

PRESS RELEASE

British Landscapes: A Sense of Place

30 May – 1 November 2026



Paul Nash, *Wittenham*, 1935, Watercolour on paper, Pallant House Gallery, Hussey Bequest, Chichester District Council (1985)

Pallant House Gallery is delighted to announce *British Landscapes: A Sense of Place*, a major exhibition which will explore how artists from the late 18th century to the end of the 20th century have captured the distinctive character, emotional resonance and enduring “spirit of place” found in Britain’s landscapes.

Bringing together works by more than 60 artists, the exhibition will trace how painters, printmakers and sculptors responded to the countryside, coastlines, towns and cities of the British Isles – not simply as scenery, but as places shaped by memory, myth, labour, conflict and imagination. From quiet lanes and chalk hills to industrial sites and abstracted coastal

forms, *British Landscapes: A Sense of Place* will reveal how landscape has been central to British visual culture and to ideas of national identity.

The exhibition will trace a lineage from 18th century master Thomas Gainsborough, and the golden age of British watercolour – with works by John Robert Cozens, John Varley and John Sell Cotman – to some of the most evocative landscape art of the 20th century. Artists including Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, Eric Ravilious, Ivon Hitchens, Barbara Hepworth, Michael Andrews and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham reimagined Britain's fields, coastlines and settlements as sites of psychological intensity, poetic symbolism and modernist experiment.

At the heart of the exhibition will be the idea of a *sense of place*: the deep emotional, cultural and imaginative bond between people and the landscapes they inhabit. For artists working through periods of rapid social change, industrialisation and two world wars, the British landscape became a powerful means of expressing belonging, loss, resilience and renewal. Inviting visitors to reflect on the landscapes that have shaped Britain's imagination – places layered with history and emotion – the exhibition will speak not only to what Britain looks like, but how it felt to live here.

Highlights will include:

- Ivon Hitchens' *Curved Barn* (1922), painted in rural Sussex
- Paul Nash's wood-engravings and lithographs of the seawall at Dymchurch, Kent in the aftermath of the First World War and *Wittenham* (1935), exploring the 'genius loci' (or 'spirit of place') of an ancient Iron Age hill fort in Oxfordshire
- Graham Sutherland's haunting pastoral etchings of Kent and Sussex from the mid-1920s and his watercolours of Pembrokeshire painted at the outbreak of the Second World War
- Eric Ravilious' poignant wartime image of the *Cerne Abbas Giant* (1939), partially buried to protect it from enemy bombers
- Wilhelmina Barns-Graham's *Snow at Wharfedale* (1957); an abstract response to the Yorkshire landscape.

The exhibition will unfold thematically and chronologically. Early sections will explore the legacy of Romanticism and the profound impact of the 1910 exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, which introduced British artists to Cezanne, Van Gogh and Seurat, sparking new ways of seeing the land. Works by Camden Town artists Spencer Gore and Walter Sickert, pacifist Mark Gertler and Vorticist Helen Saunders will reveal how continental modernist ideas were adapted to distinctly British settings, even amid the disruptions of the First World War.

A major section will be devoted to the revival of etching and wood engraving in the interwar years when artists including F.L. Griggs, Paul Nash, Clare Leighton and Graham Sutherland turned to printmaking to evoke a pastoral, often nostalgic vision of Britain, informed by romantic 19th century artists such as Samuel Palmer. These intimate works, rich in atmosphere, capture villages, farms and working landscapes at a moment of profound change, recording ways of life on the cusp of disappearance.

Watercolour and landscape painting of the 1920s and 1930s will reveal a quieter, domestic sense of place, from the beach at Portslade viewed from David Jones' family home to Eric Ravilious and Ethelbert White's images of the suburban fringes where town meets countryside. Popular 'Shell' posters promoting exploration of Britain by car will also be on display.

Surrealism and the Second World War will form a central chapter of the exhibition. As conflict loomed and then engulfed Europe, the British landscape took on heightened symbolic meaning – something to defend, remember and reimagine. Dreamlike, unsettling works including Julian Trevelyan's *The Absentee Pig* (1943) will sit alongside war images by Graham Sutherland and Eric Ravilious. Meanwhile, Neo-Romantic artists including John Piper, Ceri Richards, John Craxton and Keith Vaughan produced intensely poetic responses to place. Many of these works first appeared in literary and poetry magazines, underscoring the deep connections between landscape painting, writing and verse.

The exhibition will conclude with postwar abstraction, focusing on artists working in places far from London – St Ives, Sussex and other creative enclaves – where landscape inspired new abstract languages. John Hubbard's *Cornish Landscape* (1968) and Alan Reynolds' *Farm Buildings, A View* (1958) as well as works by Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon, Ben Nicholson and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, will show how the physical experience of place continued to shape British art, even as representation gave way to form, rhythm and colour.

The exhibition will culminate with works that draw on the history of British landscape art and the inspiration of Turner and Whistler, to render a moving evocation of the meeting place of land, sea, culture, and emotion. These will include Norman Ackroyd's evocative etchings and aquatints of the coastlines of Western Scotland as he followed the locations of the Shipping Forecast, alongside Michael Andrews' final work, *Thames Painting: The Estuary* (1994).

Displayed alongside *British Landscapes: A Sense of Place* will be *Haroun Hayward: Path Through Trees*, a contemporary response to the exhibition. Hayward's vibrant new body of work draws on the artists and ideas explored in *British Landscapes*, weaving together art history, landscape and the cultural energy of rave, graffiti and 1990s dance music, offering a fresh perspective on how place continues to shape identity today.

British Landscapes: A Sense of Place will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue, written by Simon Martin, Director of Pallant House Gallery, together with a range of exhibition merchandise. A full public events programme of talks, lunches, tours, courses and workshops will also accompany the exhibition.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

For all press enquiries please contact Rees & Co:
Lauren Hare | lauren@reesandco.com | +44 (0)20 3137 8776

About Pallant House Gallery

Pallant House Gallery in Chichester is a leading UK museum that stimulates new ways of thinking about British art from 1900 to now. As well as a critically acclaimed exhibition programme and a public programme with inclusion at its heart, the Gallery houses one of the best collections of Modern British art in the country – all within the distinctive setting of an 18th century townhouse and a 21st century gallery.

pallant.org.uk

Become a Friend in 2026

Get unlimited free access to all the exhibitions, exclusive discounts in Pallant Café, and 10% off events throughout the season. With different membership options and gift membership from just £44 a year.

Ticketing

Visitors are encouraged to pre-book tickets, which include full access to the house and seasonal exhibition programme. Please visit pallant.org.uk to book tickets or call the Gallery on **+44 (0)12 4377 4557**.

Opening Hours

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am–5pm

Sunday/Bank Holidays: 10am–4pm

Monday: Closed

Café opening hours:

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am–5pm

Sunday: 10am–4pm

Monday: Closed

Contact

Pallant House Gallery

8–9 North Pallant

Chichester

West Sussex

PO191TJ

+44 (0)12 4377 4557

info@pallant.org.uk

Exhibition Supporters

Presenting Partner



Gallery Supporters

Principal Partner

DREW EATTS

EST. 1759

Civic Partner



Major Partner

SOFAS & STUFF