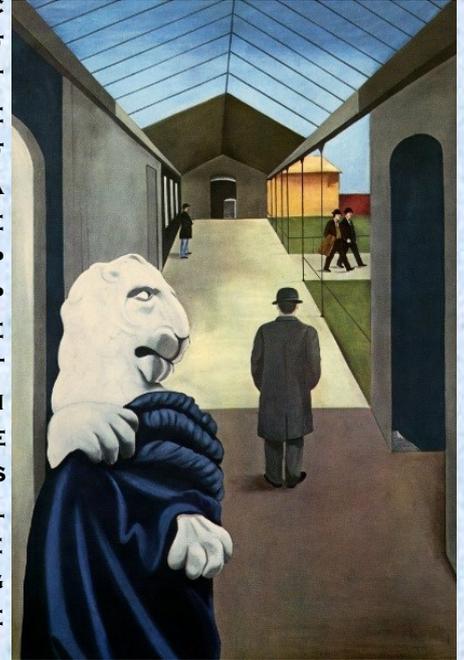


# Conroy Maddox - Artist

ENGLISH ARTIST AND WRITER BORN IN LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE. HE DISCOVERED SURREALISM BY CHANCE IN 1935 AND SPENT THE REST OF HIS LIFE EXPLORING ITS POTENTIAL THROUGH HIS PAINTINGS, COLLAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS, OBJECTS AND TEXTS. IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES HE SET OUT ON A QUEST FOR 'THE



MARVELLOUS LIBERATING POWER OF THE IMAGINATION', SURREALISM'S PRINCIPAL ASPIRATION. INSPIRED BY ARTISTS SUCH AS MAX ERNST, OSCAR DOMINGUEZ AND SALVADOR DALI, HE REJECTED ACADEMIC PAINTING IN FAVOUR OF TECHNIQUES THAT EXPRESSED THE SURREALISTIC SPIRIT OF REBELLION. AND BECAME A MEMBER OF THE BIRMINGHAM GROUP BEFORE LINKING UP OFFICIALLY WITH THE MAIN BRITISH SURREALIST GROUP IN 1938, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD CRITICIZED THE INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ARTISTS



IN THE 1936 INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST EXHIBITION IN LONDON. IT WAS THERE, HOWEVER, THAT HE MET ANDRÉ BRETON, MAX ERNST, SALVADOR DALÍ AND OTHER LEADING FIGURES IN THE MOVEMENT. THIS LED TO HIS FIRST VISIT TO PARIS IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

HIS CREATIONS SOON BEGAN NOT ONLY TO CHALLENGE THE CONVENTIONAL VIEW OF REALITY, BUT ALSO TO PUSH PICTORIAL EXPANSION TO THE LIMITS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS. MADDOX WENT ON TO BECOME A REBEL IN EVERY SENSE – THE DEFIANCE THAT HAD INITIALLY TURNED TOWARDS AESTHETICS BECAME A BROADER CHALLENGE AGAINST MORALITY, RELIGION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT AS A WHOLE. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MADDOX WAS TO BE IMPLICATED IN BOTH SCANDAL AND CONTROVERSY. DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR SCOTLAND YARD EVEN SUSPECTED HIM OF FIFTH COLUMNIST SABOTAGE AND MOUNTED A SURPRISE RAID TO SEIZE WORKS THOUGHT TO CONTAIN CODED MESSAGES TO THE ENEMY .



AFTER WORLD WAR II HE CONTINUED TO DIRECT SURREALIST OPERATIONS IN BIRMINGHAM FROM HIS BALSALL HEATH HOME 29 SPEEDWELL ROAD, BEFORE EVENTUALLY MOVING TO THE CAPITAL, WHERE HE HAD HIS FIRST ONE-MAN SHOW AT THE GRABOWSKI GALLERY IN 1963. HIS WORK, IN WHICH THE INFLUENCE OF ERNST, OSCAR DOMINGUEZ, DALÍ AND RENÉ MAGRITTE HAS BEEN DETECTED, PUSHED BACK THE FRONTIERS OF REALITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

HE DIED IN LONDON, AGED 92.



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## Legends of Balsall Heath