

Blake and Exhibitions, 2020

BY LUISA CALÈ

Luisa Calè (l.cale@bbk.ac.uk), Birkbeck, University of London, works on practices of reading, viewing, and collecting in the Romantic period. Her publications include *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: "Turning Readers into Spectators"*; co-edited volumes on *Dante on View: The Reception of Dante in the Visual and Performing Arts and Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Literary and Visual Cultures*; and special issues on "The Disorder of Things" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 2011), "The Nineteenth-Century Digital Archive" (*19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2015), "Literature and Sculpture at the *Fin de Siècle*" (*Word and Image*, 2018), and "Sibylline Leaves" (*Studies in Romanticism*, 2020). Her current project, entitled *The Book Unbound*, explores practices of collecting and dismantling the book, with chapters on Walpole, Blake, and Dickens. She is the exhibitions editor for *Blake*.

1 THE year 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 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, originally scheduled for July to October 2020 but now 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 Library and Art Museum, and the collection of Robert N. Essick. The entirely new catalogue, dedicated to Essick and published in 2020 in time for the planned opening, is reviewed in this issue. Because of the pandemic, the Museo Nacional del Prado canceled its planned exhibition of Dante watercolors loaned from the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, which was due to open in Madrid in 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.

- 2 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 Dulwich Picture Gallery, which took the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1936 as a starting point and measured its impact on British surrealists since then. Facsimiles of his Gray watercolors were the inspiration for contemporary poets in *The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House*. While the Tate retrospective reconstructed Blake's coordinates through a very detailed account of the artisanal, artistic, and commercial communities around him in his several London locations, *The Bard* rooted Blake in Peckham, reenergizing creative and critical psycho-geographic approaches.
- 3 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 and bypassing the conservation restrictions that limit the exposure of works and require intervals between loans, as well as other conditions relating to the loan of originals. As noted, 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 color versions and between technologies of print and reproduction, while also documenting the archival practice of complementing originals with reproductions.
- 4 Quotation practices in the exhibition space are an important case in the pragmatics of fragmentation and reception in pieces that Mike Goode discusses, since Blake's texts "have a recent history of becoming unmoored from their multi-medium and circulating virally."⁴ The British Surrealism exhibition made particularly creative use of quotations as part of a 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.

1. The Tate retrospective is reviewed in *Blake* 53.4 (spring 2020).

2. Edina Adam and Julian Brooks, "Acknowledgments," *William Blake: Visionary*, ed. Adam with Brooks (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2020) 9.

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

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

14 January–26 April 2020 (closed because of COVID in mid-March, left installed until mid-September)

**National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives,
Ottawa**

William Blake, 1757–1827: Illustrated Books

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

The National Gallery of Canada exhibited Blake's art of illustration through a selection from *Songs*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, Thornton's *Pastorals of Virgil*, *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, and the Dante engravings. The collection is complemented by Trianon Press facsimiles, several of which were also displayed.

Title page, *Songs of Innocence* [facsimile of copy B] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1954).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636so.

"The Lamb," *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* [facsimile of copy Z] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1955).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636s.

Title page, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy T¹⁻².
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 2971.

"The Angel," *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy T¹⁻².
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 2981.

Frontispiece, *Jerusalem* [facsimile of copy E] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1951).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636j.

"What Do I See!" [plate 92], *Jerusalem* [facsimile of copy E] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1951).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636j.

Title page, *The Book of Thel* [facsimile of copy O] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1965).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636b.

Frontispiece and title page, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* [facsimile of copy C] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1959).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636v.

"Fiery the Angels Rose" [Bentley plate 13], *America a Prophecy* [facsimile of copy M] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1963).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636a.

"Preludium" [plate 2], *The Book of Urizen* [facsimile of copy G] (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1958).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 .B636bo.

Edward Young, *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or Night Thoughts* (London: R. Edwards, 1797).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 B636 Y71 1797.

Robert John Thornton, *The Pastorals of Virgil*, 3rd ed. (London: F. C. & J. Rivingtons et al., 1821).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 B636 V47 1921.

