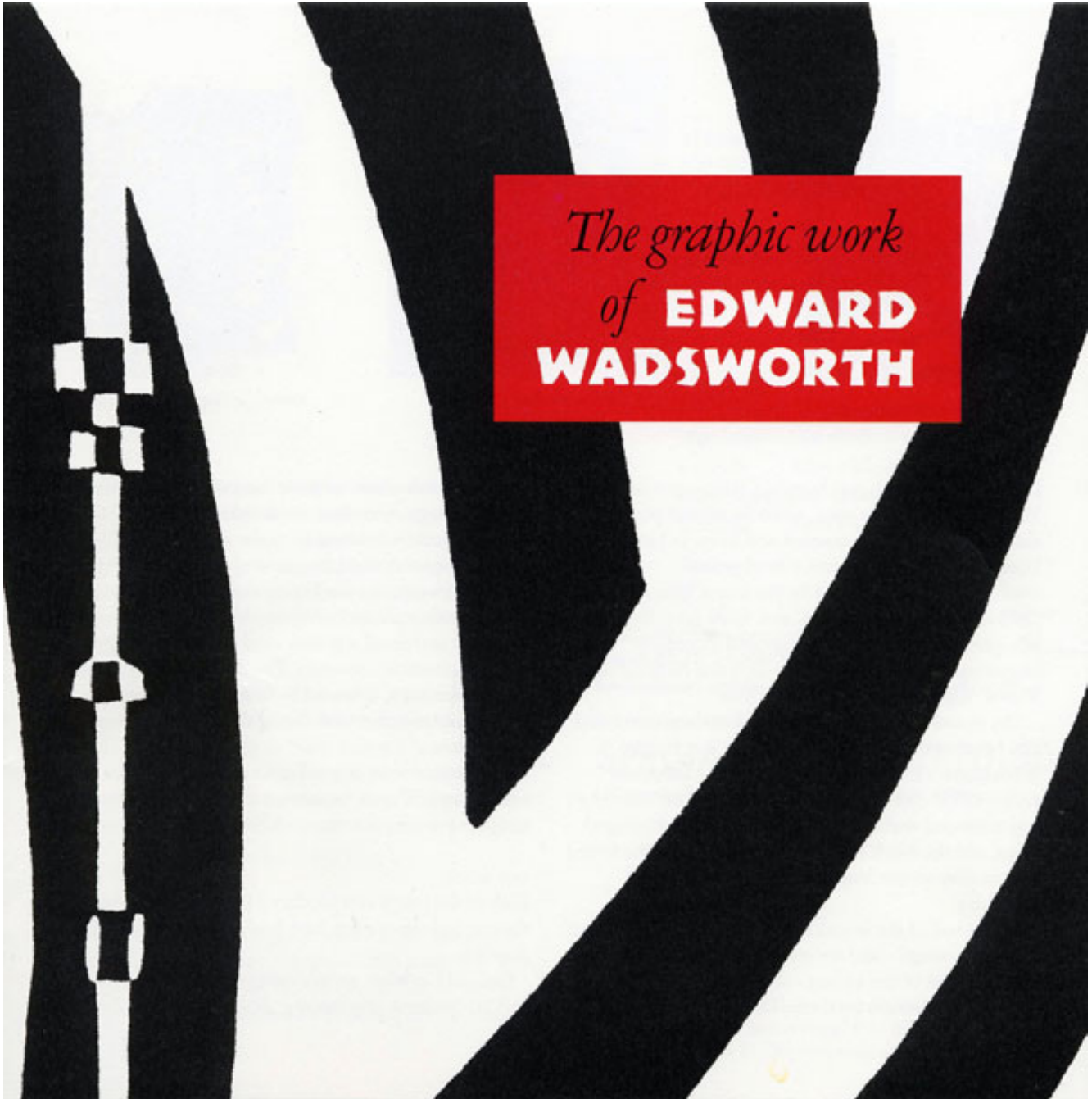


OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

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

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

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