

[After entering the gallery, turn to the first artwork displayed on wall to your left. View artworks in clockwise direction]

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Still Life, c.1931

Oil on canvas

Born into a working-class Wimbledon family, Rowe was awarded a place at the Royal College of Art (RCA), but – too challenging a character for the principal William Rothenstein – he left after two terms.

Before the Depression reduced opportunities for all young artists, Rowe had begun to make a name for himself as Clifford Hopper Rowe. Taking commercial design work to make ends meet, he met Misha Black, a quietly

charismatic young designer. In late 1933 their friendship would become crucial to the formation of the AIA.

Salford Museum & Art Gallery

Fox Photos photographer

Mr Rowe and Mr Dunlop, two masked artists, 1927

Facsimile

Rowe had previously met Ronald Ossory Dunlop at Wimbledon Art College and joined the short-lived Emotionist Group which he established at the Hurricane Lamp Gallery.

The Emotionists published a poetry journal and hosted an informal discussion salon at Cheyne Walk. This included the writer George Bernard Shaw and actors Peggy Ashcroft and Sybil Thorndike.

A would-be challenger to the Mayfair gallery world, the group dissolved in 1928 despite its flair for promotion.

Getty Images

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Portrait of Aldous Huxley, c.1931

Oil on canvas

This newly identified portrait of Aldous Huxley, who Rowe probably first met in Cheyne Walk, was painted when the writer was working on *Brave New World*, a dystopian view of a futuristic hierarchical World State.

Close to the growing network of radical young artists, Huxley began his catalogue preface for the AIA's landmark 1935 Soho Square Exhibition: 'The work in this exhibition is shown as a protest against War and Fascism. Personally, I

should have preferred to “Fascism” the more general term
“dictatorship” (...) Good ends never justify bad means.’

Ron Heisler Collection

Percy Horton (1897–1970)

Portrait of Peggy Angus, 1930s

Oil on board

Peggy Angus was a fellow RCA student of Horton’s in the mid-1920s and had travelled to the USSR as part of a teaching union tour in summer 1932.

She returned enthused by the role visual artists were playing in children’s education, adult literacy campaigns and popular culture. She brought back a collection of mass-produced books utilising colour lithography which was much admired by her RCA contemporaries.

In 1939 lithography would become central to the AIA Everyman Prints series intended to bring original art at affordable prices to a mass market. Angus was one of the first 20 artists to join the Artists International – London Section (the AIA's initial title) in autumn 1933.

Private Collection

Clive Branson (1907–1944)

Self-Portrait, c.1939

Oil on board

Branson studied at the Slade School of Art before abandoning painting for politics during the economic slump. In 1931 he met Noreen Browne, a musician. Marrying, they became involved in a wide range of community action in inner London.

After the outbreak of civil war in Spain, Branson acted as a London organiser for the International Brigade fighting in defence of the elected Republican Government. Under police surveillance, he left to fight in Spain himself, but was captured by fascist forces in April 1938.

Freed in a prisoner exchange that November, he returned to London and resumed painting. The landscape painting featured in the background is believed to depict countryside surrounding the Italian-run prison camp at Palencia, Castille-León.

Rosa Branson (MBE)

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Self-Portrait, 1948

Oil on canvas

Nan Youngman studied alongside Branson, joining the AIA after Felicia Browne, another Slade contemporary, became the first British volunteer to die in Spain. Helping to organise Browne's memorial exhibition, Youngman met Betty Rea, her future partner of 29 years.

Youngman was a talented children's art teacher, a highly active organiser of AIA exhibitions, a member of its Central Committee, and leader of the allied Society for Education in Art. In 1944 she became a pioneering County Arts Advisors, founding the nationwide Pictures for Schools initiative while continuing to develop as a painter over a long life.

Those who knew her well felt this self-portrait captured much of her essence: candid, questioning, totally committed to any task at hand.

Private Collection

Percy Horton (1897–1970)

Self-Portrait, 1950

Oil on board

Born to working-class parents in Brighton, Horton was arrested in 1916 as a conscientious objector while studying at the local art college. Brutal imprisonment followed, most of it spent in solitary confinement, leading to lifelong health problems.

In the 1920s Horton studied at the Royal College of Art with Ravilious, Bawden and Betty Rea, before becoming a

painting tutor there and at Crowndale Road Working Men's College in Camden.

A key member of the AIA from 1933 onwards, he became Ruskin Master of Art at Oxford University in 1949, retiring to Lewes in 1964. His last studio was in the Hunting Tower on the Firle Estate.

Liss Llewellyn

Edith Tudor-Hart (1908–1973)

Pearl Binder Sketching, c.1935 [Top]

Facsimile

Pearl Binder made the first of three pre-war visits to the USSR in 1933, eventually spending six months there in 1935–36 while writing and illustrating Misha and Masha, her book of Soviet Lives.

During her first visit she met Cliff Rowe, who was then approaching the end of an eighteen-month period working at Moscow's Foreign Workers Publishing Co-operative.

Rowe told her of his intention to form a new artists' organisation in Britain, where he would soon return. Struck by the active role artists were playing in Russia, and disillusioned by the art scene's irrelevance in Depression-era London, she readily agreed to support him.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Russian Railway Journey, 1935 [Bottom]

Lithograph

After moving from Manchester, Binder had learned lithography at London's Central School of Arts and Crafts while establishing herself as a freelance illustrator and an apprentice writer of note.

She almost certainly proofed this lithograph at the Central in the evening class led by her friend James Fitton. This had a young and loyal following, attracted to thrice-weekly sessions and a freewheeling mix of expert tuition and political discussion.

In September 1933 Binder brought news that Cliff Rowe had returned to London and most of those present

adjourned to Misha Black's rooms in Seven Dials, Covent Garden, to see what he had to say.

Private Collection

Margaret and James Fitton, c.1928

Facsimile [Top]

Margaret Fitton (née Cook), was born in Willesden in 1902.

While they were both studying at the Central, she met

James and they fell in love. From 1925–28 she worked as

an illustrator for the publisher Frederick Warne, while

painting mainly in oils. They married in 1927 and in 1933

became founder members of the new organisation.

Private Collection

James Fitton (1899-1982)

May Day, 1928 [Bottom]

Two-colour lithograph

Like Binder, James Fitton, the son of a black-listed trade unionist, had also made the move from inner Manchester to London. Leaving school at fourteen for insecure employment, he began attending classes at Manchester Art School where his best friend and constant companion was L.S. Lowry.

Arriving in London he worked as a commercial artist, exhibited paintings in group shows, and attended A.S. Hartrick's lithography class at the Central, taking over as its teacher in 1933.

This print of May Day, which possibly depicts events in Vienna during a workers' rising in 1927, was given to Pearl Binder by the artist.

Private Collection

Margaret Fitton (1902–1988)

Man in a Wicker Chair, c.1934

Oil on canvas

The subject is her husband reading at 10 Pond Cottages, Dulwich, where the couple moved after their marriage.

It was exhibited in Artists Against Fascism and War, the AIA's second exhibition, held at Soho Square in late 1935.

Margaret's subsequent contributions to further AIA exhibitions regularly attracted critical praise. In the

modern era, her work has been overlooked up to this point.

Private Collection

[Turn around 180° and move straight forwards to view artwork on opposite wall. Continue to view artworks moving along the wall leftwards/anticlockwise]

Edith Simon (1917–2003)

Edith and Inge, 1939

Pencil on paper

Edith Simon came to London from Berlin in 1932 after her Jewish family had chosen exile over persecution. While making ends meet colouring cartoon films and copy-

typing, she had started attending Fitton's lithography class.

At the Charlotte Street meeting, she heard Rowe speak, and witnessed the sense of optimism that accompanied the new organisation's formation: 'Can you imagine the upsurge of energy and will from the news that art could actually help to revolutionise society? (...) That thorough integration of art into everyday life must enhance the quality of both?'

It then fell to Edith to type out the organisation's chosen title – 'Artists International British Section' – on the typewriter pictured in this drawing of herself with her sister Inge.

Private Collection

[Text Panel]

The genesis of the AIA lay in two meetings held over a fortnight in late September – early October 1933. The first gathering took place by candlelight in twenty-three-year-old Misha Black's rooms above a Covent Garden shop. The young designer was about to move and the electricity had already been disconnected. Around a dozen were there to hear Cliff Rowe and Pearl Binder talk on the roles artists were taking on in Soviet society. Rowe was an eloquent advocate for artists to combine across national boundaries to defeat fascism's irrational hatreds.

The group reconvened in Charlotte Street with roughly twenty-five attending, including Edith Simon, a sixteen-year-old Expressionist painter who had been invited along for her keyboard skills. They were nearly all in their twenties and, with few exceptions, had suffered in the

slump; but just nine months after Hitler took power, they were already aware of an evil unfolding.

Black, who would not become Sir Misha until 1972, was elected chairman; mild in manner, amusing, sharp and strategic, he had a gift for generating consensus from conflicting views and would hold the post for eleven years.

Peter László Peri with his work ‘Water Between Houses (Space Construction No.1)’, Der Sturm Gallery, Berlin, c.1921

Facsimile

Two years after arriving in Berlin from Hungary, Peter László Peri exhibited over twenty works at Der Sturm Gallery in 1922, alongside the artist László Moholy-Nagy.

Peri's constructivist work was praised for revealing a 'strong architectural talent' and he subsequently pursued both architectural design and sculpture while working for the Berlin municipal government.

A member of the Association of Revolutionary Visual Artists, Peri actively opposed the rising Nazi tide but, in March 1933, threatened by the Gestapo, he and his English wife Mary Macnaghten had to flee.

With Simon and Hans Feibusch, Peri was one of at least three artists at the founding meetings of the AIA who could speak from experience about events in the Third Reich.

Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Top:

Space Construction 5, 1920–23

Bottom:

Space Construction 11, 1921

Photo-collages with painted additions

When he was forced into exile, Peri had to leave the overwhelming bulk of his early works behind in Berlin, nearly all of which were subsequently lost. The two examples exhibited here are rare survivors from his first decade's work as an artist.

Private Collection

Hans Feibusch (1898–1998)

The Horse Rider, 1936

Lithograph

Born in Munich, Feibusch was a painter, muralist, and lithographer who switched from medicine to art, before training in Berlin and Paris and settling in Frankfurt. Excluded from employment as a Jew, he moved to London in 1933 and began attending James Fitton's lithography classes. A founding member of the AIA, he helped define its internationalist and humanitarian outlook. In spring 1943 he provided one of 14 core works displayed in the 'Four Freedoms' room of the AIA's landmark For Liberty exhibition held on the John Lewis bomb site.

Ron Heisler Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

The Entrance to Gordon Square, c.1931 [Top]

Oil on board

James Boswell arrived at the Royal College of Art from Auckland in 1925, only to find it ‘provincial and awful (...) I was fascinated by modern painting but could find nobody to talk to about it.’

His great friend James Holland remembered the appearance of ‘a stockily built raw-boned’ figure who ‘had not arrived in any mood of colonial humility’. Initial wariness soon turned to friendship, deepened – Holland believed – by their very different backgrounds.

After the RCA, the young painters took rooms at 8 Fitzroy Street, a ramshackle townhouse connecting the Camden Town network and

Bloomsbury. Walter Sickert and Augustus John had worked there and Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant now had studios out the back.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

The Scala Stage Door, Tottenham Street, c.1931

[Bottom]

Oil on board

In autumn 1934 the AIA would hold its first formal exhibition, The Social Scene, in a disused Charlotte Street motorcycle showroom opposite the Scala Cinema.

Holland and Boswell struggled to earn a living as painters as most galleries – deserted by collectors after the crash, had closed their doors to all but the established. One raucous night the duo disposed of their surplus stock, depositing a neglected masterpiece on every doorstep in nearby Fitzroy Square.

Both turned to design work, taking classes at the Central School – a well-trodden path for ex-RCA students in pursuit of marketable skills. It was thus through Fitton's lithography class that the 'Three Jameses', who would energise 1930s political satire, first met.

Private Collection

**James Holland with James and Betty Boswell on their
wedding day, 17 November 1934**

Facsimile

James Boswell first met Betty Soars, a Central student, when she was serving at nearby Meg's Café, a favoured gathering place.

James Holland acted as Boswell's best man when the couple married just after The Social Scene exhibition closed.

Private Collection

James Holland (1905–1996)

Self-caricature, c.1940 [Top]

Drawing

Private Collection

James Holland (1905–1996)

The Docks, c.1930 [Bottom]

Conte crayon on paper

Holland's father was a naval blacksmith working in the Chatham Dockyard, as had three of his grandparents. The waterside was in his blood, providing many subjects for paintings, cartoons, murals, book illustrations and design projects over a long and varied career. At the South Bank in 1951 he would design the interior of the Ships and the Sea

Pavilion and, for the floating element of the nationwide Festival of Britain, he conceived and directed the fitting out of the Campania, a converted aircraft carrier that circumnavigated the British Isles.

Private Collection

James Holland (1905–1996)

The Herring Boat, c.1928

Oil on board

This painting was exhibited at Robert Siele's gallery off Fitzroy Square, and it was probably on this occasion that Jack Beddington, newly appointed publicity officer for Shell-Mex, saw Holland's work and commissioned a series of press adverts – a crucial step on his pathway from painting to design.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

The Fall of London, 1933

Lithographs

The origin of this series which depicts revolution and civil war in London is unclear; they were perhaps conceived as illustrations to an unpublished (or hitherto untraced) novel.

Set in recognisable locations such as Waterloo Station, the Colosseum and the British Museum the lithographs survive as Boswell's 'apocalyptic version of Goya's Disasters of War.'

The full series was shown in the Peace Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale, where the interior displays were designed by Holland and executed by a team including Rea and Youngman.

Private Collection

[Text displayed above artwork]

“It is time that artists began to think what sort of future they want, and what they can do to get it.”

Betty Rea, July 1935

Betty Rea, c.1935

Facsimile [Top]

Betty Rea (née Bevan) studied painting at the Regent Street Polytechnic before moving to the RCA in her early twenties where she joined the sculpture group in 1924.

There were only eleven other sculpture students, one of whom was Henry Moore. Their friendship would ensure Henry Moore was an early adherent and highly committed member of the AIA.

After two years, family pressure led to her leaving before being presented at Court. Marriage to James Rea, a barrister and minor aristocrat followed.

The couple had two boys, but the marriage was unhappy, with Betty becoming increasingly repelled by the louche lifestyle of her upper-class acquaintances at a time of desperation for many other people.

Tate Archive. Photo: Tate

Betty Rea's 'Mother and Child', Caen Stone, pre-1931

Betty Rea's 'The Boxer', Hopton Wood Stone, late 1920s

[Bottom]

Silver gelatin photographs

Moore's interest in primitivism and selection of materials influenced Rea's early work, which nevertheless had its own raw power. During her married years, however, she appears to have produced few new pieces.

In early 1935 Rea left the Belgravia mansion where she had been well-supported by domestic servants, moving to a Notting Hill flat with her two young sons.

Shortly after this she also took on the role of AIA Secretary, emerging as a supremely deft communicator and strategist at a pivotal point.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

James Fitton (1899–1982)

Russian Oil Products, c.1930

Lithograph

Fitton described this poster design as benefitting from ‘a fleeting glance at Leger and Kandinsky’. The freelance commission required him to visit the Russian Trade Mission in Moorgate and as a result he, like Misha Black who also designed a poster for ROP (Russian Oil Products), was put under Special Branch surveillance. Fitton would go on to design innovative posters for many public information campaigns while employed at the Ministry of Information during the Second World War.

Private Collection

During the first two years before its title changed from 'Artists International – British Section' to 'Artists International Association', the new group's members saw themselves as an artistic auxiliary supporting progressive causes.

Theirs was not an aesthetic agenda, like Unit One or the Seven and Five Society, seeking to mark out artistic territory or generate exhibition income, but one born out of a feeling of social responsibility in reaction to changing, and for many, threatening times.

The next room focuses on this opening period, from the cause of Rowe's germ of an idea in Moscow, communicated to Misha Black in London, to the eve of the organisation's breakthrough to wide recognition and rapidly growing membership in late 1935. It also includes examples of James Boswell's lithographs from the 1930s.

James Fitton (1899–1982)

Trapeze II, 1935

Four-colour lithograph

Fitton based this image on his oil painting Trapeze I, which he exhibited at the AIA's Soho Square exhibition Artists Against Fascism and War.

Of all the young painters joining the AIA in its very first phase, Fitton was the most established. From 1929 onwards he had regularly exhibited with the London Group, the New English Art Club and at the Royal Academy.

With an income from both teaching and design work, he was often the one most able to buy meals or stand a round of drinks.

Private Collection

[View display case starting on left side, viewing objects clockwise from top left-hand corner]

While painting Hunger Marchers, Rowe found himself working alongside Chinese and Japanese artists. They were co-operating together at a time when Japanese troops were massacring Chinese people following the invasion of Manchuria and Emperor Hirohito's establishment of a puppet state, events that began to shred the credibility of the League of Nations.

For Rowe this experience was powerful evidence of the ability of artists to unite across boundaries of national hatred for the common good and, writing to Misha Black announcing his intention to return to London, he proposed

forming a campaigning organisation for artists and designers.

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Half-size reproduction of The Struggle Between the Unemployed and the Police Forces, [also known as Hunger Marchers Entering Trafalgar Square], 1933

Called to a Moscow meeting and asked to create a work reflecting the class-struggle in his own country, Rowe turned to arriving copies of The Daily Worker for subject matter.

These described ten days of fighting after the arrival of 2000 Hunger Marchers in Central London in October 1932 when the violent nature of police tactics led directly to the foundation of a National Council for Civil Liberties. In

designing this work Rowe amalgamated incidents that occurred in Hyde Park, St George's Circus, Westminster and Camden into a single scene set in Trafalgar Square.

After returning from Moscow, Rowe never saw this painting again. He did, however, describe it in an early 1980s interview which enabled its identification in Lviv in the interval between the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Facsimile created with the kind permission of Collection Borys Voznytskyi, Lviv National Art Gallery, Ukraine

The Spirit of Invergordon, designed by Cliff Rowe and Misha Black (1910–1977), 1932

The Development of Socialist Methods, designed by Cliff Rowe, 1933

The Invergordon Mutiny – a protest against pay cuts imposed by the National Government – was the most substantial revolt against British military authority since the 1790s.

Rowe provided the image of the Naval Rating and Black the lettering for this pamphlet written by one of the mutineers.

Arriving in Moscow in summer 1932, he found his work was already known and this led to his employment at the Foreign Workers Publishing Co-operative, where he designed and illustrated publications such as The Development of Socialist Methods and Forms of Labour – making them look as attractive as possible for the Comintern's English Language network.

Private Collection

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Finishing Room, Silk Factory – Georgia sketchbook,

1933

Locomotive Repair Shop Rostov – Ukraine sketchbook,

1932

As well as working at the Publishing Co-operative, Rowe volunteered at weekends creating a factory wall-newspaper. He was also able to make extended journeys to Ukraine and Georgia, filling these sketchbooks with scenes of daily life as well as the industrial scenes seen here.

As a result of very varied activity over 18 months, his knowledge of Soviet Russia was better founded and more nuanced than that of many shorter-term visitors.

People's History Museum, Manchester; Collection of
Sandra Thornberry

Photographs from Pearl Binder's Moscow visits, 1933–

34

During her first visit to Moscow Binder attended a theatre festival, witnessing the tail end of an era of avant-garde experimental stage set design. She was greatly impressed by the role that artists were playing in the drive to bring literacy to the masses and improve children's education.

