

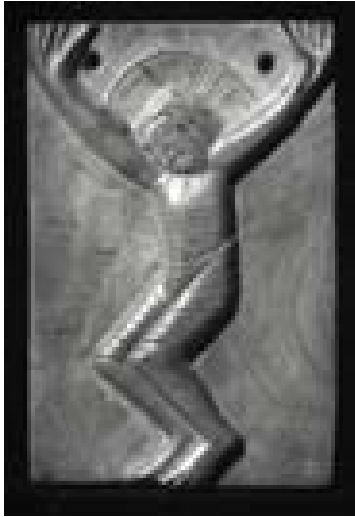
A Personal Collection of Poetic and Spiritual
Paintings, Drawings and Engravings

DAVID JONES
1895-1974



MONNOW VALLEY ARTS CENTRE





DAVID JONES 1895–1974

A Personal Collection of Poetic and Spiritual Paintings, Drawings and Engravings

Introduction by Derek Shiel

Exhibition organised by Monnow Valley Arts Centre
with the assistance of Wolseley Fine Arts

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front cover: *Landscape at Capel-y-ffin* 1926, cat. no. 3

Back cover: *Pigotts Farm* 1930, cat. no. 6

Left: *Nant Honddu* 1925, cat. no. 2

Above: *Crucifix* c. 1923–4, cat. no. 1

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MMVII

The Stadlen Collection of Paintings, Drawings and Engravings by David Jones 1895–1974

David Jones is an astonishingly varied and subtle artist as well as being a major poet, yet despite his outstanding gifts, his paintings, engravings, inscriptions or poems and essays are not generally known. As a result, he has not received the degree of acclaim his work undoubtedly merits.

This collection has been formed over years by Mr and Mrs Stadlen and contains examples of almost every aspect of Jones's visual work, including one of his extremely rare, small-scale wood-carvings. While a student at Cambridge, Frances Stadlen became interested in David Jones, initially as a poet. Then, on a visit to Kettles' Yard – a fastidious collection of 20th century paintings, sculpture, drawings and objects, situated near the University – she was able to study superb paintings by Jones as well as to speak to the owner, Jim Ede, who had for a long time been one of Jones's intimate circle of friends.

After serving as a private in the First World War and only months before graduating from the Westminster School of Art, Jones was taken in January 1921 to meet Eric Gill, the sculptor, engraver and letter designer. Several years previously Gill had converted to Roman Catholicism and was now working among a group of Roman

Catholic craftsmen, dedicated to producing religious objects, in the Sussex village of Ditchling.

In June Jones completed his second period at an art school, in September he converted to Rome and by the beginning of 1922 had gone to live and work at Ditchling. Once there, he was quickly enlisted as a rather uncouth engraver to work for the community's St. Dominic's Press. Over the next three years the bulk of his artistic output was for the Press and in consequence his skill as a wood-engraver greatly increased. Meanwhile, through his attachment to the Gill family, he and their second daughter, Petra, became engaged. Eric Gill turned out to be the ideal mentor for David Jones and it was through following his advice – or example – that Jones learned to engrave, although actually taught by another community member, Desmond Chute.

Before long Jones also began to explore the use of lettering in making his small wood-carvings. Jones often made these carvings as gifts and the two holes in the carving exhibited suggest it was worn as a pendant by a woman or perhaps by a priest when celebrating Mass. It is of Christ crucified but without a cross. Above the angularity of the bent legs turned to one side rises the trunk of the figure, his arms

symmetrically outspread like the main branches of a tree, ending in big open hands, his fingers forming smaller branches or themselves leaves. The curve of the halo is reminiscent of the sun caught between tree limbs, its rays echoing those of the sun's illumination.

By the end of 1924 Gill and Jones had severed their connection with Ditchling, Jones following the Gills to Wales, where they had already set up home amongst the Black Mountains, in a disused monastery at Capel-y-ffin. One of the earliest wood-engravings in the Collection (1924) connects image with word. It was designed by Jones as a Christmas card soon after his arrival in Wales. The Virgin and Child lie in a sort of furrow, the heads of ox and ass reverentially lowered on either side among tufts of grass and a solitary bird. Beneath is a prayer, clumsily and idiosyncratically set down:

By the mystery of thy holy incarnation deliver us.

O Virgin Mother! He whom the whole world cannot hold was enclosed in thy womb.

