WORKSHOP PRACTICES AND THE MAKING OF SCULPTURE:
AUTHORSHIP AND COLLABORATION IN THE WORK OF
ERIC GILL, 1909 TO 1940

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ABSTRACT

Workshop practices and the making of sculpture: authorship and collaboration in the work of Eric Gill, 1909 to 1940.

This thesis examines the making of sculpture and the identity of Eric Gill in the first half of the twentieth century. A period of complex practical and theoretical innovation in Britain, histories have tended to be simplified, focussing on the idea of direct carving as an autonomous and isolated process. Gill was a key figure in this period and his persona as an isolated craftsman and art-world exile has precluded balanced accounts of the collaborative nature of his work.

The study maps the complexities of sculptural practice lying behind the ideologies of modernist production, interrogating ideas of sole authorship that have developed around the notion of direct carving. It advances understanding of Gill’s workshop practice and his collaborative work with his patrons, assistants and the art market. Extensive archival research has enabled a detailed mapping of Gill's workshop practices and professional relationships to create a study which explores all aspects of the collaborative nature of making sculpture.

The thesis covers the following research questions: how has authorship been presented in discussions about early twentieth century sculpture and has this changed since Gill’s death; in light of this how has Gill's work and workshop been presented during his lifetime and since? How did Gill position himself as an artist-craftsman within the workshop and beyond? Finally, how do these presentations relate to the realities of producing sculptures at this time (workshops, patrons, the art market) and what can a detailed study of these realities tell us about the making and presentation of the artist as author?

In mapping the making of sculpture in this period the study presents a new appreciation of the complexities and collaborations that were, and are, a reality for many sculptors. The study provides an alternative perspective on the nature of authorship, creative and practical collaboration, and a new understanding of public perceptions of sculptors at the time. Finally, this thesis places the work, and workshop, of Eric Gill in the context of the critical reception he received and presents a broader appreciation of his collaborative processes.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

(Ruth Cribb)

Dated
INTRODUCTION

The label ‘direct carving’, and the sole authorship it has always implied, simplify the complex and collaborative process of the making of sculpture. This thesis examines these complexities in the making of sculpture and the identity of sculptors in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. During this period the processes by which sculptures were made gained critical importance. This was accompanied by an increasing emphasis from sculptors, critics and historians on the nature of materials. This study maps the complexities of the making processes that were adapted or endured as ideologies of modernist production emerged. It interrogates ideas of sole authorship that have developed around the notion of what became known as direct carving by examining the work of Eric Gill (1882-1940, figure 1). Gill was an important figure in this period; the persona of an isolated craftsman and art-world exile in existing narratives has precluded balanced accounts of the collaborative nature of his, and others’, sculpture. This thesis presents, through extensive archival research, a detailed mapping of Gill’s practice and so examines the hierarchies and power relationships, patronage and assistance that underpinned his work. The research advances understanding of Gill’s workshop production and his collaborative relationships with patrons, assistants, architects and the art market; in doing this, the study aims to bring to the fore the broader contexts within which sculptors were working in the first half of the twentieth century.

In the catalogue for the Carving Mountains exhibition at Kettle’s Yard in 1998, and again in the Wild Thing exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2009, Gill was positioned as one of ‘three pioneers of direct carving’ in Britain before 1914 with Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915).¹ These two exhibitions present Gill as a modernist pioneer who introduced the notion of working directly with the material. He later lost status in the canon he had been a formative part of due to his religious beliefs, his refusal to abandon figurative subject matter and his commitment to the utility of

sculpture. The narrow interpretation of modernist sculpture as involving a radical shift in process is reflected in Richard Cork’s 1987 description of an ‘emancipation’ of sculpture from traditional figuration to modernist objects through new carving techniques and non-European influences. Penelope Curtis has questioned these statements: ‘How was sculpture emancipated? And from what? There is here, I think, an unwritten assumption that it was emancipated by means of direct carving, and emancipated from the thrall of statuary.’ Curtis’s 2004 text, ‘How direct carving stole the idea of Modern British Art’, is a useful starting point from which to examine the details of sculpture production during the early twentieth century. For Curtis the ‘notion of the “tradition of carving” has shackled British sculpture and its historiography’, as she goes on to assert, ‘All carving is, at face value, direct.’ In concentrating on the idea of direct carving and the sculptures made using the process, Curtis proposes, much that was made at the time, and the many different contexts within which sculpture was made, are obscured. Such a narrow definition of sculpture positions what was perceived as carved, and therefore modern, as more important than other sculpture production; this includes works made in the context of collaboration, workshops and patronage.

Curtis defined direct carving as: ‘carvings made by the artists for themselves, and not for others, and to their own designs and not those of others.’ This notion of sculptors making work ‘for themselves’ is adopted as the framing argument for Chapter Two. The thesis goes on to question the idea proposed in the early twentieth century by historians such as R.H. Wilenski, as will be discussed shortly, that modern art was produced in isolation and was ‘original’ through the process of the artist setting out ‘to enlarge his experience by his work’ and not through interaction with life or society. The second half of Curtis’s definition is also important in understanding the process of sculptors whose work at the time was seen to be direct carving but was made to order and strictly defined by patrons.

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4 Curtis, “How direct carving stole the idea of Modern British Art,” 292.
5 Curtis, “How direct carving stole the idea of Modern British Art,” 293.
This aspect of the making of sculpture will be discussed throughout Chapter Two and, in particular, in Chapter Four’s focus on Gill’s public commissions.

During Gill’s lifetime direct carving had a narrower definition as the process by which a sculptor designed and executed a sculpture without the intermediary assistance of clay or plaster models or technicians. Stanley Casson (1889-1944), a prominent critic in the first half of the twentieth century, described it as the product of the true sculptor’s ‘love for the material’.

Wilenski stated that ‘essential sculpture is a collaboration between the sculptor and the essential character of the block of resistant substance beneath his hand’.

These authors intended to position the artists they were championing in opposition to the traditions of the Royal Academy. However, the rhetoric disguises the continuities of making between the two. By broadening understanding of the market and business contexts within which sculpture was made the idea of what made a sculpture modern will also be questioned. The construction of Gill’s identity as a direct carver enabled him to gain a reputation and be successful as a modern artist. Maintaining this position necessitated the obfuscation of the workshop, though often this was by critics not Gill himself.

This study contributes to an approach in the history of art which prioritises a full and open discussion of the processes of making sculpture in the workshop. Charles Avery, writing in 1970 on Renaissance Florentine bronzes, observed:

> the sculptor himself participates in making the original model and in working the surface detail of the final bronze. If the purely technical processes that intervene are performed by assistants or even outside the studio, it makes no essential difference to the aesthetic qualities of the work of art, nor does it diminish the sculptor’s title to its authorship.

Avery’s understanding of the making of sculpture is that the workshop was necessary to the practical process but of little importance to the creative process. In a 1989 study on Baroque sculpture Jennifer Montagu presents the collaborative nature of making sculpture

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as central to understanding the forms and styles of the finished work. In 1995 a collection of essays edited by Andrew Ladis and Carolyn Wood, The Craft of Art: Originality and Industry in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Workshop, sought to investigate ‘the relationship between art and craft, between the creative idea and its execution’; what emerged ‘is a sharper realisation of the complex and shifting balance between the mental and the manual in a work of art.’

More recently the collaborative research project Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951 (2007-2010) looked to create a database not only detailing who was making sculpture but how and where, as well as including information on exhibitions, schools and technical assistance. The first question the project asked was: ‘How does examining the working relationship between sculptors and related businesses and trades change accepted ideas of authorship and status?’ The study showed that collaboration was an integral part of the production of sculpture, and that including this aspect of production into historical investigations enabled a more accurate picture of the creative process to be revealed. This is an aspect of Gill’s work that has not been investigated, and the methodology developed in this study should allow similar questions to be asked of other sculptors. This is a pertinent topic not only due to the way in which sculptors changed their approach to the materials with which they worked, but also because many sculptors were known at the time for publishing statements about their work. In Gill’s case this included essays, letters and lectures, and the relationship between his roles as author and artist will be explored in this thesis.

Two studies into the nature of the artist and the studio, and the production of art and art historical narratives that surrounds this physical space, were published in 2010 and 2012. Through collected writings on the working practices of contemporary artists of the second

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10 Jennifer Montagu, Roman Baroque Sculpture: The Industry of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). In the preface Montagu writes: ‘One would read … that a sculptor took a block of stone, but not where he found it, how it was quarried, how he assured it was the right size, how he got it to Rome, or what it looked like when he got it.’


12 “Method,” Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain & Ireland 1851-1951, Online Database [n.d.].

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half of the twentieth century, both sought to address certain themes. In particular, the idea that an artist in a studio is the only way in which artwork can be created and physically made. Michelle Grabner’s introduction to *The Studio Reader* (2010) describes the modernist studio as traditionally designated ‘a place set aside for the production of autonomous work’; when it ‘also functioned as a place of instruction, a hub for social exchange and collective work.’

Lynda Yablonsky’s ‘The Studio System’, in the 2012 reader, observes:

> That myth of a creative genius toiling in solitude is just that. Assistants – whether a few apprentices or a cast of dozens – have long been a mainstay of artistic life, lending support, learning their craft and sometimes even making works for the boss.

Yablonsky contrasts the value, financial and otherwise, given to artworks not authenticated as being by the hand of a dead artist but by other hands in the studio with the value given to artworks by living artists who are known to employ assistants. This thesis will explore the idea of the sole author-artist carving alone in a workshop as it appeared in the first half of the twentieth century and the narratives that developed around this idea of the sculptor’s identity.

Existing accounts of the making of sculpture in the first half of the twentieth century are seen to be problematic, and are questioned by these more recent texts, in relation to a set of critiques generated in the late 1960s by essays by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. These texts began a series of critiques questioning the attribution of meaning as it relates to the person seen to produce the artwork, the society within which they work and the modes of production. These critiques posit a connection, useful for understanding artworks and modes of production, between the maker and the object, but also problematize that connection in order to expand the understanding and context of the work. In order to understand the product one must place the maker within the context of their time and place, but also question the connection between the person and the work.

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In understanding Gill this is important because of the emphasis placed on his working practice in his own writing and those writing about him.

In describing sculptures as works of ‘direct carving’ a critic or historian concentrates on the process as well as the formal value of a work. The name of the artist then becomes inextricably linked with the finished work of art: a sculpture made ‘by Gill’ is also ‘a Gill’ in an embodied sense as well as a creative sense. The art historian Lynda Nead, writing about this period of artistic production, described how the assertion of an artist’s individuality was closely connected to their sexuality: ‘the notion of genius … [became] a special type of being whose creativity is driven by, or even a manifestation of, his sexual energies.’¹⁶ The replacement of the word ‘by’ with ‘a’ has an added dimension when discussing a sculpture carved by the designer by identifying the work not only with the artist’s creative mind but also their physical body. The presence of the artist in any work of art is made apparent in the surface of the object, of which chisel marks in stone is one powerful example. The individuality of an artist, and such direct association of the person with their work, can be seen most clearly in monographic histories.

The first monograph on Gill’s sculpture was published in 1927. The book featured 33 images of sculptures and drawings and an introductory essay by John Rothenstein. He was artist William Rothenstein’s (1872-1945) son, a convert to Catholicism in 1926, and later director of the Tate Gallery. The book was part of the series Contemporary British Artists edited by William Rothenstein’s brother, Albert Rutherston. Both were associated with Gill, indicating his possible involvement in the publication. It was a largely positive text, quoting Gill’s own published theories and describing him as ‘in company with many modern craftsmen’ in advocating the importance of ‘skill and intelligence’ and attention to the detail of making. Rothenstein supported Gill’s own statements with a description of pre-Renaissance sculpture which, because of its ‘spontaneous spirit’, must have been ‘carved directly.’ Rothenstein’s own definition of a work of art, which in Gill’s work ‘exists in the highest degree’, was ‘the product of one man’s mind and hands’ which had the quality of beauty and ‘gives one a profound sense of the unity between its inspiration,

its execution, and its medium. The process of modelling in clay and then casting or carving a work was not criticised, and the notion that all art is in fact collaborative (with the accumulated knowledge of predecessors) was proposed. Rothenstein’s narrative first discussed Gill’s place among modern trends, then moved on to a short biography of Gill’s development as an artist.

The next monograph on Gill appeared two years later, in 1929, by Joseph Thorp (1873-1962), with an essay by Charles Marriott (1869-1957) titled ‘Eric Gill as Carver’. Marriott described Gill’s process of carving as part of ‘the modern movement in art’. He believed this to be determined by the artist “getting back to nature” not by direct reference to nature but rather by reference to stone. Both this book and Rothenstein’s show that the label ‘direct carving’ was in common use by critics and historians by the 1920s. For Marriott direct carving was placed in opposition to modelling since it required different designing and making processes. For all three authors (Rothenstein, Thorp and Marriott), Gill’s origins as a letter cutter added authentic value to his work as a carver of sculpture. This aspect of Gill’s work was also picked up in newspapers at the time and will be discussed in Chapter Two in particular. Alongside these monographs Gill featured in group narratives about modern British sculpture.

In 1921 Kineton Parkes’s Sculpture of To-day made a clear distinction between sculptors who carved and those who did not. Stanley Casson’s Some Modern Sculptors published in 1928, included one chapter titled ‘Eric Gill and Gaudier-Brzeska: Two Independents’. Gill’s inclusion here as a modern sculptor is his connection to an idea of Englishness, and his ‘profound feeling for the decorative values of the human form’. Gill’s technique was also central to his position as a modern sculptor. Casson’s criticism of Gill’s sculpture was that it expressed a preference for relief work, though in his sculptures in the round Gill ‘shows the qualities of a great sculptor’. Parkes returned to the subject of modern sculpture in 1931 when he described Gill as one of the best modern sculptors because of

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his adherence to the technique of direct carving. Parkes said of modern carving that it was a ‘sober and intimate craft often pursued in almost cloistered privacy’.21 This reference to a cloister seems particularly pertinent to the religious nature of Gill’s production of sculpture not only during the time of the Guild but in each community he established which will be discussed in Chapter One.

R.H. Wilenski’s 1932 *The Meaning of Modern Sculpture* described sculpture as ‘the conversion of any mass of matter without formal meaning into a mass that has been given formal meaning as a result of human will.’22 Wilenski’s book started with a disclaimer that he was not interested in sculptors who were ‘employed by modern society.’23 These sculptors were referred to as ‘popular’, as referenced in Wilenski’s earlier book, *The Modern Movement in Art*, as ‘a man who works within his own or other people’s familiar experience’ and ‘deliberately remains within the experience of other people in order to please them and attract their money’.24 Neither of Wilenski’s books on modern sculpture, published in 1927 and 1932, featured Gill’s work. Gill’s belief that sculpture had a utility in the world, demonstrated in his religious and architecture commissions, meant that he was outside the modernist canon as Wilenski defined it.

Writing on Gill from the last fifty years has either concentrated on a particular aspect of his artwork (such as his sculpture or engravings) or been a biographical presentation; much of the writing presents an isolated, eccentric artist. These histories tend to be constructed in large part from Gill’s *Autobiography*, presented as a factual source through which to examine Gill’s life and achievements. Two threads are evident throughout the most prominent texts on Gill relevant to this thesis. The first is Gill’s role as a solitary craftsman and outsider who nevertheless was a well-known and influential artist who introduced the idea of direct carving in Britain. Many texts place great emphasis on Gill’s assertion in his *Autobiography* that ‘Without knowing it I was making a little revolution. I was reuniting what should never have been separated: the artist as man of imagination and the artist as workman.’25 The second involves a close examination of the sexual and the sacred in Gill’s


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work and home life. Many of the texts fit into the second of the two narratives of modern English art identified by Lisa Tickner: ‘One is a modernist account of the avant-gardes (which puts English artists into a continental shadow). The other constructs an eccentric genealogy of Englishness … one guaranteed, implicitly, by the centrality of European modernism.’

The first biography on Gill was written by Robert Speaight and published in 1966. Speaight had been a friend of Gill’s in the 1930s, and his purpose in the book was ‘to paint a portrait and tell a story.’ Whether the reader believed in Gill as a prophet, or saw him as a success or a failure, ‘he could not be ignored.’ Speaight presents a picture of Gill as a philosopher with a unified aim for his art, essays, and way of living to proclaim a ‘condemnation of the modern world’ which ‘may go down to history as a lonely and exaggerated protest, but if the ultimate catastrophe should befall us, his will be the last word.’ The next book, written by Donald Attwater in 1969, aimed to be more contextual. The title A Cell of Good Living: The Life, Works and Opinions of Eric Gill was taken from a quote in Gill’s Autobiography that his aim in life had been to make ‘a cell of good living in the chaos of our world.’ Attwater, like Speaight, had been a friend of Gill’s having sought out the community in Wales in the mid-1920s. He married Gill’s niece, and used the idea of family and home as the core of a man’s life as the central basis for his narrative. The First World War was presented as the turning point in Gill’s life and career, leading directly to the formation of the Guild on Ditchling Common.

These books, and subsequent texts, present Gill’s writings as representative of a definitive and unchanging philosophy, and use them to explain Gill’s life and art. In the anthology A Holy Tradition of Working, Brian Keeble presents excerpts from Gill’s texts thematically as representative of ‘Gill’s coherence of mind’ and ‘the whole of his doctrine’ on art, beauty and workmanship. Gill’s texts from different times, contexts and subject matter have been used to provide deeper understanding of his sculpture, and so have been selectively


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used to place his theory in opposition to his working practices, in particular Gill’s writing about the importance of stone carving and his use of assistants. In many of the biographical books, the author finds the right quote to support a particular point, with no reference made to the date, audience or context within which it was written. This thesis argues the significance of using Gill’s published ideas appropriate to the time in which he was both writing and making. In doing so the symbiotic relationship between his theories and his working practices can be understood as an evolving process.

In 1981 Malcolm Yorke wrote one of the few studies, published after Gill’s death in 1940, which attempted an analysis integrating Gill’s life and each aspect of his artistic career. Yorke presents Gill’s conversion to the Roman Catholic Church as in part due to his need to reconcile ‘the erotic and the divine’, following from the doctrine ‘that “Man is composed of matter and spirit, both real and both good”.’ 30 Gill started to repeat the phrase ‘Man is composed of matter and spirit, both real and both good’, in various forms, much later in his life31 however the idea forms the central thesis for Yorke’s book. The phrase and the idea it represents is used by Yorke to describe the idea of the head and the hand working together in Gill’s workshop. For Yorke it ‘would be a mistake to stress Gill the controversialist and make him sound only strenuously intellectual and pedantic.’ 32 Despite this intention, Yorke’s presentation is of Gill as an outsider: though he had been connected to prominent modernists such as Jacob Epstein, Augustus John (1878-1961) and Ambrose McEvoy (1878-1927), Yorke writes that Gill maintained an ‘alienation’ from the pre-World War One art world. After the War and before his death, ‘Gill remained a non-joiner, an English isolate in a time of international styles.’ 33 Gill is presented as both part of a British avant-garde and isolated from it, or to use Tickner’s analysis, Yorke is asserting a modernist position for Gill by his relation to important modernist developments in Britain and Europe. Gill’s importance within the art world seems, for Yorke, to be evidenced by his isolation.

32 Yorke, Eric Gill, 18.
33 Yorke, Eric Gill, 243-4.

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Fiona MacCarthy, in her 1989 biography, continued the theme of Gill as insider and outsider: ‘although he stood so ostensibly apart, stranger in the strange land prophesying devastation, Eric Gill was in spite of himself a well-known public person.’ MacCarthy’s writing on Gill after 1989 repeats the idea of Gill as an outsider: a 2006 newspaper article states Gill’s works ‘celebrate the man who was, by his own account, a stranger in a strange land’; and in 2009 MacCarthy referred to Gill as someone who ‘created his own life in the wilderness.’ MacCarthy’s biography attempted to reconcile anomalies around Gill’s sexuality and his religion, and to piece together Gill the man as ‘he truly was. At least I can be confident that Gill was not what he said he was.’ Gill’s own writings are presented as evidence for contradiction between his theory and his practice both in art and in his private life, while at the same time MacCarthy uses his Autobiography as primary evidence for sections of the narrative. MacCarthy suggests Gill created his outsider identity himself despite it being in opposition to the reality of his status as a successful public artist. MacCarthy both trusts and mistrusts Gill’s own words in order to create a narrative in which his private life and public art are reconciled and complementary. Her biography is based on Gill’s diaries, interviews and other primary material but in many ways is very similar in content to the two earlier biographies by Speaight and Attwater: they construct an image of Gill as an outsider, reflecting the idea of the isolated artist-author described above and which will be interrogated throughout this thesis.

In the first major retrospective exhibition of Gill’s sculpture in 1992 Judith Collins wrote that Gill’s Autobiography:

…written at speed and with great honesty and integrity in the last months of his life, was less a historical narrative with detailed facts than a history of the growth and development of the spirit and soul of an artist.

Collins’s text uses quotes that are almost exclusively from Gill’s Autobiography to shape her narrative. Collins’s subsequent sculpture catalogue raisonné, published six years later using much of the research undertaken for the exhibition, is an invaluable resource on the

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36 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, x.
details and dates of Gill’s sculpture.\textsuperscript{38} Collins states that her aim is to celebrate the sculpture of Eric Gill ‘who to date, has been better known for the events of his life than for his work. It intends to reinstate Gill as a significant British sculptor of the interwar years’. To do this Collins maps Gill’s career as a sculptor from his first sculpture in 1909, to his first exhibition in 1911 and his association with Jacob Epstein through whom Gill was able to take ‘a seminal role in the development of modern sculpture in this country.’ In contrast to the previous publications Collins uses Gill’s connections to present as an integral part of modern art movements in Britain though only at this early stage in his career as a sculptor.

For Collins, as for Yorke and MacCarthy, Gill’s artistic and life decisions as his career progressed made him an outsider, and one who needed to be reappraised and brought into the foreground through his connections. In her opening essay ‘Gill and the Art World’ Collins asks, echoing a quote from Gill’s friend and associate David Jones (1895-1974), ‘What was it that set Gill apart from these other twentieth century sculptors?’\textsuperscript{39} Collins concludes that despite his collaborations with architects and galleries, which could suggest Gill placing himself centrally as a modern artist, Gill’s ‘contract was with God’.\textsuperscript{40} Through close analysis of the works themselves and archive sources this thesis seeks to broaden the understanding of Gill’s status and his sculpture during his lifetime. This will question, in various ways, the assumptions made in these texts.

Dennis Farr, writing about modern British art in 1978, compared Gill with Epstein describing him as ‘a sculptor of a very different temperament.’ Farr goes on to say that Gill’s ‘certain “primitive” directness of conception’ led him to be at the heart of a network of influential art world men including William Rothenstein and Roger Fry (1866-1934), as well as Epstein.\textsuperscript{41} Farr described Gill and Epstein as ‘working from a common Egyptian prototype’ in some of their work.\textsuperscript{42} Gill’s Westminster Cathedral \textit{Stations of the Cross}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} A number of errors indicate more work is needed for accuracy and to integrate Gill’s inscriptions with his sculpture; this does not detract from its important contribution to the study of Gill sculpture.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Collins, \textit{Eric Gill The Sculpture}, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Farr, \textit{English Art}, 222. Farr references Epstein’s \textit{Sun God} (1910) and Gill’s \textit{Cupid/Cocky Kid} sculptures (1910-11).
\end{itemize}
(figure 46) are described as having ‘a noble, impressive simplicity’ and Farr compares them to the work of Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) in their ‘Giottoesque’ design. In general Farr does not try to place Gill’s early career within or outside a progression and the implication is that Gill was part of the complex and varied movements and networks of art production at the time. In contrast Charles Harrison, in 1981, stated that modern sculpture in Britain had particular characteristics including continental influences, concern for the primitive and abstraction:

The assertion of the possible continuity and coherence of all sculpture, including the primitive, together with certain types of natural form, was a means by which those who felt ill at ease among sophisticates could achieve some sense of action against the domination of culture by a patrician, conservative, literary upper-middle class with highly specialised tastes.

For Harrison, avant-garde artists in England moved beyond ‘a simple commitment to carving. ... Gill offers an exception to support this rule’. Gill’s exceptionality was also due to his conversion to Catholicism and subsequent conservative subject matter. Farr seems to attempt an inclusive overview of what it meant to be a modern British sculptor, foreshadowing Curtis’s text. On the other hand, Harrison’s text implies a need to explain Gill’s prominence during his lifetime while at the same time placing him outside the recognised ‘rules’ of modern British sculpture.

In his 1987 text Richard Cork echoed Harrison’s presentation of a ‘sense of action’ among artists, stating that the tone of radicalism in some sculptors of this period, in his discussion of modern sculpture, reflects the nature of the ‘emancipation’ from the traditions of the past. In the 2009 catalogue for the exhibition *Wild Thing: Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Gill* Cork presents Gill as having a central role as part of the triumvirate of modern British sculpture before 1914. Cork then describes how Gill’s religion and his varied output placed him intellectually at a distance from Epstein. Some critical reception of the exhibition saw Gill in the light of anecdotes in MacCarthy’s biography, presenting a

43 Farr, *English Art*, 222.
45 Cork, “The Emancipation of Modern Sculpture”.
slightly farcical image of the artist. In many of these texts the authors present the idea of Gill, the eccentric outsider, as an accepted fact of his artistic status. The complexities of hierarchy, power and collaboration both within his small communities and workshop and outside it are not examined and so this narrow view of Gill and his work continues.

David Getsy wrote in 2003: ‘the symbiotic relationships across the range of possible positions and groups’ in British sculpture during the first half of the twentieth century had been overlooked in existing histories of the period. Artists identifying themselves with the avant-garde at the start of the twentieth century did so through ‘negative proposition defined by rejection and repudiation’ of the perceived traditional and conservative artistic processes, institutions and conventions. Getsy writes that part of this defence was the need to assert authenticity through materials and techniques, and that because of this ‘direct carving became simplistically equated with modernist sculpture, and work that did not fit into that equation (such as Epstein’s and Gaudier-Brzeska’s modelled figures) was dismissed or ignored.’ Gill’s own words show his awareness of the dangers of describing his work as a negative proposition. In a letter to the Times Literary Supplement in May 1932 Gill took issue with a book by William Rothenstein which stated that ‘for Gill modelling was a cardinal sin’: ‘I have never said or thought that modelling was sinful or even silly. On the contrary, I have frequently said and written that carving and modelling are two arts, each having its own proper good qualities – as is obvious.

Gill is generally presented as having contributed to the art movements of the early twentieth century through his craft as a carver and his early connections with artists and critics. Gill’s technique promoted the importance of the nature of materials and of stone carving without the use of clay models or external teams of skilled masons. Gill’s own words indicate an approach that allowed for the complexities of production, collaboration and working with the right materials for the right purposes. Some of the sculptors known

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and made famous through the idea of direct carving and abstraction, such as Jacob Epstein and Henry Moore (1898-1986), continued to use models, drawings and assistants, or create naturalistic, i.e. non-abstract, works in both stone and other materials including bronze. The presentation of Gill as purely a carver, to whom modelling was antithetical and who worked in isolation, simplifies the realities of being a sculptor at this time. Gill needed to be a businessman, an active networker and self-promoter to manage the work he took on, maintain his reputation and so be able to take on more work.

Narratives of Gill’s life and art since 1989 have been informed by knowledge of Gill’s sex life and they in turn inform on-going debates about authorship. The role of ‘sexual energies’, as referenced in Nead, in the creative and carving process; and the extent to which an artist’s ‘private’/sexual life and their ‘public’/artistic life are connected in the interpretation of artworks. MacCarthy’s biography revealed for the first time in print Gill’s abuse of two of his daughters, his incestuous relationship with at least one of his sisters, and his many mistresses. For MacCarthy Gill’s sexuality was an integral part of his artistic identity and the driving force behind his creativity and his role as a powerful patriarch in the home and the workshop. Knowledge of Gill’s ‘sexual appetite’ leads Cork to emphasise the erotic significance he perceives in Gill’s sculpture. The details of Gill’s sex-life will not be directly referenced in this thesis since they form no part of the day to day activities of the workshop; they are referenced here to acknowledge an important context within which to understand Gill’s interest in the unity of the body and the mind which will be explored in this thesis as it connected to his ideas on religion, status and the making of art. Gill’s ideas informed his published theories, his art and modes of production. This thesis will consider his identity and status within the workshop and with patrons by examining the activity of the workshop through the scrutiny of the archival sources. The close attention to primary sources was carried out with knowledge of contemporary and historical narratives of direct carving and artistic identity.

51 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, xi.
52 Cork, Wild Thing, 19.
53 As will be seen in Chapter Three Gill did use some of his assistants as models. Gill created a set of erotic drawings (now in the British Museum), though as they are not annotated it is not known if any were taken from his workshop employees.
The methodology of this study allows for an in depth investigation of some of these relationships, and the power dynamics and negotiation at the centre of Gill’s production of sculpture within and outside of the workshop. Gill’s own view of working as part of a fellowship at certain times in his career and his commitment to the skill development inherent to the apprenticeship system show an engagement with these dynamics. Gill kept meticulous records of all aspects of his work: how many hours he spent drawing and carving; what work was carried out by his assistants and how much they were paid; who he met and the exhibitions he saw; where his sculptures were exhibited and who bought them. These records are supported by many photographs taken or commissioned by Gill of finished and part-finished works, the records kept by his assistants and the many letters written by Gill and his associates. The primary archival research is flanked by a careful analysis of other sources relating to Gill. These include documents contemporaneous with the periods of Gill’s career under scrutiny in this thesis, such as newspapers, reviews and articles. It also encompasses, as this literature review has explained, a detailed study of writings about Gill, the development of modern sculpture and the history of sculpture generally.

Gill’s diaries, workbooks, ledgers and the majority of other related business material are stored in the archive of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA. The main holding of Gill’s personal and professional papers, this archive has been the indispensable source of data for this thesis. Other sources have been consulted in archives across the USA and the UK containing drawings, letters, photographs and other ephemera pertinent to the analysis. The information I have gathered has been developed into a series of detailed chronological records (see examples in Appendices II and III), each year listing the work on which he was engaged, who he was meeting, exhibitions he visited, the financial transactions involved and the assistance he received. Much of this archival material is yet to be published, in particular the family archive material relating to those in Gill’s workshop. My great-grandfather, Joseph Cribb (1892-1967), and his brother Lawrence (1898-1978)\textsuperscript{54}, worked with Gill until his death, and each of them at different times was primary assistant and head of the stone workshop. Joseph Cribb’s workbooks and diaries

\textsuperscript{54} Joseph’s full name was Herbert Joseph Cribb and he was known as Joseph. As there are two Cribbs it may sometimes be necessary to refer to them by their first name and surname for clarity. All others will be referred to, as is Gill, by their surnames.
in particular have been readily available (though the extant records do not cover his whole career), whereas such extensive records of the work of other assistants are not known to be extant. The archive information available has shaped the narrative, and the sculptures chosen as case studies, and might suggest an elevated status for Joseph Cribb within Gill’s workshop and beyond yet this is not the intention of this thesis. Rather, my awareness of those with whom Gill worked stimulated my interest in the mechanics of collaborative workshop processes and relationships.

Two pivotal periods in Gill’s career were identified to explore changes in Gill’s status and identification as a modern sculptor. The first period, 1910 to 1915, was when Gill began his sculpture career: he completed his first sculpture in 1910; had his first solo sculpture exhibition in 1911; was the only British sculptor to feature in Roger Fry’s ‘Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition’ at the Grafton Gallery in 1912; converted to the Roman Catholic Church in 1913; and started work on his first major public commission for Westminster Cathedral in 1914 (figure 46). During this time his first apprentice, Joseph Cribb, graduated to the status of assistant and the workshop expanded. The second time period, 1927 to 1932, was when Gill became firmly established as a public artist: in 1928 Gill held one of his largest solo shows featuring the recently completed Mankind (figure 34), Gill’s largest non-commissioned sculpture; he received many architectural commissions, in particular to carve sculptures for the London Underground in 1928 and for the BBC headquarters in 1931. Gill’s workshop contracted and expanded during this time, and he also moved from the remote Welsh village of Capel-y-Ffin to Pigotts, just outside High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire and much closer to London. Another important reason to concentrate on these two periods is that Joseph Cribb’s diaries and workbooks for some years have been lost, but the records for the featured years are extant.

In three of the chapters, particular sculptures made within each time period will be presented as case studies focussing on different relationships connected with production.

As part of the interrogative framework of this thesis specific sculptures have been mapped

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55 This is also the case in MacCarthy’s biography: Joseph Cribb is mentioned more times than any other assistant (with the exception of David Jones and Desmond Chute, both of whom were assistants for a very short time but remained lifelong friends of Gill), partly because, as Gill’s first assistant, Joseph was part of Gill’s working life longer than anyone else in the workshop.
in terms of their preparation, design, execution and reception of each sculpture. Through this detailed analysis this thesis aims to answer the following research questions: how has authorship been presented in discussions about early twentieth century sculpture, and in light of this how has Gill’s work and workshop been presented during his lifetime and since? How did Gill position himself as an artist-craftsman within the workshop and beyond? How do these presentations relate to the realities of producing sculptures at this time with the workshop, patrons and the art market? Finally what can a detailed study of these realities tell us about the making and presentation of the artist as author?

Contextual information on Gill, his art, theories and connections will be provided in Chapter One, introducing the themes which will recur throughout the remaining chapters on the structure of Gill’s workshops and the practical realities of sculptural production. Gill’s own theoretical and practical approach to the making of art were informed by varied influences which Gill either worked with or against: the Arts and Crafts movement; traditions of the Royal Academy; and critics and historians writing on Indian Hindu sculpture, modern art movements and religion. Gill’s publications enabled him to formalise and broadcast his idea about art, production and religion; the development of his various workshops, and the establishment of the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, allowed Gill to try and apply his ideals to his practice. These influences and oppositions will be discussed within the context of Gill’s development of his own identity and his status as author of text and art.

The second chapter concentrates on Gill and the sculptures he made without a prearranged buyer. In particular, the chapter will focus on the making of certain sculptures: the *Mother and Child* series from 1910 (figures 31-33) has been chosen because they are Gill’s first sculptures in the round, and because one of the series was left ‘unfinished’. This concept will be discussed in relation to the sculpture chosen from the second time period, *Mankind* (1927-8, figure 34), because it was Gill’s largest stone sculpture to date and was seen at the time as one of Gill’s most successful ‘modern’ sculptures. These sculptures were described as ‘for himself’ by Collins⁵⁶; this phrase relates to Curtis’s definition of direct carving noted above and can be seen to limit the meaning of Gill’s sculptures within the context of isolated authorship; Gill in fact needed


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to work with his agents, gallerists and the art market to ensure he was making sculptures that would sell and he changed his approach as he learnt what the market responded to.

Chapter Three looks in detail at Gill’s work on the Westminster Cathedral *Stations of the Cross* (figure 46), Gill’s first major public commission and one which brought to the fore his developing status as a modern artist. Usually presented by historians as a natural result of Gill’s conversion to Catholicism in February 1913, the chapter maps the process of the commission and the difficulties Gill faced in creating imagery that he felt suited the subject and its public reception. It will focus on Gill’s patrons, and his workshop, to map the creative and practical collaborative work carried out on the *Stations*. Framing this data is Gill’s writing on religious sculpture and the importance of working collaboratively within a workshop and creating useful and beautiful work in the name of God.

The final chapter is an investigation of two of Gill’s major secular public architectural sculpture commissions for London Underground (figures 64-5) and the BBC (figures 66-69). The chapter uses Gill’s writing on sculpture and architecture to explore more fully the idea presented in chapter three on the purpose and nature of architectural sculpture. The exploration of the making of the commissions begins with an examination of his presentation in the press at the time; Gill’s status and perception as a modern artist was established by placing emphasis on his working processes and his personal appearance. Throughout the chapter Gill’s often complex relationships with his patrons and his workshop in the design and execution of commissions is revealed.
CHAPTER ONE: THE WORKSHOP

Introduction

This chapter lays foundation for the thesis by examining the origins of Gill’s theories and working practices and what became known as direct carving. At the centre of this exploration are Gill’s workshops, his writings about sculpture and production, and the context within which he was working as a Catholic in the first half of the twentieth century. Existing histories tend to see Gill’s role as head of a workshop in opposition to his identity as a direct carver. This chapter broadens the context within which Gill’s sculptures are understood by exploring the ideals and realities of his sculpture workshop, his influences and what role his religion played in the formation of his ideas. In particular this chapter will set out the importance of collaborative working in the making of sculpture within and outside of Gill’s workshop and how this relates to Gill’s role as author of texts and artworks.

In the introduction to his 1964 inventory of Gill’s inscriptive work, Evan Gill wrote: ‘Is it possible to segregate the work of EG’s own hands, absolutely, from that of his assistants? The answer must be “No”.’ Gill’s work with his assistants and apprentices is presented by Evan Gill as a necessary part of the type of work Gill was producing. This is shown in his inventory where, when he has the information, Evan Gill cites an assistant’s work on a job. The introduction also included a statement from Gill’s close friend Desmond Chute (1895-1962) on Gill’s workshop:

Everything made there was wholly inspired and entirely due to him. This does not necessarily mean that all works came wholly from his hand. For if in a period when sculptors’ use of the pointing machine was taken for granted, he was adamant against this and any other devices that rob men of responsibility, on the other hand

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2 Chute was a cradle-Catholic who studied at the Slade School of Art. He met Gill in 1918.

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he made ample use of the collaboration of fellow stone-cutters, esteeming this a mutual benefit.\(^3\)

Chute’s use of the phrase ‘mutual benefit’ is important for this study. Gill’s assistants enabled him to realise a prolific output and he enabled them to learn a trade and an ethos of collaborative working. Gill believed in the importance of the mediaeval tradition where the identity of individual makers was not declared. He sought to establish this principle in relation to his workshop. For him, the collaborative work on a medieval cathedral when, as he saw it, every craftsman had a level of autonomy but none signed their name, was the ideal mode of production. This way of working required a strict hierarchy and a master to remain in control of the overall work required. This chapter will explore in more detail Gill’s ideas of collaborative working, the power relationships that emerged and how this debate relates to and complicates his role as a pioneer of direct carving.

Gill wrote about the immorality of modern forms of production which denied the worker the ability to take satisfaction and responsibility in making. Gill rejected the idea that it was a working man’s purpose to produce functional objects simply to earn enough to live; instead he believed that the worker should focus on making well-made things. At the end of his life Gill wrote that he hoped he had ‘done something towards re-integrating bed and board, the small farm and the workshop, the home and the school, earth and heaven’; his aim throughout his life, he stated, had been to ‘make a cell of good living in the chaos of our world’.\(^4\) Gill started writing essays in the early 1900s and continued throughout his life alongside his artwork. This chapter will look at the influences on Gill’s theory, how these influences relate to his working practice and how his religious philosophy relates to his artistic theory. Gill’s prolific work as an essayist went beyond theories on art and artistic production into politics, war, education and even clothing. This thesis concentrates on his writing about art production and it includes other texts when they reference Gill’s philosophy about ways of living, working and worshipping God.

\(^3\) Qted in Gill, *The Inscriptional Work of Eric Gill*, ix. The quote is from an undated and unpublished mss of a book by Chute on Gill’s sculptures, though the preface from the manuscript appeared as an essay in *Good Work* Vol. XXVII, no. 1 (Winter 1964).

Opponents and Influences: Gill’s theories of art production

This section explores the theoretical contexts within which Gill worked, and the theoretical and practical contexts within which Gill established and developed his workshops. Starting with an examination of the idea of the making of sculpture as it was discussed during Gill’s lifetime, it considers the importance of the Arts and Crafts movement. It examines the traditions of art education which Gill saw himself reacting against. Throughout the chapter Gill’s particular religious philosophy will be seen to have developed alongside these influences.

Fiona MacCarthy describes Gill’s ‘natural affinity for the views of Ruskin and Morris on art, labour and the craftsman’. For MacCarthy, Gill’s affinity early in his career with the Arts and Crafts movement was due to their ‘obsession with tools and techniques; the insistence that craftsmen were workmen not fine artists; the idea of precision as a kind of be-all, end-all’. For MacCarthy, Gill was ‘deeply implicated’ with the Arts and Crafts movement in 1905, in particular due to the location of his home and workshop in Hammersmith. Hammersmith at this time was home to a number of those associated with the Arts and Crafts movement: in particular William Morris’s daughter, the artist May Morris (1862-1938), and William Morris’s printer, Emery Walker (1851-1933). It was through Gill’s connection with Walker that Gill was introduced to his most important early patron, Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937). Walker also introduced Gill to his first assistant Joseph Cribb in 1906. In 1905 Gill was elected to become a member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and he became part of a broad debate on the nature of art, craft and production within which he developed his own views.

Gill’s early years were influenced by Arts and Crafts ideas on fine and applied arts and methods of production. Behind much of Gill’s writings, and in the practical application of

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5 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 41.
6 Imogen Hart’s Arts and Crafts Objects (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) details debates on the meaning of the term ‘Arts and Crafts’ and whether there was a ‘Movement’, as the term did not appear in print until 1896. This thesis uses the term ‘Arts and Crafts movement’ as it was used and understood by Gill: ‘Briefly, the Arts and Crafts movement may be defined as one to unite the artist and craftsman.’ (Eric Gill, “The Failure of the Arts and Crafts Movement: A Lesson for Trade Unionists,” The Socialist Review (December 1909): 289).
7 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 44.
8 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 60-61.
his theories, can be seen the writings of John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896). Gill, like Ruskin and Morris, had an interest in and knowledge of medieval architecture, production and technique. Gill’s records refer to an early interest in Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts in general. A friend of the Gill family, Dr. Codrington gave Gill a copy of Ruskin’s *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in January 1898. Gill also noted in his diary the day Ruskin died (20 January 1900), his funeral, and the obituaries he read in various newspapers. Early in his career Gill was connected to institutions associated with the Arts and Crafts legacy including the Paddington Technical Institute where he taught letter cutting, and the Westminster Technical Institute where he applied for the Principalship in June 1907.

In particular, parallels can be drawn between Gill’s thoughts on tools, and those of Ruskin. Ruskin believed that the practical skill of art and making could be taught, but that the problem arose when that worker was asked to also have the creative inspiration for a design. At this point, ‘he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks, and ten to one he thinks wrong’. Despite this faltering start, Ruskin proposed, ‘you have made a man of him for all that, he was only a machine before, an animated tool.’ Gill’s thoughts on industrialisation and workers as tools developed from Ruskin’s theories, and in 1920 he wrote that “The modern workman is not an artist. He is a tool.”

Gill’s engagement with Arts and Crafts ideas was also evidenced in May 1907 when he gave a lecture entitled ‘Socialism and the Arts and Crafts’ at a Fabian Society meeting in Essex Hall in which he referenced Ruskin’s ideas. *Fabian News* summarised the lecture with quotes. Gill stated in the lecture that the Fabian Society could only raise the standard of living, and wages, by raising the ‘standard of production’ and the whole factory system itself should be challenged; the engineering workman is simply a living tool, and when the engineer frankly recognises the limitations of his tools and makes no attempt at ornament or

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9 Eric Gill. Diary entries 1898-1900. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
Gill closely linked the importance of the unity of design and execution. Both he and Ruskin described the importance of the head and the hand working together in the production of works of art, a shorthand for the complex relationship between mind and body.

Ruskin’s description implied teaching an unenlightened worker to become an artist. As Gill’s ideas developed he came to believe that all men were already artists though they had their consciousness and responsibility taken away from them. The similarities and influence continued to be evident to Gill’s contemporaries as in 1934 Gill was invited to address the English Speaking Union on the subject of Ruskin. This invitation suggests an on-going perception at the time of a connection in ideas between the two men, long after Gill had publicly rejected the Arts and Crafts movement. In the article written up from the lecture, Gill wrote that Ruskin ‘saw – no one else did, or very few – that art and life were bound together. He saw, or foresaw, what we now see, the complete divorce of art from life which industrialism entails.’

In his address Gill described how this divorce of art from life was the production of ‘fine art’ or ‘Art’ by a select elite on the one side, and on the other the production of what was needed for living by emasculated factory-workers with no ownership or personal responsibility over what they were producing.

Gill’s debt to Ruskin, as well as his other main influence early in his career of the calligrapher Edward Johnston (1872–1944), led Gill to be part of the Arts and Crafts community and the groups associated with it. Gill joined the Fabian Arts Group in 1907. Formally established that year by Holbrook Jackson (1874–1948) and A.R. Orage (1873–1934), and with support from George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), it was ‘intended as a demonstration of the Morrisian principle that socialism and art might be blended.’ The same year Gill gave the lecture, quoted above, to the Fabian Society on the Arts and Crafts movement. The objective of the Arts and Crafts movement, according to Gill’s lecture in 1907, was ‘to bring about a reorganisation of the conditions of industry under which it

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13 “Socialism and the Arts and Crafts,” 54.
will be possible for quality to supersede quantity.\textsuperscript{16} However, Gill’s perception was that the Arts and Crafts movement used the factory system to make artist-designed goods which were unaffordable by the majority of society.

In his career Gill believed he was living through the ‘doom’ foretold by Ruskin\textsuperscript{17}, created by the businessman and the factory method of production and the dominance of organised religion. Gill’s engraving \textit{Apocalypse} (1936, figure 2) encapsulated this view. It depicts the angel of destruction casting a millstone on twisted and intertwining church, bank and factory buildings. Though Gill’s connections to Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement in general are evidenced in articles and diary entries, Gill did not write specifically about Morris; parallels can, however, be drawn between their theories on modes of artistic production.

Morris wrote in 1882 that those who made art objects ‘must be all artists, and good artists too … the handicraftsman, left behind by the artist when the arts sundered, must come up with him, must work side by side with him’.\textsuperscript{18} Morris here indicated equality in status between the designer, artist, craftsman and maker without asserting that the designer and the executant should be the same person. In 1909 Gill published an article criticising Morris’s, and the Arts and Crafts movement’s aims in this direction:

> The error began in supposing it desirable to turn the workman into an artist. It is not. The desirable thing is to control the industry in the interests of good workmanship and a just price instead of, as at present, in the interest of profit. We have got production for profit; we must get production for use.\textsuperscript{19}

There is a parallel between the two writers in their hopes that artistic production should promote the personal responsibility of makers, though for Gill this wasn’t in order to raise the status of the workman. Both authors were interested in how art was produced, and in properly recognising the beauty and importance of objects traditionally associated with

\textsuperscript{16} “Socialism and the Arts and Crafts,” 54.
\textsuperscript{17} Gill, “John Ruskin,” 172.
crafts to the status deserved by anything well-made. Morris, however, believed that all craftsmen should be raised to the status of artists.

Peter Faulkener cites Morris as having said: 'I have tried to make each of my workers an artist, and when I say an artist I mean a man.'\textsuperscript{20} There is a parallel here with Gill’s reference in his 1907 lecture that ‘all men are artists all the time, though only a few men make a business of it.’\textsuperscript{21} The divergence between the two came from Gill’s perception of Morris’s aim for all craft to be raised to the status of fine art, and craftsmen raised to the status of fine artists; Gill, on the other hand wanted to lower the status of the fine artist and flatten the hierarchy by ensuring that all workers were personally responsible for what they made, and all things made in such a way would be both useful and beautiful. Gill’s 1909 article, quoted above, was entitled ‘The Failure of the Arts and Crafts Movement’. In it Gill described the aims of the movement: ‘to unite the artist and craftsman’; ‘to affirm the reality of the union between Art and Life’; for ‘production in the interests of good workmanship and a just price. For them production was for use’; and to ‘raise the conditions of ordinary workers and the quality of ordinary workmanship’.\textsuperscript{22} The failure, however, came when the movement tried to change public taste through exhibitions of hand-made goods\textsuperscript{23}, and worked to design beautiful objects instead of empowering workmen in factories.

Morris himself seemed to be aware of the complexities, later highlighted by Gill, associated with his idealistic aims and the reality of his business:

> Except with a small part of the more artistic side of the work, I could not do anything (or at least but little) to give this pleasure to the workmen, because I should have had to change their method of work so utterly that I should have disqualified them from earning their living elsewhere.\textsuperscript{24}

The price of goods on sale from Morris & Co. had meant that they were prohibitive for the majority of the public, and most importantly for those who had a hand in making

\textsuperscript{21}“Socialism and the Arts and Crafts,” 53.
\textsuperscript{22}Gill, “The Failure of the Arts and Crafts Movement,” 289-300.
\textsuperscript{23}Despite these strongly stated opinions Gill exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society throughout his career, starting in 1903, and subsequently in 1906, 1910, 1926, 1931 and 1935.
\textsuperscript{24}Stansky, \textit{William Morris}, 36.
them. Gill saw this as a sign of Morris’ failure. Ruskin and Morris wanted to educate workers to produce beautiful hand-made goods that would raise their status to that of known, named, artists. Morris’s statement above indicates a patriarchal view of his workers: that he would be the one to enable them to take pleasure in the work that he gave them. In 1928 Gill continued to distance his own way of working from that of the Arts and Crafts movement. He wrote that a ‘revival of “arts and crafts” has been attempted, but the competition with the factory involved is too great and the position of the ‘artist-craftsman’ too artificial.’ By artificial Gill meant that someone who was ‘consciously an artist’ was now making ‘artistic’ tables and chairs as well as fine art which Gill felt to be ‘an absurd position’.  

Gill aimed to maintain a small scale workshop, acknowledging the need for the learning of technical, transferable, skills. His assistants worked closely with him and Gill ensured they were learning and taking responsibility for the work. In promoting this way of working Gill can be seen to be following the aims of the Arts and Crafts movement, though as his career progressed his writing enabled him to distance himself from these associations.

Many of Gill’s theories started to form early in his career under the influence of another writer also associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, the historian and philosopher Ananda Coomaraswamy (1887-1947). As he recorded in his diary, Gill first met Coomaraswamy in 1908 at a lecture ‘at Art Workers Guild on “Indian Art”, a most splendid paper’.  

