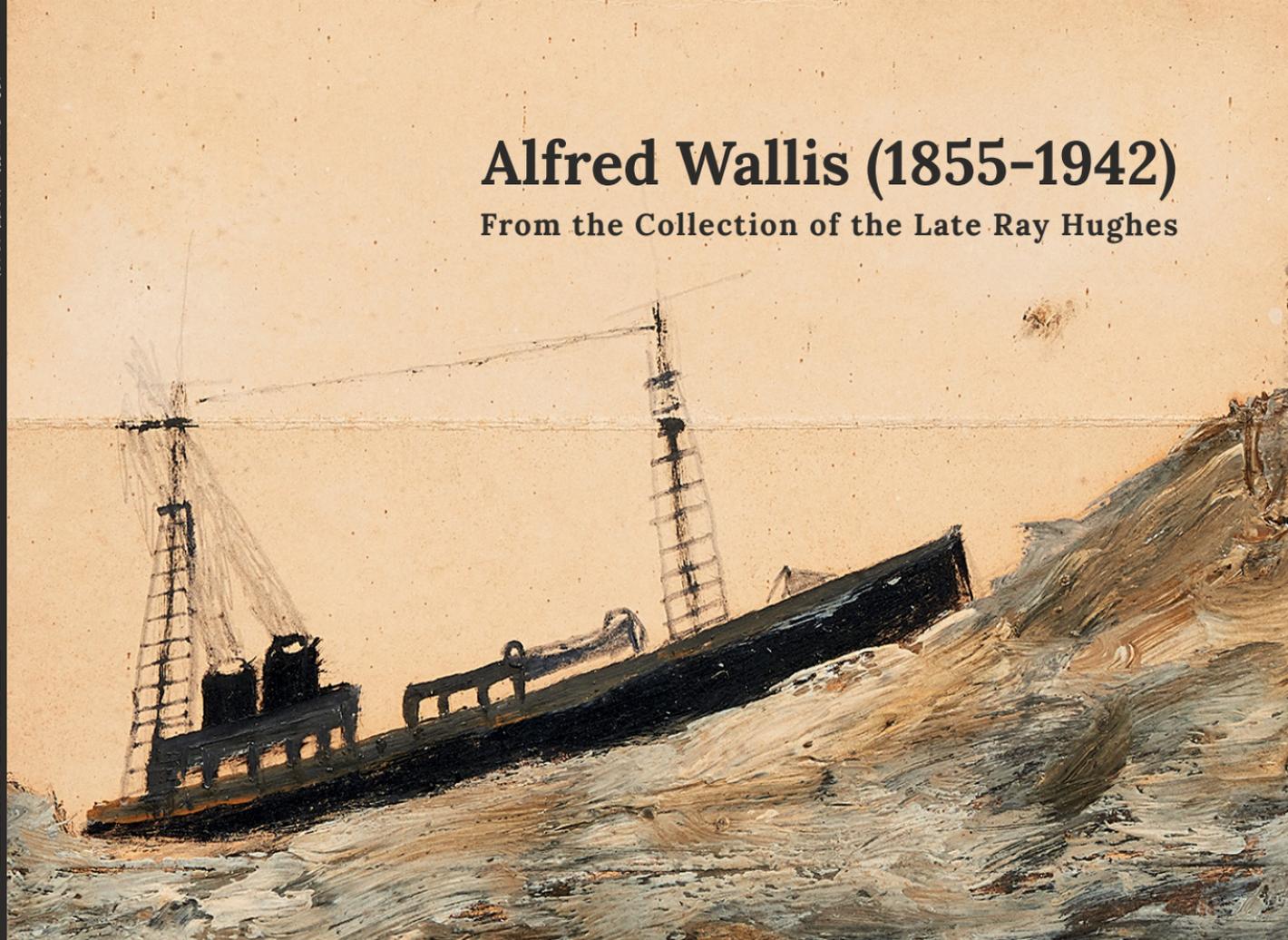


Alfred Wallis (1855-1942)

