

Ulla Frisch (née Blau) 1921 - 2019

Growing up: Vienna 1921 - 1938

Ulla Frisch was born in Vienna in 1921. Her father was an engineer with a Jewish background while her mother was from Hamburg in Germany and not Jewish.

She was not academic, leaving school aged fourteen to study graphic design. But her artistic talent must have been recognised at an early stage as she worked in the graphic design studio of Julius Klinger in Vienna between October 1933 and December 1934 and also for four months in 1938. The reference he wrote said

“I considered Miss Blau to be an exceptionally gifted graphic artist, who produced special and individual work, in particular in the modern techniques of publicity graphics. The precision and accuracy of her work in the field of script are outstanding.”

A young woman: London 1938 - 1951

In 1938, after Germany annexed Austria, Ulla left Vienna for the United Kingdom. She studied dressmaking at Kingston-upon-Thames School of Art but also worked in a wartime nursery in Cambridge and in a toy-making workshop. She had a variety of jobs using her graphic design skills, including as an art teacher, as an assistant to the architect Franz Singer and to the photographer Lotte Meitner-Graf.

Married life: Cambridge 1951 -1979

After her marriage to Otto Robert Frisch, they settled in Cambridge and had a son and a daughter. Ulla continued working as a graphic designer, illustrating articles for *Child Education*, children's annuals and books.



The photo above shows Ulla working on a linocut at home, probably early 1960s.

In 1963 she wrote and illustrated *Fun to make from odds and ends*, the first of three books on crafts for children. She taught art at a local school and to nursery nurses at Cambridge College of Arts.

She also joined the Cambridge Drawing Society and began exhibiting her own pictures with them and in various galleries in Cambridge.



The photo above is from a newscutting about her sharing an exhibition of work with a photographer (Bertl Gaye) in the Arts Theatre. It is not dated but probably early 1970s.

Later life: Cambridge 1979 – 2019

After her husband died in 1979 she had more time to devote to her art – her son and daughter by then having left home. She visited churches in East Anglia and further afield, sketching misericords, and attended courses, exploring and experimenting with different media, different techniques and continued to exhibit regularly with Cambridge Drawing Society and in various galleries until age – when she was in her mid-80s – started to constrain her activities.

As well as prints, drawings, paintings and collage she also worked in three dimensions.