



Notes for Teachers

Contents

Page

Introduction

Trevor Bell Beyond Materiality
 Paintings and Drawings 1967-2004

Trevor Bell Artists on Artists

Leach and his Circle

St Ives School of Modernists

Toby Paterson An Isometric Plan

Jem Southam From a Distance
 An Industrial Landscape in Cornwall

Appendix Trevor Bell The Artist's Words

Introduction

The winter season celebrate colour, form, landscape, sense of place and art in relation to architectural forms, as well as the work of Bernard Leach and his circle.

The displays therefore present us with the following key points:

- An insight into the work of Trevor Bell
- An insight into the photography of Jem Southam
- An insight into the work of Toby Paterson
- A historic display of artists associated with St Ives
- An insight into the ceramics of Bernard Leach and his circle
- An exploration of the experience of landscape in painting, sculpture and photography
- An exploration of the language of abstraction
- An exploration of pictorial, sculptural and architectural space

There are many starting points appropriate to these displays that you could develop according to your groups needs and interests. Consider some of the following,

- Abstraction
- Colour
- Space
- Landscape and a sense of place
- Painting versus installation and sculpture
- Trevor Bell
- St Ives Artists
- Constructivism and architecture
- Ceramics and studio pottery

The aim of this pack is to provide information about the exhibiting artists, information about the works on display and suggestions for themes and issues to consider and discuss. Details of resources and further reading are also included together with suggested activities for primary and secondary groups.

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 on line at this point. The **Tate Gallery shop** has a selection of books, catalogues, post cards and related materials.

Websites

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.

Contacts

General enquires and group bookings

01736 791114

tsi.education@tate.org.uk

Susan Lamb, Head of Education and Public Programmes

01736 791116 Susan.Lamb@tate.org.uk

Kerry Rice, Education Officer

01736 791114 Kerry.Rice@tate.org.uk

Joel Edwards, Education Officer

01736 791113 Joel.Edwards@tate.org.uk

Joan Stockwell, Group Bookings

Coordinator

01736 791114 Joan.Stockwell@tate.org.uk

Trevor Bell Beyond Materiality

Paintings and Drawings 1967 – 2004

Trevor Bell is best known for his shaped canvases inspired by abstract forms within the landscape. His paintings have been described as 'vibrant, provocative and sensual'. He is not afraid of scale or colour or of breaking rules about what shape we expect a painting to be.

This exhibition highlights Bell's work from the 1960s and 1970s, made both in the UK and America. It also includes five newly commissioned paintings. **Lower Gallery 2** includes a selection of Bell's large shaped canvases from the 1960s. In **Gallery 4** you will see two large-scale paintings, one of which was made when Bell was living and working in Florida. In **Gallery 5** there are five huge colour-field paintings that challenge the space and envelop the viewer. Don't miss the **Café** (Level 4) where there are drawings by Bell from the 1960s and 1970s as well as a series of recent paintings.

Trevor Bell was born in Leeds in 1930 and studied at Leeds College of Art. In his early twenties he spent time in Cornwall and became associated with the younger generation of St Ives artists. He had his first one-man show in London in 1959. Following this, he was awarded the Paris Biennale International Painting Prize and the Italian Government Scholarship and he later became a Gregory Fellow in Painting at Leeds University. He has travelled extensively and lived and worked in England, France, Italy, Canada and America. In 1973 Bell moved to Tallahassee in Florida and was Professor of Graduate Painting at Florida State University for many years. He exhibited widely in America and received a number of public commissions. In 1996 Bell returned to live in Cornwall and his home and studios are now near Penzance. In 1998 he was honoured with an Emeritus Professorship by Florida State University. He has work in numerous public and private collections in America and the UK.

Key work

Passage – Quiet Five 2004

These five monumental canvases in Gallery 5 were commissioned especially for the exhibition. The paintings, which are over three metres, soar upwards. Each painting is dominated by a different colour, the tone of which lightens towards the top. The rich pigments and quality of the paint seem to create a dense glow. Bell plays with the illusion of depth. The space of the room and walls between each painting are active elements within the installation.



Trigger Questions

- What are your immediate reactions when you look at these paintings?
- Stand close to and then move back from one of the large paintings. What happens?
- How do the paintings relate to each other and the space within the room?
- Describe the colours and brushmarks.
- Bell's paintings seem to have either a sense of movement and energy or stillness and contemplation. How does he create these effects?
- What do the paintings remind you of?
- Why do you think that so many of Bell's paintings are so big?

Things to think about

Materials and techniques

Bell often works on a painting for many months.

Bell has developed a method of constructing the stretchers for his canvases which is similar to that used to make tennis rackets. This enables him to make a variety of shapes.



Notes and sketches. Bell makes endless drawings and sketches which serve as notes on ideas. He describes his small working notes as 'probes' that he will often refer back to years later. He says, 'I see my progress not in a straight, uninterrupted line, but more like a giant wheel which picks things up, and brings them round again'.

