

Alan Davie: *Jingling Space*

Richard Slee: *Panorama*

Partou Zia: *Entering the Visionary Zone*

25 October 2003 – 25 January 2004

Tate St Ives

Notes for Teachers

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Introduction

This winter Tate St Ives presents *Jingling Space* an exhibition of the work of Scottish artist Alan Davie. The exhibition highlights aspects of his work from the 1930s to the present day and includes oil paintings, gouaches, drawings and prints. The exhibition offers fresh insight particularly in his relationship to European Surrealism. Also on display,

Alan Davie Artists on Artists

A group of paintings selected from the Tate Collection including Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró and Jackson Pollock.

The Pier Arts Centre Collection

An exhibition of works by St Ives artists including Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost and Alfred Wallis.

Partou Zia Entering the Visionary Zone

A group of works selected from more than 40 paintings made by Partou Zia during her six-month residency at the Porthmeor Studios.

William Blake Collection Works

A small display of paintings and drawings by William Blake that have been selected by Partou Zia to accompany her works.

Richard Slee Panorama

A second chance to see Richard Slee's intriguing ceramic installation made especially for the showcase in Upper Gallery 2.

So how do we approach these displays?

The range and diversity of work on display can offer visitors a powerful experience. Not only can you explore the work of Alan Davie in depth but also consider his work in relation to his European and American contemporaries. Davie has strong connections to Cornwall. He has had a studio in the area since the 1950s and developed friendships with artists such as Peter Lanyon, Bryan Wynter and Patrick Heron. It is interesting to compare Davie's work with St Ives artists seen in the Pier Arts Centre Collection. In contrast, you can explore the ideas and inspiration of a younger artist Partou Zia and her fascination with the writings and paintings of William Blake. Or you can explore the humorous work of Richard Slee who challenges us to re-think many of our ideas about ceramic traditions.

This season's displays therefore present us with the following key points:

- An insight into the range and characteristics of Alan Davie's work
- An insight into the inspiration and influence of European and American artists on Alan Davie from Tate Collection selection
- St Ives artists represented by the Pier Arts Centre Collection
- An insight into the work of Partou Zia and her interest in William Blake
- An insight into the work of the ceramicist Richard Slee.

There are many starting points you could develop according to your group's needs and interests. Consider some of the following,

- Colour and rhythm
- Drawing and mark making
- Music/dance/jazz
- Symbols/myths/motifs
- Abstraction
- Surrealism
- Word and image
- Painting and poetry

- Magic and mystery
- The visionary world
- Dreamscapes and imaginary stories
- Transformation and change
- The spiritual in art
- Ceramics and installation works

Link to Art and Design Unit *Visiting a museum, gallery or site* or more specifically to Key Stages 1 and 2 Units *2A Picture This!*, *4A Viewpoints* or *4C Journeys*.

The aim of this pack is to provide information about the exhibiting artists, information about the works on display and suggestions of themes and issues to consider and discuss. Details of resources and further reading are also included.

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Gallery 1

The Pier Arts Centre Collection

In 1979 the Collector Margaret Gardiner gave an extraordinary collection of paintings and sculpture by St Ives artists to the Pier Arts Centre, Stromness in Orkney. Whilst the Pier Arts Centre renovates its space, the collection is being shown here in St Ives. The display provides an opportunity to see works by Alfred Wallis, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Roger Hilton, Margaret Mellis, Naum Gabo and William Scott rarely seen in St Ives. Also included in the display are two early works by Alan Davie *The Teapot* 1938 and *Landscape with a Bridge* 1945 and Christopher Wood's *The Fisherman's Farewell* 1928.

Key work

Alfred Wallis

Three Ships and Lighthouse (c1934-8)

Oil on card, 32 x 46.5 cm

Recto *St Ives Harbour: White Sailing Ship*

This painting shows St Ives harbour and Bay and Godrevy Lighthouse. In the front you can see the 'Seine' fishing boats used to catch pilchards. Wallis does not use conventional perspective - the elevated viewpoint of the bay is contradicted by the description of the black boats and the lighthouses, which are shown in profile. He used a limited palette of black, white and grey, leaving some areas of the brown card support unpainted. Wallis would use any available surface to paint on and this image is painted on the reverse of another work.

Wallis's use of shifting perspective and scale leads your eye around the picture. He conveys his memory of St Ives Bay in a very direct way. Wallis' paintings were admired by artists such as Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood and his influence can clearly be seen in works such as Wood's *The Fisherman's Farewell* 1928 included in this display.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room and find a work that catches your eye – look at it closely. Why do you think you noticed it more than the others? Can you find words to describe it?
- Now glance around the whole room again. What sorts of things do the artists displayed in this room have in common? Make a list.
- What do these works tell us about St Ives and its art?
- Most of the works are quite small – why do you think this is?

Things to think about

St Ives Artists. All the works in this room are by artists historically linked with St Ives. Consider what story it tells us about St Ives and its art. This room could provide the focus for a wider project looking at the history of St Ives. A visit to the Barbara Hepworth Museum would complement this display well.

Collectors and Collecting. All the works in this display were collected by one woman, Margaret Gardiner. They reflect her interests, tastes and choices as she built up her collection in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Gardiner is quite unique in that she collected for pleasure alone. It was her interest, friendship and support of many of the St Ives artists that dictated the shape of her private collection. This display provides the opportunity to consider this history of a private collection which is now owned by a public gallery. Note: most of the works are in their original frames and have not been touched by a conservator since they were first made.

Margaret Gardiner. Gardiner (b1904) is a writer, collector and philanthropist. She began collecting modern art in the 1930s at a time when it was often viewed with suspicion and ridicule in Britain. She was a close friend of Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson and her collection contains some of their finest works. She supported and collected many of the artists associated with St Ives during a period of economic depression and wartime austerity. In addition to her support of the arts, Gardiner has been a campaigner, educationalist and peace activist. She has been a supporter of the Howard League for Penal Reform and among her other causes was that of creating new water supplies in Africa. The establishment of the Pier Arts Centre Trust in 1979 which houses her art collection was almost entirely due to her energy and determination and she was awarded an OBE for her efforts.

St Ives and Orkney. Margaret Gardiner visited Orkney for the first time in 1956 and she then spent many holidays there. Her love of Orkney led her to initially set up the Sourin Trust to help Orcadian art students and then eventually the Pier Arts Centre which houses her art collection. One might question what connections St Ives artists have to Orkney. Yet for anyone who has been to both places the links are extraordinary. Beyond one woman's love of both places exists a fascinating range of issues about belonging and sense of place. This exhibition is entitled *Homecoming* because for the first time many of the works on display are being seen in the place in which they were first created. For locals and visitors to St Ives they can be seen afresh within this context.

Landscape: a sense of place. Consider how works in this display reflect a sense of place and interest in the Cornish landscape. Artists such as Hepworth, Lanyon and Wells were strongly influenced by their experience of Cornwall. Again, one might question whether it is appropriate for works so strongly linked to a place to be usually housed in a very different location. However their home in Orkney provides an interesting context in which to consider them. As Patrick Heron has pointed out,

'Like Orkney, West Penwith ... is an extremely ancient land, punctuated by natural outcrops of granite, almost entirely lacking in trees and riddled from end to end with the stone remains of Bronze Age walls and Stone Age settlements. Those celebrated standing stones, huts circles, quoits and cromlechs whose profiles break the windswept lines of the moors at Zennor or Morvah in West Penwith, surely have their close cousins in Orkney, at such sites as Skara Brae, Brogar, Stennes and others...So it is not so far-fetched to consider that this 'Orkney-Cornwall axis', as it were, was not a natural one for Margaret Gardiner to have established'
Patrick Heron 1978.

Abstraction. This room shows how many of the St Ives artists explored abstraction (see also Gallery 4, page 18 and Glossary page 30). It includes a range of works by artists who have in various ways developed an abstract language. It provides a good introduction to the ways artists use line, colour, transparency, shape and form to play with the illusion of space. It also demonstrates the wide range and often, experimental use of materials.

Space. These artists explore and describe space in different ways. All the works play with pictorial space and illusionism often denying traditional perspective and depth. They create a sense of space and surface tension through colour, shape, surface and texture.

Upper Gallery 2

Richard Slee

Panorama

Richard Slee presents a unique installation of his work entitled *Panorama* in the Ceramics showcase in Upper Gallery 2. Slee challenges the definitions of applied art with this extraordinary and humorous installation of ceramic pieces. Slee's objects refer to, copy even, ordinary every-day things, but add a dimension of surprise, of disruption, of incongruity and contradiction.

