

Paintings from the collection

Laing Art Gallery first floor display

March 2019

Label texts in display order

James Orrock (1829-1913)

The Solway, Criffel in the distance 1896

Oil on canvas

Bequest from John Lamb 1909

Criffel, an imposing hill in south-west Scotland, rises in the distance of this view of the wide sands of the Solway Firth at low tide. James Orrock was originally from Edinburgh, and had returned to Scotland in search of wild landscape to paint. Orrock greatly admired the breezy landscape views of David Cox. Orrock was originally a dentist, first in Edinburgh and then Nottingham. He became an artist after moving to London in around 1866, and was an important collector of British art.

Benjamin Williams Leader (1831-1923)

Sand dunes on the Conwy about 1868

Oil on canvas

Given by Susan Cowell 2013

The sea at Conwy Bay in North Wales provides the backdrop to this study of sand dunes. It's a slightly unusual subject for Benjamin Leader, who focused on landscapes of meadows, hills and streams. He was particularly fond of sketching in Wales, and his naturalistic style was very popular during his lifetime. As a boy, he had gone on sketching trips with his father, an amateur artist who knew and admired John Constable.

Anne Redpath (1895-1965)

The Valley of San Martino di Lota about 1955

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1961

San Martino di Lota is on the French island of Corsica, where Scottish artist Anne Redpath spent some time in 1955. She used thick paint and bold brushstrokes to describe this windswept landscape, also using a palette knife for the rough white stones in front of the house. The artist commented that when painting the houses of the island in her pictures of Corsica, she "would exaggerate the buttress quality of the building ... [so] it looked as if it was growing out of the hill". She also compared her painting style to the way her father, a tweed designer, introduced brighter strands of colour into the soft overall hues of his fabric.

William Kiddier (1859-1934)

The Bridge before 1928

Oil on canvas

Given by the artist 1928

William Kiddier was fascinated by dramatic night skies and big open skies. He often emphasised the decorative qualities of his compositions, with strong verticals created by tall thin trees placed against a flattened and simplified landscape background. These qualities may have been influenced Japanese prints, which were very popular during the period Kiddier was painting.

Richard Wilson (1714-1782)

The Alban Hills 1751-57

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1954

This picture shows the countryside outside Rome. Richard Wilson began his painting in Italy, where he spent several years. However, it is likely that he finished it only after he returned to England. Wilson's Italian-style landscapes were very popular with collectors.

Wilson was one of the first British artists to paint landscapes for their own sake, rather than just as records of gentlemen's estates or as backgrounds to figure subjects. He was also interested in capturing the feeling of weather in landscape scenes.

John Martin (1789-1854)

Arthur and Aegle in the Happy Valley 1849

Oil on canvas

Given by Miss E. Cruddas 1951

King Arthur is seen with Queen Aegle in the mythical Happy Valley, supposedly located in the Alps. John Martin studied the night sky above his London home in order to paint the moon and stars. Like the majority of Martin's paintings, the picture features tiny figures within an awe-inspiring landscape. However, the deep blue night sky is unusual for Martin.

Martin exhibited this picture at the British Institution with this quotation from Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's long poem *King Arthur* (1848):

*Now as Night gently deepens round them, while
Oft to the moon upturn their happy eyes,
Still, hand in hand, they range the lulled isle,
Air knows no breeze, scarce sighing to their sighs.
No bird of night shrieks bode from drowsy trees,
Nought lives between them and The Pleiades'.*

John Wilson Carmichael (1799-1868)

Sunderland Old Pier and Lighthouse with Ryhope Church in distance 1840

Oil on canvas

Bequest by George E. Henderson 1937

A former seaman turned successful marine artist, Carmichael had a firm grip on the realities of life at sea. In this picture, a brig has lost her mast in an easterly gale, and lies straining perilously on her anchor cables off Sunderland Harbour. Her crew anxiously await the arrival of the port's lifeboat, which is being rowed out from the harbour mouth on the left.

Carmichael had learnt from the example of JMW Turner, constructing the composition around sweeping curves of dark and light, with a patch of white water focussing attention on the main ship. Until 1846, Carmichael was based in the North East, before spending some years in London.

