

Hayward annual

Frank Auerbach
Anthony Caro
Patrick Caulfield
Terry Frost
Patrick Heron
Roger Hilton
Ivon Hitchens
Howard Hodgkin
Peter Lanyon
Ben Nicholson
Tim Scott
William Scott
Matthew Smith
Ian Stephenson
William Tucker
John Walker



Gillian Ayres
Basil Beattie
Michael Bennett
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Brian Fielding
Clyde Hopkins
Albert Irvin
Richard James
Patrick Jones
John McLean
Michael Moon
Mali Morris
Fred Pollock
Geoff Rigden
Terry Setch
Paul Tonkin
Anthony Wishaw

Arts Council
OF GREAT BRITAIN

Hayward Annual 1980

contemporary painting and sculpture
selected by John Hoyland

29 August – 12 October 1980
Hayward Gallery, London

Arts Council
OF GREAT BRITAIN

The colour and black and white photographs were taken by Jonathan Bayer with the exception of several in the introductory section, including Auerbach (Prudence Cuming); Caro (Carlos Granger); Lanyon (Courtauld Institute); Scott (John Webb); Walker (Rodney Wright-Watson)

Photograph of Ben Nicholson on cover by Bill Brandt

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Preface

Each of the previous three Hayward Annuals represented the point of view of more than one person. Members of the selection committees worked either individually or by mutual agreement to arrive at exhibitions they felt were representative of the best current British art. In August 1979 the Arts Council, advised by its Exhibitions Subcommittee, decided to invite one person to choose an entire exhibition from a position of deep personal conviction and, accordingly, asked a well-respected painter, John Hoyland, whether he would undertake the task. Defining one's response to fellow artists' work is always an unnerving experience and becoming informed about recent art a time-consuming one. We are extremely grateful to John Hoyland for undertaking the selection with such a sense of responsibility and personal vision. He outlines the reasons for his approach, and his bias, in the introduction.

The longer essay which follows is the art historian Tim Hilton's interpretation of the developments in painting which these artists and their international colleagues have been effecting. Mr Hilton, presently a member of the Council's Art Panel followed the formation of the show throughout the year and together with members of the Art Department offered suggestions about studios and shows that might be of interest to John Hoyland. His help is greatly appreciated.

John Hoyland decided that the show should be installed as an entity, directed to the aim of seeing the works at their best and giving space where he felt it was due. To keep the maximum freedom and to allow for paintings and sculpture completed in August this year we decided to forego a catalogue list. Such a record, along with details of the works for sale, will be available at the Gallery.

During the planning and selection of mixed exhibitions we rely heavily on the co-operation of the participating artists and on their forbearance and trust that the result will do their work credit. We are indebted to all the artists in this exhibition for their full collaboration. Finally, we thank the lenders for making available the works in the introductory section.

The Hayward Annual series will be broken next year because the Gallery will be occupied at the time normally reserved for the Annual by an exhibition of paintings, sculpture and drawings by Picasso, selected from the works acquired by the French nation from the artist's estate. However, contemporary British art and photography will be represented at the Hayward during the coming year by retrospectives of Michael Andrews, William Johnstone, Phillip King and Raymond Moore.

Joanna Drew
Director of Art

An Introduction to the Exhibition

JOHN HOYLAND

I have believed for a long time now that there is a great deal of good painting being done in this country. This exhibition is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of that painting, but simply a personal choice, a slice of the British Art Cake. The main core of the show is taken up by the work of 18 painters. I have also chosen to show, alongside these 18, the work of a number of painters and sculptors who have helped create the context of art for me in this country during the past twenty years. To this end I have chosen in certain cases to show examples of earlier work.

All the artists included have maintained a dialogue with Europe and America over this period. If this has declined somewhat over the last ten years in relation to America, it was American painters of the first wave, Pollock, Rothko etc who probably made the deepest impression and from whom many of those showing have continued to draw inspiration.

I have been looking at most of these artists' work for a long time. It is difficult to define an overall direction for them. Some are very abstract while others contain strong figurative associations. Their average age is about 45. They are not a group, they don't hold meetings, some indeed have never met: but what they hold in common is that they have addressed themselves to painting or sculpture and the pursuit of High Art. With the exception of a few of the more senior artists, none make a complete living from painting. Each has had to devise a system for survival from teaching or part-time work. None see their art or the conventions they use as exclusive: many of those working figuratively are fervent admirers of abstract art and vice versa. Indeed, many of the abstract painters were excellent figurative artists at one time. The path for all of them is not an easy one. Some work in tiny suburban studios, others in large, temporary, cold and ill-equipped warehouses. All of them have suffered economic hardship at some time and have received little encouragement from outside.

