

# Twentieth Century British Art

FROM THE COLLECTION OF  
THE LATE JOHN CONSTABLE



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Catalogue published for an exhibition held at  
Third Floor 6 Mason's Yard St James's London SW1Y 6BU  
23 September - 16 October 2020

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ZULEIKA GALLERY

HARRY MOORE-GWYN  
BRITISH ART

Front cover:  
Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)  
*Blue Assembly*, 1964  
[cat.28]

Back cover:  
Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*Cyclamens*, 1913  
[cat.3]

Opposite page:  
Albert Goodwin RWS (1845-1932)  
*Stonehenge*  
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# Catalogue



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*Standing male nude, 1943*  
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[Fig.1]  
John Constable

# Foreword

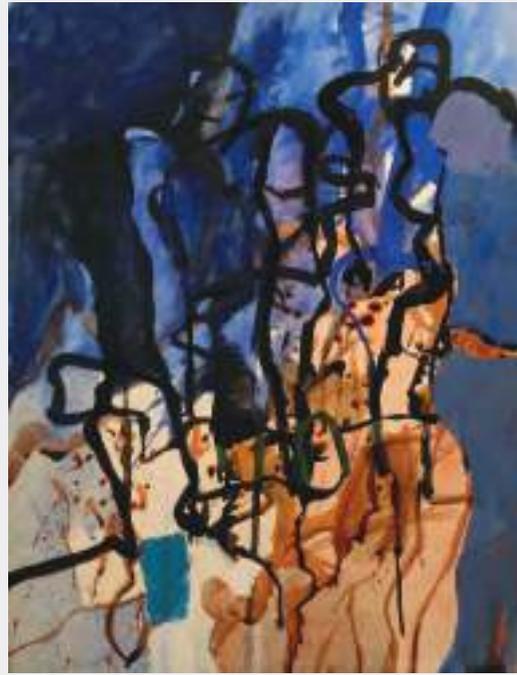
It was always a pleasure to visit John Constable in his late period Cotswold farmhouse. A gentleman and a true aesthete, he was the last of a generation of connoisseur-collectors that nowadays seems to be an increasingly rare thing. When you go to a house that has a great many beautiful works of art it can be almost embarrassing as you can't keep your eyes off the walls and keep scanning around to check out the wonders around you. Well this was what it was like when you entered John's house. From the moment you crossed the threshold you knew you were somewhere special and surrounded by much loved treasures, accumulated through the passion of a lifetime dedicated to a deep engagement with the arts. Minimalism was not for John. It wasn't just art that John loved, but music, literature, ballet and theatre too. He told me once that he had kept the programme for every single

theatrical performance he had ever attended – and this stretched way back to the early 50s when would visit London regularly (I'm told The Regent Palace, off Trafalgar Square provided his second home there), so you can imagine, was a great many programmes. Ballet was also a great passion for John, and of particular importance to him during the post-war period of the 50s and 60s. When I founded Zuleika Gallery in 2015, John was keen to dig out a programme for the Zuleika musical from the 1950s to give to me, which was so touching. And of course, being green, I had no idea about the musical! His email to me was typically informative - 'Zuleika opened in Manchester in the mid 1950s but Diane Cilento was taken ill after I saw it but it still opened in London to very good reviews with a different principal and ran for 124 performances closing in July 1957.'

I think it would be true to say that John was an incredibly private individual. He spoke softly with a very slight



[Fig.2]  
Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)  
*Blue Assembly*, 1964  
[cat.28]



[Fig.3] far left  
Keith Vaughan  
(1912-1977)  
*The Onlooker*, c.1974  
[cat.32]

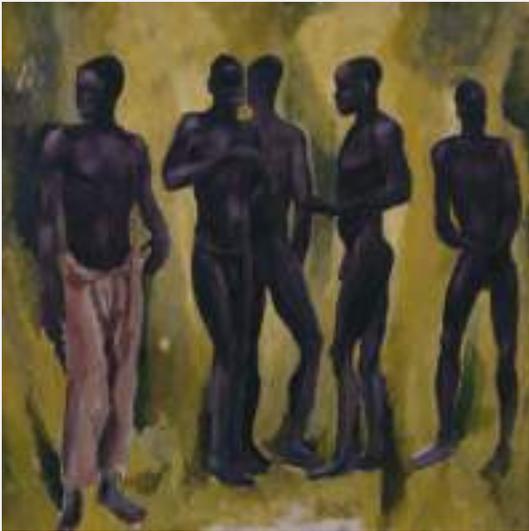
[Fig.4] left  
Keith Vaughan  
(1912-1977)  
*Maze of Figures*,  
c. 1970  
[cat.31]

midlands lilt and was always formally dressed in a suit, even when relaxing at home. Clearly a man of old-fashioned standards but a modern-sensibility and liberal approach; without doubt John was one of the most intelligent and informed collectors I have ever met. This I have to say is equalled by his business partner Nigel Collins who also never ceases to amaze with his incredible knowledge of the most obscure facts about artists and their output. John never made you feel small for knowing less than him – for my part it seemed inevitable he would have a greater knowledge given his older years and decades of collecting, so I was happy to be the apprentice of sorts.

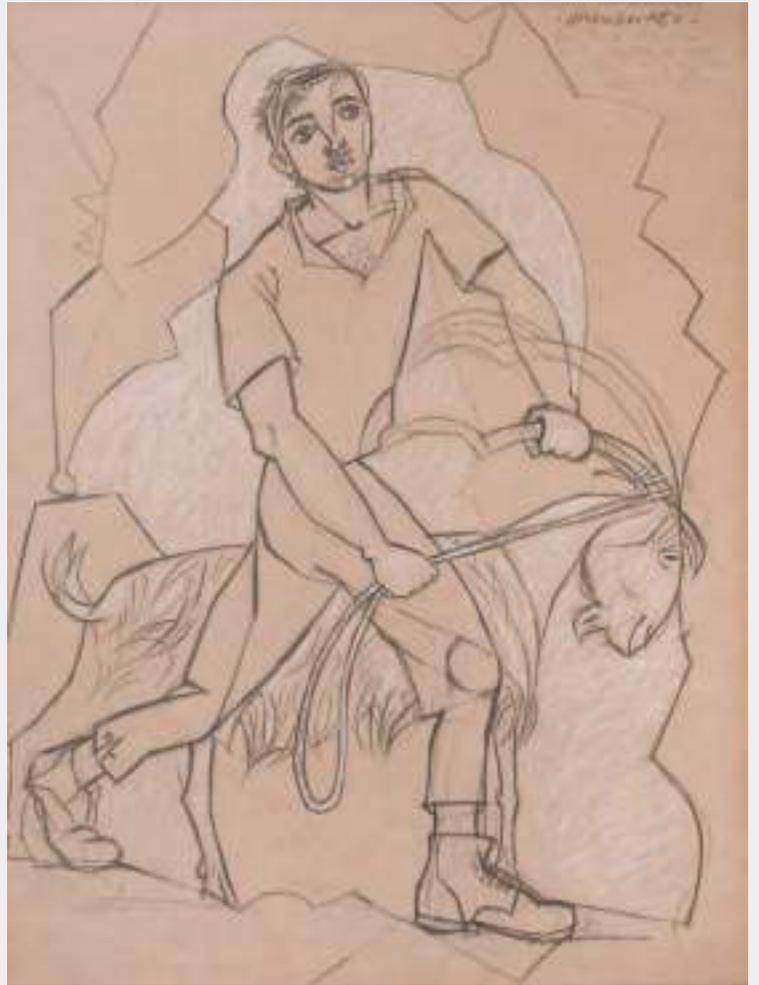
John would often tell me about his recent travels – where he had been and what he had gone for – usually it was to see a particular exhibition or to hear a particular orchestra play. I loved listening to him and learning from him. From the very moment you entered the hallway to the house John shared with both Nigel and Judy and their family, you knew you were in for a treat. The great diversity of taste was immediately apparent as you saw work by artists such as Arthur Hughes, Burne-Jones, Mary Fedden and John Bratby all hung in close quarters beside the bifurcated wooden stairway, and somehow it all worked. In the lower study, the number of books on Modern British artists was more than enviable.



[Fig.5] above  
Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)  
*Two Men*, 1970  
[cat.30]



[Fig.6] above  
Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)  
*Five Figures*, 1935  
[cat.23]



[Fig.7] above right  
John Craxton, RA (1922-2009)  
*The Goatherd*, 1950  
[cat.21]

The living room itself had to be the *pièce de resistance*. It was here that we would sit and talk about art, about the market and chew the fat about different artists we admired, examples we had seen in exhibitions or at auction and discuss what we did or did not rate, or share anecdotes. Lowry, I seem to recall, was not his favourite artist, and someone whose market he simply did not get. The cat was usually our only companion, oh, and the amazing array of paintings by Vaughan and the Bloomsbury Group. *Blue Assembly* [Fig.2] hung in this room – purchased in 1976 from Christie’s – and privately admired by John ever since, it is truly a delight to be able to show this work in our exhibition here. Flanked by

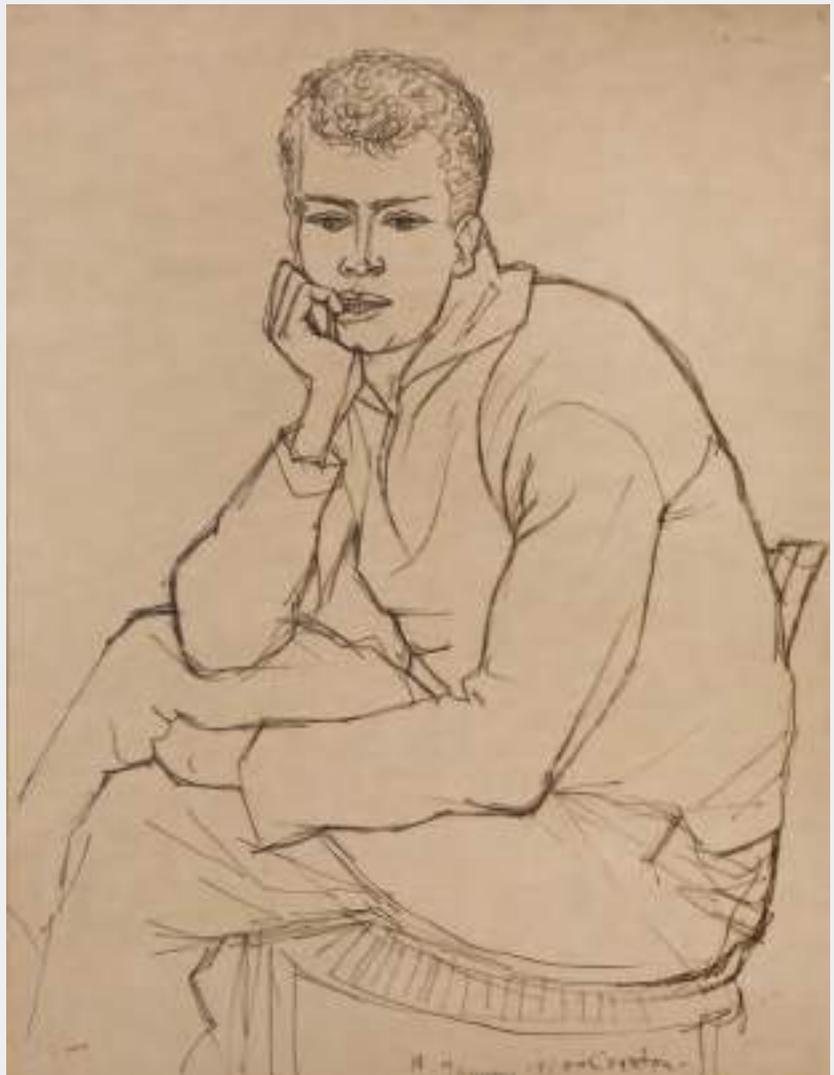
*The Onlooker* [Fig.3] and *Maze of Figures* [Fig.4] the living room was an absolute visual feast. *Two Men* [Fig.5] hung behind the door along the same wall – a bold and sexually charged work in charcoal, and along from there the very early work *Five Negro Figures* [Fig.6]. As you progressed to the dining room, the collection entered a different phase, and this is where the majority of the Bloomsbury works were hung, alongside the Goodwins and a few Vaughans and Mintons, of course, for good measure. All of this right in the middle of the most beautiful countryside in the Cotswolds, and usually viewed with Wagner blasting in the background. At home or abroad John was never less than an ardent Wagnerian.

On one rare occasion, John invited me to see the collection upstairs. I entered the first-floor study from a small corridor (hung floor to ceiling with Vaughan drawings) and was staggered to see the depth of John's collecting. John had created for himself a sanctuary of art. John's bedroom held some of the most important works we have in this exhibition today, more of the Bloomsbury oils, and to my great surprise, two of the most fabulous and important Craxton drawings -included in this exhibition - *The Goatherd* [Fig.7] and the *Portrait of Lucian Freud* [Fig.8].

Even in the last few weeks of his life John was collecting and accumulating art - receiving catalogues and placing bids online from the comfort of his Cotswold home. He had a new interest - some rather niche Scottish art. A few new Scottish artists had caught his eye, and John was collecting as obsessively as ever.

I will always be so grateful to John and Nigel for their friendship and for the support they have given me, especially since setting up Zuleika Gallery. My last memory of John was sitting with him outside his conservatory in the garden on a fine summer's day. John liked the garden. When I saw him of course I did not know it would be for the last time. In a way I am glad that it was like it was, seeing him there, surrounded by the beauty he had created for himself, dressed smartly, as ever, in a linen suit, as this is the memory I now hold of him. He will always be in my mind like this - a true gentleman and connoisseur. Not one with airs, graces or pretence, but a sincere and eminently genial soul.

LIZZIE COLLINS



[Fig.8]  
John Craxton, RA (1922-2009)  
*Portrait of Lucian Freud*,  
1950  
[cat.22]

# Surprises and Satisfactions:

## THE JOHN CONSTABLE COLLECTION



[Fig.9] top  
Albert Goodwin, RWS  
(1845-1932)  
*Santa Maria Della Salute,  
Venice, "The Fiesta"*  
[cat.1]



[Fig.10] above  
Albert Goodwin, RWS  
(1845-1932)  
*Stonehenge*  
[cat.2]

Any collection of paintings worth its salt develops a personality of its own, and most especially a collection of Modern British art. In recent years Mod Brit has attracted increasing interest in the marketplace because of the strength and variety it can offer. Whether it be evocations of the green and pleasant lands of the United Kingdom, figure painting or vigorous abstraction, Mod Brit has consistently held surprises and satisfactions in store. Just so with the John Constable Collection. Constable initially bought Victorian drawings, most of which he sold as his tastes changed and developed, and he began to focus on Mod Brit. One or two artists above all others caught his attention and held it, particularly Keith Vaughan (he owned nearly 100 of his works) and Duncan Grant. But Constable was no monomaniac collector, and greatly relished a diversity of approach. As a consequence, we see here an example of collecting in breadth as well as depth.

