





- My aim today is to compare and contrast the work of many famous artists both before and during (and sometimes just after) World War II. This enables the wide variety of art produced during the 1930s to be shown and the way in which the war influenced individual artists in different ways.
- Many British artists were conservative and painted landscapes and portraits. The landscape painters had a vision of England which they combined with Continental modernism in subtle ways that did not do violence to their native, traditional view.



NEW WAYS OF SEEING: MODERN BRITISH ART

1. New Ways of Seeing
2. Impressionism, Post-Impressionism & Fauvism
3. Cubism, Abstraction and the British Avant Garde
4. Vorticism and World War One Artists
5. Return to Order: Stanley Spencer
6. Dada, Surrealism & Expressionism
7. British Sculpture & Henry Moore
- 8. The Thirties and World War II Art**
9. British Figurative Art
10. Summary 1900-1950

- I will look at a number of artists working in the 1930s prior to World War Two and show how their work was influenced by the war.
- As usual I will introduce the artists by the chronology of their year of birth.



THE 1930s

- The Wall Street Crash, Smoot-Hawley and the Great Depression
- The National Hunger March of 1932 and Jarrow March of 1936
- Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933
- Nuclear chain reaction discovered
- Mao Zedong's Long March from 1934 to 1935
- The Dust Bowl in America from 1934 onwards
- The abdication of Edward VIII in 1936
- Ireland became a republic in 1937
- Stalin's Great Purge in the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938
- The Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939
- World War II started on 1 September 1939

- The 1930s saw the devastating **Great Depression**, the **National Hunger March** of 1932, **Adolf Hitler** rise to power in 1933, the year that Leo Szilard conceived of the **nuclear chain reaction** and he patented the idea of the **nuclear reactor**, Mao Zedong's **Long March** from 1934 to 1935, the **Dust Bowl** in America from 1934 onwards, the **abdication** of Edward VIII in 1936, **Ireland** becoming a republic in 1937, Stalin's **Great Purge** in the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938, the **Spanish Civil War** from 1936 to 1939 and the beginning of **World War II** on 1 September 1939.

Historic Events

- **1920s.** The 1920s saw widespread unemployment in the UK, the Irish Free State in 1921, hyperinflation in Germany, the first publication of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1925, the founding of the BBC in 1920 and the first public demonstration of television in 1932, the first full-length talking movie was *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, the first solo flight across the Atlantic by Charles Lindbergh in 1927, all women over 21 in the UK get the vote in 1928, the discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928 and the beginning of the Great Depression across the world. In art it was the start of Art Deco with its bold colours, geometric shapes and linear elements. Surrealism captured the imagination of writers and artists with its dream-like expressionism.

- **Great Depression.** At the beginning of the 1930s Great Britain was still recovering from the effects of the First World War when the Great Depression hit. This started with **Black Tuesday**, 29 October 1929, the **Wall Street Crash**, which was caused by a massive over investment in shares by naïve investors which drove up share prices followed by over production in industry which resulted in poor sales and a stock price collapse fuelled by massive selling. This was combined with an over production of food driven by new agricultural efficiencies and the inevitable fall in food prices followed by bankrupt farmers defaulting on their loans causing many small banks to go bust.
- The US **Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act** of 1930 was designed to protect American jobs. It raised tariffs of up to 60% on 20,000 types of imported goods. It initially seemed to work as imports dropped 66% and industrial production increased sharply but soon exports dropped 61% as other countries retaliated and America's gross national product (GNP) nearly halved (it dropped 46%) in three years. World trade dropped 33% and US unemployment rose from 8% in 1930 to 25% in 1933. In 1945 the International Trade organization was created to make sure it could never happen again.
- The effects on the **northern industrial areas** of Britain were **immediate and devastating**, as **demand** for traditional industrial products **collapsed**. By the end of 1930 **unemployment** had more than doubled **from 1 million to 2.5 million** (20% of the insured workforce), and exports had fallen in value by 50%. In 1933, 30% of Glaswegians were unemployed due to the severe decline in heavy industry. In some towns and cities in the north east, **unemployment reached as high as 70%** as shipbuilding fell 90%. The **National Hunger March** of September–October **1932** was the largest of a series of hunger marches in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. About **200,000 unemployed men** were sent to the **work camps**, which continued in operation until 1939. In the **less industrial Midlands** and **Southern England**, the effects were **short-lived** and the later 1930s were a **prosperous time**. Growth in modern manufacture of electrical goods and a boom in the motor car industry was helped by a growing southern population and an expanding middle class. Agriculture also saw a boom during this period.
- In America the **Dust Bowl** devastated agriculture in the Mid-West. It was caused by drought combined with poor farming practices. Deep ploughing and the drought turned the soil to dust which blew away, turning the sky black and removing the fertile top soil. Poor farming practices continued until the 1950s possibly because of the lack of banking credit needed to enable the farmers to switch from crops and wheat to animals and hay.
- **Adolf Hitler** (1889-1945) gained popular support by attacking the Treaty of Versailles and promoting anti-Semitism and anti-communism with charismatic speeches and Nazi propaganda. By 1933, the **Nazi Party** was the **largest elected party** in the German Reichstag, which led to Hitler's appointment as **Chancellor on 30 January 1933**. Following fresh elections won by his coalition, the Reichstag

passed the **Enabling Act**, which began the process of transforming the Weimar Republic into Nazi Germany, a one-party dictatorship based on the totalitarian and autocratic ideology of National Socialism.

- The concept of a **nuclear chain reaction** was reportedly first hypothesized by Hungarian scientist Leó Szilárd on September 12, 1933. He patented the idea of a **nuclear reactor** with Enrico Fermi, and in late 1939 wrote the letter for Albert Einstein's signature that resulted in the Manhattan Project that built the **atomic bomb**.
- **The Long March** was a strategic retreat across the worst terrain in China from Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist Party Army. It was a series of marches over a period of 370 days that covered 5,600 miles. Only one tenth of the force completed the march. The march was a significant episode in the history of the Chinese Communist Party and established the reputation and leadership of Mao Zedong.
- **Edward VIII** became king on 20 January 1936 following the death of George V. A few months later a constitutional crisis arose when he proposed to marry **Wallis Simpson**, an American socialite who was divorced from her first husband and was pursuing a divorce of her second. The marriage was opposed by the governments of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth for religious, legal, political and moral reasons. As British monarch, Edward was the nominal head of the Church of England, which did not then allow divorced people to remarry in church if their ex-spouses were still alive. For this reason, it was widely believed that Edward could not marry Simpson and remain on the throne. On 11 December 1936 he abdicated becoming one of the shortest-reigning monarchs in British history.
- In 1921 the **Anglo-Irish Treaty** gave Ireland complete independence and created Northern Ireland but it included an oath of allegiance to the King. This led to the **Irish Civil War** which ended in 1923. When Éamon de Valera achieved power he negotiated away the oath and created a new constitution in 1937. The **Republic of Ireland** was not officially declared until 1949.
- The **Spanish Civil War** was fought between the Republicans, who were loyal to the democratic, left-leaning Second Spanish Republic, and the Nationalists, a Falangist (a type of Roman Catholic fascism) group led by General Francisco Franco. Although often portrayed as a struggle between democracy and fascism, some historians consider it more accurately described as a struggle between leftist revolution and rightist counterrevolution. Ultimately, the Nationalists won, and Franco then ruled Spain for the next 36 years, from April 1939 until his death in November 1975. The war resulted in the deaths of 500,000 people including 100,000 executed by General Franco after the war.

Artists Covered

1. Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887–1976)
2. Paul Nash (1889-1946)

3. Ben Nicholson (1894–1982)
4. John Armstrong (1893-1973)
5. John Piper (1903–1992)
6. Eric Ravilious (1903-1942)
7. Graham Sutherland (1903-1980)
8. Evelyn Dunbar (1906–1960)

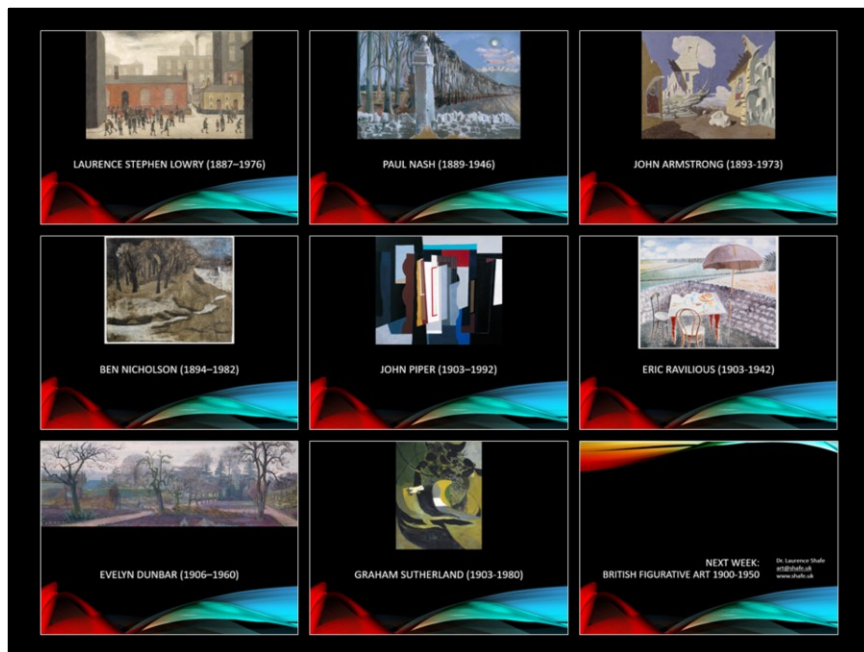
The War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC)

- Under the guidance of the National Gallery Director Kenneth Clark, The War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC) was established in 1939. Chaired by Clark and administered by the Government Ministry of Information and The British War Advisory Scheme, the group met monthly to coordinate the project, including selecting the artists, their pay and commissions. Each artist's primary purpose was to create imagery for propaganda, but it was widely understood that their work was more than just illustrating mass produced posters and pamphlets. By employing so many of the country's most talented artists, the committee were not only allowing the creation of an important and lasting record of the atrocities faced at home and on the front line, but also trying to preserve the lives and talents of the artists themselves for future generations. By 1945 the collection had amassed more than 5570 works.