On a second, longer visit to Moscow in 1934 she exhibited her work, earned money as a journalist and illustrator and was briefly employed preparing decorations for that November's commemoration of the 1917 Revolution.

These photographs, reproduced from examples she retained in her collection, reflect these interests and activities.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

Pearl Binder's passport, 1933-36

Binder arrived for the first and shortest of her three 1930s visits to Soviet Russia in early August 1933. In Moscow she met Cliff Rowe and when he told of his ideas for an artists' organisation, she expressed enthusiastic support.

Later, hearing Rowe was back in London, she urged her fellow attendees at the Central School of Art lithography evening class to go to Misha Black's Covent Garden flat

and hear what he had to say. This gathering was the founding meeting of the organisation that became the AIA.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

[Move to left of display case to view artworks on wall]

Clare Leighton (1898–1989)

Portrait of Ernst Toller, c.1933

Wood engraving

Ernst Toller was a former soldier, author and Expressionist playwright sentenced to five years in prison for his role in the short-lived 1919 Bavarian Soviet Republic. The dramas he then wrote in custody achieved notable success in the Weimar era. Forced to leave Germany after the Nazis took power, Toller lived in exile in the USA, before taking his own life in May 1939.

Leighton studied painting at Brighton Art College and the Slade, before attending wood-engraving classes at the Central and taking up the medium for which she became best known. She joined the AIA in its first year and likely exhibited this at The Social Scene in 1934.

Ron Heisler Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

The Bar, c.1927

Wood engraving

Before discovering lithography, Boswell, like many RCA students, tried his hand at wood-engraving – and like many novices before him, including Paul and John Nash and Eric Ravilious in their time, it evidently took him a while to grasp the need to reverse any lettering when cutting the block, as demonstrated by the reversed signage in this print.

Private Collection

[Turn to wall opposite and continue to view artworks
navigating clockwise along wall]

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Top, left to right:

You've Gotta Have Blue Blood, 1934

Army, Press, Church, 1935

Bottom, left to right:

The Lonely Heart, 1934

The Dilettante, 1935

Prints from pen and ink drawing

Arriving in London from New Zealand Boswell was
immediately struck by how class-obsessed British society
was compared with the more egalitarian antipodes. His

acerbic eye and disgust at how the rich and entitled viewed the unemployed during the Depression was evident in You've Gotta Have Blue Blood, which appeared in the first issue of Left Review in October 1934. Equally, his capacity for human sympathy and ability to convey emotion with a few deft lines was evident in The Lonely Heart which appeared in the third issue.

Army, Press, Church accompanied an article on 'The Press and Mass Hysteria' which appeared in issue 5 of Left Review in February 1935. The Dilettante was published in March 1935 as My first is a fair flower in Left Review No. 6.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Empire Builders, 1935 [Top]

Two-colour lithograph

Boswell displayed this lithograph at the AIA's Soho Square exhibition Artists Against Fascism and War. Stylistically it reflects his admiration for the satirical work of George Grosz which had been exhibited in London the previous year – and technically his own growing mastery of lithography. 1935 saw a ratcheting up of Mussolini's demands for an Italian Empire and access to the resources that would go with it. These culminated in the invasion of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) that October, an event which inspired Boswell's scene of City 'Agents' sizing up possibilities for colonial exploitation.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Proud Man, 1934 [Bottom]

Printed cover design, artist's guard book

Boswell turned from painting to graphic design, designing book jackets to provide an income. Murray Constantine was a pen name of the feminist science fiction writer Kay Burdekin.

The design for her book Proud Man was one of fifteen

Boswell completed over four years for Boriswood, a progressive independent publisher, that was prosecuted for obscene libel in 1935. Its offence was publishing Boy by James Hanley, a novel that centred on the grim life of a thirteen-year-old stowaway who was sexually assaulted at sea. The punitive fine imposed on Boriswood forced its closure. Boswell also completed six covers for a spread of

other publishers during this time, assembling this guard book as a record of the work he had undertaken.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Cable Street – a Demonstrator’s Impressions, 1936

[Top]

Illustrated newsprint

Boswell witnessed the events of 4 October 1936 when people in the East End rallied to resist the provocations of Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists and thwart their attempts to march through the area under police protection.

His vivid written description of the Battle of Cable Street, illustrated with five drawings from his sketchbook, was

published in The Eye, Lawrence & Wishart's in-house newspaper immediately after the events it reported.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

**Bill Shepherd at Pratt Street Market also known as
Street Meeting, 1934 [Bottom]**

Lithograph

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

The Street, c.1939 [Top]

The Station Bookstall, c.1939 [Bottom]

Lithographs

These are two of six original lithographs Boswell created for the British Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

In *The Street* Boswell depicts himself and Holland outside Collets Charing Cross Road bookshop, while Fitton glances across the pavement towards them. The first issues of *Left Review* were produced above the bookshop and here Boswell pays a playful tribute to the partnership of the 'Three Jameses'.

In *The Station Bookstall* Boswell, the *Daily Worker* under his arm, is purchasing *The News Chronicle*, a paper that in 1943 would sponsor the AIA For Liberty exhibition.

Private Collection

[Text Panel]

1935 was perhaps the last year when it was possible for most people to believe that opposition to both fascism and war were not at odds, that the defeat of fascism could be achieved without armed conflict.

Artists Against Fascism and War in Soho Square marked a new phase for the swiftly growing artists organisation, with its strategy of reaching upwards generationally and outwards politically.

Domestically, 1935 was also a Jubilee Year in which the nation was asked, at a time of great social stress, to give thanks for all the monarch had achieved for the nation and the Empire over the previous quarter of a century.

The centrepiece of the celebrations was a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral—but when London

woke on the appointed day, the streets had been plastered with a Cliff Rowe protest poster highlighting an alternative view of recent realities.

However, Betty Rea's new address had naively been added to the bottom of the design. Lord Trenchard, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, promptly alerted Rea's father, who cut off all support for her and her children, forbidding her any contact with the family. She would nevertheless have a major impact working tirelessly for AIA success in the years ahead.

[Turn to wall opposite to view shelving displays. Staring with archive display on left, viewing shelves top to bottom, left to right]

Cover design for 'The Agent Provocateur' by Cliff Rowe,

1933

Private Collection

Cover and poster design for Cambridge Anti-War

exhibition, by Cliff Rowe, 1933

James Boswell recalled that during its first year, the Artists International developed as 'a mixture of agit-prop body, Marxist discussion group, exhibitions and anti-war, anti-fascist outfit.' Acting as an artistic auxiliary for allied organisations was part of this activity and this design must have been one of the first Rowe completed after his return to London, signing it 'Rowe ai'.

Private Collection

**‘Murder in Camp Hohenstein’ published by Martin
Lawrence, with drawings and testimony from the Third
Reich, 1933**

Imprisonment of political opponents and trade unionists in concentration camps followed on from Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor in January 1933. These events were known about in London and sparked deep concern when the National Government suggested setting up labour camps for the long-term unemployed as part of its response to economic depression.

Private Collection

**Artist International – British Section, recruiting leaflet,
1933**

In Moscow Rowe met and married an American teacher, Anna Meblin, who in London became the AI's founding secretary in autumn 1933. This very early recruiting leaflet, outlining initial aims of the Artists' International – British Section, was issued from the Marchmont Street address where Rowe and Meblin rented rooms above a laundry.

Private Collection

Why We Are Marching, designed by Cliff Rowe, 1934

An early collective effort was a book of cartoons for sale when the next Hunger March, protesting the Means Test and legislation proposing to cut benefits further and set up labour camps, arrived in London in February 1934.

Rowe provided the cover for 18 images duplicated on a cyclo-style copying machine from incised wax sheets; interleaved with typed explanations of the government proposals, the booklet highlighted the severe hardships being endured in the distressed areas.

Collection Sandra Thornberry

**Through the Hoop! attributed to Edward Ardizzone
(1900–1979), 1934**

Most of the Hunger March cartoons were unattributed and the book as a whole appears to be the work of seven or eight different artists.

Although unsigned these two pages are strongly reminiscent of Edward Ardizzone's flamboyant satirical

style, and it is known that he was an attendee at the early AI meetings which would have discussed the project.

Collection Sandra Thornberry

It's a Fascist Plot! by Ralph Laurier (1912–unknown),
1934

Little is known about Ralph Laurier, a commercial artist who participated in the AIA's 1939 Foodships for Spain campaign. His cartoon was one of the most precisely realised.

Enthroned together are Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin and ex-Labour Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald. Baldwin's hand is on the lever of power controlling Whitehall's promotion of the new legislation

forcing local authorities to cut benefits so that armaments spending can rise.

Published as the British Unionist of Fascists was winning establishment support, and the Daily Mail was calling for Mosley to become Prime Minister, a portrait of Oswald Mosley, hung between those of Hitler and Mussolini, awaits enlargement in the background.

Collection Sandra Thornberry

£200 every minute for War, by Cliff Rowe, 1934

Collection Sandra Thornberry

**The Bill Attacks not only the Unemployed, artist
unknown, 1934**

Collection Sandra Thornberry

‘Slavery or Socialism’, cover design by Cliff Rowe, 1934

The arrival of the Hunger March in February 1934 coincided with a National Congress of Action organised by the National Unemployed Workers Movement. This had been called to launch a longer-term campaign for social assistance and investment in the distressed areas.

Although the Congress was supported by individual Labour MPs, the Labour Party did not officially support any of the Hunger Marches until the Jarrow Crusade in October 1936.

Collection Sandra Thornberry

Artists International – Special Notice, 1934

This call for exhibits shows that the initial impetus for organising the AI's first show stemmed from an invitation to send work to an international exhibition of revolutionary proletarian art – an opportunity which came with guidance about suitable subjects ('The negative sentiment "Pity the poor down and outs" is not required'). As it would do on many future occasions, the AI committee added a disclaimer that artists were not bound by such guidance. A copy of this leaflet was sent to Edward Burra by Pearl Binder, securing his participation.

Private Collection

Exhibition Announcement, Left Review Issue 1, October 1934

The AI's inaugural exhibition, titled The Social Scene, was held in November 1934 in a former Charlotte Street motorbike showroom and advertised in the first issue of Left Review the previous month. By then 120 works had been secured and Henry Moore, Eric Gill and Edward Burra (misnamed Edmund here) had promised to participate.

This page also carried an advertisement for the Parton Street Bookshop near the London County Council Central School of Art and Craft. The AI established its first formal office and clubroom above the bookshop in spring 1935.

Private Collection

[Move right to view next shelving display, viewing shelves
top to bottom, left to right]

**‘The Rival Firms’, James Fitton’s satirical take on sex
and religion, appeared in the third issue of Left Review,
December 1934**

Private Collection

**‘The Sailor’s Return’ and ‘With a Ladder and some
Glasses’ by James Holland, 1935**

Holland’s Sailor’s Return spoke to his Thameside roots, as
did With a ladder and some glasses, a visualisation of
urban squalor backed up by a quotation from a music hall
ditty. Faced with choosing between ‘cut throat
competition for what crumbs of patronage remained’ or

working 'to discredit a system that makes art and culture dependant on the caprices of the money markets',
Holland chose the latter.

Private Collection

'Love Lane Shadwell' by Pearl Binder, 1934

Between them 'the three Jameses' provided 105 of the 188 illustrations that appeared in Left Review over its three and a half years of publication. Pearl Binder was the fourth most significant contributor with 12 cartoons, line-drawn portraits and reproductions of her East End lithographs, as seen in this example from October 1934, the first issue.

Private Collection

‘Sedition’ by Edith Tudor-Hart, published in Left

Review, 1935

Rattled by the Invergordon mutiny, the National Government moved to introduce a Sedition Bill criminalising mere possession of literature which if given to a sailor ‘might cause them to question orders’. Under loose definitions and wide powers, police would have been able to seize copies of the Bible and virtually all of English literature, picking and choosing who to harass and frame. A massive – partially successful – campaign of opposition followed.

Edith Tudor-Hart took this famous photograph at one of the demonstrations held in Trafalgar Square, pressing her camera shutter at precisely the moment one of three not-so-secret Special Branch police realised there was a young woman with a camera pointed at him.

Private Collection

‘His Majesty’s Servants’ by James Boswell, 1935

‘Incitement to Disaffection’ by James Holland, 1935

‘Twelve Good Men and True’ by James Fitton, 1935

Exhibited first at The Social Scene exhibition and then published in the fifth issue of Left Review, Tudor-Hart’s image immediately became source material for its cartoonists.

Private Collection

Three James 1936 desk diary, 1935

Within a year, the work of Boswell, Holland and Fitton had become so popular that a 1936 desk diary was produced using 15 of their cartoons.

The closed copy exhibited here belonged to James Holland and was autographed by Tom Mann, the veteran trade union leader who rose to prominence during the 1886 London Dock strike and who turned eighty in spring 1936. Given both their backgrounds, Mann was no doubt one of Holland's heroes.

Private Collection

[Turn to your left to view standalone artwork displayed on end of wall]

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Café Rouge, 1938

Lithograph

As the momentum of events leading to war gathered pace, test barrage balloons began to appear in the London skies from May 1938. Boswell's London lithographs would figure prominently in Britain Today, an AIA touring exhibition that opened at Toynbee Hall in early 1939 and travelled to town halls, trade union halls, women's institutes and working men's clubs in the remaining months of the peace.

Private Collection

[Turn to your left and move into room ahead of you. Start viewing works from end of wall on your left, navigating room clockwise]

[View artworks starting at end of wall, navigating clockwise]

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Illustrations for People of the Small Arrow, c.1928

Pen and ink

Binder provided 22 illustrations for her first husband Jack Driberg's book on the Didinga people of East Africa, a pioneering work blending observation and imaginative writing.

Through Driberg, Binder became close to leading anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and his wife Elsie, making them dedicatees of *Odd Jobs*, the first book she both wrote and illustrated.

In later life Binder's interest in anthropology would fuel a routine of intrepid solo travel to explore and record the life of people in Africa, Asia, Polynesia and Latin America.

These journeys were recorded in picture diaries providing source material for both printmaking and children's books.

Josephine and Francis Gladstone

[Text Panel]

Pearl Binder's skill and wit had attracted notice at the Manchester School of Art. Reviewing the 1925 graduation show, The Studio's correspondent had noted, 'she has imagination, a Puckish sense of humour and a power of quickly sizing up a personality'; if she could restrain 'an undue admixture' of savage indignation, the reviewer concluded, 'Miss Binder should make her mark'.

Leaving the Salford streets where, when she was seven, the family name had changed from Binderofski to Binder, and moving to London, she did just that: as an illustrator both serious and playful, with line drawings that satirised well-heeled bohemians in Bloomsbury, during a spell freelancing in Paris and—after a short-lived first marriage—with a move to Whitechapel that coincided with her turn to lithography.

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

**Nocturne, First Dream and Third Dream, illustrations
for Auréliaby Gérard de Nerval, 1930**

Lithographs

After her early success with line-drawn book illustration – see Bed and Breakfast in the nearby case display – Binder

added lithography to her artistic repertoire, a skill she honed at the Central School classes.

Binder provided 10 plates for Richard Aldington's English translation of de Nerval's 1855 *Aurelia ou la rêve et la vie*, a fantasy-ridden interior autobiography said to have influenced Marcel Proust.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Merry Xmas, 1928 [Top]

Two-colour lithograph

Between 1928 and 1940 Binder produced annual Christmas and New Year lithographs. Despatched to close friends, incorporating touches of irony and satire, they read as a highly personal record of her progress.

Her 1928 offering was produced while living with her first, much older husband, Jack Driberg at 8 Guildford Street, Bloomsbury. Binder suffered from tuberculosis at a young age and depicts herself inhaling steam during a relapse, while sketching a self-portrait.

Driberg liked to play cards and the finger on the bell suggests friends arriving for a game. Overall, the design seems to depict a certain distance between the couple. Within a year they had separated.

Josephine and Francis Gladstone

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Spreadeagle Yard, 1931 [Bottom]

Two-colour lithograph

By 1931 Binder had set up her own home in Whitechapel, relishing independence after a time of turmoil. She now drew inspiration for both art and writing from the East End, its markets, street-life and watersides and the lives of its people, including those of the local Jewish community.

While living above the stables at Spreadeagle Yard for five years, Binder illustrated Thomas Burke's *The Real East End* (published under their joint names) and her own book *Odd Jobs*. Its opening chapter featured Bill the ostler who occupied the horse-keeper's cottage.

Josephine and Francis Gladstone

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Greetings for 1935, 1935 [Top]

Two-colour lithograph

Sent as a New Year Card, this may have been produced in the Soviet Union or – more probably – after Binder's return in early 1935.

Binder travelled to Moscow in autumn 1934 taking her recent East End and theatre lithographs for exhibition at the Pushkin Museum. While there she attended a theatre festival and worked on street decorations for that

November's celebration of the 1917 revolution – and then spent a riotous Christmas Day in the company of two Soviet sailors.

During this time away she determined to try to get a divorce – and not long after her return to London, at a party

celebrating publication of her book *Odd Jobs* she met Frederick Elwyn-Jones, a radical lawyer working to defend trade unionists imprisoned in Austria. Two years later they married.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Merry Xmas and a Fruitful 1938, 1937 [Bottom]

Two-colour lithograph

The son of a South Wales steelworker, Frederick Elwyn-Jones (1909–1989) won a place at Cambridge and became a barrister. He would go on to be an armed forces lawyer, a prosecutor at Nuremberg, a Labour MP for 29 years,

Britain's Attorney General in the 1960s and its Lord Chancellor in the 1970s.

Pearl's 1938 offering reflected the fact that he had been called to the bar, they were now married and she was pregnant for the first time. The stork flying past the Alexandra Palace aerial, also referenced her own pioneering role as co-presenter with James Laver (a fellow AIA activist) of Clothes Line, then on air as television's the first ever fashion design series.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Left group:

From the East End Lithographs, 1931–32

Left column, top to bottom:

Rum Vaults

Club Row Bird and Dog Market

Jewish Restaurant, Brick Lane

Right column, top to bottom:

Cottar's Yard, Old Montague Street

Hessel Street Market, Commercial Road

Jewish Bookshop, Wentworth Street

Josephine and Francis Gladstone; Ron Heisler Collection;

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design

Archives

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Right group:

From Backstage, 1933

Left column, top to bottom:

On Stage at the Cambridge Theatre

Theatrical Agency in Leicester Square

Wig Making at Clarkson's

Right column, top to bottom:

The Equity Meeting at Drury Lane

Palladium Dressing Room

Boxall's Property Shop

Josephine and Francis Gladstone; British Museum; Ron

Heisler Collection

James Fitton (1899–1982)

The Boating Lake, early 1930s [Top]

Oil on board

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Fitton made considerable headway as a painter, regularly exhibiting at the London Group, the New English and the Royal Academy, where his work first appeared at the 1929 Summer Show.

In 1933, he held his first and only solo exhibition at Arthur Tooth's gallery in Mayfair, winning critical acclaim.

Thereafter, despite numerous approaches from leading Mayfair art houses, he never used a commercial gallery again. Disliking the pressure put on artists by dealers, he preferred to contribute to group and alternative shows such as those put on by the AIA.