Abstract art. Trevor Bell has never been interested in making referential works of art. He talks of his 'concern to make the painting a self-sufficient entity, not describing or necessarily alluding to anything else'. This does not mean that his paintings do not draw on ideas, forms or feelings from the material world but that they are, in effect, abstract.

Abstract art can take many forms and embrace many different ideas. And for many people it is a challenge to talk about or explain an abstract painting. Within the history of modern art, Bell takes his place as someone who had taken the concept of the unframed, and therefore unrestrained, painting-as-object a major step further. He challenges us to re-think our ideas about painting and sculpture and to consider the emotive power of colour.

For further information on abstract art please refer to the Tate website glossary
www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary

Cornwall. Bell spent time in Cornwall in his twenties and he describes this period as an early love affair. He says that the most important thing for him has been the cliffs and the sea crashing into them. 'When you work in Cornwall, you're conscious of movement all the time and the light is so intense you shroud the studio window with muslin to cut it out'.

During the 1950s Bell became a member of the Penwith Society and he became associated with the generation of St Ives artists which included Wilhemina Barns-Graham, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon and Bryan Wynter. Heron and Hilton, who both pursued an abstract language for painting, were to be a major influence on Bell at this point.

Bell has always insisted that he is not a 'St Ives artist' pointing out that his reputation in the 1960s was made elsewhere in Britain and then America. However, as this exhibition reasserts, Bell has always had a link with St Ives and both the place and the people clearly had an impact on his formative years.

American Abstraction. Bell's paintings must be seen as part of a fascinating dialogue between the painting traditions of American and Europe and the international framework of post war art that pursued abstraction. In particular he was a pioneer of understanding American abstraction, becoming himself, part of this mainstream after his move to Florida in the 1970s. Indeed, during the 1970s and 1980s Bell exhibited widely in America yet was virtually invisible in Britain.

During the 1940s and 1950s Abstract Expressionism emerged as a term to apply to new forms of abstract art in America. As the term suggests, the aim was to make art that was both abstract and also expressive or emotional in effect. Abstract Expressionism included so-called 'action painters' such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning who worked in an improvisatory manner often using large brushes to make sweeping gestural marks. It also included painters such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman who focused on creating large areas of colour or 'colour fields' which aimed to produce a contemplative response in the viewer.

It is not difficult to see where Bell links to these American artists as he developed his own free-form, large-scale, intensely coloured paintings that established his reputation. He has also been connected with others such as Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly who experimented with shaped canvases.

Further information on artists mentioned and a glossary of terms can be found at www.tate.org.uk/collections

Landscape and location. Bell's abstract paintings are inspired by landscape and the natural world without being literal interpretations of it. His paintings are often rooted in geographical or topographical references or as one writer puts it 'in the land, between rocks and hard places'. He talks of his love of the Yorkshire Dales where he grew up, Cornwall, the Himalayas and Florida. He is deeply affected by the natural world, by colour, light and atmosphere and he tries to convey a sense or 'spirit of place', the intensity of a form or force within nature.

Space and environment. Bell's paintings have always explored flat space devoid of figures or objects that might suggest perspective or 3D illusion. He challenges traditional ideas of what a painting is, suggesting that it can be more dynamic and open ended. He considers the total spatial environment within and outside the canvas. He plays with counter perspective and aerial space, spacing and the gaps in between. The wall and surroundings become active components in Bell's works.

In the late 1960s Bell began to relate the canvas to the immediate environment and experimented with different shapes and scales. His paintings became sculptural objects spreading out from the wall in different directions forcing the viewer to move around them. He asks whether a painting have to be confined to the wall? Can a painting also be a sculpture?

Shape and edge. In the late 1950s Bell started experimenting with shaped canvases. He stopped using the usual rectilinear format for painting, choosing unusual large-scale shapes. Paintings were often constructed from several supports butted together and often reached out across the walls towards the floor.

Bell breaks all the rules as to what shape we expect a painting to be. He sets up an extraordinary visual dynamic between shape, edge and colour. He plays with positives and negatives and tension and balance. The fields of colour are at once controlled and activated by the bevelled or rounded, and often painted, edges.

Scale. Whether large or small scale, Bell always creates a relationship with the viewer that is physical. He can create intimate paintings that respond perhaps to a detail within the natural world (see paintings in the Café). His larger paintings envelop us, immersing us within a spatial and colour field. There is no fixed point – it is as if he is trying to convey the experience of an expansive landscape.

Night moon-shot at Canaveral. In 1972 Bell witnessed the launch of Apollo 17, the first night-time launch of a space mission. The extraordinary experience of seeing the fumes and fire left by the rocket launch had a huge effect on him. *Tall Seven* 1975-6 (Gallery 4) is one of a number of works inspired by this experience.

Colour and light. Bell's art is a celebration of colour. He talks of painting as a generative force through colour and he has always been interested in how the eye is shifted across a surface of intense changes in colour. His early work is dominated by black and white with flashes of strong colour. In the 1970s his palette changed to hot reds, burning oranges and yellows and rich blues and greens. This change was triggered by his experience of the intense colour of the tropical heat of Florida and

the Indian subcontinent. More recently Bell's fields of colour have become softer and subtly transparent.

