

Summer 2005
14 May – 25 September 2005

Tate St Ives

Notes for Teachers

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Introduction

The summer season celebrates contemporary sculpture, the art of St Ives and the language of abstraction with renewed vigour and fresh insight.

The displays present us with the following key points:

- An insight into the art of Richard Deacon
- An insight into the paintings of Paul Feiler
- A display of historic and modern works from the Tate Collection chosen by Paul Feiler
- A display of artists associated with so-called St Ives Modernism
- An exploration of the experience of landscape in painting and sculpture
- An exploration of the language of abstraction

There are many starting points appropriate to these displays (see Key Themes, page 6 and Curriculum Links, page 8) that you could develop according to your groups needs and interests.

Consider some of the following,

- Sculpture
- Materials
- The senses
- Space and the illusion of space
- Hidden spaces
- Boundaries
- Contrasts
- Movement
- Natural forms
- Landscape and a sense of place
- Painting versus sculpture
- Abstract art
- St Ives and St Ives artists
- Paul Feiler
- Richard Deacon

How to use this pack and structure your visit

The aim of this pack is to provide information about the exhibition, information about key works on display and suggestions of themes and issues to consider and discuss. The pack should help you create an introductory discussion about some of the issues raised by the current displays. The key works cards can be used to help focus work in small groups in the exhibition, and to follow up within the classroom.

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 databases online** at this point. The **Tate shop** has a selection of books, catalogues, postcards and related materials.

In the Studio a new film on Richard Deacon is on show. This film called *Work in Progress* illustrates the working processes of the artist and his unique exploration of materials.

Websites

Tate online www.tate.org.uk

Tate Learning www.tate.org.uk/learning

This site includes the Staff Room, a dedicated area for teachers and group leaders.

Teacher resource notes for all major Tate exhibitions including Tate St Ives can be downloaded from the site.

Tate Tools www.tatetools.com is a growing library of teaching resources for Key Stages 2 & 3 of the National Curriculum. Tate tools offers high quality learning to support the art curriculum. Annual fee of £90 plus VAT.

Contacts

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Further Reading

Paul Feiler

**Paul Feiler, The Near and the Far*, exhibition catalogue with essay by Peter Khoroché, Tate St Ives 2005

**Paul Feiler, Connections*, The Redfern Gallery and Le Cadre Gallery, Hong Kong, 2002

Richard Deacon

**Richard Deacon Out of Order*, exhibition catalogue with essays by Clarrie Wallis and Edmund de Waal, Tate St Ives, 2005

**Richard Deacon Sculpture*, exhibition catalogue, Dundee Contemporary Arts, 2001

**Richard Deacon Made in Cologne*, Museum Ludwig, Köln, 2003

**Richard Deacon*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Phaidon, 2000. This publication contains writings by the artist, interviews, chronology, bibliography and lots of full colour images.

Websites

www.redferngallery.com information on Paul Feiler with good images

www.lissongallery.com information on Richard Deacon

www.sculpture.org.uk information on Richard Deacon and good selection of images

www.riccardodeacon.net information on Richard Deacon, includes writings and extensive biography

www.mariangoodman.com Richard Deacon's gallery in New York includes images, biography and press articles

St Ives Artists

- **Homecoming The Pier Arts Centre Collection at Tate St Ives*, Essay by Andrew Dalton, 2003
- *Axten, Janet, *Gasworks to Gallery: The Story of St Ives*, Tate Gallery, 1995
- *Berlin, S *Alfred Wallis: Primitive*, London, 1949
- Cross, Tom, *St.Ives and British Modernism*,1999.
- *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
- *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
- Lax, Julian, *St.Ives. Eighty Years of Modernism*, 2001
- *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
- *Rowe, Matthew, *John Wells*, Tate Gallery publication, 1988
- *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.*

* Available in the shop at Tate St Ives

Tate publications have produced a series of **Key Work Cards for Teachers** including one on *Landscape and Environment*. For an order form call 01736 791114

The **St Ives Archive Study Centre** holds a range of material about artists associated with St Ives. Tel: +44 (0) 1736 796408, e-mail: archive@stivestrust.co.uk
www.stivestrust.co.uk/archivesite

Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden

Tel: +44 (0) 1736 796496
Barnoon Hill
St Ives, Cornwall, TR26 1AD
Group bookings: +44 (0) 1736 791114,
tsi.education@tate.org.uk

Key themes

Space, light and movement. These artists explore and describe space in different ways. Many of the two-dimensional works play with pictorial space and illusionism often denying traditional perspective and depth. Look, for example, at how Feiler creates a sense of space, movement and surface tension. Look at how other artists associated with the St Ives experiment with rhythm and balance through shape, colour and light. With Deacon's work we are encouraged to explore the space around, enclosed and between.