John Martin (1789-1854)

Solitude exhibited 1846

Oil on canvas

Purchased with aid from the MGC/Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, the National Art Collections Fund, and the Pilgrim Trust 1976

This picture was exhibited with the lines: "Ye woods and wilds, how well your gloom accords with my soul's sadness". The vast expanse of nature and dramatic colouring of the evening sun link the picture to the Sublime landscape painting style, which was part of the Romantic Movement. The picture may have been intended to suggest the aftermath of some natural or supernatural disaster. It is one of the small-scale pictures that John Martin painted in the 1830s and '40s.

Albert Goodwin (1845-1932)
Durham Cathedral 1910
Oil on canvas
Bequest from George E. Henderson 1937

Albert Goodwin has chosen a traditional view of Durham Cathedral, showing the imposing Romanesque architecture rising from the beautiful riverside setting. The cathedral was built from 1093 to 1132 as a shrine for the bones of St Cuthbert.

Goodwin was concerned with light and atmosphere, and was influenced by the great landscape painter JMW Turner. In this picture, he has worked layers of thin paint together to create misty hues. This is one of several studies that Goodwin painted of the great cathedrals of England.

David Cox (1783-1859)
Pandy Mill 1843
Oil on canvas
Given by F. J. Nettlefold 1948.

This picture may show a view in Wales, which was one of David Cox's favourite places to paint. In his characteristic style, Cox created a lively effect by constantly varying the shades of colour and the direction of the brushstrokes. Women washing clothes add human scale to the scene. The twisted and windswept trees and the rough shapes of the composition are typical features of Romantic landscape paintings of the 19th century.

David Roberts (1796-1864)
Edinburgh Castle from the Grassmarket 1837
Oil on canvas
Given by John Lamb 1909.

The artist has composed his picture to focus attention on the ancient castle, lit by golden light and backed by a pale blue sky. It makes a strong contrast with the darker, crowded scene of ordinary life going on below.

David Roberts painted many city views. He was born near Edinburgh, and painted this lively picture in the middle of his career. Pictures of everyday life were particularly popular in Scotland.

John Martin (1789-1854)
The Bard, exhibited 1817
Oil on canvas
Purchased with grant aid from the National Art Collections Fund 1951

This scene illustrates the semi-mythical story of the destruction of the Welsh bards by King Edward I. In the painting, the last surviving bard is shown about to plunge to his death after cursing the king. The enormous English army is dwarfed by the awe-inspiring scale of the mountains - a feature of the Sublime landscape style of this period. The castle was based on illustrations of Harlech in Wales, but the landscape was probably based on images of the Alps. Martin exhibited his picture with a verse from Thomas Gray's poem *The Bard* (published 1757):

*On a rock whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,*

*With haggard eyes the poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.*

Probably by Thierrri Bouts (about 1400 - about 1475)

The Miracle of the Gallows about 1435-1460

Oil on canvas

Bequest from John G. Joicey 1919

According to Christian legend, a young pilgrim was wrongly accused of theft and was hanged. His parents prayed to St James, patron saint of pilgrims, and the young man was brought back to life. He is shown supported on the saint's hand to represent the miracle. St James is shown with his symbols of a staff, purse, and shell. The young man's parents kneel at either side, and the landscape background suggests the pilgrim's long journey. Landscape painting as a category of art gradually developed from background scenes in paintings such as this. Thierrri Bouts was a Flemish artist.

Louis de Caullery (about 1580 - after 1621)

The Escorial

Oil on canvas

Bequest from John G. Joicey 1919

De Caullery's view of the Spanish royal palace of the Escorial demonstrates his interest in elaborate architecture and scenes of entertainment. However, he is not known to have visited Spain and probably based his composition on another artist's picture. He has skillfully showed the buildings and figures in perspective, adopting an artificially high viewpoint to be able to lay out the features of the scene. Louis de Caullery was probably born in the village of Caulery, in northern France. He moved to Antwerp to train as an artist.

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

Isabella and the Pot of Basil, 1867

Oil on canvas

Given by Dr Wilfred Hall 1953.

This magnificent painting illustrates a poem by the 19th-century writer John Keats (based on a story in the 14th-century *Decameron* by Boccaccio). The poem tells how Isabella's two cruel brothers murdered her sweetheart Lorenzo. Finding his secret grave, Isabella took Lorenzo's head and buried it in a pot beneath a basil plant:

*And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not: but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.*

In the story, Isabella's brothers find out her secret and take Lorenzo's head, leaving her to die of sorrow. Skulls on the pot in Hunt's picture refer to Lorenzo's death, and dying roses on the ground symbolise the end of love. William Holman Hunt was one of the founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists. They frequently illustrated subjects from literature and gave the objects in their paintings symbolic meanings. They worked in rich, bright colours and produced highly detailed and realistic scenes. This picture was owned by the Tynemouth art collector James Hall, who was a partner in the shipping business of Palmer, Hall & Co.