Gill took inspiration not only from the processes but also the content of Indian Hindu sculpture (figures 3 and 4, from Coomaraswamy’s 1914 book Visvakarma) as can be seen in his early sculptures Contortionist (1912, figure 5) and Ecstasy (1910-11, figure 6). In 1913 Coomaraswamy summarised the qualities Gill responded to in his sculpture: ‘in the best of Indian sculpture flesh and spirit are inseparable … the interplay of all psychic and physical sexual forces is felt in itself to be religious.’

Coomaraswamy wrote a number of books on themes of Indian art, craft, aesthetics and nature and was a

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26 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 10 January 1908. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library. He was most likely introduced by William Rothenstein, who was also at the lecture and collected Indian sculpture.
close associate of certain members of the Arts and Crafts movement. In the preface to The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon (1913) Coomaraswamy referenced Lethaby’s writing on medieval art, and Ruskin’s thoughts on the importance of craft traditions, connecting his work to a lineage of writing on British art and production. 28 Coomaraswamy’s earlier, 1909 book, The Indian Craftsman featured a foreword by C.R. Ashbee (1863-1942) and an article in the appendix by Morris. 29

Ashbee’s foreword emphasised the importance of what the book offered the world at that time, in particular to the problems brought by industrialisation and mass-mechanisation. Ashbee wrote, in response to Coomaraswamy’s descriptions of Indian villages and craft-life, that Britain needed a ‘revival of the handicrafts, the education of hand and eye’. 30 The language used by Ashbee shows that as Gill started to make sculpture and discuss the processes of making, he was contributing to an existing debate on the nature of arts, production and society in relation to design and execution. Coomaraswamy drew parallels between Indian art and craft and medieval (Christian) Europe, ‘Even in the best Gothic art there are traces of a conflict, a duality of soul and body’ 31, which underpinned Gill’s developing thoughts on the importance of religion. For Gill there needed to be unity in the artist’s mind between subject matter and material, inspiration and imagination, and technical skill and the labour involved. Coomaraswamy subsequently asked Gill to write the preface to his 1914 Visvakarma 32 and Gill described a parallel between medieval England and the Indian sculpture featured in the book:

There is a spirit, a freedom, an innocence and exuberance, a subordination of individual personality and an absence of the display of ambition and of the advertisement of originality which betray very clearly the fact that life in such

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31 Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon, 63.
32 Coomaraswamy also bought two sculptures from Gill: the Contortionist (1912) and a bronze of the first Madonna and Child series made by Gill (1913).
times and in such places was informed with something very different from the commercial atheism of our England today.\textsuperscript{33}

Taking these ideas further, Gill wrote in 1929 of the importance of the duality described by Coomaraswamy:

\begin{quote}
The mind (intelligence, will), which knows, and the body (flesh and blood), by means which we know, are the two components of man, spirit and matter, both real and both good. \ldots Mental delight is the object of art work, but, the avenue to that delight being the body, the body also demands that the means shall be delightful also.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

For Gill the making of art was a matter for the body and the mind, but also the appreciation of what was ‘delightful’ in art and in making. Gill endeavoured to teach this collaborative and spiritual approach within his workshop. René Hague (1905-1981), who moved to Pigotts in 1923, recalled just after Gill’s death that ‘he instilled what was the hub of his own life, the constant realisation that no problem is purely material or purely spiritual, that man is both matter and spirit, “both real and both good”.’\textsuperscript{35} Both the object and the means of production of that object should be delightful to the person making it and this was a result of collaboration with God and fellow makers.

Gill’s answer to the situation for workers as he saw it in 1909, and where the Fabian Society and the Arts and Crafts movement had failed, was by supporting the Trade Union movement. This could, Gill believed, emancipate ‘the working classes – the real craftsman classes – from the degradation of wage slavery’.\textsuperscript{36} At this time, and throughout his career, Gill associated the plight, as he saw it, of workers in factories with that of artists and craftsmen and he regularly called for a revolution of some description. Early in his career this seems to have referred to a politically motivated change. After his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1913, however, Gill’s theories changed and he came to believe the answer to society’s problems lay in a combination of political revolution


\textsuperscript{34} Gill, “Art and Sanctification,” 53. This quote, or a version of it, has been much used over the years, in particular by Yorke in his book title (Eric Gill: Man of Flesh and Spirit), and in one of his chapter headings: ‘Man is matter and Spirit: both real and both good’, 27.


\textsuperscript{36} Gill, “The Failure of the Arts and Crafts Movement,” 300.
alongside the mass conversion of society to the Catholic Church. In 1917 he wrote to his assistant Joseph Cribb about architecture and sculpture:

You see there cannot be a great school of sculpture again until we get a great school of builders again—and that will not happen until after the revolution and even then it will not happen unless, on the ruins of our present godless civilisation, we build a state in which poverty, chastity & obedience are the ruling ideas and that will not happen unless we all become Christians.\(^{37}\)

By 1927 Gill believed that the ‘only radical remedy is the conversion of the world to the Faith and the consequent destruction of modern materialism and commercialism.’\(^{38}\)

Gill’s diaries and correspondence show that he came to Catholicism gradually, and during his time living in and visiting London between 1900 and 1913 he took part in many debates on religion, art production and politics. In May 1907 Gill attended a meeting at Kensington Town Hall to hear George Bernard Shaw on ‘The New Theology’.\(^{39}\) In 1910 Gill met with his fellow artists Jacob Epstein, Augustus John and Ambrose McEvoy to establish a ‘new religion’. In December 1910 Gill wrote to Rothenstein to say

there is a possibility that religion is about to spring up again in England. A religion so splendid and all embracing that the hierarchy to which it will give birth, uniting within itself the artist and the priest, will supplant and utterly destroy our present commercial government and our present commercial age.\(^{40}\)

The language of revolutionary change was here connected to religion, though not yet to Catholicism. Though the group of artists were no longer as closely connected by the end of 1911, John wrote to Gill in April 1912 to ask whether he had

got further with your idea of a religion? It seems to be there never was or ever can be other than one fundamentally—those of the ancients and of the Medieval Church—they all seem to tally in their esoteric significance and to agree in the glorification of man and of God conceived as the Greater Man.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{39}\) Eric Gill. Diary entry. 15 May 1907. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.


\(^{41}\) Augustus John. To Eric Gill. Received 18 April 1912. Series 4, Box 92, Folder 28, Clark Library.

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Gill’s theories on art production, in referencing ancient and medieval ideals of art, production and technique, also referenced religion prior to the Reformation. In 1912 Gill wrote to Everard Meynell (1882-1926), a well-known cradle-Catholic from a successful London family. In his letter Gill described his engagement with artistic and political debates of the early 1900s, and his continuing rejection of Morris and the Arts and Crafts:

I’ve wandered among the ‘new arts’ & the ‘new religion’, and new politics too … But I’ve got through the Arts & Crafts. I’ve got through the Socialisms & I’ve got through the new theologies. At the same time there is something in them all which is right. They are all revolts against the present devilish state of England. It seems to me from what I can learn & also guess that the Roman Catholic Church is the right answer to Modern England & also to Morris & also to [HG] Wells & Shaw & also to the Campbelites & Besantites & Anglicans & all the rest.  

At this time Gill also explored connections between politics and Catholic thinking through the work of Hillaire Belloc (1870-1953) and later from G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936). Belloc advocated that society should be founded on moral and Christian beliefs as they were set out in the Middle Ages. The ideal example of how society should be structured was one in which every action ‘was directed towards the establishment of a state in which men should be economically free through the possession of capital and land.’ Gill took and developed for himself Belloc’s advocacy in favour of individual ownership of private property and the means of production. The idea at the heart of these debates on Catholicism and politics became known as Distributism. Though he was not part of the later founding of the Distributist League in 1926, the rules of the Ditchling Guild can be seen to be connected to this movement.

42 A religious group known as The Restoration Movement established in the nineteenth century in the USA.  
43 Gill likely means The Theosophical Society, and he is referring specifically to Annie Besant (1847-1933), a socialist and theosophist who spent time in India. Besant was President of the Society in 1907.  
44 Eric Gill. To Everard Meynell. 18 January 1912. Evan Gill Collection, Ditchling Museum of Art+Craft.  
46 In Ditchling Gill was connected to Commander Herbert Shove (1886-1943), a Catholic Convert and a writer on economic theory and Distributism. Shove’s brother Gerald was also a close friend of the economist John Maynard Keynes who was also connected to Fry and the Bloomsbury group. Keynes’s brother Geoffrey was an early purchaser of Gill’s work.
Gill’s Catholic focus in his reading\textsuperscript{47} and in the people he met enabled him to develop a new and distinct view of religion, politics and art. This new view of society’s problems and the answer through religion caused disharmony between Gill and some of his associates. In August 1912, six months before he converted to the Catholic Church, Gill recorded in his diary that while at Roger Fry’s for the weekend, ‘Fry v. argumentative and antagonistic re: Catholicism’.\textsuperscript{48} The reason for Fry’s antagonism is not clear however, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Gill’s association with Fry did not last beyond their close collaboration prior to World War One.\textsuperscript{49} Gill’s conversion to Catholicism could have been one of the reasons for this breakdown. Gill’s religious beliefs enabled him to bring together his theories on the importance of art which was useful: to make art was to worship God, and all art made by workmen who were unified in body and spirit was a form of worship.

In a later book by Coomaraswamy, \textit{The Transformation of Nature in Art} (1934), he coined a phrase which Gill used repeatedly in subsequent years: ‘The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist.’\textsuperscript{50} Coomaraswamy supported Gill’s use of the phrase\textsuperscript{51}, and by repeating the statement Gill aimed to bring Coomaraswamy’s historical view of making into a current debate as Ashbee had done. Coomaraswamy had written to Gill in 1934 that individualism in contemporary society was un-Christian and un-Buddhist: ‘to cling to the “I” in this sense is to cling to a bad master and to forget the Master in whose service alone there is perfect freedom.’\textsuperscript{52} This phrase reflected the

\begin{itemize}
\item As well as reading Belloc and others, just prior to his conversion in February 1913 Gill read St Thomas Aquinas’s ‘Summa’, whose writings were an influence on Coomaraswamy and Maritain.
\item Eric Gill. Diary entry. 8 August 1912. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library. Catholics were at this time a minority in England. There were, however, a significant number of converts to Catholicism among those prominent in artistic circles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Augustus Pugin, Graham Sutherland, Gerard Manley Hopkins, G. K. Chesterton, Siegfried Sassoon, Evelyn Waugh, Edith Sitwell, Graham Greene, and Muriel Spark.
\item In 1924 Fry also sold the sculpture he had commissioned from Gill in 1912.
\item Ananda Coomaraswamy, \textit{The Transformation of Nature in Art} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934) 47. The phrase can be seen to echo, though possibly not deliberately, Gill’s statement in 1907 that ‘all men are artists all the time’ (“Socialism and the Arts and Crafts,” 53).
\end{itemize}

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development of Gill’s own views of the workshop and art production parallel to his Catholic faith. The collaboration in design and execution between artist, workshop and customer ensured that God, as the ultimate creator, remained Master.

The influence of Arts and Crafts, and Gill’s reactions to it in light of his conversion to Catholicism, need to be placed alongside the presentation by some critics and historians of the idea of direct carving. S.K. Tillyard has examined the legacy and influence of the Arts and Crafts movement on the changes in the making and reception of modern art in the early twentieth century. She states that on-going use of the language of Arts and Crafts practitioners helped audiences to comprehend new forms of sculpture: the critical importance of formal qualities such as surface texture over subject matter and the significance placed on craft, not Academic, training. Gill was able to be part of this transition, according to Tillyard, because his Arts and Crafts roots enabled alignment with the new interest in the sculpture medium. However, ‘his commitment to Arts and Crafts ideology was so strong that in the end it militated against his commitment to modernism.’ This assertion echoes Harrison’s statement that Gill’s ‘simple commitment to carving’ placed him outside the progression of modern art. This thesis is questioning the assumptions made in these texts, that Gill was not seen to be a modern sculptor during his lifetime.

During his lifetime Gill was presented and valued in the press for his background in the crafts. D.S. MacColl (1859-1948) described the sale of a drawing by Gill in 1926 and included the following statement:

Mr. Gill’s work is of peculiar interest and value because it reverses the ordinary procedure of our sculptors. Most of them, like Carpeaux … are immersed in ‘life’, and only arrive occasionally and uncertainly at a satisfactory geometry. Mr. Gill began with geometry, with the very abstract shapes of lettering, and won his skill in carving and sharpened his sense for purity of form in the practice of inscriptions.

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54 Harrison, *English Art*, 223.

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Gill’s experience as a letter cutter and craftsman, trained in practicalities not theories, gave him added value in comparison to those who used ‘ordinary’ techniques. That Gill is credited with having ‘won his skill’ implies a struggle, a hardship, which adds to the reputation of a hard-working craftsman artist and was subsequently echoed in some later historical interpretations of direct carving. Gill’s distance from the traditional forms of art education, implied in the article, also seem to be presented as adding value to his work. This quote is indicative of discussions in critical circles at the time focussing on the importance of the material and the process in the making of sculpture. Parkes wrote in 1931 that a sculpture conceived in clay and carved in stone ‘may be a very good carving, but it is not authentic … the who matters more than the how’. The artist, in order to be authentic and to truly be the author of a particular artwork, needed to be seen to collaborate with the nature of the material.

Gill’s identity as a sculptor was closely linked to his origins as a letter cutter, and to his practice as a carver based in a rural workshop. These authors extolled the virtues of making sculptures true to the material in conception and execution: the ‘how’ was as important, if not more so, than the ‘who’. In their assessments these authors also refer back to earlier in the century when critics and artists such as Fry who wrote in 1912 that he looked forward to a time when art would be ‘purified of its present unreality by a prolonged contact with the crafts’. The writings of these authors in referencing craft-based work support Tillyard’s assertion that the language and ideas of the Arts and Crafts were transposed into writing about what was seen to be modern sculpture. These quotes also support the centrality of the idea of direct carving, that is, the conception and execution of a sculptural idea in one material, to presentations of what it meant for sculptors to be modern. Gill’s perceived ‘lack’ of a formal education in the arts was seen to be a positive in his move towards modernism.

Gill actively questioned the traditions of both teaching and making of sculpture from which he was working through his association with the Arts and Crafts movement, through the connections he made between his religion and art. His writing early in his

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career focussed on specific subjects such as Socialism, the Arts and Crafts, or the Church until the second half of the 1910s when he started to write essays with a broader view about art and production. Gill’s essay *Sculpture* (1917, re-printed 1918) featured elements of his views towards the making of sculpture that he would develop during his career. This essay has since been incorporated into an anthology of pivotal texts on sculpture in the twentieth century.\(^5^8\) Gill presented the tradition of the teaching of making sculpture that:

> The artist is not trained to be a stone-carver, the stone-carver is not, or is not thought to be, an artist. The artist therefore, becomes a mere designer, the stone-carver a mere executant – the one losing himself in idealism, the other in technical dexterity.\(^5^9\)

Gill’s criticism was of what he saw as the rarefied status of the fine artist at the Royal Academy who first learnt to draw from classical statues, then from life, then went on to create sculptures from clay to be transferred into plaster then either bronze or marble by a team of skilled technicians. Though sometimes involved in this process, the nature of the material was not necessarily central to the initial design process, and the perception of a physical distance between the designer and the executant was a problem for Gill.

The differences between the Academic tradition of making sculpture and the methods Gill promoted can be connected to contemporary photographs of sculptors capturing the physicality of their work (figure 7). Artists as authors took on new meaning and authenticity through this perceived direct contact with the material. Gill equated the Academic process with the factory system, suggesting that the stone masons could be compared to workers because of their distance from the designer. Contemporary critics also championed the idea that sculpture became modern through increasingly direct contact with the material. During Gill’s lifetime critics tried to define the idea of direct carving and the importance of the material to the process, as described in the Introduction with focus on Wilenski. In 1928 Casson wrote: ‘the handing over of a plaster model to be ... finished by others, is utterly alien to that love of the material which should be at the


heart of every true sculptor’. In 1931 Parkes wrote: ‘an artist should not model for carving, for none would ever dream of carving a model to be cast in bronze’. The traditions of the Royal Academy could therefore be positioned as promoting sculptors who were not ‘true’ at heart and therefore could not create ‘essential sculpture’.

Gill’s *Sculpture* was the first time he published a coherent philosophy on sculpture production and it enabled him to set out his views on the making of sculpture as he thought it should be. In some ways, however, Gill’s promotion of learning through doing was reflected in the paths of a number of sculptors of the previous generation. Susan Beattie’s *New Sculpture* states that at the start of their careers many of the ‘New Sculptors’ of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were apprenticed to stone masons or architectural carving firms. These sculptors attended evening classes at institutions such as the South London Technical Art School in modelling and drawing in preparation for their applications to the RA Schools. Harry Bates (1850-1899), George Frampton (1860-1928) and William Goscombe John (1860-1952) described themselves as ‘stone carvers’ on their application forms to join the Royal Academy Schools. Their acceptance into the RA was one of the ‘practical aims of the New Sculptors’ which had ‘been realised’. The coherence of this group of sculptors disintegrated in the early twentieth century, however, and their symbolism was ridiculed and then superseded by the realism of artists such as Charles Sargeant Jagger (1885-1934).

As the Arts and Crafts had paved the way for the acceptance of abstraction and craft techniques in the appearance and making of modern sculpture (as presented by Tillyard), so the New Sculptors enabled the next generation of artists to work with architecture, engage with the commercial art world through editions and small scale pieces, and break down some of the distinctions between high and applied art in the use of colour, varied

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62 For example, Harry Bates’s first job was at the architectural stone carving firm Farmer & Brindley, where he learnt to carve roundels, rosettes and foliations.
63 Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 23-25. Beattie also cites the example of Frederick Pomeroy (1856-1924), who said in 1898 that he ‘started work by being articled to a firm of Architectural Sculptors.’
materials and processes.\textsuperscript{65} Benedict Read’s ground-breaking study *Victorian Sculpture* indicates a continuity between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ at the start of the twentieth century, due to this vibrant period of British sculpture in which ‘artists were able to obtain a new freedom and independence of plastic language.’\textsuperscript{66} Martina Droth has more recently discussed the legacy of the New Sculptors and how their priorities prefigured theories presented by what came to be seen as modern sculptors. Droth summarises that ‘aesthetic intent and sculptural effects converged on the question of how sculpture was made.’\textsuperscript{67}

At the time, however, as can be seen from much of Gill’s writing, the view of the Academic world to which the New Sculptors belonged was one associated with strict hierarchy in making, elitism and a separation between art and life. After 1920 Gill read Jacques Maritain’s (1882-1973) *Art et Scholastique*. Gill’s writing on art production, aesthetics and religion then developed and became more polemical as will be discussed shortly. In particular Maritain’s influence can be seen in Gill’s ideas about art education. Though Gill engaged with aspects of the continuity of making sculpture in taking on architecture commissions and making editions of his sculptures, Gill’s philosophy rejected the notion of a hierarchy of fine art. Unity and harmony between mind and matter would be found through practical learning. Maritain’s Catholic aesthetic underpinned this view: ‘To the extent that the rules of the Academy prevail, the fine arts revert to the generic type of art and to its lower species, the mechanical arts.’\textsuperscript{68} Maritain wrote that academic traditions stifled artistic production, in particular by not allowing students to learn by doing. In his Introduction to the 1923 translation of Maritain’s *Art et Scholastique* Gill wrote:

\begin{quote}
we have made Art the province of a specially cultured few and have made the common workman responsible only for doing and not at all for making; for of no
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
factory article can it be said that such and such a man made it – the most that can be said is that the article is the result of a number men doing what they were told.\(^6\)

All workmen involved in production, Gill believed, could be seen to be artists if they were granted the personal responsibility of making and doing. Gill was not alone in this call for more direct contact between the artist and his (it was usually a he) material. Gill’s idea of unity also stemmed from his reading of Ruskin and Morris. Gill’s views on art education and the Academy can be seen to harden as his career progressed.

At the end of his life Gill was still publishing essays that railed against the status quo of the Royal Academy. In an essay titled ‘Abolish Art and Teach Drawing’ Gill wrote that, with the Renaissance, the idea of fine art was invented and “Art” thus becomes something special – a special subject:

> the word came to be applied only to the so-called ‘fine’ arts – the arts which primarily serve the mind, but which now are looked upon as primarily serving the senses. … We must therefore attempt to abolish the word except in its simple sense as meaning ‘the well making of what needs making,’ and we shall never talk of art, but only of the arts.\(^7\)

Gill’s influences were wide ranging, and developed to include an over-arching philosophy on life, art and religion. He distanced himself from the Arts and Crafts, from academic traditions and in his Autobiography he claimed to have been innocent of many influences. His theories developed alongside his workshop which changed during his career but was a constant presence and testing ground for his ideals.


The Workshop: Design and Execution

In 1917 Gill wrote in a letter to his assistant Joseph Cribb on the nature of making and how makers should identify themselves:

an artist is one who shows Beauty & a work of art is a work showing Beauty. ... The great thing is to love God & do what you like as S. Charles Borromeo said. And so instead of calling ourselves artists we shd. just remember our trades & call ourselves by them – stone-carvers, letter-cutters, potters or whatever it is.  

This statement, written relatively early on in Gill’s career as a sculptor, indicates not only a close working relationship with his primary assistant but also a relationship that involved discussions about theories of production and work. Gill believed that sculpture and all well-made objects should be made in harmony with the material, and in harmony with one’s fellow workers. In co-founding the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic in 1920 Gill formalised his aims for a harmonious, Catholic-based, society of craftsmen which would bring together in one space the designer and the executant. Gill’s use of the word designer, and the concept of the mind (idealism) and the hand (technical dexterity), can be connected to the concept of disegno, and so to Renaissance models of workshop production. Though Gill would not have used that word because of its Renaissance origin and associations, the concept of disegno can be seen, alongside the influences discussed in the previous section, in his writings and in the formation of his workshop.

In its simplest meaning disegno is the intellectual capacity to invent the design and the technical ability to transpose it while maintaining God as the ultimate creator. In the introduction to Giorgio Vasari’s (1511-1574) Lives of the Artists Vol. 1, George Bull writes that disegno, in translation ‘can mean design, draughtsmanship, or simply drawing according to the context’. Bull goes on to say that because of this, drawing became the ‘foundation of the fine arts in the philosophical sense that in the creative act the artist has (implanted in

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71 St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584) was Archbishop of Milan and was known for his knowledge and patronage of the arts and literature (William Keogh, “St. Charles Borromeo,” The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 3 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908).
72 Letter from Eric Gill to Joseph Cribb, 6th August 1917, Shewring, ed., Letters of Eric Gill, 97
his mind by God) an Idea of the object he is reproducing. Vasari was referring to a tradition that was also referenced in Cennino Cennini’s (c.1370-c.1440) treatise The Craftsman’s Handbook. Painting, according to Cennini, ‘calls for imagination, and skill of hand’ and is practiced by him with ‘whatever little understanding God has granted me’.

According to Syson and Thornton, the ideal combination was that of ingegno (intellect, talent) and arte (practical skill) as can be seen from Giotto’s (1266/7-1337) use of the phrase ‘hand and talent’. To equate disegno with the twentieth century term design is too literal as both have complex connotations relating to the context of the period. However, the concept of disegno is present in Gill’s belief that creative designs and technical skills were at the core of the creative process and that current modes of production had separated the two. It was Gill’s aim to unite these two concepts not only within his workshop but within the wider world of industrial production.

Gill’s belief about the unity of the hand and the head became a central tenet of his Catholic philosophy which developed after 1913. He believed that man was both matter and spirit, both body and mind or soul. By 1929 Gill had formed this belief into an argument about art production and wrote in his essay Sculpture and the Living Model:

We hold, then, that things exist in flesh and blood and these things are received into the mind, and there they are dwelt upon and transformed into creatures more suitable to that mental habitation than things existing in ponderable flesh can be.

In Catholic tradition the concept of matter and spirit centres around that of transubstantiation, the belief that during the Mass the host becomes Christ’s body and the wine becomes Christ’s blood. During the Mass, Catholics are literally taking in the body and blood of Christ, there is no symbolism. Catholics also believe that Christ was a man of body and spirit and not the spirit of Christ within, but separate from, the body of a man.

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For Gill this belief extended to the production of art, in which the unification of the spirit and the body, the designer and the executant, was essential to the creative process.

In Gill’s workshop the designer and the executant worked in close proximity and there was little physical distance between the head and the hand. In a review of Gill’s 1911 Chenil Gallery exhibition the critic described a tablet (cat. no. 12, figure 22)\(^78\) ‘on which [Gill] has carved certain principles, doubtless held as fundamental. “Being,” runs the motto, “does not exist apart from doing”.’\(^79\) This motto indicates a connection not only between thinking and making, but also between production and life. Gill used this idea and developed it into a philosophy following his faith under the influence of the writings of Maritain. Maritain drew a distinction between free will (Doing) and the physical action in relation to the thing being made (Making):

> Doing, in the restricted sense in which the Schoolmen understood the word, consists in the free use, qua free, of our faculties … purely in relation to the use which we make of our liberty. … As opposed to Doing, the Schoolmen define Making as productive action, considered not in relation to the use which we thereby make of our liberty, but purely in relation to the thing produced or to the work taken by itself.

Doing, therefore, was the use we make of our liberty, and Making was connected to the thing produced: ‘Art, which rules Making and not Doing, stands therefore outside the human sphere; it has an end, rules, values, which are not those of man, but those of the work to be produced.’\(^80\) Gill used this philosophy to connect what he saw as ‘fine art’ to something elevated and outside the practical and mental realities of an authentic workshop, within which responsible workmen made things of use.

When Gill first moved to London he was apprenticed to a firm of architects led by W.D. Caröe (1857-1938). He stated in his Autobiography that he left it in 1903 because he no longer wanted to be drawing out what others were executing, and the distance between his office in London and the work going on in situ was too great.\(^81\) During his apprenticeship Gill attended evening classes in calligraphy and stone masonry, and the

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\(^78\) This inscription is not listed in Evan Gill’s Inventory.
\(^79\) “Post-Impressionist Sculpture,” Athenaeum no. 4244, 28 January (1911): 104.
\(^80\) Maritain, The Philosophy of Art, 7-8.
\(^81\) Gill, Autobiography, 114.
network of connections and influences that grew from this led him to start taking on his own work in 1902. At this time he worked in unofficial partnership with his brother, Macdonald Gill (1884-1947), as well as his lettering teacher, Edward Johnston, taking commissions and sharing work. Johnston, Gill’s calligraphy teacher at the Central School, was also instrumental in introducing Gill to the many Arts and Crafts followers and practitioners working in London at the time. Gill’s activities demonstrate an engagement with ideas about production in his adoption of practical techniques such as stone masonry alongside his abilities to draw and design. His connections, starting mainly through Johnston, allowed him to take on board different influences on his developing theories while he was learning by doing.

Gill’s early work from 1902 was largely decorative lettering. For example in 1904 he completed a job for the Automobile Club for ‘certificates’, as well as working on title page designs for one of his earliest patrons and owner of the Cranach Press, Count Harry Kessler. By September 1905 Gill’s abilities in letter cutting were established enough that he recorded being ‘appointed instructor in letter carving at Paddington Technical Institute’.

From an early stage in his career it is clear that Gill worked with different media for a range of patrons and alongside collaborators, as well as becoming a teacher and sharing his knowledge. In this early period Gill also worked in an official partnership with a fellow craftsman, Lawrence Christie. Gill recorded in his diary that the ‘Firm of GILL & CHRISTIE begins work today’ on 13 May 1907. In an accompanying ledger Gill recorded a total of 66 jobs completed by the partnership. It was short-lived, however, and on 31 March 1908 Gill wrote in his ledger that the ‘G&C Partnership dissolves’ as of that day.

The dissolution of the partnership could have resulted from Gill’s move to Ditchling village, Sussex in 1907. Gill maintained his workshop in Hammersmith for the first six

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82 From Macdonald Gill’s diaries and workbooks (Macdonald Gill Archive) one can see that the relationship was collaborative and on equal terms both in the work that was received and carried out, and in the networks they both moved in. For example, Macdonald Gill was part of the team of painters on a scheme devised by Roger Fry for Borough Polytechnic in 1911.
83 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 5 September 1905. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
84 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 13 May 1907. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
85 Eric Gill. List of inscriptions and other works. 1902 to 1909. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
months. On 23 April 1908, three weeks after the end of his partnership with Christie, Gill recorded that he had moved permanently into his new workshop attached to the house in Ditchling. Gill’s first apprentice, Joseph Cribb, started work with Gill in London in 1906. Gill was introduced to the Cribb family by his Hammersmith neighbour, Emery Walker, who had previously employed Cribb’s father, Herbert William Cribb (1863-1929), an illustrator and cartographer. Joseph Cribb began with Gill as an assistant before being contracted to a five year apprenticeship in 1907, and moved with him to Ditchling. In November 1913 Gill’s family, workshop and Cribb moved from the centre of the village to a house called Hopkins Crank on the edge of Ditchling Common, north of the village. Here Gill designed a new workshop which was built by a local builder, Grainger. The nearest train stations were in nearby towns, and Gill moved all of his stone and sculptures by cart and railway carriage with the help of his assistants.

Joseph Cribb was the first of seven officially contracted apprentices Gill took on in his career, and the first of 20 assistants who worked in his workshops in Ditchling, Wales and Buckinghamshire. Cribb was Gill’s primary assistant in Ditchling. When Gill left in 1924 Joseph’s younger brother Lawrence Cribb, who had joined the workshop in 1921, took over as Gill’s primary assistant in Wales and in the subsequent move in 1928 to Piggotts, Buckinghamshire. Gill’s workshops over the years were made up of a combination of apprentices and assistants, and a number of names appear in Gill’s workbooks as ‘masons’ who were not members of the main workshop. The backgrounds and ages of those employed in Gill’s workshop changed during his career from young apprentice tradesmen to older artists with formal training. Some assistants came to the workshop with previous training either at an art school or a masonry yard, and some came with no background in carving work at all. The different skills these apprentices and assistants brought to the workshop was reflected in the type of work they were involved in. Apprentices signed up for an agreed number of years, in return for which Gill paid them a small sum and trained them in masonry, letter cutting and figure carving. The apprentice often started as an assistant on trial before starting an official apprenticeship, as can be seen from the gap

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86 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 23 April 1908. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
87 Cribb illustrated a posthumous publication of William Morris’s *Sundering Flood* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1897).
88 See Appendix I.

Chapter One: The Workshop
Ruth Cribb 2013
between Joseph joining Gill in Hammersmith in 1906 and starting his apprenticeship in 1907. Other assistants came to work on an informal basis and learnt in the workshops without an official position, such as Lawrence Cribb, Chute and David Jones.

Many sculptures created by Gill included input by members of the workshop, specifically in the early stages of roughing out the stone, or at the end in polishing the surface or adding a pedestal or inscription. Gill acknowledged the assistance of his workshop in the creation of his sculptures and inscriptions throughout his career. In the January 1914 exhibition catalogue for Gill’s show at the Goupil Gallery catalogue number 8 is a Gargoyle by ‘Eric Gill and H.J. Cribb’ (figure 8).\(^8^9\) In 1920 Gill wrote to a patron regarding the work to be carried out on a war memorial, for which Gill’s design had just been approved:

> With regard to the carving of the panels and the lettering, I will do these either myself or have them done by one of my pupils, which comes to the same thing, and we can do the work either in the mason’s yard or when the cross is fixed, which turns out to be the most convenient.\(^9^0\)

This quote summarised Gill’s view of his workshop at the time and the trusted assistants he had employed, where works by Gill and the workshop were interchangeable. It also displays a certain level of ambivalence as to where the work was carried out. In other work Gill took on he was very keen to work in situ, or was instructed to work in situ by the patron, and this letter indicates his flexibility to work with the client.

Alongside Joseph Cribb in the Hammersmith workshop was an assistant, George Stapleton, who worked for Gill in 1906 and 1907\(^9^1\) but who didn’t appear in the workbooks after Gill left Hammersmith. Taking on apprentices was usually an official process for Gill, and Joseph Cribb was Gill’s only official apprentice until 17 May 1910, when he took on Frederick White. A letter to Rothenstein in November 1911 stated ‘Alas! My younger apprentice has just died from pneumonia. This is a great loss to me. We were very fond of him & he was becoming a good workman too.’\(^9^2\) Sam Geering, a

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\(^8^9\) Job no. 495. Eric Gill. List of Work. 1910 to 1940. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
\(^9^1\) Gill’s own diaries record that ‘Stapleton died’ on 5 March 1908; as Stapleton does not appear in the records again it is likely to be the same person.
local Sussex man, was then taken on as an apprentice in spring 1912. Geering’s brother wrote to Gill on 2 March 1912 asking whether Gill had a ‘vacancy for a lad in the masonry work’ for his brother: ‘he is just on 17 years old and strong he stands about 5’ 11’ and I think you would find him willing to do the work’. On 18 March 1912 Gill recorded that ‘Geering came to begin six weeks trial for apprenticeship’. The trial was successful and on 21 May 1912 Gill visited ‘Somerset House re stamp for Geering’s [aprenticeship] articles’. Cribb graduated from his apprenticeship to become Gill’s assistant on 31 May 1913. The day was a celebratory one for all involved, and Gill recorded in his diary that ‘Cribb’s apprenticeship ends to-day and I returned him his articles! Mr Cribb senior came’. Following his move from apprentice to assistant Cribb received a pay rise. Some assistants came ‘on trial’ but didn’t remain in the workshop for long. The majority of Gill’s assistants stayed for at least a year, but none stayed with Gill as long as the two Cribb brothers.

The histories of Gill’s workshops, and the way in which work was taken on, designed and executed, can be assembled to an extent from Gill’s own payment records, correspondence, the extant workbooks of Joseph Cribb, the records kept by Gill of payments made to Lawrence Cribb (from 1924 to 1940) and Angus McDougall (from 1931 to 1936), as well as from obituaries and memoirs written by a number of his assistants. Gill taught his apprentices stone masonry and inscription cutting for different types of work, for example in October 1914 Gill recorded that he ‘helped Geering finish stove kerb for our sitting room fireplace.’ There are also mentions of Cribb helping in the garden, and of them all playing tennis together as well as anecdotes about lively philosophical debates around the dinner table. Joseph Cribb converted to Catholicism the same year as Gill, suggesting an influence beyond their working relationship and indicating the growing importance of religious practice within the workshop. Gill also generally

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91 Evan Gill’s list incorrectly records that Geering joined the workshop in 1914.
92 F.L. Geering. To Eric Gill. 2 March 1912. Series 4, Box 89, Folder 7, Clark Library.
93 Eric Gill. Diary entries. 18 March and 21 May 1912. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
94 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 31 May 1913. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
95 On 29 January 1908 Gill recorded that ‘Christie’s apprentice (Brown by name) came on trial’. A further entry states that on 9 June 1908 ‘Vernon came for his month trial’. Vernon was Gill’s younger brother. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
96 These are not always specific to what was done by the person being paid.
97 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 20 October 1914. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
maintained close working relationships with those who left his workshop to work alone or for another firm and he regularly passed on work to ex-assistants if he was too busy. The role of the apprentice, or assistant, was one that came to be closely connected to the social and the working life that Gill constructed and, in this way, Gill aimed to create a harmonious working atmosphere within which all workers were respected, taught a trade and mentored, given opportunities to take on their own work and included in the community and family.

Throughout his career, and particularly once Joseph Cribb had completed his apprenticeship, Gill worked on drawings for inscriptions which an assistant went to cut. For example on 28 June 1915, Gill recorded in his diary that ‘Cribb and Geering went to London to cut Holden inscription on King[s] College[es] for Women’ (figure 9). This way of working indicates an understanding not only with his assistants but also with his patrons, of whom the architect Charles Holden (1875-1960) was a regular one. They accepted execution by Gill’s workshop in place of the presence of Gill’s own hands, particularly for inscriptional work. Though Gill’s own statements imply something different his customers assumed and expected that the design by Gill, drawn out in advance and worked on by his assistants, was a more important part of the process than the specifics of the execution. The payment was split between Gill for drawing and his assistants for execution and illustrates the workshop hierarchy. For the King’s College job for Holden, Gill paid Geering 6d an hour for 37 hours work and Joseph 9d an hour for an estimated 112 hours. Gill paid himself by the day, or half day, and the average payment to cover his time spent drawing was around 40d an hour. The payments reflected Gill’s status as the creative master of the workshop and his experience relative to his assistants. His system, in which he charged his client an amount directly related to the length of time he spent making, could imply that Gill believed the value of a finished work to be closely allied to its production process. Chapter Two will examine how this system was used to ascribe a monetary value to his inscriptions and not necessarily to his exhibited sculptures.

The assistants and apprentices in Gill’s workshop changed, particularly during the First World War when Joseph Cribb and Geering were conscripted in 1916. That year Gill

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100 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 28 June 1915. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
took on an apprentice called Albert Leaney. Gill was himself called up to train with the Royal Air Force as a driver in 1918 after he had finished carving the *Stations of the Cross* at Westminster Cathedral. During this time, in letters to Chute, Gill wrote:

I am very glad the Gough tablet looks well. Dear little Albert – simple child. He will do well – and what a blessing he’s ‘under instruction’. What jolly good pupils God has given me. … Albert’s drawing. He’s very slow I know. He ought to draw say 50 1½" ‘letters’ in ½ an hour easily – i.e. well enough for cutting purposes – for there’s no occasion to draw serifs or to get a very high degree of sharpness in edges of forms. Still it wd. be good for him sometimes to draw letters (with brush) on paper – so as not to be incapable of good and finished drawing.¹⁰¹

Albert: Keep him continuously employed and let me know, without reserve, how he works. It is good for you that you shd. have this little experience of mastership. Keep an eye on him as much as poss. in a friendly way & let him see that idleness won’t do & is disloyal and dishonest.¹⁰²

The moral aspect of work within a workshop is here made clear. ‘Idleness’ went against the harmony of the workshop and was therefore ‘disloyal’ to the others at work, to Gill and to the Godly virtues that should be at the centre of the workshop. Gill also expressed his pleasure that Chute should have the experience of being the ‘Master’ of the workshop and seems to have been happy to delegate this role to him. The quote is an insight into the way Gill ran his workshop and worked alongside his assistants. He chose to be known as ‘Master’ and remain head of the hierarchy while also remaining committed to the workshop being a site for sharing knowledge and skills in a ‘friendly way’ that showed patience to those learning to complete work in the required manner. Gill’s belief that God had blessed him with a good workshop again indicates the intimate connection in Gill’s workshop between work and religion.

After Gill’s death one of his assistants from the 1930s, Anthony Foster (1909-1957), recalled the atmosphere of the workshop during his seven years there:

The workshop was always busy. Besides Mr Gill there were usually three of us, and sometimes more. He directed everything down to the last detail, but never in

such a way as to make us anything but co-operators with him in making what was required.

Foster went on to describe Gill’s relationship with his students as one for which

Mr Gill took endless trouble. He was always ready to give us his whole attention and service. I believe that all who worked with him will remember this most lovable quality in him, that he gave his whole self to anyone who brought him their affairs. It was like that in the workshop, and outside. This charity was the mainspring of his solicitude for his fellow-workers.  

Foster’s recollections, made immediately after Gill died, mean that they need to be treated with some caution. What they do indicate, however, is a reflection of Gill’s theories that shows an intention to create a harmonious atmosphere within which all craftsmen were respected. Hague, who worked with Gill on printing and engraving after 1924, and became his son-in-law, wrote just after Gill’s death that he was first and foremost a teacher who could ‘teach simply anyone, I am sure, to draw letters’. In a radio programme aired in 1961, Joseph Cribb said of working with Gill: ‘I learnt a lot of things which have stayed with me all my life, to do my work for the love of doing the work. And always put a good finish on it, and not be slack or haphazard.’ These quotes agree not only on Gill’s involvement in the work in the workshop as teacher and mentor, but also on the importance of Gill’s presence in the workshop for the assistants and the work produced. The assistants quoted above worked in Gill’s workshop at different times: Joseph from 1906 until 1924; Chute in the early 1920s; Hague from the mid-1920s onwards; and Foster in the 1930s. It is important to note that these quotes were made as part of a celebration of Gill’s life, and were unlikely to be critical. The importance of proximity and guidance, of skill in making and love of making, as well as the fellowship among those in the workshop, suggest that Gill’s aims and theories of the communities he created was felt by at least some of his assistants.

Four of Gill’s assistants went on to write stand-alone memoirs recounting their time in the workshop. David Kindersley (1915-1995) wrote two books, Chute wrote a short article in 1950, and the third and fourth were Donald Potter (1902-2004) and Walter Ritchie (1919-1997) in a privately printed book in 1980. Chute, who first met Gill in 1918, began his article with a description of the Ditchling Common workshops as he arrived:

a dove-cote in the midst of a yard lined with workshops; on the right the stone-masons’, on the left, next to a large wain in a shed, a big black shop where Eric stone-carved, whence jutted out at right angles a lower re-roofed shop in which he drew and engraved. An opening between this and a similar shed marked JOSEPH CRIBB led the eye through a meadow...

This description shows that by 1918 Cribb had graduated from his apprenticeship but had stayed with Gill, had his own workshop and was part of the growing community. The description indicates a romanticism through its language and the idea of approaching an idyllic space dedicated to making. There is also a sense of community portrayed in the description, and Chute went on to criticise the notion of separating the collaborative from the individual endeavour in making:

To anyone who has learnt a craft in a workshop, the elaborate expertise whose aim is to spot the Master’s hand and isolate his work from that of the school is simply laughable. The touches of the master hand are as fleeting as they are frequent, whereas the imprint of his mind is everywhere and often not least in what he has least touched.

Chute describes the work of the workshop as central to Gill’s aims and ideals of collaborative work, writing that Gill ‘no more sought to conceal the fact than it would have occurred to him to show or sell the stone under the assistant’s name. In the workshop anonymity stands for distinction not privation.’ Anonymity did not negate the

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107 The published version of this article includes the word ‘there’ at this point: ‘whence there jutted’. The version I am working from (in the Joseph Cribb Archive) is a copy given by Chute to Joseph annotated and inscribed by Chute, in which he has crossed out this word.
contribution of those involved in making, but allowed for all to be respected at an equivalent level. Chute also discussed the nature of the head and the hand in the workshop. He uses Italian words partly because, having left the workshop in 1922, he went to Italy to train as a priest, but also because it connects his text with Renaissance terms in the description of the making of art:

Whereas the master’s mind, his potency of imaginative making, is always in fieri (self-criticism of present, preparing the way for future, work), the apprentice, knowing neither arrière-pensées\textsuperscript{110} nor pentimenti\textsuperscript{111}, is free to realise the job in hand.\textsuperscript{112}

Chute indicates that because the executant is not held back in the mind by prior expectations or assumptions, they can translate the idea of the designer freely. Though Chute can be seen to be largely in accordance with Gill’s views about design and execution, the head and the hand, this quote places a different emphasis on the relationship within the workshop. Authorship, according to Chute’s understanding, was always with the master, with Gill, regardless of those involved in the execution. The naivety of the assistants implied by Chute is placed in opposition to Gill’s ‘potency’ of imagination. With this text Chute, in a similar way to historians and critics during Gill’s lifetime, used the workshop to add status and value to Gill’s work as a sculptor.

In his 1980 memoir Potter described himself as a self-taught wood-carver when he first went to Gill’s workshop in Pigotts in 1931, which he described as a ‘patriarchal community’.\textsuperscript{113} Potter recalled that Gill taught more by example than by words …. We learnt to respect the nature of our materials and impart to our sculpture that firm, crisp, stone-like quality seen in the

\textsuperscript{110} A form of mental reservation.

\textsuperscript{111} In Italian, literally means ‘corrections’. The word ‘Pentimento’ can be used to describe an image (in art) revealed beneath the surface over time.


\textsuperscript{113} Donald Potter, My Time with Eric Gill: A Memoir (Kenilworth: Walter Ritchie, 1980) 8. Written nearly 50 years after his arrival at Pigotts, these memories can be seen as an unreliable source for exact detail of the workshop due to subsequent experiences, length of time as well as possible outside influences. However, for general atmosphere, and as an indication of what remained important to Potter from him time in the workshop, it is useful.
best periods of carving down the ages: he frequently quoted the carvings on Chartres Cathedral.\textsuperscript{114}

Ritchie’s memories of the workshop in the 1930s take issue with what he also saw as a patriarchal community:

Gill preached the responsibility of workmen, but in his own workshops he really wanted men who were extensions of himself and he was successful in finding them. … Gill’s life would have been very different without these men who freed him for his polemical activities of writing and lecturing, took much of the hard work from his sculpture and carried out most of his letter-cutting.

Ritchie believed that Gill’s ‘way of working is wrong’ and that ‘the sculptor depersonalises his work by delegating it – the pupil or assistant sells himself for experience or security.’\textsuperscript{115} Ritchie’s memories indicate a changing perception of Gill, his workshop and those who sought his guidance from early in his career as a sculptor to his later time as an artist with an established reputation. Assistants in the late 1920s and 1930s came to the workshop and stayed for a short number of years before leaving, unlike Joseph and Lawrence Cribb, as well as other early apprentices, who joined Gill’s workshop to learn a trade for life and would not have considered delegation from Gill as ‘selling themselves’.

Both continued their work after Gill died and worked as successful letter cutters and, in Joseph Cribb’s case, a successful sculptor. Chute deliberately sought Gill out in 1918 having read a number of Gill’s essays and apprenticed on an informal basis to learn more about art and religion. This move by Chute can be seen as largely ideological, and David Jones could be seen to have taken the same step. By the 1930s those entering Gill’s workshop were from different backgrounds with different expectations and wanted to learn skills from a recognised master of carving as opposed to being on more of a philosophical or religious journey. Potter and Kindersley both knew of Gill and his way of working through previous study: Potter had been a wood-carver; Kindersley had been training with a firm of Italian marble carvers.

Kindersley recalled reading books by Gill and that it was this that led him to apprentice at Gill’s workshop: ‘I found someone writing about making things in stone and emphasising

that a thing made in stone must be a stone thing. ... It was not right to make a thing in clay and then copy it in stone.” Gill was widely published by the 1930s and it seems that artists and makers were aware of his beliefs on art production which led them to meet him in person and seek his practical guidance. This wide network of influence can be contrasted with Gill’s relatively small circle early in his career when he took on apprentices following personal introductions. Kindersley’s memoirs echo those of other assistants from the 1930s that there was a particular way of working within the workshop as guided by Gill:

Mr Gill’s method of teaching lettering, if he ever did teach ... was to ask you to draw an alphabet as you thought the letters should be. Having done this Mr Gill corrected it, saying ‘Here we make an “A” like this’ or ‘a “B” like that.’ He ... would say, with quiet authority, ‘You make it like this’. Kindersley recalled that ‘Many of the inscriptions you have seen are the work of Lawrence Cribb though they may rightly be signed E.G. This, of course, because we worked in a tradition and the tradition was that of Mr Gill.’ As master of the workshop Gill taught his assistants and apprentices to cut letters in a particular way. Kindersley’s recollection, supported by Evan Gill’s analysis, is that the hand of the assistant is indistinguishable from that of the master. This way of working, as inferred from a number of quotes from Gill’s assistants, was not problematic for them and they recall their learning and the harmony of the workshop fondly. For some assistants, however, their experience was one in which they felt dominated and their own artistic creativity quashed because they felt Gill expected them to be ‘extensions of himself’.

Gill wanted to maintain the ideals of a medieval workshop tradition in which he would be master. He wrote to Chute in September 1918: ‘I like you to call me Master. It gives me great satisfaction – but what am I to call you?’ This question reveals complexity in the way Gill viewed his workshop and apprentices: he wanted to be ‘master’, but this letter demonstrated a lack of confidence in this assertion. In letters and diary records of his

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118 Kindersley, *Mr Eric Gill*, 12.
119 Eric Gill. To Desmond Chute. 27 September 1918. Shewring, ed., *Letters of Eric Gill*, 111. This letter, written shortly after the two men met, seems to be a list of responses to specific questions from Chute regarding the workshop and the community.
assistants, the referential term ‘Mr Gill’ was often used, and Gill in turn used his assistants’ first names. This can be seen in letters between Gill and Joseph Cribb, and the title of Kindersley’s memoir. Potter’s memoir describes Gill as favouring ‘the idea of students working in a Master’s studio as in medieval and renaissance times’ and that ‘when talking to us he would always use our Christian names but expected us to call him Sir, somewhat in perpetuation of that tradition.’

Gill also needed to ensure that he kept work coming in and so worked to raise the profile of his name and his work. Early in his career Gill employed what he may have seen as archetypal workmen; later he employed those who wanted to forge their own artistic careers and who went to Gill for his expertise and connections. This latter group were involved in the growing interest in direct carving and this idea could be a reason for their dissatisfaction at the perceived separation of the designer from the executant.

