

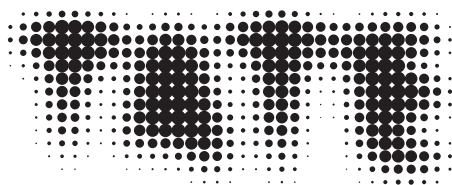
# PAUL NASH

26 October 2016 – 5 March 2017

## LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

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

ROOM 1

DREAMING TREES

O Dreaming trees, sunk in a swoon of sleep  
What have ye seen in these mysterious places?

— Paul Nash, poem written for Mercia Oakley, c.1909

Nash's earliest works were symbolist drawings accompanied by his own poetry and influenced by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Blake. He combined mysterious figures with landscape settings to evoke a supernatural world, and explored the dream-like atmosphere of the moonlit night landscape. Nash described how 'my love of the monstrous and the magical led me beyond the confines of natural appearances into unreal worlds'. Gradually natural forms replaced his spirit beings, and Nash began to invest trees with distinct personalities, describing how he had tried 'to paint trees as tho' they were human beings'. His landscapes explored the area around the family home, Wood Lane House at Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire, focusing on the 'bird garden' and the boundary between garden and countryside marked by a line of mature elm trees. A group of these trees, which he named 'The Three', became particularly important presences for him. In these years Nash also explored the idea of a 'spirit of place', and particular locations such as the Wittenham Clumps in Oxfordshire took on great significance for him. Nash's night landscapes and tree studies were shown together in his first exhibition at London's Carfax Gallery in 1912

## Work labels

Anticlockwise from left of 'Dreaming Trees' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **The Combat**

1910

Pencil, ink and wash on paper

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

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the Paul and Margaret Nash Trust, in accordance with the wishes of Margaret Nash  
X61374

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Vision at Evening**

1911

Watercolour and chalk on paper

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

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the Paul and Margaret Nash Trust, in accordance with the wishes of Margaret Nash  
X61375



Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Cliff to the North**

1912

Pen, Indian ink and grey wash on paper

This drawing was inspired by a visit Nash made to Norfolk with his Slade School friend Cloughton Pellew-Harvey in December 1912. He described the vivid impression made by ‘the yawning bluffs above the cold bitter sea ... the wavering edge gave a glimpse of the cliff’s crumbling face and the gnawing waves’. The drawing is one of the first manifestations of his preoccupation with the threatening presence of the sea, and the sense of a menacing encroaching force was accentuated by the introduction of an approaching female figure, not seen but represented by a looming shadow.

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge  
X61338

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Pyramids in the Sea**

1912

Ink and watercolour on paper

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

Tate. Purchased 1973

T01821

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Night Landscape**

1912

Watercolour and ink on paper

Nash associated the landscape at night with visionary experiences, and he described how the sound of the stream near his home in the stillness of the night was like a voice talking to him, compelling him to write poetry. **Night Landscape** was originally titled **The Archer** and Nash later erased the

figure of a woman with a bow which can just be seen as a ghostly figure between the rows of trees.

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London  
X61257

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **The Three**

1911–12

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

Nash began to imbue trees with particular qualities as dominating presences in nature. Three of the mature elms at the boundary of Nash's garden were an important catalyst for his concept of trees as distinct personalities. He wrote: 'About the centre

of this elm-row stood three trees which in spite, or perhaps because of their rigorous cropping had emerged into a singular grace. Their feathered bodies mingled together as they thrust upwards and their three heads fused in cascades of dense leaves spreading out like the crown of a vast fountain. I knew these three intimately.'

Private collection  
X62161

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Falling Stars**

1912

Ink, pencil and wash on paper

**The Falling Stars** originally contained two embracing figures and a fairy. These were erased by the artist, leaving the trees as significant mystical presences in their own right.

Like **Pyramids in the Sea** (displayed nearby) this drawing shows the influence of William Blake and Samuel Palmer. Nash described how he 'lived the dramas of the nocturnal skies – falling stars, moonrise, storms and summer lightning I shared with Samuel Palmer an appetite for monstrous moons, exuberance of stars'. This was the first drawing that Nash sold, bought by the artist William Rothenstein, from Nash's Carfax Gallery exhibition in 1912.

Private collection

X61802

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Bird Garden**

1911

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

The 'bird garden' was a shrubbery that had been planted when the Nash family home was built in 1901. It was important to Nash's emerging concept of place. He wrote: 'It was undoubtedly the first place which expressed for me something more than its natural features seemed to contain, something which the ancients spoke of as **genius loci** – the spirit of a place, but something which did not suggest that the place was haunted or inhabited by a genie in a psychic sense ... Its magic lay within itself, implicated in its own design and its relationship to its surroundings.'

Ar fenthyg gan – Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales  
X61255

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Three in the Night**

1913

Pen and ink, chalk and watercolour on paper



Collection of Frances Spark

X62035

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Summer Garden**

1914

Ink, pencil, chalk and watercolour on paper

Nash described the 'bird garden': 'Each year the grass grew up and flowered and was cut down and made into haycocks. Thereafter it was an open space of meadow invaded to the sight only by the birds, by other small creatures, and by the shadows cast by the laburnum, the chestnut, the tall acacia and the little conical silver fir. These, with a few others and the boundary hedge of beech behind, made up a group that had a curious beauty of related forms, whether seen on a dull day or transfigured by the sunlight or the moon.'

Lefevre Fine Art Ltd, London

X61993

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **In a Garden**

1914

Watercolour, pencil and ink on paper

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle

X61323

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Tree Group**

1913

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

Nash drew the elms at the boundary of his garden many times. He described how: 'the strange procession of our boundary trees could be seen crossing the upland at right angles to Wood Lane. These were also elms but of such eccentric growth that they looked like some new species. In effect they resembled palms, their stems being close-cropped, and only the top branches left to spread.'

The Daniel Katz Gallery, London

X61809

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Iver Heath, Winter**

Exhibited 1918

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

Lefevre Fine Art Ltd, London

X63356

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**A Landscape at Wood Lane**

1913

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

Manchester City Galleries

X61300

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Mackerel Sky**

1917

Watercolour and body colour on paper

Anthony J. Lester, FRSA

X62186

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wittenham Clumps**

1913

Watercolour, ink and chalk on paper

Nash first visited the Wittenham Clumps in Oxfordshire in 1911. He was immediately struck by the distinctive visual impact of these twin hilltop beech woods planted in the 18th century on the site of an Iron Age hill fort. He drew the view from a distance to emphasise the 'dome-like' hills and the 'curiously



symmetrical sculptured form' of the woods. He also emphasised their mystical presence, describing them as 'the Pyramids of my small world' and the landscape around them as 'full of strange enchantment. On every hand it seemed a beautiful legendary country haunted by old gods long forgotten.'



Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle  
X61322

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **The Cherry Orchard**

1917

Watercolour, ink and graphite on paper

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

Tate. Purchased 1975

T01946

## **Vitrine labels**

From right to left

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Poem relating to the drawing 'Combat',  
with written annotations by Margaret Nash**

1910

Ink on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 769/1/1  
Z06290

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Our Lady of Inspiration**

1910

Ink and chalk on paper

This drawing was made for Nash's friend Sybil Fountain, as the frontispiece of a book of nine handwritten poems. Nash described how 'the strange torture of being in love' inspired a recurring dream of 'a face encircled with blue-black hair with eyes wide-set and luminous, and a mouth, like an immature flower about to unfold'. Although the influence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's art was already beginning to wane, Nash described how he began to place this face in his drawings as 'the new Beata Beatrix'.

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 751/2  
Z06142

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Book of Verses (frontispiece)**

1910

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 751/2

Z06139

ROOM 2

WE ARE MAKING A  
NEW WORLD

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

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

Nash enlisted in the Artists' Rifles in September 1914 and was stationed in England until 1917. He arrived at the Ypres Salient in March 1917 as a second-lieutenant with the third battalion Hampshire regiment. Initially he was struck by the ability of nature to regenerate the battlefield, as depicted in **Spring in the Trenches, Ridge Wood 1917**. He returned to England in May to convalesce after breaking a rib in a fall. When he returned to Belgium at the end of October as an official war artist the landscape he encountered was very different, a mudscape of shell-holes and shattered trees in the aftermath of the Battle of Passchendaele. **We Are Making a New World**, his symbolist evocation of a landscape destroyed by war, was the centrepiece of his exhibition **Void of War** in May 1918 which brought him new public recognition. He was commissioned to produce memorial paintings by the Ministry of Information and the Canadian War Records, including **The Menin Road**. Nash's war experience transformed his work; he painted in oil for the first time and discovered a new artistic language of powerfully simplified forms which both conveyed the appearance of ravaged landscapes and suggested violent emotional experiences.

## **Work labels**

Clockwise from right of 'We Are Making a New World' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Wounded, Passchendaele**

1918

Oil paint on canvas

Manchester City Galleries

X61302

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **After the Battle**

1918

Watercolour and ink on paper

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61433

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Landscape Hill 60**

1918

Pencil, watercolour and ink on paper

Many of Nash's regiment were killed in the attack on Hill 60 in August 1917 while he was convalescing in England.

