Some recent purchases of

The Contemporary Art Society

Arts Council of Great Britain 1949

Foreword

Once again the Arts Council is deeply grateful to the Contemporary Art Societyf or so readily lending their recent acquisitions to make another exhibition of modern British paintings, and so help the Council to supply a widespread demand f or such exhibitions. It is hoped that the work of the Society will thereby be more widely known. Grateful thanks are also due to Denis Mathews, its secretary, f or his generous co-operation.

The blocksfor Plates II, III, IV, V, VII, and VIII were made originallyfor the book on the achievement of the Conlemporary Art Soci.ety 'From Sickert to 1948' [LUND HUMPHRIES 1948]

Introduction

There are several reasons why people have pictures in their houses, none of which has any connection with the kind of pictures you can see at this Exhibition.

There are those one likes because they hung in one's childhood home-the pictures of piety. There are the wedding presents-the pictures of politeness. There are those that have been bought because they fitted special walls or colour schemes-the furniture-pictures. None of these, normally, has the dynamic quality that makes a picture of the slightest importance as a work of art; and it is as works of art that we must examine the pictures in this show. I have said what I have, to warn you that all too many of us live our lives in surroundings entirely bereft of 'dynamic' pictures. This explains the outbursts of rage-usually merely reaction to surprise-which sometimes occur when apparently normal citizens are confronted by a contemporary picture.

The defensive armour of anger interposes itself between the viewer and the picture so that a calm appraisal becomes almost impossible. For all I know, there really are some people whose glands react (I presume by the sudden injection into the veins of an overdose of bile) whenever the optic nerve rests upon a painting that is not 'naturalistic'. But, on the other hand, I am certain that there are many more who, if they were to make the experiment, would find themselves more permanently pleased by such a picture to look at every breakfast-time than they will ever be by one of the other kind. A cow looking over a gate, however redolent of the barnyard, and a cardinal toasting his cook, however redolent of the keyhole, do, I find, soon lose their power to interest. Like jokes, they lose their entertainment value after their first impact. On the other hand, a picture in which there are elements of the artist's own view, in which there has been some exploration into the nature of form and colour and light and design, retains a power to interest and to please that permanently radiates from it. This 'radio-activity' is what we should look for in our pictures, and it will be found to be very prevalent among those in this Exhibition.

Let us try, therefore, to look at these pictures as we would look at some newly-discovered exotic bird or beast. Let us wonder, let us gasp, let us, if we may, admire. But let us not leap into an insensate fury just because we are confronted with something the like of which we never saw before.

One more thing I would urge, and that is that in an attempt to explain away an inability at first sight to understand what the artists are driving at, we should put from us that all too common bit of self-defence-'Oh, this isn't a serious thing that I am failing to understand. It's merely a leg-pull'. Believe me, artists don't suffer neglect and lack of public appreciation, still less do they impose the effects of this upon their wives and children, merely for the dubious pleasure of painting leg-pulls. It isn't as easy as this to explain away a failure to understand what they do. Artists are a serious class. They are men and women with a mission, and they paint in all earnestness as they feel impelled to paint, to express a rarer vision of things which they, being more sensitive than ordinary mortals, can capture for their own and our delight. They are explorers into the realms of appreciation and we deprive ourselves of pleasure in not making some effort to share what we can of their discoveries. These we need not expect all to be of importance. Some, of course, will be of none; the explorers will have taken, as explorers may, wrong paths leading into jungles or deserts. But even from these they may

bring back exciting objects, even if they are not of lasting resthetic importance.

It is possible to play apart in these voyages of discovery by oneself buying contemporary paintings or sculpture, but far the greater part of the public lack the courage or the confidence in their own judgment which this requires. Many of them, however, do feel great sympathy for what is being done by contemporary artists. For this large class of sympathisers there awaits, with open arms, the Contemporary Art Society.

For a most modest minimum annual subscription of a guinea you can become a member of the Society and play your part in securing the purchase of the sort of works of art that come under the heading of contemporary. All that the Society buys is given to Art Galleries, not only to those in the greatest cities, but to any Gallery that may be a member of the Society. It is, in fact, a co-operative effort, and private people who become members can feel that they are helping their local Gallery as well as the artists and sculptors whose works are bought. Members, for their own particular pleasure, are also given entry to collections of contemporary painting in private houses, on visits arranged from time to time through the Society, and these are extremely stimulating treats.

This little collection of pictures is a cross-section of the varied kinds of painting bought or secured by gift by the Society. It is the hope of the Contemporary Art Society, and of the Arts Council, through whom the collection is enabled to be circulated, that it will find sympathetic friends, and that it will create new ones who will be prepared to spend their guinea in increasing the range and influence of such a constructive and happy form of private enterprise.

