

SAINSBURY
CENTRE



PAUL NASH

Large Print Text

8 April – 20 August 2017

GALLERY 1 (exhibits clockwise)

INTRODUCTION

Paul Nash (1889–1946) was a key figure in debates about British art's relationship to international modernism through both his art and his writing. He was involved with some of the most important exhibitions and artistic groupings of the 1930s and was a leading figure in British surrealism. He began his career as an illustrator, influenced by William Blake and the Pre-Raphaelites, and explored symbolist ideas while developing a personal mythology of landscape. In response to the First World War, he developed a powerful symbolic language and his work gained significant public recognition. Much of the 1920s saw Nash processing the memories of war through the landscapes of particular places that had a personal significance for him. In the 1930s, he explored surrealist ideas of the found object and the dream, and expanded the media he worked in to include collage and photography. His final decade was spent pursuing ideas of flight and the mystic significance of the sun and moon through a series of visionary landscapes and his aerial flower compositions. Concepts which threaded through his diverse career included themes of flight, ideas of the life force in inanimate objects and a belief in the *genius loci* or spirit of place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Exhibition Curators

Emma Chambers, Curator of Modern British Art, Tate
Inga Fraser, Assistant Curator of Modern British Art,
Tate

Acknowledgements

The exhibition is organised by Tate Britain in association with the Sainsbury Centre and the Laing Art Gallery. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the following lenders:

Aberdeen Art Gallery, Arts Council Collection, British Council Collection, British Library, Ferens Art Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum, Government Art Collection, Imperial War Museum, Leeds Art Gallery, Leicester Arts and Museums Service, Manchester Art Gallery, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, St. Paul's School, Tate, Tate Library and Archive, The Museum of Gloucester, The Wilson (Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum), Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, Walker Art Gallery, Whitworth Art Gallery and all private lenders

Exhibition Design	Andrés Ros Soto
Graphic Design	Paul Kuzemczak, GK3
Exhibition Lighting	George Sexton Associates

The exhibition has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the Government Indemnity Scheme.

1. WE ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD

‘It is unspeakable, godless, hopeless. I am no longer an artist interested and curious. I am a messenger who will bring back word from men fighting to those who want the war to last forever. Feeble, inarticulate will be my message, but it will have a bitter truth and may it burn their lousy souls.’

— Paul Nash, letter to Margaret Nash, 13 November 1917

Nash enlisted in the Artists’ Rifles in September 1914 and was initially stationed in England. He arrived at the Ypres Salient in March 1917 as a second-lieutenant with the third battalion Hampshire regiment. Initially he was struck by the ability of nature to regenerate the battlefield, as depicted in *Spring in the Trenches, Ridge Wood 1917*. He returned to England in May to convalesce after breaking a rib in a fall. When he returned to Belgium at the end of October as an official war artist, the landscape he encountered was very different, a mudscape of shell-holes and shattered trees in the aftermath of the Battle of Passchendaele.

We Are Making a New World, his symbolist evocation of a landscape destroyed by war, was the centrepiece of his exhibition *Void of War* in May 1918 which brought him new public recognition. He was commissioned to produce memorial paintings by the Ministry of Information and the Canadian War Records, including *The Menin Road*. Nash’s war experience transformed his work; he painted in oil for the first time and discovered a new artistic language of powerfully

simplified forms which both conveyed the appearance of ravaged landscapes and suggested violent emotional experiences.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wounded, Passchendaele 1918

Oil on canvas

Manchester City Galleries

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Spring in the Trenches, Ridge Wood, 1917

1918

Oil on canvas

In March 1917, Nash described in letters how nature quickly regenerated the battlefield, with trenches surrounded by flowers, and a wood which had been ‘pitted and pocked with shells, the trees torn to shreds’ transformed within two months into ‘a vivid green’.

Spring in the Trenches, Ridge Wood, 1917 depicts a scene from 1917 but was painted in July 1918. Most of Nash’s company were killed in the attack on Hill 60 in August 1917 while he was convalescing in England, so the painting is also a poignant commemoration of his

fallen comrades, exploring the contrast between death and new life.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Menin Road 1919

Oil on canvas

This work was commissioned by the Ministry of Information in April 1918 for a Hall of Remembrance to commemorate the First World War. The paintings by leading British artists were intended to celebrate national ideals of heroism and sacrifice, and to emulate historic battle paintings by artists such as Paolo Uccello. Although the hall was never built, they later became part of the Imperial War Museum collection. *The Menin Road* depicts a similar landscape to *We Are Making a New World*, but here Nash's treatment is more descriptive than symbolic and shows a new interest in using geometric forms to unify the composition.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

We Are Making a New World 1918

Oil on canvas

We Are Making a New World is a powerful symbolic statement about the impact of war. Rather than showing the catastrophic loss of human life, this is signified by the dead trees and shattered landscape illuminated by the sun rising over blood-red clouds. Nash's letters reveal the deep personal impact of his experiences at the Western Front, and his title suggests despair at the destruction of war. The painting is now often interpreted as a personal statement against the war, but at the time it was considered to show the 'truth' of war through the destruction of the landscape rather than the more contentious imagery of dead soldiers.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Landscape Hill 60 1918

Watercolour, pencil and ink on paper

Many of Nash's regiment were killed in the attack on Hill 60 in August 1917 while he was convalescing in England. This drawing shows the view from the trenches

as shell fire strikes the ravaged landscape. Nash described how ‘the earth rises in a complicated eruption of smoke, and bits begin to fall for yards wide splashing into the pools, flinging up the water, rattling on the iron sheets, spattering us and the ground nearby’. In contrast, *After the Battle* (displayed nearby) shows the trenches assailed by diagonal rain in the aftermath of an assault, and includes a rare depiction of dead soldiers.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

After the Battle 1918

Watercolour and ink on paper

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

ARCHIVE CASE (left to right)

Richard Aldington

1892–1962

Images of War 1919

with cover and illustrations by Paul Nash

Like Nash, Aldington saw active service in the First World War. In this book, his vivid, ‘imagist’ style of

poetry is complemented by Nash's energetic line-block illustrations. With drawings such as *Terror* and *Barrage*, Nash displays an awareness of and interest in abstract and vorticist techniques as a means to convey the disorienting and frightening experience of the battlefield. The book was published by Beaumont Press, London in 1919 in an edition of 50.

Tate Library, and Tate Library and Archive

JOHN SALIS

'British Artists at the Front: Paul Nash',
Country Life 1918

'The British Artists at the Front' series was produced by the Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House. Established in August 1914 to disseminate British views on the war, it also oversaw the official war artists' programme which started in July 1916. Although Nash's *We Are Making a New World* was used as a cover image, its title was omitted, allowing it to function as official propaganda showing the 'truth' of war through the destruction of the landscape rather than the bodies of dead soldiers.

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Ypres Salient at Night 1918

Oil on canvas

Nash's geometric composition conveys the disorientating effects of night combat as a star shell bursts over the zigzag formation of the trenches. Star shells produced dazzling light and the changes in direction of the front line trenches were confusing as soldiers experienced an almost constant discharge of shells, signal rockets and observation flares by both sides. This painting was exhibited in Nash's *Void of War* exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in May 1918 alongside *We Are Making a New World*, *Wounded Passchendaele* and *The Landscape Hill 60* (displayed nearby).

