

ARTS' News

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Business Arts / Conservatory Gallery

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Rambling I, gouache by John Bolam

provoking enquiries from far afield)

FOUR FROM VINTAGE '22

Early and recent works by four octogenarians

John Bolam **Christine Fox**
Anthony Day **Richard Sell**

Private View Wednesday 13th March 7 - 9p.m.

Exhibition continues until 27th April

Open Thursdays to Saturdays
& Sunday 7th April 11 - 5 p.m.

(closed Easter weekend)

HERE AND NOW ...

NEWS FROM THE GALLERY:

The unsettled autumn of 2001 drew to a close with the completion of another successful exhibition for the Drawing Society with favourite contributors and a wide variety of subjects. There was also variety of media, although not many actual 'drawings'.

WATERCOLOUR & DRAWING CLASSES

Led by **Judith Din**, students are concentrating on watercolour this term, but also trying collage and monoprinting. Each week there is a new subject using different techniques with the elements and structure of picture making.

Instead of the usual summer term, **members of the class** will have the opportunity to display their work alongside Judith's here in the gallery at a

short exhibition 24th, 25th and 26th May

Please visit us then

Instead of a summer term there will be an **outing** for members of the class (and any readers who wish to join us), to an out-of-town gallery in the morning followed by a painting session on location in the afternoon.

For information telephone 01223 211311



*Canto XXXI from Dante Series, 'La Commedia',
terracotta by Christine Fox*

OUT AND ABOUT ...

BELOW ZERO - FINLAND AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR: by Frances Hatch

The Fenland of East Anglia with its black earth, vast skies and keen east wind was where it started as I grew up - I mean the feeling of wanting to be outside in the landscape. A sense of being able to breathe freely and deeply out

(**O**ur website is still being improved and refreshed,

there. I began to work on location in all weathers because I welcomed the weather as a participant in the process of making (and sometimes losing) images. Experience of landscape - not only what it looked like but also what it felt like to be there. Over the years the locations shift - often northwards as it happens - and so does the medium, but the starting point does not. It is all about being somewhere specific at a particular time. My recent exhibition *Below Zero* (in Dorset) grew as a result of a visit to Finland during the month of January 2000. A family holiday which only lasted a week (and included skiing lessons) had such an impact on me that I have been nourished by it ever since. I began a brand new sketch book in the departure lounge at Gatwick and have been adding to it ever since ... documenting the time in Finland, 'talking' through ideas with the sketch book, referring to my slides and specific pieces of music which evoke aspects of the experience*. Memory is continually sifting and refining images and events. Slow maturation and stripping down is taking place. Regular visits to a web site provided by the Finnish National Road Administration (www.tielaitos.fi/alk/english) indicating road conditions throughout the year has helped me to maintain a link with the environment as it thaws and freezes.

An important object needs mentioning: a kindling stick (kiehinen) which was a gift from a reindeer farmer. There is nothing unusual about it. The man hands them out to each bus load of visitors as a sort of business card. I housed mine in a box and held it in position with vivid red nylon gut. The taut peeling spirals run the length of the form with graceful regularity. It is strong too. The form is thus because of its function. Fire is vital to survival. But the form itself is anticipating smoke in the curling forms of clean cut wood. A calling up of fire from within the form.

The work carries heat within cold. Earth under the ice revealing itself over the spring thaw. A stab of red in the snow-clogged forest (a reindeer harness). The pale-tinted dance of the northern lights in the bitter cold. The fire within the tent. The blue snow with its attendant complementary. The hot chocolate after the skiing lesson. Heat hinted at underneath and inside - the sauna with its coals and cold shower.

I work often with acrylic - it offers the potential for snow-like layering, covering up, scratching through, scarring and embedding collage elements within it. I've also used bits of kindling from our coal bunker. All expressions of the harsh shrouding of an Arctic winter - of the sharpness which caught our breath, froze the hair in our nose and hurt. The very particular silence of a snow-clad sub-zero twilight.

