

# T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White:

## An Inventory of His Art Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	White, T. H. (Terence Hanbury), 1906-1964
<b>Title:</b>	T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White Art Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1930s-1960s
<b>Extent:</b>	72 items
<b>Abstract:</b>	The collection consists of paintings and drawings by T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White (British, 1906-1964), including landscapes, portraits, caricatures, decorative object designs, still lifes, and contemplations on resurrection and the afterlife.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Art Collection AR-00294
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. Please note that a minimum of 24 hours notice is required to pull Art Collection materials to the Ransom Center's Reading and Viewing Room. Some materials may be restricted from viewing. To make an appointment or to reserve Art Collection materials, please contact the Center's staff at <a href="mailto:art@hrc.utexas.edu">art@hrc.utexas.edu</a> . Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
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## **Administrative Information**

**Preferred Citation** T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White Art Collection (AR-00294). Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

**Acquisition:** Purchases, 1967, 1969

**Processed by:** Ransom Center staff, Jill Morena, 2018

**Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

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## Biographical Sketch

T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White was born in Bombay, India, on May 29, 1906. Partly due to illness and his parents' tumultuous marriage, White traveled to England to live with his maternal grandparents in St. Leonards, East Sussex, in 1911. When his mother and father eventually returned, separately, to India, White stayed on with his grandparents. He began his education at a public school, Cheltenham College, in 1920. His experience there was difficult, but he continued his schooling, and five years later he attended Queens College to receive tutoring and prepare himself for entrance exams. In 1925 he entered Cambridge University, and two years later he left for a sanatorium and a trip to Italy to convalesce after a diagnosis of tuberculosis. He began writing prose and poetry in Italy, and he managed to pass his examinations and graduate four years later in 1929.

White took on a position teaching literature at Stowe School in 1932 and taught there for four years. During and following this period he took it upon himself to learn hunting, fishing, flying and shooting with intensity and enthusiasm. This transition to a solitary, outdoor life led to his first literary success, *England Have My Bones* (1936), a compilation of his diaries in these pursuits. White would later publish the account of his attempt to train a hawk during this time, *The Goshawk*, in 1951.

For the entirety of his life, White lived a solitary one, largely immersed in hunting, fishing, and studying medieval texts and literature that would be the inspiration for his most well-known and loved works. In 1938 he published *The Sword and the Stone* to great critical and popular acclaim. A narrative of the young life of Arthur and his instruction by Merlyn, White's inspiration was Sir Thomas Malory's legend of King Arthur. White would live to see the compilation of all his Arthurian stories, *The Once and Future King* (1959), become the basis for the stage musical *Camelot* (1960), and for *The Sword and the Stone* be adapted for an animated Disney feature of the same name (1963). The conclusion to *The Once and Future King*, *The Book of Merlyn*, was discovered and published after White's death, in 1977. White also produced a non-fiction translation of a medieval bestiary text held at Cambridge University Library, *The Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century Made and Edited by T. H. White*, in 1954.

While White's primary interest was medieval literature and lore, he also produced a sequel to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (*Mistress Masham's Repose*, 1946), non-fiction studies of 18th century England (*The Age of Scandal: An Excursion through a Minor Period*, 1950; *The Scandalmonger*, 1952), a retelling of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (*The Master*, 1957), and musings on his travels in western Ireland (*The Godstone and the Blackymor*, 1959).

He moved to the Channel Islands in 1946 and lived in Alderney until his death, with a succession of two Irish Setters as his only constant companions. In his final years White enjoyed traveling for brief periods, revisiting Italy and lecturing around the United States. En route to Greece aboard the SS *Exeter* on his return trip home from the United States, White died in his cabin. He was buried in Athens with a stone bearing the epitaph, "Author Who from a Troubled Heart Delighted Others Loving and Praising This Life".

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## Sources:

Nelson, Marie. "T. H. White." *The Dictionary of Literary Biography, British Fantasy and Science-Fiction Writers, 1918-1960*, vol. 255 (2002): 265-275.