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

LINK BAY 1

2. DREAMING TREES

‘O Dreaming trees, sunk in a swoon of sleep
What have ye seen in these mysterious places?’
— Paul Nash, poem written for Mercia Oakley, c.1909

Nash’s earliest works were symbolist drawings accompanied by his own poetry and influenced by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Blake. He combined mysterious figures with landscape settings to evoke a supernatural world, and explored the dream-like atmosphere of the moonlit night landscape. Nash described how ‘my love of the monstrous and the magical led me beyond the confines of natural appearances into unreal worlds’. Gradually natural forms replaced his spirit beings, and Nash began to invest trees with distinct personalities, describing how he had tried ‘to paint trees as tho’ they were human beings’. His landscapes explored the area around the family home, Wood Lane House at Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire. He focused on the ‘bird garden’ and the boundary between garden and countryside marked by a line of mature elm trees. A group of elms named ‘The Three’ became particularly important for him. In these years, Nash also explored the idea of a spirit of place, and locations such as the Wittenham Clumps in Oxfordshire took on great significance. Nash’s night landscapes and

tree studies were shown together in his first exhibition at London's Carfax Gallery in 1912.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Combat 1910

Pencil, ink and wash on paper

Nash first titled this work *The Combat*, but it was also exhibited in his lifetime as *Angel and Devil*. Influenced by the work of William Blake, Nash dramatised a struggle between good and evil. His artistic training up until this point had been as an illustrator, and the detailed pen and ink technique reflects this tradition. Nash later identified this work as the beginning of a preoccupation with 'aerial creatures' that was to last throughout his career. He was encouraged in these visionary works by the poet and playwright Gordon Bottomley, with whom he corresponded from 1910.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the Paul and Margaret Nash Trust, in accordance with the wishes of Margaret Nash

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Vision at Evening 1911

Watercolour and chalk on paper

In his autobiography *Outline* (1949) Nash described how he encouraged visionary experiences and ‘began to form a habit of visual expansion ‘into regions of air’ by ‘an inward dilation of the eyes’. This method produced several visions of faces and figures in the night sky including a ‘huge dolorous face ... with hair streaming across the sky’. This drawing, which was originally accompanied by a poem, remained important to him and was illustrated in his article ‘Aerial Flowers’ (1945) in which he reflected on the importance of themes of flight throughout his career.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the Paul and Margaret Nash Trust, in accordance with the wishes of Margaret Nash

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Cliff to the North 1912

Pen, Indian ink and grey wash on paper

This drawing was inspired by a visit Nash made to Norfolk with his Slade School friend Claughton Pellew-Harvey in December 1912. He described the vivid impression made by ‘the yawning bluffs above the cold bitter sea ... the wavering edge gave a glimpse of the

cliff's crumbling face and the gnawing waves'. The drawing is one of the first manifestations of his preoccupation with the threatening presence of the sea, and the sense of a menacing encroaching force was accentuated by the introduction of an approaching female figure, not seen but represented by a looming shadow.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Pyramids in the Sea 1912

Watercolour and ink on paper

Nash described this work to his friend Gordon Bottomley as 'a queer drawing of pyramids crashing about in the sea in uncanny eclipsed moon light'. In this drawing, as the sand dunes metamorphose into waves, Nash introduced for the first time the theme of the interpenetration of land and sea and the merging of dream and reality which was to become a recurrent theme in his surrealist works of the 1930s.

Tate. Purchased 1973

ARCHIVE CASE (right to left)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Poem relating to the drawing *The Combat* 1910

with written annotations by Margaret Nash

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

Our Lady of Inspiration 1910

Ink and chalk on paper

1889–1946

This drawing was made for Nash's friend Sybil Fountain, as the frontispiece of a book of nine handwritten poems. Nash described how 'the strange torture of being in love' inspired a recurring dream of 'a face encircled with blue-black hair with eyes wide-set and luminous, and a mouth, like an immature flower about to unfold'.

Although the influence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's art was already beginning to wane, Nash described how he began to place this face in his drawings as 'the new Beata Beatrix'.

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Book of Verses (frontispiece) 1910

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Night Landscape 1912

Watercolour and ink on paper

Nash associated the landscape at night with visionary experiences, and he described how the sound of the stream near his home in the stillness of the night was like a voice talking to him, compelling him to write poetry. *Night Landscape* was originally titled *The Archer* and Nash later erased the figure of a woman with a bow which can just be seen as a ghostly figure between the rows of trees.

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wittenham Clumps 1911–1913

Watercolour, ink and chalk on paper

Nash first visited the Wittenham Clumps in Oxfordshire in 1911. He was immediately struck by the distinctive visual impact of these twin hilltop beech woods planted in the 18th century on the site of an Iron Age hill fort. He drew the view from a distance to emphasise the ‘dome-like’ hills and the ‘curiously symmetrical sculptured form’ of the woods. He also emphasised their mystical presence, describing them as ‘the Pyramids of my small world’ and the landscape around them as ‘full of strange enchantment. On every hand it seemed a beautiful legendary country haunted by old gods long forgotten.’

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

In a Garden 1914

Watercolour, pencil and ink on paper

In a Garden refers to a shrubbery that had been planted when the Nash family home was built in 1901. It was important to Nash’s emerging concept of place. He wrote: ‘It was undoubtedly the first place which expressed for me something more than its natural features seemed to contain, something which the ancients spoke of as *genius loci* – the spirit of a place, but something which did not suggest that the place was haunted or inhabited by a genie in a psychic sense ... Its

magic lay within itself, implicated in its own design and its relationship to its surroundings.'

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Three 1911–1912

Watercolour, ink and chalk on paper

Nash began to imbue trees with particular qualities as dominating presences in nature. Three of the mature elms at the boundary of Nash's garden were an important catalyst for his concept of trees as distinct personalities. He wrote: 'About the centre of this elm-row stood three trees which in spite, or perhaps because of their rigorous cropping had emerged into a singular grace. Their feathered bodies mingled together as they thrust upwards and their three heads fused in cascades of dense leaves spreading out like the crown of a vast fountain. I knew these three intimately.'

Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Cherry Orchard 1917

Watercolour, ink and graphite on paper

The Cherry Orchard was made at the poet and playwright John Drinkwater's home in Gloucestershire. Nash visited in July 1917 when he returned to Britain from the Western Front to recover from an injury. Although the cherry trees would have been in leaf at this time of year, it is likely that the rows of bare branches were intended to convey an emotional truth following Nash's war experiences rather than being based on precise observation of the landscape.

Tate. Purchased 1975

LINK BAY 2

3. PLACES

‘There are places, just as there are people and objects and works of art, whose relationship of parts creates a mystery, an enchantment, which cannot be analysed.’

— Paul Nash, *Outline*, 1949

In the 1920s, Nash became emotionally attached to significant places which inspired sequences of works. These included Whiteleaf in Buckinghamshire, Dymchurch on the Kent coast and Iden in Sussex. He responded both to the specific qualities of these landscapes and the feelings and memories that they prompted. Echoes of the Flanders landscape can be found in the recurring paintings of ponds which recall shell-holes, and in his series of stark paintings of the Dymchurch sea wall. In these, geometric forms resemble the zigzag rhythm of the trenches. The Dymchurch works are also resonant of the emotional charge of his war experiences in their exploration of threat as the sea sweeps in against the coastal defences. In the late 1920s, Nash replaced figures with symbolic objects and often juxtaposed architectural constructions with the landscape. In his autobiography *Outline*, he identified 1928 as the beginning of ‘a new vision and a new style’. He first saw Giorgio de Chirico’s work in London that year. De Chirico’s influence can be

seen in the use of isolated objects, enigmatic buildings and accentuated perspective to suggest mysterious narratives.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Tench Pond in a Gale 1921–2

Ink, graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1924

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Behind the Inn 1919–22

Oil on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Daily Express 1927

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Berkshire Downs 1922

Oil on canvas

In the early 1920s, Nash often visited the Berkshire Downs and the Chiltern Hills in south-east England, painting the juxtaposition of woods and chalk downs

which characterises the area. *Behind the Inn* (displayed nearby) shows the view from the Red Lion in Whiteleaf where he stayed. At this date his interest was purely in the landscape of the Chilterns, although he later became intrigued by the traces of human history on the land at sites like Whiteleaf Cross and Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

ARCHIVE CASE (exhibits clockwise)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Places (seven prints from woodblocks) 1922

Wood engravings on paper

Places was an opportunity for Nash to return to his early interest in poetry, writing short texts to accompany each of the seven images depicting locations of personal significance for the artist including Iver Heath, his childhood home, and Buntingford, the home of his friend Claud Lovat Fraser. Many of the features that characterise Nash's symbolic approach to landscape are found in these images: paths representing choices, trees that stand in for the human figure, and water for oblivion.

