring the society and the art scene together was far more different than the Government's, whose purpose was to just use arts as an instrument for advertising. Since the British society was not able to comprehend totally, due to the lack of education and information which was digested with the chaos in the beginning of the century, he indicated and supported the idea that the state has a responsibility to educate the public to appreciate the contemporary work of artists. Seeing the establishment of WAAC as a draft, hoping to bring the state, audience and fine arts together, he aimed to enrich the art scene by using the state as a source of income for arts, artists as an instructor and the audience as a student of this triangle.

Throughout his life Clark was deeply committed to popularizing fine art. [...]. He gave talks about art on BBC; he was a founding member of CEMA; he launched the popular lunchtime concerts at the National Gallery; and furthered this agenda through WAAC. (Rebecca Searle, 2020, p.18)

Adopting all utilities to promote art was crucial and furthermore, by this approach of Sir Kenneth Clark which gathers various forms of art together also is an effective way to introduce each art practice to the individuals who fancy different forms. For instance, a person who enjoys listening to music could be introduced with visual arts by attending a concert in National Gallery, and vice versa. Not just in the areas of art practice but also the places where common people spend time such as canteens were used by CEMA to exhibit

artworks that are produced under the leadership of WAAC, and this approach of the establishments set off the unity of the audience in respect to arts during and after WWII.



Figure 4: The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts Canteen Concert, Kenneth Rowntree, 1941

Source: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-council-for-the-encouragement-of-music-and-the-arts-canteen-concert-isle-of-dogs-london-e14-7028>

In addition to the urge to bring the arts and the audience together, another impact of WWII was to implicate the British Art to other provinces and detach from the faith of only being local. No doubt that this was beneficial in all aspects of the recognition of the British Art, nonetheless it was also in the interest of the British Government, regarding its aim to spread the word of democracy and freedom promised and pursued during and the following years

of War. The words of Roger Mortimer stressing out and impling this problem in 1939, just two years before the war art exhibition at the National Gallery was shown outside of London was quoted by Rebecca Searle's *Art, Propaganda and Aerial Warfare in Britain during the Second World War*,

At present pictures by living British artists are rarely seen outside London. I should like to see an exhibition of contemporary work in every provincial museum – the pictures to be purchased by the State, to be lent in turn to various cities, and to be on sale to any purchasers. The chief purpose of such scheme would be to create a whole new public for pictures. (2020, p.18)

This statement referring to the need for exploring ways to attain the audience is also points out the possible scheme that should be attached to the previous schemes of BWMC, which was processed at the end of WWI, since the previous schemes were mostly based on producing record and only exhibit the art pieces to the audience within London, particularly in the IWM, following the inability of building of Hall of Remembrance.

Consequently, the establishments of WAAC and CEMA have worked in collaboration with the main actor Sir Kenneth Clark through the years of WWII, preventing the artists from unemployment, searching for the jobs which they would be underprivileged and going to the front lines of War which they would eventually cause them to lose their lives. Moreover, these establishments have worked in the benefit of both the British Government's political approach in the country alongside overseas and the popularity of fine arts within the British society. As they were also directly related to the formation of Arts Council of Great Britain, which would eventually be divided into four charters of

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, WAAC and CEMA can be focused on as the progressive and reforming attitude of British Art scene.

3.1. The War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC) (1939)

Already prepared and experienced because of the WWI, the British Government was aware of the value of arts and artists and their considerable influence on the society, immediately formed a new committee that would both support the artists financially by commissioning them to collect their contemporary pieces that conveys WWII. The inheritor of BWMC of the WWI, the War Artists' Advisory Committee was established in 1939. Since BWMC established at the end of the WWI and WAAC at the very beginning of WWII, WAAC has performed in a much larger sense than its predecessor.

[...] the WAAC demonstrated that art and the state could operate within a mutually beneficial relationship. This lesson had also been taught by the First World War's British War Memorials Committee, but the WAAC significantly expanded the scope of that earlier undertaking. (Brian Foss, 2007, p.193)

This initial impact of WWII had similar purposes as BWMC, in addition to some distinctions. Aside from its aim to record the war and encourage the motivation of the artists for creating artworks, it has also embarked to constitute a room for the artists to cope with the possible severe outcomes of the conflict such as unemployment and loss of life of the artists. Since most of the galleries and art schools were closed or ceased, the artists were encountering loss of income, and eventually this led them to seek other sources of income which would keep them away from their craft and push them to attend the war instead. Sir Kenneth Clark who was the head of the Committee and the director of National

Gallery had a major role in motivating the artists and gathering them under one roof of WAAC, providing them a certain amount of income and later to exhibit their works in National Gallery. Foss states,

Assertions of a glorious flowering of British aesthetics were epidemic throughout the war and its immediate aftermath; [...]. In addition, many artists were adamant that abilities and careers had blossomed as a result of the demands put upon them by the WAAC. (Brian Foss, 2007, p. 193)

More than five thousand paintings that the collection obtained after the War ended is direct evidence of the 'blossom' that Foss states. Because the artists received the patronage of the Committee, they were able to canalize their motivation to contribute to the record of WWII, create and reach out the audience who were also in need of observing the War from artistic vision.