Colin Aruierson

Plate *I*. MATTHEW SMITH. *Femme en Chemisr* (+8)

Plate II. THÉRÈSE LESSORE. *Walcot, Bath* (27)

Plate III. RUSKIN SPEAR. *Interior with Nude* (49)

Plate IV. ANTHONY GROSS. *Gascony Avenue* (18)

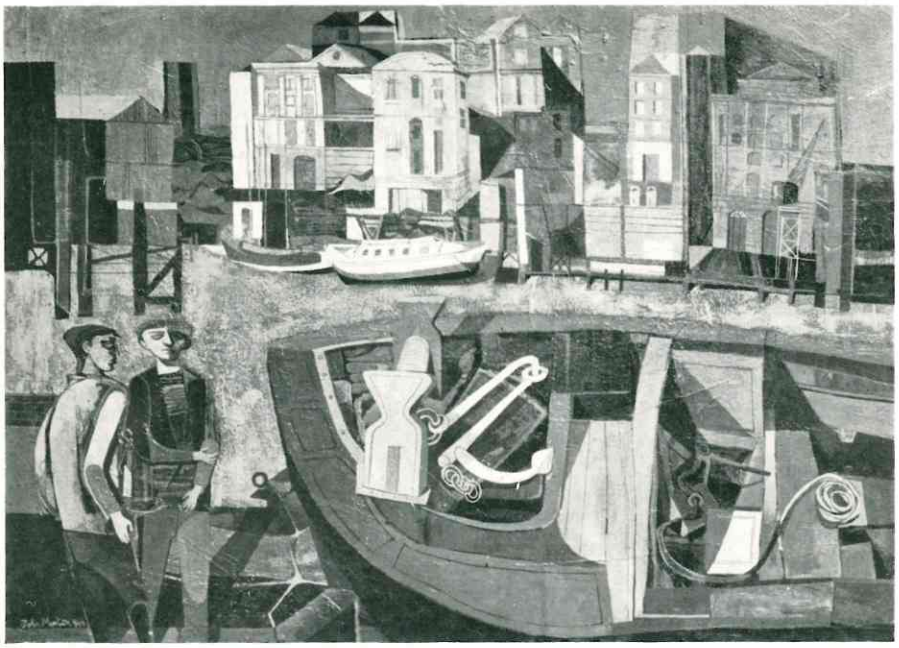

Plate V. JOHN MINTON. *Rotherhithe from Wapping* (31)

Plate VI. JOHN CRAXTON. *Dark Landscape* (12)

Plate VII. CECIL COLLINS. *The Sleeping Fool* (11)

Plate VIII. ROBERT MCBRYDE. *Woman with a Cantaloupe* (28)

Where the Society has presented the picture the name of the recipient has been added

Catalogue

ANON
1 *Stage Set*
Oil on canvas, 12 x 20 in.

Leonard APPELBEE
b. 1914
2 *Whiting*
Oil on panel, 9! x 25! in.

Edward ARDIZZONE
b. 1900
5 *The Photographer*
Pen and watercolour, 11 x 8 in.
Kettering Art Gallery and Museum

4 *The Bannaid*
Pen and watercolour, 11 x 15 in.
Nottingham Museum and Art Gallery

Keith BAYNES
b. 1887
5 *Trees*
Oil on canvas, 20 x 14 in.
Bagshaw Museum and Art Gallery, Batley

Vanessa BELL
b. 1879
6 *Still Life with Flowers*
Chalk and watercolour, 28 x 21 in.
Rochdale Art Gallery and Museum

Elinor BELLINGHAM-SMITH
b. 1906
7 *Low Tide, Putney*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 50 in.
Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Museum

BISSIERE
8 *Still Life*
Oil on canvas, 15 x 22 in.

Cosmo CLARK
b. 1897
9 *Hop Scotch*
Oil on canvas, 20 x 16 in.
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

George CLAUSEN, R.A.
1852-1944
10 *Harvest Moon*
Oil on canvas, 12 x 14 in.

Cecil COLLINS
b. 1908
11 *The Sleeping Fool* (Plate VII)
Drawing, 16 x 20 in.

John CRAXTON 12 *Dark Landscape* (Plate VI)
Oil on paper, 14t x 21 in.
Southampton Art Gallery

Charles GINNER, A.R.A. 13 *Dieppe*
b. 1878 Oil on canvas, 25 *x* 18 in.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Sylvia GOSSE 14 *First Comrmmion*
b. 1881 Oil on canvas, 20 *x* 12 in.

Duncan GRANT 15 *Nwh*
b. 1885 Pastel, 251 X 20 in.
Rugby Exhibition Gallery

16 *Newhaven Cliffs*
Oil on canvas, 14 X 21 in.

