



Cut and Paste: 400 Years of Collage SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART Belford Rd, Edinburgh

In 19th-century Britain, the curator of this exhibition informs us, nothing was safe from a pair of scissors. Cutting and sticking lay at the heart of many of the accomplishments that ladies were encouraged to acquire, including embroidery, quilling, shell and feather work, assemblage (of almost anything, it seems), scrap-booking, patchwork, artificial flower-making and *déoupage*.

Examples of all these are on show in Edinburgh in the first comprehensive survey of collage in its many forms. Included are more than 250 works from the 16th century to the present, with some being far from the fine art you might expect to see in a national gallery. The art is there, of course: Max Ernst; Eileen Agar; a lovely Julian Trevelyan collage of Sussex fields from 1938, featuring cut-outs from the Communist newspaper *The Daily Worker*. In fact, the idea for the exhibition was conceived when the gallery acquired an early Picasso collage titled *Bottle and Glass on a Table*. (There is still much scholarly hoo-ha over whether Picasso or Braque 'invented' the medium.)

Working with a much broader definition of the term, however, curator Patrick Elliott has been able to bring in more unexpected objects too, such as anatomical 'flap books' from the 16th century, whose paper doors open to reveal the insides of the human body, and a hand-painted Chinese wallpaper of c1820 from Temple Newsam, Leeds (*Wol* March 2019), enlivened with cut-out birds from Audubon's book *Birds of America*. George Smart's proto-

'Fuzzy-Felt' portraits of the 1820s and 30s, made of offcuts from his tailor's shop, seem to have garnered him more fame in his day than his skills as a couturier. Edward Bawden's paper dolls and Tirzah Garwood's three-dimensional chapel tell of collage from Great Bardfield. And a child's bedroom door from 1987-2000, covered in Scooby-Doo, Snoopy and 'Give Blood' stickers, is a miraculous survival, on loan from the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh.

By the early 19th century the arrival of machine-made paper saw production of collage-related 'miscellanies' flourish, and folding screens, Valentine's cards and album-making really took off. For instance, one could buy all manner of tiny clothing and acces-

sories from specialist shops to stick on to tinsel prints depicting actors and famous figures. The invention of photography lent itself to a multitude of creative uses too: composite images, photomontage and even the magical addition of fairies and gnomes to your pictures.

Not surprisingly, then, collage is hard to pin down. The word itself derives from the French verb *coller* – 'to glue' – but the range of the exhibits described here attests to how quickly any definition might come unstuck. Happily, whatever curatorial glue they have used to bring together such an eccentric (in the best way) selection, this exhibition offers something for everyone who has ever wielded scissors to artistic effect. **CUT AND PASTE: 400 YEARS OF COLLAGE** runs until 27 Oct, Mon-Sun 10-5 ■ JANE AUDAS is a design and craft writer and curator



Top: Humphrey Spender, *The Canal*, 1941, 28.2 x 49.8cm. Above: Pat Douthwaite, *Happiness is Green Shield Stamps*, 1969, 120 x 90cm