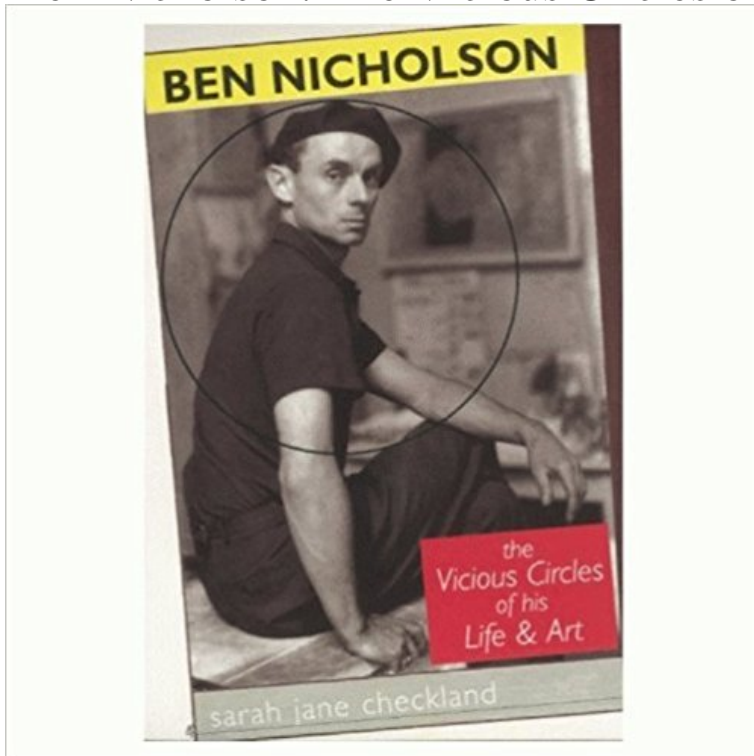


Ben Nicholson: The Vicious Circles of His Life & Art



The much-lauded biography of Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) Britain's leading 20th century modernist and abstract painter is back after popular demand as an ebook. This publication coincides not only with the 30th anniversary of Nicholson's death, but with two landmark exhibitions in London featuring his work, Picasso and Modern British Art at Tate Britain and Mondrian/ Nicholson in Parallel at the Courtauld Galleries. The book is full of fresh and fascinating insights into an artist who enjoyed worldwide acclaim during his lifetime, but whose significance has subsequently been overshadowed by his contemporaries Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, Nicholson's second wife. It reveals Nicholson's unique role not only in creating that lasting icon of 1930s British art his white relief but in forging a bridge between conservative London and the pioneers of the European avant-garde, including Picasso, Braque, Mondrian and Gabo. It was thanks largely to Nicholson's encouragement that Mondrian and Gabo came to live in Britain before the 2nd World War. While Mondrian became Nicholson's neighbour in Belsize Park, London, Gabo fled with Nicholson and Hepworth to the Cornish town of St Ives, where Nicholson became both catalyst and king to the influential avant-garde art colony which soon sprung up around him. During the 1950s and 1960s, he provided inspiration and support to a generation of younger artists including Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, while winning many international art prizes. Nicholson's story is peppered with legendary names from the history of modernism. Apart from those mentioned above, friends and colleagues featured include Constantin Brancusi, Arp, Moholy-Nagy, Wyndham Lewis, David Bomberg, David Piper, Graham Sutherland, Alfred Wallis and Christopher Wood. Darting here and there in his sea

blue trousers and white undershirt, his bald head bobbing about so much like a ping-pong ball that he would even leap in the air and play with his head. This book shows how, far from being the austere character projected by himself and his critics, Nicholson was a quixotic character, obsessed with ball-games and word play. It also reveals the painful episode during which his father, the famous painter Sir William Nicholson, stole away Ben's fiancée, pitting him against the sophistication of his family background, while setting the precedent for the succession of triangular relationships which defined his private life, most notably with his first two wives, the painter Winifred Nicholson and Hepworth. The final revelation is the reliance placed by Nicholson, and both of his artist wives, on Christian Science. Since graduating in Fine Art at the University of East Anglia, Sarah Jane Checkland has written extensively on art, as critic, feature writer and art market correspondent, most notably for the London Times. Her website, www.sarahjanecheckland.co.uk provides links to exhibitions and events relating to Nicholson and his contemporaries, as well as her blog. What the critics said about the first edition: [An] immensely thorough and enjoyable documentation of his life...a monument to painstaking research (The Observer) a wonderfully witty, well-researched, perceptive and accessible biography, packed with anecdote and analysis. The artistic kaleidoscope of the twentieth century tumbles helter-skelter through it, every movement represented, from Abstraction to Vorticism. Harpers especially good on the power plays at which Nicholson was a past master. Sunday Telegraph Carefully researched and entertaining Times Literary Supplement. a story gripping in its awfulness: the power struggles, the cliques, the jealousies and petty rivalries, his self-serving crankiness and Christian Science. Literary Review eBook edition, without illustrations, and with footnotes in separate section at the end.

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