

UNDER MOONLIGHT

Silas Clifford-Smith's biography of his English artist parents

'There is a tendency for artists to live close to like-minded people during important parts of their creative lives. While some are drawn to a gritty urban setting others are attracted to the peace found in a shared rural location. In England there have been many such rural artistic centres, the best known being the community of Shoreham in north-west Kent which became the home to a group of talented artists during the 19th century.'

'Samuel Palmer, along with fellow artists George Richmond, Edward Calvert and Henry Walter were known as the Ancients. During the 1820s and 30s these Romantic-era artists painted wonderful images of pastoral innocence inspired by the Christian scriptures and the local landscape around Shoreham. While their Shoreham work was little appreciated at the time, membership of the Ancients led to each artist producing some of the most interesting works of their careers.'

'While clearly unconnected, a rural reinvention of the Shoreham Ancients occurred in Great Bardfield in north-west Essex during the middle years of the last century when it became the home to another group of talented English artists. Much has been written about the lives of some of the Great Bardfield artists, especially Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious, but several members have escaped closer study. This book will address the lack of knowledge about two notable members of this important 20th century art community, namely Stanley Clifford-Smith and Joan Glass.'

So begins Silas Clifford-Smith's biography of his English artist parents.

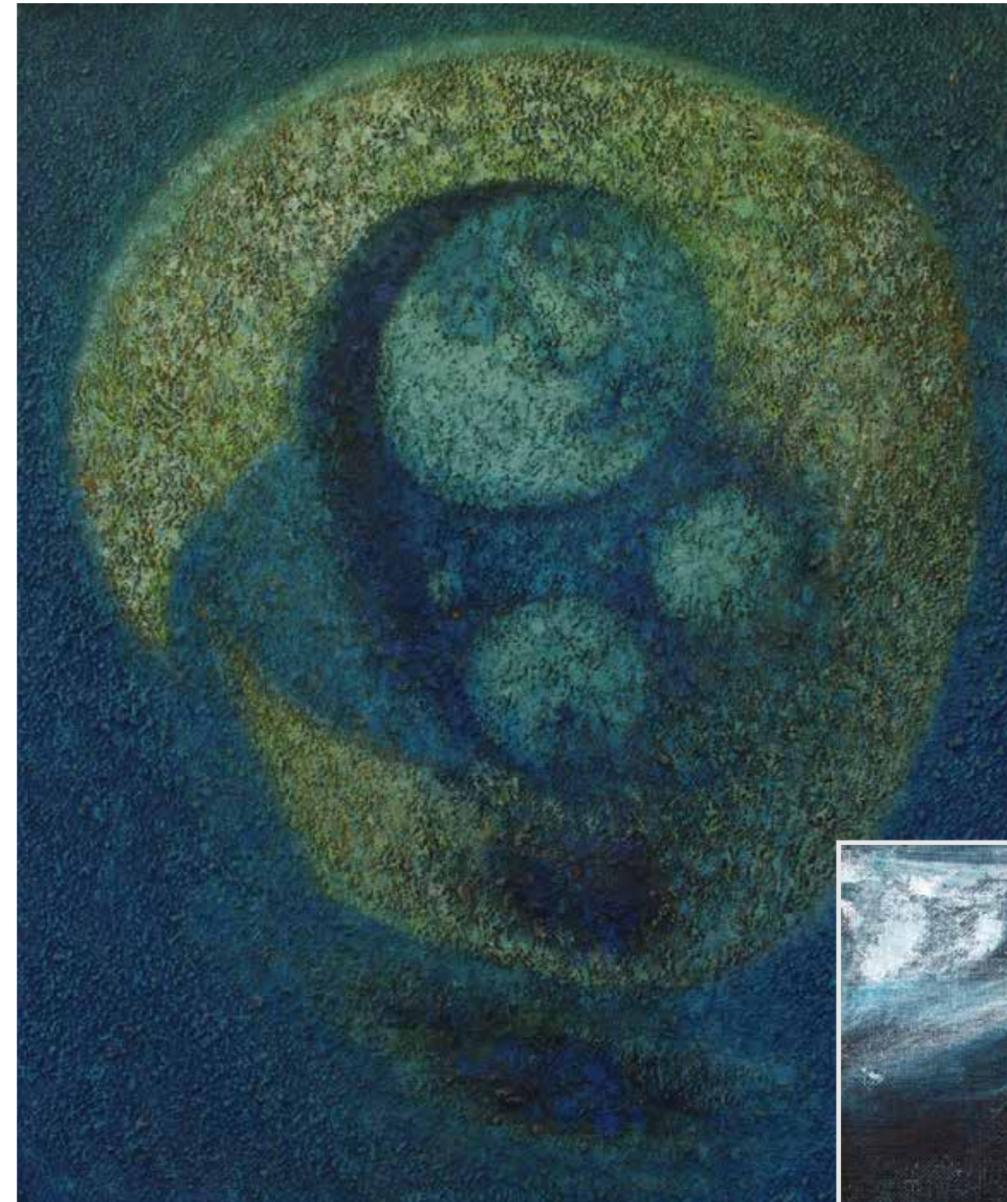
This limited edition hardcover book describes and depicts the lives and creative careers of the author's parents from the 1950s to 2000 (the year of Joan's death). During this time, Stanley Clifford-Smith and Joan Glass were active members of the Great Bardfield Artist Community in England and this book is dedicated to their memory.

Silas reveals that he felt compelled to write this book after his elderly mother presented him with a letter written to him by a sister he never knew—indeed, never knew of—and this inspired him to discover, learn more and document his family history.

The book features many family photographs and pictures of paintings and designs of their time and place. Not simply a scrapbook of memories, drawings and pictures, it becomes an artefact that maps the lives, family, art practice and the legacy of Stanley Clifford-Smith and Joan Glass. As a documentary, this book takes us on a journey through time describing the lives of two artists, their family and their community. It reveals their inspirations, their struggles, their triumphs and their need and perseverance to create art. It also exposes the influence of history and the power of the creative DNA.

This is a substantial book dedicated to substantial lives and a family history worthy of documentation. Both Stanley and Joan have made a significant contribution to our cultural capital by producing art and design that features in galleries, collections and has been mass produced in furnishings. 'Under Moonlight' is a charming and loving biography that confirms how this family continues to support, influence and nurture their creativity.

Jana Cironis



Opposite page: 1958 photo of Stanley Clifford-Smith in his Great Bardfield home

Left: 'Women bewitched by the moon' (1961-67), oil by Stanley Clifford-Smith (private collection)

*Below: Silas Clifford-Smith: Night Sky, 2014, acrylic on canvas board
Asked in what way his parents' work has influenced his own art, Silas responds: 'They certainly have in a way, although I intentionally try to be different. I inherited from my father his low-keyed colour pallet, a love for sparse landscape and his dislike of straight lines. From my mother I learnt to be spontaneous and decorative.'*



Left: Glazed earthenware bowl (c.1962) by Joan Glass (collection Fry Art Gallery)



Joan's paternal family was closely associated with the carpet trade. During the late 1930s Joan studied art at the Chelsea Polytechnic in West London, one of the most highly regarded art schools in the capital whose teachers included Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. The family involvement in the carpet trade led to Joan's growing interest in textiles and while studying at Chelsea she began formally designing fabrics with one of her 1940s designs later made into one of the most popular commercial carpets of the postwar period.

Silas Clifford-Smith is an artist, horticulturalist and author. Percy Lindsay: Artist and bohemian, was published by Australian Scholarly Publishing in 2011 and was awarded a history writing prize.