Henry Woods RA (1846-1921)

Portia 1887

Oil on canvas

Given by Samuel Smith, JP 1935

Portia is the main female character in William Shakespeare's comic play *The Merchant of Venice*. She is shown in the black lawyer's robes she wore in the play when she persuaded a judge to spare the life of her sweetheart's good friend Antonio. Her speech, about 'the quality of mercy', is one of Shakespeare's most famous dramatic speeches.

In the painting, Portia holds a letter, which is perhaps the letter she shows to her sweetheart Bassiano at the end of the play. This explains her actions in Venice, which is shown in the background. Henry Woods knew Venice well as he lived there from 1876.

John William Waterhouse (1849-1917)

A Grecian Flower Market, exhibited 1880

Oil on canvas

Given by John Lamb 1909

John William Waterhouse's paintings of groups of young ladies in Greek and Roman times were admired for their elegance, fresh colouring and sense of reality.

Waterhouse was influenced by Pre-Raphaelite art, and was known as 'the modern Pre-Raphaelite' in the late 19th century. In this picture, the subject matter and decorative shapes of this composition were also influenced by the paintings of Lawrence Alma-Tadema, whose work is also on display. Waterhouse was a London artist.

Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

Laus Veneris 1873-1875

Oil on canvas

Purchased with grant aid from the MGC/Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, National Art Collections Fund, Pilgrim Trust, and the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery 1972

Burne-Jones's painting shows the legendary court of Venusberg (city of love). The knight seen in the centre of the window is riding off to seek forgiveness for having given himself up to a life of pleasure in the city. The Queen's women are playing music (known as the food of love). A rose, also a symbol of love, lies discarded on the ground by the Queen. The tapestry in the background depicts Venus, goddess of love, riding in her chariot. Her son, Cupid, fires an arrow to land in the heart of a human and make them fall helplessly in love.

Edward Burne-Jones was the leader of the second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and was one of the most influential painters in Britain at this time.

Marcus C. Stone RA (1840-1921)

In Love 1913

Oil on canvas

Bequest from John G. Joicey 1919

This romantic scene, set in a bygone time, is one of many similar subjects painted by Marcus Stone. The figures are dressed in early 19th-century costume. A statue of Cupid, god of love, in the background underlines the theme of romance. Marcus Stone's pictures were very popular in his own age.

Albert Goodwin (1845-1932)

Wells Cathedral 1889

Oil on canvas

Bequest from George E. Henderson 1937

The artist has created an image of peaceful country life as people in their Sunday-best clothes stream across the sunny grassland to the ancient cathedral in the background. An old man in a traditional farm smock is nearest to the viewer.

Wells Cathedral, in Somerset, was begun in the late-12th century, with building work continuing into the 15th century. It is the earliest English cathedral to be built in the Gothic style. Goodwin painted a whole series of pictures of English cathedrals, showing them in various weather conditions.

Charles Napier Hemy RA (1841-1917)

Under the Breakwater about 1863

Oil on canvas

Purchased with aid from the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund 1982

When he painted this picture, Hemy was living in Gateshead, though soon afterwards he moved to Cornwall. The bright colour and detail of this scene show the influence of Pre-Raphaelite artistic ideas. These were taught to Hemy by William Bell Scott, Master of the School of Design in Newcastle, when Hemy was a student there. This type of subject, full of sunshine and showing a simple way of life, was very popular at the time. Hemy painted several versions of this scene.

Dame Ethel Walker ARA (1861-1951)

The Forgotten Melody 1902

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1951

The sweeping lines of the woman's dress in this picture lead the viewer's eye up and into the scene. The glamorous froth of white fabric contains touches of yellow, pink and brown, reflecting colour from the surroundings. The scene shows a middle-class artistic interior of the very early 20th century, with white-framed watercolours on pale walls.

A strong personality, Ethel Walker was a well-known and successful artist of her day. She specialised in painting female subjects. She was a member of the New English Art Club, set up to show more progressive work than the Royal Academy.

