

‘The Exercise of a Peculiar Art-Skill’: Kenneth Clark’s Design Advocacy and the Council of Industrial Design

Abstract

This article considers the involvement of the art historian Kenneth Clark in design policy and promotion during the 1930s and 1940s, and particularly his association with the Council of Industrial Design, at a time when the role of design was particularly prominent in Britain’s war effort and post-war planning. Clark’s activities have not to date received detailed attention from either art- or design-historians. Drawing heavily on unpublished material from Clark’s archive¹ and other collections, it considers Clark’s attitude and contribution to design, in the context of his own wider arts agenda, as well as the wider debates of the time about ‘good design’ and modernism. Clark’s somewhat abrupt withdrawal from the Council, and from a significant engagement with design, marks a shift in his thinking about the relationship between art and design and their place in society.

In November 1946, Sir Kenneth Clark, former Director of the National Gallery, London, wrote a letter resigning from his position as a member of the Council of Industrial Design (CoID), on which he had served since its establishment in 1944. The letter was to Sir Thomas Barlow, the Council’s Chairman. After the usual formalities of expressions of regret, and reference to the achievements of the Council - “I was proud to have been connected with the birth of an institution which has justified itself to such an extraordinary degree” – Clark added: “As a valediction, I enclose a quotation from Ruskin which, as usual, contains a great but unpalatable truth”. On an enclosed sheet, headed ‘Britain Can Make It’, the title of the major exhibition, organized by the Council, which had been held at the Victoria and Albert Museum from September to November that year, the following quotation was typed:

Efforts having origin only in the hope of enriching ourselves by the sales of our productions are assuredly condemned to dishonourable failure; not because, ultimately, a well trained nation is forbidden to profit by the exercise of its peculiar art-skill; but because that peculiar art-skill can never be developed with a view to profit. The right fulfilment of national power in art depends always on the direction of its aim by the experience of ages... No nation ever had, or will have, the power of suddenly developing, under the pressure of necessity, faculties it had neglected when it was at ease; nor of teaching itself, in poverty, the skill to produce what it has never, in opulence, had the sense to admire.²

Ruskin's words do not refer directly to design: the title alone links them in any way to the subject of the accompanying letter. But it is a bold statement to unleash on Barlow, who replied diplomatically, with the perspective of a cotton industry man: "Many thanks for the Ruskin excerpt – I agree with what he says but one has to approach tough business executives with circumspection!" In direct contradiction to the formalities of the letter, the inclusion of the quotation indicates that Clark saw a fundamental problem in the Council's work: it may be the design industry, it may be the public, or it may be both. Nevertheless, the invoking of Ruskin positions Clark firmly in the field of taste and aesthetics as well as the relationship between art and society. What had brought Clark to this position? The Council had been in existence less than two years; Clark had served as Chairman of its Design and Exhibitions Committee for the first part of that time. He was, of course, a busy man, with many committees in his portfolio, and at any one time would have to prioritise and evaluate his capacity for such commitments; but the Ruskin quote makes clear that something more is at play.

This article investigates Clark's engagement with, and advocacy for, design around the Second World War, culminating in his service on the Council, and subsequent disillusionment and resignation. Clark's involvement with design is not in itself surprising, but its nature and extent are. A consideration of this engagement adds to our knowledge both of Clark's own wider thinking about the visual arts and society, and also of the context of this agency across art and design. Reading design in Clark's archive allows us to go beyond conventional assessments (including his own) of his work and impact, and elucidates aspects of the relationship between art and design, at a time of complex debates about manifestations of modernism in both fields, and about the place of the visual arts in society both during the war and in anticipation of post-war reconstruction.

In November 1942, the BBC broadcaster, director and producer Mary Adams introduced Kenneth Clark to American radio listeners with the assertion: "[he] has done more for the visual artist in England than any other man".³ An

exhibition at Tate Britain in 2014 explored Clark's influence on visual culture, focusing on his "central belief in the vital importance of art for human life" and asserting that he was "driven by a profound belief in the democratic right of everybody to have access to culture".⁴ Historical and art historical analysis of Clark's impact and achievements in the visual arts has tended to focus on two areas: the War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC)⁵ and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), later the Arts Council, which extended his reach beyond visual art and into music and theatre. His promotion of a particular kind of art, whose exponents included Henry Moore, John Piper, Graham Sutherland and Paul Nash, as representative of, and appropriate for, contemporary Britain, has also been widely considered.⁶ Meanwhile, design historians, while noting his involvement as a founding member of the Council of Industrial Design, have not detailed or contextualized this involvement. A bibliography of Clark's writings yields little obviously about design:⁷ perhaps one reason why neither his design thinking and activities in the 1940s, nor their relationship with Clark's own wider concerns or the broader design culture of that time, have been critically considered in detail.

The period of the Second World War saw a transformation of Clark's sphere of influence, building on the significant expansion that had taken place after he became Director of the National Gallery in 1934, aged just 30. Clark came from a family of wealthy industrialists, their fortune made in the cotton thread industry in Paisley, Scotland; his father, no longer active in the family business after it was sold in 1896, collected art, albeit of a conventional kind, and curating this and his own collection was a formative experience of Clark's youth. As a young man, his path looked likely to be that of connoisseur, nurtured by Bernard Berenson.⁸ But in 1930 he accepted the post of Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, against Berenson's advice to stay out of administration and concentrate on writing. Although Clark always said he disliked administration, this move facilitated the rest of his career, since it was at least partly this combination of curatorial, connoisseurial and administrative skills which put him in line for the National Gallery post. In his autobiography, looking back from the 1970s with the benefit of hindsight, Clark wrote

I was flattered, but on reflection I saw that this apparent stroke of luck had come to me too early. I had no administrative experience and did not know how to deal with people, least of all people with grievances... finally I accepted, because I thought that I could buy some good pictures for the gallery, which I take to be a Director's first duty. I often regretted my decision, but the pictures are there.⁹

Socially, Clark famously described the period after his National Gallery appointment as 'the Great Clark Boom'¹⁰: he and his wife Jane were feted in London society and their glamorous social life was a source of fascination to the Press. However, several scandals and controversies during his directorship damaged his reputation.¹¹ Once war broke out, and the collections had been moved to storage in caves in Wales, away from the threat of bomb damage, only a fraction of Clark's time was taken up with Gallery business, leaving both capacity and inclination for a wide range of new wartime involvements.

In the months before and after the outbreak of war, Clark sought to use his diplomatic and cultural skills in the direct service of the government. He first approached the Ministry of Information with the idea of the WAAC in August 1939, with the Committee's first meeting held in November.¹² Through a combination of salaried employment, commissions and purchases, the Committee amassed over 5,000 works, which were later distributed to public collections around the Commonwealth.¹³ In the complex arena of the WAAC, Clark, as chairman, exercised considerable diplomatic skills in negotiating between artists, civil servants and the armed forces representatives, to implement his scheme.

