

# ARTS' News

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Business Arts / Conservatory Gallery 6 Hills Avenue Cambridge CB1 7XA 01223 211311 www.businessarts.co.uk



*Quick Turn, charcoal & ink by Nicola Ottley*

**TWO great exhibitions waiting to be viewed by YOU...**

*movement..*

1 - 24th November

**Christopher Marvell  
Nicola Ottley  
Sylvia Paul**

Sculpture and paintings encapsulating movement: animals, people, wind rushing in fields and boats scudding on the sea

**AND...**

**CAMBRIDGE DRAWING  
SOCIETY**

*29th November to 22nd December*

*A return of your favourite artists providing the inspiration you need for choosing a special Christmas present for that special person*

**THIS IS YOUR INVITATION TO  
COME AND VIEW BOTH.**



*Head to Head, oil by Sylvia Paul*

*HERE AND NOW ...*

**NEWS FROM THE GALLERY:**

*The Making Marks...* exhibition is just beginning here in the gallery as we go to press, and so it is too early to write a review. (We hope you will visit this exhibition as well as the two mentioned above). The Thursday morning art classes are off to a good start with students learning about monochrome and distortion; dry wash on wash with opposing shadows; contrasting colours beside each other with superimposed images; neutrals and strong colour; candlelight, and pure pigments, amongst many other things. Some of the students are absolute beginners and others are regulars from other years. It is not too late to join for this term, or even to dip in for just a session or two. There is always something to learn...and a relaxed atmosphere to learn in! (Coffee on tap!)

*OUT AND ABOUT ...*

**WINIFRED NICHOLSON AT KETTLE'S  
YARD: Review by Robin Stemp**

**I**n 1937, **Winifred Nicholson**, under her own name of Winifred Dacre, wrote: 'Colour has been used chiefly in



*Walking Whippet, bronze by Christopher Marvell*

the past as a means to display form - form being thought of as its obvious master. / The freedom of abstract thought has come, and shows us a future lying ahead of colour as one of the three great abstract arts. / Mathematics - music - colour ...'

Seeing her work now, when abstraction has gone to its, seemingly, furthest limits, it is easy to dismiss it as an attractive part of that very English circle (clique?) enclosing the St Ives artists and touching the fringes of Bloomsbury. Her husband, **Ben Nicholson**, claimed that he learnt about colour from his first wife Winifred, and form from his second, **Barbara Hepworth**.

What did Winifred learn from Ben? 'I was painting *faerie* pictures when I met Ben', she told **Norman Reid**, 'but he soon changed all that'. There is still a hint of whimsy in her work, which clouds the message that colour is a vehicle for expression as much - or more so - than form. The exhibition at Kettle's Yard is elegant, the set pieces of still lifes on window sills, landscape and a few portraits, all familiar. When I saw it, I was the lone dissenter in a room full of worshippers. A refusnik, struggling against the overall sweetness of the work, the (to me) cloyingly overpowering sense that this was art which no negative criticism would ever touch. There is some element about it which renders it inviolate. Is this because it is seen as unimportant? Still lifes in lovely colours are never taken so seriously as paintings of horror. I am writing this just after the appalling terrorist attack on New York and the front pages of the tabloids, which hitherto discussed the taxing question of **Posh Spice** and her breast implants - did she or didn't she (Becks says she didn't) now write 'war' across scenes of smoke and flames and the despairing wail of humanity on the edge? Is this 'real' life and the saga of Posh and Becks a fantasy? Are still lifes on a window sill, overlooking a sunny landscape, less serious than the same landscape darkened by the overhang of war? I think not.

Although she can be irritatingly fey, and her work, on the surface, is pretty and light and easy on the eye, Winifred Nicholson has a serious message. The natural world, flowers in particular, are the reality. Colour and the way in which colour transforms the simple arrangement of pots

and bowls and a view less than spectacular, is the reality. Seen at her best, her art transcends the imposed rectangle of frame and canvas. 'You know', she said, 'I don't think colours fit themselves on to the rectangles of concrete art any better than they are fixed on to material objects of representational art ... for myself I am as happy ... with cuckoo flowers as with squares'.

