

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE MINAS GERAIS

Third International Colloquium
on Writing, Sound, and Image

October 26-29, 2021

“Distant woods”:

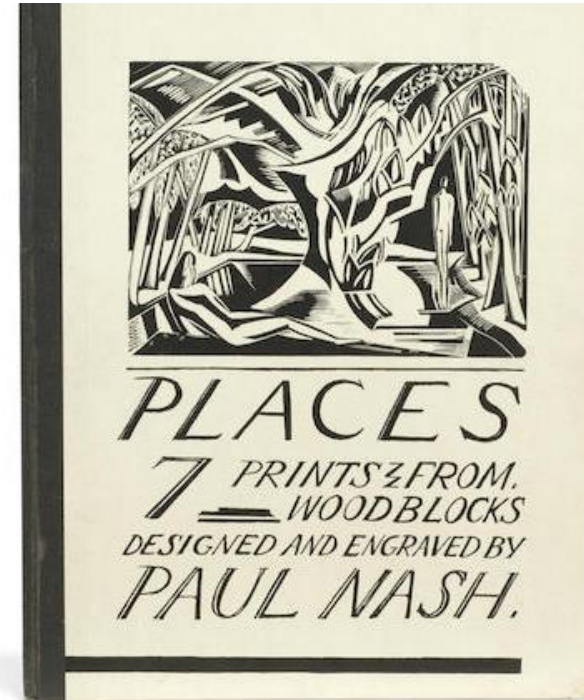
The matter of books and the modernist pastoral

Sophie Aymes, Université de Bourgogne

Paul Nash. *Places*. London: Heinemann, 1922.

Bonhams.com

Portrait of Proud Paul
Wood engraving (1922).
39.8x28.6 cm. V&A.



Ypres Salient November 1917

“it is unspeakable, godless,
hopeless. [...]

I am a messenger who will bring
back word from the men who are
fighting to those who want the
war to go on forever”

Chris Pearson

Corey Ross

Tait Keller. “Destruction of the
Ecosystem”. *1914-1918-online.
International Encyclopedia of the
First World War*. 2014.

DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10371.



Sunrise: Inverness Copse (1917-1918)

49.7 mm × 63.7 cm. Imperial War Museum.

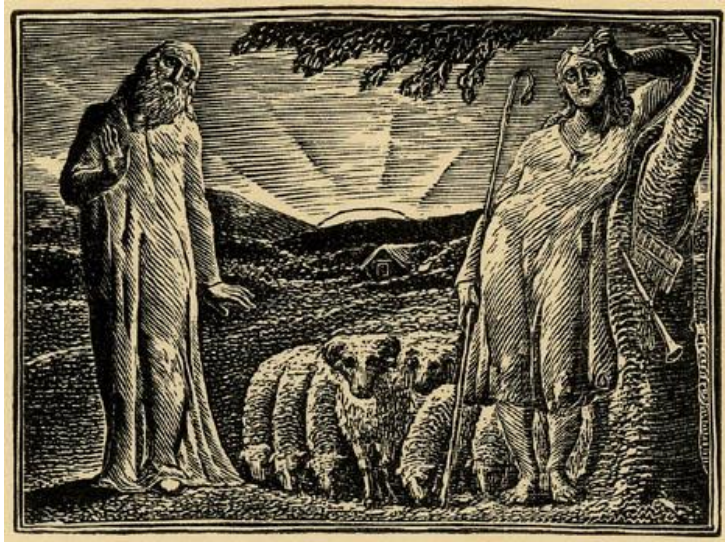


We Are Making a New World (1918)

Oil on canvas. 71.1 x 91.4 cm. Imperial War Museum.



William Blake's wood engraved illustrations
to Thornton's *Virgil*



Ambrose Phillips's "Imitation of Eclogue 1"
in Robert John Thornton, *The Pastorals of Virgil* (1821)