"And I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee" [plate numbered 4], *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826).
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1900.

"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* (Blake Trust, 1987).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 B636 B56 1987.

"Behold Now Behemoth Which I Made with Thee" [plate numbered 15], *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826).
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1911.

"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* (Blake Trust, 1987).
National Gallery of Canada, N0 B636 B56 1987.

"Agnello and Cianfa Merging into a Single Body" ["The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi"], *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (1838 or c. 1892).
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1920.

"The Circle of the Lustful: Paolo and Francesca," *Blake's Illustrations of Dante* (1838 or c. 1892).
National Gallery of Canada, accession number 1917.

30 January–8 March 2020

Flat Time House, Peckham, London

The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House

Exhibition catalogue: *The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House*. London: Flat Time House, 2020. 28 pp.

Chris McCabe, "The Commission as Vision" (3-9); poems by Keith Jarrett, Chris McCabe, Niall McDevitt, Robert Montgomery, Karen Shandhu, Iain Sinclair, and Tamar Yoseloff; 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 watercolor 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 the "Age of Future." By contrast, in Latham's Flat Time House the facsimiles participated in a very different, top-lit, white cube aesthetic, where the unbound illuminated pages hanging next to one another on the wall articulated a dialogue with Latham's own disruptions of time and the codex form. The display was complemented by contemporary poets commissioned to respond to Blake's and Latham's work.

Flat Time House was Latham's home and studio, designated by him as an artwork and conceived as a living sculpture or

5. For more information about the Guildhall exhibition, see "Blake and Exhibitions, 2018," *Blake* 53.1 (summer 2019).

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 windowpane. Blake's illustrations to "The Fatal Sisters" were hung in a space called "The Mind." His illustrations to "The Bard" were in the part of the house known as "The Hand," which used to be Latham's studio. The responses by contemporary poets took place in this space; their typescripts were hung in the corridor connecting "The Hand" to "The Brain" (where Latham wrote, now housing the John Latham Archive).⁶ The house also includes "The Body Event," "where the sitting, lying, sleeping, eating and 'plumbing' take place."⁷ Flat Time House is now an experimental institute, with a gallery space, an artists' residency scheme, and an exhibition and education programme.

6. The poetry readings were on 19 and 26 February 2020; see <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoRcyqMeQiQ>>, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySS1I70pUSg>>.

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



Photos of The Bard: William Blake at Flat Time House are by Mark Blower.

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 angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars.’”⁸ 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 that Blake drew around Gray’s poems emphasizes the aural and visual medium of poetry “in an exhibition of live readings and poetry performances,”⁹ registering Blake’s own sung performances.

The poetic responses to Blake and Latham 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?” McCabe, whose engagement with Blake is registered in *Cenotaph South*, supplied 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 passage from “The Oak Tree Wears a Dress” responds to the vision of the tree in an asphalted cityscape. Psychogeographer and novelist Iain Sinclair contributed an extract from “Mental Travellers: or, The Battle of the Books” in which he claims that “Spectral Latham pre-deceases William Blake.” Tamar Yoseloff exhibited lines from “Belief Systems.” The programming also included a “Blake Walk of Peckham,” with McCabe and McDevitt, from 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 Peck and ending at Nunhead Hill for a Blake reading.¹⁰

“The Bard,” page bearing manuscript list of titles plus 13 pages, unbound, collotype and hand coloring on wove paper with separately printed text on laid paper, from

8. Flat Time House handout, quoting Alexander Gilchrist.

9. *The Bard* 4-5, 23.

10. For a description and a recording of the walk, held on 23 February 2020, see <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QJpb3zasJs>>.



William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1972).
Collection of the Sir Denis Mahon Foundation.

