

Teacher Resource Notes – KS3-5

William Scott & Peter Fraser

26 January 2013 – 6 May 2013

These notes are designed to support KS3-5 teachers in engaging students as they explore the art work. In addition to factual information, they provide starting points for discussion, ideas for simple practical activities and suggestions for extended work that could stem from a gallery visit.

To book a gallery visit for your group call 01736 796226 or email stivesticketing@tate.org.uk.

Season Overview

This season Tate St Ives is showing the photography of Peter Fraser, and still life, landscape and nude paintings by William Scott. These are two separate shows running in parallel.

Peter Fraser

Peter Fraser was born in Cardiff in 1953. He has been at the forefront of contemporary photography since the 1980s and was one of the first British photographers to work exclusively in colour. He started exhibiting in 1982 and was short-listed for the Citigroup Photography Prize in 2004. Fraser started a civil engineering degree before deciding to study photography at Manchester Polytechnic 1972-76. The 1970s and 80s saw a new culture in photography as an art form emerge in the UK, inspired by the work of American photographers such as William Eggleston. Fraser, along with contemporaries like Martin Parr and Jem Southam, moved away the black and white social documentary style which prevailed in the UK at the time.

Fraser's work focuses on the 'materiality' of the world, inspired by a strong interest in how and why human hands shape raw materials. His photographs are found still lifes: he focuses in on the enigmatic objects he finds, revealing the edges, minutiae, strangeness and incidental beauty of the visible world. The journey is an important part of the creative process to Fraser. From his early travels around Britain as a student to his trip to Memphis to visit William Eggleston, the journey has formed an important part in the evolution of his investigative, almost forensic style.

William Scott

Born in Greenock, Scotland and raised in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, Scott trained at the Royal Academy Schools in the early 1930s before briefly moving to Cornwall then Brittany to establish an art school. After the Second World War, he became Senior Painting Master at the Bath Academy of Art. Whilst there he maintained close ties with artists in St Ives, and was one of the first British painters to make links with the emerging New York School. By the 1960s, Scott was exhibiting regularly in Europe and America, representing Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1958 and Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil in 1961.

Across a career spanning six decades Scott produced an extraordinary body of work that has secured his reputation as one of the leading modern British painters of his generation. As a painter Scott developed a unique style that pushed the boundaries of abstraction and figuration. He merged the three genres together to form paintings that are often landscapes, still lifes and nudes at the same time.

Visiting Groups information

There is one **nude** on display in Upper Gallery 2 and **abstracted nudes** on display in Lower Gallery 2 and The Apse. Please contact us on **01736 796226** or email stivesticketing@tate.org.uk if you have any concerns about this.

Please refer to the **Essential Guide to visiting Tate St Ives** for **practical information** about your visit including travel, facilities, use of art materials and gallery guidelines. This can be found at www.tate.org.uk/learn/teachers

The Galleries

Gallery 1

This gallery shows work from Fraser's five year project *A City in the Mind*. Fraser decided to describe his own adopted city, London, through objects found and photographed in his daily wanderings. It was during the making of this series that Fraser switched from using film to digital cameras. It was a revelation for him and, together with new pigment printing techniques, he found he was able to make images of extraordinary depth and colour.

Upper Gallery 2

Exhibited in this space are early still lifes from William Scott. In 1935, Scott spent some months in Mousehole, near Penzance. Inspired by the simplified vision of painter Christopher Wood and the Cornish sailor and self-taught painter Alfred Wallis, he developed his 'primitive' eye. He also concentrated on the figure, frequently painting his wife Mary. After the war Scott returned to still life subjects and he began to use motifs from memory rather than observation.

Lower Gallery 2

This gallery gives an opportunity to compare Scott's three subject areas: nudes, still lifes and landscapes. In the 1950s Scott explored the expressive potential of still life and the tension between abstraction and figuration. Later that decade Scott rejected pure abstraction and sought a more 'primitive' approach, akin to the directness of the cave paintings he saw at Lascaux, and the Greek and Egyptian collections in the British Museum. Scott's subjects often merge, as objects lose their identity and become body parts and still lifes become landscapes, producing new meanings and metaphors.