This prayer is not easy to decipher, its words being crammed together or spread out, certain letters arbitrarily enlarged or a dot placed between some words but not others. However, as Jones was to discover much later in life, he could make from this early experiment exceptionally beautiful inscriptions.

Here, too, at Capel, it was that Jones discovered his individual

style in responding to 'the strong hill rhythms and the bright counter rhythms' of the surrounding countryside. The earliest watercolour in the collection shows this process as it is happening. While the mountain top still bears the heavier contour of some Ditchling landscapes, the rhythm is quickening, segmenting already occurs, the eye bobbing from one focal point to another. Depth is created not by perspective but across the surface through tonal or colour emphasis in the curving line bounding each area of interest, whether it be around a forest, a group or even a single animal or tree.

Next in this early sequence is a painting of the orchard at Capel where the emphasis is on the angularity of the trees, patches of almost exotic foliage or a group of garden implements. Again the colour is limited, this time subdued in tone, whereas the third painting is the most colourful and the folds of the hills loosely delineated. The whole composition exudes the joyful ease of a sketch rather than being a detailed composition.

In 1927 Jones revisited Caldey island off the coast of Tenby, on his second visit already familiar with the terrain. A simple painting of a cove between rocks and grassland, although quickly sketched on buff paper, has an unusual stillness. Like the paper it is mid-toned with very little colour used. Far out a wash of blue creates the distant sea

while pale dabs and reflections of the rocks express the calmness of its gently rippling surface nearer the shore.

After almost four years the Gills moved from the austerity of Wales to the greater domesticity of Pigotts, a farmhouse in Buckinghamshire. The house was built around a central courtyard and that is what Jones paints in 1930 on a blustery day in warm weather, when the windows are wide open and curtains flap unrestrainedly in the breeze outside. Despite his picture having a bigness of scale and his colours being bright red, blue, ochrish yellow and pink, nothing is as it at first appears. The wood seems to encroach into the yard and the foreground grass or shadow to upheave towards the buildings opposite. The redness of the outhouse pales while another part of it is reduced to no more than a greying structure. On the left, the windows are more important than the wall of which they should be part, seeming merely to hang in space. Flatness of shape and three-dimensionality of form are curiously confounded and, if too closely examined, the entire image almost dissolves into particular items or enigmatic shapes.

Part of the esplanade at Sidmouth viewed from a bedroom window is utterly different, a townscape painted while Jones was staying in the Fort Hotel several years after recovering from his first breakdown of 1933–34. It had been suggested by his doctors that he

should lay aside painting since it was the source of his troubles and spasmodically he had done, concentrating on poetry instead. Hence his brushstrokes still do appear tentative, the picture seeming merely to depict the scene he is looking at, without much elaboration. However, probably prompted by the classical column to the right, Jones has very subtly included an after-image, alluding to an historical subtext. Two diagonal lines in the sky suggest the ghostage of a pediment, the birds in flight fit into it but are alive rather than carved while below the pedestrians, lamp-posts, sea and distant cliff are placed within an archway created by slightly altering the pitch of the colour around them.

One of Jones's most important patrons, Helen Sutherland, had moved to Cockley Moor, near Ullswater, in 1939 where Jones would visit her and paint. This Westmoreland landscape is far more assured than that of Sidmouth, its brushstrokes broader. The pale grey greenness and the bold handling create an optical blur suggestive of wind and cloud over the hilly terrain. Quite what is what is not easily discerned amongst the tangle of foliage, outhouse, stone wall or posts struck into the ground. Everything is caught up in the turmoil of the weather – or of Jones painting the scene.

The Dusk is Growing, the final picture in the collection, is the most evocative and beautiful, painted in 1947 while Jones was a patient at

Bowden House, Harrow, recovering from his second breakdown. Paradoxically, there he *was* encouraged to paint and as the garden included magnificent trees he felt inspired to work from them. Very soon the trees began to take on historical connotations: the title of this painting, from *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, alludes to the lateness of our civilisational epoch rather than merely to a time of day. It is the daubs of white gouache the eye is at once attracted to, noticing especially how a white trunk in the middle distance competes with a vertical fir tree on the right. Only then does an almost upright, thick greyish black line assert itself, connecting with the umbrella of foliage at the top of the composition to create the foreground tree. But the eye is never allowed to settle, following uprights or cross rhythms of branches or dappled foliage repeatedly in its attempt to assemble an image which although present will not actually declare itself. Large in scale, the picture is drawn on cream paper which gives it a unifying tonality. Everything grows from its surface in tiny marks or calligraphic strokes, whether of pencil, brush and ink, black and red conte or coloured wax crayon. Almost miraculously the trees are evoked from dabs of line, colour or paint exactly as Jones said he wanted to do: re-presenting rather than describing what he sees through the medium he uses.

