

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Presentation

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Paul Nash (1889-1946)

Men Marching at Night, 1918

Lithograph on brown wove paper

51.2 x 41.8 cms (20 x 16½ in)

Edition of 25

Signed and dated '1918'

Sheet size 58.5 x 41.8 cm

LITERATURE: Postan, Alexander. *The Complete Graphic Work of Paul Nash*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1973. cat. no. L4.

In Nash's '*Men Marching at Night*' a line of soldiers, reminiscent of Nevinson's '*Returning to the Trenches*', march towards the viewer, their backs hunched, faces covered against the driving rain,

dwarfed by the giant poplar trees lining the road. The soldiers are dehumanised, fading into a single mass disappearing off into the distance. The stark unnatural geometry of the surroundings reflects the way nature is transformed by war into an unnatural hostile landscape. In Greco-Roman mythology poplars populate the Elysian Fields, a paradise and resting place for great soldiers and heroes.



Paul Nash (1889-1946)

Mine Crater (Hill 60), 1917

Lithograph on cream wove paper

36 x 45.7 cms (14¼ x 18 in)

Edition of 25

Signed and dated 'December 1917'

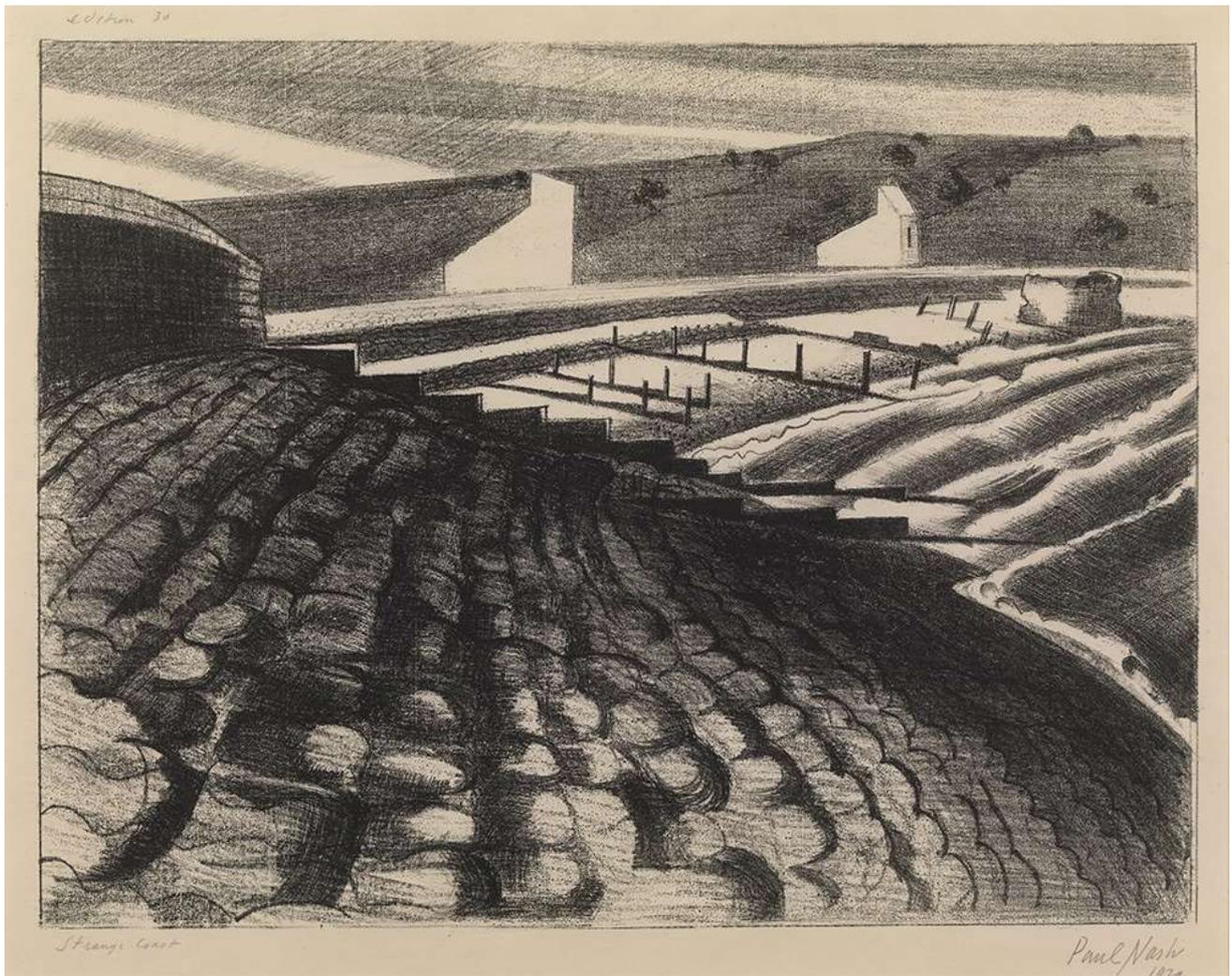
LITERATURE: Postan, Alexander. *The Complete Graphic Work of Paul Nash*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1973. cat. no. L1.