The Apse

This space shows Scott's still life and figure drawings from the model, from photographs and from memory. He used drawing as a method to explore rather than explain. Drawing remains fundamental to an understanding of Scott's painting, emphasizing pictorial and psychological boundaries.

Gallery 3

The works in this room include images from Fraser's earliest mature series, *12 Day Journey* 1984 and *Everyday Icons* 1985-6. *12 Day Journey* depicts a journey through the southwest in 1983 beginning in St Just and continuing with chance encounters and random walks and bus journeys. *Everyday Icons* was a journey from Bristol Cathedral to Glastonbury Tor focusing on traditional and secular places of worship.

The other works in this room are taken from the *Nazraeli* monograph 2006 and *Lost for Words* 2010. Fraser has become increasingly interested in the matter and materials of the visible world. Through his intense, almost forensic gaze, enigmatic and often overlooked objects take on a more potent and sometimes unsettling charge.

Gallery 4

This gallery exhibits paintings from the 1960s to the 1980s when Scott's still lifes became minimal and moved towards symbolic abstraction. Compared to the 'unfinished' look of earlier work these paintings appear calm and resolved. Scott took his subject matter from childhood memory. These 'things of life' such as the black iron pan on the kitchen table, the fish and the white bowl, became his personal collection of forms. Scott's regular return to still life offered him a framework to test his interests at the time.

Gallery 5

Photography from Fraser's *Deep Blue* and *Material* projects is shown in this gallery. Photographed in over 60 laboratories throughout the world, *Deep Blue* shows 'portraits' of machines and was encouraged by the IBM designers of the chess computer that beat the chess champion Garry Kasparov in a series of matches between 1989 and 1997. The *Material* project, made in the Applied Physics Laboratory at Strathclyde University, Glasgow, includes close ups of laboratory equipment, exposing their frayed wires, rough edges and other imperfections.

Studio Resource Room

This room features two display cases of archive materials on loan from The William Scott Foundation. The archive includes images of Scott and his family, drawings and sketches and newspaper and magazine clippings. There is a display case featuring Fraser's key catalogues and monographs, important articles, and exhibition posters and timelines featuring major events from Scott and Fraser's lives.

This room also contains books about Scott and Fraser. It can be used as a space for your group to sit, read or talk together and to take a moment to reflect on the exhibitions and your visit.

Ways of Looking: ideas for KS3-5 groups

Listening to others/responding personally/sensory experiences

A huge amount of information can be revealed just by asking the question 'what do you see?' Once a few ideas are circulating this often cascades into very imaginative and perceptive ways of viewing the work. Asking 'why do you say that?' invites further considerations and sharing of ideas between students.

- What word(s) does the work make you think about?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- What do the titles tell you?
- How does it feel to be part of this space?

Visual experience/what can you see

What materials and processes has the artist used to make the work? Have you seen photography displayed in an art gallery before? Do you think some materials have more relevance to art than others?

- Is the work part of a series; does the artist paint/photograph this subject frequently?
- What is it? (painting, collage, photograph etc)
- How is it displayed? What space does it occupy and how does it relate to other work in the exhibition?
- What is the scale of the artwork and how does this affect our relationship to it?
- Is the work made to be permanent?
- What tactile/surface qualities does the work have?
- Does the work show signs of age?

Communication of ideas and meaning

- What do you think the artist wants to communicate?
- Is it about real life?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it communicate an issue or theme?
- Does it have cultural, social or political meaning?
- Does it relate to contemporary life?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work?

Art in context/cultures/times. Local/national/global

- Is the work about a particular place or person?
- Who is the artist? Is it important to know who created the work? Does the artist's background inform the work?
- Does the work comment on contemporary society?
- Does the work relate to a particular period in history?