Warner, Sylvia Townsend. *T. H. White: A Biography*. New York: Cape, Viking Press, 1968.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of paintings and drawings by T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White (British, 1906-1964), including landscapes, portraits, caricatures, decorative object designs, still lifes, and contemplations on resurrection and the afterlife. The collection is divided into three series: I. Paintings, 1940s-1950s; II. Drawings, *Macbeth the Knife*, circa 1960s; and III. Drawings and Sketches, 1930s-1950s. The majority of paintings in Series I are oil on canvas or board, and depict scenes in or around White's home in Alderney, with ranging degrees of abstraction or realism. Notable in this series is a self-portrait, showing White in the process of painting his initials while holding a scepter in his other hand. There is also a portrait of L. J. Potts, White's tutor at Queens College who became a lifelong friend and mentor. Other paintings are still lifes, portraits of women, and imaginings of resurrection, ascension, the afterlife, and fantastical creatures and plant life. Series II includes pen and ink drawings of designs for urns, containers, and buildings for White's unpublished, adapted staging of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, entitled, *Macbeth the Knife*. Charcoal on paper is the dominant medium in Series III, which consists largely of figure studies, portraits, and caricatures.

The titles for works in each series are descriptive titles created by the cataloger and curator. Additional descriptions may follow titles to further elucidate. Exceptions are 69.20.1, 69.20.5, and 69.20.13, which are published titles in Kathleen G. Hjerter's *Doubly Gifted: The Author as Visual Artist* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1986). Works with artist's titles are as follows: 75.155.2.1; 75.155.3.1; 75.155.20; 75.155.28; 75.155.34; and 79.341.

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## Related Material

Manuscripts and letters by and related to T. H. White can be found in the T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White Collection (MS-4494), and photographs of White or related to his publications are present in the T. H. (Terence Hanbury) White Literary File Photography Collection (PH-02808).

## **Index Terms**

### **People**

Potts, L. J. (Leonard James), 1897-1960.

White, T. H. (Terence Hanbury), 1906-1964.

### **Subjects**

Beaches--England.

Hell--Pictorial works.

Landscapes--1940-1950.

Nudes--1940-1960.

Resurrection.

Self-portraits--1950-1960.

Still-life painting--20th century.

Patterns (Design elements)--1940-1960.

Portraits--1950-1960.

### **Places**

Alderney (Guernsey).

### **Document Types**

Chalk drawings.

Charcoal drawings.

Ink drawings.

Oil paintings.

Pastels (Visual works).

Sketches.

Watercolors.

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**Series I. Paintings, 1940s-1950s**

**Accession Number: 69.20.1** Self-portrait, 1955. Oil on canvas, 51 x 45.7 cm.

**Location**  
Flat File

**Accession Number: 69.20.2** Portrait of L. J. Potts, circa 1950. Oil on canvas, 61 x 45.7 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.3** Still life of potted geranium, 1953. Oil on canvas, 51.1 x 46 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.4** Abstract landscape, circa 1950. Oil on canvas, 51.1 x 46 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.5** Eve, 1949. Oil on canvas, 91.8 x 61.3 cm.

**Location**  
Screen  
Storage

**Accession Number: 69.20.6** Landscape, 1953. Farming land with dramatic clouds or smoke in sky. Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 51.1 cm.

**Location**  
Flat File

**Accession Number: 69.20.7** Woman in striped bathing suit, Alderney beach, 1953. Oil on canvas, 51.4 x 45.7 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.8** A Vision of Hell, circa 1950. Demons doze beside a yawning man in a boiling pot, tended by a sketeton. Oil on board, 47 x 48 cm (image); 53.3 x 54 x 4.4 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.9** Poppies and delphiniums, 1944. Oil on wood panel on frame, 50.5 x 43.5 cm (visible image); 60 x 53.3 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.10** Still life of three potted plants, 1944. Oil on wood panel, 50.7 x 43.3. cm (visible image); 60.5 x 53.3 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.11** Trompe l'oeil, 1944. Oil on canvas with plastic and metal attachments, 85 x 60 cm (visible image); 95.3 x 69.9 x 5.1 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.12** Deadly Nightshade, circa 1944. Oil on canvas with plastic and metal attachments, 86 x 60 cm (visible image); 95.9 x 68.8 x 5.1 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.13** Alderney, 1954. Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 50.8 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.14** Animals stare at figure posed over dead body, circa 1940s-1950s. Oil and mixed media on canvas board, 40 x 30 cm (image); 46 x 36.7 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.15** Studio interior, circa 1949. Oil on canvas board, 50.5 x 60.3 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.16** Aquatic [?] animal, circa 1940s. Oil, metal, and plastic on board, 40 x 25.5 x 1.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.17** Abstract landscape, 1949. Oil on canvas, 40.6 x 30.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.18** Abstract landscape, 1949. Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 30 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.19** Resurrection scene in graveyard, circa 1940s-1950s. A man is carried off from grave by bird-angels while a man looks on and an angel blows a horn, possibly inspired by Stanley Spencer's Resurrection, Cookham (1924-1927). Oil on board, 48 x 47 cm (image); 54 x 53 x 4 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.20** Allegorical scene, circa 1940s-1950s. Christ floats on a sofa with Death over a crescent moon. Oil on board, 47 x 47 cm (image); 52 x 52.5 x 4 cm (frame).

