

EDWIN G. LUCAS (1911-1990)

Edwin George Lucas was born in Leith in 1911. He was educated at Juniper Green Primary School and then George Heriot's, later going on to work for the Civil Service in Edinburgh and to take a Law degree at Edinburgh University.

He showed talent in drawing and painting at an early age, but his family strongly discouraged him from considering it as a career. This was due to the fate of his uncle, E G Handel Lucas who, although he is now a well regarded Victorian painter, lived the latter part of his life in poverty.

Edwin nevertheless was a very active painter. He attended the life drawing evening classes at Edinburgh College of Art for a number of years, but was otherwise entirely self-taught.

Throughout the 1930's he worked mainly in watercolours. Towards the end of that period he first turned seriously to painting in oils, the medium he was to use predominantly thereafter. This switch coincided with a brief flirtation with Surrealism which he found a greatly liberating experience. However, although he was aware of the 'modern' movements of the times, he was strongly opposed to being regarded as a representative of any particular mode.

Edwin was very well read and studied the work of many other artists, but he was influenced by far more than just the art world. Indeed *La Revue Moderne*, an influential French periodical, commented on his interest in aesthetics, ethics, religion and sociology before going on to say he deserved a place of honour for his artistic work itself.

Edwin's work was regularly accepted for exhibition by the major exhibiting societies (the RSW, SSA and RSA). However a conservative selection policy on the part of these societies, together with the absence of the independent galleries we are used to today, meant there were few opportunities to show his most innovative work. That was a shame because he was arguably a decade ahead of his time compared to most of his contemporaries in the Scottish art scene, particularly in his willingness to embrace surrealism and abstraction. Undeterred, he was continually innovative in his painting, and refused to create a personal style by self repetition.

He was a committed pacifist throughout his life and was a conscientious objector during the Second World War. As such he worked in hospitals in the North East of Scotland and later back in Edinburgh.

Following his marriage in 1952, he stopped painting in favour of domestic and family responsibilities, except for a brief spell in the early 1980s which was brought to an end by deteriorating eyesight. He died of leukaemia in 1990.

A number of works have been acquired by the City of Edinburgh art collection. These are periodically exhibited at the City Art Centre and other locations.

A retrospective of his works was held at Hanover Fine Arts gallery, Edinburgh, in April 2009. Further works of his may be viewed at: www.EdwinGLucas.com.