

**Sir Cedric Morris, (1889-1982),  
artist and plantsman**

The record price of £160,000 this October at Sworder's in Essex for 'Foxglove,' a rediscovered flower painting by Cedric Morris underlines the significant rise in auction prices for this talented Modern British artist, plantsman, teacher and early influence on Lucian Freud. I made my first visit to the artists home and studio in Hadleigh, called Benton End twenty five years ago. I was there to select a group of works by Morris's life partner Lett Haines for sale and hopefully hear some tales about Lucian Freud's antics there in the 40's. In the end it was Morris's garden scapes that really caught my eye. The market for Morris's work at auction back then in the 90's was subdued, you could pretty much take your pick of 1930's signature works similar to 'Foxglove' for around £5,000.

Gone are those days, however the rise in prices has happened only recently. First, a slight ripple starting in 2008 and then a tidal wave since 2015/16 for his signature flower pictures from the 30's. The latest rise in interest and prices were triggered mainly by the London exhibition 'Cedric Morris Artist and Plantsman' at the Garden Museum; a Morris exhibition at Philip Mould's gallery in London and then a third exhibition at Gainsborough house in Sudbury.

There were other works by Cedric Morris in Sworder's sale, 'Drought Oxfordshire' from 1933, a landscape without flowers, it was estimated at £10-£15,000 however perhaps as a result of the current interest it made £50,000, five times it's low estimate. A later still life, dated 1970 was estimated at £20-£30,000 and made £18,000; a view of a Turkish Village estimated at £10-£15,000 and made £10,000.

An example of the price change over time is a specific picture called 'Clematis and Morning Glory,' a picture sold twice at Sotheby's more recently on June 19, 2019 estimated £15- £25,000 and sold for £68,000, previously it was sold on March 18 in 2008, estimated at £5-£7,000 and sold for £5,700, a good investment for the buyer back in 2008.

Benton End itself was recently on the market and has happily been acquired by a Trust with a mission to return the Grade 2 listed property to a place of artistic and horticultural education.



Foxglove, £160,000 - Sworders



Benton End



Drought Oxfordshire, 1933, £10,000 - Sworders



Turkish Village, £10,000 - Sworders



Clematis and Morning Glory, £68,000 - Sothebys