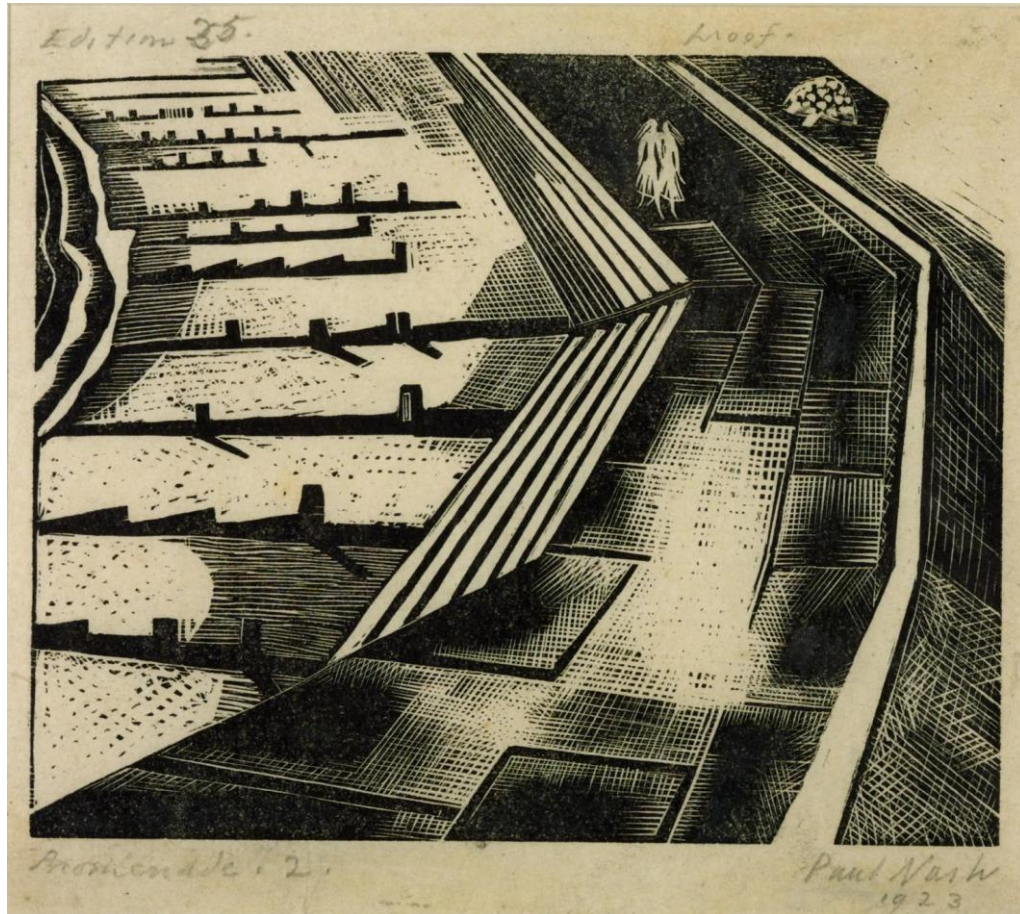
Frontispiece: Thenot and Colinet (6.1 x 8.3 cm)



The blasted tree (3.5 x 7.5 cm)

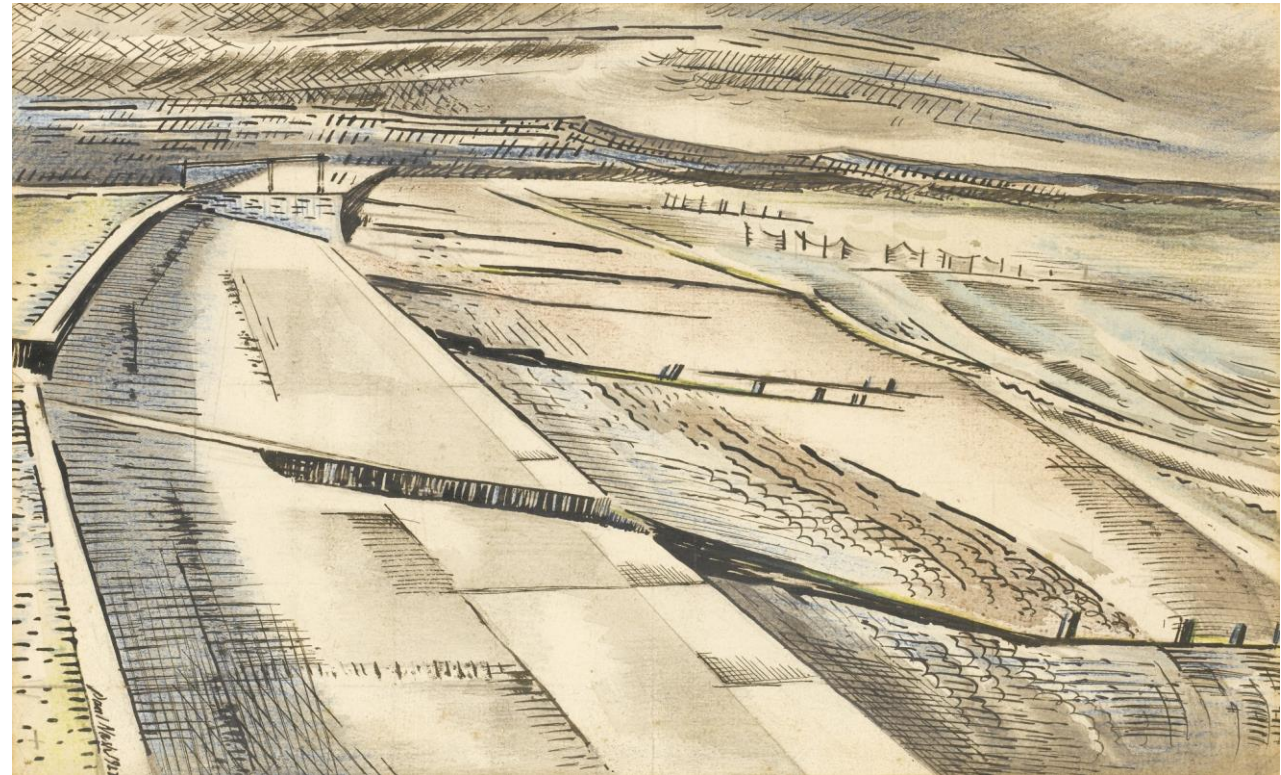
Promenade II (1920)

