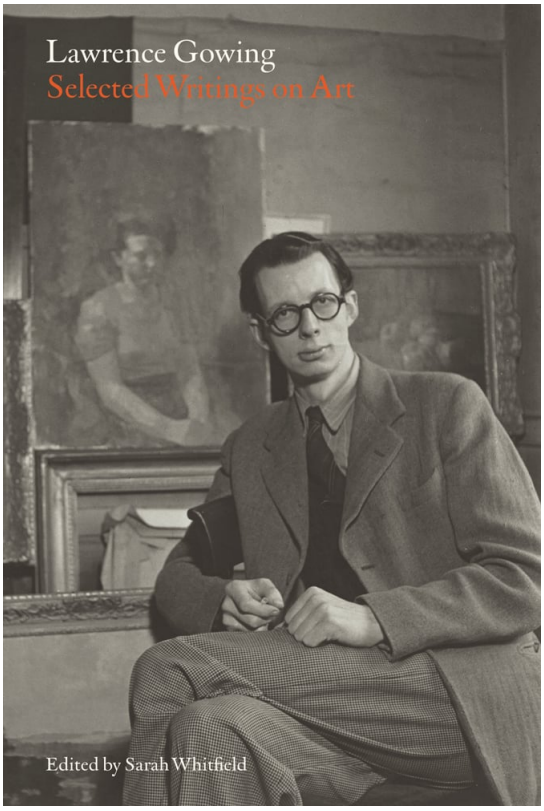
TITLE INFORMATION
Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/uk



Lawrence Gowing

Selected Writings on Art

Lawrence Gowing

Edited by Sarah Whitfield

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- Gowing was a polymathic presence in the art world from the 1940s to the 1980s on both sides of the Atlantic. His involvement in the art establishment was both wide and deep
- He was first a successful painter, later becoming a professor of fine art (King's College, Chelsea School of Art, Leeds and eventually Principal of the Slade), curator (UK, US, France), museum trustee (Tate, British Museum)
- Wrote extensively on artists including Vermeer, Hogarth, Turner, Cézanne and Matisse, and, later, Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud. As a curator he was responsible for organising the Turner exhibition at MoMA, New York, in 1966, and the Cézanne at the Royal Academy in 1988, among others
- Close friends included painter William Coldstream and Bloomsbury critic Clive Bell. His first wife was Julia Strachey, a member of the Bloomsbury Group and niece of Lytton Strachey

As one of the leading critical voices on art of the postwar years, polymath Lawrence Gowing (1918–1991) combined a passion for close visual involvement with formidable literary skills. Edited by art historian Sarah Whitfield, four decades of Gowing's writing are brought together for the first time in this volume, covering subjects from the Old Masters to Francis Bacon and Howard Hodgkin.

Having first gained success as a painter, Gowing's 1952 monograph on Vermeer brought him early recognition as a writer with the ability to combine aesthetic experience with a meticulous historical perspective.

Gowing's foremost commitment was to the pioneering painters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notably Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse. The exhibitions he curated at the Tate and Museum of Modern Art famously helped to mould and reshape public perceptions. Characterised by a desire to instruct and encourage, his writing reflects a highly successful career as a curator and teacher.

Sir Lawrence Gowing (1918–1991) began his career as a painter of portraits and landscapes, later becoming a distinguished curator, writer, professor of art and museum trustee, including at the Tate and British Museum. He was Keeper of the British Collection and Deputy Director of the Tate Gallery, London from 1965-67, Professor of Fine Art at the University of Leeds from 1967 to 1975 and Slade Professor of Fine Art at University College, London from 1975 until his retirement in 1985. A central figure in both the UK and USA art establishments, his writings include monographs on artists ranging from Vermeer and Turner to Cézanne and Freud.

Sarah Whitfield is an art historian, writer and curator who has published widely on Surrealism, as well as on Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Lucio Fontana and other twentieth-century artists. She co-authored the catalogue raisonné of René Magritte and sits on the authentication committee of the Francis Bacon Estate.

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