



THE WAR AND WOMEN ARTISTS

No.15 in the Holding the Line Series

fine Sim *art*



LEILA FAITHFULL
Saturday Afternoon, Wartime CAT. 20
Oil on canvas

THE WAR AND WOMEN ARTISTS



HOLDING THE LINE
15th Annual War Art Exhibition

fine Sim *art*

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Many Were Called but Few Chosen

Women's war art is still out there to be discovered thanks to the shortcomings of the War Artist schemes

From the very first edition of our long-running series of war art catalogues, which placed the work of the WWII nurse and artist Rosemary Rutherford alongside the work of Official War Artist, Thomas Hennell, female war artists have featured equally, despite the fact that Official War Art was overwhelmingly male. Of the 37 full time Official War Artists, just one, Evelyn Dunbar, was female, and even she was restricted to 'women's subjects'.

This seemingly progressive policy on our part is actually nothing of the kind; it is pure self interest and opportunity. The historically sad fact is that women's artistic contribution to the war effort wasn't fully recognised at the time, with the consequence that fascinating pictures are still out there to be discovered, hidden away in folios.

In the 15 years since *'Holding the Line'* began, we have pioneered the discovery of a host of hitherto neglected female



war artists and even rediscovered major lost works by Official artists, such as the aforementioned Evelyn Dunbar, whose *'Land Girls Stooking'* (above) had disappeared from view for 70 years when we re-discovered it, miscatalogued, in a provincial sale.

There were actually more trained female artists seeking employment at the outbreak of the Second World War, than at any time in human history, thanks to an increasingly progressive system of art education for women. As a result, a very large number of female artists responded to the call for potential war artists to submit their work to the War Artists Advisory Committee (W.A.A.C.) for consideration. Some were given small commissions or permissions to sketch but relatively few had their work chosen for inclusion in the official record.

“Hers is a pioneering story, of endeavour overcoming tragedy”

Eighty years on, the result of such discrimination is that there is a significant - albeit scarce and diminishing - quantity of women's war art that has survived outside the museum system (where the 'Official works' produced in harness to the State are kept) to be rediscovered and offered for sale.

At the heart of this year's catalogue is an archive of war pictures by a woman whose life and work spanned both world wars, both as an active participant and artistic recorder. Elsie Gledstanes was born a Victorian and yet lived to see



Elsie Gledstanes (left) aged 7

the election of Britain's first female Prime Minister towards the end of her ninth decade. Hers is a pioneering story, of endeavour overcoming tragedy and independence overcoming the vagaries of male patronage.

Deciding at the age of seven that she wanted to be an artist, Elsie trained in Paris, the Slade and other art schools, and had just established her first studio in London in 1914 when war broke out.

Her personal and working life was marked, like so many upper class women of her time, by both privilege and tragedy, buoyed by an unprecedented level of educational and social opportunity and yet, in the end, blighted by war, changes in artistic fashion and an art establishment still dominated by male cliques.

After service as an Officer in the embryonic Women's Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S/Wrens) in WWI, Elsie worked as an ambulance driver and for the Women's Legion in WWII, recording everything as she went in her trusty sketch book. As Buckman's definitive *'Artists' Dictionary'* states: Gledstanes was "an exceptionally accomplished watercolourist" and the watercolours and drawings of her eventful and extremely varied activities during WWII are exhibited here for the first time since they were made during the war.

As well as the remarkable Gledstanes collection, this year's edition also features a varied selection of wartime (and just pre-war) pictures by women, many of whom trained at the Slade and other art schools in the early to mid years of the last century but who, for a variety of reasons, have either not been fully acknowledged or never had the opportunity to fully develop their artistic oeuvres.

Another notable discovery is the work of Joyce Marian Beer, a collection of whose powerfully atmospheric pictures we acquired earlier this year. Hers was a talent that bloomed almost entirely unseen but which nonetheless radiates personality, individuality and quality.



Joyce Marian Beer 'The Riding Accident'

Enrolled at the Slade in the years immediately before WWII, Beer began to exhibit at the Society of Women Artists and the

Royal Academy and elsewhere but following pressure from her family at the outbreak of war, she declined to decamp with the rest of the Slade students, to Oxford, but to stay safe at home - a tale oft repeated among artistically inclined women of that period.

The ground-breaking Society of Women Artists (S.W.A) was also an important forum for another artist that we feature this year: Bethia Clarke, a one time treasurer of the Society, who exhibited over 50 pictures there between her first in 1893 and her last 60 years later. The small quantity of work of hers that survives in museums and public collections displays a versatility and quality of observation that ought to make her much better known. She would have made a first rate war artist but all that we have of her from this period is a poignant portrait of an elderly newspaper seller in London in 1939, depicted rheumy-eyed and vulnerable against a backdrop of headlines prophesying war and destruction that seem to belong to a modern era that has left him behind. It is a little masterpiece.

Although female artists predominate in this year's catalogue, there are some notable pictures by male artists, including an important and typically characterful portrait by the greatest



Bethia Clarke 'Paper Sir?'

capturer of a likeness in WWII: Eric Kennington and a beautiful, almost Italianate, depiction of bomb damage by the under-rated Frank Archer, whose Rome Scholarship was cut short by the outbreak of war and who perhaps carried his sense of regret into his depiction of a bomb-damaged English townscape.

Our catalogues have often been replete with images of the destruction wrought by the Luftwaffe in Britain; this year we exhibit an extremely rare collection of pictures by the topographical watercolourist William Warden of the devastation produced by American and British bombers on the architecture of Germany in 1945.

Andrew Sim

FRANK ARCHER
The City in Ruins CAT. 27
Oil on canvas, signed and dated '40



A Life of Art & Service

Elsie Gledstanes overcame tragedy with service in the newly formed Wrens in WWI

In 1978, Peter Liddle, an academic now seen as a distinguished pioneer of oral histories, particularly those related to WWI, went to interview 87 year old artist Elsie Gledstanes about her experiences six decades earlier as one of the first wave of young women who volunteered as Wrens in the newly formed Women's Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S).

The interview survives as a rather bald transcript in the archives of the Leeds University Library, but there are moments in the factual exchange between interviewer and interviewee when character and atmosphere emerges. The scene is Gledstanes's studio in a small Kensington street, which she has chosen as a meeting place.

The studio, which opens onto a narrow and modest street of mews-type houses, is situated at the end of the garden



One of Elsie's satirical drawings of life in the W.R.N.S



Elsie in Wren Officer's Uniform 1918

of a rather grander house in a parallel street, where Elsie actually lived. She had chosen to meet her interrogator in the professional surroundings of her long career as an artist, rather than as a private individual – in anticipation, perhaps, of the slight awkwardness that characterises their exchanges.

Liddle is respectful but probing; Gledstanes is clearly caught between wanting to oblige and reluctance to divulge personal or military detail. Gledstanes' Edwardian reticence serves to emphasise the sixty year gap between the time of the interview and the period being discussed

Perhaps Liddle was expecting something different – certainly

the dignified old lady's demeanour is very different from the character that emerges from other fragments lodged in the university library – notably a series of cartoons drawn by the young Elsie, which featured in an edition of 'The Wren' magazine in 1918: cheeky, amusing sketches that show badly fed and very bored young women thumbing their noses at naval discipline in the manner of a satirical school magazine.

Reading between the lines, however, a picture emerges of the real tragedy that lay behind the young Elsie Gledstanes' wartime service; a tragedy made all the more poignant by the picture of happiness and personal fulfilment that seemed about to blossom before the Great War.



Wren training at the Crystal Palace, 1917



At the outbreak of war in 1914, Elsie, who'd trained in Paris and at the Slade and the Byam Shaw Schools of Art, had just established herself in her own studio in West London – a dream she'd nurtured “from the age of about seven”. The artistically-inclined daughter of a wealthy stockbroker, Elsie seemed to have the world at her feet, but then, in appallingly quick succession, she lost her brother, her childhood sweetheart and, as she herself put it in the interview “almost all the young men one had been associated with – they all went in one sweep”.

So traumatic was the sequence of events that, sixty years on, Elsie struggled to remember the early years of the war, until jolted back into full recollection by her interviewer, who reminds her that she was among the first wave of young women to join the newly formed W.R.N.S. After basic training at the Crystal Palace, Gledstanes was sent to grim quarters, nicknamed ‘The Mortuary’ at Immingham on the Humber, where her job was to track and decode submarine messages.

