

ARTS' News

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CAMBRIDGE DRAWING SOCIETY

30th November - 22nd December

Although several members of the Drawing Society have exhibited with us here at the Conservatory Gallery over the last 16 years as single members, this will be the first time they will do so as a Group. The Drawing Society was founded in 1882 and has 150 elected members working in all media, many of whom, both old and new members, will be showing at this pre-Christmas exhibition. There will be all kinds of subject matter in a very wide price range. Absolutely something for everyone here, and especially for present buyers, even for those buying presents for themselves.....

Private View 29th November 5 - 9 p.m.

Further opening times Thursdays to Saturdays
and Sunday 3rd December 11 - 5 p.m.



Friends, woodcut by Pamela Hughe

Intermedia Group - 9th - 25th November 2000

Several artists will be exhibiting: **Chris Nunn** (fine wooden vessels); **Zoe Rubens**, (witty multi-textured metal sculptures); **Diana Ridsdill Smith** (grand quilts); **Josie Stuart-Smith** (earthy pots for inside and outside); **Mirella Fray** (delicate and tactile embroidery); **Nick Gillespie** (imaginative silver jewellery); **Tom Morris** (finely-detailed drawings and prints); **Doreen Sanders** (large classic wallhangings), and **Jenny Sanders** (water patterns explored through etching, painting and batik).

This will be the third Intermedia Group exhibition here, and we are sure it will be as exciting as the previous exhibitions.



Bird Singing, mixed media by Pamela Townshend

**THANK YOU FOR COMING TO OUR
EXHIBITIONS - WE LOVE TO SEE YOU**

HERE AND NOW ...

**THE FOUNTAIN GROUP at the Conservatory
Gallery 5th October to 5th November, a Review**

This group comprises eight members who have worked together since sharing the same tutor in 1993. **Pam Clocksin's** classic watercolours of fen fields and still-lives were very pleasing, with a hint of suspense in the two larger oil depictions of *Water at the Rock* and *Coast*. **Annie Gilmore's** *Athlete* series of monoprints had a beautiful translucent quality, whilst **Jill Jackson's** theme of bell-ringers in her Norfolk church struck a chord with viewers, particularly in *The Private World* (oil) with its bell ringers atop a mellow stone spiral staircase, and in *Mancroft Silhouettes* (monoprint) with its broken geometric or even ghostly shapes. **Catherine Loinsworth** showed her skill at

handling oil in Swiss skii scenes and also, to this viewer at least, her more exciting abstract series of four small *Plays of Light*. **Anna Maitland's** large oil paintings of sun-drenched doors and windows were very colourful, and **Jean Willett's** watercolour forests had a cathedral-like quality, linking with the bell-ringers. **Vee Wallace** interestingly displayed two versions of *Cherry Ripe*: a pastel study and an oil, in gorgeous pinky tones. Viewers loved her series of six *Valleys* with their wonderful blues, greens and burnt oranges. **Elizabeth Wynn-Williams'** most unusual style of collage for beach and balcony scenes conjured up the good life with her inclusion of sand, material and even tiny stones or pebbles.

OUT AND ABOUT ...



Recent exhibitions by **CHRISTINE FOX** and **RUTH BELOE**: Reviews by **Anthony Day**

Skywards, she looked, transforming the elusive changes visible in the solar system into solid matter.

Eclipses were no longer sinister shadows suppressing the earth but dense forms in bronze, aluminium and terracotta. A subject for the dreamer, the poet, perhaps - but for the sculptor?

Yes for **Christine Fox**. The mystery and poetry remain, none of that eclipsed; but for one so taken by the firmament but a short time ago she proved in her recent showing at the Broughton House Gallery (King Street in Cambridge has become quite a little Cork Street) to have body and soul firmly committed to mother earth in *Secret Hoards of 2000*, a set of 'votive offerings' in deference to stone-age artefacts placed in moulds to enhance their mystery.

