

Artist Resources – Edward Burra (British, 1905-1976)



Neil Libbert, *Edward Burra*, 1970
National Portrait Gallery, London

[Burra at the Tate](#)

In 1972, the BBC [filmed an interview](#) with Burra for the Arts Council of Great Britain, a rare video of the artist before his death. According to the [description](#) compiled by the University of Westminster: “The intention was to obtain statements that could be taken out of context for inclusion in the film, but Edward Burra had other ideas about the way the interview should be conducted. The resulting dialogue presents a unique portrait of an artist who had never previously been filmed.”

Watch a 2012 documentary, [I Never Tell Anybody Anything: The Life and Art of Edward Burra](#), which features critic Andrew Graham-Dixon telling the remarkable story of the artist's life.

In 2025, Tate Britain hosted a [major exhibition](#) of Burra's work. *Edward Burra* was the first retrospective of the artist's work in 40 years, featuring over 80 paintings, drawings, and archival materials from the artist's estate. Walk through the exhibition with the museum's guide, available on the [exhibition website](#). Read extensive reviews published in the [Brooklyn Rail](#) by Minh Le, [The Guardian](#) by Nicholas Wroe, [Time Out Magazine](#) by Phin Jennings, and [Studio International](#) by Christiana Spens. Also read an article about the artist, *Edward Burra's Satirical Surrealism*, in [Hyperallergic](#) by Michael Glover.

[Burra at Hazlitt Holland-Hibbert](#)



Burra, 1930



Edward Burra (British, 1905-1976)

Old Iron, circa 1938

Watercolor on paper

Private Collection; L2025:63.2

Born and raised in London, Edward Burra studied at the Chelsea School of Art and the Royal College of Art in the 1920s. He traveled widely, often depicting marginalized communities from the London queer underworld to everyday people surviving in the midst of war. **Old Iron** was painted at the height of the Spanish Civil War, which killed up to 300,000 civilians. With a combination of surrealism, abstraction, and social realism, the painting brings the violence and destruction to life. The artist reflected: "It was terrifying: constant strikes, churches on fire, and pent-up hatred everywhere."

On view November 19, 2025 – February 22, 2026