Slee is known for making fantastical sculptural ceramics using colourful glazes in hues associated with decorative porcelain of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most of his work is about the domestic interior and there are references to the decorative, ornamental and symbolic both from the past and in our contemporary culture. The forms he creates, such as animals and vessels, are ironic reconstructions of ceramic practice.

'Slee's understanding and appreciation of this [ceramic] tradition is anything but superficial. He understands that the ornamental tradition is meaningful for most people in as complex and as significant way as any self-conscious 'art'; over time, ornaments have been far more important in most people's lives than fine art ever has'. Dr Oliver Watson, exhibition catalogue 2002

Richard Slee was born in Cumbria in 1946. He studied at Carlisle College of Art and Design, The Central School of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art. He has worked as a design technician and ceramic design consultant. He has also taught widely and is currently Professor at the London Institute. He has exhibited widely both here and abroad and his work is represented in a range of international public collections. In 2002 he won the Jerwood Applied Arts Prize. He has his own studio in Brighton.

Trigger questions

- What sorts of things can you see in the showcase?
- What techniques and materials have been used in the creation of these objects?
- What has happened to them? How have they been transformed?
- Where are they?
- Can you think of titles for some of the objects, such as the rabbit or the duck?
- Is there a common theme? What connects the works?
- Why do you think Richard Slee has called this display *Panorama*?

Things to think about

Transforming the ordinary. Consider how Slee takes ordinary things and transforms them into the extraordinary. Rabbit, duck, snake and boats are transformed into magical objects. As Oliver Watson writes, *'they all take on a larger-than-life, part-menacing, part-comic, animated form.... I have described Slee before as the Grand Wizard of Studio Ceramics. Not just because of his looks, though the part of Art Professor at Hogwarts is waiting for him any time he wants. It is because of his ability to take the ordinary, and transform it before our eyes into the extraordinary'*.

Craft skill. Slee is a skilled craftsman. His work is all meticulously hand made and laboriously finished to ensure that there is no evidence of human touch. He describes himself not as an artist or sculptor but as a potter and his work reflects his sound knowledge and understanding of ceramic traditions.

Art, ornament and studio ceramics. Whilst a skilled craftsman, Slee challenges many of the traditions of studio ceramics. He is more interested in ornaments than hand-crafted pots. He looks at the history of popular ornaments, souvenirs and toys and appropriates them in order to

explore and question traditional studio ceramics. He creates a new kind of object which is hard to classify but which is neither decorative nor functional.

Scale, colour and surface. Slee tends to use a scale slightly larger than the norm. He says he wants to make everything a bit bigger than one might expect. The colours are brighter and the surfaces more glossy. Ordinary things – chocolate logs, a snake and a rabbit - take on a strange menacing quality.

Panorama. Slee says he was reminded of an old fashioned diorama when he first saw the showcase in Upper Gallery 2. He therefore chose to develop this idea of a 'panoramic' display of his work almost as if it is on a slow moving conveyor belt moving from left to right.

'A chocolate log swamp'. Slee describes the left hand side of his 'panorama' as a 'chocolate log swamp' through which things glide across an imaginary horizontal surface. He describes each piece which includes a *Domestic Bedroom Snake*, *Logs*, *Carpet Duck*, *Launches*, an *Appropriated* Rabbit*, a *Sword*, a *Monoplane*, *Clubs* and *Belle Tents* as if they are part of an unfolding story. However, their meanings are not fixed and his display offers visitors a range of ways to engage. We can explore it as if it is an imaginary narrative or we can look at the individual pieces and consider their own associations and connections.

* Appropriated here means to 'take from' or 'based on'.

Lower Gallery 2

Alan Davie

Jingling Space

In Lower Gallery 2 there are a group of major large-scale works by Alan Davie from the 1950s and 1960s. The display includes *Creation of Man* 1957 and *Holyman's Bird Meditation* 1960. The display also includes four triptychs (three-part paintings) and *Disintegrated Target* 1960 is hung above *Lush Life* 1961.

Alan Davie (b1920) is a Scottish painter and printmaker. He had his first one-person show in London in 1950 and has since exhibited world-wide. During his career Davie has explored a diverse range of activities including making jewellery and writing poetry. He is also an accomplished jazz musician. Davie studied at Edinburgh College of Art 1938-1940. From 1947-49 he travelled extensively in Europe studying both historic and modern art. In the 1950s Davie taught at the London Central School of Arts and Crafts before taking up a three-year Fellowship at Leeds University. During the 1960s Davie spent most summers in a remote cottage at St Buryan, West Cornwall. From 1967-71 Davie worked intermittently on a Berlin school mural. In 1971 he made his first visit to St Lucia in the Caribbean where he began to spend half of each year. Today Davie is based on Hertfordshire.

Keyword

***Patrick's Delight* 1960**

Triptych

Oil on canvas, 84 x 144 cm

This large three-part painting is dominated by an ovoid form in the central canvas. Other circular, square and rectangular forms appear to float within large blue and blue/green spaces. Davie combines areas of colour with stripes, spots, dabs and dribbles of paint across the surface. Some of the brush marks look almost like writing.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room. What are your first impressions of Davie's work?
- What do you think the paintings are about? What do all the paintings have in common?
- Davie makes use of a diverse range of imagery. Can you make sense of these apparently disconnected images?
- Why do you think the exhibition has the overall title *Jingling Space*?
- Now look at *Patrick's Delight*. What shapes and colours do you see first?
- Stand close to the painting (but not too close!) and then move further away. What do you notice?
- How many different sizes and types of brush marks can you see?
- How would you describe the way Davie applies the paint to canvas?
- Why do you think he painted it in three parts?

Things To Think About

Energetic brushwork. Davie said that at this time he tended to work on the floor using big brushes and pots of liquid paint that he had mixed. His brushwork varies from dramatic sweeps, smooth layers to wispy graffiti-like marks. Davie's technique has been compared to that of the American artist Jackson Pollock who also worked in this way and whose work Davie saw in Venice in the late 1940s. However, Pollock used the splashes and brush marks to dictate the final painting whereas Davie builds up layers of densely worked colours and shapes to create his pictures in an exercise of trial and error. Quite often the final painting may cover ten or even twenty earlier attempts, where Davie has built up, destroyed and then re-worked the picture surface. Compare Davie's work to Pollock's *Yellow Islands* 1952 displayed in Gallery 4. See also the film of Davie working screened at the Exhibition Study Point.

Intuitive approach. Davie's paintings have no preconceived composition or plan. He works quickly (and usually on more than one work at a time) without giving time to think about what the picture is going to be about. He wants his work to be intuitive and spontaneous. He compares this process to the Surrealist idea of 'automatism' whereby if you free yourself from conscious thinking you can liberate subconscious ideas. Davie has been influenced by Surrealist artists such as Paul Klee, Max Ernst and Joan Miró. Examples of their work can be seen in Gallery 4 (page 18). It is interesting to debate whether it is ever possible to be totally intuitive.

Zen Buddhism. Davie has been interested in Zen Buddhism since the 1950s. Influenced by his reading of Eugene Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* (1953), Davie concluded that conscious decision making was incompatible with a spiritual quest. He compares his intuitive or instinctual way of working to that of a Zen artist who will prepare all his colours and materials and then sit and empty his mind of any ideas and just start to paint.

Colour and shape. Look at the profusion of colour and shape in Davie's paintings. Davie plays with the tension between the free flow of the brush and larger forms that emerge from the overall structure and juxtaposition of diverse imagery. Davie began to increasingly use a repertoire of shapes and symbols such as the circle or ovoid as seen in *Patrick's Delight*.

Space. Look at the large spaces and divisions within his paintings. Davie plays with the 'push and pull' between the paint surface and implied depth. *Patrick's Delight* shows how Davie is relying more on the 'interval' - the spaces between his shapes - to create a sense of space.

Scale. Davie made many large paintings during this period. Their size partly dictated his technique of working on the floor with liquid paint. The scale of the work demanded a very physical response to it – Davie had to literally work 'in' the painting. See the film of Davie working screened at the Exhibition Study Point.

Music and improvisation. Davie is a jazz musician and he makes clear links between his painting and music. He says painting '...is very much like improvising on a piano – sitting down and playing, an idea will appear out of putting one note against another, which leads to other notes and before you know where you are, a melodic line has appeared'. You might like to consider other artists who have been interested in the relationship between art and music such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

Abstraction. Davie does not consider himself an abstract painter. He says he has never been interested in pure abstraction. He considers all marks on a surface to have some kind of symbolic quality (see Gallery 4 page 18 and also the Glossary page 30).

Titles. Davie titles his paintings after he has finished working on them. He says his titles are poetic and are not meant to explain or clarify the painting in anyway. *Patrick's Delight* was named as a tribute to the artist Patrick Heron. Apparently Heron had seen Davie's painting and said that he particularly liked it.