In the case of the older artists included, many of them well-known, their work speaks for itself. Some of the lesser-known artists have been known

as 'painters' painters' for years. They have experimented and they have had their failures. They have not moved on the level of public recognition and they have not been marketable. They are not whizz-kids but people who have spent half their lives searching for answers through the practice of their craft. The sculptors have maintained a dialogue between painting and sculpture. For me they have acted as beacons. The high quality of their work through the sixties and seventies has been something for all of us to measure up to. For myself, the Caro show at the Whitechapel in 1963, in particular, marked a turning point for art in this country.

Painting is not easy to write about and I cannot describe or explain these works. I would suggest that their very nature and seriousness denies instant communication. They will not reveal all their secrets immediately. If approached with caution and curiosity, gradually their true identity will be recognised. Some will remain elusive, a dusty mirror withholding secrets, that is their essence. Don't expect instant gratification. Look at these paintings as you would listen to music. Hearing music is abstract, but we are more conditioned to sounds. Perhaps we have been too literal, too object-orientated. We have refused to look and enjoy abstract relationships, harmonies of colour and form which we do without question in music. No one surely would ask 'does music have meaning?' It appeals to the emotions but we don't attempt to specify these feelings. Music doesn't illustrate emotion. Though a title may suggest the direction of the composer's thoughts. So it is with painting.

What the painters also share in common is their 'belief' in the medium of painting, in its directness, its responsiveness both illusive and allusive, infinitely variable in behaviour, and alchemic in its magical fusions. Painting doesn't need any gadgetry and disallows gimmickry. It survives unaided as a pure force. What I find so exciting is that now perhaps more than ever before we are witnessing the flowering of these mature artists. Their work is positive and joyful, a solid seemingly new generation of painters is emerging.

All of them work within established

conventions of the modern tradition (why critics should decry this in abstract painters I have no idea, certainly I can think of no figurative artist who doesn't work within established conventions). The boring abstract-versus-figurative argument does not concern me here except to stress that much non-figurative art does require more of the viewer, certainly initially, and may demand some rethinking and a release of the imagination on his part.

In the past ten years, we have seen a great deal of hostility towards painting and sculpture. But real art cannot be grasped, learned or understood quickly. Real art evades easy description, discourages amusing anecdotes, confronts glamour and camp with a stony, unblinking eye, and is not welcome in colour supplement land. Audiences have become accustomed to being shocked, to expect innovation via the cult of entertainment and novelty, or conversely live in hopes of returning to the illusion of stability via the old order of academic figurative art. It is now time for the educators and the critics to do their work and not once again miss the boat. No one who has travelled would claim that there is more happening in Paris, Los Angeles, Düsseldorf, Cologne or even New York than in London. But one continually hears about the LA scene and so on. Another point not often made is that both good and bad art can be acceptable to a wide audience but one must remember that good and bad art can also be totally unacceptable to that same audience. People who take upon themselves the responsibility of criticism should be reminded that this is a situation which cannot be foreseen in advance of the making of the work. Therefore it can have no bearing on the content nor on the quality of the art. I have become very tired of constantly reading about 'artists who make objects for Bond Street galleries' etc. For the last time, it doesn't happen that way. To believe that it does, and to fail to understand this basic fact means that the critic has no chance from the very beginning of understanding the true content of the work and how it is made.

The problem of defining a 'scene' in London is difficult. The extraordinarily complex geography and the sheer size of the city work against the image of a concentrated artistic ghetto, such as we have witnessed in Paris or New York. The public and commercial galleries are similarly spread out so that to keep in touch with the vast number of exhibitions and studio showings is a daunting task, and certainly cannot be understood by the casual visitor.

Attempts have been made in the past to spotlight the 'scene', but inevitably they all appear to be unfair and

narrow in scope, criticism being the main divisive factor.

There are others, of course. The cynicism of journalists out for cheap copy. English conservatism towards the visual arts and a lack of magnanimity on the part of the so-called educated classes nurtured by ignorance and its consequent insecurity and defensiveness. The real crux of the matter, however, has been the failure of many influential critics to really 'believe' in British Art. This represents a major failure of responsibility. A failure of nerve and imagination to recognise and pull together a complex and fragmented situation.