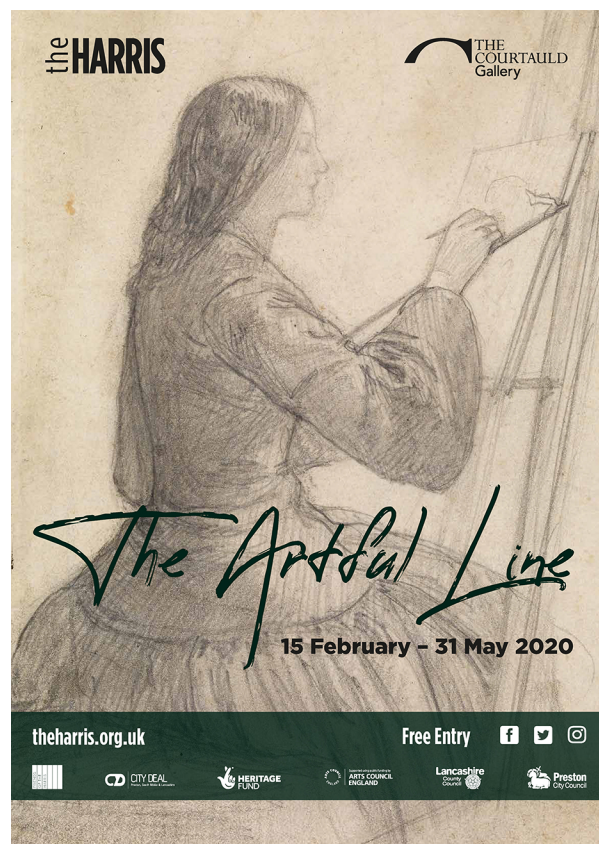
“The Fatal Sisters,” page bearing manuscript list of titles plus 10 pages, unbound, colotype and hand coloring on

wove paper with separately printed text on laid paper, from *William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray* (Trianon Press/Blake Trust, 1972).
Collection of the Sir Denis Mahon Foundation.



15 February–31 May 2020 (disrupted by COVID; reopened 3 August 2020–3 January 2021, but disrupted again)

Harris Museum, Art Gallery, and Library, Preston
The Artful Line



The exhibition celebrated the Courtauld's shared heritage with the Harris Museum through Courtaulds textiles, on the fortieth anniversary of the closure of the factory in Preston. Featuring a selection of works from the Harris and the Courtauld Institute of Art, it 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 for "Instructions for Drawing" by John Varley (c. 1818). Varley's manuscript offers landscape painting skills to artists along the lines of his publication *Precepts of Landscape Drawing* (1818). Other works from Blake's contemporaries included Angelica Kauffman's and Joseph Nollekens's drawings after the first-century Roman fresco the Aldobrandini Wedding, Nollekens's drawing of the monument to Mrs. Henry Howard, a sketch

of *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* by John Martin, and sketches by George Cruikshank on a letter.

Visionary Heads (Pindar and Lais) (1820). Butlin #711.
Harris Museum, accession number PRSMG: P44.

26 February–17 May 2020
Dulwich Picture Gallery, London
British Surrealism

Exhibition catalogue: 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 Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in London, celebrating "The English Contribution" to surrealism, "the romantic principle in art," contrasted to "the art of the intellect, the so-called classical art, ... carefully preserved in museums and academies":

A nation which has produced two such surrealists 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 surrealist. 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, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Joan Miró, and René Magritte. The significance for the reception of Blake can be measured by a group photograph that includes Ruthven Todd,¹² who would become a key contributor to Blake studies, involving Miró in the Ruthven Todd Portfolio, a pioneering attempt to reconstruct Blake's relief-etching method with Stanley William Hayter in 1947.

Read's prophetic words were retrospectively tested in *British Surrealism* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, which associated Blake with Fuseli, Carroll, and Shakespeare among the "so-called 'ancestors of surrealism'—writers and artists

11. Herbert Read, "Introduction," *The International Surrealist Exhibition* (London: New Burlington Galleries, 1936) 12, 13.

12. <http://www.luxonline.org.uk/history/1900-1949/the_surrealist_exhibition.html>, accessed 1 May 2021, reproducing a photo from the Picture Library of the Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Photos of British Surrealism are by Hannah Edwards.