Regarding its purpose of war propaganda, another consequence of WAAC was the promotion of the artwork not only to the audience in Britain but also in United States. As a country that is neutral in the first years of war, United States was tried to be induced by WAAC and the British government, using the power of art for sufficient support. This consequence impacted the art scene from two different aspects, which were to have the support using arts and respectively to increase the popularity and recognition of British art and artists in an enormous country as Unites States. Popularity and the recognition were important among the artists, due to its relation to power of influence on civilians and the raising amount of income. Hence, the exhibitions which has taken place in United States was inevitable. Furthermore, achieving successful political relations by using art as a

medium was intelligent, due to its sincere and emotional influence on public. Foss points out some detailed information about the first overseas exhibition of WAAC titled as “*Britain at War*, the first selection of WAAC work to leave the country, opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on 23rd May 1941” (Brian Foss, p.161). Moreover, he continues to highlight the expected triggering effect and political importance of this exhibition with,

Because the display [of *Britain at War*] had been organized in response to pressure from the MoI for projects that would be useful in nudging American public opinion out of neutrality (Pearl Harbor was bombed only in December 1941, more than six months after *Britain at War* opened in New York), some in the MoI feared that its inclusion of several pictures produced before mid-1940, during the months of the ‘phoney’ or ‘bore’ war, risked suggesting that the situation was not particularly urgent.” (Foss, 2007 p.161).

Considering Foss’ statement, the integration of the British Government significantly inclined with WWII, since political influence was involved between two countries. Although some artists opposed to this integration, since the Government acted as a decision mechanism of the artistic theme, it was necessary in terms of organization and financing the art scene which would be eventually crucial for future art scene of Britain.

On the other hand, as it is mentioned above, there were some limitations that were put in front of the artists to be accepted to WAAC, which prevented some artists to be included. Censorship and political affiliations were two issues that obstructed the ideological freedom of the artists and the practice in the artworks. Despite the efforts of the

Government were to build good political relations with countries abroad using arts, the artists were not allowed to become familiar with any political affiliations due to the delicate situation of the world politics during the WWII years. As one of the reasons of the War, ideological perspectives of the artists were considered as they would sabotage the main purpose of WAAC, which is to relate the civilians abroad with the ambition of Britain to protect and spread the democracy and freedom around the world by adopting the influence of arts. The Committee has attempted to choose the artists with ideology who serve the bigger picture in ideology of the country but not the ones who were seeking individual ambitions.

However, this induction in choice of artists was not easy. Aside from taking the events that were happening during the years of war into consideration, the Committee also had a purpose to have a futurist approach to preserve the art produced for Post-War. The duty of WAAC was not only to keep the record of war, but also to use this record to enhance the practice of younger artists and influence the society in Britain and around the world. Foss implies this attempt in choice of the artists of the Committee and the role of Clark in all these with the words,

The WAAC's choices of artists was also affected by the uneasy balance that the Committee struck between compiling as comprehensive a record of the War as possible, and acquiring paintings drawings, prints and sculptures that could be expected to maintain their status as important works of art in the post-war world. The latter consideration derived from Clark's concern to use the war art collection to improve public taste [...], as well as from the Committee's belief that war art would make its greatest contribution to the maintenance of morale and the

encouragement of pro-British sentiment if it was distanced in appearance from blatant propaganda. (Foss, 1991, p.183)

It is therefore clear that WAAC's perspective in the choice of artists and the production of the art is much more progressive than BWMC, since BWMC served as a schema and helped WAAC to set up some certain rules, while WAAC enriched the total figure of the idea of Art Committees by focusing on the Post War Art Scene of the country. Also, by acknowledging the fact that obvious propaganda could put a distance between the people and the art scene, the Committee also had been looking beyond all the crisis that WWII brought, even if the War was not ended yet. Until its dissolution in 1945, WAAC gave full-time employment to thirty-seven artists in total, including WWI artists such as Paul Nash, Muirhead Bone and John Piper who has become famous of Post-war Art scene, due to his exclusive work on stained glass in several Cathedrals in Britain and later commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain to paint a huge mural *The Englishman's Home* to be exhibited in the *Festival of Britain* a fair of art and exhibition which concentrated on the success of Britain and had the audience of millions in 1951. Even this event only is evidence that WAAC's support during the crisis led artists to survive in drastic times, subsequently to contribute to the unleash of British Art not just for the audience in Britain but also overseas.

As a result, WAAC has many contributions under the topics of the reputation of the artists, introducing British Art of the era overseas and influencing the people towards the Governments' political approach not just in homeland but also in United States as well. Furthermore, although the choice of artists was not easy and sometimes limited in ideological sense, the aim was much more progressive than it was in WWI, since the

motivation of the people and the future of art scene was taken into consideration rapidly, especially by going hand in hand with CEMA, the establishment which ensured to cross the artworks of WAAC and the audience to increase the morale of the individuals with getting the support of the British Government.

3.2. Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) (1940)

As the War continued, the necessity to maintain British culture, more than propaganda, increased, regarding the need to fulfill the demand of the society and the artists. Founded in 1940, CEMA was first appointed by royal charter, with the support of the Board of Education and initially headed by the President of the Board of Education, Lord de La Warr. The main distinction between WAAC and CEMA was their connection to the government and CEMA had a broader aspect in supporting Arts since it included music and performance within the constitution. Both government-funded yet from different departments, While WAAC was focusing on collecting significant amount of artworks of the War and beyond as a record, intended for Hall of Remembrance, yet later exhibited by Imperial War Museum, CEMA was an establishment focusing on both collecting arts and giving financial assistance to cultural activities to continue their performs and renamed as and roots of Arts Council of Great Britain – later divided into four bodies as England, Scottish, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1994 - in Post-War years which consequently affected the arts scene in promoting visual, performing and literary arts in Britain. Reginald Jacques, the Director of Music to CEMA, indicated the establishment of the Council in 1945 as follows,

“CEMA was born of necessity in the black days of January 1940, and the circumstances of its nativity are worth recording, for they have the colour and appeal of romance. A small group of exceedingly busy people felt that it was urgently necessary to keep alive the Arts in wartime.” (1945, p.276)

Analyzing the statement Jacques, which underlines some ‘important’ people and keeping arts alive’, CEMA was a constitution for not just the present, but also for the future of promoting the creativity and promoting of arts to boost the motivation of the society. The first conference which took place just before the establishment of the Council, the Committee acknowledged the very first steps of early vision of CEMA, with an important passage which contains the aims for two groups, the audience of arts and the artists. The aims stated in this passage were mostly focused on the preference of the audience over the artists, since the conflict between the art production and the audience was never completely ended, eventually indicating the new Council’s difference from WAAC.

