

THE DOMINANT FORCES



johndaviesgallery
Period, Modern & Contemporary Art

Moreton-in-Marsh

Abstract Art & Abstract Expressionism

Art that does not attempt to represent the appearance of objects, real or imaginary. Abstract art, then, is not a style, but a description of any art that eschews representation. In the decorative arts abstraction has been present for millennia, but it appeared in European painting and sculpture only in the second decade of the 20th century, when it emerged, in different forms, in several places, in the works of artists such as Delaunay, Kandinsky, Kupka, Malevich and Mondrian. Modern non-representational painting or sculptures arises from either (1) the reduction of natural forms to their essentials or (2) the combination of shapes, lines and colours divorced from representational intent and created for their own sake. In its first meaning, the concept of abstract art can be seen to develop from **CUBISM** and the attempt to penetrate beneath the surface of reality – the sculpture of Brancusi perfectly represents this process of abstracting from nature. The second meaning entails the belief that shapes, lines and colours have aesthetic values in their own right, the basic inspiration for most movements of abstract art.

The concept, stimulated to some extent by photography, which re-lieved the artist of his obligations as a recorder of appearances, was current by the late 19th century, when Maurice Denis proclaimed that “A picture...is essentially a flat surface covered in colours arranged in a certain order.” Although many works do not fit neatly into either category, two broad trends are discernible in modern abstraction: the hard edged, carefully finished, often geometric style of **CONSTRUCTIVISM, DESTIJL or SUPREMATISM**; and the freer, more intuitive and more expressionistic style of **ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM, ORPHISM or TACHISME**. Together they have dominated much of the history of 20th Century painting and sculpture.

(Continued on title page)

DOUGLAS SWAN

1930 - 2000

HENRY INLANDER

1925-1983

WILLIAM GEAR

1915-1997



David Ralph Simpson
Afraid of the grey
Oil on board
25.5 x 25.5 cm, 10 x 10 in



David Ralph Simpson
As together, as close as can be
Beeswax & oil on canvas
18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in

DAVID RALPH SIMPSON

b.1963

IAN BURCH

b.1952

ROGÉR WALSCHOTS

b.1974

The Dominant Forces in 20th Century Art

Abstract Art & Abstract Expressionism

**22nd November 2014
to
24th December 2014**

**9.30am - 5.00pm
Monday to Saturday**

The Old Dairy Plant · Fosseway Business Park · Stratford Road
Moreton-in-Marsh · Gloucestershire · GL56 9NQ

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(Continued from front cover)

Abstract Expressionism

Term originally used in connection with Kandinsky's early abstract work but more usually applied to a movement that developed in New York in the 1940's. The term does not denote one particular style, as the work of the artist's involved varied considerably, but rather an attitude that called for freedom from traditional social and aesthetic values, and which, in contrast to the documentary realism that had dominated American painting in the 20th century, placed emphasis on spontaneous personal expression.

SURREALISM, with its stress on the role of the Unconscious in the act of creation, was a fundamental source of inspiration. **ACTION PAINTING**, as practised by Pollock and others, is the kind of work most usually associated with the movement, but artists as diverse as Gorky and Tobey are included, and some Abstract Expressionists, notably De Kooning, retained figurative images in their work.

A feature common to these four artists, however, and to others associated with the movement, was a preference for very large canvases. During the 1950's Abstract Expressionism became an International Phenomenon. It was the first movement in the USA to develop independently of European examples, and the first to influence art in Europe.

These definitions of Abstract Art and Abstract Expressionism are reproduced from

A-Z of Art and Artists, David Piper

An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary
Mitchell Beazley Library of Art, 1984

The Dominant Forces in 20th Century Art

The paintings, or to be more accurate, the works of art that make up this exhibition mostly share homogeneous characteristics – namely they are either abstract expressionist paintings or pure abstract paintings. Terminology can be an exacting subject, and I wish to be neither pedantic nor particularly exacting but simply present some very interesting contrasts. Further, it is my hope that a good many out there will find these contrasts refreshing and enjoyable.

The collection falls into two categories in so much as one half comprises of mid-twentieth century paintings and the other half new works by living artists. In the first line of the first paragraph above I first referred to the exhibits as “paintings” and then corrected my terminology to “works of art”. My reasoning here is that no one would dispute that all the mid-twentieth century pieces in this catalogue are *paintings*, namely those by **Douglas Swan**, **Henry Inlander** and **William Gear**; further no one could dispute that those by **David Ralph Simpson** are paintings. I am dwelling for a little on the word “painting” here for a moment, employing the terminology in a traditional sense to apply to a work of art painted with traditional materials (for example oil or acrylic) on a single surface (for example canvas or board).