The dutiful tedium and barrack humour of those days is captured perfectly by the cartoons that Elsie produced for a booklet produced after the war entitled ‘The Wrens: Being the Story of their Beginnings & Doings in Various Parts’, which



Shaking the King's hand at a Royal Navy sports day, 1918

was published by another prominent Wren, Vera Matthews Laughton, who would go on to become the Director of the reformed W.R.N.S at the beginning of WWII.

TIMELINE

ELSIE GLEDSTANES R.B.A., P.S. (1891-1982)

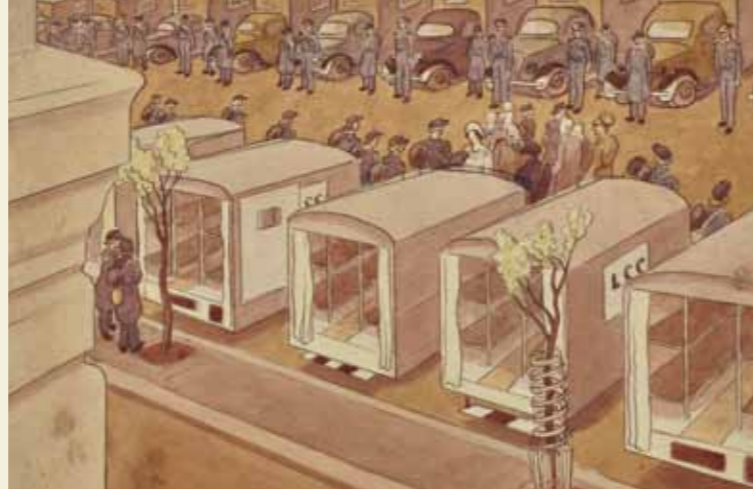
1891	Born 5 Hangar Lane, Ealing, daughter of a stockbroker.	1935	Appointed member of the Society of Women Artists (S.W.A.).
1897	School at Boston House, Eastbourne.	1939	Volunteers as an ambulance driver for the London County Council. Living in Kensington and described in the census as a ‘Qualified artist (fine arts)’. Continues to work as an artist, recording her life as a driver and also other aspects of wartime life.
1898	Decides on a career as an artist, aged 7.	1940	Exhibits five war-related works at the R.B.A. Also records other aspects of wartime life, including air raid damage on a Wren HQ at Ford in Hampshire.
1900	Family moves to Taplow in Berkshire.	1941	Exhibits six wartime works at R.B.A, including ‘1500 Fishcakes’ and ‘Rissoles for the Marines’, indicating access to other services than the Ambulance Service.
1909-10	Finishing school in Paris. Begins art education.	1942-3	Exhibits a dozen wartime works across a range of services, including WRNS & St John Ambulance.
1911	Attends the Slade School of Art.	1944-45	Works exhibited at the R.B.A and elsewhere focus on the work of the Women’s Legion: ‘Sketch at the Albert Dock’; ‘Food Van at the Docks’; ‘Women’s Legion Canteen ‘Palestine’ at the Docks’.
1913	Attends Byam Shaw School of Art in Campden St, Kensington.	1946	Working from studio in North Wales, continues to exhibit widely.
1914	Opens studio in West London. Great War begins. Forced to close studio.	1968	Donates residue of wartime works to Imperial War Museum and archive of wartime material to Leeds University Library Special Collections.
1915	Death of elder brother, Sheldon, a Captain in the First Bedfordshire Regiment.	1978	Interviewed by Peter Liddle of Sunderland Polytechnic for Oral History Archive of WW1 at her home in Kensington
1916	Death of childhood sweetheart.	1982	Dies at the age of 91.
1917	Applies to join the newly formed Women’s Royal Navy Service (W.R.N.S) as an officer. Trains at Crystal Palace. Sent to Immingham as Assistant Principal Wren.		
1918	Works in the decoding of German submarine messages at Immingham and Grimsby.		
1920	Resumes career as an artist. Exhibits at the Royal Academy and elsewhere.		
1923	Associate member of the Royal Society of British Artists (R.B.A.).		
1929	Appointed member of R.B.A.		

Here, There and Everywhere – Elsie in WWII

Gledstanes was a prolific recorder of women's wartime life in WWII

In 1939, the story of Elsie Gledstanes' service life resumes, as this public spirited veteran of the Great War, now aged 49, set about volunteering to do her bit for the war effort. The remarkable archive of works on paper, photographs and ephemera that we have been fortunate enough to display on these pages provides an overview of the activities and insight into the quite extraordinary endeavour and achievement of Elsie's artistic life at this time.

The 1939 Census shows that as soon as war broke out, Elsie volunteered as an ambulance driver for the London County Council and the first examples of the pictures she exhibited in the early years of the war, centre around that service. Clearly however, she was also given privileged access to activities beyond the Ambulance Service, possibly using the network of contacts she'd established in WWI.



H.M. the Queen reviewing Female Ambulance Drivers at County Hall CAT. 01
Watercolour study



Women's Legion Food Van at the Royal Docks, wartime CAT. 02
Watercolour, inscribed by artist verso

In the two decades since the end of WWI, Elsie Gledstanes had become an established and respected professional artist. She was elected a fully fledged member of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1930 and exhibited at the Royal Academy ten times.

During WWII, Elsie continued to exhibit dozens of war-related works in London exhibitions – 25 at the Royal Society of British Artists alone – but, very unusually, never applied for or received any permission from the official body, the War Artists Advisory Committee (W.A.A.C.).

In a watercolour from 1940, for instance, she is present to witness the aftermath of a Luftwaffe blitz on Wren quarters at Ford in Hampshire. Brian Foss, an authority on British War Art in WWII and the author of *'War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-45'*: comments: "I suspect that any permissions she may have required were probably negotiated between herself and the relevant local authorities".

It isn't clear why the artist was present at this scene of devastation or how exactly she went about acquiring the necessary permissions, but her veteran status and her connections with the W.R.N.S. certainly must have helped. A significant proportion of the collection depicted here was



Women's Legion Officer (Flying Division) CAT. 03
Pastel



Kitchens at the Royal Docks run by Women's Legion CAT. 04
Watercolour, signed



Entrance to Women's Legion Kitchens at the Royal Docks CAT. 05
Watercolour, 1940

produced at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, which – among other things -was the main headquarters for Wren training.

The nature of much of the artwork suggests that Gledstanes had been asked to produce a formal record of a visit by the Duchess of Kent to review women's services at the College. She was keen to get the background and architectural details correct and left no stone unturned in preparing the ground.

Like many graduates of the Slade, Gledstanes was a gifted and versatile draughtsman, producing sketches on the hoof, which she could then work up into watercolours and oil paintings for exhibition. Buckman's authoritative *'Dictionary of Artists'* describes her as "an especially accomplished watercolourist" and it is certainly in the more fluid media that the sensitivity and quick reactions of her draughtsmanship can really be seen to best effect. She worked diligently at producing full scale

studio oil paintings – there is ample evidence of this in the preparatory drawings in our collection - but it is clear that she is more comfortable with drawings and watercolours.

This is particularly true of Gledstanes' figure drawing – her depictions of women in uniform are delightful, capturing the endearing mixture of pride and awkwardness that came with the territory. A heavy greatcoat, tin hats, boiler suits and working overalls were hardly a young girl's dream of glamour, but Gledstanes shows exactly how wearing such strange and unfamiliar garments must have looked and felt to wear.

There is also an amusing acknowledgement of how these occasionally ungainly items of clothing were forced into an appearance acceptable to the young women required to endure them. In one particularly striking watercolour, Gledstanes depicts a very tall and athletic, almost Amazonian, woman wearing a practical costume of trousers, short sleeved top and neckerchief, topped almost jauntily with the requisite tin hat – the epitome of wartime chic.



