

Roger Fry

Spring in Province, 1933

oil on canvas
79.6 cm x 65.0 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery,
Founders' Fund
VAG 33.9



Photo: Teresa Healy, Vancouver Art Gallery

Roger Fry

Spring in Province, 1933

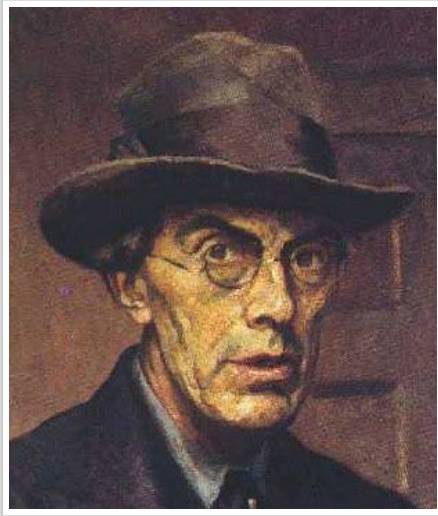


Image source: Ian G. Lumsden. *Bloomsbury Painters and their Circle*. Fredericton: Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 1977.

Artist's Biography

Nationality: British
Born: 1886-12-14, London
Died: 1934-09-09

Roger Eliot Fry (14 December 1866 - 9 September 1934) was an English artist and critic, and a member of the Bloomsbury group.

Born in London, he studied at King's College, Cambridge, where he was a member of the Cambridge Apostles. After taking a first in the Natural Science 'tripos', he went to Paris and then Italy to study art and eventually he specialized in landscape painting. In 1910, he organized an exhibition for the Post-Impressionists, the first in London. It was patronized by Lady Ottoline Morrell, with whom Fry had a fleeting romantic attachment. In 1913 he founded the Omega Workshops, a design workshop whose members included Vanessa Bell and her lover, Duncan Grant. He was later made The Slade Professor of Arts at Cambridge, a position Fry had much desired.

Source: "Roger Eliot Fry" *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. December 11, 2005. <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

Artistic Context

Nationality: British

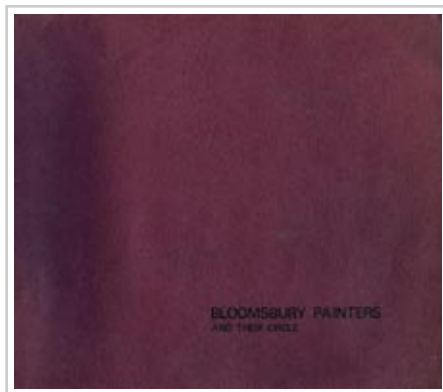
Training: Académie Julian, Paris; Studied under Francis Bate

Group: Bloomsbury Group; London Group; 19th century; 20th century

Peers: Duncan Grant; Vanessa Bell; Stanley Spencer

Provenance: purchased from Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd. by Charles Holmes on behalf of the Founders in 1933

Roger Fry
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Bibliography

Bloomsbury Painters and Their Circle.
 Publication

[transcription]

FRY, Roger E. (1866-1934)
Spring in Provence c. 1920

oil on canvas
 31 1/4" x 25 1/2"
 Inscr.: Roger Fry, lower left
 Coll.: The Vancouver Art Gallery



Modern British Art from the Permanent Collection
 Publication

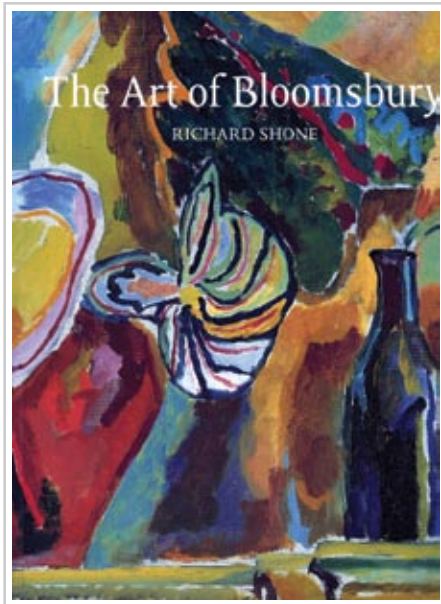
[transcription of excerpt]

The works on display represent a cross section of art produced in Britain in the modern period from 1900 to 1960. This was an important period for British art, one in which there was a struggle between tradition and innovation. European avant-garde ideas were embraced and the period between the two World Wars saw many changes in British art. More clearly discernible styles emerged and previously ignored influences from the continent (especially France) became evident. Fear of war led to insecurity and a consequent sense of chaos which provided new stimuli for artists. Alongside images of death and destruction, British romanticism as seen in the work of Graham Sutherland and Stanley Spencer, two of the most important artists in Britain at that time.