Tate Library and Archive. Tate Library, and Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Untitled (Dymchurch study with pyramid) c.1930

Pencil on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Genesis (twelve woodcuts) 1924

Wood engravings on paper

Published by Nonesuch Press in an edition of 375 and printed by Curwen Press, *Genesis* marks a high point in Nash's work in book design. The first chapter of *Genesis* from the Old Testament is printed using Rudolph Koch's Neuland typeface, illustrated by 12 woodcut prints. The first print is a pure black block – a startlingly modern depiction of heaven and earth without form – and each subsequent image was described as 'a fresh primary form cut out of the blackness of this void'. The process of the artist mirrors that of the religious narrative.

Tate Library and Archive. Tate Library, and Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Dymchurch (study) c.1920s

Pencil on paper

Tate Library and Archive

LINK BAY 3

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wall against the Sea 1922

Oil on canvas

Nash's years at Dymchurch on the southeast coast were ones of nervous strain from the delayed effect of his war experiences and he suffered a breakdown in 1921. He saw the Dymchurch paintings as a finite set reflecting his emotional response to the place at a particular time, writing afterwards: 'I shall never work there anymore ... a place like that and its effect on me – one's effect on it. It's a curious record formally and psychologically when you see the whole set of designs together.'

Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Rye Marshes 1932

Oil on canvas

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Shore 1923

Oil on canvas

Nash's Dymchurch works have a wide emotional and formal range. Earlier works in the series show a threatening sea surging against the sea wall, while later works such as *The Shore* focus on the emptiness of the landscape and the stark geometry of the sea defences exposed at low tide.

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Night Tide 1922

Watercolour and ink on paper

Private collection. Courtesy of Piano Nobile, Robert Travers (Works of Art) Ltd

ART STORE WINDOW (right to left)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wood on the Downs 1929–30

Oil on canvas

Wood on the Downs depicts Ivinghoe Beacon, in Buckinghamshire, which Nash described in his letters as ‘an enchanted place in the hills, girdled by wild beech woods dense and lonely places where you might meet anything from a polecat to a dryad. All the knolls and downs go rolling about against the sky with planes of pale coloured fields stretching out below. ’Ivinghoe Beacon is the site of an Iron Age fort, and *Whiteleaf Cross* (displayed nearby) depicts an 18th-century hill carving, showing Nash’s new interest in the ancient history of the Chilterns.

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections.

Purchased in 1960 with income from the Murray Fund

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Whiteleaf Cross 1931

Oil on canvas

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

GALLERY 2

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Blue House on the Shore c.1929–31

Oil on canvas

Blue House on the Shore depicts subjects from Cros-de-Cagnes near Nice in the south of France which Nash visited in 1925 and 1930. In this work, Nash continued to explore the theme of architectural objects in coastal landscapes. The blue house with its interior arcade and extended shadow has a mysterious presence in the empty landscape, reflecting the influence of Giorgio de Chirico whose work Nash had seen at Arthur Tooth and Sons in London in October 1928.

Tate. Purchased 1939

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Nostalgic Landscape 1923–38

Oil on canvas

Although Nash left Dymchurch in 1925, he later reworked paintings begun there, to reflect new interests. In the late 1930s, when he was most engaged with surrealist ideas, he revisited a painting of a coastal

building, adding a receding tunnel within its door which extended into deep space and used colour to link the setting sun and the circular window of the tower. Roland Penrose wrote of this work in 1938: 'The solid tower contains a deeper perspective than the sunset shore on which it stands. One reality leads to another with the assurance that both exist instantaneously and in the same place.'

On loan from Leicester Arts and Museums Service

GALLERY 2 (exhibits clockwise)

4. THE LIFE OF THE INANIMATE OBJECT

‘The more the object is studied from the point of view of its animation the more incalculable it becomes in its variations; the more subtle, also, becomes the problem of assembling and associating different objects in order to create that true irrational poise which is the solution of the personal equation.’

— Paul Nash, ‘The Life of the Inanimate Object’,
Country Life, May 1937

In the 1930s, found objects became central to Nash’s work, and he began to develop the idea of the ‘object-personage’. In 1934, he discovered a piece of drift wood, which he later called *Marsh Personage*, describing how he ‘was instantly and intensely aware of being in the presence of what he could only describe as a ‘personage’’. He explored the idea of a life force in inanimate objects and created encounters between them, arranging flints, bones, driftwood, and small geometric objects into still life compositions. Nash also actively engaged with André Breton and Salvador Dalí’s ideas of the found object, linking the object discovery to the unconscious mind. He met Eileen Agar in 1935 when he was living at Swanage on the Dorset coast, and together the two artists explored ideas of the found object and the creative possibilities of photography,

collage and assemblage. Both Nash and Agar used the surrealist practice of transforming found objects through unexpected juxtapositions to create sculptures, many of which were included in the *Surrealist Objects and Poems* exhibition at the London Gallery in November 1937.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wood Fetish 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

This is a drawing of the found object that was Nash's first discovery of an 'object-personage', which he later called *Marsh Personage*. Nash considered inanimate objects to have their own mysterious innate life force. He described how the piece of driftwood immediately struck him as 'more and other than it seemed, and emanated some indeterminable and disquieting magic. Being shapeless, it yet occultly evinced form; though dead, it was patently quick with a mysterious life of its own.' The title, *Wood Fetish*, further evokes the forces of pagan magic.

James Saunders Watson, Rockingham Castle

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Swanage c.1936

Watercolour, graphite and photographs,
black and white, on paper

In his article 'Swanage or Seaside Surrealism' in April 1936, Nash described how the town had a particularly surrealist atmosphere because of the juxtaposition of incongruous architectural features and sculpture imported from London with the town's seaside architecture. In *Swanage*, a group of Nash's 'object-personages' including *Marsh Personage* inhabit a landscape composed of collaged photographs including a seascape of Ballard Head on the Dorset coast, with a solitary swan floating in the bay. The composition suggests the vignettes of a holiday postcard, identifying a selection of surreal attractions and strange inhabitants that the visitor to Swanage might encounter.

Tate. Purchased 1973

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

In the Marshes 1938

Plant stems and bark on wood

Tate. Presented by Anthony and Anne d'Offay 1977

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Comment on Leda 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Nash's title refers to the classical legend of Leda and the Swan. The composition has as its centrepiece a wooden chair leg whose curved form resembles a swan and which also appears in photographs by Nash (displayed nearby). Nash was attracted by the coincidence of finding swan-shaped objects in Swanage and recounted how 'when walking up the Institute Road, I was attracted by an object in a turner's shop window which seemed to resemble a swan in a peculiar degree'. The drawing was given to Eileen Agar and the swan formed part of their private imagery in letters and drawings.

Gerrish Fine Art

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Welsh Collage 1939

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper and printed paper

Very few of Nash's original photo-collages survive. Although they were an important medium for his work in the mid-1930s, they are mostly recorded in photographs (displayed nearby). This example places a fountain in a rural landscape and recalls Nash's statement in his article, 'Swanage or Seaside Surrealism', that 'a statue in a street or some place where it would normally be found is just a statue, as it were, in its right mind; but a statue in a ditch or in the middle of a ploughed field is then an object in a state of surrealism.'

