

PRESS RELEASE March 2010

Surrealism in Sussex PART OF THE SURREAL FRIENDS SEASON

29 May to 5 September 2010

Pallant House Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition as part of the 'Surreal Friends' season of international exhibitions inspired by the rich tradition of Surrealism in Sussex including works patronised by the famous benefactor and resident of nearby West Dean, Edward James (1907-1984), and key pieces by the photographer and model Lee Miller (1907-1977), and the painter Roland Penrose (1900-1984) who lived at Farley Farm in Chiddingly, East Sussex.

Edward James and Roland Penrose were pivotal in bringing the European avant-garde to the attention of the British public and artistic sector at a time when most public institutions in Britain pointedly ignored modern art: James through his extensive patronage, and Penrose through his curatorial and collecting activities.

Roland Penrose and Lee Miller were part of the Parisian art scene in the 1930s and forged friendships with Pablo Picasso, Paul Éluard, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Leonora Carrington and many others. Penrose with Andre Breton organised the first International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in London in 1936, to which Edward James was a key lender. 'Surrealism in Sussex' celebrates this surrealist heritage through a glimpse into lives of these three figures.

Edward James' collection, like Penrose's, was one of the most important bodies of Surrealist art in Europe. The new exhibition at Pallant House Gallery includes key pieces by many of the artists he collected such as Leonor Fini, René Magritte and Salvador Dalí, the first 'surrealist' he supported on a grand scale. James also created some of the most successful examples of fantasy architecture and interior decoration of the 1930s.

In London, James transformed his mid-Georgian Wimpole Street home into a highly theatrical spectacle. This exhibition features several of the pieces he included there such as Dalí's 'lobster telephones', and the carpet James designed for his wife, the Viennese ballerina Tilly Losch, in which he immortalised Tilly's wet footprint by having it woven into the carpet that led from her bathroom.

INFORMATION | IMAGES | INTERVIEWS

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Pallant House Gallery
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Charity No. 293093



Salvador Dalí, Lobster Telephone and 'Mae West's Lips sofa' designed c.1938 by Salvador Dalí and Edward James.

In West Sussex, James transformed his family's Lutyen's designed hunting lodge, Monkton House, into a Surrealist hermitage. He fused traditional architectural elements and stylistic influences and integrated the past, the present and the world of fantasy in pieces such as the highly celebrated 'Mae West Lips Sofa' which he placed there, included in the show.

Roland Penrose was born into a wealthy Quaker family, and after training as an architect at Queens' College, Cambridge, he went to Paris in 1922 to study painting and began a career as a writer and surrealist painter. As well as his contribution to the International Surrealist Exhibition which proved to be a seminal marker for British surrealism Penrose also wrote the first major English biography of Pablo Picasso and with the help of a loan from James for the 1936 exhibition, was responsible for bringing the work of Picasso to the eye of the British public. Penrose's collection included masterpieces by Picasso, Miró, De Chirico, Ernst, Magritte, Tanguy, Arp, Dalí several of which are included in the show.

Cont.

Tues-Sat 10am-5pm
Thurs 10am-8pm
Sun 12.30-5pm
closed Mondays
Adult £7.50, Child £2.30
Stdnt £4, Family £17

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The Gulbenkian Prize 2007
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In 1937 he met the photographer **Lee Miller** at a surrealist fancy dress ball and they married in 1947, the year in which he co-founded, with Herbert Read, the Institute of **Contemporary Art (ICA)** in London. Lee Miller was an American from Poughkeepsie, New York, who began her career as a top fashion model. In 1929 she became the lover, pupil and collaborator of the surrealist photographer **Man Ray** in Paris, and later ran her own studio in New York. Her surrealist images and hauntingly disturbing work as a Second World War combat photographer have earned her a key place in the history of art.

Penrose and Miller had a wide circle of artistic and intellectual friends and entertained many of them at their Sussex home, **Farley Farm in Chiddingly** including **Max Ernst, Joan Miró, Man Ray, Pablo Picasso** and **Leonora Carrington**. The exhibition also contains examples of Miller's photographs which document these many and various artistic friendships.

Guest Curator, Dr Sharon-Michi Kusonoki, Head of House, Gallery, Archives and Collections at West Dean will give a talk about the exhibition at Pallant House Gallery on Thursday 15th July 2010 at 6pm. To book tickets and for further details, contact the Gallery on 01243 774557.

Notes to Editors:

'**Surrealism Laid Bare**', a three day symposium at West Dean College examining Surrealism's claim to emancipate human desire will take place from Friday 18th June 2010, 10am. To book tickets and for further details, please contact West Dean College on +44 (0)1243 811301

'Surrealism in Sussex' is part of a series of major international exhibitions and events entitled 'Surreal Friends'. For more information go to the new satellite website www.surrealfriends.com

The programme of exhibitions has been timed to coincide with the Mexican '**Year of the Nation**' – the double celebration of the **centenary of the Mexican Revolution** and the **Bicentenary of Mexican independence** which fall this year.

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