These skills would both serve him well, and be developed through, a wide range of other commitments. Clark was appointed Director of Films at the Ministry of Information in 1939, and later promoted to Controller of Home Publicity. Working at the Ministry facilitated a significant increase in the breadth and range of Clark's contacts and operational milieus. It brought together many intellectuals in a new field with limited precedents¹⁴, forging contacts which in many cases lasted far beyond wartime. Clark described the MOI as an 'undirected orchestra' in which 'it was necessary for each man to blow his own trumpet as

loud as he could'¹⁵, a view that supports Ian McLean and Scott Anthony's account of the apparently chaotic organisation of the MOI at this time.¹⁶

At the same time, Clark's public profile was also raised by his increasing involvement in radio broadcasting. A classic exemplar of the Reithian establishment, he began to appear on the radio as early as 1935, at first in the sort of contexts that might be expected given his background and position: commenting on an exhibition of Chinese painting at the Royal Academy; or lecturing on Florentine painting. In 1939, showing his awareness of the promotional opportunities offered by broadcasting, he proposed a series of talks to tie in with a new series of books that the Gallery was producing.¹⁷ He had also contributed to the BBC's periodical, 'The Listener', since the mid-1930s, and he was for a time a regular panellist on the 'Brains Trust', an early version of 'Any Questions' which was a mainstay of radio broadcasting during the war, and brought him to a wide audience. [Figure 1] While many of his broadcasts might be seen as somewhat highbrow, a charge that was often levelled at the BBC in the 1930s¹⁸, his wartime appearances were more often in this popular vein, or followed a more didactic or propagandist purpose in encouraging the British people to think of cultural products and values both as a comfort in wartime and a hope for the post-war future.¹⁹ He was also associated in the public mind – even though only those within striking distance of London could attend – with the National Gallery's morale-boosting activities such as the Picture of the Month, contemporary art exhibitions, including selections of the War Artists pictures, and its celebrated lunchtime concerts programmed by Dame Myra Hess.

In addition, Clark's diplomatic and political skills were exercised through a number of committees at different times during the war: "The Mint Committee, the Post Office Advisory Committee, CEMA, the National-Art Collections Fund, the Council of Industrial Design (for which, with Francis Meynell, I had drawn up the charter), the National Gallery Concerts, and, my only worthwhile activity, the War Artists Advisory Committee".²⁰ He was a member of the British Council Fine Art Committee and the Macmillan Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands. Clark

was one of the original members of CEMA in 1939/40, and it was partly through his agency that it became the Arts Council in 1945.²¹ He chaired the Council's Art Panel, whose remit included an extensive programme of wartime touring exhibitions, many in conjunction with the British Institute of Adult Education; these included a small number of exhibitions of design, both in relation to individual objects and to the broader design of the home itself²².

Alongside his role at CEMA, Clark was heavily involved in the Arts Enquiry, an initiative set up under the auspices of Dartington Hall, bringing together work done by a number of bodies including Political and Economic Planning (PEP), CEMA and the Nuffield College Reconstruction survey, to evaluate the current state of the arts and their place in national life, in order to plan for a central role in post-war reconstruction.²³ Other members included Julian Huxley, a fellow Brains Trust panellist. Papers in Clark's archive indicate that he made a significant contribution to the Enquiry's meetings, particularly its visual arts, education and museums sections, and was significantly involved with the drafting of its reports including those relating to industrial design.²⁴

This wide range of relationships would have helped Clark to develop the political 'nouse' and strategies of influence that informed the public profile and persona that he went on to develop after the war. Clearly, a unifying link was Clark's belief in the importance of the visual arts as an aspect of British culture in wartime conditions, and in post-war reconstruction, in keeping with what Brandon Taylor called a new generation of art "mandarins" who "were ambivalent about radical politics and had their sights fixed upon the reform of the national artistic consciousness and the attitudes to modernism of its institutions".²⁵ Certainly any consideration of Clark's involvement in design at this period must be also consider the wider background of design and modernism. As has been widely discussed,²⁶ there was not one single modernism in design, but a multiple modernisms, which found varying expression and response across different geographical locations and fields of practice, depending on the conditions, and individuals, that engaged with it: Clark's Ruskin quote indicates a belief that such an encounter must take place

organically. What did unite many of these visions, however, was the wish to make the most of the opportunity offered by war to envision a new future for the post-war country, and to plan for this “new Jerusalem”²⁷. Clark, for example, also served on the RIBA Reconstruction Committee, which organised the exhibition ‘Rebuilding Britain’. The brainchild of Clark’s friend, the architect Jane Drew, it was held at the National Gallery in February 1943, and Clark spoke at its opening:

We all share one strong belief which earlier ages lacked: that everyone has a right to a certain standard of life; that no-one need be cold, hungry, dirty or diseased through sheer want. In the past such things were thought of as inevitable. We believe that the machine, which so disastrously increased them a century ago, can be used to abolish them today...²⁸

But what involvement did Clark have specifically in design? The lack of formal writings by him on the subject of design has obscured his activities and ideas in this field, but evidence can be found in other sources to suggest what might have informed his thinking. In addition to his wide network of arts-related activities, Clark’s archive reveals a significant strand of design-related exchanges and developing relationships, suggesting a growing engagement with design. In the pre-war period, his involvement in design was primarily in relation to commercial art: he saw the use of ‘fine’ artists as way to raise standards of the work, and to increase employment opportunities for artists. As a member of Stephen Tallents’s Poster Advisory Group,²⁹ established in 1934, and this had led to a number of invitations to speak at poster-related events, such as exhibitions of Shell posters.³⁰ However, references to industrial design, or art and industry, appear frequently throughout the Clark files from 1940 onwards, with a particular flurry building up through 1944 in the immediate run up to the founding of the Council of Industrial Design that November. He repeatedly and explicitly stated that he was particularly interested in design.

Clark’s perceived and potential role as an advocate for design issues is indicated by the letters seeking his advice, or urging him to get publicly involved with design concerns. Among these correspondents were the designer Enid Marx, a well known champion of ‘popular’ arts, and later a member of the Utility

Furniture Committee, and writers Margaret Bulley and Amelia Defries.³¹ Marx, for example, wrote to Clark in February 1940 lamenting the low standard of design in industry, and urging him to take action by, among other things, writing to the *Times*: “I can’t think of anyone better qualified than yourself to champion the domestic arts on the grounds of our long native tradition”.³² She also mentioned that she had been reading *The Gothic Revival*, making a link between the book’s rehabilitation of an unfashionable architectural style, and the support of other ‘native’ traditions. Clark replied: “I agree with every word in your letter and have been trying since the war began to persuade manufacturers to do what you recommend, but nothing... is more heartbreaking than so-called Art in Industry”.³³

In September that same year, Clark, as “a person whose name will carry authority abroad”, was invited to write an introduction to a *Vogue* Quality Goods Export Supplement. Responding to a list of “chief points” which he was asked to cover, he offered an assessment of the current situation, which explains his comment to Marx:

No-one has ever questioned the excellence of English craftsmanship... but it seems that since feeling the full force of industrialism our manufacturers have been paralysed by fear that any departure from the tried canons of ugliness and vulgarity would expose them to popular suspicion... But now... we have the chance to recover a market which years of conservatism have let slip, and this chance comes at a moment when exports are vital. Our manufacturers will, therefore, be studying the question of design in the hope of raising it to the standard of our craftsmanship.³⁴

The ‘designers’ to whom he referred in the manuscript were almost exclusively fine artists commissioned to design decorations for objects, such as Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and Ben Nicholson for Foley China. He also referred to many designers who were also commissioned by his good friend, Colin Anderson, an Oxford contemporary and fellow patron and collector, to decorate the Orient Line ships of which Anderson was Chairman.³⁵ Clark was instrumental in introducing Anderson to the world of art and artists; many of Anderson’s choices were in line with Clark’s own taste.

