



Before his death, in 1974, the post-impressionist landscape painter Edward Seago wrote in his will that one third of the paintings stored in his studio in Norwich should be destroyed. Luckily for the world, Seago was a prolific artist, and around 19,000 watercolours and 300 oil paintings remain.

Many of these are in collections: the Aga Khan was a Seago collector, as were the late Queen Elizabeth, her mother, Prince Philip and (now) King Charles, who Seago taught to paint. Other works are in major public galleries. Occasionally they come up for sale in auctions, or at Portland Gallery, who represent his estate.

Seago had a colourful life, running away to the circus aged 18, working on the development of camouflage in WW2, and travelling extensively to paint his townscapes and beachscapes, rather in the manner of John Singer Sargent. He was largely self taught, though he was tutored for a while by Sir Alfred Munnings, that arch enemy of Modernism. He was born in Norwich, and had a great affinity for that fine city, and the surrounding countryside, running his 'Dutch House' studio in Ludham.

Portland Gallery have mounted an exhibition displaying pages from his 4.5 x 7-inch sketchbooks, demonstrating his rare skill as a draughtsman, and his economy of line. Seago 'worked out' his paintings in his sketchbooks – the tone, the focal point, the composition – finishing them off in his studio. In the foreword to the 1991 book *Edward Seago – The Landscape Art*, Prince Philip declared: 'He had a knack of capturing a scene with a speed and dexterity that rivalled that of a conjuror.'

Portland Gallery, until December 22

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