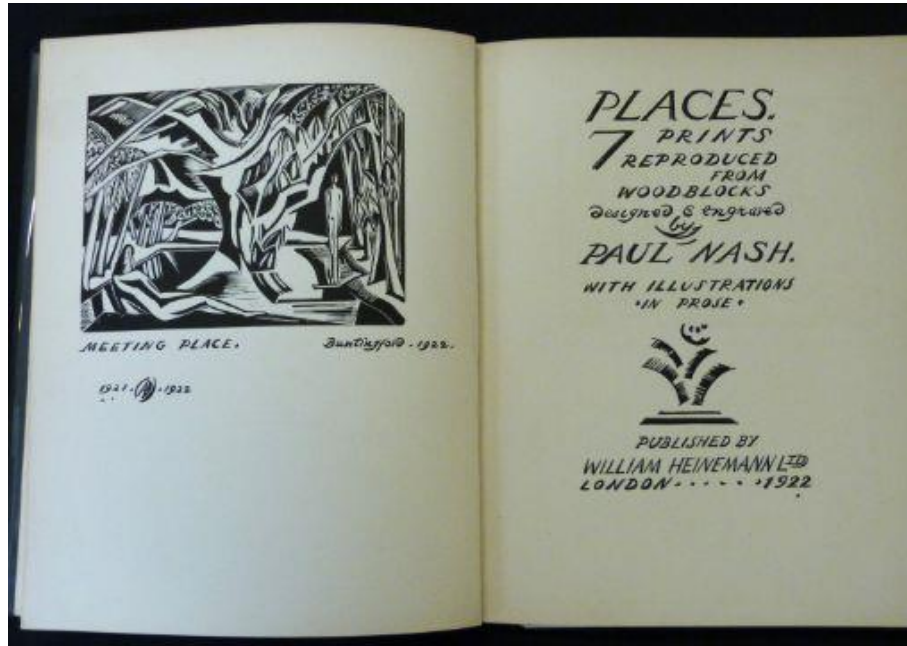
wood engraving
13.7 x 15.6 cm



The Shore (1922)