Gallery 1



Peter Fraser

Untitled (from A City in the Mind) 2012

The series *A City in the Mind* was photographed in London. Through it, Fraser describes his own city through objects found and photographed in his daily wanderings. This image explores the idea of beauty in ordinary objects that could be found anywhere and are often overlooked. Fraser's examination of how and why humans alter materials is also important in looking at this image.

Individual interpretations: We all bring individual and personal meanings to our viewing experiences. Compare the different interpretations of this work from your group. You can use the 'Ways of Looking' questions to provoke a discussion or think about the following questions together:

Why do you think Fraser called this series *A City in the Mind*?

Why do you think he has used the title, *Untitled*?

Is there beauty in ordinary objects? If so, should we still define them as ordinary?

Do you prefer to engage in your own interpretation of an artwork or be given information about it?

Produce a group mind map about your responses and interpretations.

Unexpected angles: Where do you think Fraser has placed his camera for this shot?

Make comparisons with camera angles in other photographs in the exhibition and record your observations.

Uncertain scale: How ambiguous is scale in Fraser's work? How does this affect your viewing of the photograph?

Photography contexts: Discuss whether you view photographs in a gallery differently from those you might see in magazines or other media.

Upper Gallery 2



William Scott

(Breton Landscape) 1939

In *(Breton Landscape)* 1939 we can see Scott's development as a 'primitive' painter. His Breton images of the late 1930s signal a life-long enquiry of elemental form in space. Whilst they were influenced by Whistler's famous 'arrangements of colours', the muted grey/greens and creams recalled the Scottish and Irish towns he knew in his childhood.

Beautifully plain: What impact does Scott's palette have on your emotional response to the painting? Make sketchbook drawings exploring the simplicity of *(Breton Landscape)* 1939, *The Frying Pan* 1946 and *Still Life* 1935. How do Scott's still life paintings contrast with Peter Fraser's photographs of ordinary, everyday objects or places?

Revenants and recall: Scott often worked from memory and photographs as **revenants**; personal recollected visions that he transformed into paintings. Think about places that have personal meanings for you and try sketching them from memory. Discuss what the sketches can tell you about how you remember or feel about that place.

Ways of seeing: In some of Scott's paintings there is a strong geometrical division in the composition. Explore this idea in relation to the works in this gallery. Scott was influenced by the French Post Impressionist painter, Cezanne and the French Master, Chardin. Explore these influences in relation to the artworks on display in Upper Gallery 2.

Lower Gallery 2



William Scott

White, Sand and Ochre 1960-1

Scott wrote in 1954, 'the pictures that looked the most like mine were painted on the walls a thousand years ago.' In addition to ancient classical and prehistoric images, Scott also cited archaic art from non western cultures, particularly Egyptian painting, as inspiring his work. By the late 1950s Scott veered towards abstraction again, preoccupied again with surface texture, space and a primal mark making.

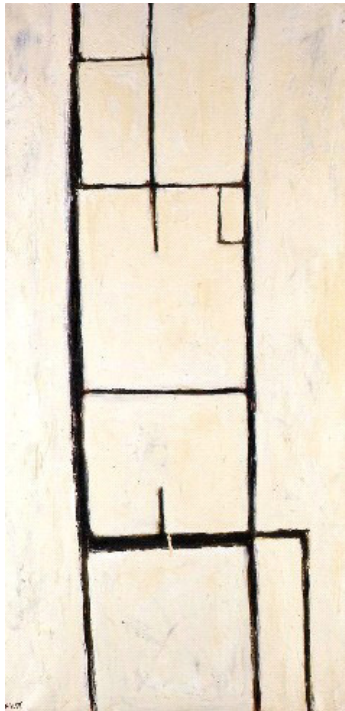
Cave drawings: In 1955 Scott visited the caves in Lascaux in South West France, when visitors were still allowed in the ancient site, and observed the pictographs of animals, dots, lines and geometric shapes drawn on old stone. How do you think Scott has reflected this experience in his work?

Game memories: Scott remembered playing hopscotch games, chalked onto pavements, as a child. How might these memories connect with this painting? Discuss any memories of games in your childhood and in your sketchbook make drawings from these memories.

