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Mark Gertler, *Supper (Natalie Denny)*, 1928
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FROM SICKERT TO GERTLER: MODERN BRITISH ART FROM BOXTED HOUSE

15 March – 22 June 2008

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, 75 Belford Road, Edinburgh

Admission free

This exhibition will celebrate the lives of Bobby and Natalie Bevan, and the works which hung on the walls of their home, Boxted House in Essex, which became a gathering place for a wide range of creative people after the Second World War.

Boxted House was the home of Bobby and Natalie Bevan from 1946 until 1974. Bobby was the son of the artists Robert Bevan and Stanislaw de Karłowska, and was Chairman of the leading advertising agency S. H. Benson Ltd. The painter and ceramicist Natalie Denny, a renowned beauty and hostess, modelled for many artists, most famously for Mark Gertler.

Bobby and Natalie married in 1946. Together they created an exceptional home: paintings by Bobby's parents and their friends, including Walter Sickert, Harold Gilman and Spencer Gore, hung beside works by Bobby and Natalie's own friends, such as Christopher Nevinson, John Armstrong and Frederick Gore. The house became a social centre for artists, particularly for those associated with East Anglia, like John Nash, Cedric Morris and Lett Haines.

As generous patrons of the visual arts, Bobby, Natalie and their house played an important role in the post-war cultural renaissance of East Anglia, centred on Colchester. During the 1950s and 1960s, Boxted House became the heart of a social milieu not just of artists, but also of writers,

politicians, plantsmen-gardeners and other creative individuals. Fine art was just one aspect of the unique environment in which the hospitable Bobby and Natalie lived; friends recall Bobby's collection of eighteenth-century furniture and Natalie's collections of Staffordshire and Chelsea ceramics, amongst other features, which when combined with his wine cellar and her kitchen made each visit an unforgettable experience.

Virtually every work in the exhibition has a personal link to Bobby and Natalie; highlights will include Robert Bevan's *Showing at Tattersall's* of 1919, which Bobby presented to The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford in memory of his father; Charles Ginner's *La Vieille Balayeuse, Dieppe* of 1913, which the artist exchanged for a work by Robert Bevan; and Harold Gilman's portrait of Bobby's mother, painted in 1913. Mark Gertler's sumptuous portrait of Natalie aged nineteen, *Supper*, reveals their intense friendship of the late 1920s, while John Armstrong painted his *Still Life with Leeks* whilst staying at Boxted House over the winter of 1955. John Nash's snowscape of his garden not far from Boxted House, *Ice and Snow* of 1959, represents the artist's friendship of many decades with the Bevans, as does Cedric Morris's bold *Paysage du Jardin No.2*. Bobby's passion for a catholic range of exceptional works on paper is revealed in works by artists including Francisco de Goya, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Cézanne.

This exhibition will celebrate the colourful character of Boxted House, its hosts, its guests and the works of art which filled its walls. It is held in memory of Natalie Bevan, who died in 2007.

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For further information please contact the Press Office at the National Galleries of Scotland on pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org or 0131 624 6325/ 332/ 247 www.nationalgalleries.org

NOTES TO EDITORS

Highlights of the exhibition will tour to Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, from 4 October to 13 December 2008. The Bevan Collection was exhibited at Gainsborough's House in 1978, so it is particularly fitting that highlights of the 2008 Edinburgh exhibition will travel there, thirty years later, and during Gainsborough's House's fiftieth anniversary year.

Bobby Bevan's father, Robert Polhill Bevan, was a founding member of The Camden Town Group, which is currently the subject of a major exhibition at Tate Britain, *Modern Painters: The Camden Town Group* (13 February – 5 May 2008).

Robert Bevan was also a founding member of The Cumberland Market Group, which is the subject of a forthcoming major exhibition at Southampton City Art Gallery, *Robert Bevan and the Cumberland Market Group* (25 September – 14 December 2008).