Private Collection, c/o Crane Kalman Gallery

Margaret Fitton (1902–1988)

Aldeburgh, c.1933 [Bottom]

Oil on board

Private Collection

Margaret Fitton (1902–1988)

Ironing and Airing, mid-1930s

Rhubarb Pie, mid-1930s

Oil on board

Private Collection

Margaret Fitton (1902–1988)

Upstairs, before 1937 [Top]

Oil on board

Both Upstairs and Duckpond were exhibited at the AIA's
April 1937 exhibition Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy
and Cultural Development.

Private Collection

Margaret Fitton (1902–1988)

Duck Pond, Dulwich, before 1937 [Bottom]

Oil on board

The painting depicts the back garden at 10 Pond Cottages, where the Fittons' immediate neighbours for many years were their close friends Percy and Lydia Horton.

Private Collection

[Turn around to view vitrine display opposite. Order of text corresponds to viewing objects clockwise from approach]

**Cover Design for the third ‘Cambridge Exhibition
against Fascism and War’ by Edward McKnight Kauffer
(1890–1954), 1935**

With the exhibition open at 28 Soho Square, a third iteration of the Cambridge Anti-Fascist exhibition was on display at no 27. James Boswell contributed artwork on the Reichstag fire and McKnight Kauffer designed a cover for the explanatory guide with sections on: Fascism’s rise in Italy and Germany, ‘semi-fascism’ in Austria and Spain, ‘Embryo Fascism – Can Fascism Come to Britain?’, ‘Fascism and Culture’, and the ‘Anti-Fascist Movement’.

Graphic documentary evidence on events in Europe shocked those who visited, and the combination of the two events – exhibition and anti-fascist documentary – was both a powerful recruiting tool and a turning point.

Private Collection

AIA exhibition announcement, Call for Work and catalogue for 'Artists Against Fascism and War', 1935

Between the call for work in June and the exhibition taking place in November 1935, the title 'Artists International – British Section' was dropped in favour of 'Artists International Association'. This signalled a departure from any narrow organisational alignment with the Comintern and a commitment to build broader alliances in pursuit of a Popular Front.

What remained constant was the remarkably successful strategy of reaching upwards generationally by encouraging leading artists with name recognition to act as sponsors.

Private Collection

It's Up to US! by James Fitton and the Alpha group, 1936

This AIA publication was an early product from its Peace Publicity Bureau set up to mobilise opinion against hostility to the Soviet Union and in favour of collective security guaranteed by the League of Nations.

With a print run of 50,000, it was advertised in Left Review for June 1936 with the jaunty assurance 'It will sell at sight. This can become a classic of Peace Propaganda'. But by the time distribution began three weeks later, so had the military uprising in Spain, triggering events that peace by pact and negotiation – that peace without war – was possible.

Private Collection

‘5 on Revolutionary Art’, published by Wishart, 1935

Edited by Betty Rea, featuring a McKnight Kauffer cover, and published to coincide with Artists Against Fascism and War, this collection of essays signalled an open-minded pluralism amongst the group.

Leading intellectual Herbert Read had been severely critical of the AIA’s first 1934 Charlotte Street exhibition, but was invited in by Rea to address the membership. His distrust was soon overcome and he ended up contributing the opening essay of the collection.

Private Collection

AIA recruiting leaflet, 1937

Private Collection

**Pearl Binder's guardbook containing examples of
Russian children's book illustrations, c.1934**

Greatly impressed by the vitality of soviet mass produced children's books, Binder collected examples on her 1934 visit to Moscow, creating this book to show publishers in London.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design
Archives; Private Collection

**'Theatrical Dressmakers' illustration by Pearl Binder for
'Backstage' by Philip Godfrey, 1933**

Writer and actor Philip Godfrey was a close friend of Binder's, whose book explored theatreland from inside out and from bottom up.

When it became necessary for Binder to provide ‘proof of infidelity’ as part of her divorce procedure, she recruited Godfrey, a gay man, to play the part of her unmarried lover. Creating and circulating her 1935 Christmas lithograph she had fun picturing them co-habiting in domestic bliss.

Private Collection

Illustrations for ‘Bed and Breakfast’ by Coralie Hobson and Pearl Binder, 1926

Moving to London from Manchester, had given Binder plenty of opportunity to observe Bloomsbury’s social networks while living in Guildford Street. She was generally unimpressed by pretentiousness and privilege.

‘Art by Bive Clell’, seen clutched at the studio party, is a reference to ‘Art’ by Clive Bell, where he argued art was a

question of ‘significant form’ triggering ‘an aesthetic emotion’. In 1927 Bell published his essay, ‘Civilisation’ arguing that society had a duty to support aesthetes such as himself – as slaves supported leading citizens in fifth century Athens.

Binder appears to have given Lytton Strachey, another member of the Bloomsbury grouping, a walk-on part in ‘You see them in all the Bloomsbury Squares.’

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives; Private Collection

Illustrations for ‘The Real East End’ by Thomas Burke and Pearl Binder, 1932

London writer Thomas Burke acknowledged Binder’s major visual contribution to his classic work by giving her equal billing on this publication.

In November 1932 the Whitechapel Art Gallery exhibited a complete set of Binder’s 20 illustrations as part of its East End Academy exhibition – and on her first visit to Moscow the following year sight of them won her the opportunity to exhibit at the Pushkin Museum.

Private Collections

**‘Odd Jobs’ publication with line drawings and
lithographs by Pearl Binder, 1935**

Poule de Luxe featured a high-class courtesan much visited by a circle of rich men, The Phrenologist a popular West-End attraction.

Odd Jobs gained excellent reviews, marking Binder’s emergence as both writer and artist. At the publisher’s party celebrating its launch Binder met Frederick Elwyn Jones, her future husband.

Private Collection

[Turn back to works displayed on wall, starting where the floor barrier begins. Navigate artworks displayed on wall clockwise]

Archibald Standish Hartrick (1864–1950)

A Rick Fire, 1920s [Top]

Lithograph

Hartrick studied at the Slade then in France, where in the 1880s he came friend with Gauguin, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec. A member of the New English Art Club he taught painting at Camberwell School of Art as well as the Central. He was a founding member of the Senefelder Club, the specialist lithography society and regarded Fitton as a star pupil in the medium, ensuring he succeeded him soon after he stepped down from taking classes there.

Such connections across the artistic generations became crucial to the growth of the AIA from 1935 onwards.

Ron Heisler Collection

Walter Sickert (1860–1942)

Maple Street, 1915 [Bottom]

Etching

Sickert's oil painting of this intersection near Fitzroy Street is in the collection of MOMA New York. He frequented pubs in the area although he had moved out of No. 8 before Boswell took a room there after meeting painter Freddie Porter, a fellow New Zealander who had his studio in the house. Boswell knew Sickert who possibly gave him this etching.

Private Collection

James Bateman (1893–1959)

Thames Wharf, c.1930

Oil on canvas

Well-known for his rural, agricultural and pastoral paintings, Bateman, a badly injured Great War veteran, was teaching at Goldsmiths College in the 1930s as the threat of war returned. The son of a Lake District blacksmith, he exhibited this work at the AIA's 1935 Soho Square exhibition Artists Against Fascism and War.

In 1939 he joined the AIA Advisory Council, helping shape its response to impending conscription ahead of the Second World War. A member of the New English Art Club who regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy, he became an RA in 1942.

Brighton & Hove Museums

Lucien Pissarro (1863–1944)

Richmond Bridge, 1935

Oil on canvas

For the founders of the AIA, Pissarro – with his strong commitment to unity – was a living link to both French Impressionism and the Camden Town Group. Monet, Manet, Cezanne and Renoir had frequented his childhood home – a group that then bitterly divided over the Dreyfus affair in the 1890s. Sickert became a close friend after he moved to London.

An early supporter, Lucien exhibited with the AIA from 1935 until two months before his death in 1944, when its Bulletin reported: ‘For us in the AIA his loss is specially felt: a member of our Advisory Council, his generous

support was never failing, and his sympathy for the younger generation was ever quick and warm.'

Collection of the Library and Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Sir Muirhead Bone (1876–1953)

Tanks, 1918

Taking the Wounded, 1918

Lithographs

Muirhead Bone became Britain's first Official War Artist in 1916 and his etchings achieved enormous popularity in the 1920s. He served on numerous public bodies, including as a Tate Trustee, and was knighted in 1937. His support was significant as the AIA sought to reach outward politically and upward generationally.

Deeply disturbed by the possibility of a return to the horrors of the Great War, he sent three works to Soho Square in 1935 and joined the AIA Advisory Council on its formation. After the betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich, his son Stephen Bone became a Secretary of the Artists' Refugee Committee, a cause his father also did much to support.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

Ben Nicholson (1894–1982)

Painted Relief, 1934 [Top]

Oil on board

When the AIA was founded, Nicholson was emerging as an abrasive advocate of abstract art in Britain. As chair of the 7 & 5 Society of painters and sculptors he had led an effort to exclude figurative artists from membership.

Montagu Slater probably had Nicholson in mind when he referred to the divisive effect of ‘art politics’ – as did Kenneth Clark when he wrote: ‘each group is like a little dissenting sect, sure of salvation while all the rest of the world is damned’.

At Soho Square Nicholson exhibited a work listed as Carved Relief 1934 – and thereafter served on the

selection committees for the Abstract sections of the AIA's
1937 and 1939 members' exhibitions.

University of Hertfordshire Art Collection

John Lake (1903–1975)

Farm Workers, c.1935 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

A friend and contemporary of Ravilious at both Eastbourne Art College and the RCA, John Lake exhibited this painting at Soho Square in 1935.

Lake was the Towner Gallery's Curator and Artist-in-Residence between 1947 and 1958, working from a studio in the Manor House, Manor Gardens, the Towner's former home.

John Lake Estate

Duncan Grant (1885 –1978)

Lewes Landscape, c.1935 [Top]

Oil on paper on board

In 1935 Duncan Grant responded quickly when Betty Rea asked him to debate the way forward for the Artists International. Later the same year he became was one of six headline sponsors of the Soho Square exhibition Artists Against Fascism and War, exhibiting a painting titled By the Ouse as his own contribution. The show was the first use of the more pluralist organisation title Artists International Association.

Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

Vanessa Bell (1879–1961)

No.8 Fitzroy Street, c.1930 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

Rea probably approached Duncan Grant through James Holland, who had rented the painter's bedsit studio at No. 8 when he and Vanessa Bell left for an extended stay in the South of France in 1929.

Quentin Bell, Vanessa's younger son, moved into a room in No. 8 after his return from studying in Paris, becoming active in the AIA at the same time before joining the Central Committee in 1936.

This painting depicts a corner of Vanessa's studio adjacent to Grant's, both reached via a first-floor walkway linked to the main house. It was here in July 1937 that Bell received

the news that her older son Julian had been killed serving as a driver during the Spanish Civil War.

Towner Eastbourne

Paul Nash (1889–1946)

Coronilla, 1929 [Top]

Oil on canvas

In 1934 Paul Nash had encouraged other artists to exhibit at the first AI exhibition The Social Scene in Charlotte Street and thereafter he was a consistent contributor to AIA exhibitions.

In 1935 he joined Duncan Grant, Eric Gill, Laura Knight, Augustus John and Henry Moore in ‘calling together’ the Soho Square exhibition. He exhibited this work there

together with Totems and Rotary Composition, two 1932 watercolours.

The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

John Piper (1903–1992)

Abstract Construction, 1934 [Bottom]

Oil paint and sand on wood

Piper's abstracts (variously paintings, constructions and designs) originally owed much to the French cubists but had evolved into a distinctive personal oeuvre by the mid-1930s.

The fourth issue of Axis – the journal championing abstract art edited by Myfanwy Evans – featured his work while Piper was exhibiting a work titled Painting 1935 at Soho Square.

Although highly suspicious of ‘group programmes’ and a proponent of artists following their ‘own inclination and nature’, Piper was active in the AIA. Myfanwy and Piper married in February 1937 just as he, Nicholson, Moholy-Nagy and Wadsworth were curating the Abstract sections of the AIA’s Grosvenor Square exhibition.

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

László Moholy Nagy (1895–1946)

Painting KVII, 1922

Oil on canvas

Soon after arriving in London in 1935 Moholy-Nagy joined the AIA, exhibiting two works at Soho Square; one was KVIII from the same series as this work. Forced to leave Berlin in 1933, he had previously taught at the Bauhaus

later establishing his own design studio in 1928 which was closed by the Nazis.

The Soho square exhibition included a strong European contingent with rooms featuring artists from Poland, Holland, the USSR and France whose 22 exhibitors included Fernand Léger, André Lhote, François Desnoyer, André Marchand, Paul Signac, and Ossip Zadkine.

As an artist, Moholy-Nagy worked in a wide range of mediums photography, typography, sculpture, painting and industrial design. In London he worked as a commercial artist before moving to the United States in 1937.

Tate: Purchased 1961

[Text displayed above artwork]

“Those whom art-politics have put asunder, an exhibition against war and fascism has joined together. It is an excellent achievement.”

Montagu Slater, January 1936

Laura Knight (1877–1970)

Dawn, 1932-33

Oil on canvas

Laura Knight had lived through the trauma of the Great War and witnessed the iniquities of racism in the United States during the 1920s.

Approached by Rea, the eminent artist did not hesitate to publicly support the AIA by sponsoring Artists Against Fascism and War.

Already a Dame, Knight was elected the first woman as a full RA of the modern era soon after the Soho Square exhibition closed. Her contribution there was this painting – a personal favourite often interpreted as celebrating female independence and the changing status of women.

A few weeks after Dawn was shown in Soho Square, Knight presented it to the Royal Academy as her Diploma Work.

Royal Academy of Arts, London

Ethel Walker (1861–1951)

Vanessa, 1937 [Top]

Oil on canvas

This portrait of Vanessa Bell, probably painted at Charleston, portrays Walker's fellow AIA Advisory Council member at the beginning of a fateful year.

Since hearing of Felicia Browne's death the previous autumn, Bell had feared that her older son Julian would fight in Spain. On 20 July 1937 she received the news that he had died during the battle of Brunete.

Weeks before, this work had been shown at the AIA exhibition accompanying the First British Artists Congress, an initiative her younger son Quentin helped organise.

After this point there are few, if any, portraits or self-

portraits of Bell that depict her as so benignly untroubled as this one.

Tate: Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1939

Percy Horton (1897–1970)

The Invalid, 1934 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

Radical and humane in politics, Horton was more conservative in his art, using the conventions of society portraiture to empower the ordinary people who were his chosen subject.

In this case that was his mother who by the early 1930s was in poor health, exhausted by a lifetime's work. For many years she had laboured as a domestic so the family could keep Percy and his brothers at school.

Horton exhibited this painting at Soho Square. His central role in the AIA, editing its Bulletin and serving on key committees, led his friend and RCA teaching colleague Edward Bawden to join the AIA Peace Publicity Bureau set up early the following year.

Tate: Purchased 1940

Duncan Grant (1885–1978)

Police Constable Harry Daley, c. 1930 [Top]

Oil on canvas

Harry Daley was the first openly gay British policeman who had been a lover of Grant's friend the novelist E.M. Forster.

Daley was disgusted by fascism, later writing about how Metropolitan Police constables serving with him at Vine

Street in 1935 were members of the British Union of Fascist who distributed anti-semitic tracts.

Grant exhibited this painting at the AIA's 1937 Grosvenor Square exhibition accompanying the First British Artists Congress.

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

Paul Nash (1889–1946)

Event on the Downs, 1934 [Top]

Oil on canvas

Paul Nash was drawn to Surrealism at this time. Together with the similarly inclined Henry Moore, Roland Penrose and Naomi Durrell he formed the selection committee for the Surrealist content of the 1937 AIA exhibition, hanging this work as part of his own contribution.

Over 1500 submissions arrived for an exhibition that eventually featured over 800 works of art on display across five floors of a massive mansion in Grosvenor Square.

On the top floor, the Pitmen Painters from Northumberland had their first group showing in London.

Separate floors focused on Abstract, Surrealist and different branches of realist and figurative work – art in such profusion that it spilled out into the marbled splendour of the hallways and over the balustrades.

UK Government Art Collection

Roland Penrose (1900–1984)

The Winged Domino, 1937

Oil on canvas

Penrose was a key organiser of the International Surrealist exhibition at the Burlington Galleries in June 1936.

A ‘success de scandale’, it divided opinion. Realist artists attacked what they saw as the phoney radicalism of fantasies paraded as progressive, seeing them as symptoms of society’s decadence. The AIA, however, responded quickly to these divisions in its artistic coalition staging two public debates and publishing discussion pieces.

Three weeks after the exhibition closed civil war erupted in Spain, triggering a new phase of activism. As Julian Trevelyan, a fellow Surrealist put it ‘until then there was an

air of gentle frivolity about our life in London.’ This now rapidly changed and Penrose would play a major role in both the 1937 Artists Congress – where this piece was shown – and the Artists Refugee Committee.

The Penrose Collection, East Sussex, England

[Keep moving rightwards along wall to continue viewing artworks]

Edith Tudor-Hart (1908–1973)

Unemployed Workers Demonstration, Trealaw, 1935

Contemporary print

In 1935 Edith Tudor-Hart and Pearl Binder made a joint expedition to the South Wales valleys, where life was still held in the grip of economic depression.

There Alex Tudor-Hart, a radical doctor and Edith's then husband, was facing an uphill battle against British Medical Association attempts to prevent him establishing a community medical practice.

Edith Tudor-Hart documented the life of the mining communities and their conflicts with the police and the courts, while Binder completed drawings for a series of lithographs.

FOTOHOF>ARCHIV © Suschitzky/Donat family

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Above: **Miners at Work**, 1935

Right: **Consumptive Miner**, 1935

Lithographs

These were produced during a year when Binder and Frederick Elwyn-Jones became an established unconventional couple. Practicing as a barrister, and close to the official Labour Party and trade union movement, Elwyn-Jones was undertaking a succession of missions to assist trade unionists imprisoned in Europe.

Binder had been close to the Communist Party and undertaken the sort of direct action rejected by Transport House and the Parliamentary Labour Party. Used to selling the Daily Worker and joining ‘chalking squads’, hers was initially more a politics of the street.

In 1936 Binder joined Elwyn-Jones in a mission to Greece to assist prisoners of the Metaxas regime. Her picture diary of the venture is displayed in the nearby case.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

The Chalking Squad, 1935 [Top right]

Lithographs

Whatever the subject, Binder's humour was never far from the surface, even when depicting an activity not without legal peril. This image originally appeared in Left Review May 1935.

Private Collection

Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development, 1937

Printed poster

Circulated early in the build-up to the Congress, this poster testifies to the breadth of support the AIA could command.

The roll call of supporters includes well-known artists, but also leading architects, writers, academics and high-profile figures such as economist John Maynard Keynes and David Low, the popular mainstream cartoonist.

The AIA had signed a lease on 41 Grosvenor Square where both exhibition and Congress were due to take place.

However, alerted by the pre-publicity, the then Duke of Westminster, the richest landowner in Britain, owner of the Grosvenor Estate and an admirer of Hitler, was able to

exploit a clause in the lease that forbade public meetings taking place on the premises. The exhibition remained at Grosvenor Square, but Congress sessions had to be transferred to Conway Hall.

Private Collection

[Text Panel]

In late 1936, facing new challenges and buoyed by momentum from an expanding membership, the AIA decided to organise an Artists Congress. This was in part inspired by events in the USA, where the Artists Union activity, a by-product of President Roosevelt's New Deal, had broadened out into the foundation of the American Artists Congress.

