



CEDRIC MORRIS (1889-1982)

Boswednack, Cornwall

c.1932

Oil on canvas

24 3/4 x 27 1/2 in. (63 x 70 cm)

PROVENANCE

Cecil Taylor;

Clifton College, Bristol, bequeathed by the above;

Sotheby's, London, 26 November 2025, consigned to benefit the above;

Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above.

EXHIBITED

The Leicester Galleries, London, 'Recent Paintings by Cedric Morris', April 1932, no. 16;

The Atkinson Gallery, Street, 'The London Group 1913 – 1939', 1 - 28 February 1995, no. 29;

The Garden Museum, London, 'Benton End: A Paradise of Pollen and Paint', 2 June - 20 September 2026.

PHILIP MOULD

& COMPANY



Cedric Morris occupies a distinctive position within twentieth-century British art, standing somewhat apart from the dominant movements of his generation. He was an extraordinarily accomplished painter of the natural world, best known for his depictions of flowers, plants and landscapes. Boswednack, Cornwall, publicly exhibited in 1932, belongs to an important phase in Morris's early landscape practice.

The painting was likely made during a visit to Cornwall in the early 1930s. Morris's continuing interest in the region is demonstrated by his solo exhibition at The Leicester Galleries in April 1932, in which Boswednack, Cornwall was exhibited alongside five other Cornish subjects [fig. 1]. Boswednack is situated in the parish of Zennor, on the north coast of the Penwith peninsula. The area later became closely associated with a number of major figures in twentieth-century British art, including Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Bernard Leach. Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines, however, were active in Cornwall before the later prominence of the St Ives School. Their relationship to the region therefore belongs to an earlier phase of modernist activity in west Cornwall. Lucian Freud's later recollection that Morris was known in these years as 'the Cézanne of Newlyn' is suggestive in this respect, pointing to the artist's interest in the organisation of form and avant-garde perspective planes.[1]

The painting's effect depends largely on Morris's handling of texture and spatial compression. The stone buildings are arranged within a shallow pictorial field, limiting conventional recession and emphasising the interlocking geometry of the scene. The vertical mass of the central building is balanced by the lower, angular forms of the cottages to either side, while the foreground wall establishes a strong horizontal counterpoint. These elements are described through thick, uneven applications of paint, giving the surface a pronounced physical presence.



Fig. 1 | Cedric Morris (1889-1982), *Gurnard's Head, Cornwall*, c. 1932, oil on canvas. Private collection, previously with Philip Mould & Company.

The 1930s were a defining decade in Cedric Morris's career, marking the consolidation of his mature artistic language and his wider reputation as a painter and teacher. The works from this period represent a moment of particular confidence and originality, when his engagement with the natural world was matched by a rigorous concern for pictorial structure, texture and form. It was also in the 1930s that Morris's career took on a more pedagogical significance. In 1937, with Lett-Haines, he founded the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, establishing an alternative artistic environment that encouraged independence and nurtured the careers of some of the greatest modern British artists, including Lucian Freud.

[1] Richard Morphet, (1984) *Cedric Morris*. London: Tate Gallery, p.21.