pencil, pen and ink, watercolour, wash and crayon
20 x 32.5 cm



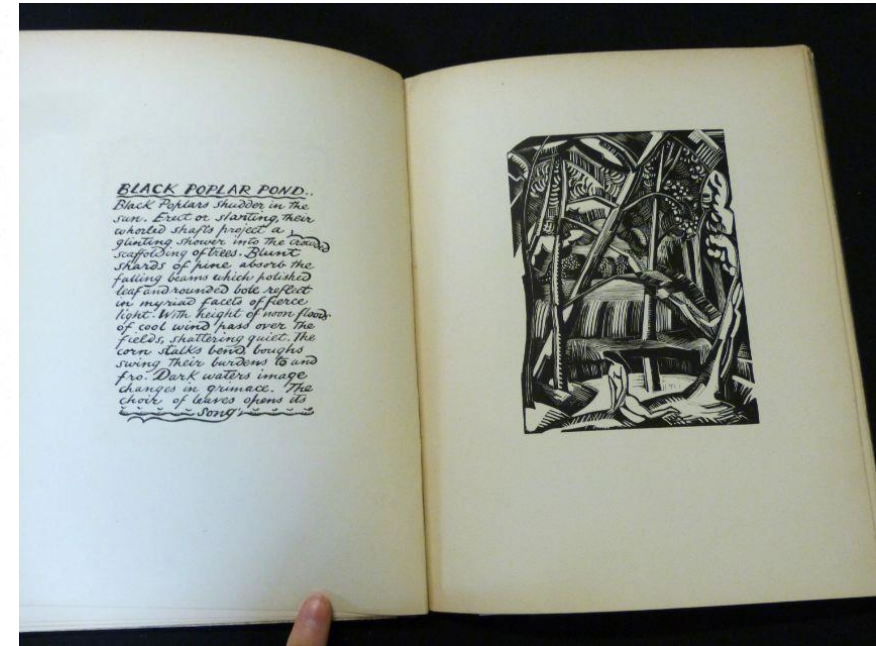


Frontispiece and title page

Contents

One.	Meeting Place.	Buntingford.
1922		
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1921		
Three.	Garden Pond.	Wittersham.
1921		
Four.	Dark Lake.	Iver Heath.
1920		
Five.	Winter.	Hampden.
1921		
Six.	Paths into the Wood.	White leaf
1921		
Seven.	Winter Wood.	Hampden.
1922		
	Tailpiece.	I den
1922		

Contents



Black Poplar Pond

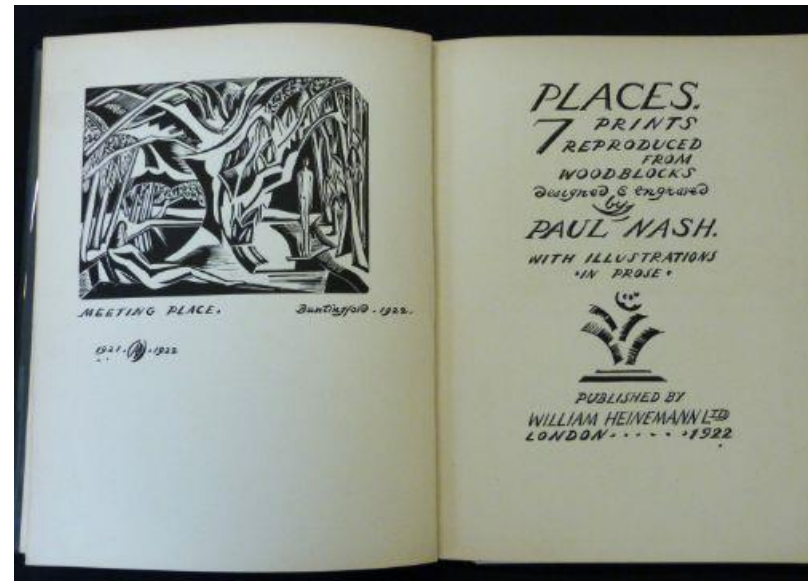
Kristin Bluemel (2014)

Patricia Patricia (2007)

Joanna Selborne ([1998] 2001)

The bibliography will be shared during our discussion

28.4x23.2 cm



https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1949-0411-5088

BLACK POPLAR POND.

Black Poplars shudder in the sun. Erect or slanting, their whorled shafts project a glinting shower into the crowd scaptozing of lilies. Blunt shards of heme above the falling beams which polished leaf and rounded bole reflect in myriad facets of fierce light. With height of noon flood of cool wind pass over the fields, shattering quiet. The corn stalks bend boughs swing their burdens to and fro. Dark waters image changes in grimace. The choir of leaves opens its song.



PATHS INTO THE WOOD.

Before light came black was the void was darkness. Light only, manifested form, can show a beginning or an end. Without hot shafts of sun or the moon's radiance the world is not seen. Between sun down and the moon's rising delicate light hinders gloom. The darkling beach wood reflects the ebbing glow. Wet shells paths of hammer like porcelain. Branches and withering leaf. The drenched grass, are ghostly arabesques, as though a hand designed in ivory on ebony.



