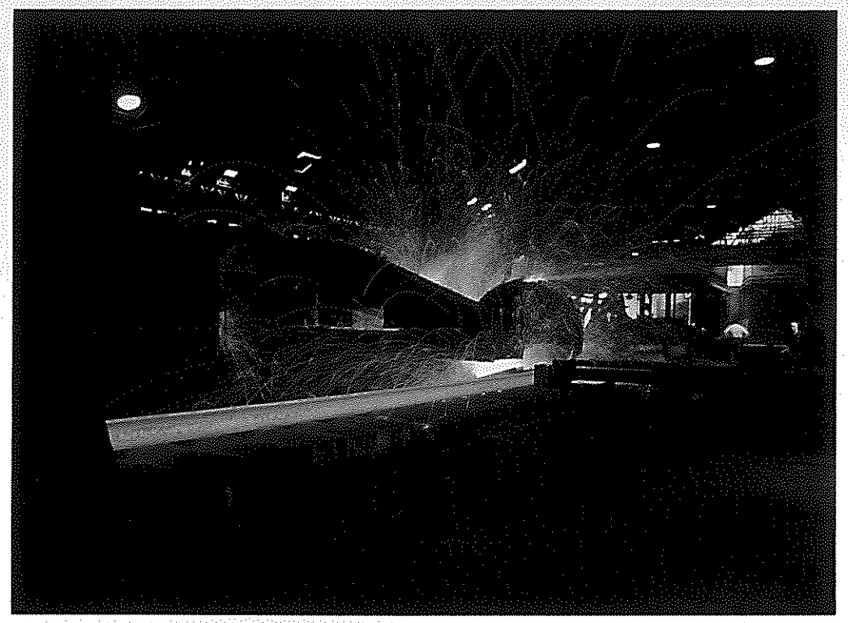
ALBA

AUTUMN '87

National and International Contemporary Art from Scotland No.5 £1.50

DOCUMENTA 8; EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL; NEO-GEO TO MINIMAL BAROQUE
TIMOTHY HYMAN ON DOMENICO TIEPOLO; CALUM COLVIN; PUBLIC ART COURSES

Festival Exhibitions at the Talbot Rice Gallery



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Admission Free

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TALBOT RICE GALLERY

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Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the publishers and editors.

Subsidised by the Scottish Arts Council

INTRODUCTION

Again the artworld is in a state of flux. Rival factions and trends compete for supremacy - in paint, in ideas, and in technique. New figuration, which first ravaged our senses a decade ago, was initially met with little critical acclaim and much scorn. The same welcome has been generally extended to the new art which has replaced new figuration in all the major art capitals over the last two years. Known variously as 'Simulism', 'Appropriation', 'Neo-Geo', and 'Fakism', none of this work, and the critical debate surrounding it, has had a proper airing in Scotland (due perhaps to the lack of a small pioneering gallery that was the New 57).

Alba intends to bring this work to its readership, along with all that is current in contemporary art, whether it be rooted in abstraction, Figuration, Minimalism, or Conceptualism. Some of this new work was seen at Documenta 8 this summer, a five yearly visual arts feast held in the West German town of Kassel. Sculptor George Wyllie, masquerading as Alba's official photographer, took the above photograph of Richard Demarco under the blade of Ian Hamilton Finlay's guillotine. Documenta runs for a precise 100 days, and Beck's Bier have generously offered 100 bottles of their famous brew, with the now rare Gilbert and George label, for the best caption to arrive in the Alba office by August 20th. The judge and executioner will be George 'Snowdon' Wyllie.

Peter Hill,
Talbot Rice Art Centre,
University of Edinburgh,
Old College, South Bridge,
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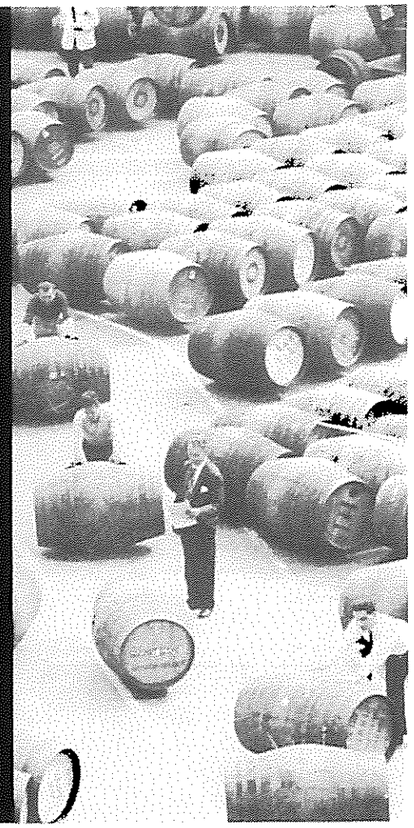
THIRD EYE CENTRE



8.8 → 6.9
DENIS MASI
New Installations
WEEGEE
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11.9 → 10.10
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1983-1987
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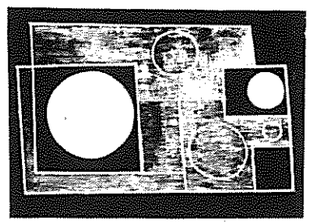

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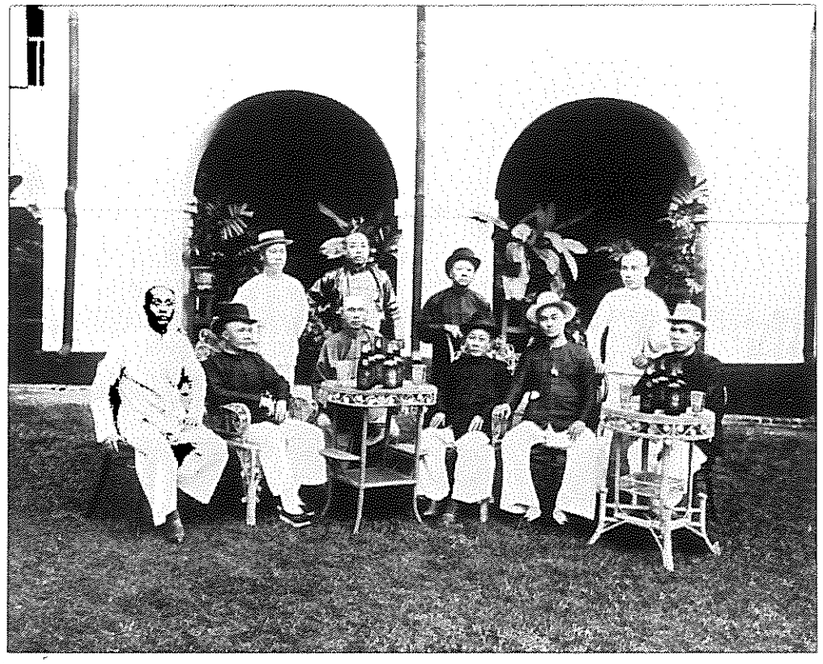

6 OUT OF 10 CHINESE PREFER TO TAKE THEIR BECKS SITTING DOWN

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A Canongate Gallery - Jedburgh Exhibition

SSAH
Scottish Society for Art History

Art History in Scotland needs a forum for the exchange of information and ideas and to establish and maintain the social contacts by which a sense of common interest is maintained. It also needs a voice once a common interest is established, especially in matters of education.

The *Scottish Society for Art History* exists to provide both a forum and a vote. It is the professional organisation for art historians in Scotland but it is not intended to be exclusive. It has existed now for two years, and has organised four successful conferences and published two Year Books.

If you are interested in art history, therefore, you should be a member. The annual subscription is £7.50 payable on the 1st April. If you wish to join, write to: **May Macnamara, Talbot Rice Gallery, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh EH8 9YL**, making your cheques out to *SSAH*.

C·A·C
CITY OF EDINBURGH ART CENTRE

18 JULY – 5 SEPTEMBER

CHILD'S PLAY

Reflecting all aspects of children's play - past, present and future. The exhibition will show playthings from the 18th century to the present day. A VIP section will include playthings lent by members of the Royal Family, politicians and foreign statesmen.

Admission: Adults £1, Children 25p, to raise money for the Save the Children Fund.

25 JULY – 5 SEPTEMBER

LACQUER WORK FROM PALEKH

Lacquered enamel work painted on miniature boxes, jewel cases, caskets and brooches which include scenes from Russian folk life, legends, history and literature. They are exquisitely painted and evoke a magical lost world.

This is the first major exhibition of this material to be staged in the UK, contributing to the Russian theme of the 1987 Edinburgh Festival.

Admission Free

2 MARKET STREET,
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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
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SCOTTISH TELEVISION FESTIVAL

SCOTTISH TELEVISION **What's on Channel Ten, Hen?** The story of how a shrewd, eccentric Canadian millionaire set up Scotland's first commercial television station back in 1957.

SCOTTISH MAESTRO **Sir Alexander Gibson**: As Scottish Opera celebrates its Silver Jubilee, we profile the man who has been, for a generation, the principle force in our nation's music.

SCOTTISH MASTER **Masterclass** in trumpet playing in five episodes taken by John Wallace from Fife, now principal trumpet player with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

SCOTTISH GENIUS **Dreams and Recollections** of Glasgow's great designer and architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh in this feature length re-enactment starring Kara Wilson and Tom Conti.

SCOTTISH NEWS **Scotland Today** by the day along with our regular news bulletins are the best way to find out what is happening in Edinburgh in August — and in Scotland any other month.

SCOTTISH JOURNALISM **War Crimes** — our investigators went deep inside Russia and tracked back in time for new evidence to document the atrocities of Nazi war criminals who found refuge in Britain.

SCOTTISH ARTS **Festival Live** previews the best in arts, music and drama during those three weeks of August when Edinburgh stages the world's greatest arts festival.

SCOTTISH FILM **Festival Cinema** in two editions previews the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the oldest in the world, which this year focuses on new British films and Soviet cinema.

SCOTTISH DOCUMENTARY **Odyssey** is the movingly told story of how a troupe of handicapped actors brought the great epic to life on stage in Edinburgh at Festival time.

SCOTTISH ANARCHY **Acropolis Now** is an anarchic guide to all that's best and worst on the Festival Fringe this year. Weekly and, of necessity, late night.

SCOTTISH ENTERTAINMENT **Gateway Cabaret** brings together the untried, the talented, and the quite unusual in a wild series of forty minute shows this autumn where anything goes.

SCOTTISH MUSIC **Aly Bain and Friends** at the (Clyde) Riverside Club features the pick of contemporary Scottish talent playing across a range from traditional to rock.

SCOTTISH DRAMA **Extras** by Alex Norton is a play for a new Channel Four drama series, First Sight. Set in a Glasgow massage parlour, the patter is funny but the business is serious

SCOTTISH SERIES **Shadow of the Stone** is a six part film series about a girl possessed by an obsession to sail. But is she also possessed by a woman burned centuries back for daring to go to sea?

SCOTTISH CRIME **Taggart** is Scotland's Number One Detective. And he is in the UK Top Ten as well. Mark McManus stars again in the next three part serial — Funeral Rites — coming soon.

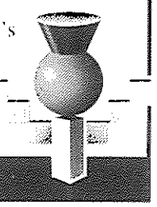
SCOTTISH SPORT As a nation, our output and events outrank those of any ITV English region: international **tennis** from Edinburgh; a **world netball** tournament and international **ice hockey** from Glasgow; **golf** from Glenbervie; **shinty** from Fort William; and an international **Curling** Skins Game. All that before our soccer season even gets serious.

SCOTTISH LIFE **Take the High Road** is our twice weekly networked serial, now in its seventh year, of life in the Lomondside village of Glendarroch.

SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL **The Campbells** is the story of a Scottish family in 19th century Canada. Made in co-operation with North American partners, this long running series starring Malcolm Stoddard was shortlisted for an international Emmy this year.

SCOTTISH SOVIET CELEBRATION

An historic live broadcast: The first ever simultaneous transmission to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe by *Superchannel* satellite to Western Europe — and across Scotland.
On Sunday, 9th August, at 7.45pm, Scottish Television will broadcast the opening concert of this year's Edinburgh Festival. On the 70th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution the 1987 Festival takes as its theme Soviet Art. Hundreds of Soviet musicians, dancers, painters and poets will be seen by Scots in Edinburgh. In turn, Scottish Television will mark its 30th birthday with this frontier-breaking broadcast projecting Scotland to the rest of Europe by satellite.



SCOTTISH TELEVISION TAKES THE HIGH ROAD

THE GILDED BALLOON THEATRE 1987

◆

VENUE 38
233-237 COWGATE
BOX OFFICE
12PM - 12AM
TEL: 226 2151

The Gilded Balloon Theatre was one of the biggest successes of the Fringe last year. Because we had to turn so many people away we have taken over the Wilkie House Theatre this year enabling us to mount two exciting programmes of theatre and cabaret simultaneously, in what promises to be the premiere Fringe venue of the 1987 Edinburgh Festival.

EMOTIVE LOCOMOTION - Aug. 7-16 1.00pm (2.30) £3.00 (£2.50)
The living Lindy Hoppers with David Michelsen's Harmonic Ensemble. These two exhilerating acts trace the country, gospel and diverse ethnic roots of authentic jazz dance to its 1930's climax in New York.

VAMPIRE-MADONNA - Aug 17-29 1.00pm (2.30) £3.00 (£2.50)
with AVIS & PRAMADA. Unique dance-music collusion from Edvard Munch's virgin to vampire, one dancer-ex-ballet Academy Munich, one cellist-Electric Light Orchestra.

THEME AND VARIATIONS - Aug 7-30 3.00pm (4.30) £3.50 (£3.00)
by Samuel Alyoshin, translated by Michael Glenny. Set in contemporary Russia, dealing with relationships, spanning the Soviet Union.

SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN - Aug 7-22 5.30pm (6.45) £3.50 (£2.50)
Meriel Brook plays Shakespeare's women, one-woman show containing excerpts from Shakespeare's plays linked with history and character background.

THE COLUMBIAN COUSIN - Aug 7-29 (not Mons) 7.00pm (8.45) £4.50 (£3.50)
by Nick Whitby. Impossible to describe. Nick Whitby's follow-up to 'Dirty Dishes', called "hilarious" (The Standard), quotes "Funniest play I've seen in months" (Today).

DENISE BLACK AND THE KRAY SISTERS - Aug 7-30 9.30pm (11.00) £5.00 (£3.00)
go TECHNICOLOR! Bigger band . . . new show . . . "Absolutely guaranteed to knock you out" (Time Out).

NORMAN LOVETT and THE PANIC BROTHERS - Aug 7-15 11.15 (12.30) £4.50 (£3.50)
Ruby Wax's deadpan stooge entertains with his own off-beat anecdotes, coupled with the Panic Brothers fizzy, fun, harmonies.

HELEN LEDERER AND RAW SEX - Aug 16-30 11.15pm (12.30) £4.50 (£3.50)
Late night entertainment with Helen Lederer from BBC's 'Naked Video' and 'Hello Mum' and Raw Sex from the French & Saunders Show.

NANSING QUARTET & THE JAM TARTS - Aug 7-29 (Mondays & Tuesdays introducing New Band Cruise) 1.00am (3.00) £2.50. Aug 24-30 5.00pm (6.30) £3.00 (£2.50)
The Main Theatre stays open till 3am for live music with the sensational sound from 'Down Under'. Also doing their own show in week 3. Late Bar.

ACTION ART FOR KIDS - Aug 7-9, 13-16, 20-23, 27-29 3.30pm (5.00) £1.50
A unique chance for children to meet musicians, jugglers, acrobats and performers and to make drawings of them in action.

THE LAST STROKE - Aug 7-30 6.00pm (7.30) £3.50 (£3.00)
by Robert Patrick. Riotious happenings in the New York art world of the 50's. UK premiere of tragi-comedy by Robert Patrick (Kennedy's Children).

THE INSINUENDOS - Aug 7-30 8.15pm (9.30) £3.50 (£2.50)
Musical cabaret with a difference. Sex, politics and religion. "Divine abomination" (An Exeter vicar). "Entertains and enlightens" (City Limits).

BROWN BLUES - Aug 7-29 10.00pm (11.30) £3.50 (£3.00)
ARNOLD BROWN "Peerless" (Time Out), JUNGR AND PARKER "Witty and soulful" (Time Out). Two sell-out shows for the price of one - AND WHY NOT!

LATE 'N' LIVE - Aug 7-30 12 midnight (1.30) £3.50 (£3.00)
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369 GALLERY

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25 JULY-26 SEPTEMBER
MONDAY-SATURDAY 12 NOON-5.30PM
Exhibition sponsored by The LAS Group

The 369 Gallery is subsidised by The Scottish Arts Council and Edinburgh District Council.

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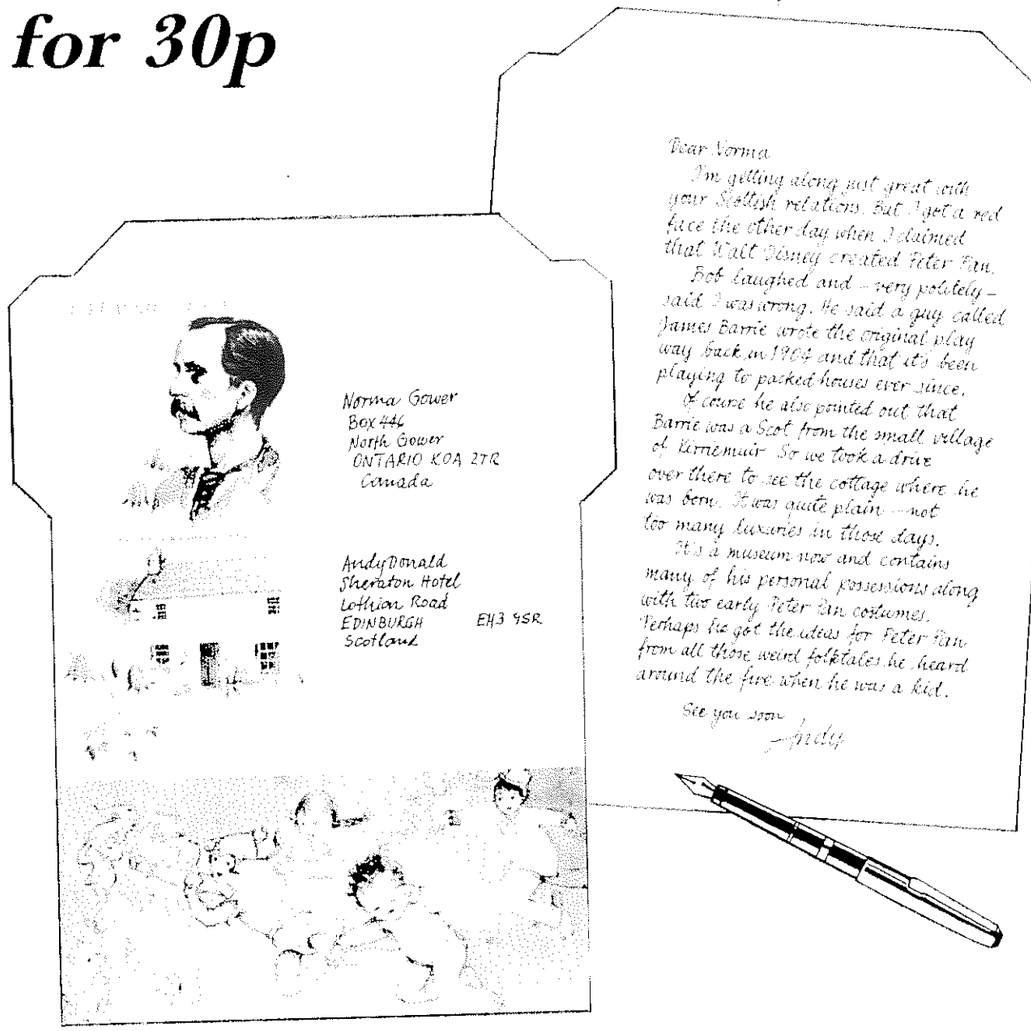

The Scottish Post Office Board have produced an illustrated aerogramme to honour Sir James Barrie (1860-1937) best known for creating the wonderful world of Peter Pan.
The aerogramme is on sale from August 4 at all Scottish post offices, priced 30p.

Scottish Post Office Board

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PAINTINGS

by

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8 AUGUST — 19 SEPTEMBER
1987

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NEWS & PREVIEWS

369 EXPANDS

369 Gallery, Edinburgh has just opened up its first floor as new exhibition space. Their first show 'Continuing the Traditional Twentieth Century Scottish Painting' sets the mood for the many exhibitions of young Scottish artists to come in this year's Edinburgh Festival.

Looking back over a century, it is the 'colourist' theme that characterises this exhibition, from McTaggart through Anne Redpath and Gillies, Robin Philipson, Alan Davie and Elizabeth Blackadder, to the current tide of young painters so eagerly watched by dealers and public alike.