World War II Artists (alphabetically)

- Edward Ardizzone CBE RA, 1900–1979
- Edward Bawden RA, 1903–1989
- Stephen Bone 1904–1958
- David Bomberg 1890–1957
- Henry Carr RA, 1894–1970
- Leslie Cole, 1910–1976
- Charles Cundall, 1890–1971
- Evelyn Mary Dunbar
- Simon Elwes, 1902–1975
- Barnett Freedman, 1901-1958
- Ethel Gabain, 1882–1950
- Charles Ginner, 1878-1952
- Duncan Grant, 1885–1978
- Thomas Hennell, 1903–1945
- Eliot Hodgkin, 1905–1987
- Eric Kennington, RA, 1888–1960
- Mary Kessell, 1914–1977
- Laura Knight DBE RA, 1877–1970
- L.S. Lowry, 1887-1976
- Henry Moore, 1898-1986

- James Morris, 1908-1989)
- Paul Nash, 1889–1946.
- Cuthbert Orde, 1888–1968
- Mervyn Peake, 1911–1968
- John Piper, 1903-1992
- Roland Vivian Pitchforth, 1895–1982
- Eric Ravilious, 1903–1942
- Albert Richards, 1919–1945
- Leonard Rosoman RA, 1913–2012
- William Rothenstein, 1872–1945
- Alan Sorrell, 1904–1974
- Ruskin Spear RA, 1911–1990
- Stanley Spencer RA, 1891–1959
- Graham Sutherland OM, 1903–1980
- Carel Weight CBE RA, 1908–1997
- Frank Wootton, 1914–1998
- Doris Zinkeisen, 1898–1991
- Anna Zinkeisen, 1901–1976



- I begin today with a range of artists, presented in chronological order of their birth date, with a representative example of the work they were producing in the 1930s and during World War II. There were about 37 WWII war artists and I have selected the most well known.
- The 1930s was a period when a great deal of British art was figurative, uncontroversial and little influenced by developments on the Continent. I have selected those artists who responded to the ideas of modernism.
- The biggest event of the 1930s regarding the influence of modern art from the Continental was the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London in 1936.



LAURENCE STEPHEN LOWRY (1887–1976)

He was born in Born Pendlebury to a 'cold-fish' father and intolerant mother and had an unhappy childhood. After he left school he had a job as a rent collector. He attended **Manchester School of Art** and the Royal Technical Institute. He cared for his **sick mother** until she **died in 1939** and so could only **paint after 10pm**. In WWII he became a **volunteer fire fighter** and **war artist**. After the war his landlord repossessed his neglected house so he bought another. He had a large collection of clocks. He made many friends but later in life avoided strangers and kept a suitcase by his front door so he could walk out on callers.



Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887–1976), *Coming Out of School*, 1927, 34.7 x 53.9 cm, Tate

- Tate website: 'Like many of Lowry's pictures this is **not a depiction of a particular place**, but is based on recollections of a **school** seen in Lancashire. Lowry's combination of observation and imaginative power often produced images which capture a **deeply felt experience** of place, with which others could identify. For example, in 1939 John Rothenstein, then Director of the Tate Gallery, visited Lowry's first solo exhibition in London and later wrote: 'I **stood in the gallery marvelling at the accuracy of the mirror that this to me unknown painter had held up to the bleakness, the obsolete shabbiness, the grimy fogboundness, the grimness of northern industrial England.**' This work was then purchased by the Trustees.'
- Lowry was well aware of French Impressionism and how it had changed the way in which the modern city and landscapes were painted. He knew the current trends in modern art and admired the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Ford Madox Brown and Rossetti. Lowry found a distinctive way to paint the northern city and he made it his own.

Notes

- Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976) lived in **Pendlebury**, Lancashire, from the age of 22 and the area around was the subject of many of his paintings for more than 40 years. He painted **mysterious unpopulated landscapes**, urban landscapes populated by '**matchstick people**', **brooding portraits** and the unpublished 'marionette' works that were only found after his death. His **father was a clerk** and a 'cold fish' and his **mother was a talented pianist** but in poor health. She wanted a daughter rather than a '**clumsy boy**' and she was controlling and intolerant of failure. He had an **unhappy childhood** and his parents **never appreciated** his artistic talent. He made **few friends** at school and showed **little academic aptitude**. After school he started work as a **rent collector** and spent his **evenings learning to draw** and in 1905 he attended **Manchester School of Art** where he came into contact with **French Impressionism**. Between 1915 and 1925 he studied at the **Royal Technical Institute**, Salford.
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L.S. Lowry (1887-1976), *Self Portrait*, 1925, 57.2 x 47.2cm, The Lowry Collection, Salford

- Lowry painted this self portrait when he was 37. He later recalled, 'I had a great tussle with it, and when it was done said "Never again, thank you." '
- As a young man Lowry attended classes held by the painter Reginald Barber. 'We just did heads,' he recalled. Early in his career he occasionally painted friends but by the late 1930s the characters in his portraits stare disconcertingly out at the viewer. They 'were all based on myself. I was trying to make them as grim as possible.'
- He also painted bleak landscapes without people.

References

<http://www.thelowry.com/ls-lowry/microsite/art/portraits/self-portrait>



L. S. Lowry (1887-1976), *Blitzed Site*, 1942, 41 x 51cm, The Lowry Collection, Salford

- During the Second World War Lowry worked as a **fire-watcher in Manchester**, usually stationed on the roof of a city centre department store. He recalled being '**first down in the morning to sketch the blitzed buildings before the smoke and grime had cleared.**'
- X-ray examination has shown that this picture is painted over one of Lowry's art school studies.
- He had to **care for his mother** as she became more ill and painted between **10pm and 2am** after she had fallen asleep. She **died in 1939** and during the war he was a **volunteer fire fighter** and he became an **official war artist in 1943**. He became **depressed** after his mother's death and **neglected the house** to such an extent that the **landlord repossessed it**. However, he had money and **bought another house** which although he **found it ugly** and uncomfortable he **remained in it until his death** 30 years later. In 1962 became a **Royal Academician aged 74**.
- He went on **holiday** in the **Seaburn Hotel in Sunderland** and sketched everywhere. When he had no other material he **sketched on serviettes** which he gave to young people around him. These serviette sketches are **now worth thousands of**

pounds. He **collected amusing stories** whether true or not and often set out to **mischievously deceive.** He had a **collection of clocks** in his living room all set to **different times.** He had many **long-lasting friendships** and made friends throughout his life. As his celebrity grew he **disliked** being approached by **strangers,** particularly at home and there is a story that he **kept a suitcase by the front door** so that he could make an excuse to leave as soon as anyone arrived. He discontinued this practice when one young man offered to **take him to the station** and he had to **buy a ticket** to the next station to get rid of him.



L. S. Lowry (1887–1976), *St Augustine's Church*, 1945, 46 x 61.3cm, Manchester Art Gallery gift from HM Government, War Artists Advisory Committee, 1947

- A close-up view of **St Augustine's Church** in Manchester, destroyed by air raid bombing. Only the shell remains, which is surrounded by a pile of rubble. A few figures stand in the street to the right, and there are more bombed buildings in the background to the left. Lowry frequently represented scenes of destruction in Britain, and this work was purchased by the War Artists' Advisory Committee.
- He claimed he was a **simple man** who could **not appreciate modern art** but he **admired René Magritte** and **Lucian Freud**, although he admitted that he "**didn't understand**" **Francis Bacon's** work. When he **became more wealthy** he acquired paintings and drawings by Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel **Rossetti** who he described as his **chief inspiration**.
- **Lowry was a shy** and **secretive** artist who **remained unmarried** until his death, at the **age of 88**, Lowry once admitted that he had "**never had a woman**". He was a **keen ballet-goer** who regularly attended performances by the Royal Ballet at **Covent Garden** and in his home city of Manchester. He **rejected five honours** in his life including a knighthood and so he hold **the record for the most rejected British**

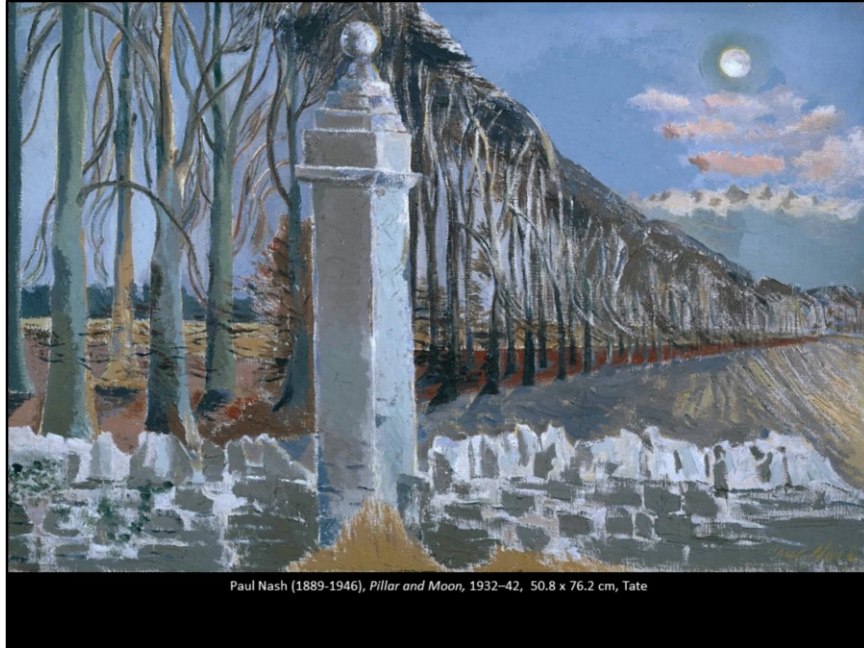
honours. There was a major retrospective at the Tate in 2013 and his first solo exhibition outside the UK in China in 2014.

- Quotations:
 - “I wanted to paint myself into what absorbed me ... Natural figures would have broken the spell of it, **so I made my figures half unreal.**”
 - “You don't need brains to be a painter, just feelings.”
 - “I am not an artist. I am a man who paints.”
 - “This art is a terrible business.”



