

Topic Page: [Sutherland, Graham \(1903 – 1980\)](#)

Summary Article: **Sutherland, Graham Vivian**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

English painter, graphic artist, and designer. He was active mainly in France from the 1940s. A leading figure of the neo-Romantic movement (1935–55), which revived the spirit of 19th-century Romanticism in a more modern idiom, he executed portraits, landscapes, and religious subjects, often using a semi-abstract style. In the late 1940s he turned increasingly to portraiture. His portrait of Winston Churchill (1954) was disliked by its subject and eventually burned on the instructions of Lady Churchill (studies survive). He was awarded the OM in 1960.

Sutherland first studied engraving and etching, his early prints showing some affinity with the work of Samuel Palmer. He began to paint from 1930, and during that decade acquired a surrealist appreciation of the strangeness and metaphorical suggestion of natural form. This developed into the characteristic thorns, sinister tree shapes, and distillations of his neo-Romantic landscapes of the 1940s. An official war artist from 1941, his sense of strangeness found vivid expression in paintings of bomb devastation.

Varied aspects of his work are shown in his *Crucifixion* (1946; the church of St Matthew, Northampton); his *Origins of the Land* (1951; Tate Gallery, London), for the Festival of Britain; his characterful portrait of the writer *Somerset Maugham* (1949; Tate Gallery, London); and his *Christ in Glory* tapestry (1962; Coventry Cathedral). He also created designs for posters, stage costumes, and theatre sets.

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