PLATFORMS FOR ARTISTS

British Rail has been getting art on the railways and in April set an exhibition off on tour round the country to show just how they've done it.

Anthony Gormley has planned a dramatic brick figure for Leeds Station, Kevin Atherton's *Iron Horses* sculptures have been placed on the linesides in the West Midlands and Sue Ridge worked with the young unemployed on the ceiling mural at Surbiton Station in Surrey.

The MSC's Community Programme is much in evidence in the arts programme and 300 Partnership schemes have already been completed or are currently in progress or planned, with a work value last year of almost £6m.

BR is committed to responding positively to original ideas for imaginative artworks and is already working closely with both public and private sectors to achieve desirable improvements to the appearance and amenity of BR stations.

Rory Coonan of The Arts Council says 'Today, British Rail is playing an important role in making art available to the public - through sculpture, etched glass, terrazzo, prints and murals in waiting areas and open spaces'.

The exhibition *Platforms for Artists* which illustrates these improvements and artworks will be in Aberdeen Station during September.

20TH CENTURY GREATS

The Whitechapel Gallery, London, puts two twentieth century greats back to back this autumn An exhibition of sculpture and drawings by Jacob Epstein, creator of that magnificent sleeping giant Christ at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, is followed only a month later by an exhibition of an innovator in paint, Fernand Leger. The American/British sculptor has not had a major showing in Britian since his memorial exhibitions in Edinburgh and London in 1961, while the last Legers to be seen here en masse, were exhibited a decade earlier, in 1951 when the painter was still alive.

The full span of Epstein's career is represented. Stone carvings such as *Maternity*, made in 1910, five years after his arrival in Britian became inspiration for young sculptors but generators of hostile criticism from press and public alike. Later, realistic bronze portrait busts of figures such as Joseph Conrad (1924) and Albert Einstein (1933) earned him the reputation of the most popular portrait sculptor of his day. More than 80 sculptures will be included in the show as well as examples of African, Pacific, Egyptian and American carvings from the Artists' own remarkable collection.

OPEN SESAME

Open Shows are all the rage and ideal opportunities for artists to be seen and perhaps even win a prize. This summer Stills had their first Photographic Open Show during Edinburgh's Spring Fling Week. The best known in Scotland, the Smith Biennial, opens on 17 Sept. and runs to 18 October. With prize money of £6,000 and invited selectors, critic, Sarah Kent, curator, Keith Hartly and artist, Rose Garrard, the number one painting, sculpture, photograph etc. (any medium can be entered) will be anticipated with interest.

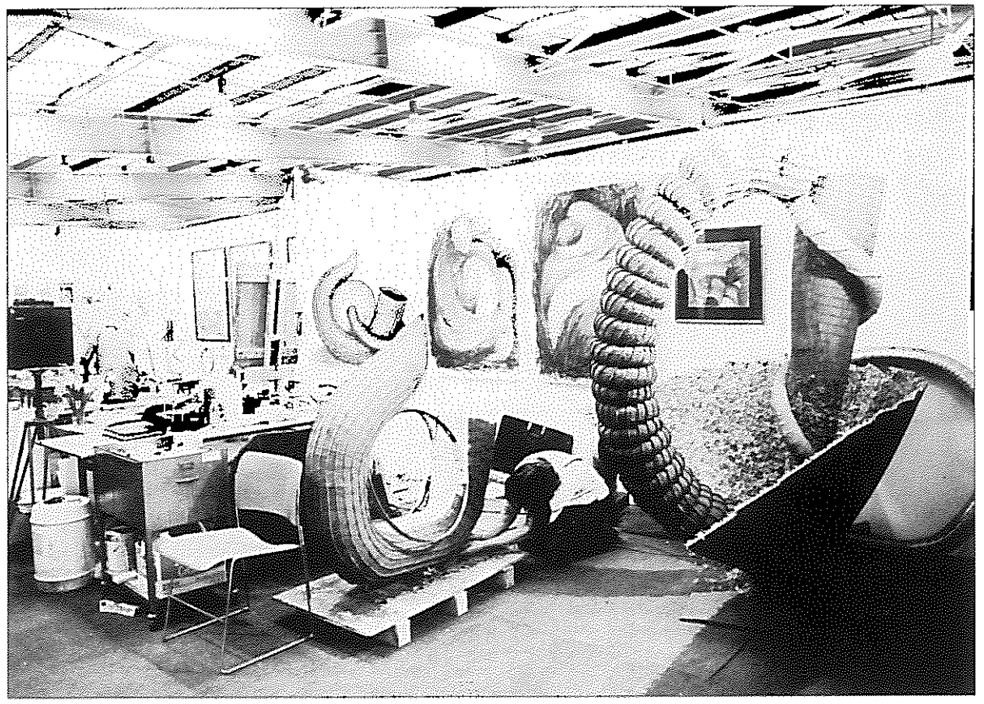
After nearly four years absence, the Scottish Print Open show returns to begin its tour of the Scottish Print Studios, in Glasgow. John McKechnie, General Manager of the Glasgow Print Studio, promises it to be the best yet. He's expecting such a large number of entrants that ideas for satellite shows are already percolating.

Their selection panel too is impressive. Keith Hartley from the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art appears again, this time joined by Rosemary Mile from V & A, London, William Packer, critic and John Houston, artist and teacher at Edinburgh College of Art. The exhibition opens on 5 October running to 28 October and then moves on to the Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop, the Seagate Gallery, Dundee and Peacock/Artspace in Aberdeen. Contact each venue for further details.

CLASSICAL REFLECTIONS

What is being dubbed the *Edinburgh International* is explained in the subtitle *Classical Themes in Contemporary Art*. Hot on the heels of the *Vigorous Imagination* at the Gallery of Modern Art which during the Festival looks at recent work by seventeen Scottish artists, organised by the Scottish Arts Council and booked into the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, This major event casts the net wider into Europe and America, catching up those artists who look back from the eighties to classical traditions in their art.

Douglas Hall, Chairman of the Selection Committee says, 'This is the first time Scotland has produced a significant international exhibition of contemporary art on this scale.' Artists invited



Kirsty McGhie working at the Ideal Homes Exhibition, 1986

to participate include Tony Cragg (British, sculpture), Rebecca Horn (German, sculpture), Sol Le Witt (USA, installation), Pisteletto (Italian, sculpture), Gerard Garouste (French, painting), Ian Hamilton Finlay (British, sculpture), Cy Twombly (USA, painting).

A satellite exhibition, also organised by the Scottish Arts Council, comprising works on paper by a number of the same artists, will tour galleries throughout Scotland. The first showing will open at Peacock/Artspace, Aberdeen from November 28th to December 23rd. The main exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy will open on 19th December (until 14th February 1988).

ARTISTS ON SITE

Work completed on the Scottish Arts Council's *Artists in Industry* scheme will have its only full showing at the Seagate Gallery in Dundee from 3-27 October.

Earlier this year five artists were selected to work for three months with participating industries.

Martin Raynor, ex-journalist and now sculptor after training at Duncan of Jordanstone, Dundee was seconded to Atholl Estates - the lands centred on Blair Castle are involved today in tourism, farming, game and forestry. Peter Standen, painter and printmaker (the only non-sculptor taking part) found himself at Ferranti's among the microwave components, lasers and power tubes. Highland Park Distilleries in Orkney blended their traditional processes with the traditional skills of Frances Pelly who recently showed sculpture and drawings at the Crawford Centre, St Andrews.

Kirsty McGhie, a 1985 Glasgow School of Art graduate, temporarily moved from her sculpture studio in Edinburgh to Kirkintilloch and John McGavigan & Co. Ltd, who have been investing in Scotland's micro-electronic future. Finally, Lyndsay Howieson, trained at Edinburgh, has been working at Tube Developments (Glasgow) Ltd, a supplier to oil rigs and platforms and, more controversially, to the Ministry of Defence.

This is the first scheme of its kind in Scotland. Plans for 1988 are already underway and placements for 1989 are full.

A FIRST FOR FILM

The first international festival of art films is to take place at the Pompidou Centre in Paris from 12-19 October. How such film is categorised is just one of the questions which will be raised during the course of the week.

In order to set a scene, films made between 1930 and 1960 will be shown, giving the historical perspective of art in and as film. Two other sections take the form of competitions for which prizes of 30 000 and 15 000 francs will be awarded by a judging panel of international movie professionals.

35mm and 16mm films made between 1980-87 have been submitted for selection. *The Studios* section of the festival is devoted to films which reveal the artist at work in his own place. *Confrontations* is open to artists who use cinematography as a medium.

Closing dates for submission to this year's festival are now passed, but the second festival is already being planned for Oct. 1989 which gives prospective entrants plenty of time.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL PREVIEW

BY ALICE BAIN

June Redfern at the Mercury Gallery

The Gallery of Modern Art has been flexing its Scottish muscle for the past few festivals. Peploe, master colourist, filled the top floor in 1985. John Bellany, influential figurative painter of recent times was given top billing last year. This summer, the 'Vigorous Imagination: New Scottish Art' takes the plunge by being the first group showing of Scottish contemporary art in the 41 year history of the Official Festival.

Two years ago Phil Braham and Ian Hughes, two of the seventeen artists selected to show, chained their paintings to the pillars of the establishment - the Royal Scottish Academy. Attention was grabbed in the right places and they got what they wanted - an opportunity for young artists to show their stuff on home ground. As a prelude to this year's finale, the 'Artists at Work' project based last year at Edinburgh College of Art, offered a public chance to watch painters and sculptors create.

Clare Henry, art critic for the Glasgow Herald has been involved since Frank Dunlop set the ball rolling on both projects two years ago and along with Keith Hartley, Assistant Keeper of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Henry Meyric-Hughes, Director of Fine Art at the British Council has made the selection for 'Vigorous Imagination'. Her enthusiasm for the artists and art education of this country has been much quoted and as well as serious intention, promises 'a lot of fun' from the exhibition which looks at these young artists.

David Mach, builder of last summer's 10,000 tyre parthenon in Princes Street Gardens will be bringing an 8 ton avalanche of magazines, twigs and pieces of art to the gallery. Somewhere amongst the flotsam, Van Gogh's sunflowers will be gleaming, bright as gold. Ron O'Donnell fills the little-used gymnasium space with the North/South divide, an installation particularly pertinent since the June general election. Kate Whiteford was wanting to cover the floor of her tomb-like installation with charcoal dust for visitors to walk about in, but practicalities prevailed. And Keith McIntyre continues the development of a performance piece inspired by the Borders town of Moffat which will be shown in the third week. Dancers, a ballad singer and 300 umbrellas were just part of his sell-out shows during Glasgow's Mayfest this year.

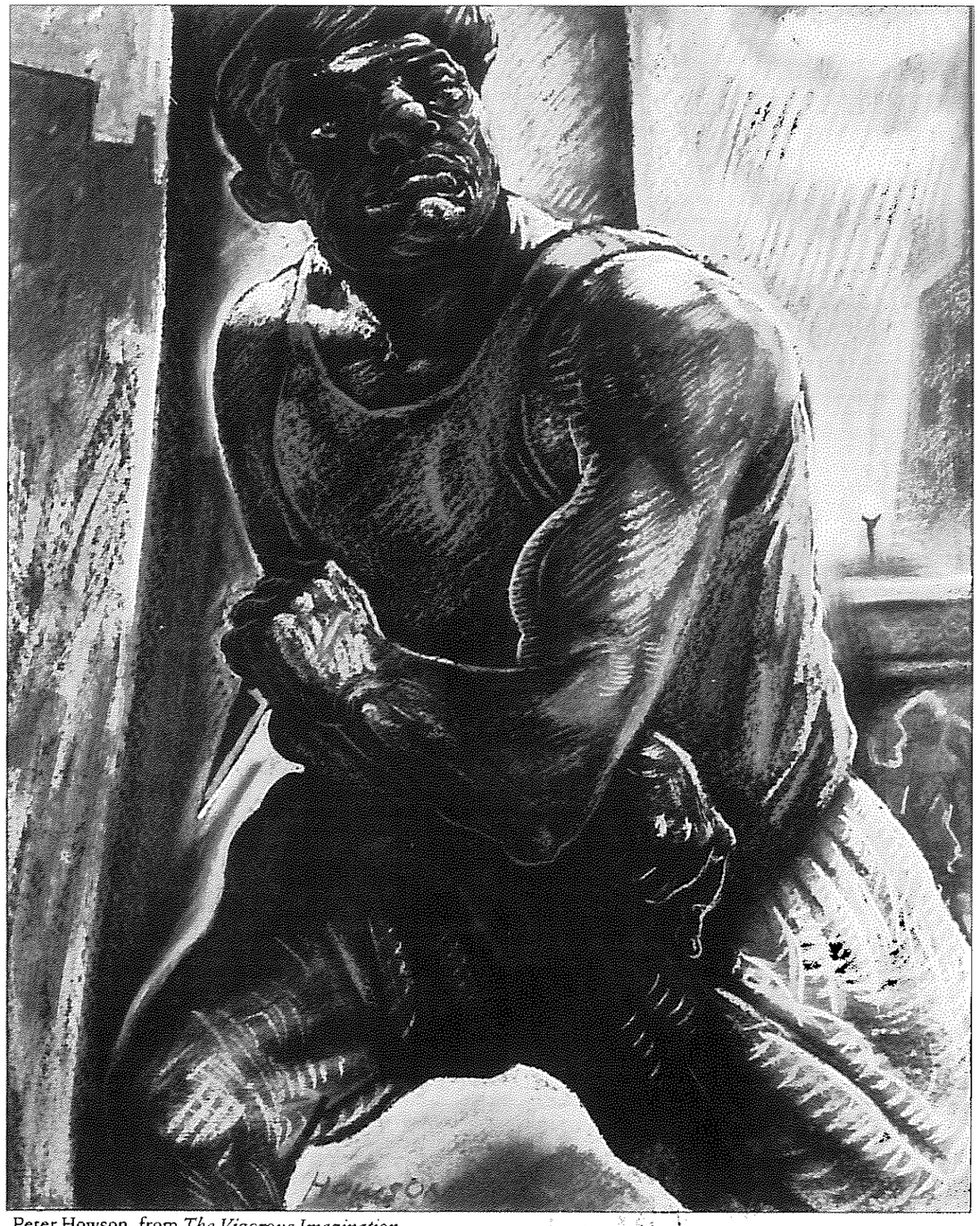
Steven Campbell and Adrian Wiszniewski, two of the best known 'Glasgow Pups' who went west to America soon after graduating, will be taking part. Peter Howson, Sam Ainsley (whose specially commissioned banner will hang between the pillars outside) Gwen Hardie, Calum Colvin, Ken Currie, Mario Rossi, Joseph Urie, June Redfern and Stephen Conroy ('87 graduate of Glasgow School of Art) complete the list. All eyes will be on this show.

While the Scots join the Official Festival at Belford Road, the venue which was picketted by those two artists is given over to the internationals. The Saatchi's are moving in to the Royal Scottish Academy with some of their big treasures. Begun in 1970, their collection of 20th century art is now one of the finest in Europe and Warhol, Auerbach and Kieffer number among the heavyweights who will be appearing under the banner of this privately owned advertising empire.

The Fruitmarket goes solo with David Salle, an American painter of the eighties. Using vocabulary drawn from comics, the movies and modern living, he presents a narrative very different from painters on this side of the Atlantic.

Richard Demarco this year celebrates his 21st anniversary as indefatigable promoter of the arts in Scotland. Still fighting strong to raise funds to develop the beautiful Blackfriar's premises he moved into one year ago, he offers a programme no less ambitious than ever.

A great friend of the late Joseph Beuys, Demarco will be showing work by the German artist which has never been seen before. Multidisciplined as ever, the gallery will also be mounting performances by the Tatoo Company from Sarajevo, Yugoslavia and a Beckett premiere directed by Tim Piggot Smith.

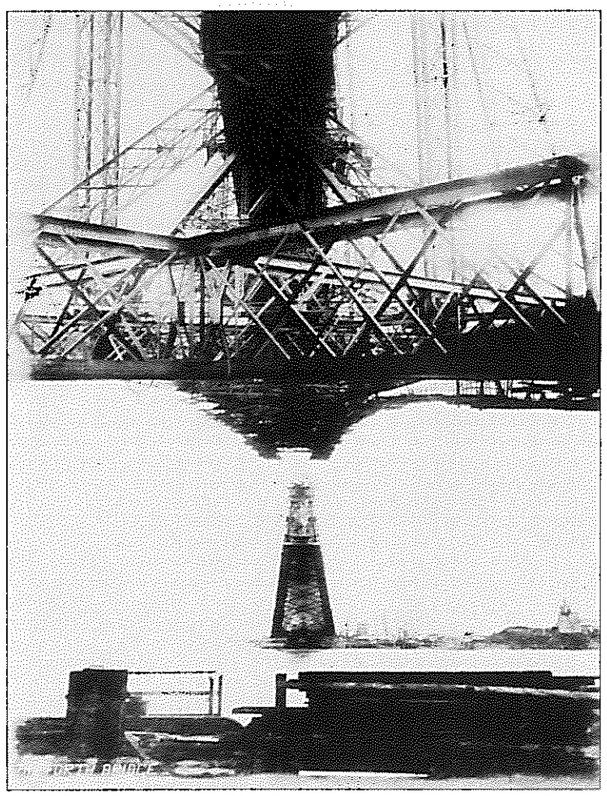


Peter Howson, from *The Vigorous Imagination*

With several rooms under refurbishment, the National Gallery's Festival exhibition has a low-key character. The collection of 125 French drawings from Stockholm's National Museum includes names like Watteau, Boucher, Chardin but will inevitably be understudy to the sheer size of the contemporary greats at the Academy on Princes Street.

In other major venues, this Festival's international handshake extends to the visual arts of Russia. 'Tbliski to Tashkent - Decorative Arts' at the Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street and 'Miniature Masterpieces - Laquerwork from Russia' are the kind of official shows you might expect to find.

But at the Portrait Gallery, Queen Street and 369 Gallery, Cowgate two very different exhibitions give more insight to the character of the U.S.S.R.



Anna Birshstein, at the 369 Gallery
Evelyn Carey, at the Talbot Rice Gallery

William Carrick moved to Russia in 1827 as a child and after a training in the arts, opened one of the first photographic studios in St. Petersburg. His portraits of peasants in town and country, show the working life of 19th century Russia with a frankness which is admired in his adopted country to this day.

Andrew Brown, Director of 369 Gallery, visited Russia six times to select his Festival exhibition. In the first Festival showing of contemporary art from that country, three artists will be featured with a small selection of views of Moscow.

Back to Scotland and the Fringe. The Scottish Gallery shows vivid painting by Alberto Morrocco, retired Head of Painting at Duncan of Jordanstone College, Dundee and the Mercury brings June Redfern a Scottish painter of great strength, up from London.

At the Pleasance, Sharon Lancer has chosen Scottish artists for an exhibition of 'Collectable Art', while the Collective, an artists run gallery takes their Annual Members Show to new premises, still in the High Street but now at number 166.

Another gallery on the move is the Prescote. From this August, Ann Hartree will be operating from her home at 5 Northumberland Street, where she will show visual and applied arts in a domestic setting. For openers, she has organised an exhibition of new work by the sculptor/photographer Andy Goldsworthy. Her old premises in the High Street will be occupied during the Festival by the Warwick Arts Trust with an exhibition of British abstract expressionist painting.

On the fringe there are an increasing number of inventive venues. There's contemporary art in a wine shop. At the Wine Emporium, Devon Place, you can sample both wine and art on the premises seven days a week. As well as 300 works by Scottish artists on display (there will be an auction of them all at the end of the Festival), Joe Keogh, a young Glasgow sculptor will be showing work in cardboard and copper.

The Scottish Council Development and Industry, tucked away in Chester Street has an exhibition of photographs of Orkney by Michael Hockney which describe the island's use of natural resources and at Edinburgh Zoo, also on a conservationist theme, photographs by Malcolm Younger document the disappearing forests of Madagascar. More photographs at the Italian Institute by Robert Bossaglia put Rome in surreal camouflage while the newly refurbished Gateway Exchange Gallery goes 'Flash, Bang Wallop' with the work of young Scottish photographers.

New faces continue to come to the Festival. Kate Bernstein and Anna Oliver, two London graduates show sculpture and drawing at Greyfriars Kirkhouse, Candlemaker Row. And regular ones return - Edith Simon moves into Chambers Street again with her unique paper cut pictures.

Finally, in this festival peppered with exhibitions of art by Scots, there is an exhibition which looks at the character and detail of Scotland itself. For the first time, Fay Godwin's photographs of Scottish landscapes taken over the past ten years have been collected together by Stills Gallery, High Street.

At the last count there were 40 exhibitions on the fringe and 14 in the Official Festival. The visual arts have become an important part of this August cultural get-together.

