

## Avant et après: Gauguin's final words (online, 23-24 Jun 23)

online / The Courtauld, London, Jun 23-24, 2023

Dr Cathy Corbett

Avant et après: Gauguin's final words.

Online conference at The Courtauld.

In 2020, The Courtauld acquired one of the most significant artists manuscripts ever to enter a UK public collection – a unique and richly illustrated text by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). Offered to The Courtauld as part of the Government's Acceptance in Lieu scheme administered by the Arts Council, Avant et après is the last major manuscript by Gauguin and the only example of his written manuscripts in the UK. It was written in 1903, the year of the artist's death, at his home on the Marquesas island of Hiva Oa, French Polynesia. It had never been exhibited publicly and remained unstudied by scholars in its original form until it came to The Courtauld.

Part-memoir and part-manifesto, the 213-page manuscript, reveals important insights into Gauguin's life, relationships and thoughts, and includes numerous drawings and prints by the artist.

Funded by The Getty Foundation's "Paper Project", this online-conference brings together scholars from all over the world to give a wide-ranging selection of papers focusing on Avant et après, including – amongst others – Gauguin's literary influences, the Hiva Oa environment in which he was writing at the end of his life, and details about the making of the book which only became apparent once it could be studied at close quarters.

Speakers: Claire Bernardi (Director of the Musée de L'Orangerie, Paris); Professor Elizabeth Childs (Washington University in St Louis); Dr Cathy Corbett (The Courtauld); Dr Elise Eckermann (Independent Art Historian, Frankfurt am Main); Professor Linda Goddard (University of St Andrews); Dr Monika Hinkel (SOAS, University of London); Yuki Kihara (award winning 2022 Venice Biennale artist); Professor Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega (University of French Polynesia); Giacomo Nericì (University of Milano-Bicocca); Professor Belinda Thomson (University of Edinburgh); Dr Caroline Vercoe (University of Auckland); Dr Rachel Sloan (The Courtauld); Kate Edmondson (The Courtauld); Dr Caroline Levitt (The Courtauld); Dr Rachel Hapoienu (The Courtauld).

Keynote speaker: Professor June E. Hargrove (University of Maryland)

Organised by Dr Ketty Gottardo (Martin Halusa Curator of Drawings, The Courtauld) and Dr Cathy Corbett (Research Assistant, The Courtauld).

To book free tickets, follow this link:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/avant-et-apres-gauguins-final-words-tickets-618940617047>

Programme

Friday 23rd June 2023

8.45 – 13.00, BST

8.45 – Introduction, Dr Ketty Gottardo.

8.55 Paper 1. Caroline Vercoe,  
'Where are We Going?': Reflecting on Gauguin's Legacy in the Pacific

9.15 Questions

9.25 Paper 2. Kate Edmondson, and Dr Rachel Hapoienu  
Material evidence and technical aspects of the manuscript.

9.45 Questions.

9.55 Paper 3. Professor Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega.  
Gauguin's literary predecessors in the Marquesas.

10.15 Paper 4. Dr Nicholas Thomas.  
Un pays merveilleux: rethinking Gauguin's "disappointment".

10.35 Questions.

10.50 BREAK

11.00 Paper 5. Professor Linda Goddard.  
Avant et après and the artist's autobiography

11.20 Paper 6. Dr Caroline Levitt.  
'Repetition as truth: Language and (un)certainty in Gauguin's text and image'.

11.40 Questions.

11.55 Paper 6. Dr Monika Hinkel.  
Gauguin and three Japanese Beauties

12.15 Paper 7. Dr Claire Bernardi.  
Gauguin dans les musées français. Un état des lieux

12.35 Questions.

13.00 END

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Saturday 24th June

12.25 – 17.45 BST

12.25 Opening remarks. Dr Cathy Corbett

12.30 Paper 8. Professor Belinda Thomson.

'Pour Rire, Pour Vivre, Pour Jouir': Some reflections on the character and role of humour in Gauguin's Avant et après.

12.50 Paper 9. Dr Elise Eckermann.

Gauguin's Final Works: Some Drawings from Avant et après and corresponding paintings – Riding Lesson with Guardian Angel.

13.10 Questions.

13.25 Paper 10. Dr Cathy Corbett.

'Flesh is flesh and spirit is spirit'. Some observations on Gauguin's references to religion(s) in Avant et après.

13.45 Paper 11. Dr Rachel Sloan.

An epistolary friendship: Paul Gauguin and André Fontainas.

14.05 Questions

14.20 BREAK

14.40 Paper 12. Yuki Kihara.

Paradise Camp.

15.10 Paper 13. Giacomo Nericì.

In Hiva oia: Gauguin and the Marquesan art.

15.30 Questions.

15.40 BREAK

15.50 Paper 14. Harriet Stratis.

Title tbc.

16.10 Paper 15. Professor Elizabeth Childs.

Dual voices of Gauguin's late career: Avant et après and L'esprit moderne et le Catholicisme compared.

16.30 Questions.

16.45 Keynote: Professor June Hargrove.

Between Avant et Après.

17.10 Questions.

17.30 Final discussion.

17.45 ENDS

Reference:

CONF: Avant et après: Gauguin's final words (online, 23-24 Jun 23). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 4, 2023 (accessed

Jul 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/39444>>.