Two small inscription studies give some idea of how Jones

developed his lettering twenty-five years or more after engraving the prayer to the Virgin. Now no image is necessary; instead the letters themselves carry the visual charge. They are bigger, painted in different colours and the language used is Latin. In *CRUX FIDELIS* Jones experiments with a background of Xs and diamond shapes but since the patterning conflicts with the visibility of words, and eventual meaning, he abandons such a scheme in his later, larger inscriptions. The text is taken from a hymn sung as part of the Good Friday Liturgy in the Roman rite, which Jones particularly admired. *DOGMA DATUR* is much more complete, successfully using only two colours, red and slate blue, one warm, the other cool. The rhyming lines are taken from a Corpus Christi hymn that celebrates the dogma given in the sacrament of bread and wine. At first the observer is attracted visually, fascinated by how letters advance or recede, the eye making connections between letter or word to left and right, up and down or diagonally across the page before trying to read the entire text. Visual and verbal (artist and poet) complement one another in a rhythmic optical dance.

Drawing was the medium in which Jones initially expressed himself, whether humorously or in setting down observations, predilections, fantasies or first ideas for a project. While the sketch of the panther, in pen and ink, may be a study for an almost similar

animal in a copper engraving of 1929, *Animals and Shepherds*, although this is doubtful because the animal faces in the same direction as that of the print, *The Stag* is certainly a study for the engraving, *Stepping Stag*, commissioned by the publisher Sheed and Ward in 1930. In the vitality of re-emphasis along the back, in the enlarged head or alteration to the legs the study far surpasses the eventual print. *Farm Events* looks as if it were a humorous accompaniment to an anecdote and the boast of ‘drawing with the left hand’ seems similarly light-hearted. Other loose sketches of a knight on horseback, with his visor up, or the contemplative profile of a warrior, wearing chain mail, relate to Jones’s continued interest in warfare, although in the 1950s transferred towards history or myth. The *Cello Player* is a rare drawing from life, probably made at a Harrow concert, whereas the formalised drawing of the *Lamb of God*, holding a standard on which sits a pelican, against the background of an Ionic temple, must be a study for an illustration or book-jacket, at one time surrounded entirely by a border of Greek lettering, most of which has been subsequently erased.

A far more astonishing erasure occurs in a larger drawing of the second of the three women Jones fell in love with, Lady Prudence Pelham. He had a need to mythologise each of the women he loved and here is Prudence being turned into a medieval Lady, the

mysterious gestures of her stylised hands perhaps indicating her putting on a necklace or having just knotted her scarf. To her left is a background of symbols whose significance can only be guessed at but might they not centre around themes of confinement and release – one bird is stationary while the other restively flutters its wings? The seated mastiff or the fountain enclosed by a circular pool might represent virginity while the horse might suggest journeying, escape, even possible elopement. In the background the church could be identified either with the sacrament of marriage or of Christian celibacy. If this interpretation is at all apt, it could explain Jones’s dissatisfaction with what he has drawn. Formally, Prudence has changed from person to symbol so the drawing of her head needs alteration; psychologically, he faces the erotic dilemma which would haunt him throughout his life – whether to marry or dedicate himself entirely to his art. In erasing Prudence’s face she becomes a ghost of herself and he can lay the drawing, but not his dilemma, aside.

Petra Gill, his first love – a simple sketch of her when a married woman is in the Collection – was never forgotten by Jones. In 1944 he made her a present of a small study of St. Helen the Empress, Helen being Petra’s second name. Although a drawing, with no more than tiny spots of colour added, in its detail it has the exactitude of a print. The youthful Empress is depicted praying by a broken column,

signifying maybe her divorce from the Emperor Constantius. While behind are three crosses, one of which is the true cross she is reputed to have rediscovered, in front are the objects of Christ's passion including in a basket the nails and tools used when crucifying Him. In the distance is the walled city of the New Jerusalem, to which she will attain after death. Here Jones is anxious doggedly to spell out his narrative but, because of its intensity and compact scale, in this instance his approach does not detract from the quality of the drawing.

