

Painting Not Painting

8 February – 11 May 2003

**Tate St Ives
2003**

Notes for Teachers

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Introduction

This Spring Tate St Ives presents ***Painting Not Painting***, a dynamic range of works foregrounding Terry Frost, a major St Ives artist, together with Jim Lambie, Victoria Morton, Julie Roberts and Richard Slee. All five artists are creating new work specially commissioned for Tate St Ives, including paintings, drawings, collages, sculpture, installation and ceramics.

Terry Frost has also made a selection from the Tate Collection to form an ***Artists on Artists*** display in Gallery 4. He has chosen paintings by artists he is particularly interested in such as Wassily Kandinsky, Sonia Delaunay, Robert Motherwell and Roger Hilton.

Also on show at Tate St Ives from February 2003 to 25 January 2004 is ***Homecoming Works from the Pier Arts Centre Collection*** which includes some wonderful examples of work by artists associated with St Ives.

So how do we approach these displays?

The range and diversity of work on display can offer visitors a powerful experience. Not only can you explore the St Ives context but you can also consider Terry Frost and his contemporaries both within a historical and contemporary framework. Juxtaposed to some of the pioneers of abstract art we are presented with artists working today who grapple with many of the same problems but often using very different materials, techniques and approaches. *Painting Not Painting* is an exhibition that aims to challenge and re-energise our ideas about the language of art. As the title suggests we are presented with wide-ranging work that defies rigid categorisation.

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

- St Ives artists represented by the Pier Arts Centre Collection
- An insight into the roots and defining characteristics of Terry Frost's work
- An insight into the work of three younger artists (Jim Lambie, Victoria Morton and Julie Roberts) whose work sits outside conventional classification
- An insight into the work of the ceramicist Richard Slee
- 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
- Terry Frost
- St Ives Artists

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

Note: we recommend teachers and group leaders make a preliminary visit before they bring their group. The range and diversity of work on display requires careful planning and focus to make a successful visit. Members of the Education team are happy to set up an appointment with any teacher to discuss a forthcoming visit. Call 01736 791114/113.

Gallery 1

Homecoming

Works from the Pier Arts Centre Collection

In 1979 the Collector Margaret Gardiner gave an extraordinary collection of paintings and sculpture by St Ives artists to the Pier Arts Centre, Stromness in Orkney. Whilst the Pier Arts Centre renovates its space, the collection will be shown here in St Ives for a year. The display provides an opportunity to see works by Alfred Wallis, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Roger Hilton, Margaret Mellis, Naum Gabo and William Scott rarely seen in St Ives. The artist Julie Roberts (see Apse) has designed a wallpaper for this space using an image of Barbara Hepworth working on a sculpture.

Key work

Barbara Hepworth *Oval Sculpture* 1943

Plane wood with concavities, 41x46x30cm

This sculpture carved in plane wood is an ovoid with four piercings that penetrate the exterior of the block. Its white painted interior is complicated by several interlocking oval voids. This sculpture was one of the first carvings Hepworth made after moving to Carbis Bay near St Ives. The sculpture was evolved from drawings that Hepworth made between 1939 and 1943 when she had no studio and was unable to carve. Hepworth said that the structure of *Oval Sculpture* related to both shapes such as caves found in the Cornish landscape and to foetal forms. It is a structure that she and other artists associated with St Ives, such as Naum Gabo, Peter Lanyon and John Wells, explored repeatedly.

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.
- Most of the works are quite small – why do you think this is?
- Look closely at the wallpaper. What do you see? Do you think it is appropriate for the display of these works?

Things to think about:

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

Collectors and Collecting. All the works in this display were collected by one woman, Margaret Gardiner. They reflect her interests, tastes and choices as she built up her collection in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Gardiner is quite unique in that she collected for pleasure alone. It was her interest, friendship and support of many of the St Ives artists that dictated the shape of her private collection. This display provides the opportunity to consider this history of a private collection which is now owned by a public gallery.

Margaret Gardiner. Gardiner (b. 1904) is a writer, collector and philanthropist. She began collecting modern art in the 1930s at a time when it was often viewed with suspicion and ridicule in Britain. She was a close friend of Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson and her collection contains some of their finest works. She supported and collected many of the artists associated with St Ives during a period of economic depression and wartime austerity.

In addition to her support of the arts, Gardiner has been a campaigner, educationalist and peace activist. She has been a supporter of the Howard League for Penal Reform and among her other causes was that of creating new water supplies in Africa. The Establishment of the Pier Arts Centre Trust in 1979 which houses her art collection was almost entirely due to her energy and determination and she was awarded an OBE for her efforts.

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

Landscape: a sense of place. Consider how works in this display reflect a sense of place and interest in the Cornish landscape. Artists such as Hepworth, Lanyon and Wells were strongly influenced by their experience of Cornwall and the forms, shapes and colours of their work explore this.