PAUL NASH (1889-1946)

Paul Nash was the **son of a barrister** who moved from **Earls Court** to **Iver Heath** when he was 13. His **mother died** when he was 21, the year he enrolled at the **Slade**. He was influenced by **Samuel Palmer** who became very influential in the 1930s. In WWI he **enlisted** and had a **quiet war** until **1917** when he fell in a trench. When he was in England recuperating most of his **unit died**. He was influenced by the **Vorticists** and became a **war artist**. He was angry and disillusioned by the way the war had destroyed the landscape as for him the land and trees had a mystical and magical quality. **Wittenham Clumps**, two tree-topped hills, were an important inspiration for him at the beginning and end of his life. In the 1920s he was a well regarded **book illustrator** and textile designer. He became a prolific **photographer** and in 1929 his father died and he moved to **Rye**. He then moved to **London** and then **Swanage** and wrote the **Shell Guide to Dorset**. In the 1930s he **co-founded Unit One** and became a pioneer of modernism. In **WWII** he was a **salaried war artist** assigned to the Royal Air Force but they did not approve of his choice of subjects. He **died of asthma in 1946** in a house overlooking Wittenham Clumps.



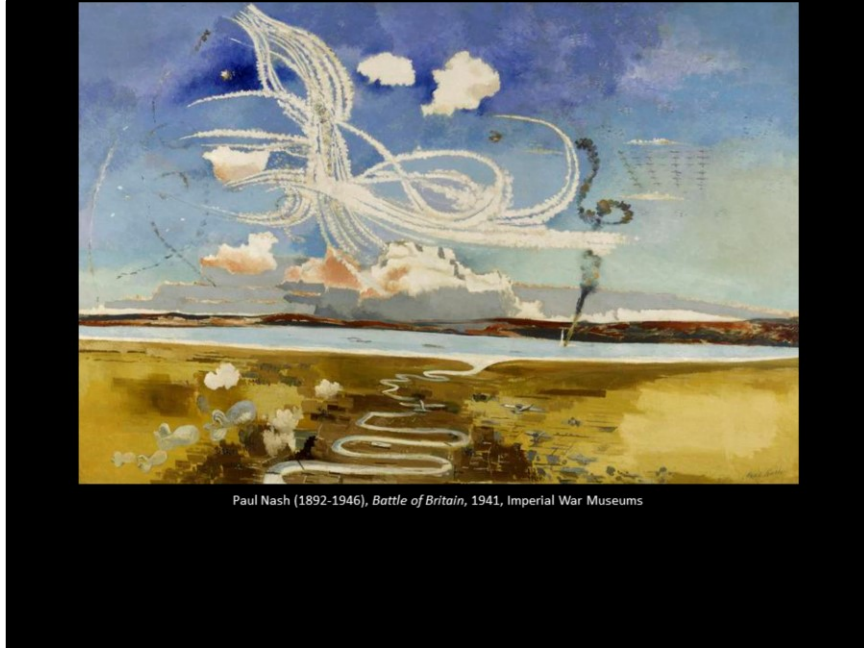
Paul Nash (1889-1946), *Pillar and Moon*, 1932-42, 50.8 x 76.2 cm, Tate

- **Paul Nash** was a well known **war artist in both WWI and WWII**. Between the wars he painted **surreal landscapes** with a **dreamlike quality**.
- Tate website, 'Paul Nash was deeply affected by his experiences as a soldier and an artist during the First World War. This picture was based around "the **mystical association of two objects** which inhabit different elements and have no apparent relation in life... The **pale stone sphere** on top of a ruined pillar faces its counterpart the **moon, cold and pale and solid as stone**."'
- Though not explicitly about mourning, the **deep, unpopulated space** and **ghostly lighting** gives the scene a **melancholy air**. Rather than depict a real landscape, Nash said that his intention had been "**to call up memories and stir emotions in the spectator**".'
- Nash became a **pioneer of modernism** in Britain, promoting the avant-garde European styles of abstraction and surrealism throughout the 1930s. In 1933 he **co-founded** the influential modern art movement **Unit One** with fellow artists **Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson**, Edward Wadsworth and the critic Herbert Read. It was a short-lived but important move towards the revitalisation of British art in the inter-war period. **Unit One** was described by Paul

Nash in a letter to *The Times* as 'a truly contemporary spirit, for that thing which is recognised as peculiarly of today in painting, sculpture and architecture'. The two major trends in the 1930s were abstract art and surrealism and Unit One embraced the full spectrum.

Notes

- **Paul Nash** (1889–1946) was a British surrealist painter and war artist, as well as a photographer, writer and designer of applied art. He was the **son of a successful barrister** and grew up in **Earls Court** before moving to **Iver Heath**, Buckinghamshire. His **mother** became **mentally ill** and **died in 1910**. He enrolled at the **Slade School** of Art under **Henry Tonks** but admitted that after his first interview '**It was evident he considered that neither the Slade, nor I, were likely to derive much benefit**'.
- The Slade was then opening its doors to a remarkable crop of young talents – what Tonks later described as the school's second and last '**Crisis of Brilliance**'. Nash's fellow students included **Ben Nicholson**, **Stanley Spencer**, Mark Gertler, William Roberts, Dora Carrington, Christopher R. W. Nevinson and Edward Wadsworth. Nash struggled with figure drawing, and spent only a year at the school. Nash had shows in 1912 and 1913, sometimes with his brother John, largely devoted to drawings and watercolours of brooding landscapes, influenced by the poetry of **William Blake** and the paintings of **Samuel Palmer** and Dante Gabriel **Rossetti**.
- At the start of the war he enlisted as a private and later trained as an officer. He was sent to the front but it was relatively quiet. He **fell into a trench in 1917** and broke a rib and was sent back to London. A few **days later** the **majority of his unit were killed** in an assault. While in London he produced 20 drawings and watercolours some showing the influence of the **Vorticists** and as a result he was encouraged to apply to become a **war artist** which was **approved** in late 1917. He returned to a very different landscape consisting of mile after mile of mud. Nash was **angry and disillusioned** with war which led him to produce up to a dozen drawings a day in a frenzy of activity and he took great risks to get as near the front line as possible. On his return he developed these drawings into finished works for an exhibition.
- **In the 1920s** he produced **highly regarded book illustrations** for many authors, including Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, **textile designs** for Heal's and designs for a range of china displayed at Harrods. In **1931**, he was **given a camera** and became a **prolific photographer**. In **1929**, when his **father died**, he sold the house in Iver Heath and **moved to Rye**. In 1933 he **moved to London** and then **Swanage** where he wrote the *Shell Guide to Dorset*.



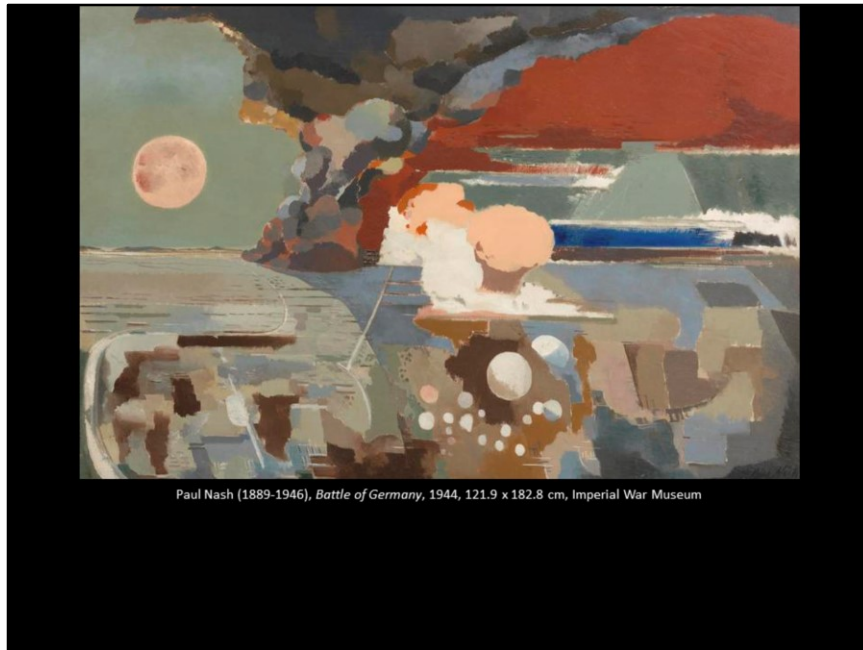
Paul Nash (1892-1946), *Battle of Britain*, 1941, Imperial War Museums

Paul Nash (1892-1946), *Battle of Britain*, 1941, Imperial War Museums

- An **abstracted aerial view** of a wide flat landscape including the mouth of a river. Above the sky is full of aircraft contrails and smoke plumes, while to the upper right aircraft are flying in formation.
- At the start of World War Two Nash was **appointed** by the War Artists' Advisory Committee to a **full-time salaried war artist** post attached to the Royal Air Force and the Air Ministry. **Nash was unpopular** with the Air Ministry representative on the WAAC committee, partly because of the modernist nature of his work and partly because the RAF wanted the WAAC artists to concentrate on producing portraits of their pilots and aircrew.

References

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Nash_\(artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Nash_(artist))



Paul Nash (1889-1946), *Battle of Germany*, 1944, 121.9 x 182.8 cm, Imperial War Museum

Paul Nash (1889-1946), *Battle of Germany*, 1944, 121.9 x 182.8 cm, Imperial War Museum

- Imperial War Museum website, 'This work was **commissioned** by the WAAC in 1944 and was **originally intended to depict a flying bomb**. In a letter to Clare Neilson on 5 September 1944, Nash described that 'K. Clark wanted me to do a sequel to 'Battle of Britain' on the flying bomb but it has fallen through I think. I did not find any point of departure, no bomb site as it were to launch into a composition. Besides I can think of nothing but my invasion painting which is now in its critical stage.' The 'invasion painting' is probably 'Battle of Germany' which was delivered to the WAAC in September 1944.
- Nash wrote a text to accompany the painting: '...The moment of the picture is when **the city**, lying under the **uncertain light of the moon**, awaits the **blow at its heart**. In the background, a **gigantic column of smoke** arises from the **recent destruction** of an outlying factory which is still **fiercely burning**. These two objects **pillar and moon** seem to **threaten the city** no less than the **flights of bombers** even now towering in the red sky. The moon's illumination reveals the form of the city but with the smoke pillar's increasing height and width, throws also its largening shadow nearer and nearer. In contrast to the suspense of the waiting city

under the quiet though baleful moon, the other half of the picture shows the **opening of the bombardment**. The entire area of sky and background and part of the middle distance are violently agitated. Here forms are used quite arbitrarily and **colours** by a kind of **chromatic percussion** with one purpose, to suggest **explosion and detonation**. In the **central foreground** the group of **floating discs** descending may be a part of a **flight of paratroopers** or the **crews of aircraft forced to bale out**. 'Kenneth Clark, Chairman of the WAAC, reacted positively to the painting but was concerned at the complexity of its meaning.'