The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic

The transition in the workshop from Gill’s early employment of trade-craftsmen to his later employment of artist-craftsmen can be seen to start after 1918. Desmond Chute, who had been studying at the Slade, came to meet Gill in 1918 having read some of his essays as did David Jones (then at the Westminster School of Art) around 1920-21. This increasing public success and renown may have been one of the reasons that led Gill to formalise his philosophies, religious beliefs and practices in the co-founding of the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic in Ditchling in 1920. His association with Chute, as a cradle-Catholic, was at this time formative, as was his reading after 1920 of the work of Maritain. With Maritain, Gill provided himself with a religious underpinning to his beliefs about learning and the production of well-made things. Maritain wrote that ‘art is virtue of the practical understanding’. Learning by doing, and sharing the making of objects with fellow Catholic craftsmen, were central to the formation of the Guild. Maritain wrote:

one must deplore from this point of view the substitution of scholastic and academic teaching for indentured apprenticeship. From the very fact that art is virtue of the practical understanding, the mode of teaching which naturally suits it is apprentice education, the working novitiate under a master and face to face with

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the real thing, not lectures given out by professors; and in sooth the very notion of ‘fine-art school’ especially in the sense in which the modern state understands the word, discloses a lack of understanding of things as deep as the idea for instance of a higher course of virtue.\textsuperscript{121}

Maritain’s philosophy, and Coomaraswamy’s earlier writing on Indian craft, provided Gill with a way of articulating a religious moral authority for art production through communal working. Maritain wrote that ‘slackness of living and of willing stop at the door of every workshop.’\textsuperscript{122} In establishing his workshops Gill aimed to create a fellowship of makers whom he could empower to create responsibly in the name of God. In The Indian Craftsman Coomaraswamy pointed readers to a number of books including A.J. Penty’s (1875-1937) The Restoration of the Guild System (1906). Gill was later an acquaintance of Penty’s, and due to his network of associates at this time, specifically in Hammersmith where he moved in 1905, Gill would almost certainly have known this book. Penty aimed to discover ‘practical ways and means of re-establishing the Guilds in our midst.’\textsuperscript{123} Gill’s co-founding on Ditchling Common of the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic in 1920 can be associated with the revival Penty’s book was a part of. The Ditchling Guild should also be seen alongside guilds established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: Arthur Macmurdoo’s (1851-1942) Century Guild of Artists in 1882; the Art Workers’ Guild and the Home Arts and Industries Association in 1884; and Ashbee’s Guild and School of Handicrafts (1880). The Catholicism of the Ditchling Guild does differentiate it from the others in this list – a distinction that was actively promoted by Gill and others in the Guild.\textsuperscript{124}

Re-establishing guild systems was popular with many of Gill’s contemporaries. Penty went on to form a movement in the early twentieth century called Guild Socialism ‘which placed great faith in the potential governance of education and production by restored arts guilds’.\textsuperscript{125} For Penty, as for Gill, the motivation behind this passion for medievalism was

\textsuperscript{121} Maritain, The Philosophy of Art, 62-3.
\textsuperscript{122} Maritain, The Philosophy of Art, 8.
\textsuperscript{124} In 1934 Hilary Pepler and the St Dominic’s Press were ejected from the Guild for employing a non-Catholic, though the Press stayed on at its original site.
quality control which both believed would be gained by placing the skilled workman back in control of his tools. Penty wrote at least six books on the nature of society and the revival of the Guild system, suggesting a groundswell of interest in the idea of Guilds which can also be seen in the context of a reaction against the elitism of the Academic training system.

By the time the Guild was established on Ditchling Common a number of craftspeople, and their families, were living in and around the village. Some had been associated with Gill in London and had followed him, such as Johnston (1917) and Joseph Cribb (1907, permanently from 1908). Others had come to the Common having met or heard of Gill, such as Chute (1918) and the weaver Ethel Mairet (1872-1952, in Ditchling from 1918).

One of the most important associates of Gill at this time was Douglas Pepler (1878-1951), whom Gill had met when living in Hammersmith and with whom Gill and Johnston had formed a close friendship. When Johnston and Gill met Pepler, he was a social worker. Throughout his life he was known as a social reformer, as well as becoming a printer and establishing the St Dominic’s Press in Ditchling. Following Gill, Pepler moved to Ditchling in 1915 and converted to the Roman Catholic Church in 1916, changing his name from Douglas to Hilary.

In July 1918 both Pepler and Gill, along with Chute and Cribb, became lay members of the Third Order of St Dominic, a local order of monks. The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic was subsequently established by Gill, Pepler and Chute on 18 July 1920. On 10 October they were joined by Joseph Cribb for its formal foundation, and in September 1921 the announcement of the formation was printed in The Game (a weekly pamphlet created by the community and printed by St Dominic’s Press). The introduction to the Constitution and Rules, printed by Pepler in 1922, stated:

The Guild is a society of Catholic craftsmen who wish to make the Catholic Faith the rule, not only of their life but of their workmanship and to that end to live and work in association in order that mutual aid may strengthen individual effort.

126 The first reference in Gill’s diaries is in May 1907: ‘D Pepler called’. Eric Gill. Diary entry. 29 May 1907. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
The Constitution and Rules reflected Gill’s basis for an ideal society which would bring together religion, craft and art, as well as personal property and responsibility:

The Guild therefore aims at:
• Making the goodness of the thing to be made the immediate concern in work.
• Undertaking and imposing only such work as involves responsibility for the thing to be made.
• Making the good of the work and the freedom of the workman the test of its workshop methods, tools and appliances.\(^{127}\)

The parallels between this formal declaration and the writing of Coomaraswamy, Maritain and Gill are clear: making in the name of God; working in fellowship with other makers; formalising this into a Guild to ensure a structure within which to work.

The ideal view of medieval guild systems, and medieval modes of production, was based on surviving buildings as opposed to any documentary evidence. In her book on medieval masons and sculptors Nicola Coldstream writes that, similar to the idea of the ‘creative genius toiling in solitude’\(^ {128}\), ‘the medieval mason has been, and to some extent still is, the subject of romantic myth.’\(^ {129}\) Coldstream goes on to write that this myth extends to the idea of anonymous craftsmen, because the documentary evidence of masons’ lives and careers were not written at the time. According to Coldstream, ‘anonymous, however, masons were not’ and this can be seen in the buildings and sculptures themselves.\(^ {130}\) She also points out that due to the peripatetic nature of building and sculpture work, as well as the high profile status of the majority of patrons, masons were not normally associated with a guild system. Coldstream writes that there was always a ‘master’ who was nominated not just for his knowledge and experience but because there would always have been the need for a ‘master’ on site to liaise between the patron and the workers. These ‘master masons’ were usually associated visually (in illuminated manuscripts or in

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\(^{127}\) Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, Constitution and Rules (Ditchling: S. Dominic’s Press, 1922).


\(^{130}\) Coldstream, Medieval Craftsmen, 6. Coldstream goes on to write that master masons’ ‘consciousness of themselves as estimable individuals surfaces in the thirteenth century, when they were buried inside churches in handsome tombs’, 16.
carvings) with the designing tools of the trade, the set square and the compass.\textsuperscript{131} The medieval ‘master mason’ seems to have been first and foremost a designer, with the experience of the executant.

The medieval guild was an idealised construction based, for Gill, on the evidence of well-built cathedrals such as Chichester, or Chartres. The Guild established by Gill, and the informal arrangements in Capel-y-Ffin and Pigotts, were reflective of the medieval system of working followed on building sites and not formal guilds. Within the sculpture workshop Gill can be seen to be the master mason, liaising with potential clients and discussing commissions while overseeing the work of the assistants working with him. Gill upheld the guild ideal by maintaining the idea of anonymity, which he still believed in and promoted in 1934:

\begin{quote}
there is no business about signing the work, except for fun and in secret; for no one cares particularly who did it as long as it is done and no one thinks of the work as having any special value because it is the work of John rather than of James.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

Gill’s statement implies that his work was the result of a collaborative effort and produced anonymous output. Throughout his career he was also reliant on his client base and critics seeing him as a sole creator in order to build his reputation, continue to receive commissions and sell his work. The perception of Gill as a direct carver and an artist committed to craft production also associated him with what was seen to be modern. Gill’s own engagement with the press while working in situ indicates an intimate knowledge of what was required in his own public profile for him to continue to be seen as a reputable artist. These perceptions enabled Gill to grow his number of clients and his public success which relied on the ability of the workshop to complete the work. Many of Gill’s clients focussed on the design and content of the work and the process of execution was of secondary importance though it was also, conversely, central to his craftsman persona.

The Ditchling Guild sold their goods through a catalogue showcasing the work of each individual member, and potential patrons and customers were invited to visit the

\textsuperscript{131} Coldstream, \textit{Medieval Craftsmen}, 11-12.

\textsuperscript{132} Eric Gill, \textit{Art and a Changing Civilisation} (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1934) 34.
workshops and deal directly with the craftsman they wanted to employ. The craftsman was in charge of negotiating the job, the price and then contributing some profit back into the running of the Guild. In the Guild, Gill and his co-founders placed the means and the profit of production into the hands of the makers, and placed the process of production into a religious context. It is clear from Gill’s published writing that he saw himself to be intimately associated with the process of design and execution in his own workshop. His statements about anonymity seemed to advocate production only as a form of worship to God and not as a way of promoting his own reputation. However, the products of Gill’s workshop within the Guild were known to be ‘Gills’. In order to keep business coming in Gill had to engage with the prevalent idea of the known and named artist-craftsman which relied upon, but simultaneously downplayed the efforts of, the workshop.
Conclusion: Gill, Author and Artist

Gill’s audience as an author was wide-ranging: architecture journals (Architect’s Journal, Architectural Review, The Builder, RIBA journal); political newspapers such as Fabian News, Socialist Review and GK’s Weekly; Catholic publications including Blackfriars and the Catholic Herald; and art magazines such as the Burlington and Artwork; as well as popular newspapers including letters in the Times, the Manchester Guardian and the Evening News. The majority of his essays, in reviewing his bibliography, appeared in religious journals or newspapers. Another magazine Gill featured in during his career was The Highway published by the Workers’ Educational Association with its by-line that it was ‘a monthly journal of education for the people.’

Between 1900 and 1913, the year of his conversion, Gill published thirteen essays. Between 1913 and 1920, when Maritain’s Art et Scholastique was published, Gill wrote a further 22 essays and essay-style letters. From 1920 until his death in 1940 (though a small number were published posthumously) Gill’s output was considerably higher at around 155 published pieces. Firstly, this indicates that as Gill’s art, religion and ideas developed, so did his published output, and the second half of his career saw his publications increase more than four-fold. Secondly, the appearance of Gill’s published writing in the mainstream and specialist media suggest a wide-ranging audience supported by the increased number of reviews in artistic and general publications. Though he was widely published the audiences for many of the journals and magazines would have been relatively limited, in particular the Catholic publications. Gill’s reputation as a writer and a speaker grew during his life, but throughout his career he was invited to speak on panels and to address universities, colleges and societies on different aspects of art including its purpose, its relation to Christianity and architecture.

During his life Gill was both an author of published writing and of artworks in a wide range of media. The range of publications within which he circulated his theories demonstrate an active engagement with current debate, a wish to aid with the education of the public including fellow Catholics and workers, and to position himself in the

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mainstream press as a voice for the place of craft in art. Gill often presented uncompromising ideas, underlining important words and using short sentences and paragraphs to express strong views. For example in a 1924 essay for Artwork (an illustrated quarterly of arts and crafts) on ‘The Revival of Handicrafts’ Gill wrote: ‘The present state of things cannot endure even if we desired it. It is bad both for the work and the worker; and, in the long run, bad work will not sell, and unhappy men will not work.’¹³⁴ He also used repetition to reinforce his main ideas as they developed, and this quote from 1924 reappeared in slightly different form in 1940: ‘At every turn our object must be to sanctify rather than to exclude physical labour, to honour it rather than to degrade it, to discover how to make it pleasant rather than onerous.’¹³⁵ The method of editing, re-publishing essays, publishing notes from lectures, and self-funding the private printing of many works was one that Gill used frequently. Sculpture, first published in The Highway in June 1917 was then printed as a stand-alone text by Pepler in 1918 and 1924. It then appeared in the Architectural Review in 1926 as ‘The Carving of Stone’¹³⁶ and in Gill’s own collection of essays, Art-Nonsense in 1929 as the revised ‘Stone-Carving’.¹³⁷ In this way Gill’s writing can be seen to reflect his artistic processes both in print-making and sculpture in the use of repetition of themes and content for different contexts or clients.

The repetition of ideas in his publications after 1920 indicate a hardening of his views on artistic production and its relation to society, religion and politics. Gill’s voice in these texts becomes one of assumed authority, in particular in his Autobiography, finished shortly before his death in 1940. As discussed in the Introduction, this end of life review has been used as the main text to understand Gill’s life, work and artistic contribution to what became known as modern sculpture. In it he positioned himself at the forefront of a revolution in the making of sculpture, though at the time he claimed naïveté. Gill’s own texts allow Gill to assert his ideological standpoint even if that didn’t always match the reality of his workshop practice. In particular Gill’s writing against industrialisation and


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the use of machines can be seen to directly contradict his collaboration with machine type-setters at the Monotype Corporation in the 1920s. Positioning Gill as a theorist who didn’t follow his own writing to the letter in his own working practice can lead to an insular and self-referential study of a self-professed ‘direct carver’ who in reality used assistants. This thesis instead aims to use Gill’s texts, the way in which he positioned himself and has been positioned by others at the time and since, to explore and broaden the understanding of the realities of being a successful artist in the first half of the twentieth century.

The number of sculptors working directly on the material from conception to exhibition increased during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Gill’s status within this group of artists was clear at the time in press and critical receptions and his practice of carving added value to his status as a modern art pioneer. The contexts within which Gill’s craft-based practice came to be seen as modern were wide ranging: the language and practice of the Arts and Crafts movement; the reaction against the rarefied and elevated status of the Royal Academy schools; the interest in non-Western and ancient artefacts and practices; changes in approach in Europe; and, for Gill, the aesthetic theories of Catholic tradition. Gill’s workshop was at the centre of his working practice; his published texts on collaboration and unity in production between the head and the hand frame his workshop practice but also detract from the day to day work and the hierarchies inherent in such a working environment. His published texts can be seen as Gill using all means necessary to publicise his work as a sculptor, and his reputation as a writer and a carver can be seen from the background of those who sought out his workshop to learn from him.

The next three chapters explore in focus the practice within the workshop in the creation of works that have become known as examples of directly carved modern British sculpture. Gill’s writing, some published in his lifetime and some private, will frame these discussions alongside other contemporary texts. Gill’s role as an author of texts, alongside a collaborative author of carved sculpture, will be examined in light of the professional relationships at the centre of the work of a successful sculptor. Ideas about modernism and the art market, patronage and architecture form the main themes for the three case studies, and texts relating to these aspects of Gill’s work will inform and question the construction of Gill as an author and an artist.
CHAPTER TWO: THE ART MARKET

Introduction

This chapter explores Gill’s sculpture and workshop, and the development of his career and reputation, through the sculptures he made for exhibition and for sale. Gill was a designer and executant, and was the driving force at the creative centre of production within his workshop. The many and varied influences and contexts within which Gill was working, as well as his workshop based approach in cutting stone, enabled an identity to be formed of an artist-craftsman working largely in isolation. Definitions of direct carving centre around the artist working in collaboration only with the material, either stone or wood, and using the nature of the material to reveal the sculpture without the use of intermediary models in other materials. Quarry stone masons used their expertise to ensure that the piece of stone supplied didn’t have any flaws that would affect the carving. This early collaboration with technical experts, and subsequently with the material, often required that the artist knew, to some extent, the trends and needs of the art market which were crucial to a sculptor’s success and their ability to fund continuing work. Gill’s engagement with the business world of art started early in his career. His awareness of the importance of evidencing the craft of sculpture in his work also indicates another layer to this engagement; the idea of artist as sole author in the change in processes is complicated by these various stages of making and collaboration and will be discussed in this chapter.

The sculptures in this chapter have, in the past, been misleadingly referred to as sculptures made ‘for himself’. However, the cost of buying and carving stone sculptures was such that Gill would not usually have been able to start a sculpture without having in mind a potential site or sale. Gill’s non-commissioned sculptures make up around a third of all the sculptures detailed in Collins’s catalogue, and are sculptures made without an immediate sale, patron or location. In looking closely at Gill’s working practices, his relationships with patrons and buyers, as well as the development of his critical reception between 1910 and 1928 this chapter aims to illustrate the realities of making a living as a modern

1 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 14.
sculptor at this time. It will explore the way in which these sculptures were designed, executed, and subsequently presented, as well as examining the way these sculptures were discussed at the time and in histories since. In particular, ideas of style will be discussed in terms of how Gill’s sculptures were critically received at the time and the relationship between the perceived style and the process of making.

In the first twenty years of making sculpture, between 1909 and 1928, the proportion of Gill’s commissioned and non-commissioned works was evenly split. In the last ten years of his life, however, there was a shift and the vast majority, between 85% and 90% of sculptures, were made on commission. Of the 109 sculptures catalogued by Collins that she described Gill as making ‘for himself’, 96 of them were made between 1909 and 1928. One conclusion to be drawn from these figures is of Gill’s public success, and that by the end of the 1920s Gill was an established artist and received sufficient commissions, both private and public, that he didn’t have the time, or the need, to work on anything else. It could also indicate that Gill’s own practice was directly affected by the economic downturn following the 1929 crash.

Early in his career as a sculptor Gill professed distaste for organisations that would help him sell his work. In 1914 he wrote to the artist James Bolivar Manson (1879-1945) to decline the offer of joining the London Group:

I have no desire to exhibit my work. I want work to do & not to show. So far I have been favoured & have not been unemployed. And if from time to time uncommissioned or unsold work accumulates on my hands I hope to be able to show it by itself on my own.  

In light of the knowledge that Gill’s sculpture appeared in solo and joint exhibitions from 1911 and throughout his life, and he relied on these exhibitions to sell much of the sculpture made with no immediate buyer, this statement seems disingenuous. This is supported by the display of his 1910 sculpture Mother and Child (2) (figure 32) in the

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2 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 14.

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window of a local shop on Ditchling High Street with a price tag of £30 though it did not sell. Gill wrote, at the end of his life, on the nature of society and commercialism:

If we could again establish shops where the goods for sale were made by the same firm and as far as possible on the same premises, and if the manufacturing side of the business were again given its proper primacy and responsibility – the selling side being honourably humble and subordinate – then we should be well on the way to the revival of that craftsmanship and beauty of design for which British manufacturers were formerly famous.5

Though he rejected the London Group in 1914, Gill was aware of the need to exhibit in order to sell and make money and maintained his membership of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society from early in his career. The above text appeared in the introduction to a catalogue for an exhibition of handicrafts in Bristol. His audience would therefore have already been in broad agreement with his aims, and also aware of the context of the Arts and Crafts movement out of which this exhibition would have come. Gill’s engagement with the art market, framed by his statements against commercialism, will be explored in this chapter in the context of his subsequent reputation as a ‘direct carver’.

Modernism and ‘Style’

The influences on Gill’s sculpture and his thinking were wide ranging, and his developing public reputation as presented in the press, and in histories since, indicated a need to categorise Gill’s work. In defining him as a ‘Post-Impressionist’, a ‘Byzantinist’, ‘pioneer’ carver and as an ‘artist-craftsman’ critics and art historians have attempted to place a particular meaning on his work, processes and collaborations. Gill viewed himself as a modern sculptor at a time of transition within the art world, and he formed part of a network of practitioners and champions of modern art including Ananda Coomaraswamy, Jacob Epstein, Roger Fry, Aristide Maillol (1861-1944) and William Rothenstein. These contemporary influences on, and presentations of, Gill and his work are dominant in histories of Gill’s career as a modern sculptor. This section seeks to establish the critical narrative within which Gill, his workshop and his network of associates worked.

One of Gill’s earliest high profile supporters was Roger Fry. The first mention of him in Gill’s workbooks is in 1904, with a commission from Fry for an inscription. The next mention of Fry was in 1910 when Gill designed and cut a woodblock for a Christmas card for him. On reception of the woodblock Fry wrote to Gill that he thought it ‘absolutely new & fresh & alive and how beautiful! You see you’ve reduced the professional critic to impotent gasps of pleasure.’ In November 1910 Gill noted a meeting with Fry at the Grafton Gallery to visit Fry’s ‘Manet and the Post-Impressionists’ exhibition. At the exhibition Gill would have seen the work of Maillol and Henri Matisse among others. In a letter to Rothenstein after this meeting Gill wrote that Rothenstein was ‘missing an awful excitement’ around the exhibition which ‘quite obviously represents a reaction and a transition’. Gill saw himself alongside Augustus John, Ambrose McEvoy and Epstein and that being

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7 Eric Gill. *List of jobs*. 1902-1909. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library. According to the inventory of Gill’s inscriptions this was an incised tablet in memory of Henry Crompton and was completed in April 1905 (no. 58 in Gill, *The Inscriptional Work of Eric Gill*, 8).
8 Roger Fry. To Eric Gill. 4 December 1910. Series 4, Box 88, Folder 33-34, Clark Library.
9 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 22 November 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
10 André Derain (1880-1954), Maurice de Vlaminck (1876-1958), Othon Friesz (1879-1949), and Pierre Girieud (1876-1948).
beyond the reaction & beyond the transition, you have a right to feel superior to Mr. Henri-Matisse (who is typical of the show – though Gauguin makes the biggest splash and Van Gogh the maddest) & can say you don’t like it. But have you seen Mr. Matisse’s sculpture?\(^\text{11}\)

Gill had indirect contact with the work of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) very early in his career. In his work for Count Kessler, Gill was commissioned to draw the title page lettering for a monograph on Gauguin published in 1906.\(^\text{12}\) Though Gill doesn’t reference Gauguin directly besides the above quote, the erotic nature of Gauguin’s sculptures and paintings while in Tahiti would have resonated with Gill’s admiration for the similar elements in Indian sculpture. In particular, Gauguin’s \textit{Christ Jaune} (1889, figure 10) can be seen to resonate in Gill’s \textit{Crucifixion} (1910, figure 13).\(^\text{13}\) There are similarities in the depiction of naked figures between Gauguin’s work and Gill’s early relief sculptures. A review of Gill’s 1911 solo exhibition made a direct comparison between Gill and Gauguin stating that Gill was a ‘convinced Post-Impressionist’, and ‘inclined to hamper [his] study of nature by the apparently determined flouting of the facts of anatomical structure which often disfigures Gauguin’s otherwise classic work.’\(^\text{14}\) This critic’s presentation of Gill as a Post-Impressionist was not positive and the influences discerned in his work were seen to negatively affect what the critic saw as Gill’s developing style.

On 19 January 1910, Gill noted in his diary discussing the ‘question of my visit to Maillol’ with Rothenstein.\(^\text{15}\) Collins writes that as Gill’s sculpture was close stylistically to that of Maillol, a connection was pursued by Kessler, Gill’s patron and also Maillol’s. Kessler arranged for Gill to take up an apprenticeship with the French sculptor in January 1910, however at the last minute Gill refused the position. In a letter to Kessler explaining his refusal Gill wrote

\[
\text{Maillol being more of a modeller than actually a stone carver, technically I should learn nothing. . . . I want to have only so much to do with modelling as is necessary for that kind of client who wants to know what he’s going to get before he gets it.}
\]

And even so I should refuse to guarantee a likeness between the model and the stone.\textsuperscript{16}

This proposed apprenticeship to Maillol is the starting point for many historical descriptions of Gill’s early sculpture career, in particular the perceived opposition between modelling and carving. In the letter Gill acknowledged that the opportunity did offer him the chance to start ‘afresh, as it were, free from the Arts & Crafts Movement’. Throughout the letter, however, he insisted that he wanted to pursue stone carving and in order to do that he needed to be ‘in opposition’: ‘the similarity in our ideas, if I may so presume to speak, would be so seductive that I should cease to oppose. … Maillol has a vision which I feel to be very largely my vision.’\textsuperscript{17} In a subsequent letter to Rothenstein, Gill quoted a letter he had received from Kessler, who was at that moment visiting Maillol and had not yet received Gill’s refusal:

I showed the photos [of your statuette] to Maillol who liked them very well. He says they show great talent; but he rather deplores you do not work in clay first, as it is very difficult, or rather, impossible, to correct mistakes in stone. He says you must learn to work in clay, if you want to develop your art.\textsuperscript{18}

For Gill the letter from Kessler confirmed that he was right in refusing the apprenticeship. The letter also indicates the nature of the relationship between Kessler and Gill, and suggests the type of relationship that would have existed between Maillol and Gill had the apprenticeship been realised. Maillol was presented as the master, and Kessler was comfortable to pass on advice he felt Gill should follow in order to develop a successful career. The relationship, as elsewhere with Gill and the other influential, and often older, men such as Edward Johnston, Fry and Rothenstein was that of an apprentice to a master reliant on the master’s money, influence and patronage. As Gill developed his own public status and workshop position he lost many of these earlier associations.

\textsuperscript{16} Eric Gill. To Count Harry Kessler. Undated. Shewring, ed., \textit{Letters of Eric Gill}, 28. The letter was most likely sent on either 20 or 21 January 1910 based on a note in Gill’s diary that he was writing it on 20 January 1910. Series 1, subseries 1, box 1, Clark Library.

\textsuperscript{17} Shewring, ed., \textit{Letters of Eric Gill}, 27-28.

None of the existing literature on Gill attempts to examine what he meant by ‘Maillol has a vision which I feel to be very largely my vision’\textsuperscript{19} though connections were made during Gill’s lifetime between the two, as will be discussed shortly. Collins introduces the Maillol narrative in a section titled ‘The Technique of Direct Carving’ positioning it as evidence for Gill’s adherence to this technique. MacCarthy writes that Gill’s refusal to go to Maillol as had been arranged was one of his ‘escapes’.\textsuperscript{20} Yorke’s presentation of the situation\textsuperscript{21} is the same as that in MacCarthy’s book, and both are summaries of Gill’s own version of events in his Autobiography.\textsuperscript{22} Gill’s concern at the time was with the issue of modelling and carving, but also that he would not be able to continue his lettering and inscription work once in Maillol’s studio. His other main concern was that he believed his and Maillol’s vision was too similar to his own, and that to become an artist he needed to remain in opposition to whoever he chose to learn from.

As can be seen from the two Maillol sculptures illustrated here (figure 11), a parallel can be drawn between the two artist’s use of the female form in their sculpture. A description of one of Maillol’s female figures by André Gide (1869-1951) in 1905 is useful here in relation to critical reception of Gill’s own work: ‘I believe one must go far back in the history of art to find such a perfect disregard of everything which could detract from the manifestation of beauty. … It is simple beauty of plane and line’. The sculptures are often allegorical and have titles alluding to a narrative of specific meaning. Their forms are voluptuous and sexual, and though not outwardly part of Maillol’s motivation, his sculptures may have suggested to Gill a unity of the mind and the body, the sacred and the sexual. This was very important to Gill’s own developing aesthetic at the time through his contact with Coomaraswamy and Indian Hindu sculpture. Maurice Denis (1870-1943) described Maillol as making art

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Shewring, ed., Letters of Eric Gill, 28.
\item \textsuperscript{20} MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 101.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Yorke, Eric Gill, 195-7.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Gill, Autobiography, 179-82.
\end{itemize}
without the benefit of theory nor of any influence beyond his own instinct … He is able to reject the shabby preoccupations and the prejudices of academic teaching and to produce in many media work of a true and synthetic beauty. 23

Both artists were seen to be in opposition to academic traditions, and they focussed on learning by doing: both sculptors claimed to be led by the creative energy derived through their techniques of execution. In his 1911 book on Post-Impressionists Lewis Hind described Maillol as a 'pure craftsman' before going on to describe Gill and Epstein as ‘more than craftsmen.’ 24 Parallels between the work of Gill and Epstein were also made following the 1928 Goupil Gallery exhibition. The critic P.G. Konody compared Gill to Maillol in praising Gill’s achievements in the ‘play of subtle curves and rich forms’ of the small statuette of Eve (1927, figure 12). 25 This parallel was also made by a reviewer in The Times who wrote that the comparison was ‘a consequence of similar intentions rather than of influence’. 26 The parallels drawn between the two artists’ intentions led Gill to engage in a debate with himself and his patron which allowed him to prioritise his own creative development.

In 1910 Gill saw himself to be ‘beyond the transition’ represented by Fry’s Post-Impressionist exhibition, and part of a group of artists who saw themselves as ‘superior’ 27 to the works on show. Gill’s close connection to Epstein at this point in his life was significant both in the making of sculpture and the growing importance, to both artists, of ‘primitive’ non-Western art, as will be discussed shortly. Their interest also included ancient England, and they worked together on a plan to build a modern Stonehenge on a site called Asham House around which they could construct and practice a new religion. 28 On 6 June 1910 Gill recorded seeing ‘Asham House for first time from Beddingham Hill’, and he visited again a number of times including one trip on 14 September ‘with Epstein!’ Gill went as far as drawing up plans for the house, and visited again with Epstein and a

24 Lewis Hind, The Post Impressionists, 69.
25 P.G. Konody, “Mr. Eric Gill’s Sculpture,” Observer, 4 March 1928: 15
28 A number of sculptures have been directly linked to this project, including Epstein’s Maternity (1910-2, figure 38) and Sun God (1910) as well as Gill’s Ecstasy (1911, figure 6) and the various versions of the Cocky Kid (1910-11).
carpenter, Grainger, later that month. Conversations continued in October, and on 24 November Gill and Epstein visited it again with John and McEvoy.29

In a letter from Rothenstein the extent of the project was discussed with enthusiasm, with reference to a ‘14 year lease’ and that

> your vision of a second Stonehenge is superb. … You shall save a little corner for me, and you shall carve neatly on it – here lies one who loved more than he was loved – and Epstein shall carve Shaw nude.30

By spring 1911 the group had disbanded and a number of letters between Gill, Epstein and Rothenstein suggest that the four artists (Gill, Epstein, John and McEvoy) had not been able to reconcile their visions, and abandoned the project as well as their close association. Epstein’s name featured in Gill’s diary for the last time in early March 1911.31 During this short time, however, the two worked closely together and the appearance of their sculptures and the process of carving them became a way of identifying how sculptors were working in new and modern ways.

At the same time that Gill had his January 1911 Chenil Gallery exhibition, Epstein also had sculptures in a group show at the Grafton Galleries. A reviewer for the *Athenaeum* wrote:

> The most interesting work among the sculpture at the Grafton Galleries is that of Mr Jacob Epstein, and it may conveniently be considered along with the exhibition at the Chenil Gallery of the sculptures of his adherent Eric Gill. Here is the Post-Impressionist influence indeed in full swing, welcome enough in some ways, but inducing inevitably the commonplace reflection that it is one thing to launch a revolution, and another to control it when it is launched.32

Gill was described as Epstein’s ‘adherent’ – or follower in a number of reviews. One reason for this was that Epstein’s sculpture had been known for some time whereas this

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29 Eric Gill. Diary entries. 6 and 26 June, 28 August, 11, 14, 25 and 27 September, 24 November 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
31 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 30 March 1911. Correspondence followed this final meeting passed blame between each artist for the failure of the society, and tried to finalise financial issues and the movement of pieces of stone from Ditchling to London. Gill designed the inscription on Epstein’s tomb for Oscar Wilde, but sent Joseph Cribb to carve the inscription in Paris in 1912. Series 4, Box, 87, Folder 45, Clark Library.
32 “Post-Impressionist Sculpture,” 104.
was the first time many critics had seen Gill’s non-inscriptional work. By the time of their 1911 exhibitions, however, Gill and Epstein were in close collaboration, and other contemporary responses present them as equals and associates.

In his 1911 book *The Post-Impressionists*, Lewis Hind devoted a chapter to the work of Gill and Epstein.\(^{33}\) In describing Epstein’s work *ROM* (1910, figure 44) Lewis Hind wrote that it had ‘the 'something more’ that lifts mere technique into mysticism.’\(^{34}\) The craftsmanship that Lewis Hind refers to was not just carving, as the other two pieces he mentions are of plaster and bronze.\(^{35}\) The craftsmanship under discussion, therefore, was not just the technical process but the process of creating sculptural forms with technical mastery and sensitivity to the nature of the material. Each of Epstein’s creations ‘hovers and hides the interior knowledge of the immemorial, silently eloquent past. He discards unessentials; he never represents; he presses forward to Expression. In him moves the spirit of Post Impressionism. It moves in Eric Gill, too.’ Lewis Hind wrote that Maillol had, for some time

been the apostle of the essential, of the elemental. He is pure craftsman, but Gill and Epstein (I class them together because they are inspired by similar intention) are more than craftsmen. … Through them, sculpture … is lifted into loftier regions than mere craftsmanship, into the aura of life itself. They do not stimulate the emotional faculties only: they stimulate the mind.

Though Lewis Hind believed that certain religious subjects might be disliked, or seen to be unconventional, Gill’s sculpture was ‘carved superbly’, ‘showing how the sculptor has thought out his idea to the last outpost of symbolic ingenuity.’ The author then recounted a story of visiting Gill’s Chenil Gallery exhibition with a young woman who was moved to tears by the two sculptured reliefs (*Crucifixion*, figure 13 and *Joie de Vivre*, figure 14), proving to the author that ‘this young Eric Gill has succeeded wonderfully’ in communicating ‘emotion to the spectator.’\(^{36}\)

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\(^{33}\) The section was the second part of ‘The Movement in England’ chapter; the first section was on Augustus John.

\(^{34}\) Lewis Hind, *The Post Impressionists*, 66


Symbolism, expression of emotion and craft were at the core of Lewis Hind’s appraisal of Gill’s sculpture as ‘Post-Impressionist’. Gill and Epstein were seen to be bringing out something ‘elemental’ in their sculptures, connecting them with the ‘aura of life itself’. The label as a whole seems to have denoted any work of art which spoke to the viewer’s emotions and to their minds, affecting them on different levels than a traditionally representative work could do.

In 1911 Fry commissioned Gill to carve a large garden sculpture for his home in Guildford. The first attempt, which Gill titled *Mulier BVM (Blessed Virgin Mary)* (figure 15), was rejected by Fry after he saw it almost completed. Fry asked Gill to make another version (*Garden Sculpture*, 1912, figure 16a). In asking Gill to understand the request Fry reminded Gill to ‘please remember that I fight your battles in public’ and that he didn’t ‘want to fight that particular battle in private too.’ This letter clearly shows that Fry saw himself as Gill’s public champion, and an influential one, as it would be difficult for Gill (from Fry’s point of view) to lose his support. In order to ensure Gill’s second version was suitable Fry insisted on seeing a small scale plaster model and so directly involved himself in the creative design process. Fry’s involvement in the making of the sculpture problematizes the perceived importance of direct carving to what was seen to be modern at the time. In insisting on this particular method for the second version, Fry’s actions reflect the importance of the form, not the process. The power balance in this relationship, as with Kessler, was of a patron to an upcoming artist and his involvement in the design of the second commissioned sculpture placed him firmly in that position. The first version, according to Fry, raised ‘the sexual question’. Though Fry admitted that the first statue had ‘splendid qualities … the hands are perhaps the finest thing you have yet done’, it was the siting of the sculpture at his home in Guildford where it would be seen by ‘totally inartistic people’ which was a problem: ‘I can’t have a largely provocative question mark stuck up for them’. 37

The first version of the sculpture can be seen to directly reference the Indian Hindu sculpture which Gill encountered through his associates Coomaraswamy and Rothenstein 38

37 Roger Fry. To Eric Gill. 23 June 1911. Series 4, Box 88, Folder 33-34, Clark Library.
38 On 15 June 1910 Gill attended the inaugural India Society meeting, and designed their device. Eric Gill. Diary entry. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
around 1910 (figure 17). Gill shared this interest with Epstein on visits to the British Museum, and in correspondence with Rothenstein who visited India. Indian sculpture gave Gill the inspiration to bring together the erotic and the religious in his sculptures and other artworks. As Collins describes, and as Gill would have been seen in photographs, the various figures and deities were sometimes depicted having sex, ‘an activity which was presented as enjoyable and a natural function of the gods.’ In combining the erotic and the religious these sculptures influenced Gill’s developing idea of man as both matter and spirit, both real and both good. Gill’s Ecstasy (1910-11, figure 6) depicted a couple having sex. In his diaries it was first called They/Group – ‘Fucking’. The change in title from a literal one to one with an underlying religious, or spiritual, meaning showed the development of Gill’s ideas in the correlation of the erotic and the religious in the mind and body of man. One of the sculptures to be discussed in this chapter, Mankind (1927-8, figure 34) a headless figures of a woman, also illustrated this recurring idea through its title. It signified the collective term for humankind, represented by a woman’s body as the site of human reproduction. An essay by Gill written the year the sculpture was exhibited, however, also indicated a religious meaning as did his earlier engraving The Nuptials of God (1922, figure 18): ‘Now man taken abstractly as the bride of God is female. Hence the Church is the bride of Christ.’ Any figure, in representing humankind as the bride of Christ, would therefore be the figure of a woman.

By 1912 Gill’s status as a modern artist, and the strength of the relationship with Fry, led Fry to include seven sculptures by Gill in his second Post-Impressionist exhibition at the Grafton Galleries including his own Garden Sculpture (figure 16b). The only two sculptors to be featured in the 1912 exhibition were Gill and Matisse: Gill’s Golden Calf (figure 19) was exhibited within a room filled entirely with works by Paul Cézanne; two versions of the Contortionist (one of these is figure 5), the Poser, a Madonna and Child and a Figure were

40 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 34.
41 In August 1912 Gill made carvings of his own penis. Four diary entries describe ‘Phallus 1’ and ‘Phallus 2’ though the piece isn’t in his workbooks. (Eric Gill. Diary entries. 27-30 August 1912. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.) Gill would have known from conversations with Coomaraswamy and Rothenstein that the Hindu god Shiva was sometimes represented in this way in Hindu tradition. It is also mentioned in Mulk Raj Anand, The Hindu View of Art with an Introduction by Eric Gill (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1933) 133.
shown alongside Matisse sculptures in the Centre Gallery with flat works from a range of French-based and English artists; *St Simeon Stylites* (figure 20) and the *Garden Statue* were shown in the End Gallery again with Matisse sculptures and paintings and drawings by French and English artists including Fry, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Georges Braque (1882-1963), André Derain (1880-1954), Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957). Gill’s letter to Rothenstein following Fry’s 1910 exhibition implied, though did not clearly state, an admiration for Matisse whose works were placed alongside those by Gill in the 1912 exhibition (figure 16b). Direct comparisons can be made with Matisse’s series of paintings *La Danse* (1910, figure 21) and some of Gill’s figure sculptures made at this time in relation to the female body, movement and abstraction.

Though now widely seen as a pivotal moment in British art in the early twentieth century, at the time the exhibition was not favourably received. One reviewer in the Burlington Magazine wrote that the ‘Post-Impressionist’ works in the exhibition ‘appear as pieces of unmitigated foolishness’ and referred to other visitors to the exhibition laughing at a number of the pieces.43 Despite the derision, by this time ‘Post-Impressionism’ seems to have been an assumed term, one that would be understood by the reader. Gill’s position in this exhibition associated him with artists now seen to be at the forefront of modern art in Europe before the First World War.

Despite these connections, Gill’s *Autobiography* was a presentation of an artist completely separated from the art world. Gill repeatedly used phrases such as his innocence in the face of other’s admiration of his sculpture, his lack of knowledge of European art movements, his lowly status as a letter cutter and craftsman being talked about by high art critics, and his innocence at stumbling upon a technique (carving) that no one else was using: ‘I was completely ignorant of all their art stuff and was childishly doing my utmost to copy accurately in stone what I saw in my head.’44 Gill seemed to believe this narrative of his own artistic development at the time. In correspondence with Rothenstein in April

43 “The Post-Impressionist Exhibition,” *Burlington Magazine* Vol. XXXIV (December 1912): 188. The reviewer discussed the painting on display, and made no direct mention of the sculpture.

1911 Gill wrote that he ‘came into the “Art” World entirely ignorant of it.’ His naiveté was contradicted by the wide network of connections he maintained in London and after he left. His ignorance related to the accepted traditions of the Royal Academy and the processes and hierarchies they followed. In proclaiming innocence of the world around him Gill was indicating his modernity.

The sculptures featured in the exhibition shared certain characteristics, firstly all were carved in stone. Gill had a distinctive way of detailing his figurative sculpture which he used repeatedly, in particular with the depiction of faces, hair and drapery: almond eyes, hair that was carved almost like a helmet with defined lines of hair and drapery that was block-like. Gill rejected critics’ interpretations of his sculpture being any defined style, though it was on his perceived style that he was judged and positioned as a ‘Post-Impressionist’ and seen to be modern alongside Epstein and other artists. By describing Gill as working in a certain style, either in the terms of craftsmanship, modernity, or post-impressionism critics were able to assign specific authorship and label sculptures as ‘by Gill’. Later, this allowed certain sculptures to be catalogued as made ‘for himself’. In his work Gill collaborated with patrons and gallery owners to guide his design suggesting an expanded field of production which will now be discussed.

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45 Eric Gill. To William Rothenstein. 27 April 1911. This is a draft of a letter subsequently sent, to which Rothenstein responded in a letter to Gill on 5 May 1911. Series 4, Box 98, Folder 29, Clark Library.
Sculptures and Sales

It is unclear how Gill came to start carving figurative sculptures in late 1909. On 4 October 1907 Gill recorded attending a lecture on ‘marble sculpture’.46 He visited with his brother Macdonald, whose diary records that the lecture was titled ‘Sculpture Direct’.47 The scheduling of this talk shows that Gill was part of a general interest in the craft of making carved sculpture. As it was held at the Art Workers’ Guild the contents would have focussed on instruction in the techniques and craft of carving. At this period in his career Gill was cutting letters in stone, and contracting out any figurative work. One headstone completed in 1909-10 was described by Gill as ‘headstone with cherubs’.48 The cherubs, however, appear to have been carved by Herbert Palisser, a sculptor based in London.49 He was paid £3 and 15 shillings for this day’s work and Gill paid himself 3 shillings an hour for his letter cutting work on the commission implying that Palisser’s status as a figurative sculptor added monetary value to his physical labour as a carver.50 Gill’s Autobiography stated that he carved a woman of stone in late 1909 because of his wife, being pregnant, was sexually unavailable.51 The presentation of the process in the Autobiography suggests that for Gill the process was an unanticipated urge to carve a figure. The number of drawings in preparation for the piece demonstrate a more measured approach to the stone carving, though the initial creative drive may have been spontaneous. As Gill made his living through the lettering and letter cutting commissions he received, every piece of stone would have been a cost to him and so he could not have risked a piece being wasted through pure experimentation.

In her catalogue Collins includes some inscriptional work that contains sculptural elements; as she describes in her notes, the catalogue ‘deals with his sculptures of the figure and some animals. It does not include reliefs which just contain foliage or are purely

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46 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 4 October 1907. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
47 MacDonald Gill. Diary entry. 4 October 1907. Private Collection (Andrew Johnston).
48 This headstone is not in either Evan Gill’s Inventory or Collins’s catalogue. Job number 335. Series 7, Subseries 1, List of jobs 1902-1909, Clark Library.
49 Palisser went to Ditchling ‘to do carving job for me on Grisell headstone’. Eric Gill. Diary entry. 19 February 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
heraldic devices of armorial shields.\textsuperscript{52} Collins’s inclusion of certain works, such as tombstones and war memorials with figures, usefully introduces a debate on the nature of sculpture both in the early twentieth century and since. This will be explored in more detail in the next two chapters on Gill’s presentation of some of his sculpture as architectural or religious ‘furniture’. Some inscriptions are now deemed to be sculptural, as are what could be seen as functional images accompanied by inscriptions such as 	extit{Stations of the Cross} (figure 46, Chapter Three).

Though it is true he was ‘self-taught’\textsuperscript{53} in that he didn’t attend academic sculpture lessons, Gill’s stone masonry course in London, his association with sculptors such as Palisser, and his process of carving inscriptions from scale drawings, also suggest that his move to sculpture was a gradual progression from letters to figures in stone. In the time between carving his first figurative sculpture in 1909 and staging his first solo exhibition in 1911 Gill produced at least thirteen free-standing sculptures without an immediate purpose. Of these sculptures, three were 	extit{Mother and Child} sculptures, and six were entitled 	extit{Cocky Kid, Cupid or boy holding a panel} all of which repeated the same relief image of a boy standing legs apart with his arms raised or behind his back. Gill’s early sculpture career shows him practising techniques within the boundaries of limited subject matter.

Gill’s first sculpture exhibition was held at the Chenil Gallery, owned by John Knewstub (1874-1959) and founded in 1905 in Chelsea, at that time ‘a quasi-rural community of bohemian artists’.\textsuperscript{54} The Chenil Gallery’s main exhibiting artist from its opening was Augustus John, then known for his ‘avid cultivation of a bohemian persona and through the vital sketch-like qualities of his drawings and prints, which held the promise of direct contact with the spontaneous moment of artistic creation.’\textsuperscript{55} The connection between Knewstub and Gill was through William Rothenstein, who was married to Knewstub’s sister. On 4 December 1910 Knewstub wrote to Gill:

\begin{quote}
I should be gratified to show a collection of your work here, but as you apparently have comparatively little would it be to your displeasure to show together with a
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52} Collins, \textit{Eric Gill The Sculpture}, 61.
\textsuperscript{53} Collins, \textit{Eric Gill The Sculpture}, 12.
\textsuperscript{55} Helmreich and Holt, “Marketing Bohemia,” 48.
few exhibits by Mr D. Innes. … Let me have your views please at your early convenience.\(^{56}\)

The Gallery’s siting and its continuing support of John (at that time still a close associate of Gill) meant that Gill would have been an appropriate choice for Knewstub. Helmreich and Holt point out there was an inherent contradiction in the styling of a ‘bohemian’ space which also needed to be commercially viable, describing the failure of the gallery in the early 1920s as ‘perhaps inevitable given bohemianism’s contradictory mix of fantasy structures, ideologies, discourses, and practices, of backward-looking characteristics married to avant-garde rhetoric, rejection of convention harnessed to fashionability, and the cult of creativity and temperament translated to commodification.’\(^{57}\) As this chapter will explore, Gill’s own career as both a modern artist and a craftsman and businessman parallels the complexities also at work in the aims and realities of the Chenil Gallery.

The Chenil Gallery exhibition opened less than eighteen months after Gill had carved his first figurative sculpture and contained 10 sculptures and 2 inscriptions (figure 22), all carved stone. Though usually described as Gill’s first solo sculpture exhibition, the show featured one work by his assistant, Joseph Cribb, and another piece by Gill and Cribb.\(^{58}\) Seven of the 12 pieces by Gill were for sale, with the other pieces being lent by Gordon Moore, William Rothenstein, and two from Epstein. One version of *Mother and Child* was listed without a price and no lender, and is likely to be the third, ‘unfinished’, version made in 1910 (figure 33) subsequently bought by John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), which is discussed later in this chapter. Of the 12 sculptures, half were of two subjects only: *Mother and Child* and *Cocky Kid*. The lenders to the exhibition point to Gill’s relatively limited circle of associates and buyers at this early stage in his career. Moore was his brother-in-law (and was given the piece as a wedding present in August 1910), Rothenstein was a friend and champion of Gill’s work, and Epstein at this time was a close associate and collaborator.

Gill’s exhibition at the Goupil Gallery, in March 1928, was by contrast to the Chenil a completely solo show and featured a larger number of sculptures and inscriptions as well

\(^{56}\) John Knewstub. To Eric Gill. 4 December 1912. Series 4, Box 85, Folder 12, Clark Library.

\(^{57}\) Helmreich and Holt, “Marketing Bohemia,” 61.

\(^{58}\) Gill’s sculpture was shown alongside paintings by J.D. Innes (1887-1914).
as drawings (figure 23). The sculptures shown were in varied media including stone, pinewood, ivory and pewter. A letter written from Gill to Joseph Cribb in April 1927 indicated that Gill may not have originally seen it to be an entirely solo show: ‘The Goupil has fixed the date of the exhibition of stone carvings by me and you for March, 1928.’ This statement could suggest that Gill intended to show his works alongside those of Cribb, as with the Chenil Gallery exhibition. Gill’s statement, however, referred to the assistance he was hoping Cribb would provide on the sculptures he was preparing to include in the exhibition.

Gill’s professional relationship with the owner of the Goupil Gallery, William Marchant (1868-1925), had started in 1914 with Gill’s second solo exhibition, and continued as Marchant acted as an agent for the sale of Gill’s engravings. According to Helmreich, Marchant had a reputation for supporting new and emerging young artists, and was also closely connected to John and Rothenstein. Again, Gill’s connection to Rothenstein was at the root of Gill’s growing network of commercial supporters in his early career as a sculptor. Gill and Marchant worked together following formal, signed contracts which were reviewed and renewed on a regular basis. This close working relationship, which lasted from 1914 until the 1930s, gave Gill an on-going professional relationship with the art market to which he could respond when necessary.

For example, after the 1914 exhibition had opened Marchant wrote of the 1913 Bath stone Mother and Child group (catalogue number 9, figure 8): ‘if you propose to make any of the sculptures so to say for stock purposes, we should suggest you putting one of this subject in hand as we think it a likely seller.’ Gill completed two more of similar

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59 The gallery size meant other artists were featured on other floors.
61 A 1928 Goupil Gallery account detailed the sale of a paperweight by Joseph Cribb for £5-5s, 7 May 1928. It wasn’t included in the exhibition but shows that Gill’s arrangements with the gallery sometimes included his assistants.
62 This exhibition also featured a ‘Money Box’ in Hoptonwood stone by ‘H.J. Cribb, Apprentice’ though Cribb finished his apprenticeship in 1913. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
65 William Marchant. To Eric Gill. 10 January 1914. Series 4, Box 98, Folder 29, Clark Library.
composition in May and September 1914, the first of which was a copy of the one in the exhibition and was sold by Marchant through the gallery. The second of these two subsequent versions (figure 24) was commissioned by Gill’s friend Joseph Thorp in 1914 and Gill started carving it the same day he finished the first 1914 version. Thorp was subsequently unable to afford to buy it and it was sold to a DY Cameron through Everard Meynell’s shop in 1915. This exchange, along with other sculpture multiples, suggest Gill’s willingness to actively engage with potentially successful style and content as reflected through sales.