Again, one might question whether it is appropriate for works so strongly linked to a place to be usually housed in a very different location. However their home in Orkney provides an interesting context in which to consider them. As Patrick Heron has pointed out,

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

Domestic display and scale. Consider how Julie Roberts' wallpaper design affects the way we view the display. Consider how different the room would be if the walls were white, for example. The combined atmosphere of the hand coloured wallpaper and the scale of the Pier Collection (most of the works are small as they were originally for Gardiner's home), harks back to the 1950s to give an historical and domestic ambience in this space. Roberts has designed the wallpaper to emphasise the particular connection between work and context. She has deliberately chosen an image of Barbara Hepworth, a close friend of Margaret Gardiner, and one of the most famous St Ives artists.

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

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

Pier Arts Collection – extracts from the labels and captions.

Research and text by Andrew Dalton.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Constructivism describes a movement of art in 1920s Russia which included the artists, Rodchenko, Stepanova, Tatlin, Pevsner and Gabo. They emphasised the role of materials and developed a language of abstraction based on ideas of pure form. The Constructivists aimed to make art a detached, scientific investigation of abstract properties (picture surface, construction, line and colour). Gabo and Pevsner left Russia

in 1922 after Constructivism had been condemned by the Soviet regime, and they and other exiles helped to spread the ideals of the movement throughout Europe. They were influential, for example, on the Bauhaus in Germany, De Stijl in the Netherlands, and the **Abstraction-Création** group in France, and Gabo was one of the editors of the English Constructivist manifesto, *Circle*, in 1937. Gabo's time in Cornwall had a profound effect on the artists around him such as Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon and John Wells. His presence encouraged them to develop abstract art based on Constructivist principles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alan Davie (b.1920) was born in Grangemouth and studied at Edinburgh College of Art between 1937 and 1940. Following service in the army (1941 - 46) Davie was introduced to the work of Jackson Pollock and other American Expressionists at Peggy Guggenheim's collection in Venice, which had a significant impact on his early work. He has exhibited widely and is included in many public collections around the world.

Davie became interested in Zen Buddhism from the late 1950s and increasingly emphasised the spiritual and intuitive aspects of his work at the expense of his earlier focus on gesture and process. His images draw on the symbolism of many cultures including Celtic, aboriginal and other non-European traditions.

Upper Gallery 2

Richard Slee

Panorama

Richard Slee presents a unique installation of his work in the Ceramics showcase in Upper Gallery 2. Slee challenges the definitions of applied art with this extraordinary and humorous installation. The display includes a selection of new work such as *Appropriated Rabbit* (2002) and *Snake* (2002) as well work such as *Surfing Heart* (1998), *Acid Toby* (1991) and *Drunk Punch* (1993).

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

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

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

Things to think about:

Transforming the ordinary. Consider how Slee takes ordinary things and transforms them into the extraordinary. Mugs, electric lamps, rabbits, vases and flowers are transformed into magical objects. As Oliver Watson writes, 'they all take on a larger-than-life, part-menacing, part-comic, animated form.'

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

Art, ornament and studio ceramics: Whilst a skilled craftsman, Slee challenges many of the traditions of studio ceramics. He is more interested in ornaments than hand-crafted pots. He looks at the history of popular ornaments such as the Toby jug and the ceramic basket of flowers and appropriates them in order to explore and question traditional studio ceramics.

Scale: Slee tends to use a scale slightly larger than the norm. He says he wants to make everything a bit bigger than one might expect.

Human emotions: Slee's work refers, often ironically, to very vulnerable human emotions. His series based on the Toby Jug form explore this popular collectible which originated in the 18th century. Slee updates this quintessentially English country character with *Acid Toby* (1993), *Toby as Abstraction* (1994) and *Drunk Punch* (1991). Slee's appropriation of Toby enables him to explore satire and political allegory with extraordinary poignancy. Other works such as *Embarkation* (1998) and *Surfing Heart* (1998) suggest feelings of loss, departure and uncertainty.

Jim Lambie Upper Gallery 2 The Studio

Zobop **Prismatic Room**

In Upper Gallery 2 you will see a visually dynamic installation that stretches across the curved terrace and down both staircases. Lambie uses vibrantly coloured adhesive vinyl tape that follows the contours of the room. The installation transforms and energises the gallery space. It echoes the architectural features of the gallery but also creates a vortex.

Zobop is a further version of Lambie's stock-in-trade floor piece which he first created in 1999. In each gallery space he uses different coloured vinyl tape to define the space and transform the environment. Here *Zobop* plays with the particular architecture of Tate St Ives.

In the Studio you will find another installation by Lambie with mirrors and holographic prismatic tape that evokes the atmosphere and glamour of a night club.

Jim Lambie was born in Glasgow in 1964 and worked in the music industry before studying at Glasgow School of Art. He has exhibited widely and in 1998 he received a British Council award towards a residency at Triangle in Marseille. In 2000 he received a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Artists. Forthcoming projects include solo shows at Inverleith House, Edinburgh and at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. Lambie lives and works in Glasgow and New York.

