



JOSEPH GRAY'S CAMOUFLAGE

Mary Horlock

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*'A stands for Aeroplane: his is the eye
That Camouflage tries to defeat; this is why.
B is for Bomber: he's coming so fast,
If he can't see you quickly, why, dammit, he's past.
C is for Camera. Try to confuse
The enemy's reading of aerial views.'*

These words are from a poem Mary Horlock found in amongst the papers of her great grandfather, Joseph Gray. Gray was an official war artist. He was perhaps the most famous war artist nobody has ever heard of, because Joseph Gray was a war artist in more than one way and in more than one war. After serving in and recording the First World War, he did something very different in the Second – he was an artist of disguise and concealment. An artist of camouflage.

Joseph Gray's Camouflage is the story of one man living several lives, spanning two world wars and the radical changes of those years, and simultaneously traces the evolving art of camouflage and the role artists played in applying it to protect and defend. But uncovering Gray's story wasn't easy, since his obsession with camouflage hid another, deeper subterfuge. His new job for the War Office had enabled him to disappear from the family he'd already created and begin an affair with another, much younger woman.

Now, decades later, having discovered Gray's letters to his lover and scoured his archive, and through interviews with family and colleagues, Mary Horlock brings her great grandfather's strange multiple lives back into focus.

Praise for *Joseph Gray's Camouflage*:

'Joseph Gray's Camouflage is a book about seeing and not-seeing. It is, inter alia, a love story, a social history and an enquiry into memory told through the biography of a remarkable artist and his family. I loved it.'
- **Edmund de Waal**

'A fascinating and strangely moving account, which not only maps the history of camouflage in war but also interrogates what it might mean to live a secret life, to camouflage oneself, to disappear.' - **Olivia Laing**

'This beautiful and moving book tells the story of an artist who became skilled in painting as a way of hiding things in plain sight, and who ultimately hid even himself from the world. It shows how painting can reveal truth and at the same time disguise it. Gripping and sharp, it is a brilliant exposure of creativity in the arena of death' - **Antony Gormley**

About Mary Horlock

Mary Horlock worked as a curator at the Tate Gallery Liverpool and Tate Britain, and has written widely on contemporary art and artists. Her first novel, *The Book of Lies*, was longlisted for the Guardian First Book Award. She lives in London and is available for interview and to write features.