The burden of choice is upon the young now that the so-called avant-garde has undoubtedly reached coffee table art books. There is no prevailing dogma. The problems for young artists have become acutely complex. The past decade has produced many shocks, at times absurd extremes. How does a young artist today pick his way between the minefields of formalism and the sinking sands of social idealism? It may well be that today with the future prospect of more leisure time people will become more open and enjoy an art which is more complex, more puzzling, an art which makes greater demands. Industrial unrest and hooliganism may be as much a product of boredom as of financial problems or the class system (do people really think a lot about it?)

To understand the cuisine of art can take a lifetime. It may not take a musician long to learn to play an instrument, but how long does it take to really understand and master every nuance, every tune, not just technical expertise but to become part of the instrument, the tool of total expression? This is to begin a life-long search. It is almost always too early to know what is good and what will withstand the test of time. Some who aspire to being critics, who appear to be the most sure, carrying the strongest and most destructive convictions are the ones who should be entertaining the most serious doubts as to their judgement. We are still developing, gaining in understanding and confidence. It is the only way. Be patient, and try to make that connection, find that bridge which the artist is building between himself and you. Painters know that the choices are never simple. I hope that this exhibition will serve as an example of how one group of artists, and there are many others, are finding their way through.

A Force against the Basilisk

TIM HILTON

We all have our early memories of art, but those of one's introduction to art life may be more significant. In The Woodman, Birmingham – the beautiful art school pub, approached by an alley and corridors of mosaics of Warwick Castle and Ann Hathaway's Cottage – I first learnt from painters to borrow the chalk from the darts board and shoulder a position at the bar; to draw on the mahogany, smudging the design out with beer and fingers, drawing again, all night, and talking. I write of the experience firstly because all the painters in this exhibition will know what I mean, for there were such places in all provincial cities, once; and secondly because there is an official view of the course of British art since the late fifties which seems to me not to have much contact with that kind of background of painting, nor to feel the generations of painters, nor to see how those generations are now beginning to work themselves out – to display themselves: a process which in part it is the purpose of this exhibition to discover.

In the late fifties, we are to understand from the standard accounts, British painting was transformed by the first sight of American art of the Abstract Expressionist period. This is art history related by revelation. I might say, mildly, that it applies to artists who were old enough (Bert Irvin is one) to have already had an independent painting career. For most young painters born in and after Hitler's war, especially if you were from the provinces, or Scotland, this was not so. In Birmingham, at the age of eighteen, you thought of London, St Ives and Paris. America came later. This was the more so because at the time of which I speak – say for three or four years after 1958 – there was some genuinely strong painting being done in England, which felt indigenous. To this one could feel attached. Ben Nicholson I think was too remote for such attachment. But there was admirable new art by people associated with St Ives; Patrick Heron, Terry Frost, Peter Lanyon, William Scott and some others. There was not a particular tendency in them, no programmatic impetus to unite their painting – Heron's in particular was anomalous – but it was fine work by artists who were in the strength of their

careers. Some of its liveliness was transmitted to the art schools. It gave rise to good student painting. Some of that apprentice work (like David Hockney's, I cannot resist saying) was by artists who have disappointed later on. That was often because they wished not to cope with the added challenge of American art. But it was a good background for many, the people who were going to give us the genuine painting of our time. Only now, it seems, can we make sense of what has happened to that potential for serious painting. For the fact is that towards the mid sixties good painting started to disappear. I mean that it was lost to the public consciousness: it went underground. It did not do so altogether: the public career of John Hoyland himself is witness to that. But it is significant that many of the artists in this show are hardly known, though often in their forties; and significant that this is the first major group show of serious painting to be held in England since the 'Situation' exhibition in 1960.

What made ambitious abstract painting go underground? The usual answer (laced with disdain for the sixties) is that it was forced out by commerce, by sensibility that found its gratification in entertainment, by flashing light art, kinetic art, pop art and the like. There is public and commercial truth here. The wrong art became famous. The dealers, with one or two exceptions, were terrible. So were the collectors, without exception. But (I think) there was also a weakness in the dominant abstract painting of the day. I mean that of high-keyed colour in stripes or regular formations, made with anonymous surfaces and neat divisions. That such art had, briefly, produced work of great quality in America did not alter the fact that its very 'doability' finished off a lot of young careers for want of depth of emulation. Be that as it may, in the early to mid sixties (as John Hoyland points out) the conviction that one could make high fine art by a dedication of one's life came not from painting but from sculpture, and in particular Anthony Caro's sculpture. The hostility to St Ives that was often expressed in those days did not often come from committed painters, though it did sometimes. But

