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2020 started with the Blake retrospective at Tate Britain still open until 2 February,¹ but the Covid-19 pandemic thwarted, shortened, or postponed other plans to exhibit Blake. Among them, *William Blake: Visionary*, originally scheduled for July-October 2020 but postponed to Fall 2023, was 'born of a collaboration with Tate Britain',² supplemented with additional materials from the Getty, and loans from the Yale Center for British Art, the Huntington Art Museum and Library, and the collection of Robert Essick. The entirely new catalogue, dedicated to Essick and published in 2020 in time for the planned opening, is reviewed in this issue of *BIQ*. Because of the pandemic, the Prado cancelled its planned exhibition of Dante watercolours loaned from the Victoria National Gallery in Melbourne, which was due to open in Madrid from October 2020 to mark the seventh centenary (in 2021) of Dante's death.³ The few exhibitions that managed to have short openings in the intervals between lockdown closures are listed below.

2020 exhibitions placed Blake within artistic traditions of drawing in *The Artful Line* at the Harris and of wood engraving in *Scene through Wood* at the Ashmolean. His role within a surrealist genealogy was reinterpreted in *British Surrealism* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, which looked back to the *International Surrealist Art* exhibition of 1936, measuring its impact in a renewed confrontation with Blake's work **by subsequent British surrealists**. Blake's role as a prompt for contemporary poetic practice was central to *The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House*. While the Blake retrospective at Tate Britain situated the poet within very detailed attention to the artisanal, artistic, and commercial communities around him in his several London

¹ The Tate retrospective was reviewed in *BIQ*, 53:4 (2020).

² Edina Adam, Julian Brookes, *William Blake: Visionary* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2020), exhibition catalogue, 'Acknowledgements', p.9.

³ I am grateful to Wayne C. Ripley and Fernando Castanedo for information about the Dante exhibition planned at the Prado in Madrid.

locations, *The Bard* rooted Blake in Peckham, reenergizing creative and critical psychogeographic approaches.

Trianon Press facsimiles were put to different uses, prompting reflection on the role of reproduction as a medium that can extend the circulation of Blake, bypassing the conservation restrictions that limit the exposure of works and require intervals between loans. As notes, unbound Trianon facsimiles facilitated a dialogue with contemporary poetic practice at Flat Time House. The National Gallery of Canada's *William Blake 1757-1827: Illustrated Books* used them to juxtapose originals and copies, enabling comparisons between monochrome and colour versions and between technologies of print and reproduction, while also documenting the archival practice of complementing originals with reproduction.

Quotation practices in the exhibition space are an important case in the pragmatics of fragmentation and reception in pieces discussed by Mike Goode, part of a decomposing, 'Viral Blake,' whose forms 'have a recent history of becoming unmoored from their multi-medium and circulating virally'.⁴ In 2020, the *British Surrealism*'s exhibition made particularly creative use of quotations as part of their surrealist curatorial poetics by disseminating lines from 'Auguries of Innocence' like modern Sibyl's leaves scattered by the wind, playfully entering the exhibition space through the air vent.

⁴ Mike Goode, *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 10.

William Blake 1757-1827: Illustrated Books, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, 24 January 2020 -26 April 2020 (closed because of COVID in mid-March, left installed until mid-September).

Exhibition brochure: *William Blake, 1757–1827: Illustrated Books*. Intro. Philip Dombowsky. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2020.

Philip Dombowsky, 'The Illustrated Books of William Blake',

<https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/the-illustrated-books-of-william-blake>

The National Gallery of Canada exhibited Blake's art of illustration through a selection from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, the illustrated edition of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* engraved by Louis Schiavonetti after designs by Blake, Thornton's *Pastorals of Virgil*, *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, and the Dante Engravings. The collection is complemented by all but three of the Trianon Press facsimiles, seven of which were displayed alongside originals from the collection.

William Blake. Title page, *Songs of Experience*, c. 1794. Relief etching with watercolour on wove paper, 18.6 x 12 cm; image: 12.4 x 7.1 cm. Purchased 1923.

William Blake. Title page, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1955).

"The Lamb," *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, 1825, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1955).