From the Collection of the Late Ray Hughes



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THE MAYOR GALLERY

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The Late Ray Hughes Collection (b.1946 – d.2017)

While reading the eulogy given by Evan Hughes at his father's Memorial last year in Sydney, one can only admire the life-long generous and passionate commitment that the Australian art dealer had achieved in his career spanning over 45 years. Ray Hughes spent his life travelling the world accompanied by his only son Evan, whose head is now filled with many beautiful memories and anecdotes:

Dad deeply loved the work and spirit of each and every one of his artists, Talent and Passion were all that mattered to him. More than anything he showed me the importance of artists as contributors to a civilised society. (...) Being an art dealer is not about selling things. It's about somehow acquiring a bunch of things that are worth considering.

Raymond Hughes opened his first enterprise, Gallery 1 Eleven in 1969 at the age of 23 in Brisbane *with virtually no capital but boundless enthusiasm and conviction. (...) Brisbane was not a cultural backwater as many would have you believe, the great Johnson gallery was one of the most impressive institutions nationwide.* He quickly befriended many artists, and the Czech Émigré Rudy Komon MBE an art dealer renowned for his wide taste in art (and wine), who soon became his mentor in Sydney¹. Hughes relocated to New South Wales city in 1988, travelling extensively in China, Africa, Europe, USA, and Indonesia. Hughes developed his legendary passion for international and national artists, including obscure or outsider artists.

Evan continues; *Ray always saw real painting. He saw it though its line; he could weigh the mettle of a painter through their drawings. William Robinson's majestic, whimsical line, Keith Looby's obsessive exact touch, Davida Allan's aggressive heroic screaming strokes, Joe Furlonger's fluid poetic soft touch with ink. There is little wonder that in Ray's glory years, the 1980s and 1990s his stable won five out of eleven Archibald Prizes plus a Moët and Chandon art prize, little wonder why in that same period he took twenty Australian artists to a Venice Biennale. Not once, but twice.*

It was during this period, that Ray Hughes acquired fervidly British artworks both for his gallery and his own collection. An avid collector of naïve paintings, Hughes acquired the works of Alfred Wallis (1855-1942), the Cornish fisherman turned artist, who was still then very much underrated, from the London Modern dealers he often visited, mostly from Mercury Gallery and Waddington Galleries.

“Ray helped people look at things”, said Evan in a 2015 interview before 90 works from their collection was put into auction. However, these exquisite works by Wallis acquired by Ray had been kept for his personal enjoyment, and now The Mayor Gallery is honoured to present this group of 9 artworks by Alfred Wallis to be offered for the first time in twenty years at The British Art Fair. The collection of the Late Ray Hughes also includes drawings by Roger Hilton CBE, prints by Sir Howard Hodgkin CH CBE, Allen Jones RA and Alan Green amongst others.

1 After his death in 1982 Ray Hughes bought the contents of the Komon Gallery

Plates

Black Boat

Oil and pencil on card
14.5 x 24 cm
5 3/4 x 9 1/2 inches

Provenance:
Ray Hughes Collection



Fishing Smack

Oil and pencil on card
15 x 22.5 cm
5 7/8 x 8 7/8 inches

Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Green Landscape (Rosewell Hill)