Scale and distance: near and far. Consider using the building to explore a sense of scale, proportion and balance. One of the Tate St Ives architects talked about the concept of this building being based on a response to the Ben Nicholson white relief series (see Gallery 1). There are plenty of opportunities to experience two and three-dimensional space and to talk about scale and balance within the building. Feiler's paintings question the limits of vision and the elusive nature of space. Deacon's sculptures challenge us to explore the space of the gallery in new ways. Both artists play with our sense and experience of nearness and distance.

Sensation of place. Many of the St Ives School of Moderns were interested in capturing their sensation or experience of place rather than a view of the landscape. Peter Lanyon described trying to paint 'placeness' and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham talked of the 'the total experience'. Many works demonstrate an emotive response to the colour, light, textures, surfaces and materials of the natural world. Feiler says he chose the landscape paintings in the *Artists on Artists* display (Gallery 3) for their atmospheric qualities.

Hidden or empty spaces. Paul Feiler is interested in what is hidden, whether in the contrasts of light and dark as shadows fall on trees or on columns or in the recesses of a tunnel or a shrine. The title of the *Aduton* series implies the meaning of 'shrine' or a 'place not to be entered'. Deacon's sculptures explore internal and external space often leaving the internal space empty or hollow. Like Gabo before him (see Gallery 1), he is interested in describing internal space and structure through line and plane rather than solid mass.

Materials. There is a wonderful celebratory feel to materials in the current displays. You will find materials such as oil paint, sand, steel, marble, ceramic, wood, perspex, gold leaf, bronze and string. These artists relish the materials they use and encourage us to investigate and discover their working processes. Feiler is forever experimenting with possibilities of different pigments and textures while Deacon tests and challenges his materials to see what he can make them do.

Language and communication. Deacon compares sculpture to language. Like the spoken word it is a form of communication and the word is fabricated like an object is in sculpture. Deacon has also compared drawing to writing. How does an artwork communicate? What is verbal and what is non-verbal? What is gesture? What is sensation? What is metaphor? Can a sculpture contain rhythm and syntax like a poem or a song? Can a painting contain silence?

The senses. Why do we prioritise our sense of sight when we look at art? What about our other senses? What can we hear and what can we smell? What about our sense of space, which contracts and expands as we move around? What about our sense of balance and proportion? Feiler's paintings appear symmetrical – but this is just a trick of the eye – there is not one single area that is the same on side, top or bottom. Deacon's titles frequently allude to the senses. He has had a long interest story of Orpheus through his reading of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets* which is dominated by references to the sense of hearing and the sound of words.

Boundaries. Many of these artists are preoccupied with boundaries. They are interested in edges and surfaces, inside and out. Whether it is the boundary between sky and sea, table and bottle, curve or straight line. Feiler's paintings seem to blur the boundaries between surface and edge while Deacon's sculptures encourage us to experience boundaries between solid, transparency and empty space. You could describe the surface of some of Deacon's sculptures acting rather like a skin.

Possibilities. Deacon is interested in creating works that have endless possibilities of meaning. He uses associative titles and many are based on puns, proverbs and sayings. He believes the use of metaphor can open up possibilities and allow us to imagine and describe in our own way. His sculptures are playful and energetic. Rather like 'doodles' they are in a state of transition and flux – full of potential but never fixed or pinned down.

Relationships. Explore the tensions between different shapes, materials and spaces. Look at the relationships in, for example, Deacon's work, between interior and exterior, macro and micro, convex and concave, transparency and semi transparency. Look at the dynamic Feiler, Malevich or Lanyon create between solid and fluid forms between bold and soft colours, organic and geometric or soft and sharp lines.