William Blake. "The Angel," *Songs of Experience*, c. 1815. Relief etching with watercolour on wove paper. 23.8 x 14.9 cm; image 11.2 x 6.8 cm. Purchased 1923.

William Blake. Frontispiece, *Jerusalem. The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, 1804–1818, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1951).

William Blake. "What Do I See!," *Jerusalem. The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, 1804–1818, plate 92, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1951).

William Blake. Title page, *The Book of Thel*, 1789, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1965).

William Blake. Frontispiece and title page, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, 1793, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1959).

William Blake. "Fiery the Angels Rose," *America, a Prophecy*, 1793, plate 11, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1963).

William Blake. "Preludium," *The Book of Urizen*, 1794, facsimile (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1958).

Edward Young. *The Complaint, and The Consolation; or, Night Thoughts*. Forty-three full-page engravings by William Blake (London: Edwards for R. Noble, 1797).

Robert John Thornton. *The Pastorals of Virgil* (London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1821).

William Blake. "And I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee," [plate numbered 4], *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826), Engraving on chine collé, mounted on wove paper, 21.2 x 16.6 cm; plate: 21.8 x 17.1 cm.

National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1900.

William Blake, "And I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee," [plate numbered 4], *William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job. Colour Versions of William Blake's Book of Job Designs from the Circle of John Linnell* (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1987).

William Blake, "Behold Now Behemoth Which I Made with Thee," [plate numbered 15], *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826). Engraving on chine collé, mounted on wove paper, 21.2 x 16.2 cm; plate: 21.8 x 17 cm. National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1911.

William Blake. "Behold Now Behemoth Which I Made with Thee," [plate numbered 15], *William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job. Colour Versions of William Blake's Book of Job Designs from the Circle of John Linnell* (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the Blake Trust: London, 1987).

William Blake, "Agnello and Cianfa Merging into a Single Body" ["The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi", *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (1838 or

c.1892). Engraving on chine collé, mounted on wove paper, 27 x 34.6 cm; plate: 27.7 x 35.5 cm.

National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1920.

William Blake, "The Circle of the Lustful: Paolo and Francesca", *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (1838 or c.1892). Engraving on chine collé, mounted on wove paper, 26.7 x 34.7 cm; plate: 27.8 x 35.4 cm.

National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1917.

The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House (30 January – 8 March 2020)
<http://flattimeho.org.uk/exhibitions/flat-time/>

The Bard, William Blake at Flat Time House (London: Flat Time House, 2020), 28pp.
Chris McCabe, 'The Commission as Vision' (3-9); poems by Keith Jarrett, Chris McCabe, Niall McDevitt, Robert Montgomery, Karen Shandhu, Ian Sinclair, Tamara Yoseloff, and Magnus Rena, 'The Bard and the Fatal Sisters' (19-23).

This exhibition was a collaboration between the John Latham Foundation and the Sir Denis Mahon Foundation, which had already joined forces to display Trianon facsimiles of Blake's watercolour illustrations to Thomas Gray's 'The Bard' and 'The Fatal Sisters' at the *Visions and Visionaries* exhibition in the Guildhall Art Gallery in 2018-19.⁵ In the dark interior of the Guildhall, the Gray poems illustrated by Blake were part of a visionary dialogue with the Middle Ages, the Pre-Raphaelites, and Latham and other artists representing 'Age of the Future'. By contrast, in Latham's Flat Time House the facsimiles participated in a very different, top-lit, white cube

⁵ For more information about the Guildhall exhibition, see 'Blake and Exhibitions, 2018', *BIQ*, 53:1 (Summer 2019).

aesthetic, where the unbound illuminated poems hanging next to one another on the wall articulated a dialogue with Latham's own disruptions of time and the codex form.

Flat Time House is Latham's home and studio, designated by him as an artwork and conceived as a living sculpture or living organism. The façade, or 'The Face', features an installation titled *How the Univoice is Still Unheard*. Suspended in midair, half outside and half inside the house, this cantilevered book sculpture is made up of two bound books whose pages are interleaved into each other, intersected by the glass window pane. Blake's watercolour illustrations to Gray's 'The Fatal Sisters' were hung in a space called 'The Mind'.