The Murray Family Collection

ARCHIVE CASE (exhibits clockwise)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Dorset, A Shell Guide 1936

Tate Library and Archive, and Tate Library

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

'Swanage, or Seaside Surrealism'

Architectural Review April 1936

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

Typescript of a Letter from Paul Nash to Dudley Tooth
November 1943
Ink on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH
1889–1946
Marsh Personage 1934, printed 2016
Photograph, digital print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH
1889–1946
Lon Gom Pa c.1936, printed 2016
Photograph, digital print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH
1889–1946
A Found Object, Mineral Kingdom, Vitreous Subject
1936, printed 2016
Photograph, digital print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

‘Swanage, or Seaside Surrealism’

The Painter’s Object 1937

edited by Myfanwy Evans

Tate Library

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life, A Chair Leg Beside Water 1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

P MORTON SHAND

‘Object and Landscape’

Country Life 3 June 1939

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

A Concrete Trough in a Field c.1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life on a car roof c.1934

Pencil and ink on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Poised Objects 1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life on Car Roof 1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life on Car Roof 1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life on Car Roof 1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer

Eileen Agar 1930s, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer

Photo Collage (The Wound of Love is Healed by Playing Me) c.1937

by Paul Nash

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Steps in a Field near Swanage c.1935, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Photo Collage (Empty Room) c.1936–7
by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Postcard of the Fossil Forest at Lulworth
Printed paper
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Photo Collage c.1937
by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Photo Collage (Sea Scrapper) c.1937
by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Sea Scrapper c.1937
by Paul Nash

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Ivory spindle
Ivory
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Untitled (Goodness How Sad) c.1937
by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Ivory brooch
Ivory and gold
Tate Library and Archive

Ivory card case
Ivory, black ink/paint, and thread
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Untitled (Victorian Paradox) c.1937
by Paul Nash

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Egyptian Hawk, Langley undated, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

Hull of a Toy Boat

Wood, metal and string

Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer

The Archer c.1936

by Paul Nash

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Archer, one of Nash's most important surrealist objects, was constructed from a child's wooden boat, a glass tube, a strip of metal bent in a curve between the base and the top of the boat, a twig and a piece of seaweed on a wooden base. The curved metal strip suggested a bow, and the elements appeared to be held in tension as if about to shoot.

Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer

Paul Nash viewing Moon Aviary through tinted glass

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

This photograph shows Nash's sculpture *Moon Aviary* at the *Surrealist Objects and Poems* exhibition in 1937, where a blue glass mask was provided to view the work, and to create the effect of moonlight. The object was thought lost for many years, and since this photograph was taken, the small stone balanced on the left of the framework has been replaced by the wooden triangle in front of the sculpture.

Tate Library and Archive, and The Murray Family
Collection

Surrealist Objects and Poems

Exhibition catalogue, London Gallery, November 1937

Although Nash's writings focused on his use of natural found objects, he also made constructions from combinations of natural and man-made objects between 1936 and 1938. Many were shown in the *Surrealist*

Objects and Poems exhibition at the London Gallery in November 1937 which was inspired by a show of surrealist objects in Paris the previous year. Nash had a small collection of ivory hands and other found objects which he incorporated into several constructions and paintings in this period. Although most of Nash's surrealist objects were dismantled, some of them are documented in photographs (displayed nearby).

Tate Library and Archive, and The Murray Family Collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

'The Life of the Inanimate Object'

Country Life 1 May 1937

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Stone Forest 1937

Watercolour, pencil and black chalk on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Group for a Sculptor 1931

Watercolour, pencil and chalk on paper

In the early 1930s, Nash began collecting natural objects and thinking of them in formal terms. In this drawing, which he gave to Henry Moore, he juxtaposed natural and man-made found objects, introducing a theme that was to become fundamental to his work. Moore wrote in 1934: 'I have found principles of form and rhythm from the study of natural objects such as pebbles, rocks, bones, trees, plants etc.', and *Group for a Sculptor* acknowledges the two artists' shared interests in the 1930s. Nash exchanged this drawing for a small wooden sculpture of a standing female figure by Moore.

Henry Moore Family Collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Nest of the Wild Stones 1937

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Nash worked both with the innate qualities of found objects and assembled and associated them to solve what he called a 'personal equation'. This personal

equation balanced 'irrational' surrealist ideas of chance discovery and the conscious process of the subsequent arrangement or 'poise' of the found objects. Nash described this drawing as 'a good example of the pictorial application of the theory of the life of inanimate objects'. Although he was interested that the round stones resembled eggs and the upright ones birds about to fly, he also insisted that they were always simultaneously both stones and birds.

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wood on the Hill 1937

Watercolour and graphite on paper

This drawing recalls Nash's early drawings of the Wittenham Clumps and demonstrates his interest in surrealist theories of metamorphosis, unsettlingly retaining the appearance of huge human hands while simultaneously acting as equivalents for trees.

Private collection

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

The Reaper 1938

Gouache and leaf on paper

This collage exploring the passage of time and seasonal cycles combines a pressed leaf with a gouache drawing. Agar later explained its meaning: 'The whole watercolour was intended to suggest a symbolic reaper with the flailing movement of the scythe-like concentric forms. The title indeed relates to time, the seasons and especially death of the Great Reaper. The dead leaf being the hub of the whole.'

Tate. Purchased 1976

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Untitled (Box) 1935

Mixed media

This assemblage combines coral, a sea horse and net fabric to suggest an underwater world watched over by the Eye of Horus, an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection. Agar wrote about the role of found objects in her work: 'the found object has a special significance for me, for the selection of one particular thing from amongst a host of others, whether stones or bones, has often provided the solution to a creative problem, or provoked its own separate inspiration.'

The Murray Family Collection

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Collage Head 1937

Collage on paper

The Murray Family Collection

ARCHIVE CASE (top shelf left to right)

Unknown photographer

Untitled (Desert Bird) c.1937

by Paul Nash

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

JOHN PIPER

1903–1992

The Nest of the Wild Stones

found and arranged by Paul Nash 1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Bum and Thumb Rock, Ploumanach

July 1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Agar was inspired by found objects in the landscape such as the rocks at Ploumanach in Brittany which, like megaliths for Nash, had a magical potential and she characterised them as having a life-force of their own as 'prehistoric monsters'. She wrote of Ploumanach:

'Before us were the most fantastic rocks. They lay like enormous prehistoric monsters sleeping on the turf above the sea: a great buttock ending in a huge thumb, or a gigantic head tuned with organ pipes, a crowd, or a foot rearing up like a dolmen, all sculpted by the sea, that master-worker of all time.'

Tate Archive and Library

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

'Le Lapin', Ploumanach

July 1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life: Flints on a Door Mat c.1936, printed 2016
Photograph, digital print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

ARCHIVE CASE (plinth left to right)

Unknown photographer
Untitled (Found Object Interpreted (Seaweed and Cork))
c. 1937 by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
The Bark is Worse than the Bite c. 1936
by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

Unknown photographer
Untitled (Found Objects Interpreted/ Encounter of the Wild Horns) by Paul Nash
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Collage for Moores 1940

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

Scrapbook of shells and molluscs

Tate Library and Archive

Antler

Bone

Tate Library and Archive

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Object (3)

Acrylic paint or felt tip pen on stone, bone and string

Object (4)

Shells

Object (1)

Shell and wood

Object (5)

Bone and stone

Tate Library and Archive

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Marine Object 1939

Terracotta, horn, bone and shells

Tate. Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1990

EILEEN AGAR

1899–1991

Ladybird 1936

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, and gouache

Ladybird, based on a portrait in which Agar wears a clear plastic cape, is an example of her creative manipulation of photographs. Here, through overpainting, she has created a decorative cloak for the figure that resembles the patterned wing-cases of the ladybird.

The Murray Family Collection

GALLERY 2 (exhibits clockwise)

5. ROOM AND BOOK

‘Furniture such as couches, chairs, bookcases and tables ... involve planes, horizontal, vertical and inclined, angles, right, acute and obtuse, directions, divisions, dimensions and recessions; contrasts of masses, light and shade – in fact, the basic material for creating the structural harmony.’