One of the 19th/early 20th century artists who survived from the previous incarnation of Constable's collection is Albert Goodwin (1845-1932). There is something rather Mod Brit about Goodwin's passion for re-stating landscape as abstract design, never more blatantly beautiful, perhaps, than in his 1910 rendering of Venice [Fig.9]. His emotive use of colour is also here apparent, in a scarcely interrupted expanse of rich turquoise, gently fretted by the outlines of buildings (Santa Maria della Salute chief among

them); likewise it is eloquently present in Goodwin's 1906 painting of Stonehenge [Fig.10] in which the roiling dramatic sky is almost hedonistic in its elemental symbolism.

An artist who was frankly hedonistic in a more straightforward way was Duncan Grant (1885-1978), a painter of sharp contrasts and spontaneous arabesques with a pronounced feeling for decorative, rather than strictly naturalistic, colour. The writer and critic Raymond Mortimer called him 'a born decorator', and when Roger Fry set up the Omega Workshops in 1913 for the production and sale of hand-made Post-Impressionist applied art, Grant was the perfect candidate for employment. Hugely talented as a designer on a flat surface - whether as painter or applied artist - he happily designed painted screens and pottery, cubist textiles and the like.

Much inspired by classical mythology, Grant was deeply responsive to sensuousness, but also capable of exaggerating irregularities, and inserting proliferating criss-crosses and croquet hoops to animate a design. For an idea of his light-hearted approach to decorative schemes for domestic interiors, see *A Young Man and a Mermaid* [Fig.11] and *Atalanta's Race* [Fig.12] (1964). At the opposite extreme, the most radical painting is the earliest here, *Cyclamens* (1913), a wonderfully vibrant and rhythmic composition which betrays the influence of such European contemporaries as Matisse, Picasso and Modigliani, and would fit beautifully into an Omega interior.



By nature mercurial and humorous, Grant brought these characteristics to his painting and made intimate art to live with. Among the fine examples to be found in Constable's collection are the 1952 seated half-length portrait of the artist's great friend Paul Roche; *Summer Flowers in a Jug* [Fig.13] (1962), in which the luxuriant blossoms are piquantly subverted by a slice of Omega pattern edging into the right hand side of the painting; and the bright feathery treatment of *The Barn at Charleston* [Fig.14] (c1945), the Bloomsbury farmhouse in Sussex where Grant lived with Vanessa Bell. Bell's own painting, of the same barn in winter [Fig.15], is by comparison a masterpiece of restraint, her cogent description utterly evocative of a snowy afternoon in south-east England, the Downs in the background.



[Fig.11] top  
Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*A Young Man  
and a Mermaid*  
[cat.10]

[Fig.12] above  
Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*Atalanta's Race*, 1964  
[cat.11]

One of the most controversial figures in Mod Brit art is Jacob Epstein (1880-1959), the American-British painter and sculptor who became a British subject in 1911. Epstein's watercolour of Adam depicts our mythical forefather as a tall, slim figure, slightly androgynous, with well-defined breasts - or are they simply highly-developed pectoral muscles to go with his broad shoulders? Quite a contrast to the massively virile alabaster sculpture he made of Adam in 1938-9 which infamously became a fairground attraction, before being sold to the owners of a wax-work display at Blackpool. Eventually, *Adam* was rescued by Lord Harewood in 1961, and came to rest in Harewood House, near Leeds.

Although John Constable collected mostly paintings and drawings, he did own sculptures as well. The *Second Portrait of Sunita* [Fig.16] (1925) is classic Epstein, a bust of perhaps his best-known model, Sunita Peerboy, who, with her sister Anita, had come to England from



[Fig.13] top  
 Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*Summer Flowers in a Jug*,  
 1962  
 [cat.5]

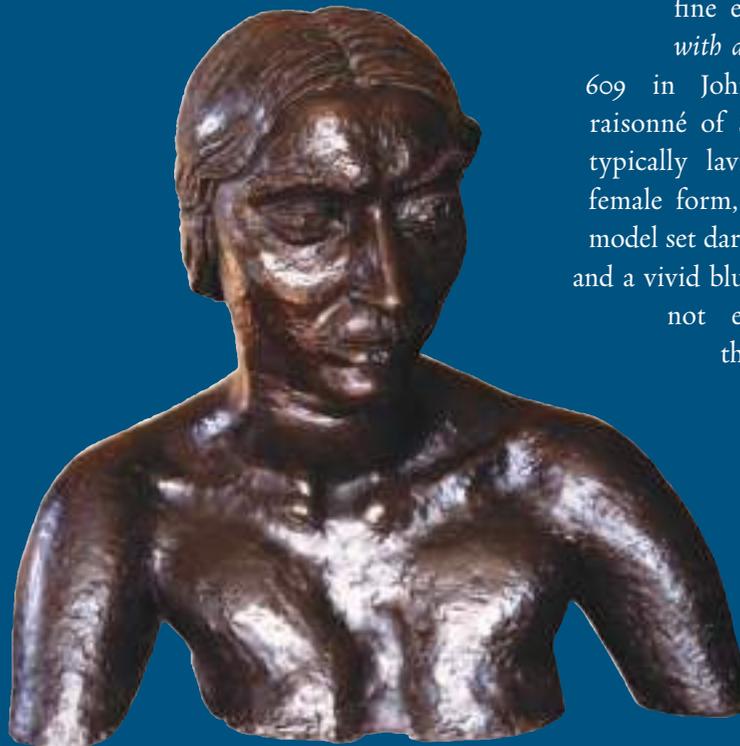


[Fig.14] above left  
 Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*The Barn at Charleston*,  
 c.1945  
 [cat.4]



[Fig.15] above right  
 Vanessa Bell (1879-1961)  
*The Barn, Charleston,  
 in Winter*  
 [cat.15]

[Fig.16] right  
 Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)  
*Second Portrait of Sunita  
 (Bust)*  
 [cat.34]



India for the Wembley International Exhibition, joining a troupe of magicians called the Masculine Brothers. The sisters moved in with the Epsteins so that the sculptor would have models always on hand. Sunita brought her son Enver with her, and between 1925 and 1933 Epstein modelled four portraits of this beautiful woman, one of Enver and one of Anita. Sunita, with the high cheekbones and melancholy, contemplative mien, was his favourite, and he drew her constantly, and she and Enver became the unlikely models for his 1926-7 *Madonna and Child*. Richard Buckle, in his 1963 monograph on Epstein, identifies the 'brooding, tragic nature of the sitter's beauty'. Buckle goes on to describe Sunita as a tall woman with a huge head, who, because she could find no food or drink strongly flavoured enough for her taste, used to put pepper in her whisky.

It's quite possible that Epstein met Sunita through his good friend Matthew Smith (1879-1959), who first drew her in 1924. Later Smith used Sunita as a model again, painting her nude or in colourful saris in the early 1930s. Soon after this she returned to India and disappeared. Smith continued to find striking models, and often painted them in conjunction with flowers. A fine example is *Sitting Nude with a Rose* [Fig.17] (1944), no 609 in John Gledhill's catalogue raisonné of Smith's oil paintings, a typically lavish exploration of the female form, featuring a red-headed model set daringly against red drapery and a vivid blue background. Although not exactly an unexplored theme for this artist (there are even variants of the precise pose), Richard Shone, writing in *Burlington Magazine* in 1979, recognised in it 'a new note of controlled severity'.

Certainly, it's a potent example of Smith's palpable delight in the female form, in colour, and in the varied textures offered by oil paint.

The work of Keith Vaughan (1912-77) shows emotional intelligence but more importantly a broad cultural sensibility which embraces both classical Mediterranean influences as well as the gothic north. One of Vaughan's greatest subjects was the orderly rhythmic group of individuals, an abstract entity which is nevertheless inescapably human. *Blue Assembly* [Fig.2] (1964) is a good example of this type of painting, and Vaughan wrote with characteristic clarity of the challenge it posed. 'The problem - my problem - is to find an image which renders the tactile physical presence of a human being without resorting to the classical techniques of anatomical paraphrase. To create a figure without any special identity (either of number or gender) which is unmistakably human: imaginative without being imaginary. Since it is impossible to conceive a human form apart from its environment, an image must be found which contains the simultaneous presence and interpenetration of each.' Vaughan's figures overlap and coalesce, making an image of contained and focused energy, which also has a beguiling fluidity of form present in many of his works in this collection.

Alan Bowness called Vaughan 'the true heir of Cézanne, at his most profound, most ambitious, most difficult', referring to Cézanne's marvellous late bather paintings. In the group of works under discussion here, we see the development of Vaughan's vision

from the very early *Five Negro Figures* [Fig.6] (1935), through the momentous army years (compare the intent solemnization of *Standing Nude* [Fig.18] with the more anecdotal *Soldiers in a Wood* [Fig.19], both of 1943), and on to the figure groups of the 1960s and 70s. The late paintings, such as *Maze of Figures* [Fig.4] (c1960), *Group of Camel Drivers* [Fig.20] (1965) and *The Onlooker* [Fig.3] (c1974) - and perhaps especially the richly inventive *Après le Déluge* [Fig.21], inspired by Rimbaud - bear witness to Vaughan's awareness of what the American Abstract Expressionists were up to, and in particular painters such as Philip Guston and Sam Francis. But Vaughan rarely abandoned the figurative impulse that dominated his life. As he wrote in his journal (7/4/64):



[Fig.17] above top  
Sir Matthew Smith (1879-1959)  
*Nude with a Rose*, 1944  
[cat.16]

[Fig.18] above left  
Keith Vaughan 1912-1977  
*Standing male nude*, 1943  
[cat.25]

[Fig.19] above right  
Keith Vaughan 1912-1977  
*Soldiers in a wood*, 1943  
[cat.24]



[Fig.20] above top left  
Keith Vaughan 1912-1977  
*Group of Camel Drivers,*  
1965  
[cat.29]

[Fig.21] above top right  
Keith Vaughan 1912-1977  
*Apres le Deluge*  
[cat.33]

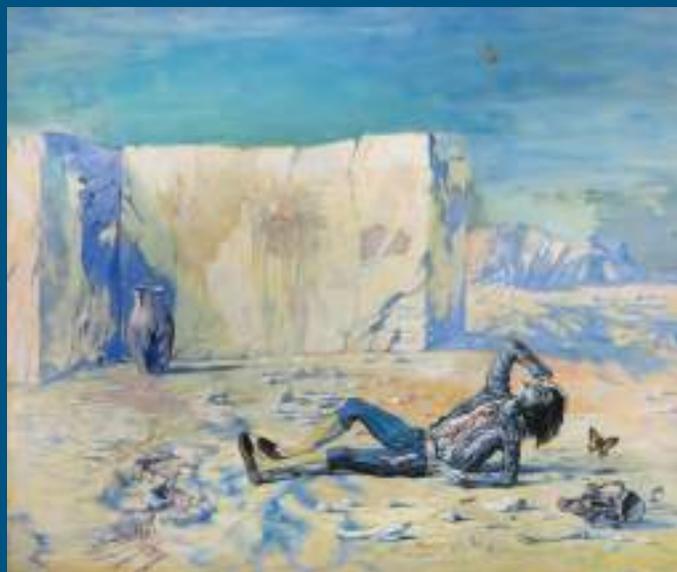
[Fig.22] above  
Keith Vaughan 1912-1977  
*Snow at Amana II*  
[cat.27]

*'Fortunately art is an end product and not a means to an end. It is not required to find the answers. It is enough if it examines the problems and states the conflicting nature of experience in positive forms.'*

Although Vaughan is most often celebrated as a figure painter, and particularly of the male nude, he also painted a considerable number of landscapes. In fact, of his mature oil paintings almost half are landscapes, a revealing percentage. *Snow at Amana II* [Fig.22] (1959) is an American landscape, painted during Vaughan's sojourn as a tutor at Iowa State University, where he responded with compelling directness to the new environment. Little of Vaughan's private misery (his sexual obsession, frustration and isolation) is communicated through the paintings. It does sometimes emerge in the drawings, although art for Vaughan was not an autobiographical statement, but a distancing and distilling of strong personal feelings. Thus *Two Men* [Fig.5] (1970), with its overt sexual content, is also about extraordinary shapes, and particularly the helmet-like head of the figure on the left. The drawing is as full of power as an electric shock.

John Minton (1917-57) and Keith Vaughan enjoyed a curious sort of love-hate relationship, sharing a house in Hamilton Terrace, north London, from 1946 until 1952, but it's clear that

Vaughan was envious of his friend's outgoing nature and zest for life. Their temperaments and personalities couldn't have been more different, although their work has features in common: a reliance on drawing and a brilliance of ink line; figures in settings; a neo-romantic passion for landscape; a gift for illustration. Minton was more involved with illustration and stage design, Vaughan with the male nude. Two of the subjects here attest to Minton's interest in spectacle and theatre: *The Desolate Stage* [Fig.23] (1939) and *The Bullfighter* [Fig.24] (1941), the latter so wonderfully thespian as to be almost a knowing or ironic caricature. This painting shows the influence of the French neo-romantic designers, such as Christian Bérard, Eugène Berman and Pavel Tchelitchev, and links too with the work of Michael Ayrton, with whom Minton collaborated in 1941 on designs for a production of *Macbeth* directed by John Gielgud. The exquisite clarity of his pen and blue ink portrait of a young man is balanced by the picaresque narrative of his later *Jamaican Scene*, one of a series much praised by John Berger.