The display was complemented by contemporary poets commissioned to respond to Blake's and Latham's work. These poetic responses to Blake were performed in another room, 'The Brain' (where Latham wrote, now housing the John Latham Archive), where their typescripts hung on the wall. Blake's illustrations to 'The Bard' were hung in the space called 'The Hand', which used to be John Latham's studio. The house also includes 'The Body Event', 'where the sitting, lying, sleeping, eating and "plumbing" take place'.⁶ Flat Time House is now an experimental institute, with a gallery space, an artist's residency scheme, and an exhibition and educational programme.

The exhibition was 'an opportunity to bring Blake back to Peckham, at a site close to the Rye where, as a young boy, he had his vision of "a tree filled with angels, bright

⁶ <http://flattimeho.org.uk/exhibitions/flat-time/>; Flat Time House handout.

angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars.”⁷ In the accompanying publication, *The Bard*, Chris McCabe identifies Blake’s ‘instinct ... to walk the five miles from Soho to Peckham’ with his later impulse ‘to explode the boundaries between word/image, mind/body, private/public’, but regrets that despite being an early source of visionary inspiration, Peckham itself does not feature in Blake’s poetic corpus. Magnus Rena indicates that hanging the illustrations Blake drew around Gray’s poems emphasizes the aural and visual medium of poetry ‘in an exhibition of live readings and poetry performances’,⁸ registering Blake’s own sung performances.

The poetic responses to Blake’s and Latham’s work took a psychogeographic approach: Keith Jarrett contributed *A Basic Diagram (or, on Alternate Time Signatures, Two Incidental Persons Converge upon Frameworks of Cosmology)*, seeing ‘lesser-spotted angels / circulate from the upper deck of the number 12 bus / for is not this the source of all miracles and visions?’. Chris McCabe, whose engagement with Blake is registered in *Cenotaph South* (2016), contributed an extract from *Civic*. Niall McDevitt’s *Edward I* projects his ‘blood shadow’ and ‘bloody geography’. In Robert Montgomery’s extract from *Poem in Lights to be Scattered in the Square Mile*, ‘the city is a magical sculpture we live inside’. Karen Shandu’s extract from *The Oak Tree Wears a Dress* responds to the vision of the tree in an asphalted cityscape. Psychogeographer and novelist Iain Sinclair featured an extract from *Mental Travellers: or, The Battle of Books*, in which he claims that ‘Spectral Latham pre-deceases William Blake’. Tamar Yoseloff exhibited an extract from *Belief*

⁷ Alexander Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake, ‘Pictor ignotus’* (London, 1863); Flat Time House handout.

⁸ Chris McCabe, ‘The Commission as Vision’, in *The Bard* (London: Flat Time House, 2020), 4-5, Reno, ‘The Bard and the Fatal Sisters’, 23.

Systems (2020). The programming also included 'Blake Walk of Peckham' with poets and psychogeographers McCabe and Devitt, proceeding from the Flat Time House to 'the Goose Green Mural which depicts Blake's boyhood vision of an angel on Peckham Rye', then in search of the tree, then along the river and ending at Nunhead Hill for a Blake reading.⁹

'The Bard', a set of 14 unbound sheets, collotype and hand-colouring on wove paper with separately printed text on laid paper, from *The Poems of Thomas Gray* (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust, London 1972), reproducing Blake's watercolours, c.1798, now at the Yale Center for British Art.

'The Fatal Sisters', a set of 10 unbound sheets, collotype and hand-colouring on wove paper with separately printed text on laid paper, from *The Poems of Thomas Gray* (Boissia, Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust, London 1972), reproducing Blake's watercolours, c.1798, now at the Yale Center for British Art.

The Artful Line: Drawings from the Harris Collection and The Courtauld Gallery (Preston, Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library (15 February-31 May; covid-disrupted, reopened 3 August 2020-3 Jan 2021, but disrupted again).

