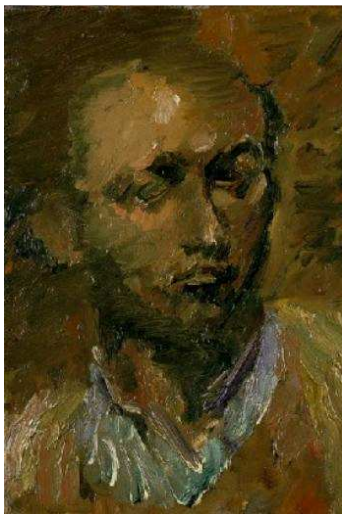


## British Art in the 1930s

*British fine and decorative art in the 1930s followed a different path from continental Europe. Although there were many British artists who were influenced by European artistic movements such as the Futurists and the Expressionists there were also several influential artists who developed a rather more conservative style.*

The following British artists were active in the 1930s. If they have any works at the Sainsbury Centre then this is marked with a ❖ after their name.



David Bomberg  
'Self-Portrait' (SCVA)

### **David Bomberg (1890-1957) ❖**

The fifth child of a Polish immigrant, David Bomberg initial artistic career saw him influenced by both Post-Impressionism and Italian Futurism. In 1915 he briefly joined Wyndham Lewis' Vorticist movement but soon began to paint scenes from the East End of London where he grew up. In the 1930s he painted many landscapes, especially in Spain and Scotland.

### **Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) ❖**

Epstein was a British sculptor of American birth. In 1913 he visited Paris where he met Picasso, Brancusi and Modigliani. Through these artists Epstein developed an interest in non-Western sculpture. His sculptures show this new interest as well as the influence of Wyndham Lewis' 'Vorticist' group. During the 1930s he was commissioned to create a series of sculptures for public buildings and private collectors. However, it was only after the Second World War that he achieved wide admiration.



Jacob Epstein 'Baby Asleep'  
(SCVA)

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### **Roger Fry (1866-1934) ❖**

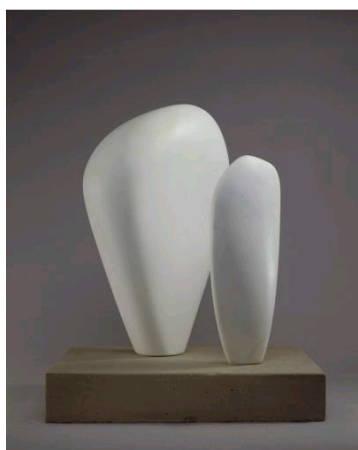
Roger Fry was an art critic and painter who influenced much of British art in the 1930s. Both Henry Moore and Duncan Grant looked to him for inspiration in their work. Fry founded the Omega Workshops and was central in bringing the Post-Impressionists to the attention of the British public.

### **Duncan Grant (1885-1978) ❖**

Duncan Grant was a painter and designer. His paintings and designs are heavily influenced by the Impressionists and by Post-Impressionism. From 1911 he was part of the Bloomsbury Group and in 1913 he started designed with the Omega Workshops in London. In 1916 he moved to Charleston Farmhouse in Sussex with Vanessa Bell. During the 1930s he concentrated on landscapes which still showed a strong Post-Impressionist influence.



Duncan Grant 'Design for a Carpet'  
(SCVA)



Barbara Hepworth  
'Two Forms' (SCVA)

### **Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) ❖**

Barbara Hepworth was one of the most avant-garde of British sculptors in the 1930s. During the 1930s she experimented with opening up her sculpture by creating holes in her work. From 1936 she moved away from creating figurative works to exploring more abstract forms. She looked to Surrealism and Constructivism for her influences.

### **Ivon Hitchens (1893-1979)**

In the 1920s Hitchens was part of a group of artists known as the London Group. It included Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. During the 1930s he mostly painted landscapes and still-life but also experimented with abstract painting.

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### **Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957)**

In the years before the start of the First World War Wyndham Lewis was seen as one of Britain's most avant-garde painters. He was heavily influenced by the Cubists, Expressionists and Futurists. He developed a geometric and semi-abstract artistic style he called 'Vorticism'. During the 1930s he was regarded by many artists as having unacceptable political views because he appeared sympathetic to fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. During this decade he painted a series of surrealist landscapes and some striking portraits of friends such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. He moved to the United States in 1939.

### **Henry Moore (1898-1986) ❖**

Moore is generally regarded as the most important British sculptor of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout his career he took the human figure as his central subject-matter. In the 1920s he was influenced by the carvings of the Aztecs and Incas. In the 1930s he looked to the work of Picasso, Hans Arp and Alberto Giacometti for inspiration. During the second half of the 1930s he lived near to Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson and all three worked closely together.



Henry Moore 'Reclining Figure' (SCVA)

### **Paul Nash (1889-1946)**

Paul Nash was perhaps the British artist most influenced by the Surrealists. In 1936 he helped to create the International Surrealist Exhibition in London. At this time he also developed an interest in 'found objects' such as bones and pieces of driftwood and he often included them in his landscapes.

### **Ben Nicholson (1894-1982)**

Ben Nicholson was both a painter and sculptor. During the 1920s he specialised in still-lives and landscapes which show a strong Post-Impressionist influence. In 1932 and 1933 he visited Paris where he met Hans Arp, Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian and Alexander Calder. As a result of these meetings his work became more abstract and constructivist. In 1939 he moved to Cornwall where he stayed until the 1950s.

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**John Piper (1903-1992) ❖**

Among all of the British painters represented at the Sainsbury Centre Piper was the most abstract. From 1931 to 1933 he showed paintings annually in the exhibitions of the London Group at the New Burlington Galleries, London. His first abstract oil paintings date from 1935, in which year he visited the studios of Brancusi, Arp and Jean Hélion in Paris. In the 1930s he also became a writer and a stage designer.

**Walter Sickert (1860-1942)**

Sickert is one of the best-known British figurative painters in 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Between 1905 and 1914 he was a major influence on the Camden Town Group of painters (a group that painted scenes of ordinary London life). At the end of the 1920s he started to paint pictures based on photographs, which he called *Echoes*. He specialised in society portraits and in portraits of actors and actresses.

**Stanley Spencer (1891-1959)**

During the 1930s Spencer was a controversial painter even though he appears to be a traditional figurative artist. In 1935 Spencer had two paintings rejected by the Royal Academy. He also painted erotic images that did not prove popular with the public. Spencer is best known as the creator of religious paintings which used the Berkshire village of Cookham as a backdrop.

**Graham Sutherland (1903-1980)**

Sutherland was a painter and printmaker. During the 1930s he supported himself by designing posters, china and stained glass pieces. His paintings and drawings in the 1930s were inspired by the landscape of Pembrokeshire in Wales. He gave up printmaking in 1930 as nobody would buy his work.

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