Roger Fry

Roger Fry (1866-1934) organized two exhibitions of Post-Impressionist painting which featured the work of Cézanne and other modern artists in London 1910 and 1912. He encouraged artists to experiment with form and structure as Cézanne had done. Primarily an art critic, Fry stressed the importance of strengthening the relatively weak links British artists had with European artists. After World War I, he spent much of his time painting in the south of France and his later works show his concern for formal properties. *Spring in Provence*, (1933), betrays Fry's interest in the work of Cézanne.

Roger Fry
Spring in Province, 1933



The Art of Bloomsbury
 Publication

[transcription of excerpt]

ROGER FRY

139 *Spring in Provence* 1931
 Oil on canvas 79.6 x 65 cm (31 3/8 x 25 5/8)
 Inscribed 'Roger Fry' b.l.
Vancouver Art Gallery Founders Fund

With his friends the writers Charles and Marie Maury, Fry acquired the Mas d'Angirany in early 1931. It was (and still is under then name Mas Gavon) a typical Provencal farmhouse on the outskirts of St. Remy near the celebrated Greco-Roman triumphal arch and mausoleum known as Les Antiques, the asylum of St. Paul-de Mausol, where Van Gogh was confined in 1889-90, and the spectacular remains of the Hellenic Roman town of Glanum (see no. 140). Visible from the terrace of the modest two-storey house, through olive, ilex and cypress trees, is the range of the Alpilles dominated by the pointed profile of Mont Gaussier. Fry furnished the house in April 1931 and wrote of developments to Vanessa Bell: '[Maury] has picked up four great stone pillars which make the supports for the treille [vine arbour] which will come when the vines grow. I got in Beaucaire two huge earthenware vases which stand between the pillars on either side of the great stone table which is in the centre. And the view is inconceivably lovely' (18 April 1931: TGA). Fry sent a drawing of the view in his letter to Bell and, later, some photographs (fig. 129) of the house. These show the stone pillar and vase on the terrace as depicted by Fry from a doorway beyond the right of the photograph. The absence of the vine trellis for both no. 139 and the photographs is evidence of a date of 1931 for the painting.



The framing device of doors and windows, here frankly espoused, is more frequent in Bell's and Grant's work than it is in Fry's. He preferred to go out into the landscape itself and was indefatigable in his search for the appropriate motif, greatly helped by his learning to drive in 1928. In his letters he often chides Bell for her relatively unadventurous attitude to landscape and she herself admitted that 'I don't think I'm nearly as enterprising as you (or Duncan) about painting anything I don't find at my door' (Bell to Fry, 16 September 1921: TGA). Richard Morphet has written of Fry's ability 'simultaneously to suggest both the immediate materiality and the endurance through

extended time of the phenomena he represents' (see Morphet 1980, p.487). *Spring in Provence* perfectly encapsulates this in the most unaffected and accessible way as the viewer is drawn from the immediate here-and-now of the chair, through a succession of repoussoirs—pillars, trees, roof—to the outlandish silhouette of the distant mountains. The 'paradise' Fry found here, combining domestic life, creativity and timeless landscape was, however, short-lived. Professional obligations in London and elsewhere curbed the amount of time he was able to spend at the Mas D'Angirany before his unexpected death in 1934.

Prov: Bt from Agnew's by Vancouver Art Gallery 1933
Ex: *Pictures by Roger Fry*, Agnew's 1933 (20); Fredericton 1977 (18. repr.)
Lit: 'Mr. Roger Fry's Pictures at Messrs. Agnew's, *Apollo*. 18 Aug. 1933 (p.125).

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Further Reading

Falkenheim, Jacqueline. *Roger Fry and the Beginnings of Formalist Art Criticism*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980.

Roger Fry. Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1976.

Shone, Richard. *The Art of Bloomsbury*. London: Tate Gallery, 1999.

Spalding, Frances. *Roger Fry: Art and Life*. London: Elek, 1980.

Woolf, Virginia. *Roger Fry: A Biography*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1940.

Exhibition History

Exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery

British Painting. May 1970.

The Founders' Collection: To Capitalize an Impression. March 3, 1979 - April 23, 1979.

Roger Fry In Province. April 17, 1991 - September 17, 1991.

Exploring the Collection: British Modern. December 11, 1993 - May 15, 1994.

Conflicting Views: Landscape Painting and the Founders' Collection. January 25, 1996 - May 5, 1999.