The exhibition celebrated the Courtauld's shared heritage with the Harris Museum in Preston through Courtauld Textiles, on the fortieth anniversary of the closure of the factory in Preston. Featuring a selection of works from the Harris and the Courtauld

⁹ <https://poetopography.wordpress.com/2020/01/27/the-bard/>.

Institute of Art, the exhibition examined 'drawing in all its forms': copies from the antique, preparatory sketches, and finished compositions from the seventeenth century to the present. Blake's Visionary Heads of Pindar and Lais hung next to Henry Fuseli's *Man with Two Dead Women* (c.1772). At the other end of the room in a flat vitrine were sketches and the manuscript 'Instructions for Drawing' by John Varley (c.1818). Varley's manuscript offers landscape painting skills to artists along the lines of his publication *The Precepts of Landscape Drawing* (1818). Other works from Blake's contemporaries included Angelika Kauffman's and Joseph Nollekens's drawings after the first century roman fresco the Aldobrandini Wedding, Nollekens's drawing of the monument to Mrs Howard, a sketch of *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* by John Martin, and sketches of characters in a letter by George Cruikshank.

Blake, William Visionary Heads (Pindar and Lais) (1820). Butlin #711.

Harris Museum, accession number PRSMG: P44.

Blake, William A Visionary Head (Wat Tyler?) (1820). Butlin #740.

Harris Museum, accession number PRSMG: P45

British Surrealism, Dulwich Picture Gallery (26 February-17 May 2020), curated by David Boyd Haycock

David Boyd Haycock, Sacha Llewellyn and Kirstie Meehan, *British Surrealism*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2020), 159 pp.

In 1936 Herbert Read introduced the *International Surrealist Art* exhibition at the Burlington Gallery in London, celebrating 'The English Contribution' to Superrealism, 'the romantic principle in art', contrasted to the 'art of the intellect, the so-called classical art, ... carefully preserved in museums and academies':¹⁰

A nation which has produced two such superrealists as William Blake and Lewis Carroll is to the manner born. Because our art and literature is the most romantic in the world, it is likely to become the most superrealistic. The English contribution to this Exhibition is comparatively tentative, but our poets and painters have scarcely become conscious of this international movement. Now that it has been revealed in all its range and irrationality, they may recover, shall we say, the courage of their instincts.¹¹

Read was a member of the exhibition's English Committee with Hugh Sykes Davies, David Gascoyne, Humphrey Jennings, Henry Moore, Paul Nash, and others, joining an international exhibition featuring Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico, Michel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Joan Mirò, and René Magritte, among others. The significance of this exhibition for the reception of Blake can be measured by a group photograph of British artists at the exhibition, which features Ruthven

¹⁰ Herbert Read, 'Introduction. Superrealism in General', *The International Surrealist Exhibition* (London: New Burlington Galleries, 1936), p. 12.

¹¹ Read, 'Introduction. The English Contribution', p. 13.

Todd, who would become a key contributor to Blake studies, involving Joan Miró in *The Ruthven Todd Portfolio*, a pioneering project of reconstruction of Blake's relief etching method with Stanley William Hayter in 1947.¹²

Read's prophetic words were retrospectively tested in the *British Surrealism* exhibition at Dulwich Picture Gallery, which associated Blake with Fuseli, Carroll, and Shakespeare among the 'so-called "ancestors of surrealism" – writers and artists whose work prefigured the movement's fascination with the absurd, the marvellous and the wildly imaginative.'¹³ While Blake's impact on surrealism is now well documented,¹⁴ the exhibition catalogue tracks Blake's association with surrealism to Gascoyne's analysis of the surrealist element in English literature and documents the exhibition's reception.¹⁵ Anthony Blunt claimed that the exhibition was "a stone cold fish" that mixed William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Rimbaud and Freud; it was "now thrilling, horrifying, puzzling, scandalizing or just boring".¹⁶ Commenting on the 1936 exhibition's encouragement to read the art of Max Ernst and Joan Miró in the context of Lewis Carroll, Eric Newton argued 'if the spectator is one who can

¹² http://www.luxonline.org.uk/history/1900-1949/the_surrealist_exhibition.html, accessed 1 May 2021, reproducing a copy from the picture library of the Royal Academy of Arts, London.

