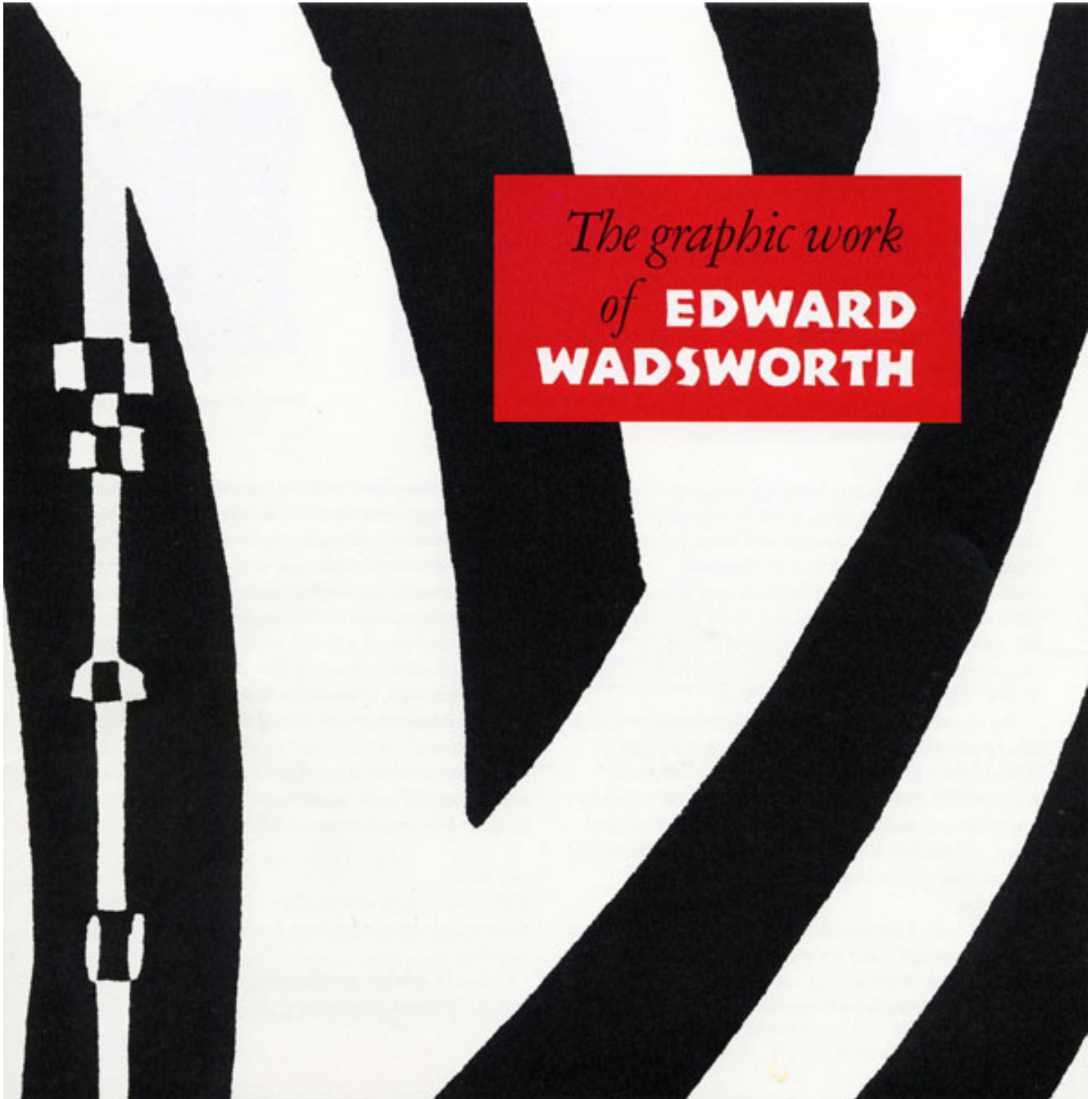


# OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

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EDWARD WADSWORTH (1889-1949)



The Graphic Work of Edward Wadsworth, 2002  
P.O.A.

Essay by Richard Cork

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Catalogue compiled by Jeremy  
Greenwood  
2002

Edward Wadsworth was born in Cleckheaton in Yorkshire in 1889. By 1913, when he started printmaking, he was newly married and living in London. During the next eight years, a brief period overshadowed throughout by the Great War, he produces over 50 woodcuts, and, from 1919, five lithographs, a couple of etchings, and 23 copper engravings for the book *Sailing-ships and Barges of the Western Mediterranean and Adriatic seas*.

The woodcuts are of great interest in themselves and also because of the variety of subjects that caught Wadsworth's imagination: harbour, the industrial valleys of his childhood, the Greek island on which he was stationed during the war, the dazzle-camouflages ships, and the Black Country. For each subject he found a distinctive artistic language that was rarely used elsewhere.

Nearly half of the woodcuts are in colour – two, three or four printings – and are remarkable for the inventiveness of the variant colour printings that Wadsworth devised for them. The book includes 49 colour reproductions of them (seven of one woodcut alone) though even more are listed.

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As the anxiety and tension of the war period faded, so did Wadsworth's Vorticist preoccupations, and when he made the engraving for *Sailing-ships and Barges* in 1926 they were tranquil and reflective: his fascination for precision and detail was now used to show rigging and boat construction accurately. The illustrations in a proof copy of the book, coloured by Wadsworth himself, are all reproduced together with the final published illustrations.

Then his interest in graphic art ceased and, apart from a lithograph in 1938, he concentrated almost entirely on tempera painting for the remainder of his life.

## The Book

Each of the prints is reproduced (many are in colour), in the original size – a few have had to be reduced to fit the page size.

Richard Cork has written extensively on Wadsworth and his Vorticist printmaking. For this book he has written an extended essay taking a wider view, putting this side of Wadsworth's work in the context of his entire graphic output, contrasting the machine-age modernity of his earlier work with the age-old traditions celebrated in *Sailing-ships and Barges*.

Jeremy Greenwood has prepared the catalogue.

Standard Edition

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450 copies, 33.9 x 24.9 cm  
Printed on 150 gsm Gardapat  
paper, 112 pages with 50 black  
and white and 109 colour  
illustrations, bound in printed  
paper-covered boards, with an  
overall design based on a  
Wadsworth woodcut, in a  
slipcase.

## Special Edition

Edward Wadsworth's  
daughter relates in the  
biography of her father how,  
in 1927, she found him making  
a bonfire of all his woodcut  
blocks. One block, however,  
had been at a printer and is  
now probably the only one in  
existence: it has recently been  
bought by Wadsworth's  
family. A Black Country  
village was commissioned for  
the 50 copies of the special  
edition of *The Black  
Country* published by the  
Ovid Press in 1920: a few  
other impressions may have  
also been taken. The colophon  
in the book claimed that the  
block had been destroyed.  
After careful consideration it  
has been decided that it would  
be appropriate if a further  
edition was taken for the 50  
copies of the special edition of  
the present book: they have  
been printed by Simon  
Lawrence at his Fleece Press  
and are bound into the books.  
The specification of the special  
edition is similar to that of the  
standard edition except that it  
is bound in quarter leather,  
includes the print of *A Black  
Country Village*, and is  
supplied in a cloth-covered  
solander.

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Sorry, the special edition is  
now sold out