Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship
English Artist Designers: 1922 to 1942
Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne 27 May – 17 September 2017
Millennium Galleries, Sheffield: 7 October 2017 – 7 January 2018
Compton Verney, Warwickshire: 17 March – 9 June 2018

Towner Art Gallery is delighted to announce Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship, English Artist Designers: 1922 to 1942. This major exhibition brings to life the significant relationships and collaborations within one of the most widely influential - though largely unexplored - English artist designer networks of the twentieth century.

Focused on Eric Ravilious and his personal and professional relationships with Paul Nash, John Nash, Enid Marx, Barnett Freedman, Tirzah Garwood, Edward Bawden, Thomas Hennell, Douglas Percy Bliss, Peggy Angus, Helen Binyon and Diana Low, the show also marks the 75th anniversary of the artist's tragic death in Iceland during the Second World War.

Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship comprises over 400 paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, engravings, books, ceramics, wallpapers, textiles and other ephemera by practitioners who embraced both fine art and design. It highlights key moments in the artists lives and work from first meetings at the Royal College of Art to the evolution of their artistic practices into commercial and industrial design during the turbulent times of the 1930s and 1940s.

The exhibition also reveals the influence of members of the group on Ravilious’ prolific career including the role of Paul Nash in the artist’s development as the most significant wood engraver of his generation; the deep, connecting interests of Ravilious, Nash, Edward Bawden and artist-poet Thomas Hennell in landscape painting; the role of Barnett Freedman in encouraging his peers to take up lithography, which lead to Ravilious creating the works High Street and Submarine Lithographs; and the pivotal location of Furlongs, Peggy Angus’ East Sussex home, where many of Ravilious’ most important landscape...
paintings were made, as well as his first paintings of interiors. The exhibition presents important but never or very rarely shown works by Ravilious including a recently discovered painting, *HMS Actaeon* (1942).

*Ravilious & Co* casts a new light on the creativity of the women within the network and includes newly discovered work by Ravilious’ precociously talented wife, the wood engraver Tirzah Garwood who also specialised in marbled papers; watercolours, engravings and illustrations by Helen Binyon, the artist’s lover and confidante; never before exhibited early wood engravings by Enid Marx; and a range of fabric, textile and wallpaper designs by Diana Low and Peggy Angus, two other important contributors to the pattern of friendship.

*Ravilious & Co* presents an authentic immersive representation of a 1930s bookshop comprising nearly a hundred books, book covers and illustrations by Edward Bawden, Barnett Freedman, the Nash brothers, Ravilious and those who influenced them during an especially formative period in the production of artists’ books. The exhibition also features a design shop, reminiscent of Dunbar Hay, a mid-century London retailer founded to encourage links between artists and industry that sold works by Ravilious, Marx and others. The artist designers made significant contributions to commercial design from the end of the 1920s for Wedgwood, the BBC, London Transport, the GPO and many more.

A dedicated space within the exhibition documents rarely seen artworks and key artefacts illustrating the end of Ravilious’ life on 2 September 1942 off Iceland where he was working as a war artist.

In April 2017, Thames & Hudson publish *Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship*, the first biography about the group, by the co-curator of the exhibition, Andy Friend, with an introduction by Alan Powers.

*Ravilious & Co* brings together works from twenty-six galleries and museums including Tate, National Portrait Gallery, V&A, the British Museum, Imperial War Museums and over thirty private collections. Towner Art Gallery holds the largest public collection of works by Eric Ravilious in the country, with a selection of his finest watercolours, prints and ceramics including many paintings of his beloved Sussex landscape.

For further information, images and interview requests about the exhibition, please contact Janette Scott Arts PR on janette@janettescottartspr.com or +44(0)7966 486156.

For more information about the book, please contact Kate Cooper, Head of Publicity at Thames & Hudson on k.cooper@thameshudson.co.uk

**Notes To Editors**

*Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship*, 27 May – 17 September 2017. Tickets £8/£7 members & concessions. Towner Art Gallery, Devonshire Park, College Road, Eastbourne BN21 4JJ. Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00am – 5:00pm and Bank Holiday Mondays, 10:00am – 5:00pm. Admission to the rest of the gallery is free. Please note that Towner’s Ravilious Room will not be open during the exhibition. [www.townereastbourne.org.uk](http://www.townereastbourne.org.uk)

*Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship* by Andy Friend, with an introduction by Alan Powers is published by Thames & Hudson. Extensively illustrated and featuring a wealth of
newly discovered material, the book is published on 20th April 2017, £24.95 hardback. www.thamesandhudson.com

Eric William Ravilious (22 July 1903 – 2 September 1942) was an English painter, designer, book illustrator and wood engraver. He studied at Eastbourne School of Art, and at the Royal College of Art, where he studied under Paul Nash. He married Eileen Lucy "Tirzah" Garwood who was also a noted artist and engraver. His early works depicted the countryside around him in the south east of England, as well as urban scenes of London. Many of his works are seen as capturing a sense of Englishness that existed between the wars. He designed a number of popular pieces for Wedgwood between 1936 and 1940 including a commemorative mug originally produced for the Coronation of Edward VIII which was adapted for that of George VI. Ravilious was an official war artist in World War II and received a commission as a Captain in the Royal Marines.

Ravilious was killed in 1942 at the age of 39 while accompanying a Royal Air Force air sea rescue mission off Iceland that failed to return to its base. http://www.ericravilious.co.uk/p/biography.html

Townier Art Gallery is an award-winning gallery set in Eastbourne presenting major exhibitions of contemporary and historic visual art, as well as displays from the internationally renowned 4500-strong Towner Collection. The Collection is best known for its modern British art – including the largest and most significant body of work by Eric Ravilious (1903-1942) - and a growing collection of international contemporary art. Towner delivers a dynamic associated public programme and learning offer and welcomes more than 120,000 visitors each year, with a strong commitment to inclusive practice and accessibility. On 1 July 2014, Towner became an independent charitable Trust, supported by a Board of Trustees, chaired by David Dimbleby. Towner is supported by Eastbourne Borough Council and Arts Council England through its National Portfolio Programme. www.townereastbourne.org.uk

Image credits, left to right: Eric Ravilious, Two Women in a Garden, 1933., courtesy Fry Art Gallery; Diana Low, Designs on Paper, late 1930s, © Estate of Diana Low; and Eric Ravilious, A Rust-Coloured Ferruginous Light, illustration for The Writings of Gilbert White of Selborne, 1938.