Even though CEMA predominantly focused on performing arts such as music and theatre, it also organized visual arts by certain regulations. Alongside with encouraging artists to expose new artworks to cultivate the British culture, it has displayed the works that were reproduced by employing different perspectives and movements that were rapidly changing parallel to the crisis which were taking place through the years of WWII. Weingartner defines these three sections of exhibitions, “The art section was to focus on the circulation of three kinds of exhibitions, notably exhibitions of original modern work, reproductions of older work and of craftsmanship.” (Weingartner, 2012, Ch. 5.2).

As it is particularly remarked in the beginning of this chapter, another result that cannot be overlooked is that CEMA was the roots of Arts Council of Great Britain, which was the first crucial step of an establishment related to arts, announcing its independence from the Government. Up until that point, the committees and exhibitions were attached to the Government's decisions on the practice, production and performance of arts, since they were funded by the state. However, with the CEMA's last report stating its legacy in 1944 for the future, formation of Arts Council was based on freeing the exhibition and production of arts from the censorships, restraints and instructions of the Boards, Departments and Ministries they rely on financially. In the very first report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, this approach clearly stated by reporting the words of the first chair Lord Keynes,

The policy of the Arts Council is still that of CEMA. When Lord Keynes met the press, on the day that future was announced, he told them no big changes would take place that the Council's established purpose held good: to encourage British national arts, everywhere, and to do it as far as by supporting others rather than by setting up state-run enterprises. "Co-operation with all, competition with none". He added a remark which comes cheerfully from a government-sponsored organization. "The arts," he said, "owe no vow of obedience" (1945, p.6)

Regarding the reformations in practice of art such as the shift towards abstract pieces and exhibitions aimed to attain the audience with arts but not a political propaganda in Post-War Britain, Art Council can be considered as a leading factor that blossomed at the end of WWII. Particularly the last words that Lord Keynes speak of is not just pointing out the

independence of the arts from the Government but also a total rebellion against the domination of the state on the art scene.

3.3. The Artists in Exile of WWII

Aside from the organizations that were formed in WWII, another important aspect that needs attention is the artists who immigrated or exiled during the era. The artists, most significantly the ones who were isolated in their countries as a result of their stance against the ideology of their country's government at the time, have fled their motherlands mainly to the United States but also the United Kingdom.

Even though WWII officially started in 1938, its effects on art practice and the artists had begun shortly after WWI and had risen in the beginning of 1930's, due to the political impacts and oppression of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Especially, conservative and fascist attitude of Nazi Germany has steered the Government to the anti-modernism in arts. This aspect, therefore, has started to exclude all of which were not on the same pace, ideology and point of view. While some artists, who stood against this oppression with their practices or was not able to reside in their motherland because of the sanctions of the Government, such as James Heartfield, Kurt Schwitters and Oskar Kokoschka have been exiled, other artists who were somehow able to stay in Nazi Germany and practice their art have encountered serious discrimination. Marion Deshmukh points out this discrimination in his work as,

The literature on artists who remained in Germany attempts to distinguish between those forced into 'inner exile', namely refraining from exhibiting in state-sponsored

exhibitions or teaching at art academies, and other artists who, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, supported the Nazi regime. (Deshmukh, 2008, p.581)

This indicates how politics and ideology was dominating and discriminating the artist from the artist in Nazi Germany, limiting and not giving a space to survive to the ones who do not obey, and merely supporting the ones who was supporting their ideology, which is a completely an inappropriate environment for the art practice and creativity, full of censorship, dismissal and isolation.

Moreover, not just by the discrimination of the artists but also by forbidding and limiting some art movements, Nazi Germany forced the artists to exile. Since it was nearly impossible for artists to survive, produce and progress in new movements in a country which is ruled by dictatorship, they needed to migrate to the countries who were fighting for democracy and freedom¹.

By 1934, the Nazi assault on avant-garde art began in earnest with the first of several exhibitions that denounced impressionism, expressionism, dada, surrealism, and abstraction. Nazi administrators also removed modern art from museum walls. (Deshmukh, 2008, p.582)

Degenerate Art which is a term that intended to indicate the artworks and the art movements stated above, banned by the Nazi Germany, also had an exhibition with the same name which was held in 1937. It was formed to insult and humiliate the artworks and the artists that were considered as ‘un-German’ and inflames Communism. There are two

¹ Britain’s motto and war propaganda in WWII was “Democracy and Freedom” as it is mentioned many times previously in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

important artists out of many, whose works were exhibited in Munich, later in various cities of Germany and Austria under the same name of exhibition: John Heartfield and Kurt Schwitters.

Helmut Herzfeld, who was known as John Heartfield, was one of the main figures of the exile. His integration with Britain started with his rebellion against Nazi Germany by changing his name to 'John' in WWI, then he continued to express his political approach against fascism by creating distinctive posters of which eventually caused him to flee Berlin and move firstly to Prague, later to North of United Kingdom.



