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Ancient Landscape, Modern Times

Eric Ravilious and the Artists of the Chalk Downs

James Russell

Chris Stephens

ISBN	9781843682943
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Binding	Hardback
Territory	World
Size	145 mm x 182 mm
Pages	176 Pages
Illustrations	108 color, 10 b&w
Price	£20.00

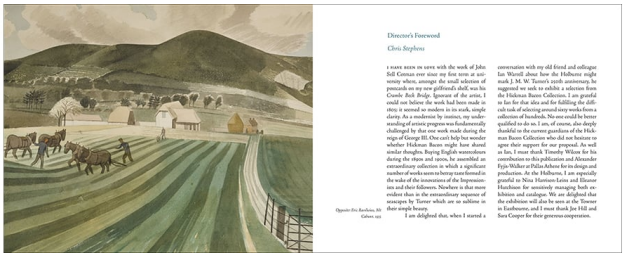
- Major new title on Ravilious, Nash, and their times
- Artists exploring some of Britain's best-loved landscapes
- Extensively illustrated, many lesser-known artworks
- Essay by leading expert James Russell
- Published to accompany an exhibition at Holburne, Bath, running from October 3, 2026 to January 10, 2027

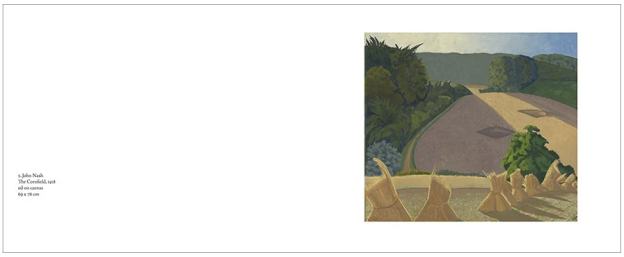
In the 1910s and 1920s the unique landscape of the chalk downs of southern England began to exert a new fascination on writers, historians, archaeologists and artists. Modernists such as Paul and John Nash, Eric Ravilious and William Nicholson immersed themselves in exploring these enigmatic, ancient places. The stark, rolling forms of the downs suited the modern aesthetic, offering a place where prehistory and modernity could converge.

With the growing political tensions of the 1930s, this modern engagement with ancient landscape took on a symbolism that still resonates. Images of Britain evolved as the downs became both symbols of wartime vulnerability and resilience and the site of machine gun emplacements and crashed aeroplanes.

Art of the Chalk Downs investigates this extraordinary collision of ancient and modern, idea and place, and the network of artists who worked and lived there. Seventy-five plates of paintings, watercolours, prints and photographs are accompanied by texts written by leading art historians James Russell and Stephens.

James Russell is an art historian and exhibition curator, most recently of *Tirzah Garwood: Beyond Ravilious* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, and *Undersea* at Hastings Contemporary. His many previous exhibitions include *Changing Times: A Century of Modern British Art* at the Higgins, Bedford, *Extraordinary Everyday: The Art and Design of Eric Ravilious*, and *Eric Ravilious: Downland Man*. Russell's books include titles on Ravilious, Paul Nash, Edward Seago and Edward Bawden. **Chris Stephens**, Director of the Holburne, has written extensively on modern British art, especially the St Ives painters, Francis Bacon and David Hockney.





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