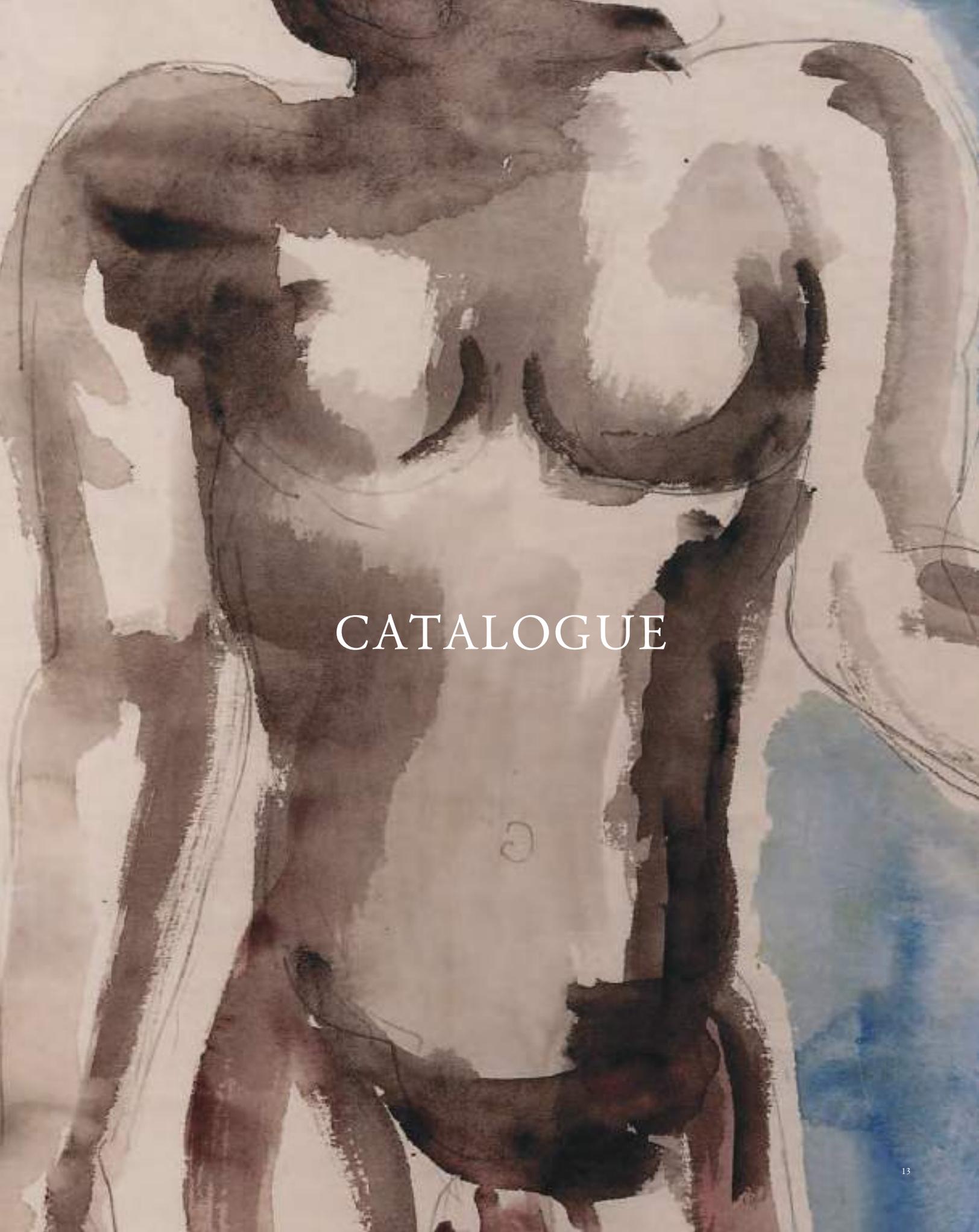
Another artist often categorized (to his fury) as a neo-romantic is John Craxton (1922-2009). Here we have two excellent examples of his work: the dynamic and vital 1950 chalk drawing of a goatherd leading one of his goats [Fig.7], the animal being a Craxton leitmotif, and a remarkable pencil portrait of Lucian Freud [Fig.8] from the same year. As young men, Craxton and Freud were close friends, but unhappily they later fell out, and Freud was keen to write Craxton out of his life story - perhaps because Craxton had taught him much, a fact he didn't wish to acknowledge. Certainly, Freud wrote me a card of complaint in the days when I was art critic of *The Spectator* because I had mentioned that he and Craxton shared a studio in the early 1940s. This was vehemently denied, and Craxton accused of various nefarious acts. But that was more than 50 years later, and much had changed. The portrait of Freud remains a tribute to a crucial early friendship, and as such is an important historical document, as well as being a typically virtuoso exercise in Craxton linearity. John Craxton, like the other artists in this remarkable collection, is a master of the particular. It is that quality, often combined with lyricism and conveyed through the choice and arrangement of paint or the exactitude of line, that distinguishes the best of the work here.

ANDREW LAMBIRTH

[Fig.23] above top  
John Minton (1917-1957)  
*The Desolate Stage*, 1939  
[cat.17]

[Fig.24] above  
John Minton (1917-1957)  
*The Bullfighter*  
[cat.18]

Opposite, detail from:  
Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)  
*Adam*  
[cat.35]



# CATALOGUE

# Albert Goodwin RWS (1845-1932)



[cat.1]

*Santa Maria Della Salute, Venice, "The Fiesta"*

Signed and dated l.r.: *Albert Goodwin/1910* and inscribed with title (*l.l.*)

Oil on board, 36.5 by 49 cm

*Provenance:* The Mathaf Gallery, Motcomb Street from where acquired by John Constable

# Albert Goodwin RWS (1845-1932)



[cat.2]

## *Stonehenge*

Signed and dated: *Albert Goodwin/1906* and inscribed with title  
Oil on board, 31 by 47 cm

# The Bloomsbury Group

## John Constable and the Bloomsbury Group



Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*Washerwoman II*, 1974  
(John Constable Collection)

At the time that John Constable bought his first Bloomsbury picture he and his business partner Nigel Collins were firmly established as dealers in Victorian Art as proprietors of the Southgate Gallery first in Wolverhampton (1969-1977) and later in nearby Shifnal (1979-1985). That picture, *Atalanta's Race* [Fig.12] was acquired in 1975 from the Kendal antique dealer Charles Aindow, three years before Duncan Grant's death in 1978. It remained in John's collection until his death and is offered in this catalogue [cat.8].

Although John never lost his interest in serious Victorian art, works by Holman Hunt and Arthur Hughes remaining in his collection until the end of his life, to some extent his interest in Bloomsbury (and perhaps Duncan Grant in particular) heralded a serious and rigorous obsession with Modern British art that occupied much of his interest in the remaining four or so decades of his life. By the time the Southgate Gallery moved to Moreton-in-Marsh in 1986, John bought with him not only his expertise in Victorian art but an important collection of Bloomsbury pictures including some forty works by Duncan Grant.

Bringing to Bloomsbury the same rigour he had employed in collecting nineteenth century art, John scored some notable coups. Amongst them was the acquisition of the major early Duncan Grant still life *Cyclamens* [cat.3.] which he bought on its second offering in a sale at Christie's in the early 1980s with few other collectors noticing its considerable significance as a painting.

One collection that seems to have particularly captured John's imagination was that of one of Duncan Grant's favourite and best-known models and muses, Paul Roche [Fig.25]. A quantity of works from Roche's collection were sold at Bonhams in 1983 and several paintings in this catalogue were acquired either directly or indirectly (through other dealers) from this source. John had first written to Roche in the late 1970s but following these sales he began a more regular correspondence which provides a fascinating insight into a number of the works John had acquired (several of which depicted Roche himself). Sadly, neither men ever met, although in an attempt to visit Roche in the 1980s, who was by then living in Soller in Majorca, John arrived at his house on a rare day he was away.



[Fig.25]  
Duncan Grant (1885-1978)  
*Male Nude Study: Paul Roche*  
[cat.6]

In 1976, a year after he had acquired Grant's *Atalanta's Race*, John bought the Keith Vaughan painting *Blue Assembly* [Fig.2], [cat.28]. Whereas John's interest in Vaughan endured until his death, he had acquired most of his Bloomsbury paintings by the

later 1980s. Despite this, the Bloomsbury paintings in this catalogue are a fine and model representative cross section of the artists in question: paintings by Duncan Grant from his early to final years highlighting his versatile ability

as a figure, landscape and interior painter, a sublimely serene Vanessa Bell snow scene from the 1940s and a Roger Fry southern French harbour scene rich in the warm colours of the Mediterranean.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.3]

## *Cyclamens*, 1913

Oil on board, 75 by 61.5 cm

*Provenance:* Margaret Fry in 1914 by descent to Marjorie Rackstraw until 1982;

Christie's, May 1983, where acquired by John Constable

*Exhibited:* Second Grafton Group Exhibition, Alpine Gallery, January 1914, no.4 (purchased by Margaret Fry for £18); London Artist's Association (unknown date)

*Literature:* Letters of Roger Fry, edited by Denys Sutton, vol II, p.378-79;

Frances Spalding, *Duncan Grant - A Biography*, Chatto & Windus, 1997, chs.8, 9 & 10

During the lead up to an exhibition at the Galeries Barbazanges in Paris in 1912, Roger Fry singled out Duncan Grant in a letter to the dealer and poet Charles Vildrac: 'Duncan Grant will exhibit and certainly he has genius... the others like myself have but a little talent and at least goodwill.' Grant's work at this date made a considerable impact on Fry and other admirers of international modern art of the period and his inclusion in Fry's Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery held between October and December later that year was a given. That exhibition would be the first to showcase work by British *avant-garde* artists (including work by Grant, Eric Gill, Wyndham Lewis and Fry himself) alongside great established and emerging names of European art amongst them Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso and Braque. As well as submitting work for the show, Grant also designed its poster – an image incorporating the kind of geometric pattern and simplification of form seen in his work for the Omega Workshops (which Fry would go on to found in 1913). Also from this show, and consistent with the style he would develop at Omega, Grant

would take some influence from Picasso's "primitive" pre-cubist work (although it is notable that Grant had first encountered Picasso as a student in Paris back in 1907). This is evident in works like *The Tub* from c.1913 (now in the Tate) which employs a form of vigorous, crude, cross hatching that is also seen in Picasso's work in this style. *Cyclamens* displays much of the same distinctive characteristics and was probably executed in the same year. Frances Spalding (*op. cit.*, ch.10) writes of a work with the same title '...*Cyclamens* had been rendered entirely in terms of hatching, under the influence of Picasso's *Nude with Drapery* (1907), which Duncan had seen in Gertrude Stein's collection'. Richard Shone (letter to John Constable, 26th July 1983) has confirmed that the present work was exhibited at the Second Grafton Group exhibition early in 1914 where it was acquired by Roger Fry's sister Margaret. It was also considered to be of sufficient importance to be included at a later date in a retrospective exhibition (currently untraced) at the London Artists' Association (where Grant was a member between 1929 and 1931). In

the same letter Shone also acknowledges the existence of a second version of *Cyclamens* painted in the same year. That work was with Anthony d'Offay in 1983. Grant's contribution to the Second Grafton Group exhibition divided opinion and like much work in the show (including by other artists) prompted a mixed critical response. *Cyclamens* itself was singled out by Sir Claude Phillips in The Daily Telegraph: 'What shall we say of Mr Duncan Grant who is seen here wasting a fine talent...What of *Cyclamens*, and what of *Slops*. They do not even merit mirth'. Like much critical opinion directed at art in this seminal period before the outbreak of the First World War, we today see this comment as strangely misguided. In the eyes of most modern collectors of Bloomsbury painting, *Cyclamens*' quality is self-evident and characteristic of Grant's work at its most modern, dynamic and inventive and executed by the hand of an artist at the height of his powers and at the forefront of the *avant-garde* in British art of the first decade and a half of the twentieth century.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.4]

*The Barn at Charleston, c.1945*

Signed l.r.: D. Grant

Oil on board, 54 by 71 cm

Provenance: the artist to Paul Roche;  
Sotheby's, London, May 23, 1983,  
where acquired by John Constable

The present work closely relates to a slightly larger view by Grant of the barn at Charleston formerly in the Reader's Digest Collection (sold Christie's, London, 19 November 2004, lot 21). That work was dated in that sale catalogue c.1944 and is nearly identical in every detail except for the inclusion of two figures and a dog that appear on the path beneath the barn in this painting and which are a notable omission in the Reader's Digest Collection picture.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.5]

## *Summer Flowers in a Jug, 1962*

Signed and dated l.r.: D. Grant/62

Oil on board, 63.5 by 54 cm

Provenance: Lady Isabel Throckmorton, a gift from the artist in 1963; Christie's, London, March 12 1981; with John Constable from 1983

The original frame on this picture was inscribed 'Given to me by Duncan Grant January 1963, Isabel Throckmorton'.

Simon Watney has confirmed that the jug was still at Charleston at the time of Grant's death. The red and white check cloth was used as a chair-back on an armchair in Grant's bedroom at Charleston. It stood to the left of the fireplace. A photograph taken by Simon Watney and in his possession shows it in that position.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.6]

*Male Nude Study: Paul Roche*

Signed and dated l.l.: *D. Grant/47*

Oil on board, 31 by 23 cm

Provenance: Paul Roche

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.7]

## *Portrait of Paul Roche, 1952*

Signed and dated c.l.: D. Grant/52 and inscribed on the reverse: *Don - done in electric light, Taviton Street*

Oil on board, 45 by 34.5 cm

Provenance: Paul Roche (a gift from the artist); Bonhams, London, 1983, as part of the collection of Paul Roche, lot 83, where acquired by John Constable

*Literature: The Charleston Magazine, Issue 8, Winter/Spring 1993-94,*

*With Paul Roche in Tangier, 1975,* reproduced in colour, p.16

Paul Roche wrote to John Constable in February 1985 following the latter's purchase of this painting from Roche's sale at Bonhams:

*'That portrait of me by electric light was painted at No.1 Taviton Street in Bloomsbury where I shared a flat with Marjorie Strachey (for eight years). Duncan used to come up from Charleston every week and I would model for him from morning until after midnight... the light was bad for painting, although he accomplished a great many. We experimented with a large blue light bulb. Occasionally Edward Le Bas would join in, and once or twice Vanessa Bell.'*

In a later postcard to John Constable from Paul Roche in February 1988, he recalled of the portrait: *'I gave Duncan a hard time, complaining that electric light didn't flatter me and couldn't be do better!'*

The name "Don" that appears in Grant's inscription on the reverse of this painting was the artist's pet name for Paul Roche.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.8]

## *Rehearsals for a Satyr Play*

Oil on canvas, 60 by 82 cm

*Provenance:* Paul Roche; Bonhams, November 10, 1983, The Property of Paul Roche, lot 79; Belgrave Gallery, June 1985 where acquired by John Constable

The rehearsal for a Greek Satyr play is the characteristic postlude for a Greek dramatic trilogy. This painting is a copy by Grant of a mosaic from Pompeii which is now in the Naples Museum. The action takes place in front of an Ionic portico hung with oscillum (an ornament freely suspended by a chain from an architrave between the columns of a peristyle). The ornament is seen in Grant's painting but has not been copied. The bald and bearded figure wearing a Greek mantle (himation) and sandals is the chorus master, possibly the dramatist himself. He watches two actors wearing goatskin loincloths, who appear to be rehearsing dance steps to the notes of the double pipes played by a richly robed and garlanded musician (who would himself have appeared on the stage). On the right an attendant is helping another actor into a shaggy Silenus costume. Behind the seated figure, on a pedestal, is a male tragic mask and at his feet a female tragic mask and a Silenus mask. The mosaic which was the centrepiece of a black and white mosaic pavement decorated with a meander pattern, is a studio price (emblema) derived from a Hellenistic panel painting, perhaps one painted to commemorate a victory in a theatrical contest. It dates from the years between AD62 and AD79. Many of the colours in Grant's painting differ and are brighter than the original. The red and yellow sash for instance, on the figure with the two pipes, is black and gold on the mosaic.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.9]

*The Jemaa el-Fnaa,  
Marrakech, 1965*

Signed and dated l.r.: D. Grant/65  
Oil on board, 40 by 53 cm

*Literature:* The Charleston Magazine,  
Issue 8 – Winter/Spring 1993-94,  
“With Duncan Grant in Tangier” by  
Paul Roche, reproduced in colour,  
page 13

Grant visited Morocco a number of times. He was there in May and June 1965 and in 1968 took a studio in Fez for two months. In 1975 he was there with Paul Roche in the house of Rex Nan Kivell, “El-Farah” in Tangier, where he was nursed by Roche through nearly terminal pneumonia. The Jemaa el-Fnaa, the famous, bustling marketplace at the heart of Marrakech was captured in paint by several artist visitors to the city, amongst them the British impressionist painter Edward Seago (see Christie’s, 17 June 2014, lot 135).