Commissions were set up to generate recommendations ranging from the reform of art schools to reaching new audiences, making art affordable, the role of museums and local galleries, and how artists could contribute to public services. Eventually, over 100 recommendations were put to the Congress in April 1937, many foreshadowing developments ahead in the next two decades.

The last session of the Congress took place at Conway Hall. Pictured here are (right to left) James and Margaret Fitton, Elizabeth Watson, and behind her, just visible, Nan Youngman. On the platform to hear the Education Report delivered by Quentin Bell are (left to right) Herbert Read, W.G. Constable (founding director of the Courtauld), Misha Black, Jack Hastings, and Ronald Kidd, founder of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The last three photographs were taken on the afternoon of Sunday 25 April 1937. Less than 24 hours later, the German Condor Legion destroyed the Basque town of Gernika (Guernica) in an operation organised as a delayed birthday present for Hitler. 'Shock and Awe' bombing had arrived in Europe, carefully calibrated to maximise loss of human life.

David Bomberg (1890–1957)

Ronda Bridge, Spain, 1935

Oil on canvas

Bomberg had travelled with Pearl Binder to Moscow in 1933 but returned from the USSR disillusioned about the state of art and society there. Neglected as an artist in London, he left for Spain in 1934; after living at Ronda, he

then moved to Asturias witnessing Franco's repression of striking miners there – a blood-letting prefiguring cruelties to come.

After returning from Spain, Bomberg rejoined the London Group while a Nazi academic was attempting to persuade members to send an exhibition excluding Jewish painters to Berlin, a move opposed by Duncan Grant and James Fitton.

Bomberg then attempted to get the London Group members to join the AIA en masse – a move that also failed, suggesting that the AIA aim of creating formal alliances with all such organisations would be difficult to realise.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Hussey Bequest, Chichester District Council 1985)

Julian Trevelyan (1910–1988)

The Potteries, 1938

Oil on canvas

In 1938 Trevelyan, William Coldstream and Graham Bell worked together in Bolton as part of Mass Observation's Worktown project, producing works based on the town which were then used to gauge local reaction to contemporary art.

Trevelyan, who identified himself as a Surrealist rather than an exponent of Euston Road's 'New Realism', exhibited this and two other works at the AIA's February 1939 Whitechapel exhibition in support of Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development.

Museum & Art Swindon

Ithell Colquhoun (1906–1988)

Dance of the Nine Opals, 1942

Oil on canvas

Colquhoun was one of the artists attracted to the AIA in the aftermath of Grosvenor Square exhibition.

She was not one of the more than one hundred artists exhibiting in the Surrealist section at Grosvenor Square but exhibited in 1939 at its major successor at the Whitechapel Gallery and at AIA exhibitions thereafter.

This painting was one of four works she contributed to the 1942 AIA exhibition held at the mid-point of the Second World War.

The Jeffrey Sherwin & Family Collection, permanently housed at The Hepworth Wakefield

Edith Rimmington (1902–1986)

Family Tree, 1937

Collage

Artist, poet and photographer Edith Rimmington had studied at Brighton Art College before, inspired by the International Surrealist exhibition, her work took a new direction. She exhibited three works at Whitechapel, which probably sold as this piece appeared as an addition to the subsequent AIA touring exhibition curated by Graham Bell. The travelling exhibition was on show at Brighton Art Gallery when war was declared in September 1939.

The Murray Family Collection (UK & USA)

William Coldstream (1908–1987)

Inez Spender, 1937–38

Oil on canvas

Coldstream, who had only recently returned to painting after several years concentrating on documentary filmmaking, exhibited this portrait of Inez Spender, the poet Stephen Spender's wife, at the AIA Whitechapel exhibition in 1939 to great acclaim.

Graham Bell, a fellow founder of the Euston Road School of painting, and Coldstream were both elected to the AIA Central Committee in October 1938.

Tate: Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1949

[Turn to wall opposite to view works left to right]

Clive Branson (1907–1944)

Noreen and Rosa, c.1940

Oil on board

Painted after his release from being a prisoner of war, here Branson poignantly depicts Noreen his wife fearing for him in Spain as she pauses from reading a Left Book Club volume on the Civil War, Rosa their young daughter looking on.

More than 500 British International Brigade volunteers died fighting for the Republic. Clive and Noreen Branson were prominent in the campaign to raise money for the dependants of those who never returned.

Rosa Branson (MBE)

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Franco and the Cardinal

artwork for Left Review, 1937

Pen and ink

Ron Heisler Collection

Edith Tudor-Hart (1908–1973)

Southwark Spain Shop, 1939

Contemporary print from original negative

FOTOHOF>ARCHIV © Suschitzky/Donat family

Unknown artist

Food and Money for Bilbao, 1937

Pen, ink and bodycolour

In spring 1937 the British navy maintained a blockade of the Basque coast in the name of 'non-intervention' as fascist forces, supported by German airforce and Italian army formations, advanced on Bilbao. AIA student members in the art schools were involved in a campaign to send aid to the Republican enclave.

Before Bilbao fell the Basque authorities appealed for foreign governments to accept child refugees. Many responded, accepting over 29,000 children, but the British Government (half of whose Cabinet ministers were supporters of Franco) refused, citing the 'principle of neutrality'.

However, such was public outrage after the destruction of Gernika, that the Government was forced to retreat, reluctantly agreeing to allow a single boatload of niños de la guerra (children of war) to enter Britain – but only if they were financially supported by volunteers. On 21 May the SS Habana docked at Southampton with nearly 4000 child refugees aboard.

Ron Heisler Collection

[See vitrine below, viewing objects left to right]

‘Chamberlain Must Go!’ photograph, 1938

The men behind the masks on Mayday were Surrealist artists Roland Penrose, James Cant, Julian Trevelyan and Geoffrey Graham.

The Murray Family Collection (UK and USA)

May Day 1938, publication with cover designed by

James Boswell, 1938

Private Collection

‘Chamberlain Mask’ made by F.E. McWilliam, 1938

Papier-mâché

The National Government’s strategy of appeasing Hitler and Mussolini attracted fierce extra-parliamentary opposition well before the betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich.

This is the only surviving mask from four made by sculptor Frederick McWilliam for the Surrealist contingent of Prime Ministers that marched in protest on Mayday 1938.

The Murray Family Collection (UK and USA)

‘Portraits of Spain’, flyer and catalogue, 1937

With option ranging from 1 guinea for a Maurice de Sausmarez drawing to 500 guineas for an Augustus John

‘head and shoulders’ the scheme was an effective fundraiser.

£750 had already been raised when the AIA received a cheque for 500 gunieas (worth £49,000 in 2026 prices) from George Cadbury paying the fee for John to do a portrait of his father ‘due to the urgency of the Spanish need’ and on condition that no publicity would be attached to the family or the confectionary company.

Private Collection

Send Them Food, 1939

By January 1939, the Republic was facing defeat and the situation in the remaining areas it controlled was desperate. In London before the New Year, the focus of

solidarity campaigns had shifted from demanding arms for the elected Government to sending humanitarian aid.

In February 1939 the London County Council made 22 sites available to support the nationwide Foodships for Spain campaign. Many of these were painted live, attracting widespread press and newsreel attention.

These photographs show artists Ceri Richards, Sam Haile and colleagues working on a billboard at Westbourne Grove on Friday 17 February a day when a reported ninety AIA members took part, despite the grim news that Barcelona had fallen to the fascists on 26 January.

The Murray Family Collection (UK & USA)

**‘We Ask Your Attention’ printed broadsheet by Henry
Moore and others unknown, 1937**

The London Surrealist Group issued a Declaration on Spain in November 1936. Denouncing the duplicitous ‘non-intervention’ of the National Government, it called for arms to be supplied to the democratic government in Madrid. It followed this up at the AIA Congress by distributing this broadsheet, overprinted with a Henry Moore design. A trenchant denunciation of British policy, it nevertheless finished with a performative Surrealist flourish calling for ‘wider satisfaction of desire’ and for ‘poets, artists and intellectuals’ to intervene ‘by violent or subtle subversion.’

Private Collection

[Turn right past end of wall to view artworks on other side,
viewing artworks left to right]

Felicia Browne and child, early 1930s

Facsimiles

First a painter, then a sculptor, always a socialist feminist,

Felicia Browne travelled to Paris with the journalist

Elizabeth Bone, an older woman friend, for the first May

Day celebrations of the Popular Front era.

They then journeyed south arriving in Barcelona in mid-July

as the city was preparing the Peoples Olympiad, a

democratic riposte to Hitler's Berlin Olympics. However,

soon after they arrived, during the night of 15th–16th July,

right-wing military officers rose against the elected

government.

Tate Archive. Photo: Tate

Felicia Browne (1904–1936)

Seated Woman, 1936

Conté crayon on paper

This is one of the original drawings offered for sale at the memorial exhibition. It was bought by Nan Youngman.

170 of Browne's drawings were sold over two weeks and £150 profit cleared for Spanish Medical Aid, newly formed in response to the military revolt. Eight days later the first contingent of 25 doctors, nurses and support staff left London for Spain.

Private Collection

Felicia Browne (1904–1936)

Peasant Woman, 1936

Conté crayon

The military rising was followed by chaos in Barcelona.

Elizabeth Bone left with Claud Cockburn, a fellow journalist, to cover events in Aragon, where George Orwell would fight the following year. Left to her own devices, Browne first travelled out towards Lerida intending to sketch in rural areas. Held there for questioning by local loyalists, she returned to Barcelona after her release and joined an anarchist militia. She is believed to have made this drawing in the square at Lerida while waiting to be interrogated.

Private Collection

[See vitrine below, viewing objects left to right]

Drawings by Felicia Browne, 1936

Conté crayon

Barely three weeks into her militia service Felicia Browne died in a hail of gun fire near Zaragoza as she ran to help a mortally wounded companion.

In retreating, her companions were forced to abandon her body but rescued a satchel and sketchbook containing an astonishing set of drawings.

Sent back via Barcelona to her AIA women friends in London, these formed the centrepiece for a memorial exhibition which opened in Frith Street, Soho, less than two months later. This in turn was the first fundraising event for Spanish Medical Aid.

In parallel with the exhibition, Lawrence & Wishart published 'Drawings by Felicia Browne'.

Private Collection

Drawn while on militia service

by Felicia Browne, August 1938

Facsimiles

Organising the memorial exhibition led to Betty Rea and Nan Youngman meeting for the first time at Elizabeth Watson's Fitzroy Street flat, four doors down from Duncan Grant's London studio.

Agreeing to provide a catalogue preface, Grant wrote of Browne's work: 'I do not think I should have ever thought of them as sculptor's drawings had you not told me. They are so alive but they exist on their own merit (...) even the

slightest express such a tense awareness of character, be it in houses, men or beasts, that they are never incomplete, something deeply felt is expressed (...) She seems to have been gradually extracting from her drawing a wonderfully flexible and personal language.'

Private Collection

Pearl Binder's Picture Diary of Mission to Greece, 1936

Pen and watercolour

Drawings in this diary show Binder accompanying Elwyn-Jones to Athens with information about anti-fascist contacts concealed in the hem of her dress. It is open at a page satirising the assurances they received on meeting Metaxas' Police Minister.

These missions gave Elwyn-Jones insight into events across Europe – and the specific threat posed by the Third Reich. He published a series of far-sighted books including Hitler's Drive to the East (1937), The Battle for Peace (1938) for Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club, and Attack From Within, a 1939 Penguin Special.

Pearl Binder Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives

Aid Spain Rally by Betty Rea, 1937

Conté crayon

AIA support for Medical Aid to Spain embraced exhibitions, studio parties, Portraits for Spain and street collections. Attending one Trafalgar Square rally, AIA artists raised funds by offering made-on-the-spot

drawings as a record. It is likely that this sketch found in Rea's papers is a survival from that occasion.

At another rally in support of the beleaguered Republic, the plinth of Nelson's column was decorated with banners inspired by Goya's Disasters of War executed by Graham Bell, Rodrigo Moynihan, Victor Pasmore, Laurence Gowing, Duncan Grant and Carel Weight. Two months later they went on show at the AIA's Whitechapel exhibition.

Private Collection

[Turn right past the end of the vitrine to view display case]

Floor:

Frank Dobson (1886–1963)

Torso, 1933

Portland stone

Henry Moore from 1934 and Barbara Hepworth from 1935 regularly exhibited with the AIA as sculpture became a significant feature of its major exhibitions.

Frank Dobson and Jacob Epstein were among the well-known sculptors of the older generation who joined the AIA. Epstein endorsed the AIA when it convened the First British Artists Congress in 1937 and Dobson joined the Advisory Council in 1940.

Tate: Purchased 1948

[Move around display case to view opposite side of wall.

View works from left to right]

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

The Dream and Lie of Franco, I & II, 1937

Etchings

Soon after Picasso completed these savagely satirical etchings for Spanish Refugee Relief, he received a Republican delegation in his studio including the architects commissioned to design a Spanish pavilion for the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale. They came in the belief that displaying a major Picasso mural at the Expo would be ‘equivalent value in propaganda terms of a major victory at the front.’

After a brief hesitation, Picasso accepted the assignment, but three months later he had not begun. It was only after he read of Gernika's destruction that he began a spate of preparatory drawings.

Three weeks later, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, plus Elizabeth Watson and Quentin Bell on AIA business, visited Picasso in the Rue des Grands Augustins as the outline of Guernica was being sketched in across a huge canvas.

Towner Eastbourne

[Text displayed above artwork]

“There are those that believe the power of law should be replaced by the law of power.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, January 2026

Jesse Collins (dates unknown)

AIA Whitechapel Exhibition Advertisement, 1939

Print

Private Collection

[See vitrine below, viewing objects left to right]

AIA Selection Committee, Whitechapel Gallery, 1939

Eric Ravilious, Percy Horton and Edward Bawden at work
on 1 February 1939, Misha Black just visible in the
background, top right.

Private Collection

AIA exhibition catalogue and private view card, 1939

Famously this exhibition was opened by The Man in the Street, an unemployed passer-by accosted by Nan Youngman at the appointed hour. This, however, was a neat ploy arrived at only after Anthony Eden, who had resigned as Foreign Secretary in protest at appeasement, J.B. Priestley, H.G. Wells, and Kenneth Clark had been considered. Herbert Morrison had also been approached, but the London County Council Labour leader evidently declined to appear in the Gallery quite so hard on the heels of Clement Atlee, who had spoken there while Guernica was on display.

Private Collection

Major Attlee at Whitechapel Gallery, January 1939

Photograph

Clement Attlee, future Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Opposition in Parliament, spoke at the opening of the Guernica exhibit at the Whitechapel Gallery, which took place just before the AIA's major 1939 exhibition in the same venue.

Marx Memorial Library and Workers School

Promotional Programme for Burlington Galleries

‘Guernica’ Exhibition, 1938

After the Exposition closed Guernica was rolled up and returned to Picasso's studio in the Rue des Grands Augustins.

Just under a year later – on the same day that Chamberlain flew back from Munich to declare ‘Peace for Our Time’ – the painting arrived at Tilbury in the hold of a merchant ship, before being taken to the Burlington Galleries to be displayed on behalf of Spanish Relief. Roland Penrose, the lead organiser of its UK tour, was disappointed by the numbers attending in the West End – which in a letter to the artist he put down to post-Munich disillusion.

However, when the painting was displayed at the Whitechapel Art Gallery two months later, as part of the East End Foodships for Spain campaign, the popular response was enormous.

Private Collection

Paris, May 1937

Photograph

James Holland, Elizabeth Watson, Betty Rea and, above, Nan Youngman working on the Peace Pavilion – a task they succeeded in despite frequent labour stoppages during its construction and sabotage attempts by Action Francaise.

Holland's design, almost certainly evolved in tandem with Misha Black, prefigured the style of public information exhibitions that they would soon create for the Ministry of Information during the coming world war.

Private Collection

‘Paris Exposition Internationale’ printed site map, 1937

Guernica was displayed on the ground floor of the Spanish pavilion (red spot #24 on map) not far from where the Soviet Union and Germany famously confronted each other on the north bank of the Seine (green spots #14 and #26).

Immediately beyond the perimeter, (yellow spot), AIA members Holland, Watson, Rea and Youngman were responsible for the displays in the unofficial International Peace Pavilion organised by the Artists Peace Campaign.

Private Collection

[Turn rightwards past the end of the wall and move towards standalone artwork in corner. Move clockwise along rest of wall to continue viewing artworks]

Percy Horton (1897–1970)

Unemployed Man, c.1929

Oil on board

Horton was well-known for his portraits of workers stressing the human dignity and agency of both the employed and the unemployed.

Sheffield Museums. Presented by the Sheffield Society for the Encouragement of Art, June 1937

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

The Fried Fish Shop, 1936

Oil on board

Painted in early 1936 before the outbreak of the civil war in Spain and the Moscow show trials, this work – with Stalin depicted dining in shadow at the centre of a brightly-lit restaurant – is an extraordinary political allegory speaking to Rowe's deep scepticism about developments in the USSR.

The key to the allegory is 'Harry's for Quality' together with the figure of Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain. He is seen serving a figure reminiscent of Horton's unemployed worker, watched over in turn by a bowler-hatted man reminiscent

of the not-so secret policeman from Sedition, Tudor-Hart's famous photograph.

Other figures depicted have been identified as Clive and Noreen Branson, Elizabeth Watson, AIA Secretary at the time, and – departing upstairs – the recently deceased Clara Zetkin, a critic of Stalin's view of art's subservience to power, who had returned to Moscow in 1933 while Rowe was living there.

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Removalists, c.1937 [Top]

Oil on board

Around 1937 Rowe turned to the streets of Camden Town, Kentish Town and Somers Town 'to make drawings and

paintings of everything that interested me from an aesthetic point of view.' For several years he immersed himself in 'the community spirit and life which a common level of income and environment always produces', painting many works in the area.

Rowe left many of his works untitled, this one included.

Although assumed to depict a removal, it was probably the brightness of the painted truck, reminiscent of local narrow-boat art, that attracted Rowe in the first instance.

People's History Museum

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Two Women and a Pram, 1937 [Bottom]

Oil on board

While working in the Air Raid Precaution service by night, Rowe continued to explore and paint the area by day ‘from love of the subject’. While doing so he met ‘mainly women and children because the men were either in the armed forces or at work (...) one could stop and chat almost anywhere and find oneself a welcome addition to the fold.’

People’s History Museum

Eric Ravilious (1903–1942)

The Lifeboat, 1938

Watercolour and pencil

Ravilious sent this work to the Whitechapel show – labelled ‘n.f.s’ or ‘not for sale’ – as he was working hard to accumulate work for a solo exhibition later in the year.

Ravilious and Tirzah Garwood had both attended the 1937 Artists Congress and were close to Helen Binyon, Eric’s former lover, and Percy Horton, both of whom were AIA Central Committee members in 1939–40.

In 1938, as part of AIA Portraits for Spain, Ravilious had painted Buscot Park for Lord Farringdon, having offered his services to the cause for a modest 10 gns; Augustus John by contrast raised 500 guineas (equivalent to £49,000

today) from the Cadbury dynasty for a ‘head and shoulders’ of the chocolate company’s chairman.