Clever Colour: Explore Scott's use of colour in the paintings in Lower Gallery 2. What effects does he create with the palette that he has used? How does his use of colour affect the way that we view his paintings?

Heritage secrets: Scott used imagery such as crosses and patterns from his Celtic heritage, without literal meaning, but to represent symbolic signs from history. Visit Balnoon cemetery close to Tate St Ives and explore the patterns and signs on the Celtic crosses in further drawings.

Apse



William Scott
Seated figure 1954

Scott used the nude as a subject all his life. His tonal and sculpturally solid nudes relate to his training as a sculptor. The nudes in this gallery metamorphose into the space the model occupies combining both **figuration** (where objects look more like the real thing) with **abstraction** (where objects are often distorted and look less real). Throughout his career, Scott made still life and figure drawings from the model, from photographs and from memory.

Arms and legs: Can you see a figure and a chair in this painting? Discuss how Scott has reduced the nude form into a rectilinear abstraction and identify how body parts and the chair combine. Make quick sketches of each other in different poses representing parts of the body as geometric abstractions.

Frameworks: Scott compressed or stretched the nude so that the form filled the frame of the painting. Make a series of drawings using different shapes as the frame and make drawings of the figure to fit those shapes. Are you familiar with drawings of da Vinci that combine geometry and the figure?

Secret complexities: Scott wanted to make simple expressions of complex thoughts. Do you think that he achieved this with *Seated Figure* 1954? What complex thoughts might be hidden in this work?

Beauty and the Beast: Scott was interested in the idea of beauty in the 'unfinished'. He recorded the messy vitality of life and disregarded the idea of perfection. Discuss the texture of the paint and the quality of the painted line: do you think Scott painted the line with a brush or squeezed paint from the tube? Does Scott's work feel 'unfinished' to you? Record your responses in your sketchbook or on your voice recorder.

Gallery 3



Peter Fraser

Newquay No 1. (from 12 Day Journey) 1984

This photograph is part of a series Fraser made in 1984 on his random wanderings through the southwest on foot, by bus or hitchhiking for 12 days, starting in St Just west of St Ives. He planned as little as possible, to allow for chance and accidental encounters. Fraser recorded this building site image on the beach at Newquay.

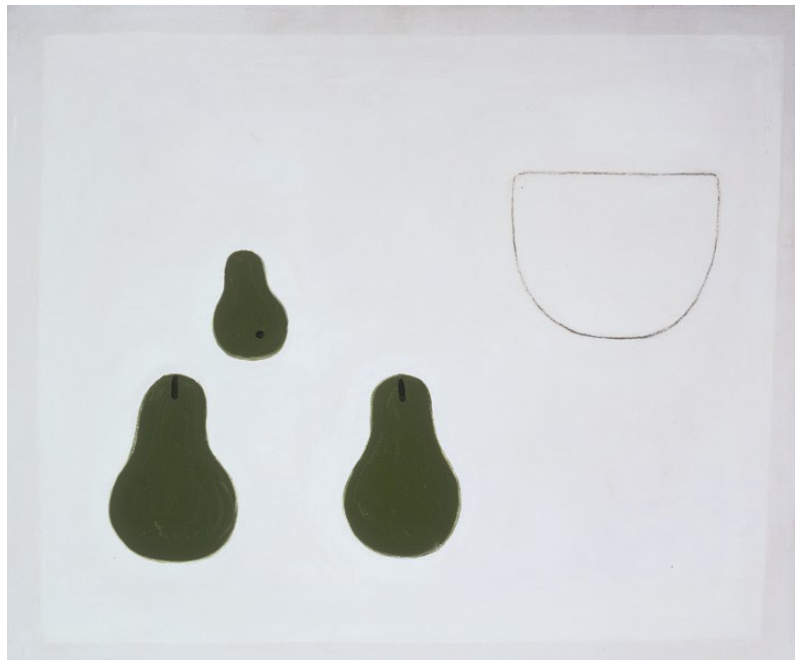
Mysteriously strange: Discuss the idea that photography has the potential to transform ordinary or trivial objects into extraordinary, strange and mysterious images. How important is light and colour for these dreamlike and dramatic qualities? What colours would you expect in an image of concrete blocks on a beach?