Brushmarks. The application of paint is sometimes gestural, dramatic and thick. His brush strokes can also be delicate, creating veil-like washes of colour.

Patrick Heron writes 'putting paint on a flat surface with a brush is just about the greatest possible pleasure I know'

Sea and sail. Bell has always been interested in the sea and most of his life he has had a sailing boat. He says he loves the dynamics of sailing – the wind's energy against the force of the sail. He talks of the particular experience or sense of space and movement when sailing, especially night sailing.

Titles. Bell titles his paintings after he has completed them. They can be seen as clues and insights to the work. Some titles are nautical such as *Kee* 1967 or *Split Jet* 1970 while others refer to specific places such as *Calshot* 1970, *Warsash* 1969 and *Wight* 1968. Others reinforce the dynamics within them such as *Thrust* 1968, *Cantilever* 1970 or *Tall Seven* 1975-6.

Beyond Materiality. As the title of the exhibition suggests, Bell's paintings do engage with a spiritual quality. As an abstract painter, he is interested in both the outward and inward sense of space. He has always believed that art serves as a metaphysical window through which we may view the deeper realities. This is particularly noticeable with his recent work which is more contemplative in mood. He says, *I feel that what we should get from art is a sense of wonder, of something beyond ourselves, that celebrates our 'being' here. It condenses the experience we all have as human beings, and by forming it, makes it significant.*

Further Reading and Resources

*Stephens, Chris, *Trevor Bell*, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2004

**Trevor Bell, A British Painter in America*, Florida State University of Fine Arts, 2003

**Trevor Bell: Both Ends of the Stream, Paintings 1990-2000*, Florida, Himalayas, Cornwall, North Light Gallery, Huddersfield, 2000

* available in the shop at Tate St Ives

Useful Websites

www.tate.org.uk Tate Gallery on line

www.stivestrust.demon.co.uk/archivesite St Ives Archive Study Centre website (check)

www.lydonfineart.com/bell/ Lydon Fine Art Gallery – information on Bell

www.artcyclopaedia.com/artists/bell-trevor.html Information on Bell & other artists

www.fsu.edu/tbell/tbellstart.html The Florida State University

Trevor Bell

Artists on Artists

Artists on Artists is an ongoing series of displays drawn from the Tate Collection. Trevor Bell has selected a group of works, which are of importance to him. The display ranges from historic works by artists such as JMW Turner and George Stubbs, to a recent work by sculptor Anish Kapoor. It includes works by well-known artists such as Pablo Picasso, Giorgio Morandi, Clyfford Still and Joseph Beuys as well as lesser-known artists such as Sean Scully, Michael Kidner and Serge Poliakoff.

At first glance the display appears surprisingly eclectic with few obvious links. A closer look provides a fascinating insight into Bell's interests and inspiration and further develops our understanding of his work. Bell explains,

Most artists learn their art history in bits – registering works by other artists (of any period) whose work can give insight into their immediate needs; and of course you develop 'loves' who travel with you a long time. My selection is mostly evident of some of those changing needs; others are because I admire the artist so much.'

Key work

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851)

Seascape with Distant Coast

circa 1840

Oil on canvas 914 x 1219 mm

This is one of two paintings by Turner that Bell has selected. Here the dramatic sea and sky merge into swirling colour field.

Turner's interest in light and atmosphere, above all else, led him to produce landscape paintings that became almost abstract, devoid of any solid form or detail. For this reason, his late paintings have been a source of inspiration to many twentieth century abstract painters. You only have to compare this painting with Clyfford Still's painting *1953* hung next to it or Bell's installation *Passage – Quiet Five* in Gallery 5 to see the link to this historic landscape painter.

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 or subject etc.)? Try making a list.
- Bell is interested in all the artists displayed here. Can you think why?

- If you have already looked at Bell's work, can you see connections between his work and any here?

Things to think about

Abstraction. Bell has included in his selection abstract works by Scully, Poliakoff, Kidner, Kapoor and Still. These works, which are all very different, provide a context for Bell's own exploration of an abstract language which pushes the boundaries between painting and sculpture.

Space. Note how a number of works such as Kidner's *Square and Circle One* 1976 or Morandi's *Still Life* 1946 explore spatial relationships within the picture plane. Morandi repeatedly painted the same selection of familiar items to the point where these objects lose their domestic purpose and become sculptural objects that invite contemplation. Each object is carefully placed in relation to the other.

Limitless landscapes. Much of Bell's work is inspired by his experience of landscape. It is interesting to see that he has chosen paintings by other artists who explore the depths and expanse of landscape. He has included four extraordinarily abstract paintings by Turner as well as a painting by Clyfford Still. The latter's work with its heavily worked surface and jagged fissures, is said to recall the 'awesome landscapes of the American West'. Still said that he saw landscape as a metaphor for the unlimited expanses of the mind and imagination.