**Accession Number: 69.20.21** Allegorical scene, circa 1940s-1950s. A depiction of men and women ascending to Heaven or descending to Hell. Oil on board, 48 x 48 cm (image); 54 x 54 x 4.4 cm (frame).

**Series II. Drawings, Macbeth the Knife, circa 1960s**

**Accession Number: 73.392.1** Configuration of architectural and decorative motifs, including key patterns, scrolls, and cartouches, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 20.2 x 25.2 cm.

**Location**  
White,  
T.H.,  
Box 1

**Accession Number: 73.392.2** Bowl with handles and heart-shaped finial on lid, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.2 x 20.1 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.3** Design for a container, with acorn-like finial and various geometric and decorative patterns, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.2 x 20.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.4** Urn-like container with spiral feet and handles, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.2 x 20.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.5** Urn-like container with finial on lid and pedestal base, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.2 x 20.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.6** Design for a container with lid and geometric spiral feet, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.5 x 20.1 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.7** Design for container with lid and pineapple-shaped finial, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 25.2 x 20.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.8** Building with broad portico, columns, and tall spire, circa 1960s. Ink on paper, 24 x 16.5 cm (image); 32.5 x 39.8 cm (sheet).

**Accession Number: 73.392.9** Building with columns and triangular spire decorated with various patterns, circa 1960s. Pen and ink on paper, 22.7 x 19 cm (image); 32.5 x 39.8 cm (sheet).

**Accession Number: 73.392.10** Whimsical building, with certain architectural elements suggesting a face, circa 1960s. Pen and ink on paper, 23 x 17.2 cm (image); 32.7 x 39.8 cm (sheet).

**Accession Number: 73.392.11** Gothic-like church with flying buttresses and bat, circa 1960s. Pen and ink on paper, 32.7 x 39.8 cm.

**Accession Number: 73.392.12** Design for stage with arches, staircase and graduated platforms, and smaller drawing showing aerial view, circa 1960s. Pen and ink on paper, 25.5 x 18.4 cm (image); 32.7 x 39.8 cm (sheet).



**Series III. Drawings and Sketches, 1930s-1950s**

**Accession Number: 69.20.22** White house with purple roof, circa 1940s-1950s.  
Chalk on board, 46 x 50.9 cm.

**Location**  
Flat File

**Accession Number: 69.20.23** Lighthouse and stormy sky, circa 1940s-1950s.  
Chalk on board, 45.6 x 50.3 cm.

**Accession Number: 69.20.24** Seascape, circa 1940s-1950s. A rocky seascape with an island. Pastel and pencil on paper, 25.7 x 35 cm.

**Location**  
White,  
T.H.,  
Box 1

**Accession Number: 75.155.1** Sketch for The Master, circa 1950s. A rock formation, or "Rockall", as depicted in White's book, The Master, sits in the sea. Ink on paper, 21 x 27.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.2.1** Troilus, circa 1930s-1950s. A Trojan soldier stands in a profile pose. Pen and pencil on paper, 17.3 x 11 cm (image); 17.3 x 22 cm (sheet).