Knewstub, owner of the Chenil Gallery, wrote to Gill during the 1911 exhibition that Gill had ‘unquestionably scored a great triumph – few men with their first exhibit have ever commanded so much press attention, and critics, and the art world in general floods here daily.’ In a review for the Manchester Guardian the critic wrote favourably on Gill’s style and technique, again in conjunction with Epstein. He introduced the review by discussing the work of Gauguin and Van Gogh and their struggle ‘towards the expression of emotional intent in their subjects’ and that, in particular, Gauguin’s ‘splendid example not only of matter but of method was to be taken up by the younger men’ of whom Gill was one:

in Mr. Eric Gill’s work at the Chenil Gallery in London, taken in conjunction with Mr. Jacob Epstein’s superb ‘Euphemia’ at the Grafton Gallery, we see the reawakening of sculpture from its long sleep to a place as second only to drama in its power to move, to haunt, and to direct.

The reviewer goes on to write that ‘there can be no doubt’ that Gill’s sculptures are beautiful, and singled out the large Crucifixion and the Joie de Vivre for particular attention, saying of the latter that ‘the artistry of this piece is supreme’. He then writes about the Mother and Child sculptures (figures 31-33) and sums up the article by writing ‘Beautiful,
beautiful is most assuredly the word upon your lips as you reluctantly leave these haunting embodiments of life’s dearest faiths." These reviews, and the responses of Knewstub in 1911 and Marchant in 1914, suggest Gill’s identity as a modern sculptor was established via the perceived emotional directness of the sculptures through the style of his sculptures, as well as the process of carving.

The review in the Observer repeated the idea that Gill was Epstein’s ‘adherent’:

‘A pupil of Mr. Epstein’ will be the first thought of most on their introduction to Mr. Eric Gill’s stone-carvings. For stone-carvings they are, in the true sense of the word, chiselled out of the block without the guidance of a preliminary clay model. But Mr. Gill, I am told, is not a pupil of Mr. Epstein. He is nobody’s pupil.

The writer does not elaborate on who it was who ‘told’ him, though the rest of the review does point to a conversation with someone who knew Gill and his work well, possibly Fry or Rothenstein. Alternatively it could have been Gill himself. Gill’s method of execution can be seen to take on increased importance in assessing the sculptures aesthetically, and later in the article the method of execution was linked to the profundity of Gill’s intention: the writer expressed conditional admiration for

the unsophisticated expression of a profound artistic emotion. I have no reason to doubt the truth of his lack of training, and of this remarkable group being the first fruit of his very considerable talent; but I do refuse to believe in the naiveté of his spirit.

In particular the review presents Gill’s apparent ignorance of the human body as false, that instead Gill ‘is deliberately trying to conceal his knowledge of anatomy.’ Gill’s unsophisticated mode of execution in carving directly into the stone, however, undermined his expressive qualities: ‘the air of archaic rudeness and clumsiness of form is not natural, but assumed’.

Using similar language to the Guardian reviewer, Arthur Clutton-Brock in The Times described Gill as attempting ‘to express the instinct of maternity and that alone. … his groups have a beauty which comes from the simplicity and force of the expression.’

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70 P.I., “Mr. Eric Gill’s Sculptures,” 6.
most important positive review at the time was that by Roger Fry in *The Nation*, again using the language of expression and beauty. This article is quoted in almost all literature on Gill written since his death. According to the letters of Fry, Clive Bell (1881-1964) supported the Observer’s view and criticised Fry’s championing of Gill. Fry wrote to Bell in January 1911 that as a result of Bell’s comments

I went again to Gill’s show and quite honestly came to the conclusion that you are wrong … It isn’t an aesthetic admiration of a certain dream of freedom of body and soul with a sentimental longing for it just because it’s impossible. It comes much nearer to Blake’s ‘Damn braces, bless relaxes’ and is the expression of a very practical act of faith. To me, there are all the signs of religious conviction in Gill’s work – and then how about the mother and child; has anyone ever looked more directly at the real thing and seen its pathetic animalism as Gill has? … It’s all so fresh, so directly in contact with life. … But you would admit the sheer extraordinary beauty of surface, of substance, of placing and all that, wouldn’t you?73

Fry’s statements parallel Gill’s views at this time on the importance of the unity between art and life, as well as supporting his interpretation of the direct emotional appeal of the sculpture by mentioning the process of carving and the quality of surface that resulted from the process.

In the texts quoted so far, the important factor for the critics was to assign a specific style to Gill’s sculpture, and though the craft of their making was referenced, the process was less important than the expressive and emotive qualities of the sculpture. The association of the works with that of an ideal of ‘stone-carving’ added to the directness of the emotional appeal of the works. Reviews of Gill’s later exhibition place greater emphasis on the importance of the process of carving used by Gill and others. One review of the March 1928 Goupil Gallery exhibition started with the following statement:

A characteristic of our sculpture in the last twenty years has been that the actual carving is more generally done by the sculptor himself and, as a natural consequence there has been an increased technical interest in the material itself. For these advances Mr. Eric Gill is very largely responsible.74

One sculpture (Headdress, 1928) was subsequently described as ‘a design of simplicity and expressiveness suggesting a natural flowering of the stone in the mind and hands of the artist.’ Konody’s description of Gill, in his review of the 1928 Goupil Gallery show, reflected the above quote of Gill’s status in the ‘advances’ in what was seen to be modern sculpture. He wrote that there was ‘no doubt as to Mr. Gill’s commanding position among British sculptors, not only of to-day but of all times.’ Konody concentrated on the importance of Gill’s skill as a carver early in the review: ‘The main thing is that Mr. Gill is a real sculptor, and not a modeller who first shapes his conception in clay and then decides on the material’. Though in the earlier review Gill’s process of making did not lead to a value judgement, in this review it was used to make Gill distinct as a ‘real’ sculptor. Konody went on to describe specific pieces in the exhibition, using phrases such as ‘simplification of form’, ‘rhythmic flow’, and ‘flowing, strong, sinuous line’. As with the review quoted above, the perceived harmony of form of the pieces is praised instead of any perceived expressive qualities; it appears from these and other reviews that the material, process and form had become the site of meaning despite the literal titles ascribed to all Gill’s sculptures.

The 1928 Times review began by stating that ‘in the sculpture by Mr. Eric Gill we have an exhibition of native talent in native materials which can hold its own with anything in Europe.’ The review then stated there was little distinction now to be made between ‘art’ and ‘craftsmanship’, that Gill’s work ‘gives the impression that it starts in craftsmanship, in the skilled handling of materials, and arrives at formal beauty and significance by the accident, so to speak, of his being an artist with a high degree of formal sensibility.’ The author here echoed Lewis Hind’s description of Gill’s early work and Epstein’s sculptures as going ‘beyond craftsmanship’. The article concentrated on a discussion regarding the title of Mankind (figure 34). For the reviewer there was ‘no paradox in the representation

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75 “London Art Shows – Mr. Eric Gill’s Sculpture,” Manchester Guardian, 16.
76 Konody, “Mr. Eric Gill’s Sculpture,” 15.
77 “Art Exhibitions. Mr. Eric Gill,” 10.
78 Lewis Hind, The Post Impressionists, 69.
of “Mankind” by the headless and armless figure of a woman. The idea that comes to us is that of the shrine of what our forefathers called the “vegetative” life of all humanity’. The review then described the sculpture as being ‘complete as a formal composition’ despite it being a fragment, and that ‘as a work of art, in total form and in rhythm of mass and line from every point of view, it gives complete satisfaction.’ The Daily Mail review also hailed Mankind a success due to its ‘perfect formal relations’.

The use of the terms ‘formal relations’ and ‘rhythm of mass and line’ referred back to the earlier critical language of Fry and Bell. Between the Chenil Gallery exhibition in 1911 and the Goupil Gallery show in 1928, however, Gill had lost the public support of Fry and there are very few references in his diary to Fry after the end of the First World War. Though the reasons for this divergence are not clear, Fry and Rothenstein had also parted ways by 1914, and Gill did maintain a close relationship to Rothenstein after this time. After their initial close association, Fry’s and Gill’s aesthetic views and theories had diverged. Fry and Bell hoped for a world in which art worked to attain a form of purity, separated from ‘ordinary’ life, and in which artworks were experienced in a purely cerebral way. Bell wrote in Art in 1914 that the ‘Patronage of the Arts is to the cultivated classes what religious practice is to the lower middle, the homage that matter pays to the spirit or … the intellect pays to emotion.’ The matter, in this case, was the work of art, paying homage to a person’s emotion. This separation of the mind from the body in the production and appreciation of art would have been for Gill a denial of the reality of making and experiencing art which necessitated matter and spirit, body and mind.

An extant letter from 1932 indicates the distance that had grown between Fry and Gill. Fry wrote an article in The Listener which Gill took exception to in a letter to Fry. In reply, Fry wrote to Gill:

I didn’t mean that you deliberately and consciously sold your soul for gain. I did not say that you sought the advantages only that you found them. They were

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80 The Daily Mail, 6 March 1928. Qtd in MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 220.
inevitably there for anyone who took the particular line which came natural to you. But I do think though I cannot prove it that you have taken the line of least resistance — this is always how a particular social milieu distorts or limits an artist’s growth.

These ‘advantages’ are unclear, though as the letter was written in 1932 it likely referred to Gill’s increasing number of public commissions and his figurative and narrative sculptures; Fry may have seen them as a failure to retain purity of form and intention. Fry wrote that in trying to make sculptures which had meaning Gill and he had moved apart:

> You wanted sculpture to do something else, to tell a story, to express directly and explicitly certain ideas and feelings, whereas my point is that the great works of art tell their story only implicitly through the artist’s unconscious sensibility and that what they tell thus is profounder and of greater ultimate significance for the spirit than any direct and explicit expression can be.

Fry wrote that Gill’s sculptures should have been made up of ‘significant formal relations’ which could tell a story but not using ‘illustration’. In 1931, as though addressing in advance criticism from Fry that came in 1932, Gill self-published an essay arguing that some artists had become like connoisseurs interested in creating ‘a vogue’ for ‘emotions’; these artists were those interested in ‘things of value only in the studio – funny things like “formal values”, “tone values”, the “relations of masses”’ who eventually became isolated ‘from common life and necessary work’, ‘existing only for the pleasure of his patrons’.

The early reviews of Gill’s sculpture, when Fry and Rothenstein championed him, show that for the critics in 1911 there was expressiveness and emotion which told a story, or expressed an idea, through the form and finish. By 1928 Gill’s position as a significant modern sculptor seemed to have been confirmed, and in the press and in critical assessments the method of execution had become as important as the content or the ‘style’. Gill’s origins as a stone carver, and his continued work carving stone and other materials such as wood and ivory helped to elevate him to the status of one of the most important British artists by the late 1920s. His identity in the reviews was a result of the value placed on his skill as a craftsman and a ‘real sculptor’. The focus on Gill’s process

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83 Roger Fry. To Eric Gill. 22 December 1932. Series 4, Box 88, Folder 33-34, Clark Library.  
85 Konody, “Mr. Eric Gill’s Sculpture,” 15.
as a carver was presented as a part of the interpretation of the aesthetic appeal and the modernity of the sculptures. His position in the public eye, however, did not translate to acceptance by all contemporary critics including Wilenski and Fry who by the early 1930s saw Gill to be ‘popular’ and an ‘illustrator’ not an artist.

Gill’s theories, published and presented in lectures in increasing numbers from the early 1920s onwards, do not feature in these contemporary critical assessments. In December 1927 Gill gave a lecture at the V&A on ‘The Future of Sculpture’, subsequently published in 1928 as an essay for Artwork. In it he defined the ‘art of sculpture’ as ‘the making of things in three dimensions such that being seen they please the eye and the mind’\(^8^6\); he also questioned the critical examination of art:

> What is beauty? What is ‘significant form’? What is the connection between the idea in the mind and the material under the hand? How much is the one dependent on the other? So we return to our beginnings, and like a cave man carving a bone we can again find in art the pure delight of the intelligence collaborating with God in creating.\(^8^7\)

In his 1917 essay Gill had described sculpture as ‘the name given to that craft and art by which things are cut out of a solid material, whether in relief or in the round.’\(^8^8\) These two definitions show a change in approach from a specific one relating to the technical method to a later, broader concept about form and design emerging as a result of the carving process. Gill’s declarations about the nature of sculpture and making, and statements made by him early and later in his career, indicate that though he was reliant upon sales and the art market he saw himself to be creating objects of utility for patrons, clients and society.

The reality of the world in which Gill worked was one that necessitated payments, contracts and business. It was, and is, standard practice for the gallery to take a percentage commission for any work sold through them; Gill had such an arrangement with the Goupil Gallery from 1914, and with Meynell’s shop from an earlier date. Gill’s 1917 essay Sculpture described how the ordinary artist-craftsman needed to rebel against


\(^8^8\) Gill, *Sculpture*, 1.
these commercial arrangements: ‘We will sell things at our own workshops and deal directly with our own customers.’\(^8^9\) When Gill did try to sell something through the local shop in Ditchling it was not a success, however he was successful in gaining work in the 1930s for inscriptions and headstones through Sculptured Memorials and Headstones. The company was established in 1934 by Gilbert Ledward and was organised for the benefit of artists and craftsmen to have direct contact with their customers. The showroom in central London was set up as ‘the response to a “crying need” for a shop window promoting contemporary British sculptors’.\(^9^0\) To sell his sculptures, however, Gill relied on his galleries and agents to promote and sell his work when required. The steady flow of engravings sent to the Goupil Gallery for sale, as well as Gill’s willingness to make sculptures that the gallery predicted would sell, show that Gill’s collaboration with the commercial side of the art world was active and benefitted him and his workshop.

By 1931 Gill’s views on the art market were more nuanced: artists before the Renaissance had made things ‘for which the customer had a need, and for which the customer therefore gave an order’; starting with the Renaissance, and deepening in Gill’s own time due to mass-commercialisation and industrialisation, artists now made ‘things “off their own bat,” so to say, and depended on luck to find a customer’, an artist’s works ‘are bought because they are by him’.\(^9^1\) Gill did not associate himself with the ‘artists’ he referred to, and his reference to sculptures made ‘off their own bat’ described his own view of modern artists working in isolation to create works of self-expression. However, Gill’s growing financial and public success was in part because he made works that could be labelled ‘by Gill’ and he both worked to order and responded to trends in the market to find customers. The way in which Gill sold his prints in editions, and re-published his essays, was reflected in his sculpture. For example, in December 1912 and throughout 1913 Gill produced a number of editions of small-scale Madonna and Child sculptures made from plasticine and then cast in bronze, brass or plaster (plaster versions were then painted, figure 25). There

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\(^{8^9}\) Gill, *Sculpture*, 18.


were five series of the small-scale sculptures depicting the same subject in slightly different poses. Gill modelled, had cast, and then sold, a total of 95 editions.

The way in which Gill recorded payments reveal his engagement with the business of making and selling sculpture, and his notations changed as the success of his workshop grew. Whereas previously work had been charged by the hour, down to the half and quarter hour for some works, in June 1913 he started recording work by the day and half day. At this point he was paying himself at least £1, sometimes £1-10s (one and a half pounds) for one day’s work. Gill’s payments to himself changed at exactly the same point that Cribb graduated from apprentice to assistant and his wages increased to 9 pence an hour. The increase in Gill’s hourly rate was directly connected to his role in his workshop which changed from master of one apprentice to master of an assistant and apprentice; this also corresponded with his developing public status and reputation. By 1928, Gill’s charges for his own time had increased to at least £1 for each half day worked, though these amounts were not always directly related to the sale price for a particular work.

Early correspondence between Gill and his London agent, Meynell, are a useful reference point for Gill’s developing attitude towards making money. In one letter written after the Goupil Gallery exhibition of 1914 Gill wrote

> the stones … are now on rail for Ditchling. … Of course I’ll be only too glad to show them to any possible buyer. … As for the price – I’m quite willing to sell for much less than Marchant saw fit to state in my catalogue. I’ve got no money at all at present and owe a great deal as the result of our removal [to Ditchling Common].

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92 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, (material, number of editions): cat. no. 32 (bronze, 7); cat. no. 33 (plaster, 42); cat. no. 34 (bronze and brass, 9); cat. no. 35 (plaster, 6); cat. no. 46 (plaster, 31). Eric Gill. Diary entries. 1912 and 1913. Series 1, Subseries 1, Boxes 1 and 2; Eric Gill. Workbooks. Series 7, subseries 1. Clark Library.

93 If Gill worked for eight hours when he wrote ‘all day’, he in effect gave himself a pay rise (more hours worked, e.g. a ten hour day, would have resulted in the same rate as before). The change could have been due to the increase in work and the size of his workshop which made it impractical to note every hour. Eric Gill. Diary Entry.10 June 1913. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1; Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1911 to July 1914. Series 7, Subseries 1. Clark Library.


95 Eric Gill. To Everard Meynell. 3 February 1914. Barrie Marks (private).
Gill wrote of at least four sculptures featured in the exhibition that were returned to him unsold, and his keenness to sell them meant that he would negotiate on price with anyone willing to buy them. In letters to Meynell written in 1915 the complexities of Gill’s view of himself as a craftsman, artist and businessman, which would come to the fore in his public work, are revealed. Gill wrote that he was

bringing up or sending up some more objets d’art (I don’t think) for your shop next time I come to town. I gather that you have quite run out of plaster Madonnas. I will let you have some more. Also some stone images (two probably). 96

His jovial statement (‘I don’t think’) indicated a self-deprecatory attitude to his artistic status, however a subsequent letter betrayed no such feeling:

The price I propose for the woman and child kneeling (thus to be distinguished) is £25 net to me. How does that strike you? In these hard times it is necessary to be lenient so I am open to any reasonable offer. 98

With reference to another sculpture (‘torso and head’, figure 2699) Gill wrote to Meynell that he wanted £25 but was ‘prepared to take £20’, and that though

there might appear to be less work in this than in the mother and child stone, that is not really so. I think you will have noticed how much more considered the modelling of the torso is – rather an advance in civilization in fact! 100

Gill worked out prices, therefore, based not only on the physical work involved but also on his view of the artistic merit and wanted to make this clear to the person who was advocating on his behalf to future customers. As these letters make clear, and with the many engravings that went to Meynell for sale, Gill was aware of the need to communicate with potential buyers through his agent and his gallery.

Gill’s work for the Goupil exhibition was recorded under job number 1021 in his ledgers (figure 27), and his records show that he made six new pieces specifically for the

96 Eric Gill. To Everard Meynell. 10 February 1915. Barrie Marks (private).
97 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, cat. no. 52 (figure 24).
99 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, cat. no. 56.
100 Eric Gill. To Everard Meynell. 7 April 1915. Barrie Marks (private).
exhibition. The costs related to these sculptures were put against his income from sales. According to his ledger he made just over £1,106 from the exhibition. His initial costs would have been reduced because he was using stone already in the workshop, and the main costs noted are for time spent carving. The prices agreed for the exhibition sales, suggested either by Gill or the gallery owner or the two in consultation, did not materialise in the final sale prices. At the Chenil Gallery both the large reliefs (*Crucifixion* and *Joie de Vivre*) were listed as £100 each, and were then bought as a pair by the Contemporary Art Society for £100; *Mankind* was priced at £1,000 and eventually sold for £800.

According to his record for work on the Goupil Gallery sculptures the prices related not only to the size of the sculpture, and to Gill or the gallery owner’s estimation of artistic merit, but also to the length of time Gill spent working on them and possibly their appeal to the market. *Adam* (1927-8, figure 28) for example was priced at £80 whereas *Eve*, much the same size, was priced at £100. Knowing the market and the more likely sale of works to male visitors, Gill and Knewstub may have identified that a sculpture of *Eve* and the tradition into which it fit would be more popular and so could sell for a higher sum. At the Chenil Gallery exhibition the sculptures were priced over and above those of the inscriptions, and the prices increased with the size of the piece (figure 22). An *Inscribed Tablet* was priced at £3-3s, whereas the large *Crucifixion* relief was priced at £100. Joseph Cribb’s *Tortoise* had the lowest price in the list at £2-2s reflecting both its size and Cribb’s status as an apprentice. Gill’s pricing for sculptures, it appears from the difference in catalogue and sale price, was over-ambitious for the market throughout his career. He was not only trying to cover the costs of production, but also to reflect in the prices a status for himself as an artist working on the design and execution in an intellectual and physical process identified by critics as central to the values of modern art.

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102 Eric Gill. Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
103 Eric Gill. Ledger. June 1927 to September 1933. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
104 Eric Gill. Ledger. June 1927 to September 1933. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
105 Cribb wrote to his sister that he ‘got £1-2-3 from the sale of that tortoise. Don’t you think that was jolly good?’ He then wrote that he spent it on tools; until then he had been sharing Gill’s. (Joseph Cribb. To Maudie Cribb. 18 March 1911. Joseph Cribb Archive).
Making the Sculpture

Gill made drawings, worked on photographs with paint and created models in the design stages prior to the final execution which involved the close collaboration of Gill’s workshop. This section will look at the making of some of the sculptures for the two exhibitions in focus, held in 1911 and 1928, to examine the changes in workshop processes during these periods in the development of Gill’s career as a sculptor. Collins’s catalogue states that ‘Gill did not work on his own; throughout his career he employed apprentices who sawed stone into shape and roughed out backgrounds. Their names have been included in the entries.’\textsuperscript{106} Collins’s catalogue, though generally thorough, is not exhaustive in its inclusion of the work of Gill’s assistants. A detailed examination of the records of Gill and those in his workshop demonstrates that there was very little that was not a collaborative effort within the workshop, including Gill’s first sculpture, \textit{Estin Thalassa} (1909, figure 29), on which Joseph Cribb worked for 34¼ hours.\textsuperscript{107} Gill’s record-keeping for a commissioned work was necessary to keep track of costs and payments and to ensure that he was not spending more than he had agreed with the client. Gill maintained the same method when recording works done with no immediate purchaser or location, indicative of Gill’s background as a self-employed craftsman, as well as an artist who hoped that all costs involved in the making of sculpture would be reflected in the sale price. In keeping these records Gill was able to estimate a sale price based on the cost of stone and the number of hours labour involved, though the correlation was not a direct one.

From Gill’s first known sculpture in 1909 and his first exhibition in 1911, to his major solo exhibition in 1928, Gill’s workshop reflected his increasing public success. In the early years of Gill’s sculpture production, from 1909 onwards, Gill’s workshop was small with no more than two or three assistants at a time. He sought local assistance to help grow his business by taking on more commissioned inscription work. By the end of 1928 Gill had moved into a new workshop in Buckinghamshire bringing with him his two main

\textsuperscript{107} Eric Gill. Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs. January 1910 to December 1911. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
assistants. The assistants who joined in the 1920s and 1930s tended to be artists and students who sought out Gill to teach them. Gill’s role as master and head of the workshop remained and his attitude towards the competency of the workshop and their practical collaboration was central to his success. Gill’s exhibition at the Goupil Gallery in 1928 came at a turning point in the type of work he completed as the economic depression led to decreases in sales from exhibitions, and an increase in public commissions. In this work, and in the continuing work on inscription commissions Gill relied on his public reputation as a reliable and renowned sculptor and on the support of his workshop.

Gill’s work on the sculptures that featured in the 1911 and 1928 exhibitions differed. For the Chenil Gallery all the sculptures exhibited had already been made, and a number of them had been sold or given as gifts prior to the opening. The process by which Gill made the sculptures, therefore, can be seen to align more closely with the idea that he did them ‘for himself’ with stone he had available. The support of his patrons and supporters, and the small scale of the majority of the sculptures made, suggests that he did not feel he was taking a great risk with the stones. He also had two apprentices working on inscriptions, both of them working relatively cheaply due to their status as pupils not assistants. The two largest pieces in the first exhibition, *Crucifixion/Weltschmerz* (figure 13) and *Joie de Vivre/A Roland for an Oliver* (figure 14) were probably carved from stones that were not used, or were unusable, for gravestones. The *Mother and Child* pieces (figures 31-33), being much smaller, could have been made from off-cuts or other pieces of unusable stone. In contrast, Gill was negotiating the terms of the 1928 Goupil Gallery exhibition in April 1927 to allow him enough time to schedule his work and his resources to enable him to produce a group of sculptures specifically for the exhibition. Gill rented a studio in London for the 6 months prior to the Goupil Gallery exhibition, and employed Joseph Cribb to assist him while Lawrence Cribb and the rest of the workshop remained in Wales. This enabled Gill to concentrate fully on the sculptures for the exhibition, as well as remain in contact with his London network while his workshop continued with other work.

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108 See Appendix I.

109 According to Collins, Gill told Rothenstein he carved the first *Mother and Child* (figure 31) because he had stone he could not use for inscriptions. Collins, *Eric Gill The Sculpture*, 63.
Gill’s method of working in 1910 developed from his background as a letter cutter. His first sculpture, *Estin Thalassa*, was carved in 1909 from a scale drawing, very much like his work on lettering and tombstones (figure 30). Gill also experimented with carving and making sculptures in the round from models and in different materials: in 1910 he carved a stone version of a bronze sculpture for Epstein; for the second version of Fry’s *Garden Sculpture* (figure 16a) in 1912 Gill made a small clay model which was cast in plaster for Fry to approve; and from 1912 to 1913 Gill made the Madonna and Child series described above. These experiments in material and process enabled Gill to learn, though in a non-academic manner, the different ways of designing and executing sculptures, often in close consultation with patrons.

These early associations with different types of working, in particular in clay, plaster and bronze, can be seen to connect during the 1910s to Gill’s developing views on the process of making sculpture in general. Knowledge of the material, and the use of the material in the creative process, was central to Gill’s theories of responsible artistic production. By placing the intrinsic qualities of the material at the centre of his process, Gill also hoped to avoid imitation. In order to do this Gill also advocated the use of nature, and the living model, as inspiration for sculpture. He later advised being cautious, however, as:

The use of living models, except merely for reference, is a very great danger; for the beauties of appearance seek to oust the beauties of thought, and concern for accuracy of anatomical representation tends to oust concern for the beauty of the work in itself.110

This way of working reflected the importance of mind and body, matter and spirit, in the design and execution of his work. Gill worked within and from nature but did not attempt to imitate or improve upon it.

This first *Mother and Child* sculpture (figure 31) was started in late 1909, and because Gill’s diary for this year does not exist it is unclear if there was a clay model or a drawing made in preparation for the carving. For the second version (figure 32), however, Gill started building a clay model on 18 May 1910 which he worked on for 47 hours, finishing on 6

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June. As Gill had by this time completed the first version which would still have been in the workshop it is unclear why he would have needed a model for a second version. In particular because he often placed modelling and carving in opposition as two very different ways of working, and so they could not be used to conceive and make one sculpture. It could indicate pragmatic action as he worked on his first three dimensional sculptures. Having never previously carved a three dimensional sculpture, the first version was expertly executed with a difficult cut away beneath and between the Mother’s legs and around the child. As Gill produced a model for the second version, and as indicated by the modelled contours and edges of the first version, it is possible that he followed a model for both pieces. Gill’s accounts record a payment to C. Smith & Son for casting the clay model for the second version into plaster. There is no corresponding payment for the first version, but he may not have had it cast, and it may be that Gill re-worked the initial model into the model for the second version. These experiments in stone were small-scale until he had developed his confidence and started working on other pieces that appeared in the exhibition; though larger these pieces were carved in relief indicating that Gill’s abilities in figure carving were still developing.

Correspondence between Gill and Joseph Cribb show that once the Goupil Gallery had confirmed the exhibition date Gill was planning what to make: ‘I think I shall make a strenuous effort to carve that piece of Hoptonwood stone which still reposes in the yard at Ditchling.’ This large piece of stone, which Gill left in Ditchling when he left for Wales in 1924, was the stone used for Mankind (figure 34), Gill’s largest sculpture in the round. Workshop photographs, and sketched drawings that seem to have been made at the time, show that Gill designed it from the start to be a fragment. In light of his earlier assertions, Gill’s work from the life is extensive but his sculptures do not follow them exactly to the drawn line. From early in his sculpture career Gill began his designing process by making life drawings, and whenever he visited Paris he attended life drawing classes, as well as using his own family and workshop as models. The drawings made in preparation for the design of Mankind indicate an interest in the fragmented figure, and some appear to be

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111 Eric Gill. Diary entries. 18 May to 6 June 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.
taken from antique statuary. One drawing in a private collection (figure 35) shows three nude female figures from different angles with no legs beneath the knees, no arms beyond the shoulder and no heads. The position of the shoulders suggests raised arms, and the slight twist in the hips also connects these drawings to the finished *Mankind* sculpture. Two photographs of naked women have also been painted to obscure their arms, lower legs and heads (figure 36). One in particular (figure 36a) shows the position of the model’s head and arms, one of which is raised to the left in the same way as the left arm of *Mankind*.

Early in his career as a sculptor, sculptures that were designed as fragments were not something that Gill was, according to his own words, interested in.\(^{114}\) The third *Mother and Child* (figure 33) in the 1911 Chenil Gallery show was exhibited not as a fragment, but unfinished and Gill wrote to Knewstub that he wished to finish the sculpture before it was taken by the purchaser. Knewstub’s letter to Gill shows that the buyer, Geoffrey Keynes (1887-1982), wanted the piece as it had been exhibited:

> Will you accept £25 for [catalogue] no. 1 ‘Mother and Child’ as it now stands, that is without giving birth to the child? Or if not – that is supposing that you particularly wish to complete it, how much will it be then? Our client particularly wants it as it is.\(^{115}\)

Knewstub and Keynes indicated that the sculpture could be presented as a finished piece and did not necessarily need further work; Knewstub’s language also referred to the idea of the potency of the ‘unrevealed’ sculpture in a block of stone and of the sculptor’s position as a virile force central to its creative design and execution.

Gill annotated the letter: ‘I will finish it for £45 including commission, E.G.’\(^{116}\) In early February 1911 Knewstub confirmed that Gill wanted to finish it because ‘it is wholly contrary to him to leave his work unfinished and he could derive no satisfaction in disposing of his work in that state.’\(^{117}\) Gill did not subsequently complete the carving, and

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\(^{114}\) See also p.114.
\(^{115}\) John Knewstub. To Eric Gill. 30 January 1911. Series 4, Box 85, Folder 12, Clark Library.
\(^{116}\) John Knewstub. To Eric Gill with annotation by Gill. 30 January 1911. Series 4, Box 85, Folder 12, Clark Library.
\(^{117}\) Collins, *Eric Gill The Sculpture*, 67. The letters are not referenced.
by the end of February the buyer paid £25 for the ‘unfinished’ piece.\footnote{Eric Gill. Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs. January 1910 to December 1911. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.} As noted above, the buyer preferred it unfinished, and Collins writes that Keynes had implied that should he not like the finished result he would not continue with the sale.\footnote{Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 67.} The work as it was exhibited showed the head and shoulders of the female figure finished, detailed and polished. Gill worked on the stone for the first *Mother and Child* (figure 31) for 19 hours in 1909, and a further 88½ hours in 1910.\footnote{Eric Gill. Diary entries. 1910 and 1911. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.} According to his workbook no one else was paid to work on the sculpture, and Gill paid himself 3 shillings an hour. Gill rounded this up to include ‘offices expenses’ and sold the piece to William Rothenstein for £20 in 1910.\footnote{Eric Gill. Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs. January 1910 to December 1911. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.} For the second version Gill again seems to have completed all the carving himself, this time in the space of about six weeks from 12 July to 27 August 1910.\footnote{Eric Gill. Diary entries. 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 1, Clark Library.} When Gill started work on the third version of *Madonna and Child* (figure 33), on 5 October 1910, he enlisted the help of his workshop. Gill spent 40 hours in October 1910 carving, but prior to this Joseph Cribb had worked on the stone for 9½ hours, and White for 32¼ hours in September. White completed all the work for the stone pedestal for this version in 130 hours.\footnote{Eric Gill. Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs. January 1910 to December 1911. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.}

The work in progress photographs (figure 33) only show carving to the top of the block of stone, though this method of carving from the top down was unusual for Gill. As with his relief carvings, Gill typically removed stone layer by layer to create a roughly shaped figure before working on the detailed carving and polishing (figure 37). It is likely, based on the workbook details and the photographs that Cribb and White prepared and then polished the main block. Gill’s close association at this time with Epstein, which included working with Epstein on his sculpture *Maternity*, could be the reason for this different
approach to this sculpture (figure 38\textsuperscript{124}). The length of time Gill and his assistants spent on the work, enough time to create a ‘finished’ version, as well as the workshop photographs, suggest that Gill intended to carve an ‘unfinished’ version of the first two Mother and Child sculptures. His correspondence with the gallery indicates that though he may have wanted to ‘finish’ it, the reception of the piece as it was may have persuaded him to leave it as it had been exhibited.

The technique involved, as can be seen from other workshop photographs, was not how Gill usually approached his work (with or without assistance). Typically Gill used a scale drawing to outline the areas that needed to be removed, and then worked across the whole surface of the stone in order to arrive at a block that showed roughly the shape of the final piece. This was work that one of his assistants would do. Gill then worked to define the shape, before working with finer tools to carve the detail. One of his assistants would then polish the piece. In his memoir Donald Potter, Gill’s assistant from 1931-6, recalled:

> He would start a stone carving by concentrating on certain points – the position and rounding of a shoulder – the point of a bent knee – the position and curve of the belly – suggestion of breasts – the rounded top of the head etc. The result would look like Lot’s wife in a pillar of salt! But the eye could easily travel from point to point and connect up the rest of the figure. After that it meant cutting away the surplus stone rather like peeling a banana.\textsuperscript{125}

This description, though eulogised, is supported by the image referenced above of the later version of Mother and Child (figure 37); both are therefore useful indicators of Gill’s measured and planned approach to creating sculptures.

Gill’s preparatory work for Mankind (figure 34) suggests he designed the form as an incomplete figure before starting carving. As well as the sketches described above, parallels can also be drawn between this sculpture and Eve (figure 12) which also appeared in the exhibition. In two workshop photographs of the almost finished Mankind, Eve can be seen to one side in the position of a possible scale model (figures 39 and 40). The position

\textsuperscript{124}This image is an interesting example of ‘the sculptors at work’ images (as in figure 7). The impression given in the photograph is one of action and force, Epstein placed his thumb over the end of the chisel in the right hand image, indicating the staging of the scene.

\textsuperscript{125}Potter, My Time with Eric Gill, 14-15.
of the arms (in particular the way they are angled up and back), the hips, the shaping of the breasts and stomach area, as well as the similarity in where the legs are cut off, lead to the conclusion that Gill was also using this smaller piece as a model. Another piece in the Goupil exhibition, though it does not appear in these contemporary photographs, is *Headress*, which is a torso and head of a woman. As with *Eve*, the breasts, stomach and shoulders (this piece also has no arms) are similar to *Mankind*. Similarities can also be detected in the pose of the figure and the final ‘garden sculpture’ made for Roger Fry in 1912. A number of other sculptures by Gill throughout his career indicate that incomplete figures were not unusual.\textsuperscript{126} In particular *Torso – Woman* (1913, figure 41) and *Essay: Female Torso and Head* (1913-5, figure 26)\textsuperscript{127} have similar postures to *Mankind* as well as having no arms and appearing to be kneeling. Gill’s engagement with the idea of what could be termed the fragment from 1910 onwards connected him to an emerging trend in modern sculpture, similar to that of chisel marks in the surface of a stone. Most of the surface of *Mankind* is highly polished, whereas the areas of its design where it is incomplete (the end of the legs, arms and neck) were left rough; these areas both showed the evidence of the sculptor’s chisel as well as allowing for an overall connection to ancient, classical, sculpture. John Rothenstein, in Gill’s first monograph, referred to the deliberate creation of these fragments as a ‘fashion’ followed since Renaissance artists copied excavated and damaged classical statues; and though ‘it is uncharacteristic of Gill to follow conventions blindly … their influence does at times tend to conventionalise his vision.’\textsuperscript{128}

Gill’s letter to Joseph Cribb in April 1927, having confirmed the Goupil Gallery exhibition, requested his help with preparing the sculptures for the exhibition: ‘I am sorry things are slack with you, but I expect I shall want your help in London, so hold yourself in readiness.’\textsuperscript{129} He confirmed in the same letter that he would be in London from the

\textsuperscript{126} Up until the completion of *Mankind* in early 1928, the following sculptures appear to have been carved as ‘fragments’: Collins, *Eric Gill The Sculpture*, cat. nos. 038, 039, 056, 090, 094, 095, 099, 129, 156, 158, 159.

\textsuperscript{127} Collins, *Eric Gill The Sculpture*, cat. nos. 39 and 56.

\textsuperscript{128} Rothenstein, “Eric Gill,” 28.

beginning of September to move into his studio in Chelsea; by October 1927 he was there almost full time. In his diaries Mankind was referred to by Gill as the ‘big HW stone figure’ and he began work on 29 October 1927. He continued working on it throughout November and December alongside his work on other pieces for the exhibition. Cribb’s workbook for 1927 is not extant; however his 1928 workbook shows that he worked on Mankind for 8 hours a day for two weeks from 25 January 1928 (figure 42). A letter from Gill following the sale of the sculpture stated ‘The Goupil has sent chq. on a/c. so I now send you chq. £12.17.6 as agreed - viz: same amount as your charge for polishing the big torso – and thank you very much.’ Cribb worked on a number of other pieces during this time including the carving, letter cutting and polishing of a tombstone commission from Oliver Lodge, two Bath stone figures, a piece in Portland stone, a large wooden Caryatid, as well as helping Gill shift the stones and position them in the gallery.

Another, irregular, member of Gill’s small London workshop at this time was his son-in-law Denis Tegetmeier (1909-1987). After Gill started work on Mankind on 29 October Tegetmeier spent 3 days working on the piece, and at the end of November Gill recorded that he himself started the claw work on the stone. Claw work, using the claw chisel which has teeth, allows the carving to go into the detail of the composition once the shape of the piece has been roughed out. According to Gill’s ledger he paid Tegetmeier for ‘pointing’ the stone. This is unlikely to be the use of a ‘pointing machine’, used to scale up models for carving in the academic tradition, but the use of a pointed tool to take off extraneous stone to enable detailed work to begin. For this work Tegetmeier was paid £6-4s, averaging at £1-11s each day he was in the workshop. In comparison to Joseph Cribb’s hourly rate this was a generous wage and probably reflects the family connection.

Gill’s ledgers and those of his first apprentice, Joseph Cribb, demonstrate a close working relationship which in some examples can lead to a questioning over which sculpture is ‘by’ who. For example, when Gill, Epstein and Cribb worked together in the workshop they

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130 Gill referred to it as a studio, whereas his other sites are workshops, suggesting he saw his sculpture for the exhibition differently to his other work.
131 Eric Gill. Diary entries. October to December 1927. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 3, Clark Library.
133 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, cat. no. 172, 155.
collaborated on a number of carvings. On 20 June 1910 Gill first recorded working on ‘Epstein (head)’. There are at least three known versions of this head in stone: two small versions very similar to the bronze (figures 45a and 45b) and a larger version on a base inscribed ROM (figure 44). Epstein’s bronze head of Augustus John’s son had been produced in 1907 (figure 43). Gill and Joseph Cribb recorded the following two jobs in their workbooks: no. 355 is ‘J. Epstein (Carving head of Romilly John in stone)’ which Gill worked on for 43 hours, and Cribb for 6½, in June and July 1910; job no. 380 is ‘J. Epstein (Copy of head of Romilly John by Cribb)’ which Cribb worked on for 63 hours between October 1910 and February 1911 (this version was also gilded). It is not clear how these two sculptures correspond with the three known stone versions. Epstein wrote to Gill about one of the stone versions:

I cannot tell you how delighted I am with the head; you have made a wonderful thing yet: much better than my model. You ought to be proud of it and you really are I believe. I am taking it immediately over to the show.

The letter was undated so it is not clear to which exhibition Epstein was referring, though it could be the 1911 group exhibition at the Grafton Gallery. Two of the versions are now ascribed to Epstein alone (figures 44 and 45b), and it could be that the version in the catalogue of Gill’s sculpture (figure 45a) was a copy of the small version by Epstein. The small version attributed to Epstein was likely a direct copy of the bronze, hence the appearance of the marks of a pointing machine, a device used for scaling or copying into stone (figure 45b). It is not clear from Gill’s own records who completed what, and job no. 355 could have been a collaboration between the two, with the third version being made by Gill for Epstein as referenced in the letter above. In an article by Simon Wilson from 1977 the recently discovered large stone head (figure 44) was attributed to Epstein and labelled more ‘radical’ than the bronze version because of its abstraction, simplification and parallels with archaic (non-Western, or ‘exotic’) imagery. In

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136 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 20 June 1910. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 3, Clark Library.
comparing the work done by both sculptors at this time there are clear correlations in certain aspects including the treatment of hair and facial features. The lack of clarity from the records over who carved which version of this particular subject also indicates the closeness of the collaboration within the workshop.

The role of Gill’s assistants in making non-commissioned sculptures for exhibition or sale was the same as on a commissioned inscription or sculpture. Gill’s reliance on his assistants changed very little from 1910 to 1928, not only in helping on the sculptures he made for sale or exhibition, but also to complete commissioned inscriptions. Having made all his sculptures for the 1911 exhibition at his workshop in Ditchling, in preparation for the 1928 show Gill hired a studio in Chelsea, and subsequently spent very little time at his workshop in Wales. During this time his primary assistant, Lawrence Cribb, was working on various commissions. As seen in the first chapter, in the early years of the workshop Gill employed local young men in search of an apprenticeship. By the late 1920s those seeking to be apprentices and assistants were usually older, often having completed prior training, and were seeking to learn from Gill before leaving to work on their own as artists or letterers. It was also at the end of the 1920s that Gill almost ceased to make sculptures that were not on commission, marking a change in his status externally that paralleled his change in status within the workshop. At this time Gill’s preparatory work on his inscriptions also became more sketch-like and less accurate, which required greater skill from Lawrence Cribb and the workshop. As his work and workshop became more established Gill also became more distanced from the day-to-day inscriptive work.

This process of delegation ensured that the finished piece was to the standard expected by Gill and his patrons, while allowing Gill to complete other work. There were some assistants in Gill’s workshop who believed that this process was dishonest and that Gill took advantage of the different skills of his assistants to complete work he otherwise would not have been able to take on. Gill saw himself as maintaining a collaborative approach to the making of sculpture both in the workshop and away from it. Joseph Cribb, in the early years of the sculpture workshop, worked with Gill (and with Epstein) to carve sculptures bought by associates or made for friends. In 1927 and 1928 both Joseph and Lawrence Cribb, and Gill’s other assistants, were integral to Gill’s ability to create works on commission and for exhibition. Again the involvement was one of
practical collaboration on the stone to allow Gill to put as many pieces in the exhibition as possible to generate sales. These practical collaborations enabled Gill to further establish his career in the public eye which in turn brought more commissions for the workshop and so Gill could employ and teach as many apprentices and assistants as he was able.
Conclusion

In addition to the archival sources, much information about Gill’s working practices comes from contemporary photographs of Gill at work, his workshop and works in progress. In almost all cases these were photographs commissioned by Gill himself, though the V&A also commissioned photographs of Gill’s work in progress at the Chelsea studio in early 1928 (figures 39 and 40). Likely to be deliberately composed, the existence of these photographs demonstrate Gill’s engagement with the public interest in the process of making sculpture. They show finished and half-finished sculptures surrounded by tools and stone chips implying that work has only just ceased. What is not shown in many of these images, however, is the workshop of assistants enabling much of the work to continue, or the lengthy process of design through drawings and models to reach what is instead portrayed as an active, possibly spontaneous, practice.

Gill’s ambitious programme of commissions, publications and meetings with associates was enabled by the competence of his workshop. This was cyclical: in order to keep the work coming in Gill needed to make and maintain relationships with patrons and artists which led to his absence from the workshop for periods of time; because of this he relied on his assistants to complete the work to a standard to which the patrons would be satisfied enough to employ Gill again or recommend him to others. There is evidence in the diaries and workbooks that Gill was at times requested to complete the work himself by a particular patron, but this was rare. The indication is that the way in which he worked – not only did his assistants complete work in the workshop but also went and carved in situ on commissions – was not an issue for many of his patrons and may even have been expected. As can be seen from the press presentation of Gill’s work and craftsmanship critics were as interested in the sculpture’s potential to express ideas and emotions. How they were made, though important, was not the only aspect considered in the critical reception. The creative process, as presented by Gill and then the press, was to maintain the integrity of the material within the design process. For the critics this meant

140 Gill noted a photographer at the Chelsea studio about two weeks before the opening of the exhibition (Eric Gill. Diary entry. 14 February 1928. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 3, Clark Library).
141 Fry wrote to Gill on 18 February 1911 of a commission that “Of course I shall be frightfully glad if you’ll do as much of the lettering as you can do because it will bring you here and also for the glory of the town.” (Series 4, Box 88, Folder 33-34, Clark Library).
that formal relations were in harmony, and the expressive power of the pieces was brought to the fore.

Gill was presented as a modern, technical pioneer and a craftsman making sculptures with expressive qualities that took ideas about sculpture in new directions. Gill was aware of his role as a businessman and maker of saleable items both within and outside of his workshop. By keeping records of hours worked, and adding on the ever-present ‘office expenses’, Gill was able to price his sculptures with the aim of making a profit as well as pay his assistants, suppliers and contractors. In supplying objects that buyers would pay for and rarely declining a commission to repeat a previous design, Gill responded to market trends to ensure a continued flow of commissions and money into the workshop. Gill’s writing often questioned the status quo in the industrialised society in which makers were answerable to the commercial world. In 1924 he wrote for the Artwork journal that ‘Man is degraded by servitude, his work is degraded by commercialism and industrialism.’

It was, however, the commercial nature of the art world that enabled Gill to make money, develop a network of associates and potential patrons, and grow his career. His views can be seen to harden during his career, in particular as he attempted to distance himself further from associations with the Arts and Crafts movement.

In 1910 he was part of a transition from the Arts and Crafts movement and in reaction against Academic traditions, he was a central figure in Fry’s second Post-Impressionist exhibition and seen, alongside Epstein, to be creating new and modern works of art. Gill’s 1911 exhibition, with the Mother and Child series (figures 31-33), encapsulated for many critics the way in which expressive sculpture was progressing and tackling modernity through art and craft. By the late 1920s Gill’s reputation as a modern sculptor was firmly established in the press and in high profile commissions, and the language with which his sculptures were discussed had become the norm among critics: the craft and making of the pieces; the virility of the artist labouring and the expressive qualities of the line and form. Alongside this public perception of a pioneering modern sculptor, Gill was also the master of a workshop working in a small way to ensure the dignity of his workers. Though these two things seem contradictory, at the time it was important to critics that Gill had the abilities of a craftsman though not necessarily that he physically did all the work himself.

142 Eric Gill, “Revival of Handicraft,” 123.
Gill’s working method within his workshop changed very little between these two periods. For his early sculptures, specifically when it was small scale, Gill did most of the work himself while his assistants continued with commissions. In his later work Gill still designed the sculptures but was assisted to a greater degree by his workshop with the execution. Gill’s engagement with the commercial side of art production was an economic necessity for all artists, though he seemed in his writing to criticise the process. In creating the works discussed in this chapter Gill can be seen to collaborate not only with his workshop but with his agents and his patrons; often this resulted in a repetition of a certain design or subject that would be guaranteed to sell. The process of design, execution, pricing and sales was a feature of Gill’s success from early in his career when he took on commissions for decorative lettering and prints. In making sculpture he engaged not only with what came to be seen as modern styles of simplification and evidencing the craft process of production, but also the commercial aspects of the business of art sales and commissions.
CHAPTER THREE: PATRONAGE AND RELIGION

Introduction

The Stations of the Cross (1913-18) made for Westminster Cathedral were a significant point in Gill’s career as a public sculptor, and as a sculptor in the public eye. As a recent Catholic convert Gill was keen to take on this high profile work and it was his first and largest religious commission (figure 46). Through working on the commission Gill developed his ideas about production, style and religious imagery, and negotiated the complications of working with a powerful patron and under scrutiny from the press and public. The reliefs were the result of both creative and practical collaborations, and were made in the context of Gill’s growing reputation as a modern artist. Gill’s work on the sculpture started just before the outbreak of World War One in 1914 and provided his exemption from conscription when it was introduced in 1916. Conscription impacted on his workshop when both his assistants were called up in spring 1916. This chapter will focus on Gill’s work both with his clients and his workshop to understand the creative and physical collaboration involved in a religious, architectural commission. Gill was a controversial choice for the commission, presented as an inexperienced sculptor and criticised because the ‘modern style’ in which he worked was considered too distinct to that in the rest of the cathedral.

At the same time the commission was confirmed Gill started writing the preface to Ananda Coomaraswamy’s Visvakarma, a book illustrating examples of Indian architecture, sculpture, painting and handicraft. Gill’s preface suggested a re-classification of ‘classic’ and ‘primitive’ art in which the latter was a combination of ‘the Real and Realism’ in which sculpture was not the imitation of appearances, but ‘the works of men … who made images, as far as possible, of what things actually were to them … the imaging of the essential quality of things.’ In order to discover the essential quality of Realism, as defined by Gill, the maker was moved by God, or Gods. Gill was here discussing not only the ancient Indian Hindu works featured in Coomaraswamy’s book, but also using the platform to criticise the art he saw being produced around him. Growing interest in
ancient periods of artistic production, including the sculptures of India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), was ‘a genuine reaction against the irreligious gentility and banality of modern European art.’

Gill’s preface put at two extremes ‘pure art’ (objects with no significance but their form) and ‘pure craftsmanship’ (objects with no significance but their utility), and it ‘should be the business of the artist who is also a craftsman … as it is that of the religious who is not a hermit, to endow utilities with Godliness.’ In Indian sculpture Gill saw the recognition that art ‘is a translation into material form of the inspiration man receives from God.’ The idea that art was the ‘material expression of religion’ is an important context from which to study Gill’s making of the Stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral. The combination of art and craft, as inspired by devotion to God, enabled Gill to see that he was producing works to facilitate worship. As will be seen in the debates surrounding the designs, however, the concentration on their form was for some a distraction to worship and Gill strove in his subsequent writings to counter ‘pure art’ interpretations of his work: ‘An artist is a maker of things and not pictures of things.’

