

## **Bone, David Muirhead 1876 - 1953**



David Muirhead Bone [commonly known as known as Muirhead Bone, and as Sir Muirhead Bone] was born in Partick, Glasgow, Scotland on 23 March 1876. He was articled to an unknown architect in Glasgow from 1891 to 1894. During this period he also took evening classes at Glasgow School of Art where he was taught by Archibald Kay (1860-1935) and Francis Newbery (1855-1946).

By 1897 it would seem that Bone had abandoned all thoughts of pursuing a career as an architect, although his training in this discipline was to influence his later work as painter and printmaker. He specialised in architectural subjects, depicting buildings in states of construction, restoration and sometimes destruction. Some of his early commissions came as a result of his friendship with the architect Charles Holden (1875-1960).

In 1916 at the recommendation of William Rothenstein (1872-1945) Bone was appointed the first British Official War Artist by Charles Masterman (1873-1927), head of the British War Propaganda Bureau. Over the next two years he documented Britain's war effort on the home front and abroad in a series of powerful prints and drawings which were widely exhibited.

Following the war, Bone returned mainly to architectural compositions, in which he documented the post-war building boom. During World War Two he served his country again as a full-time salaried artist with the Ministry of Information and as a member of the War Artists' Advisory Committee.

Bone was a member of the New English Art Club the Glasgow Art Club and the Art Workers Guild. He held the first of many solo exhibitions at the Carfax Gallery in London in 1902. During a long career as an artist he also exhibited at the Abbey

Gallery, Agnew & Sons Gallery, Beaux Arts Gallery, Brook Street Art Gallery, Carfax & Co. Gallery, Colnaghi & Co. Gallery, Chenil Gallery, Connell & Sons Gallery, Fine Art Society, Grosvenor Gallery, International Gallery, New English Art Club, Roual Academy, Redfern Gallery, and Arthur Tooth & Sons Gallery in London; the Royal Scottish Academy and Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Water Colours; the Walker art Gallery in Liverpool; Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts; Manchester City Art Gallery; and at galleries in New York. He died in Oxford, England on 21 October 1953

His work is represented in the permanent collections of the British Museum in London, the Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow, the Imperial War Museum in London, McLean Museum and Art Gallery in Greenock, Sheffield Art Gallery, the Tate Gallery, and Boston Public Library in Boston Massachusetts.

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Profile of David Muirhead Bone courtesy of Liss Llewellyn Fine Art:

Sir Muirhead Bone (23 March 1876 – 21 October 1953) was a Scottish etcher, drypoint and watercolour artist. The son of a printer, Bone was born in Glasgow and trained initially as an architect, later going on to study art at Glasgow School of Art. He began printmaking in 1898, and although his first known print was a lithograph, he is better known for his etchings and drypoints. His subject matter was principally related to landscapes, architecture (which often focussed on urban construction and demolition sites) and industry. In 1901 he moved to London, where he met William Strang, Dugald MacColl and Alphonse Legros, and later became a member of the New English Art Club. Bone was also a member of the Glasgow Art Club with which he exhibited. After the outbreak of the First World War, Charles Masterman, head of the British War Propaganda Bureau and acting on the advice of William Rothenstein, appointed Bone as Britain's first official war artist in May 1916. To many, Bone had the ideal credentials for this official appointment and, although thirty-eight years old at the outbreak of war, he was rescued from certain enlistment by the intervention of those in the art establishment who recognized what an asset his work might be as pictorial propaganda for the Allied cause. Furthermore, Bone worked almost exclusively in black and white; his drawings were invariably small and their realistic intensity reproduced well in the government-funded publications of the day. Where some artists might have demurred at the challenge of drawing ocean liners in a drydock or tens of thousands of shells in a munitions factory, Bone delighted in them; he was rarely intimidated by complex subjects and whatever the challenge those who commissioned his work could always be sure that out of superficial chaos

there emerged a beautiful and ordered design. Commissioned as an honorary Second Lieutenant, he arrived in France during the Battle of the Somme, serving with the Allied forces on the Western Front and also with the Royal Navy for a time. He produced 150 drawings of the war, returning to England in October of that year. Over the next few months Bone returned to his earlier subject matter, drawing pictures of shipyards and battleships. He visited France again in 1917 where he took particular interest in the ruined towns and villages. After the Armistice, Bone returned to the type of works he produced before the war, and was influential in promoting fellow war artists William Orpen and Wyndham Lewis. He began to undertake extensive foreign travels which increasingly influenced his work. In 1923 he produced three portraits of the novelist Joseph Conrad during an Atlantic crossing. In the inter-war period he exhibited extensively in London and New York, building up a considerable reputation. He received a knighthood in 1937. Bone served again as official war artist in the Second World War from 1940, being commissioned in 1940 into the Royal Marines as a Major. Sir Muirhead Bone died in 1953 in Oxford. His final resting place is in the churchyard adjacent to the St. Mary's Church Whitegate at Vale Royal parish in Cheshire; and he has a memorial stone in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

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Profile of David Muirhead Bone courtesy of Chris Beetles Gallery:

The Scottish painter and printmaker, Muirhead Bone, specialised in architectural subjects, and loved to depict buildings in states of construction, restoration or demolition. As a result, he made a good choice for the first Official War Artist, and was able to capture a range of environments affected by the uncertain conditions of combat.

The fourth of eight children of a journalist, Muirhead Bone was born at 1a Hamilton Terrace West, Partick, near Glasgow, on 23 March 1876. An early architectural training gave him a deep structural knowledge of what would become the best known subject matter of his paintings and prints. For he soon devoted himself to fine art, taking evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art under Archibald Kay. He began to exhibit at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts in 1897 and, three years later, just before his move to London, first showed at the Royal Academy. He was elected to the New English Art Club in 1902, and also became a member of the International Society and the Society of Twelve. He made a particular mark as a topographical etcher and, accompanied by his wife, Gertrude Dodd, made extensive tours of Britain and Europe in search of suitable motifs. He produced a number of books with etched illustrations for which

Gertrude provided the texts. As a complement to the strong contrasts of his prints, his watercolours have a lightness and delicacy. During both the First and Second World Wars, he produced some of his best work as an Official War Artist: on the Western Front and with the fleet (1916- 18); for the Admiralty (1940-43). In the latter part of his career, he acted as a trustee for the National Gallery, Tate Gallery and Imperial War Museum, and received a number of honours: he was knighted (1937) and became an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (1937), the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours (1943) and the Royal Scottish Academy (1951). He died at Grayflete, Ferry Hinksey, Oxford, on 21 October 1953. He was the father of the artists, Stephen and Gavin Bone.

His work is represented in numerous public collections, including the Imperial War Museum and Tate; The Hunterian (University of Glasgow); and the Art Institute of Chicago and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

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A biographical file on David Muirhead Bone is available at the Enquiry Desk at the Royal Institute of British Architects Library in London

Worked in

UK

Works

See: [artnet](https://www.artnet.com) - Contains over 400 examples of Muirhead Bone's work as an artist

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#### Links

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