Contents

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Four.	Dark Lake.	
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Five.	Winter.	
1921	Hampden.	
Six.	Paths into the Wood.	
1921	Whiteleaf	
Seven.	Winter Wood.	
1922	Hampden.	
1922	Tailpiece.	Iden

Edmund Spenser's *Shepherdes Calender* (1579)



12 eclogues
12 woodcuts

Month of May
Colin Clout and Hobbinol



MEETING PLACE.

Buntingford. 1922.

1921. (A) 1922

PLACES.

7 PRINTS
REPRODUCED
FROM
WOODBLOCKS

Designed & engraved
by

PAUL NASH.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
• IN PROSE •



PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD
LONDON 1922

BLACK POPLAR POND.

Black Poplars shudder in the sun. Erect or slanting, their whorled shafts project a glinting shower into the crowded scaffolding of trees. Blunt shards of pine absorb the falling beams which polished leaf and rounded bole reflect in myriad facets of fierce light. With height of noon floods of cool wind pass over the fields, shattering quiet. The corn stalks bend, boughs swing their burdens to and fro. Dark waters image changes in grimace. The choir of leaves opens its song.



GARDEN POND.

With silent force the sun hurls down light. With no disturbance, with no sound it falls upon the trees, the grass, the waters of the pond. Noiselessly, without movement light mutilates the trees, the grass, beats upon the waters. No tumult comes. There is no cry, no moan. The leaves glitter, the grass is shining, the waters flash in the still pond.



DARK LAKE.

In a black pine wood is a lake. An inscrutable, dark face staring up at the sun or into the moon's face or at the stars peering down. Above, the pines in tall columns and mighty domes and great arches stand nearly motionless. At the water's edge, rushes and irises mass their slender swords. The grey teeth of an old fence look ghostly against dark waters. Beyond a platform jutting out, a woman, naked, gleams in this shadowy place.





https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1970-0919-32



Scorpers (Wikimedia Commons)

<https://www.woodengravers.co.uk/what-is-wood-engraving/>
<https://www.chrisdaunt.com/guide-to-engraving-and-printing>

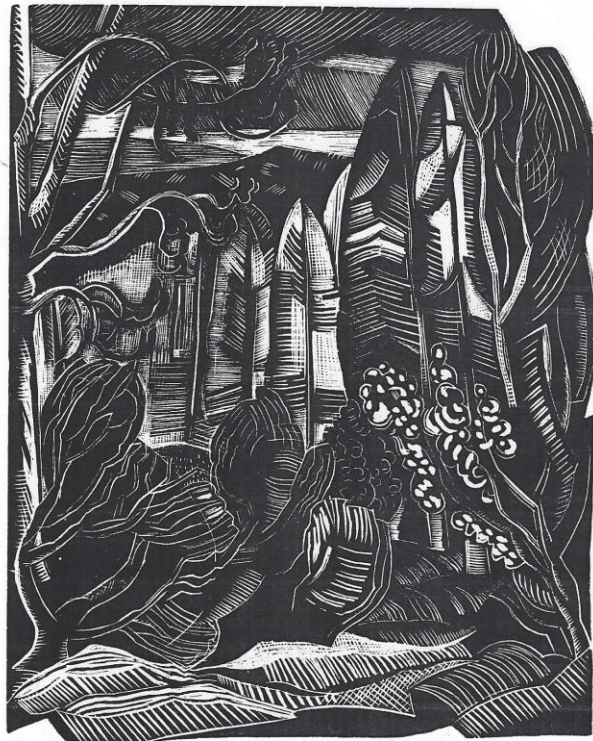
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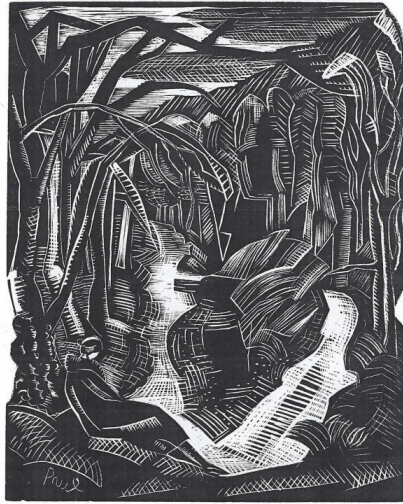
WINTER

