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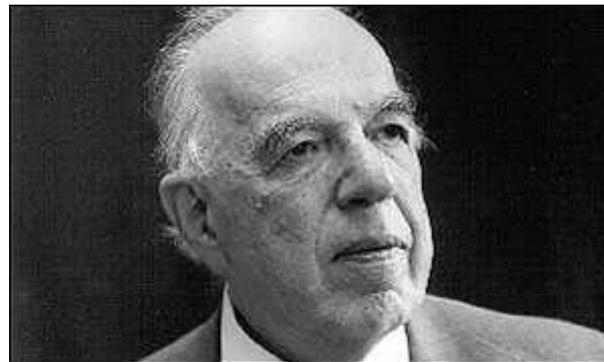
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Sir Ernst worked at BBC monitoring during World War II

The influential art historian Sir Ernest Gombrich, who has died aged 92, is being mourned as a "huge loss" to the art world.

Austrian-born Sir Ernst wrote The Story of Art, one of the most successful and widely published books in the field.

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Professor Nicholas Mann, current director of the Warburg Institute, where Sir Ernst was the director for 17 years, said the art world had "suffered a huge loss".

“ He was the greatest art historian who has ever lived and not just because he was a terrific and careful scholar ”  
Sir Christopher Frayling

"He was a man who was enormously generous, an intellectual and someone who has left behind him a great collection of admirers," he said.

Sir Ernst was born in Vienna in 1909 and came to Britain in 1936 to join the Warburg Institute - the University of London art history research centre.

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He was director of the institute from 1956 till his retirement in 1976.

In 1950 Sir Ernst published the first of 16 editions of The Story of Art, which was originally conceived as a book for children.

It surveys the development of painting and sculpture from prehistory to the modernist era.

The book, one of the most popular works on art ever, has sold six million copies worldwide.

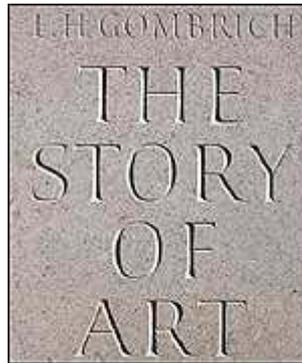
Sir Christopher Frayling, rector of the Royal College of Art, hailed him as the "greatest art historian" ever.

"The Story of Art was a book which practising artists and designers took as their bible," he said.

"He will be sadly missed."

Sir Ernst is also the author of more than 20 other works on the art world.

He is survived by his wife Ilse and their son Richard, a professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University.



The Story of Art:  
translated into 23  
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