The Stadlen engravings range from small, occasional items to others which belong to the two most assured series Jones illustrated, *The Chester Play of the Deluge*, for the Golden Cockerel Press (1927) and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, for Douglas Cleverdon (1928-9). However, in 1927, before beginning *The Chester Play* he carried out a commission by the Gregynog Press for a frontispiece for *Llyfr y Pregeth-wr* (The Book of Ecclesiastes). Although taking themes of love and hate from the Old Testament's *Book of Ecclesiastes* the engraving is dominated by the New Testament image of Christ crucified. The book states 'whatever God does endures for ever' and the death of His Son on the cross epitomises 'a time to kill' and 'a time to embrace'. The image is of Christ as mediator at the centre of all created things: the four elements, man and woman, human and

beast, even of hell, starkly portrayed in the lower left corner. While the contrasts of imagery are meant visually to shock, the print itself is technically assured in its bold use of blacks, whites and greys (half-tones), for Jones one of the essential achievements of the finest wood-engraving.

The ten prints for *The Chester Play of the Deluge* carry this achievement even further as can be seen in the two wood-engravings the Stadlens possess: *The Building of the Ark* (no 3) and *The Drowning of the Wicked* (no 8). In the former the story unfolds with wry humour. Well dressed men and women toast the builders of the Ark while small figures far below go about their tasks unaware that they are being mocked. Two storks fly ominously through the air while behind the drinking company stands a sort of tower of Babel. The latter must be amongst the most expressive prints Jones designed. The powerful diagonals of the torrential downpouring oppose the central clump of robust nudes, who have clambered into the fork of a tree, their gesticulating arms and sturdy thighs contrasted with the animals and fragile branches on either side already being engulfed as they themselves soon will be in the midst of the swirling waters just beneath them.

A single drawing of a nude may be compared with the tubular figures in this engraving, the woman's curious simplifications and her

discomfort transferring expressively into another medium through the addition of a narrative content.

Vespers, no 8 from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, is more obviously poetic, due to the subject-matter and the simplified means of copper engraving, dependent as it is entirely on line etched into the plate. Through situating the scene in a passageway between two arches Jones is able to depict interior and exterior and by his use of a loose pattern animate the surfaces of the external wall and paving to create the buoyant motion of sea and wind throughout, cunningly emphasised by a seabird at the top of the steps behind the family and two more about to fly into the church.

It is the complexity of David Jones's art which intrigues where he repeatedly demonstrates his original and erudite vision, either as painter, engraver or maker of inscriptions.

DEREK SHIEL



The Chapel Orchard. Cat. no. 4

CATALOGUE

SCULPTURE

- 1 **Crucifix** c. 1923–4
Carved boxwood pierced to be hung as a pendant, 7.5 × 5 cm
Provenance: Geoffrey Houghton-Brown *Illustrated title page*

WATERCOLOURS

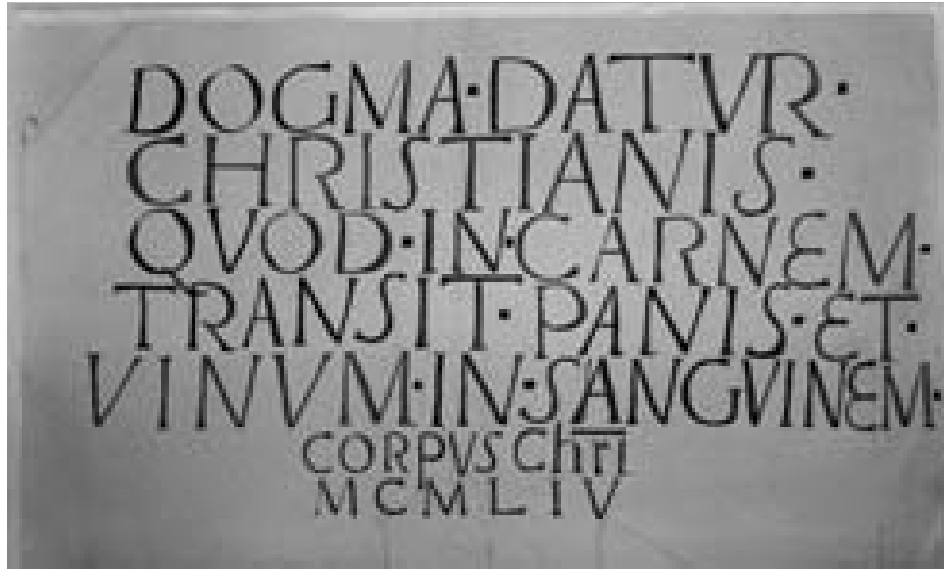
- 2 **Nant Honddu** 1925
Watercolour over pencil, 38.5 × 53 cm
Signed and dated Sep. 1925 *Illustrated inside front cover*
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts
- 3 **Landscape at Capel-y-ffin** 1926
Watercolour over pencil, 39 × 57 cm
Signed and dated Oct. 1926 *Illustrated front cover*
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts
- 4 **The Chapel Orchard** 1926
Watercolour over pencil, 51 × 39 cm
Signed and dated *Illustrated page 8*
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