These were small pieces, thankfully, house-able and therefore covetable by her many admirers; tempting to the touch - indeed, needing to be handled, if tenderly. These reflections on our evolution from primitive times were aptly created to coincide with our millenium for we have but the earth where the very laws of evolution have come to be challenged and which the ingenuity of our kind may yet destroy.

With their pantheistic and archaeological connotations these pieces compelled like magic, holding one equally to truth and wonder, lingering in their absence as profound works of art always should, leaving us to ponder indeed about the future and what has been lost sooner than gained.

Christine's longevity as an artist has secured nothing like the national recognition she deserves. Perhaps she should be grateful for it as was, say, **David Kindersley**, that hugely talented master of the letter form, who simply wanted to progress without interference. So much attention is given to uninspired inventiveness that such intimacy as Christine displays - like bringing love letters into light - brings exquisite surprise and delight.

As did the fresh look at realism devised in Florence by **Ruth Beloe** in her August exhibition at the Old Fire engine House, Ely, so refreshing in its conviction, its dedication to the human form, in both sculptures and drawings. No

gimmickry for Mr Saatchi here but a sound basis for prolonged research and a technique to serve for life. Bringing life to stone and charcoal was the dedication here and it was uplifting.

Spare me the cast-makers claiming to be sculptors or a new Royal Academy president confounding its flaunted progressive claims by remaining stuck in the sugary sixties, making non-functional toys coloured like sugar mice and meringues. Give me the organic principles of Christine Fox and Ruth Beloe pursuing their distinct ways.

Ed: Anthony Day's heartfelt sentiments are taken up here by Robin Stemp. Both Tony and Robin are gifted artists with their feet firmly on the ground!

A DISTANT APOCALYPSE at the Royal Academy: review by Robin Stemp



How do you see the end of the world? As chaos, as a final despairing glide into an eternal abyss, as a joyous culmination of all that is - good and bad - coming together at last? Will there be an angel, as in **Messiaen's** *Quartet for the End of Time*, a last fluttering of birds, a cacophony of furious trumpets? The idea of the end of human time has always been a fruitful subject for artists. It is a gift of a theme and that makes the latest offering at the Royal Academy such a disappointment, devoid of zest and imagination.

You enter via a wooden cellar. It is not an auspicious introduction, and any feeling of fearful expectancy is mitigated by acute irritation, underlined by the knowledge that the artist, **Gregor Sneider**, is '...working on a series of structural alterations to his home ... builds walls in front of walls, false windows in front of real ones and rooms which rotate on their axis ... creating an increasingly oppressive atmosphere and feeling of disorientation for the visitor'. One's immediate and frivolous question is to wonder if he lives alone and has many visitors.

Sadly, 'Apocalypse' at the Royal Academy, isn't even remotely disorientating. The overall effect is of an infantile silliness such as might be engendered by watching a slasher movie. The only difference is that the slasher movie will not expect to be taken seriously and 'Apocalypse' does.

I arrived home from a press viewing to find a newsletter from Amnesty International on my doorstep. Now that was shocking. Pictures and text showing real suffering and fear put the whole 'Apocalypse' experience into proportion. There is nothing in the show which says anything remotely powerful about the real inhumanity which is all around us. Perhaps the media has made the artificial rendering of horror superfluous and we don't need to have a **Goya** or a **Breughal**, a **Bosch** or a team of war artists to show us what is happening. So, what are the visual arts for, if not to mirror the way we live now? Perhaps 'Apocalypse' does mirror the way we are. Perhaps we have become a race of voyeuristic horror junkies. But we still need art to show us what lies beneath the surface. This show is all surface.

It would be quite something for the RA to sponsor an exhibition in which artists were sent off to record real suffering, not the manufactured tediousness of the **Chapman brothers** and their toys, or **Chris Cunningham's** video nasty, where violence is seen as the new sex, kicking in for a

bit of rough and saying very little. Nothing here has anything to say which has not been said before, and better.

Overall there is a feeling of disengagement, which, in turn, disengages the viewer. There is stillness, but it is of mind-bending tedium. Is this the point? Are we to be bored to death, quite literally, when the time comes and we march off the scene, accompanied by the trumpet-blowing angel?