Figure 5: 5 Finger hat die hand (5 fingers have the hand), John Heartfield, 1928 Source: <https://www.moma.org/>

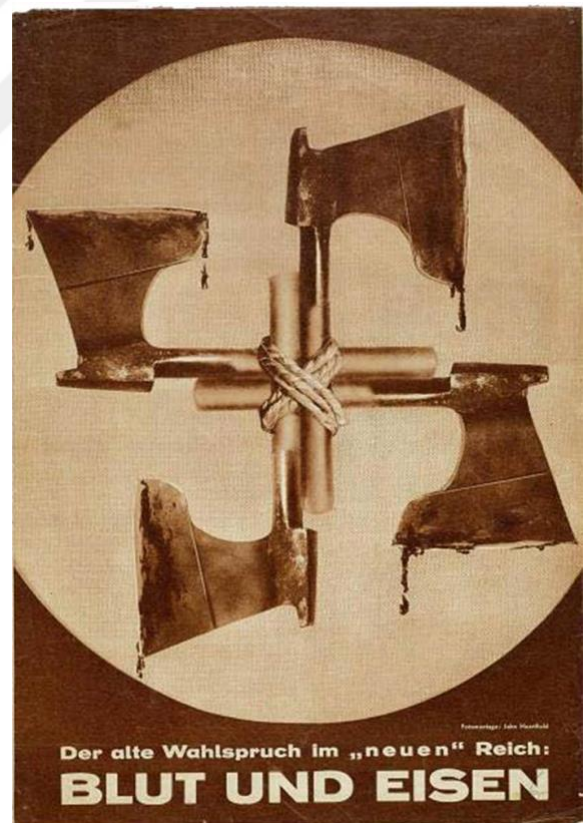


Figure 6: Blood and Iron, John Heartfield, 1934 Source: www.johnheartfield.com

Even though he was unable to produce as much as he had right before WWII after his exile regarding his political criticism using his talent, moving to Britain, to a country which started to focus the importance of arts, culture and exhibition with the committees and councils that had been formed, he was able to canalize his progress to examine new ways to create.

The period [John Heartfield] spent in north London has long been regarded as relatively unproductive; [...]. However, it was also a time in which he explored alternative modes of expression. An important influence, [...] was his fascination with the works of popular cartoonists, most notably Vicky and David Low, whose cartoons in the form of newspaper cuttings he avidly collected. (Diana et al., 26 John Heartfield: A Political Artist's Exile in London 2015)

This shows his attain to his progress in arts right before he started to produce again. Since his works were mostly graphic and political posters, he was mostly drawn into the arts which influence him, similar to his own works and also was able to reach out to the sources he sought in Britain. Aside from the fact that he has spent his first years in Britain with difficulty since he was a refugee in exile, unemployed and had been in internment for six weeks, he was released by a letter from Artists' Refugee Committee of Britain, and he was also able to attend few exhibitions with his artworks which show his enthusiasm to stay in England and contribute to the art scene in Britain.

In addition to Heartfield's experiences as an artist in exile in Britain, Kurt Schwitters was another artist who was exhibited in *Degenerate Art* of Nazi Germany, regarded as one of the representatives of dadaism and surrealism. Even though his works was not as political

as Heartfield, he was an artist who has paved a way to future installation art, especially with his structure of Merzbau (See Fig.7), which does not exist anymore due to the bombings of his house during WWII. However, with the collage art series he created, he focused on the subjects such as hierarchy and by using different kinds of materials he had used while creating the collage *The Cherry Picture* (See Fig.8) he attracted the attention of the audience to the one of the aims of the beginning of twentieth century, which is to integrate arts with daily life of the people.



Figure 7: Merzbau (Merz Construction), Kurt Schwitters, 1923-1937

Source: <http://www.moma.org>



Figure 8: Merz Picture 32 A. The Cherry Picture, Kurt Schwitters, 1921

Source: <http://www.moma.org>

[Kurt Schwitters] survived the war on the outskirts of London spent the last years of his life in the rural Lake District. Whereas his creative identity had been shaped

in cooperation with an international cohort peers – be they like-minded artists, typographers, and poets, or legions of outraged critics – once he found himself living as a refugee, this vital exchange had to come from within. (Schwitters et al.2021, p.XV)

During his exile years in Britain, which eventually ended up with his death, he profoundly changed his practice by the change in his environment as the introduction of his autobiography states. Free from the oppression of Nazi Germany, he was able to express and improve himself by being influenced by his colleagues in Britain during the War years.

Another artist aside from the two above, Oskar Kokoschka, who has spent nearly ten years in exile in Britain was one of the most distinguishable artists during the era. As an Austrian, even though he had served as a soldier and defended his country during WWI, he was later forced to escape from Nazi forces because of his art was considered as *degenerate*, regarding his exceptional and influencing practice of modernism. Having painted “timeless” portrait of a young, anti-Nazi British art collector Michael Croft, he later started to rebel against the dictatorship of Nazi Germany using his modernist practice skills in Britain. Moreover, as an artist who did not stay in Britain despite his experience in many parts of the country such as London, Scotland, and Cornwall, he later became a British citizen in early 1947, right after WWII and just five years before his departure from Britain to Switzerland. He continued his travels to United States in these five years, nevertheless his art was still on the radar of Michael Croft. Müller mentions in his article,

Throughout the correspondence, Croft emphasized how crucial he would consider an Oskar Kokoschka retrospective to finally take place in England, for there was

still only gradual interest in his work. He informed Kokoschka about his continual attempts to persuade the Tate Gallery to host an exhibition. In 1962, the first large Kokoschka retrospective was organized by the Arts Council, and in the foreword, Croft was, among others dutifully thanked for his efforts. (Chandler et al., *Rebellious and Supportive: the collector Michael Croft and artists in exile in Great Britain* 2007, p.51)



Figure 9: Michael Croft, 1938 – Oskar Kokoschka (Reproduction of the original portrait)

Source: <https://www.reproduction-gallery.com>

Above, the reproduction of Kokoschka's portrait can be observed, which was painted in his first year, after being commissioned by Croft, who later continued to appreciate and support Kokoschka even after the artist's departure from Britain since Croft was actually the first and one of the few who acknowledged that Kokoschka's works should be exhibited not just for their artistic value but also their rebellious and proud attitude against the

domination of Nazi Germany and acted as a visual proof of the defeat of “democracy and freedom” over fascism.