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

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61432

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Ypres Salient at Night**

1918

Oil paint on canvas

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

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61656



Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **We Are Making a New World**

1918

Oil paint on canvas

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



IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61430

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Spring in the Trenches, Ridge Wood, 1917**

1918

Oil paint on canvas

In March 1917 Nash described in letters how nature quickly regenerated the battlefield, with trenches surrounded by flowers, and a wood which had been 'pitted and pocked with shells, the trees torn to shreds' transformed within two months into 'a vivid green'. **Spring in the Trenches** depicts a scene from 1917 but was painted in July 1918. Most of Nash's company were killed in the attack on Hill 60 in August 1917 while he was convalescing in England, so the painting is also a poignant commemoration of his fallen comrades, exploring the contrast between death and new life.

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61429

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Menin Road**

1919

Oil paint on canvas

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



IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61431

## **Vitrine labels**

From left to right

### **Letter from Paul Nash to Margaret Nash**

7 March 1917

Pencil on paper

When Nash had just arrived at the Ypres Salient he was struck by the swift regeneration of the landscape after battle, writing: 'Here in the back garden of the trenches it is amazingly beautiful – the mud is dried to a pinky colour and upon the parapet and thro' the sandbags even the green grass pushes up & waves in the breeze while clots of bright dandelions, clover and thistles and twenty other plants flourish luxuriantly, brilliant growths of bright green against the pink earth. Nearly all the battered trees have come out and the birds sing all day in spite of shells and shrapnel.'

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/1/1/136

Z06305

Richard Aldington 1892–1962

**Images of War, with cover and illustrations by Paul Nash**

1919

Like Nash, Aldington saw active service in the First World War. In this book, his vivid, 'imagist' style of poetry is complemented by Nash's energetic line-block illustrations. With drawings such as **Terror and Barrage**, Nash displays an awareness of and interest in abstract and vorticist techniques as a means to convey the disorienting and frightening experience of the battlefield. The book was published by Beaumont Press, London in 1919 in an edition of 50.

Tate Library, and Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/10  
Z06228, Z0624

**Letter from Paul Nash to Margaret Nash**

13 November 1917

Pencil on paper

When Nash returned to the front in November his impression of the landscape was very different; 'No pen or drawing can convey this country. ...Sunset & sunrise are blasphemous mockeries to man, only the black rain out of the bruised & swollen clouds all thro' the bitter black of night is fit atmosphere in such a land. The rain drives on, the stinking mud becomes

more evilly yellow, the shell holes fill up with green white water, the roads & tracks are covered in inches of slime, the black dying trees ooze and sweat and the shells never cease.'

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/1/1/162  
Z06306

John Salis

'British Artists at the Front: Paul Nash',

### **Country Life**

1918

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

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/3/1  
Z06143

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Eleven illustrations to Richard Aldington's 'Images of War'**

1919

Pen and ink on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Donated by the Paul Nash Trust

X61376

ROOM 3

PLACES



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

—Paul Nash, **Outline**, 1949

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

## **Work labels**

Clockwise from right of 'Places' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Tench Pond in a Gale**

1921–2

Ink, graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1924

N03843

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Behind the Inn**

1919–22

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Daily Express 1927

N04259

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Berkshire Downs**

1922

Oil paint on canvas

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

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

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art  
X61377

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wood on the Downs**

1929–30

Oil paint on canvas

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

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections. Purchased in 1960 with income from the Murray Fund  
X61253

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X61377

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Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections. Purchased in 1960 with income from the Murray Fund  
X61253

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Whiteleaf Cross**

1931

Oil paint on canvas

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

X61324

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Night Tide**

1922

Ink and watercolour on paper

Private collection. Courtesy of Piano Nobile, Robert Travers

(Works of Art) Ltd

X62032

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wall against the Sea**

1922

Oil paint on canvas

Nash's years at Dymchurch on the south-east coast were ones of nervous strain from the delayed effect of his war experiences and he suffered a breakdown in 1921. He saw the Dymchurch

paintings as a finite set reflecting his emotional response to the place at a particular time, writing afterwards: 'I shall never work there anymore ... a place like that and its effect on me – one's effect on it. It's a curious record formally and psychologically when you see the whole set of designs together.'

Private collection

X62036

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Winter Sea**

1925–37

Oil paint on canvas

The bleakest of Nash's Dymchurch series was painted in 1937 from a drawing he had made in 1925. The waves sweeping into the shore are frozen into geometric forms suggesting ice or metal and the palette is almost monochrome. In his autobiography Nash had written of his early experience of nearly drowning and his memories of the sea as 'cold and cruel waters'. The mood of **Winter Sea** suggests this menacing force, but it also reflects Nash's interest in the metamorphosis between elements in the 1930s when he was closely engaged with surrealism.

York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery)

X61334

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Shore**

1923

Oil paint on canvas

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

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61281

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Dymchurch Steps**

1924–44

Oil paint on canvas

At Dymchurch, buildings such as Martello towers and sluice buildings punctuated the sea wall and Nash became interested in the effect of placing substantial architectural objects in the centre of a landscape composition. **Dymchurch Steps** is one of the earliest works to explore this juxtaposition in which buildings become uncompromising presences in the landscape, their concealed interiors creating a sense of mystery and their solid symmetrical form contrasting with the changing elements.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Gift of the Massey  
Collection of English Painting, 1946  
X61309

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Rye Marshes**

1932

Oil paint on canvas

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums

X61270

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Blue House on the Shore**

c.1929–31

Oil paint on canvas



Tate. Purchased 1939

N05048



Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Nostalgic Landscape**

1923–38

Oil paint on canvas

Although Nash left Dymchurch in 1925, he later reworked paintings begun there, to reflect new interests. In the late 1930s, when he was most engaged with surrealist ideas, he added a receding tunnel within the door of the coastal building which extended into deep space and used colour to link the setting sun and the circular window of the tower. Roland Penrose wrote of this work in 1938: 'The solid tower contains a deeper perspective than the sunset shore on which it stands. One reality leads to another with the assurance that both exist instantaneously and in the same place.'

On loan from Leicester Arts and Museums Service

X61299

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Plage (Tower)**

1928

Oil paint on canvas

This painting and **Blue House on the Shore** (displayed nearby) both depict subjects from Cros-de-Cagnes near Nice in the south of France which Nash visited in 1925 and 1930. In these works

Nash continued to explore the theme of architectural objects in coastal landscapes that he had first painted in **Dymchurch Steps** (displayed nearby). Both the water fountain and the blue house with its interior arcade and extended shadow have a mysterious presence in the empty landscape, reflecting the influence of de Chirico whose work Nash had seen at Arthur Tooth and Sons in London in October 1928.

Ar fenthyg gan – Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National  
Museum Wales  
X61256

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Month of March**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

**Month of March** shows the same view from Nash's studio at Oxenbridge Cottage near Iden as **Landscape at Iden** (displayed nearby) but frames part of the landscape within the open window of the studio. This offers the alternate reality of a landscape within a landscape. The complex intersection of the wooden frameworks of the window, hop-picking ladders and fences accentuates the effect of a landscape controlled by manmade structures.

Private collection

X62180

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Landscape at Iden**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

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

Tate. Purchased 1939

N05047

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **February**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

In 1937, reflecting on his transition from naturalistic landscape to the increasing use of symbolic objects, Nash wrote: 'the

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



Private collection  
X61807

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Trees beside a Pond (The Pool)**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection  
X62171

## **Vitrine labels**

From left to right

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Untitled (Dymchurch study with pyramid)**

c.1930

Pencil on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/31

Z06147

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Dymchurch (study)**

c.1920s

Pencil on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/28

Z06145

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Promenade II**

1920

Wood engraving on paper

Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Paul Nash Trust 1971

P01026

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Sea Wall, Dymchurch**

1919

Ink, chalk and watercolour on paper

Courtesy of the Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall,  
Oxford

X62173

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Places (seven prints from woodblocks)**

1922

Wood engravings on paper

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

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/1, Tate Library, and Private collection

Z06148, Z06227, Z06366

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Genesis (twelve woodcuts)**

1924

Wood engravings on paper

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



6

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/2, Tate Library, and Private collection

Z06149, Z06251, Z06367

ROOM 4

ROOM AND BOOK



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

— Paul Nash, *Room and Book*, 1932

The still life in an interior setting became an important subject for Nash from the mid-1920s and in 1927 he wrote: 'still life fascinates me, nothing can be quite so absorbing or so fascinating to paint'. His work evolved from a naturalistic treatment of this theme to an exploration of the intersection of geometrical forms to create multiple perspectives as he began to explore cubist ideas of space and engage with abstraction and surrealism. His compositions of plant forms juxtaposed with mirrors, open windows and architectural structures explored the relationship between interior and exterior and between organic and architectural forms. Nash's use of reflections, intersecting planes and multiple perspectives became increasingly abstract. He also began to depict arrangements of everyday objects, creating a mysterious proto-surrealist atmosphere from elements of observed reality combined in an unexpected way. He exhibited several of these works in the exhibition *Recent Developments in British Painting*, held at Tooth's in October 1931 which positioned him as a member of the modern movement in Britain rather than a landscape painter. In 1931 he worked on a major book project illustrating Sir Thomas Browne's philosophical discourses, *Urne Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, both of 1658.