¹³ Introductory Text; Showcase Panel 6, *British Surrealism*.

¹⁴ Mei-Ying Sung, 'Blake and Surrealism', in *Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture*, edited by Steve Clark, Tristanne Connolly and Jason Whittaker (Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 102–19; David Hopkins, 'William Blake and British Surrealism: Humphrey Jennings, the Impact of Machines and the Case for Dada', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 19:3 (2018), 305-320. 2015. Surrealism's European coordinates are explored in Sibylle Erle and Morton Paley's *Reception of Blake in Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019): surprisingly minimised in the French chapter by Gilles Soubigou and Yann Tholoniati (63), extensively documented in the Belgian context by Franca Bellarsi and George Watson (102-116), while the exhibition *Surreal Roots: From William Blake to André Breton* at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh in 2015 is discussed in relation to the role of surrealism in connecting Blake to Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró by Cristina Flores in 'The Reception of Blake in Spain', pp.177-178.

¹⁵ David Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism* (London: Cobden Sanderson, 1935), 132; Hugh Sykes Davies, 'Surrealism at this Time and Place', in Herbert Read, ed., *Surrealism* (London: Faber, 1936), 119-68.

¹⁶ David Boyd Haycock, Sacha Llewellyn and Kirstie Meehan, *British Surrealism*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2020), 18.

tolerate nothing without a precedent, cannot the surrealist reply by pointing to Hieronymus Bosch and William Blake?'.¹⁷ Another element aligning Blake with surrealism is the world of dreams that he captured through his illustrations to Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, whom Breton saw as a forerunner of surrealism, though deprecating his priestly moralism in his first surrealist manifesto.¹⁸

To document Blake's surrealist imagination, in addition to displaying the edition of *Night Thoughts* illustrated by Blake, the curators requested the manuscript of the *Four Zoas*, which could not be included for conservation reasons. In the exhibition Blake stands as a model for the surrealists' 'forbidden desires' and 'sexual freedom': 'fired by fantasy they broke social taboos and rejected polite customs'.¹⁹

The exhibition experimented with surrealist methods of juxtaposition and disorientation, combining seeing Blake as an ancestor of surrealism with pairings intended to generate new associations. Blake's *Head of a Damned Soul in Dante's Inferno* was captioned: 'Breton believed that Dante "might well have passed" for a surrealist. For the British surrealists, Blake was their ancestor par excellence. Here the two combine in depicting the terrors of Hell'.²⁰ This idea was tested by an inspired, haunting pairing with Leonora Carrington's *Head* (1940-41).

Curatorial techniques of quotation activated Blake's works as part of a surrealist poetics of chance. Playfully alluding to the mode of transmission of the ancient Sibyl

¹⁷ Haycock, *British Surrealism*, 19.

¹⁸ André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme. Poison Double*, 14th edn (Paris: Éditions Kra, 1929), 47; see also Haycock, *British Surrealism*, 44.

¹⁹ Room Text, *British Surrealism*. I am grateful to Hannah Edwards for information about the loan request of the manuscript of *The Four Zoas* and for providing information about the exhibition.

²⁰ Wall caption, G7, *British Surrealism*.

by means of modern technology, flying leaves or gusts of wind painted on the wall seemed to enter the room through the air vent, each carrying a prophetic line from Blake's "Auguries of Innocence." Where might such visionary hopes land? On the walls of the exhibition they were sighted underneath Sam Haile's watercolor and collage *Hitler Must Be Overcome* (1939).²¹ Captured in a corner in which "Head of a Damned Soul" was activated in the context of the Second World War, Blake's visionary lines planted seeds of renewal. Captured in the corner which Blake's *Head of a Damned Soul* was activated in the context of the Second World War, Blake's visionary lines planted seeds of renewal.

The exhibition catalogue concludes with Blake's words from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: 'if the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern' (MHH 14; E39). In 2017-8 this statement featured above Richard Anuskiewicz's optical screen prints *Inward Eye* in *Blake and the Age of Aquarius* (Chicago).²² Placed at the end of the *British Surrealism* catalogue, Blake's words invite us out of the world of the book with the enhanced perception of new surrealist ways of seeing.