- * *Kielo* by **Kimmo Pohjonen** featuring original and extreme compositions for accordion, live loops and effect.
- * *Rosensfole* performed by singer **Agnes Buen Garnas** and saxophonist **Jan Garbarek**.
- * *Winter was Hard* by Finnish composer **Aulis Salinen**.
- * *Footprints in the Snow* and *Snowflakes are Dancing* by **Claude Debussy** realised for synthesiser by **Isao Tomita**.

Ed: Frances displayed some of her Finnish and Icelandic watercolours in her exhibition here with Tom Anderson a couple of years ago



Latest corporate clients are Autonomy Corporation, Microsoft UK, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, TTP Communications and Sarfo Solicitors

Autumn Winter II, gouache by Anthony Day

WHO, ME? WHAT IS A PORTRAIT?

by Robin Stemp

The portrait, having been unfashionable, is now undergoing a renaissance. But, what is a portrait? Is it a technically proficient rendering of a recognisable face, or can it show other elements relating to the subject and avoid the issue of getting a likeness? Two exhibitions, recently, offered diverse ways of portraying the human being. *Rembrandt's Women* went on tour, with images which were assumed to be likenesses of **Rembrandt's** wife, his mother, his mistress, but now new scholarship is questioning this. The National Portrait Gallery, with the support of the Wellcome Trust, have commissioned a Genomic Portrait of **Sir John Sulston** by **Marc Quinn**, using the subject's genome - the 'recipe' which makes him uniquely *him*. This is the first purely conceptual portrait acquired by the gallery. Sulston is the leading figure in the development of DNA analysis and a former director of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Centre, Cambridge.



'The portrait', says Sir John, 'is the result of a standard laboratory procedure, transposed into the setting of the gallery ... The portrait contains a small fraction of my DNA, so it's only a detail of the whole, though there is ample information to identify me ...' Yes, I'm sure there is, if you know what his DNA looks like. To most of us, it resembles an abstract painting - and this raises the question of what makes a work of art into a portrait. As in most conceptual art, the viewer needs to have relevant information which enables an understanding. Is the knowledge that what we see is the 'real' John Sulston enough, or do we need an approximation - something created from another material, which looks like him, but which we know is only paint or stone?

We can only assume that Rembrandt's women resembled the subjects. **Hendrickje Stoffels** gazes at the viewer and yet not at the viewer, possibly about to speak, maybe not. She is utterly engaging - and we can only assume that the work is a likeness.

John Sulston's DNA sets him apart from any other human being, but is this reality so 'real' as to be unrecognisable?

Do we see people most clearly when they are indistinct? After death, the human face is clearly defined, but anyone who has seen someone they loved just after they have died, knows that they are not there. The beloved face is as before, but the essential element has gone, leaving only the outer casket. It is this subtle, but essential ingredient



which the artist has to reproduce.

Richard Sell at work with lithographic stone

I am not a scientist, so I asked a molecular biologist, working on DNA, for her opinion of the Quinn portrait. What we see is a small fraction of DNA, replicated in bacteria, spread out on agar jelly, on a glass plate. 'He (Quinn) is being a bit superficial, relying on the fact that the viewer probably won't know what John Sulston's DNA would be like ... This doesn't define him - at that level the bacterial could be growing anything...' She described the beauty of the chromatograms which show the sequence of the four 'letter' of DNA. To the majority of viewers, the traces of Sulston are indistinguishable from those of anyone else. Perhaps this is the point. You look at Quinn's portrait and you are reflected in the wide silver frame. Thus, at a certain level, we are seeing something which might be us - but we know it isn't. Our DNA resembles Sulston's but is uniquely different.