From 1942-4 Clark corresponded about design with his brother-in-law, Colin Martin, who worked at the Central Agency, a selling agent for J & P Coats,

the firm which had absorbed the Clark family business.³⁶ Martin asked for advice about employing a designer for several items of packaging. Clark's letters indicated a greater awareness of design issues than at the time of the *Vogue* article. For example, in a period before the widespread establishment of corporate identity design in Britain, he was aware of the value of an integrated design scheme for a business: "I would recommend you not to try and employ too many designers, as it is most important from the publicity point of view for all the products of the firm to have some kind of consistent character". He also highlighted the importance of making the design appropriate to the medium: of Allan Walton, recently appointed Director of Glasgow School of Art, who Clark was suggesting as a good source of advice, he wrote "he tends to make pretty patterns without strict regard to the medium in which they are to be executed. In this way he is of the opposite school to [Eric] Ravilious and [Barnett] Freedman, who always think of a design in terms of its purpose". Barnett Freedman seems to have been one of Clark's favourite designers; he recommended him on numerous occasions. In this case, he also discussed Norbert Dutton and Milner Gray, who, unlike Freedman were known as designers first and foremost.³⁷

Also significant was Clark's contact with The Cotton Board and the Colour Design and Style Centre in Manchester, a model for the Council of Industrial Design's own Design Centre.³⁸ Clark visited the Centre as the guest of the Cotton Board at least three times in 1943 and 1944, and was due to make a further visit on 6 June 1944 that he cancelled because he had warning of D-Day.³⁹ In February 1943 Clark was invited to Manchester for lunch and a visit to the Centre, with members of Cotton Board. In accepting, he wrote: "The question of design in industry has been much in my mind during the last few months". He was invited to Manchester again to talk to the Design Industries Association Manchester Branch, about post-war textiles and textile design, in October 1943: "I take a great interest in textile design but I am afraid I do not know enough about the subject to give a lecture to the DIA. I shall certainly visit the Design Centre when I am next in Manchester... but I shall come to learn, not instruct".⁴⁰ In fact he did speak; correspondence suggests the subject of his talk

was 'The Artist in Industry or similar'.⁴¹ He also commented on several occasions in correspondence elsewhere about the importance of the concept of the design centre.

Clark's involvement with both the Cotton Board and the Central Agency, of course, relates to the cotton trade, with which Clark's own family were associated, and it may be that, despite his lack of involvement with the business personally, he felt he had an inherited and inherent interest there. His Manchester connection may well have been through Sir Thomas Barlow, a former President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and Chairman of the family cotton firm of Barlow & Jones, and already known to Clark before the CoID; Barlow was a keen collector himself, and Clark's archive contains a comfortable correspondence between the two men in January 1943 about paintings acquisitions.⁴²

Indeed, by the time of this association with Manchester, Clark was already heavily involved in the planning of the Council of Industrial Design. Its establishment in 1944 was an important landmark in British design policy, and the result of longrunning debates.⁴³ From the 1920s onwards there was a drive to promote 'good [modern] design' of what were often referred to as 'everyday things', with the mission of improving social problems through the design not only of household goods but of homes themselves: using technology, in the age of the machine, to solve society. Some, like critic Herbert Read or architect and designer Wells Coates, favoured a more radical international modernism which made a break with the past and whose functionalist lines eschewed ornament. Others, like the members of the Design and Industries Association, or the Council for Art and Industry, which was established under the auspices of the Board of Trade in 1933, supported a less radical approach which evolved from some of the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, and therefore retained some link to traditional British design and, significantly, craftsmanship (even in mass production), and the notion of 'fitness for purpose'. The concept of 'good design' that was established by the 1930s was given new impetus and momentum through the outbreak of war, as has been widely noted: Jules Lubbock writes,

“the design reformers of the 1930s used the exigencies of war to advance their objectives for the promotion, even enforcement of Good Modern Design during peacetime”.⁴⁴ Amid wartime conditions and planning for post-war reconstruction and economic recovery, the Council of Industrial Design was established by the Board of Trade, ‘to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry’.⁴⁵

A number of government-led committees and reports through the 1930s and 1940s were in some way precursors of, or preludes to, the establishment of the Council.⁴⁶ Of these entities, Clark was a member of the Weir Committee, or the ‘Sub-Committee appointed by Mr Harcourt Johnstone on Industrial Design and Art in Industry’, at the Board of Trade, generally seen as the immediate trigger for the Council’s formation. After submitting its initial report in February 1943, the committee was asked to go into greater detail about the role of the “central body which would act as an authority on design”.⁴⁷ Its final report of 23 September 1943 declared that it was “appointed to consider the place of design in post-war planning for industry with particular reference to export trade, and to recommend measures to secure that the United Kingdom shall reach and maintain a leading position in the field of industrial art.”⁴⁸ Clark was involved in the drafting and re-drafting of this report during 1942 and 1943: he sent confidential drafts to both RA (Rab) Butler, President of the Board of Education, to which CEMA reported, and Julian Huxley in January 1943.⁴⁹

Clark’s associates were involved in many of these other design reports and commissions, and we might infer that he was at least aware of, if not actually involved in, the detail of these wider discussions: the Meynell-Hoskin report for example, delivered on 27 January 1944, again at the Board of Trade, involved several of Clark’s close associates, including Francis Meynell (founder of the Nonesuch Press, and a wartime civil servant like Clark) and E M O’Rourke Dickey, formerly Secretary of the WAAC and now at the Board of Education. Frances Meynell’s lover and later wife, Alix Kilroy, one of a body of pioneering women breaking into the ranks of the senior civil service, in her case at the Board of Trade, played a critical role in bringing the Council into being.⁵⁰

Clark was in fact also an early choice for its Director; indeed, he was top of more than one list of suggestions.⁵¹ He was particularly favoured by Sir Cecil Weir, who wrote that the Director “needs to be a man of high standing and I suggest that Sir Kenneth Clark would be a particularly good suggestion for this post. I have seen a good deal of Sir Kenneth during the past few years and have formed a high opinion of his ability in this field”. Sometime in late September or October, Clark was approached by Sir Thomas Barlow, but on 2 November it was reported that he had declined the post of Director.⁵²

The lists of suggested names for the Director and Council members often gave brief information about the field they represented; Clark was simply designated ‘Arts’, suggestive of his credibility as a representative of ‘taste’, as well as his contacts and bureaucratic experience. However, while diplomatic skills, good taste and a high public profile would clearly be valuable qualities in the new Council’s Director, knowledge of design and the design industry were indubitably important in a role that was administrative as well as a figurehead. Indeed, Clark may have felt himself ill qualified for the Directorship in this regard; in addition, he may not have wanted to make design such a focus of his attention as the CoID directorship would both signal and require. When on 26 October 1944 Sir Hugh Dalton, Minister at the Board of Trade, wrote formally to Clark, it was to invite him to serve as a Council member, under the Chairmanship of Sir Thomas Barlow [Figure 2].

On 16 December 1944 Barlow wrote to Clark about a preliminary meeting of the Council on 28 December to discuss the post of Director, suggesting the name of S C Leslie. Clark had known Leslie, too, since at least October 1940 when Leslie was at the Ministry of Home Security and wrote to Clark about the frustrations of dealing with the Ministry of Information over the production of a leaflet. Leslie was in contact with Clark again in July 1942 about the Ministry of Home Security’s representation on the War Artists’ Advisory Committee, and invited Clark to meet for lunch “and renew an acquaintance that I should be sorry to let lapse”.⁵³ Clark annotated the letter “12.50 Reform Club” and his diary

confirms an appointment for 20 July with “Leslie”.⁵⁴ They became sufficiently intimate for Leslie to ask Clark to comment on some drawings by his daughter, which he duly and diplomatically did⁵⁵.