## Work labels

Anticlockwise from right of 'Places' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Mirror and Window**

1924

Oil paint on canvas

**Mirror and Window** is a view of the 'bird garden' at the Nash family home framed by an interior setting. This juxtaposition of interior and exterior was frequent in Nash's work of the 1920s and allowed him to contrast organic and architectural forms and create multiple spaces within a painting. The vase of flowers on the window sill represents a domesticated version of the garden beyond, and the mirror, tilted to show the reflection of the ceiling, offers a second interior space composed of abstracted geometric forms.

Private collection

X61994

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**St Pancras**

1927

Oil paint on canvas

The Cheltenham Trust and Cheltenham Borough Council

X61268

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life with Bog Cotton**

1926

Oil paint on canvas

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61284

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Dead Spring**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

In one sense **Dead Spring** depicts observed reality, a dead pot plant and technical drawing instruments on the window sill of Nash's flat in London overlooking an empty advertising hoarding in front of St Pancras station. However, the intersection of geometric forms and the two views of the plant

(one unmediated and the other seen through a transparent set square) serve to create ambiguity between multiple visual realities. There is a similar ambiguity between interior and exterior in the juxtaposition of the structure of sticks and string supporting the plant and the wooden hoarding outside.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK (Kearley Bequest, through The Art Fund 1989)  
X61367

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Token**

1929–30

Oil paint on canvas

This painting combining objects from an artist's studio is similar to the still lifes of Giorgio de Chirico, whose work Nash saw in 1928. The ivory card case with an engraved hand in the centre of this composition was part of a small collection of ivory hands which Nash used in his surrealist constructions of the late 1930s. It is shown in Room 6 with other objects from Nash's studio.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art  
X61378

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Mantelpiece**

1928

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X61959

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Lares**

1929–30

Oil paint on canvas

In **Lares** Nash developed the composition of **Dead Spring** (exhibited nearby) using the same combination of ruler and set square and rectangular framing device, but replacing the plant and window with an abstracted representation of his fireplace. Here he began to develop the theme of an opening from one space into another composed of architectural forms. These became increasingly abstract in works such as **Opening** and **Kinetic Feature** (displayed nearby) which were both included in the **Recent Developments in British Painting** exhibition in 1931. The title of the painting alludes to the Roman gods of hearth and home.

Tate. Bequeathed by W.N. Sherratt 1980

T03098

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Convolvulus**

1930

Oil paint on canvas

**Convolvulus** is closely related to the painting **Coronilla** (shown in Room 5). This was based on the symbolist poem by Harold Monro (1879–1932) in which a flower acts as a femme fatale, trapping and killing its victim in a shuttered room. Nash also made two wood engravings of the subject, in the second substituting a female figure for the flowering plant that appears in the paintings (displayed nearby). He saw symbolic potential in the way that the convolvulus strangles nearby plants and its flowers twist to follow the sun.

Courtesy of Peter & Renate Nahum

X61806

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Opening**

1930–1

Oil paint on canvas

Nash visited Léonce Rosenberg's gallery in Paris in February 1930, and **Opening** shows the influence of the late cubism that he would have seen there, as does **Kinetic Feature** (displayed nearby). Both explore the use of different spaces within a picture, characteristic of Picasso's work, and mark the culmination of Nash's experimentation with abstraction. In 1937, looking back on this development, he wrote: 'I have no doubt, that the infinite variations of nature may be resolved with an equally incalculable number of complete abstractions. Yet I find I still need partially organic features to make my fixed conceptual image.'

The Daniel Katz Family Trust, London

X61810

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Kinetic Feature**

1931

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1965

T00734

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **The Diving Stage**

1928

Oil paint and pencil on canvas

**The Diving Stage** was based on a public swimming pool in Caen, Normandy, which Nash visited in June 1928, but by setting the wooden construction in a semi-abstracted landscape he detaches it from everyday life. Nash was fascinated by the imagery of Jacob's Dream in which angels ascended a ladder to heaven and the construction of the diving board may have evoked this association. In 1932, he developed the idea of wooden constructions floating in space in his illustration **Mansions of the Dead for Urne Buriall** (displayed nearby) to reflect on mortality and the soul as an aerial presence.

British Council Collection

X61263



Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Swan Song**

1929–30

Oil paint on canvas

Nash described **Swan Song** as his 'first surrealist landscape'. It develops the symbolic use of objects in landscape that he had explored in **Landscape at Iden** and **February** (in Room 3). **Swan Song** is more surrealist in effect, and is as much a still life as a landscape painting, not attempting to situate the objects in naturalistic space. A different plane of vision is used for the group of trees, while the dead leaves and fungi are enlarged in scale, appearing to float and dance in space.

Private collection

X61803

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Nest of the Siren**

1930

Oil paint on canvas

Nash saw the components of **Nest of the Siren** on a trip to Caen, Normandy, in June 1928. A painted wooden decoration from a pedlar's cart is placed in front of a window containing a potted plant and an empty bird's nest, creating an ambiguity

between interior and exterior space. This siren bird suggests a seductive and dangerous female figure, a theme which preoccupied Nash at this date in works such as **Coronilla** (in Room 5). Nash creates a mysterious narrative with the shadow on the left cast by an unseen object or presence recalling the work of Giorgio de Chirico.

GAC 6828. Lent by the UK Government Art Collection.

Purchased 1965

X61276

## Vitrine labels

From right to left

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Sketch for 'Empty Room'**

1938

Graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/6

X63363

### **'Urne Buriall and the Garden of Cyrus' by Thomas Browne, with illustrations by Paul Nash**

1932

Printed paper

Nash was already familiar with the writings of 17th-century polymath Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) when the proposal for a new edition came about. The two texts, **Urne Buriall** and **The Garden of Cyrus** had always been published together and for this Cassel and Co. edition, printed by Curwen, Nash contributed 32 drawings in chalk from which monotype collotypes were produced. They were coloured first in watercolour, then with stencils for the final prints.

**Urne Buriall** is a treatise on burial rites, prompted by the discovery in 1658 of a number of sepulchral urns in Walsingham in Norfolk. One of Nash's illustrations represented Browne's 'mansions of the dead' as 'airy habitations of the skies which sailed and swung from cloud to cloud', visited by souls which he conceived as 'winged creatures'. **The Garden of Cyrus** is a treatise investigating the common occurrence of the 'quincunx' pattern in both nature and art, revealing an underlying geometric order to the world. Nash's illustrations both echo and embellish the ideas in the text and it is clear that he found Browne's blend of mysticism and natural science sympathetic to his own way of conceiving the landscape. Many of the motifs in this book, such as the serpent and sunflower, would appear in Nash's later paintings and the fusion of natural, geometric and mystical forms put forward in Browne's text was clearly something Nash sought to pursue in his own art.



9

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/30, and Private collection Z06365, Z06364

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'Ghosts' proof from Urne Buriall**

1932

Collotype print and stencilled watercolour on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow through  
The Art Fund 2013)

X61368

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'Poysonous Plantations' proof from Urne Buriall**

1932

Collotype print and stencilled watercolour on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Lucas Bequest 1995)

X61370

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'Generations Pass' proof from Urne Buriall**

1932

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/13

Z06152

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'The Story of the Phoenix' proof from Urne Buriall**

1932

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/9

Z06150

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'Pyramids in the Desert' proof from Urne Buriall**

1932

Collotype print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/12

Z06151

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Coronilla No. 2**

1925–30

Wood engraving on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/3

Z06210

# ROOM 5

## UNIT ONE

Unit One may be said to stand for the expression of a truly contemporary spirit, for that thing which is recognized as peculiarly of to-day in painting, sculpture, and architecture.  
— Paul Nash, letter to **The Times**, 12 June 1933

Nash announced the foundation of Unit One in a letter to **The Times** in June 1933. The group of artists included John Armstrong, John Bigge, Edward Burra, Barbara Hepworth, Tristram Hillier, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore and Edward Wadsworth with architects Wells Coates and Colin Lucas. The members of Unit One were broadly aligned with either abstract or surrealist positions, and Nash's letter set out how the group was opposed to the dominant naturalist tendency in English art, and was interested instead in 'design ... considered as a structural pursuit: imagination, explored apart from literature or metaphysics'. One of the group's aims was to ensure that the members' works could be seen alongside those of artists with similar interests rather than in eclectic group shows. Unit One toured an influential exhibition in 1934–5, and the works exhibited here were shown in that exhibition. It took place when Nash was moving away from abstraction towards surrealism and the works he showed reflect this transitional moment. Unit One had disbanded by 1935, but for Nash it had been important in publicly stating his commitment to international modernism and positioning himself alongside other leading British avant-garde artists.



## **Work labels**

Anitclockwise from left of 'Places' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Coronilla**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

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

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge  
X61341

John Armstrong 1893–1973

### **On the Balustrade**

1933

Tempera on board

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums  
X61272

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Northern Adventure**

1929

Oil paint on canvas

**Northern Adventure** depicts the view from Nash's flat opposite St Pancras station. The wooden framework in the foreground is the back of an advertising hoarding, but Nash has transformed it into a fantastical structure. The station has also entered the realm of dreams as its architecture is disassembled, a window is detached and floats in space and an archway leads to an ambiguous dark space populated by geometric planes, recalling the metaphysical architecture of Giorgio de Chirico whose work Nash had seen and admired in 1928.