— Paul Nash, *Room and Book*, 1932

The still life in an interior setting became an important subject for Nash from the mid-1920s and in 1927 he wrote: ‘still life fascinates me, nothing can be quite so absorbing or so fascinating to paint’. His work evolved from a naturalistic treatment of this theme to an exploration of the intersection of geometrical forms to create multiple perspectives. Nash began to explore cubist ideas of space and engage with abstraction and surrealism. His compositions of plant forms juxtaposed with mirrors, open windows and architectural structures explored the relationship between interior and exterior and between organic and architectural forms. Nash’s use of reflections, intersecting planes and multiple perspectives became increasingly abstract. He also began to depict arrangements of everyday objects, creating a mysterious proto-surrealist atmosphere from elements of observed reality combined in an unexpected

way. He exhibited several of these works in the exhibition *Recent Developments in British Painting*, held at Tooth's in October 1931 which positioned him as a member of the modern movement in Britain rather than a landscape painter. In the same year Nash worked on a major book project illustrating Sir Thomas Browne's philosophical discourses, *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, both of 1658.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Kinetic Feature 1931

Oil on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1965

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Swan Song 1929–30

Oil on canvas

Nash described *Swan Song* as his 'first surrealist landscape'. It is more surrealist in effect, and is as much a still life as a landscape painting, not attempting to situate the objects in naturalistic space. A different plane of vision is used for the group of trees, while the dead leaves and fungi are enlarged in scale, appearing to float and dance in space.

Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Lares 1929–30

Oil on canvas

In *Lares*, Nash incorporates the tools of his artistic activity (a T-square and a set square) in the foreground of the painting. Here he began to develop the theme of an opening from one space into another composed of architectural forms. These became increasingly abstract in works such as *Kinetic Feature* (displayed nearby) which was included in the *Recent Developments in British Painting* exhibition in 1931. The title of the painting alludes to the Roman gods of hearth and home.

Tate. Bequeathed by W.N. Sherratt 1980

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

St Pancras 1927

Oil on canvas

The Cheltenham Trust and Cheltenham Borough
Council

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Still Life with Bog Cotton 1926

Oil on canvas

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Nest of the Siren 1930

Oil on canvas

Nash saw the components of *Nest of the Siren* on a trip to Caen, Normandy, in June 1928. A painted wooden decoration from a pedlar's cart is placed in front of a window containing a potted plant and an empty bird's nest, creating an ambiguity between interior and exterior space. Nash creates a mysterious narrative with the shadow on the left cast by an unseen object or presence, recalling the work of Giorgio de Chirico.

GAC 6828. Lent by the UK Government Art Collection.

Purchased 1965

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Token 1929–30

Oil on canvas

This painting, combining objects from an artist's studio, is similar to the still lifes of Giorgio de Chirico, whose work Nash saw in 1928. The ivory card case with an engraved hand in the centre of this composition was part of a small collection of ivory hands which Nash used in his surrealist constructions of the late 1930s. It is shown in the corner archive case in the beginning of Gallery 2 with other objects from Nash's studio.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

ARCHIVE CASE (exhibits anticlockwise)

JULES TELLIER

1863–1889

Abd-er-Rahman in Paradise 1928

with illustrations by Paul Nash

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

1882–1974

Saint Hercules: and other stories 1927

with illustrations by Paul Nash

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts

MIKHAIL LERMONTOV

1814–1841

A song about Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch, his young body-guard and the valiant merchant Kalashnikov 1929

cover and illustrations by Paul Nash

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

1605–1682

Urne Buriall and the Garden of Cyrus 1932

with illustrations by Paul Nash

Printed paper

Nash was already familiar with the writings of 17th-century polymath Sir Thomas Browne when the proposal for a new edition came about. The two texts, 'Urne Buriall' and 'The Garden of Cyrus' had always been published together and for this Cassel and Co. edition, printed by Curwen, Nash contributed 32 drawings in chalk from which monotype collotypes were produced. They were coloured first in watercolour, then with stencils for the final prints. 'Urne Buriall' is a treatise on burial rites, prompted by the discovery of a number of sepulchral urns in 1658 in Walsingham, Norfolk. One of Nash's illustrations represented Browne's 'mansions of the dead' as 'airy habitations of the skies which sailed and swung from cloud to cloud', visited by souls which he conceived as 'winged creatures'. 'The Garden of

Cyrus' is a treatise investigating the common occurrence of the *quincunx* pattern in both nature and art, revealing an underlying geometric order to the world. Nash's illustrations both echo and embellish the ideas in the text. It is clear that he found Browne's blend of mysticism and natural science sympathetic to his own way of conceiving the landscape. Many of the motifs in this book, such as the serpent and sunflower, would appear in Nash's later paintings and the fusion of natural, geometric and mystical forms put forward in Browne's text was clearly something Nash sought to pursue in his own art.

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Pyramids in the Desert 1932

proof from Urne Buriall

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Story of the Phoenix 1932

proof from Urne Buriall

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Generations Pass 1932

proof from Urne Buriall

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

GALLERY 2 (exhibits clockwise)

6. UNIT ONE

‘Unit One may be said to stand for the expression of a truly contemporary spirit, for that thing which is recognised as peculiarly of to-day in painting, sculpture, and architecture.’

— Paul Nash, letter to *The Times*, 12 June 1933

Nash announced the foundation of Unit One in a letter to *The Times* in June 1933. The group of artists included John Armstrong, John Bigge, Edward Burra, Barbara Hepworth, Tristram Hillier, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore and Edward Wadsworth, with architects Wells Coates and Colin Lucas. The members of Unit One were broadly aligned with either abstract or surrealist positions, and Nash’s letter set out how the group was opposed to the dominant naturalist tendency in English art, and was interested instead in ‘design ... considered as a structural pursuit: imagination, explored apart from literature or metaphysics’. One of the group’s aims was to ensure that the members’ works could be seen alongside those artists with similar interests rather than in eclectic group shows. Unit One toured an influential exhibition in 1934–5, and the works exhibited here were shown in that exhibition. It took place when Nash was moving away from abstraction towards surrealism, and

the works he exhibited reflect this transitional moment. Unit One had disbanded by 1935, but for Nash it was important in publicly stating his commitment to international modernism and positioning himself alongside other leading British avant-garde artists.

JOHN BIGGE

1892–1973

Composition 1933

Oil paint on wood

Tate. Purchased 1980

EDWARD WADSWORTH

1889–1949

Dux et Comes I 1932

Tempera on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1969

BEN NICHOLSON

1894–1982

1933 (Six Circles) 1933

Oil on board

Nicholson created the first of his carved reliefs on 11 December 1933 in the Paris apartment of his first wife, Winifred Nicholson. It was during the same trip that the artist also completed *1933 (Six Circles)*, which he described at the time as 'about the best' of his recent work. It was shown at the Mayor Gallery *Unit One* exhibition in 1934 alongside the other works displayed here.

Private Collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Druid Landscape 1934

Oil on cardboard

This is one of several paintings inspired by the Avebury stone circles. Nash's statement in the *Unit One* book signalled this new direction in his art. He wrote: 'Last summer I walked in a field near Avebury where two rough monoliths stand up, sixteen feet high, miraculously patterned with black and orange lichen, remnants of the avenue of stones which led to the great circle. A mile away, a green pyramid casts a gigantic shadow. In the hedge, at hand, the white trumpet of a convolvulus turns from its spiral stem, following the sun. In my art I would solve such an equation.'

British Council Collection

JOHN ARMSTRONG

1893–1973

On the Balustrade 1933

Tempera on board

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums

EDWARD BURRA

1905–1976

Serpent's Egg 1934

Gouache on paper

The Museum of Gloucester

TRISTRAM HILLIER

1905–1983

Pylons 1933

Oil on canvas

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Northern Adventure 1929

Oil on canvas

Northern Adventure depicts the view from Nash's flat opposite St Pancras station. The wooden framework in the foreground is the back of an advertising hoarding, but Nash has transformed it into a fantastical structure. The station has also entered the realm of dreams as its architecture is disassembled; a detached window floats in space and an archway leads to an ambiguous dark space populated by geometric planes, recalling the metaphysical architecture of Giorgio de Chirico.

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections.
Purchased in 1953 with income from the Macdonald Bequest

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Voyages of the Moon 1934–7

Oil on canvas

The inspiration for this painting was the restaurant of the Hôtel du Port, Toulon, where Paul and Margaret Nash stayed with Edward Burra in 1930. The walls were entirely covered in mirrors that created a repeated reflection of the white globes of the ceiling lights. Nash adapted this phenomenon into an abstract composition where interior architecture dissolves into open sky and the lights (or moons) appear to recede into infinite space. The version of the painting Nash exhibited in

1934 when he was more concerned with abstraction, was titled *Formal Dream* and did not contain the 'real' globe of the moon.