Rembrandt plays different tricks, but with a similar end result. He shows us a woman and we assume it is Hendrickje Stoffels, but through Rembrandt's humanity, his genius for understanding the human condition, it transcends the merely factual and becomes not just an image of a woman, but an approximation of women - and of love. Quinn, by surrounding his work with a reflective frame, makes a similar point about universality. Is it not time that artists erased the boundaries between Conceptual and Figurative and saw the images made by artists as just - art! Art which has something to say has to be looked at without prejudice. Both Rembrandt and Quinn are making relevant statements about what it is to be human and an individual. I am not comparing Quinn with Rembrandt - there is no comparison - but in art, as in human life, there is room for

all shades of expression and anything which asks questions should be welcomed, especially those to which there is no pat answer.

Increasingly, readers are choosing to receive Newsletters by Email - for those of you who are worried that by using this method you will miss out on receiving the actual 'invitation cards' - we can assure you there is always a pile here in the Gallery which you can collect when you visit.!

SPOKEN LANDSCAPES - continuing our alphabetical anthology of landscape poetry selected, introduced and illustrated by Mark Handley and interwoven with our art anthology



'Q' is for ...

FRANCIS QUARLES (1592 - 1644)

Francis Quarles was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, and eventually became 'Chronologer to the City of London', an appointment which sounds like one of those delightful sinecures poets used to be able to look forward to before the advent of the Arts Council. His musings on religious themes were very popular, particularly his *Emblems* (1635). This moving verse on the birth of Christ is written in an archaic style for the time, with an awareness of **Donne's** contortions but with an overriding Chaucerian vividness and simplicity:

BORN IN WINTER

Phlegmatic winter on a bed of snow
Lay spitting full of rheum: the sun was now
Inned at the Goat, the melancholic Earth
Had her womb bound, and hopeless of the birth
Of one poor flower, the fields, wood, meads, and all
Feared in this snowy sheet a funeral.
Nor only senseless plants were in decay:
Man, who's a plant reversed, was worse than they.
He had a spiritual winter, and bereft
Not of his leaves, but juice, nay, nothing left,
His passive power to live was so abated
He was not to be raised, but new created.
When all things else were perished, and when



No flowers were, but in their causes then
This wondrous flower itself to act did bring
And winter was the flower of Jesse's spring.

...for QASHQA'I

The Qashqa'i of Fars Province are one of the major Turkic weaving tribes of Persia; their piled carpets and kilims have been collected avidly for many years. Carpets are often made in what is known as the Herati pattern, a Classical floral design found on many

Persian rugs and made up of a symmetrical arrangement of palmettes, floral rosettes and lancet leaves. The quality varies widely, and often pieces in the middling range have a combination of vegetable and synthetic colours.

...for QUADRATURA

A method of decorating or painting ceilings and walls to give the illusion of architectural elements, such as joining imaginary architecture to the real architecture of a room. Common in Ancient Roman (at Pompeii and elsewhere), this art was revived by **Mantegna** in his *Camera degli Sposi* at Mantua in 1474. The style reached its peak in Baroque Italy. **Pozzo** was probably the greatest practitioner of *quadratura* in his ceiling at S. Ignazio, Rome, where flamboyant architectural features and figures surge upwards. Unlike Pozzo, some artists employed specialists called *quadraturisti* to paint the architectural settings for their figures: for instance **Guercino** employed **Agostino Tassi** for his *Aurora*, and **Giambattista Tiepolo** collaborated with **Gerolamo Mengozzi Colonna** (c.1688 - 1766).

'R' is for ...

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828 - 82)

Rossetti is most notorious, perhaps, for having his wife's body dug up after seven years in order to retrieve a manuscript book of his poems, which in a fit of grief and remorse he had buried with her. This unseemly act of grave violation would not have been forced upon him in an age of computers and Xerox machines and he would surely, with our reproductive advantages, have avoided a permanent blot on his escutcheon. If the following splendid delicate Pre-Raphaelite poem is one addressed to **Elizabeth Siddal** and buried with her, then we (and she) must be grateful for her brief exhumation:



SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, -
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.

All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden king-cup fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky: -
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour

When two fold silence was the song of love.