Abstraction. Consider how many of the artists on display explore an abstract language. The displays provide a good introduction to the ways artists use line, colour, transparency, layering, texture, surface, shape and form to play with the illusion of space. But are these works abstract? Explore how Feiler's work developed from natural structures in the landscape to pure geometric forms. What happens when, for example, Deacon gives his sculpture a title such as *Individual?* How does metaphor and symbolism affect the way we respond to these works?

St Ives artists. Many of the artists on display are historically linked with St Ives. Consider what story it tells us about St Ives and its art. Do artists associated with St Ives share certain shared interests and concerns? How does a detailed study of Paul Feiler's art affect the way we view the art of St Ives as a whole? You might like to use the displays for the focus for a wider project looking at the history of St Ives and include a visit to the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Links to the curriculum

This season's displays could be the focus for a range of curriculum work. Any of the art works could be used as a starting point for the discussion of issues in almost any subject (see key themes section). Suggestions are made below for links with a range of different subject areas, but all activities could relate to Art and Design. Suggested activities are included with each key work card. The following are just some additional ideas.

Art and Design

The exhibition could be the focus for any of the following topics or themes:

- Investigating materials and processes (natural and made)
- What is sculpture?
- Sculpture in different places and spaces
- Exploring buildings (art and architecture, exploring Tate St Ives)
- Journeys
- Signs, symbols and metaphors
- Viewpoints (light, space, reflections)
- Containers (sculpture, ceramics, containing space)
- A sense of place (landscape and environment)
- Visiting a museum, gallery or site

English

There are many opportunities for language work which encourages children to develop their verbal and written language skills and to contribute to group discussions:

- Description, investigation and imagination
- Creative writing
- Developing vocabulary – for example, words or titles to describe paintings and sculptures
- Writing to describe, explore or imagine
- Writing to analyse and comment (students could write exhibition reviews)
- Writing to persuade and argue (link to a group debate about a particular artist or work)
- How do artists communicate their ideas? – the use of metaphor and symbolism

Mathematics

Obvious opportunities to explore shapes and spaces and for students to develop their skills describing two and three dimensional forms and to experience different scales.

Science

There are opportunities to explore scientific ideas and to make links between art and science. The displays could provide a springboard for the following topics:

- Characteristics of materials
- Light, dark and shadows
- Solids and liquids
- Changing states

Geography

You could extend work to link to the geography curriculum with the following topics:

- Going to the seaside
- Coasts/coastal environments
- Investigating rivers (see *Riverbed* 1959 by Bryan Wynter in Gallery 1 or Deacon's sculptures in Lower 2 apparently partly inspired by the River Tay in Scotland)

History

Researching the history of St Ives art and/or the life and work of one of artist could link to curriculum work. For example;

- How has Britain changed since 1948? (study Barbara Hepworth)
- What can we learn about recent history by studying the life of a famous person? (Deacon won the Turner Prize in 1987 and was awarded the CBE in 1999).

Music

The summer displays offer a variety of opportunities to explore links between music and art. Here are just some ideas,

- Exploring sound – what sounds might this painting or sculpture make?
- Exploring or journeying into space – sounds for different spaces and places
- Painting with sounds – how can sounds describe the moods stimulated by pictures, sculptures or words?
- Hearing sculpture – Can sculpture speak like music or poetry? Deacon has had a long interest in the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus, the musician whose gift was so great that his music could charm the beasts.

Paul Feiler (born 1918)
Janicon LXXXVIII 2004

Oil, silver and gold leaf, gesso and gessoed board on canvas
92 x 92 cm

© the Artist

Photo: Marcus Leith and Andrew Dunkley © Tate

Artist Biography

Born in Germany, Feiler moved to England in the 1930s. He studied at the Slade School of Art in the late 1930s. At the outbreak of Second World War, he was interned in Canada but returned to Britain in 1941. In the 1950s Feiler settled permanently in Cornwall. He taught at the West of England College of Art in Bristol for many years. Today he lives and works near Penzance.

Background

Feiler's recent work *Janicon LXXXVIII* will stop you in your tracks. It is an extraordinary image that draws you into a strange, mysterious space. Square in format, Feiler has constructed and painted a series of recessive spaces, which leads your eyes back and forth to the central circles.

Feiler has combined thin layers of paint with silver and gold leaf to create a series of subtle colour gradations and tonal variations. He plays with surface and depth and it is difficult to tell what is relief and what is painted and what is edge and what is centre. The different types of gold surface – imitation gold which is shiny, real gold which is matt as well as the gold leaf which is over-painted and then varnished create a shimmering surface which changes as the light or our positions changes.

