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Eric Gill: Iconographer



***Laband Art Gallery Presents Extensive Exhibition of
British Artist Eric Gill
On View January 26 – March 24, 2013***

LOS ANGELES – The Laband Art Gallery at LMU will open ***Eric Gill: Iconographer*** on January 26, 2012 with a curator's lecture and reception from 3-6pm. The exhibition features over 100 works by the controversial British artist and writer Eric Gill (1882-1940).

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Eric Gill: Iconographer explores the art and writings of Eric Gill (1882-1940), whose typefaces Gill Sans, Joanna, and Perpetua are still popular today. Gill was a prolific artist and writer whose daring aesthetic combined sensuality and spirituality. His subjects range from fashion to literature, from the erotic to the religious. His iconographic designs and commitment to craftsmanship demonstrate a strong influence from the English Arts and Crafts movement (1880-1910) and artists such

as textile designer William Morris and calligrapher Edward Johnston. The exhibition presents sketches, watercolors, wood engravings, and books created between 1910 and 1940.

Gill's was (and is) a controversial and conflicted figure. His art and life were greatly affected by his deeply held religious beliefs. He grew up as a Calvinist Methodist, but converted to Catholicism as an adult. He moved several times with his wife and children between rural areas in England and Wales seeking to recreate medieval guilds of artists where the distinctions between work, creativity, religion, and everyday life were blurred. Toward this end, he founded the Guild of St. Joseph and St. Dominic along with two peers in 1920 in order to unite artisans in a religious association. At the same time, he crossed every imaginable moral boundary in his private life. He was an advocate of free love and Fabian socialism while also a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. The deeply spiritual and overtly sexual are regularly intermixed throughout his work. The engravings in *Eric Gill Iconographer* embody these tensions while revealing the elegant boldness that defines his aesthetic.

This exhibition is drawn primarily from the Albert Sperisen Collection of Eric Gill, University of San Francisco with additional loans from the William H. Hannon Library, and UCLA's William Andrews Clark Library. Thomas Lucas, S.J., director, USF's Thacher Gallery and Stuart McKee, USF design professor, co-curated the exhibition.

MORE ABOUT ERIC GILL

Eric Gill was born into a family of Anglican ministers and Congregationalist preachers in Brighton, England in 1882. The family moved to Chichester, England where Eric began to study art at age fourteen. When he was eighteen, he went to London to enroll as a pupil at the architecture office of W.D. Caröe in Westminster.

By age twenty-one, Gill had given up formal studies in sacred architecture to pursue calligraphy, stone cutting and masonry—crafts he utilized throughout his entire career. Identified on his own tombstone as a "stone carver," he was one of England's most sought after headstone carvers, and received commissions for important stonework and sculptures at Westminster Cathedral, the BBC Headquarters, and the League of Nations building in Geneva. Between 1925 and 1931, Gill designed his best-known typefaces: *Perpetua*, *Gill Sans*, and *Joanna*, named for his daughter. He was appointed a Royal Designer for Industry in 1936, the highest British honor for designers. His most celebrated artworks include sculptures and refined wood

engravings as well as drawings. During his lifetime, Gill wrote and published numerous books on art, religion and society, including *An Essay on Typography* in 1931 and *Autobiography* in 1940.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening

Lecture by curator Thomas Lucas, S.J., 3pm
and Reception, 4-6pm
Saturday, January 26, 2013

Hands-On Letterpress Demonstrations for LMU Students

with the International Printing Museum
Tuesday, February 5, 12:15-1:30
Laband Art Gallery

Gain insight into Gill's typefaces, engravings, and printing process with a hands-on demonstration lead by Mark Barbour, executive director and curator of the International Printing Museum. Mark will bring his mobile printing exhibit on campus to explore the history of printing and books from Gutenberg to Eric Gill.

The Sensual and the Spiritual: The Life and Art of Eric Gill

Class taught by Laband Director Carolyn Peter
Saturday, February 9, 2013, 10am-1pm
Laband Art Gallery
In collaboration with UCLA Extension, pre-registration required

This course explores these dichotomies in Eric Gill's work and life. Held at the Laband Art Gallery, the course opens with a lecture; students then have the opportunity to look closely at the engravings, typography, and writings in the exhibition.

Press Fest

Typography, Letterpress, Bookbinding Demonstrations, and Exhibition Tour

In collaboration with the International Printing Museum
Saturday, March 16, 1-4pm
Laband Art Gallery

Come for a fun-filled day of hands-on demonstrations and a tour of the exhibition. Gain insight into Gill's typefaces, engravings, and printing processes working with vintage printing presses and typeset machines. Mark Barbour, executive director and curator of the International Printing Museum and other experts will lead visitors in these hands-on investigations. Carolyn Peter, director and curator of the Laband will give a gallery walkthrough of the exhibition at 2pm.

Paul Soady Lecture

Eric Gill and the Evolution of a Typeface

Burns 211, Burns Fines Arts Complex, LMU

Friday, February 15, 11:15am

Graphic Designer, letterpress printer, and author of the forthcoming book *Eric Gill: The Evolution of a Typeface* will give a lecture on Eric Gill, his typeface Perpetua and put it in context of the history of typography.

Also on view in the William H. Hannon Library *Gill's Legacy: LMU Students' Posters*

For the most up-to-date information on programming in conjunction with this exhibition, visit <http://cfa.lmu.edu/laband>

EXHIBITION ORGANIZERS AND SUPPORT

The exhibition was co-curated by Thomas Lucas, S.J., director of the Thacher Gallery, University of San Francisco and Stuart McKee, design professor, University of San Francisco.

The exhibition is drawn primarily from The Albert Sperisen Collection of Eric Gill housed in the Donohue Rare Book Room, Gleeson Library/Geschke Center, University of San Francisco with additional loans from the William Andrews Clark Library, University of California, Los Angeles, and the William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

The exhibition and the related programs have been made possible in part by the generous support of the College of Communication and Fine Arts, LMU's Art and Art History Department, the Graphic Design and Printmaking Programs, and the William H. Hannon Library.

ABOUT THE LABAND

The Laband Art Gallery opened in 1984 as part of the Fritz B. Burns Fine Arts Center with a generous gift from Walter and Francine Laband.

LABAND ART GALLERY INFORMATION

For current program and exhibition information, call 310-338-2880 or visit <http://cfa.lmu.edu/laband>.

Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Admission: Admission is free. Parking is available on campus for a charge.

Location/Parking: The Gallery is in the Fritz B. Burns Fine Arts Center on the LMU campus. Enter the campus at Lincoln and LMU Drive. Kiosk attendant will direct you to parking and the gallery. For a map of the school, visit: www.lmu.edu/maps.

Image Caption:

Left: "The Burial of Christ" from *The Four Gospels*, wood engraving, 1931

Right: "The Lord's Song," from *The Lord's Song*, wood engraving, 1934