As a result, despite the difficulties both artists have come face to face in their exile years in Britain, they also had a chance to research on and express their practice in Britain more than they had ever done in their motherland in the subjects of movements and ideology. Since the artists were monitored by the Artists Refugee Committee of Britain, they were also able to get their freedom and approach the audience by both having a chance to be exhibited and not to be isolated and humiliated because of their craft as they had encountered in Nazi Germany.

4. THE EFFECTS OF WWI AND WWII ON THE ART SCENE OF POST-WAR ERA FROM 1945 TO 1960

In the previous chapters, several important organizations and people that affected the British art scene between 1917 to 1945 have been focused on as a result of two great wars. Aiming to influence the society and support the artists financially have been two main reasons through the era. The role of the state, in terms of funding and war propaganda, was inevitable and the organizations and establishments which were required to satisfy the certain claims of the Government were in fact searching for a way out from their boundaries of the state. Obviously, since the financial power is on the hands of a government of the state, it also has the power to use this over shaping the society as it desires. However, as it is now and was back then, to be able to grasp the atmosphere of the society is always important, in order to use the arts as a weapon of the mind. Therefore, it is not always practical for the Government to impose on the citizens everything it wants, since they may rebound.

Compared with corporations and other institutions in British society, the state is more public, more accessible and easier to influence. [...]. The state is the most direct and obvious way of trying to change the society. But it is not the best way of understanding society. (Catterall & Obelkevich, 2004)

Considering the understanding the society as it is stated above, the role of the artists has always been crucial, especially during the Wars and after. Through the years of both Wars, the experiences and the conflict that the society endured have mostly led the society to be parallel with what the Government had always wanted to imply on, however, since the Government canalized all its power to war propaganda and the recording of the events of

Wars, using the aspect of the society in those years which eventually all about giving a meaning to all those sacrifices and endurance they had encountered. However, after the Wars, there was a relief and a sense of emptiness due to the loss of a certain ideal which was to see the end of the Wars. Meanwhile, the ongoing of financial crisis which has affected all Europe and not just Britain, shaping the society in a way of pursuit of satisfaction in arts. As a result, understanding the society was urgent and necessary for the future of British culture in the Post-War years.

The most important organization for this implementation of arts into culture was the Arts Council of Great Britain, whose effects will be analyzed later in this chapter. Nonetheless, the most significant impact of the Council, that was formed from CEMA which had been supported by WAAC by providing artworks through the War years and later dissolved in 1945, that its partial division from the state financially and reacting the society's needs independently. However, the Government proceeded its role in financing arts, shifting its course from war propaganda to preserving and harboring the British culture for integrity of the society in the following years. Arthur Marwick points out what was behind all this financial support of the Government for arts and culture in Post-War period between 1945 to 1957,

The vital question at any time is: how are the arts financed? Without any doubt, British political authorities in this period of what might be termed the 'cultural welfare state' made a greater contribution to financing the arts than ever before. Behind that process lay the experience of the war, the sense that Britain was fighting for what was best in civilization, the sense of pride in British culture, the sense that the best in that culture should be widely shared. (Catterall & Obelkevich, 2004).

This indicates how the attitude of the Government towards the art practice has altered, because there was a different world out there with different needs. For nearly the last thirty years, the art had been dominated by the Government and the focus was on War, hence the subject of production and the creativity was completely around chaos, crisis and conflict respectively. Even in the abstract forms in arts, the reality was there to present the loss, darkness and drastic experiences. Undoubtedly, the echoes of both Wars were not easy to get rid of right after the Wars' end, however, the British society and the artists started to hold on what the future would bring artistically and culturally.

In addition to the Arts Council of Great Britain, there is another institution which was risen as a consequence of both Wars, yet also as a rebellion against the conflict and pressure that were experienced by the artists, in Post-War years. The formation of Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) was mostly based on the liberation of the thoughts and ideas of the artists, by creating a space where they can discuss independently not just among each other but writers and scientists, as well as using dialectic approach to take arts and most particularly British art and culture further, integrating them to the future. As Lord Keynes' words "The arts owe no vow of obedience"², ICA adopted the similar approach and put it in practice since it was inevitable for the future of the arts which was depending on collaboration and freedom against the limitations and traditions of not just state but also Royal Academy, which was established long before both Wars, in the eighteenth century. This step of ICA can be interpreted as the effect of Wars, since the traditional intentions of

² Lord Keynes, see p.32 of this Dissertation.

the establishments before was finally ignored and new ones were structured on not the limitations but sharing, debating and attaining the reforms that they might bring.

To sum up, the effects of the Wars on the Post War art scene, therefore, can be analyzed in three major aspects: alterations in arts organizations in the subjects of finance and politics, the Government's approach towards arts from the war propaganda to cultural needs, and the aspect of the society towards the arts, since the importance of education of the audience started to be taken into consideration by all three: the state and the art patrons and the artists.