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections. Purchased in 1953 with income from the Macdonald Bequest  
X61254

Tristram Hillier 1905–1983

**Pylons**

1933

Oil paint on canvas

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art  
X61381

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Voyages of the Moon**

1934–7

Oil paint on canvas

The inspiration for this painting was the restaurant of the Hôtel du Port, Toulon, where Paul and Margaret Nash stayed with Edward Burra in 1930. The walls were entirely covered in mirrors that created a repeated reflection of the white globes of the ceiling lights which Nash adapted into an abstract composition where interior architecture dissolves into open sky and the lights (or moons) appear to recede into infinite space. The version of the painting Nash exhibited in 1934 when he was more concerned with abstraction was titled **Formal Dream** and did not contain the 'real' globe of the moon.

Tate. Purchased 1951

N06024

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Stone Tree**

1934

Oil paint on board

The subject of this painting is a fossilised tree that Nash saw at Whitecliff Farm near Swanage in 1934. The process of wood turning to stone was one that fascinated Nash and he admired the treatment of metamorphosis in Max Ernst's work. Nash shared with Henry Moore an interest in the primitive power of single vertical forms such as large tree trunks and monoliths at Stonehenge.

The Daniel Katz Gallery, London

X61811

Edward Burra 1905–1976

**Serpent's Egg**

1934

Gouache on paper

The Museum of Gloucester

X61273

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Druid Landscape**

1934

Oil paint on cardboard

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

British Council Collection

X61265

Edward Wadsworth 1889–1949

Dux et Comes I

1932

Tempera on canvas



Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1969

T01124

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Poised Objects**

1932

Pencil, chalk and watercolour on paper

**Poised Objects** has a similar composition to **The Quincunx Mystically Considered**, one of Nash's illustrations to Sir Thomas Browne's **The Garden of Cyrus**, 1932. The quincunx is an 'X' pattern that marks five points – each corner and the centre – that Browne argued is found in a multitude of natural and manmade forms, evidence of its mystical significance. In **Poised Objects** Nash has reinterpreted this design as a simple juxtaposition of abstract geometric forms.

St. Anne's College, University of Oxford

X61320

Ben Nicholson 1894–1982

**1933 (milk and plain chocolate)**

1933

Oil paint and gesso on board

Private collection

X61816

John Bigge 1892–1973

**Composition**

1933

Oil paint on wood

Tate. Purchased 1980

T03057

## **Vitrine labels**

From right to left

Herbert Read 1893–1968

### **Unit One: The Modern Movement in English Architecture,**

Painting and Sculpture

1934

The Unit One exhibition began at the Mayor Gallery in Cork Street, London, in April 1934 and went on tour across the UK, receiving extensive press coverage. The book published to coincide with the exhibition had an introduction by Herbert Read alongside individual statements by the artists. Nash's personal statement reflected on English art and modernism asking: 'To what extent has contemporary art in England a national character?' His answer to this question was not to isolate an English tradition, but to explore how environment might shape the characteristics of an artwork that was still part of an international modernism.

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/2/8, and The Murray Family Collection

Z06153, X62422



**'Unit One' exhibition catalogue at Platt Hall, Manchester**

23 June–22 July 1934

Tate Library

Z06229

**'Unit One' exhibition catalogue at The Mayor Gallery,  
London**

April 1934

The Murray Family Collection

X62420

Barbara Hepworth 1903–1975

**Mother and Child**

1934

Cumberland alabaster on marble base

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

T06676

Henry Moore 1898–1986

**Composition**

1933

Concrete

British Council Collection

X61267

ROOM 5

THE LIFE OF THE  
INANIMATE OBJECT

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

— Paul Nash, 'The Life of the Inanimate Object', **Country Life**, May 1937

In the 1930s found objects became central to Nash's work, and he began to develop the idea of the 'object-personage'. In 1934 he discovered a piece of drift wood, which he later called Marsh Personage, describing how he 'was instantly and intensely aware of being in the presence of what he could only describe as a "personage"'. He explored the idea of a life force in inanimate objects and created encounters between them, arranging flints, bones, driftwood, and small geometric objects into still life compositions. Nash also actively engaged with André Breton's and Salvador Dalí's ideas of the found object –that it was created by the artist finding it, yet it had always been waiting in the unconscious. He met Eileen Agar in 1935 when he was living at Swanage on the Dorset coast, and together the two artists explored ideas of the found object and the creative possibilities of photography, collage and assemblage. Both Nash and Agar used the surrealist practice of transforming found objects through unexpected juxtapositions to create sculptures, many of which were included in the **Surrealist Objects and Poems** exhibition at the London Gallery in November 1937.

## Work labels

Clockwise from right of 'The Life of the Inanimate Object' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### Wood Fetish

1934

Pencil and watercolour on paper

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

James Saunders Watson

X61996

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Swanage**

c.1936

Graphite, watercolour and photographs, black and white, on paper

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

Tate. Purchased 1973

T01771

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Ballard Phantom**

1935

Pencil and watercolour on paper

This drawing was reproduced in Nash's article 'Swanage or Seaside Surrealism' in 1936 and combines found objects with the Dorset coastline in a similar way to the photo-collage **Swanage** (displayed nearby). Nash placed one of his favourite found objects, a fragment of antler, on the shore at Swanage Bay, creating a surreal encounter between object and landscape that reflects the disquieting atmosphere and strange juxtapositions he associated with the town. The antler (displayed nearby) also appears in the photographic arrangement **Still Life: Flints on a Doormat** and the drawing, **Study for Landscape of Bleached Objects** (displayed nearby).

Private collection

X62184

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Comment on Leda**

1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

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

Gerrish Fine Art

X62038



Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Nest of the Wild Stones**

1937

Watercolour and pencil on paper

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

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

X61258

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Study for Landscape of Bleached Objects**

1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Looking back in 1937 to the start of his work with found objects, Nash wrote: 'At this point I began to discover the significance of the so-called inanimate object. ... To contemplate the personal beauty of stone and leaf, bark and shell, and to exalt them to be the principles of imaginary happenings became a new interest.' Many of the encounters Nash created between his found objects were first explored in photography (see nearby case) and later worked up into watercolours and paintings.

The Daniel Katz Gallery, London

X61812

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Untitled**

c.1936

Mixed media collage on paper

Agar's collages often used the human form in combination with natural objects. She wrote: 'I used natural elements to establish the context of nature, and then figures or technological artefacts to bring out the dialogue.' The base of this collage is a drawing of a man which Agar has overlaid with leaves and patterned plastic film. In **Collage Head** (displayed nearby) images of marine creatures are superimposed on an ancient Greek statue. Agar wrote of collage: 'for me it is a form of inspired correction, a displacement of the banal by the fertile intervention of chance or coincidence.'

Courtesy of The Mayor Gallery, London

X62160

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Untitled (Box)**

1935

Mixed media

This assemblage combines coral, a sea horse and net fabric to suggest an underwater world watched over by the Eye of Horus, an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection. Agar wrote about the role of found objects in her work: 'the found object has a special significance for me, for the selection of one particular thing from amongst a host of others, whether stones or bones, has often provided the solution to a creative problem, or provoked its own separate inspiration.' The boxed assemblage was an important surrealist format also used by Nash in works such as **Only Egg** (displayed nearby).



The Murray Family Collection

X62165

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Collage Head**

1937

Collage on paper

The Murray Family Collection

X62168

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**The Reaper**

1938

Gouache and leaf on paper

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

Tate. Purchased 1976

T02064

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **In the Marshes**

1938

Plant stems and bark on wood

Tate. Presented by Anthony and Anne d'Offay 1977

T02243

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Only Egg**

1936–7

Two stones, shale, collaged photographs (gelatin silver prints on paper)

Nash wrote of the moment he discovered the stone objects in this assemblage as if he had disturbed a flock of birds: 'When the authors of *Axis and I* flushed a covey of wild stones on East or West Ilsley Down I found a stone nest bearing the imprint of its only egg. It was a rare find.' Similar stones appear in the photograph **The Nest of the Wild Stones** (displayed nearby). In **Only Egg** they are juxtaposed with a photograph of a water trough in a field, also used in the watercolour **Objects in a Field** (displayed nearby), to create an irrational conjunction of natural objects and man-made geometric structures out of place in the landscape.

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61282

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Objects in a Field**

1936

Chalk and watercolour on paper

The Daniel Katz Gallery, London

X61814

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wood on the Hill**

1937

Graphite and watercolour on paper

This drawing transposes the hand/tree forms of Forest (displayed nearby) to a landscape setting, grouping them on the crown of a hill. Here they both recall Nash's early drawings of the Wittenham Clumps and demonstrate his interest in surrealist theories of metamorphosis, unsettlingly retaining the appearance of huge human hands while simultaneously acting as equivalents for the trees.