Created when a railway cutting was built in the 1850s, Hill 60 was a favourite spot for courting couples before the war. The hill was a coveted point of high ground near the village of Zillebeke on the Ypres frontier. In the First Battle of Ypres in 1914 the high ground of Hill 60 was captured by German forces

and a lengthy phase of static trench warfare ensued. The area became renowned as a place of intensive mining activity with both sides tunnelling under No Man's Land.

Paul Nash was based nearby in the Spring of 1917 with the 15th Hampshires when he fell into a trench, breaking his ribs and was sent back to England to convalesce. Several days later the Battle of Messines (7th-14th July) began with one of the largest explosions in history up to that point, reportedly heard as far away as Dublin. The mines underneath Hill 60 were detonated at approx. 3:10 am destroying a large part of Hill 60 and killing as many as 10,000 German soldiers. The 15th Hampshires were sent into battle in the offensive that ensued and suffered many casualties. Nash lost many friends in the attack and his depiction is surely a tribute to his comrades. The shattered trees in the background stand as symbols for the bodies beneath the ground. The demolished earth that rises in front of the view in a confronting wall is the ground so fought over for four years. The subject is not only a tribute to his comrades but also to the bitter pointlessness of war.

The site is now a battlefield memorial site, left untouched by all but nature since the Great War. While the giant crater is still visible today, nature has begun to reclaim the land.



Paul Nash (1889-1946)

Strange Coast, Dymchurch, 1920

Lithograph on off-white wove paper

31.4 x 40.7 cms (12¼ x 16 in)

