

Current Temporary Exhibition:

Christ's Hospital in the 20th Century

29 April 2017 – 29 March 2019



Abstract Painting, oil on canvas, by Nell Todd, former Head of Art at Christ's Hospital (1950-69)

The 20th Century saw dramatic change for Christ's Hospital as it moved from its small London site of some 350 years to its current extensive grounds in Sussex. This exhibition explores the art, artefacts and stories behind the school, reflecting the huge social, economic and cultural changes that went on in this period.

While such a display cannot be considered a definitive guide to Christ's Hospital in the 20th Century, it serves to highlight a modern take on the collections it holds. With so much history around us, and such rich collections, the last 100 years can easily be overlooked. The exhibition showcases recent acquisitions from this transformative era including fine art, social history, costume, photos, ephemera and personal artefacts reflecting the everyday life of pupils and staff.

While acknowledging the impact on Christ's Hospital of two World Wars, the focus is more on the remarkable historic collections that illustrate the school's key developments and on-going Old Blue achievements.

What was valued by the staff and pupils at Christ's Hospital in the 1920's? How were the school's main events documented in the 1960's? Why do we collect a loud hailer and which famous celebrities are associated with Christ's Hospital in this century? The exhibition celebrates and commemorates the scope and diversity of a truly unique, and at times quirky collection, that boasts some 40,000 objects.

Christ's Hospital in the 20th Century invites us to consider art works by two of the most significant Modern British artists of that era: Keith Vaughan (1912–77; pupil here 1921-29) and Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956; commissioned to paint the Chapel murals 1912-23) beside the work of lesser known artists Donald Towner (1903-85; art teacher here during WWII) and Nell Todd (1909-76; Head of Art here 1950-69). Equally accomplished drawings by Philip Youngman Carter (1904-69; pupil here 1916-21) of the First World War poet Edmund Blunden (1896-1974; pupil here 1909-14) make an insightful comparison with the battlefield pen and ink sketches by Second World War poet Keith Douglas (1920-44; pupil here 1931-38).

This exhibition offers a rare and intriguing opportunity to enjoy a range of objects across varied disciplines - what is often not seen and in storage – is revealed and not to be missed in this remarkable gathering!

Contact Christ's Hospital Museum for more information:

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