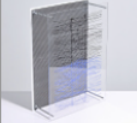


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William Crozier, Dried Lake, Essex, 1959. Courtesy of Piano Nobile.

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LONDON.- Brought together again after five decades, a series of landscapes by the Scots-Irish artist William Crozier (1930-2011) will be displayed at [Piano Nobile](#) at the start of 2024, showcasing why he became one of the leading artists of the post-war generation.

Produced between 1958 and 1961 when the artist was temporarily living in north Essex, the daring and original landscapes are infused with an existential angst common in Crozier's work. Over 30 works will be on display, some that have not been seen for a generation, showing a painter who throughout his career walked a tightrope between representation and abstraction.

The artist was in his late twenties when he began commuting back and forth between the urban streets of London in the week, and the isolated rural settings of an Essex cottage with his family on the weekend. Works such as *Essex Wilderness* (1960) and *Essex Landscape* (1959) depict bleak winter fields, twisted brambles and atmospheric marshland with sweeps of pure colour. They highlight Crozier's original style that reconciled both naturalistic observation with forceful painterly gestures.

Although the Essex setting brought on an important development in the artist's painting, the exact landscape itself was secondary to the human emotion and experience that Crozier preferred to capture. Recognisable depictions of trees, ploughed fields and hedgerows appear in works in which it is unclear whether it is day or night, or whether they might reflect aerial or architectural views. Crozier himself would doubt whether they could be classified as landscapes, and remarked he was more concerned with the 'black stunted foliage of a bush screaming for life in a city square' than the 'full blown luxuriance' of grand nature.

Most of the pictures were executed in London, and Crozier's widow Katharine Crouan remarked that Crozier would often finish his landscapes in places far away from where he first collected and stored their views. The landscapes could therefore be categorised as imagined or reinvented, imbued with Crozier's own influences and obsessions. He summed up his existential approach to what he saw by saying that landscapes were made in the image of the artist's 'own

disappointment or eccentricity'. The battlefields of World War One were on Crozier's mind when painting the Essex flatlands, and subsequent depictions involved skeletal figures such as *Untitled (Figure)* (1961) where horizontal lines eventually form a ribcage, and the horizon is cropped with a skull. In recent years the Imperial War Museum and the National Gallery of Ireland have acquired examples of Crozier's skeletal figure works, acknowledging their importance in art of the period.

This exhibition, which has been organised in collaboration with the William Crozier Estate, will demonstrate how an artist responded against the popular American Abstract Expressionism of the time, and drew on a strong personal sense of European identity to create works that reflect the anxieties of the age. The exhibition is accompanied by a publication featuring an insightful essay by the art writer and editor Thomas Marks.

Piano Nobile specialises in 20th-century British and international works of art. The gallery represents the estates of artists including Craigie Aitchison, Jean Cooke, William Crozier and R.B. Kitaj. Piano Nobile has established a reputation for authoritative exhibitions and accompanying publications under the gallery's imprint Piano Nobile Publications. Recent titles include *From Omega to Charleston: The Art of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant* (2018); *Leon Kossoff: A London Life* (2019), long listed for the William M.B. Berger Prize; *Ben Nicholson: Distant Planes* (2020); *Sickert: The Theatre of Life* (2021) and *Frank Auerbach: The Sitters* (2022).

Piano Nobile
William Crozier: Nature into Abstraction
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