4.1. Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) (1945)

“The new Council would be independent in constitution, free from political inference, financed by the Treasury, and ultimately responsible to Parliament”
 [...] (Harris, *Decision-makers in government programs of arts patronage: The Arts Council of Great Britain 1969*, p.254)

As the WWII ended, alongside with Europe, Britain got her share from the devastated arena which was left for the survivors. Since it is impossible to set the emotions of the society and the atmosphere of the period aside when the swift between the establishments and organizations of the era are to be mentioned, firstly, the change in arts patronage should be focused on. To embrace the society's needs, merge them with artistic perspective and illustrate, exhibit and perform the works of art independently, the first leap of the art scene in Britain was to not to separate the Government and the arts for good but at least draw a line between them, protecting arts from the Government-dominated frame. Arts Council of

Great Britain (ACGB), in that sense, was the initial and most reformatory formation right after the end of the WWII, regarding its political and organizational aspects as a council.

Its seeds had been planted by CEMA and ACGB was established in 1945 with the leading of Lord De La Warr, Herbrand Sackville. While CEMA's ultimate goal was to gather the different forms of arts and bring the audience and the artists' work together in order to preserve the motivation of the people by reminding them the cultural blossom even if the WWII was still continuing and to support the artists financially to survive the WWII by providing them with a certain income and a chance to exhibit their work not just in particular museums and galleries but in the places where the British society can reach out as a whole, the ACGB took the flag of CEMA further, by targeting independence of arts from the Government. The role of the members of the first Council was crucial in that sense. In order to change the course of power from Government to the arts to the arts to the Government, education of both the audience and the members was essential. Since high culture of the arts needs a certain vision to be implemented on the people, the members should have come from an educational background. Even though this privilege of education of the council members might have created a gap, considering the essential needs of the society, especially the people in working class right after the war such as employment, financial crisis and welfare in household, it has also enabled the members to regard the big picture, not just thinking about the problems of the present but also the future of the British culture. John Harris points out this importance among the education of the council members and its integration to the ability to consider all aspects of the era with "Schools and universities attended by members of the Arts Council played an important role in shaping their cultural, economic, political, and social viewpoints and reflect to a

considerable degree their class orientation.” (Harris, 1969, p.256). Hence, indicating both their knowledge and how it affected the decision-making process in ACGB and the class they belonged to even if the aim of the Council was to reach out all individuals without discrimination. No matter the artists had been in the front lines of the War to reflect the scenes to all individuals by processing these scenes from their own artistic vision for the people, which eventually brought all of the society and the arts together, the arts was still in a need of certain educated people who had the perspective to conserve and make use of this scene of conflict and give arts the freedom of production without relying on not just the Government’s direction but also the audience. There is no doubt that art cannot be separated from the people’s experiences sociologically and psychologically, however, it should not only act as a mirror of those from an artistic perspective, but also imply new ideas, vision and broaden the people’s aspect by giving a chance to them to escape from themselves, painting different windows and encouraging them to breathe outside of their own limitations.

To do this, newly formed Arts Council needed members who was able to think outside the box, able to peel of the War-oriented subject in arts but of course not leaving behind for good. Aside from the reformatory approach to art practice in the encouragement of the artists to practice not just to reflect the society but also for the future, there was another step that must be taken to put this approach into use, which was to set the Government aside in terms of financial yet artistic freedom. Therefore, the education and the background of the Council members has led the Council to undergird the arts for arts and not just for the audience and the Government’s needs to influence the society. There is no question that this has been concluded with the increasing effects of arts on the future of

British society since the arts and the artists became the protagonist of the art scene as a decision mechanism from then, not the others which were stuck in the faith of the situations of the present.

The Arts Council has been able to provide greatly needed financial assistance and yet avoid the dangers of government control. The success of programs of support depends to a major degree upon the wisdom of the decisions made by the patrons concerning policy: how administrative agency organized, what categories of the arts to be aided, procedures utilized in receiving and processing applications for support, and most important, the decision as to what individuals and organizations are to be accorded specific types of assistance – [...] (Harris, 1969, p.253-254)

This implies not only the successful domination of the independence of arts in finance over the Government with Arts Council, but also how the organization with an educational background changed the faith of arts in Britain swiftly right after the WWII. This can be seen as a result of the end of the conflict, nonetheless, the establishments and committees had been formed for the last twenty-five years cannot be overlooked. The Wars led the Government to have war propaganda over the audience, because of that the government funded arts during the war years to use it as a weapon to impose its ideals respectively, the committees and councils were formed to support the artists and the art scene but after the Wars ended, the need of arts was not concluded to its mission to maintain the British culture and freedom in all aspects that the British government had promised over the WWII years,

hence, with the members of Arts Council, who were able to foresee the future of the country, regarded arts as a future and the motivation source but not a record of past and present of the people in Britain. To present this new approach, a festival of science, technology and arts was organized, as ACGB was associated with.



Figure 10: Festival of Britain Poster, Abram Games, 1951

Source: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1223476/festival-of-britain-poster-abram-games/>

In 1951, just six years after the ACGB was formed, Festival of Britain was organized. Though the suggestion of the Festival has initially come from Royal Society of Arts in 1943, ACGB's contribution to the most prestigious festival which would take part right after the War was to commission the art pieces to this occasion, related to the recognition

of ACGB over the country. Regarding one of its purposes to direct the future of the art scene in Britain by reminding the society what they had preserved through the years of War, both to put the British culture in the center of the arts, leaving the Wars' effect behind and also to increase the morale of the people by implying the drastic experiences of the conflict had already been left behind and that Britain was still standing, Festival of Britain can be considered as a public demonstration of the state to the citizens that two things that matter are the future and the achievements of Britain and the culture which brings all the citizens together.



