

Edwin G Lucas at Bourne Fine Art



Following his recent rediscovery by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Bourne Fine Art presents an exhibition of work by an idiosyncratic artist Edwin G. Lucas, an artist who painted against fashion and was forgotten by history. In the late 1930s, he associated with innovative and, later, influential students at Edinburgh College of Art, including Wilhelmina Barns-Graham from whom Lucas rented a studio in 1939. His involvement with Surrealism dates from this year and his pictures stand apart from anything his contemporaries were producing. Initially inspired by major figures such as Magritte, he soon found his own seam of Surrealism. This independence of thought and drive for innovation led him to spend the next twelve years producing a body of work from which ten examples have been selected for this show.

Though he showed artistic promise from early childhood Lucas was discouraged from pursuing a career in the arts as his uncle had struggled to make a living from his art, despite being a respected painter. Although he had a career in the civil service, Lucas regarded himself as a painter who had a day job to fund his art. As contemporary painter John Byrne exclaimed:- 'It's shameful, but thank God at long last we have discovered him – he is a great, great enormous talent.'



Patrick Elliott, senior curator Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, explained their inclusion in the national collection: "They are impressive because they are inexplicable, I've not seen anything quite like them before in my 20 years at the Gallery of Modern Art: there's a bit of

Picasso, but overall he's got nothing in common with anyone painting in Scotland at the time – or in fact anywhere else.”

The paintings have been kept in storage since Lucas's last major solo exhibition in 1951. His son, Alan Lucas, said “My father pretty much stopped painting when he got married and started a family. It was wonderful growing up surrounded by the paintings in the family home, but the recent interest since his work entered the national collection, hung along with the likes of Picasso and Paolozzi, has really blown us away! I'm sure he would have been overjoyed by the recognition he's now getting.”



In October last year the National Galleries announced their acquisition of works by Lucas:-

“A remarkable group of paintings, which have lain unseen in a self-store lock-up on the outskirts of Edinburgh for 60 years, have been acquired by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. The five paintings are by Edwin Lucas, a talented amateur painter whose hitherto-unknown work was brought to the attention of curators at the Gallery following a recent exhibition of Surrealism. Lucas worked for the Civil Service his entire life, encouraged away from a life as a painter.

Painted between 1939 and 1949, the works demonstrate the artist's highly individual take on Surrealism and are unprecedented in Scottish art of the period. They are now on show at the Edinburgh gallery, as part of the Gallery's New Acquisitions exhibition.

Lucas was born in Leith in 1911 and educated at George Heriot's school, later going on to work for the Civil Service in Edinburgh. He showed promise in drawing and painting at an early age, but his family discouraged him from considering art as a career. He attended life drawing evening classes at Edinburgh College of Art but was otherwise entirely self-

taught. Towards the end of the 1930s, he discovered Surrealism, probably via one of a handful of Surrealism shows staged in Edinburgh at that time. He exhibited regularly in Edinburgh from 1933 onwards and held solo shows at the New Gallery in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, in 1950 and 1951. Following his marriage in 1952, he virtually stopped painting. His work remained almost unknown and he died in 1990."

EDWIN G. LUCAS: SURREALIST (1911-1990)

27th March-17th April 2014

[Bourne Fine Art](#), 6 Dundas Street, Edinburgh EH3 6HZ

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Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 10-6pm, Sat 11-2pm