Feiler has always been fascinated by the illusion of space and his work questions the limits of vision and the elusive nature of it. Inspired by the mountains in Germany as a child, and since by the dramatic Cornish coastline, his early paintings could be described as landscapes. But like many of the artists associated with St Ives, his interest was not in painting views but in creating a response to the experience of landscape. Natural structures and thick gestural marks gradually gave way to simplified and geometric forms. For Feiler, the space between two rocks or the view through trees is always more interesting – it can leave us guessing about the near and the far.

Janicon LXXXVIII continues a theme that Feiler has been preoccupied with since the late 1960s. The word Janicon refers to Janus, the Roman god who was guardian of doorways and who, with his double head, could see both past and future. The word also suggests an icon and this is reinforced by Feiler's use of gold and silver. The series therefore explores the idea of a sacred portal or hidden entity – a mysterious space, seen from afar but never entered, which prompts contemplation rather like a traditional religious icon. The series has also been compared to Tantric yantras or cosmic diagrams that are used as an aid to meditation.

For Discussion

- What happens when you look at this image? How do your eyes travel across it? Move closer and then stand further away. How does it change? Now look at other paintings by Feiler. How do you feel as you move around the display?

- Why do you think Feiler chooses a square format?
- The *Near and the Far* is the title of Feiler's exhibition at Tate St Ives. Why do you think this title was chosen? How could you relate this title to this work and the exhibition as a whole? What could be meant by the 'push and pull' of space?
- What is a shrine? Many of Feiler's works are titled with Greek and Roman terms such as Adyton, Adytum and Ambit, relating to the inner sanctums of ancient temples. Why do you think he is so interested in this theme?
- Compare this painting with earlier works by Feiler in Gallery 4. How does his work change? Describe how his use of shape, colour, texture, materials and technique changes.
- Notice how this painting changes as the light and atmosphere shift in the room. How does it relate to the architecture of the space? Can you think of a better place to exhibit this painting?
- Feiler selected the paintings from the Tate Collection in Gallery 3. Can you think why he might have chosen them?

Activities

Contrasts. Feiler often sets up a dynamic between different elements in his paintings such as; solid forms versus fluid, sharp versus soft edges, geometric versus organic, transparent versus hidden, light versus shadow, shallow versus depth, square versus circle and imagined versus real. Consider using the idea of contrasting elements as a starting point for a project.

Constructed paintings. Look closely at Feiler's working processes and the way he combines painting with gold leaf on board. Look at how he creates an illusion of space. Compare with other artists who experiment with two-dimensional relief, construction or collage such as Ben Nicholson, Sandra Blow, Mary Martin and Victor Pasmore (on display in Gallery 1). Extend to a three dimensional project looking at the work of Deacon, Hepworth and Naum Gabo (also in Gallery 1).

Gold, silver and paint. Research the history and use of gold leaf. Look at religious icons from the past. Compare and contrast to Feiler. Experiment and make work using metallic paints.

Janus: past and future. Research the Roman god and invite students to make their own work based on their research. Janus' attribute is a snake in the form of a circle, which is an ancient symbol of eternity.

Links

Many of Feiler's earlier paintings were prompted by his experience of the landscape of Cornwall. Compare his response to other artists of his generation associated with St Ives such as Peter Lanyon, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, William Scott, Patrick Heron and Bryan Wynter (see Gallery 1).

Feiler has studied the work of past artists associated with landscape, especially the paintings of Paul Cézanne. Look at his selection for the "Artists on Artists" display in Gallery 3. Feiler is also interested in artists such as Piet Mondrian, Georges Braque and Nicolas de Staël, all of who developed a language of abstraction based on pared down images.

Contrast with other artists who work in series and who play with the illusion of space. For example, Callum Innes who recently exhibited at Tate St Ives. Link also the sculpture of Anish Kapoor and his creation of enclosed, mysterious spaces.

Further information on Tate works can be found at www.tate.org.uk

Richard Deacon (born 1949)

Individual 2004

Steamed ash and stainless steel

110x 314 x 115 cm

Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

© The Artist Photo: John Berens, New York

Artist Biography

Born in Wales, Deacon studied at Somerset College of Art, Taunton, St Martins School of Art, The Royal College of Art and Chelsea School of Art, London. Since the 1980s he has exhibited widely. In 1987 he won the Turner Prize and he was awarded the CBE in 1999. He lives and works in London.