Private collection

X06234

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Forest**

1936–7

Wood

This wooden relief is made from glove stretchers slotted into a wooden backing. The stretchers metamorphose into tree forms while continuing to suggest hands. **Forest** reflects Nash's interest in Max Ernst's work. Nash had reviewed Ernst's solo show of paintings and collages at the Mayor Gallery in June 1933 and admired the way that landscapes and natural objects metamorphosed into strange and contradictory states in his work, describing 'the disconcerting associations of birds and flowers, suns and forests – suns which look like targets, forests which more resemble seas'.



Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61283



Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Philemon and Baucis**

1939

Collage and frottage on paper

Here Agar employs frottage, an 'automatic' surrealist method where paper is laid over a textured surface and rubbing over it with pencil transfers the pattern of the texture to the paper. The technique was developed in 1925 by Max Ernst who was inspired by an ancient wooden floor where patterns of the graining suggested strange images to him. Philemon and Baucis were an old couple whom the gods transformed into an oak and a lime tree in Ovid's **Metamorphoses**. Agar uses frottage to create two vertical forms taken from wood graining and suggest the metamorphosis between human and tree form.

Courtesy of The Mayor Gallery, London

X62159

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Welsh Collage**

1939

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper and printed paper

Very few of Nash's original photo-collages survive. Although they were an important medium for his work in the mid-1930s, they are mostly recorded in photographs (displayed nearby).

This example places a fountain in a rural landscape and recalls Nash's statement in his article, 'Swanage or Seaside Surrealism', that 'a statue in a street or some place where it would normally be found is just a statue, as it were, in its right mind; but a statue in a ditch or in the middle of a ploughed field is then an object in **a state of surrealism.**'

The Murray Family Collection

X62194

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Ladybird**

1936

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, and gouache

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

The Murray Family Collection

X62169

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wood of the Nightmares' Tales**

1937

Watercolour over pencil on paper

This drawing is one of a group in which Nash became fascinated by primeval history and its ability to evoke the power of irrational primitive forces, an interest he shared with Max Ernst. The title is a pun on the name of the plants depicted, horse-tails, huge plants which grew in the forest swamps of the Carboniferous period, millions of years ago. The theme is continued in **Stone Forest** (displayed nearby) which was based on a postcard of the fossil forest at Lulworth Cove in Dorset, the petrified remains of Jurassic trees.

Susannah Pollen Ltd

X61965

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Stone Forest**

1937

Pencil, black chalk and watercolour on paper

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

X61325

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Sunset at Worth Matravers**

1937

Watercolour on paper

In 1937 Nash made a series of watercolours exploring the theme of jetsam washed up on the beach. Here a huge piece of seaweed has been stranded by the tide, its amorphous form suggesting a prehistoric marine monster.

Private collection, courtesy England & Co Gallery, London

X63364

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Group for a Sculptor**

1931

Watercolour, pencil and chalk on paper

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

Henry Moore Family Collection

X61804

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Group for a Sculptor**

1931

Watercolour, pencil and chalk on paper

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

Henry Moore Family Collection

X61804

## **Vitrine labels**

From left to right

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **'Swanage, or Seaside Surrealism', *Architectural Review***

April 1936

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

Z06166

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **'Dorset', *A Shell Guide***

1936

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/16, and Tate Library

Z06154, Z06231

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### ***Still Life, A Chair Leg Beside Water***

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/787

Z06310



## **Vitrine labels**

From left to right

Paul Nash 1889–1946

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April 1936

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

Z06166

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Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/16, and Tate Library

Z06154, Z06231

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### ***Still Life, A Chair Leg Beside Water***

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/787

Z06310

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'Swanage, or Seaside Surrealism' in The Painter's Object,  
edited by Myfanwy Evans**

1937

Tate Library

Z06316

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**'The Object', Architectural Review**

1936

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

Z06327

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Marsh Personage**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/765

Z06232

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**A Found Object, Mineral Kingdom, Vitreous Subject**

1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/747

Z06172

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Lon Gom Pa**

c.1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/750

Z06230

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Marsh Personage**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/762

Z06168

**Typescript of a Letter from Paul Nash to Dudley Tooth**

November 1943

Ink on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 769/1/31

Z06842

Unknown photographer

**Encounter of the Wild Stones by Paul Nash**

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/12

Z06348

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Untitled**

1934–5

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

Z06322

Antler

**Bone**

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/4/3  
Z06175

Paul Nash 1889–1946

'The Life of the Inanimate Object', **Country Life**

1 May 1937

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library

Z06326

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life: Flints on a Door Mat**

c.1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/527

Z06192

John Piper 1903–1992

**The Nest of the Wild Stones found and arranged by Paul Nash**

1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/15

Z06351

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Found Objects Interpreted / Encounter of the Wild Horns)**

by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/14

Z06350

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Desert Bird) by Paul Nash**

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/16

Z06352

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Object (2)**

Human skull, gold paint and sea shells

This skull originally formed part of the anatomy collections at the Slade School of Fine Art. Agar described in her autobiography how she later painted it gold and decorated it with small sea shells thinking of the line from Shakespeare's

**The Tempest:** 'these are pearls which were his eyes'. She considered it to be her first use of found objects, which became a favourite working method, as the object constructions from her studio displayed nearby demonstrate.

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9222/3/2/1  
Z06182

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Object (4)**

Shells

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9222/3/2/9  
Z06184

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Found Object Interpreted (Seaweed and Cork))**

by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/13

Z06349

Unknown photographer

**The Bark is Worse than the Bite by Paul Nash**

c.1936

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/6/1/11

Z06347

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Object (1)**

Shell and wood

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9222/3/2/12

Z06181



Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Object (3)**

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

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9222/3/2/8  
Z06183

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Mate in Two Moods**

1930–58, printed later

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/4/60  
Z06314

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Untitled**

1930–58, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/4/47  
Z06311

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Untitled**

1930–58, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/4/45

Z06313

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Untitled**

1930–58, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/4/46

Z06312

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Bum and Thumb Rock, Ploumanach**

July 1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

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

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

Tate Archive and Library. TGA 8927/13/55  
Z06167

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**'Le Lapin', Ploumanach**

July 1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/13/25  
Z06308

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life**

c.1934

Pencil and ink on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8416/2/47

Z06188

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life on Car Roof**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/480

Z06190

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Poised Objects**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/488

Z06414

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Poised Objects**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/488  
Z06414

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life on Car Roof**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/478  
Z06189

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Still Life on Car Roof**

1934, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/479  
Z06191

Clare Neilson 1894–1982

**Paul Nash with 'Still Life on a Car Roof'**

c.1934

2 photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper

The encounters between objects in Nash's work often began by making still life arrangements of items he had collected and photographing the results. This allowed him to experiment with different combinations of objects which might then be reused in paintings and drawings. Clare Neilson's images of Nash photographing one of his still life arrangements give an insight into the impromptu nature of the process. The small geometric objects in this sequence of still life photographs are related to Nash's painting **Equivalents for the Megaliths** (displayed in Room 7).

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)  
Z06319

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**A Concrete Trough in a Field**

c.1936, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/790  
Z06309

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Steps in a Field near Swanage**

c.1935, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/1050  
Z06171

P Morton Shand 1888–1960

'Object and Landscape', **Country Life**

3 June 1939

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library  
Z06324

**Surrealist Objects and Poems', London Gallery exhibition  
catalogue**

November 1937

Although Nash's writings focused on his use of natural found objects, between 1936 and 1938 he also made constructions from combinations of natural and man-made objects. Many were shown in the **Surrealist Objects and Poems** exhibition at the London Gallery in November 1937 which was inspired

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

Tate Library and Archive, and The Murray Family Collection  
Z06328, X62421

Unknown photographer

**Basket for Found Objects** by Paul Nash and Margaret Nash  
c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/21  
Z06355

Unknown photographer

**Paul Nash viewing 'Moon Aviary' through tinted glass**  
c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

This photograph shows **Moon Aviary** at the Surrealist Objects and Poems exhibition in 1937 where a blue glass mask was provided to view the work, to create the effect of moonlight.



The object was thought lost for many years, and since this photograph was taken the small stone balanced on the left of the framework has been replaced by the wooden triangle in front of the sculpture.

Tate Library and Archive. Photographs collection  
Z06332

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Egyptian Hawk, Langley**

Undated, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/733  
Z06413

Unknown photographer

**The Archer** by Paul Nash

c.1936

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

**The Archer**, one of Nash's most important surrealist objects, was constructed from a child's wooden boat (displayed nearby), a glass tube, a strip of metal bent in a curve between the base and the top of the boat, a twig and a piece of seaweed on a

wooden base. The curved metal strip suggested a bow, and the elements appeared to be held in tension as if about to shoot. In 1937 Nash added it to the painting **The Archer** and the china doll's head in this case was used in the painting **Changing Scene** (both displayed in Room 7).

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/23  
Z06356

### **Hull of a Toy Boat**

Wood, metal and string

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/4/2  
Z06174

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Goodness How Sad)** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/19  
Z06346

wooden base. The curved metal strip suggested a bow, and the elements appeared to be held in tension as if about to shoot. In 1937 Nash added it to the painting **The Archer** and the china doll's head in this case was used in the painting **Changing Scene** (both displayed in Room 7).

