

Martin Bloch (1883-1954) was born in Neisse, Silesia (now Nysa, Poland). He initially studied music and architecture in Berlin, but later took up painting and was largely self-taught.

Between 1947 and 1954, Bloch frequently visited Wales, travelling and painting with Joseph Herman in Ystradgynlais, Bangor and Bethesda.

Throughout his career, Bloch invested his work with an emotional complexity that reflected both his response to his private domestic sphere and to the broader political upheavals of his time. His move to London represented an enormous interruption to the career he had established in Berlin. Though German Expressionist painting was not well understood or critically received in London, Bloch was able to offer his students at Camberwell School of Art an alternative approach to teaching. He was to impress upon his students that 'it is not the drawing that leads to colour but the colour that leads to drawing'.

Martin Bloch dedicated his life solely to teaching art and painting. Before the beginning of World War II Bloch fled Berlin to escape Nazi persecution and settled in London, where he reopened his private art school.

Bloch survived the Blitz, and internment as an enemy alien on the Isle of Mann, and in the last years leading up to his death, in 1954, he taught at Camberwell School of Art in London.

Towards the end of his life Bloch worked in both North and South Wales and MOMA Wales, at Machynlleth, offers an ideal setting, in its position at a mid point between these two locations.

Bloch became deeply imbued in the atmosphere Welsh landscape, particularly around Bangor which he first visited in 1947. In the early 50s he came to Ystradgynlais, to visit his friend, Joseph Herman and in 1951 Bloch contributed a large Welsh subject painting, Down From Bethesda Quarry (National Gallery of Wales, Cardiff) to the Festival of Britain exhibition.

Both aspects of his painting style and his single minded approach to being an artist, had some considerable influence on a generation of Welsh painters, the most notable of which was Peter Prendergast.

The selection of drawings and canvasses at the Tabernacl concentrates on the late period of Bloch's work; the exhibition shows his consummate skill as a colourist and also, with the Welsh drawings, provides a fascinating insight into how Wales and Welsh life was seen through this truly European artist's eyes.

From Bernard Evans's website

First studied the violin, then architecture; finally art at Munich under Wölfflin 1905 and at Berlin under Corinth and George Mosson. First one-man show at the Paul Cassirer Gallery, Berlin, 1911. Worked in Paris 1912; visited Spain 1913 and again there 1914-18, stranded by the war, working with Pascin. Retrospective exhibition at the Paul Cassirer Gallery 1920; exhibited with the Expressionists in

Berlin and elsewhere in Germany 1920–33. Ran an art school in Berlin 1923–33, first with Anton Kerschbaumer, then from 1926 with Schmidt-Rottluff; spent most summers in Italy with pupils 1924–30. Left Germany 1933, spending a year in Denmark before settling in England; naturalized British subject 1947. Ran an art school with Roy de Maistre 1936–9. First English one-man shows at Cambridge and Oxford 1938; also exhibited at the A.I.A., the London Group and the Ben Uri Art Gallery. Painted mainly in London, Dorset and Wales from 1939. Visited America 1948, teaching at Minneapolis and exhibiting there and at Princeton. Travelling exhibition in western Canada 1952–3. Died 19 June 1954 in London. Memorial exhibitions at the Beaux Arts Gallery 1955, Arts Council, London and tour 1957, German travelling exhibition 1958, Kaplan Gallery 1959 and Ben Uri Gallery 1963.

Martin Bloch was a British painter and teacher of German birth. The son of a Jewish factory-owner, Bloch studied architecture in Berlin in 1902, aesthetics with Heinrich Wölfflin in Munich in 1905 and drawing with Lovis Corinth in Berlin in 1907. As a painter he was largely self-taught. His first one-man exhibition (1911) took place at the Paul Cassirer Gallery, Berlin. In 1912 he went to Paris, where he worked in Montparnasse and became a friend of Jules Pascin. The years 1914–18 were spent in Spain. In 1923 he founded the Bloch-Kerschbaumer school in Berlin with Anton Kerschbaumer, whose place was later taken by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. In 1933 Bloch was declared a 'degenerate artist' by the Nazis, and in 1934 he fled with his family to Denmark, and thence to London, where, with Roy de Maistre, he opened his School of Contemporary Painting. In later years he taught at Camberwell School of Art. (From Tate Gallery The Modern British Paintings)

Martin Bloch

MOMA Wales

What's On Wales

Times:

Prices: Free

Date: 08 Dec 08 - 07 Mar 09

MARTIN BLOCH EXHIBITION



Martin Bloch 8 December 2008 - 7 March 2009

MOMA WALES

Y Tabernacl

Heol Penrallt

Machynlleth

Powys SY20 8AJ

Tel 01654 703355

The most recent opportunity to see the work of Martin Bloch 1883-1954 was a retrospective held at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia: and this eye opening event (in 2007-8) made abundantly clear how important Bloch's late period was. For this reason it is particularly appropriate that the current exhibition of Bloch's paintings and drawings concentrates on his output from between 1945 and 1954.