Winter is life imprisoned. A face peering through an iron mask, a body which gleams behind a cage of steel, whose feet are shod harshly, the hair of whose head falls stiff and thin. The winter country has imprisoned life a space. The beech tree boughs are steel, bushes and grass seem black and rusty wire. A pallid gleam falls across metal spears - the larch copse which was and shall be again - soft waving plumes. The restless wind beats in the distant woods like icy waters lapping round iron piers



PATHS INTO THE WOOD

Before light came black was.
The void was darkness. Light
only, manifests form, can
show a beginning or an end.
Without hot shafts of sun or
the moon's radiance. The world
is not seen. Between sun-
down and the moon's rising
delicate light hinders gloom.
The darkling beech wood reflects
the ebbing glow. Wet chalk
paths glimmer like porcelain.
Branches and withering leaf,
the drenched grass, are ghostly
arabesques, as though a hand
designed in ivory or ebony.



WINTER WOOD

Cathedrals and mighty churches
shut in peace. In narrow cold aisles,
between pillars of stone peace is con-
fined. The slanting ray, filtered thro'
dulled glass and lead shines wanly.
The winter wood has narrow aisles,
as cold, trees grey-black as granite.
The tepid sun oozes through
lattices more intricate and far. But
in great churches and cathedrals
the walls are chill to touch. Foot-
steps re-echo startlingly, the faint
stink of tombs has tinged the air.
In Winter Wood the wet mould
is fragrant, soft is the touch of
leaves, footsteps tread noiselessly
all these dim tenuous aisles.



Caterpillar Crater (1917)



Garden Pond

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1949-0411-5088



The Ypres Salient at Night (1918). 71.4 x 92 cm. Imperial War Museum.



Garden Pond



Void (1918). Oil on canvas, 71.4 x 91.7 cm.
National Gallery of Canada.

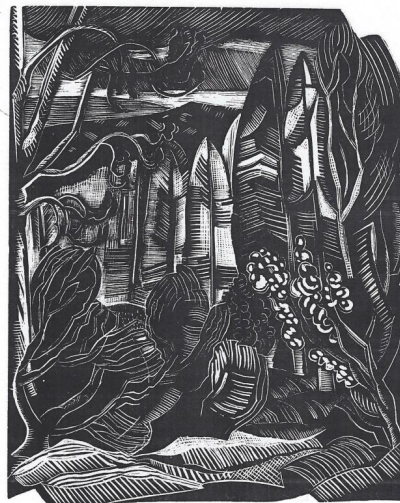
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'resistant mourning' (Patricia Rae 2007)



Responsiveness
and alterity (Andrew Causey 2013)

DARK LAKE.

*In a black pine wood is a lake.
An inscrutable, dark face
staring up at the sun or into
the moon's face or at the stars
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Beyond a platform jutting
out, a woman, naked, gleams
in this shadowy place.*

Medium, matter and agency

Exploiting or working with the medium?

a “pliable” medium (Malcolm Salaman, 1914)

“the freeing of the ‘design’ from the material by a series of gradual eliminations” (Herbert Furst, 1924)

“ensouled materialism” (Jane Bennett, 2010)

“wood seems to yield to the evolution of an abstract design or a decorative arabesque as stone excites the sculptor to the creation of pure form for it is the glyptic character of engraving on wood which is its peculiar charm so that the more the engraver cuts into his block [...] the greater his sense of contact with the reality of his expression [...]. Of all the arts which are crafts it is the most autobiographical”.

(Paul Nash, “Woodcut Patterns”, *The Woodcut* n°1, 1927)



The engraver allows “the medium to dictate its technique” (Herbert Furst 1924)

“technique in craft is never a violent encounter of hand with the material world, but a natural coming together of hand, material, and form. [...] With machines, material [...] can be forced into the form desired even if this form is counter to the material’s natural tendencies”
(Howard Risatti 2007)

