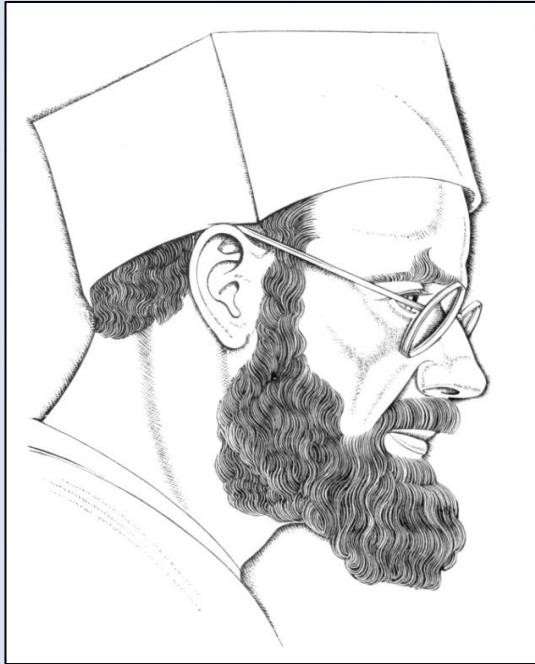


# Eric Gill: Artist-Craftsman

## The Early Years



The work of the controversial artist Eric Gill is part of the fabric of our lives - in the lettering on the rail network, wood engravings on Christmas cards, and sculpture on public buildings such as the BBC. His great-niece Caroline Walker explores Gill's early life to discover how this poor clergyman's son came to be regarded as one of the greatest artist-craftsmen of his age.

## Eric Gill



Eric Gill was born in 1882 in Brighton into a poor family of missionary stock. At the age of eighteen he became a pupil architect in London but abandoned this career two years later for letter carving. He set up a workshop first in Hammersmith, then in Ditchling, Sussex, where Gill discovered a passion for sculpture. After being admitted to the Roman Catholic faith, he co-founded a quasi-monastic arts and crafts community outside the village. Here, he and Hilary Pepler founded St Dominic's Press and began printing pamphlets and booklets illustrated with Gill's wood-block engravings. In the late 1920s he designed the first and most famous of his typefaces, Gill Sans. In 1924 Gill and his family moved to Capel-y-ffin in the Black Mountains, and later to Pigott's near High Wycombe. He died in 1940.

My illustrated talk will include local examples of Gill's work wherever possible.

## About Caroline Walker

All my life I've been aware of my illustrious great-uncle Eric Gill. However, I've spent much of the last two decades researching the life and championing the work of his equally gifted but less known brother MacDonal'd 'Max' Gill, a graphic artist who was famed for his pictorial maps for the London Underground and iconic buildings such as Lindisfarne Castle. In my research I've been given privileged access to previously unseen family documents and diaries, inevitably deepening my knowledge of his older brother Eric, a fascinating if controversial character.



Over the last decade I've co-curated a series of exhibitions showcasing the work of MacDonal'd Gill including at the University of Brighton and Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft. I've written articles for a range of publications including *Country Life*, *TAS* journal, and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and I'm the author of *MacDonal'd Gill: Charting a Life* (Unicorn, 2020). Since 2016 I've been an accredited lecturer for The Arts Society but I've also spoken for many other societies and institutions around the country including the Art Workers' Guild, Christie's, the National Trust and U3A, and

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