Oil and pencil on card
25.5 x 31 cm
10 x 12 1/4 inches
Signed upper right

Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Sailing Ship and Cliff

Oil and pencil on card
20 x 25.5 cm
7 7/8 x 10 inches

Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Sailing Ship and Steamer

Oil and pencil on card
18.5 x 27.5 cm
7 1/4 x 10 7/8 inches
Signed upper right

Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Trawler

Oil and pencil on card
17 x 22 cm
6 5/8 x 8 5/8 inches

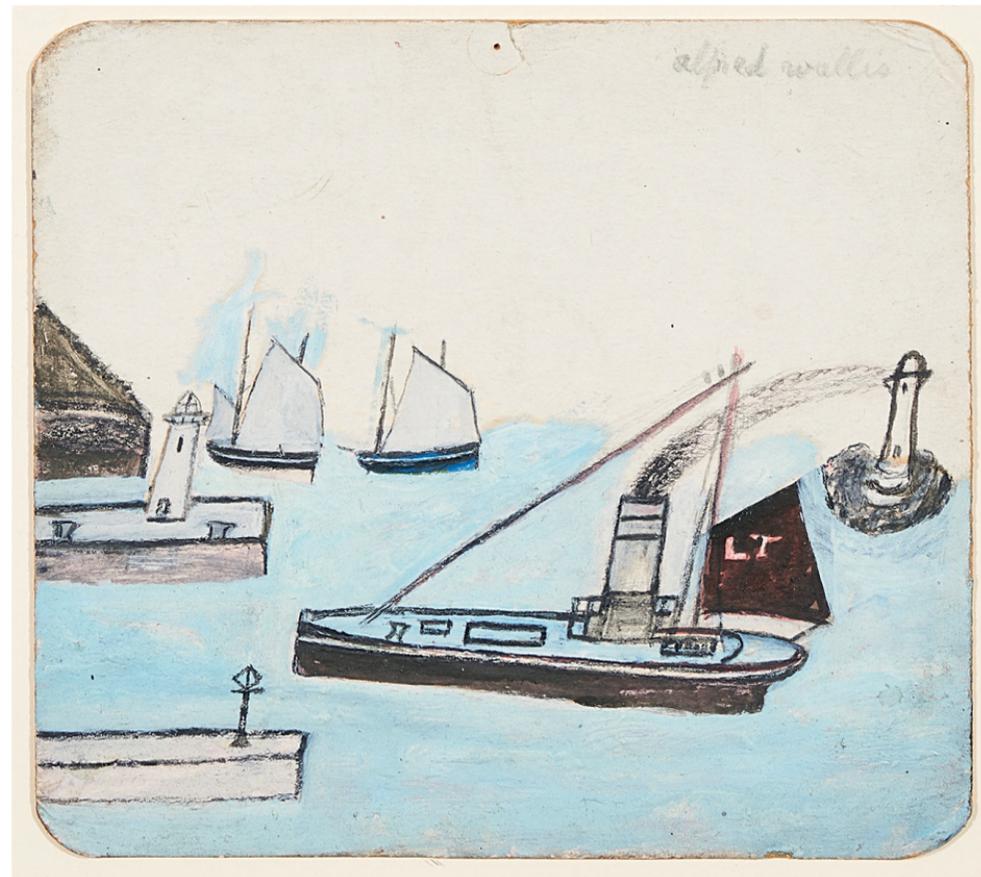
Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Untitled

Oil and pencil on card
17.5 x 20 cm
6 7/8 x 7 7/8 inches
Signed upper right

Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection



Landscape with gate and houses

Oil and pencil on card
18 x 27 cm
7 1/8 x 10 5/8 inches
Signed upper centre

Provenance:
Victor Waddington
The Waddington Galleries
Ray Hughes Collection





Untitled
Pencil on card, double sided
19.5 x 27 cm
7 5/8 x 10 5/8 inches
Signed upper left