The show fails, in the end, because it is superfluous to our understanding of what it is to be either human or inhuman. Art, whether it is video or easel painting, performance or watercolour, must go beyond the surface and add another layer to our understanding. 'Apocalypse', large and empty, is visual art's answer to the Dome!

Ed: I wonder how many readers agree (or disagree)? Let us know.

MUSINGS ...

**SPOKEN LANDSCAPES
- AN ALPHABETICAL
ANTHOLOGY OF
LANDSCAPE POETRY**
Selected, introduced and
illustrated by Mark
Handley interwoven with
our own art anthology



'G' is for...

ROBERT GRAVES (1895-1985)

I have sometimes felt the same about the moon, especially when it is full, bathing the backs of the terraces in its frigid light and making the thin bedroom curtains fluoresce, banishing all hope of sleep. Writing in the

trenches it is little wonder that **Graves** curses the bright harbinger of madness and enemy fire.

I HATE THE MOON

I hate the Moon, though it makes most people glad,
And they giggle and talk of silvery beams - you know!
But *she* says the look of the Moon drives people mad,
And that's the thing that always frightens me so.

I hate it worst when it's cruel and round and bright,
And you can't make out the marks on its stupid face,
Except when you shut your eyelashes, and all night
The sky looks green, and the world's a horrible place.

I like the stars, and especially the Big Bear
And the W star, and one like a diamond ring,
But I *hate* the Moon and its horrible stony stare,
And I know one day it'll do me some dreadful thing.

... for **ERIC GILL (1882-1940)**

Eric Gill was a sculptor, typographer and writer who began in 1903 as a letter-cutter. In 1913 he converted to Roman Catholicism. In the '20s he formed a religious commune of craftsmen at Ditchling in Sussex. This followed in the **William Morris** (1834 - 96) tradition of reviving English Romantic medieval notions of art and craftsmanship as a contrast to the prevailing social and economic trends. Gill's workshops and houses were arranged around a quadrangle with the chapel of Saints Joseph & Dominic emphasised by a huge wooden crucifix. Gill himself wore the habit of the Third Order of St Dominic complete with girdle of chastity. In another parallel to Morris, Gill was inspired by Chartres and, in particular, its Cathedral, and considered his first sight of the North Transept to be one of his most spiritual experiences. Again like Morris, Gill believed that Chartres' beauty epitomised its social system.

Gill's commissions include the 14 relief carvings of the *Stations of the Cross* for Westminster Cathedral (1914 - 18) and *Prospero and Ariel* (1929 - 31) for Broadcasting House. Gill encouraged the revival of direct carving, and his work accordingly has an appealing simplicity. He wrote that his 'inability to draw naturalistically was, instead of a drawback, no less than my salvation. It compelled me ... to consider the significance of things.' His books include *Christianity and Art* (1927), *Art* (1934) and *Autobiography* (1940), and he did many illustrations, particularly for the **Golden Cockerel Press**. He was instrumental in the revival of book design and typography, and his *Perpetua* and *Gill Sans-serif* typefaces, designed for the **Monotype Corporation**, are among the classics of 20th century typography

... and for **MICHAEL GILLESPIE**

Mike, as he is more usually known, is a sculptor who defies the limitations of his chosen medium, bronze, to produce wonderfully delicate and fluid shapes to suspend belief in gravity. He learnt to cast bronze in his 'back yard' whilst studying sculpture during the 1950s at Hammersmith College of Art. He then lived by his casting for a few years, working first for **Epstein** (during the latter two years of his mentor's life) and later **Elizabeth Frink**. He also lectured part-time until 1995 at Hammersmith College of Art, Cambridge Technical College and the Hertfordshire College of Art and Design, and co-authored *Studio Bronze Casting* (**Batsford Press**, 1969) with **John Mills**.