- 5 **The Bay at Caldy** 1927
Watercolour over pencil, 37 × 51 cm
Signed and dated
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

- 6 **Pigotts Farm** 1930
Watercolour over pencil, 48.5 × 63 cm
Signed and dated *Illustrated back cover*
Provenance: The Estate of the artist
Anthony d'Offay
Mrs du Pré
Exhibited: David Jones, Tate Gallery 1981

- 7 **Sidmouth** 1940
Watercolour over pencil, 60 × 48 cm
Signed and dated
Provenance: Redfern Gallery

- 8 **Cockley Moor, Cumbria** 1946
Watercolour, 60 × 48 cm
Signed and dated
Provenance: Redfern Gallery



Dogma Datur. Cat. no. 11

9 The Dusk is Growing 1947

Watercolour, crayon, ink and gouache, 75 × 54 cm

Signed and dated

Provenance: Redfern Gallery
Duncan Oppenheim

PAINTED INSCRIPTIONS

10 Crux Fidelis 1950s

Watercolour, 20 × 32.5 cm

Provenance: The David Jones Estate
Wolseley Fine Arts

11 Dogma Datur 1954

Watercolour, 20 × 33 cm

Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

Illustrated

DRAWINGS

12 Seated Nude 1925

Pencil and coloured
chalk, 32 × 23 cm
Signed with initials and
dated "June 1925" and
inscribed
"Westminster"
Illustrated



Seated Nude. Cat. no. 12

13 Farm Events 1927

Pencil, 18 × 14 cm
Signed and dated
Provenance: The New Art Centre

14 The Panther c. 1929

Ink, 19 × 30.5 cm
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

15 The Stag c. 1930

Ink, 22 × 16.5 cm
Signed with initials lower right

16 Woman Holding a Cat 1932

Ink (with left hand), 20 × 32 cm
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

17 Recto: Petra c. 1935

Verso: René Hague
Ink (left hand), 30 × 19 cm
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

18 'Cello Player c. 1935

Ink, 19 × 30.5 cm
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

19 Unfinished Portrait of Lady Prudence Pelham c. 1930

Pencil, 61 × 49 cm
Provenance: Anthony d'Offay
Austin/Desmond Fine Art

20 Recto: Knight/Warrior c. 1950

Verso: Horsemen
Pencil, 31 × 18.5 cm
Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

Illustrated overleaf



The Warrior. Cat. no. 20

21 The Warrior c. 1950

Pencil, 32 × 18 cm

Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

22 Recto: Lamb of God and Temple 1940s

Pencil, 39 × 28 cm

Verso: **Studies of Roman Standard 1940s**

Coloured crayons, 39 × 28 cm

Provenance: The David Jones Trustees
Wolseley Fine Arts

23 Helen the Empress 1944

Pencil, ink and watercolour, 24 × 19 cm

Signed and dated

Illustrated inside back cover

An inscription on the verso reads:

Sancta Helena ora pro nobis

For Petra Helen

with much love from David

Aug 18th 1944

Mary was visited to redeem

Eve, Helen was visited to redeem

Emperors

Matins. Aug 18th 2nd Nocturne. Lesson

Provenance: Gift from the artist to Petra Tegetmeier
Wolseley Fine Arts

Exhibited: David Jones Tate Gallery 1981, number 115

ENGRAVINGS

E numbers refer to *The Engravings of David Jones* by Douglas Cleverdon, Clover Hill Editions 1981

24 Nativity 1924

Wood engraving E80, 11.2 × 7.6 cm

From the 1981 Cleverdon edition

Lettered: By the Mystery of thy Incarnation deliver us O virgin Mother ! He Whom the whole world cannot hold was enclosed in thy womb.