In response to Barlow’s letter about Leslie, Clark replied that he had discussed Leslie with Alix Kilroy:

I have had a good deal to do with him during the war and have found him an unusually able and forceful man... his great weakness is that he has very little knowledge of design and when I spoke to him recently he did not seem aware of some of the chief reasons why good designers were not employed in industry. In fact the whole field is more or less a new one to him... moreover, we do not know what Mr Leslie’s taste is like. It would be disastrous if, having been given a fairly free hand, he were to turn out to have bad taste.⁵⁶

If Clark felt himself insufficiently knowledgeable about design, his concerns about Leslie must have been great, given that the latter’s taste was also in doubt, the quality which Clark *would* have been able to bring. However, despite Clark’s reservations, Leslie was duly appointed.

As well as being a member of the founding Council, Clark was made Chair of its Design Committee, later the Design and Exhibitions Committee. **[Figure 3]** The minutes of the meetings suggest a body finding its feet, developing an agenda of priorities and trying to establish an authority through its members’ networks of contacts in government and industry; but also in danger of becoming bogged down in not only in the differences between these groups but also in bureaucracy. In the careful reported speech of the minutes are Sir Kenneth Clark’s concluding comments, after what appear to be lengthy discussions on whether furniture of traditional mahogany or more contemporary in style would be preferred for civil servants’ offices: a microcosm of the debate between modernism and tradition: “There would still be enough mahogany for the more conservative Civil servants, but many he thought would appreciate a modern and individual furnishing to their rooms.”⁵⁷ Clark resigned from the Design Committee (though not from the Council) at the end of May 1945, not six months into the Council’s existence. He gave the reason of pressure of work; he may have given a fuller explanation when he met Barlow to discuss it in person, which he refers to having done. Evidently someone in his position could

prioritise the things he wanted to focus on, which was presumably not the furnishing of civil servants' offices.⁵⁸

One of the CoID's first major projects was the 'Britain Can Make It' exhibition at the V&A from September to November 1946.⁵⁹ An exhibition of this kind had been part of the Council's initial brief, and through the Design Committee, Clark had been involved in the early stages of exhibition's conceptual development. Even after his resignation from that Committee, he accepted an invitation in February 1946 to serve on a selection committee "to review the work of designers in charge of individual furnished rooms" and in July on a special supervisory committee "to make a last minute survey... to ensure... that the highest standards of display are maintained and that no blunder has been committed in the selection or arrangement of objects".⁶⁰ [Figures 4, 5] Jonathan Woodham has discussed the challenges of the selection of goods for BCMI: "the conflict between, on the one hand, the perceived elitist cultural values of a 'metropolitan' State-funded body and, on the other, the aesthetic 'ignorance' of provincial manufacturers who were preoccupied with short term gain".⁶¹ These were the tensions at play in the Council's arena, and Clark had first hand experience of them through the Design and Exhibitions Committee. The more aesthetic-supervisory role he took in the final exhibition was certainly more his natural milieu than the civil service furniture discussions. The objects displayed in the furnished rooms (each room itself credited to an individual designer) included examples of design by artists Clark had supported, including Graham Sutherland and the late Eric Ravilious⁶²: here, design is presented in an aesthetic, curated context, quite separate from the industrial and ideological conflicts which lay behind their production and inclusion.

As we have seen, as Britain Can Make It was ending, Clark resigned from the Council altogether, and sent the Ruskin quotation to Barlow. Officially, Clark gave as the reason for his resignation the need to focus on the Slade Professorship at Oxford, which he was to begin in 1947; he was at this time also increasingly involved in the Arts Council, which CEMA had become in 1945. On receipt of his formal resignation letter, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board

of Trade, wrote to thank Clark for his work. "I am indeed grateful to you for the hard work and wise advice which you have given to the cause of improving industrial design both on the Weir Committee in 1943 and during the first two years of the Council's existence. I am confident that you have contributed to establishing the Council on a firm basis, to which the success of the 'Britain Can Make It' exhibition testifies, and that you leave it in an excellent position to extend its influence in industry and with the public".⁶³

Given that Clark's involvement with design had brought him to this point of dissociation from the institution which seemed to embody the attempt to implement the social potential of design, what had happened to Clark's enthusiasm? Where did he see design in his vision for the arts? What gave design its importance, for Clark, was its potential to bring art into daily life, allowing the public to express their tastes as patrons. Design was part of popular discourses about art and everyday life. Julian Holden has described a strong and popular strand of design programming on the BBC from the 1930s onwards.⁶⁴ In September 1944, Clark was invited to contribute to a series entitled 'Art for Everyone', which aimed "to deal with the main ways in which art is being brought into the experience of more people both directly, through a widened appreciation of the Fine Arts, and indirectly through the many ways in which artists are contributing to the design of everyday objects and in shaping community life."⁶⁵ Clark was intended for the first programme in the series "because of the work you have done to bring art more fully into the lives of ordinary people and your wide knowledge of the subject". While Clark was not asked to talk about design, he was seen as a component of the authentication of design as a part of a cultured visual arts literacy, just as he might be seen to stand for 'taste' on the Council of Industrial Design. Design was potentially a more useful medium to society in present conditions, despite Clark's highbrow sense of its inferiority. In 1938, he made an explicit link between modern art and design, pointing out the influence of Picasso on commercial modernism:

If modern art were a delusion confined to a small clique, it might have no great importance, but as a matter of fact it has an unusual appeal to a mass of ordinary people who have probably never seen an original work by Picasso. And industrial designers have been quick to exploit the vitality and what we may call

the magic of Picasso's pictorial invention... Heaven knows how degraded this is when it is transferred to cheap fabrics, but it remains *the tribute that vice pays to virtue* [my italics], and a proof that Picasso is a vital force in contemporary art...⁶⁶

This may be a rather simplistic assessment of the relationship between art and design; it is certainly one that starts very much from a fine art rather than a design perspective. Clark's words are reminiscent of his friend and mentor Roger Fry's comments in the appendix to the Gorell report in 1933, referring to the 'timid and side-long glance towards [Cubism]' to be seen in carpets and fabrics, evidence of the fact that manufacturers had "no guide, no clear purpose" as to the application of art.⁶⁷

Like many of his contemporaries, Clark gave considerable attention to the role of the artist in society, and to the relationship (or the lack of it) between the general public and the visual arts.⁶⁸ As well as his BBC broadcasts and his writing for publications such as *The Listener*, Clark was in great demand as a lecturer, a demand which increased during wartime, with invitations to speak to the armed forces, local arts groups and museums across the country. He accepted a surprising number, given his workload, suggestive of a commitment to putting his beliefs about art and society into action. Alongside the general lectures about looking at pictures can be seen several recurring themes, such as the relationship between art and society, and patronage. Clark's writings, demonstrating the accessibility for which he became known, show a genuine, if patrician, attempt to help people to understand and share his own pleasure in art.⁶⁹ He seems initially to have seen design as a potential way for artists to speak more the language of the ordinary 'man' (and he usually spoke of a man), to encourage him to be more confident in his aesthetic tastes. Clark's purpose was not only to raise awareness of art and aesthetic education, but to try to nurture patronage. As an art historian trained under Berenson in the tradition of connoisseurship focusing on Renaissance Italian painting, it is not surprising that Clark's consideration of the question of patronage should refer back to that period as a heyday of patronage.⁷⁰