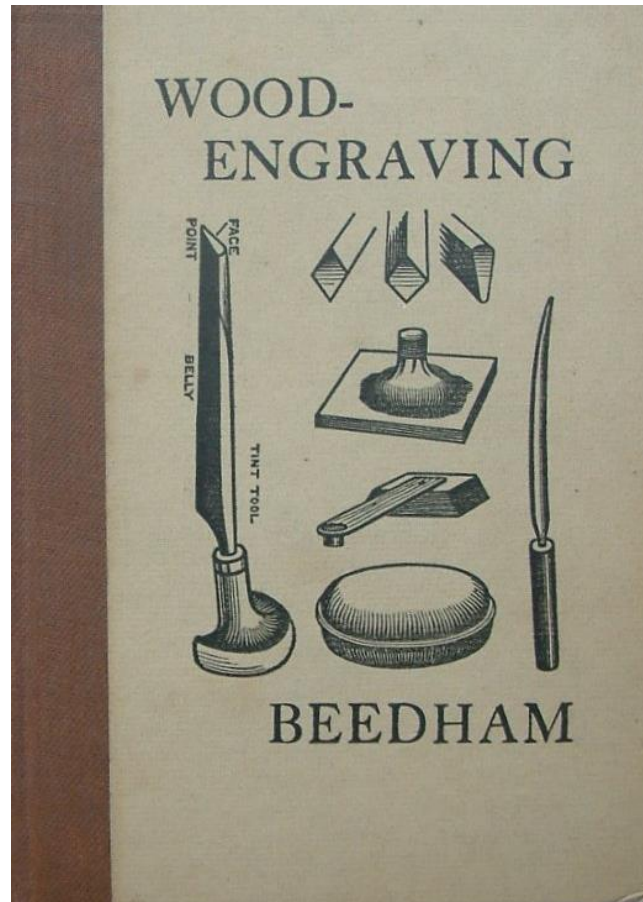


“any item made by soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians, from war matériel directly, or any other material, as long as it and they are associated temporally and/or spatially with armed conflict or its consequences to the landscapes and considers the afterlife of such objects”
(Saunders 2000)



<http://www.trenchart.co.uk/>

Medium, intermediality and reversibility



John Beedham, *Wood Engraving* (1920)

Edward Gordon Craig, *Woodcuts and Some Words* (1924)

Herbert Furst, *The Modern Woodcut* (1924)

Clare Leighton, *Wood-Engraving and Woodcuts* (1932)

Iain Macnab, *Wood-Engraving* (1938)

John Farleigh, *Graven Image* (1939)

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, *The Graphic Arts* (1882)

“Every material used in the fine arts has its own subtle and profound affinities with certain orders of natural truth, and its own want of adaptability to others. One might think that the materials were sentient and alive, that they had tastes and passions.”

Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann (2012)

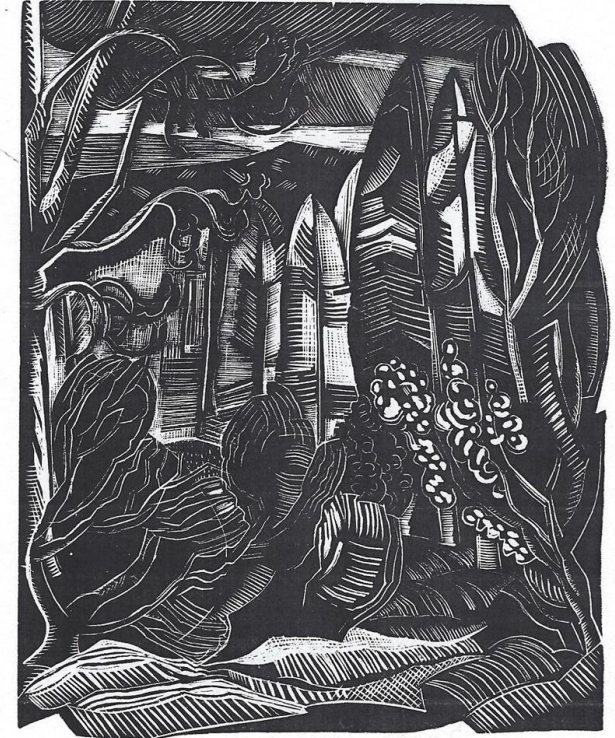
Serpil Oppermann (2019)

Jussi Parikka (2015)

The book as 'meeting place'

“the book might best be considered a constitutively incomplete and unfinishable object. Through such considerations, our authors highlight the provisionality and dynamism that make the conceptual boundaries of the book indistinct and variable. Some of our contributors mobilize notions of the unfinished as they emphasize books' existence within fields of interactivity”

(Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch, eds. *The Unfinished Book* 2020)



Paul Nash's surrealism

Monster Field, study II (1938)

Black and white negative
87 × 127 mm



Thank you!