Tate. Purchased 1951

ARCHIVE CASE

Unit One

Exhibition catalogue, Platt Hall, Manchester

23 June–22 July 1934

Tate Library

Unit One

Exhibition catalogue, The Mayor Gallery, London

1934

The Murray Family Collection

HERBERT READ

1893–1968

Unit One: The Modern Movement in English

Architecture, Painting and Sculpture 1934

The *Unit One* exhibition began at the Mayor Gallery in Cork Street, London, in April 1934 and went on tour

across the UK, receiving extensive press coverage. The book published to coincide with the exhibition had an introduction by Herbert Read alongside individual statements by the artists. Nash's personal statement reflected on English art and modernism, asking: 'To what extent has contemporary art in England a national character?'. His answer to this question was not to isolate an English tradition, but to explore how environment might shape the characteristics of an artwork that was still part of international modernism.

The Murray Family Collection

BARBARA HEPWORTH

1903–1975

Mother and Child 1934

Cumberland alabaster on marble base

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1993

HENRY MOORE

1898–1986

Composition 1933

Concrete

British Council Collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Coronilla 1929

Oil on canvas

Coronilla was based on Harold Monro's symbolist poem in which a flower acts as a femme fatale, trapping and killing its victim in a shuttered room. This painting was made at a moment when Nash was experimenting with abstraction and cubist ideas of space through interlocking abstracted planes in shallow space. His exploration of pure abstraction is undercut here by the poetic subject and the representational plant forms.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

GALLERY 2

7. THE INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST EXHIBITION

‘The divisions we may hold between night and day – waking world and that of the dream, reality and the other thing, do not hold. They are penetrable, they are porous, translucent, transparent; in a word they are not there.’

— Paul Nash, ‘Dreams’, undated typescript, Tate Archive

Nash’s work had been aligned with surrealism since the early 1930s through his dream-like interiors and landscapes, and his interest in found objects. He was closely involved with the organisation of the *International Surrealist Exhibition* held at the Burlington Galleries in London in June 1936. All the leading continental European surrealist artists participated including André Breton, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Man Ray, Joan Miró, Yves Tanguy and other prominent artists such as Giorgio de Chirico, Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso who were then associated with the movement. The exhibition also showed the work of an emerging surrealist group in England including Eileen Agar, John Banting, Edward Burra, Merlyn Evans, David Gascoyne, Humphrey Jennings, Henry Moore and Julian Trevelyan. Nash was a member of the hanging committee for the exhibition and the range of works he exhibited, including

paintings, photo-collages and found objects, reflected the increasing impact of surrealist ideas and methods on his work. The exhibition had extensive press coverage and attracted around 23,000 visitors. This exposure reinforced public perceptions of Nash as a surrealist artist and showed his work in an international context.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Mansions of the Dead 1932

Watercolour and graphite on paper

This watercolour was originally made as an illustration to Sir Thomas Browne's 'Urne Buriall', but Nash created a larger oil version entitled *Aerial Composition* which he exhibited at the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in 1936. Nash's earlier interest in the supernatural was highly compatible with surrealism's use of dreams. His concept of an aerial construction which was visited by the souls of the dead had connections with other works in that show, such as Alberto's Giacometti's sculpture *The Palace at 4 a.m.* (1932, now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York) which combines a wooden framework with small symbolic objects.

Tate. Purchased 1981

ARCHIVE CASE (top shelf left to right)

Catalogue for the *International Surrealist Exhibition* at
the New Burlington Galleries, London
11 June–4 July 1936
Tate Library and Archive

Catalogue for the *International Surrealist Exhibition* at
the New Burlington Galleries, London
11 June–4 July 1936
Facsimile
Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH
1889–1946
Typescript of The Surrealist Object Explained
Undated
Tate Library and Archive

ANDRÉ BRETON
1896–1966
What is Surrealism? 1936
translated by David Gascoyne
Tate Library

International Surrealist Bulletin
no.4 1936
Tate Library and Archive

Plinth left to right

HERBERT READ
1893–1968
Surrealism 1936
Tate Library and Archive

Installation photograph of the *International Surrealist Exhibition* at the New Burlington Galleries, London
1936
Photograph, digital print on paper
Penrose Archive

Large Room V
Installation photograph of the *International Surrealist Exhibition* at the New Burlington Galleries, London
1936

This photograph shows Nash's *Harbour and Room* and *Aerial Composition (Mansions of the Dead)* alongside works by André Breton, Edward Burra, Giorgio de

Chirico, Max Ernst, André Masson, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Roland Penrose and Yves Tanguy.
Penrose Archive

DAVID GASCOYNE

1916–2001

A Short Survey of Surrealism 1935

Private Collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Typescript of 'On Dreams' undated

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape at Large 1936

Paper, pine and shale on paper

Nash first showed his work with found objects at the *International Surrealist Exhibition*. His earliest found object, *Marsh Personage*, was mounted on a plinth and displayed as *Found Object Interpreted (Vegetable Kingdom)*. He also exhibited *Landscape at Large*, one of a group of collages he made in 1936–8 in which real

objects were used pictorially. The title suggests an abstract landscape, with the shape of the bark indicating perspective, and the texture and patterns of the materials making the features. The 'at Large', although not explained by the artist, may have its usual meaning of 'at liberty'.

Tate. Purchased 1986

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Harbour and Room 1932–6

Oil on canvas

The composition of *Harbour and Room* was inspired by Nash seeing the reflection of a ship in the large mirror of his room at the Hôtel du Port at Toulon. This unexpected visual incursion led him to imagine how the sea might flow into the room and a ship sail in. The painting was started in 1932 when Nash became interested in how 'the release of dream' could expand his work, and was completed for the *International Surrealist Exhibition*, where its dreamlike architecture and interpenetration of elements echoed the work of Giorgio de Chirico and Max Ernst.

Tate. Purchased 1981

GALLERY 3 (exhibits anticlockwise)

8. UNSEEN LANDSCAPES

‘The landscapes I have in mind are not part of the unseen world in a psychic sense, nor are they part of the Unconscious. They belong to the world that lies, visibly, about us. They are unseen merely because they are not perceived.’

— Paul Nash, ‘Unseen Landscapes’, *Country Life*, May 1938

Nash’s experiments with found objects and photography helped him develop a new approach to landscape. No longer symbolic figure equivalents, objects were now present in the landscape in their own right and animated his paintings by the drama of their encounter with the landscape and with each other in what Nash described as an ‘imaginative event’. Nash also explored the mysterious ancient power of megaliths, and the dramatic potential of using abstract equivalents for the standing stones to emphasise their formal qualities and increase the incongruous effect of their presence in the landscape. His concept of ‘unseen landscapes’, in which the artist made visible what had previously been overlooked, enabled him to draw on surrealist ideas to interpret the British landscape. After his participation in the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London in 1936, Nash painted some of his most intensely surrealist

landscapes in which reality and dream co-existed. These fantastic environments were created from irrational juxtapositions of observed places and objects. The concept of the 'object-personage' also remained important to Nash, particularly in his *Monster Field* series in which he created a narrative around the monstrous personalities of a group of fallen trees.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

February 1929

Oil on canvas

In 1937, reflecting on his transition from naturalistic landscape to the increasing use of symbolic objects, Nash wrote: 'the landscape, as a scene, ceased to be absorbing. Some drama of beings after all seemed to be necessary.' In *February* and *Landscape at Iden* (displayed nearby) objects take the place of figures. In both, Nash uses cut trees as a symbol of death. The title refers to the death of his father in February 1929, and the imagery of a billhook embedded in a tree stump is unusually violent in conveying the emotional effect this event had on Nash.