75 Years of Collecting: British Masters, Group of Seven and Pop Icons. February 4, 2006 - May 14, 2006.

Selected Exhibitions outside of the Vancouver Art Gallery

Agnew's, London. *Pictures by Roger Fry*. 1933.

Arts Centre of Greater Victoria, Victoria. November 1952.

Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton. *Bloomsbury Painters and their Circle*. November 16, 1976- November 1977.

Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham. 1987.

Roger Fry
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Archival History

Bill of Sale
Acquisition Record
1933-07-04

[transcription of excerpt]

London July 1933

The Vancouver Art Gallery
(per Sir Charles Holmes)

To The Agnew Sons Ltd. Dr.

July 4, 1933 To the Picture by Roger Fry
Spring in Province
No. 20 in Exhibition

[33.9 in pencil]

£31.10.

21 July 1933
Received with thanks
For Thos. Agnew & Sons Limited



Charles Holmes Correspondence
Correspondence
1933-07-07

[transcription of excerpt]

PHOTOGRAPH
DON'T CRUSH OR BEND

H.A. Stone Esquire
Vancouver Art Gallery
1145 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Stone

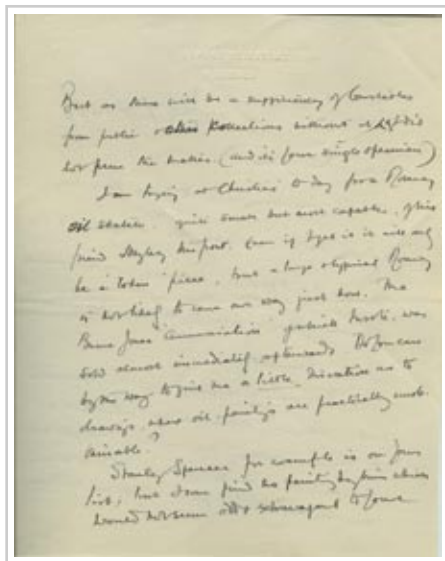
I was delighted to have your letter of June 20th and will open a special title as for the Hopper balance out quickly and propose to make all smaller purchases for the present.

There was a suggestion at the committee for the forthcoming exhibition of British art at the Royal Academy this winter that you be asked to allow the Constable study to remain here 'till next spring for inclusion in the show.

I am trying at Christies Wednesday for a Romney oil sketch, quite small but capable. Even if Fry will be a 'token piece' but a large typical Romney is nothing to come our way just now.

Roger Fry

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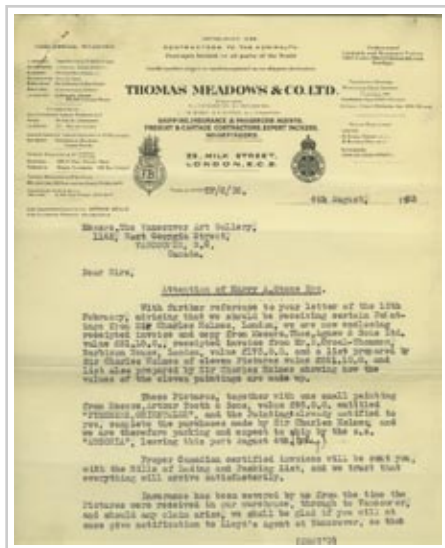


The Burne-Jones was sold almost immediately afterwards. Do you care to give me a little direction as to drawings where oil paintings are practically most valuable?

Stanley Spencer for example is on our list but I can find no painting by him which does not seem oddly extravagant to your

committee. But there are some quite admirable drawings which would represent him for the moment. I can find a recent Paul Nash which would really suit you. They have become mere geometry. I know of an earlier one in private possession which I might secure as the owner will be moving house, and is likely to consider it.

Meanwhile, for the modern I have bought a View in Provence from the Roger Fry Exhibition. He is such a prominent and influential figure in the art world that his work always has an interest, and this in my opinion is not the best thing he has ever painted, but a summary of what contemporary landscape is trying to do. I have also got a vivid little Pyrenees landscape by the late J.D. Innes. The remarkable genius who died young, I had to pay 95 pounds. The Fry was only 30 pounds. It will anyhow be necessary to a historical series as well as fresh and lively in themselves and make a pleasant contrast to the more sober examples of the 18th Century.



Shipping Correspondence

Correspondence

1933-08-04

[transcription of excerpt]

THOMAS MEADOWS & CO. LTD.

SHIPPING, INSURANCE & PASSENGER AGENTS,
FREIGHT & CARTAGE CONTRACTORS, EXPORT PACKERS,
WHARFINGERS.

35 MILK STREET
LONDON E.C.2

4th August, 1933

Messrs. The Vancouver Art Gallery,
1145, West Georgia Street,
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada.