Cornwall and St Ives artists. As *Patrick's Delight* indicates, Davie had contact with a number of St Ives artists during his summer visits to Cornwall. He was familiar with the concerns and issues of artists such as Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon and Roger Hilton at this time and his own development can be seen in parallel with theirs (See Gallery 1 & 4). Davie has had a studio in Cornwall since the 1950s. He, like many artists, has been inspired by the powerful Cornish landscape and history.

Triptychs. Davie has often used the triptych format. He found it more practical to work on three smaller canvases in his studio rather than one large. The triptych format also allowed him to experiment with the relationships in colour and form between each section. Sometimes he hangs the canvases with a small gap between each one. Traditionally the triptych format was often used for religious altar-piece paintings many of which Davie would have seen during his travels in Europe in the late 1940s. Consider other well known triptychs such as Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* 1515 or Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for the Base of a Crucifixion* 1944.

The Studio

Alan Davie

In the studio you will find a selection of Alan Davie's gouaches from the late 1990s highlighting his creative vision of the world through mapping/charting and topography. He creates strange landscapes that seem to combine the real world with fantastical diagrams.

Key work

Shaman's Window No 3 1999

Gouache on paper, 22 x 26 cm

Here Davie combines bold patterns, shapes and symbols with dazzling colour. He combines the black line of his drawing style with delicate brushwork and intricate details. Strong circles, coils and chequered lines contrast with soft feathery paintwork. You can see numerous shapes and symbols such as crosses, towers and eyes. A deep sense of space is created by the foreground 'stage' while far in the distance you can see chimneys, rooftops and church towers sitting high on the horizon.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room. What do all these works have in common?
- Why do you think they are so small?
- Why do you think Davie juxtaposes geometric, symbolic, organic, realistic and dream-like forms?
- What shapes, objects or symbols does Davie seem to repeat in his work?
- Choose one work to look at in more detail. Describe some of the shapes and colours.
- Can you recognise any particular shapes?
- Why do you think Davie uses black outlines?

Things to think about

Charts and maps. Some of Davie's works on paper look like charts or maps. They remind you of pirates' maps or ancient shipping charts. Davie says he is fascinated by medieval maps and those of the Carib Indians which look more like mysterious diagrams than realistic places.

Aerial views and landscapes. Davie's activities include underwater swimming and gliding. He likes to experience the natural world in many different ways and from different angles. These gouaches often suggest wide aerial viewpoints and shifting scales and perspectives. They also include elements of landscape such as houses and trees. Apparently while he was making the series *Island Maps* he flew over to the Orkney Islands off the North East coast of Scotland. He was struck by how similar the aerial view of the islands and sea were to his paintings. Compare Davie's work with Peter Lanyon's (see Gallery 1, page 5 and Gallery 4, page 18) whose painting was also influenced by the 'all encompassing view' experienced when gliding.

Drawing. Davie believes the art of drawing is commonly misunderstood; creating a perfect likeness is merely 'hand and eye co-ordination' which is not directly linked to creative expression. Davie draws in a very direct way using a brush and black gouache paint – a technique which was triggered by seeing the prehistoric Egyptian pottery decoration in the British Museum.

Black outlines. Davie's drawings and gouaches are characterised by bold black outlines. He says that black has always been important for him and talks of the power of black images which 'seem to leap off the page'. See also Davie's prints in the Café and recent drawings using white gouache on black in the Mall.

Coloured drawings. Davie has tended to make numerous black and white drawings which then lead to a series of large oil paintings. With these works he decided to work on a medium scale and simply develop the drawings with colour using gouache. They therefore have a particular quality that seems to combine his stark black drawing line with the bright translucent quality of watercolour.

Working on paper. Davie says that working on paper is more fluid compared to working large scale in oils. He says 'the medium is so mysterious, so inspirational. All you have to do is soak colour onto a piece of paper and all sorts of exciting things happen, which you can never do in oil paint. One can do dozens of small things very quickly and spontaneously'.

Pattern, shape, colour and rhythm. Davie combines shapes, symbols, patterns and colours in such a way to create a sense of rhythm and energy within his pictures. He uses stripes, spots and chequered squares, symbols such as circles and serpents as well as representational shapes such as houses. These gouaches are particularly reminiscent of Australian Aboriginal art which Davie has studied closely (see Gallery 5, page 20).

Words and images. Since the 1970s Davie has often included letters or passages of writing in Spanish, English or unknown script within his drawings and paintings. Davie says they are not supposed to have any meaning but simply add another dimension, an element of poetry or mystery. He has always been fascinated by medieval manuscripts and ancient art forms which combine script and painted image. He says 'there is something very fascinating about words, and incorporating words in a painting has a very strange effect. It leads one into a new dimension and makes one look at the image from a new angle'.

Shamans and spirits. Davie is interested in role of the shaman* as a spiritual leader and he compares the role of the artist. He says 'I feel the artist is still a shaman, able to enter this spiritual realm and produce these fantastic images out of the unconscious, or the spirit world'. You could say that Davie's paintings are more about the spirit world than the real world and he describes his quest as an artist to search for 'a formula for the magic conjuring of the unknowable'.

'I feel very close to the alchemists of old. Art is the evocation of the inexpressible by images, symbols, sounds, movement of ritual. The most important things are instinctual.'
Alan Davie, 1989

* A shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits, especially among some peoples of northern Asia and North America.

The Apse

William Blake

Collection works

To complement Partou Zia's exhibition a small selection of paintings and drawings by William Blake from the Tate Collection are on display. Works include *Agony in the Garden* c1799-1800 and *The Soul Hovering over the Body Reluctantly Parting with Life* c1805.

William Blake (1757-1827). English poet, painter, illustrator and printmaker. He is known for his visionary work in words and images and for his opposition to the academic principles of the day. He studied drawing and printmaking, working as an engraver from 1772. In 1779 he began studying at the Royal Academy Schools and became friends with other artists such as Henry Fuseli and John Flaxman. He developed a method known as 'illuminated printing' which combined handwritten text and hand-coloured illustrations and he published *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) using this method. Blake developed his own religious and philosophical system based on his understanding of Christianity combined with his reading of the mystical writings of, for example, Emmanuel Swedenborg. He produced a series of 'prophetic' books that combined his own religious beliefs with revolutionary political views. His publications include *The Book of Thel* (1789), *America; A Prophecy* (1793), *Urizen and Europe; A Prophecy* (1794) and *The Book of Vala* (1797) and the *Four Zoas* (1797-1808). He produced a large number of watercolours illustrating parts of the Bible and of Milton. The painters John Linnell and Samuel Palmer formed part of a circle of young artists around him, known as the 'Ancients'. However, Blake's work was not well received in his day and it is only in more recent times that he has been hailed a great Romantic artist. Blake claimed to be guided by supernatural forces and although much of his work remains obscured by private symbolism his prophecies have continued to fascinate and speak to a modern world.

Key work

***The Soul Hovering over the Body Reluctantly Parting with Life* c1805**

Pencil on paper support, 27.2 x 45.6 cm

In this drawing the feminine soul hovers over a dying man. The man is drawn in strong bold line, the hovering soul in softer delicate line. Next to the man is a lyre and wreath. This is a sketch for a design that Blake made for an edition of Robert Blair's poem *The Grave* (published 1808). Blake's illustrations to the book were later engraved by Luigi Schiavonetti. In the print the dying man is shown lying on his back without the lyre and wreath. Blake frequently used the horizontal pose, reminiscent of tomb sculpture, as a symbol for death and despair.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room. Describe the mood/atmosphere created by these paintings and drawings
- What do all they all have in common?
- Look at one work closely. Describe what you can see
- Describe the way Blake draws figures
- Describe the way Blake uses paint and colour
- What sorts of subjects does Blake seem to be interested in?
- Why do you think a painter working today such as Partou Zia (see Gallery 4, page 18) would be interested in the work of Blake? What can we learn by studying his art?

Things to think about

Line. Blake trained as an engraver rather than a painter and the emphasis in his art is always on line. He was influenced by the linear design of medieval art and when he worked as an engraver he spent many hours drawing the tomb sculpture in Westminster Abbey. He also greatly admired the drawings and sculpture of Michelangelo which he knew from engravings. Blake's figures often combine a linear quality with muscular bodies reminiscent of Michelangelo.

Painting. Blake's preferred painting media was watercolour. He developed his own colour printing technique as a means of making larger independent prints on biblical, Shakespearian and other subjects. He would paint directly onto a piece of board and then take an impression from it. He would take three or four prints from the board and then add line and colour by hand using ink and watercolour. Many of his 'paintings' made in this way show the texture of the board as a mottling effect in the print.