Gill’s essay Sculpture was written in 1917 and first printed in The Highway, a monthly journal to aid the education of the general public published by the Workers’ Educational Association. The working, and possibly secular, audience of The Highway could be the reason for Gill’s instructional tone and at points he directly addressed stone carvers. It was re-published by Douglas Pepler in 1918, the year Gill finished carving the Stations. The essay covered many of the points made in Gill’s 1914 ‘Preface’ with regard to representation, technique and ‘the making of things’: ‘The sculptor, as any other artist, is primarily a herald, and his work is heraldic.’ By using the word heraldic Gill intended his sculpture to be understood as works with meaning and utility to the world in which he lived and worked. Religious art subjects, such as the Stations, served the purpose of worship, of being a vehicle for religious experiences. In the 1917 essay Gill moved away from the religious aspects of the 1914 essay to concentrate on the technique of the stone

1 Gill, “Preface,” 4-5.
4 Gill, Sculpture, 3.
carver, in particular defining two types of production: ‘conditioned’ by which Gill meant ‘for a certain place’, and ‘unconditioned’, the relative freedom to ‘carve what shape you will’. The central section of the essay focussed on why modelling in clay was not an appropriate preparatory method for a stone carving. In the last part of the essay Gill urged his fellow workmen to reform the process of production: ‘we, the workmen, the men who do the work, are the persons responsible and not the architect and designer, not the contractor the shopkeeper or the customer.’ As will be seen in the next chapter Gill’s views on responsibility, particularly with reference to sculpture on architecture, was not as clear cut as this statement implies.

These two essays form a useful framework within which to examine Gill’s first major commissioned sculpture. As the first of Gill’s large commissions the sculptures were a close collaboration between patron, artist as designer and the workshop. As this thesis shows, Gill’s career involved continuous negotiation and search for balance between the input of the patron, the artist and the workshop for both public and private commissions. The idea of direct carving, as it was being discussed and defined during Gill’s career, was compatible with commissions, as long as the work was completed in situ to ensure it was authentic to the surrounding. The critical responses to Gill’s work in Westminster Cathedral discussed and defined Gill’s style as that of a modern sculptor partly due to his practice of carving; Gill’s own view was that he did not have a style but designed in accordance with the function and purpose of the work. The creative and practical process involved in making the Stations was more complex than either of these positions describe.

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5 Gill, Sculpture, 6.
Competition and Negotiation

Westminster Cathedral, the home of the Catholic Church in England, was dedicated to the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ (figure 47). The building was finished, and the first Mass celebrated, in 1903. It was officially consecrated in 1910. It was described in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1903 as ‘Byzantine’ in style and proves to those who did not know it already that [John Francis Bentley, the architect, 1839-1902] was an architect who did not delegate his work, least of all the artistic portion of it, to others. However many may have been engaged upon it, it was all his.7

This description of Bentley is indicative of the importance of the architect to the building as a whole; despite this, there was continued debate after Bentley’s death about the interior decoration, and whether or not to stay true to Bentley’s vision. The language of the article also indicates the value perceived in the work of a sole, dominant, author in terms of authenticity and unity of style.

My archival research shows that the process of being given the commission took about six months. Gill’s work to secure the commission included a sheet with the designs for all fourteen Stations (figure 48, now in the British Museum), a carved full-size panel as a trial (figure 49) and a number of preparatory sketches. Before he started any preparatory work Gill discussed the style of the carving with the architect, John Marshall (1853-1927).8 Marshall was the previous architect’s assistant, his position indicating he had a legacy to uphold. Gill and Marshall met to look at a crucifix that Gill was selling through his agent, Meynell, at the beginning of August 1913. In a postcard Gill wrote to Meynell:

> Have you, by any chance, got rid of my incised crucifix (the marble one)? I am told that Marshall (architect of Westminster Cathedral) wishes to see it as there is talk of using the incised method for the Stations of the Cross at the Cathedral. I am writing to M[arshall] suggesting a meeting at your shop. But if you have sold it, I must do another if poss. Please let me know, by return, of your charity.9

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This crucifix was one of at least three that Gill made in 1913, according to his records, though its location is now unknown. Figure 50 is a rubbing which is likely to be from this carving, due to it being an incised block and in a similar style to that of the other two crucifixes definitely made at this time. Gill’s postcard implied a previous discussion with Marshall regarding the Stations, though there is no mention in Gill’s diary of Marshall prior to 16 August 1913. Gill’s reference to Marshall also implies that he had already thought about the appearance of the Stations prior to beginning the conversation with Gill or the other potential artists.

Having the Stations as carved reliefs was not the intention of the previous architect. The Cathedral Chronicle for March 1909 stated that ‘The permanent Stations of the Cross are to be made of opus sectile [a type of mosaic work] about five feet square, surrounded with white marble frames’. This statement was followed by appeals for donations to pay for each Station with the promise that if erected In Memoriam ‘a bronze tablet bearing an inscription would be placed under each.’ This original plan was subsequently replaced by Gill’s proposed stone reliefs. The pillar of each Station carries a small plaque recording the name of the benefactor, showing that the means by which the Cathedral funded the work was sustained through the process despite the change in method and material.

In the Chronicle for October 1913 the editorial notes that ‘the cartoons of the Station of the Cross which have been hung up in the Cathedral are there only on approval. None of them have as yet been accepted.’ The editorial goes on to say that ‘with two exceptions every cartoon is by a different artist. With such a number it should not be difficult to make a

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10 Job nos. 491 (low relief, Hoptonwood stone), 492 (outline, marble, figure 50), 493 (high relief, Hoptonwood stone). Eric Gill. List of Jobs. 1910 to 1940. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
11 This outline relief is not catalogues by Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture. Cat. nos. 41 and 44 are both crucifixions in Hoptonwood stone. Cat. no. 45 is described as possibly job number 492 from Gill’s workbook, though the image is of a Hoptonwood stone relief, not a marble outline.
12 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 16 August 1913. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
13 A Roman technique in which materials (e.g. coloured marbles, mother of pearl, glass) are cut to different sizes and inlaid into walls and floors. Similar but distinct from mosaic, which uses uniformly-sized pieces.
Gill’s inclusion in this competition is not certain, however his diary shows him working on drawings for the Stations until the middle of September, and again in December 1913, but not in between. His inclusion, and the fact of the exhibition, indicates that the Cathedral wished to include the worshippers in the final decision. There is archival evidence to show that despite this search for involvement and consensus, there were objections to Gill’s inclusion.

A letter from one of the donors at the time of the October 1913 exhibition wrote to the Cathedral about the proposed designs, but does not mention Gill:

The opus sectile was the original idea for the material to be used, as in ‘the Brampton’ and ‘All Souls’ Chapels and … is much preferable to ‘Joan of Arc’. The 2 best pictures, unquestionably in treatment, are the Women of Jerusalem on Epistle side, and the Entombment on the Gospel side. I am much interested in the Cathedral and in all connected with architecture and decorations.  

Though it is not clear which artist(s) the donor preferred, the letter does indicate a broad range of work in the exhibition. It also indicates interest among the donors in the making of the Stations, and in the opus sectile method in particular. The exhibition, Gill’s meetings and preparatory works, and the views of those involved in the commissioning process, complicate the picture presented by historians since of Gill as the only choice for the commission.

According to Collins, Gill ‘provisionally gained the major commission’ on 16 August 1913 and was then required to carve a trial panel of one of the Stations at his own expense. The information above describes a process by which, though Gill may have been ‘provisionally’ awarded the commission and requested to carve a trial version, there was more competition ahead. The trial panel (figure 49) appeared as job number 516, “Simon Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross” Stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral – this one as sample’. The design of the trial panel differed from the finished version in the removal of

18 Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 89.
19 Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1911 to July 1914. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
the soldier and the addition of two small boys to the left. In general, the lettering went from being raised to being incised; the trial panel was also not to scale with the size of the final versions. It was originally framed and included more detail, such as foliage, than the finished *Stations*.

After Gill’s first meeting with Marshall in August 1913, Joseph Cribb’s workbook shows him at work on the *Stations* every week from December until the end of February 1914, with the largest number of hours recorded in mid-January 1914. In the week ending 10 January Cribb spent a total of 44 hours on the trial panel, the equivalent of around 5 days out of a 6 day working week.20 The weeks in which Cribb was working on the panel correlated with dates in Gill’s diary in which very little mention of the *Stations* was made. Gill’s records show him working on the trial panel from 29 January 1914, suggesting that Cribb’s work was preparatory. Cribb’s and Gill’s work overlapped during February, and they both worked on the job until the stone was sent off on 2 March 1914. Geering was also recorded in Gill’s ledger as spending 113 hours up to April 1914 and, alongside Cribb’s 135 hours up to March 1914, must have been just as crucial to the progression of the job in moving, preparing and finishing the stone.22 The cost of this preparatory work was therefore considerable, in particular the work on the trial panel. Though part of the process of receiving the commission, Gill likely received an indication from his client of his potential success to justify this initial outlay of funds. In proposing designs for potential commissions Gill would have needed to regularly set aside money for materials and time spent on only preparatory work required to secure the work.

In his 1917 essay *Sculpture* Gill wrote that the ‘making of models is not absolutely essential’ but can sometimes be desirable, though ‘the use of models is very much overdone at the present time.’ He went on to write that ‘in the case of carvings in low relief, for instance, a model is generally unnecessary, a drawing to scale being all that is required, and even that may sometimes be dispensed with.’23 Gill’s experience as a letter cutter and sculptor would have enabled him to dispense with a model for a relief in many

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21 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 29 January 1914. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
22 Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1911 to July 1914. Series 7, Subseries 1, Clark Library.
examples. The purpose of the panel, therefore, was to satisfy the patrons and possibly to experiment with his approach; it does not match either the design of the finished panels, or the initial approach of incised images. Despite the creation of the trial panel, Gill did not seem to gain the knowledge one would expect with regard to preparing the final designs in considering the in situ conditions of light and height. As will be seen, it was only after the installation of the first completed panel that Gill started to understand the physical limitations and the conditions of the commission. This indicates again that the trial panel was more important to Gill’s client than to his own process.

After sending in the trial panel on 2 March 1914 Gill and Marshall had a number of meetings in Ditchling and London to discuss the drawings already made.24 The British Museum drawing is inscribed ‘Spring 1914’ (figure 48). The implication here, as well as the date of the drawing, is that the single sheet drawing was carried out as the final stage in being awarded the commission, as opposed to the first step as is usually assumed.25 In a letter to the V&A in 1923 Gill wrote of this drawing that ‘it is more prettily finished to ‘take in’ the architect!’ 26 His statement demonstrated, as stated in Sculpture (1917), that certain preparatory stages had to be completed to please the client, as opposed to being necessary to Gill’s process.

Gill and Marshall met again on 1 April 1914 to discuss the preparatory work, and on 8 April 1914 Gill wrote in his diary that he met Marshall at Westminster Cathedral and ‘the work is mine!’ 27 He also wrote on a postcard sent on 9 April 1914 to Meynell that ‘You’ll be glad to hear that I have got the commission. I am.’28 This mapping of Gill’s preparatory

24 Eric Gill. Diary entries. 2, 4, 5, 16, 18 March and 1 April 1914. On 5, 6 and 7 March Gill recorded ‘painting in Westminster Cathedral’, it is not clear what this was. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
25 Collins states Gill approached the commission ‘by first drawing out the Stations on squared paper, then by making scaled pen and pencil sketches’ before carving the trial panel (Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 38). MacCarthy wrote that Gill ‘began his drawings in August 1913, starting with the very small initial design now in the British Museum, which compresses all the fourteen Stations into a drawing nine inches square … and working up from these to a half-size cartoon.’ (MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 124).
27 Eric Gill. Diary entries. April 1914. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library.
work and meetings with Marshall up to the final awarding of the commission illustrates that the process was lengthy. Yorke implies that Gill was awarded the commission as a result of his conversion and that ‘his new Church was not slow to find him work’. Though his Catholicism was a factor, Gill had to demonstrate his aptitude for the work through a number of stages. McCarthy writes that it was a surprise to Gill to have received this ‘huge commission … a surprisingly important job to be entrusted to a relatively inexperienced sculptor who had only very recently become a Catholic.’ Though relatively inexperienced the preparatory process to secure the commission allowed Gill to demonstrate his abilities and develop a working relationship with the architect.

He was, however, as MacCarthy points out, relatively inexperienced and his appointment elicited objection in some quarters. A number of renowned artists were associated with the Cathedral as advisors on the developing decorative scheme. Charles Napier (1841-1917), a Royal Academician, wrote to the Cardinal on 17 May 1914:

The idea of having them done in a soft grey stone and in low relief is excellent, but judging from a photograph sent me they will be simply ridiculous. … I sent the photograph to Sir George Frampton RA one of our foremost sculptors and he quite agrees – he says ‘Mr Gill is not an artist he is a letter cutter, if the work is to be anything like that shown in the photograph all I can say it is sheer rubbish.’ At the Academy banquet Prince Connaught spoke strongly against the fads of certain modern schools to one of which it appears Mr Gill belongs. I wonder who introduced him, no one with a knowledge of art I should say. What we want are works beautiful and devotional; not things ugly and queer and comic. … If I or any of the sculptors of the Academy can be of any use I am sure you may count on us. We all take a keen interest in your splendid Cathedral and would be sorry indeed to see it disfigured by the dreadful things it is prepared to erect.

The photograph does not survive with the letter, though it is likely to be of the trial panel. Napier’s and Frampton’s responses described disapproval not only of the design Gill proposed to follow, but of what they saw to be trends in modern sculpture in general. Napier’s sign off, however, also indicated a hope that he and his RA colleagues remained in favour with the Cathedral in case future work should arise. Frampton’s reference to

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29 Yorke, Eric Gill, 202.
30 McCarthy, Eric Gill, 124.

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Gill as ‘not an artist’ but ‘a letter cutter’ is interesting in relation to Gill’s identity at this time and the relative status of craft and art in academic circles.

What this correspondence shows is that it was the design, more than the method of execution, which was important to those involved in the commissioning process, and that it was not a certainty that Gill would get the commission. Gill’s early design process, and his interaction with the Cathedral, followed a method aimed at collaboration with his patrons and a close connection to the purpose of the reliefs as a vehicle for worship. Due to his background in lettering and relief carving, and the inherent nature and cost of working as a sculptor with large pieces of stone, drawings were central to Gill’s creative process. As will be seen in the next section, this reliance on drawings led to difficulties during the installation of the final pieces and tension between Gill and his patrons. His preparatory work, despite the exhibition on site, was extensive and indicates an on-going dialogue between Gill and the Cathedral.
Design and Execution

In his 1914 text for *Visvakarma* Gill stated that an artist was not interested in representation: ‘An artist is a maker of things and not pictures of things.’ In 1917 he expanded this idea and explained that a sculptor’s ‘job is primarily that of making things, not representations or criticisms of things.’ In 1936 Gill further explained that a:

> crucifix is not a picture of Christ on the cross; it is Christ on the cross – Christ himself in wood or stone, as Christ himself would be if he were *made* of wood or stone – a wooden Christ or a stone Christ, not an imitation in wood or stone of a Christ made of flesh and blood.

What Gill seemed to be asserting was that any ‘style’ that may have been perceived in his work was not due to a conscious thought or aim, but a result of his aim to stay true to the material and the subject matter combined. Gill maintained, in the creation and content of the *Stations*, a theoretical underpinning with regard to both sculpture and religious imagery which was reflected in his writing at the time and later. Gill’s use of the phrase church furniture, which will shortly be explored, demonstrated the intention for the *Stations* to be purely devotional. Though Gill’s work was seen to be working in a particular ‘style’ in his designs for the panels, which resulted in each of them being labelled as ‘a Gill’, for him the design could not be separated from their purpose.

The extant drawings do not make up the full range of Gill’s preparatory work. The V&A acquisition record contains notes referring to other drawings already sold, and there are certain *Stations* for which there are only one or no extant preparatory drawings (figures 51 and 52). There are sketches of heads and hands, a number of legs and feet and three full length figure studies. Gill used a model called Balshaw for some of the very early

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36 Stations 4 and 9.
37 Stations 7 and 8.

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drawings.\textsuperscript{38} For other drawings, as will be seen for the tenth Station, Gill used himself as a model in front of a mirror. He also used members of his workshop such as his assistants Cribb and Geering for some of the poses. This was a process used by Gill throughout his career, and in 1931 he wrote that the ‘members of your own household and your friends and relations are the best models. It’s what you’ve got in your head that matters.’\textsuperscript{39} Gill’s preparatory work on the Stations, and the inclusion of his assistants in the process, demonstrates the multiple roles within his workshop and his inclusive attitude towards his assistants as part of an extended network of family.

Following the confirmation of the commission, Gill worked on the Stations until the summer of 1918. It is unclear from Gill’s statements where the initial inspiration for the imagery came from. In a 1918 article for the Westminster Cathedral Chronicle he wrote that there were no good examples which he could have followed.\textsuperscript{40} Stations of the Cross started appearing in churches sometime in the seventeenth century, and the fourteen Stations as they are now known were codified by the Church authorities in 1731.\textsuperscript{41} Having visited Rome in 1906 Gill would have visited many churches and religious buildings and though they may not have contained all fourteen Stations, he could have seen many versions of images from the Life of Christ and the Passion. He would also have seen examples of this kind of imagery at Chartres and in other medieval French churches and cathedrals.

Other sources of inspiration for the design and composition of the panels include English cathedral sculptures both in situ and in the V&A. Collins cites Gill’s regular visits to Chichester Cathedral and the sculptures held there while he was growing up. In particular, she notes a correlation between the imagery in the eighth Station and the relief panel in Chichester of Martha and Mary kneeling before Christ at the gates of Jerusalem, both in subject matter and in style (figure 54).\textsuperscript{42} In August 1916 Gill wrote to the V&A to ask if he

\textsuperscript{38} Balshaw visited a number of times between 18 August and 1 October 1913, and lodged with Gill for two weeks in September. Eric Gill. Diary entries. 1913. Series 1, Subseries 1, Box 2, Clark Library.
\textsuperscript{39} Gill, “Sculpture and the Living Model,” 113.
\textsuperscript{40} ‘In the absence, then, of any good precedent, the artist attacked the problem \textit{de novo}.’ Gill, “The Stations of the Cross,” 52.
\textsuperscript{42} Collins, \textit{Eric Gill The Sculpture}, 39.
could buy a cast of the Madonna and Child relief (figure 53), the original of which is in York Minster, which he had ‘seen a photograph of in Prior’s book on “Figure Sculpture in England”. It's a very beautiful thing’.\(^{43}\) The many sources Gill had reference to, though they may not all have been exact versions of the Stations, undermine his statement that he was creating the Stations without any prior knowledge of how they should appear.

Having made an initial design for all fourteen Stations Gill worked on preparatory drawings and the half-full size cartoons as he worked through, drawing and carving at the same time. Gill did not design and carve the Stations in order, but started with the tenth Station. Speaight wrote that Gill carved the Stations ‘not in their devotional or chronological order, but as this or that milestone along the Via Dolorosa appealed to his imagination.’\(^{44}\) According to the letter sent to the V&A following their acquisition of drawings in 1923, Gill was instructed by the Cathedral to produce Stations 10, 2 and 13 first so as to ‘pacify pious donors’\(^{45}\) but that the order of the remaining work was up to him. After the first three were completed, the order was largely numerical: 1, 5, 3, 4, 6, 8, 7, 9, 14, 11, and finally 12.\(^{46}\)

One of the first jobs Gill completed in mid-1914 was the drawing to be used for the frames (figures 55 and 56). On appointing Gill, Marshall wrote to the administrator of the Cathedral:

> I agree with Mr Gill that it would be best to have the existing frames gradually removed as the Stations are done. He would do this and provide some of his own in keeping with his work without extra cost.\(^{47}\)

The drawing for the frame is in very bad condition in comparison to the other surviving drawings and cartoons, evidence of their extensive use. It is the only drawing used for all fourteen Stations and, as will be seen, the frames were carved entirely by Gill’s assistants.

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\(^{44}\) Speaight, The Life of Eric Gill, 77.

\(^{45}\) Eric Gill. To Captain Martin Hardie. 20 August 1923. V&A acquisition file: MA/1/G634.

\(^{46}\) 2 and 13 were started in 1914; 1 and 5 in 1915; 3, 4, 6, 8, 7 and 9 were all started in 1916; and 14, 11 and 12 began in 1917.

The drawing resides in the archive of Westminster Cathedral and was not exhibited at the Alpine Club. It is likely that it was never made available for sale and can therefore be understood as a working drawing which, though essential to the creative process, was not deemed as important as the other drawings used in execution. The drawing, dated 27 April 1914, detailed the pattern for the frame as well as the dimensions of each of the areas to be left for carving the inscriptions. The wording of each inscription was also on the drawing, though not drawn to scale. Gill had done enough preparatory work by this stage to create this detailed description of the moulding and the inscriptions, as well as confirming the wording for each.

The drawing was made as a general instruction for the decorative treatment with relevant dimensions and lettering. In the letter to the V&A Gill wrote that the

inscriptions & mouldings were done by apprentices. The pilasters at back of No. 2 were done by an apprentice. The main sinkings of backgrounds were done by a mason & apprentices. The rest of the work was done by E.G.

Cribb was doing some form of work on the Stations every week, sometimes very little (e.g. 18 July 1914 when he was paid 3 shillings) and sometimes much more (e.g. 22 August 1914, £1 and 14 shillings). Cribb’s work, alongside that of Geering, coincided with the time before Gill started work on a particular Station. Their work included removing the upper layers of the stone, carving the frames and the inscriptions, all of which was completed prior to Gill starting work on the figures. The letter to the V&A evidences Gill’s willingness to acknowledge the assistance he received. The condition and non-sale of the drawing for the frames and lettering work his assistants completed may have been seen to be decorative, not sculptural and therefore of possibly lesser importance.

Following the completion of the drawing for the frames Gill continued to work on preparatory drawings. From Gill’s letter accompanying the acquisition of these works, we can be sure of the following order: having completed an initial small drawing for each Station (figure 61a) he transferred all of these on to one sheet (figure 48) prior to being

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48 Eric Gill. To Captain Martin Hardie. 20 August 1923. V&A acquisition file: MA/1/G634.

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awarded the commission; the small drawings were photographed and the photographs also worked on (figure 61b)\(^{50}\); at the same time he worked on life studies (figures 61c and 61f) used for subsequent small drawings that were squared up (figures 61c and 61d); the cartoons were then squared up for transfer to the stone (some final small alterations were made at this stage). In 1917 Gill worked the small squared drawings into pen and ink studies (figure 57) and used them to produce, with Pepler, a set of wood engravings (figure 58). Gill’s process indicates that though his initial designs were accepted by the Cathedral and the architect, there were small and large changes both prior to finalising the cartoons, and in transferring the cartoon onto the stone. It may be, therefore, that the initial drawings were approved without the final design of each individual panel being fully signed off.

For the tenth Station (figures 59 and 60), the first panel that Gill completed, the only change is in Christ’s arms. Initially they were designed to cross his chest (figure 59e), whereas in all later designs they are open with his palms facing out. The distortion apparent in the figures drawn for the tenth Station points to the use of the mirror, and Gill maintained this distortion in the final carving so that Christ appears to be reaching out to the viewer. The final carving of the tenth Station is, of all the finished Stations, the closest to the designs Gill made for Marshall’s initial approval. The difference between his design work on this Station and others suggests that as Gill worked through each of the Stations his ideas developed and he was able to incorporate these changes into the final versions. These changes, as will be discussed shortly, were made not only as part of the process of working up the designs, but in conversation with Marshall and following Gill’s reassessment of the in situ appearance of the Stations once the first panel was installed.

The chain of preparatory stages described in Gill’s letter to the V&A is supported by developments in the design of certain drawings, for example in the first Station (figures 61 and 62). The initial small-scale design (figure 61a) shows Christ’s hands tied behind his back, and no child holding a bowl. The British Museum drawing shows the same design, but with an inscription added to the background and this drawing matches the photographed version (figure 61b). Two further small scale designs are similar in general

\(^{50}\) Gill paid someone called Foster for photographs in June 1914. Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1911 to July 1914. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
composition, but both were squared up and show Pilate washing his hands in a bowl held by a child servant and Christ with his hands tied in front of his body (figures 61c and 61d). Gill’s surviving life-study sketches for this Station were for the small boy holding the bowl next to Pilate, and to Christ’s wrists bound in front of his body (figures 61e and 61f). In a letter to William Rothenstein Gill admitted to difficulties in the imagery for this Station:

I am now doing the first of the Stations: ‘Jesus is condemned to death’: a difficult subject for me because so much depends on the exact attitude of Jesus. I hope to pull through but I do not feel good at subtleties.

The addition of a servant at Pilate’s feet holding a bowl for him to wash his hands provided symbolic meaning with regard to the story being illustrated, and Gill could therefore avoid the ‘subtleties’ he did not feel skilled at; the move of Christ’s hands from the back to the front of his body works better with the composition inside the decorative frame, as well as allowing Christ to be physically upright, and not bowed, in the face of the sentencing by Pilate.

It is unclear whether the squaring up on the cartoons was done before or after the figures were drawn in, though the implication is that they were squared up to transfer the small-scale drawing on to the large paper, and also to allow transfer from drawing to stone. There appears to be a connection between the spacing of the figures and the imagery and the laying out of the squares. For example, in the cartoon for the thirteenth Station there is a correlation between the layout of the squares and elements of the figures drawn in. The heads for each of the standing figures are contained with nine squares (three squares across, three squares down), and the drapery at the base of each of the figures is always four squares wide. It appears that Gill was using the structure of the squared paper not only to fit the imagery to the panel, but also to guide the placing of the figures as he transferred them from his sketches. In designing inscriptions Gill understood the importance of using the area available to space the letters and the words to ensure readability and legibility. This experience allowed him to use the measurements of the squares to both fill the area available and give a sense of balance.

51 The study for Christ’s hands (figure 61f) is inscribed ‘EG from Cribb’.
Gill bought all fourteen stone panels, once he had received the commission, cut to size from the Hoptonwood stone quarry for £26-3s-4d. Gill’s work on each of the panels overlapped and he started the drawing for the next Station while the carving of the previous panel was finished. He received some, or possibly all, the stones for the Stations on 29 May 1914, and spent 10 June ‘shifting stones and marking out’. This preparatory work required the assistance of his workshop, in this case both Cribb and Geering. At this stage Geering was two years into his apprenticeship and probably did the roughing out and polishing; Cribb had graduated from apprentice to assistant in 1913 and was the senior of the two, and therefore likely to complete the more complex work such as the lettering and frame carving. As the lettering forms part of the frames it is likely that Cribb was responsible for its completion while Gill concentrated on the imagery. Gill also employed others to complete specific tasks and the names Whitehead and Matthews appear in relation to masonry work from 1916 onwards. Whitehead was also referred to as ‘Whiteheads’ and was presumably the firm J. Whitehead and Sons Ltd., employed to fix each of the Stations into place.

In August 1914 the tenth Station was packed, dispatched and then fixed in place by Whiteheads on 9 September, overseen by Gill. Following the installation Gill wrote in his diary: ‘I was v. disappointed! Alas!’ In other correspondence at the time Gill further described his disappointment. He wrote to his friend and patron, the writer and Catholic convert, André Raffalovich (1864-1934) on 24 September 1914:

> I am really very grateful to you for sending me Father Gray’s encouraging report. Thank you very much and him also. I am the more pleased because the architect to the cathedral, one John Marshall, has written to me in a very different style saying that it must ‘now’ be clear to me that my style of work is neither suitable for the peculiar light of the Cathedral nor the Catholic public (curious, that word ‘now’ – underlined above – as though the blame for the importation of my work into the Cathedral is attached to me!). I have written to him urging him to forego any

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53 Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1914 to January 1921. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
54 Eric Gill. Diary entries. May and June 1914. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library.
55 Eric Gill. Ledger. September 1914 to January 1921. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
56 “J. Whitehead and Sons Ltd.,” Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951, Online Catalogue [n.d.].
57 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 9 September 1914. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library.
58 Father John Gray (1866-1944) was Raffalovich’s life-long companion, and a Catholic convert.
decision until at least three or four more of the panels are erected and suggesting that the one already fixed should be covered with a sheet meanwhile.

Gill went on to write that the Stations were a series and ‘should not be judged individually’ and if a particular one should stand out once all were in place it could ‘be done again perhaps’: ‘They have definitely given me the “order” for the work and they must have the courage to see it through.’ Gill conceded, however, that ‘the light is bad!’ in agreement with Marshall.59

On 9 October Gill returned to the Cathedral to meet Marshall at the Cathedral to discuss the installation.60 A letter to Rothenstein on 10 October 1914, the day after the meeting, reiterated Gill’s negative experience of installing the tenth Station:

I am sorry to say that the first ‘Station’, now fixed in the cathedral, is not a success – not from my point of view. I have nearly finished the 2nd one and hope it will be better – but I am distressed about the 1st. The light in the cathedral is extraordinarily difficult and makes things look entirely different from what they do in my shop.

In particular, he wrote, it was the expressions of the faces and the colour put on that were ‘not a success’. After ‘some worrying correspondence with the architect’ about whether or not he was due to continue with the commission, he wrote that he was ‘glad to say things are settling down and I am going ahead with the work hoping to do better each time.’61

These letters, and the discussions with Marshall that are referenced, show that the relationship between sculptor and architect was strained at times. The majority of the meetings happened before work started on the carving. Gill’s reference to Marshall’s letter shows that the two were in contact though not always face-to-face. The letter to Raffalovich could indicate that Marshall had not previously approved of the designs, despite all the preparatory work and the many meetings to discuss them. The use of the phrase that it must “now” be clear to’ him supports this idea that earlier conversations may have followed similar lines. This letter also suggests that Gill’s position as the

60 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 9 October 1914. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library.
commissioned artist was in question, and Gill’s keenness for the architect to delay a
decision was partly due to the time and money already spent on the stones and the
preparation, as well as the potential damage to his reputation. The controversy of Gill’s
appointment seems, therefore, to have continued during these early stages, and as will be
discussed shortly it continued in the press when more panels had been installed.

The statement that his work was not deemed suitable either for the light in the Cathedral,
or the Catholic public, was one that Gill quickly refuted and was the cause of frustration at
the time. Gill’s two essays on the Stations, published once they were installed, stated that
the panels should first be seen as church furniture, placed there for worship. 62 This
description, though tying in to Gill’s belief that artists should make things, not pictures of
things, demonstrate his need to defend his designs once they were completed. The letter
to Raffalovich is also enlightening as to Gill’s view of the commissioning process of the
Stations. His comment that the ‘importation’ of his work into the Cathedral was the
responsibility of the Cathedral suggests that though Gill wanted to see the panels through
to completion for himself, he also shared responsibility of the work with his clients. In a
letter to William Rothenstein, later in 1914, Gill expressed general confusion and
frustration with the commission:

This Westminster work is very difficult & I am far from pleased with the portion
already done & fixed. The reflected light from the floor and the conflicting
shadows thrown by the electric lights upon all sides are very hard on low relief
carvings. But I hope by the time I get to the 14th I shall have achieved some
success. (Truly it is a marvellous chance anyway.) And then apart from such
technical difficulties there is of course the terrible difficulty of realizing precisely
what I am actually doing and what the ‘Stations’ actually are, complicated as that
difficulty is by the absence (apparently) of any but a sentimental (anecdotal as Fry
wd. say) attitude upon the part of the Catholics in general – my clients to wit &
those for whom I am working & whose approval I do most deeply desire (vainly I
fear). 63

Gill also wrote to Raffalovich that he was reassured by “continued expressions of approval on the
part of respected friends on account of the first one put up. I shall have to approve of it myself in
the end it seems!” (23 December 1914. Shewring, ed., Letters of Eric Gill, 61).
What Gill was ‘precisely doing’ and his desire for the approval of his patrons show that though the conversations and correspondence with Marshall were difficult they enabled him to move forward to make suitable and appropriate works. As mentioned above, this first completed *Station* is very similar to the initial drawings, whereas the rest of the panels undergo design changes. In working closely with the architect, who expressed the wishes not only of the Cathedral but probably also the donors, Gill started working on more appropriate designs. Gill did very little work *in situ*, despite mentioning in the letter to Rothenstein that the difficulty was the difference in lighting between his workshop and the site.\(^64\) He continued to work in this way, drawing and carving almost to completion, in the workshop. His growing familiarity with the site, and with Marshall as a client, would have enabled him to change the design of each of the panels to ensure they worked with the changing conditions.

One question regarding the appearance of the *Stations* that was raised in these early stages of completing the commission was that of colouring. In his 10 October 1914 letter to Rothenstein following the installation of the tenth *Station*, Gill debated whether to use colour or not; in another letter to Rothenstein in 1915 Gill stated that he felt colour should be used but ‘the architect seems afraid to risk anything and I’m bound to attend to him.’\(^65\) In answer to the reply from Rothenstein Gill wrote that he quite agreed ‘with you about ‘colour’ at Westminster. I hope it may be possible to make a bold attack.’\(^66\) It seems to have been Gill’s intention to persuade Marshall that the inclusion of colour was imperative to the success of the *Stations*. P.G. Konody in the *Observer* wrote in October 1915 of the two *Stations* installed that

> the touches of colour – a bit of blue lining and red borders to the Roman soldiers’ tunics in ‘Christ Stripped of His Clothes,’ and the green grass in the ‘Deposition’ – far from ‘giving to the cold surface the breath of life,’ have the very opposite effect, and are positively grotesque.\(^67\)

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In reply to this criticism, also in the *Observer*, a correspondent who interviewed Gill wrote that ‘Mr Gill explained that the scheme has not been decided at all. These little pieces of colour are experimental: they are merely there to form a basis for discussion.’

In the appendix to Johnston’s 1906 *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering*, Gill wrote that for inscriptions ‘Colour and Gold may be used both for the beauty of them and, in places where there is little light, to increase legibility.’ Gill’s use of colour was self-consciously medieval, though by this period many of the stone sculptures made in the Middle Ages had been scrubbed to reveal the stone beneath. Gill was aware of the tradition through his associate W.R. Lethaby (1857-1931) who was known to have closely examined the front of Wells Cathedral and found evidence of colour all over. Gill may have seen himself to be engaging with aspects of medieval sculpture in his workshop and with stylistic aspects such as colour. For MacCarthy, Gill’s aim with using colour demonstrated that despite the serious nature of the commission he ‘could still make mischief.’ MacCarthy connects the use of colour, in the face of opposition and criticism, as indicating many of the tensions in Gill’s life and art: ‘between image and reality, the public life and private, the rules of work and worship and Gill’s irresponsibility.’ As will be seen in the next chapter, this comic portrayal of Gill as a lone ‘mischief’ maker detracts from a fully contextualised understanding of his artwork and his collaborative working practices. The methodical process of completing the *Stations* in his workshop, on site and with his client, indicates that he took the commission very seriously; the addition of colour was, for Gill, a connection to a medieval tradition of making and religious art.

The absence of colour in the *Stations* as they stand now (figure 46), and the debate in the early stages of the installation shows that Gill’s ‘bold attack’ was not successful. Gill’s

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68 Catholicus. To the Editor. 17 October 1915. *Observer*, 16.
70 Lethaby published his findings in 1904. Arthur Gardner, *English Medieval Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951) 3. Gardner also stated ‘It is, perhaps, something of a shock to those who have not studied medieval art to realise that all sculpture, like that of the Greeks, was originally coloured.’
72 Except for the gilding of certain details, and the red lettering added at an unknown later date (Farr references the colour and gilding being added later (Farr, *English Art*, 222), as do Collins (*Eric Gill: The Sculpture*, 39) and Yorke (*Eric Gill*, 205)).
reading of Marshall as being ‘afraid to risk anything’, and the uncertainty suggested by his own statements, also illustrates the complex on-going relationship between client and artist. Marshall was answerable to the Cathedral, the donors and the congregation who would have viewed him as following in Bentley’s footsteps; Gill was early in his sculpture career and interested in his own growing reputation; it is likely therefore that both men approached the commission with some trepidation. In a review of Gill’s 1911 Chenil Gallery exhibition, the writer had critiqued Gill’s sculpture *Joie de Vivre/A Roland for An Oliver* (1910, figure 14): ‘A polychrome “decoration” of this relief is of questionable taste, and detracts from, rather than adds to, the impressiveness of a conception that is not without a certain primeval power.’ The writer went on to compare the use of colour as similar to certain French pornographic etchings. Very few of Gill’s sculptures in stone now have the colour that Gill applied at the time, and during his lifetime he was asked to remove the colour from a sculpture when it appeared in a 1913 exhibition in London. Though Gill was keen to colour his sculptures, it was seen by some of his patrons to be incompatible with the subject matter and the material. The Cathedral’s reluctance, and Konody’s critical assessment, suggest that though colour in sculpture had by this stage become more accepted in the work of the previous generation of New Sculptors, colour on stone sculptures was not approved of.

The colouring, or not, of elements of the panels was part of a design adjustment process which continued throughout the four years of the commission. The process of working up to the finished cartoons, for some of the Stations, took place one, two or three years after Gill had completed the small-scale designs. The disagreement between Marshall and Gill on the style and content of the finished designs once the tenth Station had been installed in September 1914 appears to have come as a surprise to Gill, possibly because of the number of meetings the two men had prior to the installation. Having met in August 1913, the two met five times between the 4 March and the 8 April 1914 to look over

73 “English Post-Impressionism,” *Observer*, 5 February 1911: 4. Collins cites this review in her discussion on Gill’s use of colouring, though it is given the wrong date (*Eric Gill The Sculpture*, 39).
74 The exhibition was at the Goupil Gallery, London, 1-12 April 1913. On 25 March 1913 Gill recorded that ‘Cribb went to London to take things to Goupil Gallery for Contemporary Art Society’s Exhib also to remove paint from nipples of ‘young woman’ to please C.K. Butler’ (Eric Gill. Diary entry. Series 1, subsérie 1, box 2, Clark Library). The two sculptures exhibited were *Torso – Woman* (1913, Collins cat. no. 38) and *Torso – Woman* (1913, Collins cat. no. 39).
Gill’s drawings and discuss the work. After being awarded the commission the two met twice more in April, but then not again until October 1914 following the installation of the tenth Station. Gill made no mention of Monsignor Jackman, Vicar General of the Cathedral, or any other members of the Cathedral’s governing body, though Marshall was in regular contact with Jackman in particular regarding the designs.

The work over the four years slowed down at certain stages, possibly due to the on-going design work, but also as a result of the introduction of conscription in January 1916. In May 1916 Gill wrote to his friend and patron, Geoffrey Keynes:

> Can’t get any masons – no use trying until I know whether I’m going myself or not. Both my chaps have gone. I’m all alone & find things rather difficult. Can only get on with drawings & light jobs. Lucky I had two Stations well ahead before my chaps left. I can finish them by myself now.

The first part of this letter was a reference to whether or not Gill would be able to secure exemption while he completed the Stations. He was able to, and was subsequently called up in September 1918 though he never left England. The two ‘chaps’ in the letter are Cribb and Geering, both of whom had left in Spring 1916, and Gill had to find suitable replacements which took a few months. He took on an apprentice, Albert Leaney in September 1916, and employed a stone mason, C. Baines, who had also been employed on an ad hoc basis in 1915. The majority of the Stations were started and completed in 1916, 1917 and 1918, with only four being worked on during 1914 and 1915. However, the number of hours worked by Cribb and Geering prior to their departure, and the time put in by Leaney and Baines following this date, indicates that a considerable amount of preparatory work had been completed by the workshop before spring 1916.

The effect of the War on the workshop was not only seen in the work on the Stations. Gill’s List of Works details a further 43 jobs taken on in 1914, though these varied in scale.

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75 Eric Gill. Diary entries. March and April 1914. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library.
76 Correspondence shows Jackman also signed off on the terms of Gill’s appointment. John Marshall. To Monsignor Jackman, Vicar General of Westminster Cathedral. 11 April 1914. Westminster Cathedral Archive.
78 Cribb joined the Royal Sussex Regiment as a soldier, and Geering, due to health issues, joined the ambulance service.
from a drawing, an engraving or a lecture, to a tombstone or a sculpture. According to his
diaries the majority of Gill’s time in 1914 and 1915 was spent drawing designs and not
carving; during 1914, Cribb worked on 21 of these jobs as well as on the Stations. After
1914, however, Gill’s other work seems to have reduced: in 1915 he took on 34 separate
pieces of work; another 20 in 1916; and 17 in 1917. By 1918 he was back to around 35
recorded works, and by 1919 and 1920 the figure rose again, due in part to the
unfortunate increase in demand for gravestones and memorials.79 The change in workflow
could indicate a reduction in those requiring, or being able to afford, inscriptions or
sculptures during the war; it could also indicate that the lack of experienced and trusted
assistance in Gill’s workshop led him to accept less work.

In total Gill worked 406½ days, about 3,252 hours (figure 63) on the Stations: 361½ days
on ‘drawing and carving’ and 45 days on the cartoons. Alongside him, Geering worked an
estimated 1,154 hours on seven Stations before mid-1916; Cribb worked at least 973
hours80 on the same panels before also going to war in 1916. Leaney worked a total of
473½ hours on the Stations, and though Baines’s hours are not recorded he was paid just
over £72 for masonry work and a further £10 for helping with the fixing. If Gill was
paying him one shilling an hour this amounted to 1,440 hours on the Stations, which tallies
when compared to Gill’s work and the regularity of the payments.81

According to this post-completion summary of costs Gill spent between £8 and £10 per
Station on ‘other expenses’. These included: the stones and transport from the quarry; the
railway carriage and carting to the train station of the finished stones; photography of
drawings and sculptures; Gill’s own travel and expenses; fixing the panels at the
Cathedral; and gilding. Gill employed various people over the course of the four years for
carting and carriage of the stones (Evans, R. Green, Whitehead, Fuller, and D.P). What
becomes clear in the extant letters mentioning the Stations is a gratitude that he had the
work (‘It is one of the best sculpture commissions one could have’82; ‘of course I am

79 Eric Gill. List of Works. 1910 to 1940. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
80 Estimated from the total Cribb was paid, and his average wage which in 1914 (having graduated
from apprentice to assistant in 1913) was 9d an hour.
81 Eric Gill. Ledger. 1914 to 1921. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
extraordinarily lucky to have this work to do’; alongside complaints that it was taking him a very long time to complete because the work was badly paid and he was having to take on other work in the hopes ‘to get just enough to make up the necessary “bread & butter”. Having bought all the stone at the start of the commission, and the number of different people needed to assist him, may have left Gill short of funds. As evidenced in his workbooks, Gill worked within a system of instalments whereby some money was kept back to be paid on completion of the commission. This may have led to financial pressures within the workshop if, as with this commission, the sculptor bought all the stone at the start of the process.

Gill’s letter to Rothenstein of December 1914 also shows a parallel need in Gill to impress and please his clients when he referenced his patrons as those ‘whose approval I do most deeply desire’. Despite the difficulties with the architect and the Cathedral it seems he still wanted and needed their support for two reasons. Not only because of Gill’s status as an emerging artist, but also as a recent Catholic convert working for the most high profile Catholic building in Britain. In the same letter to Rothenstein in December 1914 Gill had admitted his difficulty in ‘realizing precisely what I am actually doing and what the “Stations” actually are’. This could be because Gill’s own ideas about religion, art and process were developing at this stage. By 1918 his publications show his confidence in his work on the Stations was more assured, as were the ideas he expressed in 1914 and 1918 about the purpose of the artist, of religious art and of the process of designing, executing and working collaboratively.

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Style and Critical Reception

Following the controversy at Gill’s appointment from within Cathedral supporters and donors, criticism and controversy continued in the press once the panels started to be installed. When he was nearing the completion of the commission Gill wrote the first of three articles on the Stations; the first article was commissioned by the Cathedral for their Chronicle to be published March 1918. The article also preceded the May exhibition of ‘all the Cartoons, Studies and Designs made for these Stations’ at the Alpine Club Gallery which was advertised in the April issue of the Chronicle. Though it was published under the pseudonym, ‘E. Rowton’, the March 1918 article opened with Gill stating that it was an opportunity given by the patrons to ‘give a short description of the carvings and some idea of the intention of the sculptor.’

In the article Gill wrote that a ‘work of art is not to be judged by what it appears, not by what it says but by what it is and what it does.’ Once the article dismissed the ‘vexed question of style’, and that of representation, Gill wrote that

we will consider them as furniture and endeavour to decide what service is rendered by them and by the craftsman in making them, and then we will consider them as works of art – that is, as things in which Beauty, as apprehended by an artist, may be revealed.

Gill here both separated art from craft and united them in common purpose to worship God and allow believers to worship through the work. The artist served God, and in creating the Stations Gill defined himself as in service to the Church, following the order of the Stations as set down by St Francis. Gill rejected the ‘modern habit of allowing and paying other people to do everything for us’ and that in fact it was felt ‘by the sculptor’ that it was ‘no part of his business to impose his own notions upon others.’ As to the Stations as works of Art, ‘some of the panels are better than others … they are at any rate

86 The pseudonym was a version of Gill’s name, Arthur Eric Rowton Gill. Gill was paid £2-2s. Eric Gill. List of Works. 1910 to 1940. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library. The purpose of the use of a pseudonym is not clear, but could imply an intention on Gill’s part to slightly distance himself from the Stations or the Cathedral, or to give the impression of a balanced, unbiased view.
stone carvings and not stone imitations of plaster models’ and there is a valuable aesthetic quality in this method: ‘the simplicity of design and absence of meretricious appeal are things to be thankful for.’

Interestingly, Gill is referencing the idea of direct carving in these statements. In this statement he used ideas about process to serve his hope that art production would also be an act of worship to produce something useful. The whole process of production, from planning, negotiating, designing and executing, was undertaken in collaboration with the Church, and therefore with God, to ensure that the finished results were not seen to be a Gill representation of the Stations but the Stations as they would be made of stone.

Correspondence and press articles indicate, as will be shown, that in commissioning Gill, the Cathedral were seen to have consciously chosen to employ a modern artist, and one who would work in a very different way to the decorative appearance of the rest of the building. The implication of this choice is that the name and work of the artist was as important to the patrons as the need to ensure the Stations were appropriate for the purpose of worship. The press presentation of the pieces also showed that the author of the work was intricately linked to the ability of the finished works to fulfil their function.

In the second of the two articles about the Stations, published in August 1920 in the religious magazine Blackfriars, Gill re-printed the 1918 article with some additional text. He added to it that art was

> the expression in things made, of the national and individual sense of the absolute Beauty which is God, just as faith and morality are not merely the means to social convenience but are the conformity of the intellect and the will to God.

Gill’s aim with the Stations was that they were not to be viewed as works of fine art, but images to enable acts of worship; any Beauty or style perceived in them by viewers or critics was incidental to their purpose.

In the third article, published in Blackfriars in June 1920 (just prior to the second version), Gill wrote that ‘A work of art is the product of love. How then can it be done to order

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90 Founded in 1920 as a forum for Catholic Christian reflection on current events.
and to a scale drawing? On close examination of Gill’s working practices during the production of the Stations it becomes clear that this statement needs investigation. The Westminster Stations by their nature as a commissioned piece of work and part of a Catholic tradition were ‘done to order’, using Gill’s phrase, and his working practice necessitated the use of many scale drawings. On the surface Gill’s statement seems to contradict his working practice of employing assistants. Gill, however, used the phrase as a metaphor to describe what he felt to be unnecessary distance and delegation. His work with his patrons and his workshop was intended to counter the practice of an artist, or designer, sitting in an office while the executant carried out the work in situ.

Gill’s preparatory sketches were worked up into cartoons which were then carefully transferred on to each stone. He designed the imagery and the lettering within each scene, and the basic design for the frames and the inscriptions for each Station. The Cathedral Chronicle referred to Gill in 1918 as the ‘designer and sculptor’ and within the workshop these two aspects of production were often separated between Gill and his assistants. In another article published in 1918, though with a more limited circulation, Gill stated that the ‘factory system is unchristian … Any workshop in which the workman works simply for his wages and the master simply for his profit is, in essence, that thing called a factory.’ He then wrote that the master, in seeking increased profit and productivity, would always seek to increase the size and lower the conditions for the workman – hence the growth of large factories out of small workshops. Gill’s workshop continued at a certain size throughout his life and though Gill did not execute every design, nor individually credit each of his assistants publicly, he also never signed his own name on inscriptions or sculpture, nor denied the existence of his workshop.

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95 One exception is the First World War memorial in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Designed by Gill and carved by Joseph Cribb, in the bottom corners of the inscription Cribb carved the initials EG and JC.
Gill also used his ‘Stations’ publications to address their imagery. In the first article in March 1918 Gill wrote that there were three groups of people to be represented in the Stations:

our Lord and the few faithful persons actually mentioned as being present at the various stages of the procession; and, second, Pilate and the Roman soldiers. A third class, that of the crowds of Jews and other inhabitants of Jerusalem, is unnecessary to a representation of the Passion.

The worshipper or viewer was intended to be part of the crowd. ‘In the same way it has been customary to show the Roman soldiers with every expression of cruelty and callousness’; Gill, however, presented them as ‘no more than the legal instrument.’

This article enabled Gill to explain his approach to the final designs for each of the Stations in answer to his critics.

Controversy over the appearance of the panels started during the first installation and in situ work on the Stations and continued almost until they were finished. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, debates on the decoration of the Cathedral were on-going, and became particularly heated after the unveiling of the first panels. In 1915 a series of letters and articles appeared in a number of newspapers, including the Manchester Guardian and Observer which questioned the decoration of the Cathedral in general and Gill’s work in particular. The beginning of this debate was an article by P.G. Konody, the art critic and author, in October 1915. Referencing a series of letters in the Universe on the subject of the reliefs, Konody wrote that the letters were: ‘probably the first rumblings of a storm of discontent that is brewing about the deplorable blunders and errors of taste and judgement in the slowly progressing decoration of the cathedral.’ The Stations (four of which were by this time in place):

are objectionable because all his efforts to project his mind back to the early periods of civilisation have failed, and because his technically admirable marble

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97 Westminster Cathedral Archive also holds cuttings from The New Witness, the Scarborough Evening News and The Yorkshire Post (the last two seem to be re-prints of the same article) discussing the controversy over the decoration and the Stations. Articles and letters were also published in The Builder. The quotes from the Observer and Manchester Guardian are used here as representative of all the cuttings.