Whether these works are representational or abstract has no bearing on the word “painting”, and the fact that some abstract paintings are partially representational is another matter, a matter to which I will return a little later in this monologue. But I find it difficult to apply the word “painting” to the works of **Rogér Walschots** and **Ian Burch**; here I find the terminology “works of art” so much more fitting. While both these artist’s exhibits are clearly “painted”, the traditional connotations of the purpose of a painting do not apply. The fact that Rogér Walschots uses glass, or in some cases yarn on a stretcher as supports for his work, and Ian Burch employs abutted blocks of wood as supports are considerations that certainly contribute to the unsuitability of the word “painting” as terms of reference. To refer to them as “collage”, at least in my book, would categorise them incorrectly, or worse, interfere with their purpose and how they are perceived. But it is the matter of the intended role of these works that for me renders the word *painting* rather unsuitable. That said, even while writing this I have inadvertently slipped into referring to them as *paintings* and corrected where necessary!

The major point with both Walschots and Burch is that neither artist is setting out to depict any seen object within their work. They are about as abstract as one can get short of a vacant space on the wall. And while there is a lot in common between the two artists, quite naturally there are strong contrasts and individualities of approach between the two. What they have in common, from the viewers’ perspective, is that the performance of their creations, their effect on the eye, is in most cases purely a matter of sensation. Both these artists’ works are primarily concerned with surface, texture and colour; the bringing about a feeling of space and transportation however microscopically short. Historically, Mark Rothko was one of the earliest artists to explore similar concerns.

As all art observers know, the pace of development in art in the early 20th Century was extraordinary, particularly in Paris, with Braque, Picasso and Matisse amongst the leading protagonists who changed how we view and understand art. From this era all sorts of movements and approaches evolved throughout Europe, America and Russia.

The British painter, **William Gear** (1915 – 1997) was strongly associated with the Cobra Group for some years. Born near Fife, he studied at Edinburgh College of Art 1932 – 1936 alongside such fellow students as Wilhelmina Barns-Graham. The award of a Travelling Scholarship took him all over Europe in 1937 and 1938, for a period studying under **Fernand Léger** in Paris.

After the war he lived in Paris meeting many UK artist including **Paolozzi** and **Alan Davie**, as well as many of the leading new generation of European artists such as **De Staël**, **Dubuffet**, **Hartung**, **Poliakoff** and **Soulages**. It was at this time he joined the Cobra movement after meeting Appel, Constant, Corneille and Jorn, holding his first solo exhibitions in Paris and London in 1948. After moving back to England in 1950 his painting *Autumn Landscape* was awarded a Festival of Britain purchase prize a year later. He then went on to enjoy a long international exhibiting career, as well as being made Curator of Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (1958-64) and Head of Fine Art, Birmingham College of Art (1964-75).

To return to the general interpretation of the term *abstract* in painting, I would categorize William Gear as predominantly an abstract painter, that is to say it is rare that one sees anything representational or recognizable in paintings from his mature output. But it is clear that his inspiration and many of the elements that feature in his compositions are derived from nature and the landscape, such as *Summer Garden* (1951) in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum at Kelvingrove, as well as sculptural forms as in *Interior with Sculpture* (1954) in the Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.

It is clear that the 1957 paintings of **Douglas Swan** (1930-2000) derive from recognizable elements observed in the visual world, although there is a strong contrast between the naturalistic, if markedly structured, approach within the Arbroath shoreline compositions and the highly abstract-expressionist approach in the powerful John Moores Exhibition painting *Fisherman with Nets*. Yet within the space of two years, Swan was painting in an entirely abstract style, very often titling his paintings to indicate the natural environment, such as Harbour Series.

Henry Inlander (1925 - 1983) on the other hand, often worked up strongly naturalistic paintings featuring landscape subjects contemporaneously with highly structured abstract paintings such as *Revelation No 6*, page 9.

David Ralph Simpson displays a delightful array of elements that can be recognized, if explained, in what to all intents and purposes can often be described as abstract paintings. That said, he will sometimes paint in a wholly figurative manner. A sublime draughtsman, and extremely sophisticated in his use of paint, he prefers not to explain his paintings, but the clues are in the titles.

Further commentary continues when introducing each artist within the catalogue.

Douglas Swan

1930 – 2000

Such is the quality of Douglas Swan's painting, it should be known to a far wider public in the UK than it is presently. A move to live in Germany will be a contributory factor to this, as well as exhibiting there and in Italy and Switzerland for much of his mature years.