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/23  
Z06356

### **Hull of a Toy Boat**

Wood, metal and string

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/4/2  
Z06174

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Goodness How Sad)** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/19  
Z06346

## **Ivory Spindle**

Ivory

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/4/6  
Z06179

Unknown photographer

**Burnt Offering** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/9  
Z06345

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Victorian Paradox)** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/20  
Z06354

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage (Sea Scrapper)** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/25

Z06358

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage (Empty Room)** by Paul Nash

c.1936–7

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/30

Z06363

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage** by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/28

Z06361

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage (Margaret Theodosia)**

c.1938

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/26  
Z06359

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (The Nest of Myopic Crow)**

by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/36  
Z06343

Unknown photographer

**Untitled (Portrait of Lunar Hornet)**

by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/35  
Z06342

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage (Empty Room)** by Paul Nash

c.1936–7

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/29

Z06362

Unknown photographer

**Photo Collage (The Wound of Love is Healed by Playing Me)**

by Paul Nash

c.1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 9310/3/6/1/27

Z06360

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Collage for Eileen**

c.1930s

Printed paper and leaf

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/5

Z06186

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Collage for Eileen**

c.1930s

Printed paper and leaf

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/5

Z06186

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Collage**

c.1938–46

Graphite and black and white photograph on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/4

Z06840

Unknown photographer

**Eileen Agar**

1930s, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8927/12/63

Z06315



## **Postcard of the Fossil Forest at Lulworth**

Printed paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050  
Z06340

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Collage**

c.1938–46

Graphite and black and white photograph on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8712/2/4  
Z06840

## **Doll's Head with Locket**

Doll: painted china; locket: string, glass, metal and unidentified substance

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 8313/4/1  
Z06173

Unknown photographer

**Portrait of Paul Nash Holding a Doll's Head**

1930s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

Z06323

Eileen Agar 1899–1991

**Marine Object**

1939

Terracotta, horn, bone and shells

Tate. Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1990

T05818

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Moon Aviary**

1937

Cedarwood, ivory, stone and bone

**Moon Aviary** developed the concept of Nash's **Mansions of the Dead** series (in Rooms 4 and 7) in three dimensions. He had depicted an open geometric framework in the drawing to represent the mansions as 'airy habitations of the skies which sailed and swung from cloud to cloud', visited by souls conceived as 'winged creatures'. Here, influenced by the work of Alberto Giacometti, Nash used egg crates to form the framework, and bobbins balanced on triangular forms represented perching birds, creating a dream-like constructed environment.

Ernest Brown & Phillips Ltd

X63681

ROOM 7

UNSEEN LANDSCAPE

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

— Paul Nash, 'Unseen Landscapes', *Country Life*, May 1938

Nash's experiments with found objects and photography helped him develop a new approach to landscape. No longer symbolic figure equivalents, objects were now present in the landscape in their own right and animated his paintings by the drama of their encounter with the landscape and with each other in what Nash described as an 'imaginative event'. Nash also explored the mysterious ancient power of megaliths, and the dramatic potential of using abstract equivalents for the standing stones to emphasise their formal qualities and increase the incongruous effect of their presence in the landscape. His concept of 'unseen landscapes', in which the artist made visible what had previously been overlooked, enabled him to draw on surrealist ideas to interpret the British landscape. After his participation in the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936, Nash painted some of his most intensely surrealist landscapes in which reality and dream co-existed, as fantastic environments were created from irrational juxtapositions of observed places and objects. The concept of the 'object personage' also remained important to Nash, particularly in his series *Monster Field* in which he created a narrative around the monstrous personalities of a group of fallen trees.

## **Work labels**

Anticlockwise from left of 'Unseen Landscape' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Encounter of Two Objects**

1936–7

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X62337

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Landscape of the Megaliths**

1934

Oil paint on canvas

In 1934 Nash set himself a new pictorial problem, describing the features of the Avebury landscape including 'two rough monoliths ... sixteen feet high, miraculously patterned with black and orange lichen, remnants of an avenue of stones which led to the great circle'. He concluded: 'In my art I would solve such an equation.' This work is one of the earliest in the series of paintings which attempted to 'solve' the 'equation' of the relationship of the stones to the surrounding landscape, emphasising organic qualities such as their irregular shapes and the colours of the lichen that covered them.

British Council Collection

X61264

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Equivalents for the Megaliths**

1935

Oil paint on canvas

Equivalents for the Megaliths 1935 was painted when Nash was thinking about the relationship of his work to abstraction. Wishing to avoid complete abstraction he instead created 'equivalents' for the standing stones by simplifying them to their essential 'prone or upright' forms. By replacing the stones with geometric equivalents, Nash also created a disparity between landscape setting and abstract object that proposed two simultaneous versions of reality. He created a fresh encounter with these familiar but mysterious objects, retaining their dramatic presence in the landscape, but allowing the viewer to experience their incongruity as if for the first time.



16

Tate. Purchased 1970  
T01251

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Objects in Relation**

1935

Oil paint on board

The composition of **Equivalents for the Megaliths** (displayed nearby) had partly evolved from Nash's experiments with small geometric objects, which he juxtaposed in different combinations in a series of photographs including **Still Life on Car Roof** (in Room 6). **Objects in Relation** takes this idea a stage further by placing the geometric objects themselves in a landscape rather than making them into equivalents for the standing stones, yet still exploring the formal relationship between vertical forms and horizontal landscape features.

St. Paul's School, London

X61321



Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Event on the Downs**

1934

Oil paint on canvas

This is one of Nash's first paintings to combine found objects in a landscape setting. The tree stump and tennis ball juxtaposed in the coastal landscape of Ballard Down near Swanage had already been included in separate photographic still life compositions, but enlarged and placed in a landscape setting, these small objects acquired a monumental presence and their meeting suggests a mysterious imaginative event. Nash admired Giorgio de Chirico's use of isolated objects in architectural settings to create an uncanny narrative, and wrote in 1931: 'He has, in his best moments, an extraordinary power to make things happen in a picture.'

GAC 8536. Lent by the UK Government Art Collection.

Purchased 1969

X61275

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Mineral Objects**

1935

Oil paint on canvas

Nash saw Roman discs made of shale known as 'Kimmeridge Coal' in Dorset County Museum when he was undertaking research for the **Dorset Shell Guide** (1936). These were the waste discs from bracelets and armlets made on a lathe, the square hole in the top showing where they would have been mounted on the lathe. Nash transformed these small objects into monumental structures in the landscape that, like the monoliths, represent both the traces of ancient history, and exist as abstract equivalents for the objects.

Yale Center for British Art. Paul Mellon Fund

X61333

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Changing Scene**

1937

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X62166

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Archer**

1930–1937–1942

Oil paint on canvas

**The Archer** was originally a construction that Nash had made from found objects. In 1937–8 he added it to landscapes painted earlier. Nash constructed a narrative around the object describing the battle between the shadow cast by the archer and a 'counter-menacing shadow in the form of a woman with long flying hair. She is always on his track. Nothing but her shadow is visible but that is quite enough for the Archer and sometimes too much.' The female shadow is suggestive of de Chirico's work and also recalls Nash's early drawing, **The Cliff to the North (in Room 1)**.

Southampton City Art Gallery

X61319

## **Vitrine labels**

From right to left

**Paul Nash in the Forest of Dean** (page from Clare Neilson's photograph album)

1939

3 photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

Z06320

Paul Nash 1889–1946

'Unseen Landscapes', **Country Life**

21 May 1938

Facsimile

Courtesy of the British Library

Z06325

**'Fertile Image'** by Paul Nash,  
edited by Margaret Nash  
1951

Tate Library  
Z06241

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Monolith in Arcadia**

1939

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)  
X63682

**Paul Nash in the Forest of Dean** (page from Clare Neilson's  
photograph album)

1939

4 photographs, gelatin silver prints on  
paper, on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)  
Z06321

William Stukeley 1687–1765

**'Abury, a Temple of the British Druids with Some  
Others Described**

1743

From Paul Nash's library

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/5/111

Z06208

Stuart Piggott 1910–1996

**Stukeley, Avebury and the Druids (A Booklet Reprinted  
from Antiquity)**

March 1935

From Paul Nash's library

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/5/112

Z06209

ROOM 7  
(DIVIDING WALL)

THE INTERNATIONAL  
SURREALIST EXHIBITION

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

— Paul Nash, 'Dreams', undated typescript, Tate Archive

Nash's work had been aligned with surrealism since the early 1930s through his dream-like interiors and landscapes, and his interest in found objects. He was closely involved with the organisation of the International Surrealist Exhibition held at the Burlington Galleries in London in June 1936. All the leading continental European surrealist artists participated including André Breton, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Man Ray, Joan Miró, Yves Tanguy and other prominent artists such as Giorgio de Chirico, Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso who were then associated with the movement. The exhibition also showed the work of an emerging surrealist group in England including Eileen Agar, John Banting, Edward Burra, Merlyn Evans, David Gascoyne, Humphrey Jennings, Henry Moore and Julian Trevelyan. Nash was a member of the hanging committee for the exhibition and the range of works he exhibited, including paintings, photo-collages and found objects, reflected the increasing impact of surrealist ideas and methods on his work. The exhibition had extensive press coverage and attracted around 23,000 visitors. This exposure reinforced public perceptions of Nash as a surrealist artist and showed his work in an international context.