Trio, bronze by Mike Gillespie

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We can help you with your framing

He states his sculptural aim as pushing abstract composition to its limits by leaning heavily on the musical analogy, '... sustaining the battle with recalcitrant materials by reflecting on the pondered judgements of classical musicianship, which can still produce performances which are as fresh as a mayfly'. He would like to 'make shapes in space with the freedom and accuracy of a jazz man blowing a horn', but he finds that no entirely suitable material exists, although wax would be the best approximation. He finds it necessary to think big but then work small. In spite of the difficulties of his chosen medium, all his smaller works are cast in bronze, although he uses cement for his larger pieces. Although most of his work is in private collections, he has 'public' sculptures at the Gas Research Centre in Loughborough, the Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire County collections, and Churchill College. Besides exhibiting locally he has shown regularly in London including the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, and the USA.

'H' is for...



**THOMAS
HARDY
(1840-1928)**

Hardy was quite uninterested in pure aesthetics. Landscapes were of importance to him for the human figures they contained or the evidence of ancient occupation.

The beauty of association mattered to him far more than abstract beauty. His was a very English and provincial sensibility and yet at the same time profound and universal. In spite of their intricacy and conscientious rhymes, Hardy's poems have a rough hewn and sometimes ungainly character, but they go direct to the heart.

UNDER THE WATERFALL

'Whenever I plunge my arm, like this,
In a basin of water, I never miss
The sweet sharp sense of a fugitive day
Fetched back from its thickening shroud of gray.
Hence the only prime
And real love-rhyme
That I know by heart,
And that leaves no smart,
Is the purl of a little valley fall
About three spans wide and two spans tall
Over a table of solid rock,
And into a scoop of the self-same block;
The purl of a runlet that never ceases
In stir of kingdoms, in wars, in peaces;
With a hollow boiling voice it speaks
And has spoken since hills were turfless peaks.'

'And why gives this the only prime
Idea to you of a real love-rhyme?
And why does plunging your arm in a bowl
Full of spring water, bring throbs to your soul?'

'Well, under the fall, in a crease of the stone,
Though where precisely none ever has known,
Jammed darkly, nothing to show how prized,
And by now with its smoothness opalized,

Is a drinking-glass:
For, down that pass
My lover and I
Walked under a sky

Of blue with a leaf-wove awning of green,
In the burn of August, to paint the scene,
And we placed our basket of fruit and wine
By the runlet's rim, where we sat to dine;
And when we had drunk from the glass together,
Arched by the oak-copse from the weather,
I held the vessel to rinse in the fall,
Where it slipped, and sank, and was past recall,
Though we stooped and plumbed the little abyss
With long bared arms. There the glass still is.
And, as said, if I thrust my arm below
Cold water in basin or bowl, a throe
From the past awakens a sense of that time,
And the glass we used, and the cascade's rhyme.
The basin seems the pool, and its edge
The hard smooth face of the brook-side ledge,
And the leafy pattern of china-ware
The hanging plants that were bathing there.

'By night, by day, when it shines or lours,
There lies intact that chalice of ours,
And its presence adds to the rhyme of love
Persistently sung by the fall above.
No lip has touched it since his and mine
In turns therefrom sipped lovers' wine.'

... for JAMES HORTON

James Horton MA (RCA) RBA is well known as a portrait painter, writer, teacher, and leader of annual painting trips to both Venice and India. He was born in 1948 and studied during the '60s and '70s at the Sir John Cass Art School, City and Guilds Art School, and the Royal College of Art Painting School. In 1970 he was awarded a Travelling Scholarship to Florence, and in 1992 was a prizewinner for *The Discerning Eye*. He has had solo exhibitions in Dublin, Belfast, London, Stockholm and Cambridge, and some of the London galleries where he has participated in mixed shows include Agnews, the National Portrait Gallery (prizewinner) the New English Art Club, New Grafton Gallery, Royal Academy summer exhibitions, Royal Portrait Society, and the Royal Society of British Artists. Since 1976 he has written articles for *The Artist* since 1976 and contributed to *Art and Artists*, the *Artist and Illustrator* and *Leisure Painter*. His publications include *Learn to Draw the Figure* (Collins) *Sketching with James Horton* (Collins), *Introduction to Drawing* (Dorling Kindersley Art School series in association with the Royal Academy, 1994), *Composition* (Quintet, 1994); *Skin Tones* (Batsford, 1995); *Pastel Techniques* (Chrysalis 2000). He has taught part-time at the Sir John Cass School, the Mary Ward Centre, Anglia Polytechnic University, and has been a lecturer and guest tutor at various colleges. He also runs his own painting and drawing classes. His commissions include **Brenda Ryman** (late mistress of Girton College, **Lord** and