Minimalists: If the actual stack of blocks was presented in a gallery would you consider it a contemporary sculpture? Are you familiar with the minimal sculpture of Andre or the wrapped sculpture of Oldenburg? Make drawings from the image then compare your studies with the work of minimalist sculptors you later research.

Presence and absence: Although there are no people in the photograph does the image invite feelings of a human presence? What human stories and events can you link with this image? Do you think this grid looks abandoned or is part of ongoing human work? Do you consider it important that art is connected to social contexts?

Personal journey: As you journey from the gallery use cameras or mobile phones to photograph everyday objects that define your personal journey around St Ives. Download these when you return to school or college, select the images and develop a computer slide show or film. What story do the images tell about your personal journey?

Gallery 4



William Scott

Orchard of Pears NO 10 1976-1977.

William Scott returned to still lifes from the 1960s until the end of his working life. Still life offered him a framework to test his interests at the time. This gallery includes a selection from his later work which appears calmly resolved in comparison to the 'unfinished' look and rough surfaces of the earlier work in Lower Gallery 2. The orchard is represented by the reductive forms of three sculptural pear shapes painted in a minimal chromatic palette.

Developments: Discuss the changes in Scott's later painting, such as *Orchard of Pears*, in comparison with works you have seen in the other gallery spaces. Why do you think Scott's work may have developed in these ways? Which paintings do you relate to most?

Balancing act: There is a balance between the solid objects and the void in this painting. Make a series of drawings in your sketchbook using the shapes in this work to explore balance and weight. You could move them to the edges, open up space in the centre or change the relationship between them to find new compositions.

Personal meanings: Discuss the idea that there is no meaning in still life objects and that they are just the means to make an abstract picture. Explore the works in the gallery. Do you think that there is meaning in the 'things of life' that Scott uses in his still lifes: the black iron pan on the kitchen table, the fish and the white bowl? What is your interpretation of *Orchard of Pears*?

Gallery 5



Peter Fraser

Untitled (from Material) 2002

Fraser travelled to many countries in the world in the early 1990s photographing machines in scientific research establishments. In *Material* 2002 Fraser brought images made in the department of Applied Physics at Strathclyde University, together with others he was making of dirt and detritus, to propose a democratic notion of the importance of all material. As he demonstrates across all of his work, for Fraser 'everything might be worthy of the utmost attention'.

Small clues: What do you think this object might be? Discuss the clues in the work. What effect does seeing a small object in this scale have on your interpretation of it?

Detail and focus: Why do you think Fraser allows some areas of some photographs to be out of focus?

Black, white or colour: Why do you think Fraser chooses to work with colour photography? What difference would black and white photographs of the image make to your response to the work?

Gallery connections: Does this image relate to other photographs by Fraser? Can you identify any repeating themes? What connections can you discover between Fraser and Scott's work? Make a series of sketches about the connections you make.

Blow-up: How important is scale in photography? Is there a distinction in your response to very large scale images which become part of the architecture of a space and smaller framed works hung on the walls?

Resources

Books & Journals

Anfam, D. *The Ambiguous Pleasures of Puritanism*, Tate etc. Issue 23

Bowness, A., Ragon, M. and Schmalenbach, W. (1964) *William Scott: Paintings*. London: Lund Humphries

Fraser, P & Miller, J. (2002). *Peter Fraser*. The Photographer's Gallery

Fraser, P & Martin, R. (1988). *Two Blue Buckets*. Cornerhouse

Fry, R. (1932). *Characteristics of French Art*. Chatto & Windus

Lynton, N. (2004). *William Scott*. London: Thames and Hudson

Mellor, D. (2008). *No Such Thing as Society: Photography in Britain 1967-1987*. London: Hayward Publishing

Morley, S. (1998). *William Scott: Paintings and Drawings*. London: Merrell Holberton