The Bible. Blake studied the Bible in detail and had intimate knowledge of its stories. He was a deeply religious man, although his ideas depart radically from orthodox Christianity. He also had extensive knowledge of writers such as Milton and Dante and he made illustrations for their work reinterpreting it in his own way.

Blake's mythology. Blake created his own mythology and a range of characters that evolve through his books in increasingly complex ways. He used poses and attributes to identify particular characters and ideas. He also drew on biblical and historical and literary figures transforming them into symbolic representations within his own poetic world.

Albion and the four Zoas. Blake uses the figure of Albion to stand for both England and mankind. He describes Albion's fall which is brought about by his division into the four Zoas.* For Blake these are depicted as four separate characters who each represent one of the four aspects of man: Tharmas (the body); Erizen (reason); Luvah (emotion) and Los-Urthona (imagination). Albion can only be saved by the reunion of these four elements, restoring his wholeness. (See Partou's Zia's interpretation of the four Zoas, [page](#))

* Zoas is the Greek name for the four beasts of the Apocalypse as described in the Book of Revelation.

The imagination. Blake emphasised the spiritual and imaginative world. He saw the imagination as the way to explore the intangible aspects of mankind. He rejected the world of reason and science claiming that scientists such as Isaac Newton chained man to fact. A central figure in his mythology is Los representing imagination.

The visionary and spiritual world. Blake's paintings draw on the world of man and nature however his concern was to create a visionary world. Blake believed in a literal as well as a metaphorical world of spirits. He described spirits who visited and guided his art. He drew images of these visionary figures including his famous *Ghost of a Flea* (c1819-20). Blake said that while he was working on this image the flea told him that all fleas were inhabited by the souls of those men who had been bloodthirsty to excess during their lifetime.

Good and Evil. For Blake, life was made up of opposing forces and much of his work explores and 'teaches' about good and evil. His writings and visual images frequently play out this dualism with contrasting characters, themes, colour, pose, light and dark. Consider, for example the 'good' soul hovering over the 'self-indulgent' man in *The Soul Hovering over the Body Reluctantly Parting with Life*.

Poet and painter. Blake saw himself as a poet as well as a painter. His images are nearly always related to text. Although there are no examples in this exhibition it is interesting to consider Blake's unusual way of combining word and images. Why not compare Blake's use of word and image to Davie and Partou Zia.

Gallery Three

Partou Zia

Entering the Visionary Zone

This display shows work by Partou Zia completed this year as part of her residency at Number 5 Porthmeor Studios. The Tate St Ives Artists Residency Programme, a collaboration with the Borlase Smart, John Wells Trust, has been developed to support the development of emerging young artists, living and working in Cornwall. Partou, the first artist to work on the programme, has used her six-month residency to create a new series of paintings which reflect on the writing and painting of William Blake.

Partou Zia was born in Tehran, Persia in 1958. She emigrated to England in 1970, studying at Warwick University and the Slade School of Fine Art. She has been based in Cornwall since 1993 and has exhibited widely in this country.

Key work

My Accomplice II 2003

Oil on canvas, 154 x 183 cm

This painting is dominated by a central figure that has her back to us. Down the spine of her back the number eight has been repeated. The figure has her left hand touching a sleeping head. Another figure or perhaps a reflection appears behind in a ghostly outline. In the right foreground Partou has painted a classical architectural feature and on the left there is a pair of shoes or sandals next to what appears to be a blue rug. Partou's paint swirls across the surface, she uses dark outlines to draw her figures but combines this with areas of smeared and scraped paint. Her colours are dull and murky except for the strong contrast between the red of the figures and blue rug in the foreground. Her composition creates a strange sense of space.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room. Describe the mood/atmosphere created by these paintings.
- What do all the paintings have in common?
- Who do you think the figure with her back to us is? What other figures can you see?
- List some of the objects you can see in Partou's paintings. Why do you think she likes to paint gloves and shoes?
- Look closely at the surface of the paintings. Can you think of words to describe the way Partou uses paint?
- What colours does she prefer? How would you describe her palette?
- How does she create a sense of space within her pictures?

Things to think about

The Visionary Zone. Partou's paintings have a lyrical or poetic quality to them. Her figures and objects are placed in dream-like spaces and she seems to combine the objective with the subjective. Rather like Blake's juxtaposition of good and evil, Partou plays with the dualism of observed reality and the evocative/spiritual world. She describes her paintings as 'interior' landscapes or 'dreamscapes'. The artist talks of trying to capture an elusive moment, the 'visionary zone' or a 'moment of being'. Partou describes Blake's work 'as though he was speaking from the dream world. And I suppose I want my paintings to come from that same sense of unreality'.

Storytelling. Partou describes her work like ‘action movie stills, moments and actions frozen... we, the onlooker are given the chance to dream into the possible story-line’. Apart from Blake, Partou cites the great ‘storytellers’ of Persian manuscripts and epic poetry, late Gothic and early Renaissance paintings as her inspiration.

Blake and the Four Zoas. Under the terms of the residency, Partou was invited to respond to the work of an artist represented in the Tate Collection. She chose to study closely Blake’s first epic poem Vala (1797) or as known in its final version, The Four Zoas (1797-1807) in which Blake attempts to re-address Christian ideas of original sin and loss of innocence in his own unique and highly personal interpretation. Partou is particularly interested in Blake’s idea of the ‘shattered individual’ that is split into four different aspects which she describes as Passion, Reason, Sensation and Instinct. She relates Blake’s ideas to her own experience as a child in Iran and as a Persian woman living and working in the UK. (see Blake’s work in Apse, page 14)

Identity and love. Partou is interested in exploring her own identity as a woman and a painter and she has painted many self-portraits. In this series of new works a figure which has her back to us appears a number of times. Partou says that this figure is possibly some sort of alter-ego but her identity remains enigmatic and undisclosed. In the pictures the alter-ego appears to direct, caress or protect a pair of lovers. She links the alter-ego and the motif of the lovers to Blake’s ideas of the split-self and the desire to find some kind of reunification.

Memory and remembered objects. Memory has always fascinated Partou and many of her paintings have explored feelings of loss and absence. Her paintings contain fragments of ancient sculptures or monuments combined with her favourite and more personal motifs such as books, shoes and gloves. These objects, painted in different scales and spaces, suggest memories or past histories and cultures.

Drawing with paint. Partou made all these paintings by ‘drawing’ in paint straight onto the canvas. In the past she has always worked from preparatory drawings before beginning a painting. She says the experience of working straight on the canvas has been very liberating and her recent paintings show a freer and more expressive handling of paint.

Palette and tonality. Partou’s paintings have a particular soft tonal quality. However, her new paintings are stronger in colour and colour contrasts. She says ‘...to paint an imaginative world in strong colours is another step for me, because it’s not a specific place I’m replicating – it’s an interior colour, an interior world’.

Numbers. Partou has a love of numbers and they often appear in her work. She talks of the complexity and mystery of numbers. It is interesting that she has chosen number eight which is considered a perfect number and hence the symbol of infinity.

Stitched thread. The motif of stitched thread appears in a number of her paintings conveyed by aggressive marks scratched into the paint. This motif becomes a symbol for the locked mystery of the painted image. The canvas is literally ‘closed up’. Apparently Partou was appalled by news reports of an Iranian refugee in Britain who had stitched up his eyelids and lips to protest against the plight of asylum seekers. This event symbolised the very real horror of being closed-up - of being silenced.

Gallery 4

Alan Davie

Artist on Artists

Artists on Artists is an ongoing series of displays drawn from the Tate Collection. Works have been selected to complement and support the exhibition of Davie's work. The selection aims to give further insight into Davie's interests and inspiration. The selection includes some of the 'great masters' of twentieth century art such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse as well as artists associated with Surrealism such as Paul Klee, Joan Miró and Max Ernst and a work by Jackson Pollock. Also included are artists associated with St Ives and with whom Davie was personally acquainted such as Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon and Roger Hilton. Davie's painting *Jingling Space* 1950 is included in the display.

Key work

Joan Miró

***Women and Bird in the Moonlight* 1949**

Oil on canvas, 8.13 x 6.6 cm

Here Miró has painted a dream world where forms seem to float in a mysterious space. Some of the forms are indicated by white or black lines while others are painted with bold colours. The orange/brown ground has an extraordinary soft dense feel to it. Apparently the shapes held personal meanings for Miró but they can also be identified with the women and bird of the title. This painting is part of a series of very elaborate works which Miró painted slowly only giving them their titles when they were complete.