Relaxation – two women from the Women's Legion CAT. 06
Watercolour



Female Ambulance Driver in Greatcoat Carrying Cap CAT. 07
Watercolour



Utility & Style - Young Woman in Casual Dress with tin hat CAT. 08
Watercolour



Ambulance Driver in Greatcoat Wearing Cap CAT. 09
Watercolour



Wren in soft gaberдинe hat CAT. 10
Mixed media



Study for 'Duchess of Kent Reviewing Women's Royal Naval Service Training' at the R.N.C. Greenwich CAT. 11
Watercolour, summer 1940

Architectural Study for 'Duchess of Kent'
 - Parade Ground at R.N.C CAT. 13
Pen and ink



Sandbagged courtyard of Royal Naval College (R.N.C.) CAT. 12
Watercolour, monogrammed



Three Women's Legion Girls in Sandbagged Warehouse
 CAT. 14
Watercolour

The Women's Legion was a voluntary service providing cooks, drivers etc for the war effort. These women were invaluable during the Blitz, looking after women and children, as well as driving for the Ministry of Food. Following the bombing of the London Docklands in December, 1940, three mobile WL canteens were set up in order to provide prepared food to offer to dock workers. Permanent kitchens staffed by the WL were established at various Dockland locations.



Sandbagged H.Q (Women's Legion) CAT. 15
Watercolour



Military figure in Warehouse CAT. 16
Watercolour

Joyce Beer – The War as an Ending

For some women artists, the war spelt the end of their artistic careers

JOYCE MARIAN BEER (1915-2006)

For most of the female artists included in *'Holding the Line'* over the years, the war represented an opportunity – for employment, patronage and a wider recognition of the talents developed in the more enlightened teaching environment of the interwar years. For some women, however, it meant the end of their artistic careers. Bromley-born Joyce Marian Beer was one such: a talent that had grown and begun to bear significant fruit: acceptance at the Slade and pictures exhibited in prestigious places, such as the Royal Academy and the Society of Women Artists.

The three pictures collected here represent a significant portion of her exhibited work and show what a distinctive and individual talent she possessed. One of these *'The Milliners'* is lined, poignantly, with a copy of the London Evening Standard from the last days of peace in 1939. At the time, Beer was enrolled at the Slade School of Art, where she had studied for two terms and was regarded as an extremely promising student. In 1939, however, it was decided to evacuate the school to Oxford, where it amalgamated with Ruskin School of Drawing at the Ashmolean Museum, Joyce was advised not to follow.

According to her family, Joyce's father, like so many parents of young women at the time, felt it was safer for her to remain at home in the outer London suburbs – a decision made pre-Blitz in the days of the so-called 'Phoney War', when nothing much appeared to be happening, on the domestic front at least. As luck would have it, the art world's loss was society's gain: Joyce married quickly and very well. She met Captain Edward Worsley (later to become the Uncle of the Duchess of Kent) while out playing golf and married him in 1941.



The Riding Accident CAT. 17
Oil on board, signed and dated '38





The Milliners CAT. 18
Oil on canvas, signed



The Fitting CAT. 19
Oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited 'Society of Women Artists, 1939

LEILA FAITHFULL (1896-1994)

Saturday Afternoon, Wartime

Oil on canvas

Exhibited Leicester Galleries Dec '41

Exhibited Royal Academy, 1944. No.657

Leila Faithfull (née Reynolds) was a socially well-connected artist whose quietly appealing scenes of social and domestic life found favour with many influential collectors, such as Kenneth Clark and Lady Ottoline Morrell. She exhibited at the prestigious Leicester Galleries before the war and their director, Oliver Brown was among those who supported her application to produce work for the War Artists scheme in 1940. She was granted permission and facilities to paint Women's Voluntary Scheme subjects and the Committee purchased her work. The present work was exhibited twice during the war, once at the Leicester Galleries and then at the Royal Academy. A very similar work, again painted from the rear of a crowd, can be found in the Imperial War Museum's collection.



Faithfull (left) at a tea party given by Lady Ottoline Morrell, with W.B Yeats in the foreground.



Saturday Afternoon, Wartime CAT. 20
Oil on canvas

BETHIA CLARKE P.S., S.W.A. (1867-1958)

‘Paper Sir?’

Oil on canvas, signed

Exhibited ‘Society of Women Artists Annual Exhibition, 1939’

Bethia Clarke was 72 and had been an artist for over 50 years when she painted this poignant portrait of an elderly newspaper vendor dispensing news of an increasingly violent and bewildering world to which he no longer seems to belong with his droopy Victorian moustache and ancient, weatherbeaten hat. It is an affecting and powerful portrait that was exhibited at the Society of Women Artists in its first wartime exhibition in autumn 1939. The Society had been an important feature of Clarke’s life – she had been one of its first treasurers and she exhibited with them for over 40 years.



‘Paper Sir?’ CAT. 21
Oil on canvas, signed

SONIA MERVYN P.S., S.W.A. (1893-1977)

The Stretcher Bearer

Oil on canvas, signed

Mervyn was a talented and committed portrait painter who came to painting relatively late in life, having first trained as a classical musician. She gained a scholarship to the Regent Street Polytechnic, where she was taught by Ralph Middleton Todd R.A, whose distinctively soft, painterly style inspired and influenced her own work and with whom she corresponded extensively. At the outset of WWII, Mervyn volunteered to work as a Land Girl and made a portrait of herself in her jumper and breeches. Although there is no record of her having applied to work as a war artist, Mervyn completed this sensitive study of an ARP Warden/Stretcher Bearer in 1940. Interestingly, her mentor, Middleton Todd, had received a commission at the same time to record Home Front subjects and had himself made a portrait of an ARP warden. Mervyn made two versions of the current portrait, a smaller study, in which the Warden's helmet (bearing the letters 'S.P' for 'Stretcher Party') hangs on the corner of the armchair, and the larger, completed work shown here, where the emphasis is on the warden's careworn face in the flickering light of the hearthside, so different from the firestorm he would have encountered on duty.



Sonia Mervyn 'Self Portrait in Land Girl Dress'



The Stretcher Bearer CAT. 22
Oil on canvas, signed

JOSEPHINE WAYMOUTH née STROUSBERG (1872-1955)

The Southampton Blitz, 1940

Watercolour, inscribed and dated on a label verso 'Nov 1940'

The infamous main 'Blitz' of Southampton took place on just two nights in November 1940, so this atmospheric watercolour of the maelstrom that engulfed the docks on that night can be confidently dated. So vivid were the flames that night that they could be seen from the Normandy coast 120 miles away. The artist, Josephine Waymouth, had been born in Prussia but became naturalised as a British citizen in 1893, when her English mother remarried an Englishman and moved to Dorset. At the time of this watercolour, Josephine, then well into her 60s, was working for the Red Cross in Southampton, where her husband was an A.R.P. controller.



