



### **Dorothea Spence Field 1915-1994**

**Artist, founder member of the Midland Group of Artists,  
gallery proprietor**

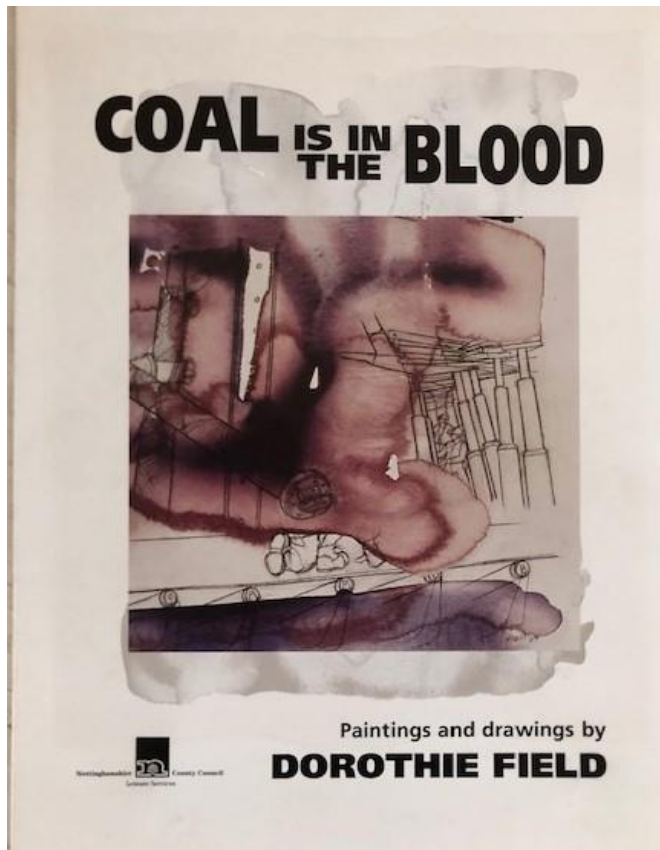
Dorothea was born at Stoke Newington, London, where she was brought up by her grandparents who were descendants of Quakers and Huguenot silk merchants who had sought religious asylum in England. Dorothea studied at Highbury Hill School under Nan Youngman from 1927–31; Chelsea School of Art where her teachers included Henry Moore from 1931–2; and came to live in Nottingham in studying at Nottingham School of Art from 1933–6. She also gained a social services diploma at Birmingham University in 1941-2.

Dorothea sold her first painting in 1931 aged 15 to the Universities Education Authorities and had her first one-woman exhibition in 1937 at the Wertheim Gallery, London. She painted in a variety of mediums and styles -oils, still-life, flowers, coal mining. In 1943 she was a founding member of the left-leaning Midland Group of Artists, alongside Evelyn Gibbs who was a friend. Dorothea also exhibited there.

From 1947 she taught Art at Waverley College of Further Education when Bessie Wright was setting up a 2year FE course for students aged 16-19 in Nursery Nursing. Dorothea also taught art at the Deaf school nearby. She has work in the permanent collection at Bath Academy, in Manchester, London, Australia, Minsk and Hungary. She was an art lecturer with the Nottingham Education Committee and lived at 54 Chalfont Drive, Nottingham where she had her studio. She married Walter Stanley Langridge and so the name Langridge is on some of her earlier work, she was unable to have children because of TB as a child but she adopted two children. After a divorce she married again to John Taylor and the children changed their name to Taylor but Dorothea reverted to Field.

She was a passionate socialist and was always concerned with social inequality and injustice. This led to visits to eastern Europe – she was invited by the Hungarian government to show paintings on the coal mining theme in Tatabanya near

Budapest. In the UK she took part in an exhibition organised by the National Coal Board at Hobart House in London exhibiting painting of Nottinghamshire pits as well as about the Aberfan disaster. The National Coal Mining Museum at Caphouse Colliery, near Wakefield, has a number of her paintings.



As well as her work as an artist she was tireless in supporting other artists and promoting art and creativity in the community as an organiser of exhibitions and galleries. She was a full-time artists' consultant and organised freelance exhibitions from 1964, living at 359 Aspley Lane where she and her husband lived above the ground floor space which became Gallery 359 from 1971-75 and later Field Gallery 1976-7. She showed work by a wide range of artists including Evelyn Gibbs. She worked on 'The last man on earth' exhibition of painting and sculpture shown at Nottingham Castle as well as in Keighley, Ilkley, Derby and Lincoln. Coal mining, war and peace, the origins of life and death and environmental problems were key themes, pursued over long periods.

In 1978 she moved to Farnsfield where the 2 bedrooms upstairs became her studio and she opened Field Gallery from 1978-1981. She advised on the setting up of the Rufford Abbey Craft Centre and organised the first 2 major exhibitions there. In 1981 she created 'garden of Flora' a mixed exhibition at the Castle which also travelled to Ilkley. In 1982 she co-operated with the Canadian High Commission in London to create an Eskimo sculpture exhibition. From 1982-86 she opened the Field Galleries at Edwinstowe Craft Centre and then 1987-89 it returned to Farnsfield allowing Dorothea to concentrate on her own work again. In 1990 she was involved with Leicestershire Schools collection. Dorothea felt that painting was her form of communication and as part of this she was keen for her work to be seen and exhibited. There was a retrospective exhibition at the Portland Building at Nottingham University of her 75<sup>th</sup> year as an artist showing drawings and paintings from 1927-1990

Her son Joe Taylor has a collection of his mother's papers, exhibition brochures, posters as well as many of her paintings. He remembers his mother's involvement in the Midland Group of Artists, her friendship with Evelyn Gibbs who did 2 drawings of Joe as a child c1954; and the family visit to the Gibbs' home in Gozo. He also can remember Gallery 359 and the various Field Galleries, and her studios. He is rightly proud of his mother's achievements and does not want her to be forgotten.