Trigger questions

- As you walk into this room, what are your immediate impressions?
- Look around the room and find a work that catches your eye – look at it closely. Why do you think you noticed it more than the others? Can you describe it?
- Now glance around the whole room again. Do some of the works have things in common (such as colour, brushwork, space etc.)? Try making a list.
- Can you think why these particular works have been selected to accompany Alan Davie's exhibition.

Things to think about

Post war Europe. In 1948 Davie travelled to Europe and by chance saw work by Klee, Ernst and Miró at the Venice Biennale. He was also introduced to Peggy Guggenheim and it was at her museum that he first saw work by Jackson Pollock. Davie states that this is the moment he 'woke up...from then on I painted non-stop'.

CoBrA. Davie's style of painting has often led him to be associated with CoBrA and he was acquainted with fellow Scottish artist William Gear who was involved. CoBrA works are characterised by the vibrant use of unmixed colours to create paintings of spontaneity and imagination. Like Davie they sought inspiration from non-European art – primitive signs and symbols, Eastern Calligraphy and prehistoric art.

Surrealism. Davie has been strongly influenced by Surrealism. His emphasis on a spontaneous and intuitive response to drawing and painting is similar to the Surrealist idea of 'automatism'. The Surrealist exploration of dreams and fantasy and the, often bizarre, juxtaposition of confusing imagery can be compared to Davie's own exploration of signs and symbols and his treatment of space in his paintings.

Abstraction. Davie's work from the 50s and 60s could be described as abstract – although he would never consider it so (see Lower Gallery 2, page 9). However, his work can be seen within the context of post-war European and American art and, in particular, a concern to develop an abstract language. Consider some of the different ways artists such as Pollock, Heron, Gear and Lanyon, explore abstraction in the works displayed here.

Imaginative spaces. Davie's paintings often explore unusual and dream-like spaces. Consider how some of the artists he has selected explore space in their paintings. Contrast for example Klee and Miró's ghostly scenes with Gear or Lanyon's 'landscapes'. Apparently Ernst used the forest as a symbol for the imagination while Picasso called the views of his studio 'interior landscapes' as a metaphor for the artist's mind.

Bold colour and paint work. Look at the way each artist handles his paint and colour. The chosen works all show an energetic and unusual way of treating paint and the surface of the picture. Look at the movement and tension in works such as Lanyon's *Lost Mine* 1959, Pollock's *Yellow Islands* 1952 or Hilton's *Untitled* 1971. Roger Hilton commented 'I like my colours dynamic and strongly contrasted. After all, one prefers something alive to something dead. The more alive a person or a picture, the better they are...'

Please refer to the Appendices for biographies of the artists included in this display and for a fuller explanation of some of the art terms.

Gallery 5

Alan Davie

Jingling Space

In this gallery you will see a group of paintings by Davie that show his increasing interest in cosmic mythologies and his connection with Surrealism. It includes paintings from the 1970s such as *Fairy Tree No 5* 1971 or *Dancer Myth No 6* 1977 and more recent works such as *Cosmic Signals # 7* 2002.

Key work

***Flight of the Flieblies No 4* 1973**

Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 cm

This small painting is full of surreal drama. Strange animal-like forms can be seen on a red ground. The space suggests a stage set with a screen on the left and a chequered wall on the right. The far horizon and clouds can be seen beyond. There is a painting hanging off the chequered wall which could also be a window until you realise its not the same sky. The forms suggest birds and serpents but they are combined with circles that look like both eyes and targets. On the left there is an area of energetic brushwork creating a strong contrast to the bold black lines of the other shapes.

Trigger questions

- As you walk into this room what are your immediate impressions?
- Can you identify some of the signs and symbols Davie uses? What do they mean to you?
- What century or age do his images relate to?
- Can you identify some of the different cultural influences on his work?
- What do you think about the idea of using signs and symbols from diverse cultures and historical periods?
- How does Davie create a sense of space in his paintings?
- What seem to be his preferred colours?
- Look closely at *Flight of the Flieblies No 4*. Describe all the different shapes/objects/things you can see?
- What do the circular shapes remind you of?
- Why do you think Davie called it *Flight of the Flieblies No 4*?

Things to think about

Shapes defined by line. In contrast to Davie's earlier works which are characterised by energetic brush marks (see Gallery 4, page 18) his paintings since the 1970s are more tightly controlled, shapes become more defined, incorporating intense colours. The ovoids, diamonds and triangles are replaced with crosses, clubs, striped motifs, spirals, snakes, the moon, eyes, arrows, wheels, locks and the ancient ankh symbol.

Colour. Davie talks of the 'mysterious element of colour' and compares colour to sound waves. He says certain colour juxtapositions produce a 'vibration' similar to the construction of a musical chord. You might like to consider other artists/musicians such as John Cage, who have explored the relationship between colour and sound.

Space. Davie introduces perspective and a sense of 3D space within his paintings. In some he suggests an interior space while others suggest landscapes with distance horizons. In *Flight of the Flieblies No 4* he has painted a screen to suggest a room or stage that creates a strong theatrical quality.

Surrealism. Davie's paintings from the 1970s show the strong influence of Surrealism (see Appendix II page 30). They are characterised by strange dream-like spaces and abstract forms reminiscent of the work of Miró or Ernst (see Gallery 4, page 18). He also plays visual tricks (for example the 'window' in *Flight of the Flieblies No 4*) similar to those found in the work of René Magritte.

Signs and symbols. Since the 1970s Davie has introduced signs and symbols within his paintings. Some are simply 'accidental' and grow out of his colour and brushwork, some are ambiguous and suggestive of representational objects while others are recognised symbols such as the serpent and chessboard seen in *Flight of the Flieblies No 4*.

Transformation/metamorphosis. Consider the way some of Davie's objects and symbols seem to be in a process of transformation or change. He appears to enjoy combining the overt with the hidden and the narrative with the evocative or symbolic.

Strange objects and 'presences'. Some of Davie's shapes have a very strong animal, human or sexual feel to them. They have a strong biomorphic quality (decorative forms representing living organisms) and one writer has described them as 'presences'.

Interpreting signs and symbols. Many of Davie's signs and symbols seem familiar but are difficult to pin down. He has created his own personal and esoteric language that draws on a diverse range of sources. Davie argues that signs and symbols are open to many interpretations and should not be regarded as having fixed meanings. He deliberately uses these shapes because they are dream-like and 'magical'.

Primitive art. Davie is interested in the art of so-called primitive people. He is also interested in ancient and non-Western belief systems and their religious expressions. For example, he has studied Australian Aboriginal art, African tribal sculpture and masks, the American Indians, the Jain religion of India and the Carib Indians of the Caribbean. He believes art has a spiritual purpose and he says 'in primitive art there seems to be some kind of spiritual intensity...it also has this dynamic quality, intuition and a tremendous intensity.'

Archetypal imagery. Davie's fascination with primitive art and ancient symbols has led him to believe that there is some sort of archetypal imagery. Influenced by the writings of Carl Jung, Davie notes that you will find the same kind of images and symbols in all sorts of cultures that are not related. This has led him to create paintings that explore some of the same symbols. It is interesting to consider whether he achieves this and how we relate/interpret imagery which can mean very different things according to our own personal histories and cultures.

Titles. As stated earlier (Lower Gallery 2, page 9), Davie titles his work after he has finished them. His titles are poetic and are not intended to explain or clarify the work. However, some of his titles in his more recent work do seem to link directly to the symbols he uses within his paintings encouraging us to identify with, for example, a principle 'character'.

Writing and magical marks. Davie is interested in the history of writing, hieroglyphs, calligraphy and illuminated manuscripts and what he describes as the magical and symbolic significance of mark making. For example he has studied the petroglyphs of the Carib Indians which are ancient engravings in stone.

Café

Alan Davie *Impromptus 2001* Print Series

The prints shown here are taken from a set of sixteen etchings, edited by Paragon Press, made by Alan Davie between April and June 2001

Heron Mall

In the Heron Mall you will find a display of new drawings by Davie where he has used white gouache on black paper.

Things to think about

White on black. Davie was inspired to make this series of new drawings following his experience making a woodcut print for the Tate St Ives series. Woodcut prints are a new process for Davie and it made him explore the reverse image process involved in relief printing. He says, '...I got so interested in this black on white. I have never done that before. There is something fascinating about doing a drawing in white on a black background, and then adding some black as well so the combination of black and white on a black background opens up all sorts of new possibilities....you get these wonderful, magical qualities in negatives.'