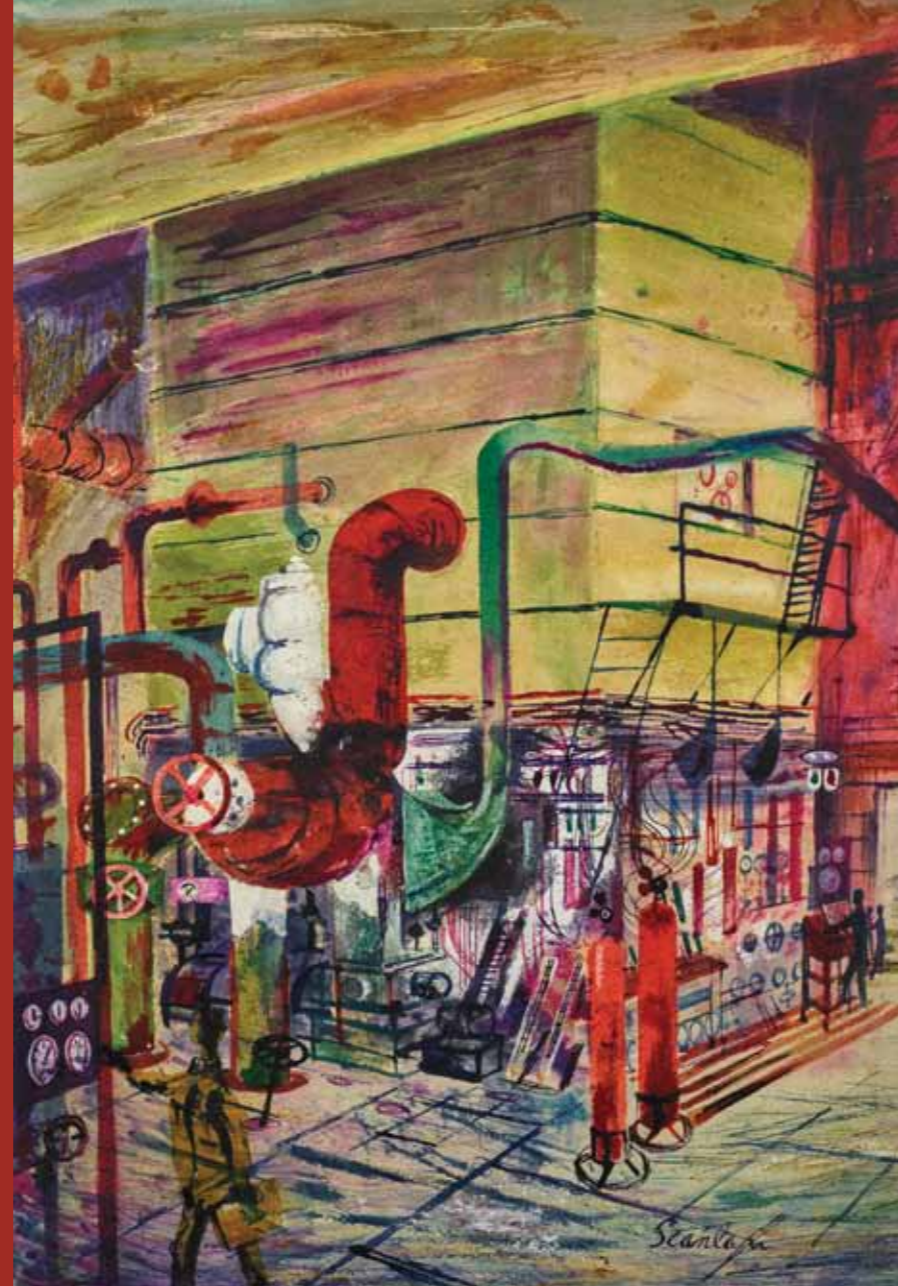
The Southampton Blitz CAT. 23
Watercolour, inscribed and dated on a label verso 'Nov 1940'

ROBERT SCANLAN (fl 1939-50)

The Engine Room

Watercolour

Robert Scanlan was selected as a war artist in 1942, following the purchase of a drawing he submitted to the War Artists Advisory Committee (Imperial War Museum collection). He worked in the Camouflage Unit but was later sent to Malta as a civilian artist, where he made this colourful watercolour of the engine room of a ship



The Engine Room CAT. 24
Watercolour

EVE KIRK P.S., S.W.A. (1900-69)

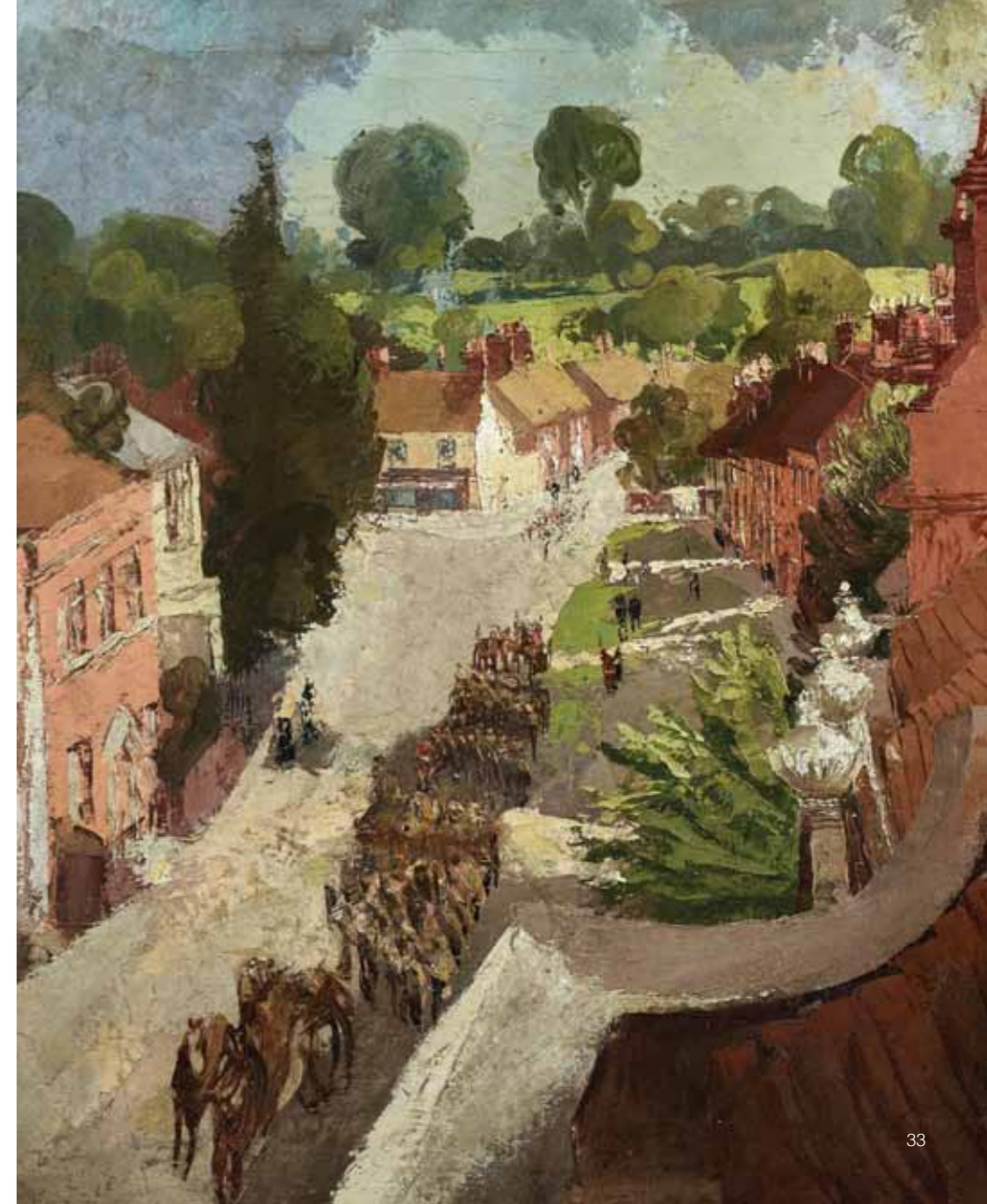
Military Parade, Newtown

Oil on canvas

Eve Kirk, who had trained at the Slade in the early 1920s, enjoyed considerable prominence as an artist in the 1930s and during the war. She was painted by Augustus John (below), who wrote a flattering introduction to her first solo exhibition, saying "she has captured a method, a technique which seems to provide a perfect means for the interpretation of her subjects". The war proved quite fruitful for Kirk, who volunteered for Civil Defence work and obtained permission to continue painting, which she did, exhibiting at the Leicester Galleries and in the Exhibition of National War Pictures at the Royal Academy in 1945. Towards the end of the war, she moved to Newtown in Wales, where she painted this portrait of a military parade.



Military parade, Newtown CAT. 25
Oil on canvas



Portraying the Wrens

Sim Fine Art has led the re-discovery of museum-quality Wren portraits



Two years ago, we included a pastel portrait of a Wren Officer in our annual catalogue, without fully realizing the extent of its rarity. The artist was Joseph McCulloch, a talented but somewhat wayward artist, who built up and subsequently lost a studio-based practice in Chelsea in the wartime period. McCulloch rarely worked beyond Chelsea and Kensington but produced an interesting record of that area during the war, particularly pubs, leading us to surmise that perhaps he was paid in kind. Many of his clientele were upmarket and bohemian Chelsea-types, which led us to conjecture that perhaps the young Wren Officer was local, but were not able to name her.

Despite its anonymity, the portrait was acquired by the National Maritime Museum (Royal Museums Greenwich), who subsequently initiated a campaign to establish the identity of the sitter, a story that made the National press.