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PLEASE GIVE US YOUR ADDRESS. IT  
WOULD HELP US TO CUT DOWN ON  
ENORMOUS SNAIL MAIL COSTS AND  
LABOUR

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



'o' is for ...

**WILFRED OWEN** (1893-1918)

Wilfred Owen is remembered for his attempts NOT to *poeticize* war in the old and customary way, but to tell the uncomfortable truth without recourse to classical or medieval allusion, but here is an exception, with its Arthurian reference adding immeasurably to its poignancy. Owen met his death a week before the Armistice beside the Sambre Canal in the landscape of his poem:



**HOSPITAL BARGE AT CÉRISY**

**B**udging the sluggard ripples of the Somme,  
A barge round old Céisy slowly slewed.  
Softly her engines down the current screwed  
And chuckled in her, with contented hum.

Till fairy tinklings struck their croonings dumb.  
The waters rumpling at the stern subdued.  
The lock-gate took her bulging amplitude.

Gently from out the gurgling lock she swum.

One reading by that sunset raised his eyes  
To watch her lessening westward quietly,  
Till, as she neared the bend, her funnel screamed.

And that long lamentation made him wise  
How unto Avalon, in agony,  
Kings passed in the dark barge, which Merlin dreamed.

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...for **CLAUS OLDENBURG** (1929- ?)

**A** Swedish born sculptor and graphic artist, Claus Oldenburg spent early periods in the USA with his diplomat father, before becoming an American citizen in 1953. He studied at the Chicago Art Institute 1953-4, and then at Yale University. During this time he worked part-time as a reporter and illustrator, and hence his artworks are related to large-scale advertising. Around 1958 he was influenced by **Allen Kaprow**, **George Segal** and **Jim Dine** and their movement away from Abstract Expressionism, to become involved in arranging happenings and environments. New York's street life, its shop windows, advertisements, graffiti etc. inspired him, and in 1961 he opened a 'shop' called *The Shop*. It was intended as a parody of a shop, and it sold works of art replicating the real items of food sold in real food shops. From 1965 it also stocked drawings and models of colossal monuments. In 1962 he had a one-man show at the Green Gallery New York where he combined elements from *The Store* with his first giant soft objects, a Giant Ice Cream Cone and a hamburger as large as a bed. This led to the work with which his name is most closely associated: giant-sized sculptures of foodstuffs and 'soft sculptures' of normally hard objects (such as *Dual Hamburger*, 1962, now in The Museum of Modern Art, New York). Exhibitions followed in Stockholm, Paris, Amsterdam, Dusseldorf and London. He became hailed as one of the leaders of American Op art.

Oldenburg's projects for colossal monuments are also well known, for example *Lipsticks in Piccadilly Circus, London* (Tate, 1966) which consists of a magazine-cutting of lipsticks pasted on to a picture postcard.

...and for **LESLEY ORTON**

**A**s a mature student, Lesley gained a BA (Hons) in Art from Anglia University. She has exhibited her expressively lifelike wire-mesh animals here at the Conservatory Gallery where they were very well received. She has also shown at Chilford Hall and worked with Kettle's Yard. As well as her wire mesh figures, she models portrait heads in plaster and clay and full-size figures in clay. Animals are a subject which



have always appealed to her.

*Goat, wire mesh by Lesley Orton*



*Solstict, ink/bleach painting by Mishtu Austin - Member of the Cambridge Drawing Society*

'**P**' is for ...