Jones' first Christmas greetings engraving made at Capel-y-ffin

25 The Three Kings 1925

Proof impression of an intaglio wood engraving E130, 10 × 7.6 cm

Lettered: Omnes de Saba Venient.

Made as a greetings card for Christmas 1925 with the three kings shown against a background of the Black Mountains

26 The Crucifixion 1926

Proof copper engraving E135, 12.5 × 15 cm

Provenance: Philip Haggren and by descent
Wolseley Fine Arts

Illustrated

27 The Crucifixion 1927

Proof wood engraving E155, 16.5 × 12 cm

Made for *Llyfr y Pregeth-wr (The Book of Ecclesiastes)*, published by the Gregynog Press
Illustrated inside back cover



The Crucifixion. Cat. no. 26

28 The Building of the Ark 1927

Proof wood engraving E164, 16.5 × 14 cm

Signed and inscribed

Made for *The Chester Play of the Deluge*, Golden Cockerel Press

Provenance: Philip Haggren and by descent

Wolseley Fine Arts



Animals Kneeling. Cat. no. 30

29 The Drowning of the Wicked 1927

Proof wood engraving E169, 16.5 × 14 cm

Made for *The Chester Play of the Deluge*, Golden Cockerel Press

30 Animals Kneeling 1927

Copper engraving E172, 17.6 × 13.5 cm

Signed

Illustrated

Lettered: Quare fremuerunt gentes et populi meditati sunt inania

Provenance: The Estate of Petra Tegetmeier

Wolseley Fine Arts

Made as a greetings card for friends in an edition of about 30 prints

31 Vespers II 1928/9

Copper engraving E191, 17.5 × 13.5 cm

From the Cleverdon edition of 1981

Made for *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, published by Douglas Cleverdon

32 Nativity with Shepherds and Beasts Rejoicing 1929–30

Drypoint E202, 19.5 × 15.5 cm

Lettered: Animetur Gentilis

Illustrated

Made for distribution to friends in an edition of about 30 prints

33 The Wounded Knight 1929

Drypoint E204, 19 × 15.5 cm

Signed and inscribed

Illustrated

Made as a trial image for an intended version of *Morte D'Arthur*

Provenance: The Estate of Petra Tegetmeier

Wolseley Fine Arts

34 Unicorn and Broken Column 1930

Proof wood engraving E205, 5.7 × 7.6 cm



Nativity with Shepherds and Beasts Rejoicing. Cat. no. 32



The Wounded Knight. Cat. no. 33

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Monnow Valley Arts Centre is extremely grateful to Nicholas and Frances Stadlen for agreeing to make their splendid collection of works by David Jones available for exhibition at the Monnow Valley Arts Centre.

The collection was formed over the last 15 years. In my capacity as managing director of Wolseley Fine Arts, I have had the privilege of helping the Stadlens add works to the collection.

Many of these works come either direct from the David Jones Trustees or from the estates of his close friends, Petra Tegetmeier and Philip Haggren. Petra Tegetmeier was the second daughter of Eric and Mary Gill and was engaged to David Jones from 1924 to 1928. Although they broke off their engagement, they remained lifelong friends; Jones sending drawings and prints to Petra for her birthdays and feast days.

Philip Haggren was a founder member with Eric Gill of the Society of Wood Engravers in 1920 and with Gill a member of the

Guild of St. Joseph and St. Dominic in Ditchling. Haggren and Jones exchanged views about art throughout their lives and this included sending each other examples of the engravings they were working on from time to time.

I am grateful to Derek Shiel for agreeing to write the introduction to this catalogue and for so eloquently explaining the significance of some of the works.

We hope that this small catalogue will be a permanent reminder of the passion of our collectors and a testament to their discernment and interest in David Jones, as both an artist and poet.

The financial support of the Monnow Valley Arts Patron Group is gratefully acknowledged.

RUPERT OTTEN
Monnow Valley Arts Centre





The Crucifixion. Cat. no. 27



Helen the Empress. Cat. no. 23