DOMINICO TIEPOLO
THE NEW WORLD
BY TIMOTHY HYMAN

On the edge of a great capital city, that had once controlled an empire but was now slipping unmistakably into economic and political decay, an elderly painter covered the walls of his own villa with poignant images of a stranded society. Those frescoed rooms, together with the album of 104 drawings 'for the children', are the testament of the solitary Domenico Tiepolo, working in semi-retirement in his sixties and seventies, just in the years when the thousand-year Republic of Venice was sinking out of history. In Domenico's strange late flowering, the dilemma of many intellectuals and artists in the face of a new age seems unexpectedly transmuted, into a poetic conjuring of life-as-dream.

Last year the *Punchinello Drawings* were published here in a magnificent edition* but there is still no overall monograph in English; and Domenico's masterpiece *The New World*, remains surprisingly little reproduced. English artists from Burra to Hockney to Neil Jeffries have drawn from Domenico, but these 'private' works, invisible throughout the nineteenth century, have yet to find their public.

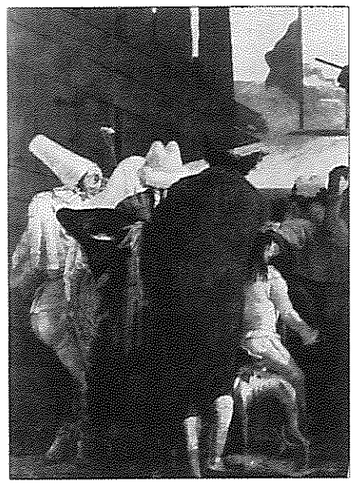
His reputation has suffered most by the failure to distinguish Domenico from his father, Giambattista; to recognise the entirely independent personality that develops after 1790. But for anyone coming to Domenico's art for the first time, so much bears an odd resemblance also to the greatest painter of his day - to Goya; and beside the tragic drama of Goya, how can Domenico's not appear a puppet-booth, a side show, a curtain-raiser? Yet I want to suggest that Domenico's Venice may be nearer to us than Goya's Spain; that the serio-comic perspective proposed in Domenico's later work, his sense of the stranded absurdity of the shabby-genteel, may be exactly the right one for the would-be Painter of Modern Life in late 20th century London; increasingly seedy and forlorn, but not tragic - or not yet tragic.

THE NEW WORLD, 1791
'You have shown me a strange image, and these are strange prisoners.'
'Like ourselves,' I replied
Plato: *The Republic*, Book VII

Two years before Goya rose from his sickbed to paint *The Burial of the* Sardine, Domenico Tiepolo created his own vision of a society collapsing into carnival. Across a 20 foot wall he strung a row of nearly life-size figures, all of them seen from the back; broken only by two portrait profiles, the young Domenico himself peering through an eyeglass, and his beloved father Giambattista, already more than twenty years dead. What these figures are actually *doing* is not immediately at all clear (as unclear as, say, Cezanne's watchful bathers). Brought together in a carnival limbo, where periwigged fops are plonked beside huge pantomime-dames, or get to rub shoulders even with Punchinello himself (who brandishes his favourite potato gnocchi at the end of his fork) a representative sample of mankind seems forever stranded. Only the dark commanding figure who mounts the stool with his long pole suggests there may be more purpose to this gathering, than the aimless Sunday leisure of that other infinitely remote and hieratic crowd-scene that takes place almost a century later on the Island of the Grande Jatte - Seurat's 'making the moderns move about in friezes.'

Domenico had first formulated *The New World* in 1775 when he was thirty, as a small square vignette in the Villa Valmorana above Vicenza. Here the action is instantly clear; the cupola'd building behind the figures turns out to be a huge peepshow, a 'cosmorama', and the tall figure on the stool, its showman, his pole a pointer. Figures crowd in to gaze at the porthole windows; several gross and greedy faces look out at us; on the left, a Hogarthian basket man smokes his clay pipe.

34 years later, all that bustle is surpressed; the composition lengthened, vastly enlarged in scale yet simplified; the figures presented in flattened silhouette. The total effect becomes strangely naive and 'primitive' in its monumentality. This string of figures suggests, not the sophisticated frieze compositions of contemporary neo-classicism so much as the narrative



The New World, Details, 1791

strip of trecento and quattrocento fresco. *The New World* seems linked to all those earlier processions - Piero's High Priests, Mantegna's *Triumph*, Carpaccio's Ambassadors - whose subject is less a particular episode or narrative, than the sense of life itself as a procession.

Were it not for the solid warmth of its monumental figures, this final enigmatic New World might seem an overscaled conceit, a barrier of backs placed between ourselves and meaning. To me it stands as a summation of Domenico's vision, and a wonderfully final statement of an attitude to life.

The New World was painted six years before the Republic fell. Domenico had known the old world of the European courts, where he had accompanied his father - three years in Wurzburg, eight in Madrid; in due course he had inherited his father's mantle, became President of the Venetian Academy. But now, in retirement, he saw that world crumbling; the new ideology of the Enlightenment everywhere victorious, the Revolution already lapping at Venice's foundations.

One possible interpretation of *The New World* might relate it to that image by which Socrates in *The Republic* promises to show us 'to what extent mankind is enlightened or unenlightened.' Would Domenico Tiepolo be familiar with Plato's haunting myth of the cave, where the unenlightened are perpetual prisoners, immobilised, duped into staring at a wall of shadows, while puppeteers behind them manipulate the shadow play?

To me, Plato's image does clarify the way Domenico's composition involves the spectator in a kind of complicity; the wonderful stroke of irony by which he places not only himself and his father, but us as well, among the audience on the stranded shore; forced to join 'unenlightened' mankind, forever duped by the showman's enchantment, both curious and sceptical towards his New World.

BETWEEN THE SUBLIME AND THE RATIONAL

Every element in Domenico Tiepolo's art is inherited, but the elements are so reassembled that they create a profoundly original voice. He was not only son to Giambattista, but nephew to Francesco Guardi; in the culture of the 18th century Venice, the sublimity of Giambattista's ceilings and Piazzetta's altarpieces was balanced by the new observational genres - Canaletto, Piranesi, the Guardis, Longhi - and each of these had at some time included within their work those dimensions of festival, carnival, showman and mask which became Domenico's special territory. At 23, working beside his father at Wurzburg, Domenico learnt to unfold an entire universe out of cloud-shapes; but in his final microcosm he is down in the thick of the crowd, the low horizon almost blotted out by looming figures.

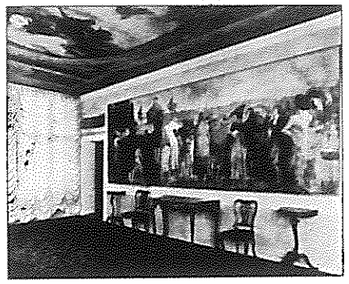
Domenico never ceased to revere his father; he wanted he said, to be 'una vera copia', a true copy. He learnt to draw on his father's pattern so thouroughly that many sheets are still disputed. Essentially the Tiepolo's is a drawing-art, and fresco - a kind of drawing with colour - their ideal form. After 1780 Domenico seems to have confined himself to wash-drawings and fresco, abandoning easel painting entirely.

What Domenico accepts from his father's hands is chiefly a *style*; whose headlong weightless invention of fluttering, broken forms resembles a kind of fast talking, that never allows the spectator time to question the implausability of the fantasy world unfolded. Yet there was it seems a kind of *residue* which could not be incorporated within the grand style; hence Giambattista's freshly observed landscape drawings; his 'Capricci' (which often parody his own grand compositions); and, centrally for Domenico, the caricatures, of which he inherited at least three volumes. Many of the recurrent figures in Domenico's late work - for instance, the 'pantomime-dame' who turns up in *The New World* and elsewhere - are permutated from one or other of his father's sheets. But whereas in Giambattista those caricatured are single monsters, isolated deformities, in Domenico's late work thay are grouped together to form whole societies.

Giambattista's great style is partly an attenuation of the cloud-paradise of counter-reformation Baroque; but it is usually a good deal less in earnest (and that is why he is most convincing in secular works, such as the Wurzburg ceiling, where he can accomodate the mock-visionary and self-parodying elements that are always latent in the style). By the 1760s when father and son were in Madrid, this style was already under siege. Working also for the Spanish Court was Mengs, a founder of neo-classicism, allied to Winckelmann. According to one old legend, it was the 'Mengs Faction' who poisoned Giambattista in Madrid. But certainly when Domenico returned alone in 1771, he found a changed world, where his father's great style seemed more and more redundant.

The language of Giambattista had been acceptable to much of Europe; as public art it served and glorified the hegemony of the day. But the rules were changing. The artists of Domenico's generation found themselves

caught between the discredited rhetoric of the old sublime, and what may well have seemed to them an equally false new rhetoric, the revived pure Roman of the revolutionary castes, those republican citizens already preparing for Empire. The achievement of Domenico was to find, in late life, a personal style distinct from both the current forms of official art.



The New World, 1791

A CARNIVAL SENSE OF THE WORLD

'The Carnival sense of the world, permeating these serio-comic genres from top to bottom, determines their basic features, and places image and word in them in a special relationship to reality....There is a weakening of its one-sided rhetorical seriousness, its rationality, its singular meaning, its dogmatism....Thus even in our time those genres that have a connection, however remote, within the tradition of the serio-comical preserve in themselves the carnivalistic leaven or ferment....The sensitive ear will always catch even the most distant echoes of a carnival sense of the world...'
M. Bakhtin, 1929

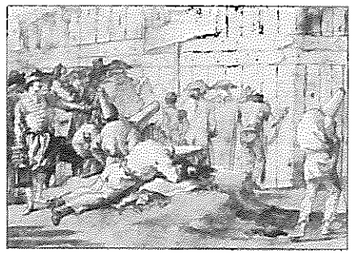
In the early 1790's Domenico embarked on a series of large album drawings in wash and ink which together add up to a picture of contemporary life as wasted by the polite classes. Smug family groups simper in a garden; milliners and dressmakers are visited; we glimpse the round of coffee-house, dinner-party, cards; and the streets also are full of distractions - acrobats, charlatans, Punch and Judy booths....What puts these scenes in quite a different category from his earlier, often insipid treatment of genre, is their characterisation of so many of the figures as ridiculous. This new satirical dimension may partly result from the import into Venice of English caricature - not only Hogarth, but Gillray also. For the art-world of the late 18th century, increasingly bound by aesthetic convention, this rude but vigorous imagery had an enlivening function, comparable to the infusion of 'pop' in the climate of 1960's formalism.

From this point on, what is so admirable in Domenico - and what makes him such a suggestive exemplar for a contemporary chronicler - is the very special balance he maintains between observation, a comic or caricatural viewpoint, and something harder to define, a dreamlike sense of life passing though we ourselves are still. This mood is generated partly by Domenico's evanescent effects of light, his marvellous control of tone; but mostly, by his grouping. We see his people mostly from the back; they, like us, are isolated voyeurs, not participants. It is their isolation, that redeems their ugliness and absurdity; Gillray's manic indignation would have condemned them, but Domenico allows them some of the glamour of a lost cause.

At the same time Domenico was drawing more deeply on the popular traditions present in Venetian streetlife - the richest in Europe; on the all-pervading mask, with its tendency to confuse or subvert social differences; on the showmen and street-performers; on the carnival itself; and on the imagery of the Commedia Dell'Arte, whose stock-types and situations were in themselves a kind of transmutation of humdrum streetscene into the realm of the mythical.

The Commedia claimed a classical origin, but was often identified with the Alps, with Bergamo. (When Bottom says 'we shall dance a Bergamask' at the end of his performance of 'very tragical mirth', he means a farcical intermezzo on Commedia Dell'Arte lines; just as Schoenberg's moonstruck Pierrot is floating 'Nach Bergamo'). The troupes could be knockabout or courtly, or both at once; they always retained an element of anarchic fantasy, of 'The World Turned Upside Down'. The genre peaked in the 1650's; when Watteau painted Gilles it was already on the wane; by the 1790's, the Commedia was under active condemnation in Venice, chiefly from pro-French rationalist intellectuals. Mariuz quotes the dramatist Antonio Piazza, writing in 1797 (the year Domenico frescoed his punchinello-room):
'these inane and wretched improvised comedies, which stupefy the ignorant audience without enlightening or correcting them, should be outlawed.'

Writing in the late 1920's, on the eve of the great purges, the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin developed his ideology of carnival, an exploration of the 'serio-comic' elements in Rabelais and Dostoevsky. Bakhtin outlines a literary tradition in the satires of Menippus, and other Greek and Latin writers. But he also shows how all such 'carnival' art holds a possibility of speaking a deviant truth in societies where lies prevail. In approaching the Punchinello theme that dominates Domenico's final decade, I have found Bakhtin's perspective helpful. But a further question seems begged. Where in contemporary Britain - of all nations the most purged of the 'carnival sense of the world' - is an authentic tradition of this kind still to be found?



Punchinello Drawings, 1797-1801

PUNCHINELLO

'A very important characteristic of the Menippea is the organic combination within it of the free fantastic, the symbolic, at times even a mystical - religious element, with an extreme and crude slum-naturalism. *The adventures of truth on earth take place on the high road, in brothels, in the dens of thieves, in taverns, market places, prisons, in the erotic orgies of secret cults, and so forth. The idea here fears no slum, is not afraid of any of life's filth.'*
Bakhtin.

The Fresco of *The New World* is only one part of the extensive decorative scheme Domenico created over about 25 years throughout the Tiepolo Villa near Mestre (and now transferred to the top floor rooms of Ca' Rezzonico, looking out onto the Grand Canal). The earlier decorations are mostly grisailles: they include a room of small Satyrs who parody some of the grand currency of classical art; and a room of small Punchinellos, who parody the Satyrs, thus making their lineage and function clear. Generally, these earlier Frescoes are playful; above a doorway, Domenico creates a Macaw parrot in breathtaking trompe l'oeil, shadow and all. But from the 1790s, the scale changes, and the room of genre compositions, such as *The Evening Walk*, has life size figures. *The New World* itself is placed at waist height, above a row of chairs: it becomes a kind of parade or entrance screen, before we pass through the door on the right, to find ourselves in the last and most complete of all these frescoed rooms, given over entirely to Punchinello.

As George Knox has shown*, Domenico's father made most of his Punchinello drawings in connection with the Festival of Potato Gnocchi that took place on the last Friday of Carnival in Verona. (The long conical hat is in fact a pot for cooking that indigestible delicacy.) The traditional Punchinello of the Commedia Dell'Arte was an exceptionally fluid and undefined character (only occasionally resembling out own brutal 'Mr Punch', the Anarch who batters baby, wife and policeman); he could therefore be enlisted by Domenico as Everyman. This frescoed room, and the drawings which follow, do not so much present the *Life of Punchinello*, as impose his mask on the earlier genre; mankind is remade in Punchinello's image.

In entering the world of the mask we lose some of the timeliness of modern dress, but gain the freedom of fantasy. And if Punchinello helped to release Domenico's invention, his presence was also insurance against on the new doctrine of Egalite. But Punchinello's pointed hat carries for silhouette, gives pungency and a disturbing intensity to every image. The creamy-white impasto Domenico had used for Camaldolese saints in Verona, now comes in useful for Punchinello's gleaming linen pyjamas: silhouetted against the excited crowd in the hustings, as tumblers burst upon the stage; or against the sky, as Punchinellos swing on the ceiling. This looming silhouette sets out on the journey of life in the alps ('Nach Bergamo') among fir trees, carrying what at first seems a roll of bedding, but is perhaps instead a chamber pot. While the foreground figure sleeps uncomfortably, his belt undone - indigestion? - another points wearily down the mountain path.

A world made up only of Punchinellos is a kind of New World. Mariuz suggests Domenico's repetition of the mask may carry an implicit satire on the new doctrine of Egalite. But Punchinello's pointed hat carries for us also a strange shadow image; it becomes the comic counterpart to the tragic dunce cap of the Inquisition in Goya's Spain. How and when Domenico received a copy of the *Caprichos* (published in 1799, but soon withdrawn) remains an enigma. After his return to Venice, Domenico may have retained some contact with Madrid, likely enough after eight years there. Certainly the Goya album was in his library at his death in 1804. Already, Goya's mythology of the masked Mayos and Mayas had been another carnival world; and Goya manifested a similar impatience with the high seriousness of neo-classicism, keeping company with the 'Acafilos', lovers of ugliness. Whatever their contact, or lack of it in Madrid (Goya was 22 in 1769, Domenico 20 years older) their later lives moved on parallel tracks; both found themselves fully in middle-age, only when their public role failed; and their art climaxed on their own walls, or in a graphic series whose fame was posthumous. As the comic or the tragic mask, Domenico and Goya offer us two alternative prisms, through which to experience their era.

THE PASSING SHOW

I began writing, unaware that Domenico's *Punchinello Drawings* were about to be published. The whole album, broken up in the 1920s, is now reunited in an ideal format; the plates match all the nervous subtlety of Domenico's reddish washes. Who were they for? The title page defines them as 'Divertimenti per li regazzi', Diversions for the children; but by 1797 Domenico had none of his own surviving. After years frescoing his own walls, it seems likely he was, here again, creating to please himself.

The series is a recapitulation of all the themes of a lifetime, all mixed up together. Punchinello, hatched from a turkey's egg, is nevertheless brought up much like other little boys. As an adult he suffers disgrace and imprisonment, is released with the Isola San Giorgio in the background; but the vehicles of his exotic travels include Dromedary, Eagle and Centaur. Eventually the album becomes a kind of compendium, bringing Punchinello in contact with every conceivable situation, every species - peacock, cattle, elephant, tiger, ostrich; a true Book of Life.

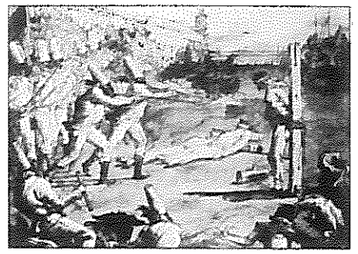
The constant invention is matched by a constant repetition. His use and reuse of stock figures and stage props - the rotting wooden palisades for example - brings Domenico close to more recent archetypal worlds, to Guston or the late De Chirico. In the course of the album Punchinello will be flogged (his bare bottom a pale focus in the crowd), shot by firing squad, and publicly hung; but the executioners are also Punchinellos, and so are the onlookers. Surviving two bad ends, Punchinello grows old, infirm, sick, dies and is burried; only to resurrect as the skeletal apparition of the finale.

The episodic narrative and tonal imagery creates a medium that resembles cinema (the heir to Plato's shadow play) and particularly, the Italian cinema of the sixties, when neo-realism gives way to the onslaught of the archetypal. In No.27 two groups of Punchinello's surround a giant spider crab, stranded on dry land. Their disposition as each awkward group bends inward, marvellously echoes the articulation of the crab's own claws. The resonance here is strikingly similar to the enigmatic encounter that ends *La Dolce Vita*, where the futile protagonists cluster around a stranded sea-monster.

Like Fellini, Domenico is most himself when he evokes life as a melancholy spectacle, a passing show, and for both, fairground and circus are inevirable metaphors. No. 28 is a retelling of *The New World*, but the row of spectators are now glued to the cracks of a circus palisade, while Punchinellos sleep or gossip on a dunghill; another pisses. The palisade appears again in the great image of the trapeze (No. 31): Punchinello hurtling through space, towards the single huge bulk of the 'pantomime-dame', who rules the crowd. And in *The Spring Shower*, (No. 68), perhaps the most poetic of all these images, Domenico dispenses at last with any subject for his figures' watchfulness. A motley group, strolling abreast along an empty road (including a Punchinello, but also a man in a white coat, much like a cricket umpire) have been overtaken by rain. All are seen from the back. Some of them hold up umbrellas, but the general sense is of an uncanny helpless stillness, the white figures having entered a zone altogether outside time. In cinema this would be a very long take.

Images such as *The Spring Shower* and *The New World* are as much archetypes of their age as Fuseli's *Nightmare*, Goya's *Third of May*, Blake's *Dante*, and no less prophetic. As Mariuz says, Punchinello's mask ends by being more authentic, more human, than Giambattista's elegant beauties; perhaps nearer to us than David's noble Romans also.

I wrote on Domenico partly to come to terms with my overwhelming response when I first encountered his art at Ca' Rezzonico two years ago. Why did I feel so close to him? In the hours I spent drawing in front of *The New World*, many visitors from many nations passed by unmoved. However much Domenico mingles in the crowd, his art remains elusive and problematic. Only the special affinities between out time and his, the issue of depicting a futile world you know you're part of, bring us together in a fatal complicity.