Things to think about:

Transforming space. Lambie completely transforms our experience of the gallery spaces. Contrast these spaces with other areas of the Gallery. Lambie begins at the outer perimeter where the floor meets the walls gradually working his way to the centre. His tapes follow and highlight the particular shape and contours of the curved gallery in Upper 2. They produce a rhythm and vibration which creates a confusing and disorientating vortex. We are left giddy and feeling we have been transported along a colour-coded track to some other unimaginable abstract space. Lambie says that *'for me something like Zobop, the floor piece, its creating so many edges that they all dissolve. Is the room expanding or contracting? ...Covering an object somehow evaporates the hard edge off the thing, and pulls you towards more of a dreamscape...'*

Colour. The bright psychedelic colours of the glossy tape in *Zobop* have a particular effect. The space feels saturated in colour. It seems to vibrate and pulsate. The colours remind one of the 1960s and Pop and Op Art – it is as if we have been thrown into a huge abstract painting.

Installation art. *Zobop* and *Prismatic Room* defy categorisation and create debate: are they sculpture, architecture or paintings? Both are installations in that they exist only as long as they are installed in these spaces. The works are perceived in time as they cannot be looked at like traditional art objects, but are experienced in time and space and are interactive with the viewer. *Zopob* reminds one of Carle Andre's walk-on floor pieces or Sol Lewitt's instruction drawings.

Ordinary materials. Lambie uses everyday material, such as vinyl tape, to make something extraordinary happen. He invites us to look at familiar things in a new way. The instant impact and appeal of *Zopop* belies the meticulous and labour intensive work of production. It takes a team of helpers at least two days to install.

Music. Lambie's involvement in the Glasgow music scene (as both musician and DJ) has considerable influence on his work. He is fascinated by the way music can transform a social environment. Like music, visual art can fill a space and change the way we perceive our surroundings as well as ourselves. He says, *'You put a record on and it's like all the edges disappear. You're in a psychological space. You don't sit there thinking about the music, you're listening to the music. You're inside that space that the music's making for you'*.

Lower Gallery 2

Terry Frost

The Leeds Connection

Shown together for the first time, this display focuses on an important group of breakthrough paintings made from 1954-6 whilst Terry Frost was a Gregory Fellow at Leeds University.

The Gregory Fellowship was established by philanthropist Peter Gregory in 1950 as a pioneering experiment to bring artists and writers to Leeds University. Frost was one of a number of emerging artists who found their time at Leeds pivotal. The fellowship provided Frost with time to develop his work and was probably crucial to his development into a major abstract artist. Frost's experience of the Yorkshire landscape was also to have a big influence and changed the vocabulary and colours of his paintings.

Keywork

Red, Black and White, Leeds, 1955

Oil on board, 122 x 182.8 cm

This painting is dominated by strong vertical red, black and white strips which seem to hang as if decorating a curtain that runs across the board. Below are some horizontal bands and other shapes that add to the feel of movement and energy. Frost says he had been invited to give a talk to the architecture students at Leeds University and he had given them the exercise of creating a screen in a canteen. *'...So before I went I did a collage like that for a simple panel. It got me working with red, black and white, which was simple'*. Frost also says that this painting was related to his experience of the Yorkshire landscape. *'Here down in Cornwall I can see the moors on three sides and the sun and the moon. But when I went out on to Ilkley Moor I suddenly felt no longer a giant but just a little tiny person, faced by Goredale Scar and other scars flat up in front of me. It was an honest solution to painting landscape on a flat surface, because that was what it looked like'*.

Trigger questions

- Look around the room. What are your first impressions? Describe how you feel standing in this space.
- What do all these paintings have in common? Describe their shapes and colours.
- Why do you think they are so large?
- What do the shapes and colours suggest to you?
- Frost's was inspired by the Yorkshire landscape while he was based in Leeds. Can you see things in the paintings that might suggest aspects of the landscape to you?

Things To Think About:

Bold colour, line, shape and scale. The Leeds paintings are dominated by the bold use of colour, line and shapes. They are also quite large. He uses a vocabulary of shapes such as arcs, wedges, circles and chevrons. Consider the way Frost uses compositional elements to evoke feelings of movement, space, light and dark.

Space. Frost creates spatial ambiguity in his paintings. He creates a tension between freedom and discipline, between instinctive painting and compositional control. He uses colour and shape to create depth and surface – black marks block off depth while framing devices open it up.

Landscape and seasons. Many of Frost's paintings are inspired by his experience of looking and being in the landscape. When he is out in the countryside he talks of 'walking through poetry' and that his art tries to capture these 'moments of truth'. He says that painting is about 'a state of delight in front of Nature'.

Frost's move to Yorkshire from Cornwall had quite an effect on him and the change in scale and grandeur of the landscape is reflected in his work. The bleak sparseness of the North and especially the high Pennines and limestone outcrops intersected by dry stone walls running vertically over the contours of the hills was to change his painting. He called this 'the true experience of black and white in Yorkshire'.