As luck would have it, however, a year later, we acquired a portrait of another Wren Officer, this time a fully identified portrait of a noteworthy young woman called Ann Rosada Haldin, who held the distinction of being the youngest woman to be promoted to the rank of Second Officer and who would later go on to be awarded the MBE for her 'zeal and devotion to duty'. Frank Salisbury was the artist who commemorated her promotion with a portrait that has joined McCulloch's portrait in the Maritime Museum's growing collection of significant Wren portraits.

In this year's catalogue, we have another example, this time in oil, by a young man who would go on to become the President of the Royal Society of Scottish Watercolourists. The sitter in his 'Clodagh - A Portrait of a Wren' has yet to be fully identified.

JOSEPH R. R. McCULLOCH (1893-1961)

Wren Officer

Pastel, signed & dated 1945

Acquired by the National Maritime Museum
(Royal Museums Greenwich) 2023



FRANK O. SALISBURY (1874-1962)

Ann Rosada Haldin, Wren Officer

Pastel

Acquired by the National Maritime Museum
(Royal Museums Greenwich) 2024



Ann Rosada Haldin, Wren Officer
Pastel

**JOHN MILLER
R.S.A., P.R.S.W. (1911-75)**

Clodagh – Portrait of a Wren

Oil on card

John Miller was born in Glasgow and studied at the Glasgow School of Art under Sir William Hutchison in 1936 and at Hospitalfield Art College in Arbroath under James Cowie in 1938. He joined the staff at the Glasgow School of Art in 1944 and remained there until his death. A versatile painter; he was the elected president of the Royal Scottish Watercolour Society from 1970-1975. His work is held in the Hunterian in Glasgow.



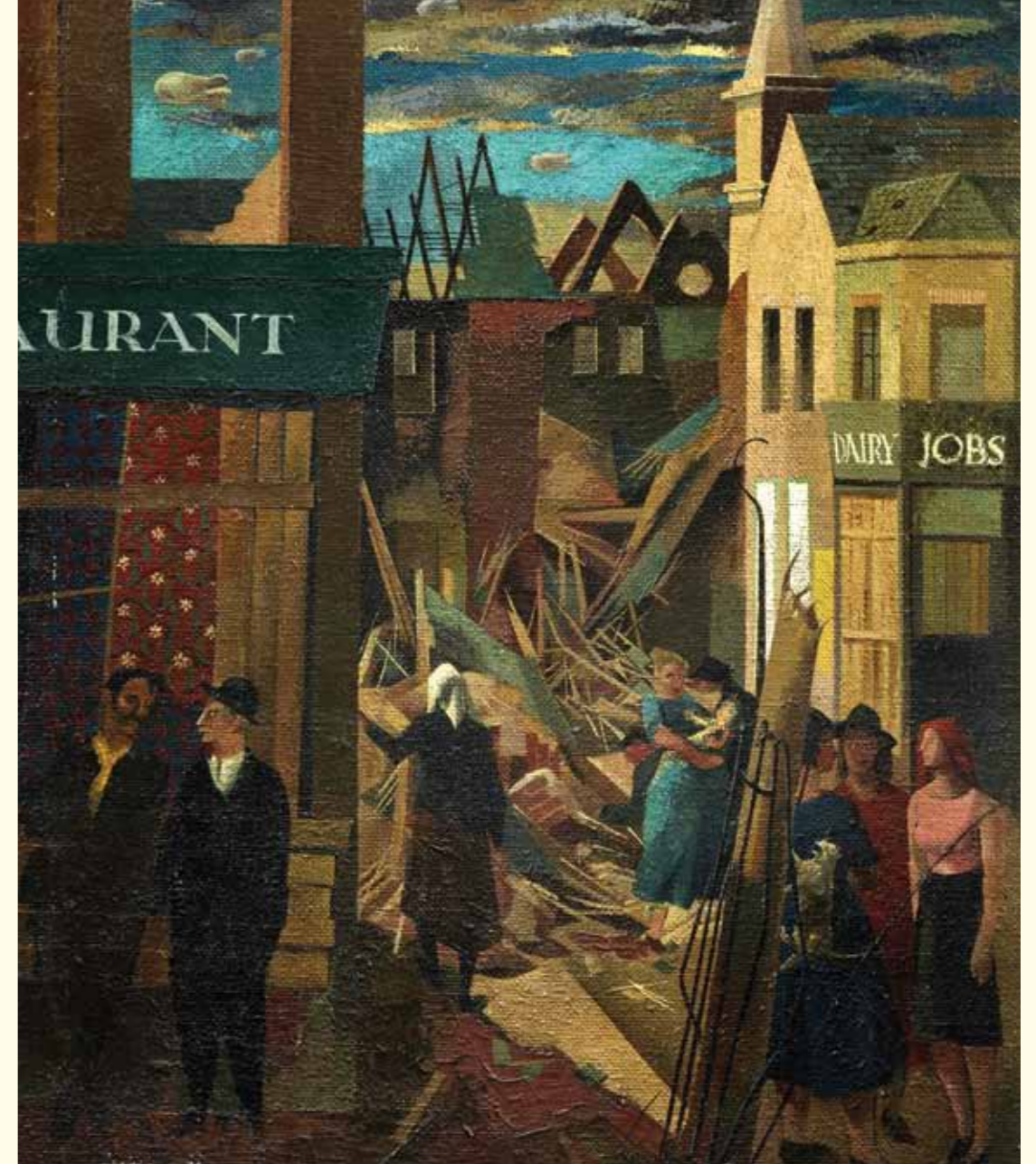
Clodagh – Portrait of a Wren CAT. 26
Oil on card

FRANK ARCHER R.W.S., A.R.C.A., R.E. (1912-95)

The City in Ruins

Oil on canvas, signed and dated '40

While a student at the Royal College of Art, Archer won the *Prix de Rome* prize for engraving, enabling him to study in Italy for a year in November 1938. His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war and Archer returned to England where he married and was conscripted into the Pioneer Corps. Italy and Italian painting had a lasting impact on Archer's work, particularly in the work he produced in those early years of the war. Although the shop fascias in this scene of war devastation declare it to be a British scene, the colouration and figure drawing recall classical Italian art and light, as well as the dense urban environments of that country: "The variety of people or the urban environment they inhabited was stimulating material for the kind of painting I was doing," he recalled.



The City in Ruins CAT. 27
Oil on canvas, signed and dated '40

ERIC KENNINGTON (1890-1960)