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.10]

## *A Young Man and a Mermaid*

Oil on board, 78 by 90 cm

Provenance: Paul Roche; Bonhams, London, 1983, as part of the sale of the Paul Roche Collection; Fosse Gallery, Stow-on-the-Wold; John Constable from c.1984

The Model for the young man in the present work was Paul Roche.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.11]

## *Atalanta's Race*, 1964

Signed with initials and dated l.l.:

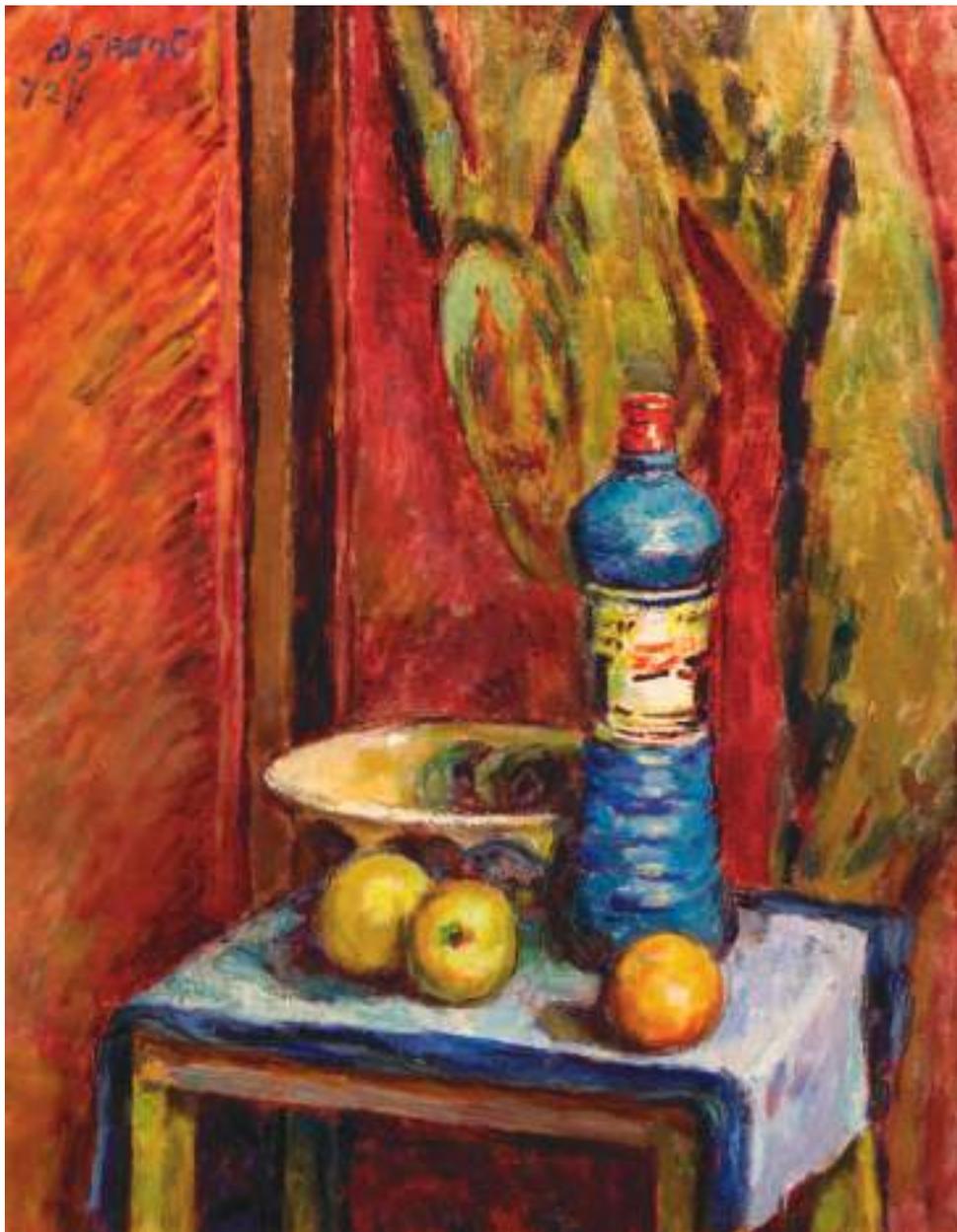
DG/64

Watercolour on paper, 27 by 42 cm

Provenance: Charles Aindow, Kendal  
from whom acquired by John Constable  
in 1975

According to Paul Roche in a letter to John Constable on 1 April 1977, a year before Grant's death, *Atalanta's Race* was intended to be part of a series of mythological watercolours that appear not to have been completed. Mythological subjects and paintings relating to Greek legend appear in Grant's work throughout his career.

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.12]

## *Still life with Domestos bleach bottle and Apples*

Signed u.l.: D. Grant/72

Oil on canvas, 48.5 by 39 cm

Provenance: Paul Roche;

Anthony d'Offay, London; Sotheby's,  
London, January 18, 1984, where acquired  
by John Constable

In a letter to John Constable on 18th February 1984, Paul Roche wrote of the present work:

*'I was very fond of the 1972 still life of some apples and a detergent bottle, (Domestos?) against an Omega screen. I may buy it back from you one day. It was one of the last successful still lifes he did - in his 88th year!'*

# Duncan Grant (1885-1978)



[cat.13]

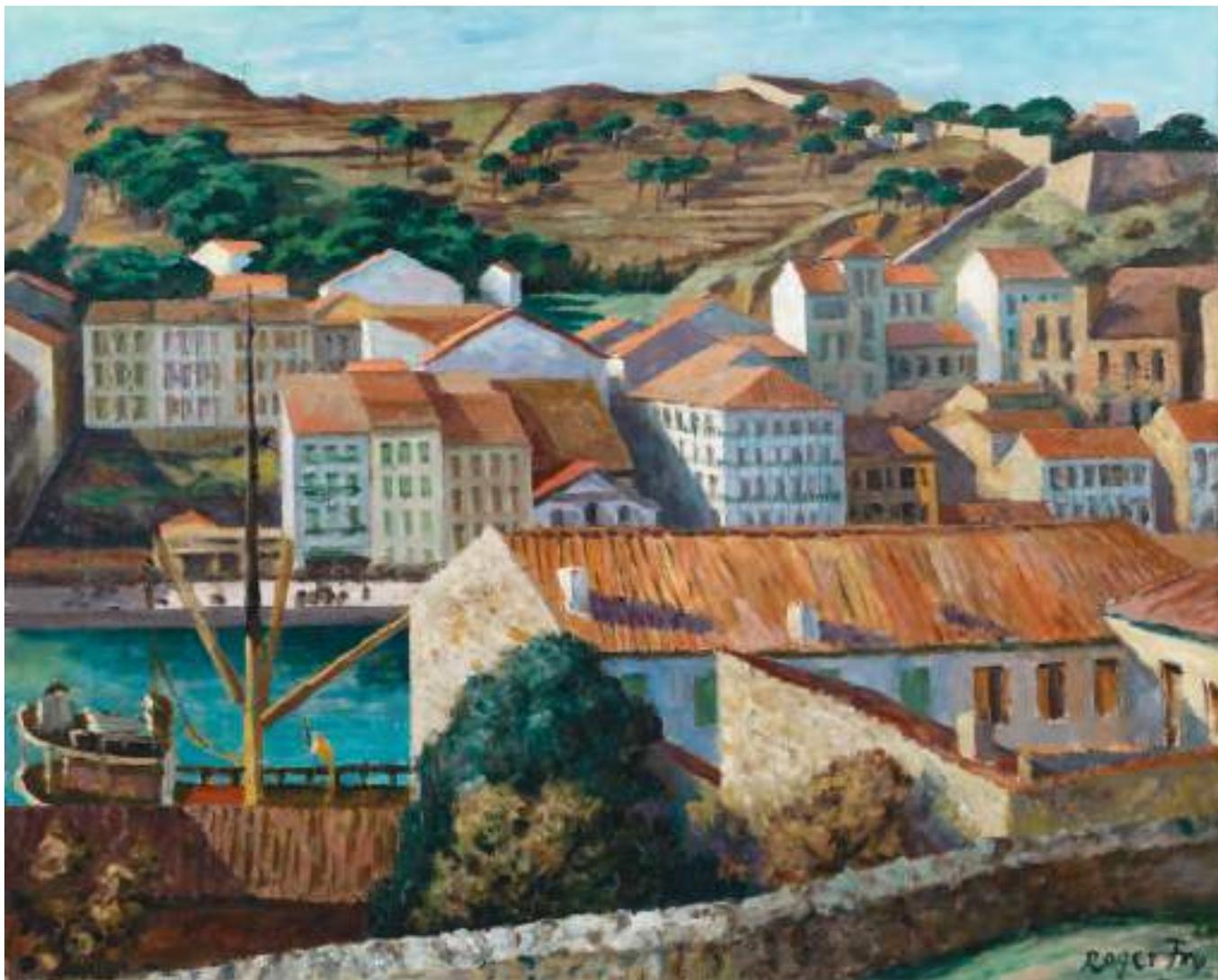
*Wrestlers*

Signed with initials l.r.: DG

Watercolour, 19 by 27.5 cm

Provenance: Paul Roche

# Roger Fry (1866-1934)



[cat.14]

## *Port Vendres*

Signed l.r.: Roger Fry  
Oil on canvas, 53 by 65 cm  
Exhibited: Roger Fry Memorial  
Exhibition, Bristol Art Gallery, 1935

The Mediterranean fishing port of Port Vendres with its rocky hillsides that rise steeply from the seafront was a magnet for several European artists in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most famous of these was the Scottish architect and painter Charles Rennie Mackintosh who first arrived in the port in 1923 and lived there until ill-health forced him to return to London in 1927 (where he died in the following year).

Other British artists in his circle there included the painters Rudolph Ihlee and Edgar Hereford whose strong graphic landscapes of the region are rich in Mediterranean colour and tone. Fry made a number of trips to France, including to Cassis further round the coast. He is known to have travelled to Port Vendres as part of an extensive trip to Europe in 1928 and it can be assumed that this painting of the harbour dates from that trip.

# Vanessa Bell (1879-1961)



[cat.15]

## *The Barn, Charleston, in Winter*

Signed l.l.: V. Bell

Oil on canvas, 60.7 by 50.8 cm

*Literature:* The Charleston Newsletter,  
no.23, June 1989, reproduced in colour,  
Annex 2, page 58

Vanessa Bell withdrew to Charleston for the majority of the Second World War, a tendency towards isolation perhaps fuelled by the death of her son Julian in 1937 and further exacerbated by the suicide of her sister Virginia Woolf in 1941. Consequently, many of her views of Charleston and the surrounding

countryside date from this time. This snow scene bears some comparison to her landscape *Snow at Tilton* from 1941 which is now in the Arts Council Collection. The winter of 1940 to 1941 was notable for its heavy snowfall and it seems likely that this view of Charleston's famous barn was painted at the same date.