Notes

- **Nash was among the most important landscape artists of the first half of the twentieth century.** He played a key role in the development of Modernism in English art. Born in London, Nash grew up in Buckinghamshire where he developed a love of the landscape. He entered the Slade School of Art but was poor at figure drawing and concentrated on landscape painting. He painted some of the most iconic paintings of WWI and after the war continued to paint landscapes. During the 1930s his landscapes became increasingly abstract and surreal. During WWII he developed an **asthma that killed him in 1946**. He produced two series of anthropomorphic depictions of aircraft, before producing a number of landscapes rich in symbolism with an intense mystical quality. These have become among the best known works from the period.
- A major exhibition of his work was from 26 October 2016 to 5 March 2017 at Tate Britain.

References

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/20104>



Paul Nash (1889-1946), *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*, 1940-41, 101.6 x 152.4 cm, Tate

- *Totes Meer* is German for 'Dead Sea' and Nash is presenting planes shot down during the Battle of Britain as a **sea of dead planes**. The area contained British and German planes but Nash has made **all the destroyed planes German** for propaganda reasons. He worked **from photographs** he took on the site. He said it looked to him like a sea that was completely dead, '**nothing moves, it is not water or even ice, it is something static and dead**'. The only creature is the **white owl** swooping low over the dead scene.



JOHN ARMSTRONG (1893-1973)

John Armstrong was born in Hastings to a clergyman father and **studied law at Oxford** but switched career. He served with distinction in WWI and built a career as a **theatre designer** before joining **Unit One** in 1933. He designed **posters for Shell** and Royal Mail. In WWII he was appointed as a war artist and recorded bomb damage but his work was criticised by some as **too superficial**. After the war he became well known for his painting of the **effects of nuclear war**. He continued to paint until his death from Parkinson's disease in 1973.



John Rutherford Armstrong (1893-1973), *Pro Patria*, 1938, Imperial War Museums
 Piero della Francesca (c. 1415/20-1492), *The Baptism of Christ*, 1450s, egg on poplar, 167 x 116 cm, National Gallery

- John Rutherford **Armstrong** (1893–1973) was a British artist and muralist who also **designed for film and theatre productions**, but is most notable for the **Surrealist paintings** he produced.
- He was **born in Hastings** and his father was a **clergyman** who had him educated at **St Paul's School**, London. He then **studied law** at St John's College, Oxford but switched to art. He served with distinction in the Royal Field Artillery in Salonika (now the Greek port of Thessaloniki). He slowly **built a career** as a theatre designer and room designer. Armstrong held his **first solo exhibition in 1928** at the Leicester Galleries in London. In **1933** he joined **Unit One** and displayed a set of semi-abstract paintings at their one, extended, exhibition. There was no strong aesthetic or style that brought together British artists in the 1930s and groups, such as **Unit One**, quickly dispersed as the members pursued their individual visions.
- Armstrong is sometimes described as a Surrealist and this painting invokes the images of dreams. The melancholy mood is reminiscent of de Chirico's

townscapes. However, this is misleading as Armstrong prized his independence and did not like to be categorized. He was a master designer and, like Stanley Spencer, could plan a complete work in advance and then proceed with painting it in detail from top left to bottom right.

- It is a reworking of Piero della Francesca's *The Baptism of Christ* with a large storm cloud suggesting a forthcoming war instead of the dove of peace with torn posters and the ruins of civilization below. The trees are blasted and the earth rocky and barren. A tiny figure in the middle distance is a pathetic echo of Christ. The colours are influenced by Francesca and remained an inspiration throughout his life. It is not a work of overt propaganda and is therefore timeless in its appeal. It is one of Armstrong's early masterpieces.

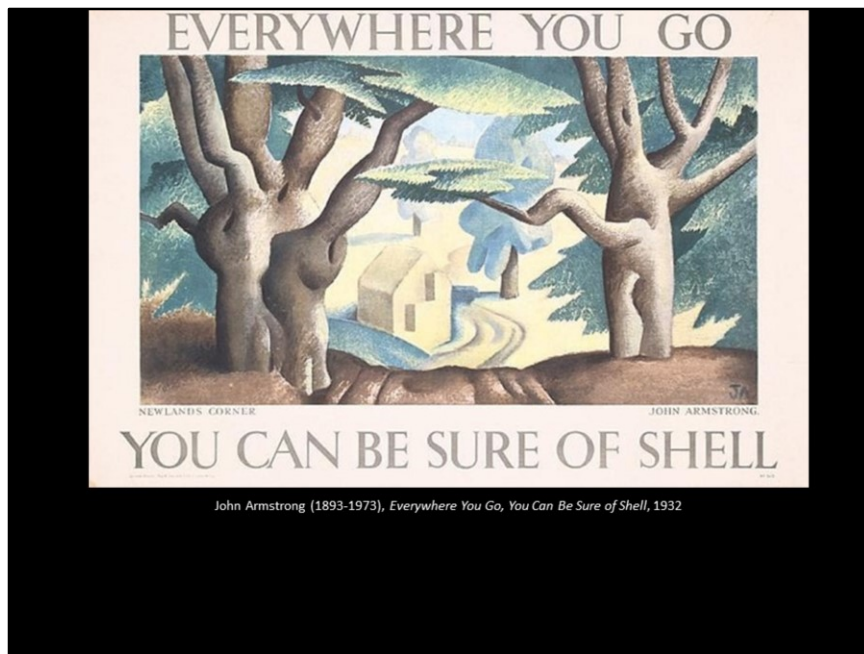
Notes

- When Armstrong visited Italy in 1937 he found 'Pro Patria' plastered everywhere as propaganda for Mussolini. The title means 'for one's country' and is from '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*' is a line from the Roman lyrical poet Horace's Odes (III.2.13). The line can be translated as: "It is sweet and proper to die for one's country." The line was used by Wilfred Owen in his satirical anti-war poem 'Dulce Et Decorum Est'. In the poem he described the line from Horace as 'the old lie'. In a school essay in 1915 Bertold Brecht called the line from Horace 'cheap propaganda' and pointed out that 'It is sweeter and more fitting to live for one's country.'
- If we separate artists into two camps, the Romantic and the Classical, and if the Romantic prioritizes the representation of the artist's feelings and emotions over the art and the Classical artist subordinates themselves to their art, regarding themselves as a conduit between the viewer and some greater truth or order, then Armstrong was a Classical artist.

References

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Armstrong_\(artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Armstrong_(artist))

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/851>



John Armstrong (1893-1973), *Everywhere You Go, You Can Be Sure of Shell*, 1932

- Throughout the **1930s** Armstrong continued to work as a **designer** as he also continued to develop his art. He produced a number of remarkable **posters for Shell** (as did other artists). Armstrong also produced a 1935 poster for the Royal Mail.
- In 1938 Armstrong held an exhibition which featured Surrealist works set in English landscapes such as *Dreaming Head*. *Pro Patria*, also from 1938, is Armstrong's comment on the **Spanish Civil War**.



John Armstrong (1893–1973), *A Farm in Wales*, 1940, 64.6 x 51 cm, National Museum Wales, Cardiff

Graham Sutherland (1903–1980), *Devastation, 1940: A House on the Welsh Border*, 1940, watercolour, gouache, ink, crayon and graphite on paper on cardboard, 80 x 54.6cm, Tate

- Armstrong's **fascination for ruined buildings** and **images of decay** found a natural outlet when he became an **official war artist**. This **bombed farmhouse** may be the **same one that Graham Sutherland painted** in 1940, at Aberthaw near the RAF station at St Athan, west of Cardiff.
- There had been little bombing before 11 August 1940 when the German Luftwaffe began the massive air offensive that would become known as the Battle of Britain. Military and industrial sites were targetted and South Wales was one of the areas attacked.
- Armstrong and Sutherland produced images of what seems to be the same farmhouse and this suggests there was a deliberate policy of showing how far-reaching the war was and to demonstrate the effect of bombing on private individuals. The implications of this in terms of propaganda were urgent as the bombing of civilian targets was the subject of controversy. Pre-war expectations

were that air raids would be aimed at strategic sites such as airfields, ports and factories - but on 24 August 1940 the first bombs fell on London. Retaliatory raids on Berlin were used by Hitler to justify a sustained attack on British cities and the 'London Blitz' began at five o'clock on 7 September when 337 tons of explosives were dropped on the city.

- During World War Two, Armstrong worked as an official war artist undertaking short contracts for the War Artists' Advisory Committee, WAAC. In paintings such as *The Elms* and *A Farm in Wales* he recorded bomb damage to buildings such as churches and cottages. They were **praised by John Piper but criticized by the *Sunday Times* as being too superficial.**
- After the War Armstrong produced a series of **large symbolic works** including *Victory*, which imagined the **results of a nuclear attack**. The painting was shown at the Royal Academy in 1958 and attracted **considerable public attention**. He was elected an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1966 and despite developing **Parkinson's disease** he continued to paint and travel until his death in London in 1973.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sutherland-devastation-1940-a-house-on-the-welsh-border-n05734>
https://museum.wales/art/online/?action=show_item&item=29



BEN NICHOLSON (1894–1982)