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carvings are so utterly inexpressive of the sublime tragedy of which they profess to be an interpretation that they verge dangerously on the ridiculous.

Having criticised the style to be inappropriate as vehicles of worship, Konody went on to also dismiss the panels as examples of fine art:

If the Contemporary Art Society choose to acquire examples of this strange phase of neo-primitivism it is their own business, but the permanent exposure of such experiments in a place of worship, where they will be a source of annoyance and indignation to not a few, is quite another matter.

The main argument, aside from Konody’s disapproval of Gill’s style and content, was that the Stations, in low carved relief, did not fit with the vision of the architect and that the reputation of Bentley was in jeopardy. The Observer published two letters, referencing Konody’s article, in agreement with him on the need to maintain Bentley’s vision. One letter, from the ‘Builder’, stated that the Stations ‘may be works of genius, but if men of genius, or without genius, are allowed to run riot in the Cathedral at their own sweet will, the result may be interesting, but it will not be architecture.’ The suggestion at the end of this negative report was to request that Gill’s work be stopped, as the Cathedral authorities were going against the wish of the architect.

Letters on the subject continued the following week and an interview with Gill also appeared in this edition of the paper. Gill was quoted as saying of the opus sectile method that

It is factory work, and to any real craftsmanship it is death. . . . It was decided that this method was not desirable for the ‘Stations,’ and that they should be done in low relief carving, which is, I believe, the only kind of carving that ever was used in a Byzantine building.

Gill then questioned the narrowness of ascribing one particular ‘style’ to either the building or to the Stations: ‘the greatness of Bentley’s building is entirely in its fine sense of size and proportion, and that it is not necessary to follow a great engineer’s work in

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98 Konody’s reference was to the two large reliefs purchased by the CAS after the 1911 Chenil Gallery exhibition (Crucifixion/Weltzschmerz and Joie de Vivre/A Roland for an Oliver).
decoration because he was a great engineer.’ The change in tone between his private letters following the installation of the first Station and this public statement, separated by almost a year, indicates a hardening of Gill’s views in the face of criticism. He went on to say that ‘As to the question why the reliefs were given to me to do, I suppose that the architect approved of my work.’ Earlier evidence shows that Marshall’s criticism of the first Station led to a concern that Gill’s commission would continue. Gill’s continued work on the Stations, with Marshall’s support and input to the design process, enabled Gill to be publicly confident of his work in the press.

Gill ended the interview with a statement about his working method: he carved directly into the stone without the use of clay models because he was ‘simply a stone carver’. The use of the word ‘simply’ and the focus on craft enabled Gill to position his identity outside the critical debate on the relative ‘artistic success’ of the works. It also provided him with a way of distancing himself from the words of the critic, of whom he was dismissive:

I am doing the work in what I consider to be demonstrably the right way. It follows, therefore, that if I do not do what other people consider to be pleasing to them it is my incompetence to please them. At the same time, perhaps, I should say that I am not out to please them exactly. After all, the artist does the work. It is the critic who has the inspiration. I suppose that is what he is for.  

Gill was keen to take on the commission, worked closely with the architect and hoped to please not only his patrons but also to create sculptures worthy of being ‘furniture’ and to inspire devotion and worship. In doing this work Gill was also able to present himself as working in no particular style but in the only way that he knew how. Gill’s focus on his working method was something that none of the correspondents referred to, for them the main problem was one of style, inappropriate modernity and the importance of the decoration envisioned by Bentley. The defects that had been construed, Gill implied, were in the eye of the viewer or critic, who tried to label the work and so limit its meaning as objects of devotion; and, furthermore, in not recognising or approving of a particular style or tradition, dismissed the panels as unfit for purpose. What was appropriate for the purpose of the subject matter, Gill seemed to be saying, wasn’t necessarily pleasing.

101 “Mr Gill’s reply to the Critics,” Observer, 17 October 1915, 16.
The following week the Observer published five more letters headlined the ‘Westminster Cathedral Decorations’, all of which continued the negative criticism of Gill’s work. One letter agreed that the Cathedral’s decorative scheme was being ruined by not using the mosaic opus sectile method, and two more said that the method being used was to the detriment of the Cathedral as well as dismissing Gill’s Stations as ‘Pagan art put to Christian use.’ The fourth letter agreed with Konody that the wishes of the architect and the original patron should be adhered to. The fifth correspondent accused Gill of indulging in a ‘weird experiment’ which was ‘a poor tribute to Bentley’s memory’. On 31 October 1915 a letter was published from William Woodward, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, referring to an article he had written in Building News in June 1915. In that article he had criticised the decoration in the Cathedral as being too varied and out of harmony with the building. Woodward called for the publication of Bentley’s decorative scheme, and if there wasn’t one, discussion of ‘what steps are being taken to control the vagaries of various artists who seem to be succeeding in turning the noble edifice – as Mr Konody says – “into a monument of bad taste”? Another correspondent the following week understood Gill’s interview to be an admission by the sculptor of the scheme’s ‘highly experimental character’: the Stations should not ‘be left, a standing offence to the faithful, till our after-comers shall correct in the light of a saner day the aberrations of our own.’

Subsequent letters to the Observer continued the debate. Various correspondents, including Bentley’s son, attested to Bentley’s decorative scheme, and almost all criticised the ‘style’ of Gill’s Stations. One letter defended Gill’s Stations on 21 November 1915: ‘The appeal which Mr Gill’s Stations make to me is, in the first place, that of simplicity’, as well as impressions of ‘repose’ and ‘dignity’ of the figure of Christ; the Stations were above all ‘devotional’. Below this letter was a note from the editor: ‘We cannot publish further letters on this subject’ though some letters continued to be published on the subject until the end of 1915. In March 1916 a short editorial piece described the mosaics that had been

104 William Woodward. To the Editor. 31 October 1915. Observer, 9. A correspondent from 24 October also wrote again on 7 November agreeing with Woodward.
105 Fidelis. To the Editor. 7 November 1915. Observer, 20.
revealed in the Cathedral tympanum as unsuccessful\textsuperscript{107} and there was then no mention of the decorative scheme, or the\textit{Stations}, until after they were finished in 1918.

Gill’s work, as recorded in his diaries, continued throughout this time and his in-going support from his patrons is indicated by Gill receiving a £30 bonus from the Cardinal Archbishop once the work was completed. The Cathedral therefore continued to be supportive of Gill’s work, though neither they nor Marshall seem to have made any statements in the mainstream press during this time. In December 1915, possibly in answer to many of the criticisms quoted above, the\textit{Westminster Cathedral Chronicle} published an article entitled ‘The Decoration of Westminster Cathedral’. The article was a re-print from the November issue of\textit{The Builder}, and was a defence both of the Cathedral’s actions, and the decisions of the architect, Marshall in the decorative scheme of the whole building. One paragraph about the\textit{Stations} was included at the end of the article:

\begin{quote}
The\textit{Stations of the Cross}, to which such exceptions have been raised in many quarters, are in such low relief that they can scarcely disturb the main architectural lines when the completion of the whole scheme is effected, nor does the dignity and reserve of the treatment adopted justify the remarks which have been made. Adverse opinion on their suitability may be justified according to the critics’ standpoint, but there is neither justification nor reason in the condemnation meted out to them in some quarters.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

Though generally supportive, the article does allow for criticism according to the opinion of the critic, echoing Gill’s reference to the critic’s point of view as one person’s interpretation. Difficulties between Gill and Marshall had started when the first\textit{Station} had been installed; however the relationship must have developed in order that an agreement was reached both for Gill to be able to continue and finish the work, and for the Cathedral to positively endorse the scheme. Mid-way through 1916, however, Gill expressed privately that he was unhappy with the way the work was progressing. It was in this letter that Gill also referred to having no assistants, and it shows Gill’s reaction to the public debate of the previous year:

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
It’s rather a rum job, working at the Cathedral in the full glare of publicity. E.g. to-day: Voice of lady from below: ‘Can you tell me what style the Stations are in?’ Self: ‘No, I can’t.’ Lady: ‘Can you tell me what style the Stations are in?’ Self: ‘I’m sorry, I can’t tell you.’ Lady: ‘They’re very ugly, aren’t they?’ Self: ’I don’t know.’ Lady desists.¹⁰⁹

This letter seems to suggest a lack of confidence and motivation following the negative presentation in the press. It also supports the idea put forward by writers such as MacCarthy of Gill as a solitary craftsman who was unwillingly thrust into the limelight. His interview in the Observer, however, indicated a willing engagement with the press and an awareness of the identity he was hoping to present. In the article he described himself as standing ‘for a new beginning in stone carving … any defects that are found cannot be charged against my ideas of style, for I can only work in one style, and that is my own.’¹¹⁰

The focus on his relative naiveté alongside his confidence as a craftsman was something that continued to be communicated in press articles during his career. His own statements also imply an awareness of the importance to his growing reputation and artistic identity to place himself as the core of a creative process without at this time any public reference to his patrons or his workshop.

There was very little coverage in the press in the following years, and very little in 1918 when the Stations were finished. It is likely that the continuation of the First World War affected reception of the completion, and the length of time Gill took to complete the work may have subdued the initial controversy and debate. To coincide with the canonical erection of the Stations on Good Friday 1918, the Chronicle featured a short article which made no mention of the form or appearance of the Stations in the Cathedral, or to Gill or the style in which the Stations were made.¹¹¹ The purpose of the article was as an instruction to those worshipping, and reflected Gill’s views of the Stations as part of the furniture of Cathedral, not to be seen separately in terms of style and material, but as vehicles for worship.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ “Mr Gill’s reply,” 16.
Gill’s exhibition of his preparatory work at the Alpine Gallery in May 1918, and the subsequent sales of the work to major museums between 1918 and 1923, indicates that though Gill wanted the finished works to be viewed as church furniture he was also keen to sell the drawings as works of art with value beyond the Cathedral and the religious purpose. The exhibition coincided with a lengthy positive review of Gill’s Stations in the Burlington Magazine in which the choice of Gill was described as ‘uncommonly apt. Mr. Eric Gill is well fitted for the task by his capabilities, his sentiment and aspirations, and his fourteen important reliefs are entirely worthy of Bentley’s building.’ The author stated:

Mr. Gill has considerable power in the handling of a restricted number of figures and the concentration of large and simple forms. Ingenious and varied use is made of the lines of the Cross in combination with the human form, the shafts of weapons, the curves of arches, etc., and where lettering invades the composition it is always with perfect decorative propriety. …

The question of lighting has evidently been carefully studied. In No. VIII, which receives no direct light, the effect of flattened linear design is still satisfactory; and here the marble casing\textsuperscript{114}, which as yet has been applied to only one of the brick piers on which the Stations are placed, will ultimately make this position more luminous. …

A minor objection may be made to his partiality for attitudes involving a hyper-extension of the lower leg, a position which the normally constructed man falls into with difficulty and avoids for its discomfort.\textsuperscript{114}

This article discussed the artistic merit and skill of the artist, using the words ‘apt’, ‘worthy’, ‘satisfactory’, and ‘perfect decorative propriety’ to support statements on the choice of artist, the style of architecture and the depth of relief in relation to the play of light. The criticisms closely parallel earlier critiques of Gill’s work in which critics described a lack of ability in anatomy and accurate representation.\textsuperscript{115}

The May 1918 exhibition involved Gill’s main gallery representative, William Marchant of the Goupil Gallery. A letter from Marchant to Maclagan at the V&A noted that Gill was

\textsuperscript{113} The columns that each of the Station panels were fixed to were made of brick and subsequently encased in marble.


\textsuperscript{115} Chapter Two, 97: in 1911 a critic described Gill ‘deliberately trying to conceal his knowledge of anatomy.’ “English Post-Impressionism,” 4.
keen the drawings should stay together and ‘that they should find a home at one of the museums’. Following the exhibition, the British Museum purchased the worked up and coloured sheet containing all fourteen Stations. Marchant hoped that the V&A would purchase the twenty-eight cartoons. In writing to the then Director, Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith, Maclagan noted that the drawings were quite extraordinarily beautiful and I think … they would be a most admirable acquisition; even if one does not much like the finished carvings, they are among the most important things that have been done in sculpture of recent years in England.

A.K. Sabin, a colleague at the V&A, then went to see the drawings and wrote a recommendation in an internal minute paper:

They are excellent drawings, and valuable documents in regard to the finished carvings, as showing a modern sculptor’s method of work upon a series of sculpture which are bound to be considered of historic importance. The Department of E.I.D. needs more designs of this kind in its collections.

The V&A did not acquire the drawings, though the file does not refer to why this was. There is an indication of continued controversy in Maclagan’s phrase ‘even if one does not much like the finished carvings’. A note from Sabin in March 1919 stated ‘I am mentioning the matter to several Friends of the Museum in the hope that they may be willing to assist in acquiring them for us.’ A further note confirmed that ‘no satisfactory result transpired’ and the matter was ‘done with’ that year.

In 1923 and 1924 the V&A acquired the twenty-eight cartoons as well as fourteen life study drawings, and ‘for the sum of Twenty-seven pounds (£27) the set of fourteen designs, two alternative designs, set of proof wood-engravings, life-studies, etc., which we received from you on approval on 25th August last year.’ This correspondence and the acquisition of so many preparatory works by Gill suggest that his reputation in the

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119 A.K. Sabin. Minute paper.
120 Sir Cecil Smith. To Eric Gill. 8 May 1924. V&A acquisition file: MA/1/G634. The 28 cartoons were purchased in 1923, and the remaining preparatory work acquired in 1924.
light of the completion of the *Stations* was becoming more established despite the previous controversy.

Gill’s *Autobiography* explained that he was awarded the commission largely because his quote was the cheapest which, in view of his private correspondence at the time, could be one of the reasons for his appointment.\(^{121}\) He complained at the time at the cost of completing the commission and his need to take on other work supports the assertion that in fact he may have under-quoted. According to his own accounts his own work and the assistance he employed cost him just over £358; his *List of Works* recorded a commission quote of £735, which he was paid plus a £30 bonus.\(^{122}\) The summary does not include the cost of the stone, but another workbook shows payments to the quarry in June 1914 and May 1916 for £26.\(^{123}\) The problem came, it seems, in the length of time it took him to complete the commission; the initial outlay of funds which though remunerated in instalments throughout the four years may not have covered the specific work being carried out at that time. The sale of drawings through the Alpine Club exhibition made Gill a further £147, indicating either that Gill viewed the drawings as works of art in their own right, or that he was aware the market and museums would see them in this way.

Gill wrote in his 1918 article that because the *Stations* were church furniture, there should be no attempt at the attribution of ‘style’ and that as a servant of God he made only what was necessary for worship. Gill used ‘a diagrammatic treatment of the subjects’ and each of the *Stations*, therefore, appeared as Gill deemed necessary to inspire devotion, as well as be acts of devotion in the making.\(^{124}\) Of the fourteen *Stations*, Gill stayed close to his initial designs in more than half of the finished panels. For six of them, however, Gill changed the composition and the figures, in most cases simplifying the overall treatment. In particular he removed certain characters (usually soldiers) as well as removing foliage and in general bringing the narrative content of the particular panel to the fore. Gill was working closely with the architect and his patrons who would have had an intimate


\(^{122}\) Eric Gill. *List of Works*. 1910 to 1940. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.

\(^{123}\) Eric Gill. *Ledger*. September 1914 to January 1921. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.

knowledge of the subjects that needed to be portrayed and how they expected them to appear.

In the 1920 edited version of the 1918 article Gill inserted two new sections of text, including the following:

Beauty is an attribute of God, and the present degradation of the arts is not merely an eyesore but a soulsore – a sign of spiritual famine and disease. Beauty is an essential part of good workmanship and good life as it is an essential part of God’s creation.\(^\text{125}\)

This excerpt reflected Gill’s developing ideas and referred to the ideological assertion of the making of art as an act of worship. From early on in the process Gill’s public statements aimed at avoiding overtly ‘artistic’ interpretations or assessments of the panels. Gill wrote of his collaboration with God, with the material, and with the patron. Though he did not directly reference his own workshop he supported the nature of collaboration that he saw epitomised in the work on medieval buildings such as Chartres Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Gill referred to the Stations as ‘furniture’\(^\text{126}\) (an idea which was repeated in later writing by Gill on other architectural work), implying anonymity in production and status outside an artistic canon or critique. The panels are often presented in subsequent histories as a turning point in Gill’s career as a direct carver and the growing importance of the idea of direct carving to what was seen to be modern in the making of sculpture. The analysis of the design, execution and reception of the commission reveal a more complex process than is usually presented in historical accounts of this work.


\(^{126}\) Gill, “The Stations of the Cross” (1918): 52.
Conclusion

Subsequent historical presentations of this commission position it as one of Gill’s most important works, his first major sculpture and the work which enabled him to move from being a little known to a widely known modern sculptor. Parkes, in 1921, described them as ‘beautiful and new, because they are the outcome of a sincere artist’s thoughts and vision and practice.’ Gill wrote in his *Autobiography* that he had carved the *Stations* in the only way he knew, ‘because I couldn’t carve any other way’. In 1918 in reference to the *Stations*, Gill wrote:

> The present degradation of sculpture is largely due to the fact that the modern artist works in clay and gets his model made into stone by more or less mechanical means. The stone has therefore little or no influence upon the form of the work.

Gill’s emphasis in creating the *Stations of the Cross* was to design and execute symbols useful for worship: they had to be images carved to appear as though the figures and symbols were made from stone, not represented in stone. The execution also needed to be an act of worship and in this Gill collaborated closely with his workshop. His assistants in turn ensured that other work continued so that Gill could concentrate on his designs in collaboration with the architect.

His work at the time was described as ‘inexpressive’ of the tragedy of the subject matter, made in a style that verged on the ‘ridiculous’. The same critic labelled Gill’s work as ‘neo-primitive’, and summarised the main objection to Gill’s work as being inappropriate for a religious setting. Gill engaged in the debate about ‘style’ in order to explain that he didn’t work in any style but created work that was appropriate to the context and should ‘Beauty’ be revealed or perceived then they could be described as works of art. Gill’s views on the idea that style was irrelevant to the artist, only to the critic, was one he developed throughout his life. In a ‘round-table’ discussion on style in 1929, reported in *The Manchester Guardian*, Gill was asked to speak about sculpture and was reported to have

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said that style was down to ‘the critic’ who ‘had the inspiration; he could tell the public what style the statue was in.’ Sculptors work ‘with their own hands’ and do not question what style they do it in, as ‘No responsible workman could possible help working in his own style.’ The important motivation for a work of sculpture was that it should ‘look like stone’. Gill cited Chartres Cathedral as having sculptures which ‘looked as God would have made them look if he had created royalty in stone.’

In a 1937 the guide to the Cathedral the Stations were described in a manner in which Gill’s ideals are reflected. There is no mention of the artist’s name and there is an, albeit qualified, approval of the Stations as appropriate for use by the faithful in acts of worship:

> The fourteen Stations to be seen on the brick pillars are stone carvings in low relief. They are meant to be suggestive rather than expressive, and on this account are treated with bare simplicity. No attempt is made at expression or at portraying the varying degrees of agony suffered by our Lord. Some are admitted to be better than others in their presentation and from the point of view of stone carving; but all claim merit for simplicity of design, for absence of any meretricious appeal, and for their suitability to the style of the building.

The number of drawings completed by Gill to be awarded the commission and in preparation to start carving reflected the way in which Gill approached many of his sculptures: first by finalising the designs in collaboration not only with the architect or patron but with the purpose and context of the subject matter; then carving the stone direct from the final drawings with the assistance of his workshop. His workshop was central to this development process, not only completing other commissions while Gill was working on preparatory stages, but also in shifting stones, early stage carving work and the inscriptions, frame moulding and polishing. Even in this work, as can be seen from the variety of moulding decorations, there was a certain amount of creative freedom within the workshop. Opponents presented the sculptures as a ‘weird experiment’ and representing a ‘strange phase of neo-primitivism’; his supporters presented them as the work of a technically talented craftsman creating emotive imagery that engaged with...

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132 “Elusive Style: All Arts Represented in Round-Table Debate,” Manchester Guardian, 21 June 1929, 5. The debate was on 20 June and also featured G.K. Chesterton.


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modernity. The Stations were therefore viewed as both suitable religious images, vehicles for worship, and examples of directly carved fine art by a modern sculptor. The purpose, the method of production and the nature of collaboration with patrons, religious tradition and the workshop complicate the simplicity of these two meanings and broaden the understanding of Gill’s approach to making public religious sculpture.
CHAPTER FOUR: ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

Introduction

This chapter uses the information found in the detailed study of archival sources to examine the making of particular public sculptures by Gill for architecture. The buildings in focus were two of Gill’s most high profile commissions: the Underground Electric Railways Company of London Limited (‘the Underground’, figure 64) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (‘BBC’, figure 66). For the Underground Gill produced three relief carvings: South Wind, East Wind and North Wind, each for a different axis of the building (figure 65). The BBC commission was a more elaborate undertaking: three panels for the side of the building (Ariel Hears Celestial Music and Ariel Between Wisdom and Gaiety on Portland Place, Ariel Piping to the Children on Langham Street, figure 67); Prospero and Ariel in a niche above the main entrance (figure 68); and The Sower to go inside the entrance hall (figure 69). The buildings and the sculpture became part of the urban landscape and the popular press and members of the public interpreted, described and critiqued the meaning of the sculptures and the importance and identity of the artist.

Interpretations of modern sculpture on modern architecture was linked to the success of a building, and architectural decoration was discussed passionately in the press and in journals and lectures. The status and relative success of the artist, and those commissioning the work, were also closely tied to whether the work as a whole was seen to be successful. Sculpture, or sculptural decoration, should be harmonious with the design of the building to ensure success. The architect’s central role in the design of the building, envisioning the sculpture and appointing the artist, was as important as the execution by the sculptor of the finished work. By examining in detail the collaborative relationships established between Gill and his institutional patrons, and the presentation of their work in the press, this chapter intends to broaden the understanding of Gill’s secular sculpture commissions and work with architects.
The first section will describe texts published by Gill and by a number of contemporary writers and critics to understand the intellectual and popular debates within which Gill wrote and produced sculptures. This contextual discussion will be followed by an examination of the relationship between Gill and the architects and patrons of the Underground and BBC headquarters. It will look in detail at how the media and historical interpretations related to the practical production of architectural sculpture. Through a close investigation of Gill’s workshop, the idea of authorship will be examined in relation to the work carried out in these high profile commissions. The investigation of Gill’s working practices, the processes and collaborations inside and outside the workshop, will bring into question the contemporary and historical construction of Gill as a simple craftsman.

The understanding of Gill as an artist-craftsman, with emphasis placed on his physical appearance and working methods, enabled the contemporary press to create an identity repeated and built upon by Gill and subsequently by historians and biographers. Gill’s published ideas about sculpture and architecture provide a framework within which to examine his processes of design and execution. Gill’s central theme, as in much of his theoretical writing, was that of harmonious unity between makers in the production, presentation and the purpose of the artworks. He argued that the architect should be part of the general building gang, as should the sculptor; the authorship of a building is therefore, at once, all those involved and anonymous for the same reason. This chapter will explore how the architects in focus, Charles Holden and Colonel George Val Myer (1883-1959), had their own views and ideas on the importance and placement of sculptures on architecture and had particular reasons for appointing Gill. The process by which the patron defined the limits on the work of the artist in relation to content, size, material and working methods will also be investigated.

In both instances, after the relationships and parameters of the work had been established and Gill had begun his preparatory work, Gill collaborated with his patrons. During these periods, varying from a few weeks to a number of months, Gill and his patrons discussed the composition of each piece, during which time alterations were made to the drawn designs. This chapter will analyse the processes involved in the development from the

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initial sketched designs to the final sculptures and, in doing so, it will question what it means for Gill to be known as the sole ‘author’ of these works. The carving of the final sculptures was done partly in situ. In the press this process was central to the authenticity of the finished works and so to Gill’s developing identity as a direct carver. Gill’s workshop was again instrumental in the making of the sculptures, alongside Gill’s other commissions, and making possible his continuing financial success. The presentation of Gill’s identity in the press simplifies the often complex practical functions of the workshop, and could be seen to lead directly to the later criticism of Gill by one of his 1930s assistants.

When Gill first set himself up as a self-employed letter cutter in 1903 he was reliant on commissions and patrons who were often also friends and acquaintances. Through his network he developed relationships with wealthy private patrons, businesses and, later, with major institutions. This patronage, however, would not have led to the increased success Gill experienced without the appearance of positive press articles about him and his sculpture that started in the late 1920s. These, in turn, were supported by Gill’s own statements about his work and his continuing role in the debates around what it meant to be an artist making sculpture for architecture.
Modernism and Architecture

Gill wrote on the subject of architecture throughout his life. This section starts with an outline of Gill’s public statements on sculpture and architecture, and the roles of the makers involved. It will then describe the media reception of the two sets of sculptures in focus in this chapter. These contemporary texts provide a contextual basis for the investigations into the practicalities detailed in the following two sections, describing Gill’s public identity and his place at the heart of numerous public conversations on sculpture and architecture. In 1910 Gill gave a lecture to the Architectural Association’s debating club on the topic ‘The Architect: Economically a Necessity – Artistically a Failure’. Gill’s argument, summarised in a subsequent journal, was that the function of the modern architect is primarily to protect his clients from the rapacity of commercial builders. Secondarily, to infuse an appearance of beauty into the work of wage-labourers whom commercialism (their own and that of their masters) had degraded.

The lecture also presented his developing views of art and production in general: ‘Art is that which makes man united to God.’ In response some in the audience praised Gill’s argument, however there were more who were critical of Gill’s polemical interpretation of the current situation: in particular Gill’s apparent ignorance that ‘a patron had been, and always would be, necessary to art.’ It is interesting that they received this impression in view of the fact that Gill relied not only on the support but the creative input of his patrons to further his public and financial success. The system of patronage, and the hierarchy of client and artist it necessitated, was reflected within Gill’s system of production: his small-scale workshop worked as a business, with a master and his assistants producing high quality hand-made work, and producing it at a relatively high rate of production.

Many of Gill’s subsequent lectures and articles on the subject of architecture, and architecture and sculpture, continue these two themes: ornamentation and the roles of, and collaboration between the architect, sculptor and craftsmen. The majority of Gill’s

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2 His first article was: Eric Gill, “Chichester Doorways,” The Building News Vol. LXXIX, no. 2399 (28 December 1900): 910.

writing specifically on architecture and sculpture started in the later 1920s though he had referred to it earlier when describing his work on the Westminster Stations. In a 1927 lecture Gill emphasised the importance of site, function and purpose in the mind of the sculptor working on buildings:

Ask a sculptor to supply you with a nice shaped stone, and if you do not tell him of some purpose the stone will serve he will be at a loss and will turn out some formless gimcrack or sentimental nudity suitable only for road metal.

Although in his 1910 lecture a member of the audience remarked that Gill showed little awareness of the dominance and importance of the patron in architecture, this later statement displayed a deeper understanding of the collaboration between patron and artist. The relationship should not be one of master and subordinate, however, but of collaborators working within carefully defined boundaries to ensure the resulting sculpture displayed cohesion with the building.

Gill then described the traditional hierarchy of the arts in which architecture, and the architect, was seen to be the epitome of all arts. In an ideal society (or what Gill called ‘a normal civilisation’): the architect was the person who had ‘rather the gift for co-ordinating the labour of others’ whereas a sculptor ‘has rather the gift for making things himself than for co-ordinating the work of other people’. Gill described how quality in anything made was dependent upon the intensity of love that the maker had for that thing, and the intensity was greater when the maker used his own hands. In the modern world the architect had become a ‘man who imposes his ideas upon a mob of more or less unwilling slaves.’

Gill’s view of the role of the architect in modern society related to his ideas of modern art production – the separation of the head and the hand in making.

Gill believed there was a parallel between the way buildings were designed and built and the factory system of production for profit. In both systems Gill saw men of business,

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4 See Chapter Three.
7 Gill, “Architecture and Sculpture,” 182.
8 To place Gill’s experience and ideas in context MacCarthy describes his apprenticeship at Caröe’s practice as typical for that time: the upper floor was occupied by ‘gentlemen’ architects, and the lower floor by draughtsmen, assistants and pupils. The physical work was done by labourers in situ. MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 39.
who were interested in quantity, not quality, ruling the workmen. In turn, the workmen had no personal responsibility or care for what was produced. In Gill’s writings on architecture he referred to Maritain’s Art et Scholastique, in particular the identification of the artist (or architect) with the work being produced:

> To the work to be done, that it may turn out well, there must answer in the soul of the workman a disposition which creates between the one and the other that sort of conformity and inmost proportion which the schoolmen call ‘connaturality’.  

Connaturality, meaning innate, or of the same nature, was the basis for the connection between the artist, and the beautiful and meaningful work being produced. Gill’s ideas took this philosophy further by stating that the connection must exist between all workers and their product, and, importantly for sculpture and building, between the architect and the artist. This collaborative approach problematizes not only the idea presented in the press of a sole author of a particular sculpture or building, but also the relative importance of the artist alongside the architect. Gill’s role within his workshop was that of the master; in his architectural commissions he was positioned in the role of contractor reporting to the master architect and the patron; in the press he was presented as a solitary artist-craftsman carving in isolation either in the workshop or in situ; at the same time he aimed to form a close working relationship that ensured harmony and collaboration in thought between all those involved.

Charles Holden, with whom Gill worked throughout his life, wrote in the early 1930s that architects should work closely with sculptors, and that the ‘more sculpturesque the building the more it is the natural home for sculpture’. Though Gill agreed with Holden’s approach of close collaboration between the architect and the sculptor, he believed that modern architecture did not necessarily need sculptural adornment. In 1932 Gill stated that good building was plain building: ‘devoid of those things which do not spring from the nature of the building as a constructed thing or from the necessities of its

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10 Maritain, The Philosophy of Art, 14.
11 The notes (in the RIBA Library archive) have no reference to use and there are several versions of the same script. The passages are undated, however they were certainly written after the completion of the Underground headquarters, and Holden at one point wrote ‘I am not going to quarrel with God for planting me down in 1930 or thereabouts’ (RIBA Library: AHP\26\23\4).
nature as a thing to be used for such and such a special purpose.’ 12 Though the notion of plain building could denote no sculptural decoration, there were some circumstances in which Gill felt that it was required:

The only possible occasion for the sculptor on good industrial architecture is the provision of heraldic signs; to distinguish the Church of St. James from that of St. Jude a statue on a corbel would be useful. To distinguish the building of the Prudential Insurance Company a statue of Prudence might be appropriate. 13

Though on first reading Gill seems to disagree with Holden’s views, and with sculpture on buildings in general, in fact he maintained a view which parallels Holden’s motto ‘fitness for purpose’. 14 Holden noted that the

human element is a much more important factor in building than Gill allows although it is inevitable that owing to the multiple trades and the many hands at work, architecture alone cannot have the direct emotional quality of sculpture itself. 15

Gill wrote in 1932 that ‘architecture is a social art. … [Buildings] are the product of the whole society.’ Gill then wrote that to produce sculpture for architecture, to ensure it served its purpose, ‘the artist, that is to say the responsible workman’ had to work with the idea that ‘the subject is all in all.’ 16

For Gill, as for Holden, close collaboration between the architect and the sculptor was necessary in order to create works of cohesive unity. Their work together on the Underground commission is a useful example to discuss their ideals. Before the Underground headquarters was officially finished in late 1929 there was discussion in the press about the style of the building. A Financial Times article from June 1928 described the building as ‘a notable example of the post-war return to dramatic architecture – architecture, that is, which gains its effect from the simple appeal of form and make,

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14 This was the motto of the DIA (Design and Industries Association) and was referenced by Holden (Charles Holden. Manuscript. Undated. RIBA Library: AHP\27\6. Qted in Eitan Karol, Charles Holden Architect (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007) 9).
rather than from graceful lines or ornament – from contour rather than from detail.\textsuperscript{17} In December 1929, after it was officially opened the Observer’s architecture correspondent described the outside of the building:

It is a maxim that if we look after the planning and structure, architecture will look after itself, which is quite true in this case, for the building is very plain and has no enrichment upon it except the sculptures of Jacob Epstein, Eric Gill, Eric Aumonier, and others, which are certainly very interesting – but could one call them enrichments?\textsuperscript{18}

The article echoed Gill’s 1928 phrase, ‘look after goodness and truth, and beauty will take care of itself’.\textsuperscript{19} A similar point was made later in the Times with regard to the BBC headquarters following the addition of steel pylons on the roof: ‘When you recognize what a thing is for its actual form adapts itself insensibly to the recognition – a psychological truth that the formal purists do not allow for.’\textsuperscript{20}

In early 1929, as the work on the Underground sculptures was finishing, James Bone wrote a positive view of the panels in relation to the building:

The eight panels are in bold relief, well gauged to be seen from the street as enrichments to the simplicity of the high facades with their plain ranges of windows. Apart from Mr Eric Gill, whose reputation, of course, has been established many years, the sculptors are all young men who have so far had little opportunity for architectural sculpture on any scale. Several of these panels are completed, but in the present state of London weather it is difficult to discern more than that they fulfil their functions as bold enrichments of the building. The Underground Railway, which led the way to commercial London in providing posters were a joy and refreshment to us all, is showing the same boldness and discernment in the great building that is to be their house and in its decoration.\textsuperscript{21}

The focus of the article is on the success of the overall appearance of the building and the words used to describe the sculptures seem interchangeable: decoration, architectural sculpture, enrichments. In assessing the purpose and context critics were interested in how the architecture and sculpture came together as a coherent whole, reflecting Holden’s own approach towards unified structure and decoration. The Guardian and the

\textsuperscript{18}Architectural Correspondent, “Housewarming at the Underground,” 21.
\textsuperscript{20}Times, 31 March 1931. BBC Written Archive: Box 9A.
Observer appear to be consistently supportive and presented the Underground as an enlightened patron taking on both established and early career sculptors and artists. Both newspapers, and many others, closely followed the progress of the building and the sculptures.

Gill’s work on the BBC sculptures, in particular on Prospero and Ariel, was also closely followed in newspapers from early 1931 until the unveiling in 1933. The decoration was discussed with what seems to be agreement that, though stark, the new building was architecturally and decoratively a success. Gill’s appointment did spark some public debate, suggesting that, though in some areas of the press he was an artist worthy of commissions and attention, in other quarters he was thought to be unsuitable. In May 1931 Violet Duchess of Rutland wrote to the Morning Post to complain that Gill had been commissioned and referred to Epstein’s controversial Hudson memorial in Hyde Park, and what she termed the ‘malformations at St James’s Park Station’. The BBC architect, Val Myer, defended the pieces, saying it is with my enthusiastic approval that to Mr Eric Gill has been entrusted the task of producing the panels and groups in which are to be concentrated the rich decoration and interest which will enhance and be enhanced by the simplicity of my own work.

After being shown Gill’s designs, however, the Duchess was quoted as saying ‘it is awful… All I can say in its favour is that it might have been worse, and that it is better than the work with which Mr Epstein and Mr Henry Moore generally favour us.’ Myer’s defence of Gill was important for both his success and Gill’s. Myer had chosen the site and size of each of the sculptures in designing the exterior of the building and needed Gill’s sculptures to be in harmony with his vision. Gill, though not the only choice of sculptor as will be discussed, still needed the continued support of the BBC, as well as to understand Myer’s vision to create these harmonious sculptures.

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24 Violet Rutland, qtd. in “Modern Cult in Sculpture, Mr Eric Gill’s Work, Architect’s Reply to Criticism,” Morning Post, 29 May 1931. BBC Written Archive: Book 9A.

Chapter Four: Architecture and Sculpture
Ruth Cribb 2013
In March 1932, around the time of the first BBC broadcast from the new building, a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* commended the architecture because it ‘resembles Underground House’. This was in part due to the white Portland stone used to clad the buildings, but also in their simplicity with clean lines and minimal decoration (figures 64 and 66). Broadcasting House did have some decoration between two rows of windows, although when the article was written the panels had been unveiled but the niche was still empty (figure 70). By mid-1932 the three relief panels (figure 67) were complete and were reviewed favourably: ‘Eric Gill’s conception is entirely a success. He has equally avoided prettiness and heaviness, and, while fitting in with the architect’s scheme, he has added just the right touch of fancy to the austere, gigantic bastion of a building.’ The press coverage seems to have been generally positive about both the Underground and the BBC headquarters, and the sculpture was presented as appropriate. In the media coverage of the erection of the buildings and their sculpture, Gill’s role and status was presented differently, as by the time the BBC sculptures were unveiled there was more emphasis on Gill’s technique and personal appearance.

Gill was one of a number of sculptors at work on the Underground building and the majority of press articles covered the public’s unfavourable reaction to Epstein’s sculptures, *Day* and *Night* (figure 74), each placed above an entrance into the building. Epstein was seen to be a controversial artist partly because of the appearance of these two works, but also because of the criticism of earlier public sculptures, including *Rima*, the W.H. Hudson Memorial in Hyde Park, London (1924-5) and the *Ages of Man* sculptures on the British Medical Association headquarters on the Strand, London (1907-8). Gill’s role on the commission was presented as one of a master among younger artists. On 5 April 1929 the *Times* published images of two of Gill’s panels, alongside Henry Moore’s

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26 W. Aumonier and Sons, following designs by Myer, carved decoration above and below the third floor windows showing birds in flight and waves. W. Aumonier was the grandfather of Eric Aumonier who worked with Gill on the Underground building.
28 Numerous newspaper articles criticising Epstein’s London Underground sculptures also reference these previous works. See RIBA Library: AHP\11.
panel from a distance (figure 75c), and Eric Aumonier’s panel (figure 75a).29 Below the images was a simple caption explaining that it was now possible to view the pieces as the scaffold had been removed. Throughout the year after the sculptures were completed Gill was referred to as follows: ‘Mr Gill is being helped by five young assistants’30; ‘Mr Eric Gill is the leader of the band of sculptors’31; ‘Mr Eric Gill and his colleagues’32; and ‘Eric Gill and other artists’.33 The Times described Gill, the ‘very experienced craftsman’ as the ‘leader of the team for the “Winds”’34, a comment repeated in the Morning Post35 a few days later. Gill’s identity was that of an elder, experienced, sculptor guiding his fellows, though this was not necessarily the reality of the appointment. Gill’s experience as a craftsman was also at the fore of these presentations, as was the idea of direct carving.

In August 1929, in response to numerous articles criticising the Epstein sculptures, the Manchester Guardian printed ‘A Letter from the Architects’ which described the importance of the sculptors’ technique:

> it was a condition that the figures were to be carved direct in the stone without the use of the pointer or any mechanical means of reproduction from a preliminary clay or plaster model, the objection to this being that the resulting sculpture is not as a rule the work of the artist’s own hand. … It was preferred to preserve all the virility and imagination and adventure brought into play with every cut of the chisel, even at the expense of some degree of accuracy of form. Time would not allow of the work being done by one sculptor; the work was therefore placed in the hands of several men who were young enough and keen enough to take up the problem with enthusiasm.36

There was no mention of Gill being anything but one of the commissioned group of sculptors, and the decision to bring in five seems to have been because of the time limit for carving the sculptures directly and in situ.

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30 Cape Argus (South Africa), 5 February 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\10.
31 “Underground Winds,” Indian and Eastern Engineer, June 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\11.
32 The Age (Australia), 7 September 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\11.
33 The Yorkshire Post, 2 December 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\11.
35 ‘Mr Eric Gill is the leader of the sculptors concerned’. The Morning Post, 13 April 1929, RIBA Library: AHP\10.
The importance of maintaining the ‘virility’ of the sculptures by the use of the ‘young’ sculptors’ hands working directly on the stone also appeared in an article in The Studio of August 1929. In this case the ‘virility’ of the sculptures was commended, though their inclusion on the building was considered superfluous because the author saw them as having been added as an afterthought. The emphasis on an article in the Times on the technique of carving directly in situ implies, on the other hand, that the sculptures were an integral part of the architecture. The Times article stressed that the sculptures were ‘all carved directly, and without ‘pointing’ from the model, in the Portland stone which faces the building.’ The article described two panels by Gill on the eastern faces of the building as ‘by far the best’ due to the correct proportions of the relief and the horizontality of the drapery. Gill’s age and experience was considered to be important, alongside the physicality of the work carried out by him and his fellow sculptors.

According to MacCarthy it was with his work for the BBC that Gill firmly established his reputation, and when he became known as an eccentric and given the nickname ‘married monk’. The Evening News in July 1932 wrote of seeing the ‘remarkable head and shoulders of Mr Eric Gill, bearded and bereted (or is it an old-fashioned skull cap this modern sculptor wears?)’ appear over the top of the canvas screen behind which he was working on the Sower in situ in the entrance to Broadcasting House:

Mr Gill wears a smock and two pairs of spectacles at his work, and is altogether an unusual figure. His beard is black, he has piercing, dark eyes, and he looks as if he had strayed from a Montmartre atelier, where his studio is an enormous barn at his charming place at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

A photograph illustrated this article, the caption for which read ‘Mr Eric Gill, in his beret and clogs, at work in his studio’ (figure 71). The majority of articles on Gill’s work for the BBC appeared around the time of the unveiling of Prospero and Ariel in early 1933. The Evening News, echoing its earlier article, visited Gill on 1 February 1933 on the scaffold erected around the piece in situ (figure 72) and described Gill as ‘a strange bearded figure girt with something that might have been a trench coat, shod in rubber shoes, and

38 “Sculpture for the ‘Underground’: St James’s Park Station,” The Times, 5 April 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\10.
39 MacCarthy, Eric Gill, 247. MacCarthy doesn’t provide the reference for this quote.
40 “What’s Behind the Screen?” The Evening News, 7 July 1932. BBC Written Archive: Box 9A.
crowned with the honourable remains of a once black beret."\(^{41}\) The article was illustrated with the same image of Gill that had appeared the previous year, of Gill carving in his Buckinghamshire workshop (figure 73).

In the Daily Telegraph the physical nature of the work was described with emphasis placed on Gill’s hardiness in completing the work:

> Mr Gill has climbed 25 feet up a ladder four or five times a day for four months to work on these figures, his only protection from wind, rain and snow being a narrow sheet of glass suspended just above Prospero’s head.\(^{42}\)

The Manchester Guardian article, picking up on Gill’s own description of his work, was titled “Furniture Pieces” at the BBC’. It stated that the sculptures had been viewed by ‘a small party active enough to climb a long ladder’, emphasising the physicality of the building and the process of carving the sculptures. The article then described Gill’s appearance: ‘Mr. Gill [was] wearing a blue beret and picturesque muffler and clothes, his brown beard trimmed to a more Renaissance shape than it used to be’. Gill was described as a ‘master carver’ who had worked for four months in all weathers up the scaffold to finish the piece.\(^{43}\) In referencing the appearance of the sculptor, and emphasising the physical nature of the work, the article was describing Gill as a direct carver, and solely responsible for the work.

A debate on the meaning and success of the BBC sculptures appeared in the press following the unveiling in 1933, and one local MP called for the sculptures, in particular Prospero and Ariel, to be removed on the grounds of indecency. His request, when it appeared in the newspapers, seems to have been treated as an amusement both in the House of Commons and among journalists. The Evening News interviewed Gill on the subject in March 1933, and he justified Ariel’s nakedness by saying the BBC specifically requested it:

> ‘I suppose I ought to feel offended, and talk about art with a big A, but it is just too absurd. After all, why blame me, in any case? Even if I had deliberately carved an

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\(^{41}\) “A peep at Ariel and Prospero,” The Evening News, 1 February 1933. BBC Written Archive: Box 9A.

\(^{42}\) “BBC ‘Prospero’ Finished, Mr’s Gill view of his sculpture, ‘Furniture Piece’,” Daily Telegraph, 15 March 1933. BBC Written Archive: Box 9A.

\(^{43}\) “‘Furniture Pieces’ at the BBC,” Manchester Guardian, 15 March 1933, 8.
indecent statue, the BBC would not have put it up, and’ – he spoke confidentially, with a trace of pride – ‘they liked Ariel’.  

Here again, Gill was presented as a jovial figure, and his amusement at the MP’s complaint was quoted at length in the article. Gill, in this article and elsewhere, publicly presented himself as following the instructions of his client, much as he had done privately during the completion of the Westminster Stations. In claiming this distance between his role and the subject matter Gill seemed to be absolving himself of personal responsibility and authorship. Possible media misunderstanding of the meaning of the sculptures, and any perceived failure of the work, could therefore be deflected from his identity as an artist.

Despite this protest, there was general agreement that the BBC sculptures were a success both individually and as part of the building. The Manchester Guardian article stated that whatever the purpose or the background, the Prospero and Ariel figure group was one of ‘the most notable pieces of carving on architecture in London.’ R.R. Tatlock, writing in the Daily Telegraph in March 1933 described Prospero and Ariel as ‘utterly different’ to Epstein’s Day (figure 74a), though the two might be compared: ‘Epstein is a coarse and insensitive carver but an extraordinarily good modeller. Gill, on the other hand, is at his best, as here, when he is cutting into hard Portland stone.’ Gill’s identity and status was parallel to Epstein, though the comparison did not correlate with Wilenski’s interpretations in 1927 and 1932: Wilenski viewed Epstein’s directly carved, public sculptures as examples of originality and therefore modernism whereas Gill’s sculptures were ‘popular’ and therefore not modern.

The articles on the BBC sculptures in 1932 and 1933 presented Gill’s physical appearance and clothing as indicators of the identity of an authentic craftsman, in particular the phrases ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘Renaissance’. In his own statements in the press, Gill concentrated on the symbolic aspect of his work and the context of its siting: sculpture should signify the function of the building. These articles usefully capture many of the
themes associated with Gill’s identity at this time: the artist’s physical appearance as expression of an authentic idealised craftsman and his carving method and physical hardiness. The press coverage of his work shows that Gill’s appearance as a solitary craftsman dominated the way in which he and his work was presented. This may have paved the way for subsequent interpretations of his sculpture and working methods which obscured the reality of making public sculpture. However, as seen in Chapter Three and later in this chapter, Gill did publicly discuss the contribution made by his workshop on commissions. His technique, and the process of receiving the commission and working up the designs, expose the presentation in the press as over simplified.
Artist as Contractor

Gill’s role can be seen to shift depending on the stage of the process between artist, contractor and collaborator, and required on-going negotiations of status and power. This section charts the relationships between Gill and the patrons and architects during these different stages, including the commissioning, designing and carving, and examines Gill’s own views of his status and the finished sculptures. Before work had properly started on the BBC sculptures (figures 67-69) in 1931 Gill appeared to have been reprimanded for allowing the publication of images of his work in progress without the correct authorisation. Robert Solomon, who led the syndicate financing the building, wrote to the architect, Val Myer, in January 1931, just after Gill’s appointment:

I notice that Gill is broadcasting pictures of himself at work on the commission for the BBC. I am wondering how far he recognizes the true position, viz: that he is at work on a commission for RBS [Solomon] and colleagues.50

Solomon’s objective was to ensure Gill was aware of his obligation to the BBC and the syndicate. In a published list of contractors that appeared in September 193151 Gill was not mentioned nor on a list kept in the correspondence regarding the building.52 Other carvers53 working on the building were listed as contractors, indicating a difference in the perception of Gill’s status which is complicated by Solomon’s statement: Gill was expected to behave as a contractor in relation to the approval of his actions during the work but was commissioned as a renowned artist to work on a high profile sculpture in the public eye. In referring to his work on the Sower (figure 69) Gill wrote to his brother, Cecil, at the end of August 1932, that ‘Mine [is] not to reason why … mine simply, to carve a good image of a broadcaster.’54 This statement, prefaced by a stinging attack on the BBC as an organisation and patron, suggested unease with his role and status in relation to his employers. The relationship between artist and patron, in particular in the public eye,

51 Architect’s Journal, 23 September 1931. BBC Written Archive: Box 9A.
52 Typed list, undated but included with correspondence from March 1932. The list was also printed in the Architect’s Journal, 23 September 1931. BBC Written Archive: S167/4/9.
53 W. Aumonier and Sons.
was one that required constant negotiation and at times Gill can be seen to be testing the boundaries put in place by his client.

Of the two architects, Gill had formed a close working relationship with Holden prior to the Underground commission, whereas he had not worked with Myer. The buildings of both architects were described in the press as modern. This attribution was in part evidenced by their use of Portland stone and the stark and plain appearance of that material, and in part through their choice of artists for the external sculptures. Both architects reported to major institutions providing public services, and this made them directly answerable to the general populace and scrutinised by the media. Myer was directly answerable to Solomon of Montagu’s, Cox & Cardale in London, the head of the syndicate who paid for and oversaw the erection of the building and then sold the lease to the BBC once it was completed. Solomon worked with the Director General Sir John Reith (1889-1971) and the BBC Board of Governors, as well as the BBC’s structural engineer, Mr Tudsbery. Though Myer left specific spaces for the sculpture in his design, the choices of subject matter, material and artist were eventually made by the BBC, in particular by Board members Dr Rendall and Mr Goldsmith.

The Underground was a private company with a public function and, possibly for this reason, Holden had more autonomy than Myer in the design process. He reported to Frank Pick (1878-1941), Managing Director of the Underground from 1928, who was particularly interested in promoting young, modern artists to create artwork for the Underground and then for the new headquarters.\(^{55}\) Holden and Pick had been working together since 1924 on designs for new stations to be built as underground lines were extended. As described above, Holden believed that architecture should be built according to the philosophy of ‘fitness for purpose’, and unnecessary adornment should be omitted for the purpose of the building to be understood through its design. Pick and Holden worked closely together on the exterior of the new headquarters, however Pick’s involvement seems to have been in the background and Gill rarely mentions him. How Gill came to be employed on each of these commissions, and the nature of the power

relationships with each of his patrons, provides a useful context within which to frame the making of the sculptures.