## Work labels

From left of wall

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Mansions of the Dead**

1932

Graphite and watercolour on paper

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



19

Tate. Purchased 1981

T03204

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Harbour and Room**

1932–6

Oil paint on canvas

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

Tate. Purchased 1981

T03206

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Landscape at Large**

1936

Paper, pine and shale on paper

Nash first showed his work with found objects at the International Surrealist Exhibition. His earliest found object, **Marsh Personage**, was mounted on a plinth and displayed as **Found Object Interpreted (Vegetable Kingdom)**. He also exhibited **Landscape at Large**, one of a group of collages he made in 1936–8 in which real objects were used pictorially. The title suggests an abstract landscape, with the shape of the bark indicating perspective, and the texture and patterns of the materials making the features. The 'at large', although not explained by the artist, may have its usual meaning of 'at liberty'.

Tate. Purchased 1986

T04161

ROOM 7

UNSEEN LANDSCAPE

(CONTINUED)

## Work labels

Anticlockwise from left of The International Surrealist Exhibition captions

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Circle of the Monoliths**

(verso **The Two Serpents** 1929)

c.1937–8

Oil paint on canvas

Nash often reused canvases, resulting in double-sided paintings. The side of this work usually exhibited is **The Two Serpents** 1929. On the other (displayed here) is a composition closely related to the nearby **Circle of the Monoliths**. Its blue-tinged palette and the red sun casting light across the sea to the avenue of megaliths intensify the link between land and sea and heighten its dream-like quality.

Private collection

X62164

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Circle of the Monoliths**

1937–8

Oil paint on canvas

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

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61280

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Nocturnal Landscape**

1938

Oil paint on canvas

**Nocturnal Landscape** revisits the night landscape of Nash's early drawings but here it is populated with monstrous white biomorphic forms. One of these is related to the fragment of antler that Nash had regularly used in compositions, and the gridded framework on the left also recalls the structure of the sculpture **Moon Aviary**. The Cornish Neolithic monument Mên-an-Tol can be clearly identified in the background. Nash also described this painting as 'influenced by the conditions of Dream'.

Manchester City Galleries

X61303

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Landscape from a Dream**

1936–8

Oil paint on canvas

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



Tate. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1946

N05667



Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Minotaur (Monster Pond)**

1939

Chalk and watercolour on paper

In 1939 Nash discovered 'Monster Pond' near Upleadon in Gloucestershire, and attributed a similar animism to the tree stumps he found there as to the trees he had earlier discovered at 'Monster Field'. He photographed the location, emphasising the association it suggested with primeval swamps by titling a print of the photograph **Pre-History and Pre-pre-history** (displayed nearby) and also made several watercolours of the tree stumps including **Minotaur**.

Benedict Read

X62190

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Severn Bore near Pimlico Sands**

1938

Pencil and watercolour on paper

Nash's fascination with encroaching tides found a counterpoint in nature in his observation of the Severn bore, a surge wave that is formed as the incoming tide is funnelled from the Severn Estuary into an increasingly narrow channel. Pimlico Sands was near the Neilsons' home in Gloucestershire and Garden Cliff, seen in the background, has striking layers of cream and pink rock. Nash has emphasised the growing force of the water as it surges past a large tree stump in the foreground.

Private collection

X63683

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Monster Field Study I**

1939

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil on paper

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

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of  
Cambridge

X61339

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Monster Field Study II**

1939

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge  
X61340

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Monster Shore**

1939

Oil paint on canvas

Nash created a dream-like environment by combining the landscape of **The Severn Bore near Pimlico Sands** (displayed nearby) with one of the Monster Field trees and a set of steps he had photographed near Swanage several years earlier. In this composite landscape the 'monster' takes on a yet more sinister presence as the water rushes past it, creating the sense of an unstoppable natural force. The strange presence of the steps both accentuates the irrational juxtapositions of surrealism and echoes in its form the ancient layers of geology in the stripes of Garden Cliff beyond.

Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; Gift of the Women's Committee, 1966  
X62172

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Monster Field**

1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/1106  
Z06157

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Monster Field**

1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

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

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/1108  
Z06158

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Monster Field**

1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/1109  
Z06159

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Monster Field**

1938, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper



Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/1107  
Z06160

**Monster Field, A Discovery Recorded by Paul Nash**

1946

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/1/25

Z06334

**'Monster Field' at Carswell Manor Farm**

(page from Clare Neilson's photograph album)

1938

Photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper, on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

Z06317

**Upleadon (page from Clare Neilson's photograph album)**

1939

2 photographs, gelatin silver prints on paper, on paper

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

Z06318

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Pre-history and Pre-pre-history**

c.1939

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Nash inscribed this photograph 'Pre-history (this way up)' on the top edge and 'Pre-pre-history (this way up)' upside down on the bottom edge indicating that the image could be viewed both ways. Since the composition is of the reflection of trees in a pond it suggests that viewing the image upside down with the reflection at the top would reveal a deeper, more mysterious, history further back in time in the depths of the pond.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (The Clare Neilson Collection  
Presented by Jeremy Greenwood and Alan Swerdlow 2013)

X61372



**International Surrealist Bulletin, no. 4**

1936

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 929/6/21

Z06335

**Catalogue for the International Surrealist Exhibition at the  
New Burlington Galleries, London**

11 June–4 July 1936

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 200511/7/8/1

Z06333

**Catalogue for the International Surrealist Exhibition at the  
New Burlington Galleries, London**

11 June–4 July 1936

Facsimile

Tate Library and Archive

Z06329

David Gascoyne 1916–2001

**A Short Survey of Surrealism**

1935

Private collection

Z06331

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Typescript of 'The Surrealist Object Explained'**

undated

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 769/1/60

Z06338

André Breton 1896–1966

**What is Surrealism?**

translated by David Gascoyne

1936

Tate Library

Z06330

Herbert Read 1893–1968

## **Surrealism**

1936

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 964/5/20  
Z06307

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Typescript of 'On Dreams'**

undated

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 769/1/58  
Z06337

## **Drawings I**

Installation photograph of the International Surrealist Exhibition  
at the New Burlington Galleries, London

1936

Photograph, digital print on paper

This photograph shows Nash's painting **Encounter in the  
Afternoon** and photograph **Step Edge** alongside works by  
Eileen Agar, David Gascoyne and Francis Picabia.

Penrose Archive, GMA A35/1/3/378, p17  
Z06936

## **Drawings II**

Installation photograph of the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London

1936

This photograph shows Nash's **Landscape at Large** alongside works by Eileen Agar, Cecil Collins, Salvador Dalí, Paul Klee, René Magritte, André Masson, Joan Miró, Henry Moore and Julian Trevelyan.

Penrose Archive, GMA A35/1/3/378, p18

Z06937

## **Large Room IV**

Installation photograph of the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London

1936

Photograph, digital print on paper

This photograph shows Nash's **Landscape of the Megaliths** alongside works by Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, Stanley William Hayter, Paul Klee, René Magritte, André Masson, Henry Moore and Roland Penrose.

Penrose Archive, GMA A35/1/3/378, p6

Z06934

## **Large Room V**

Installation photograph of the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London

This photograph shows Nash's **Harbour and Room** and **Aerial Composition (Mansions of the Dead)** alongside works by André Breton, Edward Burra, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, André Masson, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Roland Penrose and Yves Tanguy.

Penrose Archive, GMA A35/1/3/378, p7  
Z06935

## **Large Room III**

Installation photograph of the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London

1936

Photograph, digital print on paper

This photograph shows Nash's found object sculpture **Marsh Personage** alongside works by Jean Arp, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, Francis Picabia and Pablo Picasso.

Penrose Archive, GMA A35/1/3/378, p5  
Z06933

ROOM 8

AERIAL CREATURES

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

—Paul Nash, **Aerial Flowers**, 1945

Nash left London for Oxford in August 1939, just before the outbreak of war. He was appointed as an official war artist by the War Artists' Advisory Committee in March 1940. While working for the Air Ministry he painted a series of watercolours of crashed German bombers which appealed to him because they were out of their natural element in the clouds. He described how on the ground these fallen giants took on a personified quality as monstrous creatures in the same way that fallen trees had done in his **Monster Field** series made in 1939. He was also inspired by the piles of crashed planes at the Cowley Dump near Oxford, taking numerous photographs of them which he used as the basis of the painting **Totes Meer**. In this work he drew on surrealist ideas of metamorphosis to transform the twisted mass of crashed planes into the waves of a metal sea. His observation of aerial combat triggered both fear and new pictorial ideas and, at a time when his health was failing, he became obsessed with the idea of death as an airborne force which he explored in **Battle of Germany**.

## **Work labels**

Clockwise from right of 'Aerial Creatures' wall text

Jill Craigie 1911–1999

### **Out of Chaos**

1944

Film, 35mm, transferred to digital

Excerpt, 2 min 38 sec

**Out of Chaos** was the first film Jill Craigie directed.

It features artists including Paul Nash, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Stanley Spencer, all of whom were making work during the Second World War as Official War Artists, a scheme run by Kenneth Clark, chair of the War Artists' Advisory Committee, who appears elsewhere in the film. This excerpt shows Nash sketching the wrecked aeroplanes at Cowley Dump in Oxfordshire.