Edition of 30

Signed, titled and dated in pencil

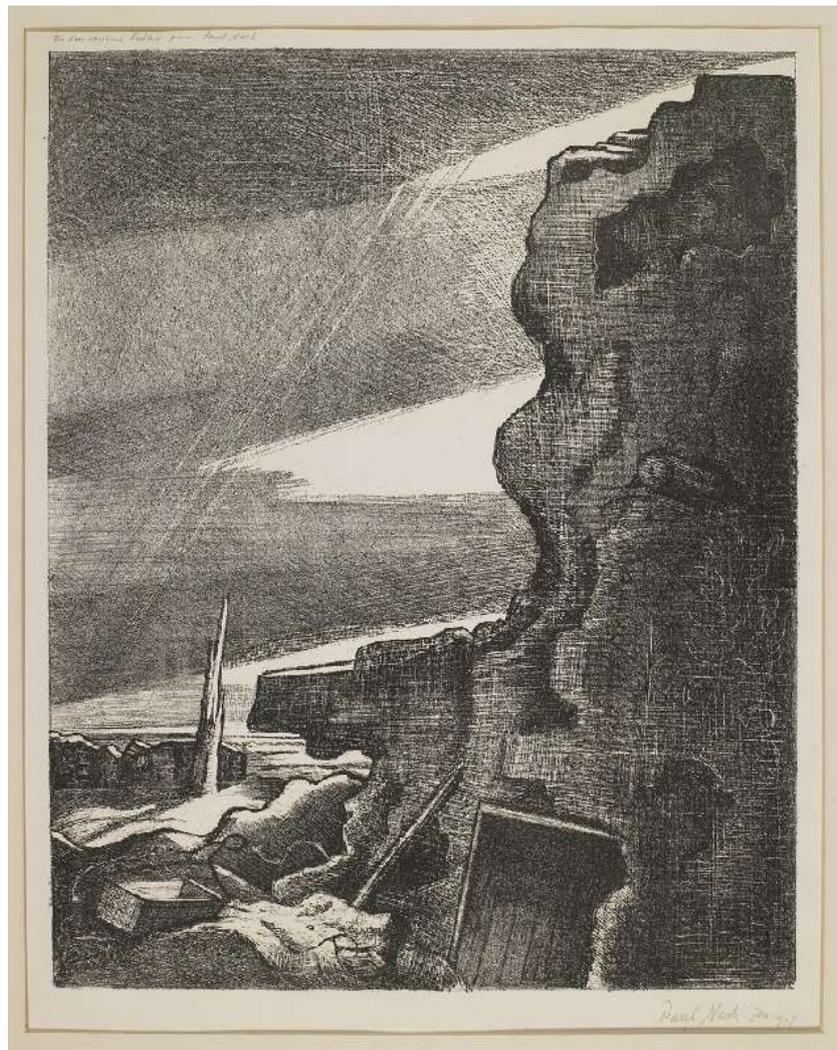
LITERATURE:

Postan, Alexander. *The Complete Graphic Work of Paul Nash*.

London: Secker & Warburg, 1973. cat no. L10.

Paul Nash first visited the Kent village of Dymchurch in 1919. "A delightful place with much inspiring material for work" he subsequently moved his family there in 1921. The lofty broad seawall protects the

low lying and ancient area of Romney Marsh from flooding. Running for six kilometres, nine metres high and six metres wide the monumental wall was originally constructed in Roman times with the great Martello towers added in the Napoleonic era after the threat of invasion. Three sluices gates in the wall allowed the water on the wetland to run out at low tide. Nash, who nearly drowned as a child, wrote of his fear and fascination with the sea; 'cold and cruel waters, usually in a threatening mood, pounding and rattling along the shore'. This feeling of dread can be sensed in his works of Dymchurch with a strange low evening light casting long shadows.



Paul Nash (1889-1946)

German Double Pill-Box, 1918

Lithograph

45 x 35.5 cms (17¾ x 14 in)

Signed & dated lower right. Dedicated in pencil to 'Sir Michael Sadler' upper left.

Edition of 25

Reference: Postan L5

Created as part of Ministry of Information commission, Scheme 3.



Paul Nash (1889-1946)

Rain, Lake Zillebeke, 1918

Lithograph

25.5 x 41.2 cms (10 x 16¼ in)

Edition of 25 proofs on cream wove paper with a few proofs on white wove

Ref: Postan L3



Christopher Nevinson (1889-1946)

The Road from Arras to Bapaume, 1918

Lithograph on Antique de Luxe laid paper

47.2 x 38.5 cms (18½ x 15¼ in)

Signed and dated

LITERATURE

Black, Jonathan. *CRW Nevinson - The Complete Prints*. London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, 2014. cat. no. 30.