Punchinello Drawings, 1797-180l

Fellini Still
White Figures Walking Across the Plain

NOTES

* *Domenico Tiepolo: The Punchinello Drawings* by Adelheid Gealt. (British Museum Publications, £50). The only large-scale monograph on Domenico is in Italian, by Adriano Mariuz, but long out of print. But Mariuz has contributed a penetrating essay on Domenico to *Masterpieces of Eighteenth Century Venitian Drawing*, (Thames and Hudson, 1983, £9.95). James Byam Shaw's *The Drawings of Domenico Tiepolo* (Faber, 1957) has useful reproductions. George Knox has written on Giambattista's Punchinello drawings in *Studi in Onore di M. Murano, 1984.*

* The central figure of the showman was recently used as a Venice Film Festival poster. Italian directors have been aware of Plato's cave as a myth of cinema; see for instance Bertolucci's discussion in *The Conformist.*

ART EDUCATION BEYOND THE WALLS

PUBLIC ART EDUCATION

BY MALCOLM MILES

There is a wall in Wigan which was once graced by banana trees, pink and blue sky, and lovers out of Gauguin: the land of the Bounty eaters, transposed from advertising and art history into a blackened street. It was very nice. The wall began to crack and the first fracture in the dream's brittle surface exposed the contradiction of mural and site. It did not identify real environment problems. It evaded them.

Many murals in the 1970s were cosmetic. Some were seen as cheap answers to urban blight, and murals became identified with slums. In London they were also heavy in ideology. Glasgow's gable ends pioneered the link between murals and conservation, and explored more sympathetic approaches than putting very big gallery paintings in the street. Most of the gable ends are now deteriorating, either due to age, or lack of foresight in such areas as 'who cuts the grass?'

Current directions in public art follow a more integrated approach. Artists, craftspeople, designers, planners and architects can work together, as they do in the Dundee Public Art Project (which grew out of the Blackness Project). As the potential for spending 1% of the budget for new public buildings on art is explored (some local authorities have adopted this policy already), integration and expertise will be essential. Then the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. All this means that public art is the major growth area for art graduate employment. Few colleges are doing anything at all about it. If the 1% scheme was national policy tomorrow, the result would be chaos due to lack of suitable education in the field.

There is a lot to be learnt from the past decade of expansion in public art. For example, that lack of consultation and genuine relation of art to site leads to vandalism. William Turnbull is quoted as saying 'the problem of public sculpture is with the public - not with sculpture'. This epitomises the arrogance and ignorance which late modernist art has proclaimed. The result has been a lack of good public art and empty galleries (remember all those boring Hayward Annuals!) Art which turns its back on the audience has no place. As soon as it addresses an audience, it naturally extends into street and square.

To expose the problems of public art in the past decade, a more expansive and lively critical debate is needed. Compared with the gallery art, the magazines give a little coverage to public art. If we are to progress beyond cosmetic solutions, the critical edge is vital, and it can begin in art education. That, after all, is where the next generation of public artists are experimenting. Often they do so in very outdated ways. Most courses are too narrow to include public art. Most students dwell in the land of cloud-cuckoo!

The CNAA and the NAB have urged broader courses to evolve from or replace existing structures. They suggest closer relation to likely employment. In this context, public art has an evident role. It requires additional transferable (intellectual) skills, but these can be identified. The obstacle is the Romantic idea of art as secret.

Chatterton still haunts the studios, misunderstood, rejected and starved. Actually, he had VD. No-one needs a degree to be any of those. The idiot-boy's adolescent verse was not published because, when he was not forging medieval pastiche, it was drivel. A better model would be Wordsworth: England's most radical poet, who used ordinary language. Solitude he accepted, but no locking himself up in self-imposed isolation Maybe a few artists should take note.

The skills needed in public art can be gained, through student-centred learning in structured courses. Imagination is still the core, as for any creative work. But additional needs include: consultation and negotiation, presentation and articulation (visual and verbal), adaptability, working in a group, and working with designers and architects.

The national provision for courses including such skills is thin. There is a 2-year BTEC at Chelsea, and Art in Social Context at Dartington (BA Hons). In Scotland there is Glasgow's Environmental Art (BA Hons), and Duncan of Jordanstone's MA in Public Art. Northern Arts sponsors two places at Newcastle Polytechnic for an MA in Public Art, where there is a research project on art in the built environment. A few students on the part-time course at St. Martins have worked in public art, and the mixed degree

Discussing drawings for the 1987 Mosaic Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art

at Roehampton Institute includes mural design. The Royal College offers a very small number of places for a PhD in landscape sculpture (and students use the RCA as a mailing address while working away). Compared with the provision for traditional courses, this represents a lamentably small resource. Conversely, the prospects for employment in public art are much better. Prospects for would be art mega-stars are grim. At least Van Gogh had a nice brother to supply the paint he sometimes ate. Few unemployable art graduates will be able to afford cadmium sandwiches!

North of Hadrian's Wall the provision is higher: Glasgow and Dundee offer excellent models for courses in public art.

The course at Glasgow has been running for just two years, but there is a marvellous vitality in the studios (in an old school). Students develop ways of working in public places as part of their personal growth as artists, from the outset.

The first year (year 2 in the Scottish system) is structured: the first term looks at the personal context, the second at the cultural context and the third at the local context of the city of Glasgow. A public art project and a community art project take place in the middle year, alongside self-motivated studio work. Media range from fine art to photography and stained glass. Facilities are good, despite a low budget. Most work is, where it relates to real sites, taken to the design stage, not necessarily implemented. Projects in the final year are developed in consultation with the external examiner, and may sometimes be realised.

Glasgow is a good location for such a course. The Garden Festival offers opportunities for projects. In 1990 the city will be European City of Culture. A survey of suitable sites for public art is to be undertaken. The gable ends are almost a tourist attraction now, and there is the Easterhouse mosaic as a monument to sustained effort.

One example of real-site work by Glasgow students is at Phillips Electrical factory at Hamilton. In 1986, the company funded six students to produce a mural. Designs were shown and a choice made democratically by employees at all levels. The course in no way depends on such opportunities, but they give useful experience as well as cash.

The MA in public art at Dundee is a unique course in quality and sophistication. Students come from a variety of first degree courses, from embroidery to video to fine art. Two bursaries a year are reserved for English students The emphasis is on teamwork and adaptability.

The course is constructed from concurrent modules: number one deals with practical work (about 80% of the course), and begins with short projects to establish skills. The final term of the four-term course is devoted to a major project relating to a real site.

The course utilises other areas in the design school. For example, one short project involved working with architecture students. Areas of the city were taken as examples, and models constructed to present solutions. One student described the project as a bloodbath. No doubt both sides learnt, at least, more of the other's preconceptions. Architects need to become visually literate, if we are to avoid future decades of concrete nightmares, and artists need to be able to work to briefs and schedules.

Where students work on real sites there is careful supervision. The existence of the Blackness Project within a few minutes walk of the course is a major asset. Artists with experience in the project teach on the course. Blackness

Working in the Studio on the 1987 Mosaic Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art

was so successful, commercially as well as aesthetically, that it has been expanded into the Dundee Project. Students work in this through a group project. A mosaic has been completed in a housing development, and another is about to be made.

There are two other modules in the course: number two deals with theory and history. It emphasises public art and broad movements of the past century, with a critical interest in utopianism. This area is, however, seriously underfunded. Module three is taught by staff from the schools of architecture, social and communication studies, and food and accomodation management. It involves professional practice, business and legal studies, and elements of planning. It is exactly the kind of component called for by the CNAA in their 1986 paper on professional and business studies in art education

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Work by MA students can be seen in Dundee, for example in the Hillcrest Housing association's Upper Dens Works: a mill converted to flats. Three projects were implemented here, under very careful supervision, sensitive to the needs of student and client. Of the six graduates of 1986, five have already enjoyed significant success. Lesley Burr has been commissioned for a ceramic treatment of a swimming pool. David Frankland is working on a design for the approach to a local theatre. Carol Semple is producing murals for a shopping mall in Kirkcaldy. David Wilson has won a £7000 commission for work at the Discovery visitors centre in Dundee. John O' Reardon, having already had a local commission, has recently been appointed to a residency in Gravesend, Kent. This is funded by South East Arts as part of a policy to increase public art in their region; competition for the past was intense. This adds up to a very impressive track record, and the students graduated only in December of 1986. It proves beyond doubt the practical utility of the course and says much for its high intellectual quality.

Glasgow and Dundee show it can be done. There is an urgent need for more colleges to build broader courses which include, to varied degrees, public art. The arguments are equally pragmatic (employment-related) and idealistic (the quality of the environment). If we want an environment worth living in, we need artists suitably equipped to work in it. So we need courses to give them the skills and insights.

Glasgow's course sees the urban context as central to the personal development of its students. The course is one model of a broad programme of study based art. There is scope for other institutions to develop models adapted to their locality, urban or rural, or marine. It is to be hoped that they will consider this urgently, even if it means wholesale re-education of staff. The fantasy of 'artist as lonely frontiersman' or (failed) star does not come only from students. Oddly, the very tutors who are most conservative have often found that gallery outlets strangely elusive too!

One way to broaden a course is, as in Glasgow, to emphasise context (and hence ideas not materials). Another is to cross categories. Areas such as image and text (also developed at Glasgow), and ceramic sculpture, have potential public applications. At the same time, self-

The 1986 Mosaic

initiated studio work remains the research area which informs more overt and public practice.

At BA level, the need is for broader courses, rather than over-specialised or narrow courses. The place for highly specialist courses is at MA level. The number of courses and places here is pitifully inadequate. Many students on traditional post-graduate art courses merely evade the real world for a few years more. Instead of luxurious escapism we need courses which develop transferable skills for the wider arena, and stimulate a virile critical debate on art in a public context. Public art is a growth area. The audience in any major hospital (or library, or station....) is far greater than in most galleries, but should not be considered less deserving or perceptive. In place of clique-factories, we need courses which address the issues of our environment.

The question of placements and student commissions is difficult. Students need realistic experience, and, certainly at MA level, this entails working on real sites. On the other hand, some artists and agencies resent what they perceive as undercutting by students. Artists need to make a living and their fears are understandable.

The solution is in two things: the Dundee model, where there is a well-established public art scheme into which to integrate students under careful supervision; and the idea of apprenticeship, whereby a student would spend part of a course working with an established public art team (such as Street Artworks in Edinburgh or Greenwich Mural Workshops in London). They would learn by watching and helping in current projects. It is surprising that colleges have not explored such possibilities already.

What needs to be avoided at all costs is sending students out on their own, with inadequate briefs and supervision. Proper costing and consultation are also vital. The environment in most cities is so awful, there must be room for students as well as artists when the provision is handled as carefully as at Glasgow and Dundee.

Perhaps there is a further area for inquiry: how to strengthen the critical debate on public art. There is little yet published on the language and content of public art (applying the same methods of 'reading' a picture as used in art history). Are there alternatives to the styles of social(ist) realism, and the mix of illustration with modernism? Is there a possibility for a public art which celebrates the 'sharable'?

There is a wealth of local and oral history, there is a remnant of myth in our folk tales; can these elements form part of a renewal of public art?

We need to go beyond cosmetic murals, to integrated projects which give imagination and joy to our built environment. Beyond the walls of the city is the growth of rural public art, such as the New Milestones Project in Dorset, linked to a campaign to conserve and value the landscape. A sense of place and a sense of history can be imparted through public art in both urban and rural contexts.

A sense of self can also be shared and celebrated. When we are most deeply ourselves, shedding cosmetic identities, we are closest to everyone. We need courses which encourage artists to work in this area of the sharable.

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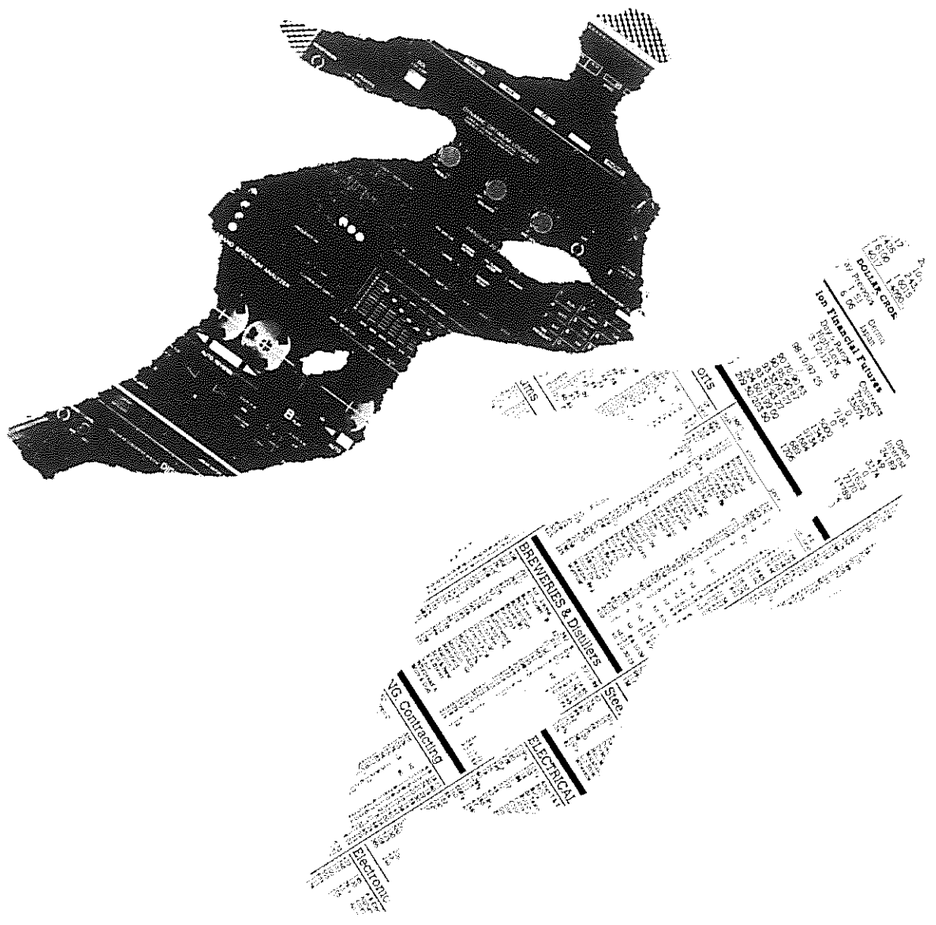

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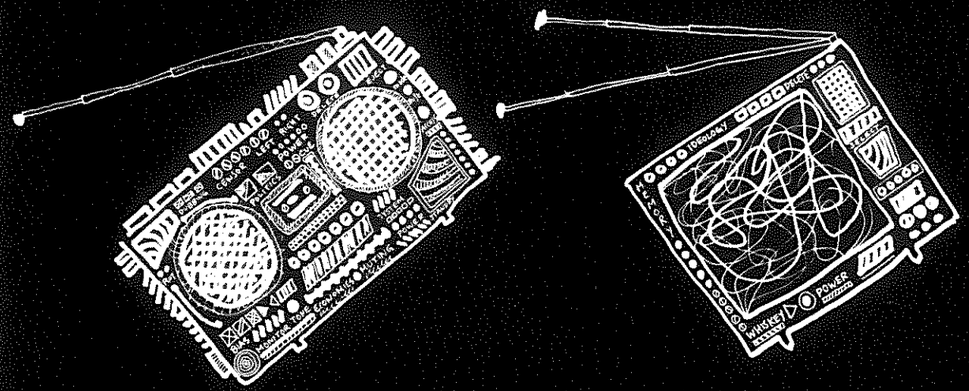


it was a day like any other day

I SAW a woman, shoulders hunched against the cold outside Xile on Clerk Street, a can of Carlsberg Special in her hand. As I passed her she muttered 'It's not joyous - get rid of everybody. It's a biological joke.' Her hands worn by wind and cold curled round her possessions like pink crayfish. She carried a carrier bag with the word 'NEXT' written on it in red. As her eyes caught mine her voice raised ominously 'The Shah sleeps in Lee Harveys grave' she shouted. 'It's the money people - if the money people decide this; something is going to happen, that's that.' I recognised her with shock as one of my own generation with our cultural cardboard sixties fantasies; watching ourselves getting older than Marilyn Monroe. I held the Financial Times against my wallet - I know this sounds a little flaky - I felt the earth move. I can hear you saying this guy isn't tightly wrapped, or even this isn't even poetry. At this point the cultural workers came out of the galleries into the streets or possibly out of the street into the galleries. In both cases they left the walls sprayed with the legendary Atkinson painting: ' SAY NO TO PENTOGRAPHY FROM THE PORNOGON.'

I SAW a man in Waverley Station toilets. He was combing his wavy grey hair and spreading a purplish blackcurrant flavoured creamy yoghurt onto it and massaging it in with a fastidious determination. He was aware and self amused and drunk. He wore dirty brown suede boots. His pyjamas protruded below the bottoms of his trousers like the blackest of night in the brightest of daylight. He was carrying a copy of the Wall Street Journal and a plastic bag on which was printed the word 'CONNECTIONS' in magenta. I thought he was a perfectly nice man who wondered what he was doing that seemes so outlandish yet containing its own internal dislocated logic, resolutions and satisfactions. He felt like an advertisement praising drinking and haircare with terror and madness under cover of lightness and healthiness and a happy virile anaesthesia. Just an ordinary guy in an ordinary street on one of those cadillac days, long, shiny and black. The streets smooth with rain like a middle period Kline, his stomach making post-modern noises.

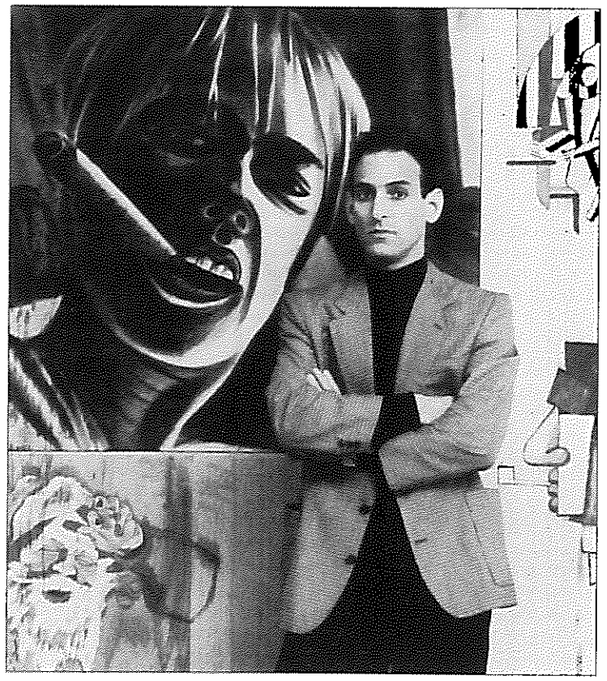
I SAW a man who seemed completely intoxicated on Princes street. He was conducting a boxing match with all the videocorders, TV's, compact disc players, tape recorders, microphones and radios in the windows of Radio Rentals, the land of the shadows. His reflection mingled with the reflected images in the plate glass. He passed on to the next window where he danced with silent pictures of whiskey bottles and dinner parties in sumptuous surroundings.He wore Adidas shoes and a Lacoste shirt with the crocodile torn off - the ultimate status symbol. He wore ragged greasy pinstripe trousers, one leather driving glove, a tartan shirt, half a quilted Snowgoose anorak inside out and a beret with an enamel badge reading Duracell. I didn't know how deliberately he'd dressed until I saw the top of a bottle of whiskey in a paper bag in his hand like the previous nights episode with Frank Furillo in Hill Street Blues. I drank the offered whiskey until it ceased to taste like sugar water.

I SAW a middle aged woman weeping on the pavement along the Grassmarket. She was wheeling a shopping trolley full of maps. She wore a transparent plastic headscarf on which the drops of rain blurred and doubled the floral motif of her tears. I decided to paint this aspect of the visual as she wept but the woman refused to stand still for the sketch. Someone yelled at her 'You can run kid but you can't hide.' She shouted back 'This is a designated place under section 5 of the Criminal Justice [Scotland] Act, June 1981. So fuck your money.' We approached each other carefully like badly sunburned lovers.' 'Rumour control' yelled someone from amongst the garbage bins behind Marks and Spencers. 'Relax it's oral and anal patrol' hissed a voice from the darkness. Have I told you this story

DAVID SALLE

BY

DONALD KUSPIT



David Salle

The peculiar intensity of David Salle's pictures is such that it seems possible to think that he doesn't know which he prefers: art objects or real objects. It is a problem innate to representation: is one finally interested more in the artistic merits of the representation of the real object than in the object represented, or vice versa? Does the representation exist to bring one closer to the object in some way, or for its own aesthetic sake?

The question perhaps sets up a false dichotomy -why not both?- but it brings into focus another question: are objects represented for purely cognitive reasons, because they exist and so must be grasped or for emotional reasons, because one likes or dislikes them (both)? Is it possible to make a neutral, true-to-fact representation, or is every representation permeated with eternal emotional ambivalence, as Salle's representations seem to be? Is an object represented because it represents a certain emotional state a certain attitude? Isn't this kind of 'symbolic' representation harder to achieve than the representations of objects as such? For emotions exist as tensions, so that it is only by means of the contradiction between objects that they can be made manifest, 'suggested'. Passion inflates the dialectic of objects to represent its own dialectic.

