

A Complete Portrait of Arthur Jeffress 1905-1961

1945-1947 A Life in Art

Post war, Jeffress renewed contact with Loraine Conran, the first curator of Southampton Art Gallery, and lent a sizeable number of his paintings to the gallery for an exhibition from 19 August to 21 September 1946; it was a great success and welcomed over 14,000 visitors. The list included his Picasso, de Chirico and works by Soutine, Rouault, Derain, Modigliani, Balthus, Dufy, Vuillard and Vlaminck. He mentions that wants to sell his Picasso de Chirico:

"You remember it in the hall – huge rhomboid faceless heads & bodies filled with rectangular shapes? It is very cheap – £200 – would the gallery be dashing enough to buy it?"

The gallery was not so dashing; he sold it to Princess Anne-Marie Callimachi from whom it was purchased by the Tate in 1961, at exactly the same time as part of the Jeffress bequest was being allocated there.

A gallery attendant asked Arthur to explain the Picasso, de Chirico work to him and he replied that he was never able to explain modern paintings and, whenever he felt the need for an explainable painting, he bought a nice coloured postcard instead. He was sure that the man thought he was mad.



Jeffress at Marwell, probably 1939
Southampton City Archives



Portrait of *Lorraine Conran* (1912-1986), by
Cedric Morris (1889-1912)
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Press clipping from the Southern
Evening Echo 1946.

In 1947/8, Arthur lent substantially to two exhibitions organised by the 'Circle for the Study of Contemporary Art' at the Judges' Lodgings in Winchester. Amongst his loans was a work by Jackson Pollock, the first to be shown in Britain. It was also shown at Southampton Art Gallery.