...for BRIDGET RILEY (1931 -)

Leading British exponent of Op art (abb. Optical art - type of abstract art using optical phenomena to cause a sensation of vibrating or flickering, originated by **Victor Vas** (b.1908), a French painter of Hungarian origin with works in Paris, Caracas, Jerusalem, and *Metsh*, 1964, in the Guggenheim in New York). Bridget Riley's interest in optical effects came partly through study of **Seurat's** pointillism, and partly through **Vasarély's** influence. In the early 1960s she worked in black and white, only turning to colour in 1966 after a trip to Egypt and the inspiration of its colours. Her paintings are usually large and consist of subtle variations in size, shape and positioning of serialised units in an all-over pattern. One of her paintings was used on the cover of the catalogue of the exhibition *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1965, the exhibition that was responsible for the term 'Op art'. She won the International Painting Prize at the Venice Biennale in 1968. She has studios in London, Cornwall and Provence, and usually uses assistants.

An untypically calm decoration for the interior of the Royal Liverpool Hospital (1983) uses soothing bands of blue, yellow, pink and white, and has reputedly reduced vandalism and graffiti. She has also worked in theatre design, with a set for the ballet *Colour Moves* (first performed at Edinburgh Festival in 1983) which, unusually, preceded the composition of the music and choreography. Examples of her work can be seen in Edinburgh and *Late Morning*, 1967, at Tate Britain.

...and for MALCOLM RYAN

Malcolm was born in London in 1938 and by the early 1960s was fully committed to oil painting. By 1969 his work had been included in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition twice; at the Royal Festival Hall; the Greater London Arts Exhibition; had the first one-person exhibition at the AIA Gallery in London; and was elected a member of the Artists International Association. He then moved to West Suffolk with his family. He became a member of the Cambridge Society of Painters and Sculptors with exhibitions at Kettles Yard and the Fitzwilliam Museum (and also here in the gallery on a couple of occasions!).

From 1977 to 1980 he worked on a series of large paintings entitled *Seven Ages*. In 1979 his work was included in the Ellingham Mill / Sealink travelling exhibition and his *Airfield* was purchased by the Eastern Arts Association. In 1980 the *Seven Age* series was exhibited at the Hobson Gallery in Cambridge, the Minories Gallery in Colchester and was the subject of an episode of Anglia TV programme *Folio*. In 1982 he travelled to Sydney to promote his work and began a series of Australian paintings, most of which were subsequently stolen in Australia.

He has consistently exhibited in Sussex, Monte Carlo, the West Country, and of course extensively throughout Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex and Norfolk, as well as London and, more recently, Wales.

'My work has been described as 'like a diary', but it is not that, perhaps more an attempt to take what is seen and experienced and to re-cast it rather as a novelist does. I

sometimes wonder if it is an attempt to make sense of it all to myself. More though, I think, to find a kind of wholeness, for which I am always seeking'.

FRAMING CREDENTIALS

Since taking the plunge 10 years ago with two framing courses, I have framed for most of the colleges, many corporate clients, private individuals and artists



The End of a Day, oil by Malcolm Ryan

MUSINGS ...

IN RETROSPECT by Anthony Day

The one positive result of having to wait so long for the opportunity to study art was the impetus to succeed when it ultimately came. The breadwinner from the age of fifteen, the long wait through a succession of jobs and army service prepared me to be appalled at those younger coming in straight from school and doing barely enough to get by, taking this early chance for granted and wasting it. They fell away inevitably and I have to wonder if this happens today to youngsters having the chance thrust upon them, of study on top of study.

Well, I can hardly advocate the compulsory waiting that I went through along with others of my generation, but on reflection the getting in of a measure of life, much of it drab and dangerous, before undertaking study served me well.

In a community dedicated to the need for toil, the concept of art barely existed and the art sessions in my village school were time off for the teachers who got on with their marking while we drifted into pretty patterns or, later in the senior forms, copied in pastels what we had gathered on the way to school from anywhere but our own gardens. So unsupervised and uninspired the dimmest could place leaves flat on the paper and draw round them and get no

worse than an acceptable mark. It was time off for them too and they were never urged to do better.

