

Pallant House Gallery Visit also on 13 Sept 2017

John Minton: A Centenary Exhibition: again, our Exhibition Guide was hugely informative.

John Minton (1917-1957): his eclectic style combined elements of French and British Neo-Romanticism. His work ranged from the young male figure in emotionally charged settings, to Samuel Palmer influenced landscapes, and scenes of urban decay. His travels to Corsica, Spain, and the West Indies provided opportunities for light and dark contrasts in his work, new sharp, acid colours, political observation, and intense draughtsmanship. He also built up a fine reputation as a books illustrator. He has been described as an unquiet romantic with an extraordinary range of talent. Paintings on display included:

Vast set-pieces: The Dice Throwers: (1954) a huge painting of the soldiers dicing for the garment of Jesus.

Portraits of Kevin Maybury: (1956) Minton's lover at the time of his death looks silent and downcast, with his carpentry tools and Minton's empty easel in the foreground and

David Tindle as a Boy: (1952), a sensitive and intense portrait of a Minton student.

Scenes of Britain depicting urban decay and incisive, haunted images of war, intense draughtsmanship, and rural beauty.

Figure in Ruins: (1941)

Summer Landscape: (1943)

Children by the Sea: (1945) the children and Cornish backdrop looking wooden and unnatural.

Rotherhithe from Wapping: (1946) bombed ruins after the Blitz contrast with Samuel Palmer influenced pastoral scenes.

Fish in a Glass Tank: (1948) shows the influence of V & A's Picasso and Matisse Exhibition 1945-46, with its bright colours, and subject matter.

Overseas Travel: in 1948 Minton had begun to travel overseas to Corsica, Spain, and the West Indies.

Melon Sellers, Corsica: (1948) again showing the Picasso and Matisse influence.

Road to Valencia: (1949) the darkness of the interior of the cart, with a sleeping farmer, contrasting with the ripe corn and grey/blue sky.

Jamaican Village: (1951) this three-month trip to Jamaica inspired a new colour palette of sharp, acid colours with a backdrop of political and racial tension, and unfulfilled (at that time) desire for Independence, a colossal canvas: at first it seems to be a scene of night life but closer inspection reveals all the figures to be isolated and not conversing.

Travel Books illustrator:

Alan Ross', Time Was Away, A Notebook in Corsica, (1948)

Elizabeth David's, A Book of Mediterranean Food (1950): in her words, a panorama of "table spread with white cloths and bright fruit, bowls of pasta and rice, a lobster, pitchers and jugs and bottles of wine" and a "brilliant blue Mediterranean bay" beyond.

History:

Death of Nelson (1952): a not entirely successful re-working of an 1860s House of Lords mural.

Composition: The Death of James Dean (1957): an unfinished painting at the time of his death reflecting his obsession with the then recent death of a film star he adored.