Colour. Some of the paintings in the display are hot dry summer paintings in brilliant orange, yellow and red with powerful black lines. Others are winter paintings in which the snow colours are cold and wet. Frost's encounter with the strong black and white environment of the North (especially with its heavy winter snow falls) led to a series of paintings exploring taut geometric shapes and reducing his colours to the strong use of red, black and white. These included the hexagon often locked into black verticals, derived from seeing shafts of sunlight within a wood.

Frost has a particular way of using black in his work that first became apparent in the Leeds paintings. He went on to make the *Duende* series of etchings which explore the mystic significance of black for the Spanish poet Lorca. Frost has also explored the same simple combination of red, black and white in his recent work created in his studio at Newlyn (see Gallery 5).

Terry Frost is regarded as one of Britain's greatest abstract painters. His paintings are known for their strong colour and energy and are inspired by the landscapes of Cornwall, Yorkshire, the Greek Islands and America.

Frost was born in Leamington Spa in 1915. Between 1932-39 he worked in an electrical wholesalers in Birmingham; he also worked at Armstrong Whitworth in Coventry painting red, white and blue targets onto the wings of fighter planes and bombers. He served in the war and was captured in Crete in 1941. He was later interned at Stalag 383 where he stayed until the end of the war. The artist and fellow prisoner of war Adrian Heath encouraged Frost to paint. In 1946 Frost married Kathleen Clarke and the following year they moved to St Ives. From 1947-50 Frost attended Camberwell School of Art on an ex-serviceman's grant commuting between London and St Ives. In 1950 he worked as an assistant to Barbara Hepworth. In 1951 Frost took one of the Porthmeor studios at St Ives, adjacent to Ben Nicholson's. In 1952 Frost had his first one-man exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in London. Between 1954 and 1956 Frost was a Gregory Fellow at Leeds University and he moved to Yorkshire with his family, returning to Cornwall in 1958. In 1960 Frost went to New York for his first American exhibition and there he met artists such as De Kooning, Rothko, Motherwell and Newman. In 1962 Frost and his family moved to Banbury and in 1965 he was appointed a full time lecturer at Reading University, later becoming Professor of Painting there. In 1974 Frost returned to Cornwall to the house in Newlyn where he still lives. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1998 and the same year he received a knighthood. Frost has exhibited widely both in this country and abroad and has numerous works in public and private collections.

The Apse

Julie Roberts

Jack

Here you will find an atmospheric and historic presentation of a series of detailed contemporary drawings by Julie Roberts of the victims of Jack the Ripper. The walls in this space are hand-painted using watercolour. Roberts has explained her intentions;

In Part 1: Heroes and Villains, I was able to continue my fascination with eighteenth and nineteenth century European history. Highly charged images of historical events have been a continuing interest and inspiration.

Photography has always played a vital role in the production of my paintings and I have often relied upon photographic evidence as my starting point. To this end I traced a collection of original Jack the Ripper photographs to The Public Records Office at Kew. 1888 saw the first serial killings in Britain. Jack the Ripper became infamous overnight and to this day his popularity has never waned. I wanted to re-present the story by making a suite of drawings dedicated to the victims. The police archive includes five murders, with three other suspected cases that were later disproved but remain in the archive. The original photographs range in intensity but I felt it was more fitting to work from the less aggressive close up portraits. Heads are swathed in cloth and posed as if for a family portrait, the women seem to be merely sleeping, only tiny signs like a protruding tongue or eyes are not fully closed testify to anything untoward.

Julie Roberts is currently based in Carlisle. She was born in Flint in Wales in 1963. She studied at Wrexham School of Art, Wales, St Martins School of Art, London and Glasgow School of Art. She has exhibited widely both here and abroad and had her first solo show in 1992. She has taught widely and is currently a Research Fellow at Glasgow School of Art. In 1995 she was the Scottish Art Council Scholar at the British School at Rome and in 2002 she undertook a residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York.

Things to think about:

History and context. Roberts presents her work in a way that emphasises the particular connections between work and context. As she says she has tried to create the historical atmosphere of old Whitechapel. Consider the significance of basing work on historical sources and the use of photographic images as source material.

Power, abuse and sexual violence. Much of Roberts' work explores the subject of power and abuse through history, often 're-presenting' the female body. Here she explores the famous Whitechapel murders which, as she says, have held enduring popular fascination. At first glance these drawings appear quite straightforward – it is only on closer inspection the full horror of what we are looking at is revealed. Roberts' is interested in these women as victims of power and male sexual abuse and these drawings are an attempt to reclaim their status.

What happened just before? The drawings are based on photographs from the police archive. We are encouraged to reconstruct the scene and imagine the crime that went before. The fact that the drawings do not actually depict violence creates tension and a sinister atmosphere.