Lady Hemingford (arranged through this gallery); **Sir Eli Lauterpacht CBE QC**; **Lady Lauterpacht**; **Jean Gooder** and colleagues (Newham College) and **Professor Thomas Sherwood** (Professor of Radiology at Addenbrooke's Hospital).



Portrait of Lord Hemingford, oil by James Horton

...and for HAPPENING

This term was first used in 1959 by **Allan Kaprow** to cover a multiplicity of artistic events which were performed in a conscious rejection of traditional craftsmanship and permanence. A Happening is actually carefully planned and structured, usually combining theatrical and visual elements, containing an element of spontaneity. A recent example might be the two concurrent plays *Home* and *Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn at the National Theatre where the audience participated with the cast and celebrity guests in the fete in the foyer immediately after the stage performance.

Kaprow thought of a Happening as a progression of 'assemblage art' and 'environment art'. The word 'assemblage' was first used by **Jean Dubuffet** to describe works of art made from what we now term found objects, a term which became commonly accepted after an exhibition entitled *The Art of Assemblage* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1961. 'Environment art' is where the artist creates a 3-dimensional space in which to enclose the spectator and involve him in sensory stimuli such as visual, auditory, olfactory etc. While both assemblage and the environment are static, the Happening is not restricted to the confines of a gallery and is planned as a contrast to a 'genuine'. The leading instigators of the development of the Happening include **Jim Dine**, **Claes Oldenburg**, **Robert Rauschenberg**, and **Roy Lichtenstein**. The word 'Happening' has sometimes been used as a blanket term to cover demonstrations with a socio-political intent such as those arranged by **Joseph Beuys**, or those intended to shock established moralities.

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GATHERING IN: feature by Anthony Day

Paul Nash felt the satisfaction long before I did of gleaning his art from the land as legitimately as his forebears harvested corn. He was, however, deferring to earlier forebears than mine, for I was in direct descent and following my father's trade before taking the long, winding road to self-expression in paint.

Nash never followed the plough, was never close enough to the soil to compromise his artistic detachment. He came to it from a distance in a spirit of rediscovery and his art always had that element of fresh excitement over familiar terrain.

Not that our agrarian forefathers would have accepted our claim to be one of them while merely portraying the scenes of their grinding toil. The virtue of work was inseparable from their pride. I came face to face with this, stubbornly returning to my roots 20 years after deserting them, albeit descending as far as I could into hiding until the acquaintances of my upbringing could tolerate me without embarrassment. And that didn't take long simply because the world was in radical change, the jobs on the land disappearing, the men of my generation who had known no other valid employment undertaking work they had never previously contemplated. A style of painting grew out of that shyness to admit my new calling and I still often paint behind high vegetation!

These reflections were set in train by the small exhibition of Paul Nash watercolours and prints at the Fitzwilliam Museum recently and by his beautifully written but unfinished autobiography, *Outline*. Nash was first celebrated for his First World War paintings, but I find them theatrical, an element he was to swap for quintessential poetry later. He was the first Englishman of landscape painting between the wars, dedicated to understatement, at ease principally in watercolour, looking at the familiar with a visionary's eyes. His greens are seldom but his greys capture the essence of England while retaining their modernity and never abusing tradition.

The exhibition embraced but a narrow range of his work but it was enough to revive his uniqueness. Some were studies for his oil painting *The Monster Field*, catching the ambiguity of fallen tree forms, but this is never forced. The exaggeration was left to **Graham Sutherland** later working under his influence. The best of Nash's oil paintings retain his poetry, but there are not many of them. The Fitzwilliam owns a beauty in *November Moon*, but those of the Second World War, while brave, come a distant second to his poignant series of watercolours of stricken aircraft and debris from the sky.