Martin Bloch, was a very well travelled man, his oeuvre spans Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Denmark, and the USA, as well as England and Wales.

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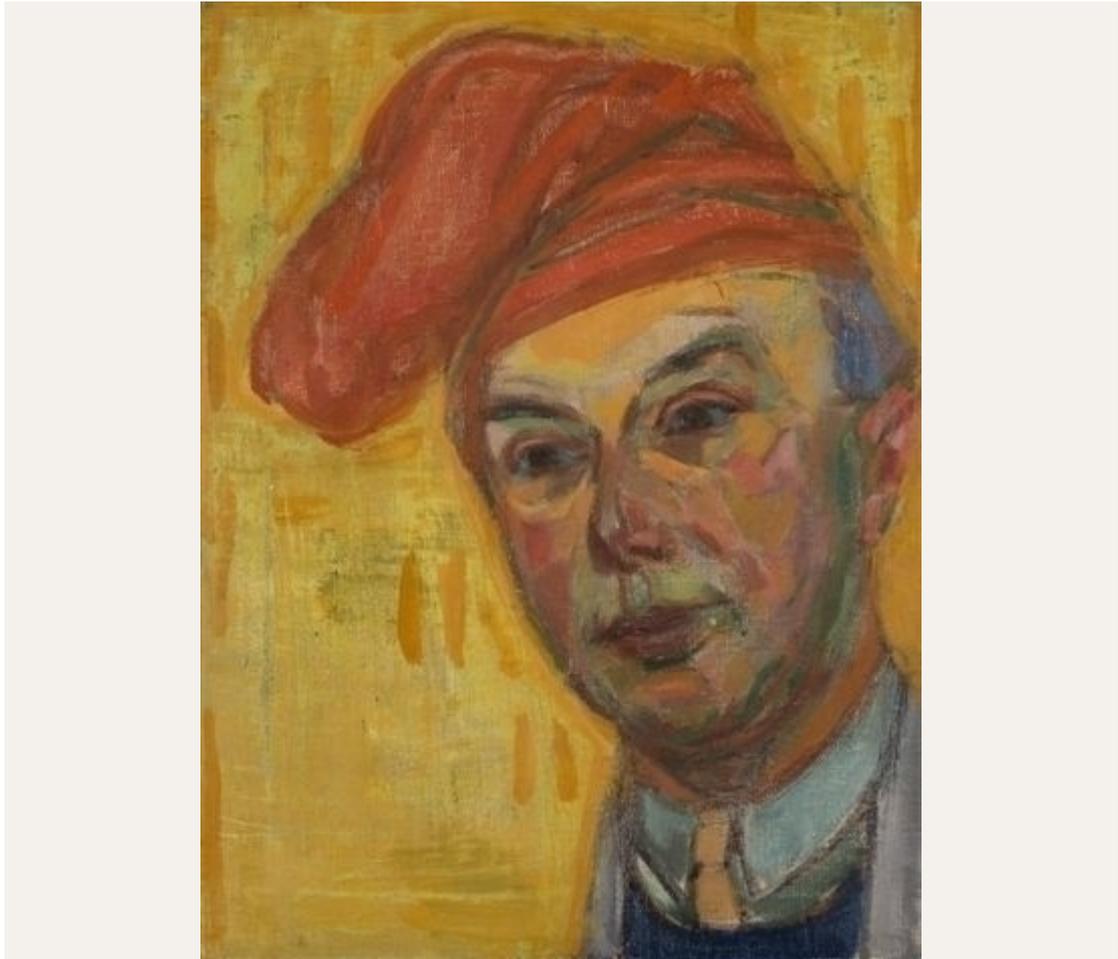
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Peter Rossiter (artist/curator)

Bangor at nightfall

Estuary of the river Dee



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