Sensuality. Bell invites us to enjoy the sensual qualities of works such as Kapoor's richly pigmented sculpture called *Three* 1982 or Stubbs *Horse in the Shade of a Wood* 1780. In the latter a grey stallion is set against a wooded landscape creating an extraordinarily simple composition where Stubbs seems to have revelled in the stark contrast between the light horse and the dark background.

Picasso and cubism. It is significant that Bell has included Picasso's *Weeping Woman* 1937. It is one of a series of drawings and paintings where Picasso used the motif of a weeping woman to symbolise the anguish of the Spanish civil war. Picasso used techniques developed from Cubism to twist and distort the head of the woman. Bell talks of the revelation of discovering Picasso and cubism when he was student. Suddenly he was able to free himself of traditional composition and perspective.

Further information on terms such as Cubism please refer to the Tate website glossary www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary

For further information on the works included in this display please refer to the collection database at www.tate.org.uk

Bernard Leach and Circle

In the show case in Upper Gallery 2 you will find ceramics by Bernard Leach and his Circle drawn from The Wingfield Digby Collection with loans from around the country. The exhibition highlights work by key figures in the story of the Leach Pottery and includes work by Shoji Hamada, Norah Braden, Michael Cardew and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie.

Bernard Leach (1887-1979) spent the first ten years of his life in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan before going to school in Britain in 1897. He studied at the Slade School of Art and in 1909 returned to Japan where he studied traditional Japanese pottery. In 1920 Leach set up the St Ives pottery with fellow potter Shoji Hamada. They built the first oriental climbing kiln in the West. With a team of workers and students, Leach made a range of ware that included decorative raku, and functional tableware, souvenirs and large earthenware dishes. He also produced individual pieces in stoneware. While running the Leach pottery he visited China and Japan regularly. In 1932 Leach set up a new pottery in Dartington, while his son, David, managed the Pottery in St Ives. In 1940 he published his influential *A Potter's Book* outlining his philosophy and methods. Leach returned to St Ives in 1941 establishing at David's suggestion a range of tableware in stoneware that became known as Standard Ware. Leach travelled extensively throughout his life passing on his ideas to potters throughout the world. In 1962 Leach was awarded a CBE and in 1968 he was awarded the Freedom of the Borough of St Ives.

Key work

Bernard Leach

Griffon (Slipware Charger) 1929

Earthenware and Galena glaze 46 x 10 cm

This large earthenware dish has a deep yellow/brown galena glaze. This glaze is made from finely ground lead and reflects Leach's interest in the history of English slipware at this time. The dish is decorated with a griffon in the centre and a lattice pattern around the edge. The griffon fills the space - its legs, head and tail reaching to the edges of the inner circle. The dynamic stance of the griffon creates a sense of movement and energy.



Trigger questions

- What sorts of things can you see in the showcase?
- Can you tell how they were made?
- What colours can you see?
- Can you see common characteristics between the ceramics or are they all very different?
- Look at one work closely. Describe its shape and colour. Is it decorated? What would it be used for?

Things to think about

Hand-crafted pots. Leach established a tradition of studio pottery encouraging potters to learn and experiment with the craft in order to produce pots for everyday use at relatively reasonable prices alongside the production of individual 'works of art'.

Use and beauty. Leach said that he liked to make objects that were both good to use and to look at. He said they are 'an extension of people striving to make human products with as much wholeness and naturalness as a sea shell or the wings of a butterfly'.

Leach and assistants. Leach, like many artists, preferred to work with assistants to help realise his ideas. Many of these assistants, as you will see here, went on to

become leading potters in their own rights. Compare and contrast Leach's work with that of, for example, Michael Cardew, Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie or Nora Braden.

Western influences. Many of Leach's pots show Western influences such as medieval jugs, eighteenth century slipware dishes and German salt-glaze ware. His designs also include mermaids, hares and griffin-like animals.

Eastern influences. Leach's low-fired wares such as raku and his high-fired stoneware and porcelain were strongly influenced by the East. They are characterised by a powerful sense of form and minimal decoration and simplicity of glaze. He also included Eastern motifs such as wellheads and stylised landscapes.

East and West. In *A Potter's Book*, Leach advocated the need to relate pots to the culture within which they are made, explaining that it is not a matter of copying historical styles but of interpreting them with sensitivity and thought. While it is possible to distinguish between the Western and Eastern influences on his work you could argue that his most successful work combines them.

Born in the East and educated in the West, Leach constantly searched for a wider understanding and acceptance between the two cultures. He evolved an aesthetic that combined aspects of modernism with such eastern concepts as the beauty of naturalness, tradition, simplicity and functionality. Emmanuel Cooper

Vitality. Leach described pots using the language of the body. He talked of neck, shoulder, belly and foot and of generous curves and movement. He said he wanted his pots to have 'vitality' – to capture a sense of energy and life.

Pattern and decoration. Leach was a skilled draughtsman and he had a powerful sense of composition. He would sketch his ideas before decorating a pot. Look at the way he combines pattern and motif with the colour and shape of each pot. Leach has his own favourite decorations such as birds, horses and griffins. He often combined animals and plants with simple patterns and marks. Why not compare Leach's work with Grayson Perry in Gallery 1.