Private Collection, on loan to Towner Eastbourne

Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980)

The Crab, 1939–40

Oil on canvas

Kokoschka arrived in London in late 1938 grateful for sanctuary but decrying Britain’s appeasers who had betrayed Czechoslovakia at Munich.

In *The Crab*, the first in a series of politically charged allegories created over four years, he appears as a swimmer pursued by a giant mollusc representing Chamberlain. Alternately titled ‘Hospitality’ it spoke to the

emotions of anti-fascist refugees threatened with incarceration as ‘enemy aliens.’

Kokoschka became a Vice-President of the Free German League of Culture and became a crucial link between the growing community of newly exiled artists and the AIA, joining its Advisory Council.

In 1943 he painted the ironically titled *This is What We Are Fighting For* for the AIA’s *For Liberty* exhibition – an expressionist howl of rage at war’s progenitors.

Tate: Purchased 1984

[Move past end of wall and turn left to view wall from opposite side]

[View artworks starting at end of wall, navigating clockwise]

[Text Panel]

Making original art affordable for a mass market was an AIA aim. They wanted to do for artists what the Penguin paperback was doing for writers and were inspired by an initiative of the American Artists Congress. In the USA, an exhibition of 100 topical affordable prints had opened simultaneously in 30 cities. The rallying cry was: Everyone an Art Patron!

In January 1939, a Printing Unit was set up and zinc metal plates were distributed for members to create lithographs which would sell at 1/- for the black and white ones (equivalent to £3 today), 1/6d for two colours. About 25

Everyman Prints were ready before war was declared in September 1939, but more were needed and it was decided these would need to reflect ‘the war situation’.

When the series was launched in January 1940, 3000 prints were sold in 3 weeks, and marketing through chain stores was piloted during ‘the phoney war’ period before Dunkirk. Displayed here is the only complete set of the 52 prints by 41 artists known to exist—a unique record of Britain’s transition from the last summer of peace to the early months of the Second World War.

AIA Artists

Everyman Prints, 1939

52 lithographs

Private Collection

Beginning from the top, first row, left to right:

1 Elizabeth Spurr, Washing Day

2 Rowland Hilder, Landscape

3 Kathleen Gardiner, Market Day

4 John Piper, Font and Tortoise Stove: Britwell Salome

Second row, left to right:

1 Beryl Sinclair, The Row

2 Durac Barnett, Bread and Circuses

3 Feliks Topolski, Drawing

4 James Holland, 'Here They Come'

Third row, left to right:

1 Phyllis Ginger, Chimps at the Zoo

2 Henry Trevick, The Fair

3 Helen Binyon, Summer Holiday, Walton-on-Naze

4 Edmond Xavier Kapp, A Queen's Hall Prom

Bottom row, left to right:

1 Edmond Xavier Kapp, 'My Marmaduke'

2 Mary Adshead, Spring on Woodhouse Moor

3 Stephen Bone, Village on Coast

4 Helen Binyon, The Gate

Beginning from the top, first row, left to right:

1 David Caplan, Liverpool Station

2 Maurice de Sausmarez, A Garden - God Wot

3 Russell Reeve, Barrage Balloons ascending over
Hampstead

4 Peter Barker Mill, The Threat

Second row, left to right:

1 Helen Binyon, The Flower Show

2 Freda Nichols, Fun Fair

3 Herbert Budd, September 1939

4 James Holland, Country Town the Militia

Third row, left to right:

1 William Townsend, W E A Meeting

2, 4 James Boswell, Hunger Marchers in Hyde Park /

Candidate for Glory

3 Cliff Rowe, Unemployment Assessment Board

Forth row, left to right:

1 Diana John, On the Beach

2, 3 Moira Evans, August Bank Holiday / November 11th

4 Diana John, Evacuees, Bradford-on-Avon

Bottom row, left to right:

1 Edward Scroggie, Street Market

2 Theodore Naish, Underground

3 Vanessa Bell, London Children in the Country

4 Pearl Binder, Evacuation Scene

Beginning from the top, first row, left to right:

1 Lowes Dalbiac Luard, The Rescue

2 Chris Fontaine, Hampstead Library

3 Carel Weight, Blockade

4 Henry Holzer, Barrage Balloon

Second row, left to right:

1 Kenneth Rowntree, Wartime Hoardings

2 James Holland, News Reel

3 Geoffrey Rhoades, Blackout

4 Helen Kapp, Black-out; Listening to Beethoven

Third row, left to right:

1 James Boswell, Gite Business

2 Robert Butler, The Station

3 Stanley Badmin, A British Common. Down for a Refill

4 Mona Moore, Draught Players

Bottom row, left to right:

1 Raymond Coxon, Evacuated Children at a Yorkshire
Village

2 Kathleen Walker, The Mother's Union in War Time

3 Arthur Boyce, Upheaval

4 Edmond Xavier Kapp, English Rose

[Continue to navigate along wall clockwise]

[Text Panel]

The Nazi Blitzkrieg in May 1940 brought ‘the phoney war’ to an end. After the Fall of France two months later, Britain stood alone. The Battle of the Atlantic brought food shortages and that September, following the Battle of Britain, the intense bombing of the Blitz brought civilian loss of life.

The ambitions evident when Everyman was launched were not fulfilled—initially strong marketing through Boots and Marks & Spencer faltered, paper rationing cut supplies, and the churn of war meant previous volunteer printers were unavailable.

The AIA’s major 1940 exhibition was delayed by a week after two incendiary bombs fell through the gallery roof but once opened was a notable success.

New initiatives in 1941 included the launch of a second travelling exhibition, a joint show with the Free German League of Culture, support for artists arriving from occupied countries, and displays of new art in shops, factory canteens, shelters, civil service offices, and railway stations.

During the darkest periods of the conflict, the AIA not only kept going but also growing, and in 1942 was able to offer extended services to its members.

Clive Branson (1907–1944)

Blitz: Plane Flying, 1940 [Top]

Oil on canvas

‘It may be my last chance’, Branson remarked as he turned to painting in autumn 1940, taking the Blitz and its impact on local communities as his subject.

Although the plane flying low over South London in this work of surreal intensity displays Nazi insignia, it also carries Royal Air Force roundels. In Branson’s view ordinary people, German and British, were now united in being victims of another unjust war.

After Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, Branson came to support the war effort as part of the resistance to fascism, striving to be effective as a soldier despite writing: ‘My whole being revolts against war and I found myself much

more wholehearted in opposing the war than I do now in urging more drastic prosecution of the war’.

Tate: Bequeathed by Noreen Branson 2004

Clive Branson (1907–1944)

Bombed Women and Searchlights, 1940 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

This startling painting, depicting war’s impact on Battersea, was first shown in April 1941 at an AIA exhibition in the Whitehall canteen of the Ministry of Shipping and Economic Warfare.

Conscripted into the Armoured Corps that January, Branson faced discrimination because of his International Brigade past. He died in Burma commanding a tank on 25 February 1944. Shortly before he wrote to Noreen: ‘one is

given by fate only one lifetime to work and live for
humanity (...) If by chance one of us has to leave this work
before it is done, then let the other go on (...) there are so
many years of grand work ahead.'

Tate: Bequeathed by Noreen Branson 2004

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Left, top to bottom:

Crewe 2am, 1941

Ink and conte crayon on paper

Roadmaking by RAMC No 2, 1942

Pen and black ink, with watercolour and black chalk

Skin Wards at 33rd General Hospital, 1941

Pen and black ink, graphite, black chalk and watercolour

Conscripted into the Royal Army Medical Corps James Boswell trained as a radiographer. He found forces life 'brutish', but whether in Scotland or the Iraqi desert carried sketchbooks with him constantly, snatching every possibility to continue working.

Writing to the art critic Jan Gordon he explained 'I think I have been luckier than most. The kind of work I do doesn't need a lot of equipment (...) I use the X-ray department in the hospital as a studio in the evening and at weekends.'

IWM (Imperial War Museum) (Crewe);British Museum.

Presented by Ruth Boswell (Roadmaking/Skin Wards)

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Right, top to bottom:

Dusk the Hospital Site, 1943

Watercolour over graphite

Burning Sun, Iraq, 1943-44

Pen and black ink and black wash, with watercolour

Bringing in a Casualty at Night, 1941

Pen and black ink, with watercolour and black chalk

Boswell was deployed to the Middle East in April 1942, spending 20 months in isolated desert locations. It was a time of doubt and stress during which he filled sketchbooks with drawings and written commentaries of hallucinogenic intensity.

After returning to Britain, he was commissioned as an officer and in 1944 joined the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, which played a pivotal role in promoting debate amongst soldiers in the run up to the 1945 election.

Boswell's time in the RAMC overseas formed the basis of his solo show *On Duty in the Desert* held at the AIA's Charlotte Street Centre in May 1944.

British Museum, Presented by Ruth Boswell

Humphrey Spender (1910–2005)

Salisbury Plain, Wartime, 1941 [Top]

Oil on board

The artist and designer Humphrey Spender, brother of the poet Stephen Spender, was first known for his

photography, having been introduced to cameras by his older brother Michael, a scientist and explorer.

In the late 1930s Spender pursued documentary photography, contributing to Mass Observation's Worktown project alongside fellow AIA members Graham Bell and Julian Trevelyan. Appointed an Official War Photographer while working in the Royal Army Service Corps, Spender would eventually abandon the medium in the mid-1950s to concentrate on textile design, teaching at the RCA from 1953 to 1975.

This is one of at least three Salisbury Plain landscapes Spender completed based on his time in the RASC, two of which are in the IWM collection.

Private Collection

Julian Trevelyan (1910–1988)

Halt! Who goes there? 1941 [Bottom]

Ink

Trevelyan exhibited this with the AIA in 1941, contributing an etching in similar vein to Salvo for Russia, a fund-raising initiative supporting the Soviet war effort and its resistance at Stalingrad the following year.

Trevelyan's war service was as a commissioned camoufleur in the Royal Engineers – an experience he found both frustrating and distressing before being retired on medical grounds in 1943. At the outset, as artists lost livelihoods, camouflage was a sought-after activity among the AIA membership for those not involved in other war work. Partly as a consequence a thirty-member AIA branch formed at the Camouflage Directorate at

Leamington Spa, which carried out projects decorating workers' hostels and British Restaurants.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Edith Simon (1917–2003)

Incendiary Bombs at Camden Studios, 1942 [Bottom]

Gouache

Camden Studios, a late Victorian complex of thirteen artist's studios had been used by Percy Horton, his brother Ron Horton, Peggy Angus, and Eric Ravilious in peacetime. Landlord's rules about not sleeping on the premises were freely ignored.

Peter László Peri had taken a studio there to complete works for his 1938 solo exhibition *London Life in Concrete*, and in the early years of the war he, Edith Simon, Cliff

Rowe and Carel Weight were among the AIA members who made it their base.

Simon's print records the night when a German incendiary bomb fell in the courtyard, but modestly barely alludes to her central role extinguishing it.

Private Collection

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Parachute Flares, c.1941 [Top]

Oil on canvas

Rowe and Peri both served in the St Pancras Unit of the ARP's Light Rescue Service. Regular work, it yielded a steady if modest wage, as well as time for working as artists either during long depot nights on call or on leave days. But in the context of the Blitz, it was a gruelling

experience taking them to scenes of horror and loss, as well as occasionally sights of terrible awe.

Rowe depicted Peri to the right, and himself to the left of the central scene of his 1941 lithograph *The Stretcher Party*.

Private Collector

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

The Rescue Men, c.1940 [Plinth]

Concrete and steel

Private Collection

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Woman Cleaning Locomotive Boiler, c.1942

In April 1941 the first of Rowe's three war-time applications to become an Official War Artist was turned down almost certainly as a result of MI5 vetting, a routine step in the appointment process. However, he was successful in obtaining a permit to sketch and paint in the St Pancras rail marshalling yards which he did on multiple occasions during rostered days off from ARP duties.

People's History Museum

Sir Muirhead Bone (1876–1953)

Study for Winter Minelaying off Iceland, 1942 [Top]

Conté carbon pencil and white chalk

Muirhead Bone, John Nash and Eric Ravilious were all commissioned as Royal Marine officers in 1940 to give them status during their work as Official War Artists with the Admiralty. Bone's subsequent studies for a major painting unintentionally depicted action in the Icelandic waters where Ravilious would lose his life in September 1942. Ravilious was the first of three War artists, all AIA members, killed in action during the Second World War; the others were Albert Richards (1919–45) and Ravilious' friend Thomas Hennell (1903–45) who was killed in Indonesia as the war was ending.

Liss Llewellyn

Ethel Gabain (1883–1950)

Sandbag Workers, Women's Work in the War, 1941

[Bottom]

Lithograph

Gabain studied at the Slade and the Central School of Art, becoming a founder member of the lithographers' Senefelder Club in 1909. In the 1920s she was one of the

very few artists able to live solely from print sales.

The War Artists Advisory Committee commissioned

Gabain, a regular AIA exhibitor, to produce eight

lithographs on the theme of the evacuation of children and

women's war work. Despite being beset by ill health from

1939, she was elected President of the Society of Women

Artists in 1940, and travelled widely recording women

working in traditionally male roles such as engineering,

salvage and construction workers, and as ‘lumberjills’ in the Scottish forests.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

F. H. K. Henrion (1914–1990)

For Liberty, 1943

Printed poster

Private Collection

[Text Panel]

Before internment as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man in summer 1940, F. H. K. Henrion had established himself as a graphic designer of promise working with Misha Black.

Six months later, Henrion was released to work at the Ministry of Information. As Henrion recalled, ‘the sudden change was absolutely surrealist—from the I O M to the M O I in a week—an episode in a bad dream.’

Such was his prowess as a designer that the American Office of War Information in London also wanted to employ him. There he was exposed to Roosevelt’s ideals expressed as the Four Freedoms—from want, from fear, of speech, and to worship—which the US President had pressured his British allies to sign up to as war aims for the post-war world.

For Liberty, held on the John Lewis bomb site in spring 1943, was originally conceived by Misha Black as 'For Freedom' and 'propaganda of the imagination', themed as 'How are we fighting, What are we Fighting Against, What are we fighting For.' Henrion had joined the committee as overall designer and, while the wider exhibition that emerged still spoke to Black's themes, a 'Four Freedoms' room became its centrepiece, with the exhibition's main title changing from 'For Freedom' to 'For Liberty.'

Morris Kestelman (1905–1998)

Lama Sabacthani? Why has't thou forsaken me? 1943

Oil on canvas

For some visiting *For Liberty*, this work in the Four Freedom's room had immense emotional impact as an

intimation of events in Europe. While the terrible oppression of Jews under fascism was generally recognised in London, the extent of the holocaust unfolding in Europe was known to very few and not publicly acknowledged by official circles.

Extraordinary in itself, the work is also an exception within Kestelman's extensive oeuvre of paintings. Although born in Whitechapel to parents of Russian Jewish heritage, he had rejected religion on rationalist grounds. Very few, if any, of his other works created over a long career make any explicit reference to Jewish life and culture – making his contribution to *For Liberty* in spring 1943 all the more remarkable.

Kestelman's period of intense involvement with the AIA began in 1941 as co-ordinator of its Charing Cross station

exhibition of War Pictures, seen by 120,000 people in less than four weeks.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

New World? 1943–47 [Plinth]

Bronze

Betty Rea and Nan Youngman spent much of the war looking after children, in Huntingdon, then Cambridge, and in Rea's case more broadly across the Fenlands where abandoned children evacuated from LCC institutions had been housed. Rea, with Youngman in support, also took on three children whose mother, a friend, had died.

At a crucial point of the war, the final two lines of Day-Lewis's sonnet affirmed faith in the future as did the

placing of Rea's contribution at the end of the Four Freedom's sequence. In her mind the question mark Rea added to its title almost certainly alluded to the uncertainty of emerging from war into a better society when peace and reconstruction finally arrived.

Private Collection

John Tunnard (1905–1998)

Lunar Synthesis, c.1942

Gesso, oil and pencil on board

Tunnard was both a pacifist and a member of the London Surrealist Group who exhibited regularly with the AIA from 1937 onwards, contributing to many of its wider initiatives. He volunteered as a coastguard after the outbreak of war, and in 1943 painted Focal Point for display in the Four

Freedoms room. Lunar Synthesis painted the previous year and displayed here has a strong affinity with the 1943 painting, now in New Zealand.

A few days before the exhibition opened, when all the artwork for the room had arrived, the future poet Laureate Cecil Day-Lewis, a colleague of Black and Henrion's, wrote a sonnet referencing each work, each line being used as a caption.

Referencing Tunnard's painting and Betty Rea's sculpture, the last two lines read as an optimistic crescendo: 'A pattern mysterious yet lucid, for Love is the focal point of the pattern. And our heirs shall unfold, like a cluster of apple blossom, in a fine tomorrow.'

Jerwood Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Nazi photographing hanged couple, c.1943 [Top]

Ink and watercolour

War and Peace, 1943 [Bottom]

Etching

It was only after the war that Peri learnt that all four of his brothers had perished during the Holocaust.

Private Collection; Ron Heisler Collection

[Turn around and move to vitrine, viewing objects left to right]

Gabriel Péri by William Rust, 1942

One of the standout paintings of For Liberty, lauded for its tragic pathos, was The Death of Gabriel Péri by Pat Carpenter (reproduced in the catalogue displayed here).

A resistance hero for many exiles from the occupied countries, Gabriel Peri, former Foreign Editor of L'Humanité and a parliamentary leader of the French Popular Front, was executed by the Germans in Paris at dawn on 15 December 1941.

In the moments before his death he penned an extraordinary letter of farewell, which – smuggled out to London – was reproduced on the inside cover of William Rust's pamphlet.

Rust, editor of the then banned Daily Worker, got David Caplan (the cartoonist 'Davy') to design the cover.

Private Collection

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Factory Gate Meeting, 1942

Pen, ink and wash

Rowe's now lost contribution to the For Liberty exhibition was an oil painting titled Freedom of Speech. It depicted a young woman confidently addressing a factory gate meeting calling for an end to the ban on the Daily Worker.

This earlier sketch shows a similar meeting set in a wider streetscape incorporating a newspaper placard reading 'Ban Lifted', dating it to October 1942.

People's History Museum

‘Back to the Dark Ages’ and ‘Hostages’ by Géza Szóbel

(1905 –1963), 1941

The Slovakian painter Szóbel had fought in the Battle of France with the Free Czech forces before escaping to Britain in 1941, the year he began exhibiting with the AIA.

Szóbel’s drawings, completed after reaching London, expressed the pain, evil and cruelty he knew to be unfolding in Europe and were published in 1942 as *Civilisation* by Penguin Books.

Private Collection

‘Our Allies Inside Germany’ by René Graetz, 1942

Many individual exiles had exhibited with the AIA before the Munich Agreement in 1938 led to a further influx of artists assisted by the Artists Refugee Committee.

Work by exiled artists interned as 'enemy aliens' figured prominently in the AIA's 1940 exhibition as part of ongoing co-operation with the Free German League of Culture. In 1941 the AIA and FGLC held a joint exhibition of Drawings and Sculpture.

In summer 1942, the FGLC staged Our Allies Inside Germany in an empty Regent Street shop which featured 27 demountable panels of photographs, pamphlets and publications smuggled out of Germany, as well photomontages and information graphics produced in exile.

30,000 people attended the exhibition which then toured, as We accuse – Ten Years of Hitler Fascism, to Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Oxford, Leicester and Cambridge where it was seen by a further 160,000 visitors.