According to Freud, passion - instinct - attaches itself to whatever object affords satisfaction, almost by chance. Salle's pictures are about the difficulties of such attachments, their inherent frustrations as well as possible satisfactions: the ambivalent representation of the object they give rise to. His subject matter is the discontents of civilized representation. His is an aesthetic of discontent, disclosed through a method of contradiction. His 'representative' images seem full through over use, for each is an already inscribed social 'perception'. But this technique, in which each representation neutralizes the other by being given visual equivalence to it - thus subtly draining each representation of all meaning but attitude, an involuntary subjectivization of the picture as a whole through an infinite regress towards meaninglessness which nonetheless leaves each constituent representation or pictorial detail its legibility as 'objective' language - implies that all the representations are equally trivial for the individual, if not entirely empty. Salle's is an art of total disillusionment.

The secret of representation is that it is a problem of object relations, psychoanalytically understood. Salle's art is a brilliant demonstration of the general character of object relations, as well as a deconstructive odyssey - as full of unpredictable adventures as that of Ulysses and Leopold Bloom - of his own relations to that personally most dramatic, socially most vivid object, woman. No matter how naked, his woman is still veiled with his own ambivalent attitude toward her. One can initially understand our subjective relations to objects through William James' idea that the mind is 'always interested more on one part of its object than in another, and welcomes and rejects or chooses, all the while it thinks.' According to Freud, the parts of the object the mind is unconsciously interested in are those which give it pleasure: 'pleasure...pointed the way to object-choice.' According to Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, 'for most psychoanalytical theorists, the benchmark of successful development is the ability to establish consistent relationships with the whole object.'

One of the 'lessons' of Salle's art is that such successful development is rarer than one thinks. One remains infantile for much of one's life, stuck in partial attachments to partial objects - fetishizing fragments of objects, or whole objects which seem fragments of a larger pleasure, not quite forthcoming from the world: the pleasure of being mirrored by it, and so made whole by its wholeness. *My Head* (1984) suggests that only artworks are narcissistically satisfied by the world; one becomes an artist to have narcissistic satisfaction at one remove, through the acclaim given one's objects - better than none at all. I think this partially explains the abundant presence of well-recognized or well-mirrored - popularly reproduced - artworks, or successful - socially assimilated as normative - styles, in Salle's works. They are enviable examples of well loved objects - as is woman. Salle's art often shows his envy of such objects getting the better of him - leading to an almost suicidally ambivalent love/hate treatment of them, which quickly becomes murderous in its method of anaesthetization and dissection of them. In a sense, Salle's art is about the eternal return of subtly infantile attitudes to adult objects. His pictures turn them into erotogenic zones available for infantile sensation.

According to Freud, the pleasure the autoerotic infant obtains, in Greenburg/Mitchell's words, 'from his erotogenic zones with the help of the person who had looked after him - his mother' shows how she becomes his choice object. This 'first object....will be a part object', because it is constituted of 'component instincts'. 'To the extent that the object is created out of experiences of satisfaction of the oral drive, it will be the orally satisfying part of the relevant person, for example, the mother's breast. If the operative component instinct is the exhibitionist trend, the object will be the mother-as-looker, not the 'whole' mother as she would be defined by the objective observer.' Object relations theory forces one to differentiate yet relate a number of different objects: 'current perceptions of real objects; relatively durable representations of others (object relations); fantasies of internal objects; and identifications with internal objects which serve as a focus for the organization of various functions within the personality (as Freud described the superego).'

I submit that what is operational in Salle is the interplay between these different objects, focused around a demonstration of woman - whether currently perceived, durably conceived, 'fantastic', or alluring object. She is what W.R.D. Fairbairn, an object relations theorist, calls 'the exciting object', forever enticing one to (sexual/symbolic) merger with her yet never 'really' allowing it. Even if it occurs, it is never as satisfying as her looks promised it would be. She is satisfying because of her promise of pleasure, but in the end unsatisfying, because she in fact never gives significant, lasting pleasure. More pointedly, she is the self-absorbed - narcissistically supreme - bitch goddess, recognising no one but herself, indifferent to everyone else - except insofar as they mirror her. She is enviably narcissistic - the secret of her seeming self-sufficiency and composure, even when naked. Salle is dealing with the old problem of the allure of Venus, which is as much an attraction to her vanity and coolness in the face of desire for her as it is of the desirability of her nakedness. Art objects have this same narcissistic vanity for Salle - this same indifference toward the viewer, whoever he or she may be. They are at once available for everyone and no one. They are surrogate women.

For Salle, then, woman's nakedly displayed indifference - 'coolness' - is as much as a seduction as her nakedness. Salle is attracted more to her attitude than her flesh, which is neutralised by the mechanical/slick surface he gives it - the indifferent touch with which he renders it. It is a touch which not only cancels the voluptousness of her flesh, but in so doing partakes of her detached attitude. This double, and one might say doubly cooled, nakedness - physical and emotional - is perhaps most explicit in *The Bigger Credenza* (1985). I know of no contemporary artist except perhaps for Eric Fischl, who can present both physical and emotional nakedness, and the simultaneity of an almost sleazy, unconcious voluptousness and self-concious coolness - consciousness that gives the self distance from the flesh, a distance that is not so much sexually repressive as revelatory of autonomous selfhood in the face of the flesh and its desirability to the male other - with the same ruthless completeness as Salle.

Object relational interplay is not always easy to follow in Salle, and is the source of the inner discontinuity of his narrative 'line', which sometimes takes abrupt turns, not easily readable and thus all the more engaging, intriguing. Sometimes the interplay seems a private pandemonium at other times a 'speculative' (spectacular/decorative) marriage of well-publicised objects, conventionally unrelated - from separate realms of experience. There is a simulated copulation of internal objects, in a nightclub/circus act - my favourite way of thinking of the juggling act Salle performs. Some of Salle's works actually utilise a nightclub setting; almost all can be understood as having a deliciously unwholesome nightclub atmosphere, vaguely seamy - but with no enduring sensual impact. In this his pictures are enticing objects, like his women. This is the essence of his pictorial 'perversity', which is not without a profligate, punchinello painterless, which would hardly be tolerated in a truly popular medium.

Since the beginning of modernity, high art has depended on perversity - with its cleareyedness about the ultimate disappointing character of all objects, internal or external - for its impact. Popular art tends to clean up the perversity by stylising or normalising it into a cliché, if not eliminating it - and with it the sense of why modern life is heroic (because it can endure, even celebrate disillusionment) - altogether. Paradoxically, Salle begins with popular - we might say, phylogenetically significant, culturally speaking - images of objects, that is, images internalised socially. By desentimentalising or demystifying them so that their perversity becomes clear - by deliberately looking at them with a hard, cold eye - he recovers their ontogenetic impact, their role in individual psychic development. He shows the perversity of the society as a whole, in its demoralisation of the individual by seducing him with images - internal objects - that are in the end disappointing, disillusioning. In this Salle seems to differ sharply from Pop art, which generally

regarded popular images as satisfying in themselves, as well as suggestive of the satisfaction to be had in real American life. Salle seems to suggest that it is no longer possible to believe in either artistic or American satisfaction.

Salle's struggle, then, is with the pleasure principle - no doubt an old struggle, at the centre of becoming civilised, and producing civilised art. T.W. Adorno has written that 'in true art the pleasure component is not given free rein.... Art absorbs pleasure as remembrance and longing.' But in Salle rememberance and longing are not what they used to be; they are shot through and through with ambivalence towards the pleasure-proposing object. It is this unconscious ambivalence that is in large partly responsible for the conscious, carefully constructed dissonance of Salle's pictures. Adorno has written that 'dissonance - the trademark, as it were, of modernism - lets in the beguiling moment of sensuousness by transfiguring it into its antithesis, that is, pain. This is an aesthetic phenomenon of primal ambivalence.' For Adorno, 'dissonance preserves the moment of pleasure, if only as a distant echo.' But dissonance eventually comes to seem pleasurable - an absurd and awkward but nonetheless credible kind of consonance. In response, what Adorno calls 'hypermodernism' develops: 'Dissonance....congeals into an indifferent material, a new kind of immediacy without memory trace of its past, without feeling, without an essence.' Hypermodernism - a more accurate term than postmodernism - 'prefers to join forces with reified consciousness rather than stay on the side of an ideology of illusory humanness,' such as modernist dissonance, with its exciting promise of a distant pleasure, offered. Salle's art is hypermodernist, in that it offers representative - reified - images wiped clean of any memory traces and feelings - essenceless images that do not offer the slightest illusion of humanness. Paradoxically, the hyper-dissonance of ambivalence cancels out free-forming memory and free-flowing feeling, for ambivalence as the form of indifference. Salle's art absolutises ambivalence as the form of anti-humanness. Such unhumanness articulates the disillusionment responsible for authentic realism - realism that articulates the pain of reality, of aquiring a reality principle. Hyper-modernism shows the pleasure principle come to a complete standstill in insurmountable ambivalence. Hyper-modernism shows the indisputable, inherent ambivalence to object relations to be necessary, the real theme of representation - the only theme that can prevent it from collapsing into the pseudo-humanness of sentimentality or into matter of fact reproduction of already produced reality.

Let us look at one work, the triptych *Muscular Paper* (1985), from an object relations point of view. In a partial description, one encounters, in the left panel, a dark greyblue modern sculpture, ambigouosly abstract (pure) and animalistic (primitive), with the orange outline of a reclining (sleeping?) female nude superimposed on it, and flanked by bluetipped woodgrained bits of rod (not unlike the illusion of three-dimensionality created by a 'realistic' nail in a famous Cubist painting). In the central panel, on an orange ground, two ropeskipping female nudes (from a 30's German 'health' film?), with - from an antique Batman comic strip - blue, redlipped Joker's faces/masks (Salle's) on their buttocks like comic masks on a theatrical place of honour, with a central orange phallic fountain painted between and over them. Finally, in the right panel, on cheap blue/green plaid material, there is a copy of a famous Max Beckmann print, *Iron Bridge in Frankfurt* (1922), in Salle's use perhaps alluding to the defunct *Brücke* group (also illusioned in their disillusionment). What is crucial is that none of the objects exist in - one might say establish - a 'current perception.' The most contemporary is the grimacing, Gorgonian mask, but the permanence and fixity of its smile implies that it is an imago - has the status of an internal object.

The murkiness of the whole suggests its fantastic quality. Salle reveals durable artistic representations to be 'regressive' fantasies - one might say he tries to recover the fantastic element in them. They are fantasies in the Kleinean sense: not substitute gratifications but gratifying in themselves, whatever their psychic function. The joker's mask is a kind of 'superego' - a 'Man'-made loin cloth covering the anal orifice of the artfully naked Eves, with their false promises of erotic paradise. The artificial or arch character - seductive fakeness (all seductiveness is fake for Salle, a sign of unfulfilled promise) - of their 'going native' is suggested by the jump rope. The mask also makes clear the situation's artificiality, and that of the situation of all, let alone perverse, sexual satisfaction.

From the point of view of D.W. Winnicott, another object relations theorist, Salle's 'fantatic' painting articulates the ambiguous character of 'creative' illusion. He shows the moment of development from hallucinatory omnipotence - all the artistic representations seem to have been brought into being by the infantile artist's own whimsical wish - to recognition of the independent 'remote' reality they signify. It is a moment of scepticism. The representation is suspended in an infantile no-man's-land, and as such more illusory than if experienced as a dream or as the true representation of a real object. It is the same moment of 'sucess' and disillusionment - that the German *Brücke* group experienced. Salle's paintings are, indeed, personal narratives - representations of his private world of internal objects, all of which are shown to be 'artistic', just as all art objects are shown to be internal.

The brilliance of his art is the way he shows perceptions caught on the horns of a dilemma, uncertain whether it has created internal artistic objects or articulated externally given objects - uncertain whether or not it has confused or can distinguish them. He seems to imply that all representations are suspect, neither enequivocally internal or external. Salle is one of the great-masters of representation - of the new New Objectivity - because he has made clear, like Beckmann one of the masters of the old New Objectivity - the internal character of external objects, and the power of internal objects over the external world. He leaves us in a limbo of disillusioned longing between representations of ambivalently internal and external perverse, partial, infantile character of both worlds.

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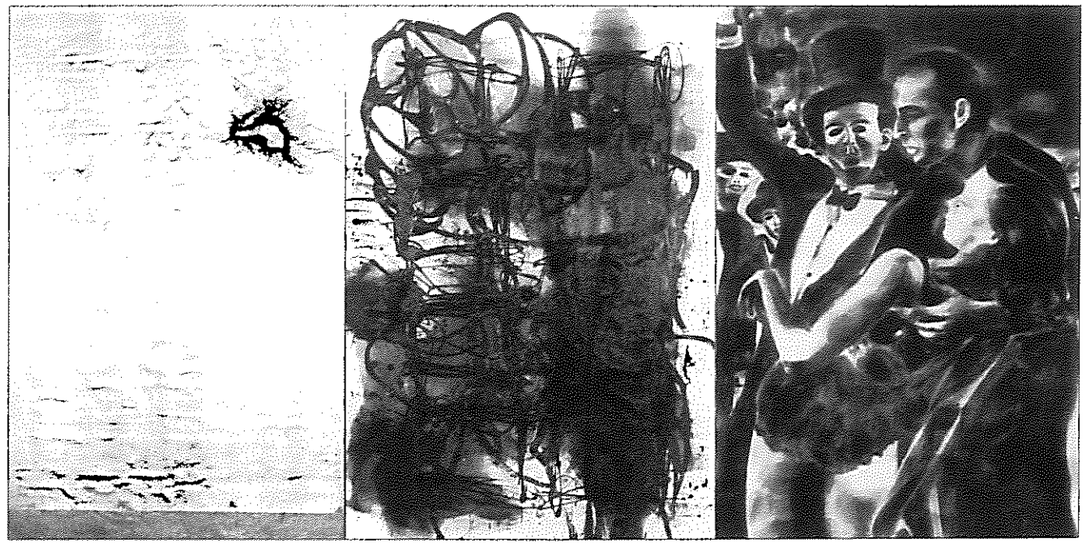
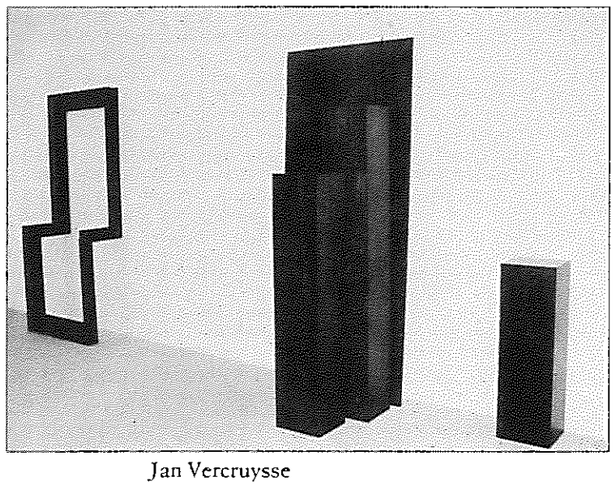


David Salle: *Senza Titolo, 1985*
David Salle: *An Agreement, 1984*

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM
DOCUMENTA 8

DOCUMENTA is an art event which occurs roughly every four or five years in the otherwise uneventful West German town of Kassel. 1987 is a Documenta year and there is still time to catch it, running as it does for a precise 100 days. Such Olympian jamborees like this, or like the Venice Biennale, often reflect the most current market trends and gallery choices, and if, as occasionally happens a whole new paradigm emerges from the confusion, it does so months, or even years later, once the art machine has adapted its digestive system to its new fodder. Peter Hill went to the opening in June and recorded a few impressions of *DOCUMENTA 8*.



Jan Vercruysse

MICHAEL ARCHER

As regards the two exhibitions in the Orangerie and the Fridericianum I don't find a lot of connection between the two. I think any kind going on in the Fredericianum is like any kind of international art show that you would see anywhere. It's well laid out, some of the work is okay,a lot of it is not. What's going on in the Orangerie seems to me to be more about what the organisers are trying to do which is to point up the whole notion which they describe as being the provision of a bridge between art and society using design, architecture, and art. It seems to me that what is happening, to use Edward Fry's term, is that these various forms are being depurified. And it seems to me that in doing so they are getting each of them to the point where they could be the other. There is no way that you can discriminate between the superficiality of a Scottass chair and the superficiality of an Opie sculpture, it's all the same kind of banal rubbish.

I think there are one or two kind of nice points Everybody goes on about Fischli Weiss and the kind of films they've got here; and they are very interesting, they are very amusing but more as a kind of interlude from the trudge of going round. What I find disappointing about them is the way in which they are all actually constructed as films. They are these very nice anarchic scenes which roll along like houses of cards falling down, tyres rolling, pushing other things over which push other things over. But always when the scenario which they have constructed is just about not to work and just about to become anarchic they put in a nice edit and you get the next thing. It is wrong, it's just too much like entertainment still. Robert Morris I think should be hung for what he's done, I find that work absolutely obscene, utterly obscene. (At this point Paul Johnson interjects with 'Longo should be hung before Morris....')

Longo is just not interesting, Longo is not in the same league as Morris. Morris should be hung, drawn and quartered....just outrageous.

I am disappointed on the whole with the way in which the sculptors have used the park outside the Orangerie. There are some exceptions. I think that Kumrow's work is good. He has two pieces, one a kind of sedan chair which is on the lawn and another which is a pontoon come steamer come float come buoy, in the middle of one of the lakes.

Finlay is excellent, very, very good indeed. Not only the line of guillotines using the vista through the park but also the texts which he has on the guillotines which are very strong. The only disappointing thing about it is that Scott Burton has done a piece which is right in front of it blocking out the vista. That kind of brutal disregard for the ambience of the space is disappointing.

Then there is Thomas Schütte with his ice-cream parlour come bog - well I just don't know what he is doing.

MARK FRANCIS

My feeling is that it is a curious combination of a strightforward retread of Documenta 6 some ten years ago, which was done by more or less the same team of people including Schneckenburger, and the part that is not a retread are those artists who were probably too young or too unknown to have been in that show.

So it is really not, in any sense, the exhibition they claim it is which goes beyond the so-called hunger for painting which was in evidence in Documenta 7, five years ago. It is really a harking

Ian Hamilton Finlay: View to the Temple, 1987

back to a frustrated desire that all that never happened.

I think Documenta 6 was generally considered to be the worst ever, and this is the worst ever warmed over again. However, in a big show like this there is always interesting work. But the most curious thing about the show are the people who are missing. As soon as you think of the people missing it makes a mockery of any attempt to be a survey. For one thing there are literally about half a dozen paintings in the entire show, and whether or not you think painting is dead that is just ludicrous. Also there are tremendous gaps even in that area they claim to be representing which is that field between sculpture, installation, architecture, design and so on. The key German artists who have been working in that area simply aren't in the show.

As for the individual works, a number of people agree that the installation by Christian Boltanski is incredibly moving, which is in a small forgotten side-room like a museum storage room with racks, with blurred photographs of children taken from school photographs of the 1950's I think, and lit very dimly so that it is a memory of children who died.

Another room I like a great deal is the one with the film installation by Fischli and Weiss, two Swiss artists. It is extremely funny, hysterically funny; an anarchic sequence of events and pyrotechnic scultures filmed in a very deadpan way. The other things I think are great are two of the outdoor installations. One is by Thomas Schutte, a young German sculptor who has made a sort of outdoor pavillion which on one side is an ice-cream stall and the other side, which faces the expanse of the park and the Orangerie is a public toilet. And Ian Hamilton Finlay's piece is perfectly sited and exercises a moral rigour in the circumstances of those that are basically the circus and the jamboree. Events like these need some kind of cutting edge and I think that in every sense Ian's piece does provide that.

FUMIO NANJO

So many different directions are being shown here that I cannot find one definite message from the whole exhibition. Some of the work was interesting, but basically I cannot find any really new direction or completely unique ideas. I have seen some works of Neo-Geo in the Orangerie but it is not shown in a big way as a new tendency. I expected to get a stronger message from the exhibition as a whole; maybe there are too many people involved to organise it properly. Perhaps in this post-modern world there is no longer such a thing as a message.

ANDREW NAIRN

I found Documenta 8 very exciting. In the press conference Schneckenburger the organiser made a wonderful generalisation which I don't think anyone would dare say in Britain. He said Documenta 8 was art about art, Documenta 7 was about painting and the artist being subjective, Documenta 8 we think is about art and society.

There are so many works of art here that one can only make general comments about them, it would be impossible to put them in to any kind of framework.

There are one or two very good things here out of so many which you may have seen at the Venice Biennalle last year or at Sydney next year.

For an exhibition organiser like me it is not just about seeing the work but about meeting people from all sorts of different places and making contacts.