Dear Sirs,

Attention of Harry A. Stone Esq.

With further reference to your letter of the 15th February, advising that we should, be receiving certain Paintings from Sir Charles Holmes, London, we are now enclosing receipted, invoice and copy from Messrs. Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd. value £31.10.0., receipted, invoice from Mr. D. Croal-Thomson, Barbizon House, London, value £175.0.0. and a list prepared, by Sir Charles Holmes of eleven Pictures value £291.10.0, and, list also prepared lay Sir Charles Holmes showing how the values of the eleven paintings are made up,

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These Pictures, together with one small painting from Messrs. Arthur Tooth & Sons, value £95.0,0. entitled "PYRENEES, ORIENTALES", and the Paintings already notified to you, complete the purchases made by Sir Charles Holmes, and we are therefore packing and, expect to ship by the s.s. "AUSONIA", leaving this port August 4th. [today in pencil]

Proper Canadian certified invoices will be sent you, with the Bills of Lading and Packing List, and we trust that everything will arrive satisfactorily.

Insurance has been covered by us from the time the Pictures were received in our warehouse, through to Vancouver, and should any claim arise, we shall be glad if you will at once give notification to Lloyd's Agent at Vancouver,

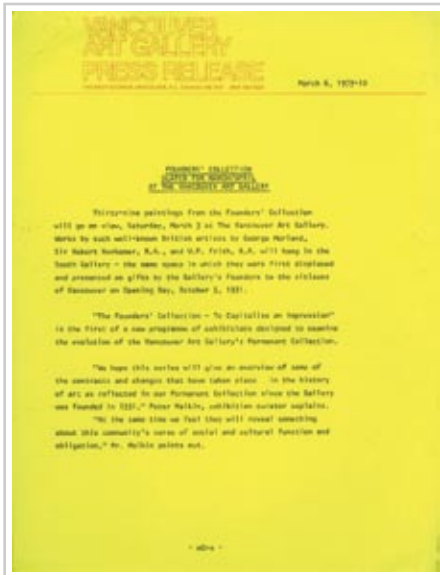
(CONT'D)

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so that a proper survey can be held.

Yours truly,
THOMAS MEADOWS & COMPANY LIMITED

P.S. We have now received receipt and Invoice from Messrs. Arthur Tooth & Sons, and attach same hereto.



Press Release
Miscellaneous History
1979-03-06

[transcription]

VANCOUVER
ART GALLERY
PRESS RELEASE

1145 WEST GEORGIA, VANCOUVER, BC., CANADA V6E 3H2 (604) 682-5621

March 6 1979-10

**FOUNDERS' COLLECTION
SLATED FOR MARCH/APRIL
AT THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY**

Thirty-nine paintings from the Founders' Collection will go on view, Saturday, March 3 at The Vancouver Art Gallery. Works by such well-known British artists by George Morland, Sir Hubert Herkomer, R.A., and W.P. Frith, R.A. will hang in the South Gallery—the same space in which they were first displayed and presented as gifts by the Gallery's Founders to the citizens of Vancouver on Opening Day, October 5, 1931.

"The Founders' Collection—To Capitalize an Impression" is the first of a new programme of exhibitions designed to examine the evolution of the Vancouver Art Gallery's Permanent Collection.

"We hope this series will give an overview of some of the contrasts and changes that have taken place in the history of art as reflected in our Permanent Collection since the Gallery was founded in 1931," Peter Malkin, exhibition curator explains.

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"At the same time we feel they will reveal something about this community's sense of social and cultural function and obligation," Mr. Malkin points out.

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Mr. H.A. Stone, one of eleven founders and first president of the Vancouver Art Gallery Association, led the campaign to establish a public art gallery and acquire private funds to provide a nucleus of works for a Permanent Collection. For Mr. Stone, this project was "a great cultural adventure" which would prove itself "an incentive and stimulus for the cultural commonweal of the whole community."

In April 1931, Mr. Stone and Charles H. Scott, commissioned by the Founders to assemble a collection "good in quality and comprehensive in appeal" set off for Europe to purchase, among others, single examples of British art which would be unique on the American continent while at the same time aiming at a collection that would provide a history of British and Canadian painting that would give the Gallery "an individuality and completeness which would be lacking were another policy pursued." It was also their intent that their purchases would, over the years, "gain in reputation and value."

Financially assisted by the Government of B.C. through the B.C. Cultural Fund and the B.C. Lottery Fund, the exhibition continues through April 22.

Reference:
Dorothy Metcalfe
Information Officer
Local 20

- 30 -

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