Private Collection

[Move around to see vitrine on other side, viewing objects
left to right]

‘Your Work as Artist in Wartime’ published by the AIA,
1940

The political repercussions of the Hitler-Stalin pact
threatened to fatally divide the broad coalition of artists
the AIA had patiently assembled during the last fraught
years of the peace.

Led by Misha Black and adapting to new circumstances,
the AIA focussed on two aims that all members could
agree on during the first 21 months of war: maintaining

employment for as many artists as possible, and ensuring that visual culture survived the conflict.

To this end the AIA prepared a memorandum for Government drawing on the lessons of the New Deal in the USA, played a leading role in formation of the Central Institute of Art and Design (a precursor of the Arts Council) and kept generating new initiatives for people to have access to art and for artists to contribute to community ends.

Private Collection

**Designs for the 'For Liberty' Oxford Street forecourt by
F.H.K. Henrion, 1943**

The AIA initially struggled to find a suitable central site for an exhibition which was a largescale undertaking at a

crucial point in the war – when for the first time victory seemed probable and questions about the shape of post-war society more relevant.

John Lewis' grand, six-story retail emporium had been destroyed by bombing in autumn 1940, with the site then used for an air raid shelter during the intense phase of the Blitz. By 1943 this was over and the V1 and V2 attacks had not yet begun.

Henrion's designs for the exhibition exterior, combined symbolism conveying aspiration with a colourful makeover for elements of the ruins – delivered courtesy of Marylebone firefighters and their extendable ladders – to attract attention.

FHK Henrion Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives. Courtesy of the Henrion Estate

‘For Liberty’ catalogue by Peter A Ray, 1943

These pages show some of the 15 works especially commissioned for the Four Freedoms room at the heart of the exhibition, as well as Cecil Day-Lewis’ linking poem dated and probably written on the day they arrived for installation.

Private Collection

[Turn right to view the standalone artwork displayed on the end of the wall in front of you]

Peggy Angus (1904–1993)

The Birthday Feast, 1941

Oil on board

This atypical and slightly surreal work was painted during a distressing period for Angus. Her husband Jim Richards, the father of her two children, was in process of abandoning their marriage without being clear about his intentions. Looking after her children, one of whom was frequently ill, while living and teaching in Chichester was desperately difficult.

Painted at a time of tightening rationing and shortages of every ingredient required, this picture of a birthday party awaiting an unseen family to gather reads as a cry of longing for what is not to be.

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

[Move left past end of wall turning inwards to continue viewing artworks, moving in an anticlockwise direction]

Laura Knight (1877–1970)

Corporal J M Robins, MM, WAAF, 1941

Oil on canvas

London Gazette, 20 December 1940: ‘Corporal Robins was in a dug-out which received a direct hit during an intense enemy bombing raid. A number of men were killed and two seriously injured. Though dust and fumes filled the shelter, Corporal Robins immediately went to the assistance of the wounded and rendered first aid. While they were being removed from the demolished dug-out, she fetched a stretcher and stayed with the wounded until they were evacuated. She displayed courage and coolness of a very high order in a position of extreme danger.’

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Ethel Gabain (1883–1950)

**Women Workers in Canteen at Williams and Williams,
Chester, c.1943**

Oil on canvas

Gabain exhibited five works at the AIA Exhibition The Engineer in British Life in June 1945, organised to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and mark the nation's industrial achievement during the war years. These included two of her Williams and Williams paintings – Lathes and Centreless Grinders in a Shell Shop.

When the AIA staged 1945 This Extraordinary Year at the Whitechapel Gallery that autumn Gabain's contributed a third work Swinging Bailey Bridge Sections at Reliance

Works Chester. This was displayed next to L S Lowry's VE Day and not far from Peter László Peri's The Rescue Men.

Grosvenor Museum, West Cheshire Museums

Ethel Gabain (1883–1950)

Women Workers at Williams and Williams, Chester,

c.1943

Oil on canvas

After completing portraits of individual women at war and scenes of women at work as salvage workers, factory hands and ARP wardens, Gabain was commissioned by a number of Northwest industrial firms to record their part in the war effort. These included Williams and Williams' Reliance Works in Chester, Ferranti at Hollinwood and Richard Howarth & Co in Salford.

Grosvenor Museum, West Cheshire Museums

Percy Horton (1897–1970)

Blind Workers at the Lucas Factory in Birmingham,

c.1942 [Top]

Oil on canvas

Percy Horton was evacuated to Ambleside with the remaining RCA students in 1940, but frequently escaped back to London on AIA business when circumstances allowed. In 1941 he and Morris Kestelman curated the AIA Charing Cross exhibition of unofficial war art.

This work is one of two he completed following a similar suggestion from Clark as the one made to Spear, and probably preliminary to Horton's very similar Blind

Workers in a Birmingham Factory now in the IWM Collection.

Horton returned to London with the RCA in 1945 at a time of confusion and reorganisation, leaving in 1949 to take up the post of Ruskin Master of Drawing at the University of Oxford.

Ron Heisler Collection

Ruskin Spear (1911–1990)

Deaf Girls Working on Construction of Petrol Tanks,

1944 [Bottom]

Oil on panel

After purchasing Blackout, a Hammersmith nightscape, for the War Artists Advisory Committee, Kenneth Clark asked Spear to select 'war work subjects'. Those he went

on to paint included scenes of women doping aircraft fuselages with toxic materials at an aircraft factory in Coventry, and this painting where Spear – physically disabled himself – selected a subject emphasising the extent of industrial mobilisation in an era of total war.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Pat Carpenter (1904–1989)

Ammunition Column Moving Out, 1942

Oil on canvas

Carpenter joined the AIA Central Committee in 1938 as an 18-year-old student while studying at Chelsea College of Art and was conscripted as an Army Signaller in April 1942. In late 1942 the AIA exhibitions committee selected

Carpenter to contribute a new work to the 'Four Freedoms' room at the For Liberty exhibition.

He wrote to Jan Gordon: 'I personally find it impossible to do more than sketch (...) the main difficulties are keeping one's painting equipment in a barrack room and getting a little quiet and privacy.' However, in response to the challenge, he produced *The Death of Gabriel Péri* (1943) in three weeks – a painting that had major resonance for exiles from the occupied countries of Europe for whom Péri was a resistance hero. (A catalogue photograph can be seen in the nearby floor case).

Southampton City Art Gallery

Carel Weight (1908–1997)

Escape of the Zebra from the Zoo during an Air Raid,

1941 [Top]

Oil on panel

Weight was overlooked when Official War Artists were appointed but invited to send in paintings for possible purchase. When he submitted *It Happened to Us!*, depicting a German fighter-bomber strafing a London trolley-bus, it was rejected as damaging to civilian morale. A suggestion was made he might instead paint a zebra's recent escape from London Zoo. The animal's re-capture in Camden had been much reported and the idea recalled Weight's *Allegro Strepitoso* (1932) of a woman at the Zoo fighting off an escaping lion with an umbrella. Weight duly obliged.

It Happened to Us! meanwhile made a considerable impact at the AIA's Charing Cross exhibition of unofficial war art in September 1941, where it was seen and admired by Londoners for whom its sense of danger among the everyday rang true.

Manchester City Galleries. Gift of H.M. Government War Artists' Advisory Committee to the Rutherford Collection, 1947

Carel Weight (1908–1997)

Recruits Progress – Preparations for an Evening Out,

1943 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

In 1942 Weight was conscripted into the Royal Engineers where his commanding officer was distinctly

unsympathetic to artistic activity in the ranks, but he nevertheless managed to produce a series of works recording the foibles and occasional humiliations of life in the forces. Gathered together with the work of three young 'sapper-artists' he met, these formed the basis of After Duty, an exhibition he organised at the AIA's newly opened Charlotte Street Centre in November 1943.

In spring 1945, after Albert Richards was killed, Weight replaced him as an Official War Artist, landing in Italy in March 1945. From there he wrote to the AIA suggesting that the next major show they were planning should take This Extraordinary Year 1945 as its title and theme.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Graham Sutherland (1903–1980)

The Quarry Railway, 1943 [Top]

Pencil, ink, gouache and pastel

In 1945 Sutherland exhibited a work titled Limestone

Quarry in the AIA organised display The Engineer in British Life.

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Middle top:

Mother and Child Cowering, 1944

Left:

Workers and Soldiers Unite! 1943

Etchings

Ron Heisler Collection; Private Collection

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Above:

Train Derailment, c.1943

Right:

Clearing Rubble, c.1943

Coloured lithographs

Private Collection

James Fitton (1899–1982)

Milk – the backbone of Young Britain, 1943 [Top]

Lithograph

IWM (Imperial War Museum)

James Fitton (1883–1950)

A Clear Plate Means a Clear Conscience, 1943 [Bottom]

Lithograph

When the AIA organised a touring exhibition, Poster Design in War-Time Britain, in 1943 it brought together 152 posters, 130 of which had been commissioned for government agencies such as this one designed by Fitton for the Ministry of Food. Reviewing these, Eric Newton wrote ‘New and revolutionary modes of behaviour have to be imposed on us and the poster artist is the modern propagandist’s most potent agent.’ Many exhibited a freshness of style as they delivered public service messages necessary for the conduct of the war, as did others either subliminally or explicitly suggesting a better future for all was the aim.

Grosvenor Museum, West Cheshire Museums

Edith Simon (1917–2003)

Top:

Dental Surgery, mid-1940s

Bottom:

Christmas in Hospital, mid-1940s

Gouache

The Beveridge Report, published at the end of 1942, was a foundation document of the modern Welfare State. It generated enormous public interest and swiftly became an unlikely best seller.

War had necessitated collective provision – and a more equal sharing – of key services and resources, and for

many it cemented a determination to avoid a return to the social conditions that had scarred many lives in the 1930s.

Private Collection

Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975)

Concentration of Hands, 1948

Pencil and oil on plywood

At the end of the war detailed proposals for formation of a national health service were published and in 1946 the Attlee Government enacted legislation. A hard-fought dispute with the British Medical Association followed before professional resistance was overcome and the NHS came into operation in July 1948. Seven months earlier, Barbara Hepworth had created her series Hospital

Drawings – born out of her own experience seeking urgent yet barely affordable treatment for one of her daughters.

Given access to an operating theatre, Hepworth was struck by the skill, graceful concentration and intricate teamwork of the surgical staff. She produced seventeen works over five weeks which, while not intended as overtly political, stand as a stunning celebration of these human interactions at a critical time.

British Council

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Three Women Talking, c.1950

Oil on board

Exploring Camden before the war, Rowe had written ‘both the women and the children led most of their social life on

the streets, in order to gain relief from the boredom of living in small rooms without gardens, so pavement conversations were the accepted means of communication (...) One could stop and chat almost anywhere, and find oneself a welcome addition to the fold, as though entire streets were really one large family.'

Returning to this in paint after the war, Rowe employs a closer focus and a brighter palette than in some similar pre-war works, imbuing the scene with a suggestion of changing times as well as changing fashions.

People's History Museum

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

The First Lemons After the War, 1946

Oil on canvas

Signalling a new era, this work was painted at Papermills on the outskirts of Cambridge. Youngman and Rea had recently moved there with Betty's two sons and the three children of a friend, still in the forces, whose wife had died.

Papermills would be their home for the next nineteen years. As well as being the centre of their own endeavours, it became a lively crossroads between university, city, and the wider world of art. Many of the works exhibited here were created in the rambling building fronted by a millstream and accessed over two small bridges.

Private Collection

[Turn right and move ahead approximately 4m to meet end of wall. View works navigating in a clockwise direction]

[Staring from end of wall, navigate artworks in clockwise direction]

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Top:

At the Station, c.1925

Bottom:

Country Fair, c.1925

Etching

Youngman trained at the Slade under Henry Tonks and Philip Wilson Steer between 1924 and 1927 before studying for a teaching diploma at the London Day Training Centre. While there she became friends with its Principal, the charismatic Marion Richardson, who many regarded

as having a unique depth of understanding about art and aspiring artists, whether child, adolescent or adult.

In Youngman's case, these early experiences laid the foundation for a career of astounding determination and versatility: as painter and draughtswoman, as a crusader in art education, an exhibition organiser, and as an approachable 'lighter of fires' with a talent for dealing with humanity.

Private Collection

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

On the Leads, 1936 [Top]

Oil on canvas

This was one of two paintings Youngman exhibited at Grosvenor Square in 1937, the other being 'Lilies and

Protea'. Her manner of painting was often to use nothing but 'earth colours, applied with a palette knife, methodically applying thick dabs of paint to a structure rather carefully composed and squared up onto the canvas.'

At this time she was teaching part-time at Highbury School while painting in Mark Gertler's former studio at Penn Studios, Hampstead, and drawing on the Camden Town, Tufnell Park and Cumberland Market areas for urban landscape subjects.

Private Collection

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Boys in Princess Road, 1938 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

Immediately before the war, Nan and Betty lived with Betty's sons at 4 Princess Road, Camden Town, which provides the viewpoint for this street scene.

After the outbreak of war, Youngman used the same view, but a markedly new style, for *The First Siren*, an important work that featured in an AIA travelling exhibition two years later.

Bought by a businessman who had asked local children to pick their favourite painting, it was presented to Templefield School Dewsbury but then lost. It is now known only from this photograph.

Private Collection

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Gleaning at Godmanchester, 1944 [Top]

Oil on canvas

Evacuated with her school to Huntingdon, Youngman was joined by Betty Rea who toured East Anglia organising art classes for evacuees from London Local Authority Children's Homes.

Nan wrote: 'Perhaps when the destruction is finished, some seeds will remain (...) it is this, of course, which makes one able to continue, as well as the wish to give the children what little good can be gathered from the chaos we have made for them.'

At first, Betty, Nan and the children lived in two connected caravans in the grounds of Hinchinbrooke Castle, before moving in 1943, to Shepherds Halt, Godmanchester,

where they stayed for two years. Inspired by the surrounding landscape, Youngman found this subject nearby. – She had contributed two oil paintings with a similar harvest theme to the AIA For Liberty exhibition the previous year.

Private Collection

Tirzah Garwood (1908–1951)

Papermills, 1946–47 [Bottom]

Paper collage, leaf prints, Meccano mechanism

Both Tirzah Garwood and Eric Ravilious knew Youngman and Rea; Ravilious since Rea's time at Royal College of Art in the 1920s, and both of them through AIA circles and mutual friends such as Peggy Angus from the mid-1930s. Some two years after Ravilious died off Iceland in late

1942, Tirzah had taken up painting in oils and then, by 1945, embarked on a series of 'portraits' in model form of local East Anglian buildings using printed, collaged and modelled paper. Additionally, her model of Youngman and Rea's home, Papermills incorporated a mechanical mechanism and moving ducks, making it an object of continuing delight to visiting children from the Rea-Youngman family network.

Private Collection

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Convolvulus, 1943 [Top]

Oil on canvas

This work was painted just after the mid-point of the war, in the same year that Youngman became chair of the

Society for Education in Art, and just before she was appointed Art Advisor to the Cambridge Education Committee.

Manchester City Galleries. Purchased from the artist, 1945

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Flower Piece, 1948 [Bottom]

Oil on canvas

By 1947 Youngman was not only advising Cambridgeshire's Education Committee and editing the Society for Education in Art's journal, *Athene*, but was also organising the inaugural Pictures for Schools (PfS) exhibition in the still half-empty Victoria and Albert Museum.

Drawing on her AIA network and pre-war experience, she conceived of PfS as an answer to two post-war problems: the need for artists to supplement modest incomes, and for schools to enrich teaching by acquiring original contemporary art. Youngman's efforts ensured that many leading and emerging artists exhibited at annual PfS exhibitions where thousands of works were bought for local education authority collections.

Already newly energised as a sculptor, Rea was now teaching part-time at Homerton College, where she would remain an admired, restlessly dynamic member of staff until her death in 1965.

Homerton College, University of Cambridge

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Depart, 1948 [Top]

Oil on board

Tate: Presented by the Rea Family 2019

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Dieppe Wall, 1948 [Bottom]

Oil on board

Youngman's growing reputation as an arts advisor led to British Council assignments to West Africa and the West Indies during the 1950s. She and Rea were also able to take holidays in France, visiting Dieppe for the first time in 1947.

In creating these two paintings the following year Youngman assayed a new departure in her painting, introducing ‘a characteristic charged atmosphere’ into scenes informed by elements of surrealism.

Dieppe Wall hung in Youngman’s studio for many years, before being presented to the Tate after her passing.

Tate: Presented by the Rea Family 2019

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Loudon Square, Cardiff, 1959 [Top]

Oil on board

The first of many Welsh Pictures for Schools events was mounted in partnership with the National Museum Wales in 1951. As a result, Nan Youngman became friendly with Esther Grainger (1912–1990), a Cardiff-based artist and

teacher, one of her many subsequent visits to her providing the occasion for working on this picture.

As children at dusk stream helter-skelter across the ethnically diverse inner-city area known as ‘Tiger Bay’, this work marked a further development in Youngman’s technique, heralding the clarity and precision of many later works.

Private Collection

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Wasteland Tredegar, South Wales, 1951 [Bottom]

Oil on board

Youngman made many visits to the Rhondda and mining communities in the surrounding South Wales valleys during the 1950s. Her admiration for its people and

response to the characteristic regional landscape –
ribbons of identical buildings, slanting streets, coal-tips,
slag heaps – led to a distinctive run of paintings taking as
their motif ‘a situation sombre in terms of human living,
recreated in an art with its own its own tough humour.’

Manchester City Galleries. Purchased from the Leicester
Galleries, 1953

[Turn right to view display on back wall/sculpture display,
moving from left to right]

Back wall:

Huntingdon Anglo-Soviet Friendship Weekend, 1942

Printed poster

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Girl with Dove, 1930s

Walnut

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Nursing Mother, 1950s

Plaster

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Learning to Walk, 1950s

Resin

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Stretching Figure, 1950s

Bronze

Private Collection

Back wall:

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Printing the Daily Worker, Handling Newsprint, 1940s

Pencil, crayon and bodycolour

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Sister and Brother, 1950s

Terracotta

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Mother and Child, 1955

Terracotta

Wakefield Permanent Art Collection(The Hepworth

Wakefield). Transfer from the Education Resource Service

Collection, 2004

Back wall:

Pages from Betty Rea's guard book

With images taken by Cambridge-based photographer and friend Lettice Ramsey and notations in Rea's hand.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Mother and Child Sitting, 1946

Plaster

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Cleaning Windows, 1950s

Ciment fondu

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Winding Wool, 1954

Terracotta

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Hanging out Washing, 1953

Terracotta

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Pregnant Lady, undated

Terracotta

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Mother and Two Children, undated

Metal composite

Homerton College, University of Cambridge

Back wall:

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Above Aberdare, 1962

Graphite

Youngman made pencil studies in preparation for oil paintings which now figure prominently in Welsh collections. On occasion she would also complete highly precise large-scale works in pencil.

Homerton College, University of Cambridge

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Travelling Home, 1955

Terracotta

Betty Rea's bronze version of Travelling Home was purchased at the Whitworth exhibition by Manchester industrialist Sir Charles Renold. He placed it in his chairman's office as a reminder of whose work underpinned his enterprise's prosperity. Lending it back

for the extensive Looking At People tour he wrote to Rea: ‘I shall miss my two workmen. They are much admired.’

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

The Balancer, 1950s

Plaster

Macquet for The Balancer.