**EZRA POUND** (1885-1972)

**E**zra Pound was a keen supporter of modern movements in art (particularly the *Vorticists*), including his own art of poetry, and together with T S Eliot brought an American pioneer spirit to England enabling them to hack their way out of the dying Georgian thickets of our native verse onto a rather bleak but memorable promontory of their own scattered with exotic foreign growths of which this *haiku* is a fine example:



**IN A STATION OF THE  
METRO**

**T**he apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.

...for **PERSPECTIVE**

**P**erspective is a method of showing depth of space on a flat or shallow surface with an illusion of diminishing objects and the convergence of receding parallel lines. Systematic, mathematically founded perspective, based initially on a fixed central viewpoint, was probably developed in Italy in the early 15th century by **Brunelleschi**, recorded by **Alberti** in *De Pictura*, and improved by **Masaccio**, **Uccello** and **Piero della Francesca**. In pre-Renaissance Europe and in the East more intuitive systems of representing spatial recession were used, such as lines diverging instead of converging, which looks much more convincing in practice than it sounds in theory. In Chinese art 'parallel perspective' was common in the depiction of buildings.

The basic assumption of all perspective systems is that parallel lines never meet, but that they appear to do so, and also that parallel lines going in one direction meet at a single point on the horizon known as a Vanishing Point. In early systems it was assumed that all other parallels were automatically parallel and did not need to meet at some point. Whilst being theoretically correct, this is rather unnatural, and therefore a system has evolved using two or more Vanishing Points on the horizon, thus producing up-hill and down-dale effects. A further refinement is the use of Measuring Points, allowing the representation of objects to scale.

Perspective is variously termed: geometric, linear, mathematical, optical, Renaissance or scientific, and it has remained one of the foundations of European painting until the late 19th century. It is not common to the art of all epochs and all peoples. For example, the sophisticated art of the ancient Egyptians did not include the topical effects of recession. Also, many present-day artists prefer to create their own spatial illusion in order to stress their independence from the laws governing appearance in the physical world.

It is said that Uccello was so impressed by the discovery of perspective that he spent days and nights drawing foreshortened objects, setting himself ever new problems, such as shown in *The Rout of San Romano*, about 1450. This painted panel is probably from a room in the Medici Palace and now in the National Gallery.

Aerial perspective describes a sense of depth in a painting by imitating the effect of atmosphere, with objects looking paler and bluer as they recede into the distance. Scientific analysis shows dust and large moisture particles present in the atmosphere causing some scattering of light passing through, the amount of which depends on the wavelength (hence colour) of the light. Short wavelength (blue) light is scattered most and long wave-length (red) is scattered least. This is why the sky appears blue and why distant dark objects appear to lie behind a veil of blue, and why distant bright objects tend to appear redder than they would be if nearby.

Although the term 'aerial perspective' was invented by **Leonardo**, the device was used by Roman painters, for example at Pompeii. In Leonardo's time, Italian painters sometimes made their backgrounds look artificially blue, but in general aerial perspective has been more subtle in Northern Europe where the atmosphere tends to be hazier. **Turner's** paintings probably epitomise the best examples of atmosphere, indeed atmosphere is his subject. There has been a greater interest in aerial perspective by Northern Europeans than Southern Europeans, particularly amongst the Impressionists, due to this difference in atmospheres.

#### and for CATHY PARKER

**C**athy paints colourful, energetic, expressive pictures, mainly of trees and woodland. Some of them focus on capturing a particular play of light at a particular time of day. In others she likes to simplify and abstract, exploring a more expressive use of colour.

She works mainly in oils and acrylics, occasionally watercolours, sometimes mixing acrylics with other media such as oil-soaked charcoal, ink and pencil. She likes the sensuous oiliness of oils, but also enjoys the versatility and

*April Showers (Tiger Hill), oil by Cathy Parker*



speed of acrylics. Her working process is to start by working out doors in front of the subject, and then to continue the work in the studio.

She has exhibited widely throughout Cambridge and Suffolk, and will be showing again with the Cambridge Drawing Society here at the Conservatory Gallery in December. (She has been a member since 1990). In 1999 she was selected for the Laing Calendar 2000 and in 1995 and 1998 she was a Finalist at the Mall Galleries in London.

## CONTEMPLATION IN A GARDEN

by Robin Ivy

**S**cent of privet and the briar rose  
 We drift through stillness  
 In the heat of June.  
 Trailing fronds of the weeping birch  
 Hang in our souls,  
 Stunned at high noon.

Scent of honeysuckle and lime,  
 Sweetness in the pain.  
 Long lost days, first love,  
 The shining rivers of youth,  
 That will not come again.