Claude Rogers (1907-1979)

The Broad Walk, Regent's Park

Oil on canvas 1938

Purchased 1958

Claude Rogers's picture shows the sparkle of summer sun over a scene of people relaxing in Regent's Park, London. Rogers wanted to paint everyday subjects that everyone could enjoy. He used a softly realist style, with dabs of bright colour. In 1937, Rogers helped set up the Euston Road School in London, a group of artists who shared his aim of painting ordinary modern life.

Dorothea Sharp (1874-1955)

The Primrose Way before 1916

Oil on canvas

Given by W. H. Renwick 1916

Dorothea Sharp produced many paintings of children, often showing them outlined against the sky, as in this scene. These children are dressed in the fashions of the early years of the 20th

century. Bright colours and blue shadows in the picture reproduce the effect of the sun on the children's faces and the surrounding landscape. This style was sometimes known as British Impressionism, and the artist has used small brushstrokes of different colours to paint the flowers amongst the grass.

Christopher Wood (1901-1930)

Sleeping Fisherman, Ploaré Brittany 1930

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1959

Christopher Wood painted this picture on his second visit to Brittany, in northern France, in June to July 1930. He admired the directness of folk art, and deliberately used an 'untrained' style of painting. As part of this approach, he has painted the sky in thick, rough brushstrokes, with no attempt to create an illusion of space. In fact, the texture of the paint is an important part of the composition. The colours and jagged forms are arranged in patterns that add to the impact of the picture.

Edward H. Compton (1881-1960)

Cape Zafferano, Sicily 1927

Oil on canvas

Given by George E. Henderson 1927

The triangular rock in the centre of this painting is Cape Zafferano, which is a headland on the north coast of the Italian island of Sicily. The area is known for its blue seas and clear light, as well as the rugged beauty of its coastline. Edward Compton has used a slightly simplified realist style to capture the effect of hot sun on the expanse of sea, sky and rocks. He specialised in landscape subjects. Compton was based in Germany, and later moved to London.

Julius Olsson RA (1864-1942)

Evening, St Ives about 1900-1905

Oil on canvas

Given by G. F. Charlton 1924

The subdued light of evening simplifies the forms and colours of this picture, creating a sense of the spaciousness of sea and sky. Julius Olsson was fascinated by the changing quality of light on the sea, particularly at evening. Much of his work was done outdoors. Olsson began a school of sea painting at St Ives in Cornwall, and was one of the leading members of the artists' colony that developed there. His work was influenced by the colour and light of French Impressionist paintings. Olsson was of Swedish descent.

Dame Laura Knight RA (1877-1970)

The Beach exhibited 1909

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1919

This is one of the earliest and most important pictures that Laura Knight produced during the time she spent at Newlyn. Painted from sketches made on the beach, it captures the bright light and breeziness of the Cornish coast in summer. Children often featured in Laura Knight's paintings, and here they are scattered in small groups across the beach, peering into rock pools or playing in the waves. Laura and her husband Harold Knight spent twelve years living and working in Cornwall. She was one of the most successful artists of her day.

Stephen Bone (1904-1958)

Hospital Ship 1944

Oil on canvas

Given by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1947

Stephen Bone painted this picture while working as a War Artist, attached to the British navy during the Second World War. The ship seems to be a converted passenger liner, and is painted in hospital-ship colours of white with red crosses. Hospital markings did not always keep the ships safe, and several British hospital ships were destroyed during the war. Stephen Bone travelled to several areas with the navy in 1944, including Scotland, northern France, and Norway.

Sheila M. Fell RA (1931-1979)

High Tide

Oil on canvas

Bequest from W. Graham 1983

Sheila Fell concentrated on painting the landscapes and sea views of her native Cumbria, though she lived in London for the later part of her life. This study of wild waves is probably one of the pictures she made on sketching trips to the coast near Aspatria, where she was born and brought up. Many of her paintings focus on weather, and this picture is characteristic of her vigorous, thickly painted and almost abstract style.

James Torrance (1859-1916)

April - Boat of Garten

Oil on canvas

Bequest from the artist 1921

Sand, water and sky divide this picture into three horizontal bands. The scene shows the River Spey near the village of Boat of Garten, in the Highlands of Scotland. It is in an area of impressive natural beauty, which is now part of Cairngorms National Park. In this picture, the artist has focussed on the light emanating from the sky. The picture's near-abstract and decorative character may have been a response to Japanese art, which influenced many artists of the time. James Torrance was a Scottish artist, from Glasgow. He also painted portraits.