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Girl with Towel, c.1960

Metal composite

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Jiving Girl, mid 1950s

Bronze

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Girl with a Bird, 1950

Plaster

Homerton College, University of Cambridge

[Text displayed above artwork]

“In the formative days of the Artists’ International

Association, Betty was its heart and dynamo. Authority

combined with absolute sincerity were Betty’s formidable

weapons, but they were transmuted by a tender kindness which made all who worked with her the happier for having done so.

In our quasi-political organisation Betty had no enemies...

She hated fascism and she hated war, only when social duty was done did she feel free to return to the sculpture in which her human sympathy and understanding was freely expressed.”

Misha Black, 1965

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Girls in the Wind, c.1956

Bronze

Wakefield Permanent Art Collection (The Hepworth Wakefield). Transfer from the Education Resource Service Collection, 2004

Nan Youngman (1906–1995)

Left, top & bottom:

Bristol Channel, 1968

Boat with a Yellow Sail, 1968

Oil on board

Right, top & bottom:

Ely and a Lark, 1973

Ebenezer Chapel, 1970

Oil on board

After Betty's death, Nan at 59 left Papermills for the Hawks at Waterbeach with a purpose-built studio. After the industrial landscapes of the previous decade, her art turned now towards the fen country and the Norfolk coast. Although never living with Esther Grainger, they became closer visiting each other often and sharing holiday expeditions.

Structures in landscape had always attracted Nan as objects to draw and paint, but so too had the fun to be had as a witty visionary, a trait encapsulated in Ely and a Lark.

Robjn Cantus, *Inexpensive Progress*; Homerton College,
University of Cambridge

[Turn to display in centre of room behind you, navigating plinth anticlockwise from your approach]

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Stretching Girl, c.1960

Bronze

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Nude – Three in One, c.1950

Concrete

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

The Balancer, 1950s

Ciment fondu

Private Collection

Betty Rea (1904–1965)

Girl in the Rain, 1960s

Aluminium

Having developed a figure, Rea would often produce versions in different materials. This version in aluminium was made for Nan Youngman but single examples of Girl in the Rain exists in ciment fondu, bronze and resin.

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

The Skirt, c.1950

Polyester resin

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Mother and Child, c.1937

Concrete

This work was exhibited at Peri's solo show *The New Realism in Sculpture* in 1937.

Installation photographs show that a much larger terracotta Peri sculpture of a mother holding a child, created at the time of the Blitz, appeared as a centrepiece of Room 3 at the AIA's *For Liberty* exhibition in spring 1943.

Private Collection

[Navigate back to start of vitrine display in corner of gallery, starting on the leftmost side. View objects left to right]

Betty Rea's 'Mother and Child' sculpture, c.1926

Silver gelatin print

Working as a student alongside Henry Moore, Betty Rea pursued 'direct carving' in stone as opposed to modelling and casting to create her sculpture. This early Mother and Child in Caen Stone is an example. She also carved in wood – using the method for figures such as Girl and Dove above (and for a clenched fist finial for the International Brigade banner taken to Spain).

After the war, she returned to sculpture on a far bigger scale and moved towards modelling figures in terracotta clay, plaster, ciment fondu and various resins. This opened up the possibility of 'editioning' works, making them more affordable to produce and acquire, but did not preclude

using casting to produce versions of the same pieces in bronze and aluminium.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

'Pictures by Children' private view invitation, December 1931

Curating this exhibition at the Wertheim Gallery established Youngman as an authority on children's art in her own right. It brought her to the attention of cultural theorist Herbert Read, whose writings on the subject would draw on her practical examples. It also resulted in an invitation to take the exhibition to New York in 1932 – where, on the Lower East Side, she discovered the denim

jackets and jeans that would become her future sartorial trademark.

Private Collection

Huntingdon Anglo-Soviet Friendship Weekend'

souvenir programme, 1942

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Letter from Russian Ambassador Ivan Maisky to Betty

Rea concerning Huntingdon Soviet Friendship

Committee, 1942

After Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, Winston Churchill initially expected the Soviet Union to fold 'in six days', even more swiftly than the French had in 1940.

As the quality of Russia's resistance to the Nazi blitzkrieg became clear, local solidarity campaigns, often involving AIA members, became highly active. Rea and Youngman were prime movers organising activities in Huntingdon and Cambridge, spearheading fund-raising activities that supported Stalingrad hospitals and a mobile X-Ray unit.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

The Daily Worker, Monday 7 September 1942

The Daily Worker was banned by the Government on 21 January 1941 at a time when the Soviet Union remained neutral and the Communist Party of Great Britain opposed the war effort.

Despite Russia's entry into the war as an ally six months later, the prohibition on the Daily Worker's publication remained in place for fifteen months, the longest suppression of a publication in British history.

This copy of the first edition to appear after the ban was retained by Rea long after she had left the Party, disillusioned by the imprisonment of Czech friends who had returned to Prague in the late 1940s.

Private Collection

Pages from Betty Rea's guard book, c.1960s

With images taken by Cambridge-based photographer and friend Lettice Ramsey.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea working in her studio at Papermills, 1950s

Woman looking at Betty Rea's bronze 'Learning to Walk', Manchester Evening News, 1955

Silver gelatin prints

In his preface for the tour catalogue, John Berger praised Rea's classic focus on the importance of human interaction and for knowing 'the image of a mother winding wool can stay with a child all his life.'

Summing up the popular impact of the exhibition in a nuclear age 'when we either destroy all human achievements... or we live together to make our equality more positive' he praised its artists who 'in defiance of artistic fashion, apathy, gentility, gloom, clever cynicism and the imaginatively blind – are for the people.'

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea's 'Standing Boys' under examination, 1957

Silver gelatin print

Catalogue for 'Looking at People, Works by Eight

Contemporary Artists' Pushkin Museum, Moscow, 1957

Clockwise from top right: Carel Weight, Ruskin Spear, Alistair Grant, Derrick Greaves, Edward Ardizzone, George Fullard, Betty Rea and Paul Hogarth.

Rea did not travel to Moscow for the exhibition opening.

Paul Hogarth wrote to her after returning with Ruskin

Spear 'from a bizarre cocktail session in the British

Embassy' to say that everything had nevertheless gone

well at a red-ribbon cutting session at the top of the

Pushkin gallery steps recorded by ‘a battery of filmmakers.’

The exhibition was a first showing for British art in Soviet Russia during the Cold War era.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors’ Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

‘Looking at People’ private view card, 1955

Betty Rea and her AIA colleagues Paul Hogarth and Carel

Weight opened the first Looking at People exhibition

‘because they felt that ordinary people had vanished from

the studio of the contemporary artist.’ In an era when

abstraction in art was ascendant, it premiered at the

Whitworth Manchester in autumn 1955 and ‘broke all

previous attendance records’; its subsequent tour,

concluding at the South London Art Gallery in spring 1957,

was visited by a further quarter of a million people. By then the work of five other artists including Edward Ardizzone and Ruskin Spear had been added to the exhibition.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea's 'Woman Putting on Stockings', c.1954

Silver gelatin print

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Private view card for Betty Rea's Zwemmer Gallery one woman show, June 1960

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Betty Rea working on her sculpture 'Stretching Girl',
1950s

Silver gelatin print

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors' Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

Exhibition catalogue and installation photograph of 'Betty Rea, Sculpture', 1965

On 2 April 1965 Betty Rea died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage, leaving her wide circle of friends devastated.

Nan Youngman organised a memorial exhibition of her sculpture which opened in June. The catalogue included Misha Black's tribute, celebrating her crucial contribution to the AIA.

Private Collection

‘Girls in the Wind’ photographed by Rea or Youngman,

c.1955

Over three decades before Sir Anthony Gormley began placing figures in the landscape, Betty Rea’s girls in the wind were touring the East Anglian Coast.

Betty Rea archive. Leeds Museums and Galleries (Archive of Sculptors’ Papers, Henry Moore Institute)

[Turn right and move towards end of next display unit]

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Space Construction with Bathers, c.1950 [Top]

Painted and pigmented concrete

In the late 1920s Peri turned to making small figures in bronze and then concrete. In 1932 he created *The Meeting*, a sculptured concrete crowd scene of a workers' street corner rally, a precursor of the key direction of much of his future work. The siting of figures in space became a hallmark of Peri's art in both two and three dimensions.

A proponent of realism founded in everyday observation of people and his life and times, Peri never regretted and frequently drew on his early more abstract Constructivist phase, its influence strongly evident in this much later work.

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Wall Design, 1924 [Bottom]

Linoleum print

After the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet in 1919, Peri moved to Vienna, Paris and then Berlin. There he created Raumkonstruktionen (Space Constructions) and related linoleum prints, gaining a reputation as an avant-garde artist.

In 1924, he found work with the Berlin City Architect's department; his tasks were regulatory but he pursued architectural studies and housing design projects in his own time. A witness to the slow angry death of the Weimar Republic, he actively opposed the rising tide of Nazi-inspired cultural censorship.

Seeking to reflect life around him in a way that could be understood by ordinary people, he turned towards realism, pursuing experiments that also incorporated the benefits of his experience as an abstract artist.

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Young Couple, 1938

Concrete

Private Collection

[View works displayed on unit from left to right]

Back wall:

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Building Workers, 1936

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Portrait of Mary Peri, 1935

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Back wall:

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Swings, 1936

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Portrait of a Man thought to be Herbert Read, 1935

Pigmented concrete

Peri first met Herbert Read in 1934, the year of the The Social Scene exhibition in Charlotte Street. Peri recalled ‘its liveliness was overwhelming, because all the exhibitors were able to free themselves from the usual handicap of an artist who believes he is at the centre of the universe.’

Read was less impressed and wrote a hostile press review, but in a classic example of Betty Rea’s bridge-building, he then agreed to address the AIA at its first club rooms in

Parton Street. Three months later he wrote a keynote essay for '5 on Revolutionary Art', the AIA publication that appeared alongside the 1935 Soho Square exhibition. A leading cultural intellectual, Read would go on to support the Artists Congress in 1937 and other AIA initiatives involving Peri.

Private Collection

Back wall:

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Fishing, 1938

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Portrait of Woman with Red Hair, 1939

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Back wall:

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Chess, 1938

Pigmented concrete

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Father and Son, c.1935

Concrete

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Country Scene, 1935

Concrete

Private Collection

[Return to end of vitrine on leftmost side, viewing objects
from left to right]

Work displayed in Peri's studio or apartment, Berlin,

c.1930

Peri, Mary and Biddy in Berlin, c.1929

This photograph of Peri, Mary Macnaghten, a music student who became Peri's second wife in 1931, and her sister Biddy, was probably taken in the studio apartment the two sisters shared in Victoria Strasse.

As Mary later described, in 1933, 'after the burning of the Reichstag, when the first violent attacks on Socialists and Communists began, I was caught with some old Communist literature which I was taking to friends in the allotments to burn because we had no means of doing it ourselves. I was arrested but Peri got me out next day because of his Hungarian nationality and because I was British born; but he was in grave danger because of his political work and we decided to leave. We left everything behind – all Peter's drawings and sculpture.'

Private Collection

‘Workhouse in Poplar’ by Peter László Peri, c.1934

Pen and ink on paper

After arriving in England, Peri found London’s galleries uninterested in his work and realism unfashionable. He nevertheless threw himself into exploring the city, making many drawings and new work which provided the basis for his second London solo show at Foyle’s Gallery that year.

As Left Review noted in its review: ‘Since settling in London in 1933 Peri has produced a whole series of groups, figures and bas-reliefs of ordinary men and women and of children directly observed in the various activities of their lives. In these, as in his brilliant pen drawings of London street scenes, Peri is not concerned with a mere photographic reproduction of literary themes. In each work the experience transmitted is intensified by a

rigorous economy of sculptural or graphic form. All superfluous details are omitted.'

Ron Heisler Collection

'From Constructivism to Realism – Paintings, Drawings and Concrete Sculpture', 1936

Writing as the exhibition opened, the Marxist art historian Francis Klingender praised Peri's work for 'aesthetic vitality derived from its virile economy of means' noting the every piece represented 'a consistent struggle for the mastery of the sculptor's medium – the relation of shapes in space – as a means of succinct and convincing expression.'

While Peri's exhibition was open at Foyle's bookshop, the International Surrealism exhibition at Burlington Galleries provoked fierce controversy in AIA circles and led to the

organisation of a formal debate at Conway Hall. Peri and Anthony Blunt both spoke, critiquing Surrealism's revolutionary claims from a realist standpoint.

Blunt was then instrumental in staging Peri's solo show *The New Realism in Sculpture* at the Gordon Fraser Gallery, Cambridge, in April 1937.

Private Collection

'The New Realism in Sculpture, Exhibition of Concrete Sculpture, L. Peri' catalogue, 1937

In the catalogue preface describing Peri's work Blunt wrote:

'From the crucial Street Corner Meeting of [1933] to the present day, he has devoted himself to the rendering of the ordinary life of people in the streets and parks of London.'

His groups represent everyday scenes of the workers' life in a straightforward but subtle technique, and in the medium of concrete, the use of which, as the important building material of today, opens up the possibility that again sculpture may be united with architecture. In this way sculpture can again become a communal art.'

Private Collection

'London Life in Concrete' catalogue, 1938

With bronze casting expensive, Peri increasingly turned to a substance he dubbed 'Pericrete' – a mixture of concrete and coloured pigments.

In 1936 the Cement and Concrete Association commissioned Concrete Mixers a large relief for their boardroom and, impressed, then agreed to sponsor a

major exhibition of Peri's work at 36 Soho Square two years later.

Promoted by the AIA, London Life in Concrete was a critical success, and a moment of optimism for Peri, but few sales followed before war intervened.

The relief sculpture illustrated on the catalogue cover is currently on display at Tate Britain.

Private Collection

Copper plate for 'Blitz' by Peter László Peri, c.1944

Liss Llewellyn

Etching 'Blitz' by Peter László Peri, c.1944

Peri still managed to create some notable sculptures during the war years, but materials were in very short supply. Etchings such as this work formed a growing proportion of his output.

Private Collection

'Fighting Spirits – Peter Peri and Cliff Rowe', Camden

Arts Centre exhibition catalogue, 1987

In 1944 the AIA organised a government-industry conference promoting public art as part of coming reconstruction. The overall national drive faltered with austerity, but Peri was one artist who succeeded in securing a run of commissions.

By 1949 he had created three friezes for London County Council housing estates in Lambeth including Follow the Leader, a memorial to children killed in the Blitz, and Footballers shown here.

Peri's contribution to the Festival of Britain, Sunbathers, was installed over Station Gate at the Waterloo entrance to the South Bank site.

Projects in Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Lincolnshire followed for Peri, with Leicestershire in particular making art intrinsic to its school-building programme. In doing so it embraced the trail that Henry Morris had blazed in Cambridgeshire and Nan Youngman campaigned for as chair of the Society for Education through Art.

Private Collection

Peter László Peri in the new Camden studios, 1967

From the time of the exhibition London Life in Concrete onwards, Peri had worked at the old Camden studios. In the mid-1960s he led a successful campaign to ensure that Camden Council agreed to provide replacement studios when it sought to demolish the complex in the mid-1960s.

This photograph shows Peri in the last of his studios which he occupied for about a year at the end of his long, tenacious and varied career as an artist.

The art critic and novelist John Berger, a great admirer of Peri's work, described him as 'an eternal exile' who had 'the sculptural energy of a Zadkine.' After leaving the Communist Party in the 1950s, Peri's politics remained left-wing. His pacifism drew him to the Quaker community

and in his last decade he was an active member of the Society of Friends.

Private Collection

[Move past end of vitrine to view works displayed on wall in corner area, navigating along wall clockwise]

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Smithfield, 1951

Painted concrete

Peri's frieze showing pickets at the gates of Smithfield was produced in the aftermath of an unofficial strike by lorry drivers which spread to the wider road haulage industry in July 1950. Fearing that weekly rations would disappear

from grocery shops, the Labour Government mobilised 2800 troops as drivers.

In an attempt to integrate Britain's road, rail and seaborne transport, the 1947 Transport Act had nationalised road haulage companies, railways and port operations. The reforms were contested by previous owners and, regaining power in 1951, the Conservative administration sold off many assets. British Road Services, however, survived in the public domain as a large-scale profitable entity until the National Freight Corporation was de-nationalised in 1982.

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Londoners, c.1945-50

Etchings

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Londoners, c.1945-50

Etchings

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Selling the Daily Worker, c.1947

Pen, ink and watercolour

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

Western Culture, 1952

Etching

Private Collection

Peter László Peri (1899–1967)

People by Peri, 1948

Exhibition poster

After the closure of its Charlotte Street Centre in 1945, the AIA Gallery opened a gallery and clubroom in Lisle Street in late 1947, buying a long-term lease and continuously staging exhibitions there with a three week or monthly turnover until 1971.

Peri's solo show came at the end of its first year of operation.

Private Collection

[Move right past the end of the wall to view works on the opposite side. Navigate final room clockwise]

Graham Sutherland (1903–1980)

Furnaces, 1944

Oil, gouache, pencil and crayon on paper

Initially trained as an engineer, but previously best known as a neo-romantic landscape artist, Sutherland was overlooked when the first Official War Artists were appointed in late 1939. Later, however, Kenneth Clark turned to him for Blitz scenes and ‘production subjects’ depicting the industrial Home Front.

It was not a role that Sutherland took to easily, stating ‘I, who up to then, had been concerned with the hidden aspects of nature (...) suddenly was a paid official, a sort of reporter.’ However, at Geevor tin mines in Cornwall, at Dowlais steel works in South Wales and at Woolwich

Arsenal, depicted here, he created a powerful record of the machinery and labour of war.

This is one of three Sutherland paintings lent to the AIA by the War Artists Advisory Committee for The Engineer in British Life in June 1945.

Tate: Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee
1946

Edward Wadsworth (1889–1949)

Ship Building, c.1941

Oil on canvas

Following the death of his father in 1921 Wadsworth became a wealthy man. In 1926 he volunteered as a strike-breaker delivering newspapers by luxury car during the General Strike; and, until the rise of fascism, he replied

to challenges as to why he was voting Conservative with the observation ‘because I have something to conserve’.

In 1937, however, Wadsworth sponsored the Artists’ Congress in support of peace, democracy and cultural freedom despite its radical intent and sat on the committee selecting abstract art for its accompanying exhibition – an indicator of the breadth of the coalition the AIA was assembling.

Wadsworth sent Ship’s Keel and Framework for the Future to The Engineer in British Life, at the time of the 1945 General Election, organised for the silver jubilee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

This work was originally titled ‘Down to the Sea in Ships’ and was commissioned by ICI as an advertisement for anti-corrosive paints.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

[Text Panel]

Winning the Peace would prove to be a harder task for the AIA than preserving unity during the war, when they had kept going and growing, generating new initiatives and articulating the potential for artists and designers to contribute to a better tomorrow.

With the Allied victory came hope amidst exhaustion, a moment celebrated at the AIA's 1945 exhibition. Opening at the Whitechapel Gallery thirty-two days after an atom bomb had destroyed Hiroshima, its 205 works presented 'the cycle of events, personal and national, of the extraordinary year 1944–45, the year that has seen the liberation of starving Europe, the ordeals of V1 and V2

bombing, the horrors of the concentration camps revealed, VE and VJ Days, and the triumph of the democratic forces at the General Election.’