there was nobody in Cornwall, nor indeed in London, who could match Caro's capacity for inspiration. The fact that his sculpture was radical was not as important to painters as was the fact that he represented high art, and also internationalism. Through him there was a direct route to American achievements. He also gave access to Clement Greenberg, who has remained a sort of touchstone for most of the artists in this exhibition. For this reason – quite apart from the work itself – it is moving to see Caro's sculpture in what is first and foremost an exhibition of paintings. Caro's presence here also points to a crucial relationship between the major media in the mid sixties. While his mature art was in some respects inspired by painting, in particular Kenneth Noland's, Caro's sculpture did not itself work back into painting. It was not, as it were, *usable* by painters. There has been no direct pictorial equivalent of Caro's art, nor really of any other St Martin's sculpture. Nor, it now seems important to say, was there a direct influence in St Martin's between Caro and younger sculptors. This is not to belittle his example, but rather to emphasise it. Although it might not have been made without him, not much of the sculpture made at the school looks like his. This simple visual fact, ignored in all accounts of recent British art, indicates just how much we need to think again about the art of our time – or how much it needs to be rethought by the people who write about it.

The false account of Caro's influence has worked to depreciate the originality – indeed the whole artistic characters – of such sculptors as Tim Scott and Bill Tucker. They are broadly of Hoyland's generation. They came to make abstract sculpture at St Martin's in the early 1960s. This was just at the time when Hoyland was beginning his independent career after study at the Royal Academy Schools. Both had known other kinds of further education, Tucker at Oxford, Scott at the Architectural Association. Their relative maturity gave them a different relationship to their tutors and to the whole business of making art. It has become more and more the case that maturity, not to say originality, has tended to come to artists more lately in their lives than at any other time in the history of modern art. This seems to apply especially to painters. Here is another contrast with a kind of art that has held a prominent public position in the last fifteen years. The 'New Generation' exhibitions of 1964–65, in which Tucker, Scott and Hoyland all showed, marked the height of the fame of the new sculpture. Within St Martin's it brought an

immediate reaction in the form of what became known as conceptual art. And yet it was not so much the show itself as the success of the show that provoked this rejection. Similarly, as one looks back at the period, one feels that conceptualism was something that happened *to* art rather than *within* it. What had happened was at one and the same time greatly significant and greatly unexciting to look at. The significance was that a new kind of minor art was invented which may very well be permanent rather than passing; new, because for the first time in history it had no relationship whatsoever to the major art of the time. Of this art, all that needs to be said here is that its purpose is to interest and that its chosen instrument is the camera. But the implications of a minor art which could never aspire to major art do concern us, just as they concern the art schools and of course the very position of painting. Another point this exhibition makes is this: it is plain that not all the art in the show is of equal merit, but it is the conviction of the selection that it exhibits that kind of art in which high merit can legitimately be sought.

These considerations (which of course I here oversimplify) gave a particular style to much of the painting of the seventies, or gave it a particular purpose. I hesitate to call it didactic, though by its nature it was a challenge to the photographers and sociologists who were everywhere in the art schools. I would prefer to say that it was patient and – very well – autodidactic. Its centre was at the Stockwell Depot in South London: a number of painters had followed St Martin's sculptors there. In this dismal setting, for years, when the painting tradition seemed most to be underground, a kind of abstract art was made that had quite large scale, softly broken paint, any amount of texture, not a lot of pronounced drawing, no dominant image, and harmonious rather than contrasting colour. Often, perhaps more often than not, the painting was made on the floor and its stretched size was found by cropping. This was in fact the international style of the time. It had its counterpart in New York, not so much because the British were following the Americans as because painters on both sides of the Atlantic had, by now, a common inheritance. The difference was that in England the work was made at the nadir of painting's public fortunes. It appeared that the mainstream of art was a minority concern, and the concern only of those artists who made it. The painters, who therefore had only each others' company, tended towards a common expression. It was – predictably, alas – denigrated as 'academic'.

This it was not, but certainly it was a 'learning' sort of style – and that gave it a value which we now perhaps can more fully appreciate. How little it was appreciated five or six years ago, and how unworldly were its aspirations, prompts me to say something about what was called its conservatism. For far from being conservative, it was considered by its authors as being – within the general context of our culture – radical: not in that it wished to change society or to reflect society, but in that it stood for things – *was* those things – otherwise unvalued. It was a force against the basilisk, and yet not a force: only itself.

