

Collections 1950s

Miners, 1951 - Josef Herman



The Josef Herman Art Foundation was launched in Ystradgynlais in May 2004, to promote interest in the artist's life and work and to encourage arts education initiatives in the area.

Herman (1911-2000) was known fondly as 'Joe Bach' to the people of this former mining community at the top of the Swansea Valley where he lived for 11 years from 1944, only leaving (for Spain, then London) when the dampness of the Welsh climate began affecting his health.

This work in 6 panels was commissioned in 1951 for the Minerals of the Island Pavilion at the Festival of Britain. It shows 6 miners resting above ground after their shift.

John Upton, Education Officer at GVAG explains "Although often dark, his paintings have a warm glow to them and this is achieved by underpainting light, bright colour then building up slowly with darker tones so that the life of the picture radiates from within." Herman said of this work "I think it is one of my key pictures and the most important one I did in Wales."