# Sir Matthew Smith (1879-1959)



[cat.16]

## *Nude with a Rose*, 1944

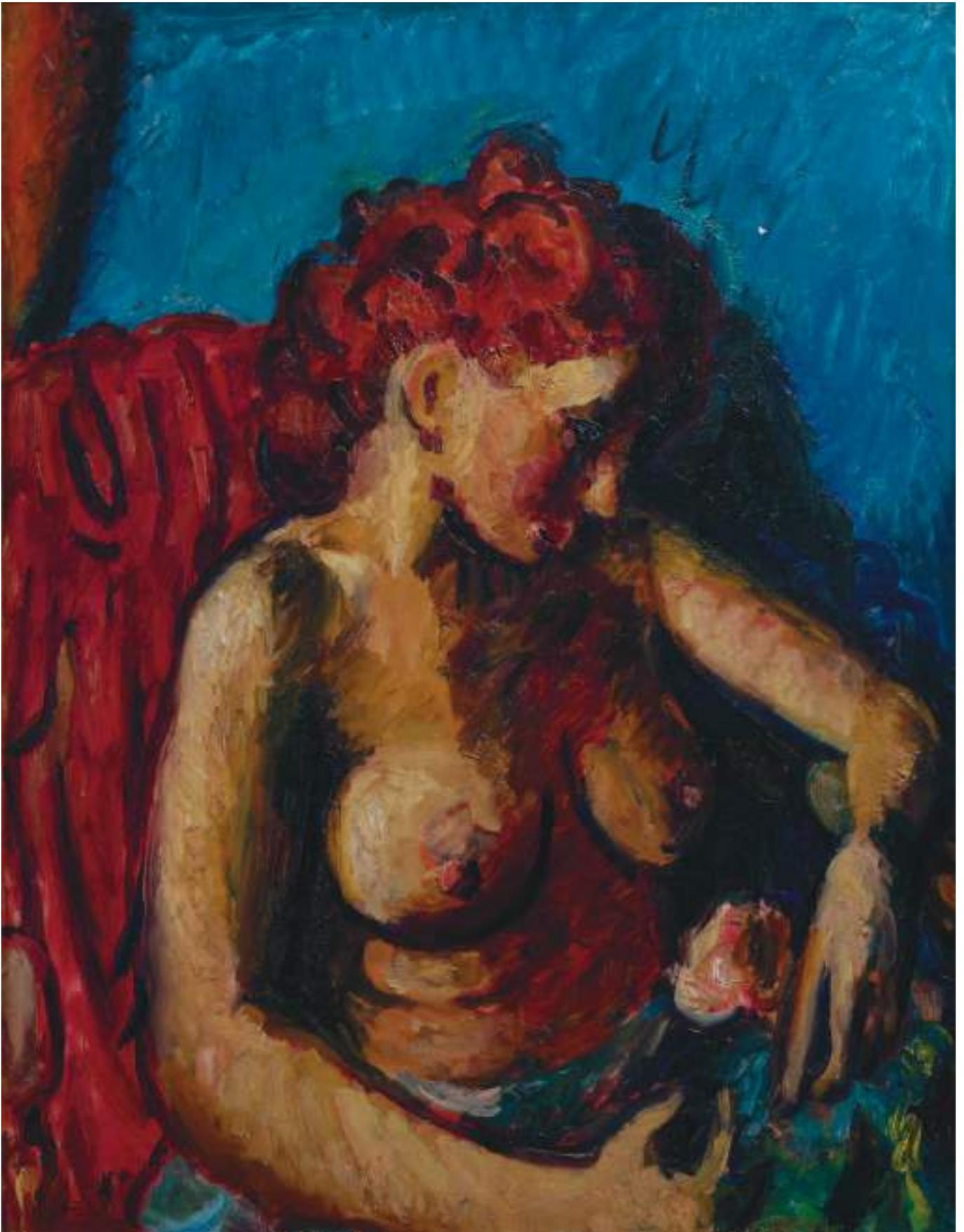
Oil on canvas, 101.6 by 76.2 cm

*Provenance:* Mrs Edward Hulston; J. Hertage-Peters; R. A. Bevan; Robert Haines; with Agnews in 1984 where acquired by John Constable  
*Exhibited:* The Arts Council, 1953 (no.44); Royal Academy, London, *Matthew Smith Retrospective*, 1960, no.237; David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney, Fine and Decorative Art, June 1976, no.16; Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd, *The Realist Tradition*, London, May-July 1983, no.2 (illustrated on p.4 of the catalogue)

*Literature:* Francis Halliday and John Russell, *Matthew Smith*, London, 1962, reproduced full page in colour, plate 37

The present painting was described as follows in the Agnews catalogue *The Realist Tradition* (see literature above): ‘In 1910 in Paris, he met Matisse, but it was not until 1916 and seemingly in independent fashion that Smith’s distinctive style and marvelous use of colour emerged out of Fauvism.’

In the 1920s his concentration on the nudes and still lifes hardened into a flamboyant and unusual way with paint, and there is, residually, a French flavour to his best work. Our picture was painted in 1944 while Smith was unwillingly in refuge in London, but once, usually later in life, he had arrived at this union of imagination and technique, there is little change in these voluptuous nudes, this Roger Fry’s comment of 1926, “*The modelling of the figure is developed to the utmost limit of amplitude and the sequences of relief are rhythmically effective*” is as true of our picture, which dates from eighteen years later.’



# John Minton (1917-1957)



[cat.17]

## *The Desolate Stage, 1939*

Signed and dated l.r.: *Minton 1939*

Pen, ink and wash, 30 by 47 cm

Provenance: with Abbott & Holder Ltd

Exhibited: John Minton - A Centenary, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester,  
July 1 - October 1 2017, cat., Fig. 7 page 15, illustrated in colour

As art students John Minton, Michael Ayrton and Michael Middleton formed an alliance, going regularly to the ballet together. All three read James Thrall Soby's *After Picasso* which had been published in America in 1935. In the book Soby promoted two contemporary movements, Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism.

The Neo-Romantics who interested Minton, Ayrton and Middleton were the Paris-based Russians, Eugene Berman and Pavel Tchelitchev, and the Frenchman, Christian Berard who was more famous as a stage designer than as a painter. Berman was the one who influenced Minton most, had made frequent visits to Italy, especially to Venice, where he found architectural settings which he incorporated into imaginative and nostalgic images, made additionally moody by the dominant use of blue. Soby's book made urgent Minton's departure for Paris where he was to have first-hand experience of the artists he here read about. He left England at the very end of December 1938, having come of age on Christmas Day, and after a winter sports holiday at Villars, in Switzerland, he was Paris-based on the Left bank from February 1939. (Michael Ayrton arrived in April). In his letters home

he often concluded with a drawing in which he sometimes used the striking perspectives and stagy vistas employed by both the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists. The figures he now drew had begun to take on a poignancy similar to that found in Picasso's Blue Period.

Aware that Eugene Berman had painted at Les Baux, the ancient ruined town perched on a rocky outcrop in Provence, Minton and Ayrton determined to visit it. His experience of Les Baux allowed a number of influences in Minton's art to coalesce. Here he found a terrain in which he could explore the ominous silence that the Italian surrealist George de Chirico had created. Likewise, Minton makes his vistas tense by strewing the foreground with shards of rock and sharply etched shadows. The unending space is often offset by a foreground figure in tattered clothes, either standing or asleep, whose wistful beauty is reminiscent of Berard's paintings of back-street waifs. There is also something of Tchelitchev in the mood of otherworldliness, whilst Berman's example may have inspired Minton's choice, in his paintings, of tenebrous colouring.

In 1958, following Minton's death in the previous year, Michael Middleton - who eventually became an art critic - remembered working alongside him in Paris: '*All through the last, long pre-war summer in France, he played with their (the Parisian neo-romantics') emotive devices - the crepuscular tonalities, the deep perspectives and long shadows, the preoccupation with sleep and shrouded figures, the torn flags and cracked walls and ruined vistas that were so soon to look prophetic.*'

The present work is a fine example of Minton's work from the period and was probably executed between February and August 1939. It has been known under a variety of titles including simply *Design for a Stage Set* (Sotheby's sale, 3rd March 1999), acquiring the present title (by which it was described in the major Minton retrospective at Pallant House, Chichester in 2017) following its sale at Abbott & Holder in 1999.

The present text is closely based on material from Frances Spalding's biography of John Minton, *Dance till the Stars Come Down*, published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1991.

# John Minton (1917-1957)



[cat.18]

## *The Bullfighter*

Signed and dated on the corner of the wall: *Minton/April 1941*

Pen, ink, watercolour and gouache,

48 by 61 cm

*Provenance:* Redfern Gallery, London, March 1945 where acquired by Sigmund Politzer Esq

*Exhibited:* *John Minton - A Centenary*, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, July-October 2017, cat.fig 9, illustrated in colour, p.17

Although dated 1941, the painting is a throwback to interests that John Minton had developed in the late 1930s, first at St John's Wood School of Art and then in Paris. It draws on his interest in ballet, in the French Neo-Romantics and on his fascination with the ruined town of Les Baux, in Provence. While at art school Minton had met Michael Ayrton and also Ayrton's friend Michael Middleton. All three friends read James Thrall Soby's *After Picasso* (1935) which, according to Minton 'became our Bible'. Its importance lay in the fact that it had identified a reaction against cubist inspired abstraction and, in its place, a desire to replace emotional restraint with poetic intensity. Soby directed Minton's intention to the Surrealists and the French Neo-Romantics, in particular the Paris based Russians, Eugene Berman and Pavel Tcheltichew, and the Frenchman Christian Berard, who looked to Picasso's Blue and Rose period for inspiration.

'The Neo-Romantic painters', Soby pronounced, 'are filling their canvases with unashamed poignancy'. Soby's book sent Minton in December 1938 to Paris, where Ayrton joined him in the spring of 1939.

It was in Paris that Minton first began to experiment with the striking perspectives and stagey vistas employed by both the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists. Likewise, the Neo-Romantics' heavy use of blue encouraged his leaning at this time towards monochromatic effects. He and Ayrton, conscious that they were following in the footsteps of Berard, went to Provence and twice visited Les Baux.

'Les Baux is an extraordinary place,' Minton wrote to his friend Edie Lamont, 'once the capital of Provence, there are now forty-eight inhabitants, and the rest is fantastic ruins with enormous rocks strewn about in curious positions. The whole atmosphere is charged with romantic desolation. I did a lot of paintings and crowds of little drawings.'

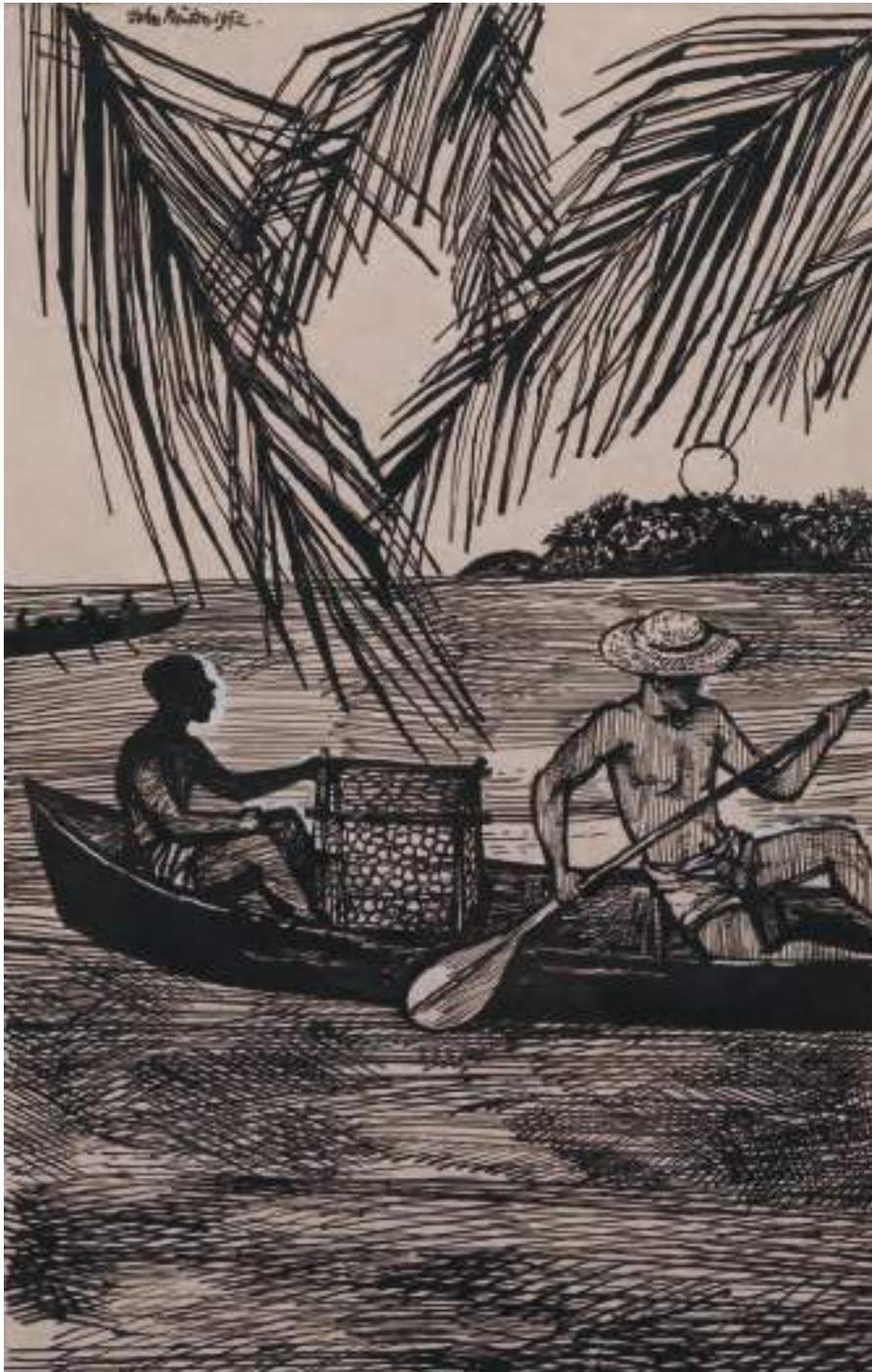
*The Bullfighter* is one of several images from the period that draw on Minton's memory of Les Baux and which made use of the shards of rock and sharply etched shadows. He frequently introduced into these works solitary figures, in a wistful manner reminiscent of Berard's waifs and strays. But *The Bullfighter* may contain a more specific literary or balletic source for the details of the

broken pot, the dead figure, the butterfly and the suggestion, on the rocky wall behind, of a recent shooting, create a melancholy and fateful mood. By August 1939, when he began a self-portrait with the Seine in the background, he was beginning to be critical of his youthful enthusiasms and described the painting as 'all very blue, with lots of bogus Berman quality'.

Minton did not exhibit *The Bullfighter* until March 1945 when it was hung at The Redfern. He had regularly shown work in group exhibitions at this gallery since 1943. It had, and still has, a lower ground floor. Minton's friends Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, teasingly referred to it as 'Min's bargain basement', perhaps because they were a little envious of his sales.

The present text is closely based on material from Frances Spalding's biography of John Minton, *Dance till the Stars Come Down*, published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1991.

# John Minton (1917-1957)



[cat.19]

## *Jamaican Scene*

Signed and dated u.l.: *John Minton/1952*

Pen and ink, 26 by 16 cm

*Exhibited: John Minton - A Centenary,*  
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester,

July 1 - October 1 2017, *The Catalogue,*  
fig 69., illustrated page 65.

Minton left for Jamaica on the SS Bayano of the Fyffes Line on September 9 1950 with Ricky Stride. It was a fortnight on the boat directly to Kingston and there were seventy other passengers. Not one to opt out, Minton starred at the boat's fancy-dress ball when he appeared as the Mysterious Guest in female dress. He and Ricky made friends with Captain Peter Blagrove and his wife Alice, wealthy, white Jamaican landowners, who invited them to stay at their home. The invitation was accepted, though on docking at Kingston, the two friends spent their first month at Dudley Lodge, Half Way Tree, just outside Kingston.

*'Well it's all here' Minton wrote to Bobby Hunt, 'all they said and more, the coral sands, the swaying palms, moonlight and glamour and all that stuff. Luxury hotels at £10.0.0 a day and VD any minute. Some of it is wonderful, a lot of it is awful. Poverty, the colour-bar, the English (Oh God, the English), the rich, and a whole lot of Coloured Bores as well ... Everyone sits on verandahs endlessly and drinks.'*

He wrote, sitting beside a swimming-pool, with a rum and ginger to hand, while Ricky lay in bed with a hangover.