Drawings in series. Davie made a large number of these drawings in a short space of time. He usually works in series, developing a continuous line of ideas across a number of sheets of paper laid out on the floor, repeating motifs before introducing new forms. He says, 'the whole drawing process is an adventure, leading the mind into all sorts of directions which one wouldn't normally reach. You take a brush, put a random mark on the paper and one is led to all sorts of imaginary realms where strange things appear out of the sub-conscious.' Compare these drawings to Davie's gouache paintings in the studio and his paintings in Lower Gallery 2 and Gallery 5.

Starting points. Although Davie considers each drawing as an artwork in its own right, some 'suggest themselves' as starting points for canvases which he may develop back at his studio in Hertfordshire. Consider how these new drawings relate to Davie's paintings in the Gallery.

The language of signs and symbols. These drawings are made of marks, signs and symbols. Some of them look rather like pictograms or hieroglyphs. Compare these drawings to Davie's paintings and consider how he has developed his own personal language based on signs and symbols drawn from different ages and cultures (See Gallery 5, page 20)

Resources available in the Gallery

There is an **Exhibition Study Point on Level 3** that has a selection of books relating to the exhibitions. You can access the **Tate Collection** and **Crafts Council Photostore** databases on line at this point. The following films will be also be on view: *Alan Davie in his Studio* (Bill Davie, 1961) and *Painting the Warmth of the Sun*, 1985 (South West Film & Television Archive).

The **Tate Shop** has a selection of books, catalogues, post cards and related materials. The following publications have been produced in relation to the current displays and are available in the shop:

Alan Davie Jingling Space, Essay by Dr Andrew Patrizio, 2003

Richard Slee Grand Wizard, Essay by Oliver Watson, 2002

Homecoming The Pier Arts Centre Collection at Tate St Ives, Essay by Andrew Dalton, 2003

Partou Zia New Work, Essay by Dr Virginia Button, 2003

Further Reading

*Indicates they are available in the Tate Shop

Alan Davie

Davie, Alan, *The Quest for the Miraculous*, Lund Humphries, 1993

*Davie, Alan, *Alan Davie*, Lund Humphries, 1992 (includes detailed bibliography)

Alan Davie, Drawings, Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1997

**Alan Davie, Works in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art*, 2000

**Alan Davie Small Paintings 1949-2000*, University of Brighton, 2000

**Alan Davie Recent Paintings and Gouaches*, Gimpel Fils Ltd, 2003

Richard Slee

Richard Slee, *Arts Review*, October 2001

Richard Slee, *Studio Pottery*, June 2000

Richard Slee, *Artists Newsletter*, June 1995

William Blake

*Vaughan, William, *William Blake*, Tate publishing, 1999

Ackroyd, Peter, *Blake*, London, 1995

Bindman, David, *Blake as Artist*, Oxford 1977

Damon, S. Foster, *A Blake Dictionary: Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*, London 1973

Pier Arts Centre Collection/ St Ives Artists

*Axten, Janet, *Gasworks to Gallery: The Story of St Ives*, Tate Gallery, 1995

Berlin, S *Alfred Wallis: Primitive*, London, 1949

*Cross, Tom, *Painting the Warmth of the Sun, St Ives Artists, 1939-1975*, Alison Hodge, Penzance, 1984

*Davies, Peter, *St Ives Revisited – Innovators and Followers*, Old Bakehouse Publications, 1994

*Gale, M & Stephens C, *Barbara Hepworth: Works in the Tate Collection*, Tate Publishing 1999

Gardiner, M *Barbara Hepworth, a memoir*, Salamander Press, 1982

Gardiner, M *The Pier Gallery The First Ten Years*, Pier Arts Centre, 1988

*Hammacher, AH, *Barbara Hepworth*, Thames and Hudson, 1968 Revised Edition, 1987
Barbara Hepworth, A Pictorial Biography, Tate Publishing 1970. Reissued 1985

*Mullins, E, *Alfred Wallis: Cornish Primitive*, London 1994

*Phillips M & Stephens C, *Barbara Hepworth Sculpture Garden*, Tate Publishing 2002

Oldham, Alison, *Everyone was Working, Writers and Artists in Post War St Ives*, Tate St Ives/Falmouth College of Art, 2001

*Thislewood, D (Ed), *Barbara Hepworth Re-considered*, Liverpool University Press & Tate Liverpool, 1996

*Val Baker, Denys, *Britain's Art Colony by the Sea*, Samson and Co, 1959

*Whybrow, Marion, *St Ives: 1883-1993: Portrait of an Art Colony*, Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge, 1994

St Ives 1939-64, Twenty Five Years of Painting, Sculpture and Pottery, Tate Gallery, 1985

The St Ives artists Series, Tate Publishing includes: *Terry Frost, Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, Bernard Leach, Alfred Wallis, Bryan Wynter and Christopher Wood.*

The **St Ives Archive** holds a range of material about artists associated with St Ives.

Tel: 01736 796408

e-mail: archive@stivestrust.co.uk

Websites

www.tate.org.uk Tate Gallery on line

www.tate.org.uk/learning Tate's new e-learning site. Resources for young people and adults who want to learn more about Tate Collections and Exhibitions

www.artnet.com Information on key artists and movements

www.art-online.org/uk Contemporary art site

www.artcyclopedia.com information on artist and images

www.groveart.com Grove Dictionary of Art on line (subscription fee required)

www.axisartist.org/uk Axis Database of artists and exhibitions

www.stivestrust.co.uk/archivesite St Ives Archive Study Centre website

www.richardslee.com Richard Slee's own website

www.sculpture.org.uk Information on British sculptors including Richard Slee

Appendix I Artist's Biographies

Note: biographies on William Blake, Alan Davie, Richard Slee and Partou Zia included within the text above.

Max Ernst (1891-1976). German-French painter. Studied at Bonn University and first exhibited his work in 1913 at the Sturm Gallery. He served in the German army 1914-18. In 1919 he founded the Dada group in Cologne with Hans Arp and Johannes Baargeld. He experimented with printmaking and collage techniques creating strange dream-like images. In 1922 he moved to Paris and exhibited at the first Surrealist exhibition in 1925. Ernst worked in a variety of media including sculpture although he is most famous for his 'frottage' and 'grattage'* techniques which he combined with symbolic images such as birds and ghoulish animals. He was interned as an enemy alien during the war and rearrested by the Germans in 1940. He escaped to New York in 1941 and lived in America until returning to France in 1949. A collection of writings appeared in English in 1948 as Beyond Painting.

*'Frottage' is a technique by which rubbings from floorboard and other surfaces are used as the basis for drawings. Ernst called his technique in which paint is scraped across the canvas to reveal the imprint of objects placed beneath 'grattage'.

Paul Klee (1879-1940). German painter and printmaker. He studied painting and music in Munich. His first significant work was his etchings *Inventions* 1903-5. He had his first one-man exhibition in 1910 in Zurich. He met Wassily Kandinsky, Alexei von Jawlensky, Auguste Macke and Franz Marc in 1911 and was included in the second Blue Rider exhibition in 1912. He visited Paris in 1912 and met Robert Delaunay and saw Cubist paintings. He developed a growing interest in colour and worked largely in watercolour. In 1921 he moved to Weimar in Germany to teach at the Bauhaus. He published his Pedagogical Sketchbook in 1925. He taught at the Dusseldorf Academy in 1931-3 but was dismissed by the Nazis and returned to Bern.

Henri Matisse (1869-1954). French painter. Studied law and only took up painting when he was recovering from an operation in 1890. He studied painting and sculpture in Paris and visited London. He had his first one-man exhibition in 1904. He became known as one of the Fauve painters after his energetic colourful paintings were exhibited at the Autumn salon in Paris in 1905. In 1908 the Moscow collector Shchukin began to buy his work. The same year he published Notes of a Painter. Matisse was influenced by Persian and Islamic art and design and he spent time in Morocco. He made paintings, sculptures, book illustration, stage design, stained glass and religious images. In 1925 he was awarded the Légion d'Honneur. In 1931 he was commissioned to paint the *Dance* Mural for the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, America. He increasingly divided his time between Nice and Paris and in the late 1940s he worked mainly in collage and paper cut-out producing his famous series of *Blue Nudes*.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Spanish artist and probably the most famous in modern times. From 1892 studied at Coruña and Barcelona art schools and the Royal Academy in Madrid. He returned to Barcelona in 1899 and became part of a circle of writers and artists who met at the Café Els Quatre Gats. He spent increasing amounts of time in Paris moving there in 1904. His early paintings focused on death and deprivation and are known as his Blue Period (1902-4) and Rose Period (1904-6). Influenced by African art and ancient Iberian sculpture he developed a series of more angular broken forms in his paintings and sculptures. He went on to develop Cubism with his friend Georges Braque. During the 1920s he became associated with the Surrealist movement. His work fluctuated between images of extreme distortion and harshness and the more classical and calm. In 1937 he painted *Guernica* a mural for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris Exposition dealing with the bombing of a Spanish town during the Spanish Civil War. From 1946 Picasso was based on the south of France. His fame led to world-wide exhibitions and commissions. His life and work became the subject of numerous books and in

1955 Clouzot made the film *Le Mystère Picasso*. Picasso worked in a wide range of media including painting, collage, sculpture, ceramics, stage design and printmaking.

Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). American painter and considered a pioneer of Abstract Expressionism. He studied at the Art Students League in New York 1929-31 and worked as a painter on the Federal Art Project between 1935 and 1942. His early paintings are characterised by strong gesture and paint work often evoking symbolic, sexual or violent imagery. He was strongly influenced by the sand paintings of the American Indians and Surrealism. In the 1940s he started to produce paintings with a completely abstract 'all-over' style. Pollock had his first one-man exhibition at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery in New York in 1943. By 1947 Pollock was painting using his infamous technique of dripping trails of paint onto a canvas laid flat on the floor. He married the painter Lee Krasner in 1944 and they settled on Long Island in 1946. In the early 1950s he painted a number of works in black and white which were less abstract. Pollock died in a car crash in 1956.

Christopher Wood (1900-1930) British painter who briefly studied architecture at Liverpool University before attending the Académie Julian in Paris in 1921. While in Paris he met Picasso and Jean Cocteau and also worked on designs for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. In 1926 Wood moved to London where he became a member of the London Group and the Seven and Five Society. He established a close friendship with Ben and Winifred Nicholson and exhibited with them in 1927. It was during a trip to St Ives with Ben Nicholson that they encountered Alfred Wallis whose work Wood believed to be a perfect example of 'primitive' expression. The encounter with Wallis encouraged Wood to develop his own style. Wood had a solo exhibition in London in 1929 and spent time in Brittany 1929-30. Suffering from the withdrawals of opium, Wood committed suicide in 1930.

Appendix II

Pier Arts Collection – extracts from the labels and captions.

Research and text by Andrew Dalton.

John Wells (1907-2000) worked as a doctor on the Isles of Scilly between 1936 and 1945. He studied art informally, attending evening classes at St Martin's School of Art (1927-8) and briefly attended Stanhope Forbes' Newlyn School of Painting. He worked as a studio assistant to Barbara Hepworth and was encouraged to be an artist by Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. Wells made sculpture and paintings throughout his career that explored the geometric forms of Constructivism and his love of the Cornish landscape.

Wells was a founder member of the Crypt Group, so called because they exhibited in the crypt of the Mariner's Church in St Ives. From 1946 to 1948 he exhibited alongside Bryan Wynter, Peter Lanyon, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Sven Berlin, Guido Morris, Patrick Heron, Adrian Ryan, David Haughton and Kit Barker.

Roger Hilton (1911-1975) rented a studio in Newlyn from 1957-60 and the works he made at this time established him as a leading abstract painter. With the other Middle Generation St Ives artists, Heron, Frost, Wynter, Davie and Lanyon his work was compared to that of the American Abstract Expressionists. The example of Dutch painters Constant and Mondrian had a profound impact in Hilton's work in the 1950s. Hilton's paintings typically have an organic non-figuration; dense painted forms contrast with gestural linear passages creating an expressive composition anchored by Hilton's formal concerns. Hilton became a central figure in the group of artists working Cornwall in the 1950s. Close friends with Terry Frost and Patrick Heron he moved permanently to Botallack, Cornwall in 1965, where he died ten years later.

Peter Lanyon (1918-1964) was a student of Gabo and Nicholson in the 1940s, applying their Constructivist ideas to his abstract landscape images. In an attempt to gain new perspectives Lanyon took up gliding in 1959 - an experience that informed a series of paintings based upon his experiences of flying over the Cornish coastline.

Encouraged to paint by Adrian Stokes, he studied briefly at the Euston Road School in 1938. Returning to Cornwall from wartime service in the RAF he became a founder member of the Penwith Society of Arts. He taught at Bath Academy of Art 1950-57. He ran an art school at St Peter Loft, St Ives with Terry Frost between 1957-60. Died in a gliding accident in 1964.

Patrick Heron (1920-1999) studied at the Slade between 1937-39. He met Nicholson, Gabo and Hepworth while working at the Leach Pottery between 1944-45. Heron played a leading role in the development of post-war abstract art both as a writer and painter and was instrumental in introducing American Abstract Expressionism to Britain. He was also a friend of the influential critic Clement Greenberg. From the mid 1950s he lived at Eagles Nest, his house in Cornwall, surrounded by the extraordinary light, colour, shapes and textures to be found in the spectacular garden.

Naum Gabo (1890-1977) was born, Naum Pevsner in Bryansk, Russia. Studied Medicine, Engineering, Philosophy and Art History in Munich. 1914 moved to Norway with his brother Antoine Pevsner. 1917 returned to Russia during the revolution. 1920 published the *Realist Manifesto*. 1939 moved to Cornwall. 1947 moved to USA.

Margaret Mellis (b 1914) has been making driftwood constructions from materials collected on the beach near her home in Southwold, Suffolk since 1978. Her association with Constructivism originates in her contact with Gabo, Hepworth and Nicholson in Carbis Bay, Cornwall during WWII.

Born in China, of Scottish parents, Mellis attended Edinburgh College of Art 1929-1933. Married Adrian Stokes in 1938 and lived Carbis Bay 1939-1946. Began making constructions after meeting Hepworth, Nicholson and Gabo. 1948-50 moved to France with second husband Francis Davidson. Lives and works in Southwold, Suffolk.

Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) studied at the Slade School of Art 1910-11 and spent time in France, Italy and America. He married his first wife Winifred Roberts in 1920. In 1913 Nicholson met Barbara Hepworth and they married in 1938 (divorced in 1951). He lived in London 1932-39, making several trips to Paris visiting the studios of Picasso, Braque, Arp, Brancusi and Mondrian. From 1939-1958 Nicholson lived and worked in Cornwall, before moving to Switzerland. He returned to London in 1974.

Nicholson is perhaps most famous for his carved reliefs and it was the formal austerity of his earlier white reliefs that placed him in the vanguard of British modernism. During the 1940s Nicholson's focus turned towards still life and landscape subjects, combining Constructivist ideas with subtle tone, colour and shape. By the 1950s Nicholson enjoyed an international reputation and in 1956 he won the First Guggenheim International Prize, 1956. Eleven important works by Nicholson form the core of the Pier Art Centre collection, gifted to Orkney by Gardiner in 1978.

Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) was born in Wakefield, Yorkshire. She studied at Leeds School of Art with Henry Moore in 1920 and the Royal College of Art between 1921-1924. She met and married her first husband, John Skeaping, on a scholarship to Italy. Hepworth moved to St Ives in 1939 with her second husband Ben Nicholson.

Hepworth was considered a prominent exponent of direct carving in the late 1920s alongside Henry Moore and her first husband, John Skeaping. During 1931 her work began to shift from figuration to abstraction and she carved her first pierced form. During the 1930s Hepworth, Moore and her second husband Ben Nicholson formed the central axis of a group of avant-garde artists living in Hampstead. This association was a defining force in British modernism; it led to the formation of Unit One and publishing of Circle with Naum Gabo and JL Martin.

In 1939 Hepworth and Nicholson moved to Carbis Bay in Cornwall. There they became centre of a group of artists who explored abstraction but also responded to the shapes and forms of the Cornish landscape. In 1949 Hepworth moved to Trenwith Studio in St Ives where she remained for the rest of her life. By the 1950s Hepworth enjoyed an international reputation and she received numerous commissions and awards.

Alfred Wallis (1855-1942) was a mariner aboard fishing boats in the 1890s. He ran a marine scrap business in St Ives and began painting in his late sixties after the death of his wife. Wallis painted many of his images from memory, both of recently witnessed events and scenes of his youth. He did not use conventional perspective and his materials and techniques were unusual – he would paint on card, brown paper and scraps of wood. Although self-taught, Wallis developed an economy of line and sense of composition that belies the perception of him as naïve. Artists such as Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood, who met Wallis in 1928, were drawn to Wallis' innate abilities as an artist, which they valued for its directness and clarity.

William Scott (1913-1989) was born in Strathclyde, Scotland. He lived and studied in Belfast from 1928-31 before moving to London to attend the Royal Academy Schools. He ran a painting school in Pont-Aven from 1937-1939 before serving in the Royal Engineers during WWII. Appointed senior painting master at Bath Academy of Art 1946-1956. Awarded first prize at the second John Moores Exhibition, 1959. Awarded the CBE in 1966 and made RA in 1984.