Given that the Third Eye Centre, where I work, is very keen on promoting East European art, I have made very many contacts that will help with future exhibitions.

I think it is a pity that there are not more East European artists at an event like this.

The other thing that is evident here is their keeness to have works of art in the streets, and it is very successful. There is a brilliant Japanese guy who has surrounded this bombed out Church with bits of wood, and the whole of the inside, and I look at that and think if only we can do this kind of thing in Glasgow in 1990 it would be fantastic. One of the reasons for me being here is to get ideas for public art projects, or ways of showing art outside the gallery space, again with a view to Glasgow as the city of culture in 1990.

WOLFGANG MAX FAUST

This Documenta is about an inbetween situation. During the last ten years the comeback of painting dominated everywhere, with themes like the individual, and subjectivity. Now we are moving towards artforms which are more related to art and the public, art and the social situation. So it is right that this has been put into focus at Documenta, though I think sometimes you have the feeling that the list of the names and the situations are not very precise.

It is also a problem that Documenta is not an uptodate exhibition now. Over the past year there has been a new wave of painters from America, and especially New York, taking a stance against European attitudes. The whole situation of art in relation to media, to media related experience, the whole question of simulation, of fakism, and of course before this there was Neo-Geo.

In relation to painting I would say that it is a little bit a pity that we know over the last ten years the visual arts went through paintings, went through images, and the consequence that created is not examined here. After that all possibilities of painting were once again discussed.

And so for me the whole movement of Neo-Geo is just the logical outcome of this earlier return to painting. It would have been interesting to show some of what has been happening in painting over the last ten years and to see it placed in relation to neo-geometrical painting. Then you would see suddenly that the whole movement was not about painting in one style, but a return to painting in many styles. Neo-Geo is the outcome of this logic in thinking.

We are in a fascinating situation right now because the new American art tendencies which are strongly supported by the New York art scene and the critics are for me very symptomatic art forms, because they deal with a special American mentality and what I found out also by talking to some of the artists is that they want to be accepted in Europe; therefore all the New York artists are here and want European acclaim, from an intellectual background. It would be good to start a discussion on this, and it would have been good for Documenta to have focused on this. Although Manfred Schneckenburger said he did not want to play the art market game, on the other hand in our society without the art market there is no art.

Finally, I think it was a very good idea taking the new tendency of art in relation to the public to include design, architecture, performance, video and to site public sculptures all over the city. Art is no longer limited to the gallery and the museum, as the painting scene was.

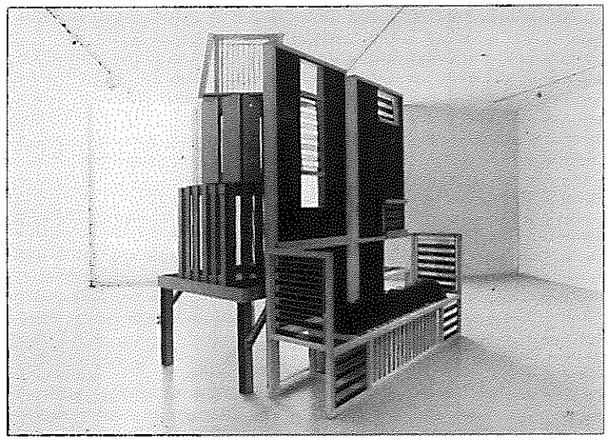
CLARE HENRY

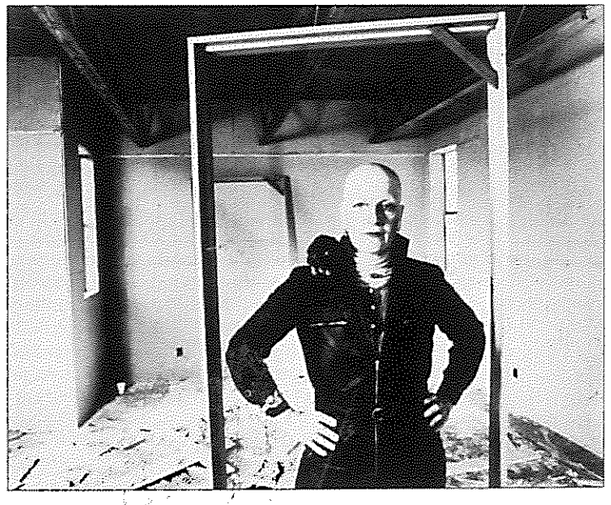
Pluralism is obviously the fashion right now but when it slides into a negative nostalgia mixed with media slickness it serves little purpose Documenta 8 contains few paintings. In an age of, so we are told, Neo-Geo modish abstraction, this is perhaps not surprising. What is off-putting is the sense of deja vu, of lack of direction, lack of conviction. The 1960s and 70s did it all so much better!

Both the Fridericianum and Orangerie contain an odd combination of cold artificial plastic surfaces, mirrors and monsters. Formica replaces paint. Photography substitutes for draughtmanship. Video and film proclaim that technology has won, message wise. It is quite the most un-sensual, un-tactile exhibition I have seen. In parts it is actually nauseous with a strong undercurrent of the grotesque. Many of these artists, like Robert Morris and Roberto Longo, are in fact not German but their inclusion by Dr. Schneckenburger reflects the long Northern tradition of gremlins and hobgoblins: monsters of the subconcious never laid to rest. Kassel is after all Brothers Grimm territory.

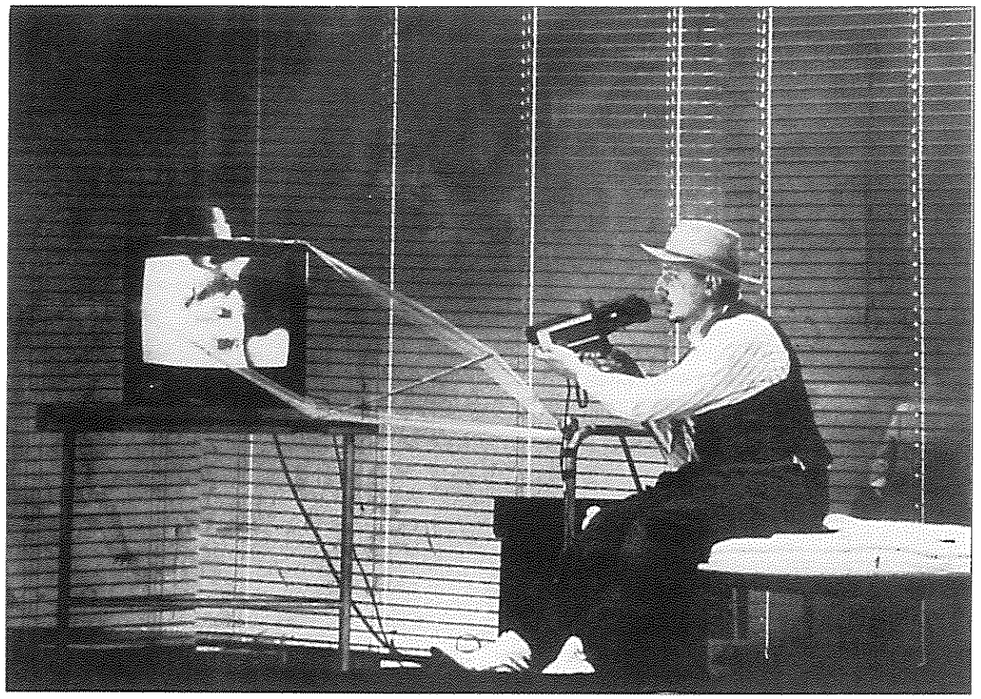
On the plus side I enjoyed the majority of the 30 massive sculptures, installations (plus 3 Wodiczko night illuminations) placed around the town from municipal car parks to the town hall, squares and parks. Here our own Ian Hamilton Finlay (one of only five Brits. among 150 artists) does well and his immaculately positioned Guillotines on the central axis running along the avenue of trees between the far distant little neo-classical temple which sits on an island in the lake and the late Baroque facade of the Orangerie, are a welcome return to restraint and intelligence after excessive banality.

Kantor's premier of Die Liebes und Todesmasahire, the performance high spot while another success story is the wood installation by Japanese Tadashi Kawamata. He has transformed a ruined church into a moving, sensitive, almost organic space best seen at dusk when two lights emphasis its oriental assymetry. At the other end of the spectrum but immensely enjoyable and witty is a video by the Swiss pair, Fischli-Weiss and a disco-like red room by





Klaus Kumrow: *Ohnetitel*,
Siah Armajani: *Elements No. 9, 1987*
Rachel Rosenthal: *Rachel's Brain, 1987*



Artaud (von Federico Tiezzi): *Magazzini Criminali*

Fabrizio Plessi. The shadow of Beuys is of course ever present but what would he have made of the pessimistic press statement: 'In the late 80s there are no new strategies.' Let's hope its proved wrong.

With so few British artists around I felt some adopted loyally to Irvin, seen very recently at Demarco in Edinburgh, and was glad I had taken 2 trains to find their exhibition.

Last a gold star for the people of Kassel. Documenta has whole hearted support from the City Council, Province and public, despite the fact that much of the avant garde work, especially that in public spaces, must arouse unfriendly feelings. But somehow Documenta is sacred and complaints are not taken too seriously - which says a good deal for Kassel. Edinburgh could take a few lessons regarding attitudes to Festivals. Interestingly the tradition of open house culture goes back to the 1780s when Friedrich II installed his huge collection and library in the custom built Museum Fridericianum. It soon became a place of pilgrimage for scholars, art lovers and historians - and from the crowds at the opening of Documenta 8 - remains so today.

MAJORIE ALLTHORPE-GUYTON

If the 'whole enterprise represents a reasoned appraisal of art towards the end of this century' then it lost credibility on the inclusion of some works which oppose anything that stands as art. Two shockers were Rupert Longo and Robert Morris. Longo's *All You Zombies*, the ultimate in Kitsch horror and Morris' deathcamp Alterpieces represents everything which Kiefer in the adjacent space attempts to transgress and transform. And Kiefer has enough problems of his own. Although these are by far the most serious and disturbing elements in Documenta 8 there was a massive disjunction of concept between the *appropriation* of Designer Style, in say Hans Haacke's strong and didactic Mercedes Benz installation and the self-indulgent liquorice-all-sort utopias of real architects and designers in the Orangerie. There is irony of course in the work by artists which subvert these pieces, Liz Magor's splendid linoleum rolls in *Regal Décor*, for example. There were many good things - Group Materials' *Castle*, Nam June Paik's video apotheosis of *Beuys' Voice*, Terry Allen's splendid *Chinese Night* - an apothesis of 'hoser' art - Fischli and Weiss' brilliant film, Jenny Holzer's grim little vault. Marie Jo Lafontaine's video installation on pumping iron was magnificently seductive but seemed too close to its subject for comfort. The work which seemed to make the clearest statement was the outside sculpture of Ian Hamilton Finlay's masterly *A View to the Temple* comes closest to the intended spirit of the enterprise. Scott Burton, Thomas Schütte, Micha Ullman, are also good. There are notable things in the town, particularly the brilliant vases by Nobert Radernacher on top the grim modernist car park between C&A and MacDonalds. There is a lamentable paucity of women, less than a fifth, of those excluded many would have seemed more than relevant to the aims of the organisers, Nancy Spero for one. What was also brought home was the significance of several British artists, especially Performance artists, not invited to Documenta 8. The ubiquitous tribe of Cologne revolutionary workers of Adam Noidlt Intermission Orchestra seemed a quaint throw back to the sixties, which curiously is what characterised the whole event.

THE DAY WE WENT TO DOCUMENTA

The journey as an art form is not new. Chaucer pilgrimmed on foot. Pickwick pontificated by stage-coach. Now, Demarco performs by minibus.

The Celtic influence is strong on Demarco journeys. From the perimeter the destination is reached by ever decreasing circles. Viewed from above, this is the spiral. Its circuitous nature ensures maximum mileage and interest, but destinations cannot be taken for granted. We were thus only able to travel hopefully to Kassel to visit Documenta 8.

At 11.30am for 9.30am, the Scots contingent left Blackfriars and zipped south. Demarco and the pilgrims (a good name for a group) are no slouches, and time passed quickly as we addressed a million invitations. If one hasn't reached you, blame the motorway scribble or the shipping clerk who got landed with posting them. At Sheerness we were joined by the international brigade - a German, a Swiss, a smatter of English and, would you believe, two Americans. We are now Cafe Society in motion.

On boarding the Vlissingen ferry, the maximum intake from the eat-as-much-as-you-can buffet is recommended. This is good practice on Demarco journeys as no one is sure of the next fuel stop. We groan off to sleep, arrive in Holland at 6am, disembark, and head due west.

Anyone knows that for Germany we should head *east*, but we are travelling by *spiral*. It is therefore logical to speed to Zetland for very early morning coffee which can only be enjoyed if dispensed in a special Zeeside restaurant which Demarco, like Black Rod, commanded to open for us. It did, and when refreshed we debated the design of Dutch coffee cup handles. The motion had been moved and the discussion chaired by Ricky - first names now, for we are getting to know one another.

Unpredictably, we now travel east to Munchen-Gladbach Museum to check up on the Edinburgh Poorhouse doors. Joseph Beuys thought a lot of Ricky and had turned these doors into art to help his gallery, and they are now a big attraction in this superb Beuys collection. They were big, but not an attraction when on the Poorhouse - such is the power of art to change things. The doors as art were holding up fine and so we headed further east to Kassel which we had, innocently, thought to be our destination. Instead it was to be bonnie Bad-Soden, some 36km off course, of course - but allus forgiven for it is a nice wee olde English German village, and charming at midnight.

Bad-Soden, like Zetland, was another Demarco bonus. Forgetting Documenta and giving ourselves to the hotel pool did cross our minds, but we spiralled back to the greatest art show on earth and arrived a day early - Press Day. It was then that the miracle happened. Demarco pilgrims magically became writers for obscure journals and directors of doubtful galleries. They turned into official photographers, personal assistants, and secretaries to personal assistants. We are thus officially authorised to drone about Documenta like real critics. The unanimous *second* choice of the pilgrim critics for the best of Documenta was Kiefer's big painting *'Osiris = Isis, Bruch = Einung; 1985/87'* - we had bought a catalogue. A German press person had even brought along a press dog, and it liked Kiefer too. It wagged its tail. Local hero Ian Hamilton Finlay's guillotine was taking some stick from the Germans, a mechanically-minded nation, and quick to point out that it could not slicen offen der head because of the angle offen der blade - und they were not for excusing this just because it was Kunst. Demarco, always in danger of getting the chop, should derive some hope from the possibility of a similar flaw in the machinations of the S.A.C. Come to think of it, the S.A.C. representatives were there and looking hard at the guillotines. Don't worry, Ricky, remember what the mechanically-minded Germans said.

On the following day, after a last Documenta round-up and seeing the planting of Beuy's 7000th eichen by mechanical digger - when anyone other than mechanically-minded Germans would have used a spade, we journeyed back to Vlissingen, the night ferry, Sheerness, London - with, and why not, a quick spiral to Dulwich, Newton Stewart, Girvan, Largs - for Nardini's, Gourock, and thence to Edinburgh, another Demarco journey over. Thank you Ricky for the privilege of being part of the performance - yours was the best even in Documenta 8 and voted by all the pilgrim critics as their gold star razzle-dazzle *first* choice. We genuinely felt sorry for anyone who had only made the trip by air, the aeroplance being a form of transport where the spiral is not appreciated, even by intention - and certainly not otherwise.

George Wyllie.

THOUGHTS FROM ACROSS THE BORDER

THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER

BUT YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO CRACK THE SHELL

WENDY HALSTEAD INTERVIEWS

CALUM COLVIN

Calum Colvin: *Heroes [Detail], 1986*

Calum Colvin was born in Glasgow twenty six years ago. He studied at Dundee Art School and then went onto the RCA where he completed a post-graduate course in photography. It was during this period of creative indecision that he revived some unresolved sculptural ideas from his Dundee days. He started by making 'installations' using models and found objects, which were often collected from junk shops and skips, and then painted figures over them in bold black outlines. The end product often being quite elaborate witty and raucous compositions. By working in this method he has produced a formula by which he could combine all of his talents.

During the past year, Calum Colvin has exhibited his work along with Ron O'Donnel, in a touring show called *Constructed Narratives*. The pictures in this show were all created over a period of two years, the later work being more complex and associative with action man Scots in kilts wielding paint brushes and pick axes; they are self portraits which explore the humorous areas between fantasy and reality.

My work is about me, a Scot living in London, and how I feel about it. I became very aware of being Scottish when I moved here. Things occured to me that I hadn't thought about before; patriotism, fate, how experiences fail to live up to expectations. The objects I put into the pictures are meant to suggest these reponses. Most of the work is, I think, quite dramatic and fairly romantic. It's about relationships.

WENDY HALSTEAD: *What did you study at Art College?*

CALUM COLVIN: I studied painting, but after realizing that this was not what I wanted to do, I moved into the sculpture department. It was then that I first started to use a black and white polariod camera that my father had given me. I started to take pictures of friends, and then gradually worked my way towards the photography department where I learnt to develop my own black and white photographs as there were no colour printing facilities. During my second year at art school I started to photograph a wide range of subjects, becoming more involved in what I was doing. During my fourth year I applied to the Royal College of Art and was accepted on the photography MA course. I was still making sculpture, trying to incorporate it into the photographs. At first this didn't really work, it was then that I started to make installations. I had seen little of what was happening in contemporary art, I was familiar with people like George Rousse, and I think that all of these things (Mach, Woodrow, Cragg, Blackadder etc) going on has made it much easier for my work to be appreciated.

During my first year at the RCA I continued to do documentary photography, my hero at the time was Cartier Bresson, and for a while I tried to be like him, but I later came to the conclusion that I wasn't very good at it. I then learnt how to print in colour and started to use large format, and 'five four' cameras. This was self taught as it wasn't a very structured course.

Would you agree with Alexander Noble, when he described your work as 'incorporating motifs and forms from painting and sculpture, and presents a holistic approach to photography placing it in a truly integrated sense within the context of the contemporary visual arts?'

What I do is really a combination of everything that I have ever been interested in. From wanting to be a painter, a sculptor and now being a photographer. I am often asked why I don't exhibit the sets that I make, as an installation. Then someone wanted to buy one of the sets, but I said no, because the photograph is the finished work. I always demolish anything that I have made in order to make the photograph. For me there is a kind of magic in photography that has always fascinated me.

One tends to read into your photographs rather than just look at them. You could look at one photograph half a dozen times, and each time see something different. Could you see yourself taking this further, for example working with videos?

This is something I have thought about. The trouble is that these things take so much time to organise and then you yourself are not totally in control of the project. I tend to work within my own privacy, I work late at night and I also work quite slowly, so I would rather work in my own time, preferably to that of someone else's. Working in something like a video, in a group situation might be quite problematic for me. However I suppose if something really interesting arose I would certainly think about it.

Would you say that your photographs have a theme or story behind them?

Yes but then sometimes the idea changes half way through. I usually start off with a vary basic idea, this could either have come from another photograph, painting or drawing that I may have seen in a gallery somewhere. I usually have a rough sketch in my mind about what the final photograph is going to be about.

How long does it take you to construct the installations that you work from?

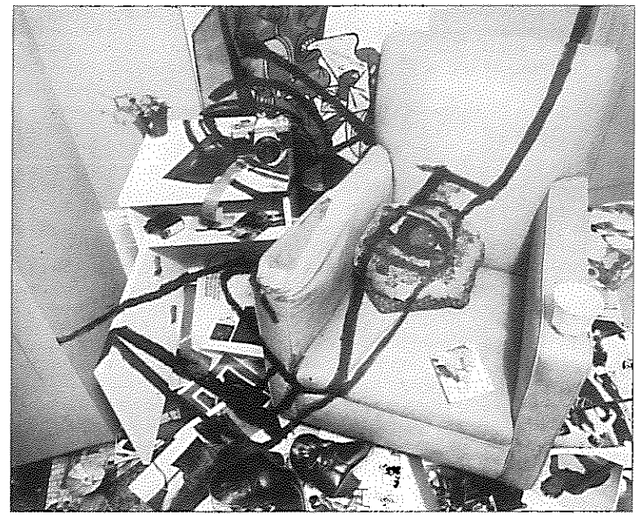
Each photograph is taking more time as they are becoming more detailed. Sometimes it can take me a month to complete a piece of work, other times maybe just two weeks. It really depends on the subject matter. It can also take a while to aquire all the props that are required in order to make the set. Many of these things come out of skips, junkyards or secondhand shops. I need a good supply of books in order to find a line or a title suggesting exactly what I am trying to say, for example in one picture there is a book opened at a page reading, 'Thoughts from across the border' which was quite deliberate. I draw an outline of an idea on the camera screen and spend a lot of time moving things and looking around for the right bits and pieces, it is tricky.