Harry Watson (1871-1936)

A Tale by the Way exhibited 1922

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist 1922

Harry Watson has shown smartly dressed young people pausing to talk during a pleasant summer stroll. Dashes of bright blue and lilac colour in the shadows help give an impression of dazzling light breaking through the leaves. The dappled sunlight and dabs of colour are characteristic of the British Impressionist style of the early 20th century. Harry Watson was a London painter, who exhibited this picture in Newcastle in 1922.

Edward Wadsworth ARA(1889-1949)

Le Havre 1939

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist 1948

Edward Wadsworth was fascinated by the strange forms of marine equipment, and his view of the French port of Le Havre features the surreal shape of a shrouded boat at the front of the scene. The unreal effect is heightened by Wadsworth's use of dots of bright colour to create shimmering light, coupled with absolute stillness in the picture. Wadsworth's technique was developed from the French Post-Impressionist style known as Pointillism, but has been used in a Surrealist-inspired manner. Wadsworth preferred to use egg-based tempera paint, which dries immensely rapidly, suiting his precise approach.

John Armstrong ARA (1893-1973)

Icarus 1961

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1961

In Greek myth, Icarus used homemade wings to fly near the sun. The wax holding the wings together melted, and Icarus was killed. To John Armstrong, the myth symbolised the danger to the world posed by advances in scientific knowledge of the time. This picture probably represents the threat of nuclear weapons, which greatly concerned Armstrong. The damaged spherical head of the figure represents the world. John Armstrong's painting style was formed in the 1940s, and was influenced by the Surrealist movement.

Albert Reuss (1889-1976)

Lady Reading a Book 1940-45

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist 1945

Albert Reuss's pictures emphasised decorative line. He often used intense colours, like the blues of this picture. Reuss had been a successful artist in Vienna, and came to England after Austria was taken over by Nazi Germany in 1938. A touring exhibition of his work was shown at the Laing Art Gallery in 1945, which included this picture. The small size of this painting may reflect shortages of painting materials during the Second World War. Reuss later settled in Cornwall.

Sylbert Bolton (born 1959)

Time Out

Oil on canvas

Given by the artist 1992

In many of his paintings, Sylbert Bolton focusses on the abstract qualities of colour and paint application. Born in Jamaica, he moved to Wolverhampton at the age of eleven. He gained a First Class art Degree at Wolverhampton Polytechnic (now University). He now teaches at Milton Keynes College.

Flora A Glover (1919-1946)

The Flood exhibited 1941

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist with grant aid from the William Glover Fund 1941

The title of this picture probably refers to the Bible story of Noah's Ark and the Flood. Some of the figures in this scene are wearing long robes, but the clothes of others have a 20th-century shape. At this time, there was a fashion for painting Biblical subjects in a semi-modern setting. Similarly, the stylised forms and flat colours of the picture were also popular at this period. The picture's small size may be partly due to art shortages during the Second World War. Flora Glover studied art at King's College, Newcastle. Her life was cut short by an accident in 1946.

Nora Waterhouse (working 1960s)

Linked Forms exhibited 1963

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist 1963

The overlapping squares of rich reds and yellows of the central shape in this picture seem to project outwards. The thick texture and brightness of the white surround also push this area towards the viewer. As a result, the composition can be seen as rounded, flat, and textured, all at the same time. Abstract explorations of texture, colour and form were popular in the 1960s. The artist Nora Waterhouse exhibited this painting at the Laing Art Gallery in 1963. She was a Sunderland artist.

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903)

The Breton Shepherdess, 1886

Oil on canvas

Given by the National Art Collections Fund 1945

This important landscape was one of the first pictures that Gauguin painted in the French village of Pont Aven, on the coast of Brittany. Many artists were fascinated by the ancient way of life of the Breton people, and an artists' colony grew up there. In this picture, Gauguin has merged the outlines of the young girl and the calf beside her, expressing the close connection of the country people's lives and the land they worked. The picture style demonstrates how Gauguin was in the process of moving from Impressionist-influenced dabs of paint to his later Post-Impressionist style of outlined, flatter areas of colour.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788)

Peasant Ploughing with Two Horses 1750-1753

Oil on canvas

Purchased with grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Resource/Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Fund, and the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery 2003

Thomas Gainsborough was one of Britain's most important landscape artists. His small, informal landscapes of the early 1750s established a naturalistic style that was new in British art. This picture includes one of his earliest uses of the motif of a ploughman, which later became a favourite feature in his landscapes. Gainsborough was particularly influenced by 17th-century Dutch landscape paintings. Dutch features in this picture include the high bank that divides the composition, the furrows leading into the distance, and the wide expanse of sky.