From the 1950s onwards, Scott used still life subject matter to explore abstraction. His palette of colours became increasingly opaque and non-naturalistic. Scott's use of textured areas of impasto, combine with his accent on pictorial flatness to create paintings that balance between representation and abstraction.

William Gear (1915-1997) was born in Methil, Fife. He studied Fine Art at Edinburgh College of between 1932-36 before studying Art History at Edinburgh University in 1937. On a travelling scholarship he studied with Leger in Paris. After serving in the Signals Corps during WWII, Gear lived in Paris from 1947-50 where he met Soulage and Poliakoff. While in Europe he exhibited with the CoBrA group in Amsterdam. Gear was Curator of the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne from 1958-64 and Head of Fine Art at Birmingham College of Art from 1964-75. He is represented in numerous public collections, including Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Tate and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He was made an RA in 1995

Gear's close association with the CoBrA group in Europe and his awareness of American Abstract Expressionism positioned him as one of Britain's leading abstract painters during the 1950s. In 1951 he was awarded the Purchase Prize at the Festival of Britain exhibition *60 Paintings for '51*, resulting in controversy over the jury's selection of a non-representational work.

Appendix III Glossary of Art Terms

Abstract art

In its most general sense abstract art is art that does not represent aspects of the visible world. It is also described as non-objective, non-representational and non-figurative art. In the twentieth century many artistic movements (such as Cubism, Constructivism and Abstract Expressionism) explored and developed abstract art. But the term means different things in relation to different artists.

Abstract Expressionism

A term usually connected with post-war American artists working in a non-geometric style of abstraction. The term emphasises the spontaneity of expression and the idea of the subconscious. Most of the artists associated with the movement were influenced by Surrealism and they also shared an interest in Carl Jung's ideas on myth, ritual and memory. However, abstract expressionism encompasses a variety of styles, from Pollock's dribbling techniques to Rothko's colour fields. Key artists include Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey and Willem de Kooning.

CoBrA

CoBrA was founded in 1948 by the Belgian writer Christian Dotremont and its name came from the three cities where many of the participants lived – Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. CoBrA style is characterised by violent brushwork and strong colour. Their abstracted but still recognisable imagery was often derived from prehistoric and folk art. CoBrA artists included Pierre Alechinsky, Karel Appel, Cornelius Corneille, Asger Jorn and Karl Pederson.

Constructivism describes a movement of art in 1920s Russia which included the artists, Rodchenko, Stepanova, Tatlin, Pevsner and Gabo. They emphasised the role of materials and developed a language of abstraction based on ideas of pure form. The Constructivists aimed to make art a detached, scientific investigation of abstract properties (picture surface, construction, line and colour). Gabo and Pevsner left Russia in 1922 after Constructivism had been condemned by the Soviet regime, and they and other exiles helped to spread the ideals of the movement throughout Europe. They were influential, for example, on the Bauhaus in Germany, De Stijl in the Netherlands, and the Abstraction-Création group in France, and Gabo was one of the editors of the English Constructivist manifesto, *Circle*, in 1937. Gabo's time in Cornwall had a profound effect on the artists around him such as Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon and John Wells. His presence encouraged them to develop abstract art based on Constructivist principles.

Surrealism

An essentially European movement in art and literature that flourished in the 1920s and 1930s characterised by a fascination with the bizarre, the incongruous and the irrational. The writer André Breton launched the movement with his first [Manifesto of Surrealism](#) in 1924 and a series of international exhibitions in the 1930s ensured wide dissemination. A key idea of the movement was to release the creative powers of the subconscious mind. Breton drew heavily on Sigmund Freud's theories concerning the subconscious and its relation to dreams. Many Surrealist works resulted in the juxtaposition of bizarre and confusing imagery often painted in a realistic manner, resembling the extraordinary yet strangely normal nature of dreams. However, Surrealism embraced a range of doctrines and techniques and some very different artists were associated with it. Key artists within the Surrealist movement include Ernst, Miró, René Magritte and Salvador Dali.

Appendix IV

Alan Davie

The artist's words

It's never the case in my work of having an idea first and then putting it on paper. The idea comes out of working. I do a whole series of drawings on an idea which has presented itself. I might do about twenty variations using that idea and developing it. It is very much like improvising on a piano – sitting down and playing, an idea will appear out of putting one note against another, which leads to other notes and, before you know where you are, a melodic line has appeared and a harmonic structure presents itself.

From an Interview with Alan Davie, Andrew Patrizio and Bill Hare, Gamel Studio, Hertfordshire, 14 November 1991.

The artist in the past or in primitive societies is a kind of shaman, the man who is the spiritual leader, he's the priest, he's the man who comes between everyday life and the spirit life. He links the mysterious elements of the universe with the everyday, conscious living, brings them all together. I feel the artist is still a shaman, able to enter this spiritual realm and produce these fantastic images out of the unconscious, or the spirit world. But in our own civilisation, people have left the artist, although he's still in the same position, he's still in touch with the spirits but on the whole people think he's just a crank. On the other hand, the fact that art galleries are thronged again means that a lot of people have this need still. I think what people get from art as they go round galleries enthusiastically is this spiritual enlightenment. But on the whole, people think anything spiritual is just hoo-ha.

From an Interview with Alan Davie, Andrew Patrizio and Bill Hare, Gamel Studio, Hertfordshire, 14 November 1991.

If I put writing in my work, I am adding another dimension, an element of poetry.... There's something very lovely about lettering in a pictorial image. It's something that you find in illuminated manuscripts that I've always loved. It's so very different from just making decorative marks across a painting. If the marks take on the form of actual readable words it seems to add a poetic dimension: a combination of poetry and painting. Some of the words don't make sense, from the point of view of the actual subject matter of the painting, but this is all to the good because it gives you a sort of complementary other image which contrasts with the image of the painting.

From an Interview with Alan Davie, Andrew Patrizio and Bill Hare, Gamel Studio, Hertfordshire, 14 November 1991.

The titles enable the spectator to 'ENTER' the work from an 'irrational' viewpoint, as it were. One becomes 'LOST' in the image and is compelled to recreate 'meanings' for one's self and thus enter a world of painting of one's own making (A REVELATION).

Alan Davie, letter to James Hyman, 2003, [Magic Revelations](#), Alan Davie Recent Paintings and Gouaches, Gimpel Fils, Ltd, 2003

Painting for me is a purely personal thing. I have no consideration about who's going to look at the picture – it never enters my mind. But it still basically adds up in the end that the lettering in the painting has a mysterious quality. I mean, after all, the elements of writing are derived from very ancient pictographs. Each letter we use in everyday life in our writing or our printing is derived from a very ancient pictograph. To me, letters in the alphabet are magical things, words are magical. They can unlock all sorts of mysteries.

From an Interview with Alan Davie, Andrew Patrizio and Bill Hare, Gamel Studio, Hertfordshire, 14 November 1991.

The work of Art seems to be something thrown off – a by-product of the process of living and working. Art just happens, like falling in love. ...

...In what way can I describe what I feel art to be? Perhaps I could say: Art is the evocation of the inexpressible. But no definition can in itself be entirely satisfactory. Actually, what I am trying to get at is best expressed by the idea of pure intuition. We could define the function of art as being: to arouse the faculty of direct knowledge by intuition, and what we feel by intuition requires pointers or symbols more than concrete ideas for its proper expression; and these pointers have to be enigmatic and non-rational. They are shy of intellectual interpretation and come to us, as one Japanese writer has put it, 'like flashes of lightening'...

...The right Art is purposeless, aimless. The more obstinately one tries to learn how to paint for the sake of producing a work of Art, the less one will succeed.

Alan Davie, Notes by the Artist, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1958

Perhaps colour is impossible to talk about. Colour is like scent – indescribable; or like a chord struck on a harp in the darkness.

The mysterious element of colour, perhaps the most important element in my painting (and indeed my life) is something utterly magical to me, filling my life and surrounding me with wonder...

...The colours must sing together very much like the notes in music; a mingling in wave lengths; in light as in sound...

...A certain conjunction of colours cannot be of real meaning until there is a working of inner movement and subtle interplay of space and proportion.

Alan Davie, Notes on Colour, Hall, Douglas Alan Davie, Lund Humphries, 1992

Art is something which happens to me:

- not something which I make happen: - therefore 'Artless'.

Perhaps it's like the artless process of a plant producing a flower:

Maybe a plant suffers pain as I do, in its making.

Images are not made as art objects, but as channels of communication with the divine.

Wonder at the miracle of life is the stimulus to creation, and my own creations are a source of wonder also to me.

Alan Davie, Alan Davie, 1950-2000: Schilderijen Paintings, Cobra Museum, 2001