Meticulous detail and technique. Roberts' drawings are extraordinarily detailed. This precision again adds to the horror of the subject depicted. In the same way the careful presentation of the drawings and complete installation with frames and wallpaper emphasises Roberts interest in technical skills as well as historical context. Roberts' seems to make a connection between the anatomical studies of academic painters with the speculation that Jack the Ripper had knowledge of surgical procedures.

Gallery Three

Victoria Morton

New Paintings

In this gallery you will find a group of vigorous and colourful large-scale paintings that hover between abstraction and figuration with their richly painted surface.

Morton's paintings feature vivid colours and combine solid shapes with an organic feel and multiple visual planes. She combines various techniques including spraying, brushing and pouring paint onto the surface. The textures vary from gooey to smooth to delicate. Swirling compositions are combined with colourful layering to create paintings which are both fluid and hugely detailed. She says she is 'trying to produce abstract work in a logical way' and she wants her paintings to have a 'life of their own'. She insists that her shapes and motifs are not symbolic. 'I am not making pictures of anything in particular. I use my knowledge of graphics, painting and fashion – many things influence my work'.

Morton describes her works as arrangements of conscious and unconscious thought and action – as 'inner landscapes'. She says, *'I make paintings of various sizes and shapes using a combination of traditional and industrial techniques and materials. These works are concerned with the act of painting, its ability to represent and its potential for meaning. The viewer's experience is one of trying to make sense of a no-place or a meaningless image. Disease with the surface refutes transcendence and deflects placement. Through dysfunctional vision these paintings explore thought and distance.'*

Victoria Morton was born in Glasgow in 1971. She studied at Glasgow School of Art and in 1990 won the John D Kelly Memorial Award. Morton has exhibited widely in the UK. In 1996 she was Artist in Residence at the Fringe Gallery Glasgow. She recently exhibited as part of the *Visions of the Future* series at the Fruitmarket Gallery and this was accompanied by a major solo publication called *Plus or Minus*. She lives and works in Glasgow.

Things to think about:

Space. Morton's main interest is in the representational space of the painted canvas. She does not use single point perspective. Her use of space is more optical and she combines shapes and colours to open and close space within her paintings. She talks about using 'stoppers' – painted objects which disrupt or block movement through space. Compare Morton's treatment of pictorial space with Terry Frost or others on display in Gallery 4 next door.

Colour. Morton's choice of colour is quite deliberate. She chooses, intense, dazzling, psychedelic colours to create a particular mood and effect. Compare her choice with that of Jim Lambie's *Zobop* (Upper Gallery 2) or with artists on display in Gallery 4.

Movement. Morton's paintings are brimming with movement and forms that appear to shift. She says she wants to make her paintings active – as if the image would have been different had she painted five minutes later.

Music. Morton is interested in music, clubs, mixing and sampling. She is also interested in the development of computer-generated ambient-scapes. She compares her paintings to the idea of musical composition – that with each painting she constructs a self-contained life form that holds its own rhythm and balance.

Ambiguity. Morton's paintings are full of ambiguity. They are both abstract and figurative, natural and unnatural, fluid and detailed.

Abstraction: Morton is engaged in a search for a new pictorial language of abstraction. Consider the way she uses colour, form, texture, space, line, shape, size, scale and materials. Compare Morton's abstraction with that of earlier artists such as Kandinsky and Kupka (Gallery 4). Compare also Morton's approach to that of Terry Frost.

Gallery 4

Terry Frost

Artist on Artists Display

Artists on Artists is an ongoing series of displays drawn from the Tate Collection. Terry Frost has selected works from the Collection with whom he feels a particular affinity. Frost has chosen artists he has been interested in throughout his career and the display is intended to complement and support the exhibition of Frost's own work. He has selected some of the pioneers of abstract art to display alongside artists associated with post war European and American abstraction. The display includes work by Wassily Kandinsky, Sonia Delaunay, Roger Hilton, Frantisek Kupka, Nicholas de Stael, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt.

Key work

Sonia Delaunay *Triptych* 1963

Oil on canvas 99.7 x 200 cm

Frost says he has always loved Delaunay's use of colour and this large oil painting simply resonates with colour and light. Delaunay has used circles, rectangles and triangles of subtle colour and texture to create a dynamic composition. The artist said she called it a Triptych (three-panel) because it combined three motifs that she had been working on for some years. She said that she placed an area of white in the centre to see if she could create a sense of unity between the three parts. The artist wrote,

This is a painting on which I worked a great deal and which opened up new vistas for me. I have freed myself from many plastic problems. I now intend to continue this direction with all my lyricism, while retaining the precision of construction'.

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 find words to describe it?
- Now glance around the whole room again. What do all these works have in common?
- Frost has chosen the works for this display. Can you think why he chose these particular works?

Things to think about:

Colour. Consider the different ways the artists in this display use colour. Some use bold, bright colours others are more dark and sombre. Ad Reinhardt uses black and colours mixed with black only in his painting. Contrast the way different artists use blocks, lines, shapes or areas of colours to create feeling and mood.