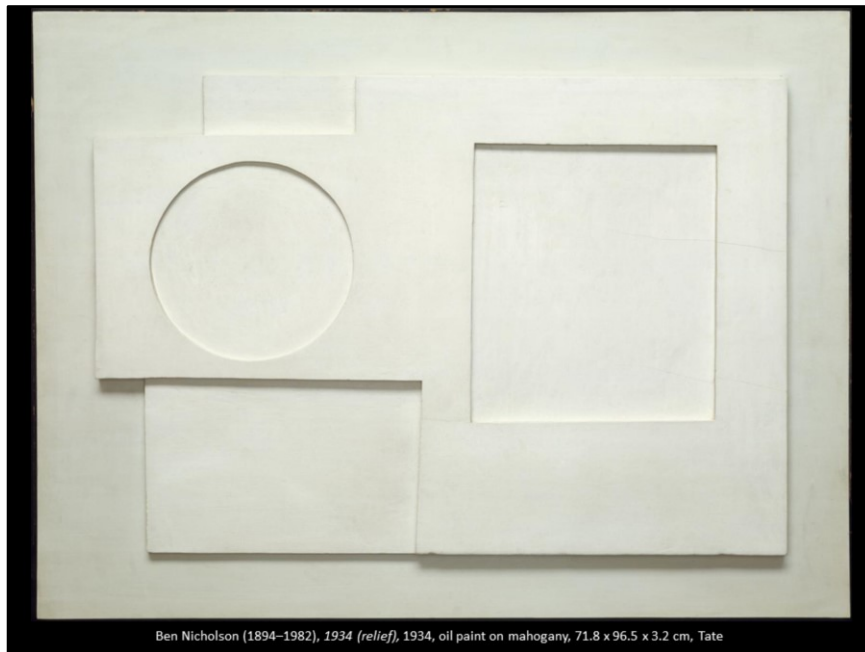
Ben Nicholson was the **son of painters** and his **sister** became an important artist and his **brother an architect**. He trained at the **Slade** and was **exempt from service** because of his asthma. In 1920 he **married** Winifred Roberts and he devoted himself to **painting still lifes and landscapes**. He met **Christopher Wood** in the 1920s and they went to **St. Ives** but Wood committed **suicide** in 1930. In 1931 he **met Barbara Hepworth** and his work became **more and more abstract**. He separated from his wife, Hepworth had **triplets** and they **married in 1938**. In the late 1930s he painted **white relief** works but when **WWII** started they **moved to St Ives** and he painted more **saleable landscapes**. After the war he painted increasingly **abstract landscapes**.



Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), *Pill Creek, Cornwall*, 1928, private collection

- Ben Nicholson was the eldest son of the painters William Nicholson and Mabel Pryde and brother of the artist Nancy Nicholson and the architect Christopher Nicholson. He trained as an artist at the **Slade School** from 1910 to 1914 where he was a contemporary of Paul Nash and Stanley Spencer. He was **exempt from military service** due to asthma and travelled to America in 1917. He did not devote himself seriously to art until 1920, the same year he **married** the **artist Winifred Roberts** (1893-1981). His early works were simple and traditional still lifes and figurative art. In 1921 he saw an exhibition of Cubist paintings in Paris, which was to influence his style. During the 1920s he produced mostly landscapes.
- In the 1920s he met **Christopher 'Kit' Wood** (1901-1930) and they became good friends and went on painting holidays together. In 1928 they went to St. Ives and met the self-taught 'primitive' painter of the sea, **Alfred Wallis** (1855-1942).
- In 1930 and isolated in St. Ives **Christopher Wood** became addicted to opium which exacerbated psychological problems and he committed **suicide** in August aged just 29.
- **Alfred Wallis** sold few paintings despite Ben Nicholson's support and lived in **poverty** until he died in the **workhouse** in Penzance in 1942.

- In 1931 Ben Nicholson met **Barbara Hepworth** and under her influence his work became more and more abstract. Ben and Winifred separated shortly and in 1932 Winifred moved with their three children to Paris, and from then until 1936 Ben often visited them, sometimes with Hepworth. The marriage ended in divorce in 1938, and Ben married Hepworth in November of the same year. Winifred continued to paint prolifically throughout her life and lived in Northumberland and travelled around Europe. Most of her work is in private collection but a few are in the Tate and Kettle's Yard art gallery, Cambridge. After the separation she sometimes used the name Winifred Dacre, an old family name. Her auction record is £145,000 at Bonhams in 2011.
- This painting sold at Bonhams in 2016 for £600,000 (£722,500 with fees), double the estimate.



Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), *1934 (relief)*, 1934, oil paint on mahogany, 71.8 x 96.5 x 3.2 cm, Tate

Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), *1934 (relief)*, 1934, oil paint on mahogany, 71.8 x 96.5 x 3.2 cm, Tate

- “Like the cubists, **Nicholson was interested** in the ways in which **paintings can represent space**. In the 1930s, he made shallow reliefs in which areas of different depths define actual space. In the most radical of these, **colour was reduced to just white or grey** to achieve a **sense of purity**. Depth and plain colour make the play of light and shadow an intrinsic part of the work. This emphasis was related to new ideas about living and, especially, to modern architecture, in which natural light and formal simplicity were major concerns.” (Tate)
- Nicholson turned to abstraction in the early 1930s. This was partly due to the influence of Barbara Hepworth, with whom he shared a studio from 1932 and partly due to the impact Piet Mondrian's work made on him in Paris in 1933. He **married three times** and had six children. His **second wife** was **Barbara Hepworth** (1903-1975) from 1938 to 1951 and she had **triplets** in 1934.
- It was in **Paris in 1933** that he made his **first** wood relief, ***White Relief***, containing only right angles and circles. In 1937 he was one of the editors of *Circle*, an influential monograph on constructivism. He believed that abstract art should be

enjoyed by the general public, as shown by the Nicholson Wall, a mural he created for the garden of Sutton Place in Guildford, Surrey.



Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), *1943-45 (St Ives, Cornwall)*, 1943–5, oil paint and graphite on canvas, 40.6 x 50.2cm

- He first visited **St. Ives** in **1928** with fellow artist **Christopher Wood**. **Ben Nicholson and his family** moved from London to **St Ives** in **1939**, taking refuge from the threat of **wartime bombing**. This relocation to the Cornish countryside renewed his interest in **landscape painting**. For several years Nicholson's reliefs had been **predominantly white**, but he now began to **reintroduce colour**. His reliefs show the influence of the colours, shapes, textures and light of Cornwall with their hints of grey, warm red and silvery blue. In this work, Nicholson has also **carved into the surface** of the board to create several different planes. The treatment of space by its division into planes was central to the artist's work.
- Tate, "Nicholson was at the centre of the London-based British avant-garde. Shortly before the war he moved to Cornwall with his wife Barbara Hepworth and their children. To earn a living he abandoned his white reliefs of the 1930s and returned to **painting landscapes**, which his **dealers** Alex Reid & Lefevre **considered easier to sell**. Landscapes, particularly those of British scenes, became **popular during the war**. Nicholson moved to St Ives permanently in 1939 and this view of the harbour is **one of a series** he began that year. They enabled Nicholson to

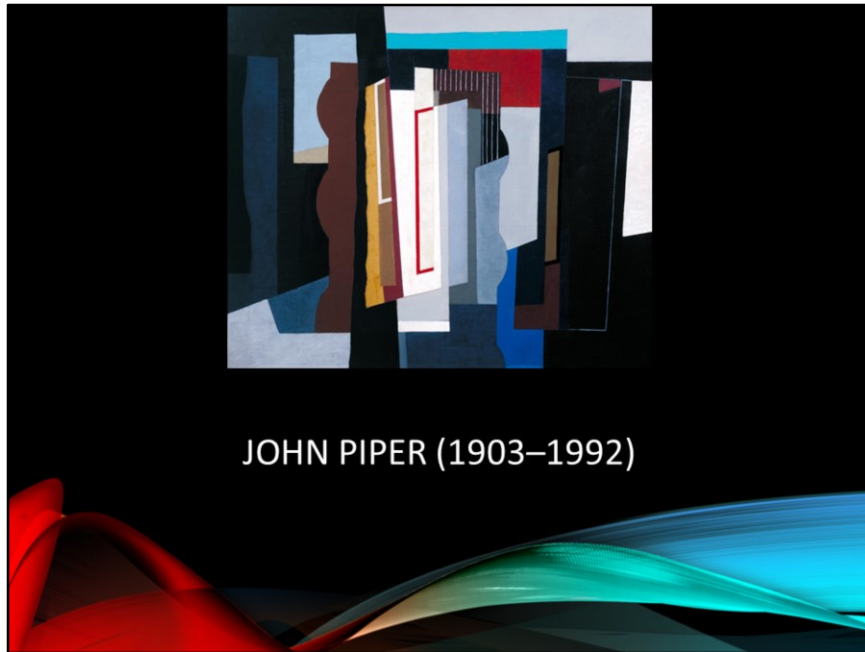
develop ideas of the previous decade, particularly his experimentation with the positioning of objects in space. He **added the Union Jack** in the foreground as a gesture to **celebrate V.E. Day** and the end of the war. “

Notes

- His auction record was for *Fiddle and Spanish Guitar*, sold for **€3,313,000** by Christie's in 2012.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nicholson-1943-45-st-ives-cornwall-n05625>
- <https://art.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/730>



The final four artists were too young to paint in WWI as they became art students after the war had finished.

John Piper was **born in Epsom**, the **son of a solicitor** and as a child liked painting **old churches**. His father wanted him to go into law and he worked in his father's office for three years but refused a partnership and so his **father disinherited him**. He then attended **Richmond School of Art** and the **Royal College of Art**. He **married a painter** in 1929 and joined the **Seven and Five** society. In 1935 his **wife left him** for another artist and he moved in with **art critic** Myfanwy Evans, near Henley. He wrote the ***Shell Guide to Oxfordshire***. In WWII he became a **war artist** working on short-term commissions and he painted **bombed churches** including **Coventry Cathedral**. After the war he **wrote books on modern art** and continued to paint figurative and landscape until his death in 1992.