Blue delphinium and red, red rose  
 Meet in our blood  
 Under a timeless sky.  
 A ring-dove echoes a voice from the past,  
 Fading with a sigh.

Restore, restore again,  
 Some other Eden  
 And hold this moment pure;  
 Entwined fleshless in mind and spirit  
 Before late Summer clouds  
 And Winter to endure.

## THE POETIC WORK OF STEVE MCCAFFERY: PART 1 – A CULTURE IS A LEXICON: Extract by Julian Barrell

...**W**hat **Ted Hughes**, **Seamus Heaney**, **Andrew Motion** the Poet Laureate, **James Fenton**, and **Simon Armitage** have in common is that their poetry conforms to specific traditions, such as being created in linear units running from left to right along the page. This 'free verse', as it is often called, can be differentiated from prose in a number of ways, but is actually understood semantically, when

read, in a similar way to prose. 'Free verse' often ignores a number of literary traditions such as rhyme, metre, and specific verse form, but rigidly retains the notion of writing in lines, and in tightly expressed semantically lucid phrases. **Steve McCaffery** and other 'alternative' poets have continued to remove literary traditions and explore the possibilities of linguistic creation in a way that these widely published poets have ceased to do, often rejecting the concept of writing in recognisable words, writing from left to right, or writing on a page.

However much the work of these writers deviates from poetic traditions, for example by incorporating visual images or pictures, or 'nonpoetic material', their work is still almost always rooted in language or linguistic symbols, and the concepts around which language functions and can be understood. Some of the work has a highly visual content, so one might be tempted to consider it 'art' rather than 'poetry'. Yet the creative palette is almost always informed by the word, letter, syllable or phoneme, as opposed to the landscape, visually represented image, or contrast between light and dark. In addressing the relationship between 'poetry' such as McCaffery's *Carnival*, and fine art, I do believe that McCaffery's poetry is often closely related to art in a conceptual sense. Its purpose often seems to be to possess some kind of visually representational value, and to make the reader (viewer?) think, question, and take a step back to broader questions than could be posed by the words themselves; as opposed to using words to convey semantic meaning. Yet his work is also critically discursive, and its roots are in an exotic range of literary traditions from around the world.



*Run like the Wind, charcoal by Nicola Ottley*

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## **GARDENS OF THE FAR EAST - feature by Philippa Croft**

**A**ncient Chinese gardens were based upon the veneration of nature as seen in the mountains, rocks, lakes and waterfalls of the Chinese landscape. They were places in which to stroll, sit, contemplate and draw refreshment from an idealised countryside.

Landscape gardening was considered to be one of the four interconnected arts, together with landscape painting, calligraphy and poetry. Based on the philosophy of the Tao, in which nature is revered for its harmony and unity,

the Chinese garden style, once perfected, persisted virtually unchanged for more than fifteen centuries.

The choice and arrangement of rocks, pools, and plants had symbolic meaning, with large stones being chosen and placed with special care. Lakes with islands, meandering paths, steps and cascades could be included, together with bridges and pagodas. Trees and flowers were valued for their habit, grace and form more than their colour. Pines, willows and bamboo were frequently used, with the preservation of old trees being more important than the planting of new ones. Flowers such as the chrysanthemum and peony were cultivated from as early as the 5th century BC.

The Chinese arts were introduced to Europe by the Jesuits in the early 17th century. However, whilst this led to a vogue for Chinoiserie and possibly a wider interest in the natural landscape, the essential philosophical unity and meaning of the Chinese garden was disregarded.

The essence of the Chinese garden was transferred to Japan, where the traditional layout was initially similar in style. However, other influences such as the introduction of Zen Buddhism, with its thoughtful and austere attitudes, and of the related tea ceremony, also played a significant role.