Colour. Look at the range of colours used in the slips and glazes before the pots were fired. Leach often liked to paint on and then incise into his glazes. One of his favourite was temmoku glaze which had a deep brown colour.

Bowls, bottles and jugs. Look at the range of different objects these potters made. Look at the different sizes and shapes and uses. How does their shape, colours and decoration relate to their use?

Slab or thrown. Leach made most of his ceramics by either 'throwing' them on a wheel or by moulding together slabs of clay. Sometimes he did a bit of both. Identify the different ways different pots have been put together.

Further Reading

**Bernard Leach*, Tate St Ives exhibition broadsheet, text by Emmanuel Cooper, 2004

**Bernard Leach, Hamada and Their Circle from the Wingfield Digby Collection*, Marston House, 1992

*Cooper, Emmanuel, *Bernard Leach, Life and Work*, Yale University Press, 2003

*Waal, Edmund de, *Bernard Leach*, Tate Gallery Publishing, 2003

Websites

www.leachpottery.com The Leach Pottery

www.studiopottery.com Further information on Bernard Leach

The Leach Pottery

Higher Stennack

St Ives TR26 2HE

01736 796398

Open 6 days a week 10-5pm

Some Useful Definitions

Ceramic – the art of making objects of clay and firing them in a kiln.

Earthenware – ceramic that has not been fired above 400°C. It tends to be quite rough or coarse looking and is often a reddish/yellow colour.

Firing – process of placing clay in intense heat (in a kiln) which hardens and changes the clay.

Glaze – A thin glassy layer on the surface of a ceramic. It is usually applied by dipping the ceramic in a watery liquid which contains the glaze mix but it can also be painted and brushed on.

Kiln – a structure within which pottery is fired (rather like an oven).

Porcelain – the finest ceramic, usually white, that been fired at a very high temperature.

Potters wheel – a turntable on which clay pots are shaped.

Slab method – technique of forming pottery by hand using rolled out slabs of clay.

Slip – a fine clay surface coating applied to the clay before a glaze and before firing.

Stoneware – a dense ceramic that has been fired at high temperatures, usually above 1100°C.

Throw – this means to shape on the potters wheel.

The Sensation of Place: The St Ives School of Moderns

In the **studio** you will find a display of artists associated with St Ives. This display focuses on the so-called St Ives 'Moderns' such as Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Naum Gabo. From the late 1930s these artists began to fuse ideas about abstract art with their response to the landscape around them. Work by the following artists is also included: Sandra Blow, Paul Feiler, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon and John Wells. Two paintings by ex-mariner Alfred Wallis are included. Wallis' informal approach and unusual use of materials to create images based on his maritime experiences were admired by many of the St Ives artists.

Key work

Naum Gabo (1890-1977)

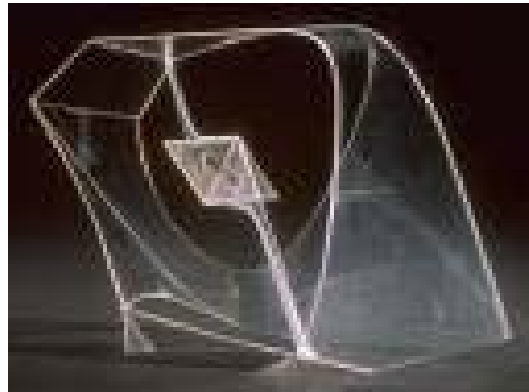
Construction in Space with Crystalline C
1938-40

Perspex and celluloid

For this construction Gabo has enclosed a small crystal-like central shape within a series of sweeping planes that emphasises the transparency and flexibility of the material.

Gabo was a pioneer of abstract art and in particular, Constructivism. He was also one of the first to experiment with new materials such as plastic. Gabo believed that sculptors should use modern materials for a modern art and in 1920 he wrote his *Realistic Manifesto* where he rejected the idea of sculptural mass in favour of space

In the late 1930s Gabo spent time in Cornwall where he became influenced by the local landscape. This sculpture combines organic forms and geometric shapes and reflects his desire to express what he saw as the 'hidden forces of nature'.



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.
- Can you see any connections between the sculptures and paintings?
- What do these works tell us about St Ives and its art?
- Many of these artists were inspired by the Cornish landscape – how can you tell?

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. It is interesting to make links to Trevor Bell's exhibition because he is also considered a St Ives artist. 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.

The Cornish landscape. Consider how works in this display reflect a sense of place and interest in the Cornish landscape. Artists such as Blow, Hepworth, Lanyon and Wells were strongly influenced by their experience of Cornwall. Their experience and sensation of the landscape is captured in different ways within their work. Works have been chosen which capture an evocative response to the atmosphere of this particular landscape.