John Piper (1903–1992), *Abstract I*, 1935, 91.7 x 106.5 x 5 cm, Tate

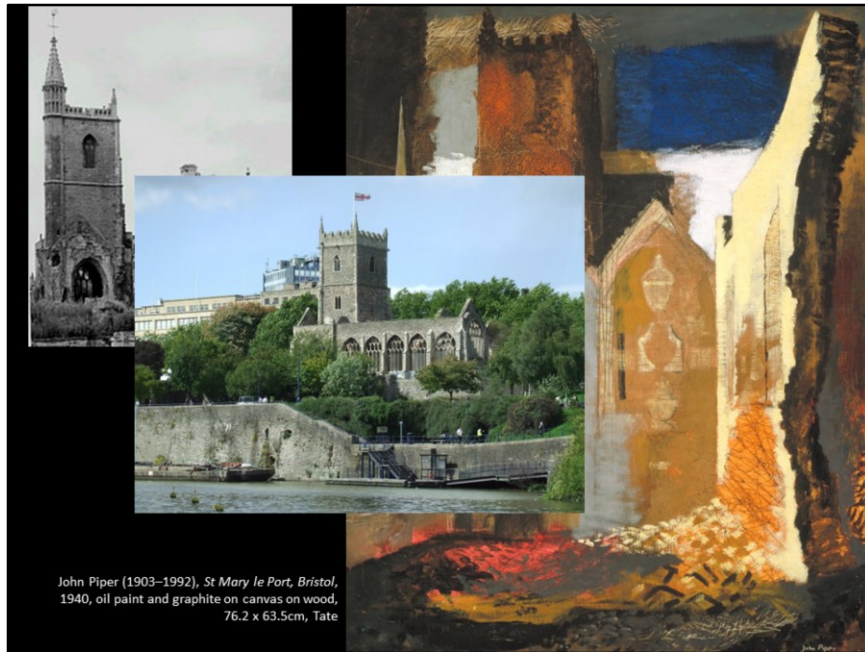
- The paintings stage-like interleaving of coloured planes reflects Piper's engagement with abstract aesthetics. Though Piper is more commonly thought of as a **painter of historical architecture and the landscape**, for a short period he was intimately involved in the **avant-garde**. This was evident in his association with **Axis**, a groundbreaking journal of abstract art, which was edited by his wife **Myfanwy Evans**. Piper had strong links with artists abroad and his own collection included works by painters **Piet Mondrian** and Jean Helion, as well as the American sculptor Alexander Calder.
- **John Piper** (1903-1992) was born in **Epsom**, the **son of a solicitor**. As a child he explored the countryside and painted **pictures of old churches** and started making illustrated guide books. He had two older **brother** one of whom was **killed at Ypres** in 1915. After attending Epsom College he wanted to become an artist but his father insisted he join the family law firm. He worked there for three years and took his articles but refused an offer of a partnership. His father **disinherited him** but it enabled him to attend **Richmond School of Art** where he prepared for his entry into the **Royal College of Art** in 1928. He married a fellow student, Eileen

Holding, in 1929. He held a joint exhibition with his wife and wrote art and music reviews. One review led to an invitation to join the **Seven and Five Society**. In 1935 his **wife left him** for another artist and he moved in with **Myfanwy Evans**, the art critic, in a farmhouse near **Henley**. Piper met **John Betjeman** who asked him to write and illustrate the ***Shell Guide to Oxfordshire***.



John Piper (1903–1992), *Interior of Coventry Cathedral*, 15 November 1940, 1940, 51 x 61 cm, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

- At the start of World War Two Piper was persuaded by Kenneth Clark to work as an **official war artist** for the War Artists' Advisory Committee, which he did from 1940 to 1944 on **short-term contracts**. Piper was one of only two artists commissioned to paint inside of Air Raid Precaution control rooms. In November 1940 Piper persuaded the WAAC committee that he should be allowed to concentrate upon **painting bombed churches**. This may have reflected both his pre-war **conversion to the Anglican faith** as much as his previous interest in depicting derelict **architectural ruins**. The terms of this commission meant Piper would be visiting bombed cities, and other sites, as soon as possible **following an air raid** often "**the following morning, before the clearing up**". He arrived in **Coventry the morning after the air raid** of 14 November 1940 that resulted in 1,000 casualties and the destruction of the medieval cathedral.



John Piper (1903–1992), *St Mary le Port, Bristol*, 1940, oil paint and graphite on canvas on wood, 76.2 x 63.5cm, Tate

- Ten days later, on 24 November 1940 Piper arrived in Bristol just after the bombing raids, a day, or possibly two, later. Although Piper only **spent a few hours** in the city the sketches he made did, by January 1941, result in **three oil paintings** of ruined churches, "St Mary-le-Port, Bristol", "The Temple Church" and "The Church of the Holy Nativity".



John Piper (1903-1992), *Somerset Place, Bath*, 1942, graphite, ink and gouache on paper, 48.9 x 76.2 cm, Tate

- Piper also painted bombed churches and other buildings in Bath, London and Newport Pagnell.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/piper-somerset-place-bath-n05720>



A poster designed by John Piper for the film 'The Bells Go Down', starring Tommy Trinder and James Mason.

- Throughout the war Piper also undertook work for the **Recording Britain project**, initiated by **Kenneth Clark**, to paint historic sites thought to be at **risk from bombing** or neglect. He also undertook some **private commissions** during the war. Piper painted Renishaw Hall and **Knole House** for **Edward Sackville-West**. In **1943**, Piper received the first of **several poster commissions** from **Ealing Studios**. His draft poster for the film ***The Bells Go Down*** featured a view of **St Paul's Cathedral** seen among monumental ruins.

Notes

- After the war, Piper wrote extensively on modern art in books and articles. In 1992, after suffering from **Alzheimer's Disease** for some time, John Piper died at his home at Fawley Bottom, Buckinghamshire, where he had lived for most of his life. Two of his children are or were artists as well as two of his grandchildren.
- The Tate collection holds 180 of Piper's works, including etchings and some earlier abstractions. Major retrospective exhibitions have been held at Tate Britain (1983–84), the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Imperial War Museum and others.

- ***The Bells Go Down*** is a black & white wartime film made by Ealing Studios in 1943. The reference in the title is to the alarm bells in the fire station that "go down" when a call to respond is made. It covers the period of the start of the London Blitz and starred Tommy Trinder and James Mason.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bells_Go_Down



ERIC RAVILIOUS (1903-1942)

Eric Ravilious grew up in **East Sussex** where his parents ran an **antique shop**. He won a scholarship to Eastbourne School of Art and went on to study at the **Royal College of Art**. He studied **under Paul Nash** and won a **scholarship** to travel to **Italy**. In 1930 he **married an artist** and lived on the corner of **Weltje Road, Hammersmith** overlooking the Thames. They moved to **Essex** and he had a successful one-man exhibition. He did **graphic design** and his painting was inspired by the landscape of the **South Downs**. In WWII he became a **war artist** attached to the **Admiralty** and he **died after volunteering** to search for a **missing plane off Iceland**.



Eric Ravilious (1903-1942), *Tea at Furlongs*, 1939, 35 x 43 cm, Fry Art Gallery

- Eric William Ravilious was an English painter, designer, book illustrator and wood engraver. He grew up in East Sussex, and is particularly known for his watercolours of the South Downs. He served as a war artist, and died when the aircraft he was in was lost off Iceland.
- **Furlongs was a cottage** on the South Downs, near Glynde and Lewes, which was occupied by Ravilious' friend **Peggy Angus** (1904-1993), a **painter**, designer and educator. Many artists visited her there including Ravilious and John Piper. Ravilious wrote that his time at Furlongs '**altered my whole outlook and way of painting**, I think because the colour of the landscape was so lovely and the design so beautifully obvious'. **She was a charismatic and formidable character**, opinionated and inclined to exhibitionism but also generous spirited, extremely sociable and a great inspiration to many young people. Angus had a great love of the outdoor life – camping and hiking – and was an intrepid traveller with her rucksack on her back. She eschewed a bourgeois lifestyle for places without modern conveniences, such as Furlongs. Her **interest in Russia**, her visits and the way she encouraged others to go earned her the nickname '**Red Angus**'.

Notes

- **Eric Ravilious** (1903-1942) was born in Acton but his family soon moved to Eastbourne where his parents ran an antique shop. He went to Eastbourne Grammar School and won a scholarship to Eastbourne School of Art and then another to study at the Royal College of Art. From 1924 he **studied under Paul Nash** who was an enthusiastic wood engraver and proposed Ravilious to the Society of Wood Engravers. He received a travel scholarship to Italy and then taught at Eastbourne School of Art and the Royal College of Art. In 1930 he married the artist and wood engraver Eileen 'Tirzah' Garwood. He spent a year working on a mural but it was destroyed in WWII. Between 1930 and 1932 he lived on the corner of **Weltje Road** Hammersmith. They moved to **Essex** and he had his **first solo exhibition** in London where he sold the majority of the works displayed. Ravilious engraved more than 400 illustrations and drew over 40 lithographic **designs for books** and other publications. In 1936 he held a second solo exhibition in London which was also a commercial success. He was commissioned to produce graphic designs for mugs and china sets, glass designs and graphic designs for London Transport. Ravilious was **inspired by the landscape of the South Downs** around Furlongs, the cottage of his friend Peggy Angus.
- **Weltje Road** is named after Louis Weltje, continental head cook to the Prince of Wales (later George IV). He purchased land in Hammersmith and built a substantial house that is near Weltje Road. He also speculatively bought a farm in Brighton which he later leased to the Prince for £1,000 a year as the site for the Royal Pavilion.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/eric-ravilious-1817>



Eric Ravilious (1903–1942), *Submarines in Dry Dock*, 1940, graphite, watercolour, crayon and pastel on paper, 43.2 x 57.1cm, Tate

- Ravilious was attached to the Admiralty with the honorary rank of Captain, Royal Marines from February 1940. *Submarines in Dry Dock* was probably **painted at Chatham or Sheerness** where he spent much of the **first two months** of his service as a war artist.



Eric Ravilious (1903–1942), *Midnight Sun*, 1940, watercolour and graphite on paper, 47 x 59.1cm, Tate

Eric Ravilious (1903–1942), *Midnight Sun*, 1940, watercolour and graphite on paper, 47 x 59.1cm, Tate

- *Midnight Sun* was painted shortly after, on a trip to Norway in a destroyer.

Notes

- The midnight sun refers to the sun never setting for part of the year. This occurs north of the Arctic Circle because of the tilt of the axis of the Earth. In the northernmost inhabited region of Norway (an island called Svalbard, formerly Spitsbergen) there is no sunset from 19 April to 23 August.
- The device in the foreground is a depth charge launcher



Eric Ravilious, *Morning on the Tarmac*, 1941, watercolour, 48.5 x 56 cm, Imperial War Museums

- Two **Walrus aircraft**, one only partly visible, sit on the runway with some personnel in the background.
- Ravilious was accepted as a **full-time salaried artist** by the War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC) in December 1939. He was given the rank of **Honorary Captain in the Royal Marines** and assigned to the **Admiralty**. In February 1940, he reported to the Royal Naval barracks at **Chatham Dockyard**. While based there he painted ships at the dockside, barrage balloons at Sheerness and other coastal defences. He painted bomb disposal, destroyers, battlecruisers, aircraft carriers and aircraft landing.
- After Ravilious's **third child was born** in April 1941, the family moved out of Bank House to Ironbridge Farm near Shalford, **Essex**. The **rent** on this property was **paid partly** in cash and partly in **paintings**, which are among the few private works Ravilious completed during the war. In October 1941 Ravilious **transferred to Scotland**, having spent six months based at Dover. In Scotland, Ravilious first stayed with **John Nash** and his wife at their cottage on the **Firth of Forth** and painted convoy subjects from the signal station on the Isle of May. At the Royal

Naval Air Station in Dundee, Ravilious drew, and sometimes flew in, the **Supermarine Walrus seaplanes** shown here.