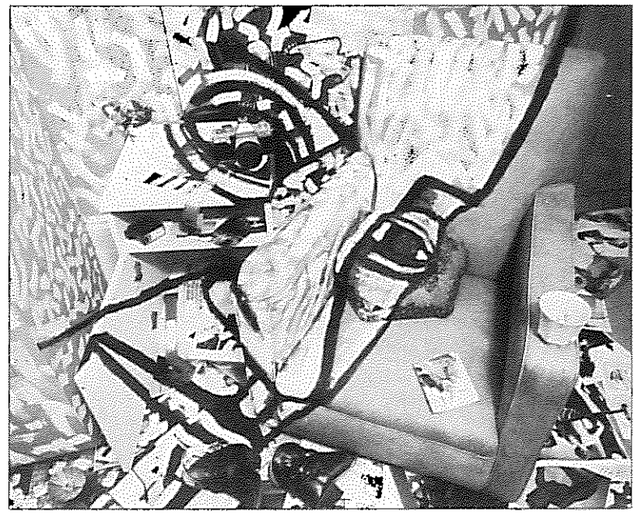
What sort of response have you had so far from your work?

Overall the response has been quite good. I did have a picture a while ago that was supposed to have been in a show in the North of England, but was finally rejected because they thought it was too 'smutty'. The photograph in question was called *The Turkish Bath*. The photograph featured two nudes inspired by Ingres and Gauguin. They were painted upon an old matress, the surrounding walls and furniture.

Do you like seeing your work in fine art galleries as well as photography galleries?

I really don't mind. When I first started to exhibit my work, I expected other photographers to be annoyed about what I was doing, and say that this wasn't what photography was about. A few people did in fact say this, but the majority loved it. I think this idea of, are you an 'artist' or are you a 'photographer' can be a problem for some people because they want to be accepted as artists, but at the same time show in photography galleries and have their own set up. It really doesn't bother me, if it is a good gallery then they will get a lot of people in to see the work. The photographers gallery has in fact toured the *Constructive Narratives* show to mostly fine art galleries, though quite a lot of photography galleries have taken it as well.



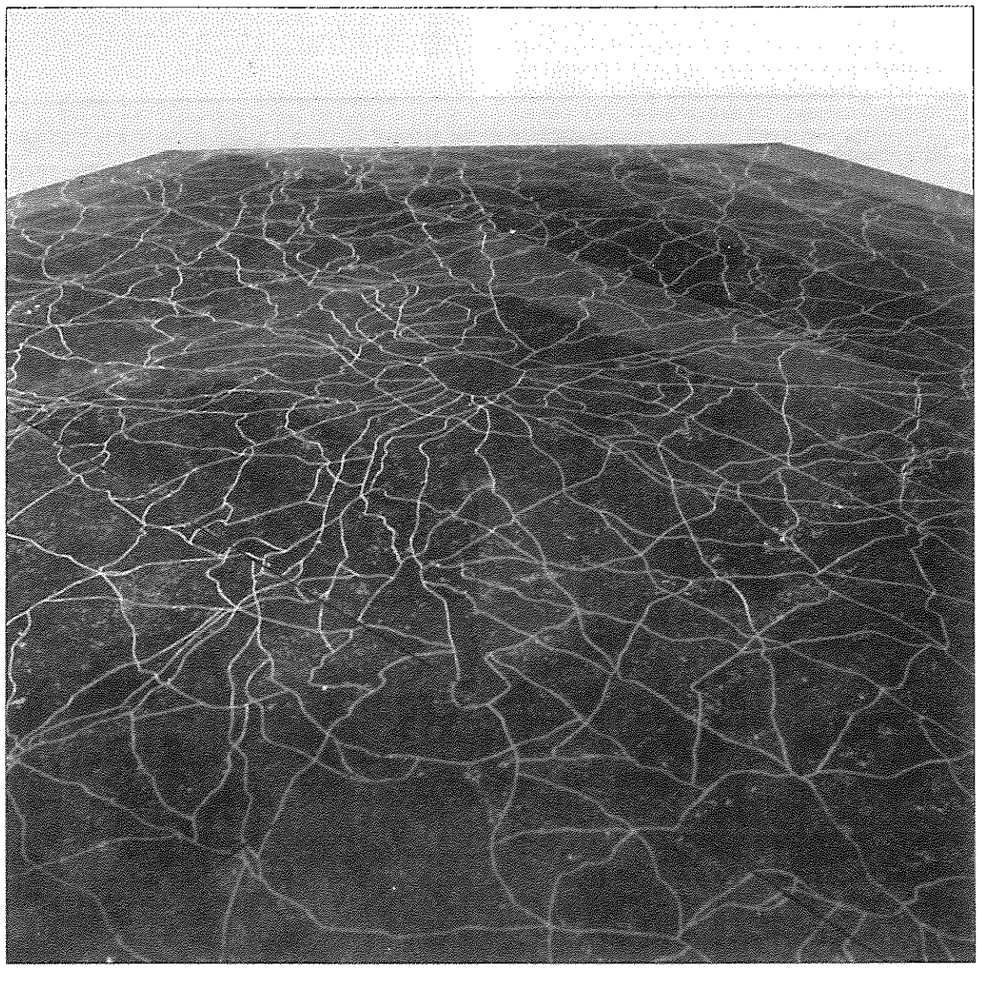


SYNTHETIC MODERNISM

BY PETER HILL

PART ONE

FROM NEO-GEO TO MINIMAL BAROQUE



Harald Vlugt: *European Aesthetic*

By now everyone has realised that even in art [through the strengthening of Neo-Geo art, through American art that is no longer centred on painting, and through the revival of object art] very diverse procedures of representation and manipulation are under way and are getting better and faster, and that once again the end has come for painting, a new defeat.
Jutta Koether, Flash Art, April 1987

Some say it was started by a cartel of formica salesmen; others that it began in a bar in the East Village where two critics, an artist, a gallery director and high-rolling collector were lazily discussing what might follow post-modernism.

'Nothing can follow post modernism', declared one critic, a deeply entrenched post-modernist.

'But we must act "as if" something can', retorted the other. 'Our job is to construct band-wagons, not jump on to them.

'Well it will have to be neo-something', the first critic parried cynically.

'Neo always follows "post".'

'Neo', mused the artist.

'Neo', mused the gallery director.

'Something snappy. What rhymes with neo?' demanded the collector, who was no poet.

'Geo', said the waitress (who was in fact a poet) roller-skating past with a tray of pretzels and perriers for the next table.

'Neo-Geo', the collector ruminated aloud, dollar signs revolving where eyeballs once stared languidly. 'I'll but that. In fact I'll buy as much of it as you can bring me'.

The rest is history; or fiction.

The above is a cynical view, yet one that recurs cyclically with different actors on other stages whenever there is a major change in the art market. Such a change has been simmering away for the last three years and only in the last twelve months has it broken the crust of our accepted view of contemporary art.

Shipwreck by Richard Bosman is typical of the movement known variously as new figuration, the trans-avant garde, or neo-expressionism. Paintings such as these were more than just figurative paintings. Growing out of conceptualism, for many they answer the question 'What would happen if a conceptual artist started painting again' and here one can cite the work of Sandro Chia and Jorg Immendorf as examples, painting from 'ground gero'. In subject matter artists such as Bosman often depicted as individual either physically lost in a desert or at sea, or psychologically lost in a city or a motel (Robert Yarber), or lost materially or sexually in a first world society (Eric Fischli). Surreal narrative was always there to be 'read in', but it was disjointed like a still from a film later recalled as part of a dream (Stephen Campbell). Canvas surfaces were raped with primary colours (Chia) or with blow torches (Kieffer), while TV images (Scharff) and Greek mythology (too numerous to mention) were plundered until the last stone of imagination has been transferred for the delight of a hand-me-down culture.

New figuration began in the late seventies and ended, as a dynamic movement at the centre of critical debate, in the mid eighties. Some would pin the date down to the exhibition in New York called 'Abstract Painting' organised by John Armleder in 1984.

There will always be figurative painters, and other forms of figuration will again take centre stage, but as for *new figuration* that now exists in a time capsule, like Pop Art or Impressionism. Many of those artists will continue to develop and refine their individual languages - Schnabel, Cuchi, Tillers etc. - as did the Pop artists of the sixties; they are now 'safe bonds' whose rise in the market place will continue and soar now that the movement is closed. Those new figurative painters yet to be 'discovered' and who played little or no part in the formulation of the movement they have elected to join will find the path much harder.

Art movements often arrive late in Scotland (as with new figuration), and after a prolonged period of derision and suspicion are eventually assimilated into the visual culture; in short, as a visual nation we are forever turning up at the pub half an hour after everyone else has left for the party. This year's Edinburgh Festival is one such example. There are several very powerful exhibitions of contemporary art, yet not one gets anywhere near engaging with any of the issues so passionately being debated in the world's art capitals. Wolfganf Max Faust, at a recent lecture in the ICA, spoke of the battle that was being fought on the pages of the world's art press, by artists and critics, over the several different directions in which art is moving. He spoke of Cologne's ascendancy to art capital of the world, ahead of New York and he spoke of the insularity of Britian which would be given a shock when the new Saatchi exhibition opens in September - 'New York Strikes Back!'

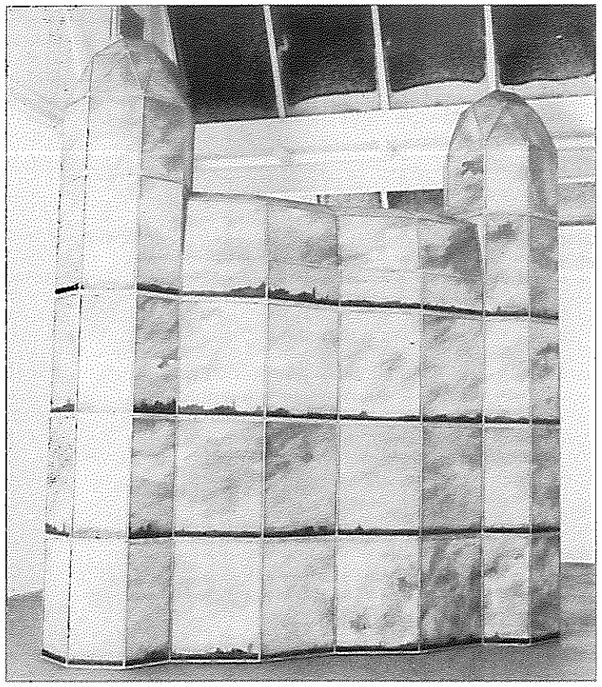
During last year's festival Scotland received a hint of what was happening when Tom Lawson opened his lecture at the Fruitmarket Gallery by saying, and here I paraphrase, 'In New York, gallery directors are ditching their figurative painters as quickly as collectors are removing their figurative paintings from their walls.'

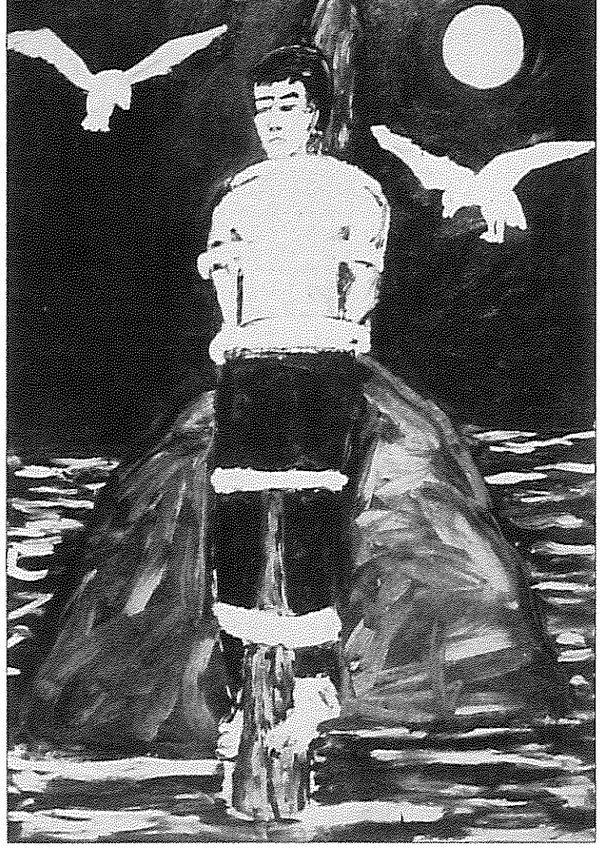
So what has been happening? Different things to different groups.

To the artists, both old and young, a feeling of entropy. The universe of new figuration had been running down for some time; no longer was it a place for creativity and experimentation; increasingly it became academicised. Yet other artists had been working, in a number of movements that are now under scrutiny, out in the wilderness, working their own creative seams in a variety of ways. They are still doing this, only the microscope through which the art market, and later the gallery administrators, view the art world, has clicked into their focal range.

Younger artists, in Austria, Switzerland, Amsterdam, New York and Cologne, were already tired of the new figuration - all those dreary pastiches of Chia, Kieffer , and Schnabel being churned out in Stockholm, Melbourne, Toronto and Aberdeen; they did not want to be part of that underthinking tradition where the aspiring artist becomes the technician, or slave, to another's creativity.

The gallery directors and collectors were more than happy to close one movement and hype another while the critics in their eternal search for artworks into which philosophies can be painfully grafted and reputations made were equally happy to ditch Barthes and Saussure in favour of Baudrillard as earlier generations had set free Wittgenstein or Sartre in favour of





Barthes.

Four main movements are currently being explored in various countries. At their broadest they may be defined as Neo-Geo Interventionism, Collaborative artworks, and Fiction.

Neo-Geo is a stupid term, as was Cubism and as was Impressionism but it has caught the public imagination and will probably stay. Neo-Geo embraces both painting and sculpture yet is not just a throwback to minimalist aesthetics or to colour field painting. Whereas the new object tendency sculptors such as Cragg and Woodrow fashion their works from the detritus of society, the Neo-Geo artists go for the clean and smooth materials of the hardware store - formica, linoleum, fablon, and plywood laminates. *Fakism* and *simulism* have also been grouped under *Neo-Geo* with sculptors constructing objects from one material and decorating them to look like they are made from another thus flirting with illusionism. Monumental sculptures may be made from plywood and then spray-painted to look 'as if' they were made of gold, bronze or steel. Painters produce works straight out of the Circle group, but on a larger scale and painted in industrial paint on aluminium rather than oil on canvas as with the work of the Amsterdam artist Han Schuil. The Kieffers, Schnabels, Fischls, Chias, and Immendorfs of the last decade are now fighting for magazine space and column inches with the Neo-Geo artists: John M Armleder, Gerwald Rockshaub, Phillip Taaffe, Richard Artschwager, Imi Knobel, Gunther Forg, Monika Brandmeier, Bernhard Prinz, Gerhard Merz, Julian Opie, Rosemary Troekel, Han Schuil John Carter, Rene Daniels, Harald Vlugt, Ashley Bickerton, Meyer Vaisman, Haim Steinbach, Jeff Koons, Carroll Dunham, Peter Halley and in their wake we have seen galleries stocking up on Judds, Flavins, Mondrians, Frantisek Kupkas, and especially Sol le Witt who recently appeared to be represented by every second Paris gallery.

Harald Vlugt is a young and successful Dutch artist whose work many would see as typifying much of the Neo-Geo or Fakist movement, but who prefers to use the term *minimal baroque*.

European Aesthetic is one of his sharpest works. The form is minimal, constructed from plywood and subtly angled like a Royden Rabinovitch floor sculpture, but the surface is covered with black linoleum upon which the arterial network of the suburbs of Paris has been projected and then traced. For a week Vlugt worked at a linoleum factory gouging out these arteries to a depth of about quarter of an inch and these were later filled with red wax and allowed to harden flush with the surface, thus producing a poetic transformation of an everyday material.

Interventionism often reveals the artist as cultural anarchist and this could range from the projections of cruise missiles upon civic buildings by Krzysztof Wodiczko, the political strategies explored by Conrad Atkinson and those of Hans Hacke through to the subversion of the Artangle Trust which cross most of the above areas.

Ingo Gunther, a young German artist exhibiting at Documenta 8, intervenes on a global scale. His installation at Kassel involved a whole room being clad in marble with a large marble 'altar' placed upon the centre of the marble floor. A projector was concealed in the roof and played across the white surface films taken by satelite of the earth's surface. Gunther buys declassified film from NASA and sifts through it with a disillusioned CIA agent living in Amsterdam. Together they discover missile sites and army installations around the globe and sell the information to ABC News and other press outlets which finances future projects. On the day I met him he had just discovered a large missile site in Iran; the following day I read in the Herald Tribune that Iran was boasting a new missile site the exact location of which it claimed neither super power knew.

Collaborative artworks. There is nothing new in artists collaborating except that it appears to be happening more often. Duos have become groups as we move from Gilbert and George, Ulay and Mariia Amramovich, and Komar and Melamid to the Irwin group as shown by Richard Demarco at Documenta 8, Group Material who are made up of Doug Ashford, Julie Ault, and Tim Rollins, and numerous conceptual and performance groups of which Minus Delta is typical, that is typically singular.

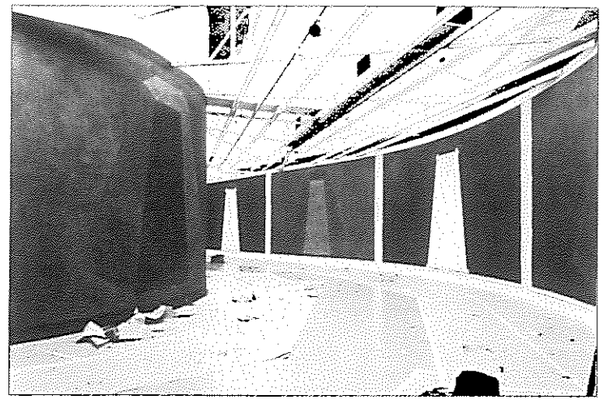
Minus Delta have been working as a group for nearly a decade. One lengthy performance involved transporting a huge stone around the world from a starting point in the Welsh hills through Paris, Iran and Tibet. On the way the stone was blessed by the Pope and later received by the Dalai Lama. Shares were sold in the stone and each shareholder received a golden key to the box which still rests secure in Tibet, halfway up a mountain.

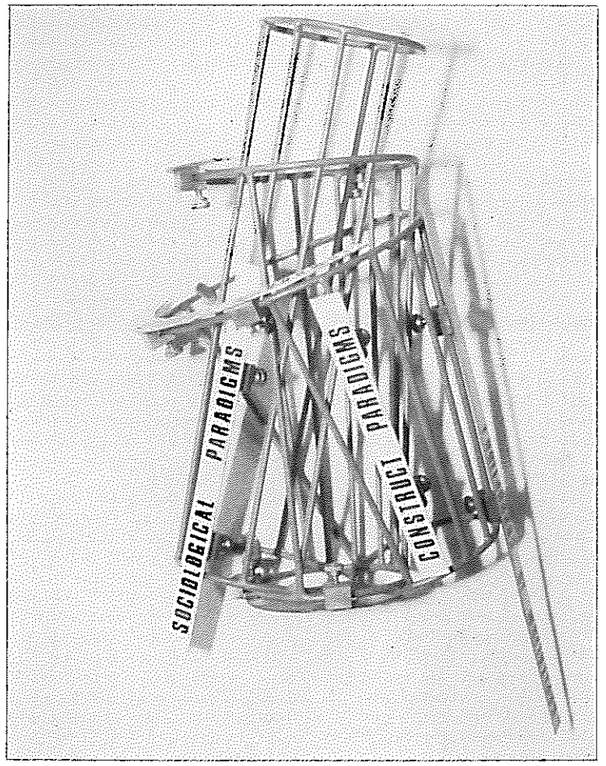
Art as *Fiction* and fiction as art, is another fairly subversive movement in which lies replace illusion in the artists repertoire. Artists are invented, fake adverts are taken in magazines, and the art market is hijaked.

Jerome Sans, writing in the catalogue of the New York exhibition *'F' Four French* in 1986 says of the group *Information Fiction Publicite*, founded by Jean Francois Brun and Dominique Pasqualini in 1984: 'From the outset by its choice of name, the group emphasises the ambiguity and the derision it uses both to play upon the multiplicity of contemporary means of communication and to develop their 'minimalist' writing. The conditions leading to the recovery of certain media images by artists at the beginning of this decade have themselves become the central concern of IFP.