In attempting to nurture a public appetite for art, Clark frequently asserted that the general public hesitated to have opinions about paintings because they had not been as exposed to art as much or as widely as they had to other art forms, such as music and literature. Seeing a painting in a bad black and white reproduction, he believed, could not convey the effect of the actual object⁷¹ and this impeded the average person in the street from being able to develop his or her own responses to art. Looking at art, he said, created an appetite for it, and allowed the development of a confidence in the individual's own tastes. It is perhaps also important here to consider Clark's view of what we might call cultural brokerage: between artist and industry, and artist and public, artist and patron; a model he followed in the War Artists Advisory Committee, to some degree in CEMA, and may have hoped for the CoID. These views were set out very clearly in two letters to the editor of the Times (at the time, Barrington Ward) in March and April 1941.⁷² The first letter was written in response to an article which "draws attention to the fact that during the last twenty years many of our most talented writers and painters have been appreciated only by a few people who gave special attention to their work". Clearly piqued by the accusation that this was inappropriate, Clark felt moved to defend the position of arbiters of taste such as himself. In the covering letter to Ward, he urged the Times to "take a stand against the deification of the small man":

I suppose we should all like to see appreciation of art rest on a broader basis of popular approval – not least the artists themselves who find it hard to exist on the restricted patronage of the "highbrows". But in our desire for popular art, we must not be led into thinking that the average man, whatever his qualities... is, or can ever become, the ultimate authority on artistic merit. The poet and artist are important precisely because they are not average men: because in sensibility, intelligence and power of invention they far exceed the average.⁷³

The responses to this letter caused him to write again, to try to clarify his view: "the responsibility for understanding works of art, and interpreting them to the average man, must rest with a small minority", because "popular approval... has been made possible by the penetration and faith of a few people who have recognized the artist's merit in spite of the unfamiliarity of his style". A defender of modern (and potentially 'difficult') art, Clark nevertheless retains 'taste' as the preserve of the elite. He asserts the importance of both the creators

and the interpreters of art, such as himself: indeed, by his arguments, designers might also be seen to be interpreters of art to the masses.

Clark, of course, was a patron himself, beyond his efforts with the WAAC and the CEMA collection. He supported a number of artists over many years, helping Graham Sutherland to buy his house, for example, and making regular payments to a number of artists including Victor Pasmore and David Jones. We know a little of the Clarks' design patronage, as seen in their home: though by the convention of the times this was much more the territory of his wife, Jane. Meryle Secrest describes the house in Portland Place where the Clarks lived from 1934 until the outbreak of war, thus: "white walls and yellow silk curtains in the manner of Sybil Colefax... curtains designed by Duncan Grant... but the main decorative influence... was that of Marion Dorn".⁷⁴ Textile designer Dorn was the partner of the graphic designer E McKnight Kauffer, and the couple were good friends of the Clarks. Indeed, Secrest points out that Dorn was "a habitue of that handsome house that was to provide such a direct link with the people who mattered, those with the money to commission and the influence to foster careers".⁷⁵ Dorn was also one of the artist-designers referred to in Clark's article for *Vogue* in 1940. Her textiles remained in the Clarks' homes until at least the 1950s.⁷⁶ Felix H Man's photographs of the interior of Clark's Hampstead home, published in *Home and Garden*, show a home which Clark himself described as "a desperate rear-guard action" to keep alive "the most perfect of English works of art, the great house".⁷⁷ If this house was, as Chris Stephens points out, "itself an artefact",⁷⁸ it was Clark's creation, and the embodiment of the enormous value he placed on a link with tradition and the past.

LeMahieu has argued that Clark endorsed commercial patronage of artists because it effectively "made commerce the midwife of social responsibility".⁷⁹ By this argument, the application of good design to mass-produced goods not only provided employment for artists but was also a social leveller and brought aesthetically superior objects into everyone's daily life, benefitting both artist and public. Certainly, through his involvement with the commercial art of Shell in the 1930s, Clark expressed approval for such patronage. In 1934, he declared

that “posters... represent a real effort to communicate an idea or a belief in a memorable way to a mass of people”.⁸⁰ And in 1938, for a debate at Shell-Mex, he wrote: “For the past seven or eight years, Shell Mex and BP have been among the best patrons of modern art... The art of patronage has long been dead, and state patronage where it exists is out of touch with public feeling.”⁸¹ Previous forms of patronage, by the aristocracy or the rich, had gone forever: the aristocrat now only *sold* paintings, and rich people, looking for a return on their investment, would not choose modern art because it was too risky.⁸² Which left the ‘ordinary’ person, or the state. In 1939, in a speech to the American Federation of the Arts, Clark suggested that in the long term he favoured the individual over the state.⁸³ The State, he believed, however well meaning, could never replace the individual. In 1940, in a BBC broadcast discussion with Eric Newton, he expressed the view that, given that the ordinary man cannot afford art patronage he has “more hope” about the possibilities of state patronage.⁸⁴ By 1942 state patronage was “inevitable if artists are to survive at all”;⁸⁵ that same year, he addressed a CEMA exhibition opening with the view that state patronage functions as an encouragement to private patronage.⁸⁶

In 1944, in an article in the *Sunday Times*, comparing state, municipal and commercial patronage, he wrote: “during the last twenty years, artists have come to look more hopefully towards industry as a patron which has not only paid high fees, but has encouraged originality and a fair amount of freedom.”⁸⁷ However, this time, he favoured state patronage much more strongly: the problem with corporate patronage, he felt, was that it depended too much on the “taste and character” of the individuals responsible for commissioning; and there could not always be a Frank Pick (London Transport) or a Jack Beddington (Shell) in these positions. He had more faith, then, that such men could better be secured by the state, than by the private sector. We are back at the views expressed in the *Times*, of intelligent patrons and interpreters. But Clark goes even beyond this: unlike Herbert Read, who favoured the artist having the ultimate authority on design matters⁸⁸, Clark felt that, although the artist’s creative freedom should be respected, the artist could also benefit from the input of the patron, a view seen in his relationships with the artists he supported:

The creative patron must learn to leave the artist alone, even though it seems that his money is being wasted; or what is worse, his whole carefully thought out plan upset. / This argument has been pushed [...] notably by the artists themselves, who often maintain that the state should pay them their money and leave them alone; and after so long a period of individualism it is natural that some artists should find any limitation tiresome. But if history is any guide, some feeling of direction is helpful to the artist...⁸⁹

However, as the use of the Ruskin quotation in 1946 indicates, Clark was concerned that the situation must not be forced: one could only create the right conditions for an invigorated arts community. “An artificially stimulated demand for art produces an artificial art”⁹⁰, or again, “you cannot create a great school of painting, but you can make it possible for one to exist”.⁹¹ If the state could make it possible for it to exist, it was the individuals, the private patrons, and the intelligent interpreters and promoters, who would nurture the artistic community, and the individual taste of the public. Clark’s model was a broadly hegemonic good taste, in which a proportion of the general public could be encouraged to educate themselves, with guidance from a cultured elite, through various methods which might include those endorsed by the state. In such conditions, both fine and applied art might be encouraged to flourish naturally; the employment of fine artists in design was a means of achieving this.