*Figure 11: Reclining Figure, Henry Moore
1938 is at the Festival of Britain*

Source: <https://www.henry-moore.org>

ACGB's contribution to the Festival included sixty paintings, and various sculptures, one of them was which Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure* which can be seen above. Even though the Festival's concept was "*Discovery*", discovery of the culture, achievements, future of Britain, the woman figure of Moore's was fairly controversial. On the other hand, this

commission of ACGB can be interpreted as a foresight of the destiny of women, whose potential and outshining had already started to become a subject of many fields, including arts and the art scene since the councils and committees were already commissioning some female artists and a number of council members were women. Discovery of female strength, prediction of the loud steps of feminism can also be the focus of ACGB. This choice also shows ACGB's futuristic approach alongside its support to British culture, desiring to strengthen it with new ideas and concepts, not by using arts but with arts. Furthermore, as different as it might seem, this change of approach towards arts was actually because of Wars and the experiences people had, impacting the aspect towards the importance of peace and prosperity, leaving behind the fight but embracing the welfare of the country. Gerald Barry indicates this aim of the Festival and its contradiction with the War years as,

Behind the varied experiments and achievements of British life there exists a store of common ideas which inspire us to the kind of action we take. These again are not easy to analyze, but some of them emerge clearly in the record of our national achievement in the arts, in science, in sociology. Among them are such things as love of country, love of freedom, love of nature, pride in craftsmanship, tolerance and fair play. These, though abstractions, are recognizable British traits – [...].

They are not passive conceptions; they express themselves dynamically in the kind of Britain we have built or want to build. (Barry, 1952, p.676)



Figure 12: Some people in front of the exhibition building of Festival of Britain, UK Source: <https://www.southwarkcarers.org.uk>

Since ACGB was the Council behind the artworks that were sent to the Festival, it is obvious that they were especially chosen pieces to not to enforce a government-led atmosphere to the individuals, but to unleash the core that had always been there, inside the people, which was just covered because of the chaos that took place in the beginning of the 20th century. Festival of Britain can be analyzed as the first historical event of ACGB, allowed the Council which is still ongoing in our century, which gave the chance to the Council to explain the society of the new meaning of arts.

From that day on, the arts in Britain would be for the contribution to the British culture and the education of the audience but not for the contribution to the government and its ideology of implementation on the society.

The Council continued its actions as ACGB until the end of twentieth century, later divided to four charters as Arts Council of England, Arts Council of Scotland, Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council of Northern Ireland and have still been progressing to be the most recognized Councils of the art scene of the world, with its progressive reputation in Contemporary Art of the present.

4.2. Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) (1946)

Until the year of 1946, the organizations that has been established focused on the production of art, the support of the artists, the exhibition of the pieces and different art forms together and bringing the audience and the artists together to educate the audience. Initially used by the Government but later to enrich the cultural aspect of the audience by ACGB, the arts in Britain had one gap left to be filled in. Forming a center which enables the artists to gather and discuss their intentions for the sake of their production and future of the art scene in Britain was essential for the progress of arts.

During the Wars, it was nearly impossible to create a common ground for the artists in Britain because of the chaotic scene and most of the artists who were commissioned by the Committees were concentrating on the conflict as a subject, travelling to different countries to illustrate the scenes of War, thus supported by the Government. However, especially after the establishments to exhibit the arts which helped the artists to reach out larger

audiences not just in Britain but overseas such as CEMA and ACGB, the artists had an urgent need of discussing their artworks with their colleagues to flourish new ideas for their future artwork and also exhibiting first stages of the artworks that were being experimented which is inevitable for the improvement of the artists and leading a way towards new art movements. Because of these all above, Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) was born in 1946.

Here, it is very important to acknowledge that, as drastic as it was, without the conflicts of both Wars, ICA might not have been formed as the others before ICA. The one should be aware of that the suppress and the stress, which was caused by the chaos Wars had brought, eventually resulted with the progress in arts as a resistance, most especially after WWII ended. The emptiness and exhaustion that were left were to be filled in by the preservation of culture, the unwritten demise of the victims of the Wars would be honored unintentionally by holding on to the future and the continuity of the country. The life needed to have a meaning again. These thoughts led the artists to come forward and progress in their craft in the Post War, to the establishment of ICA. Creating individually without sharing new ideas was not enough for the persistence and progression of the arts.

To point out the foresighted approach of ICA, Judith Bihr gives an example for the discussions within the institute under the Independent Group (IG),

The origins of the Pop Art movement lie in Europe. Long before American artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol elevated mass media consumer culture to the subject of their works, artists from the London Independent Group (IG), for example Eduardo Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton, had introduced the term “Pop”

to refer to their art. Founded in 1952 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), the Independent Group was already discussing ideas for adapting and integrating mass culture such as advertising and mass media in the fine arts. (Bihr, 2016)

Independent Group (IG) which is mentioned above was a group of artists gathered between the years of 1952 to 1955, to debate on the domination of modernism on culture, which was concluded with the reveal of mass culture. The group's challenge against modernist movement can be interpreted as a rebellion against the traditional expectations of the society from an artist. Moreover, it was just six years after WWII and the artists who met under IG of ICA were seeking to find progressive ways besides the control of ACGP or Royal Arts Academy. The best way to do this was “found object” which has formed from