From Kingston they crossed the island to stay with the Blagroves whose mainly spice plantations Minton drew whilst Ricky exercised polo ponies. The Captain and his wife proved so hospitable that Ricky stayed on for a few days after Minton left to stay with Paul ('Odo') Cross and Angus Wilson at their home Rio Chico at Ocho Rios. When he and Ricky returned in December, Minton had a considerable mass of drawings and watercolours. During the next few months he worked on this material in preparation for a show at the Lefevre Gallery in September 1951 and for other exhibitions. Jamaican material also fed the large and complex decoration which, with the help from others he painted for the Festival of Britain's Dome of Discovery in 1951. He had been given the topic 'Exploration' and Keith Vaughan the theme of 'Discovery'.

# John Minton (1917-1957)

Although described in the Christie's catalogue for the Brian Sewell Collection as being a portrait of Norman Barker it seems likely that the sitter in the present drawing is in fact the actor Norman Bowler. Bowler was a regular sitter for Minton in the early 1950s.

[cat.20]

*Portrait of Norman Bowler*

Pen and blue ink, 38 by 28 cm

*Provenance:* Brian Sewell; Christie's, London, *The Brian Sewell Sale*, 27 September 2016, part of lot 184



# John Craxton RA (1922-2009)

The present work is a study for Craxton's painting *Four Figures in a Mountain Landscape* of 1950-51, now in the Bristol Art Gallery. The picture is now considered to be a seminal painting in Craxton's oeuvre marking a turning point in his career and evidence of the radical effect Greece had had on his style following his move there. In an *Apollo Magazine* review of the Craxton show at Salisbury Museum in 2016, Maggie Gray notes of the work:

*'The large painting is an unashamedly Arcadian depiction of Aegean life, woven with colour, which encapsulates much of what changed in Craxton's art after he went away.'*

It is thought that the initial studies for this work were made on a visit to the mountains of Crete in the summer of 1950. By the time of this study in December of that year, Craxton had found some resolution in the work and the study of the goatherd is remarkably similar to its eventual depiction on the left hand side of the final painting. A letter dated 18 February 1976 from Jeffrey Daniels, curator of the Geffrye Museum also confirms its Jack Wood Palmer provenance:

*'Having at last managed to make contact with John Craxton, who has been working in Edinburgh, I am now in a position to throw very little light on the inscription on your drawing. Apparently Jack Wood Palmer was curator of the Minorities Gallery, Colchester during the 1960s and then went to Penzance where he died about four years ago.'*

[cat.21]

## *The Goatherd, 1950*

Dated u.r.: December 1950 and dedicated for Jack Palmer with respects and a good wishes, May '52/John Craxton  
Black and white chalk on buff paper,  
61 by 48 cm  
Provenance: Jack Wood Palmer



# John Craxton RA (1922-2009)

Craxton met Lucian Freud in the early 1940s and for a time the two painters were almost inseparable. They shared lodgings in St John's Wood in 1942 and in 1946 travelled to the Greek island of Poros. Freud stayed on in Greece for six months filling sketchbooks and executing exquisite jewel-like still lifes and portrait panel paintings. For Craxton this would mark the beginning of a love affair with Greece that would result him staying there for most of the next six decades.

In Poros Craxton drew a remarkable portrait of Freud which was later acquired by Brian Sewell (see Iain Collins, John Craxton, Lund Humphries, 2011, p.79, plate 90). This later portrait from 1950 is an important addition to the corpus of Freud/Craxton work. Larger than the 1946 drawing and full length, this fine portrait drawing shows Freud in a pose of remarkable informality executed with the adept sense of line we would expect from this fine draughtsman. Already by 1950 Freud's relationship with Craxton was beginning to wane, culminating in their total estrangement following Craxton's criticism of Freud's painting *Large Interior: Paddington* in the late 1960s.

[cat.22]

## *Portrait of Lucian Freud, 1950*

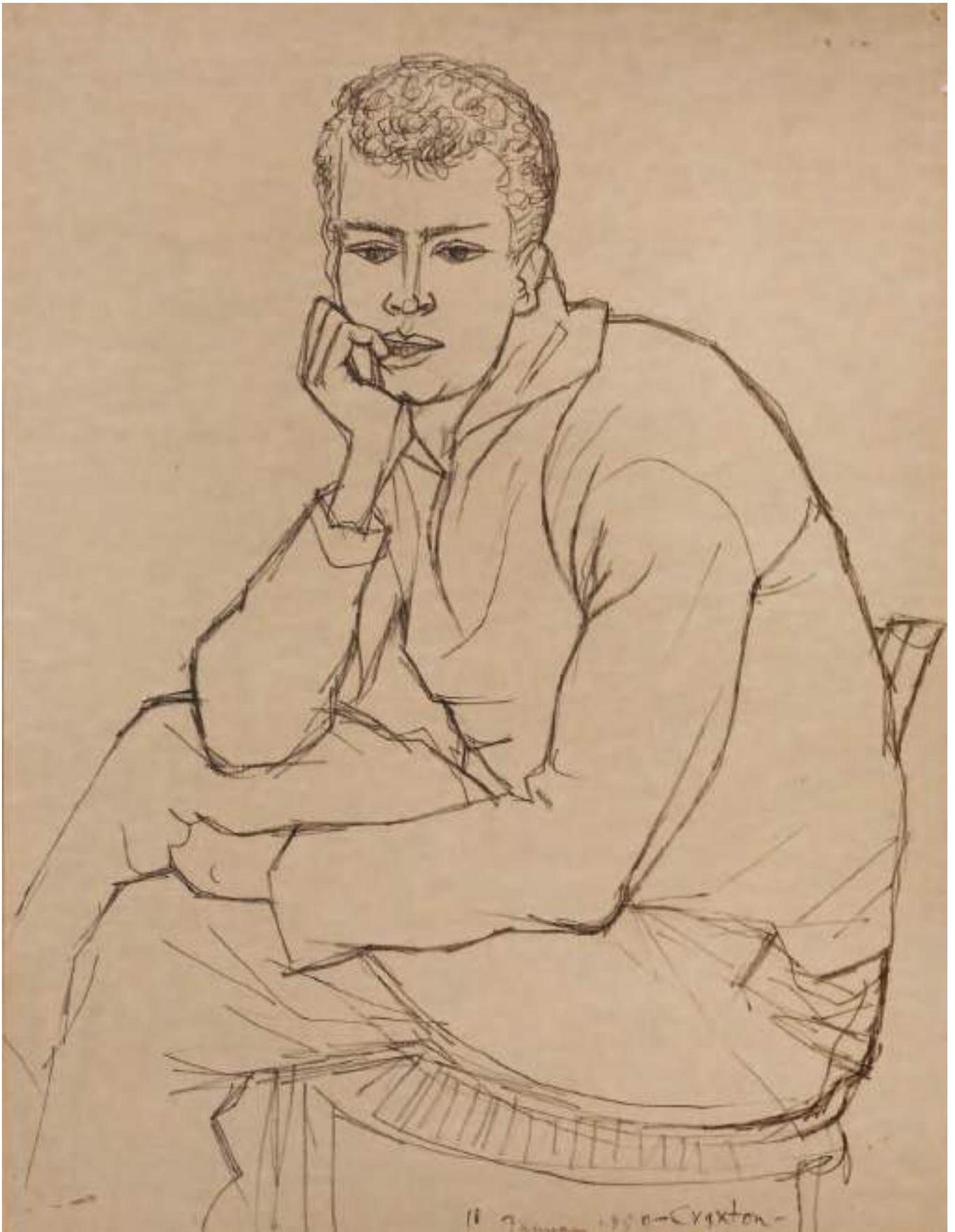
Inscribed and signed l.r.:

10 January 1950/Craxton

Soft pencil, 62.5 by 47 cm

Provenance: Redfern Gallery;

Wenlock Fine Art from whom acquired  
by John Constable in January 2014



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

This is a very early work by Vaughan but, nevertheless, contains some of the qualities and characteristics of his later work including the subject of male nudes brought together into an assembly of figures. It is interesting to compare this to Vaughan's *First Assembly of Figures* (1952) where there is a remarkably similar composition, collection of figures, colour scheme and setting.

Vaughan produced comparatively few oil paintings before the war. Once he joined the army easel painting was out of the question and besides, not having attended an art school, he felt comfortable using oils. Once the war was over, he managed to overcome some of the 'stiffness' and unyielding qualities of the pigment he had previously encountered.

Unable to access many photographs of the male nude during the 1930s, Vaughan turned to illustrated books on German Nacktkultur and anthropological studies as starting points for many of his early paintings. In his journal he mentions one such volume, which he saw in a bookshop and which contained a variety of photographs of black, tribal figures. He very much wanted to buy it since he thought it would be a rich source of inspiration. However, his wages from Lintas Advertising Agency were so modest that he could not justify the exorbitant price the bookseller was asking.

[cat.23]

*Five Figures, 1935*

Oil on board, 40.6 by 40.6 cm

*Provenance:* the artist's estate to Belgrave Gallery, London from where acquired by John Constable in March 1989



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

For much of the war Vaughan was stationed at Eden Camp, near Malton, in Yorkshire. Army life precluded him setting up a functioning studio in his barracks and, as a consequence, he was unable to work with canvas and oils. Instead he produced a series of small, intense gouaches combined with various mixed media, including wax crayons and Indian ink. He recorded daily life in the army and the landscape around him. In *Soldiers in a Wood* his platoon is engaged in some sort of land clearing activity.

At first sight this appears to be a fine example of Neo-Romantic, wartime painting. The dark, brooding atmosphere, the woodland setting and the association of man and nature are all characteristic qualities of that peculiarly British tendency. However, Vaughan later re-worked this piece significantly.

An illustration, in its original form, appears in Keith Vaughan *Journal and Drawings: 1939-1965* (Alan Ross, London, 1966, p. 69). The monochromatic pen and ink drawing, with additional ink washes are characteristic of his war work. It was a time of 'make do' and rationing and he confined himself to what could be squeezed into his knapsack: a few bottles of ink, some tubes of gouache and a selection of wax crayons. By combining these simple materials, he was able to create surprisingly diverse ranges of tones and variations of hues. In the 1960s the original work was drastically altered when Vaughan added all the present colour washes (the cream-coloured foreground, the ultramarine patch in the middle distance and the brown and green gouache and oil pastel sections). The result is a tighter, more pictorial effect.

[cat.24]

## *Soldiers in a wood, 1943*

Signed l.r.: Keith Vaughan  
Ink, watercolour, gouache and pastel,  
12.7 by 7.8 cm

*Provenance:* The Hamet Gallery, where purchased by Mrs Wright Ludington, October 1971; Agnew's

*Literature:* Keith Vaughan, *Journals and Drawings 1939-1965*, London, 1966, p.69

*Exhibited:* Santa Barbara Museum of Art, *English and American Drawings*, September-October 1973



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

This wartime picture was made while Vaughan was serving in No. 9 Company of the Non-Combatant Corps in Malton, Yorkshire. For the first time, he found himself among like-minded people and became genuinely attached to fellow recruits. In gouaches such as *Standing Male Nude* he depicted his comrades and their daily existence under canvas or in the barrack room. Here a young soldier is, perhaps, dressing himself in some unspecified interior. An erotic charge suffuses the small, intensely worked image, which is not uncommon in the gouaches from this period.

Vaughan's working materials were confined to what he could squeeze into his knapsack and, as a consequence, many of his wartime pictures are small-scale and monochromatic. His entire 'studio' contents consisted of a few pots of ink, a couple of tubes of gouache and some pens and pencils. With these he was able to create extraordinary range of images and expressive textures. He was always cadging candles stumps from his companions, not so much to create light by which to work, but to help make wax-resists, which are in much evidence here, especially on the boy's hair. It was a technique widely used by the Neo-Romantic painters and Vaughan learnt it directly from Graham Sutherland.

[cat.25]

*Standing male nude, 1943*

Signed and dated l.r.: *Keith Vaughan/1943*  
Watercolour, bodycolour, pen and ink,  
31.5 by 24.5 cm



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

Towards the end of the war Vaughan's painting began to take on a greater confidence in terms of its approach to form and figural construction. This was largely as a result of having visited the Picasso and Matisse exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in late 1945. Having been cut off from European developments over the course of the war, many British artists were affected by Picasso's approach to form and Matisse's use of colour. Vaughan was no exception. In *Seated Figure* we can see that much of his previous use of decorative detail has been dispensed with as he turns his attention to the physical presence of the sitter, breaking down the anatomical parts into a series of interlocking planes. Around the same time he wrote in an article entitled *Apropos Picasso, the Subject, the Myth*:

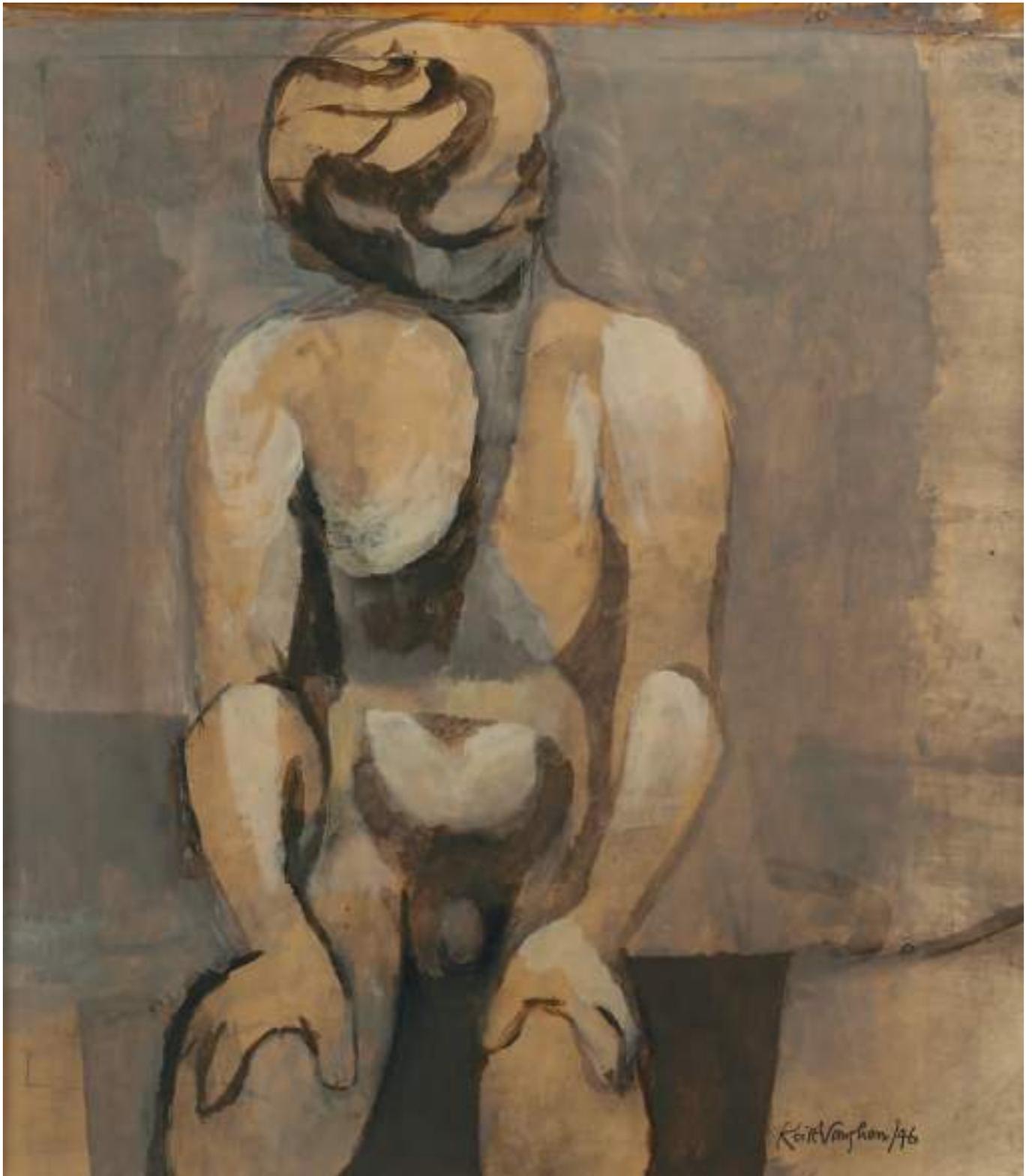
*'Picasso has got nearer than any artist to evolving a coherent vocabulary of form appropriate to our age, comparable say to the language of Auden or the musical form of Bartok. And it is significant that it owes so little to actual observation of the natural world, and so much to the emotional forces operating within the world of abstract shape and rhythm and colour.'*

(Keith Vaughan, unpublished, undated notes, *Apropos Picasso, the Subject, the Myth*. c. late 1940s)

[cat.26]

## *Seated Figure, 1946*

Signed and dated l.r.: Keith Vaughan /46  
Gouache, 34 by 30 cm  
Provenance: anon sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 March 1997, lot 166  
Exhibited: London, Osborne Samuel, May-June 2007, no.31  
Literature: Exhibition catalogue, Keith Vaughan, *Paintings and Drawings*, Osborne Samuel, no.31 (illustrated)



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

1959 was a liberating year for Vaughan and he grew in confidence both in terms of his painting and his private life. Encouraged by his friend Patrick Proctor he applied to spend the winter/spring term at Iowa State University as a painter in residence and produced a rich series of oils and gouaches based on the surrounding landscape. During the winter months he experienced heavy snowfalls and was struck by how much this transformed the landscape, making the familiar immediately unfamiliar. This experience inspired a series of 'snow paintings'. It was a subject he was to return to in his final years at his house in Essex, after particularly heavy snowfalls during the 1970s.

In this example Vaughan has achieved equilibrium between the observed elements of the landscape and the formal, abstract qualities of the painting – something he was always striving to achieve in his work. The colour scheme, which certainly evokes the wintry snows of Iowa, is economical and employs only a handful of hues mostly diluted or coated with translucent white. Vaughan was drawn to landscape subjects that featured evidence of man rather than dramatic, geological features such as mountain ranges or other similarly notable qualities. Fences and sheds, outbuildings and barns feature strongly in his landscapes. Here he has locked them into a satisfying and unified composition.

[cat.27]

## *Snow at Amana II*

Signed, titled and dated and inscribed on the reverse: *Iowa City/59* and signed and dated again on the backboard.

Oil on board, 30.5 by 30.5 cm

*Provenance:* R. N. Kershaw (1959-1982);

Matthiesen Gallery, London, 1960,

*Keith Vaughan, Recent Paintings* (no.10);

Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1962,

*Keith Vaughan, Retrospective Exhibition*,  
March-April (no.235)

*Literature:* Anthony Hepworth and

Iain Massey, *Keith Vaughan:*

*The Mature Oils – A Commentary and*

*Catalogue Raisonné*, no.AH311,

reproduced p.119



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

Assembling groups and congregations of figures occur throughout Vaughan's oeuvre. In his earlier versions, the figures retain their individual identities, somehow psychologically insulated from their neighbours. In later versions, as we see here, figures interpenetrate one another and the individual becomes identified as part of the group while it jostles and collides against itself. The landscape rarely exists as a separate backdrop for the figures but is assimilated with them and it is not easy to determine where figures end and the landscape begins. The connections and interactions between the human forms and their association with their environment, is generally the overriding theme in Vaughan's work. He wrote:

*'I would like to be able to paint a crowd - that abstract entity referred to by the sociologists as the masses. An amorphous compressed lump of impermanent shape reacting as a mass to environmentally stimuli yet composed of isolated human egos retaining their own separate incommunicable identities. In the past artists have usually dealt with the problem of crowds by turning them into assemblies. Assemblies are orderly rhythmic groups of individuals which act and are acted upon by mutual consent. The behaviour of an assembly is at least*

*compatible with that of any member composing it and often surpasses him in achievement. The behaviour of a crowd follows its own laws and generates its own energy. It is inferior, humanly speaking, to any one member composing it and usually acts contrary to his interests, and can even accomplish his destruction.'*

(Keith Vaughan, *Some Notes on Painting*, August 1964)

*'No longer incorporated in the church or any codified system of belief, the Assemblies are deprived of literary significance or illustrative meaning. The participants have not assembled for any particular purpose such as a virgin birth, martyrdom, or inauguration of a new power station. In so far as their activity is aimless and their assembly pointless they might be said to symbolize an age of doubt against an age of faith. But that is not the point. Although the elements are recognisably human their meaning is plastic. They attempt a summary and condensed statement of the relationship between things, expressed through a morphology common to all organic and inorganic matter.'*

(Keith Vaughan, 'Painter's Progress' from *Studio*, August 1958, p. 53).

A remarkable variety of textures here, demonstrates just how inventive and imaginative Vaughan's technique had become. Translucent azure pigments are lightly brushed over the forms that appear ghost-like from beneath successive veils of paint. The effect is both subtle and haunting.

[cat.28]

## *Blue Assembly, 1964*

Signed: Keith Vaughan and titled and dated (reverse of board)

Oil on board, 25 by 24 ins

Provenance: with Marlborough Gallery, London, 1964; Mrs Mavroleon; M. Cohen; New London Art Gallery, London, *Keith Vaughan, New Paintings* (no.15, illustrated in catalogue); Christie's, 11 June 1976, lot 172, where acquired by John Constable  
Literature: Anthony Hepworth and Iain Massey, *Keith Vaughan: The Mature Oils - A Commentary and Catalogue Raisonné*, no.AH424, reproduced p.152



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

In April 1965 Vaughan visited Morocco with his doctor and friend Patrick Woodcock and their trip had a profound influence on his picture making. His subject matter changed dramatically after visiting the colourful, exotic markets in Marrakesh, Taroudant and Casablanca and then driving through the Atlas Mountains. On his return, acrobats, snake charmers, horsemen and camel drivers were added to his list of subjects. He wrote in his journal:

*'Marvelous landscape driving up the coastal road from Agadir. Dry, luminous scrubby foothills, cinnamon pink to olive - white dotted with dark olives & patches of glowing saturated colour from the people working in the fields. Camels, oxen or donkeys harnessed to the ploughs. Flocks of black, brown & white goats. Shepherd boys in bluish white djellabas... storks fly overhead... like living in the Old Testament...Light cotton djellabas start indigo & bleach through every tone of the colour until they become nearly white.'*

1965 was a pure gouache year for Vaughan; he abandoned oil painting altogether and did not produce any paintings on canvas. He worked in a frenzy, painting sometimes from morning to late evening:

*'July 26: 1965: The routine continues. I start the day with gouache. I have no particular idea in mind, but there is nothing else to do. After breakfast, I get out the pots and jars and rags and paper. It is quite systematized now. I have been doing it since last November. Like everything else - compulsive. And it adds up to agonised futility. Yet the effect of it is no more futile than other people's routine. But mine is solitary. It involves no one else. I have done more gouaches that ever can be shown or sold. Yet I continue to do them because there is nothing else I can do.'*

By June he had painted sixty-one works and, by the end of the year, he had completed around one hundred and thirty gouaches. In October 1965 The Marlborough New London Gallery put on a major exhibition of sixty-nine of them, including thirty of the Moroccan paintings. It was certainly Vaughan's best gouache work to date both in terms of his technical assurance, poetic vision and fluid application of the pigment. Inexplicably the show failed to sell, which seems extraordinary today, and it shocked Vaughan:

*'October 3, 1965: Show of gouache a complete failure. Disagreeable. Sold 6 out of 70. My first taste of failure... In fact I almost decided to give up. Subjective meanderings are no good at all. Problem of what to do instead. Very hard to find any stimulus to start painting when some 64 works are about to come home to be stored somewhere.'*

[cat.29]

## *Group of Camel Drivers, 1965*

Signed and dated l.r.: *Keith Vaughan/65*  
and indistinctly titled on old mount  
*Group - Camel Drivers*

Gouache, wash and pastel, 48.5 by 41 cm  
Provenance: Private Collection, U.K.;  
Bonhams, 10 June 2010, lot 3



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

Vaughan learnt to use charcoal in 1960 when he asked his student Mario Dubsy, who was working extensively with it at the time, if he would demonstrate some of its more subtle qualities and techniques. He subsequently produced a series of large, finely worked charcoal drawings and then returned to the medium from time to time, since it afforded rapid and expressive execution. *Two Men* is a later, erotic drawing which relates to Vaughan's *Erotic Fantasies*. He referred to these usually quite graphic images as his 'Grafitti Drawings', in his inimitably dyslexic way. They were usually made late at night and explore various aspects of human relationships. Never intending to have them exhibited, Vaughan carefully dated and then stored them in specially labelled folders in his studio. Ten days before making this drawing Vaughan wrote in his journal:

*'It is, of course, fashionable though it may be rather absurd to hope that sexual activities can be the most important part of the life of a man of 58 (me). Nevertheless I confine myself to try to make it work.'*

(Keith Vaughan, *Journal*, March 2, 1970).

[cat.30]

## *Two Men*, 1970

Inscribed u.r.: *March 12/70*

Charcoal, 79 by 56 cm

*Provenance*: the artist's estate;

Agnew's, London from where acquired  
by John Constable, May 1999

*Literature*: Malcolm York, *Keith Vaughan Journals (1939-1976)*, illustrated p.214

*Exhibited*: Agnew's, Old Bond Street,

British Art 1900-1998,

September-October 1998, no.113

(illustrated in the catalogue)



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

When starting a gouache Vaughan would make a series of automatic, random marks on the paper. These unconscious smudges and splashes were sometimes incorporated into the structural design of the composition, as in *Maze of Figures*, or obliterated as the painting evolved; either way, they kick-started the painting process for him. It was an intuitive ritual that started ‘...as usual, with no more than a process. The making of a series of wet marks across the white board in a sequence of colours (blue black I fancy at the moment) and see where it leads’, (Keith Vaughan, *Journal*, July 2, 1972).

He then used black Indian ink to augment the arbitrary arrangement of emerging forms, letting the easy flow of his brush and his instinctive pictorial handwriting guide his gestures until more formal configurations began to emerge. Structuring the composition was vital. In studio notebooks he recorded the progress of his paintings from the initial marks to the final touches.

One note reads:

*‘Necessity for compositional structure to run right through to the edges – disregarding identity of forms... not enough simply to balance shapes within the area. This is a subjectively obvious fact of which I have only just become conscious in words... the continuing lines are never obvious and are constantly interrupted by counter rhythms and thrust back and forth in space’*

(Keith Vaughan: unpublished *Notes on Painting*, October 16, 1958).

His pictorial scaffolding gradually transformed itself into contours of interlocking heads, shoulders and limbs of an assembly of figures. Work advanced mark against mark as fresh applications of gouache were spread over the picture surface in increasingly complex sequences; each chromatic decision, brush track or chance gesture was governed by what had previously been laid down. During the process frequent adjustments had to be made since additional applications were needed to complement existing textures, tones and hues until eventually the gouache was completed.

[cat.31]

*Maze of Figures*, c. 1970

Inscribed u.r.: *March 12/70*

Ink, watercolour and gouache,  
73 by 52 cm

*Exhibited:* Austin Desmond Fine Art, Keith Vaughan, November-December 1989, no.106; London, Agnews, Keith Vaughan, May-June 2012, no.25

*Literature:* Agnew’s, London, Keith Vaughan, 2012, no.25 (illustrated)



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

Several of Vaughan's works of this period possess titles that, at first, seem puzzling. The on-looker here can be identified as the pale, almost ghost-like figure (suggested rather than fully realized) at the upper right. He is gazing towards the foreground group. His unexplained separation and isolation from the others, (something that Vaughan himself frequently experienced), creates the emotional tension within the composition.

Vaughan's finest gouache decade was perhaps the 1960s when he produced numerous first-rate paintings in rapid succession. He made further technical breakthroughs in terms of handling his gouache with greater eloquence and determining his compositions with renewed confidence. The character of his paint became increasingly fluid and his touch more assured; the rigidity of the densely applied paintings of the 1950s gave way to a fresher and more articulate technique. (Vann and Hastings, *Keith Vaughan*, Lund Humphries, 2012, p. 168.)