While Clark’s approval of state patronage might explain his endorsement of such initiatives as the CoID as part of a vision for the arts, he also developed a sense that design – British design, at least - was being forced in an unnatural direction by the state-facilitated drive to improve it through modernism. Critical to his doubts about modernism was the question of ornament, which, like many of his contemporaries, he saw as a natural expression of, and link to, English traditions in art and design. In an address to the Council for Visual Education in 1947, Clark asserted that the intrinsic qualities of English design and craft are inherently incompatible with modernism. England, he explained, was characterized by “a kind of all-pervading formlessness... lack of formal sense... shapelessness”.⁹² However, this was compensated for by “our remarkable sense of nature... our forte is the informal, the natural, the poetical and the

picturesque". But this did not excuse the English from any effort: that could lead to "a gradual lowering of standards. We begin to feel that if beauty depends on a series of happily contrived accidents, then there is no need to bother too much about design". So, a balance between the two was required: the eye needed "a well designed detail or a well proportioned façade. It is part of the eternal balance between vitality and order which underlies all art. In England, where the sense of ordered form is not in our blood and atmosphere, it can never by itself give us complete satisfaction". English design had another characteristic, "a talent for tasteful simplicity". But this simplicity was not that of unornamented, international modernism: it must be linked to vernacular forms and histories. If design was forced in such a direction, it became dissociated from the qualities of art which imparted its value. Thus art and design stopped being so usefully linked if the latter was no longer a carrier of the imaginative, even spiritual qualities of art.

Consistent with Clark's assessment of design and architecture in placing significant value on links to the past, to native visual and craft traditions, and to nature, were his endorsement and promotion of contemporary artists such as Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. He often made explicit reference to their link to English landscape traditions.⁹³ He felt abstraction was a dead end, and he had limited approval of the Surrealists. In a typescript entitled 'Modern Art', which relates closely to his article 'The Future of Painting', published in *The Listener*, 2 October 1935, he sets out his "serious objections to both the cubist and super-realist [sic] approaches to painting", making significant reference to Herbert Read's defence of abstract art in *Art Now* (1934): "The whole cubist movement has revealed the poverty of human invention when forced to spin a web from its own guts".⁹⁴ The Surrealists are at first sight preferable because of their connection with psychology, but actually "they come to grief more disasterously [sic] than the cubists... schools of art which depend on vamped up emotional states are the most unattractive of all". Clark's objections to various modern movements in art are likely to have informed his approach to design objects. In *Art and Industry* (1934), Read set out his case for modernist design objects as a suitable vehicle for abstract art: "Utilitarian arts – that is objects

designed primarily for use – appeal to the aesthetic sensibility as *abstract art*". For him, it was precisely the qualities of abstraction that allowed the human eye to find a simple designed object pleasing. Meanwhile for Clark, "abstract art, in anything like a pure form, has the fatal defect of purity. Without a pinch of earth the artist soon contracts spiritual beri-beri and dies of exhaustion... forms which the human mind can invent, it can also exhaust. Uncontrolled and unrefreshed by natural appearance, our internal rhythms are banal and redundant".

Clark, then, was concerned about an automatic adoption of modernism that did not take into account vernacular variation. He also seems to have become afraid that unornamented, internationalist modernism, if it became too dominant in 'good design', would overwhelm or supplant art; that functionalism would overwhelm the 'mystery' of art, the vernacular spirit, which was expressed in ornament. Such a fear is expressed explicitly in a 1944 manuscript, on the subject of 'Art and Democracy', of which versions were later published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and in the *American Magazine of Art*.

In each social cell – the factory, the village, the office – there should be a few people who believe, and whose belief is strong enough to influence the apathetic. These believers must be able to justify their faith through the presence of works. These works may be of two kinds: those which show decent and orderly design proportion, respect for materials – in short the qualities of good workmanship; and those which nourish the imagination, works of art in the narrowest sense. The former will, for the most part, be objects of daily use; the latter will be looked at in special moments of leisure, and will be quite useless except that in Ruskin's words they minister to man's mental health and pleasure. We have come back, you see, to the old distinction between applied art and fine art, a distinction recently discredited and fundamentally illogical, but at this moment indispensable. When frousty old museums and the private collections of the rich are swept away in the spring cleaning of social reform, there is a great danger, it seems to me, that an essential part of art will be swept out too. It is the old story of throwing out the baby with the bath water, and I am afraid that after this sanitary episode has taken place we may be asked to seek consolation in the clean, functional lines of the empty bath. To drop the metaphor, I am afraid that in the present mood of reconstruction people will feel that art consists in proportion, tidiness, all those admirable, but rather negative, qualities of good design, and will forget that it also includes invention, mystery and passion. There is something barren and exclusive about good modern design which is chilling to art. Art must be slightly septic...

This is a passionate call for a spiritual, almost evangelical role for art in society, an art under threat from the practical, social salvation that was promised

by modernism in design. Here we see again the notion of a broker, an interpreter, an almost priestly figure who carries the faith of the community. There is a clear distinction between the art object and the design object: only the former carries the spiritual quality, suggested by Ruskin. For Clark, state-endorsed 'good design' is being taken in the wrong direction, disabling it from carrying such qualities.

He goes on:

Prophets of reconstruction generally argue that art can only become popular if it is introduced into everyday life through objects of daily use. Well, no-one will deny the need for a higher standard of design, but I do not believe that this is the way in which art will regain its former power. There has never been a time, it seems to me, when so much of the will to believe was going begging. In almost every one of us faith floats round like a seagull with nothing to alight on. Art can provide a focal point, or as the scientists say, a precipitant for our dissolved beliefs. But the art that can fulfill this highest function cannot be the applied art of Staybrite steel and glass bricks. What, in all forms of religion, are the keys which unlock the spirit? Magic, ritual, allegory, love. And works of art have been revered, even in the most primitive times, precisely because men have felt that they contained some of these mysterious properties⁹⁵

In an article in the RIBA Journal in 1945⁹⁶, Clark refers again to these ideas of ornament as the expression of a character and spirit, to which the individual can respond. He laments the arrival of "an architecture without ornament" as a reaction to the excesses of the previous century. "The... plastic arts... have their roots in the imagination, and in a full and passionate experience of life. And in all great architecture, ornament has been one of the chief means through which the creative imagination has found expression".

Two later examples, from the 1950s, show the continuation of this line of thought, and link it explicitly back to, and explain, the Ruskin quote used in his resignation letter. For the Winchester School publication *Wykehamist* in 1953 he wrote:

It is often said that a popular understanding of form and colour is chiefly desirable in relation to objects of daily use; but I am not sure how far these really depend on what may be called aesthetic faculties. On the whole I agree with Ruskin that they reflect the whole character of a civilization, and cannot be improved unless civilization is improved, which is outside the scope of the Council of Industrial Design or any similar body. Nothing can be achieved by telling people what china or textiles they ought to buy – they will buy what they

like, or what the salesman likes. I believe it is a fundamental mistake to try to control taste, for taste is rooted in discrimination, and the powers of discrimination are killed by controls. In practice, efforts to improve the taste of everyday things consist in the cutting down of ornament, thus depriving the object of that marginal exuberance which gives the craftsmanship of the past its charm for us⁹⁷

Here, seven years after Clark's resignation from the Council of Industrial Design, he expresses more explicitly the doubt that was implicit in the use of the quotation. The Council was arguably at the peak of its programme to influence public taste when, in 1958, Clark wrote and presented a series of talks for ATV entitled 'Is Art Necessary?', including one on the subject 'What is Good Taste?'