Leonard GREAVES 17 *Sun arul Snow, Poulton's Square*
b. 1918 Oil on canvas, 20 *x* 16 in.
Kidderminster Art Gallery and Museum

Anthony GROSS 18 *Gascony Avenue* (Plate IV)
b. 1903 Watercolour, 8 X 13 in.
Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Archibald Standish HARTRICK 19 *Mother and Child*
b. 1864 Watercolour, 8 x 10 in.
Hastings Musewn and Art Gallery

Derak HILL 20 *Anticoli*
b. 1916 Oil on canvas, 12 *x* 8 in.
Bradford City Art Gallery

Tristram HILLIER 21 *Fishing Boats*
b. 1905 Oil on canvas, 23 X 31 in.
Bradford City Art Gallery

Ivon HITCHENS 22 *Tangled Pool No. 1*
b. 1893 Oil on canvas, 20 *x* 52 in.
Harrogate Art Gallery

Frances HODGKINS 23 *The Weir*
1870-1947 Oil on canvas, 24 X 30 in.
Glasg<ILIJ Art Gallery and Museum

David JONES 24 *Panthers*
b. 1895 Watercolour, 13 x 21 in.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Mary KESSELL 25 *Staruling Figure*
b. 1914 Coloured drawing, 18 X 13 in.
Darlington Public Library and Art Gallery

Edward LE BAS, R.A. 26 *Pheasaru*
b. 1904 Oil on canvas, 15 *x* 28 in.
York Art Gallery

Therese LESSORE 27 *Walcot, Bath* (Plate II)
1884-1944 Oil on canvas, 24 *x* 30 in.

Robert MCBRYDE 28 *Womanwith a Cantaloupe* (Plate VIII)
b. 1914 Oil on canvas, 60 *x* 30 in.
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Frances MACDONALD 29 *The Lake*
b. 1914 Watercolour, 141 X 22t in.

Denis MATHEWS 30 *Two Roads*
(Monotype) 14 *x* 22 in.

John MINTON 31 *Rotherhithe from Wapping* (Plate V)
b. 1917 Oil on canvas, 36 *x* 48 in.
Southampton Art Gallery

Henry MOORE 32 *Group of Shelterers during an Air Raid*
b. 1898 Gouache drawing, 14! x 20 in.
Toronto Art Gallery

Paul NASH 33 *Whiteleaf Cross*
1889-1946 Oil on canvas, 23! *x* 19! in.

34 *Stone Forest*
Watercolour, 18 x 12 in.
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

Ben NICHOLSON 35 *Sea with Boats*
b. 1894 Oil on canvas, 15! *x* 22 in.
Rutherston Collection, Manchester

Sir William NICHOLSON 36 *Still Life, Flowers*
b. 1872 Oil on canvas, 22 *x* 24 in.
Gilstrap Public Library and Museum Newark-on-Tr ent

Winifred NICHOLSON 37 *Violas in a Wind<ILIJ*
b. 1881 Oil on canvas, 20 *x* 23 in.
Nottingham Museum and Art Gallery

38 *Honeysuckle and Swea Peas*
Oil on canvas, 17 *x* 28 in.
Aberdeen Corporation Art Gallery

Victor PASMORE 39 *Head of a Man*
b. 1908 Oil on canvas, 20 *x* 16 in.

Mary POTTER 40 *Deserted Pier*
b. 1900 Oil on canvas, 12 X 10 in.

James PRYDE 41 *The Ladder*
1866-1941 Oil on canvas, 18 x 12 in.

Adrian RYAN 42 *Mousehole*
Oil on canvas, 36 X 24 in.

Claude ROGERS b. 1907 43 *Nuth*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield

A. Dunoyer de SEGONZAC b. 1884 44 *Winter Landscape*
Pen and ink, 12 X 19 in.

William SCOTT 45 *Girl with Birdcage*
Oil on canvas, 30 X 33 in.
Brighton Art Gallery

46 *Flowers in a Jug*
Oil on canvas, 20 x 18 in.
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Walter Richard SICKERT b. 1860-1942 47 *Interior (unfinished)*
Oil on canvas, 59 x 29 in.
This painting was left unfinished by the artist at his death

Matthew SMITH b. 1879 48 *Femme en Chemise* (Plate I)
Oil on canvas, 36 X 26 in.

Ruskin SPEAR, A.R.A. b. 1911 49 *Interior with Nuth* (Plate III)
Oil on canvas, 36 X 26 in.
Usher Art Gallery, Lincoln

Gilbert SPENCER 50 *Lansdowne Crescent*
Oil on canvas, 15½ X 12½ in.

Graham SUTHERLAND b. 1903 51 *Red Rocks*
Gouache, 15 X 20 in.
Oldham Art Gallery and Museum

Wilson STEER, O.M. 1860-1942 52 *Sea Shore*
Watercolour 9 X 12½ in.

53 *A Deserted House*
Wash drawing, 9½ x 13½ in.

Carel WEIGHT b. 1908 54 *Weston-super-Mare*
Oil on canvas, 12 X 15 in.
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

55 *Sketching on the Roof*
Oil on board, 12 x 16 in.

Gerald WYLDE 56 *Composition I*
Gouache, 10 X 12 in.

LUND HUMPHRIES

Other Arts Council Exhibitions

Notes and Sketches by Sickert

Gordon Craig. Designs and Engravings

Modern French Tapestries

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