Background

The form of this sculpture twists, turns, loops and rolls. The artist has steamed and bent three wraps of ash wood around a twisted core. Steel girders have been screwed across the wood and at the joints.

Individual looks like giant pencil shavings or fruit peel and it suggests a super coiling of DNA or an immersion heater. It also suggests a rippling current of water is reinforced by the setting at Tate St Ives looking out to the Atlantic Ocean. Apparently an aerial photograph Deacon took of a spiral formation in the River Tay in Scotland acted as a catalyst for the series of work which this is part of. *Individual* also links to a series of drawings called *It's Orpheus When there's Singing* that Deacon made in the late 1970s. These drawings are characterised by a series of arcs and curves, which appear to spiral off points inside and outside a figure.

Individual is suggestive rather than descriptive. Like most of Deacon's work, it resists straightforward definition. Deacon likens sculpture to language – the spoken word is manufactured like objects and it is full of metaphor, rhythm and feeling. Sculpture offers the opportunity to explore the limits of language. He is particularly interested in trying to convey the idea of transition or the sense of expectation – from one state to another, unformed to the formed. The title of the exhibition *Out of Order* reinforces his belief that it is the point 'of transition between order and disorder, where different kinds of ordering emerge'.

Deacon likes to experiment with materials and over the years he has worked with wood, steel, leather, fabric and ceramic. He describes himself as a 'fabricator' and he never hides the making process. The steel rivets and bolts and rough surfaces become part of the final form of this sculpture and reinforces the sense of this wood being manipulated into shape. The curve and counter curve of *Individual* seem to hold enormous tension and energy. He has transformed this inert heavy wood to give it fluidity and movement.

Deacon's sculptures have consistently explored the boundary between inside and out and between artwork and viewer, usually denying a single unifying surface in the work. His sculptures invite us to walk around and explore them - affecting the way we experience them and the space we find them in.

This preoccupation with boundary and edge can also be seen in Deacon's ceramic work exhibited in the curved display case in Upper Gallery 2. *Gap* is a series of undulating forms made from thrown and joined components of clay that are placed next to each other. Open at both top and base they are almost like three-dimensional drawings in space. They are displayed at a slight angle to emphasise both the view of the white line on the top and the convex and concave curves of the slabs seen from the side. These ceramics have richly glazed surfaces and have aptly been described as 'forms on move'. Like *Individual* they seem to interact with the space in a playful way.

For Discussion

- Where does this sculpture start and finish? Can you follow the lines? How many parts is it made out of?
- Deacon talks of bringing dead materials alive. Does this sculpture look alive to you?
- Deacon's sculptures are defined by the space around and within them. How do you move around them and how do they draw your attention to the architecture and setting of Tate St Ives? Can you find a best viewpoint from which to look at a sculpture? Can you think of a better place to exhibit these sculptures? Compare the effect of the different settings on his sculptures (i.e. Gallery space, courtyard space and enclosed showcase)
- Deacon says 'whenever I draw I tend to avoid drawing the middle'. What do you think he means by this?
- Are Deacon's sculpture's abstract? Do they suggest familiar or recognisable forms to you?
- What sorts of titles does Deacon use for his work? How do they help you to look at and understand his work?
- *Individual* is exhibited alongside another wood sculpture called *Restless Wave* What shapes are repeated in this sculpture? What shapes are different?
- *Restless Wave* was made specifically with Tate St Ives in mind. How does it relate to the site?
- Compare Deacon's wood sculpture with his ceramic and stainless steel pieces also on show.
- Discuss Deacon's unique and unusual working methods. See the film illustrating the processes the artist uses on view in the Studio (off Lower Gallery 2).

Activities

Titles. Hide the titles of Deacon's sculptures and invite students to make up their own titles. Ask them to imagine how they think the sculpture was made and also what action it might make if it could move.

Quick drawings: viewpoint, scale and negative shapes. Look at the sculptures from different viewpoints and distances. Students to make a series of quick drawings as they move around the sculptures. Imagine they are a giant looking down on the sculpture or a tiny mouse inside the sculpture. Look at the spaces, holes and shadows created by the sculptures – draw some of these negative shapes.