[Figure 6] Here Clark spoke explicitly about the lack of ornament as “ghastly good taste” (*pace* Betjeman) – “absence of ornament, absence of colour, absence of vitality”.⁹⁸ While suggesting what good taste was, he told the audience to reject it. However, he did concede that, given the vast range of choice available,

one needs a little guidance; at least, I know I do... and it's for this reason that some years ago the Government set up the Council of Industrial Design. The Council... can't dictate taste. Nobody can tell you what you ought to have... your taste is you, my taste is me... it's a commitment...[But] taste can be improved – that is to say, we can improve that part of ourselves which is involved in taste...⁹⁹

As early as the 1940s Clark had expressed a belief that the public's relationship with art and design is more about creating the right conditions – which must be compatible with a national tradition - than telling people what to like. For him, the development of good design – or taste - in both industry and the public was a delicate and subtle art in which a state-endorsed institution could have only limited success, however noble its aims. He saw how invidious was the Council's position, negotiating between state, industry and public, even in the relatively unifying conditions of wartime. Furthermore, he sought for art a more autonomous spiritual role than could be achieved by association with design. By the 1950s, when the vision of post-war reconstruction had divided and fragmented, Clark's attention was focused on the Arts Council as a vehicle for developing the public's relationship with art, though this proved a far from straightforward vehicle itself. He was also exploring the possibility of television as a new medium for reaching the general public to this end. 'What is Good

Taste?' was perhaps one of the last manifestations from Clark of a direct engagement with design and the question of its social purpose.

¹ Clark's main archive is held at Tate Archive, www.tate.org.uk/research/archive; the archive of the Design Council (formerly the Council of Industrial Design) is held at the University of Brighton Design Archives www.brighton.ac.uk/designarchives.

² Ruskin was a longstanding influence on Clark, and the subject of a number of lectures and articles. Clark published a selection of Ruskin's writings, 'Ruskin Today', in 1964.

³ Transcript of 'Answering You', BBC North American Service, 69th Edition, transmitted 15 and 16 November 1942. BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

⁴ Chris Stephens and John-Paul Stonard *Kenneth Clark: Looking for Civilisation* (Tate Publishing, 2014)

⁵ The work of the WAAC has been much discussed. See for example Harries, *The War Artists*, and Foss *War Paint*. The records of the War Artists Advisory Committee are held at the Department of Art at the Imperial War Museum, London and were catalogued by the author.

⁶ See particularly Foss.

⁷ See Margaret Slythe's bibliography.

⁸ For details of Clark's life and career, see his two-part autobiography; and Meryle Secrest's biography. A new biography of Clark, by James Stourton, is slated for publication in 2016 by Harper Collins.

⁹ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 209-10.

¹⁰ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 211.

¹¹ See Secrest, and Clark *Another Part of the Wood*, for two accounts of these problems.

¹² As Clark declared, in a kind of manifesto for the WAAC, in 'The Listener', "the first duty of an artist in wartime is the same as his duty in peace: to produce good works of art... there are certain things in life so serious that only a poet can tell the truth about them" Clark 'The Artist in Wartime', 810.

¹³ The files relating to the distribution of works are part of the War Artists' Archive at the Imperial War Museum.

¹⁴ The Ministry of Information was established at the start of the war, but planning had been underway since 1935. There had also briefly been a Ministry at the end of the First World War.

¹⁵ Clark *The Other Half*, 10.

¹⁶ Ian McLean *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*; Scott Anthony *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*.

¹⁷ BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. File RCONT1 - Sir Kenneth Clark / Talks File 1 / 1935-1945. Letter from G. Ivan Smith to Sir Kenneth Clark, 26 Sep 1944, TGA 8812/1/1/42, File Misc B 1944. Also at WAC RCONT1 / Sir Kenneth Clark / Talks File 1 / 1935-1945, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

¹⁸ D L Le Mahieu *A Culture for Democracy*, 275 and passim

¹⁹ For example, 'Art and the Average Man', Home Service, 14 November 1939: "I do think that soon we shall get far more pleasure out of painting than we used to... in order to enjoy painting one has to know a little about it... the more pictures we have to look at in these times, the better".

²⁰ Clark, *The Other Half*, 55.

²¹ For a history of CEMA and the Arts Council, see, for example, Eric White *The Arts Council of Great Britain*; Robert Hutchinson *The Politics of the Arts Council*; Richard Witts *Artist Unknown: An Alternative History of the Arts Council*.

²² This aspect is discussed in XX “The taste of everyday things”: Kenneth Clark and the display of design in the 1940s’, in Farrelly, Liz and Weddell, Joanne (eds) *Design Objects and the Museum* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

²³ The Group’s final report, *The Visual Arts: A Report Sponsored by the Dartington Hall Trustees*, was published in 1946. The Trustees’ Foreword states: “the chief authors have had to remain anonymous”, but Clark was certainly among them. By the time of the report’s publication, its recommendations in many areas had been superseded by the establishment of the Arts Council.

²⁴ Correspondence in various places in the file series TGA 8812/1/1/ shows that Clark attended a number of meetings through 1943 and into 1944, discussed the enquiry’s progress and priorities in correspondence, and both contributed to and reviewed drafts of various parts of the report.

²⁵ Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 169.

²⁶ For example, Paul Greenhalgh (ed.) *Modernism in Design* (Reaktion Books, 1990); Cheryl Buckley *Designing Modern Britain* (Reaktion Books, 2007); Penny Sparke *An Introduction to Design and Culture* (Routledge, 2004), Jonathan Woodham *Twentieth Century Design* (OUP 1997), as well as Woodham and Maguire.

²⁷ A phrase used by, for example, by Drew’s husband and fellow architect Maxwell Fry in a 1981 interview: Drew concurs: “I believed in all that then”. Tate Archive TAV264AV.

²⁸ TGA 8812/1/4/371 Correspondence file for the Royal Institution of British Architects: Reconstruction Committee. Rebuilding Britain Exhibition.

²⁹ Yasuko Suga has written of the Committee’s innovative work as state patrons of modern graphic design. See Yasuko Suga ‘State Patronage of Design? The Elitism/commercialism battle in the General Post Office’s Graphic Production’ *Journal of Design History* 13:1, 2000, 23-37

³⁰ ‘Exhibition by Shell-Mex and BP Ltd. of Pictures in Advertising from 1935-1938’, June 30 – July 9, 1938. Exhibition catalogue, H A Rothholz Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.

³¹ Marx was a painter and designer, and author of *English Popular and Traditional Art* (1947) and *English Popular Art* (1951). Bulley was author of *Have you Good Taste?* (1933); Defries published *Purpose in Design* (London: Methuen 1938)

³² TGA 8812/1/1/19

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ TGA 8812/1/1/13

³⁵ See, for example, Ruth Artmonsky *Shipboard Style: Colin Anderson of the Orient Line*

³⁶ References appear across several files in the sequence TGA 8812/1/1.

³⁷ Gray was a leading figure in the establishment of design as a profession, through the Society of Industrial Artists (SIA).³⁷ Clark certainly knew Gray from his time at the Ministry of Information, where Gray ran the exhibitions department, and it’s possible they met before that; Gray was also a close friend of Graham Sutherland, a protégé of Clark’s and also involved in the early SIA.