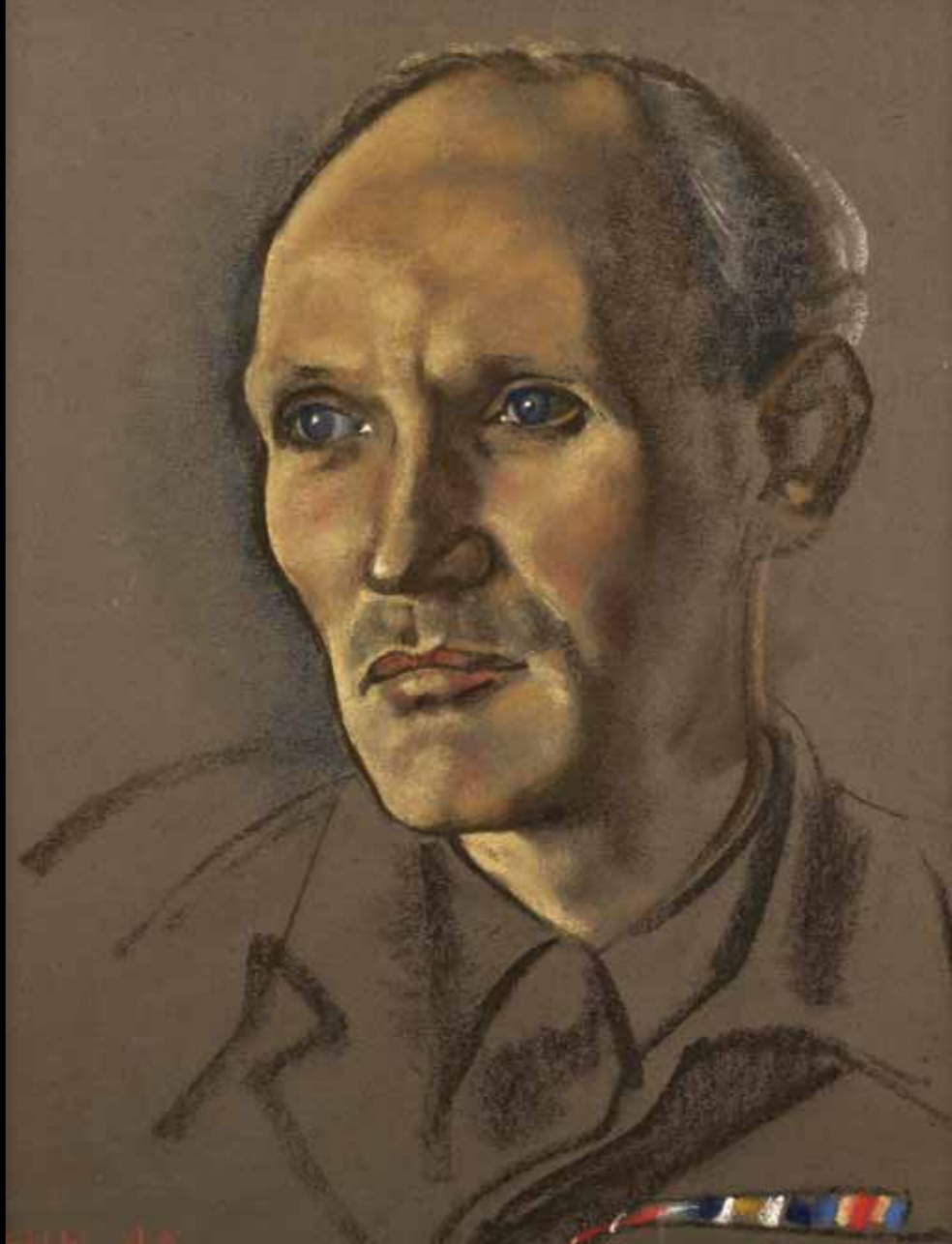
Lt Col James Eben McConnell 1894-1987

Pastel, signed and dated '42

Kennington is widely considered the definitive 'Official' portraitist of the Second World War's fighting men: from the dashing young flyers of the RAF to the tough stokers of the Navy and the heroism of the tank folk, but his output was far from restricted to those on active service. At the end of 1942, Kennington wrote to his friend, Basil Liddell Hart, that he had "violently sacked myself from all official status and am a pirate, favoured and spoilt by the newly awakened and alive War Office".

The War Office's PR Unit signed up Kennington on a number of roving commissions, including recording the work of the Home Guard and the Territorials – a job that he took to with alacrity and with some personal experience, having served in his local Home Guard in south Oxfordshire for four months. He enjoyed delineating the variety of faces of men of all ages and types: from the shepherd and tenant farmer to veterans of the first war. A contemporary critic wrote of his efforts in this sphere: "he has the ability to visualise the character of his sitter. It is this ability which makes his portraits a remarkable contribution to contemporary art. The vigour of his handling and the bold, sure technique mark him out as a great artist...his portraits are always a good likeness".

Lieutenant Colonel James McConnell was a Great War veteran, who came out of retirement to command a Territorial Army regiment of the Seaforth Highlanders in WWII. It was important for national morale that an able and discerning portraitist such as Kennington was able to capture the intelligence and experience of men such as McConnell in his inimitably skilful way.



Lt Col James Eben McConnell 1894-1987 CAT. 28
Pastel, signed and dated '42

**HAROLD JACKSON WHITAKER
(1920-2013)**

Troop Ship

Watercolour

Landing Craft, North Africa, 1942

Watercolour

As a young man, Harold Whitaker, who had trained at Macclesfield School of Art, won a 'Punch' scholarship (a fellow recipient was Ronald Searle) but war broke out and despite his call up being deferred because of illustrative work for the MOD, was eventually conscripted into the army and served with the Royal Engineers in North Africa, where he made these watercolours. He would go on to become a distinguished animator, most notably creating the memorable comic strip animation of George Orwell's 'Animal Farm'.



Troop Ship CAT. 29
Watercolour

Landing Craft, North Africa, 1942 CAT. 30
Watercolour



HAROLD YATES (1916-2001)

Short Arm Inspection

Watercolour

Reveille

Watercolour

Harold Yates was a serving soldier in WWII when he made this intimate drawing of a young soldier waking up in a barrack room. Yates was a Londoner who trained at Portsmouth School of Art in the 1930s before embarking on a career as a commercial artist. He was a brilliant and versatile draughtsman and when conscripted into the army set about producing a record of his life as a serving soldier. The War Artists Advisory Committee were very impressed by Yates' documentary account of everyday military life and purchased a number of his drawings and watercolours, which are housed in the Imperial War Museum. Yates was frank - sometimes brutally so - about the privations of army life in his drawings and watercolours, which are, at turns amusing, informative and intimate, but always beautifully observed and rendered.



Short Arm Inspection CAT. 31
Watercolour



Reveille CAT. 32
Watercolour

THOMAS RATHMELL (1893-1977)

Riot

Pen and wash

ENSA Entertainer

Watercolour

Girls in the Park

Watercolour, dated '39

Rathmell worked producing industrial and naval camouflage during the war for the Ministry of Home Security in London and Leamington Spa. He had a fine eye for social observation, a talent that he continued to indulge during the war, obtaining permission to sketch from the War Artist Advisory Committee. The acronym ENSA stood for the 'Entertainments National Service Association' or, more colloquially: 'Every Night Something Awful'.



Riot CAT. 33
Pen and wash



ENSA Entertainer CAT. 34
Watercolour



Girls in the Park CAT. 35
Watercolour, dated '39



GEORGE CHARLTON N.E.A.C. (1899-1979)

Daphne at her Dressing Table

Watercolour, signed and dated indistinctly 1938

A sad story underpins this minutely detailed watercolour of quiet, apparently untroubled domesticity – surely a labour of love in its extraordinary detailing of subject and surface. The artist, George Charlton, depicts his artist wife, Daphne – eleven years his junior - in their marital home, New End Square in Hampstead, in the late 1930s. Within a year, however, Daphne embarked on a tempestuous extra-marital affair with Stanley Spencer, a mutual friend of the couple, who had been their guest in Hampstead, having been evicted from his home. Daphne later featured in a number of portraits by Spencer, looking rather less demure than in the present work, and also painted a portrait of Spencer herself.

Daphne at her Dressing Table CAT. 36
Watercolour, signed and dated indistinctly 1938

Rebel with a Cause

GEORGE LAMBOURN (1900-77)

Northern Command, Summer 1941

George Lambourn was the unlikeliest war artist: an unconventional pacifist, he nevertheless managed to produce a large body of artwork while working as a philanthropic volunteer. From a poor background in the London docks, Lambourn's artistic career had begun relatively late when he studied art as a mature student at Goldsmiths and later the Royal Academy Schools. His artistic output at this time displays a political bent – the Tate holds a portrait by him, entitled *'Portrait of a Communist'*. At the outbreak of war, Lambourn joined the Red Cross and was sent to France with an Ambulance Unit attached to the British Expeditionary Force and was one of the last to be evacuated from Dunkirk, having worked at a Field Dressing Station for one of the rearguard units at Calais, where he was wounded himself. Throughout his time in the Red Cross and later as a volunteer with the YMCA, Lambourn continued to record his activities in sketches and even oils, despite the often appalling conditions in which he was forced to work. The Imperial War Museum holds an horrific oil painting made by Lambourn of a row of bodies in the cellar of a dressing station at Calais. After his recovery from wounds received at Dunkirk, Lambourn again volunteered for the British Volunteer Ambulance Corps, where he commanded a unit and where the present drawings were made – at Northern Command in the summer of 1941.