Sensation of place. Works chosen for this display focus on the more sensual, lyrical aspect of the St Ives School. It includes a wide range of artists who in their different ways

responded and expressed empathy with their environment. Most of these works demonstrate an emotive response to the colour, light, textures, surfaces and materials of the natural world.

Abstraction. This room shows how many of the St Ives artists explored abstraction. 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 and movement. These artists explore and describe space in different ways. Many of the works play with pictorial space and illusionism often denying traditional perspective and depth. They create a sense of space, movement and surface tension through colour, shape, brushmark, texture and transparency.

Further Reading

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, *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

*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.*

* Available in the shop at Tate St Ives

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

Tel: 01736 796408

e-mail: archive@stivetrust.co.uk

www.stivetrust.co.uk/archivesite

Toby Paterson An Isometric Plan

On the **Café Stairwell** you will find two wall paintings by Toby Paterson. This site-specific work uses the architecture of the Gallery to explore ideas about painting, construction and drawing. Paterson's work has been inspired by the ideas of the Constructivist movement and the so-called St Ives School of Modernists. Artists such as Victor Pasmore, Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth were interested in integrating visual art and architecture. Paterson has created another installation in the **Apse**, which acknowledges the influence of Victor Pasmore and which includes relief constructions and paintings on Perspex.

Toby Paterson (born 1974) studied at Glasgow School of Art. From 1996-1998 he was a member of the committee at the Transmission Gallery, Glasgow. In 2002 Paterson won the Becks' Futures award. He has exhibited his work both in the UK and abroad. In 2005 (10 February – 17 April) he has a solo show at the Barbican Art Gallery in London. He lives and works in Glasgow.



Isometric Plan 2004

Trigger questions

- What type of architecture is Paterson interested in?
- Why do you think he is so interested in the work of Victor Pasmore?
- Why types of materials and techniques does Paterson use to make his work?
- Why do you think Paterson has chosen the stairwell to create an installation?
- Why do you think he calls it *Isometric Plan*?

Things to think about

Site specific work. An *Isometric Plan* is a site-specific work made especially for the stairwell for the duration of the exhibition. Paterson has chosen a very particular site – a place

within the gallery where people move up and down but don't usually stop. It is as if he wanted his installation to become part of the continuum of the building. Perhaps it is only through a sideways glance that we become more aware of own physical presence and movement through a public art gallery.

Modernist architecture. The main theme of Paterson's work is the post-war modernist architecture with which he grew up and which we are all familiar with. His subject is the public buildings and housing developments of the 50s and 60s which were inspired by the modernist principles of architecture set out by early pioneers such as Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Erno Goldfinger.

Modernist architecture is characterised by spare, modular concrete spaces and sharp angles and planes epitomised by The Royal Festival Hall and National Film Theatre on the South Bank (the remaining buildings of the 1951 Festival of Britain). Designed for mass production, while much modernist architecture aspired to utopian ideals of community regeneration, it fell short in terms of materials and technical solutions. Today these buildings represent a sense of lost dreams and they are often flawed, neglected and even hostile environments.

It is interesting to ask why Paterson is looking at this architecture. Perhaps he is encouraging us re-look at this devalued architecture and reconsider its aesthetic and social qualities.

Constructivism. Paterson says his roots are in the constructivist tradition. By this he means that his work links to the ideas first put forward by artists such as Naum Gabo, Piet Mondrian and Ben Nicholson in the 1920s and 1930s and by Victor Pasmore in the 1950s. These artists 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). For a full definition of the term Constructivism please refer to the glossary on the Tate website www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary

Victor Pasmore. Paterson has been inspired by the abstract painting and constructions made by Victor Pasmore (1908-1998). Pasmore was a figurative painter who turned to abstraction in 1948. In the 1950s Pasmore developed a theory of painting based on his interest in the constructive ideals of modern architecture. Through his association with artists exploring Constructivism such as the American Charles Biederman, Ben Nicholson, Kenneth and Mary Martin, he began to develop relief constructions, such as *Synthetic Construction (White and Black)* 1965-6, seen here.

In 1955 Pasmore became a consultant on the new town plan for Peterlee, County Durham, extending his principles of painting into 3D space. He saw town planning as a question of the body's movement through space. Paterson's work, like Pasmore explores flat painting, relief and architecture.

Abstract painting. Regardless of the references he makes, Paterson's work could be seen quite simply as abstract painting. He paints lines, angles and planes with precision in primary colours and with no tone.

Architecture as history. He says 'my interest in architecture is that it's a physical manifestation of history. You can use it to explain why things are the way they are'. His works invite us to consider the social, cultural and political situations that have inspired these buildings and in turn, been affected by them.

Micro-spaces. Paterson's art is informed by his own experience of cities. His understanding of structures within the built environment is heightened by his interest in skateboarding. He sees cities and buildings as a series of micro-spaces to navigate – a series of surfaces to isolate and present in his paintings.

Plan, elevation and section. Paterson translates architecture in a series of lines, angles and planes. *Isometric Plan* is not a painting of a building - we are not looking at architecture but a form of its representation. Although he is drawing our attention to the function of the building, he presents us with a limbo space – somewhere between architecture, relief and construction.