ITN Source

X63228



Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wrecked Aeroplanes, Cowley Dump, Trees in the Distance**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050/PH/52

Z06415

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wrecked Aeroplane, Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/56

Z06848

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wrecked Aeroplane, Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/56

Z06848

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **The Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

In 1940 Nash visited the salvage dump for wrecked German and British aircraft at Cowley, near Oxford. He wrote to Kenneth Clark: 'It is metal piled up, wreckage. It is hundreds of flying creatures which invaded these shores ... By moonlight one could swear they began to move and twist and turn as they did in the air.' He took numerous photographs which he considered important in their own right, describing them to his friend Hartley Ramsden as 'rather extraordinary, but no one understands how photography can be used except as a method of cheating'.

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/58  
Z06849

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/61  
Z06851

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wrecked Aircraft, Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/63  
Z06852

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Cowley Dump**

1940, printed 2016

Photograph, digital print on paper

Tate Library and Archive. TGA 7050PH/67  
Z06853

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Totes Meer (Dead Sea)**

1940–1

Oil paint on canvas

Nash transformed the piled-up wreckage of aircraft that he had photographed at the Cowley Dump into 'a great inundating sea', drawing on surrealist ideas of metamorphosis of materials.

He created an uncanny atmosphere by setting the scene at night and including a solitary owl in flight. Nash described the subject of the painting as 'a vast tide moving across the fields, the breakers rearing up and crashing on the plain. And then, no: nothing moves, it is not water or even ice, it is something static and dead. It is metal piled up, wreckage.'



20

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1946

N05717

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Battle of Germany**

1944

Oil paint on canvas

This scene of aerial bombardment at night is the most abstract of Nash's war paintings. The left half of the image represents the waiting city, the right the bombardment where he described how 'forms are used quite arbitrarily and colours by a kind of chromatic percussion ... to suggest explosion and detonation'. In the central foreground the group of floating discs represents parachutes. Nash was struck by the Spanish term 'rose of death' for parachutes, and **Battle of Germany** was painted in the same year as **Flight of the Magnolia** (displayed in Room 9) which began his series of 'Aerial Flowers'.



IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X61434

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**The Messerschmidt in Windsor Great Park**

1940

Pastel, graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1946

N05716

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Wrecked German Plane in Flames (Death of the Dragon)**

1940

Watercolour and bodycolour over black chalk on buff paper

Working for the Air Ministry in 1940, Nash made a series of watercolours of crashed German bombers. He wrote: 'the fact of their being out of their element and being found not among the clouds but in the cornfield or on the moors or stretched across the sands had a strong and natural appeal for me'. He noted 'the diverse distinct personalities of these enchanting monsters', seeing them as living presences, in a similar way to the fallen trees in his earlier **Monster Field series** (some shown in Room 7).

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Presented by H.M.

Government (War Artists Advisory Committee) 1947

X61337

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Bomber in the Wood**

1940

Watercolour on paper

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61285

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Bomber in the Wood**

1940

Watercolour on paper

Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery)

X61285

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Encounter in the Afternoon**

1940

Chalk and watercolour on paper

Manchester City Galleries

X61304

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Bomber in the Corn**

1940

Graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1946

N05715



ROOM 9

EQUINOX

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

— Paul Nash, letter to Dudley Tooth, 1943

In 1942 Nash returned to the landscape of the Wittenham Clumps. From the garden of his friend Hilda Harrison's house at Boars Hill near Oxford, he could see the Clumps in the distance beyond Bagley Wood. He described how the deep history of this place with its hill fort, long barrows and ancient forest gave it 'a compelling magic'. This was also a landscape of the imagination in which Nash explored the mystic resonance of moments marking the changing seasons such as the spring equinox and the summer solstice and ancient rituals connected to them. The sun and moon were significant symbolic presences in a series of paintings in which Nash's handling became looser and he used rich vibrant colour to convey his emotional response to the landscape. His final paintings revisited ideas of the soul as a floating presence in the sky now expressed through the imagery of airborne flowers as precursors of death. Reflecting on his own mortality he concluded the essay **Aerial Flowers** (1945) by saying: 'it is death I have been writing about all this time. . . death, I believe, is the only solution to this problem of how to be able to fly'.

## **Work labels**

Anitclockwise from left of 'Equinox' wall text

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Pillar and Moon**

1932–42

Oil paint on canvas

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

Tate. Presented by the Art Fund 1942

N05392

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **Landscape of the Moon's Last Phase**

1944

Oil paint on canvas

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery. Presented to the Walker Art Gallery by the Contemporary Art Society in 1949

X61313

Paul Nash 1889–1946

### **November Moon**

1942

Oil paint on canvas

Nash explored the effect of different phases of the moon on the night landscape creating an atmosphere of mystery and enchantment. **November Moon** has a melancholy mood, focusing on the garden at Boar's Hill suffused with the pale ghostly light from the half-moon, its form echoed by the underside of the mushroom in the foreground, which suggests themes of decay and death.

**Landscape of the Moon's Last Phase** (displayed nearby) looks beyond the garden to the Wittenham Clumps lit dramatically with the rich golden light from a huge almost full moon which Nash described as 'very full blown and frightening.'

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

X61342

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Landscape of the Vernal Equinox**

1943

Oil paint on canvas

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



Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

X61314

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Landscape of the Vernal Equinox (III)**

1944

Oil paint on canvas

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

X61380

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Eclipse of the Sunflower**

1945

Oil paint on canvas

In 1945 Nash embarked on a final sequence of paintings exploring the relationship between the sun and the sunflower which he saw as its terrestrial equivalent. Nash wrote: 'the withered flowerhead is the ghost of the flower in eclipse or just another sunflower time has destroyed and the tempest has torn up and scattered over the water.' **Eclipse of the Sunflower** has a melancholy feel, unlike the sense of joyous release in **Solstice of the Sunflower** (displayed nearby).

British Council Collection

X61266

Paul Nash 1889–1946

## **Solstice of the Sunflower**

1945

Oil paint on canvas

The symbolism of Nash's sunflower paintings combines personal associations with ancient rituals. Nash wrote of this painting: 'The sun appears to be whipping the Sunflower like a top. The Sunflower Wheel tears over the hill cutting a path through the standing corn and bounding into the air as it gathers momentum. This is the blessing of the Midsummer Fire.' He was referring to the custom of binding stubble to a cartwheel, setting it alight and rolling the firewheel downhill at the summer solstice to ensure the survival of life through the winter and the following year's fertility.



National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Gift of the Massey Collection of English Painting 1952

X61311

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Flight of the Magnolia**

1944

Oil paint on canvas

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

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Tate Gallery, the Art Fund and a group of donors 1999  
T07552



Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Cumulus Head**

1944

Oil paint on canvas

Nash's preoccupation with 'the spaces of the skies and the miraculous cloudscapes that constantly form, change and disappear' resulted in a series of cloud studies (displayed nearby) and in the painting **Cumulus Head**. Here, an unusual cloud formation is transformed into a giant floating figure which recalls his early drawings with their mystic visions of figures in the sky.

Private collection

X61988

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Landscape of the Bagley Woods**

1943

Oil paint on canvas

City & County of Swansea: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Collection

X61274

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Michaelmas Landscape**

1943

Oil paint on canvas

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

Ferens Art Gallery: Hull Museums

X61271

Paul Nash 1889–1946

**Landscape of the Brown Fungus**

1943

Oil paint on canvas

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

X61379

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at the exhibition entrance  
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Sunday 13 November

Performance 14.30, Talk 16.00

Clore Auditorium

Performance and Talk £10 (£7 concessions)

Talk £5 (£3 concessions)

New multimedia performance by Dave McKean.

In partnership with 14–18 NOW.

## AUDIO DESCRIPTION TOUR

Monday 21 November 11.00–12.00

In the exhibition

Free for blind and partially sighted visitors

### **ARTIST TALK: ASSEMBLE**

Thursday 24 November 18.30–20.00

Clore Auditorium

£12 (£8 concessions)

Turner Prize winners Assemble discuss their recent work in the context of Nash and Unit One.

### **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE TOUR**

Saturday 17 December 11.00–12.00

In the exhibition

Free

### **CURATOR'S TOUR**

Friday 27 January 18.30–20.30

In the exhibition

£20 (£15 concessions)

Includes exhibition entry

### **CURATOR'S TALK**

Friday 3 February 18.30–20.30

Clore Auditorium

£20 (£15 concessions)

Includes exhibition entry

### **STUDY DAY–PAUL NASH: MODERNIST FAMILY TREE**

Saturday 25 February 10.30–13.00, 14.00–16.30

Taylor Digital Studio and Archive Room

£40 (£30 concessions)

Includes entry to exhibition

Led by art historian Sarah Fill.

## **COURSE—A LANDSCAPE IN LETTERS**

Fridays 10 February–10 March,

18.45–20.45

Clore Duffield Room

£130 (£100 concessions)

Use Paul Nash archival material to explore imagined landscapes through letters, poetry and prose. Led by writer Justin Hopper.

These events are provided by Tate Gallery on behalf of Tate Enterprises LTD

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