Whitfield, S. (2013). *William Scott British Artists*. London: Tate

William Scott: Paintings, Drawings and Gouaches, 1938–71 (exh. cat. by A. Bowness, London, Tate, 1972)

Weblinks

<http://www.peterfraser.net>– this website has many links to literature about Peter Fraser

<http://www.williamscott.org/>

www.powersof10.com/film

<http://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/people/id/345>

Ideas for follow-up

Personal journeys (Gallery 3)

Use photographs of everyday objects taken on your journey back from Tate St Ives to produce a slide show or film using stills which relates to your personal experience. Experiment with your photography software to make various changes to your images that might produce a dream like quality and ambiguity in your work.

Eventually, everything connects (Gallery 5)

Peter Fraser saw a film by Charles and Ray Eames, *Powers of Ten*, when he was at school. The film depicts images of a couple picnicking in Chicago then journeys out to the imagined edge of the Universe and back and continues down through the skin to an atomic level. Use Google earth, microscope images, the internet and books to investigate the idea that everything in the universe is made of small things and develop a project in a media of your choice.

Portraits (Gallery 5)

Peter Fraser travelled to many countries in the 1990s photographing machines in scientific research establishments and presenting these as 'portraits'. In this way Fraser drew attention to the importance of machines rather than doing social documentary portraits of people. Develop a portrait project using photography, drawing or painting making your individual choice of subject.

City/objects of your mind (Gallery 1 and Upper Gallery 2)

Fraser produced a city of the imagination from physical objects so that the city existed purely in the mind of the viewer. Scott also painted images about finding beauty in plainness. Develop a body of work in any media that explores your own 'city' space in your imagination.

Still life reinterpreted (Galleries Upper 2, 4 and 5)

Fraser draws attention to how vast things are made of important small things, often by moving his camera in close to discover intense, detailed images of objects that you might not notice. Scott's still lifes also made relationships between objects, sometimes using cut out bits of paper to investigate balance and placement. Make a collection of small objects and use these to develop a project, in any medium, exploring detail and interconnectivity.

Beauty in the thing badly done (Lower Gallery 2)

In *White, Sand and Ochre* Scott used sand in his painting. Investigate how Scott used different textures, scraped paint, lines scratched through the paint and lines made with tubes of paint in his work. Develop a body of work using plaster, polyfilla, knives and trowels, as well as brushes, which uses the ideas of disregard for perfection and enjoyment of messy vitality in mark making. You might revisit a highly finished historic painting and rework it using your own ideas around unfinished, coarse, grainy surfaces.

Primitive realism (Upper Gallery 2 and 4)

Scott moved to Mousehole in 1935 and was impressed with the primitive realism of Christopher Wood and Alfred Wallis. In 1955 Scott visited Lascaux in South West France (when visitors were allowed into the caves) and observed the primitive images of animals, dots, lines and geometric shapes. Research images from art history and develop a workbook around primitive realism that informs a final artwork, in your choice of media.

Revenants (Gallery Upper 2, Lower 2 and 4)

Instead of drawings Scott sometimes made work from photographs and memory. This time lapse enabled distance and recollection in his visual experiences. Landscapes and objects that he had observed and games (hopscotch) he had played became revenants and metaphors, which allow the possibility of non-literal interpretation. Draw on memories from your past and use metaphorical objects or places to develop a personal project in any media about your own symbols.

Hidden figures (Apse)

Make drawings in the Apse about the merging of the nude with the space the figure occupies and the integration between figure and furniture. Use drawings, collage or photography to develop a series of images that produce ambiguity and metamorphosis.

Unusual viewpoints (Gallery 1)

Peter Fraser sometimes places his lens in unusual places and produces unexpected images and ambiguous interpretation of scale. Develop a photography project where you select strange placements for your lens and explore an object in this way.

Reinterpretation: 2D into 3D (Gallery 4)

Record shapes and images from Scott's still lifes and develop your own reinterpretation using three dimensional materials to produce a sculptural response which considers space between objects.