Craving much more and being no prodigy in the spell of miraculous intuition, I had to plough on quite alone. Head down at the kitchen table one evening I resolved the problem of conjuring three dimensions out of two while copying a portrait of the king in a newspaper. When that face came out at me through my clumsy gradations of sepia wash it was like discovering the wheel. My dad thought the likeness was poor, so I did another and he approved while overlooking the breakthrough. With a modicum of guidance I could have comprehended that long before the age of thirteen.

I still have that breakthrough picture which is rubbish for one of such advanced years. I have the relics of the dark ages of intermittent activity, taken out sometimes in disbelief at the inadequacy, but they prove to be necessary reminders of a difficult time. There was illumination along the way of course, the first within weeks of my arrival in town. One of my odd jobs was to assist a display artist at a shop just before Christmas, an artist who was similarly trapped into full-time work, albeit a lot more congenial than mine. He painted sunny landscapes in his spare time, such as I had left behind so painfully, and on hearing my own pictorial struggles he gave me serious advice.

I kept in touch with that man for the rest of his life. As a militia man he had soon gone to war but came back intact to run his own business before giving his full time to art. One summer's day back in my own village I came upon him painting near my cottage, when he felt the need to reassure me he was not invading my pitch but would as likely as not attribute his painting to some other village.

The war, of course, put every ambition on hold and this was a relief to me since mine was so far from resolution. But how it surfaced afterwards with the new age offering help! Yet I do regret, unlike my strict contemporary, **Richard Sell** who received his art training before the war, not having the artistic know-how to capture anything of my wartime and post-war travels abroad. All I brought back from that time, apart from drawings that had nothing to do with the life or terrain I was experiencing, were one caricature of a fellow serviceman who also stimulated my ambition and a still-life watercolour of flowers approximating to those found in England, done in Bengal. I keep that too, laboured though it is, as my own souvenir. It might have led to more if I had not been forced to move on days later. And with the degree of skill to inspire confidence I might have brought back a few exotic landscapes, although nothing abroad stirred the pantheism I feel in England.

THE NEO- ROMANTICS by Anthony Day



So long ago, it seems, but all in my lifetime, occurred the Neo-Romantic movement in British painting, engendered by the rediscovered early images of **Samuel Palmer** and **Edward Calvert**,

disciples of the visionary but anguished **William Blake**. There were other sources but none so significant for a movement confined to the United Kingdom and with no influence outside it.

When it became necessary in my student days to produce a thesis I chose to assess the British landscape painters of the day, if only to find my bearings among them. **John Bolam**, as was his wont, illuminated the way for the comparative ignoramus and I found myself held fast by Palmer at his most visionary. Since we were compelled to copy for our illustrations and not use reproductions I made a fair job of copying Palmer's *In a Shoreham Garden* (V & A) for my frontispiece and was infected by it for years. Until, that is, I recognised that I was no introspective romantic dreamer but a good deal more earthbound by nature, held by the poetry of reality.

Yet Palmer lingered. Long after I had bid him goodbye he resurfaced subconsciously and someone would whisper his name to my profound irritation. And I still like him and fed for a while on his contemporary followers until they served me no more.

And what of them? Well, what is long overdue is a full-scale exhibition covering the whole movement from start to finish. **Graham Sutherland** was in the vanguard with etchings subservient to Palmer in the 1920s and most of his successors began in imitation of Palmer before going their very different ways.

Looking at those early Sutherland etchings it was hard to imagine the first world war had not long ended, although its protagonists must have dreamt long of arriving home into such perfect rural bliss. **Paul Drury** was equally enthralled by Palmer in a set of wood engravings and equal homage was paid by **Robin Tanner** later. Yet these artists were soon forced to realise they were trapped into pastiche. They had to start again and each went his very different way whilst retaining the spirit of romantic translation.