Over the next decade, the AIA would continue to organise major exhibitions such as *The Mirror and the Square* in 1952—an extraordinary survey of modern art ranging from realism to abstraction. It would also programme a continuous series of monthly exhibitions at its own gallery, acting as an incubator for new talent and a showcase for artists ignored by fashion, national institutions, and commercial galleries. And it would see many of its pilot initiatives to bring art to the people taken up by the newly formed Arts Council.

Diana Uhlman (1912–99) was the key organiser of the AIA Gallery in Lisle Street during its first decade. In the early 1950s, a young Gillian Ayres was her assistant.

However, with hardship and austerity at home, and renewed confrontations in Europe and Asia, the arrival of the Cold War revived political divisions and internal controversy about the AIA's broader aims. As the Iron Curtain descended in Europe, 1948 saw an unsuccessful attempt to remove reference to political aims from the AIA constitution; in 1953, it succeeded.

One consequence was the formation of a separate 'Artists for Peace' campaign by those most concerned to keep the flame of past internationalism alive amidst new dangers.

Supported by many AIA members—from Augustus John and Jacob Epstein to John Berger and Ruskin Spear—'Artists for Peace' held a series of exhibitions from 1952 onwards reminiscent of those staged by the AIA in the 1930s. This activity, in turn, contributed to the formation of

the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament later in the decade.

Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957)

The Tank in the Clinic, 1937

Oil on canvas

The former Vorticist and enfant terrible of London's literary and artistic world had always been volatile in life and politics, flirting with fascism and appeasement from the 1920s onwards, before publicly recanting this stance in 1937 and creating 'macabre fever dreams' in paint as meditations on war and technology.

After six years in the United States, Lewis returned to England after the war and from 1946 became influential

once again after being appointed art critic at The BBC's Listener magazine, a position he held until 1951.

This work was one of two he exhibited at the AIA's The Mirror and The Square exhibition the following year.

The Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust. On long loan to the Courtauld Gallery, London

Ivon Hitchens (1893–1979)

The Tangled Pool, 1946

Oil on canvas

A member of the 7 & 5 Society from the early 1920s, Hitchens was a close neighbour of Peggy Angus and Helen Binyon in Adelaide Road, Hampstead. He lived there until the Blitz precipitated a move to a caravan at Lavington Common in Sussex, which in turn became the site for his

creation of a sprawling rural retreat set in wilderness grounds with a lake – and the centre of his artistic endeavours for the next 39 years.

Hitchens began exhibiting with the AIA at Grosvenor Square in 1937 and in 1952 sent Evening Pool to The Mirror and the Square.

British Council Collection

William Gear (1915 –1997)

Landscape Composition, 1951

Oil on canvas

Like Ewan Phillips, the organiser of Portraits for Spain and many other AIA activities, Gear served as one of the ‘Monument Men’ in occupied Germany, before living and

working in Paris for three years and returning to Britain in 1950.

Now appreciated as a key work, his abstract Autumn Landscape was a controversial winner of the Festival of Britain '60 paintings for 51' competition. He exhibited a similar painting, Wood Pile, at the AIA's The Mirror and the Square the following year.

Gear began a six-year term as Curator of the Towner Art Gallery in 1958, the same year as his Grey Composition was included in the AIA's 25-year Anniversary retrospective.

Towner Eastbourne

Ceri Richards (1903–1971)

Trafalgar Square London, 1950

Oil on canvas

The setting is one Richards knew well from AIA activity in the pre-war era, when he had been highly active within the Surrealist group supporting the AIA.

Richards sent two paintings – A Movement of Light and Fountain – to The Mirror and the Square exhibition, having created this painting for the Festival of Britain's '60 Paintings for '51'.

'I made numerous small notes (...) I then painted instinctively straight on to the large canvas – colour was resolved gradually as design created [a] sense of reality (...) features of fountain, Nelson's Column, pigeons, figures, houses, vista down Whitehall to Big Ben, were not

so much selected and isolated features, but effects which formed the essential character of the place, and which I wanted to feel I was expressing as a natural fluent whole – lively, varying, but always the same.’

Tate: Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1959

Peter Lanyon (1918–1964)

Bojewyan Farm, 1951–52

Oil on masonite

In late 1938, disillusioned by his own painting, Lanyon visited the Euston Road School when artists were creating banners based on Goya’s Disasters of War shown at the AIA’s Whitechapel exhibition. He contemplated joining the fight in Spain but was beset by an illness he later

described as a nervous breakdown. Soon after he painted his first abstract painting.

After five years in the RAF, Lanyon returned to painting and West Cornwall in spring 1946. In 1951 he began work on three large paintings associated with farming (Bojewyan Farm), fishing (Porthleven) and mining (St Just) – the historic industries of the Penwith area. He wrote ‘I paint places but always the Placeness of them’ and ‘I was in and out of farmyards and mixed up in granite walls for some months before Bojewyan Farms was begun’.

Lanyon sent a related painting, Harvest Festival, now in Australia, to the AIA’s The Mirror and Square.

British Council Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

AIA 25, 1958

Printed poster

The Selection Committee for the AIA Jubilee exhibition included veterans of its pre-war and war-time campaigns such as Ceri Richards, Carel Weight, Josef Herman and Claude Rogers as well as more recent arrivals Prunella Clough, Alan Davie, William Scott and Adrian Heath.

170 artworks by AIA members, arranged historically, testified to the organisation's anti-fascist origins, war-time activities and post-war trajectory. In an echo of Soho Square 1935, an international section brought together 42 works by contemporary foreign artists, chosen via a poll of 300 professional members.

Six years later, Boswell devised the visual imagery for the Labour Party's 1964 election campaign when the dynamic impact of 'Let's Go with Labour!' was judged crucial to Harold Wilson emerging as Prime Minister with a four-seat majority.

Private Collection

[Move past double doors and continue to navigate room clockwise]

Pictures for Schools, 1968

Printed poster

The scheme Nan Youngman led during an era of expanding free educational opportunity resulted in hundreds of schools and colleges acquiring thousands of works by

leading artists from annual Pictures for Schools exhibitions.

Over two decades many local education authorities built up loan collections as an aid to improving school environments and as a resource for teaching art to children.

In the 21st century a combination of public sector austerity and financial opportunism has undone the work of previous decades. Collections have been dispersed as local education authorities have been disempowered as an act of policy. Works originally acquired for the public domain from PfS exhibitions between 1947 and '69 have re-appeared for sale in multiple locations.

Private Collection

Ronald Horton (1902–1981)

Self-Portrait, 1945

Oil on canvas

Ron, a younger brother of Percy Horton, studied at Brighton Art College, winning a scholarship to the RCA where he was taught by William Rothenstein.

Joining the AIA in 1933, he was a member of its Central Committee while teaching at the Crowndale Road Working Men's College and the Hackney Technical Institute.

In 1944 Horton became head of teacher training at Brighton Art College, a position he held for twenty years as its training courses gained international renown.

This painting belonged to Ron's close friend Oscar Thomsett, an equally committed teacher, painter and prolific collector. Oscar passed away in 2020, donating

both this painting and a further 1057 works to the Towner Collection.

Oscar Thomsett Gift, Towner Eastbourne

James Fitton (1899–1982)

The Pie Shop, 1979

Oil on board

In later years Fitton's paintings were often illustrative and humorous, and he was able to reduce his commercial workload to concentrate on the causes he supported.

Promoting artistic enterprise at every level, he served on the governing bodies of the RCA, the British Museum, the Arts Council and Dulwich Picture Gallery. He also found time to judge scores of children's art competitions.

Painters experiencing hardship were often helped personally with money, advice and job leads.

James Fitton died suddenly in 1982; Margaret Fitton survived him by six years.

Private Collection, c/o Crane Kalman Gallery

James Fitton (1899–1982)

The Painters Wife, 1958

Oil on board

Among the images Fitton included as background to this portrait of his wife Margaret are a 1951 photograph of Stanley Spencer by Irving Penn, Pierre Bonnard's 1894 poster for the Paris magazine *La Revue Blanche*, Van Gogh's *L'Arlésienne*, Giorgione's *The Old Woman*, an 1886 photograph of the future Queen Mary in her wedding dress

and - top right - a photograph of their teenage daughter
Judy practicing a Mozart Flute Quartet.

Private Collection

James Fitton (1899–1982)

The Painter, 1956

Oil on board

Fitton was elected as an Associate RA in 1944, full RA in 1954. His early years in the Academy coincided with the Presidency of Alfred Munnings, who disliked Fitton's 'modernism' and his campaign calling for women to be admitted to its annual dinner. After Munnings retired, he manoeuvred to ensure that Fitton would not become President, but only narrowly succeeded.

As a painter, Fitton experimented constantly. As a citizen, he remained deeply concerned with the state of education and for 25 years acted as Chief Assessor of Design for the Ministry of Education. This, together with his appointment to key Government Commissions and his strong media presence helped him carry forward elements of the progressive vision articulated at the AIA's 1937 British Artists Congress.

Private Collection

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Hong Kong Market, 1964

Silkscreen print

The internationalist instincts that had motivated Binder in 1933 led her to explore the life and culture of many

different peoples during the post-war decades, and to join the Aldermaston marches in support of CND in 1959.

In the 1970s the Lord Chancellor's quarters in the Palace of Westminster benefitted from a decorative makeover and a re-hang organised by Binder.

Pearl Binder and Elwyn-Jones retired to Brighton. He died in early December 1989; still drawing with pencil in hand nearly every day, Pearl Binder died at the end of the following month.

Josephine and Francis Gladstone

Pearl Binder (1904–1990)

Self-portrait with husbands, 1946

Oil on board, with collaged photographs

Binder painted this icon-like depiction of herself with her two husbands, Jack Driberg and Frederick Elwyn-Jones, on a wardrobe panel in the family home.

Elwyn-Jones, on the right was first elected to Parliament in 1945 and would sit as an MP for 29 years, becoming Attorney General in 1964 and Lord Chancellor in 1974.

During the post war years, Binder continued as a highly productive book illustrator, lecturer and author, and an intrepid traveller. As a result of connections made at Nuremburg, where Elwyn-Jones served as a prosecutor, she and her young family visited Poland in 1947. It was a prelude to many post-war expeditions, usually solo and

often by rail or tramp steamer, taking her back to the Soviet Union, to the United States, Africa, China, India, the Asia Pacific and Central America. Picture diaries, sketchbooks, writing projects, TV animations, and prints of many varieties resulted.

Josephine and Francis Gladstone

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Silkscreen Workers, mid-1950s

Oil on board

In the changing post-war world, Rowe's practice as a painter evolved as he navigated an art establishment consensus increasingly dismissive of 'engaged art'. For Rowe the lazy association of people-free abstract expressionism with individual consumer freedoms was a

false one. 'Capitalism destroyed the value of work, therefore one spontaneous response was to paint people at work, factory work'.

Pursuing this, Rowe often used strongly outlined designs and a simple range of colours to depict workers – often women workers in 'light industry' settings – and the interrelationships of labour, machinery, technology and tasks. Here the co-operation, skill and physical strength required for fabric-printing is emphasised by the overhead view of printing table and the symmetrical postures of the women workers.

People's History Museum

Cliff Rowe (1904–1989)

Man with Microscope, mid-1950s

Oil on board

Critical of the ‘vendetta against realism’ that unfolded during the Cold War, Rowe was nevertheless also opposed to the ‘oppressive insistence upon academic Victorian convention’ he saw ruling officially approved art circles when he visited East Germany in 1956. For him, depiction of modern realities required constant experiment on how to depict contemporary existence in a fresh and clear style.

This is one of a series of paintings from the late 1950s and early 1960s showing specialist workers carrying out exacting tasks in the laboratories and modern factory settings of the gathering post-war boom.

People's History Museum

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Shoreham Beach, c.1965 [Top]

Oil on board

In 1957 Boswell and his wife Betty left Camden for Hove. It was not a move favoured by Boswell, for whom London life in all its shades was inspiration, and it coincided with a change in the balance of his work as an artist.

Since the war, Boswell had been continuously employed as an illustrator, journalist and art editor – Our Time, Lilliput, Topic Records, Ealing Studios, and the Economist figuring among many clients. After moving to Sussex he devoted considerable time to painting, commuting more sporadically to London as a graphic designer. In 1960, he

re-established a London studio, ahead of a solo exhibition of his paintings at the Drian Gallery in 1962.

Private Collection

James Boswell (1906–1971)

Cold Shore, 1970 [Bottom]

Oil, sand, Polyfilla and glue

Tate's 1956 exhibition Modern Art in the United States exposed Boswell to new influences, provoking a period of experiment involving different materials, a touch of fauvism and then an emerging abstract lyricism in response to the natural world.

Explaining this he wrote 'along the narrow shore of perception which lies between conscious attention and

oblivion there is a harvest of visual and emotional surprises for anyone who sets his nets there.'

In 1969, two years after beginning treatment for cancer, he was commissioned to provide a large five-panel work for BP's headquarters in Wellington, New Zealand. The Golden Day – a meditation on light and dark, love and mystery, life and death – was shipped to his native New Zealand less than a year before he died, having never lost enthusiasm for the causes he had embraced.

Private Collection

[Turn right and move towards vitrine. Start with vitrine closest, viewing displayed objects left to right]

‘Festival of Britain’ brochure (1950) and guide, 1951

The AIA’s original plans for For Liberty in 1943 included a display of war-time posters, but such was the richness of work available that a separate AIA touring exhibition was organised to run in parallel.

Poster Design in War-Time Britain included 152 posters, with the stars of the show being works by F.H.K. Henrion and Abram Games. Games, whose motto was ‘maximum meaning through minimum means’, later won the design competition to provide a Festival Emblem capable of ‘use both serious and lightsome’. Games was also one of several designers who worked on Festival brochures and guides.

Private Collection

The Festival Design Panel on opening day (l to r) Ralph Tubbs, Misha Black, Hugh Casson, Edward Gardiner and James Holland, 1951

A Design Panel 'was brought together to plan, supervise and co-ordinate all design activities in connection with the Festival. We worked as a team, and although we allocated particular responsibilities among ourselves, there was no supremo, and all aspects of all projects were subjected to the critical scrutiny of the panel as a whole.'

Black and Holland had worked together on nearly every major AIA exhibition since the beginning, including the Peace Pavilion at Paris in 1937. Many of those who contributed to For Liberty in 1943 were also brought into the festival collective, with F.H.K. Henrion designing the County Pavilion. Murals were provided by Bawden, Boswell, Fitton, Minton, Rowntree and at least five other

AIA members; major sculptures by Peri, Moore, Hepworth,
and Daphne Hardy Henrion.

Private Collection

**Artwork for the Campania by James Holland in pencil
and bodycolour, c.1949**

This imagining of the former escort aircraft carrier as the Festival Ship touring British ports was probably completed by Holland as part of preparation for the design and fit out process he supervised. It was subsequently adapted for a monochrome lithograph sold during the Festival year as the Campania took its floating version of London's South Bank to Southampton, Dundee, Newcastle, Hull, Plymouth, Bristol, Cardiff, Belfast, Birkenhead and Glasgow.

Private Collection

**James Holland, Chief Designer, and Lt. Cdr. Jenkins RN
viewing the Campania, c.1949**

Holland was already a core member of the Festival Design team when he was assigned the task of co-ordinating displays across the upstream section of the main South Bank site and delivering a seaborne sample of the Festival.

This photograph taken aboard a support vessel at Gareloch on 13 July 1949 captures the moment when Holland first saw the 16,000 ton Campania ('an uncompromising lump of grey and rusty steel with a large hangar deck') in its de-commissioned state and, looking up, could for the first time appraise the task and the opportunity ahead.

Private Collection

James Holland at work in the Festival Design Office,

c.1950

As Holland recalled: ‘My own involvement followed a long apprenticeship in the Ministry of Information (...) Perhaps the key moment was when we knew that the Government had agreed to us having the South Bank site. Up to then a great many schemes of varying possibilities were being pursued, including plans for tented structures and reusable units on the 1851 Great Exhibition site in Hyde Park; an experimental rigid-framed tent was slowly disintegrating under test in the docks in the winter of 1940 and 1950.’

The illustration on the wall behind Holland shows the undeveloped South Bank site running from County Hall on the right to beyond the Shot Tower on the left.

Full Employment for the Artist? printed leaflet, 1945

After D-Day in 1944, the AIA increasingly focussed on the prospects for art and artists during coming reconstruction and the post-war world.

It aimed for 'the continuance of the cultural revival which began with the Battle of Britain' and full-employment for the artist in a remade society.

The AIA could point to its crucial role in helping establish the Central Institute of Art and Design in 1939 and many activities it had mounted with the Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts during the conflict years.

But even as it contributed to planning for a National Arts Council, the AIA recognised that a new push would be needed to realise the 1937 Congress vision of building ‘a powerful organisation embracing the great majority of British artists’.

Private Collection

[Move to vitrine on opposite side, viewing objects left to right]

‘This Extraordinary Year’ catalogue design, 1945 [Top]

The Selection Committee included Jim Fitton, Morris Kestelman, Henry Moore, Claude Rogers, Beryl Sinclair and Julian Trevelyan. S John Woods, who with Frederick

Kahn designed this catalogue, was the Art Director for Ealing Studios.

Private Collection

**Catalogue for the inaugural ‘Pictures for Schools’
campaign organised by Nan Youngman, 1947 [Middle]**

Private Collection

**‘The Perils of Being a Member of the AIA’ by Edward
Ardizzone, c.1953 [Bottom]**

Facsimile of a drawing given to Diana Uhlman, key organiser of the AIA Gallery, by the artist. For twenty years the AIA Gallery shared Lisle Street with more traditional red-light district activities.

Image courtesy of a Private Collection and The Ardizzone Trust

‘Full Employment for the Artist?’ AIA’s programme for the post-war world, 1945

Private Collection

‘Sculpture and Sculptor’s Drawings’ AIA Gallery private view card, 1948

Private Collection

‘Artists For Peace’ exhibition catalogue, 1952

Held at the Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, for two weeks in June 1952, the cover of the exhibition catalogue featured

Picasso's Dove in Flight, specially drawn for the exhibition, with reproductions and mounted copies for sale as a fundraiser.

The 278 exhibits included works by Rea, Peri, Rowe, Boswell and Holland with John Minton, Victor Pasmore, Kenneth Rowntree and Ruskin Spear among those both exhibiting and acting as sponsors.

Private Collection

'The Hiroshima Panels' by Iri Maruki and Toshiko

Akamatsu, tour catalogue, 1955

The Hiroshima Panels, art as immediately powerful for the 1950s as Picasso's Guernica had been in the 1930s, were displayed during a tour arranged by 'Artists for Peace. This included an exhibition in Coventry organised by a City

Council still grappling with the destruction wrought by bombing.

The initiative was sponsored by John Berger, Jacob Epstein, Josef Herman, Leslie Hurry, Denis Matthews, Stanley Spencer and Carel Weight.

Private Collection

‘The Mirror and Square’ catalogue, designed by F.H.K.

Henrion, 1952 [Top]

At a time of internal controversy and political uncertainty, the intent of the AIA’s major exhibition for 1952 was neutrally educative: ‘From Realism to Abstraction (...) between these poles, symbolised by the mirror and the square, lies the labyrinth of contemporary styles in

painting and sculpture through which the enquiring
spectator must find his way.'

Private Collection

'AIA 25 years' catalogue, designed by James Boswell,

1958 [Bottom]

Private Collection