Note: An isometric projection is a technical or architectural drawing which incorporates a method of showing perspective in which the three principle dimensions are represented by three axes 120° apart.

Further Reading

Toby Paterson, *An Isometric Plan*, exhibition broadsheet with essay by Graham Parker, Tate St Ives, 2004

Toby Paterson *New Façade*, Exhibition Catalogue, CCA, 2003

Websites

www.themoderninstitute.com/artists/t-paterson/index.shtml

Jem Southam From a Distance An Industrial Landscape in Cornwall

In Gallery 3 you can see a selection of large photographic works by Jem Southam. Commissioned by Tate St Ives, these photographs explore the china clay pits around St Austell.

Jem Southam (born 1950) studied at the London College of Printing in the early 1970s. He lives and works in Exeter and teaches at Exeter School of Art and Design (University of Plymouth). His photographic work has developed through five main series: *Bristol City Docks* (1977-84), *Paintings of West Cornwall* (1982-86), *The Red River* (1982-7), *The Raft of Carrots* (1992) and the *Shape of Time: Rockfalls, Rivermouths and Ponds* (2000). He has also produced a number of publications. He has exhibited widely and received many awards including the The Charles Pratt Memorial Award, the Arle Rencontres Prize and the Leopold Godowsky Jr. Colour Photography Award. In 2002 he was shortlisted for the Citybank Photography Prize.

Key work

Mica Dam at Penhale 2004

© the artist

This photograph, as the title records, depicts the reed beds at the mica dam at Penhale.

The dam looks like a huge lake in some very natural place. Yet in the distance you can see the point of the cone of one of the waste tips at the St Austell clay pits. Many of the old pits are used to store the water run off from the extraction process of china clay. The fine white mica sediments, which refract the light in strange ways, eventually solidify. Southam has created an extraordinarily dreamy, even romantic image of this industrial site.

Trigger questions

- What aspects of the landscape is Southam interested in?
- Where is the horizon in these photographs? Consider the viewpoint from which they are taken.
- Is Southam interested in detail and description or mood and atmosphere?
- Why do you think Southam is so interested in the St Austell clay pits?
- What do his photographs tell us about the clay pits?
- Can you describe the colours and tones within these photographs?

Things to think about

The St Austell Clay Pits. Southam has a fascination with the landscape of the South West of England and much of his work is about this area. For this series he has focused on the landscape created through the excavations of English China clay by Imerys in St Austell. He has been intrigued by this area and its surrounding historic communities for some years.

Southam says he was drawn to this landscape both because of the sculptural conical waste heaps that dominate the skyline and because it is a place where the surface of the earth is, or has been, endlessly churned over. He is also interested in the presence of water as a visible source of change. In the china clay pits they use powerful water cannons to blast the rock creating white streams of clay suspension that run through the floor of the pits.

Landscape in a state of flux. Southam uses photography to record ever-changing aspects of the English landscape. He had been described as a 'visual archaeologist' and a 'cultural geographer' who charts the constantly moving surface of the landscape. His 'measured gaze' collects and orders information about places, moments of time and definitions of space. His images represent a 'kind of slow moving history'. Here he explores this industrial landscape, which is one of perpetual destruction and renewal, to reveal the effects of time, man and climate on the land. By returning repeatedly over a period of time to the same site he creates a record of these patterns of change.

Although the scenes he depicts are tranquil the locations are in state of flux. It is as if each photograph is a pause in an on-going cycle of change. As Jeremy Millar writes, 'When looking at Southam's photographs, I think the viewer does become aware of a sense of fluid time, of historical duration, rather than simply a collection of isolated moments'.

Series. Southam says he first started working in series so that he could develop a relationship and create an understanding with a place. He takes photographs repeatedly at different sites within an overall series. He says each piece (of one site) tells a different story and forms an 'architecture of place'. Consider how next to each other, these photographs create a tension – quietly revealing small changes and shifts within this landscape. Southam says he does not consider this series finished and hopes to gain permission to work at the clay pits again.

10" x 8" camera. Southam works with a 10" x 8" plate Wista camera. This is a modern version of a Victorian box camera. The type that projects the image upside down as you look under a huge black cloth. Southam always wanted to work with a camera this size, although for a long time he could not afford to, settling for a 5" x 4". The larger format means that the work can be reproduced on a relatively large scale, with sharply focused detail. He can create monumental photographs with particular intensity. He says that he is still completely captivated by the visual impact of a good contact print.

Of course, taking pictures with this heavy camera, which is extremely sensitive to climatic conditions, is a challenge. Southam, tends to work quite high up in the landscape (about 10-12 feet) so he usually has to work up a ladder and any movement or sudden gust of wind and the image is lost.

Colour photography. Southam is more interested in subtle tones rather than sharp colours and high saturation and says with advanced film technology it difficult to achieve the soft muted colours he prefers. He has to wait for the correct conditions (often only a few days a

year) as he can only photograph on the still grey days! Landscape photography has been traditionally one of black and white, while colour has usually been associated with tourism. Consider how Southam offers a different approach to colour photography holding our attention with his soft muted details.