His brother John, with whom I shared an exhibition in 1964, was also essentially English and of fields and byways, but with his feet more firmly on the ground. Paul retained the slightly unearthly element of the visionary and it remains in his most down-to-earth vistas such as these fields of fallen branches threatening to transform before our eyes.

Surrealism infected him and he never quite shed it while never wanting to entertain its weirdest extremes. Man-made structures in landscapes often set him off in that direction and the moon was never far distant, day or night. People are implied by their absence. He is the only one present, softly treading, hardly daring to disturb the wildlife, uplifted by the sound of crows, a shrill invisible wren or the breeze picking up and rustling the born. On the warmest days of this

summer you could cool off before these pellucid but structurally firm vistas.

Paul Nash was born three months before and died three months before **Nevinson**, and they were contemporaries at the Slade. He joined the Artists' Rifles in 1916 and the Hampshire Regiment in 1917 and was subjected to poison gas which almost certainly shortened his life. He is not one likely to be forgotten in our land but is perhaps too English in his art to appeal abroad. I feel thankful for that as a devotee of England before any other land.

ART ON A PLATE ...

by Katharine Macpherson DA

It's pumpkin time again - and aren't these eye-catching vegetables the perfect way to bring a splash of colour to your autumn table? They're worth buying for their decorative qualities alone.

The owners of *The Strawberry Tree*

Restaurant at Milton Ernest near Bedford obviously agree with me. While enjoying an excellent lunch there recently I spotted a row of small beauties perched on a display shelf, together with an array of bottled fruits. The fruit appeared on the menu but not the pumpkin, which was a shame as this neglected vegetable is actually extremely versatile. I've had successes with it made into sweet pumpkin pie and added to casseroles, but my favourite use for it has got to be soup. This is the recipe I invariably turn to after my sons have carved out their annual Hallowe'en lantern. It's colourful, tasty and makes you feel virtuous for having put that mountain of orange flesh to good use.

PUMPKIN AND TOMATO SOUP Serves 8 or more

1 average-sized pumpkin (size doesn't really matter)

1 medium onion, chopped

1 oz butter

2 pints chicken or vegetable stock

2 tins chopped tomatoes

2 tablespoons double cream

1 tablespoon tomato puree

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped

dash of Tabasco

salt and freshly ground black pepper

* Scoop out the pumpkin flesh, discarding seeds and chop roughly.

* In a large pan, fry the onion gently in butter until softened but not coloured.

* Add the pumpkin, tomatoes, tomato puree and stock and simmer for 20 minutes or until tender.

* Liquidise (find it easiest to whirr it up in the pan with a hand-held mixer).

* Stir in the cream and Tabasco, season to taste, reheat gently and serve sprinkled with chopped parsley and perhaps another swirl of cream.

Perfect for a bonfire night party!



*Our Wine expert, Paul Bowes of **Bacchanalia** and **The Jug & Firkin** says ...'a slightly tricky nosh to match with wine, but for the adventurous epicurean a nutty sherry would be ideal. Try a well chilled dry Oloroso - go on - Live a Little!'*



Sculpture by
Zoe Rubens

COMING SHORTLY

Exhibitions in 2001 will include Jane Strother, Anthony Day, John Brown ARBS and Nicola Ottley. WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DETAILS.

Don't forget the gallery is open every Saturday and the first Sunday of each month, or by appointment, throughout the year in between special exhibitions.

Also, if you do not see what you are looking for, please ask - we will probably have it in our storeroom.

ART CLASSES WITH JUDITH DIN

The very popular Art Classes with Judith Din in the gallery (and garden when possible)

will continue in the New Year

and will include drawing as well as the use of watercolour.

Please telephone 01223 211311 for details.



Pamela Marshall Barrell

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Portrait of Pamela, oil by Bob Abrahams, wearing shawl by Heidi Lichterman and jewellery by Gail Klevan