Although born in the United States, he spent most of his growing years in Arbroath, and later attended Dundee College of Art. Here he worked under James McIntosh Patrick and Hugh Adam Crawford and later studied the Patrick Allan-Fraser School of Art at Hospitalfield, Arbroath. Significantly he studied with William Scott in London, and went on to win an RSA Scholarship in 1954. A British Council Italian Government Scholarship followed in 1957.

He showed at the Royal Scottish Academy, Young Contemporaries, with the London Group, Gimpel Fils and with the Artists International Association. Examples of his work are held in public collections in Brazil and Germany.

The three works illustrated on these pages all date from 1957 when the artist was just 27. One can detect certain similarities between them, echoed in the black ink featuring in the palette of the works on paper and the black oil describing the nets in the larger work. The fishing accoutrements on the shoreline also link the works on paper to the large oil. These are wonderful period pieces and make a most engaging suite. The power and energy in the large oil, together with the painting's history of being shown at the 1957 John Moores Exhibition, lend it very considerable presence.



Beached boats 57
Oil on canvas, 38.7 x 56.5 cm, 15¼ x 22¼ in



Houses by the Sea
Oil on canvas, 38.7 x 56.5 cm, 15¼ x 22¼ in

Fishing Net & Figure

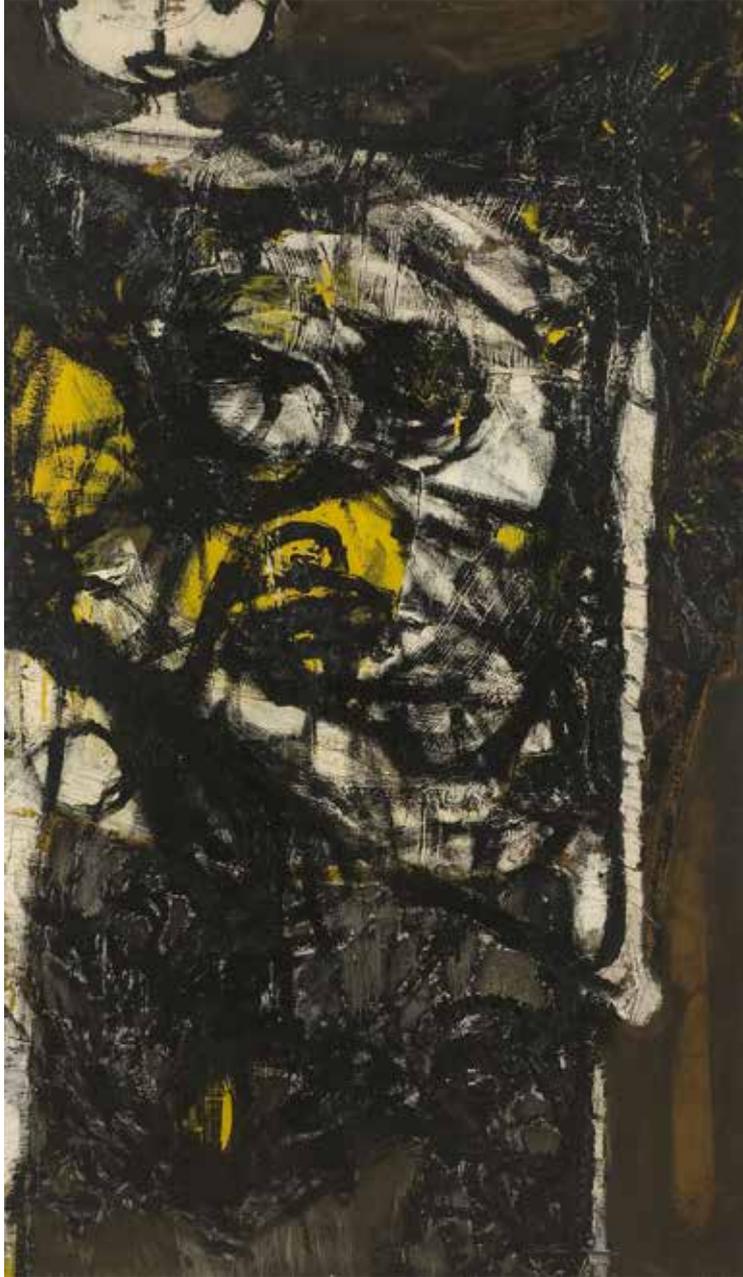
Oil on board, 122 x 70 cm, 48 x 27½ in

Signed verso with title & dated '57 with
the London

Address "2 Radcliffe Rd SW"

Exhibited : John Moores Liverpool
Exhibition, 1957

Bears original label verso



Henry Inlander

1925 – 1983

Born in Vienna, Henry Inlander fled Europe to London in 1938 where he later studied at St Martin's School of Art and at the Slade. He won a Travelling Scholarship to Rome in 1952, met Peter Lanyon and also discovered the village of Anticoli Corrado, in the Italian Alps. Here he bought a house, established a studio and went on to paint many paintings inspired by the surrounding landscape. He showed first in Rome in 1953 and at the Leicester Galleries in London in 1956.