The earliest gardens in Japan were associated with temples and shrines, where the natural elements were worshipped. By the 11th century Japanese garden-art had been codified to a set of strict rules with both practical and aesthetic considerations. The styles of gateways, fences, lanterns, the design of pools and arrangement of rocks and stepping stones were all predefined. Shrubs and trees, particularly evergreens, with mosses and grasses, could be included but blossoms tended to be grown separately for the specific art of ikebana flower arrangement. Later, only 'auspicious' plants such as pine, bamboo and plum were used.

The view of the garden at night had particular significance, when features seen by the light of the moon were enhanced by the use of white sand around them. This developed into the austere dry gardens of raked sand and gravel for the purpose of contemplation, where plants other than moss were completely excluded. Whilst these were not for walking in, other types of Japanese garden invited visitors to discover their various delights by strolling around, absorbing their atmosphere or pausing to admire the 'borrowed' views.

The later Japanese garden would have invariably included a small tea house, approached by stepping stones over water, with a single tree such as a willow or maple planted nearby. The emphasis was on simplicity, peace and an appreciation of the spiritual and aesthetic beauty of the place.

The almost abstract composition of Japanese gardens with their naturalistic rhythm and sensitivity to form and texture has an appeal to modern garden designers, particularly when associated with the stark lines of some modern architecture.

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*Dressing, mixed media by Jill Walden - Member of the Cambridge Drawing Society*

## ART ON A PLATE ...

by **Katharine Macpherson DA**

Reviewing restaurants is not an occupation that could be described as hazardous. 'Fun' would be a better adjective. Occasionally, after a particularly delicious meal, 'privileged' is the word that comes to mind. Nonetheless, there are times when it all goes pear-shaped. No, I'm not thinking of chefs reacting badly to criticism. Or of dubious concoctions that have to be given a fair tasting. But of those heart-sinking moments when the evidence of too many weighty dinners starts to register on the bathroom scales.

So you will not be surprised to learn that my own cooking is currently of the low-calorie variety, of which this recipe is a healthy - but still flavour-filled - example.

### **MONKFISH WITH CHILLI TOMATO SAUCE**

Serves 4

4 monkfish fillets  
 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped  
 1 400g tin chopped tomatoes  
 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped  
 2 small green or red chillis, deseeded and finely chopped

12 fresh basil leaves, shredded  
 olive oil  
 lemon juice  
 large pinch ground cinnamon  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 Tabasco sauce (if wished)



*Rounding the bend, oil by Sylvia Paul*

- \* If you buy a whole monkfish, fillet it by cutting down either side of the central bone then dividing each section into two portions. Place the fillets on a sheet of foil large enough to enclose them. Season lightly, drizzle with a little lemon juice, then wrap up and bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for 25 minutes.
- \* Meanwhile, in a large pan, gently soften the chopped onion and garlic in a little olive oil, without allowing them to brown.
- \* After 5 minutes, add the chillis. Please remember to wash your hands after preparing them as it really hurts if the juice gets in your eyes.
- \* After 5 more minutes, add the tomatoes and simmer uncovered for about 10 minutes to allow the sauce to reduce slightly and thicken. For a smoother sauce, give it a quick whirr with a hand blender now.
- \* Finally, must before serving, add the basil, cinnamon, salt and pepper to taste and a few drops of Tabasco if a hotter flavour is required. Turn up the heat and boil for around half a minute.
- \* Serve this vibrant red sauce with the milk-white monkfish and steamed green vegetables of your choice for a colourful, tasty and virtuously healthy plateful!

*Ed: Katharine Macpherson DA is a writer and illustrator whose 'Eating Out' page appears in Business Weekly.*

Our wine correspondent, **Paul Bowes** of **Bacchanalia** (01223 576292) believes *Pierre Sourdais Chinon Tradition '99*, made from the Cabernet Franc grape in France, would make a very interesting companion to the above. It costs £7.99 per bottle.

[Pamela Marshall Barrell](#)

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**STOP PRESS - COMING SOON - Four from Vintage '22, Jane Strother and Tom Anderson, 40 and rising, and Natasha Carsberg and Alec Stemp.**

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Four from Vintage '22  
Jane Strother and Tom Anderson and  
Natasha Carsburg and Alec Stemp

40 and Rising (check)