

Press Release

Paul Nash

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
8 April 2017 – 20 August 2017



The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich launches its 2017 exhibition programme with Paul Nash, the largest exhibition of the artist's work for many years. Organised by Tate Britain the exhibition spans a lifetime's work from Nash's earliest drawings to his iconic war-time paintings.

Paul Nash (1889–1946) is regarded as one of the most important British artists of the first half of the twentieth century. Renowned as an official war artist in both the First and Second World Wars, Nash developed a powerful symbolic language showing the impact of war through the destruction of landscape. In the 1920s he became fascinated with the landscapes of Southern Britain, and responded both to the specific qualities of these landscapes and also the feeling and memories they prompted, as illustrated in *The Shore* (1923) and *The Rye Marshes* (1932). His interest in landscapes provided a stage for his engagements with abstract and surrealist ideas later in his life.

The exhibition examines Nash's work in an international context and considers his position at the forefront of developments in British modern art. In the 1930s and 1940s Nash's experiments in photography, collage, and painting often involved juxtapositions of found objects and landscapes. He worked closely with Eileen Agar during these years and materials from Agar's archive will be shown alongside Nash's work to explore these connections.

Nash was a founding member of Unit One, the British modernist group of painters, sculptors and architects, including Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Henry Moore. The display will explore Nash's contribution to major exhibitions of the 1930s, referencing the Unit One touring exhibition (1934–5) and the International Surrealist Exhibition in London (1936).

Some of Nash's most iconic war-time works will be featured in the exhibition, including *We Are Making a New World* (1918), *The Menin Road* (1919) and *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*, 1941 depicting the wrecked and twisted remains of planes at Cowley as the waves of a metal sea. The latter work is especially poignant as the region marks the 75th anniversary of the "Friendly Invasion" when the East of England welcomed hundreds of thousands of American airmen.

The artist had a connection and affinity to the region with his brother John living in the Stour Valley. A trip to Mundesley in North Norfolk to visit Claughton Pellew-Harvey in 1912 provided inspiration and an increased feeling for nature. Nash recalled afterwards "We walked in a landscape entirely new to my eyes, flat and chequered, with all the trees slanting one way, their branches welded together in tortuous forms by the relentless winds." The exhibition includes the enigmatic *The Cliff to the North* which was produced after this visit.

The exhibition also includes four Fine Press books illustrated by the artist from the Sainsbury Centre's collections as well as illustrations for *Urne Buriall and the Garden of Cyrus*, a treatise on burial rites by Sir Thomas Browne prompted by the discovery in 1658 of a number of sepulchral urns discovered in Walsingham, Norfolk.

The exhibition is curated by Emma Chambers, Curator, Modern British Art and Inga Fraser, Assistant Curator, Modern British Art at Tate Britain. The exhibition is organised by Tate Britain in association with the Sainsbury Centre and the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. It will tour to the Laing Art Gallery in September following its display at the Sainsbury Centre.

ENDS

Events Programme

A dedicated events programme will accompany the exhibition and will be announced in April. Just confirmed is a special lecture, 'Paul Nash: Imagined Landscapes' with Emma Chambers, Curator, Modern British Art, Tate Britain on Thursday 18 May.

18 May

£8/£6 concessions

Tickets:

http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase?agency=SAINSBURYVISUAL&organ_val=45769&percode=0D5B01&perbsubcode=2017

Paul Nash is perhaps best known as a war artist who painted some of the most powerful works of the First World War, but he also shaped our experience of the landscapes of Southern England, through his paintings of the Kent and Dorset coast, the Chilterns and Sussex downs and through his explorations of England's ancient past at Avebury. Throughout his career these landscapes were not merely observed places but also provided a stage for his investigations of supernatural forces and dreams through Symbolism and Surrealism. This lecture will explore how these ideas shaped his approach to landscape throughout his career, from his early drawings which explored the dream-like atmosphere of the moonlit night landscape, to surrealist landscapes in which reality and dream co-existed, and his late paintings of the Wittenham Clumps which Nash described as a 'landscape of the imagination'.

Listings Information:

Paul Nash

8 April – 20 August 2017

£12/£10.50 concessions

Free for Sainsbury Centre Members and Sainsbury Centre Student Members

Tickets:

http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase?agency=SAINSBURYVISUAL&organ_val=45769&event_val=0D43&schedule=list

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Notes to editors:

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts

The Sainsbury Centre is one of the most important public university art museums in the UK. It is situated on the campus of the University of East Anglia, Norwich.

It opened in 1978 after Robert and Lisa Sainsbury had donated their art collection to the University. The museum is situated in an extraordinary building designed by Norman Foster which was his first major public work. The Collection includes works dating from prehistory to the late twentieth century from across the globe. A significant number of works by masters of acknowledged European modern art such as Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Alberto Giacometti, Francis Bacon, Jacob Epstein, Henry Moore, Jean Arp, Chiam Soutine, and Amedeo Modigliani.

These works are displayed alongside major holdings of art from Oceania, Africa, the Americas, and Asia; the ancient Mediterranean, classical cultures of Egypt, Greece and Rome, Medieval Europe. Alongside these permanent collections, it hosts a range of major temporary exhibitions and is one of the largest exhibition venues outside of the capital.