Private collection

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape at Iden 1929

Oil on canvas

The dramatic perspective and strange juxtaposition of rustic objects create a sense of the uncanny in this landscape which show the influence of Giorgio de Chirico. Nash reflects on the aftermath of the First World War; the pile of logs suggests the bodies of fallen soldiers and the snake may be a reference to the *Caduceus* (a rod with intertwined serpents) held by Mercury when accompanying the dead to the underworld. Nash also imposes a geometric order on the landscape which gives it the feeling of a stage set, arranging the fences, woodpile and lines of trees with converging diagonals.

Tate. Purchased 1939

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Objects in Relation 1935

Oil on board

The composition of *Equivalents for the Megaliths* (displayed nearby) had partly evolved from Nash's experiments with small geometric objects, which he

juxtaposed in different combinations in a series of photographs. *Objects in Relation* takes this idea a stage further by placing the geometric objects themselves in a landscape rather than making them into equivalents for the standing stones, yet still exploring the formal relationship between vertical forms and horizontal landscape features.

St. Paul's School, London

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Equivalents for the Megaliths 1935

Oil on canvas

Equivalents for the Megaliths was painted when Nash was thinking about the relationship of his work to abstraction. Wishing to avoid complete abstraction, he instead created 'equivalents' for the standing stones by simplifying them to their essential 'prone or upright' forms. By replacing the stones with geometric equivalents, Nash also created a disparity between landscape setting and abstract object that proposed two simultaneous versions of reality. He created a fresh encounter with these familiar but mysterious objects, retaining their dramatic presence in the landscape, but allowing the viewer to experience their incongruity as if for the first time.

Tate. Purchased 1970

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field Study II 1939

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil on paper
The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of
Cambridge

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field Study I 1939

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil on paper

Nash's watercolours of the 'Monster Field elms' placed them in new landscape settings and heightened their animate character, reducing their contact with the ground so that they seem almost airborne. In the article 'Monster Field' (1946) he likened one of them to the 'sightless couriers of the air', airborne horses in William Blake's *Pity* (1795, Tate), themselves derived from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, writing: 'In the new life their roots and trunks formed throat and head. The uplifted arms had become great legs and hoofs outstretched in mad career.'

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of
Cambridge

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field 1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

In June 1938 Nash visited his friend Clare Neilson at Madams near Upleadon in Gloucestershire. They discovered a field near Carswalls Manor Farm with two fallen elms that had been struck by lightning. These trees immediately caught Nash's imagination and he made a series of works, constructing a narrative around them which was published as the article 'Monster Field'. He described how they had been transformed by their violent fate: 'If they had been no more than trees in their perpendicular life it was as much as you could believe. Horizontally they had assumed or acquired the personality of monsters.'

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field 1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field 1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Monster Field 1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

YELLOW WALL (right to left)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Nocturnal Landscape 1938

Oil on canvas

Nocturnal Landscape revisits the night landscape of Nash's early drawings but here it is populated with monstrous white biomorphic forms. One of these is related to the fragment of antler that Nash had regularly used in compositions. The Cornish Neolithic monument

Mên-an-Tol can be clearly identified in the background. Nash also described this painting as 'influenced by the conditions of Dream'.

Manchester City Galleries

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Circle of the Monoliths 1937–8

Oil on canvas

Nash's later Avebury paintings fused contrasting landscapes, creating a dreamlike environment where the sea invades the land and the vertical forms of the monoliths are echoed by chalk cliffs and waterspouts. Nash described this as 'a picture of the kind of dream that might come to a sleeper who had lately spent hours on the shore of Swanage Bay ... and not long before the dreamer had walked in a field near Avebury and wondered at the strangely patterned megaliths that stood up here and there between the hedges. Perhaps each place made a very deep impression, deeper than he knew.'

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape from a Dream 1936–8

Oil on canvas

Nash's composition creates alternate realities through geometric structures, reflections and shifts in colour. The viewer looks through the folding screen to the Dorset coast, while the hawk looks into a mirror showing a sunset landscape in which it sees both, its own reflection and itself in flight. Roland Penrose described the unsettling effect: 'A bird watches itself in a glass, waiting for the image to move so as to know which is really alive, itself or the image. This is just what has happened with the images of Paul Nash, they have moved, asserting their independent life.'

Tate. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1946

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Event on the Downs 1934

Oil on canvas

This is one of Nash's first paintings to combine found objects in a landscape setting. The tree stump and tennis ball juxtaposed in this coastal landscape had already been included in separate photographic still life

compositions. Enlarged and placed in a landscape setting, these small objects acquired a monumental presence and their meeting suggests a mysterious imaginative event. Nash admired Giorgio de Chirico's use of isolated objects in architectural settings to create an uncanny narrative, and wrote in 1931: 'He has, in his best moments, an extraordinary power to make things happen in a picture.'

GAC 8536. Lent by the UK Government Art Collection.
Purchased 1969

ARCHIVE CASE (left to right)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Fertile Image 1951

edited by Margaret Nash

Tate Library

Monster Field, A Discovery Recorded by Paul Nash
1946

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Unseen Landscapes, *Country Life* 21 May 1938

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library

GALLERY 3 (exhibits clockwise)

9. AERIAL CREATURES

‘When the War came, suddenly the sky was upon us all like a huge hawk hovering, threatening. Everyone was searching the sky waiting for some terror to fall; I was hunting the sky for what I most dreaded in my own imagining. It was a white flower ... the rose of death, the name the Spaniards gave to the parachute.’

— Paul Nash, ‘Aerial Flowers’, 1945

Nash left London for Oxford in August 1939, just before the outbreak of war. He was appointed as an official war artist by the War Artists’ Advisory Committee in March 1940. While working for the Air Ministry he painted a series of watercolours of crashed German bombers which appealed to him because they were out of their natural element in the clouds. He described how, on the ground, these fallen giants took on a personified quality as monstrous creatures in the same way as fallen trees had done in his *Monster Field* series of 1939. He was

also inspired by the piles of crashed planes at the Cowley Dump near Oxford, taking numerous photographs of them which he used as the basis of the painting *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*. In this work he drew on surrealist ideas of metamorphosis to transform the twisted mass of crashed planes into the waves of a metal sea. His observation of aerial combat triggered both fear and new pictorial ideas and, at a time when his health was failing, he became obsessed with the idea of death as an airborne force which he explored in *Battle of Germany*.

FILM

JILL CRAIGIE

1911–1999

Out of Chaos 1944

Film, 35mm, transferred to digital
excerpt, 2 min 38 sec

Out of Chaos was the first film Jill Craigie directed. It features artists including Paul Nash, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Stanley Spencer, all of whom were official war artists during the Second World War, a scheme run by Kenneth Clark, Chair of the War Artists' Advisory Committee, who appears elsewhere in the film. This excerpt shows Nash sketching the wrecked aeroplanes at Cowley Dump in Oxfordshire.

ITN Source

YELLOW WALL (left to right)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Messerschmitt in Windsor Great Park 1940

Watercolour, pastel and graphite on paper

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee
1946

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Bomber in the Corn 1940

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee
1946

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Cowley Dump 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

In 1940 Nash visited the salvage dump for wrecked German and British aircrafts at Cowley, near Oxford. He

wrote to Kenneth Clark: 'It is metal piled up, wreckage. It is hundreds of flying creatures which invaded these shores ... By moonlight one could swear they began to move and twist and turn as they did in the air.' He took numerous photographs which he considered important in their own right, describing them to his friend Hartley Ramsden as 'rather extraordinary, but no one understands how photography can be used except as a method of cheating'.

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wrecked Aircraft, Cowley Dump 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wrecked Aeroplane, Cowley Dump 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

The Cowley Dump 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Cowley Dump 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Wrecked Aeroplanes, Cowley Dump, Trees in the Distance 1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive

PINK WALL (left to right)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Battle of Germany 1944

Oil on canvas

This scene of aerial bombardment at night is the most abstract of Nash's war paintings. The left half of the image represents the waiting city and the right depicts the bombardment. Nash described how 'forms are used quite arbitrarily and colours by a kind of chromatic percussion ... to suggest explosion and detonation'. In the central foreground the group of floating discs represents parachutes. Nash was struck by the Spanish term 'rose of death' for parachutes. *Battle of Germany* was painted in the same year as he began his series of 'Aerial Flowers' displayed in the next section.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Totes Meer (Dead Sea) 1940–1

Oil on canvas

Nash transformed the piled-up wreckage of aircraft that he had photographed at the Cowley Dump into 'a great inundating sea', drawing on surrealist ideas of metamorphosis of materials. He created an uncanny atmosphere by setting the scene at night and including a solitary owl in flight. Nash described the subject of the painting as 'a vast tide moving across the fields, the breakers rearing up and crashing on the plain. And then, no: nothing moves, it is not water or even ice, it is

something static and dead. It is metal piled up, wreckage.'