Documenting the landscape. Southam says that 'one aspect of my work is unpicking the histories that have led up to a place being what it is – geological and human'. He records the landscape encouraging us to consider the natural and social histories of the place. However, he does not make documentary photographs in the sense of snapshot records. He carefully composes and orders his images rather like traditional landscape paintings while also capturing the details and nuances of the particular day.

Mystery and enigma. These photographs have been described as mysterious and enigmatic. The dull grey colours and light seem to enhance this 'other worldly' feel. Southam is not interested in creating drama and his photographs seem muted and detached. On the one hand his photographs simply record the clay pits while on the other they transform them into strange, surreal, bleak, lunar places. Of course the clay pits are not a conventional landscape, the scale of movement and change is vast and Southam has tried to focus on the way people live and work amongst such epic landscapes.

Land art. Southam has described himself as a land artist who makes his work through a ritual of walking and working physically with the land. However he does not draw attention to his physical involvement with the landscape and he does not intervene. This is different to artists more usually associated with land art such as Robert Smithson or Richard Long.

Landscape traditions. Southam's focus on particular sites over a period of time could be linked back to John Constable's (1776-1837) paintings of the Stour valley or Claude Monet's (1840-1926) series paintings of places such as the river Thames or Rouen Cathedral. His photographs also recall the surreal landscapes of Paul Nash (1889-1946). Southam cites other influences such as the writer and naturalist Gilbert White (1720-1793), American photographer Carleton E. Watkins (1826-1916) and the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher. Interesting comparisons can also be made to other contemporary artists working with subject of landscape in film and photography such as Thomas Joshua Cooper or Tacita Dean.

Further Reading

Jem Southam From a Distance An Industrial Landscape in Cornwall, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2004

The Shape of Time: Rockfalls, Rivermouths & Ponds, exhibition catalogue, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, 2000

* Southam, Jem, Thomas, D.M, Turk, Frank & Ruhrmund, Jan, *The Red River*, Cornerhouse Publications, 1989

A major monograph on Jem Southam will be published by Princeton in Spring 2005 with essays by Andy Grundberg and Gerry Badger.

* Available in the shop in Tate St Ives

Websites

www.archphotoit/Flash/SOUTHAMFL.htm

www.photography-now.com/artists/K09189.html

www.hirschlcontemporary.co.uk/artist_K/index.htm

Trevor Bell The Artist's Words

My philosophical approach to making art is synonymous with the way I see my role as an artist in society. For myself, art does not make social statements, but contributes to society on a deeper, less tangible level. I feel that what we should get from art is a sense of wonder, of something beyond ourselves, that celebrates our 'being' here. It condenses the experience we all have as human beings, and by forming it, makes it significant. We all have an in-built need for harmony and the structures that create that harmony. Basically art is an affirmation of life.

Trevor Bell (From, *Trevor Bell A Rock and a Hard Place*, Art Collectors Gallery, Florida, 1995)

I have always believed in the object nature and assertiveness of painting as an independent entity, but working in this vigorous Cornish place, I suspect my relationship to land, sea and weather plays a bigger role in my conscious – or unconscious – choices that I would like to admit.

Trevor Bell, Vellyndruchia, March 2001 (From *Trevor Bell, Paintings 2000 –2001*, The New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall)

I think about things that excite me: convoluted strata, the eroded and broken edges of cliffs, the constant interaction of the elements, the movement of boats on water...I think about the object and its inner image; the activity of each and the play between the two and I try to be straightforward to remove unnecessary information.

For all the theorizing, formal and conceptual notions, the truth of the matter is that I see myself as a conduit. The titles come afterwards so that I don't impose myself on the work as it goes along. Then I leave it alone.

I have been saying the same thing all my working life. Just in different ways. Trevor Bell 2002 (From *Trevor Bell*, Lydon Fine Art, Chicago)

The paintings are only themselves. They may carry overtones of other things but I don't want them to be likened to anything else. They are their own 'people'. They carry their own meanings. Trevor Bell (printed in *Trevor Bell 2003*, New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall)

In a way my small working notes – I call them 'probes'- say it all. They are a result of an open curiosity, or a different look at what I think I am doing out in the studio. I often come across a 'probe' which might be five or more years old, out of context at that time, but which gives me insight into my immediate work. So I see my progress not in a straight, uninterrupted line, but more like a giant wheel, which picks things up, and brings them round again.

In retrospect I am always amazed how one period grows from another, or overlaps it, and often two currents run side-by-side before they fuse, like those rivers in the Amazon... Certain experiences and choices have always affected my work, a love of the sea and sail, of places with good spaces, mountains, and natural forces at work. The early Italians, and the 50s Americans, the Cubists, and the Yorkshire Dales barns, all and much more – influenced my belief in the exertive powers of factual paintings and the power of oblique reference to external experience.

Trevor Bell, Florida, 1989 (From *Expanding Themes*, Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 1989).