Drawing and assembling curves. Deacon talks of sometimes drawing in three-dimensions while at other times he assembles by fitting together curves and counter curves of wood that he already has in the studio. Develop two and three-dimensional work to explore these different processes. Students could be given a set of curves from which they have to construct a shape or form.

Word sculptures. Deacon's sculptures are suggestive of many ideas and things. Make lists of nouns, adjectives and verbs that describe different aspects of the sculptures. Encourage students to understand why description is always a personal choice of words and that these sculptures invite us to make our own 'imaginings'. Older students could discuss the idea of metaphor and make links to literature. Deacon has been inspired by the *Sonnets to Orpheus* by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1922) (see www.dead.net/RobertHunterArchive/files/Poetry/SonnetsToOrpheus.html).

Out of order is the title of Deacon's exhibition at Tate St Ives. Discuss what this title might mean in relation to Deacon's work and then invite students to develop their own interpretation.

Space containers. Experiment with card and clay (and other materials) to make containers. Encourage students to think about containing or describing space.

Placing sculpture. Students to make a sculpture for their favourite place. Encourage them to choose appropriate materials and to explore shape, weight, balance, texture and surface in relation to the place it is made for.

Links

You can view a new film documenting Deacon's working methods in the Studio (off Lower Gallery 2).

Further information on Deacon's works in the Tate Collection which includes drawings from the series of *It's Opheus When There's Singing* 1978-9 can be found at www.tate.org.uk.

Compare Deacon's work with Naum Gabo and Barbara Hepworth's sculpture (see Gallery 1). Visit the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden in St Ives (see page 5). Compare his use of 'surreal' but not wholly unfamiliar forms to artists such as Hans Arp, Joan Miró and Yves Tanguy.

Look at the history of British sculpture and compare Deacon with sculptor's such as Henry Moore, Tony Cragg, Bill Woodrow, Richard Wentworth and Anish Kapoor. Links can also be made to European contemporaries such as Per Kirkeby, Juan Muñoz, Harald Klingelholler and Thomas Schütte.

Deacon's approach to clay has been compared to that of Miró, Pablo Picasso and Lucio Fontana. Contrast Deacon's approach to ceramics with the more traditional studio pottery of Bernard Leach. Visit the Leach Pottery in St Ives, +44 (0) 1736 796398, www.leachpottery.com. Or contrast to contemporary ceramicists such as Richard Slee, Sebastian Blackie and Gwyn Hanssen Pigott.

Peter Lanyon 1918-1964

Lost Mine

1959

Oil on canvas

© Sheila Lanyon

Artist Biography

Born in St Ives, Lanyon studied briefly at the Euston Road School in London. He also received private tuition from Ben Nicholson, whom he met in 1939. During the war he worked as flight mechanic. He returned to St Ives after the war where he became a leading member of the artistic community. He was a founding member of the Penwith Society of Arts. In the 1950s he taught at the Bath Academy of Art in Corsham. In 1955 he opened an art School in St Ives with Terry Frost. He had his first solo exhibition in New York in 1957. Lanyon died following a gliding accident in 1964.

Background

The sweeping brushstrokes and large areas of blue give this painting a great sense of movement. The rapid, twisting and interweaving marks on the right contrast with the quiet area on the left. The painting appears to be totally abstract although there is a sense of a landscape glimpsed from above, obscured by clouds. The strokes of blue and white could signify gusts of wind, rolling waves or foaming surf.

In fact, *Lost Mine* refers to an actual place and event – the flooding of the Levant tin mine at Pendeen in West Cornwall. Levant Mine is one of Cornwall's most famous mines producing copper, tin and arsenic. At one point it employed over 500 people and the mineshafts were sunk out under the sea at deeper and deeper levels. In 1919 the main rod of the Man Engine broke killing 31 miners and by 1930 the mine had closed due to the economic situation.

Lanyon painted this picture at a time when the re-opening of some of the mines was being considered. Unfortunately it was discovered that the sea had broken into Levant Mine. As a Cornishman, Lanyon felt strongly about the history of the mines. He believed, the mines, once a source of wealth that represented the survival of its workers, belonged to the land and were capable of regeneration or rebirth.