Provenance:
Mercury Gallery
Ray Hughes Collection

Untitled

Oil and pencil on card
15.5 x 21.5 cm
6 1/8 x 8 1/2 inches
Signed upper right

Provenance:
The Waddington Galleries
Ray Hughes Collection



List of Works

- | | | | |
|-------|--|-------|--|
| p. 9 | <i>Black Boat</i>
Oil and pencil on card
14.5 x 24 cm
5 3/4 x 9 1/2 inches | p. 19 | <i>Trawler</i>
Oil and pencil on card
17 x 22 cm
6 5/8 x 8 5/8 inches |
| p. 11 | <i>Fishing Smack</i>
Oil and pencil on card
15 x 22.5 cm
5 7/8 x 8 7/8 inches | p. 21 | <i>Untitled</i>
Oil and pencil on card
17.5 x 20 cm
6 7/8 x 7 7/8 inches |
| p. 13 | <i>Green Landscape (Rosewell Hill)</i>
Oil and pencil on card
25.5 x 31 cm
10 x 12 1/4 inches | p. 23 | <i>Landscape with gate and houses</i>
Oil and pencil on card
18 x 27 cm
7 1/8 x 10 5/8 inches |
| p. 15 | <i>Sailing Ship and Cliff</i>
Oil and pencil on card
20 x 25.5 cm
7 7/8 x 10 inches | p. 25 | <i>Untitled</i>
Pencil on card
19.5 x 27 cm
7 5/8 x 10 5/8 inches |
| p. 17 | <i>Sailing Ship and Steamer</i>
Oil and pencil on card
18.5 x 27.5 cm
7 1/4 x 10 7/8 inches | p. 27 | <i>Untitled</i>
Oil and pencil on card
15.5 x 21.5 cm
6 1/8 x 8 1/2 inches |

Alfred Wallis Biography

Alfred's parents, Charles and Jane Wallis, were from Penzance in Cornwall and moved to Devonport, Devon to find work in 1850 where Alfred and his brother Charles were born. Later, when Jane Wallis died, the family returned to Penzance. On leaving school Alfred was apprenticed to a basketmaker before becoming a mariner in the merchant service by the early 1870s. He sailed on schooners across the North Atlantic between Penzance and Newfoundland.

Wallis married Susan Ward at St Mary's Church in Penzance in 1876, when he was 20 and his wife was 41. He became stepfather to her five children. He continued as a deep-sea fisherman on the Newfoundland run in the early days of his marriage allowing him to earn a good wage. After the death of his two infant children Alfred switched to local fishing and labouring in Penzance.

The family moved to St. Ives, Cornwall, in 1890 where he established himself as a marine stores dealer, buying scrap iron, sails, rope and other items. In 1912, his business, "Wallis, Alfred, Marine Stores Dealer" closed and Alfred kept busy with odd jobs and worked for a local antiques dealer, Mr Armour, which provided some insight into the world of objets d'art.

Following his wife's death in 1922, Wallis took up painting, as he later told Jim Ede, "for company". He was self-taught, and never had an art lesson.

His paintings are an excellent example of naïve art; perspective is ignored and an object's scale is often based on its relative importance in the scene, giving many of his paintings a map-like quality. Wallis painted seascapes from memory, in large part because the world of sail he knew was being replaced by steamships. As he put it, his subjects were "what use To Bee out of my memory what we may never see again..." Having little money, Wallis improvised with materials, mostly painting

on cardboard ripped from packing boxes and using a limited palette of paint bought from ships' chandlers.

In many ways, Wallis' timing was excellent. In 1928, a few years after he had started painting, Ben Nicholson and Kit Wood came to St Ives and established an artist colony. They were delighted to find Wallis and celebrated his direct approach to image-making. Nicholson commented later that 'to Wallis, his paintings were never paintings but actual events'. Wallis was propelled into a circle of some of the most progressive artists working in Britain in the 1930s. The influence, however, was all one way; Wallis continued to paint as he always had. Nicholson later termed Wallis' art 'something that has grown out of the Cornish seas and earth and which will endure'.

Through Nicholson and Wood, Wallis was introduced to Jim Ede who promoted his work in London. Despite this attention, Wallis sold few paintings and continued to live in poverty until he died in the Madron workhouse near Penzance. He is buried in Barnoon cemetery, overlooking St Ives Porthmeor beach and the Tate St Ives gallery.

Wallis believed that his neighbours resented his fame, believing him to be secretly rich. In one of his last letters, to Ede, he wrote:

I am thinkin of givin up The paints all to gether i have nothin But Persecution and gelecy [jealousy] and if you can com [come] down for an hour or 2 you can take them with you and give what they are worf [worth] afterwards. These drawers and shopes are all jealous of me.

Examples of Wallis' paintings can be seen at Kettle's Yard (Jim Ede's home) and at the Tate St Ives.

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