**Accession Number: 75.155.2.2** Seaside landscape, circa 1930s-1950s.  
Pen and pencil on paper, 17.3 x 22 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.3.1** Troilus, circa 1930s-1950s. A man holds a teapot with a camera slung over his arm, standing back to back with a Trojan soldier. Ink and pencil on paper, 17.3 x 11 cm (image); 17.3 x 22 cm (sheet).

**Accession Number: 75.155.3.2** Seaside landscape, circa 1930s-1950s.  
Ink and pencil on paper, 17.3 x 22 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.4** Interior scene, circa 1930s-1950s. A man with an axe behind his back stands beside a dead body, and a woman stands in front of him, resisting. Charcoal and pencil on paper, 17.6 x 12.6 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.5** Man and woman seated on couch, conversing, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 32 x 23.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.6** Seated man reading, and study of hand with glass, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 31 x 23.5 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.7** Two sketches: woman and dog, circa 1930s-1950s. A semi-nude female figure holding a wine glass is falling over, and a dog is dressed in a garment, reading "Pauvre Blessé". Charcoal on paper, 31 x 24 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.8** Seaside scene, circa 1930s-1950s. A man and woman are bathing in sea with fishes, with houses on a hilltop in background. Charcoal on paper, 24 x 30.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.9** Study of seated semi-nude female figure, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 24.1 x 31 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.10** Study of seated semi-nude female figure, crossed through with a line, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 24.1 x 30.8 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.11** Study of seated semi-nude female figure, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 24.1 x 30.8 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.12** Studies of reclining nude female figure, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal, pastel, and pencil, 23.5 x 30.1 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.13** Studies of falcons, circa 1930s-1940s. These drawings are on British Falconers' Club letterhead. Pencil on paper, 25.5 x 20.3 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.14** Nude female figure, resting elbows on surface, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 24.2 x 30.7 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.15** Seated woman reading book, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.16** Semi-nude female figure, resting elbows on surface, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 31 x 24.4 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.17** Two men seated in interior with fireplace in background, tea service in foreground, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 24 x 30.8 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.18** Three-quarter head and shoulders profile portrait of bearded, long-haired man, possibly with winged ears or leaf in hair, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.19** Head of man tilted back, smoking [?], crossed through with line, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.8 x 24.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.20** Helping with the Wintchess [?], circa 1930s-1950s. A sketch of two women seen from behind, one is leaning over, and one is seated. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24.2 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.21** Large armchair and side table against wall, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24.3 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.22** Head of man tilted back, smoking [?], with head of dog and paw resting on chest, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.23** Landscape with fence and large tree in foreground, circa 1930s-1950s. Watercolor and charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.24** Colorful landscape, with a cow in foreground, circa 1930s-1950s. Watercolor and charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.25** Woman in bathing cap and swimsuit standing in water, holding a toy sailboat, with another figure presumably on shore, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.5 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.26** Profile portrait of young woman, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.8 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.27** Good Friday (Fred Ridgeway aged 7), circa 1930s-1950s. A front view portrait of a bearded man, wearing a plaid cap and smoking a pipe. Charcoal on paper, 30.8 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.28** The Crown Inn Tingewick in '35, likely 1935. A group of men are playing darts, one labeled, "John B.". Charcoal and watercolor on paper, 30.8 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.29** Sketch of top half of soda siphon bottle, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.8 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.30** Nun with exposed stomach seated at table, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 18.5 x 23.5 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.31** Three studies of forearm, wrist, and hand, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.32** Loose sketch of figure in hat painting a canvas, circa 1930s-1950s. Pencil on paper, 30.7 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.33** Head of man tilted back with eyes closed, holding a pipe, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal on paper, 30.2 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 75.155.34** Dodo [?], circa 1930s-1950s. A quick head and shoulders sketch of figure in cap. Charcoal on paper, 30.3 x 23.7 cm (irregular).

**Accession Number: 75.155.35** Man resting head on pillow against a wall with books and framed drawings, circa 1930s-1950s. Charcoal and pencil on paper, 30 x 24 cm.

**Accession Number: 79.341** Dr. [Malcolm?] Sargent, Dr. Gavin, and Commander Campbell, circa 1930s-1950s. This is a two-sided page of three caricature studies. Pen and ink on paper, 23 x 9 cm.