Yes, I would like to see that comprehensive exhibition to gratify curiosity, if not to provide enjoyment. For so much of the work done under the Neo-Romantic banner became thin and mannered. The emotional content conceded to self-consciousness and a contrived art of the age and it was such a pity these artists were in the vanguard during the second world war. This insular form of art was not suitable for rendering the traumas of war and **Kenneth Clarke** dismissed it as 'mediocre and tame'. **Paul Nash**, of course, was an earlier talent who added substance to the collection, particularly in his watercolours.

After the war Sutherland's work became orange and theatrical, not helped by commercial pressure to do his recognisable stuff. **John Piper**, perhaps for the same reason since he was with the same dealer, became slicker by the day while **Keith Vaughan** of the younger set abstracted all human content from his figure studies. **Robert Colquhoun** and **Robert MacBride** genuflected to **Picasso** and came off second best; **John Minton** kept on course but with increasing self-sympathy; **John Craxton**, the only one to make it to old age, kept firmly to his Grecian stylisation and **Michael Ayrton**'s durability has yet to be acknowledged for its full worth both in painting and sculpture. Apparently he was apt to ruffle critical feathers, being of sharp mind himself.

But I would like to test these opinions which depend on memory and some prejudice. The last of the line was **Alan Reynolds**, closing in on Pre-Raphaelitism until, in the mid-

fifties, he cut himself off from his landscape sources to further his passage into minimal abstraction, **Victor Pasmore** being the precedent.

But these artists still achieve high estimates and prices in the salerooms. Indeed the catalogues would be thin without them, although it is the early examples the buyers wan.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

24-26th May - students from the Gallery Art Class with tutor **Judith Din**

June - Annual Garden Sculpture exhibition featuring plant forms and birdbaths - **Natasha Carsberg, Mark Reed, Diana Roles, Alec Stemp**

October - **49 and Rising** - diverse group of artists whose work includes paper vessels, prints, book-boxes and box-books, paintings on paper, canvas and silk and multi-media poetry

November - **Tom Anderson, Helena Greene and Jane Strother**

ART ON A PLATE ...

by **Katharine Macpherson DA**

There is a good side to these cold, dark, wintry days. They give the perfect excuse - if one is needed - to make lots of lovely, substantial, warming casseroles.

One of my current favourites is cassoulet, originally from the Languedoc region of France where it was named after the cassole, the glazed earthenware pot traditionally used to cook it in. The classic ingredients are haricot beans, pork rind, sausage (particularly Toulouse sausage) and duck or goose.

What I love about this version is that it's easy to make, tastes delicious and is popular with both children and adults, making it ideal for a quick and tasty family supper.

For a slightly more sophisticated variation, avoid baked beans and add a splash of wine, together with some cooked duck or chicken legs.

QUICK CASSOULET

Serves 4



8 pork sausages (Sainsbury's Classic Toulouse sausages are perfect)

4 rashers streaky bacon, chopped

1 large onion, sliced

1 large clove garlic, crushed

1 410g can baked beans in tomato sauce (or flageolet or cannellini beans, drained)

1 can Zanae butter beans in tomato and onion sauce (optional but it does work well - available in Waitrose)

1 pint beef stock

olive oil

1 white baguette, sliced

100g Cheddar cheese, grated

Chopped fresh parsley to garnish

- * Heat a tablespoon of olive oil in a frying pan and fry the sausages for 5 minutes or until nicely browned. Then add the onion, bacon and garlic and continue frying for a further five minutes.
- * Transfer to a casserole dish. Add the beans and stock. (If making an adult version, you might like to deglaze the pan with a glassful of whatever wine you have open and add that too.)
- * Cover and cook at 180°C, Gas Mark 4, for 40 minutes.
- * Remove the lid. Cover the mixture with baguette slices and sprinkle with grated cheese. Increase the temperature to 200°C and return to the oven for another 10 minutes or until the cheese has melted and the top is crusty and golden.
- * Serve sprinkled with chopped fresh parsley.

Pamela Marshall Barrell

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