Mark making and composition. Contrast the way these artists build up their compositions using different marks, lines, shapes, textures and colours. Consider how they create a sense of movement or stillness, energy or calmness.

Abstraction. This display, along with Gallery 1, could provide an introduction to abstraction in painting and a starting point for a wider discussion of the development of European and American abstract art. It provides a context for Frost's work revealing the type of art he is interested and inspired by. In their different ways, all these artists believed that by removing representational elements from their work they could convey spiritual and emotional values simply through the arrangement of lines, shapes and colours.

Selected Artists

Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979)

School of Paris painter and designer. Born in the Ukraine she studied in Paris where she met and married Robert Delaunay. She began by using intense colours influenced by Van Gogh and Gauguin gradually moving toward abstraction. Working in close association with her husband, she painted abstract pictures with colour rhythms and discs, as well as collages, book bindings and posters using the simultaneous contrast of colours. She lived in Spain 1915-20 supporting her family by working as a decorator. After her return to Paris she worked as designer of fabrics and clothes in styles related to her paintings. She collaborated with Robert Delaunay on several huge mural paintings for the 1937 Paris International Exhibition and subsequently created many paintings, gouaches, prints and tapestries of lyrical colour abstractions. She had her first solo show in 1953.

Roger Hilton (1911-1975)

Roger Hilton studied at the Slade School of Art and then spent time in Paris in the late 1930s before serving in the War. He first developed an abstract style in the early 1950s. In 1953 he met the Dutch painter, Constant, a member of the CoBrA group, and travelled with him to Holland where he saw work by Piet Mondrian. Hilton developed a style of expressive abstraction which emphasised bold colour and shape and flowing line. Hilton visited Cornwall in 1956, taking a studio in Newlyn and then St Ives. He became a regular visitor to Cornwall over the years and eventually settled at St Just in 1965. Frost met Hilton in 1951 and they remained close friends until Hilton's death.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)

Russian-born painter, wood engraver, lithographer, teacher and theorist. Kandinsky was a pioneer of abstract art. He initially studied law and economics at Moscow University before moving to Munich to study painting. He made paintings and woodcuts inspired by Russian folk art and fairy tales and also landscape studies painted directly from nature. Gradually he began to eliminate the representational element in his paintings and compose with abstract colours and shapes. In 1910 he wrote *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and in 1911 he founded the *Blue Rider* group with Franz Marc. In 1922 he was appointed a professor at the Bauhaus School in Germany. After the closure of the Bauhaus he spent his last years in Paris. Kandinsky's belief that colour can be used as an emotional vehicle has had particular influence on Frost.

Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957)

Kupka was a School of Paris painter and wood engraver and a pioneer of abstract art. He was born in Bohemia and studied at the Prague Academy. In 1896 he settled in Paris where he initially worked as a satirical draughtsman and book illustrator. From 1909 he experimented with painting figures in motion inspired by high speed photography. From 1911 his work became abstract based on cosmic themes and rhythms, intersecting arabesque and rectilinear vertical planes. His later work adopted a more geometric and classical abstract style. In 1922 he was appointed professor at the Prague Academy. In 1931 he was a co-founder of *Abstraction-Creation* which promoted the development of an international abstract art.

Robert Motherwell (1915-1991)

American Abstract Expressionist painter, he was also a writer, editor and teacher. Born in Washington he studied painting, philosophy and art history settling in New York in 1941. He was influenced by Surrealism and experimented with techniques such as automatism. He had his first one-man exhibition in 1944. He painted many large pictures including extensive series known as *Elegy to the Spanish Republic* and *Open*. He also made a number of collages. Motherwell collaborated with other artists associated with Abstract Expressionism and lectured widely.

Barnett Newman (1905-70)

American Abstract Expressionist painter and sculptor. He was born in New York and studied at the Art Students League. He painted in the 1930s in an expressionist style but destroyed all his early work and stopped painting in 1940. In 1944 he made a new start with swiftly executed drawings in chalks and oil crayon of plant and seed growth and images of fertilisation. He became an active champion of new American painting and in 1948 began to work with fields of colour interrupted by one or more vertical stripes (or zips). He had his first solo exhibition in New York in 1950. From 1958-62 he painted in black and white while his later works used colours of exceptional purity. He also made a number of steel sculptures.

Ad Reinhardt (1913-1967)

American abstract painter associated with the Abstract Expressionist movement. He was a strong advocate for abstract art of the greatest purity. Born in New York he studied art history at Columbia University. He began to work in an abstract style in 1937 and joined the society of American Abstract Artists. He had his first solo exhibition in 1943. He served in the US Navy 1944-5. After the War his painting became more rectilinear and symmetrical and his colours more monochrome. From 1955 he worked almost exclusively in near-black.