³⁸ The Cotton Board was established in 1940 and the first exhibition in its Colour, Design and Style centre opened at the end of that year and included the work of Sutherland, Piper, Ravilious, Bawden and Vanessa Bell. See Woodham, *The Industrial Designer and the Public*

³⁹ References appear in a number of files in the sequence at TGA 8812/1/1. The aborted June 1944 visit is documented in TGA 8812/1/1/54.

⁴⁰ TGA 8812/1/1/19 File Misc D 1942-3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² TGA 8812/1/4/126

⁴³ For a survey of these developments, see for example Jonathan Woodham *The Industrial Designer and the Public*.

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- ⁴⁴ Jules Lubbock *The Tyranny of Taste* (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre/Yale University Press, 1995)
- ⁴⁵ Council of Industrial Design *Council of Industrial Design First Annual Report 1945-1946*, p5. Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives
- ⁴⁶ See Woodham, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Weir to Clark, TGA 8812/1/1/39 File Misc W 1942-3.
- ⁴⁸ 'Report of the Sub-Committee appointed by Mr Harcourt Johnstone on Industrial Design and Art in Industry' 23 Sep 1943. Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.
- ⁴⁹ TGA 8812/1/1/16, Misc B 1942-3 and TGA 8812/1/1/23, Misc H 1942-3.
- ⁵⁰ See, for example, Maguire and Woodham, and Lesley Whitworth 'Inscribing design on the nation: the creators of the British Council of Industrial Design', *Business and Economic History On-Line* Vol 3, 2005.
<http://www.thebhc.org/publications/BEHonline/2005/whitworth.pdf> Accessed 13 December 2012. These events are touched on only briefly in Kilroy's autobiography *Public Servant, Private Woman*. Kilroy was at Somerville College, Oxford, with Jane Clark, although they had not stayed in particularly close contact since then.
- ⁵¹ TNA, Board of Trade papers BT64/5173
- ⁵² National Archives, BT64/1573 Board of Trade, Council of Industrial Design, Selection and Appointment of Foundation Members.
- ⁵³ TGA 8812/1/1/1 File Misc L
- ⁵⁴ TGA 8812/4/1/6
- ⁵⁵ TGA 8812/1/1/1 File Misc L
- ⁵⁶ TGA 8812/1/1/44
- ⁵⁷ Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives. Design and Exhibitions Committee, File 42/289
- ⁵⁸ TGA 8812/1/4/126
- ⁵⁹ For an assessment, see Woodham and Maguire, *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain*, and Spark, *Did Britain Make It?*
- ⁶⁰ TGA 8812/1/4/126.
- ⁶¹ Woodham and Maguire, 52-3
- ⁶² Ravilious was killed in action whilst working for the WAAC.
- ⁶³ TGA 8812/1/4/126
- ⁶⁴ Julian Holden...
- ⁶⁵ Letter from G. Ivan Smith to Sir Kenneth Clark, 26 Sep 1944, TGA 8812/1/1/42, File Misc B 1944. Also at WAC RCONT1 / Sir Kenneth Clark / Talks File 1 / 1935-1945, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.
- ⁶⁶ 'Debate at Shell-Mex House, 26.10.38. Can Modern Art be revived by a return to nature?' Typescript, TGA 8812/2/2/598
- ⁶⁷ Quoted in Cheryl Buckley *Designing Modern Britain*, London: Reaktion Books, 2007, p111.
- ⁶⁸ See for example Read's *Art and Industry* (1934 and four subsequent editions) and *Art and Society* (1936). Robin Kinross asserts that Read's thesis was of "abstract art finding its place in industry, as *design*".
- ⁶⁹ This tendency dates back to Clark's National Gallery publication, *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery* (1938). It found a natural medium in the BBC of the 1930s and 1940s, then in television, culminating in his 1969 television series *Civilisation*.
- ⁷⁰ For example, see Clark's discussion with Eric Newton in 'The Artist in the Witness Box – 10 – Art and the Patron', BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham: Scripts, Sir Kenneth Clark.
- ⁷¹ This suggestion appears in several writings, including his script for 'Fireside Talks: Looking at Pictures', broadcast on the BBC North of England Home Service on 19 May

1946. "I can't imagine any form of coloured reproduction which will take the place of an original, and so, in some way, it must be made possible for more people to see good original painting". BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham: Scripts, Sir Kenneth Clark.

⁷² TGA 8812/1/1/11

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Secrest*, 114

⁷⁵ *Secrest*, 114-5

⁷⁶ The Clarks moved to medieval Saltwood Castle in Kent in 1955, a very different home to style.

⁷⁷ Reproduced in Stephens and Stonard, 77-81.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 83

⁷⁹ LeMahieu, 275

⁸⁰ Clark, 'Painters turn to posters: the Shell Mex Exhibition', *Commercial Art and Industry*, 17 (1934), quoted in Le Mahieu, 268.

⁸¹ TGA 8812/2/2/598

⁸² Speech to the American Federation of Arts, 18 May 1939. TGA 8812/2/2/959

⁸³ TGA 8812/2/2/959

⁸⁴ Script for 'The Artist in the Witness Box – 10. Art and the Patron. Sir Kenneth Clark KCB with Eric Newton'. BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. This was part of a series of discussions between Newton and various 'witnesses'. As part of his summing up of the series, in the *Listener*, Newton, referring in part to his discussion with Clark, stated: "The trouble with art today is not lack of talent or lack of enthusiasm on the part of the artist, but lack of general demand for his work... if there were as many opportunities of seeing and enjoying pictures as there are of seeing and enjoying motor cars or wireless sets or books, both the public and the artist would benefit. There might be a chance of getting back to the good days when art was a part of the background to everyman's life". Newton, 'The Artist in the Witness Box: Eric Newton sums up'.

⁸⁵ TGA 8812/2/2/989

⁸⁶ TGA 8812/2/2/941

⁸⁷ 'Artist and Patron', *Sunday Times*, 2 March 1944.

⁸⁸ For example, "[the artist's] power must be absolute in all matters of design... the factory must adapt itself to the artist, not the artist to the factory". Herbert Read, *Art and Industry*, 39.

⁸⁹ Clark 'Artist and Patron'.

⁹⁰ 'Is Art Necessary in Public?', undated but probably around 1942-3, TGA 8812/2/2/46

⁹¹ 'American Federation of Arts', 18 May 1939, TGA 8812/2/2/959,

⁹² Clark 'The Appreciation of Design', an address given to the Council for Visual Education at the Royal Society of Arts, 6 May 1947. Published in the 'Points from Papers' section of *The Architect and Building News*, 13 June 1947, 217-218; extracts were also published in the *RIBA Journal*, July 1947, 474-475, under the title 'Vitality and Order in Architecture'.

⁹³ For example, in a speech for the opening of the BIAE exhibition, 12 February 1942, "if you like Cotman and the English watercolourists you will like Piper also" (TGA 8812/2/2/990).

⁹⁴ TGA 8812/2/2/600

⁹⁵ 'Art & Democracy', an undated manuscript, TGA 8812/2/2/42; published versions of this article appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in July 1945 and in the *US Magazine of Art* Feb 1947.

⁹⁶ RIBA 1945

⁹⁷ 'Wykehamist', July 1953. TGA 8812/2/2/47.

⁹⁸ Clark *What is Good Taste?*

⁹⁹ Clark *What is Good Taste?*