

## **Spence, Thomas Ralph 1845 - 1918**

Thomas Ralph Spence [sometimes known as T.R. Spence] was born in West Gilling, near Richmond, Yorkshire, England in 1845. Although he trained as an architect, he only completed a few architectural commissions. These included Jesmond Church in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the interior of All Saints Church in Ennismore Gardens, London. Spence primarily worked as a painter, metalworker and wallpaper designer.

He painted landscapes and classical scenes in the style of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and between 1882 and 1916 exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Fine Art Society, Baillie Gallery, the Grosvenor Gallery, the New Gallery, and the Royal Society of British Artists in London; the Royal Society of Artists in Birmingham; the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool; the Manchester City Art Gallery; the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh; and the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts. He also participated in the exhibitions of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society exhibitions in London between 1888 and 1910.

Decorations designed by Spence for St. George's Church in Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne are discussed in *The Journal of Decorative Art* vol.16, no.2, February 1896 (pp.43-44). He was also responsible for decorative paintings in Manchester Cathedral.

He designed wallpaper for Essex & Co. 'Syon', a wallpaper he designed for Essex & Co. is illustrated in *'The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art'* 1906 (p.130).

Spence lived in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1882; London in 1890); North Shields in 1897; 28 Newman Street, London in 1902 and 1905; 8 Windsor Road, Denmark Hill, London in 1912; and 214 Croydon Road, Beckenham, Kent, in 1915 and 1917. He died in Bromley, Kent [now London] on 12 April 1918.

Examples of Spence's wallpaper designs are in the permanent collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Worked in

UK

Bibliography

Armstrong, Barrie and Armstrong, Wendy. The Arts and Crafts movement in Yorkshire: a handbook. Wetherby, England: Oblong Creative Ltd., 2013

Armstrong, Barrie and Armstrong, Wendy. The Arts and Crafts movement in the North West of England: a handbook. Wetherby, England: Oblong Creative Ltd., 2006

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 2: L-Z. London; New York: British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001

Oman, Charles C. and Hamilton, Jean. Wallpapers: a history and illustrated catalogue of the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum. London: Sotheby Publications in Association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982

### Links

- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/spence/bio.html>
- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/spence/1.html>
- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/victorian/art/architecture/spence/index.html>
- Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain & Ireland 1851-1951 [https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/mapping/public/view/person.php?id=msib2\\_1213350464&search=](https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/mapping/public/view/person.php?id=msib2_1213350464&search=)
- Bonhams <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24248/lot/37/>
- Artcyclopedia [http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/spence\\_thomas\\_ralph.html](http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/spence_thomas_ralph.html)
- Benezit Dictionary of Artists. Oxford Art Online [Subscription service] <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/benezit/B00173283?q=spence&search=>
- Artist Biographies [Subscription service] <https://www.artbiogs.co.uk/1/artists/spence-thomas-ralph>
- Artnet <http://www.artnet.com/artists/thomas-ralph-spence/>
- The Knohl Collection <https://www.theknohlcollection.com/portfolio/detail/surrender-of-capua/>
- Sotheby's <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2019/19th-century-european-art/thomas-ralph-spence-the-disciples-of-sappho>
- Richard Taylor Fine Art <https://www.richardtaylorfineart.com/artist/thomas-ralph-spence>
- Oxford Benezit Dictionary of Art Online [Subscription service] <https://doi.org/10.1093/benz/9780199773787.article.B00173283>