Nicolas de Stael (1914-55)

Painter of the School of Paris, one of the most influential European artists of the post-war period. He was born in Russia but brought up in Brussels where he studied painting. In 1938 he settled in France. He initially painted still lifes and portraits and then in 1942 turned toward abstraction. He liked to work with a palette knife creating dense encrusted blocks of colour. He had his first solo exhibition in Paris in 1944. In the 1950s he returned to figurative painting often using brilliant colours.

Note: for further information on the artists in this display please refer to the Tate Website at www.tate.org.

Gallery 5

Terry Frost

Installation - Contrasts in Red Black and White

In Gallery 5 you will find an exciting and dynamic installation of new work by Terry Frost. The display focuses on his visual dictionary of forms in red, black and white that the artist has used since the 1960s and includes cubes placed in relation to paintings. Frost has created a dazzling installation inspired by the work of the Russian Constructivists, particularly Malevich.

Things to think about:

Pure colour: Since the Leeds paintings, Frost has moved towards the use of pure colour. He has focused on the emotive use of colour and argues that colour can be a medium of mystery and spirituality. Much of his recent work is characterised by strident, undiluted colour and he has returned to his love of red, black and white.

Acrylic paint and collage: Frost first used acrylic paints in the 1960s when they became readily available to artists for the first time. It has since been his preferred paint medium. A quick drying medium, acrylic paint does not lose its intensity when thinned. Hence Frost found he could create a strongly coloured but thinly painted surface. For this installation Frost also uses collage which he says is about positioning shapes. Consider how his combination of painted and collaged surface creates a strength and vitality.

Dynamic form: Frost's recent work is characterised by pure colour and dynamic shape and form. There is a joyful exuberance to his recent work. This energy and dynamism extends to a complete installation in this case where Frost invites us to experience space and colour in a multi-dimensional situation.

Black: Frost uses black again and again in his work. His blacks do not darken but set off other colours in their brightness. Frost says that certain colours have a depth and life and can take you on a spiritual journey. Black holds particular significance for him and he says 'it holds everything and nothing, it is both joyous and mournful'.

The Russian Constructivists: Frost's use of red, black and white relates to his interest in the Russian constructivists. In the early 1920s artists such as Malevich and El Lissitzky proposed a revolutionary art and developed a language of abstraction based on ideas of pure form. They aimed to make art a detached, scientific investigation of abstract properties (picture surface, construction, line and colour). Frost greatly admires the way Malevich, for example, could use such simple forms of pure colour to such effect. In the early 1950s Frost saw a lithographic revolutionary poster by El Lissitzky which he said had an enormous impact on him. He was shocked at how a simple graphic shape in one colour could be so dynamically imply space on a flat surface.

Café

Terry Frost

Print Exhibition

On display in the café is a portfolio of 25 woodcut prints by Terry Frost called the Orchard Tambourine. These prints have been produced in an edition of 35 by Hugh Stoneman, a master printer based in Madron. Frost has also produced a new print for the St Ives series.

Since the 1950s Frost has made numerous prints such as woodcuts, linocuts, etchings, lithographs and screen prints. Printmaking had proved to be a particularly successful medium in which to explore his interest in pure colour and dynamic form.

Stairwell

Terry Frost

The Quay

Terry Frost has created a new work entitled *The Quay* for the stairwell. The work has been painted directly on the wall for the duration of the exhibition.

Resources available in the Gallery

There is an **Exhibition Study Point on Level 3** that has a selection of books relating to the exhibition. You can also access the **Tate Collection** and **Crafts Council Photostore** databases on line at this point.

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

A 48 page publication accompanies Terry Frost's work written by Mel Gooding.

A 32 page publication accompanies *Painting Not Painting* written by Will Bradley

Homecoming written by Andrew Dalton

Panorama written by Oliver Watson

Further Reading

*Indicates they are available in the Tate Shop

Terry Frost

*Stephens, C *Terry Frost*, St Ives Artist Series, 2002, Tate Publishing £8.99

*Lewis, D *Terry Frost*, 1994, Lund Humphries, £25

**Terry Frost Act and Image, Works on Paper*, Belgrave Gallery £39

*Gooding, M *Terry Frost Six Decades*, 2000, Royal Academy of Arts, £12.95

Victoria Morton

Victoria Morton, *Plus and Minus*, Exhibition Catalogue, Fruitmarket Gallery, 2003

Jim Lambie

Tufnell, R, *Zobop*, Exhibition Catalogue, Transmission Gallery, 1999

Early One Morning, British Art Now, Exhibition Catalogue, Whitechapel Art Gallery 2002

Frieze, Issue 46 1999 (Ross Sinclair)

Julie Roberts

Tufnell, R & Brown, K, *Here and Now, Scottish Art 1990-2002*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, 2001

Cross, A, *Julie Roberts*, Exhibition Catalogue, Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, 1992

Richard Slee

Richard Slee, *Arts Review*, October 2001

Richard Slee, *Studio Pottery*, June 2000

Richard Slee, *Artists Newsletter*, June 1995

Pier Arts Centre Collection/ St Ives Artists

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

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

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

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

*Gale, M & Stephens C, *Barbara Hepworth: Works in the Tate Collection*, Tate Publishing 1999
Gardiner, M *Barbara Hepworth, a memoir*, Salamander Press, 1982