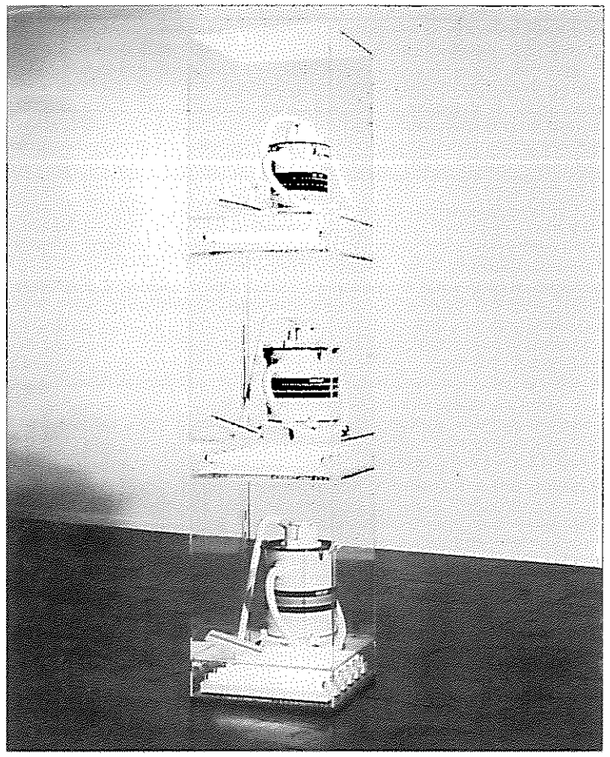
'Using the image of the blue sky, one of the most overworked media images - at once banalised by advertising and communications yet at the same time a universal image - a major element of art history, they have made it into a sign that introduces their territory..... The blue de-materialises the surface of the wall. What is real, what is information, becomes transformed into imaginary, into fiction. To enter the blue is, in a way, to go through the looking glass....'

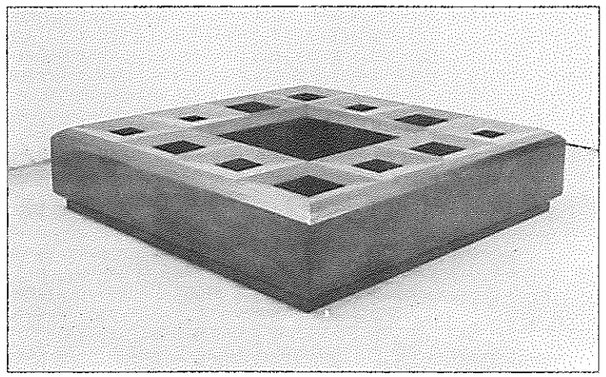
Some people say that the artworld is now blown right open, that all styles can co-exist peacefully, and that this is a function of the post-modern movement, yet they often go on to talk about a conflict between modernist and post-modernist aesthetics. Such definitions are fine for the critic and the exhibition organiser who need rules as much as pigeonholes. Artists are more anarchic than that. The creative individual knows that once all the rules have been learned they must be discarded, and the same goes for terminology. The only form of modernism





Sol Lewitt: *Mention Obligatoire*
Zvi Goldstein: *Anomalous Model XY423*
Page 44, opposite
Harald Vlugt: *Landshape*, 1985
Richard Bosman: *Shipwreck*





Jeff Koons: *New Shelton Wet/Dry Triple Decker, 1981*
Harald Vlugt: *Untitled*

that can now succeed is *synthetic modernism* for it allows the artist free rein to cross all boundaries and intelligently choose the building block of modernist and post-modernist thought that best suit his purpose.

Such a synthesis has already been acheived within the philosophy of science, giving us a model of how it is possible to body-swerve intellectually between various streams of thought. The person who has done it is Paul Feyerabend, a maverick and self-confessed double agent whose book *Against Method* is subtitled, 'Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge.' Claiming to be an anarcist in all senses except the political one he states: 'Science is an essentially anarchist enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives.' The same, I believe, holds true for art and creativity, and the same choices Feyerbend makes in his synthesis could be made between modernism and post modernism when he states:

'Let me now present in its entirety the picture of science which I think should replace Kuhn's account. This picture is the synthesis of the following two discoveries. First it contains Popper's discovery that science is advanced by a critical discussion of alternative views. Secondly, it contains Kuhn's discovery of the function of tenacity which he has expressed, mistakenly I think, by postulating tenacious periods. The synthesis consists in Lakatos assertion (which is developed in his own comments on Kuhn) that proliferation and tenacity do not belong to successive periods of the history of science, but are always co-present.'

Such a synthesis is already filtering through in the visual arts. At Documenta 8, and earlier in the year at the Pompidou Centre Zvi Goldstein exhibited his *Anomalous Model XY 423* and *Second Version [element F-6]*, sculptures which, using text, embody Khun's paradigm theories with questions such as 'What is a construct paradigm?' alongside expositions of Popper's Worlds 1, 2, and 3 which are really a clever extension of Cartesian dualism.

Thankfully, the future direction of art is, as it always has been, in the hands of artists and not in the gift of critics, the market, or exhibition organisers. Artists will always roam freely across whatever territory they choose, selecting or synthesising as they wish.

Art is not a battlefield upon which opposing sides meet, or a football match with a clear division between two distinct sets of supporters. Creativity is more subtle than that, more selective It is about being alone, playing chess against the universe.

The second part of this article will appear next year.

FOOTNOTES

1. 'When choosing the term 'anarchism' for my enterprise I simply followed general usage. However anarchism, as it has been practised in the past and as it is being practised today by an ever-increasing number of people has features I am not prepared to support. It cares little for human lives and human happiness (except for the lives and happiness of those who belong to some special group); and it contains precisely the kind of Puritanical dedication and seriousness which I detest. (There are some exquisite exceptions such as Cohn-Bendit, but they are in the minority.)

Paul Feyrabend Against Method, pub Verso, London
Ibid. (2)

REVIEWS

PETER DE FRANCIA

Painter and Professor, An Anthology at Camden Arts Centre, 26 May - 26 June, 1987

Exactly 10 years after their big showing of Peter de Francia's paintings, Camden now present us with what they describe as an anthology and not a retrospective of de Francia's drawings. This large exhibition consists of 180 works, beginning with a number of studies of Italian workers from the early 1950's and ending with a new drawing dedicated to the African National Congress made especially for the exhibition. Timothy Hyman worked with the artist on the formulation and selection of the exhibition and he tells us in his informative catalogue essay that 'the sequences of large drawn scenes are the works of de Francia that I have admired most. There is nothing else quite like them in contemporary art...' Is Hyman implying here that de Francia's drawings are more successful than his paintings - a point of view which the artist himself has candidly remarked upon. 'I'm able in drawings to make comments about what I see as the human situation. I find it very difficult to transmit these into painting.' It seems to me that what de Francia has managed to put into his remarkable body of drawings is *different* from the content of his paintings and it is in his drawings that he comes closest to his chief aim of exploring the 'Comedie Humaine' of our own times. Hyman is right to claim that there is nothing to compare with this achievement in contemporary British art.

De Francia was born in the South of France in 1921 and came to England in 1940 after escaping through occupied Belgium on a bicycle. He has remained something of an outsider in this country despite becoming Professor of Painting at the Royal College of Art. Indeed, many would claim that his work has been unjustly neglected. That the Tate Gallery only last year purchased a large painting and several drawings merely highlights the lack of interest shown in de Francia's work over the years. But working opposition to the main trends of the last 30 years hasn't prevented de Francia from forging an art of such power and conviction to outlast most of the fashionable preoccupations of his contemporaries. The Camden show documents his immense range as an artist as well as paying homage to his great mentors, Goya, Picasso, Leger, Guttuso, and Beckmann (there is a fine showing of examples of their work at the entrance to the exhibition) and clearly demonstrates that de Francia has never been simply derivative. His own personal characteristics emerge from almost every drawing, vindicating his ideas on a synthesis of languages coupled to the saying of something of importance.

The drawings from the 1950's reflect de Francia's interest in Italian neo-realism and include a number of impressive portraits. From there we move on to various sketches and studies for his big political painting of 1959, *The Bombing of Sakiet*. These works vibrate with a spontaniety of gesture surprising perhaps to those who are only aware of his later drawings. In the *Disparates* drawings of the 1960's (there are over 200 drawings in this particular series) de Francia is at his most savage, revealing his fierce critical anger at the ways of the world. But even here, and it is important to point this out, his satirical rage is tempered by a robust sense of humour. During the mid 1970's, de Francia produced a magnificent series of charcoal illustrations (his favourite medium) for Aime Cesaire's long poem *Return to my native land* (several of which have been acquired by MOMA, New York). These drawings are much less scathing in tone than the preceeding *Disparates*, being instead, more monumental and affirmative. The Mythological series of the last 10 years (Pandora, the Minotaur, Prometheus) continue this evolution of style and idea. These classical drawings suggest that the artist has returned in spirit to the Mediterranean lands of his birth.

De Francia knew Leger, Beckman, Grosz, and Guttuso. His great achievement has been to renew and re-work, in his own fashion, the humanist languages of painting which they handed down. This in turn has made it possible for him to assist the many younger artists who have come into contact with him in their attempts to make an art of ideas which could communicate with others. What a pity the exhibition isn't coming to Scotland.... Instead we have to put up with imported shows of a so-called radical nature; shows which display only intellectual poverty, aesthetic dullness, and a singular inability to engage in issues other than those of an isolated art world. De Francia, so often castigated by these 'radicals' as an old-fashioned marxist, has so much more to offer than any of them.

... As a footnote it is interesting to recall de Francia's last visit to Scotland in 1982. After delivering a memorable lecture on Philip Guston to a packed audience in Glasgow Schol of Art, he took a master class in drawing at the Fruitmarket Gallery the following day. Three of the students present on that occasion were Gwen Hardie, Ken Currie, and Adrian Wiszniewski.

Alexander Moffat

CRAIGIE AITCHISON
at Albermarle Gallery, April 1987

'The only perfect poem...is pure silence.
A very good poem...approaches this
silence.' (George Mackay Brown)

Craigie Aitchison's paintings are beautiful. His is one of the very few examples in contemporary art of which one could say such a thing. Looking at his recent paintings at the newly opened Albermarle Gallery in Albermarle Street (along the road from Marlborough) the spectator is granted that sense of the silent.

The pictures have presence. The colours are rich and luminous, deep and pure, like perfect pitch. The drawing is gentle and very sensitive, yet uncompromising. The imagery is timeless, through no contrivance or desire to be grand, but subsumed in the legacy of Giotto: a personal and contemporary mystery.

Silence is the ground of truly great art. Whilst some painters endlessly extend their vocabulary, Aitchison paints the same things, going straight to the still point.

In this exhibition are several crucifixions from 1984 to 1987. The first (1958) he ever painted was, like all since, based on the landscape of Arran. A telegraph pole became the cross. In 1960 he assimilated Giotto's Crucifixion with angels. His sky is deeper, more like the indigo of Simone Martini. The landscapes vibrate softly, with colour like Vuillard. Christ is alone, in reveriemore concentrated vision. The portraits are witness.

The recent work exhibits richer colours, perhaps a more concentrated vision. The portraits are still incisive, true to life and imagination at once. But it is the crucifixions and landscapes which give the deepest vision, are most concerned with pictorial space. A particular Scottish landscape, a memory from childhood, could also be Tuscany in the quattro-cento, or the dawn of time. As he says:

'Ever since the world began the same birds sit
on the same trees with the same leaves...'

They also sing the same song, that approaches silence. These are truly beautiful paints.

Malcolm Miles

MARGITA TITLOVA
Third Eye Centre, May 1987

In principle the display and discussion of art from Eastern Europe should be of interest and importance - and Glasgow's Third Eye Centre should receive credit for its previous exhibitions from Hungary and Poland and the present one of art from Czechoslovakia.

Modernism's bindings with the Empire, its readiness to be complicit in a cold war rhetoric of freedom and self expression finally began to be excavated in the wake of 1968. The wilder shores of nouveau melangism aside - wherein a flicker of interest in the products of the New York School is liable to meet with rapid and rigorous 'Egalitarian' suppression - modernism can now be placed in some historical perspective: neither autonomous, as it would have itself, nor complete catspaw of capitalist interests, but a fractured, flawed and displaced struggle for critical purchase on an increasingly resistant social formation. Only the wholly digested and easily celebrated 'modern art' was truly in flight from its world - and as such it will be, as it deserves to be, forgotten.

In contrast to this obsessive depth of cultural auto-critique, almost nothing is generally known about artistic and critical debate in the East. The fluctuations of Stalinist cultural policy - not to mention its imposition in eastern Europe after an initial post war continuation of Popular Frontism - nor successive attempts to shore up or break down socialist realism, nor indeed the complexity of argument around the towering figure of Lukacs, are scarcely discussed outside the specialist journals - and then as little more than an appendix or supplement to economic and political analysis.

When such a basic absence is set against an equally hazy but somehow more highly profiled - and because of its originating context therefore deeply suspect - knowledge of resistance to Stalinism, initially in East Germany, then in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and throughout the period, in Poland, then the scale of the problem for an adequate purhcase on supposedly dissident or at least unofficial art, should be evident. In film the situation is perhaps better: the work of Wadja, Tarkovsky, Jankcso and others is quite widely known. This is not the case in art.

Margita Titlova is a thirty year old artist from Prague. Her exhibited work consists of a dozen large drawings, half a dozen small drawings, and a set of five 'electrographs' - hand prints made with a piece of medical photograph equipment. Several of the drawings are about 8' high by 6' wide; some are larger, in one case as much as 15'x 10'. They are all on very rough heavy paper, irregularly cut, and unframed. One has a large hole, a sort of gash, torn in it; one has many small triangular holes, almost like stitching, cut out of the surface. The surfaces are heavily worked, mostly with chalk or charcoal. The colours are predominantly bright, not to say garish. This is less so with the largest and most interesting of the drawings. It is made of three roughly rectangular sheets of paper, stuck together slightly staggered, so that from a distance it reads rather like a fluttering flag. Two internal shapes are suggested, 'negatively', but the relative absence of the lines which cover the rest of the drawing, and the flecking of their edges with fingerprints; the two shapes read respectively as angular and organic (male and female?). The colour is more muted, being restricted to dark red handprints and a forest of variously thick jagged charcoal lines, smears, and specks. Two others of the more recent pictures also contain large gestalt shapes, but these are again highly coloured and made of flatter forms. They also incorporate some kind of hieroglyphic-primitivist squiggles around the edge. The hallmark of the whole show is Gesture, the Trace: swirls of red chalk spiralling out of the centre, jagged rapid charcoal lines covering the surface, swathes of orange and green and red, occasionally on gold backgrounds - which heightens their liturgical quality; and handprints - handprints everywhere, slapped down in red ink or paint. The studio as a sort of cross between an abattoir and a church is heavily implied in most of this work. The catalogue groans with mysticism. Titlova herself is quoted as saying 'I want my work to emanate the energy that I put in it. I want it to transmit that energy'. Vaclav Erben claims them as a 'permanent materialisation of artists physical and spiritual energy...There is no need for interpretation'. And Hanah Rousova sees them as magical objects: 'the practice of art as a way of performing magic; communicating a mysterious something for which there is no name'.

This kind of foundation course sub-Kandinsky gibberish is probably laughed at by now even in the more benighted provincial art schools of Scotland and England (But then again...). The point, however, is not to feel superior and advanced; that is merely to re-inscribe oneself the more invidiously in cold war myths of Freedom. The point is not just that a critical language is lacking, but that an adquate from of practice is lacking - which can alike transform the Stalinoid cultural landscape of eastern Europe without apeing the dubious freedoms of the West, and the desert of the West itself. Solidarnosc was riven with just such contradictions; but such self activity by those on the receiving end of state capitalism east and west, cultural and political, will alone change it. In the sphere of culture it is not enough, as Rousova's catalogue essay does, to bemoan Czechoslovakia's supposed 'isolation' from the modernist mainstream, and to claim that while 'authentic expression' has become untenable in the West it is 'acutely significant' still in the East. The point is that the concept is philosophically incoherent and politically reactionary, not that it is or isn't appropriate here and there. It would be ironic indeed if the jargon of authenticity, definitively remaindered by capitalism's own advance in the West, found its legitimating saviour in Glasnost.

Paul Wood

JOHN BYRNE
Tuttie Frutti
Rocking Through the Rye

It was Oscar Wide I think (it usually is), who observed that you would have to be blessed with a heart of stone not to crease yourself laughing at the death of Little Nell in Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*. In this century, the tragicomic syndrome was further examined by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles in their greatest hit *The Tears of a Clown*. That uncertain dividing line between humour and heartbreak and the human incapacity to distinguish them was brilliantly exploited by John Byrne in the final stages of *Tutti Frutti*, to such a degree that I literally didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

This confusion of response could, however, be a sign of the times present. As Elton John pointed out in *Crocodile Rock*, life was much simpler *'When Rock Was Young.'*

The Scotland of my teenage schooldays welcomed Rock 'n Roll in the late 1950's with open arms. Unlike today, we loved everything American from Jerry Lee Lewis to Jackson Pollock, and the sound and style of their Rock kings was music to our ears, and more. They simply and directly expressed in their songs experiences and emotions which were in tune with the younger Scottish urban working class. Just listen to Little Richard's frantic anticipations of weekend pleasures of dionysian propotions in *Rip It Up*, or Buddy Holly's clear conviction that his love is even bigger than the greatest achievement of human progress, the Cadillacs! Ah....as Wee Willie Wordsworth might have said,

'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
but to be young was... *Three Steps To Heaven.'*

What, however, if alas you live on, rather than *Rave On*, and are denied by the gods for good fortune to die, forever young, in a car crash like Eddy Cochran? Then you end up like the dinosauric Vinny Diver, *The Majestics'* lead guitarist *All Shook Up*, emotionally pole-axed by your suicidal baby doll lover, verbally castrated by your wife, and generally having your *Blue Suede Shoes* walked on by all and sundry. For Diver, *The Majestics'* silver jubilee coast to coast tour turns out to be a one-way Orphic descent from Paradisco Club (Ardrossan) to the Hades of the Glasgow Pavilion. In the end there is nothing left for the *Iron Man of Scottish rock* but to go out in a blaze of *great balls of fire*.

But *Tutti Frutti* was not all *Ain't that a shame*, no siree. There was also Big Bopper McClone in his silver lame oven foil suit 'belting it oot' with Suzi *Bony Maronie* Kettle and the Inverbervie Ceillidh Quintette. - Rock is dead, long live Rock 'n Roll.

Bill Hare

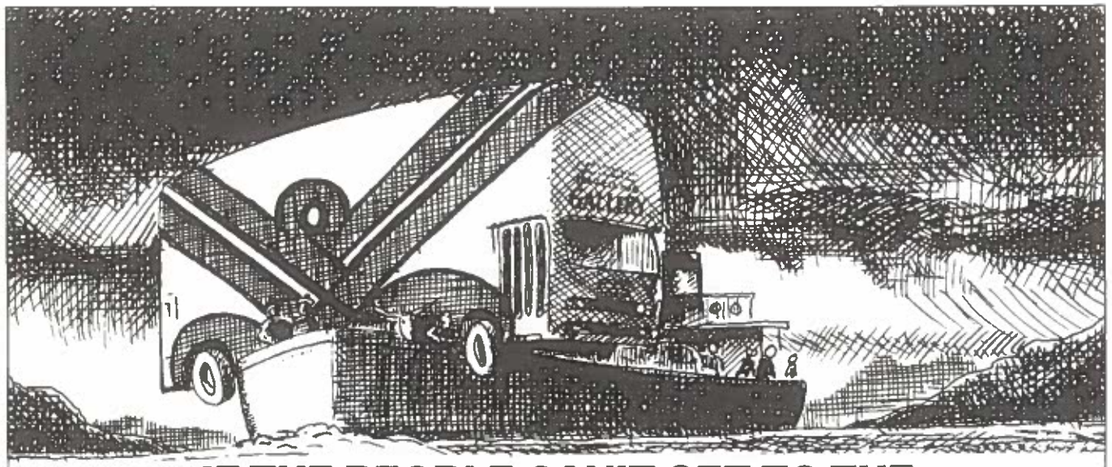
BALLA: THE FUTURIST
At the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art,
6 June - 19 July, 1987

We were liberally laying back the Lambrusco down Portobello (just a quick drink, consumed beneath the jabbering orifice of the television - that Babel of Modernity, to which we raised our glasses!). Then, 'Off! Off!' We went out. Out to the viewing at the Gallery of Modern Art (that Mount Calvary of crucified dreams!). We walked over a bridge where the locomotives pass at mad speed with red-hot bellies, and got into our waiting automobile (only fractionally more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace - being a Fiat Panda).

At last we arrived, first genuflecting before a large Mimmo Paladino (this time only fractionally more beautiful than a Fiat Panda), our hearts now racing with the speed of engineers! Yet what did we find, my friends and I?!! Sketches made important by having large frames and frames made unimportant by having no canvas! 'Enough!', I cried, 'Enough! Let us go! and let us now free Edinburgh from her countless galleries which cover her like numberless cemeteries!! Let us now turn the Waters of Leith and flood the vaults of this gallery!'

Your objections? I know them! But we will not listen!! We are off! With pick-axe and hammer in hand to destroy the dead, decaying art that surround us!! We must, we must!!!

Andrew Patrizio



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