

Collections 1930s

The Cockle Woman - Evan Walters

Oil on canvas

61 cm x 51 cm



Cockles have been harvested on Gower (at Penclawdd and Crofty) since Roman times. Traditionally a female task, involving a hand rake and a sieve (or riddle), with donkeys to carry the full sacks inland from the low-tide beds.

Swansea-born artist Evan Walters (1893-1951) has here portrayed one of the local cockle women. The sitter for this portrait was not in fact a cockle woman, but a relative of the artist named Sarah Goss. Wearing the very necessary layers of warm clothing, worn to resist the sometimes fierce shoreline winds and also the flat-crowned black straw hat which could bear the weight of a cockle pail or basket. Sometimes women became cockle-pickers to earn money if their husbands fell prey to illness or injury in the local coal mines or heavy industries.

With its horizontal brushstrokes and use of broken colour, this work appears to fall within the experimental framework established by Walters in the 1930s in pursuit of his 'double-vision' technique.

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To see more works by Evan Walters in the Glynn Vivian permanent collection, see [The Welsh Collier](#).