His formative years were deeply troubled with the loss of family members at Auschwitz and Theresienstadt during the Second World War. Two sides to his work reflect on the one side a passion for nature, often depicted in both naturalistic and more formalized canvases, and in the second a more private output of balanced abstract works containing pockets of symbolism.

Revelation No. 6, illustrated opposite, is an example of this, and relates very strongly to Revelation No 1 which, with *Approaching Eclipse No 1*, was exhibited at the exhibition British Painting in the Sixties organised by the Contemporary Art Society at the Tate Gallery, Millbank in June 1963.

He was the subject of a Retrospective Exhibition at The Redfern Gallery in 2008.



Revelation No 6

Oil on canvas, 101.6 x 101.6 cm, 40 x 40 in, signed

William Gear

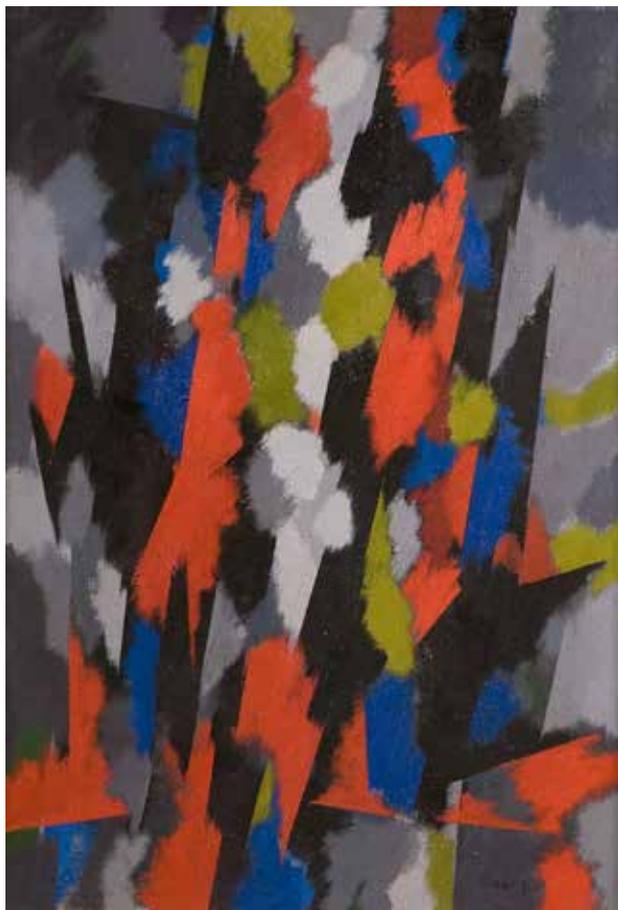
1915 – 1997

At one time a pupil of Fernand Léger and a member of the CoBra Group, William Gear's career and contribution to modernist British painting are set to be celebrated with a Travelling Exhibition next year, 2015. In recent months Gear has also been tipped by a number of pundits who feel his market 'could have a long way to go'. There is no doubt that this artist's credentials are strong enough to form the basis of significant market reappraisal, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by a number of specialist London dealers.

To refer back to the definitions of Abstract Art and Abstract Expressionism reproduced on the front cover and title page of this catalogue, it is very interesting to see how William Gear fits into this overview. In fact, the place that he occupies in the evolution of abstract and abstract expressionist painting in European terms is not insignificant, and in British terms can only be defined as strong.

Few British painters were working in an abstract or semi-abstract idiom before the Second World War, with the exceptions of Claude Flight (b. 1881), to a degree Paul Nash (b.1889) and C.R.W. Nevinson (also b. 1889), Hitchens (b.1893), Nicholson (born 1894, 21years before Gear) and Piper (born 1903, twelve years before Gear). But immediately after the war, with influences from America and the New York School, as well as from the Continent, abstract painting became increasingly established in Britain. By the mid 1950's there was a strong emerging generation of artists, who had been serving during the war, who instinctively adopted abstract and abstract expressionist ways of working. Nicholson, Lanyon (b.1918), Hilton (b.1911), Heron (b.1920) and Frost (b.1915) were working in St. Ives. In London and elsewhere, such artists as Bacon (b.1909), Davie (b.1920), Kossof (b.1926) and Auerbach (b.1931) were amongst the most progressive.