Robert Jobling(1841 - 1923)

Darkness Falls from the Wings of Night 1886

Oil on canvas

Given by Mrs R. Robson 1931

The setting sun casts reflections on the wet sand as the people of the North-East fishing community of Cullercoats trudge home. The two main figures are fishwives, one carrying a fish basket, and the other a load of seaweed. At the top of the slipway we see the Lifeboat Lookout House with its tall tower. Robert Jobling painted this picture during the time he was a member of the Cullercoats Colony of artists. The title of his painting is a quotation from the poem *The Day is Done* by the American writer Henry Longfellow, published 1844. These are the first two verses:

*The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.*

*I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:*

Henry H. La Thangue RA (1859-1929)

Gathering Bracken exhibited 1899

Oil on canvas

Given by Sir John D. Milburn 1905

Henry La Thangue painted in the open air, choosing scenes showing rural workers. The woman and elderly man in this picture are cutting bracken with sickles, perhaps for fuel or animal bedding. The blunt-edged brushstrokes soften their outlines, allowing them to blend into their surroundings. The moulded oak leaves and acorns decorating the frame continue the autumn theme. Despite his surname, La Thangue was a British artist, and was associated with artists painting at Newlyn in Cornwall. Like them, he was strongly influenced by similar scenes painted a few years earlier by French Ruralist artists.

James Bateman RA (1893-1959)

Silage about 1940

Oil on canvas

Given by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1947

Land Girls in tan-coloured dungarees are helping a farmer load grass into a bin to make silage, which is used as winter feed for cattle. The women took the place of male farm workers who had joined the armed forces during the Second World War (1939-1945). This picture was part of the War Artists scheme set up to record the war effort. The painting style of broad areas of strong colour was used by many artists at this time. James Bateman was an artist and teacher who showed many paintings in Newcastle exhibitions, though he lived outside the area.

Ernest Procter ARA (1886-1935)

The Family 1935

Oil on canvas

Given by Mrs Dod Procter 1936

Ernest Procter spent most of his career in Cornwall, and the farm background in this picture may be based on a Cornish scene. The way the legs and arms of these figures link together suggests the closeness of their family relationship. The composition's curving lines and pastel colours are typical of Ernest Procter's decorative style. Procter was born in Tynemouth, but moved to Cornwall when a young man, and set up an art school there. He died suddenly in North Shields, possibly while visiting relatives.

Flora M. Reid (1860-1938)

Comrades 1905

Oil on canvas

Given by George E. Henderson 1934

This picture of a little girl with her grandfather is typical of Flora Reid's subjects. It probably shows a scene in France or Belgium, where the artist lived for a time. Flora Reid also lived for many years in Polperro in Cornwall. The artist has carefully arranged contrasting areas of light and dark throughout the composition. The crazing in the darker areas is due to the use of thick layered paint to achieve rich brown colour. Flora Reid was a successful painter who had been taught by her artist brother, John Robertson Reid.

Sir Stanley Spencer RA (1891-1959)

The Lovers 1934

Oil on canvas

Purchased 1948

Stanley Spencer had a deep feeling for the everyday life of his home village of Cookham in Berkshire, and often saw it in terms of Bible events. The dustman in the centre of this picture is being joyfully reunited with his wife after the Last Judgement. Spencer has included thrown-away cabbage leaves and a teapot as he felt that they were 'reminders of home life and peace, and are worthy of being adored as the dustman is.' The interlocking pattern of people and things is characteristic of Spencer's style.

Gabriel Atkin (1897-1937)

Work

Oil on canvas

Acquired before 1983

Gabriel Atkin was born in South Shields and studied briefly at Armstrong College, Newcastle. During the First World War, he had a relationship with the poet Siegfried Sassoon and became friends with the Bloomsbury Group artists, including Duncan Grant. The painting style of this picture is similar to some pictures by Grant. Atkin moved to London after the First World War, but continued to exhibit his paintings at Artists of the Northern Counties exhibitions at the Laing Art Gallery. He later lived for a time in Newcastle before moving to Cornwall.