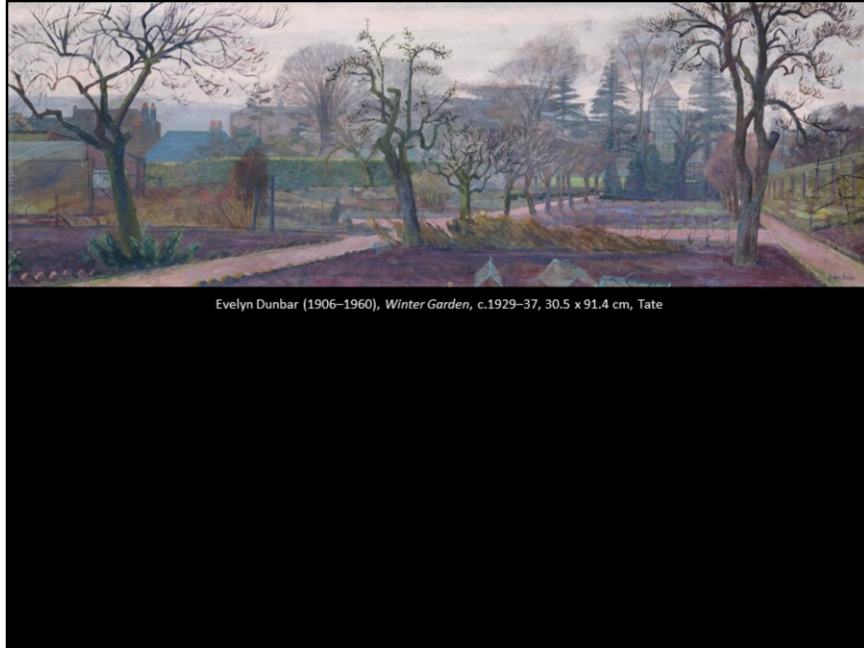
- He returned to **Portsmouth** and painted submarines and coastal defences. He began to **fly regularly in Tiger Moths** and in 1942 **flew to Iceland**. He volunteered to **search for a missing plane** but his plane **went missing** and has never been found.
- In April to August 2015 the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London held what it called 'the first major exhibition to survey' his watercolours, with more than 80 on display.
- The Supermarine Walrus was a British single-engine amphibious biplane reconnaissance aircraft designed by R. J. Mitchell and first flown in 1933. It was the first British squadron-service aircraft to incorporate a **fully retractable main undercarriage**, completely **enclosed crew accommodation**, and an **all-metal fuselage** in one airframe. Designed for use as a **fleet spotter** to be catapult launched from cruisers or battleships, the Walrus was later employed in a variety of other roles, most notably as a rescue aircraft for downed aircrew. It continued in service throughout the Second World War.

References

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/22470>



Evelyn Dunbar grew up in **Rochester**, the **daughter of a Scottish tailor and an artist** and **Christian Scientist**. She studied at the **Royal College of Art** and spent three years painting a **mural of Aesop's Fables**. Allegorical figures became a theme of her work. During WWII she became a **war artist** and was the **only woman to receive a continuous series of commissions**. She recorded the civilian contribution to the war including the **Women's Voluntary Service** and the **Women's Land Army**. She completed **40 paintings** and *The Queue at the Fish Shop* took two years. After the war she continued to paint but held few exhibitions. After her death her husband remarried and her work was distributed to friends and relatives and so was **largely forgotten** until her biography in 2006 and an exhibition at Pallant House in 2015-16.



Evelyn Dunbar (1906–1960), *Winter Garden*, c.1929–37, 30.5 x 91.4 cm, Tate

- Dunbar's parents **lived at Strood** near **Rochester** in Kent and this picture is a **record of their garden**. Between 1929 and 1933 the artist attended **Rochester Art School, Chelsea School of Art** and the **Royal College of Art** in London and remembered that this painting was begun before arriving in London as an art student and finished off around 1937. In that same year Dunbar wrote and illustrated the book *Gardeners' Choice*, along with the painter Charles Mahoney, who had been her teacher at the Royal College. Dunbar also executed murals at Brockley School, near Lewisham in the mid 1930s and was an Official War Artist during the Second World War.
- The artist wrote (7 May 1956): 'Begun before I came to London as a student, and finished later, about 1937. It was painted in the **garden of my parents' home** at Strood, Rochester, Kent.'



Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960), *Baling Hay*, 1940 or 1943, 45.8 x 61cm, National Museum of Wales

- Dunbar painted this in January 1943 (the National Museum of Wales says 1940). Land Girls are pitchforking 'bird's nests' of hay into the baling machine. The machine compresses the hay which is then chopped into lengths by the guillotine and tied into bales with the baling wire.

References

<https://evelyn-dunbar.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/baling-hay-1943.html>



Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960), *The Queue at the Fish-shop*, 1944, 62.2 x 182.8 cm, Imperial War Museums

Photographer unknown, Angel Corner, High Street, Strood, approx. 1920. View looking west along Strood High Street towards the Westminster Bank in the centre. This was demolished in 1956. The Angel Inn is in the centre. On the left is H. C. Hill & Son, fishmongers at number 91. It was demolished 1959 and a Co-op store built.

- Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960) was born in Reading and when she was seven they moved to Rochester where her Scottish father was a bespoke tailor. Her mother was a Yorkshire woman and an amateur still-life artist and Christian Scientist. Evelyn became and remained a Christian Scientist throughout her life. She won a scholarship to Rochester Grammar School and an exhibition to study at the **Royal College of Art**. She and other students were commissioned to paint a **mural of Aesop's fables** in a school in south London, the Brockley murals. She spent three years painting the murals and the subject matter, landscape, **allegorical figures became a theme of her painting for the rest of her life**. She produced illustrations for books and magazines.
- In April 1940 Dunbar was appointed by the War Artists' Advisory Committee, (WAAC), as an **official war artist**, eventually becoming **the only woman**

artist to receive successive and continuous commissions throughout the war. Her brief was to **record civilian contributions** to the war effort on the home front. Her initial subjects were the activities of the Women's Voluntary Service and later in the war, the Women's Land Army. By the end of the war Dunbar had some 40 paintings accepted by WAAC. One of those paintings was *The Queue at the Fish-Shop* set outside, H. C. Hill & Sons, a fish and chip shop in Strood High Street. It was started in the spring of 1942 but not completed until 1944. The **RAF officer cycling** into the painting from the left is her **husband Roger Folley**, while her **sister Jessie is the figure crossing the road**. The **ancient building** housing the fish shop **existed until the 1960s**, when it was demolished to make room for a road widening scheme at a point called Angel Corner. Dunbar is notable for her recording of women's contribution to World War II particularly the work of the Women's Land Army.

- After the war she and her husband moved to Warwickshire and then Oxfordshire and she taught at the Oxford School of Art. They moved to Kent and she concentrated on landscapes and portraits, later specialising in children's portraits. After the war she continued to paint but held few exhibitions. In 1960 she suddenly collapsed and died in the woods near her home. After her death her husband remarried and her work was distributed to friends and relatives and so was largely forgotten until her biography in 2006 and an exhibition at Pallant House in 2015-16.

References

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/8171>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn_Dunbar



Evelyn Dunbar, *Autumn and the Poet*, 1950-60

- Her **last work** that was **found on the easel** in her studio **when she died**. She had been working on it for the **previous ten years** and it summarises her approach and beliefs. She believed that the **Creator** had granted the **human race a fertile and abundant land** as long as we **cared for the world**. Her views of the Creator included Mother Earth, Gaia and the deities of the ancient world.
- The fields stretch to the distance and were her **metaphor for promise**. It is unassuming and the landscape is not intended to be picturesque or beautiful. Most of her landscapes feature farmed land. **Autumn is the female figure** looking at the person on the ground modelled on her **husband Roger**. The poet has a sheet of paper ready to transcribe what Autumn has to say or convey. The poet has a **puzzled look** at this is a form of **reversed Annunciation** where the female 'angel' implants the idea in the mind of the male poet. The long-bodied, small-headed female is a type that Dunbar had made her own.

References

- <https://evelyn-dunbar.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/autumn-and-poet-1960.html>



Graham Sutherland was **born in Streatham**, the **son of a lawyer**. He trained as an **engineer** and then went to **Goldsmith's College**. He specialised in engraving and was influenced by **Samuel Palmer**. He **did not paint until his 30s** when the **print market collapsed** due to the **Great Depression**. He produced mostly landscapes **influenced by Paul Nash**. He exhibited at the **1936 *International Surrealist Exhibition*** and **taught** at various colleges and continued with design work. He visited and was inspired by the landscape of **Pembrokeshire**. During **WWII** he became a **war artist** and painted **tin mining in Cornwall** and **bomb damage in London**. He had **converted to Catholicism** in 1926 the year before his **marriage** and in the early 1950s was asked to **design a tapestry** for the new **Coventry Cathedral**. After the war he painted landscapes and he continued to paint portraits of which the most famous is of Somerset Maugham and the most notorious of Winston Churchill.



Graham Sutherland (1903-1980), *Entrance to a Lane*, 1939, 61.4 x 50.7 cm, Tate

- Graham Vivian Sutherland (1903–1980) was an English artist, notable for glass, fabrics, prints and portraits. His work is much **inspired by landscape and religion**, and he designed the **tapestry** for the **re-built Coventry Cathedral**. He was an **official war artist** in the Second World War.
- **Tate website**, 'Though **apparently abstract**, this painting represents a **lane at Sandy Haven, Pembrokeshire**. By 'paraphrasing' what he observed, Sutherland felt he captured the **essence of the landscape**. This innovative technique fused the observational powers of John Constable with the daring of Pablo Picasso. The prominent black forms also reflect Sutherland's debt to the landscape drawings of **Samuel Palmer**, whose work **enjoyed a revival in the 1930s**. This painting belongs to a tradition of images of wooded landscapes which seem to **enfold the viewer**. In 1939, with **war looming**, such a natural refuge may have had **special significance**.'