The road from the city of Arras to the town of Bapaume was a major British supply route during the Great War. Here the road continues across infinite rolling hills, the only variation on the flat expansive landscape a few broken trees. Nevinson wrote in his autobiography of his return to London in 1918; "I got back to find that a bomb had fallen on the printing works where my lithographs were kept and my stones were damaged. The reason for the extra ridge on my lithograph of the 'Arras-Bapaume Road' is because I had to put it in to cover the injury done to my original stone."



Christopher Nevinson (1889-1946)

The Blue Wave, 1917

Lithograph

34.3 x 42.8 cms (13½ x 16¾ in)

Signed and dated in pencil

PROVENANCE

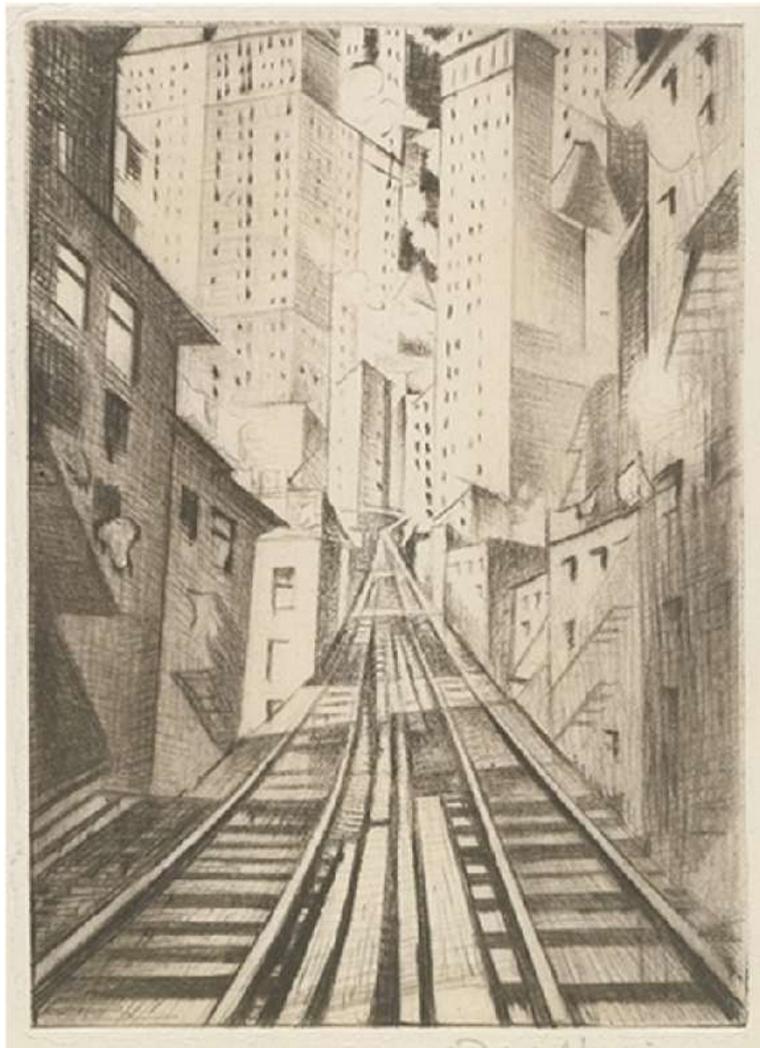
Sir George Clausen (thence by direct descent to the previous owner)

LITERATURE

Black, Jonathan. *CRW Nevinson - The Complete Prints*.

London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, 2014. cat. no 15.

The Blue Wave was the first colour lithograph Nevinson produced and is now extremely rare. When first exhibited with the Friday Club in April 1917, the print was titled '*Breakers*', and undoubtedly inspired by Hokusai's colour woodcut, '*The Great Wave off Kanagawa*'. Where Hokusai gives distance from the rolling ocean to take in its enormous scale, Nevinson fills the field of view confronting the viewer as though they about to be consumed. An oil painting of the same subject is now in the collection of Yale British Art Center.