Laurence S. Lowry RA (1887-1976)

River Scene 1935

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist from William Glover Fund 1946

Industrial scenes were the main subjects of L. S. Lowry's paintings. This may be a North East scene, painted during one of the artist's trips through the region in the 1930s on his way to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Winding gear for a coal mine can be seen beside the tall chimneys on the right. Lowry painted this picture in his characteristic style of flat black forms set against a whitish base colour. Only small amounts of other colours, principally red, has been used to vary the scene.

Christopher R.W. Nevinson ARA (1889-1946)

Twentieth Century 1932-1935

Oil on canvas

Given by the artist 1943

Nevinson painted this picture in response to violent political movements in Europe in the 1930s, while the background reflects his experience of New York in America. The huge central figure was based on Auguste Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker*, and probably represents rational society threatened by the bayonets and guns of the marching crowds. Nevinson has expressed the violent energy of the scene using a version of his fragmented Futurist style, which he used earlier in his career for war subjects. Nevinson served in an ambulance unit during the First World War and was horrified by the violence and destruction he witnessed.

Glenn Brown (born 1966)

In the end we all succumb to the pull of the molten core 2016

Ink and acrylic on board

Given by the Contemporary Art Society through the Great Works scheme supported by the Sfumato Foundation 2017

This spinning head in this picture has two faces, one young and one old. The faces have been adapted from pictures by the old master artists Giovanni Tiepolo and Andrea del Sarto. Glenn Brown was originally from Hexham. He says that this picture, 'was made with Newcastle and the Laing in mind. It is a painting that looks forward (the youth) and looks back (the old man), but they are one and the same, entangled in a complex game of sitting in the present. The heads could be trapped in religious ecstasy or they could be in outer space.'

Frank H. Auerbach (born 1931)

EW's Head on her Pillow II, 1965

Oil on canvas

Given by the Department of Culture Media and Sport 2015

Estella Olive West was an important figure in Auerbach's life and was one of the women he painted most often. The squeezed, trailed and pulled paint and the exuberant colours of the

painting create a very rich image. The picture demonstrates the physicality of Auerbach's style in this early period. Auerbach is one of the most important figurative artists of modern times.

Ben Nicholson (1894 -1982)

1933 (design) 1933

Oil on canvas

Given by the Contemporary Art Society 1946

The two parts of this composition show Ben Nicholson's interest in the relationship between representational and abstract art. The head on the left seems almost like a simplified view of a design on an ancient coin. Nicholson was also interested in the 'musical' relationship between form, tone and colour. He has scraped the surface of the paint to create tonal variations. These contrast with areas of bright, flat red paint and white colour, which together create a shifting sense of space. Nicholson was influenced by Picasso, and was an important figure in the development of abstract art in Britain in the 1930s.

Sean Scully (born 1945)

Doric Rust 2016

Oil on canvas

Given by the artist 2017

Sean Scully is considered to be one of the world's leading abstract painters. His repeating arrangements of subtly modified blocks of colour are influenced by his admiration for the visual harmony of ancient Greek architecture, based on proportional relationships. His style also draws on the legacy of American abstract art. The subtle arrangement of colour and form in his art is intended, he says, to 'embody deep emotion'. Sean Scully studied at Newcastle University, and has given this picture in connection with his 2018 exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery and Hatton Gallery. He now lives in New York and Germany.

Florence A. Engelbach (1872-1951)

Gladioli exhibited 1933

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the artist with aid from William Glover Fund 1933

Florence Englebach used thick, creamy paint to capture the flamboyant pinks and reds of gladioli, which bloom particularly in August. The background is painted in the same vigorous style, using varied colours. This approach was characteristic of the style of many artists in the 1930s. Florence Englebach was an accomplished artist who was based in Newcastle from 1902 to 1933. She painted many flower compositions, and exhibited this picture at the Laing Art Gallery in 1933.

Winifred Nicholson (1893-1981)

Evening at Boothby 1953

Oil on canvas

Purchased from the Trustees of the estate of Winifred Nicholson 1986

This is a view from Winifred Nicholson's family home at Boothby in Cumbria, where she lived from 1939. She often painted flower and landscape compositions as a means of exploring relationships between colour and natural light. She said that colour was not tied down to form, but instead 'floated free', and was not concerned with strictly naturalistic representation. Earlier in her career, Winifred Nicholson was a member of the 7 and 5 Society whose members tended towards abstraction in their work. Throughout her life, she had close associations with abstract and semi-abstract artists such as Christopher Wood and Ben Nicholson (her husband in the 1920s before their divorce). Pictures by both artists are on display.