This is aestheticism: and I believe that the aesthetic attitude was necessary and beneficial to our painting. I hasten to add that I speak only from my own experience, drawing now on the bar in the Marquis of Lorne opposite the Stockwell Depot. Art life and art itself have been much more various than I can hope to describe here, or can be exhibited. This is the point of John Hoyland's selection of token paintings by the artists who hang in the mezzanine gallery. Surely they suggest fascinating perspectives on the background of British art and its relationship to the new painting which, as this catalogue goes to press, is still in the studios, wet. This is all the more so because some of the mezzanine pictures are also new, and have been painted for this exhibition. For instance. Howard Hodgkin's art comes from a painting culture not at all like the one I have described above. It is his own. But it seems to me that the longer he paints the more his art becomes, in the best sense, novel: and that his individualism is akin to a current tendency to make a personal art, and thus painting that is rather different from anyone else's. Frank Auerbach's attachment (attachment is a weak word) to his model or streetscape is not that distant from the tensions of some abstract art. Or, to take another perspective, I think that it could be argued that Fred Pollock's painting, in which there is a grandeur attained by long study of American art, is also akin to Peter Lanyon's: Pollock went from art school in Glasgow to St Ives in 1959. To look back on Lanyon, now, is more pleasurable than it has been for years. It is as if the experience of autonomous abstraction in the seventies, which is now concluded, had paradoxically rid us of worry about the *genius loci*, neo-romantic, found-object and little-harbour associations that were not long ago objectionable in St Ives art. I do not mean that they have ceased to be objectionable: I mean that one is looking at such pictures for their paint. Terry Setch's paintings, and

Mick Moon's too, have this at least in common: that their complicated feel comes from a topographical objectness and a spirit that has gathered much from Atlantic shores.

The new painting will be unconcerned by the presence, or absence, of figurative or representational elements. It will be smaller in size, probably; it will not be painted on the floor; it will do what it likes with the framing edge and it will find depth where it pleases to find depth; colour will be sumptuous; very likely there will be an amount of powerful, supple drawing with the brush, and touch, a really painterly touch, will be all-important. No wonder that sculptors are nowadays envious of painters! For of course it is painting's current ability to be resourceful that enables it to be so variously beautiful.

I dare to say that in London, today, there is more possibility for painting than ever in my lifetime, or yours. Some works, and many passages in some works, would have been simply unimaginable only three or four years ago. I think of the cloudy sheets of pigment in Clyde Hopkins, the twisting of local colour in Paul Tonkin, Geoff Rigden's square, centralised format, Mali Morris's scarlet movement and black swathing, Jeff Dellow's daring green depth. Evidently one can have many expectations from all these artists. But it is in touch and compactness that we will recognise new work that is utterly complete. What a contrast there is between the exquisite judgement of John McLean's open, almost aerial markings and the concentration of Michael Bennett's application. Both are beautiful. My feeling is that McLean's painting could have been done in New York, but that Bennett's is British. Bennett was taught, in Birmingham, in the Woodman probably, by John Walker, who is the most transatlantic of our painters. Now we can feel not only that our native art is our own, but that it has a relevance far beyond our background.



Clyde Hopkins *Untitled* 1980
acrylic on canvas 182.9x168.9



Clyde Hopkins

Rooster 1980
acrylic on canvas 182.9×147.3

Born Sussex 1946
1965-69 studied Fine Arts at the University of Reading; 1969-73 various occupations including teaching, printmaking demonstrator, printer at Kelpra Press etc; 1973- part-time and visiting lecturer in various colleges including Hull, University of Reading, Winchester, Canterbury and Manchester; 1979 GLAA Award; Living and working in London

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Individual

1974 *Four Painters* Congress House; 1975 *Six Artists* Africa Centre; 1976 *Drawings*

and Prints Aquarius Gallery, Harrogate; 1977 *Drawings by Painters and Sculptors* Greenwich Theatre Gallery; 1978 First Spring Show Serpentine Gallery; *Drawing in Action* touring exhibition (Camden Arts Centre in January 1979); *Bates, Crowley, Hopkins* Winchester School of Art; 1979 *Open Attitudes* Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; 1980 *Small Works by Younger British Artists* Somerville College, Oxford; Kettles Yard, Cambridge (touring show)

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