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee
1946

GALLERY 3

10. EQUINOX

'Everything I am thinking of and imagining now tends towards objects poised, floating or propelled through the middle and upper air, earth, the spaces of the skies and the miraculous cloudscapes that constantly form, change and disappear. ... I have become increasingly absorbed in the study of light and the drama of the great luminaries. Particularly the moon and her influence upon all nocturnal objects.'

— Paul Nash, letter to Dudley Tooth, 1943

In 1942 Nash returned to the landscape of the Wittenham Clumps. From the garden of his friend Hilda Harrison's house at Boars Hill near Oxford, he could see the Clumps in the distance beyond Bagley Wood. He described how the deep history of this place with its hill fort, long barrows and ancient forest gave it 'a compelling magic'. This was also a landscape of the imagination in which Nash explored the mystic

resonance of moments marking the changing seasons such as the spring equinox and the summer solstice, and ancient rituals connected to them. The sun and moon were significant symbolic presences in a series of paintings in which Nash's handling became looser and he used rich vibrant colour to convey his emotional response to the landscape. His final paintings revisited ideas of the soul as a floating presence in the sky, now expressed through the imagery of airborne flowers as precursors of death. Reflecting on his own mortality, he concluded the essay 'Aerial Flowers' (1945) by saying: 'it is death I have been writing about all this time ... death, I believe, is the only solution to this problem of how to be able to fly'.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Pillar and Moon 1932–42

Oil on canvas

Nash described how this painting was based on 'the mystical association of two objects which inhabit different elements and have no apparent relation in life ... The pale stone sphere on top of a ruined pillar faces its counterpart the moon, cold and pale and solid as stone.' Begun in 1932, the relationship between pillar and moon recalls his use of 'equivalents' linking the formal qualities of objects. By 1942, when he finished

the painting, Nash had embarked on a series of works exploring the phases of the moon.

Tate. Presented by the Art Fund 1942

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

November Moon 1942

Oil on canvas

Nash explored the effect of different phases of the moon on the night landscape creating an atmosphere of mystery and enchantment. *November Moon* has a melancholy mood, focusing on the garden at Boar's Hill suffused with the pale ghostly light from the half-moon. Its form echoed by the underside of the mushroom in the foreground, which suggests themes of decay and death. *Landscape of the Moon's Last Phase* (displayed nearby) looks beyond the garden to the Wittenham Clumps, lit dramatically with the rich golden light from a huge almost full moon which Nash described as 'very full blown and frightening.'

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Michaelmas Landscape 1943

Oil on canvas

Nash was interested in marking the effect of the changing seasons on the Wittenham Clumps landscape. In *Michaelmas Landscape* he portrays it at a specific time of year, 29 September, the feast of St Michael that traditionally marked the end of the harvest season. Rich ochres and browns convey the autumnal scene, while in *Landscape of the Brown Fungus* (displayed nearby) the cooler pale green and grey tones resemble those of *November Moon* (displayed nearby), which shares the motif of fungi in the foreground of the scene.

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape of the Brown Fungus 1943

Oil on canvas

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape of the Vernal Equinox (III) 1944

Oil on canvas

The vernal or spring equinox is the time of year when day and night are of equal duration and accordingly Nash's landscape is divided into two parts, one lit by the rising moon painted in cool blue tones, and the other suffused by the rich pink and gold light of the setting sun. Nash described this painting as 'a landscape of the imagination' which had evolved both from 'a personal interpretation of the phenomenon of the equinox', and from 'the inspiration derived from an actual place'.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Landscape of the Moon's Last Phase 1944

Oil on canvas

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery.

Presented to the Walker Art Gallery by the

Contemporary Art Society in 1949

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Flight of the Magnolia 1944

Oil on canvas

While visiting Dorset in September 1943, Nash both drew a magnolia blossom and saw an unusual cloud formation. He combined these elements in the image of an unfurling magnolia blossom in flight. This is one of a series of paintings of 'aerial flowers' that Nash made in 1944 and 1945. The floating white flower recalls Nash's observations on the 'rose of death', the evocative Spanish name for a parachute. It also links to the artist's preoccupation with death as an airborne force in the 1940s, when his health was poor and he was coming to terms with his own mortality.

PAUL NASH

1889–1946

Eclipse of the Sunflower 1945

Oil on canvas

In 1945 Nash embarked on a final sequence of paintings exploring the relationship between the sun and the sunflower which he saw as its terrestrial equivalent. Nash wrote: 'the withered flowerhead is the ghost of the flower in eclipse or just another sunflower time has destroyed and the tempest has torn up and scattered over the water.'

British Council Collection

PAUL NASH EVENTS PROGRAMME (BOOKING ESSENTIAL)

Evening Lecture

Paul Nash: Imagined Landscapes

Emma Chambers, Curator of Modern British Art, Tate

Thursday, 18 May 6–7pm

Paul Nash is perhaps best known as a war artist, but he also shaped our experience of landscapes, through his paintings of the Kent and Dorset coasts, the Chilterns and Sussex Downs, and explorations of England's ancient past at Avebury. These landscapes were not merely observed places but also provided a stage for investigating supernatural forces and dreams through symbolism and surrealism. This talk will examine Nash's approach to landscape: from early drawings exploring the dreamlike atmosphere of the moonlit landscape, to surrealist landscapes in which reality and dream co-existed, to late paintings of the Wittenham Clumps, described as a 'landscape of the imagination'.

Workshop: Un-pick – Un-ravel – Re-form

Kimberley Foster

Friday, 2 June 10.30–4.30pm

This object-based workshop, inspired by Kimberley's practice, will investigate how the identities of objects can

shift through material manipulation. Inspired by Paul Nash, we will explore the potential of the everyday object by joining, unpicking, mapping, repeating, mirroring, locating and fixing. How can the ordinary become extraordinary through thoughtful making techniques? This session will focus on the transformation of participants' own and provided objects to generate a series of images and forms – a new body of work. Booking essential.

Paul Nash Artists' Study Afternoon
Friday, 9 June 1–4pm

Dr Rachel Smith, Assistant Curator of Modern British Art at Tate, will chair a discursive afternoon with artists Claire Bayliss, Desmond Brett and Nicholas Brooks to reflect on the different ways they have worked from, or in response to, Paul Nash. Thursday Lunchtime Talks
Gain a different perspective on Paul Nash with our lunchtime talks, given by contributors from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Study Afternoon: We are making a new world
Friday, 7 July 1–4pm

Join artists Jane and Louise Wilson, Michaela Crimmin, Co-Director of Culture+Conflict and Tutor at the Royal

College of Art, Julian Stallabrass, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art, Courtauld Institute of Art and Dr Alisa Miller, King's College London, to explore representations of conflict, and the artist's role in shaping perceptions of war.

Tours of Paul Nash Exhibition

Tuesday to Friday 3pm

Explore the Paul Nash exhibition during a 45 minute tour with one of our volunteer guides.

Thursday Lunchtime Talks

Gain a different perspective on Paul Nash with our lunchtime talks, given by contributors from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Lives of Objects

Alexandra Woodall, Head of Learning, Sainsbury Centre
Thursday 27 April 1.15–1.45pm

Paul Nash Photographs

Hugh Pilkington, Curator
Thursday 4 May 1.15–1.45pm

Paul Nash, Eileen Agar and Surrealism

Ghislaine Wood, Deputy Director, Sainsbury Centre
Thursday 11 May 1.15–1.45pm