Notes

- Graham Sutherland was **born in Streatham**, the **son of a lawyer**. When he was 18, following academic training as an engineer, he persuaded his father to send him to

Goldsmith's College School of Art as there were no vacancies at the Slade. He specialised in engraving and was heavily influenced by Samuel Palmer. He did not paint until his 30s following the collapse of the print market in 1930 due to the Great Depression. He produced mostly landscapes influenced by Paul Nash and focused on the strangeness and surreal appearance of natural objects. In 1936 he exhibited at the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London. He also took up glass design, fabric design and poster design during the 1930s, and taught at a number of London art colleges. In 1934 he first visited Pembrokeshire and was profoundly inspired by its landscape, and the place remained a source for much of the following decade. In 1967 Sutherland returned to Wales and was once again inspired by the landscape regularly working in the region until his death in 1980. Between 1940 and 1945 he was employed as an official war artist and worked mostly on the home front including tin mining in Cornwall and bomb damage in London.

- Sutherland converted to Catholicism in 1926, the year before his marriage to Kathleen Barry, who had been a fellow student at Goldsmith's College. In 1944, he was commissioned to paint *The Crucifixion* (1946) for St Matthew's Church, Northampton. In the early 1950s, Sutherland was commissioned to design the tapestry for Basil Spence's new Coventry Cathedral. *Christ in Glory* took ten years before completion in 1962. He also continued to produce work based on natural forms, and managed to blend some of these – such as thorns – into his religious work. Sometimes, as in *Head III* (1953), these forms, often considered threatening in appearance, have an organic appearance but are entirely invented.
- Sutherland also painted a number of portraits, with one of *Somerset Maugham* (1949) the first and among the most famous. His painting of *Winston Churchill* (1954) was given to the subject and was then apparently destroyed on the orders of Lady Churchill; studies for the portrait have survived.
- **Neo-Romanticism**, a return to the past, Neo-romantics landscape 1930s to 1950s. School of London (see <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/s/school-of-London>), R.B. Kitaj and a return to figurative painting in the face of the avant-garde in the 1970s.



Graham Sutherland (1903–1980), *A Foundry: Hot Metal has been Poured into a Mould and Inflammable Gas is Rising*, 1941–2, crayon and gouache on paper, 91.8 x 109.2 cm, Tate

- Between 1940 and 1945, Sutherland was an Official War Artist. He was almost continually employed on specific projects including, for example, recording bomb damage in London, and depicting tin mines in Cornwall and steel works in Cardiff and Swansea. This picture is one of several works made at the Guest, Keen and Baldwin steel works in Cardiff. Since the emergence of the modern factory system in the late eighteenth century, artists had often associated the fiery and awesome industrial landscape with more traditional visions of hell.
- Though the artist does not seem to have wanted to show a coherent progression, there are depictions of various stages in each of the three main processes of the steel works: the refinement of iron from iron ore, the production of steel and the forging of that steel into armaments. The progression from natural resources to weapons might be seen to bear a symbolism that would have suited the WAAC's propaganda purposes.
- The media were applied in a complex layering to create the highly modulated surface quality for which Sutherland became renowned. The main ground seems

to have been a grey watercolour wash, while the yellow of the flames is a dry gouache. Wax crayon was applied in several places - notably in the white area in the centre - and the washes have been thrown off by it to create a mottled effect. Much of the ink drawing was worked over the paint and it has come off where it went over the yellow. Some wrinkling in the thin white paper originated from its mounting on Essex Board, which is stamped on the back along the bottom edge; the board is concave, the centre being recessed by approximately 1/4 inch. There are several tears, cuts and patches in the paper which seem to have existed prior to completion. Towards the bottom right hand corner, the section of moulds on table tops and its immediate surroundings are painted on a large patch.

- In 1964 Sutherland recalled that he was 'fascinated by the primitiveness of heavy engineering shops with their vast floors. In a way they are cathedrals ... And yet the rite - a word I use carefully - being performed when men are making steel, is extraordinary; and how primitive it all really is in spite of our scientific age'.
- A similarly reassuring message had been conveyed by Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings which, by 1942, were already established as major works of modern British art. Though Sutherland's threatened bodies are frequently compared with William Blake's figures, the two here, like the receding tunnel-like space on the right, reveal the influence of Moore's images. Indeed, the style shared by Moore, Sutherland and John Piper in their WAAC work might be thought to have become one of the leading visual languages in wartime Britain.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sutherland-a-foundry-hot-metal-has-been-poured-into-a-mould-and-inflammable-gas-is-rising-n05739/text-catalogue-entry>



Graham Sutherland (1903–1980), Coventry Cathedral tapestry of Christ, 1952-61, 23 x 11m

- Graham Sutherland was invited by Basil Spence, the architect of Coventry Cathedral, to design the tapestry - which he accepted in 1952.
- By early 1958, the design was accepted by the church authorities and sent to France, in preparation for the weaving. It was woven by 12 women and one man, is the size of a tennis court and weighs just over one tonne.
- Sutherland converted to **Roman Catholicism** in 1926, and married Kathleen Barry in 1927. He was awarded the Order of Merit in 1960, and died in 1982.
- The commission given to Sutherland by the Church authorities was to depict the risen Christ **seated in glory** in the environment of heaven, surrounded by the symbols of the **four evangelists**, the **human being** (representing **St. Matthew**), the **lion** (representing **St. Mark**), the **bull or calf** (representing **St. Luke**) and the **eagle** (representing **St. John**).
- There are other symbols woven into the tapestry. Above 'Christ in Glory' is the **Dove** of the Holy Spirit.
- A **human figure** appears between the **feet of Christ**, symbolising both the relative **smallness of human beings** and the majesty and caring **love of God** for us.

- There is a **serpent emerging** from **the cup** or chalice. This is a reference to a legend that **St. John** was given a **cup of poison** to drink. He drank in faith and **the poison** (the serpent) did him **no harm**.
- The **lower section** of the tapestry shows **Jesus on the cross**, with **Mary** his mother (John Bridgeman's statue) gazing up at him from the Lady Chapel itself.
- The two **shapes on either side below** Christ's **arms** are those of **angels hiding their faces** from so much suffering.

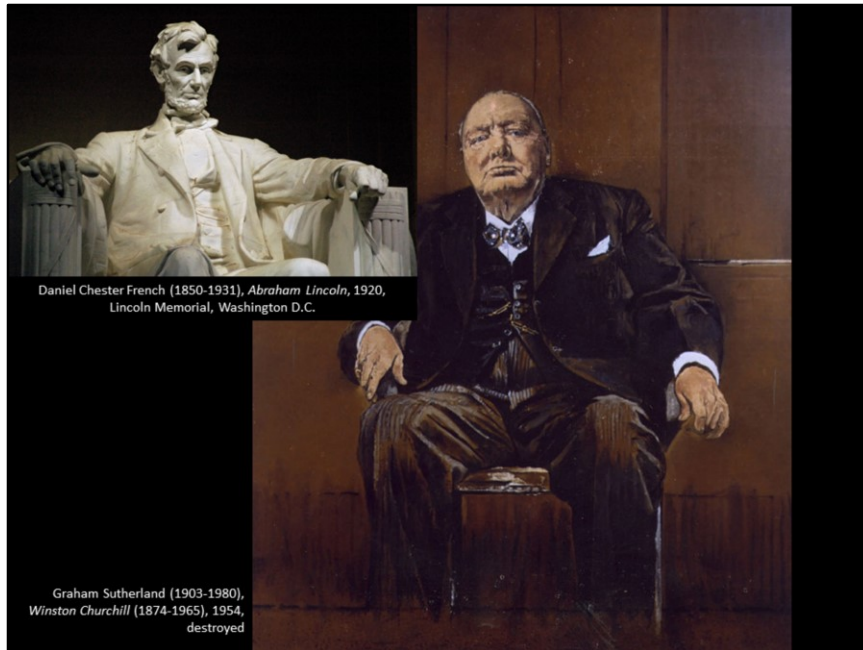
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Graham Sutherland (1903–1980), *Somerset Maugham*, 1949, 137.2 x 63.5cm, Tate

- Tate, “This was the **first of many portraits by Sutherland**, mostly of either **friends** or **distinguished elderly people**. He met Maugham, the famous novelist and dramatist, at St Jean Cap Ferrat, and was invited to paint his portrait. Maugham was then **aged seventy-five**. The **bamboo stool** and **background colour**, like that of the robes of **Buddhist monks**, were intended to refer to the setting of many of **Maugham's novels** and short stories in the **Far East**. The portrait was **painted from drawings** made by Sutherland during about **ten one hour sittings** with Maugham.”
- Sutherland had a reputation as a modernist painter and this portrait of Somerset Maugham in 1949 was **well regarded by many**. Sutherland **captured the real person** and some sitters considered his **disinclination to flattery** as a **form of cruelty or disparagement**.



Graham Sutherland (1903-1980), *Winston Churchill* (1874-1965), 1954, destroyed
 Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), *Abraham Lincoln*, 1920, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.

- In **1954** Graham Sutherland was **commissioned** to produce a **portrait** of Winston **Churchill**. The painting cost **1,000 guineas** and was paid for by **donations from members** of the House of Commons. **Churchill disapproved** of the painting when it was unveiled as he thought it made him look '**half-witted**'. At the opening ceremony he described it as "**a remarkable example of modern art**" to much laughter from his audience. It was **kept in the cellar** at **Chartwell** and **later burned** by Churchill's secretary and brother at his farm.
- Sutherland chose a **square format** to reflect a remark by Churchill, "**I am a rock**" and he is shown **grasping the arms** of the chair as a **reference to the statue of US President Abraham Lincoln** in Washington, D.C.
- Sutherland described the destruction of the portrait as an "**act of vandalism**".

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1. Walter Sickert (1860-1942)
2. Gwen John (1876-1939)
3. Augustus John (1878-1961)
4. Laura Knight (1877-1970) also a war artist in WWII
5. William Orpen (1878-1931)
6. David Bomberg (1890-1957) also a war artist in WWII
7. Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) also a war artist in WWII

8. John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)