William Blake, 'Head of a Damned Soul in Dante's Inferno', also known as 'Head of a Man in Fire', 'Head of a Man Tormented in Fire', and 'Satan', c1789, British Museum, 1856,0712.209

²¹ Haycock, *British Surrealism*, 99.

²² For more information about *Blake and the Age of Aquarius*, see Jennifer Michael's review in *BIQ*, 52:3 (Winter 2018–19).

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* [A facsimile of a coloured and gilded copy of the first edition] (Liverpool: H. Young & Sons, 1923), C.71.d.19.

Edward Young, *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or Night Thoughts*, with engravings after William Blake (London: Edwards, 1797)

Scene Through Wood, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 28 March-15 November 2020
(delayed opening 10 August because of COVID Lockdown in mid March).

Desmet, Anne, *Scene through Wood: A Century of Modern Wood Engraving*
(Oxford: Ashmolean Museum Publications, 2020), 256pp.

<https://youtu.be/jfFIJqM-zFs>

Externally curated by Anne Desmet, the third wood engraver to be an elected member of the Royal Academy, this exhibition celebrated the centenary of the Society of Wood Engravers, showcasing specimens from the collection of the Ashmolean, supplemented by private lenders, including a series from the diploma collection of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers. In the accompanying catalogue, Desmet indicates that the exhibition's title was inspired by one of the Society of Wood Engravers' founding members, wood engraver and theatre set designer Edward Gordon Craig, who asserted the medium's power to capture an image of epic proportions: 'on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square you can make a line which seems to tower in the air, and you can do the same on your stage, for it is all a matter of proportion and nothing to do with actuality'. Desmet argues that 'within a tiny rectangle a skilled artist can convey both epic panorama and intimate spaces of illusionistic depth'.²³ This is certainly borne out by Blake's engraved illustrations of the *Pastorals of Virgil*.

²³ Anne Desmet, 'Wood Engraving takes Centre Stage', in *Scene through Wood: A Century of Modern Wood Engraving* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2020), 25; quoting Craig from Janet Leeper, *Edward Gordon Craig: Designs for the Theatre* (Penguin, 1948), 29.

Albert Dürer's *Christ in Limbo* (c.1510), Thomas Bewick, and Blake marked the beginning of the exhibition as the artists who were most influential to engravers in the first half of the twentieth century, pointing out a genealogy by noting Blake's admiration for Dürer, whose 'Melancholia I' used to hang in his studio. Bewick is credited with adapting end-grain boxwood from fabric printing to illustration because of 'its potential for creating images of immense detail and subtle tonal differentiations, as opposed to the long-grain of softer woods used for the woodcut technique'.²⁴ Blake is placed alongside Samuel Palmer and Edward Calvert to represent the 1820s and 30s, as well as identified as a key influence on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris.²⁵

After 'Beginnings', the exhibition showed the role of wood engraving in newspaper illustrations, commercial advertising, fine-lettering, ex-libris, books without words, with sections devoted to 'The Theatre of Life', 'Storytelling', 'The Natural World', 'The Built Environment', and 'Abstraction and Detail'. Featured artists included Paul Nash, Henry Moore, and M.C. Escher; Craig, Eric Gill, Lucien Pissarro, and Gwen Raverat, founding members of the Society of Wood Engravers; Ian McNab, founder of London Grosvenor School of Art, which specialises in linocuts; Eric Ravilious, Clare Leighton, Gertrude Hermes, Geoffrey Wales; Simon Brett and Hilary Painter, who were instrumental in the Society's revival in the 1980s; and concluding with contemporary practitioners Chris Pig and Desmet herself.

²⁴ Desmet, 43.

²⁵ Desmet, 45.

Illustrations of Imitation of Eclogue I, Bentley #504.6-9, 10-13, 14-17, 21-24.

Illustrations to Robert John Thornton, *The Pastorals of Virgil*, 3rd ed. (London: Rivington, 1821).

Ashmolean Museum, accession numbers WA1941.30.2; WA1941.30.6;

WA1941.3010; WA1941.30.14.