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

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

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

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

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

St Ives Library

Gabriel Street

St Ives TR26 2LX

Tel: 01736 796408

e-mail: archive@stives.trust.demon.uk

The following websites can also provide useful starting points for further research:

www.tate.org.uk Tate Gallery on line

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

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

www.themoderninstitute.com Information on Glasgow based artists including Lambie, Morton and Roberts

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

www.richardslee.com Richard Slee's own website

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

Appendix

Terry Frost

The artist's words

(Extracts from *Memory and Imagination, From a Conversation between Terry Frost and Isabel Carlisle* in **Terry Frost: Six Decades**, Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition Catalogue, 2000)

Red, Black and White, Leeds, 1955

The first-year Leeds University architectural students invited me to give a talk. I wanted to kill the idea of architecture as decoration stone dead – architects placing coloured doors and palm trees in interiors and thinking that was decoration – so I gave them an exercise to work on, which was to create a screen in a canteen so you don't see all the greasy stuff, and this design would affect the tables and everything. So before I went in I did a collaged like that for a simple panel. It got me working with red, black and white, which was simple. I then did a painting of it and the painting was related to the fact that I was no longer in Cornwall.

Here down in Cornwall I can see the moors on three sides and the sun and the moon. But when I went out onto Ilkley Moor I suddenly felt no longer a giant but just a little tiny person, faced by Goredale Scar and other scars flat up in front of me. It was an honest solution to painting landscape on a flat surface, because that was what it looked like.

Leeds Painting II, 1955

I used to wind up the engine of my Bedford van on the cold, damp mornings in Leeds to make it start. Then I would look up and see the octagonal shape around the sun above the verticals of the trees. When you are out walking you can look up and be hit visually by a copse or a lot of trees that shape. You are walking through poetry really.

The shape in this painting was all linked up with the movement of what I was doing; it became part of me at that time, whether it was the pleasure of being in the landscape or the exhaustion of not being able to start the old van. I think I have been more influenced by poetry than I realise.

Blue Winter, 1956

This painting is about driving home from Harrogate, with the landscape on my right. It was white with a beautiful moon: it had been snowing. Luckily it was very late and there was no other traffic, so I was able to take it in as I was driving. Here is my blue moon at different stages, and the landscape, which I am still treating as in *Red, Black and White, Leeds*. I didn't make notes. When you come to paint you're just with the blank canvas. Your first mark is going to be nothing like that dream and wonderful moment. It's great if you do suddenly hit what you were thinking about.

Yellow Triptych, 1957-56

This painting represents another new experience. The painting was done in Leeds. I had the hardboard, which was cheaper than canvas, 8 feet by 4 feet as they are. I had to prepare them and I got titanium white from ICI, half hundredweight bags at a time. That's in all that yellow, to lift it up and give it the power. I hadn't got a studio and was living in a rented house. The painting is the size of the wall in the bedroom that I used as a studio. I couldn't step back far because I had tins of paint all over the place. I suddenly realised I was painting in a different way from easel painting, right up to it. It meant that I was working from my concepts, very close to the idea: it's about thought rather than walking back to see it.

Extracts from the artist's writings (From *Terry Frost: Painting in the 1980s*, Exhibition Catalogue, Reading University and Newlyn Orion Cornwall, © Terry Frost, 1986).

...I looked up and saw the white sun spinning on the top copse. Afterwards and now I recall that I thought I saw a naples yellow blinding circle spinning on top of black verticals. The sensation was true. I was spellbound and, of course, when I tried to look again 'it' had gone, just a sun and a copse on the brow of a hill covered in snow. In looking back... I wouldn't have written this and I certainly would not have tried to put anything about it into words. Then, the event had to be absorbed and then found again in paint. I don't think I really stopped to see it. I do remember my heart almost stopped at the experience and it was gone. As a result I think I painted *Red, Black and White, 1956*.

Yorkshire, late 1950s.

The last two years (since I have been in Yorkshire) I have used verticals, sometimes solid verticals of colour...and at other times a colour surface with vertical lines drawn over and under and knitted together to be complete as a thing in itself. I suppose (although talking after the event is a doubtful game) the verticals first came from the height experience up here, though I've always been interested in trying to get a line to move from top to bottom and across a rectangle. This landscape experience has given me the confidence I needed.

It is not easy to get a line alive from top to bottom and when you need hundreds of vital connecting rods like I use, they (the lines) have to work with colour and feel spatially certain, not fixed to a certain point in space but moving in space in relationships to the next line and in completeness with the colour area between, until one has a whole period of time-space, as in a walk, or a drive, or a thought. Every mark must be a world, but the same world. I am not copying nature but endeavouring to construct my paintings in the same way as nature, so that they have a trueness about them and a reality as big as nature.

Yorkshire, 1956