Christopher Nevinson (1889-1946)

New York: An Abstraction, 1921

Drypoint

12.7 x 8.9 cms (5 x 3½ in)

Drypoint printed in sepia on off-white laid paper

Titled verso

Signed lower right

LITERATURE

Black, Jonathan. *CRW Nevinson - The Complete Prints*.
London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne
Samuel, 2014. cat. no. 77.

Used as the cover image for the catalogue at Bourgeois Galleries, New York, 1920, 'New York: An Abstraction' may be based on a stretch of elevated railway that ran along Third Avenue. The wall of skyscrapers and the train tracks dominate the composition, leaving no space for human beings, described by Jonathan Black as "New York's somewhat inhuman architectural dynamism". Nevinson later renamed the oil painting of the same subject, '*The Soul of a Soulless City*' - indicative of the artist's now distinctly negative view of the city.



Christopher Nevinson (1889-1946)

Returning to the Trenches, 1916

Drypoint on off-white laid paper

15.1 x 20.4 cms (6 x 8 in)

Edition of 75

Signed & dated in pencil

LITERATURE

Black, Jonathan. *CRW Nevinson - The Complete Prints*.

London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, 2014. cat. no 9.

During his time both as an ambulance driver and with the Red Cross, Nevinson was captivated by the dense lines of marching

French soldiers seemingly moving as one. Informed by the Futurist techniques for depicting movement, seen in such works as Boccioni's *'The City Rises'* and *'States of Mind'*, the French soldiers in *'Returning to the Trenches'* merge into one unified mechanical mass, their limbs blurring together, giving one the impression of a speeding train disappearing into the distance. In his autobiography Nevinson stated that these soldiers may have been part of the French 89th territorial division, and in the oil painting of the same subject the early French uniform is distinctive with its impractical red cap. In an interview with *The Daily Express* in February 1915 where the painting was reproduced he stated:

"I have tried to express the emotion produced by the apparent ugliness and dullness of modern warfare. Our Futurist technique is the only possible medium to express the crudeness, violence, and brutality of the emotions seen and felt on the present battlefields of Europe ... Modern art needs not beauty, or restraint, but vitality."



Christopher Nevinson (1889-1946)

Banking at 4000 Feet, 1917

Lithograph

Edition: 65/200

40.2 x 31.5 cms (15¾ x 12½ in)

Edition of 200

Signed, dated and numbered

LITERATURE

Black, Jonathan. *CRW Nevinson - The Complete Prints*. London: Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, 2014. cat. no 20.

'Britain's Efforts and Ideals' was a series of prints published by the Department of Information, the wartime propaganda wing of the government. The prints were intended to be widely distributed and exhibited to boost morale and encourage support for the British war effort. Nevinson was selected for the topic of '*Making Aircraft*' a new element of modern warfare. Each print was published in editions of 200 signed and a further 100 unsigned impressions. '*Efforts*', such as Nevinson's series, were sold for £2 2s (£100 today) and '*Ideals*', symbolic subjects, for £3 3s (£154 today). Art critic P.G. Konody wrote of Nevinson's lithographs

in the Observer; "To look at his flying pictures is to share his experience of swooping through the air. Here are all the essentials of movement, of exhilaration, of the victory of human intelligence over the forces of nature and these essentials are detached from their insignificant and disturbing details." The series was exhibited at the Fine Art Society in early July 1917 and went on to tour Britain, France, America, Canada and Australia, launching Nevinson's international career as a printmaker.

On 19 June 1917 Nevinson took his first flight with veteran Major-General Sefton Brancher over London from Hendon. In '*Banking at 4000 Feet*', the artist, placed in the foreground, clutches at the sides of the flimsy plane. The tendons on the hand are taut and the knuckles pronounced as Nevinson clings on while the plane turns steeply high over the patchwork of English countryside. Any type of air travel at this time was still extremely perilous and more deaths were caused by accidents than enemy fire.

