

PRESS RELEASE
Exhibition of Science Fiction artwork
uncovers Leeds's key role

Exhibition: 'Visions of the Future: The Art of Science Fiction'

4 April – 11 June 2011

Open: Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm. Free admission.

'Visions of the Future: The Art of Science Fiction,' a new display at the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, showcases a selection of materials from the Science Fiction Collection in the Leeds University Library. The exhibition explores the history of science fiction artwork, from the illustrations in early utopian fictions to the images represented in contemporary film posters. The Gallery is open Monday to Friday, 10-5, and entrance is free.

Focusing on the visual arts, the display provides an insight into the development of the genre. Besides showcasing the history of trends and styles, the display also uncovers little-known facts, such as the important role Leeds played in the early history of science fiction in England.

The first chapter of the Science Fiction League outside the USA was formed **in Leeds in 1935**, and the group later hosted what is widely regarded as **the world's first science fiction convention**. This took place on January 3, 1937 at the Theosophical Hall– which remains at 12 Queen Square, Leeds. Around twenty fans attended, including well-known authors Eric Frank Russell and Arthur C. Clarke, plus future editors E. J. Carnell and Walter Gillings. The display showcases unique photographs from this early convention.

The Science Fiction Collection is held in Special Collections at Leeds University Library. The Science Fiction Collection comprises more than a thousand books published in the twentieth century, as well as examples of many of the influential periodicals published in the 1920s and 1930s in Britain and the United States. The majority of books in the Science Fiction Collection were presented to the Brotherton Library at various times in the 1970s by Professor Cyril Oakley (Professor of Bacteriology, 1952-1972).

Further significant additions of printed books to the collection were gifts of the former curator of the Special Collections, David I. Masson, who was himself a published science fiction writer. During



his 23 years at Leeds he wrote some of his most well-known short stories, including 'A Two-Timer', the tale of a seventeenth-century man's revulsion upon finding himself in the twentieth century. This and six other stories were collected in *The Caltraps of Time*, published in 1968.

During the exhibition, several related events will take place at the Gallery, including a roundtable discussion and a Science Fiction Scavenger Hunt in the dark, which is part of the nation-wide event series 'Museums at Night 2011'.

For full details about the related events visit <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery/events.htm>.

Please note that the Gallery is closed during Easter and Bank Holidays.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

IMAGE INFO:

Albert Robida (1848-1926) *Le Vingtième Siècle [The Twentieth Century]: Texte et dessins*
Paris: G. Decaux, 1883.
© Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds

EXHIBITION CURATORS and IMAGE CONTACTS:

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ADMISSION/ HOURS:

10.00 - 17.00, Mon-Saturday
Admission: FREE

VENUE INFORMATION:

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Parkinson Building, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT
www.leeds.ac.uk/gallery
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The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery is an accredited art museum at the heart of the University of Leeds campus, recently refurbished in 2008 with funds from the Audrey & Stanley Burton Charitable Trust. The Gallery offers both a programme of temporary exhibitions and a display of selected treasures from the University Art Collection. Accumulated over more than a hundred years, the Collection consists mainly of European, principally British paintings, drawings and prints, dating from the 17th century up to the present day, with small collections of sculpture, ceramics, and photographs. Outstanding elements are the Sadler Gift of early 20th-century British art, the collections of drawings and paintings by artists of the Camden Town and Bloomsbury groups and their contemporaries, and works by former Gregory Fellows in Painting and Sculpture, and the recent gift of works from the late Stanley & Audrey Burton's personal collection of 20th-century British art.