Holden wrote in the 1930s that though

the architect’s job is to decide the position on the building and the broad mass and the relief and scale of the sculpture ... [if] these matters can be decided in close consultation with the Sculptor or Sculptors so much the better. 56

Gill and Holden shared a view on the importance of collaborative work on behalf of, and with, society (and in Gill’s case, in God’s name). Gill was one of a number of sculptors commissioned to create sculptures for the outside of the Underground headquarters. The most prominent work was by Epstein, commissioned to carve sculptures to go above the two entrances to the building (Night and Day, figure 74). Gill and the other sculptors were commissioned to carve eight ‘winds’ around the building at a high level. Gill carved three of the eight Winds (North, East and South) while the other sculptors carved one each: Eric Aumonier (1899–1974, South Wind, figure 75a), Alfred Gerrard (1899–1998, North Wind, figure 75b), Henry Moore (1898–1986, West Wind, figure 75c), Samuel Rabinovitch (1903–1991, West Wind, figure 75d) and Allan Wyon (1882–1962, East Wind, figure 75e).

According to Holden’s biographer the Winds were inspired by Epstein’s tomb for Oscar Wilde (1912, figure 76)57 in light of Holden’s assistance on that memorial project, and his on-going support and employment of Epstein and Gill, who had been close associates during the designing of the tomb. In particular, as described in the review in the Times 58, the horizontality of the figure is echoed in the Underground figures, as are the wings on the memorial and the drapery of the Winds.

Pick, according to Michael Saler, aimed to use the Underground to serve as an organising framework for a modern organic community. The buildings and design of the growing Underground system would reflect modern society by using the work of modern artists: it would be ‘the modern equivalent of a medieval cathedral, an integrated work of art that would be a joy to both makers and users. Like the cathedrals, the transport system would

57 Karol, Charles Holden, 313. Cork had previously made this connection in Art Beyond the Gallery (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 257.
58 “Sculpture for the ‘Underground’: St James’s Park Station,” The Times, 5 April 1929. RIBA Library: AHP\10.
provide a unifying function for society. According to Saler, Holden concurred with Pick’s views, as he ‘sought to incorporate modern sculpture into his architecture, insisting that the sculptor carve directly into the stone of the building’. Though the sculptures themselves may not have appeared in early sketches of the building, as highlighted by Cork, the sculpture scheme was in Holden’s mind from the early planning stages. Holden was awarded the RIBA London Architecture 1929 medal for the building, and in his acceptance speech, he spoke of the initial planning for the design. In his notes for the speech, Holden described the gradual development of the final design around the north-south/east-west axis, with a central tower. An important starting point had been to design a ‘short-cut’ through the building to allow access from all sides to the Underground station below. The sculptures above these entrances, depicting Night and Day, display a symbolic reference to this functionality, as do the winds on the exterior walls of the four wings. The foundation stone for the Underground building, designed by Gill and cut by him and Lawrence Cribb, bears an inscription that it was laid by the foreman stonemason to pay ‘honour to the craftsman who makes our work possible’. From early in the process, around 1927-8, Holden’s aspiration was one of unity in the team of builders, artists and architect, and this was realised in Gill’s work with Holden in the early stages of the design.

Holden’s support from Pick and the Underground was not paralleled in Myer’s work for the BBC, and the difference in the experience of each architect demonstrates the complexity of their roles as employees of their patrons. The length of time between the initial visit to Gill in late 1929 and his appointment in late 1930, and correspondence during that period, points to considerable debate between the many people involved in the design of the BBC building. As will now be shown, many stakeholders debated the subject matter, and which sculptor or sculptors would be commissioned; a process leading to uncertainty and delays.

Initially the discussions regarding the sculpture were between Solomon and Myer exclusively, and Solomon’s first choice to complete the work was a relatively unknown

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61 Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery*, 255.
62 RIBA Library: AHP\4\2\1. RIBA Journal, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6, 24 January 1931, 168.
sculptor called John Smith. Solomon wrote to Smith in November 1929 outlining what was needed; he indicated that other artists were also being asked to submit drawings and that all entries would go in front of the Board of Governors of the BBC. The correspondence implies that all those involved in the building had different views on the final form of the sculptures, and the quantity of correspondence shows their importance. Solomon told Smith that the ‘idea is one symbolising human development – progress, or anything you like. The smaller figure, still comparatively primitive, rising slowly upwards and forwards, the other one merely symbolising the energy.’ For Myer, his ‘whole conception of the building is bound-up with, not only the right placing and the proportioning of the sculpture in relation to the rest of the lines and masses but above all in getting the right quality.’ A letter from Myer to Smith in May 1930 indicated that he had finalised his idea for the subject matter of the figure sculpture above the entrance. The frustrated tone of the letter implies that Myer was not convinced by Solomon’s choice, and why he subsequently approached the sculptors Charles Wheeler (1892-1974), Maurice Lambert (1901-1964) and Charles Sergeant Jagger.

A small exhibition at Solomon’s house on 6 October 1930 was intended to allow all the stakeholders to review the proposed designs by all four sculptors. Reith expressed his dislike for Smith’s work because he did not ‘want the sculpture to be at all on Epstein lines.’ It is apparent from the correspondence that this opinion on behalf of the BBC had earlier ruled out Gill’s inclusion on the shortlist of artists, as he was seen to be an associate of Epstein. On 30 October 1929 Gill met with the critic Herbert Read (1893-1968), and Mr Goldsmith and Mr Lambert ‘of the BBC’ to discuss the ‘possibility of doing sculpture on new BBC building’. Despite another visit from Mr Goldsmith, who came with

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67 ‘It is now two months since I wrote telling you that it had been decided that the single figure over the southern entrance should take the form of a ‘Sower’ broadcasting his seed.’ George Val Myer. To John Smith. 9 May 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/4. That the idea for the sculpture above the entrance, later abandoned by the BBC, came from Myer could indicate why it was still included in the commission as a stand-alone piece within the foyer of the headquarters.
69 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 30 October 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
Solomon in December 1929\textsuperscript{70}, there was then a break of nearly a year before the next visit. The process came to an end after the October 1930 exhibition when the BBC appointed two Board members, Mr Goldsmith and Dr Rendall, to finalise the content and choose the sculptor, overriding Solomon and Myer. One of the first actions they took was to visit Gill on 13 November 1930; Gill did not meet with Myer until 9 December 1930\textsuperscript{71}, and correspondence shows that both Myer and Solomon were unhappy with the unilateral actions taken by the BBC.\textsuperscript{72}

With both the Underground and the BBC commissioning process there was no evidence of a formal competition as there had been for Westminster Cathedral, suggesting Gill’s reputation was by this time more assured. Both Myer and Solomon were in favour of Gill’s appointment, though they were surprised at his inclusion:

> I saw Gill’s work in this connection some 9 months ago, but abandoned further negotiations in the face of the DG’s emphatic pronouncement that he would have nothing to do with Gill or Epstein, Gill being apparently the blacker of the two beasts.\textsuperscript{73}

This earlier confusion as to Gill’s appropriateness for the commission did not reappear during the negotiations and, having visited Gill, Rendall described him as ‘the most original and genuine artist of to-day in the field of sculpture’.\textsuperscript{74} In a letter from Solomon to Reith in October 1930 he wrote that it ‘would seem that sculpture on a public building is “fair game”, and I feel sure that whatever we do will expose us to the abuse of the highbrows or the lowbrows as the case may be.’\textsuperscript{75} Myer and Solomon hoped to commission a sculptor who would help them to create a building that would be seen in the

\textsuperscript{70} Eric Gill. Diary entry. 8 December 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
\textsuperscript{71} Eric Gill. Diary entries. 13 November and 9 December 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
\textsuperscript{72} Robert Solomon. To George Val Myer. 14 October 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/5. This action also led to a financial problem for Myer and Solomon, though they were eventually able to pay Smith, Wheeler, Jagger and Lambert a nominal sum for their work.
\textsuperscript{73} Robert Solomon. To George Val Myer. 17 November 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/5.
\textsuperscript{74} Mr. Rendall. To Robert Solomon. 27 November 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/5.
\textsuperscript{75} Robert Solomon. To John Reith. 29 October 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/5.
By the end of 1930, Gill had been appointed as the only sculptor for the relief panels and the main figures, at an initial estimate of £1,600. Prior to the first visit from the BBC in 1929, Gill had written to Read to disagree with an article Read had published in the BBC’s magazine The Listener: ‘I think there is something in the nature of a fundamental disagreement in connection with your use of the word “emotion”.’ Gill’s point related to the interplay between the artist and the “consumer”; for Gill, Read had put forward the view that the artist’s aim was to express himself to the viewer – a one-way transaction. In contrast, Gill believed that ‘the artist’s function is simply as maker of things’ that were useful and, ideally, beautiful. Placed in the context of his recent completion of the Underground commission, and his upcoming work for the BBC, Gill’s comments are particularly pertinent. His job, as he saw it, was to produce what was needed, when it was needed, for those who would want it and use it.

Developing from his early experience of the large-scale sculpture commission for Westminster Cathedral, Gill’s view of himself informed the professional relationships he maintained with his patrons. It also informed his view of the meaning of the sculptures once they were finished, as can be seen from Gill’s published quotes between 1929 and 1933.

In an interview with the Manchester Guardian after the full-size Prospero and Ariel (figure 68) was unveiled in March 1933 Gill referred to the sculpture as a ‘furniture piece’: ‘Prospero is a symbolic piece rather like the three balls over a pawn-broker’s shop.’ Gill then stated that the figures were sculpture, because ‘Sculpture was something that was part of the building, not mere ornament. “Prospero” and “The Sower” were ordered by the owners for decoration.’ As described in the quote above from 1932, Gill believed that sculptures on buildings should be functional. A 1933 article by him on the BBC sculptures in The Listener expanded this view:

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77 Met with Gill, agreed a price of £1600 for the whole lot.’ George Val Myer. To Robert Solomon. 12 December 1930. BBC Written Archive: S167/4/5. A team of designers and architects also worked on the interior decoration of the building lead by Raymond McGrath (1903-1977), including Serge Chermayeff (1900-1996), Wells Coates (1895-1958), Dorothy Warren-Trotter (1896-1954) and Edward Maufe (1883-1974). From early 1931 the level of correspondence regarding the decoration reduces considerably.
79 “‘Furniture Pieces’ at the BBC,” 8.
stone carving is to be regarded as heraldic rather than architectural sculpture. It is only a work of art in a low sense of the word. … This carving is meant to be a useful object. As walking sticks are useful to lame men, so this carving is intended to be useful to the passer-by – useful as a sign and a symbol, like a cross on a tombstone or the three balls on the shop of a moneylender.80

Gill’s view of his own status, as implied by these quotes, was to produce useful symbols by which the function of the building could be understood. The emphasis on the meaning of sculpture as furniture can be seen to change subtly from his use of the phrase in relation to the Stations of the Cross. Earlier in his career ‘furniture’ indicated the carved work which formed part of the building and were a vehicle of worship for the viewer; later with the BBC the ‘furniture’ was still there to serve a purpose but the purpose was now symbolic adornment. The Stations served a meaningful purpose as part of the church furniture, whereas Prospero and Ariel was heraldic, but both interpretations subsume Gill’s responsibility as author-artist to the aims of the patron and the purpose of the building.

Later in 1933, also in the Manchester Guardian, Gill was interviewed for an article entitled ‘Artist and Patron’. The interview was précised earlier in the newspaper in which Gill was quoted as preferring ‘to have his instructions and to have them precise’. Gill complained that often the patron’s instructions were not precise enough because patrons did not always know what they wanted; the result was that they left the artist to himself and then complained that the result was not what they envisaged. The newspaper stated it was in broad agreement with Gill’s ‘distinction between the ‘art of the studio’ and the art of the portrait or public monument.’81 The two different modes of being were illustrated as a problem for the ‘furniture sculptor’82; being employed as a creative artist and yet needing to fulfil the (often undefined) requirements of the patron.

On being asked by a passing member of the public if he was carving in a Byzantine style (as had been discussed during the completion of the Westminster Stations), Gill told the newspaper:

81 “Artist and Patron,” Manchester Guardian, 23 September 1933, 10. Epstein also said of his contributions to the Underground headquarters that ‘no one can deny that they form very definitely part of the building. I would have done something entirely different had I intended them for exhibition in a gallery or museum.’ (Jacob Epstein and Arnold Haskell, The Sculptor Speaks: A Series of Conversations on Art (London: W. Heinemann, 1931) 47. Qted in Cork, Art Beyond the Gallery, 6).
‘I have none of the tricks of an architectural carver with centuries of tradition behind him,’ he said. ‘In a kind of way I am almost an amateur. The Byzantine sculpture was done by people who had none of the later tricks learned by architectural carvers. I am back in the Saxon, or primitive period, in one sense, not through design to do primitive carving but because this is the way in which carving must begin.’

Gill distanced himself both from associations with a particular ‘style’ and any recent traditions in architectural sculpture. The presentation of his work is of a contractor, working to order, within precise boundaries set out by the client, who was ultimately responsible for the appearance and success of the final piece. With the work on the BBC headquarters, however, Gill’s statements and subsequent actions also indicate a need to take back some responsibility and authorship for the completed work by substituting his own meaning onto the figures.

Before their completion Gill privately and publically questioned the symbolic meaning of the commission. In a letter to his brother in August 1932 he had written derisively of ‘the BBC kidding itself that it may be likened to a sort of wise old prince putting the world to rights and its bally apparatus likened to a sort of heavenly sprite!’ In an interview with the Evening News on 1 February 1933, six weeks before the sculptures were unveiled, Gill said to the journalist that he was wondering ‘what the public will think of them … Some will say it is Marconi – some Father Christmas. But there you are, it is none of my business.’ Gill believed it was the responsibility of the patron to provide clarity on the intention and meaning of the sculpture in order for the artist to create something appropriate, and if there was a lack of public understanding it was not the fault of the artist. Gill’s work on the models, on the other hand, shows a deep engagement with the subject matter of the BBC sculptures.

Gill produced two models for the Prospero and Ariel figure group, and in his subsequent work on each of the models changed the meaning and intention of the subject matter from secular to religious. Between the unveiling of the full-size group at the BBC in early 1933, and the sale of the second model (figure 93) to the Tate in 1935, Gill carved stigmata on

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the small scale Ariel. It is unlikely that this was a feature of the models when inspected by Gill’s patrons. When the first model was exhibited for sale at the French Gallery in 1936 under the title *Abraham and Isaac* (figure 92), a letter to *The Listener* expressed confusion at the similarity between this group and *Prospero and Ariel*. Gill replied in a letter to the magazine:

> In my view the figures at Broadcasting House are as much God the Father and God the Son as they are Shakespeare’s characters, and so it is quite appropriate that the group at the French Gallery should be either Joseph and Jesus or Abraham and Isaac, for all these things are different views of the same thing.  

In his *Autobiography*, Gill wrote ‘I took it upon me to portray God the Father and God the Son. For even if that were not Shakespeare’s meaning it ought to be the BBC’s.’ The initial press interpretation and Gill’s public statements show that the contemporary meaning of the piece was secular, but in later examinations the group is presented as a religious sculpture with Prospero as God and Ariel as Jesus. Gill’s alteration of the models enabled him to give them religious meaning. Gill’s actions (carving the stigmata on the second model, changing the title of the first model to *Abraham and Isaac*, and his public statements) have subsequently influenced historical interpretations of the full-size group at the BBC as being an intentionally religious sculpture. Gill’s use of the images of *The Sower* and *Ariel* in engravings he was making in the early 1930s for the Golden Cockerell Press’s *Four Gospels* also emphasised this interpretation. The final version therefore became both a religious sculpture by Gill, and a symbolic statue ordered by the board of Governors of the BBC.

Gill’s attitude toward his patrons could shift between that of a renowned artist, a contracted craftsman and a collaborator with a shared vision, and the professional relationships he developed required regular negotiation of position and power. In an article in 1936, Gill summarised the identity of an architectural sculptor, and implied possible confusion over his view of his own status:

> in between the modern workman and the modern artist … [is] the ‘artist-craftsman.’ He is neither released from the business of making anything useful, nor is he released from responsibility. And he suffers from his eccentricity, for though he represents the normal workman, his work is not normal. It is too self-

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conscious. It doesn’t go with machine-made things, and yet it is not suitable for the museum.

These dilemmas point to difficulties Gill and others may have experienced at the time in relation to identity and purpose. Gill described the artist-craftsman as a ‘furniture sculptor’, connecting his work in the 1930s to his earliest sculpture commissions in the 1910s and indicating a continuing negotiation with identity, patronage and public sculpture. The practical work involved in collaborating with the patron to finalise the designs, and with the workshop to execute the sculptures, was discussed by Gill, publicly, in 1933, in relation to his work in Manchester. The critical and press response to much of Gill’s work simplified this complex process to concentrate on Gill’s identity as a modern sculptor, which also enabled Gill to take advantage of his reputation to continue his workshop business.

The Workshop and the Architect

The majority of preparatory work for both commissions was carried out in Gill’s workshop in Buckinghamshire. For both commissions there were varying levels of collaboration in finalising the designs, though Gill was commissioned within certain pre-determined boundaries as the size, subject matter and material had been decided upon by the architects with their patrons. Power relationships, both within the workshop and outside it, shifted, as did Gill’s identity and role as discussed in the previous section. For both commissions his reputation as a modern artist was central, and this modernity was connected to his craft, his perceived ‘style’ and his connection to other artists and critics. The extent of the collaboration between Gill, the architects and his workshop will be discussed in this section to broaden the understanding of the processes and patronage in the making of sculpture.

For all commissions, and for many non-commissioned works, Gill began with sketches and drawings which were often worked into scale models for larger sculptures. As will be seen, and unusually with Gill’s work on commissions, the models for the Underground sculptures do not seem to have survived.89 The first designs when he began drawing on 22 January 1928 are extant (figure 77a and 77b), as are some of the results of three further periods of drawing and re-designing, in March (figure 77c), June (figures 78a, 78b and 79) and October (figures 78c and 78d) of that year.90 In earlier drawings the figures have elongated limbs, long hair and the drapery is flowing; the whole composition has a sense of movement about it. The later drawings, by contrast, are more static, the drapery was depicted as lined blocks, and the figures have simplified hair and less detail. A close reading of the archival sources and the drawings themselves reveals that this evolution in design was made alongside discussions with Holden who maintained an overview of the work of all the artists.

It is significant, therefore, that between the early drawings (figure 77) and the later examples (figures 78 and 79), Holden sent Gill, and he traced for his own record, a

89 Small scale versions of each Wind were carved after the in situ work was completed. It is unclear why Gill carved them, probably for exhibition and sale, though they are now referred to as ‘models’ (Collins, Eric Gill The Sculpture, 162).
90 The following discussion mainly references drawings for the South and East Winds. The North Wind appears to have only one extant drawing, made on 9 June 1928 (Clark Library).
drawing of the *Wind* being designed by his fellow sculptor Rabinovitch (figure 80). Gill’s *South Wind* seems to replicate the drapery representing the wind, and the face, breasts and hair in Rabinovitch’s drawing. However, Rabinovitch’s finished work does not match his earlier drawing, a simplification from initial design to finished sculpture that can often be seen in carved works: it is more voluptuous, slightly more abstracted in the twisting of the body, and the drapery, or wind, is missing and has been replaced by a stylised bird.

Another possible influence on the final appearance of the *South Wind* seems to have been one of Henry Moore’s *Reclining Figures*. On 11 January 1929 Gill worked all day on the sculptures and then visited the Royal College of Art with Moore (who was teaching there at the time), ‘to see … [Moore’s] carvings’. There is very little extant evidence to show the development of Gill’s designs for the *North Wind* but, in examining the final carvings, there is a very clear similarity between Gill’s *North Wind* (figures 65c and 79) and Wyon’s *East Wind* (figure 75e), despite Wyon’s inclusion of a pouch. The crouched poses of the bodies, the angle of the heads and the position of the arms and legs are almost identical.

There is no evidence in Gill’s diaries or in the extant preparatory work – though it is possible that Holden shared Wyon’s work with Gill, as well as Rabinovitch’s.

Holden seems to have engaged in an active collaboration in the development of the designs not only with Gill but with the other sculptors at work. Holden, therefore, ensured his vision for the whole building was being realised, and the five sculptors were working on appropriately different, though complementary, designs. In the transfer from initial, small-scale designs to the larger, finished pieces, each sculptor would have benefitted from Holden’s input and advice to ensure the sculptures were readable at height. Holden’s collaborative actions were pivotal for the development of Gill’s designs. For Gill’s work on the BBC, he seems to have absorbed the lessons learnt from Holden in the development of his ideas and in his regular contact with the patrons.

The BBC, Solomon and Myer had finalised Gill’s appointment by the end of 1930. Sometime in October 1930, however, Dr Rendall of the BBC set out his (and by extension the BBC’s) proposal for the content of the decorative scheme. The scheme, with only one slight variation, was confirmed as the subject matter for the final sculptures by the time Gill was appointed. Rendall’s scheme was described by him as follows:

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91 Eric Gill. Diary entry. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
I now put forward my own suggestions, which rest upon the personality of Shakespeare’s Ariel, the poetic embodiment of Aerial.

They are to some extent pictorial; but much great sculpture has been of this order. On the other hand, I have endeavoured to keep them simple in character, and everything is significant.

(A) The Central Niche: Prospero, standing or seated, delivers the pan-pipes to Ariel, a boy child of about thirteen or fourteen years of age – Ariel might be kneeling before him, but I expect the artist would prefer that both should look outwards. Prospero would, I imagine, be fully gowned and bearded; Ariel nude, unless he carried a fawn-like skin or something similar across his body. This might make a very dignified and charming group. Ariel alone would look a bit disconsolate.

(B) The Three Panels

(1) Ariel is borne up by two winged angelic figures. This idea is taken from the charming figure of Mary of Anjou similarly supported (on her tomb at Naples). The conception is of Ariel learning celestial harmonies. It fills the space admirably.

(2) Ariel stands piping to a circle of children. This may portray the message of wireless to children, or, if the whole company are piping (as I prefer), it may include other ideas involved in the development of broadcasting.

(3) Ariel, with his pipes slung over his shoulder, stands between two severe figures, Justice and Wisdom, who hold out their emblems, the balance and … the compasses.

All these conceptions are fully sculpturesque. It is my own strong desire that we should depart as far as possible from the work of Epstein and his imitators. I hope an artist will be chosen who is capable of scrupulous and beautiful work.  

Rendall’s emphasis on simplicity, the significance of each element of the subject, and the detail provided, would have enabled Gill to start work on the designs very quickly. Though he did not decide on the subject matter, it was then Gill’s task to produce designs that adequately portrayed the symbolic content that satisfied his clients. His swift acceptance of the job and the scheme implies that he was aware of, and comfortable with, his relatively limited creative role in delivering the work. Solomon insisted on seeing the sketches and that Gill understood that ‘the sketches must have my approval before Gill proceeds to completion.’ Solomon’s letter stated that, though Gill was the appointed

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sculptor, it was the syndicate (those paying for the work) who should be responsible for signing off the designs and leading Gill’s completion of the work.

Gill’s first step in working on initial designs was to ask the actor Leslie French to model for the figure of Ariel in early 1931. According to Collins, French played Ariel in a stage version of *The Tempest* in early 1931, and Gill asked French ‘to let me make some drawings from your beautiful figure as a help to me in making the sculpture.’ Gill was drawing for much of February, and Myer, the architect, wrote to Solomon on 17 February 1931 to report that sketches had arrived for review. The extant drawings are almost all for the three relief panels; one drawing, undated, exists for Prospero and Ariel which appears to be an early sketch of the figure group similar, though with more movement and detail, to the final piece.

Two sets of drawings present two different designs: the first drawings for all three panels, dated 10 February 1931 (figure 81), depict full-size figures within the rectangular space. They are quite detailed, and the figures have lithe bodies and flowing wavy hair. Four days later, on 14 February, Gill drew another series of designs (figure 82). As with the Underground designs, these drawings changed from detailed and stylised to increasingly abstract and simplified. The second set of drawings (figure 82) for the two Portland Place panels show truncated figures with fuller bodies, simplified hair and features, and details such as the wings are more stylised and in keeping with the lines surrounding the site for the panels. Gill recorded a trip to London on the 12 February, in between the completion of the two sets of drawings, when he visited the BBC to see the site for the carvings. This visit, during which he may have met Myer, seems to have led to him adapting his designs to suit the site. During the trip, Gill visited an Epstein exhibition at the Leicester Galleries where he would have seen a number of bronze portraits as well as the large *Genesis* (1929-30, figure 83). The simplicity and bulk of Epstein’s sculptures in comparison to Gill’s initial drawings could also have influenced Gill in the development of his ideas.

For both the Underground and the BBC, the function of the institution was reflected in the building’s structure, appearance and proposed decoration. Both institutions were, on behalf of the public, at the forefront of technological innovation, and the headquarters

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were built to reflect these associations. Gill collaborated not just with his patrons and their stakeholders on finalising his designs, but also, it seems, with an idea of modernity represented by his fellow artists, the architecture, and the function of the building. One aspect of this engagement with modernity was on the emphasis on carving. The patrons felt it was important that the sculptors carved directly, in situ, which meant there was little scope for mistakes or re-working. The three BBC panels were carved in situ and so the models would be the final stage at which the designs could be influenced or altered. Gill’s process of creating drawings and models for both these commissions would have been part of his contract and made in order for the patrons to be sure of the success of the sculptures once finished as there would be little or no chance for re-making.

Early drawings for the Winds (figure 77) suggest that Gill may have carved three very small-scale models: two drawings on small sheets of paper were coloured in red crayon on the reverse, the drawing was squared up, and pencil lines were gone over twice. This evidence, and Gill’s usual working practice, suggests that the drawings could have been transferred to stone for carving and Gill spent three days carving early on in the process. On 5 July 1928 Gill recorded ‘drawing on stone (model)’ for the Underground sculptures and then spent four days that month ‘carving model’. The drawings that match the finished carvings were produced in June and October 1928, indicating that part of the designing process for Gill involved working with his earlier drawings in stone to assess their suitability. Gill did make small-scale versions of the finished designs (figure 84), but these replicas were not finished before he went on site at the Underground headquarters. Holden’s instruction to the sculptors was that they work in situ in order ‘to preserve all the virility and imagination and adventure brought into play with every cut of the chisel’. Models may not, therefore, have been a required part of the preparation process and the subsequent execution of the smaller versions was likely to have been a commercial decision made by Gill.

Gill worked on the models (½ full size) for all five BBC sculptures from March to July 1931; the similarity between the second set of drawings and the models indicate the

97 Eric Gill. Diary entries. March to July 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
designs were swiftly approved by Solomon in February 1931. Gill went on to carve two models for the relief panel *Ariel Piping* (figure 87); the second model being made after Gill drew an alternative design in August 1931. Photographs documenting the making of the first model clearly show the workshop process of carving relief sculptures with the stone squared up, layers removed before the detail was carved (figure 85). The models for the Portland Place panels, *Ariel Hears Celestial Music* (figure 88) and *Ariel between Wisdom and Gaiety* (figure 89) are similar to each other in design, and the in situ panels are almost identical to the models and the final drawings from 14 February 1931. The composition of Ariel rising up between two figures was used in both pieces, with the wings replicating the horizontal lines in the stone around the finished panels. The three truncated figures fill the available space, whereas in the first design for *Ariel Piping* the three full body figures were shown in an open space with much of the background visible. The similarity of the first two could be as a result of their intended proximity to each other on the same street, whereas the third panel is on the other side of the building.

Gill’s revised design for *Ariel Piping* in August 1931 (figure 86) was a simplified version of the earlier drawings and model and Ariel is clothed in one and shown naked in the other. The model of the second design illustrated in Collins shows Ariel naked; however a contemporary photograph of the model shows Ariel clothed as he appears in the finished panel (figure 87b). According to Gill’s records, the second model was finished after the large-scale piece had been completed, indicating that Gill carved the second model for approval by his patrons but afterwards adapted the model to his own preferred design. There is no direct evidence in the records of why Gill re-designed this panel; it could be, however, based on the changes to the second design, that his patrons objected to Ariel’s nakedness in this scene, despite their direction that Ariel should be depicted naked in the large group with Prospero. As he later did with the first model for *Prospero and Ariel*, Gill appears to have modified this sculpture to reclaim responsibility and authorship over a design he had not approved of. Solomon required Gill to gift the models of both Portland Place panels to him\(^98\); neither of the *Ariel Piping* models were requested, suggesting he did not approve of either version.

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\(^{98}\) Correspondence between Gill, Myer and Solomon evidences this request. May 1931. BBC Written Archive: S167/4/6
There are important differences between the two models Gill produced for *Prospero and Ariel*. In the first model, which became *Abraham and Isaac* (figures 90 and 91)\(^99\), the figure of Isaac is taller (relative to Abraham) than the figure of Ariel in the second model (relative to Prospero, figure 93); Abraham has a longer flowing beard and hair and appears more passive with what seem to be closed eyes; Isaac also stands on the top of a globe (later removed, figure 92) whereas the model of Ariel stands on a flat ground.\(^100\) In order for the piece to become *Abraham and Isaac* Gill removed the pipes and depicted Isaac’s hand in the gesture of blessing. In the letter to *The Listener* in 1936, referenced above, Gill described why he rejected the first model:

> in the course of carving it I came to the conclusion that the proportions of the figures to one another were not appropriate to the subject, so I abandoned it. … If anybody chooses to compare the two groups he will see that the sizes of the figures in relation to one another are quite different and that … in the Prospero and Ariel the relation is that of magician to fairy (i.e., the figure of Prospero is monstrous and that of Ariel much smaller than any natural child could be in relation to a parent).\(^101\)

This letter presented Gill’s realisation that he had created an image that did not fit the purpose of the subject matter requested. During his work on the first model, Gill was visited by Myer and Rendall at his workshop in April 1931, and Howard Coster (1885-1959) took photographs of it on 6 May.\(^102\) Gill did not begin carving the second model (figures 93 and 94) until 20 May, indicating that, though Gill later presented a decision made by him alone, it was likely made in discussion with his patrons. Though he was not required to produce drawings for the figure group, these models were crucial to the production process and enabled Gill to start work on the large stone for the final piece.

Both commissions were carved at the workshop and finished in situ. The majority of the preparatory work for the Underground commission was done by an assistant and Gill

\(^99\) In Gill’s diary both models are referred to as *Prospero and Ariel*; Collins catalogues what became *Abraham and Isaac* as the second version made by Gill, ‘carved for his own pleasure’ (Collins, Eric Gill *The Sculpture*, 264). Photographs in the Hesburgh Libraries show *Abraham and Isaac* in the background of the *Prospero and Ariel* model half-finished (figure 94), supporting the assertion, evidenced in Gill’s letters, that *Abraham and Isaac* was the first model.

\(^100\) The globe was referred to in Rendall’s original scheme: ‘There is a sphere at the base on which the figure might stand; this, however need not be retained.’ Dr. Rendall. Manuscript. Undated, early October 1930. BBC Written Archives: S167/4/5.


\(^102\) Eric Gill. Diary entries. April and May 1931. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
covered the cost of their work within his own fee. There seems to have been very little interaction between Holden and Gill during this work on site and Gill only recorded one meeting with the architect on 23 January 1929.\(^{103}\) Holden wanted the sculptors to work on the stone as part of the creative process and so seems to have stepped back once the paper designs had been discussed and approved. He may have wanted the sculptors to feel that they had more freedom by carrying out the majority of the work on the stone from these preparatory sketches. On 20 November 1928 Gill visited London with Lawrence Cribb to start work in situ at the Underground headquarters.\(^{104}\) According to one letter sent in September 1928 Gill hoped that Joseph Cribb would also be able to assist with carving the *Winds*, possibly to enable Lawrence Cribb to stay at the workshop and oversee the other commissions being completed.\(^{105}\) Joseph Cribb was not able to join the workshop at that point, and Gill, instead, employed an un-named mason for ‘assisting’, though he does not record what he was paid or what work he completed.\(^{106}\)

From Gill’s diaries, and from his letter to Joseph Cribb, it appears that the stone for the Underground panels was first delivered to the workshop before being sent to the building and put in place. Gill recorded sending off the large stones at the end of October 1928 and his expense records show sizeable payments to the railway company for their movement to London. This information, a visit from the Clerk of Works for the Underground building before the stones left\(^{108}\), and Gill’s notations on final preparatory drawings relating to the joins, indicate that Gill had the large stones in his workshop prior to working on site.\(^{109}\) Gill did not record any time spent carving before going on site, suggesting that the initial work of taking off the top layers and roughing out the basic shape of the figures, was done by an assistant. Lawrence Cribb was paid £11-10 for work carried

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\(^{103}\) Eric Gill. Diary entry. 23 January 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.

\(^{104}\) Eric Gill. Diary entry. 20 November 1928. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.


\(^{106}\) Eric Gill. Ledger. June 1927 to September 1933. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.

\(^{107}\) This is in comparison with other movements of stone that year: for the Underground job he paid the railway twice, £3-14-1 and £2-9-10; for another job, a regular headstone being transported the same distance, he paid £0-18-2. Eric Gill. Analysis Cash book. July 1928 to June 1933. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.

\(^{108}\) Eric Gill. Diary entry. 25 October 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.

out in the workshop indicating that he prepared the stone prior to the in situ carving\(^{110}\); relatively detailed drawings were therefore necessary for the assistants to carve accurately. There was a gap of three weeks between the stones being sent off, on 29 October, and the work starting in situ, on 20 November 1928, during which time the stones would have been fixed in place. Holden’s wish that each of the sculptors work on site reacting to the limitations that brought about, was unlikely to have been the case with Gill, or the other sculptors. Having had the stone in the workshop first, each sculptor could leave only the details to carve on the site which, as the reliefs were about 80 feet from the ground and worked on in winter, was also the most practical process.

Gill went on site to draw out the *Ariel between Wisdom and Gaiety* panel on the stone at the BBC on 27 May 1931, which he did with Lawrence Cribb. On 2 June he was at the BBC again and ‘drew out carving on panel for AMcD to cut out silhouette’. This was Angus McDougall, Gill’s assistant who had joined the workshop in early 1931.\(^{111}\) He was subsequently employed, though not continuously, on ‘sawing & working stone for BBC models’ between February and April.\(^{112}\) McDougall worked for a further two weeks up to 15 June and received £2; he worked another two days’ before 15 August 1931, presumably roughing out the stone based on Gill’s drawings.\(^{113}\) Though the final figure of *Prospero and Ariel*, in three large pieces of stone, was started in the workshop, each of the reliefs was done entirely in situ due to the way that Myer had designed the stone panels as part of the structure of the building.

Gill started carving the panels at the BBC on 24 August 1931.\(^{114}\) He continued to carve in situ on a regular basis and worked through the winter. In a letter to his brother in May 1932 he wrote that ‘All this winter I’ve been doing the three panels on the outside of the building. Bad weather, bad stone, & bad health. But they’re done at last.’\(^{115}\) The work on the two Portland Place panels was completed quite quickly, likely due to the preparatory

\(^{110}\) Eric Gill. Lawrence Cribb account book. 1925-1940. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.

\(^{111}\) McDougall appeared in Gill’s diary in January 1929 in connection with the Monotype Corporation for whom Gill designed typefaces. From the start of 1930 McDougall appeared more frequently; on 8 February Gill recorded that he was ‘starting Angus McDougall with letter cutting.’ Eric Gill. Diary entries. 1929 and 1930. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.

\(^{112}\) Eric Gill. Diary entries. May and June 1929. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.


\(^{114}\) Eric Gill. Diary entry. 24 August 1931. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.

work that had already been done. Myer and Rendall visited Gill on site, and at his
workshop, during this time to inspect the carving. Gill’s work on the first two panels
continued as agreed and the panels were identical to the final drawings and models. As
Gill’s letter described, all three panels were completed by spring 1932. Work on the
large-scale *Prospero and Ariel* group, including work by Lawrence Cribb, continued in the
workshop during this time.

Photographs taken by Coster, a well-known portrait photographer, of the making of
*Prospero and Ariel* shows Lawrence Cribb at work in the workshop (figure 96) roughing out
the large piece of stone based on the smaller scale model. The small-scale model,
alongside the full-size stone, was surrounded by a wooden armature (figure 95). Another
set of wooden battens surrounded the full size stone (which was in three pieces, stacked)
and could have been used to accurately scale up the shape of the model. The middle piece
of stone was roughed out first and the outline of Ariel’s upper body can be seen in the
photograph. Coster’s photograph displays close affinity with the images of sculptors
discussed in Chapter One (figure 7) indicating the importance of the methods of execution
and Coster’s awareness of these trends. The purposes of the photographs is unclear.
However Gill’s use of such a well-known photographer, and his knowledge of the press
interest in his work, indicate a responsiveness to the management of his public identity.

Gill started carving the large stone in the workshop on 8 January 1932.116 This was
considerably later than his clients had expected, according to a letter written following
Gill’s appointment as sculptor. Myer wrote to the structural engineer, Tudsbery, on 31
December 1930 that

> Mr Gill says that he hopes to commence carving the panels in situ by June [1931],
and to have the big group ready for erection by the end of September [1931]. …
Needless to say, I think it would be in every way undesirable for us to have to
hurry the Sculptor with his work.117

Gill’s status here was of the artist at work, someone who could not be rushed through the
creative process, at the same time his patrons needed to factor his work into the general
progress of the building work. Gill was carving *Prospero and Ariel* until early 1933, though
how his patrons reacted to this extension to the original estimate is not in the records. An

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116 Eric Gill. Diary entry. 8 January 1932. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
117 George Val Myer. To Mr Tudsbery. 31 December 1930. BBC Written Archive: S167/4/5.
article printed the month before the sculpture was unveiled indicated disquiet and frustration between the sculptor and the patron:

Mr Eric Gill, I hear, has now been told that he really must get his Prospero and Ariel figures finished at Broadcasting House. Authority at the BBC is pained at the impish glee with which the great sculptor has spun out, entirely at his own expense, the completion of his fascinating task in Portland Place.\textsuperscript{118}

Gill did not work on \textit{Prospero and Ariel} from July until 12 September 1932 during which time he worked on other commissions, including carvings and engravings. During this time it is probable that Lawrence Cribb, or another assistant, continued to work on the stone, most likely hewing away areas around the figures. In 1932 Gill recorded seeing Myer and Rendall only twice, both times when they visited the workshop at Pigotts. He saw Myer once more in London in December 1932.\textsuperscript{119} The infrequency of these meetings and the similarity of the model to the finished piece suggest that, as with the Underground, once the designs had been approved, any meetings were to monitor progress as opposed to comment on content or style. Gill continued carving from September until 29 October, and on 19 November he worked with his assistants to get the stones ready to send to London.\textsuperscript{120} Photographs taken of the figure prior to the move to London, as well as the photograph of it being lifted into position (figure 97), show that very little carving work remained. The photograph shows considerable detail on Prospero’s face and hair, indicating that Gill’s work in situ was relatively limited.

The presentation in the press of Gill’s work with the Underground and the BBC concentrated on the work done in situ, and the physicality of the artists’ work was praised. Photographs of Gill show him ‘at work’ either in his workshop or in situ, indicating not only a public interest in the artist’s creative process but also Gill’s willingness to be identified in this way.\textsuperscript{121} In fact the work done by the workshop ensured that Gill’s work on site was minimal, as well as enabling him to complete the work relatively quickly and continue with other projects. The simplicity with which Gill’s role was presented as the sole carver of the work belied the complex process of designing, preparing the stone and

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Reynold’s News}, 12 February 1933. BBC Written Archive, Box 9A.
\textsuperscript{119} Eric Gill. Diary entries. 24 February, 22 September and 1 December 1932. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
\textsuperscript{120} Eric Gill. Diary entries. July to November 1932. Series 1, subseries 1, box 3, Clark Library.
\textsuperscript{121} The images are likely to have been staged to ensure no movement would blur the image.
working off and on site that was Gill’s usual working practice. Later in the interview in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1933 Gill discussed his approach to working with architects and his workshop:

Mr Gill started work on the relief at his home by getting one of his apprentices to do the preliminary cutting away of stone from the rectangular block. Apprentices must learn their trade, he explained, and they must start with something they cannot spoil. He has been working on the stone in position in Manchester for over a fortnight. It is important for a sculptor to do the later work on the site so that he may see the finished work under the conditions of light in which spectators will see it. The lighting of a studio differs greatly from the lighting of the open air, and to a spectator a sculpture is built up of light and shade.\(^{122}\)

Though he later publically discussed the work carried out by his assistants, the three months Gill spent on site for *Prospero and Ariel* (seen by some as unnecessary) saw Gill actively engaging with his public identity as a modern artist-craftsman.

When Gill finished work on the Underground, on 8 February 1929, he had worked for a total of 51½ days. The majority of Gill’s days carving were in situ, his assistants responsible for the majority of the preparatory work done when the stones were in the workshop. In total, Gill received £600 for the commission from which he paid himself £125, around £1 for every two days’ work. Lawrence Cribb was paid £69 and 10 shillings in May 1929 for an unrecorded number of days. As well his own earnings, and those of his assistants, Gill covered expenses such as stone and carriage; after these deductions he finished with profit of over £300.\(^{123}\)

By 10 June 1931 Gill had paid Lawrence Cribb £7-8s for work on the BBC commission. As with his work on the Underground, Cribb was Gill’s most trusted assistant at this time and he had a central role in these high profile commissions. When Gill totalled the work done he paid himself £825 (275¼ days work ‘at say £3’ a day), and Cribb was paid £201 (Gill didn’t note for how many days); ‘other assistants’ were paid just over £15 in total. This last small amount related to work done to help Cribb, most likely by McDougall in preparing the stones and polishing the models when finished. Gill’s final fee for the BBC sculptures was much higher than for the Underground, in total £2,000. This figure was

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\(^{123}\) Eric Gill. Ledger. June 1927 to September 1933. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
£400 more than his patrons had budgeted, indicating that Gill was not necessarily working longer ‘at his own expense’. His accounts show he was also paid another £45 which is likely to have been for the inscription in the entrance hall and engravings for the BBC letterhead. The large sum covered the stone for the Sower, possibly the stone for the models (though this is not clear from the records), transport for each of the pieces and all the labour involved from him, Lawrence Cribb, Angus McDougall and the other jobbing masons he employed in the workshop when required. Gill added, as he did for all jobs, a percentage for ‘office expenses’, which for this work was 25%. His profit was over £600, twice that for the Underground commission.

Gill’s status as the sole sculptor on the BBC commission, and the increased scale of the work, could have led him to increase his charges. Gill’s role as businessman in these negotiations was clear: he completed the job he was hired to do, within the parameters set by the client, and ensured that his profit, after earnings and expenses, was substantial. This self-awareness would have extended to an acute consciousness of his role alongside that of the architect and client, and the expectations he needed to fulfil. Regular meetings, the approval stages of sketches and models, as well as site visits ensured that the artist / patron relationships were collaborative and productive. During this time Gill was also able to commit to work for others clients in inscriptional work and, as seen in the first chapter, Gill taught his assistants to be able to follow his drawings and to carry out his instructions in a ‘Gill-like’ manner.

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124 Reynold’s News, 12 February 1933. BBC Written Archive, Box 9A.
125 Eric Gill. Ledger. June 1927 to September 1933. Series 7, subseries 1, Clark Library.
Conclusion

Between starting work on the London Underground headquarters in late 1928 and finishing at Broadcasting House in early 1933, Gill’s public reputation, one that has since formed the basis of much historical interpretation, was firmly established. For Gill, this was the start of a high profile and lucrative decade, with continued coverage of his work in the press and numerous large-scale commissions. These included the Midland Hotel in Morecambe (1933), a collaboration with the architect Oliver Hill (with assistance from Lawrence Cribb, Donald Potter and Denis Tegetmeier); the Palestine Archaeological Museum (1934); a set of carved panels for the People’s Palace on Mile End Road (1936); and a large relief panel for the League of Nations in Geneva (1937-8), for which he was commissioned by the British Government. In his own public and private writing and quotes in the press, however, Gill displayed discomfort in this role. For example, in his use of the term ‘furniture’ to describe his architectural work, his continuing lectures and essays on ‘plain building’ and his statements criticising the status of the modern architect. This final chapter has closely analysed contemporary photographs and drawings from different archives, alongside the sculptures, to describe the complex aspects of working on public sculpture. Gill’s published work on architecture and sculpture can be seen to be his negotiation with this complex web of collaboration and production. The chapter has discussed, in detail, the importance of the relationship with the architect; how media and historical interpretations have obscured the realities of sculpture production; and how the idea of authorship was presented in relation to the collaborative work carried out in these high profile commissions.

Over the five years Gill was working on these two major commissions he gave at least five lectures on architecture, and architecture and sculpture. He continued to write and publish throughout this time and beyond, and took part in debates in person and in newspapers. One such debate appeared in the letters page of the Manchester Guardian in

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126 Now the Rockefeller Museum.
127 Now the Queen’s Building, Queen Mary University of London.
129 Liverpool Architecture Society, 21 November 1928, Architecture Association Club, 9 April 1930, debate on architecture and sculpture; Gryphon Club (Trinity College, Cambridge), 21 May 1930; Birmingham, 20 May 1932; and the opening speech at the RIBA conference in 1932, 16 June 1932.
June 1935 on the subject of architecture and sculpture in which Gill seems to have criticised Epstein’s sculptures for the British Medical Association building on The Strand. The art historian Eric Newton responded to Gill’s letter and criticised Gill’s assertion that the machine-made and the handmade were incompatible:

The hand-cut and the machine-cut stones are both expressions of human intention. There is no reason why that creative intention should not fuse them into a real unity. They must be judged by the quality of the intention and the skill with which it has been expressed, not by the force—steam, electricity, or muscle—that has been used to make them. If an ‘unadorned’ building is the only kind of structure which is ‘at unity with itself and the life of our time,’ then the life of our time is in a deplorable state. A blank wall is the expression of a blank mind.\(^{130}\)

Newton’s idea of unity was of that between forms of creative human intention and skilful action or, as Gill might have expressed it, between the head and the hand. For Gill, however, the distance between the head and the hand in the making of sculpture for buildings was too great and caused a lack of unity between art and life or society.

Historical accounts of Gill’s ideas and his work on both the Underground and BBC headquarters have presented, as Newton alluded to, contradiction: that in making sculpture for modern architecture he was in direct opposition of his own belief that the two could not go together. According to Speaight’s biography, Gill’s work on the Underground commission ‘introduced a decade of compromise with a world that Eric denounced in proportion as he was obliged, economically, to come to terms with it.’\(^{131}\)

Speaight’s summary of Gill’s work on the BBC commission concentrates on his attempts to please the patrons, whose idea the subject matter was, despite his lack of understanding and agreement with the symbolic messages. Speaight describes Gill as meeting the challenge with a combination of skill and scepticism. . . . He worked in all weathers until his smock and biretta became part of the landscape of Langham Place. He could perfectly well have been provided with a proper shelter, but he preferred to be treated like an ordinary mason, and stood on a plank platform, reached by a ladder and protected by a strip of sacking.\(^{132}\)

Speaight’s presentation of Gill as a craftsman is simplified, with a continued concentration on his physical appearance as a craftsman, his hardiness and his discomfort at working in


\(^{131}\) Speaight, *The Life of Eric Gill*, 204.

the public eye. The complex and constantly negotiated power relationships of patron and artist, and artist and workshop, are obscured to create an image of a solitary artist at work despite, not because of, his ability to work with patrons.

In 1985, Richard Cork wrote that Gill must have ‘welcomed Holden’s commission as an opportunity to implement his passionately held beliefs about carving on a grand and public scale.’ Cork contrasts this assumption with Gill’s dissatisfaction at the status of the workers around him working on the building. Gill was, according to Cork, ‘fighting a battle with himself, torn at his pleasure at receiving a substantial commission for public sculpture and his misgivings about the advisability of carving at an architect’s behest.’ Cork’s reasoning for Gill’s involvement in the project was Holden’s enthusiasm for appropriate, carved, architectural sculpture. Again Gill was placed at the head of the ‘team’ of younger sculptors, though there is no evidence put forward to support this assertion; the emphasis here is on Epstein’s and Moore’s work as examples of modern direct carving, and Gill’s status as a craftsman, in a medieval tradition, wedded to larger philosophies.

MacCarthy continued this theme in her interpretation of Gill’s work at the BBC: ‘in his insistence on working out of doors on the scaffold in all weathers, with a zeal in fact not strictly necessary, he was asserting the craftsman’s anonymity. He wanted the conditions of the ordinary stonemason.’ Speaight and MacCarthy present a struggle between public recognition and sculpture production that can be seen in Gill’s comments, both at the time and later, about his role as a ‘furniture’ maker and the failure of the BBC scheme. Speaight writes that, in the last decade of his life, Gill’s work never achieved the perfection of his earlier work, most likely due to the ‘necessity of turning out too much.’ The message from Speaight, Cork and MacCarthy is that Gill worked on these architectural commissions to the best of his ability but was not able to reconcile his ideas with what he had to do in practice. He is positioned as both a modern, direct carving,
solitary sculptor as well as a philosophising, but reclusive, craftsman; neither of these limited identities allows for the complexities of the relationships and collaborations that Gill managed during each commission.

In some of Gill’s statements he seemed to distance himself from his patrons and present himself as a simple craftsman. He saw himself as master of the workshop in status, payments and stages of involvement in work; he carved himself, and worked closely with the assistants who carved instead of, and alongside, him. In the close examination of Gill’s practice in this chapter, the complexity of the process and the collaborations both inside and outside the workshop become clear and the presentation of Gill as a simple craftsman then becomes untenable. His sculptures, from initial designs, consultations with his patrons, working the ideas through onto the stone with the help of his workshop, and his financial profit, show that Gill was, if not completely at ease, at least unperturbed with his role as contracted artist.