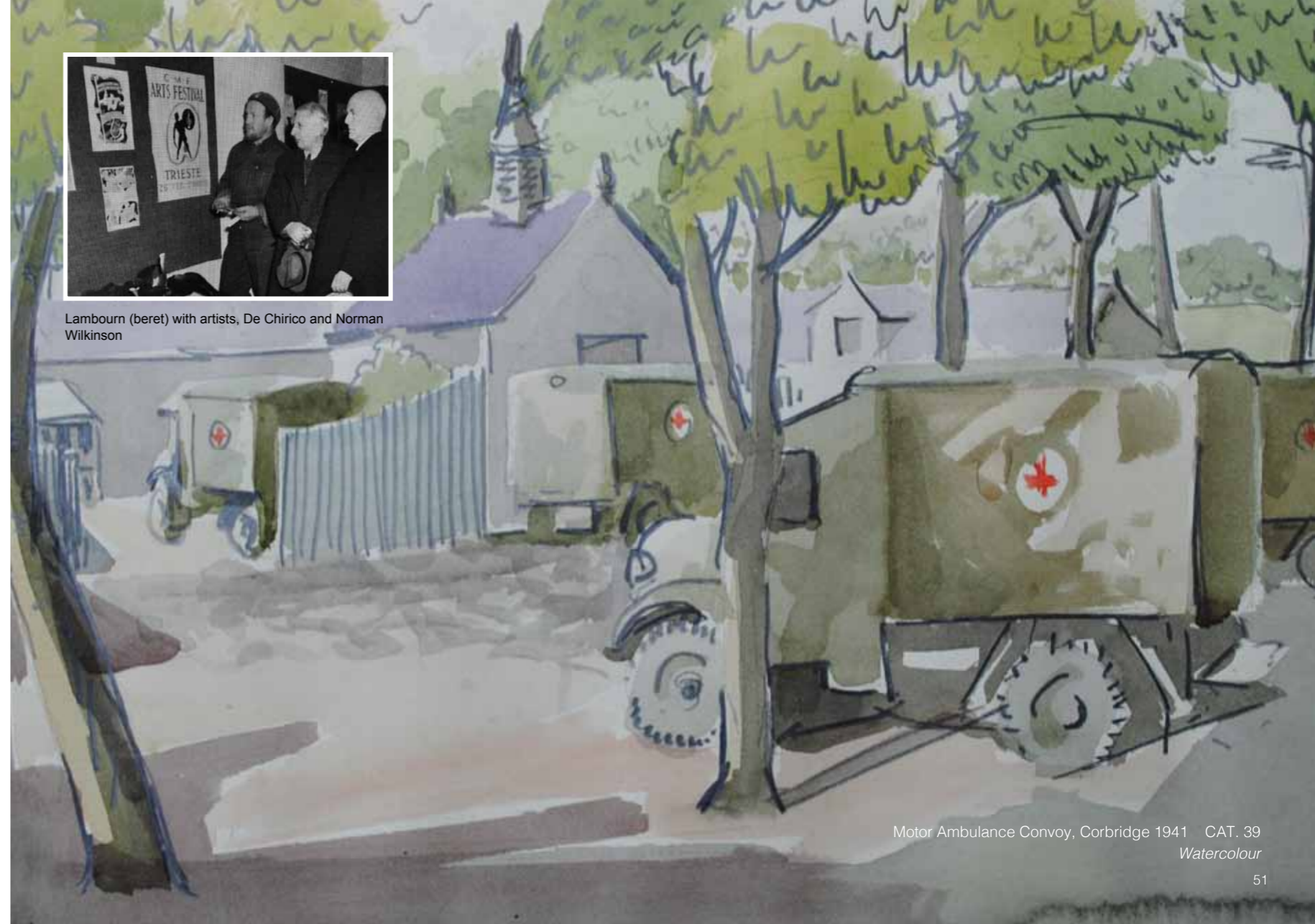
Gun Pit, Coastal Battery CAT. 37
Watercolour, signed and inscribed



Nissen Hut being Camouflaged CAT. 38
Watercolour



Lambourn (beret) with artists, De Chirico and Norman Wilkinson



Motor Ambulance Convoy, Corbridge 1941 CAT. 39
Watercolour

Lorry disguised with Camouflage Net CAT. 40
Watercolour, signed and inscribed



Road Block, Northumberland 1941 CAT. 41
Watercolour, signed inscribed verso 'Road block, coast road, Blyth 24 June 1941'

Devastation in Nazi Germany

William Warden recorded the cultural ruins of a defeated enemy



The Cathedral, Cologne CAT. 42
Watercolour, signed and dated '45

WILLIAM WARDEN R.B.A. (1908-82)

Warden, who was a distinguished landscape watercolourist, travelled to Germany to record the devastation of its townscapes. The Imperial War Museum and the Rye Gallery hold examples of his work from this trip. The intensive bombing of German cities late in the war has subsequently acquired an ambiguous reputation in some revisionist circles but at the time, these views were rarely held and even less frequently expressed. Interestingly, Warden chooses to title his watercolour of the town of Krefeld: 'American Bomb Damage', whereas the perpetrators of the Cologne devastation, which was the work of the R.A.F., is left to the imagination.



American Bomb Damage, Krefeld CAT. 44
Watercolour, signed and dated '45

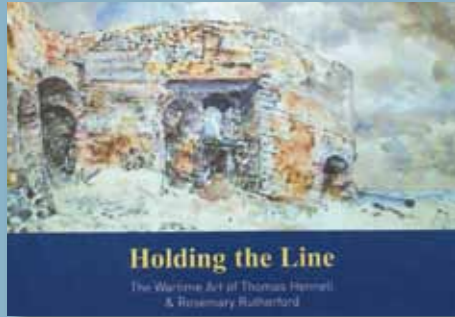


Cologne 1945

'Once Proud city' - Cologne after the bombing CAT. 45
Watercolour, signed and dated '45
(The Imperial War Museum holds a different watercolour of the same title)