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

13. Introductory text; Showcase panel.

14. Mei-Ying Sung, "Blake and Surrealism," *Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture*, ed. Steve Clark, Tristanne Connolly, and Jason Whittaker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 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): 305-20. Surrealism's European coordinates are explored in Sibylle Erle and Morton D. Paley's *The Reception of William Blake in Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019)—surprisingly minimized in the French chapter by Gilles Soubigou and Yann Tholoniati (1: 63) and extensively documented in the Belgian context by Franca Bellarsi and Gregory Watson (1: 102-16), while the exhibition *Surreal Roots: From William Blake to André Breton* at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2015 is discussed by

in English literature and documents the reception of the 1936 exhibition.¹⁵ Anthony Blunt claimed that it 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 Ernst and Miró in the context of Carroll, Eric Newton argued, "If the spectator is one who can tolerate nothing without a precedent, cannot the surrealist reply by pointing to Hieronymus Bosch and William Blake?"¹⁷ Another ele-

Cristina Flores in "The Reception of Blake in Spain" in relation to the role of surrealism in connecting Blake to Dalí and Miró (1: 177-78).

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

16. *British Surrealism* 18.

17. *British Surrealism* 19.

NOT LEADER BY SURREALISM
John Armstrong
Headlines of George
1934
Oil on board

In the 1930s Armstrong was hailed in the press as one of Britain's greatest artists. Though his abstract paintings appear to be among the most advanced works of British art by a British artist of the period, his later career, however, though often surrealistic,



SURREALIST
Sam Hill
After-Marke Overcome
1939
Watercolour and collage

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour



William Blake, 1803

ment aligning Blake with surrealism is the world of dreams that he captures through his illustrations to Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*; André Breton saw Young as a forerunner of surrealism, though he deprecated Young's priestly moralism in his first surrealist manifesto.¹⁸

To document Blake's surrealist imagination, the curators displayed the edition of *Night Thoughts* that he illustrated; they also requested the manuscript of *The Four Zoas*, which could not be included for conservation reasons. In the exhibition, Blake stood 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. His "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 by means of modern technology to the mode of transmission of the ancient sibyl, 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 "Auguries of Innocence." Where might such visionary hopes land? On the walls of the exhibition they alighted 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. The catalogue concludes with 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." In 2017–18 this statement was inscribed on the wall above Richard Anuszkiewicz's optical screen print series *Inward Eye* in William Blake and the Age of Aquarius (Northwestern University).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.

"Head of a Damned Soul in Dante's *Inferno*" (c. 1789).
British Museum, museum number 1856,0712.209.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience [facsimile of copy T]
(Liverpool: H. Young & Sons, 1923).
British Library, C.71.d.19.

Edward Young, *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or Night Thoughts* (London: R. Edwards, 1797).
National Galleries of Scotland.

28 March–15 November 2020 (delayed opening on 10 August because of COVID lockdown in mid-March)
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Scene through Wood

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

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 for *The Pastorals of Virgil*.

Albrecht 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

23. *Scene through Wood* 25; Desmet quotes Craig from Janet Leeper, *Edward Gordon Craig: Designs for the Theatre* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1948) 29.

18. André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme. Poisson soluble*, 14th ed. (Paris: Éditions Kra, 1929) 47; see also *British Surrealism* 44.

19. Room text. I am grateful to Hannah Edwards for information about the loan request of the manuscript of *The Four Zoas* and about the exhibition.

20. Wall caption.

21. *British Surrealism* 99.

22. For more information about William Blake and the Age of Aquarius, see Jennifer Davis Michael's review in *Blake* 52.3 (winter 2018–19).

“Melencolia 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 was 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, and 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; Iain McNab, founder of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, which specialized in linocuts; Eric Ravilious, Clare Leighton, Gertrude Hermes, and Geoffrey Wales; Simon Brett and Hilary Paynter, who were instrumental in the society’s revival in the 1980s; and contemporary practitioners Chris Pig and Desmet herself.

“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: F. C. & J. Rivingtons et al., 1821).
Ashmolean Museum, accession numbers WA1941.30.2, WA1941.30.6, WA1941.30.10, WA1941.30.14.

24. *Scene through Wood* 43.

25. *Scene through Wood* 45.