In a 1931 essay on the subject of clothing, Gill wrote that ‘Public display should be confined to what is of public importance.’ Though referring to appropriate dress in modern society, this statement is pertinent both in the context of Gill’s reputation and his views and practice on sculptural architecture: sculpture should be integral to the building (and not inserted as an afterthought); the form of the sculpture needed to be intimately linked to the function of the building (and therefore not ‘mere’ ornamentation); and sculpture should display in form, both in material and how it was made, close collaboration between the architect, the builder, the artist and the craftsman.

In his essays, Gill seemed to suggest that the role of the artist was secondary to the overall purpose of the sculpture and the building as determined by the architect. The anonymity of the medieval craftsman could be seen to be the desired outcome for Gill in his public sculpture. However, his public display of an image of himself as a craftsman, his public statements about his sculpture, and his changed meaning of Prospero and Ariel, show Gill’s desire to be seen to be the author of these works. In comparison to other sculptures by Gill there is similarity in the treatment in hair, drapery and facial features supporting the idea of each work being ‘a Gill’. The presentation of his work in the press, and in

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historical accounts since, has supported the idea of Gill as a lone creative craftsman. As this chapter has carefully explored through detailed analysis of Gill’s preparation and execution of the sculptures, he was closely connected physically, and at times philosophically, to his workshop and to his patrons and fellow artists. His public statements, and the statements by the architects he collaborated with, also show a deep engagement with current debates on modern architecture and modern sculpture. As this examination of material produced by Gill and other at the time of production, Gill can be seen to work closely with his associates to produce what was required, benefitting both his own financial, artistic and public success.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that the making of Gill’s sculpture was a complex and collaborative process, made as a result of private or public commissions, as gifts for friends and family, or because he hoped to sell them through galleries or exhibitions. I have therefore focused on the collaborative practices of the artist and the workshop, the art market and the patron, and the role of authorship central to these processes. I set out to address the following research questions: how has authorship been presented in discussions about early twentieth century sculpture; and in light of this how have Gill’s work and workshop been presented during his lifetime and since? How did Gill position himself as an artist-craftsman within the workshop and beyond? Finally, how do these interpretations relate to the realities of producing sculptures at this time and what can a detailed study of these realities tell us about the making and presentation of the artist as author? The body of the thesis has addressed these questions through a detailed analysis of Gill’s day-to-day working practices and his published theories on art production in the context of a number of his collaborations.

In his theoretical and practical approach to the making of art, Gill aimed to unite the head and the hand, the body and the mind and, in doing so, bring together ideas of the sexual and the spiritual. One image that encapsulates these aspirations is the Divine Lovers (1922, figure 98) which depicts an intertwined couple, both of whom have haloes. The image appeared as a print and a series of sculptures, and has its origins in Gill’s early carving Ecstasy (1910, figure 6, currently on display at Tate Britain). The Divine Lovers existed as an engraving and subsequently as a small sculpture made from the engraved woodblock. Gill was carving the wood block while he was working on the translation of Maritain’s Art et Scholastique.¹ The significance of Maritain’s text was to enable Gill to bring his own

¹ ‘Fr. [John] O’Connor translated book ‘Art & Scholastic’ in m[orning] & n[oon]. I wielding dictionary & carving “divine lovers” the while.’ 29 April 1922. Eric Gill. Diary entry. Series 1, subseries 1, box 2, Clark Library. The wood carving was subsequently cast into an edition of six pewter sculptures of the same size.
theories on art and production into a religious context and allow him to confirm his ideals of collaborative making in the name of God.

In press and critical discussions of Gill’s work during his lifetime, commentators constructed a simplified image of the isolated sculptor at work. Some histories of this period of sculpture production also featured the parallel idea that those artists who engaged with life, society and, to an extent, with architecture, were seen to be ‘popular’ and so irrelevant to the development of modern art. More recently, historians have questioned the narrow definition of modern sculpture as that which is carved and abstract; these continuing debates, however, remain within a discourse whereby sculptors were able to make sculptures purely ‘for themselves’. The image and idea of the isolated artist at work, alone in a studio, persists; the perception of Gill at work as an idealised, anonymous medieval craftsman has persisted in historical accounts of his sculpture. During his own lifetime, and since, he developed a complicated public identity. He was presented somewhere between a sculptor actively engaging with modern trends and influencing those trends, and an eccentric workshop patriarch who deliberately distanced himself from modernity.

Gill’s view of himself was also complex and changed throughout his life. Early influences and opponents allowed him to develop his own views and philosophy that encompassed art, society, politics and religion. His own workshop was central to the development of his artistic processes and his theoretical ideals, and so forms the central basis in this thesis to examine his collaborative working processes within and beyond it. Further, Gill’s status and success evolved in parallel to developments and changes within his workshop. Early in his career Gill worked within a small workshop taking on apprentices learning a trade. A number of his early assistants subsequently completed their training and went on to work in larger firms, or other workshops, cutting letters and carving stone. His status and influence within the workshop and beyond inspired certain assistants to stay with him and

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4 Curtis, “How direct carving stole the idea of Modern British Art,” 293.

5 For example, Albert Leaney went to Norman & Burt builders in Burgess Hill who supplied tombstones; and Sam Geering left for Rooke & Son, monumental masons in Brighton.
to work according to his ideals. Early in his career Gill was part of a team as well as master and teacher. In a BBC radio programme about Gill in 1961 Joseph Cribb said ‘I learnt a lot of things which have stayed with me all my life, to do my work for the love of doing the work. And always put a good finish on it, and not be slack or haphazard.’ As Gill became more successful and well known, the number of commissions he received increased, and so did the size of his workshop. The type of person who worked in the workshop also shifted to slightly older, more experienced carvers who were looking not just to learn practical skills but also to learn within an environment based on Gill’s ideals. In the same BBC programme Michael Richey, one of Gill’s assistants in the 1930s, said that he had learnt of Gill having read his essay Sculpture which impressed him and ‘I went up to see him. And eventually I apprenticed myself … in the stone shop.’

Gill’s changing status in his workshop, from the mid-1920s onwards, developed his role as a patriarchal, mentor figure among his assistants and apprentices. This was in part a result of his changing public persona in the media where he was increasingly presented as a respected and influential modern sculptor. From his first sculpture exhibition in 1911, Gill was seen to be part of a movement in modern sculpture because of his technique as a carver, his background as a craftsman, and the ‘style’ he was seen to work in. Many accounts of his artistic identity and his art in books, newspapers and journals during his lifetime positioned his work as a coherent expression of modernist tendencies, including: collaboration with the sculpture material; engagement with non-Western traditions; and association with what was seen to be ‘modern’ in Europe. Through all these interpretations there was an assumption of the isolated artist creating artwork with the sole purpose of self-expression. Gill’s own writing questioned this idea of the function-less artwork and in his art production he aimed to make what was needed and useful. His collaborative work with patrons, architects and public institutions can be seen to manifest his aims for art to be useful.

Working on architectural sculpture for Gill and many of his contemporaries was a useful source of income, patronage and enabled the progression of an artist’s success and reputation. As noted by Gill’s patrons for the BBC commission, with reference to Charles

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Wheeler’s recently unveiled sculpture *Prosperity* (1930) for the Bank of England: ‘It would seem that sculpture on a public building is “fair game”, and I feel sure that whatever we do will expose us to the abuse of the highbrows or the lowbrows as the case may be.’ The reception in the press of the sculpture on the London Underground headquarters and Broadcasting House show that this was the case. Gill’s identity was presented as both an elder statesmen among younger sculptors, as a controversial modern artist, and a jovial antiquated craftsman. Gill’s own experience of making sculptures to order reflected this mixture of artistic identities. He was eager to sell his models but he also subsequently changed the meaning of the commissioned works to identify them more closely with his own intentions. Alongside these actions he published and appeared in newspapers to try to direct interpretations of his work and his processes as a craftsman and head of a workshop. Within these statements, Gill was often intent on asserting the responsibility of those who commissioned him. Patrons and architects were called on to explain, justify or defend Gill’s appointment at various stages, suggesting that the responsibility for the content, appearance and relative success of a particular work was shared. The idea of an individual, isolated creator, however, was maintained in critical reception through interviews with the artist, discussions of style and images of the ‘sculptor at work’.

The collaborations central to Gill’s making of commissioned and non-commissioned sculpture become clear from the detailed mapping of his processes and connections. This process of mapping and the analysis that followed were enabled by the methodology I used to carry out the research. In the analysis I employed a similar methodology to the Mapping Sculpture project and was able to provide an expanded view of the records created by that project. The project’s database provides the mechanism by which researchers can examine relationships and collaborations indicated by the many cross-referenced, connected people and institutions in the database. It also allows for an in-depth investigation into the idea of authorship connected to the physical space of the workshop covered in the 2010 and 2012 readers on post-Second World War artist studios discussed

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9 See Introduction, 19.
in the Introduction. In this thesis I aimed to examine, as these readers did, the idea of the workshop or studio as a physically creative space, a social and learning space and the creative spaces outside the workshop. Gill worked within, and outside of his workshop, both with and without his assistants, and in collaboration with his patrons and other artists. Chapter Two described a period of intense collaboration between Epstein, Gill and Joseph Cribb, as well as a sharing of technical skills and subject matter in the context of mutual admiration and encouragement. In questioning the site of creative inspiration and the process of making allowed by the methodology I was also able to investigate the idea of ‘style’. In detailing how Gill was discussed in the media, the thesis addressed a number of issues in addition to the research questions set out at the start, including: was the way in which an artist worked a conscious effort to follow certain trends; to what extent was it inspired by close associates; and how can the designation of a certain ‘style’ support the attribution of an artwork to an individual artist?

The strengths of the methodology also lay in the depth of information I compiled to map the detailed making of a sculpture, and the relationships central to the creative and practical preparation and presentation of the work. By focussing on two periods (1910-1915 and 1927-1932) in Gill’s life, and particular sculptures produced during these years, my study has been able to detail the people involved; the payments made; the number of hours worked; and the development from design to execution. In addition to this detail, my study brings the information into a broader understanding of the work and of the artist’s career. These aspects of making are crucial for understanding, in the broadest sense possible, the reason Gill made sculptures, the ‘style’ in which he made them, and who informed that creative process. In focussing on this small sample of sculptures, however, Gill’s extensive output in sculpture and other media was necessarily in the background.

In order to fully explore the issues discussed in each chapter, I concentrated on the sculpture, workshop, processes, and theories of Eric Gill. The application of this detailed study of process into the making of sculpture by Gill’s contemporaries should lead to a deeper understanding of the making of sculpture during this period. As I showed in

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Chapter Four, the media coverage of the work of all the artists on the London Underground headquarters concentrated on the practice of carving and the connection between this, the abstract style in which they worked and the perceived identity of the sculptor. In particular, the methodology could be used to examine, in detail, the way in which sculptures described as works of ‘direct carving’ were made, to understand and reveal the reality of working processes, and how sculptors were viewed in press and historical interpretations. Other questions on the sculpture of Gill covered in my study are: the extent to which modelling was still used; how, or if, sculptors attempted to align their practice with published statements on process and creativity; and how direct contact with materials came to be, in media and historical interpretations, as important if not more important than the artist’s own intentions. Examining images of sculptor’s work spaces, images of them at work, and their public statements, has been a useful starting point to see how artists themselves engaged with increasing public interest in the process of making sculpture.

Gill’s sculpture was heavily influenced by British medieval traditions. Research into Gill’s use of local stones, and his mainly UK-based network of patrons and associates, should allow investigation into what it meant to be an English artist in the first half of the twentieth century. Gill’s theoretical standpoint originated largely from a perception of the evils of industrial and factory production which led, in part, to his insistence on the limited size of his workshop and the status of his assistants. The research I have presented in this thesis provides an underpinning to understand Gill in the context of what it has meant to be defined as an English artist and how his work and ideals were affected by the social, political and economic contexts of the making of sculpture during the first half of the twentieth century; in particular, in reaction to the First and Second World Wars and after the economic slump of 1929. As Andrew Stephenson noted in a 1991 article on modernism and the depression, ‘it forced artists to diversify’ and engage with and re-evaluate ‘the relationship of the artist to society and of art to the political economy’.

My research considered contemporary assessments on the success of sculptures made for architecture; another useful line of enquiry would be to investigate architecture and

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11 Andrew Stephenson, “‘Strategies of Situation’,” 30.
sculpture in the context of ideas of modernism and patronage. One aspect of the idea of modernism as referenced by Wilenski was that an artist who engaged with the public was not relevant to the histories of the modernist approach to art production. The extent to which the mind and life of the artist was present in artworks as sole creative author is questioned by the pursuit of architectural sculpture. How sculptors navigated this terrain, particularly in light of the financial cost of making sculptures, would be a useful perspective from which to investigate these contexts.

In this thesis I have shown that a sculptor like Gill worked within a complex network including technicians, patrons and critics. Gill collaborated with each to construct an identity that would allow for perceived integrity of purpose but also continued financial and public success that would enable him to work. Gill’s example, as a theorist and artist, demonstrates the difficulty in creating ideals against which an artist’s practical work can be judged. Direct carving became a useful shorthand to describe what it meant to be modern and original in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century; this label designated the identity of an isolated artist working directly with the material. These labels, and the many which were applied to Gill’s ‘style’, limit the understanding of Gill, his work, and the complex network of collaborations and relationships which were central to the making of sculpture.

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ARCHIVES


Barrie Marks (private).

BBC Written Archive, Reading.


Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Ditchling Museum of Art+Craft, Ditchling.

East Sussex Record Office, Lewes.


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Macdonald Gill Archive (private).

Manchester City Art Gallery.


Philip Hagreen Archive (private).
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The Albert Sperison Collection of Eric Gill, The Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco.

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Bibliography

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Appendix I: Assistants and Apprentices 1906 to 1940

Ordered by the date they started in the workshop.

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<td>1940</td>
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The data from this table is compiled from: Evan Gill, *The Inscriptional Work of Eric Gill* (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd, 1964), xv; Eric Gill, Diaries and Ledgers, Series 1 and Series 7, Clark Library; Peter Cribb, unpublished manuscript on the history of the workshops, Joseph Cribb Archive.
Appendix II: Example spreadsheet showing compiled information from Eric Gill’s diary, 1910

Compiled from Eric Gill’s diary for 1910 (Series 1, subseries 1, box 1, Collection on Eric Gill, MS Gill, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles).

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<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Went to Guildford to see Fry but he was away</td>
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<td>09/02/1910</td>
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<td>Roger Fry</td>
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<td>Kessler</td>
<td>E&amp;F</td>
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<td>Job (as described)</td>
<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>16, 17 etc. / EP / E&amp;F / N</td>
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<td>T. J. C-S.</td>
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<td>17/02/1910</td>
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<td>E. P / N / 16, 17 etc.</td>
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<td>18/02/1910</td>
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<td>Kessler</td>
<td>16, 17 etc.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schmerz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Palisser</td>
<td>came to Ditchling &quot;to do carving job for me on Grisell headstone&quot;</td>
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<td>19/02/1910</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
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<td>Kessler</td>
<td>16, 17 etc. / Endpapers</td>
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<td>20/02/1910</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>21/02/1910</td>
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<td>Kessler</td>
<td>E&amp;F</td>
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<td>21/02/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>T. J. C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;W&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;W&quot;</td>
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<td>Grisell</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Kessler E&amp;F</td>
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<td>William Rothenstein</td>
<td>model for painting</td>
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<td>23/02/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;W&quot;</td>
<td>Palisser</td>
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<td>Banker</td>
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<td>24/02/1910</td>
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<td>Board of Trade alphabet</td>
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<td>24/02/1910</td>
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<td>Stowe &quot;Val…&quot;?</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;W&quot;</td>
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<td>Board of Trade alphabet</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;Legend&quot;</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;Legend&quot;</td>
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<td>28/02/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Joie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jack and Nan Nye</td>
<td>Land Club Business all evening with Nye</td>
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<td>28/02/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Schmerz</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S.</td>
<td>&quot;Legend&quot;</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>01/03/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Joie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sent pictures to B.A.C. water</td>
<td>To London (till 3rd)</td>
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<td>Hours</td>
<td>Job (as described)</td>
<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>01/03/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>T.J.C.S.</td>
<td>visited</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>02/03/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lady Ottoline Morrell</td>
<td>worked at WRs on Gladstone League Lettering in noon</td>
<td>William Rothenstein</td>
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Ruth Cribb 2013
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<td>Tidied work room all morn</td>
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<td>India Soc. (device)</td>
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<td>Gibb (199)</td>
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<td>Roger Fry</td>
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<td>At Guildford</td>
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<td>William Rothenstein</td>
<td>To London (till 9th) with Betty and Petra.</td>
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<td>09/06/1910</td>
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<td>Joie</td>
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<td>Joie</td>
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<td>Balzac Tante Lisbeth</td>
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<td>Pite - Yeomanry</td>
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<td>William Rothenstein</td>
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<td>William Rothenstein's show</td>
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<td>At Bognor</td>
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<td>Dakyns (mon)</td>
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<td>At Bognor, then home</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Grenfall</td>
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<td>26/06/1910</td>
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<td>Aitken</td>
<td>&quot;Saw Asham house for first time from Beddingham Hill&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;all day&quot;</td>
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Appendix II
Ruth Cribb 2013
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<td>A.G.W.M.</td>
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<td>Madonna (2)</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>(Christie) Green</td>
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<td>Send Madonna (2) to Mayston to put in his window price £30</td>
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<td>(Shields?)</td>
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<td>Joie</td>
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<td>to Autumn Salon</td>
<td>Roger Fry</td>
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<td>25/08/1910</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>Fry (Dakyn)</td>
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<td>To Guildford; to Havant for AGWM's wedding in noon</td>
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<td>26/08/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb (199)</td>
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<td>Joie</td>
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<td>Month</td>
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<td>Job (as described)</td>
<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>28/08/1910</td>
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<td>Walk with Max. Saw Asham house and found it empty.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29/08/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Epstein (Wilde inscription)</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td></td>
<td>To London (till 31st)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>30/08/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Epstein</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>To Chelsea in the evening with Epsteins and Max</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31/08/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Epstein</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Albert R's to lunch</td>
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<td>01/09/1910</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Joie inscription</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>01/09/1910</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>They (large)</td>
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<td>02/09/1910</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Joie inscription</td>
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<td>02/09/1910</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>They (small)</td>
<td>Fry (Burlington Magazine Tail piece) 3</td>
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<td>They (large)</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>03/09/1910</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>They (small)</td>
<td>Highway article (1) all morn</td>
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<td>They (small)</td>
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<td>They (small)</td>
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<td>Madonna (3)</td>
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<td>Enid and Cecil Clay</td>
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<td>07/09/1910</td>
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<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>To London (till 8th)</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>07/09/1910</td>
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<td>Mansbridge ?</td>
<td>re &quot;Highway&quot; printing and articles</td>
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<td>Bukett</td>
<td>re LCC class</td>
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<td>Madonna (3)</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
<td>(shifting stone)</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
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<td>Madonna (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr and Mrs Epstein</td>
<td>Came to Ditchling for the weekend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
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<td>Day</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Job (as described)</td>
<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Saw Asham House</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>12/09/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>To Portland to see the quarries. To Salisbury after for night</td>
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<td>13/09/1910</td>
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<td>To Stonehenge in morning</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>14/09/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>&quot;to see Asham House with Epstein!&quot; Drew plans of house</td>
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<td>15/09/1910</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Madonna (3)</td>
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<td>16/09/1910</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>Gibb (carving)</td>
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<td>17/09/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
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<td>They (large)</td>
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<td>B.A.C. Monogram</td>
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<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td>To London (till 22nd)</td>
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<td>B.A.C. Monogram</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
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<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>24/09/1910</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Epstein (mother)</td>
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<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Epstein cupid</td>
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<td>Fry (Dakyn)</td>
<td>written: Dakyns mon</td>
<td>Roger Fry</td>
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<td>Fry (Dakyn)</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>27/09/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Fry B. Mag. Tailpiece 1</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td>To Asham House with Grainger and Epstein to see about repairs to house</td>
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<td>28/09/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
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<td>02/10/1910</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; second article</td>
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<td>Cupid (No 3)</td>
<td>&quot;Highway&quot; second article</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
<td>&quot;Highway&quot; second article (1.5)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>William Rothenstein</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; second article</td>
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<td>07/10/1910</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; second article</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Cupid (No 3)</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td>re Asham</td>
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<td>Month</td>
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<td>Job (as described)</td>
<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Jack and Nan Nye</td>
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<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>Interview with Hope (owner) re Asham in noon</td>
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<td>To Winkworth to see Hoptonwood stone quarries with Epstein</td>
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<td>19/10/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cornford</td>
<td>(travelling to Cambridge)</td>
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<td>G.C.C.</td>
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<td>(work in Cambridge)</td>
<td>McEvoys</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Fry Burlington Magazine Tailpiece (2)</td>
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<td>27/10/1910</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>T.J.C-S</td>
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<td>Easton Gibb</td>
<td>made alterations in my chapter of his book for third edition</td>
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<td>wood eng</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>29/10/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
<td>(relief)</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S</td>
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<td>Jock came for tea and supper</td>
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<td>01/11/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
<td>Fry Burlington Magazine Tailpiece (2), 1</td>
<td>Gibb's son came to inspect monument &quot;and criticised the parson's grammar&quot;.</td>
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<td>To London (back 3rd)</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>03/11/1910</td>
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<td>Lutyens</td>
<td>(S. Judas +./f. st.)?</td>
<td>&quot;Albert R's little show&quot;</td>
<td>at Carfax Gallery</td>
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<td>06/11/1910</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; third article, 1.5</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grove tablet</td>
<td>(T…?…)</td>
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<td>08/11/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fry (Dakyn)</td>
<td>written: Dakyns monument design and letters</td>
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<td>09/11/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manners</td>
<td>visited re: Clovelly, Pavement ?</td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td>To London (till 10th)</td>
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<td>G.R.S.T</td>
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<td>John?</td>
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<td>McEvoy</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>Post-Impressionist exhibition</td>
<td>at Grafton gallery, with Epstein</td>
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<td>British Museum</td>
<td>with Epstein</td>
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<td>T.J.C-S</td>
<td>&quot;G&quot;</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; third article</td>
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<td>16/11/1910</td>
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<td>Mr and Mrs Epstein</td>
<td>To London (till 17th)</td>
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<td>Lady Horner</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>Engraved E&amp;H woodblocks</td>
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<td>E&amp;H</td>
<td>at John's</td>
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<td>18/11/1910</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Epstein (child)</td>
<td>written: Epstein cupid</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>Grove tablet</td>
<td>(T…..?)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Manners</td>
<td>Clovelly</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>British Museum</td>
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<td>Post-Impressionist Exhibition</td>
<td>at Grafton Gallery, with Fry</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roger Fry</td>
<td>London, then Guildford</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>23/11/1910</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>24/11/1910</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
<td>To Asham with John and Epstein</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>E&amp;H</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>Mrs Fish headstone</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>25/11/1910</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Roger Fry Xmas Card</td>
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<td>Month</td>
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<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Manners</td>
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<td>Clovelly</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>26/11/1910</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>They (large)</td>
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<td>27/11/1910</td>
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<td>27/11/1910</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>01/12/1910</td>
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<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>03/12/1910</td>
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<td>&quot;Highway&quot; January article</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Roger Fry Xmas</td>
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<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>14/12/1910</td>
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<td>Gibb</td>
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<td>To London (till 15th)</td>
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<td>Notes (and other work)</td>
<td>People / meetings etc.</td>
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<td>Jack Nye</td>
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<td>17/12/1910</td>
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<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>18/12/1910</td>
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<td>19/12/1910</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>Inscription 'Blessed'</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>They</td>
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<td>20/12/1910</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>21/12/1910</td>
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<td>They</td>
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<td>22/12/1910</td>
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<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>23/12/1910</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Epstein (child)</td>
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<td>24/12/1910</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>They</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mr and Mrs Epstein</td>
<td>Came for Christmas</td>
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<td>25/12/1910</td>
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<td>26/12/1910</td>
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<td>They</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>27/12/1910</td>
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<td>They</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>28/12/1910</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>They</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jacob Epstein</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>29/12/1910</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>They</td>
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<td>Cornfords</td>
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<td>29/12/1910</td>
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<td>December</td>
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<td>They</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>31/12/1910</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>They</td>
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</table>
Appendix III: Example spread sheet showing information compiled from Eric Gill’s workbooks, 1910

Compiled from Eric Gill’s workbooks (Series 7, subseries 1, Collection on Eric Gill, MS Gill, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job No. in: List of Works – 1910</th>
<th>Names in: List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</th>
<th>Received (£-s-d)</th>
<th>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</th>
<th>Notes from: Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>B.C. Boulter (headstone with crucifix, HW stone)</td>
<td>30 0 0</td>
<td>Paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. 1-11-0 on 31 January (along with 331 &amp; 332), and paid H.W. stone firms 3-9-4 on May 13th (along with 331 &amp; 332), and paid C/G.W. Ry. Co. 0-18-5 on 11 August</td>
<td>White 2 days &amp; 7.75 hours @6d 0-11-0; E.G. 74.5 hours 11-3-6; HJC 83 hours @9d 3-12-3; total incl stone, carriage and workshop exp @33% = 24-9-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>Nicholson &amp; Corlette (inscription for Epsom Church)</td>
<td>2 2 6</td>
<td>Paid Cropley Bros. 0-12-6 on 23 February</td>
<td>HJC 45.5 hours 1-2-9; E.G. 1 hour 0-3-0; total incl carriage, fixing and office exp = 2-2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>326</td>
<td>Royal Water Colour Soc. (Lettering on Benefactor’s Board)</td>
<td>4 5 0</td>
<td>Paid Felix 3-2-0 on 6 February</td>
<td>? (Felix) 3-2-0; E.G. 4.75 hours 0-15-0; total incl office exp = 4-5-0. Extra for re-polishing 0-15-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>L.C.C. (Class at Central School)</td>
<td>12 12 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Received March 22 4-14-6; July 21 5-15-6; January 4 1911 2-2-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328</td>
<td>Miss Creighton (Brass Memorial tablet)</td>
<td>11 10 0</td>
<td>Paid C. Mylam 7-5-0 on 24 March</td>
<td>Mylam acc. 7-5-0; E.G. 6.5 hours 0-19-6; total incl office exp = 11-10-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329</td>
<td>Mrs E. Farrell (two marble memorial tablets)</td>
<td>43 0 7</td>
<td>Paid Whitehead &amp; Sons 4-4-6 on 13 May, and 8-0-7 on 3 September</td>
<td>E.G. 2.5 hours (1909) 0-7-6; E.G. 7 hours (1910) 1-1-0; HJC 444 hours @9d 16-13-0; White 26.25 hours 0-13-0; Whitehead acc. re: fixing 5-19-3; total incl stone, carting, carriage to Scotland, workshop exp @25% = 37-3-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job No.</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
<td>Received (£-s-d)</td>
<td>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
<td>Notes from: Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911</td>
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<td>330</td>
<td>W. Rothenstein (Woman and Child, in round) (in memorandum: ‘Madonna 1’)</td>
<td>20 0 0</td>
<td>E.G. 19 hours (1909); E.G. 88.5 hours (1910); total 107.5 @3/0 = 16-2-6; total incl office exp = 20-0-0. ‘Sold to W.R. (no invoice) … 1928! Repairing toes of child (damaged in exhibition) E.G. 0.5 day 2-0-0’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>‘Joie de Vivre’</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
<td>Paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. 1-11-0 on 31 January (along with 324 &amp; 332), paid H.W. stone firms 3-9-4 on 13 May (along with 324 &amp; 332), paid Angela Gill 0-5-0 on 3 February 1911 E.G. 8.25 hours (1909); E.G. 168 hours (1910); total 176 - 26-8-0; HJC 44.5 hours 1-2-3; White 3.5 hours 0-1-9; total incl stone, carriage and office exp = 43-12-3. ‘Sold to Contemporary Art Society for £50-0-0’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332</td>
<td>‘Welt Schmerz’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. 1-11-0 on 31 January (along with 324 &amp; 331), and paid H.W. stone firms 3-9-4 on 13 May (along with 324 &amp; 331) E.G. 4.5 hours (1909) 0-13-6; HJC to 5 Feb 1910 62.5 hours 1-11-3; E.G.94.5 hours (1910); HJC Feb 5 et. seq. 14 hours 0-7-0; total incl stone, carriage and office exp = 27-7-0; ‘Sold to Contemporary Art Society for £50-0-0’</td>
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<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td>‘ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ’ (with figure) (in memorandum: ‘known as panel 49’)</td>
<td>20 0 0</td>
<td>Paid Chenue 1-16-6 on 30 September HJC 34.25 hours @6d 0-17-3; E.G. 51.75 hours @3/- 7-16-0; total incl stone and office exp @50% = 13-15-0. See photograph</td>
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<tr>
<td>334</td>
<td>‘ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ’ (inscription only)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marble 0-2-6; HJC (2 days) 0-4-0; E.G. (1 day) 1-0-0. ‘Given to WR’</td>
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<td>Job No. in: List of Works 1910–1910</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910–1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902–1910</td>
<td>Received (£-s-d)</td>
<td>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
<td>Notes from: Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>335</td>
<td>F. Grisell (in List of inscriptions: ‘L.M. Gill - headstone with Cherubs’) (in Memorandum: ‘Grisell headstone for L.M.G.’)</td>
<td>15 0 0</td>
<td>Paid H. Palisser 3-15-0 on 6 May</td>
<td>Palisser for carving 3-15-0; HJC 75 hours 1-17-6; E.G. 3 hours 0-9-0; total incl carriage and office exp = 15-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Given to L.M. Gill (in List of inscriptions: ‘L.M.G. - Vaughn memorial tablet’)</td>
<td>1 10 0</td>
<td>‘Given to L.M.G. (L.M.G. paid me 1-10-0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338</td>
<td>Given to L.M. Gill (in List of inscriptions: ‘L.M.G. - Macartney bronze tablet’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Given to L.M.G.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339</td>
<td>Given to L.M. Gill (in List of inscriptions: ‘L.M.G. - inscription for Clapham Deaconesses’)</td>
<td>5 0</td>
<td>‘Given to L.M.G. (L.M.G. paid my 5/-)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340</td>
<td>J.M. Barrie (poster and programme for Repertory Theatre)</td>
<td>11 5 0</td>
<td>Paid Chiswick Press 2-17-0 on 24 March</td>
<td>Chiswick Press 2-17-0; E.G. expenses 1-4-10.5; E.G. 41 hours @3/- 6-3-0; total incl office exp = 11-5-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>341</td>
<td>Board of Trade (Exhibition Branch, advice re: lettering)</td>
<td>2 2 0</td>
<td>Paid L.M. Gill 0-16-6 on 8 March 1911</td>
<td>To L.M.G. for visit 0-10-6 out of p. exp.; E.G. 11 hours; acc. sent for alphabet 0-6-6; ‘but as they were returned unused acc. resent (letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix III
Ruth Cribb 2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job No. in:</th>
<th>Names in:</th>
<th>Received (£-s-d)</th>
<th>Notes from:</th>
<th>Notes from:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
<td>List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
<td>Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
<td>Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342</td>
<td>T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (Initial W. and first line for Faust)</td>
<td>4 4 0</td>
<td>E.G. 21 hours 3-3-0; total incl woodblock and office exp 4-4-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td>Geoffrey Lupton (Monogram on Brass Plate)</td>
<td>15 0</td>
<td>Paid Downes 0-2-6 on 13 May 13</td>
<td>E.G. 3 hours 0-9-0; total incl expenses and office exp = 0-15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343a</td>
<td>James Vincent (Painting his name and trade on bicycle plate)</td>
<td>3 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>E.G. 1.25 hours 0-2-3; office exp 0-0-9; total = 0-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>344</td>
<td>Gladstone League (Badge and Members Card)</td>
<td>12 12 0</td>
<td>Paid A.E. Smith 2-4-7 on 25 March (along with 304 &amp; 318), and paid Badoureau &amp; Jones 0-7-5 on 14 May (along with 304)</td>
<td>March: A.E. Smith 0-2-4; 2 electros of figure 0-1-4; 2 electros of lettering 0-3-0; E.G. Badge 4 hours; E.G. Figure 25 hours; E.G. Letters 60 hours; E.G. Corrections etc. 10 hours; total 99 hours 14-17-0; total incl woodblocks, postage, telegram and office exp = 19-14-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>Randall Wells (Painting name tablet)</td>
<td>10 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Max 0-7-6; office 0-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>346</td>
<td>Chatto &amp; Windus (Device for title page)</td>
<td>1 1 0</td>
<td>E.G. 4 hours 0-12-0; office 0-9-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>347</td>
<td>Raymond Unwin (Alphabets for signwriters)</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
<td>Paid Oldacres &amp; Co. 1-4-0 on 5 July</td>
<td>Blue Print Makers acc. 1-4-0; E.G. 24.5 hours 3-1-3; acc. sent as estimate. (*Sold 2nd set of blue prints to W.H. Smith December 1919 for 3-3-0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>St. John's Church, Bognor (Rev. R.J. Lea, corbels)</td>
<td>24 0 0</td>
<td>Paid Booker Bros. 4-5-8 on 20 August</td>
<td>E.G. 46 hours @3/- 6-18-0; total incl E.G. travel and office exp = 10-0-0; Bookers acc. for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No.</td>
<td>Names in:</td>
<td>Received (£-s-d)</td>
<td>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
<td>Notes from: Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>349</td>
<td>H.G. Dakyns (monument to his wife)</td>
<td>6 16 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mason 9-5-7.5 (see photographs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350</td>
<td>Easton Gibb (monument to his wife)</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
<td>Paid Smith &amp; Son 3-11-6 on 30 September (along with 359)</td>
<td>October: E.G. 28 hours 4-4-0; total incl E.G. travel, postage and workshop exp @25% 6-16-0 (‘acc. sent to Fry (owing to death of Mr Dakyns’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351</td>
<td>Lady Horner (Inscription at Mells.)</td>
<td>9 5 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>June: C. Smith acc. (moulding) 1-14-0; July: Mason (casual) 0-6-0; October: E.G. 140.5 hours 21-1-6; November: 120 hours 18-0-0; Cribb (to date) 210 hours 5-5-0; Cribb (kerbing) 112.5 hours 2-16-3; White (kerbing) 43.75 hours 0-11-0; White (headstone) 41.75 hours 0-10-6; E.G. 11.5 hours 1-14-6; total incl stone, carriage (Turners, plus tip), and workshop exp @50% = 88-0-3. December: began to work on stone again: E.G. 31 hours; February 1912: Cribb 51.5 hours 1-6-3; March: E.G. 21.5 hours 9-0-0 (for Dec as well); total incl this extra work and workshop exp (2-0-0) = 100-6-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>E.L. Lutyens (Drawing of inscription ‘Heathcote’ Ilkley)</td>
<td>0 15 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>E.G. 20 hours 3-0-0; Cribb 18 hours 0-9-0; total incl E.G. travel (3-6-5) and workshop exp @33% = 9-0-6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>E.G. 4 hours 0-12-0; office 0-3-0</td>
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<td>Job No. in: <strong>List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>353</td>
<td>W.A. Pite (Setting out inscription for Imp. Yeomanry School)</td>
<td>1 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>E.G. 4 hours 0-12-0; office 0-9-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>354</td>
<td>W.A. Pite (Setting out inscription for Barkingside Hospital) (in Memorandum: ‘W.A. Pite Barkingside Hospital Boy’s Garden City)</td>
<td>3 12 0</td>
<td>Cribb travelling 0-7-10; Cribb expenses 0-14-10; E.G. 6 hours 0-18-0; Cribb 39.5 hours 1-0-0; total incl office exp = 3-12-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>355</td>
<td>J. Epstein (Carving head of Romilly John in stone)</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
<td>E.G. 42 hours 6-6-0; Cribb 6.5 hours 0-3-3; total incl office exp @25% = 7-16-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>356</td>
<td>J. Epstein (off) (Figure in round - Jane bathing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Carriage of model 0-2-11’ OFF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>357</td>
<td>J. Epstein (Small idol - Cupid) (In Memorandum ‘Small figure of “The Child”’)</td>
<td>8 10 0</td>
<td>October: E.G. 3 hours; December: Cribb 9.5 hours; E.G 18.5 hours 5-7-6 (for both @3/-); total incl office exp @50% = 8-1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>358</td>
<td>F &amp; F Cornford (Inscriptions at Conduit Head, Cambridge)</td>
<td>6 10 0</td>
<td>August: E.G. 9 hours 1-7-0; October: E.G. 11 hours 1-131-0; total incl E.G. travel exp and office exp (on working hours only) = 6-4-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>359</td>
<td>F &amp; F Cornford (Woman &amp; Child (no. 2 same size as no. 3)) (In Memorandum ‘Madonna (2) in Portland stone, same size as No. 1’</td>
<td>30 0 0</td>
<td>Paid Smith &amp; Son 3-11-6 on 30 September (along with 350), paid Chenil &amp; Co. 7-4-0 on 15 March 1911 (along with 388)</td>
<td>E.G. 171 hours (May 19 began model; June 4 finished model; July 12 began carving; Aug 22 finished carving) @3/- 26-0-0; plus office exp = 30-0-0. See photograph: Cast of moulding clay model, C. Smith &amp; Son's acc. 1-14-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No.</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
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<td>360</td>
<td>H.L. Christie (Designs for signs of Evangelists for Cross on Dockenfield Church, Frensham, Surrey)</td>
<td>3 0 0</td>
<td>E.G. 16 hours @3/- 2-8-0; plus office exp @25% = 3-0-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>361</td>
<td>‘The Virgin’ (in List of inscriptions: ‘Roger Fry - Garden statue’). See no. 404</td>
<td></td>
<td>Received £30. Paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. 2-10-0 on February 15 1911, paid Barnes 6-8-1 on 2 March 1911, paid J. Evans (carting) 4-10-10 on 8 December 1911 (along with 8 other jobs), paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. Co. 0-18-2 on 20 January 1912, paid Barnes 0-17-6 on 19 February 1912</td>
<td>May: E.G. time to date 225 hours; June: E.G. 112.5 hours 60-0-0 for both; Cribb 140 hours 3-10-0; White 123 hours 1-10-0; December: E.G. time to date 54.5 hours 10-0-0; March 1912: E.G. 143.5 hours 24-0-0. Total at close of job, incl stone, carriage, carting = 108-15-9 (see photographs for rest of information - confusing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>362</td>
<td>J. Epstein (Inscriptions on ‘Wilde’ memorial)</td>
<td>4 8 0</td>
<td>August: E.G. travel exp 0-8-6.5; September: ‘Loan to J.E. to go to Portland 1-0-0’; ‘Loan to J.E. to go to Asham 1-0-0’; ‘Loan expenses (miscell.) 0-7-0’; October: E.G. 20 hours 3-0-0; December: ‘Loan to J.E.2-0-0’; total incl office exp (on working hours only) @25% = 8-15-0. September 10: Rec. on acc. 12-0-0 i.e. £10 for job on acc. and £2 in payment of loans mentioned above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No. in: List of Works – 1910</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
<td>Received (£s-d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>363</td>
<td>‘Lovers’ (Large) (in List of inscriptions: ‘A pair of Lovers (Large)’)</td>
<td>60 0 0</td>
<td>Paid J. Evans 9-19-0 on 24 September 1912 (along with 415 &amp; 430)</td>
<td>October: E.G. 6.5 hours; December: E.G. 48 hours; February: E.G. 109.5 hours 41-0-0 (for all); December: HJC 48 hours 1-10-0; total incl stone, carting and workshop exp = 65-15-0. 1912: April offered to sell to E.P. Warren (Lewes) for £60-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>364</td>
<td>‘Votes for Women’ (in List of inscriptions: ‘A pair of Lovers (small - a joke)’) (In Memorandum: ‘Lovers (a joke) (small) (‘Votes for Women’) carved on back of alphabet stone’)</td>
<td>5 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>December: E.G. 31.5 hours 4-10-0; August: HJC 3 hours 0-1-6; total incl workshop exp 6-17-0. ’Offered to sell it to J.M. Keynes (Cambridge) for £5-0-0 April 1912 and sent it to him on spec. … He accepted it, paid £5’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No. in: List of Works 1910–1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902–1910</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910–1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902–1910</td>
<td>Received (£-s-d)</td>
<td>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>J. Epstein (Figure of Mother and Child, HW stone, 6x2.9x1.9)</td>
<td>40 3 11</td>
<td>Received £32 ‘remainder ? of’. Paid A.H. Turner 2-10-6 on 25 September, paid L.B. &amp; S.C. Ry. 0-7-7 on 28 September, paid H.W. Firms (on account) 3-0-0 on 2 February 1911 and again H.W. Firms (on account) 5-17-6 on 21 February 1911, paid J. Evans (carting) 4-10-10 on 8 December 1911 (along with 8 other jobs)</td>
<td>September: carriage of model 0-8-1; October: E.G. 2 hours 0-6-0; carriage of ret. Empties 0-1-8; White sawing empties 163 hours @3d 2-0-9; May: Cribb overtime 1.5 hours 0-9-0; White overtime 1.5 hours 0-0-3.5; Cribb 7 hours 0-3-6; White 6.5 hours 0-1-6; Cribb (packing stone figure) 1.5 hours 0-9-0; White 6.25 hours 0-1-6; June: White 10.5 hours and Cribb 12.5 hours 0-4-3; total incl stone, carriage, shifting stone, wood for packing cases and office exp (‘Cribb's time put to office’) @33% (on work time) = 18-14-8: ‘Less: for stone, originally destined for Woman &amp; Child group, if J.E. allows me to keep it - i.e. 6'0''x1'6''x2'0'' approx 18 feet @10/- 9-0-0'. So total now 9-14-8. See photographs, and one more of ‘Epstein’s complete acc. to date’ (Jan 1912)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No.</td>
<td>Names in:</td>
<td>Received (£-s-d)</td>
<td>Notes from: Analysis Cash Book, January 1st 1909 to December 31st 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>366</td>
<td>J.M. Keynes (in Memorandum: 'Madonna', Mother and Child (No. 3))</td>
<td>22 15</td>
<td>October: E.G. 40 hours 10-0-0; September: HJC 9.5 hours 0-10-0; White 35.25 hours 0-17-6; total incl workshop exp @50% = 17-1-0; Stone pedestal for same: June: White masonry 130 hours 0-32-6; total incl stone and workshop exp @33% = 2-15-0. ‘Sold to J.M. Keynes of Cambridge: the figure for 20-0-0 and the pedestal for 2-15-0 (received Feb 1911 on acc. through Chenil Gallery 25-0-0 less 20% disc. = 20-0-0, plus 2-15-0 from J.M. Keynes direct, June 1911)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>367</td>
<td>R. Whiting (modelling moulding to his bust)</td>
<td>((bad debt) - no values entered)</td>
<td>E.G. 3 hours 0-7-6, acc. Letter book (no. 468) 0-10-0. ‘bad debt’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>368</td>
<td>Roger Fry (Design for tailpieces for the Burlington Magazine)</td>
<td>2 2 0</td>
<td>October: E.G. 7.5 hours; November: E.G. 3.5 hours; total incl E.G. hours (1-13-0) and workshop exp @33% = 2-4-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>369</td>
<td>E.L. Lutyens (Inscriptions on Foundation stones at S. Jude's church, Hampstead Garden Suburb)</td>
<td>3 0 0</td>
<td>HJC expenses on acc of No. 1 stone 0-14-6; November: HJC 28 hours 0-14-0; March: E.G. 3 hours 0-9-0; total incl workshop exp @50% = 2-16-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370</td>
<td>Count Kessler (1. Letter for cover of Vol II of Homer; 2. and Initial 'D' for index of same)</td>
<td>3 0 0</td>
<td>November: 1. E.G. 1.5 hours 0-4-6; 2. E.G. 15 hours 2-5-0; total incl postage = 2-10-6 (acc. sent for 5-0-0); December: Designs for lettering of 'Inhalt' for Vol II: E.G. 8 hours 2-0-0 (acc. sent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job No. in: List of Works – 1910</td>
<td>Names in: List of Works 1910-1940; Memorandum of Expenses chargeable to Jobs Jan 1910 to Dec 1911; List of Inscriptions and other works 1902-1910</td>
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<td>371</td>
<td>T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (stone tablet (Hoptonwood) for Doves Press and Doves Bindery and dates)</td>
<td>2 3 0</td>
<td>November: E.G. 14.5 hours 1-16-3; Cribb 8 hours 0-4-0; office 0-2-9; total = 2-3-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>372</td>
<td>T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (wood engraved frame for bookplate for Beesley ? Memorial Library at Marlboro. Coll., and wood engraved initial 'G' for Doves Press book)</td>
<td>2 1 0</td>
<td>Bookplate: E.G. 8.5 hours; B&amp;Jones for wood 0-2-6; Initial 'G': E.G. 5 hours 0-15-0; total incl office exp = 2-1-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>373</td>
<td>C. Spooner (Memorial tablet for Hadley Church, Suffolk)</td>
<td>3 2 6</td>
<td>October: HJC 37 hours 1-0-0; total incl office exp = 3-2-6;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>374</td>
<td>Arthur Grove</td>
<td>5 0 0</td>
<td>November: HJC 75.5 hours 1-17-9; E.G. 5 hours 0-15-0; total incl workshop exp @50% = 3-19-0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>375</td>
<td>Roger Fry (Designing and engraving (on wood) Christmas Card)</td>
<td>3 10 0</td>
<td>December: E.G. 21 hours 2-12-6; wood block 0-1-4; total incl office exp = 3-10-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>Lady Constance Manners (Inscription on Clovelly Church)</td>
<td>2 10 10</td>
<td>November: E.G. travel 0-7-1; February 1911; E.G. (drawing) 8.5 hours 1-10-0; total incl</td>
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<tr>
<td>377</td>
<td>Lady Horner (Two carved fountain stones with dogs - off)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>workshop exp @33% = 2.9-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>378</td>
<td>No jobs put to these numbers by error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November: E.G. travel 0-7-1; ‘off’</td>
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<td>379</td>
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<tr>
<td>380</td>
<td>J. Epstein (Copy of head of Romilly John by Cribb)</td>
<td>4 0 0</td>
<td>December: HJC 49 hours; February: HJC 12 hours 3-11-0 (for both); total incl workshop exp = 4-0-0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>381</td>
<td>‘Child’ (Gilded) (In Memorandum: ‘(Copy of) the Child (gilded) (No. 3)’)</td>
<td>8 8 0</td>
<td>(Received: ‘0-10-0 ’)</td>
<td>December: HJC 9.5 hours 0-10-0; E.G. 52 hours 13-0-0; total incl workshop exp @50% = 20-0-0. (Or at a cheaper estimate: HJC 9.5 hours 0-4-9; E.G. 52 hours 6-10-0; total incl workshop exp @25% = 8-8-5). ‘Sold Ap. 7 (Easter Sunday) 1912 to E.C. Laughton for half a sovereign to get rid of it 0-10-0’</td>
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<td>January 1912: E.G. 3 hours 0-7-6; Matthews Drew acc. for making stamp 0-7-9; total incl office exp = 1-0-0; March: ‘extra stamp made at my own expense! 0-10-6’.</td>
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WORKSHOP PRACTICES AND THE MAKING OF SCULPTURE: AUTHORSHIP AND COLLABORATION IN THE WORK OF ERIC GILL, 1909 TO 1940

ILLUSTRATIONS

RUTH CRIBB

PhD 2013
Introduction

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Chapter One

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Figure 6b

Top Right: Phoebe Stabler working on *Fortitude* in the doorway of the Acton YWCA. First half of the twentieth century. Stone.

Left: Maurice Lambert working on *Departure of Birds*. First half of the twentieth century. Alabaster.

Figure 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>MULIER, 1912 Portland Stone</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Gravestone, 1911 Portland Stone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Man must play, and woman weep”</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Boxers, 1913 Portland Stone</td>
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<td>Sketch for a Statue, 1913 Bathstone</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Dancer, 1913 Bathstone</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Madonna and Child, 1913 Coloured Plaster Copies, each</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Money Box Hoptonwood Stone</td>
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<td>By H. J. CRIBB, Apprentice</td>
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<td>Gargoyle Portland Stone</td>
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<td>By ERIC GILL and H. J. CRIBB</td>
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<td>Mother and Child, 1913 Bathstone</td>
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<td>Crucifix, 1913 Relief—Hoptonwood Stone</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lent by EVERARD MEYNELL, Esq.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Crucifix, 1913 Incised Marble</td>
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</table>

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<td>3.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Tablet for the Wall of a Sea-side House</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;&quot;There is the Sea, and who shall drain it dry?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(Agamemnon of Aeschylus.)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Mother and Child</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Head of Romily John</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Carved from model by Mr. Jacob Epstein,</td>
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<td>Inscribed Tablet</td>
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<td>A Crucifix</td>
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<td>A Roland for an Oliver</td>
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<td>A Tortoise</td>
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www.artandarchitecture.org.uk. JPEG Files.
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Figure 61
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Figure 62c
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87a. Howard Coster. *Eric Gill’s first model for Ariel Piping to the Children* (1931. Bath stone. 40.6 x 68.6 x 8.9 cm. The Chairman and Board of Governors of the BBC). Photograph. c. 1931. The Eric Gill Collection, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame: C-062.01.

87b. Howard Coster. *Eric Gill’s second model for Ariel Piping to the Children* (1932. Corsham stone. 30.5 x 55.9 x 8 cm. Sir Christopher Bland). Photograph. c. 1931-2. The Eric Gill Collection, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame: C-075.01.
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a. Reference: C-067.01.

b. Reference: C-067.03.
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