Colour and shape work symbolically in this painting. The black represents the mineshaft and signifies death, the blues are the sea and sky, and the red signals life and danger. The quiet area is offset by the chaos on the right hand side, perhaps suggesting the torrent of water bursting into the mineshaft.

Lost Mine was made at a moment of transition for Lanyon. In 1959 he had exhibited in New York and he was interested in American abstract painting. It was also at this time that he took up gliding. He began to focus on the more abstract qualities of the landscape and aerial views. He said he was trying to paint his environment both inside and out. He said, 'I like to paint places where solids and fluids come together such as the meeting of sea and cliff, of wind and rock, of human body and water'.

Lost Mine was one of the first oil paintings Lanyon made on canvas, before he had always worked on board. Here you can see a combination of techniques, scraping,

wiping and over painting as well as thinner layers of colour. Lanyon made a number of drawings and three-dimensional constructions in preparation for this painting. He said the constructions were like scaffolding for his painting. They helped him to work out spatial problems and to 'test how the image was cooking'.

For discussion

- What is 'landscape'? Why is it different to 'nature'? Why do artists past and present choose to paint landscapes? How many different types of landscape can you find at Tate St Ives (see Gallery 3)?
- Lanyon is usually described as a landscape painter. Would you consider *Lost Mine* a landscape?
- *Lost Mine* is part of a display about art associated with St Ives. Can you see connections with other works in the room? Why not make a list.
- How does Lanyon create a sense of space and movement in *Lost Mine*? Is there a single viewpoint?

Activities

2D/3D. Students to develop work based on a landscape of their choice. Encourage them to gather a range of visual material and to consider how to create a sense of space and movement. Experiment by making a series of studies on a range of media including drawing, collage, photography and 3D. Use these studies to decide on the shape and form of their final landscape piece.

3D constructions. Students to make 3D constructions using a range of scrap materials based on a landscape/cityscape.

Our environment. Explore issues about the landscape and built environment that concern us today. Ask students if they identify themselves, as Lanyon did, with a particular place and its history. Encourage students to research a place and use it as the focus for a piece of experimental work that might include sound, text, photography and digital imagery.

The natural world: structure, form and colour. Develop drawings and collage work based on observation and collection of materials and objects from the natural world. Encourage students to simplify or 'abstract' their forms to emphasise their sensations of the place.

Links

Compare *Lost Mine* with earlier works by Lanyon in the Tate Collection such as *Porthleven* 1951. Look also at his three-dimensional constructions.

Lanyon was inspired by Alfred Wallis's paintings of St Ives (see Gallery 1). Wallis' treatment of space within his pictures was based on lived experience rather than single viewpoint perspective. The changes of scale and viewpoint create a sense of movement within the painting.

Compare Lanyon with other artists associated with St Ives such as Paul Feiler, Patrick Heron, Bryan Wynter, Sandra Blow, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Terry Frost or John Wells (see Gallery 1). What do these artists have in common? Make links to sculptors such as Hepworth and Deacon whose work is also inspired by the landscape.

Lanyon was influenced by American Abstract Expressionism, which he saw for the first time in the mid 1950s. Look at the work of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning.

Contrast contemporary artists such as Richard Long and Tacita Dean who explore the theme of landscape but in very different ways.

For further information on Tate works see www.tate.org.uk.

Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935)

Dynamic Suprematism

1915 or 1916

Oil on canvas

80.3 x 80 cm

Artist Biography

Born in Kiev, Russia, Malevich studied at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow in 1902-3. His early paintings were mainly landscapes, figures and still life influenced by Cubism and Futurism. By 1915 he was producing completely abstract so-called Suprematist paintings. He had his first one-man exhibition in 1919 and he wrote a book *On New Systems in Art*. He was invited by Marc Chagall to teach at the art school in Vitebsk and in the 1920s he taught at the Institute for Aesthetic Culture in Leningrad. He visited the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1927.

Background

This painting is dominated by a large grey triangle painted onto a white ground. Clustered around each corner of this triangle are simple geometric shapes which are mostly black but also white, brown, blue and yellow. The shapes seem to hover in space and the fact that there are no horizontal or vertical lines creates an overall sense of movement and energy.