These words certainly apply to *The Onlooker* since the handling of the pigment is fluid and eloquent. Gouache suited both Vaughan's creative temperament and working method. It is a very immediate medium since it dries rapidly and, as a consequence, fosters speedy progress and spontaneous management. Vaughan is economical with his palette; only yellow, blue and burnt umber are employed, along with black and white, to achieve a highly expressive effect. The opacity of certain pigments is played off against the translucence of others and his characteristically frothy textures are also in evidence. The mark-making has the freshness of an improvisation. Vaughan explained his approach to painting in his journal:

*'I seem to be purposefully trying to make a composition of mutual contradictions. Figures which aren't figures, landscape space which is something else, shapes which are neither abstract nor figurative. What am I doing and why? Certainly I am following a scent, but it is buried and extremely irrational.'*

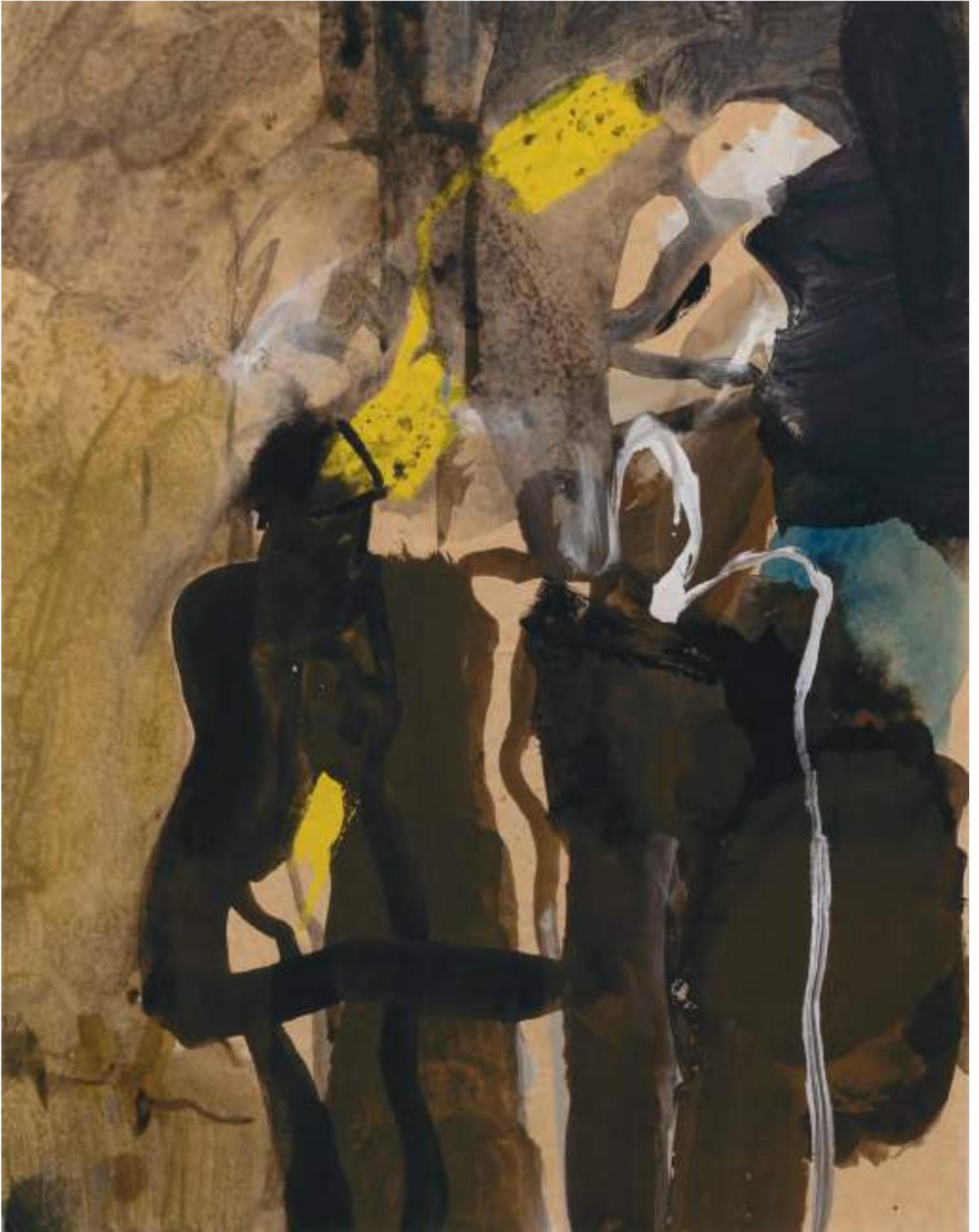
(Keith Vaughan, *Journal*, November 27, 1957).

[cat.32]

## *The Onlooker*, c.1974

Watercolour and gouache,  
23.2 by 18.8 cm

Provenance: Austin Desmond  
Exhibited: London, New Grafton Gallery,  
*Keith Vaughan: Drawings and Paintings*,  
April 1987, no.72; Austin Desmond Fine  
Art, *Keith Vaughan: Paintings, gouaches,  
watercolours and drawings (1936-1976)*,  
April 1987



# Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)

Vaughan spoke fine French and regularly read the Symbolist poetry of Arthur Rimbaud throughout his life. He made several paintings and numerous drawings based on his cycles of poems, *Les Illuminations*, and this is one of them. At the lower left he has written the words of which he is making a pictorial translation:

*'Aussitôt que l'idée du Déluge se fut rassise, un lièvre s'arrêta dans les sainfoins et les clochettes mouvantes et dit sa prière à l'arc-en-ciel à travers la toile de l'araignée.'* (As soon as the idea of the Flood was finished, a hare halted in the clover and the trembling bluebells and said its prayer to the rainbow through the spider's web.)

The rich and symbolic associations of Rimbaud's words have triggered all sorts of visual images in the painting including the little white hare, the slate grey sky after rain, the green clover and bluebell flowers and even the mesh of the spider's web. Vaughan was, perhaps, the leading exponent of gouache painting in British art during the post-war years. This highly worked example comes from one of the richest periods of his work in terms of his gouache painting. It was made at time of professional

uncertainty and emotional turmoil, since he had come to believe that everything he had worked towards throughout his career, was now considered irrelevant with the onset of Pop Art and New Generation trends. A distinguishing quality of Vaughan's gouache technique is the variety and diversity of his of mark-making and how he retained a record of each stage of the working process in the final statement. For example, in some areas the whiteness of the blank paper sparkles through; in other places translucent washes are retained, counterbalanced elsewhere by opaque brushwork that obliterates parts of previous pictorial decisions. His free handling of paint, his distinctive frothy deposits and energetic brush marks, lend the image an uncommon vitality and liveliness and his painterly, vigorous application transmits a considerable expressive force. Vaughan has imposed a grid on pictorial architecture on the pictorial forms, perhaps a parallel to the mesh of the spider's web and this is reinforced by small, structured blocks of colour that sing out of the composition. These are bound together with broad brushtracks made with gouache Indian ink.

[cat.33]

## *Après le Déluge*

Studio stamped lower right. Inscribed in French with a section from *Après le Déluge*, no.1 of *Les Illuminations* by Arthur Rimbaud "... hare stopped among the clover and the swaying flower bells and said his prayer-to the rainbow through the spider's web."

Gouache, 52 x 41 cm

*Provenance:* Waddington Galleries, London, 1976, *New Paintings and Gouaches*, six gouaches inspired by *Les Illuminations*; acquired from Waddington Galleries by Prof Cecil Arthur Hackett for £500; Julian Lax, Hampstead; Richard Selby (Redfern Gallery); Osborne Samuel, *Keith Vaughan Centenary Tribute*, November - December 2012, p.81 in the catalogue (reproduced full page in the catalogue); Peter Cotterill from whom acquired by John Constable in 2013



# Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)



[cat.34]

## *Second Portrait of Sunita (Bust)*

Conceived in 1925

Bronze with a dark patina, 57 cm high

Provenance: C. Rutherston; I. W. Brown; E. Littler (1965); Eisenberg Robbins, Washington MA, 1973

Exhibited: London, Leicester Galleries, 1926, no.11

Literature: A. Haskell, *The Sculpture Speaks*, London, 1931, p.184; L. B. Howell, *Jacob Epstein*, London, 1932, p.13; R. Black, *The Art of Jacob Epstein*, New York, 1942, p.235, no.120; R. Buckle, *Jacob Epstein, sculptor*, London, 1963, pp.140-2, p.182, pl.213; E. Silber, *The Sculpture of Epstein*, Oxford, no.160, p.158 (illustrated)

# Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)



[cat.35]

## *Adam*

Watercolour, 56 by 43 cm  
Provenance: Abbott & Holder,  
London, 2002

In 1930 Epstein wrote in a letter from Epping Forest:

*'It is raining all the time. I have nothing to read except an old Bible. I keep reading Genesis and have made some drawings.'*

These were the first of a long series of biblical drawings which were later exhibited at The Redfern Gallery [in 1932]. They were all sold immediately and became so dispersed that when later someone wanted to publish them with the text it was thought too great a task to trace all the owners and collect them again for reproduction, so the idea fell through."

Quoted from *Epstein Drawings* with notes by Lady Epstein and an introduction by Richard Buckle, Faber & Faber 1962.

# Dame Elisabeth Frink RA (1930-1993)



[cat.36]

## *Crouching figure with Horse's Head, 1951*

Signed and dated l.r.: *Frink/51*  
Grey/black wash over pen and ink and  
black chalk, 74.5 by 55 cm  
*Provenance:* Walter Brandt;  
Sotheby's, June 1979 where acquired by  
John Constable

This rare early drawing forms part of a body of work executed by Frink during or just after her time as a student at Chelsea School of Art in the early 1950s. These drawings, which are monumental in scale, have a strong, almost brutal, sculptural quality that can be lacking in some of her later work on paper. Nevertheless, the drawing's themes of the divinity of the human and animal form would be a constant in Frink's work throughout her life. A comparable drawing, *Bound Figure*, 1950 was with Gillian Jason Gallery in 2018. The artist's son, Lin Jammet, believed that work to be a depiction of the bound figure of Christ.

# Karin Jonzen (1914-1998)



Karin Jonzen studied at the Slade School in 1933, winning the Slade Diploma and Scholarship in 1937. She subsequently studied at the Royal Academy in Stockholm (1939). She was awarded the Prix de Rome in the same year, with further awards including: Fedors Gleichen Award (1948) and the Leverhulme Research Award (1963). Her work is in many permanent collections including in Brighton, Bradford, Glasgow, Southend and internationally in Melbourne and the USA. Works by Jonzen have been commissioned for the Arts Council, the Festival of Britain (1951), Selwyn College Chapel, Cambridge and Guildford Cathedral, amongst many others.

[cat.37]

*Claus*

Edition of 3 Terracotta, 58 cm high  
*Exhibited:* The Royal Academy,  
Summer Exhibition, 1978 (no.1427).

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Zuleika Gallery and Harry Moore-Gwyn wish particularly to thank the following people  
for their kind assistance in preparing this catalogue:  
Nigel Collins, Gerard Hastings, Andrew Lambirth and Brandon Lindberg

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*Design:* Sarah Garwood Creative, [sarahagarwood@outlook.com](mailto:sarahagarwood@outlook.com)

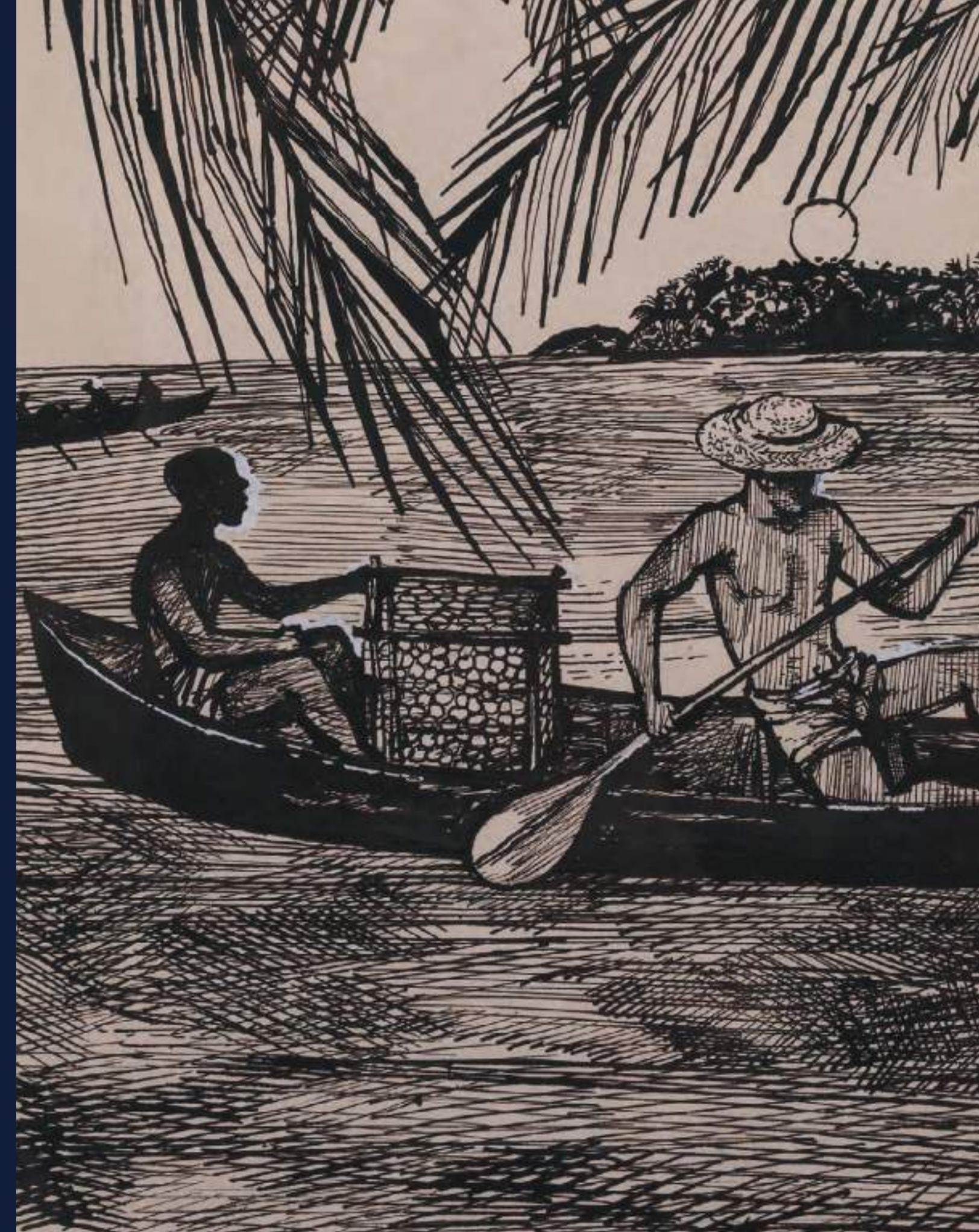
*Print:* Zenith Print Group, [enquiries@zenithprintgroup.com](mailto:enquiries@zenithprintgroup.com)

Opposite page:

*Jamaican Scene*

John Minton (1917-1957)

[cat.19]





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