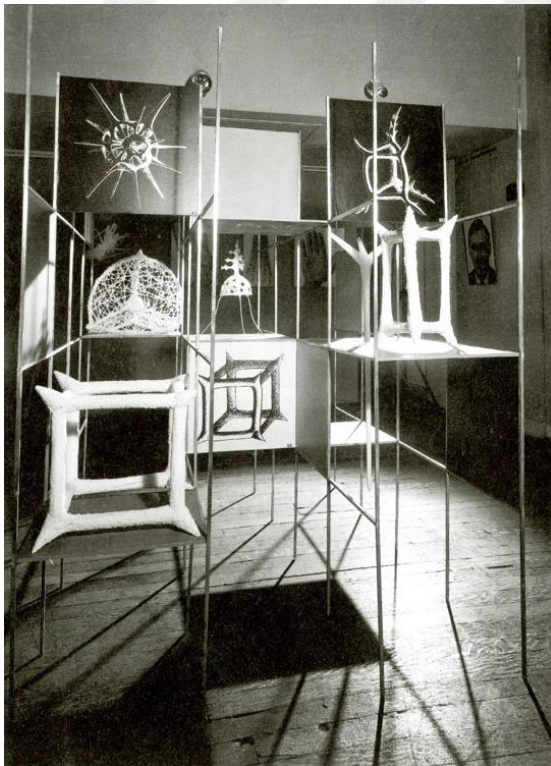


Figure 13: From “Growth and Form” exhibition, 1951

Source: <https://medium.com>

the opposition to modernism of the artists in IG. Not just new forms of art which blossomed from the gatherings and discussions of IG, but also the exhibitions of ICA which took place in 1950s is the other evidence of how the arts started to change in a way to merge with all forms of life not just with history, especially with the revolving exhibition *Growth and Form* (1951), which revealed the microorganisms as installations and photographs in details, bringing the arts and sciences together, introducing a multidisciplinary approach to the second half of the century.

Therefore, ICA can be analyzed as an end to the art scene of dictation, expectations and control in Britain and the arts breaking off its chains towards a new century and Contemporary world of arts.

5. CONCLUSION

All in all, due to the conflict that WWI and WWII caused, the art scene in Britain was affected positively, regarding the organizations, establishments, committees, museums and groups that was formed and is therefore mentioned in this thesis. Even though throughout the years of WWI and WWII the arts were mostly directed by the Government with the power that it had acquired by funding the art scene and the purpose of war propaganda, through the end of the WWII and beyond until 1960 during the Post-War years, it started to change dramatically because of the domination of the arts over the Government, and the shift of the roles in the triangle of the Government, the artist and the audience as a result of the formation and the actions of some important establishments which are directly or indirectly connected to each other. With the beginning of the second half of the century, the artists and their practice, free from the state, became more progressive by focusing on the different forms of arts, challenging the movements of the era.

Starting from the formation of Wellington House, the War Propaganda Bureau of Britain in WWI, until Institute of Contemporary Arts, there are points that has affected the art scene in Britain, mostly financial, organizational and in terms of exhibiting the artworks. This dissertation, as a result, also shows that, although the British Government was using the arts as an instrument for its own benefit from the beginning of WWI and through the years of WWII and enforced the artists in subject, sending them to the frontlines of the Wars, it also funded the artists and encouraged them to survive through the painful years when the people were coping with unemployment and economic crisis. Aside from its limitations, the Government played a huge role by supporting the establishment of committees such as BWMC which introduced schemes to plan the production and funding

of the artists during those years, with the intention of the gathering official British war artists under one roof, unintentionally leading to WAAC. WAAC, which had a broader and extensive sense in the organization of the art scene, aside from the fact that it was again government-funded, and the artists commissioned were censored by the committee due to several reasons, pave the way to the artists to exhibit their work not just through the country but also overseas, increasing the recognition of British art.

In addition to these organizations and their effects in the production of arts and the morale on the artists, significant exhibition areas such as Imperial War Museum, Hall of Remembrance and the formation of CEMA, which is a council concentrated on the exhibition of arts in various places within the country to reach out the audience, also supported the art scene in Britain in terms of its progress in freedom of practice, recognition of the artworks and the artists. Despite the fact that the Hall of Remembrance was never completed due to some obstacles, BWMC's scheme one was all for the formation and the collection of Hall of Remembrance which the artists were highly funded until the structure was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the whole collection was collected by IWM, therefore worked for the benefit of the art scene of Britain, recording the violent years of War and the scenes were illustrated by the artists in a way that photographs cannot picture.

As a continuing establishment of CEMA, The Arts Council and its members sought ways to be apart from the British Government financially, to grant the British art and the artists with freedom. Having accomplished this, it commissioned the artworks for and contributed to one of the most famous festivals of Britain right in the middle of the century, *Festival of Britain*. As a festival which brought all forms of art with culture and sciences together, it also formed in the same years as Institution of Contemporary Arts (ICA). ICA can be

considered as a door towards today's Contemporary Arts, as it is an Institution that brings the artists together, providing them a space to discuss their practice and their futuristic thoughts on arts by experimenting on their artworks and exhibiting them free from the Government's limitations to influence the future of the British art scene.

Aside from the establishments and organizations of Britain that affected the production in Britain, the artists John Heartfield and Kurt Schwitters whose works are considered as significant politically and anti-fascist, fled Germany and move to Britain which supported the ideology of the British Government in WWII, that is democracy and freedom by sheltering these artists under the flag of United Kingdom.

Therefore, according to the art establishments of WWI to the Post War that are examined in this dissertation has ultimately changed the course of British art, starting from the propaganda purpose of the Government yet benefiting from it and finally reaching out to a stance where the arts itself has become the one that calls the shots of its faith, independently.

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