Called *Dynamic Suprematism* this painting is an example of a style the Russian artist Malevich developed between 1913-16. Malevich said he wanted to free art from the real world and he believed that 'the artist can only be a creator when the forms in his pictures have nothing in common with nature'. Hence he abandoned descriptive representation in favour of geometric imagery. In 1915 he exhibited his *Black Square*, the famous painting of a black square on a white ground.

For Malevich, the black square expressed pure feeling while the white field the void beyond this feeling. The static quality of the square was soon replaced with a more 'dynamic' composition as can be seen. By 1920 this had culminated in a series of white-on-white canvases.

After the Revolution of 1917, Malevich founded a collective called Supporters of New Art in order to promote abstraction as the appropriate art for a new society. Malevich was strongly influenced by Futurism and Cubism and his extreme geometric abstraction should be interpreted within this context. Suprematism was an attempt to express an idea of the modern city and modern technology in abstract form. He set out his theories in various pamphlets and manifestos claiming, like other avant-garde movements, a utopian vision. In 1922 Malevich was made director of the Institute for Aesthetic Culture in Leningrad where he pursued the fusion of art and architecture as an expression of new 'creative inventiveness'.

Suprematism, and abstraction in general, was eventually rejected by the Soviet state in favour of Socialist Realism. However Malevich's ideas were to have far reaching influence outside Russia. His theories were first published in a Bauhaus publication in 1927 and direct links can be made to both Constructivism and de Stijl.

This painting is included in a special display selected by Paul Feiler. *Artists on Artists* is an ongoing series of displays drawn from the Tate Collection. Feiler has selected works with whom he feels a particular affinity. Also included in the display are works by John Constable, JMW Turner, Henri Matisse, George Seurat, Nicholas de Staël, George Braque and Paul Cézanne.

Please refer to the Tate Glossary at www.tate.org.uk for further information on art movements and terms.

For Discussion

- Can you describe this painting? What do you see first? How does Malevich use line, shape, colour and tone?
- Why do the shapes appear to be floating?
- Do you think this painting is 'dynamic'?
- For many people this type of abstract painting is hard to comprehend and appears cold and detached. Yet Malevich believed it was only by freeing painting from representational imagery and illusionism that you could achieve a spiritual quality. Do you think geometric forms can convey feelings?
- Look at the other paintings displayed in this room. Do they have anything in common with *Dynamic Suprematism*? Can you think why Feiler might have chosen this painting or any of the others in the room?

Activities

Dynamic and still shapes. Students to cut out or paint shapes they feel express the ideas of dynamic or still. This activity could be extended by using cut out cardboard which students could then paint and arrange to make into three-dimensional forms.

Balance and harmony. Students explore the use of colour and shape to create collages. Paint and then cut out shapes and fit them together to create three different types of balance: asymmetrical, symmetrical and radial.

Smudged or sharp edges. Compare Malevich's painting with Paul Feiler's works. Look at the different ways each artist uses paint, colour and line. Students could make their own colourful pictures, deciding whether to blend and smudge the colours together or keep them separate with sharp edges.

Shapes in architecture. Use the building to explore a sense of scale, proportion and balance. Students to draw the different shapes and spaces within the building, which they could then use to create an abstract two-dimensional painting or collage.

Links

Link to Paul Feiler's paintings. Compare Feiler's use of geometric forms, treatment of space and use of the square format. Contrast each artists' use of line, edge, colour and tone. Feiler says the square format provides a 'neutral proposition' which avoids a painting being read either as a horizontal landscape or a vertical still life.

Look at Naum Gabo's *Spiral Theme* 1941 (Gallery 1). As a fellow contemporary Russian, Gabo like Malevich, pursued a language of abstraction based on the idea of pure form. Compare Gabo's construction with Malevich's painting and discuss how both artists sought a revolutionary treatment of space.

Link also the geometric constructions of artists associated with St Ives such as Ben Nicholson, Kenneth Martin, Mary Martin and Victor Pasmore (Gallery 1).

Compare to another pioneer of abstraction, Piet Mondrian. See Mondrian's *Composition B with Red* 1935 in Gallery 1.

Look at the paintings of Terry Frost who exhibited at Tate St Ives in 2003 (See *Green, Black and White Movement* 1951 in Gallery 1). Frost spoke of his admiration for Malevich's use of simple forms and pure colour. Frost believed certain colours have a depth that can take you on a spiritual journey. He said black 'holds everything and nothing, it is both joyous and mournful'.