15 Years of HOLDING THE LINE



Holding the Line 2010



Holding the Line September 2012



Holding the Line November 2013



Holding the Line October 2011



Holding the Line September 2014



Holding the Line November 2015



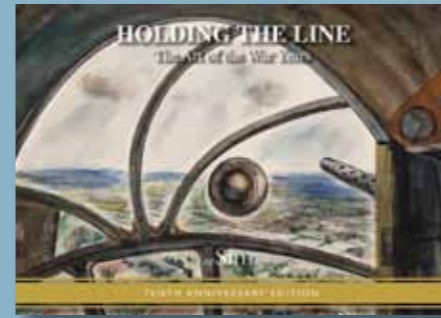
Holding the Line November 2016



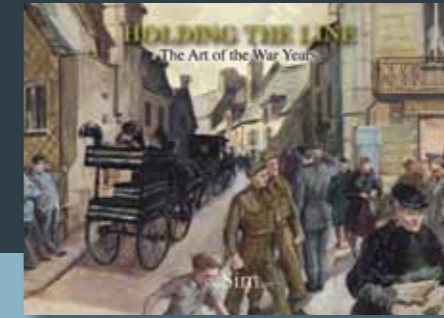
Holding the Line September 2017



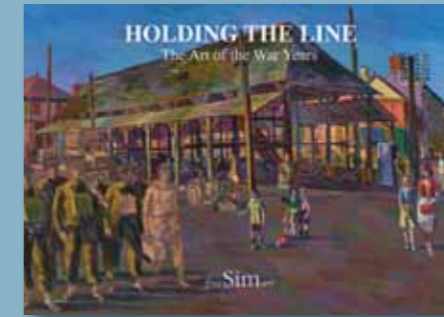
Holding the Line September 2018



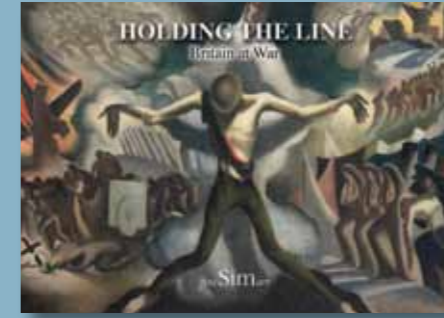
Holding the Line September 2019



Holding the Line October 2020



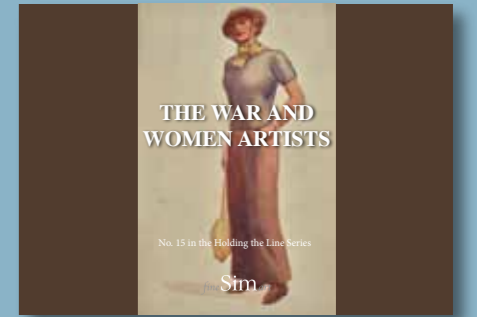
Holding the Line October 2021



Holding the Line November 2022

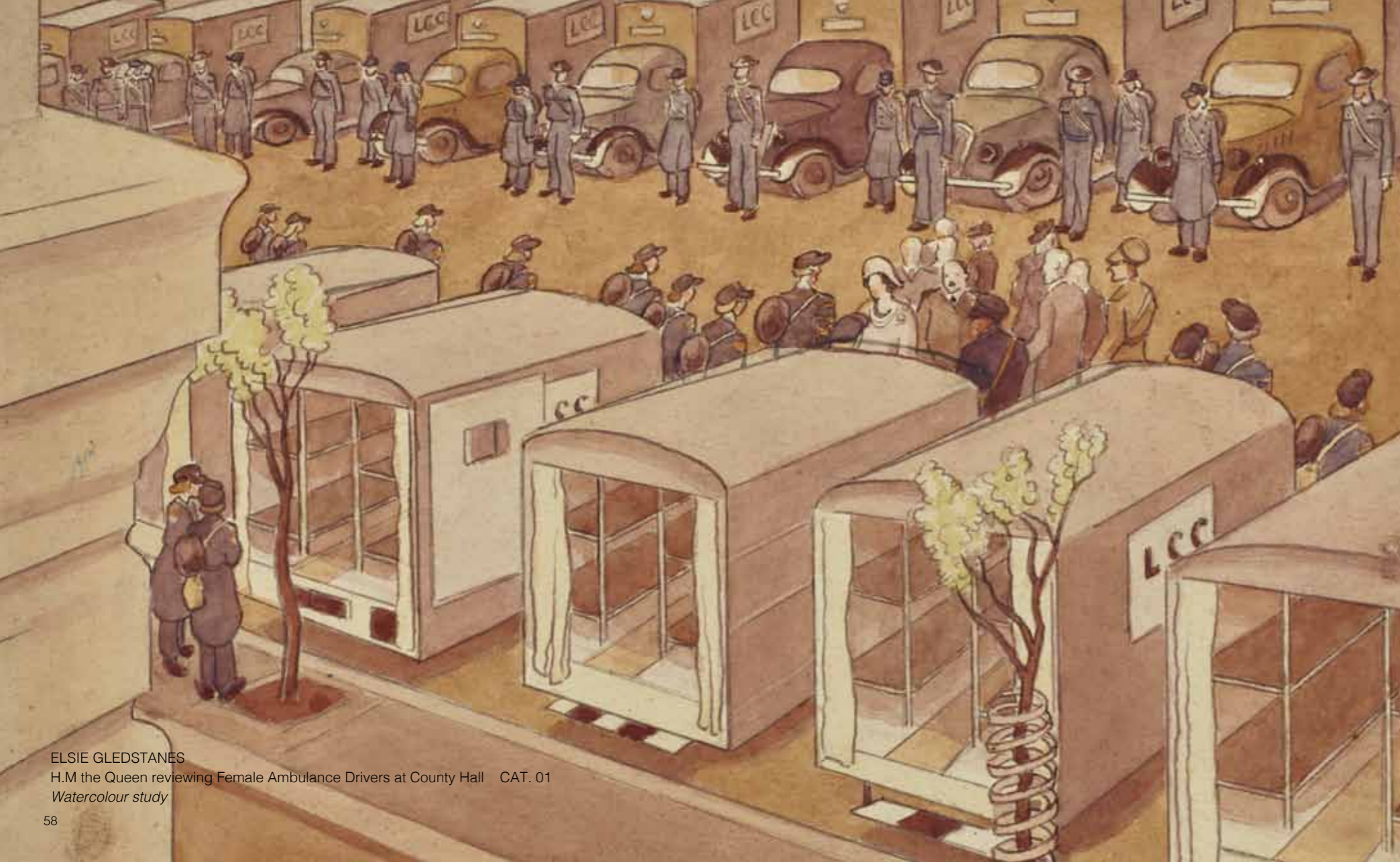


Holding the Line November 2023



Holding the Line November 2024

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ELSIE GLEDSTANES
H.M the Queen reviewing Female Ambulance Drivers at County Hall CAT. 01
Watercolour study

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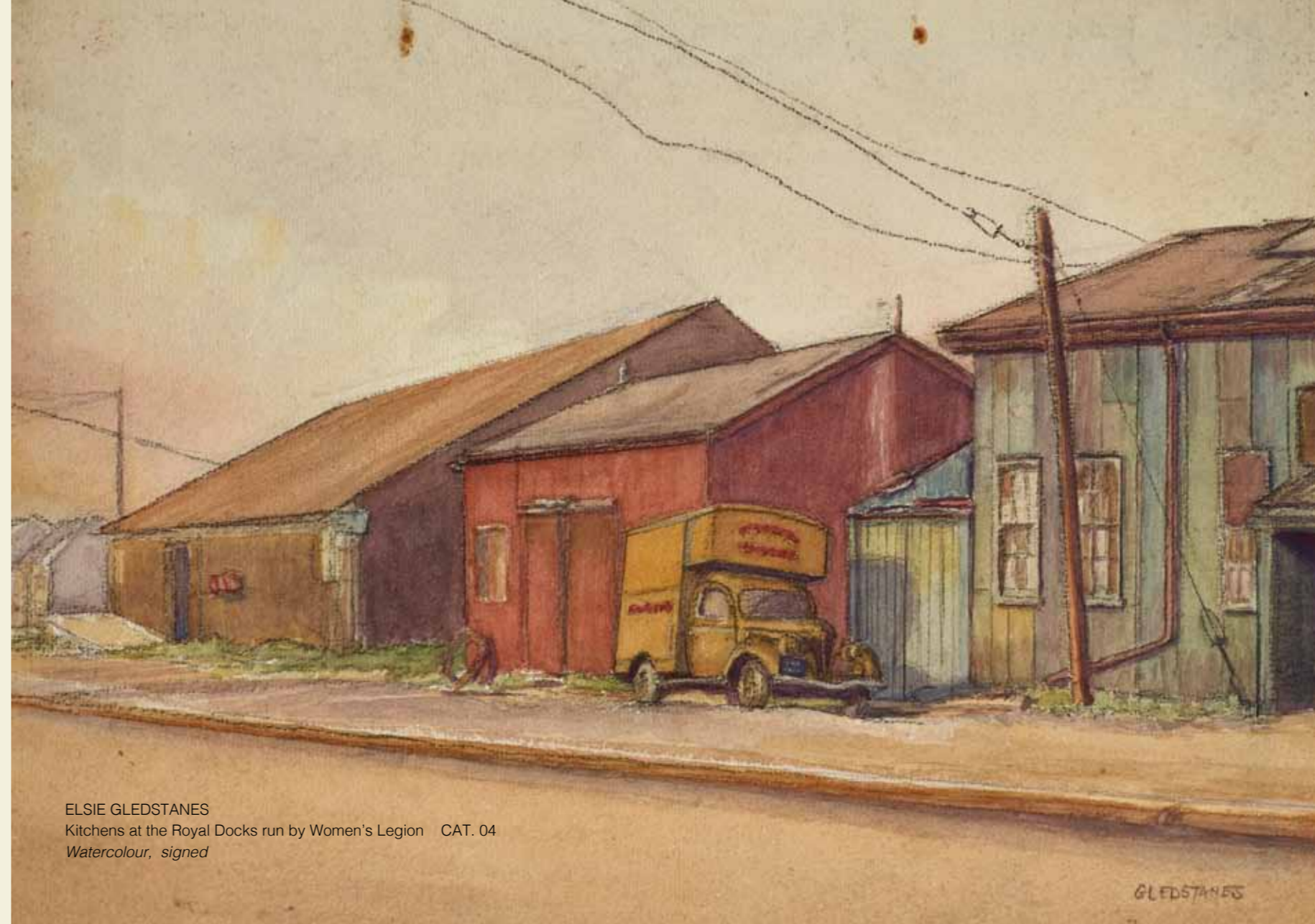
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ELSIE GLEDSTANES
Kitchens at the Royal Docks run by Women's Legion CAT. 04
Watercolour, signed

GLEDSTANES



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