William Gear was at the cutting edge immediately after the war; he was fresh on the scene after his studies in Paris, as well as being an active member of the CoBra Group. He first showed in London and Paris as early as 1948, and exhibited with Jackson Pollock at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York in 1949. He exhibited regularly from then on in Europe, London and America right up until his death in 1997. His work is represented in many public collections at home, including municipal galleries in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Manchester, Aberdeen, Birmingham, and Oxford. Overseas, examples of Gear's work are held in the Cobra Museum at Amstelveen, the Allbright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, and art galleries and museums in Canberra, Cincinnati, Fort Lauderdale, Liège, Nelson, New Zealand, Ottawa, Sydney, Tel Aviv and Toronto.



Twin Structure Red 1964
Signed, signed & titled verso
Oil on canvas, 81.5 x 71 cm, 32 x 22 in

William Gear, Selected Bibliography:

- 1948: *William Gear*, catalogue introduction, David Sylvester, Gimpel Fils
- 1951: *Contemporary British Art*, Herbert Read (Penguin, London)
- 1956: *Abstract Art*, Frederick Gore (Methuen, London)
- 1958: *A Dictionary of Abstract Painting*, Michael Seuphor (Methuen, London)
- 1959: *A Concise History of Modern painting*, Herbert Read (Thames & Hudson, London)
- 1964: *Abstract Painting: From Kandinsky to the Present*, Michael Seuphor (Prentice-Hall, London)
A Concise History of English Painting, William Gaunt (Thames & Hudson, London)
- 1970: *Art in Britain 1969/70*, Edward Lucie-Smith & Patricia White (J.M.Dent, London)
- 1974: *A Visual Dictionary of Art* (Heinemann, London)
- 1977: *The Century of Change: British Painting since 1900*, Richard Shone (Phaidon Press, Oxford)
- 1986: *British Art since 1900*, Frances Spalding (Thames & Hudson, London)
- 1988: *Cobra: 40 Years After*, Chris van der Heijden (Sdu publishers, Amsterdam)
- 1989: *Scottish Art since 1900*, Keith Hartley (national Galleries of Scotland)
- 1990: *20th Century Painters & Sculptors*, Frances Spalding (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge)
- 1991: *Scottish Art in the 20th Century* (RWA, Bristol)
- 1993: *The Sussex Scene: Artists in Sussex in the Twentieth Century*, Norbert Lynton (Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne).
- 1994: *Scottish Art in the 20th Century*, Duncan MacMillan (Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh)
- 1997: *William Gear and Cobra*, Peter Shield and David Gear (Aberdeen Art Gallery)
- 1998: *New Art/New World: British Art in Postwar Society*, Margaret Garlake (Yale University Press) *Handbook of Modern British Painting and Printmaking 1900-1990*, 2nd edition, Alan Windsor (Lund Humphries, London)
- 1999: *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*, Ian Chilvers (Oxford University Press, Oxford)
- 2000: *Scottish Art*, Murdo Macdonald (Thames & Hudson, London)
Surrealism in Birmingham 1935-1954 (Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery)
- 2003: *William Gear*, John McEwen, Lund Humphries

Selected One-man & Joint Exhibitions:

- 1944: Galleria Michelangelo, Florence
- 1947: Junge Kunst, Hamburg
- 1948: Gimpel Fils, London
Galerie Arc-en-Ciel, Paris
- 1949: Betty Parsons Gallery, New York (with Jackson Pollock)
- 1951: Gimpel Fils, London
- 1954: South London Art Gallery (with Ivon Hitchens)
- 1957: Saidenberg Gallery, New York (with Sandra Blow)
- 1960: The Stone Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne
- 1961: Gimpel Fils, London
- 1962: Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (Touring Retrospective 1946-62)
- 1966: Commonwealth Institute Gallery, Edinburgh (with Alan Davie)
- 1967: Gimpel Fils, London



Standing Structure, June '65
Signed, signed & titled verso
Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 61 cm, 36 x 24 in

Selected One-man & Joint Exhibitions (continued):

- 1969: Compass Gallery, Glasgow, and touring to Aberdeen and Dundee Art Galleries
1976: Retrospective (1947 -76) at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists
1982: Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh and Ikon Gallery Birmingham (Retrospective)
1987: Redfern Gallery: *Cobra Years 1948-51*
1988: Galerie Marcel Fleiss, Paris: *Cobra Abstractions 1946-49*
Galerie Karl & Faber, Munich: *Works from the Artist's Studio*
1989: Galerie von Loeper, Hamburg
1990: Redfern Gallery, London (75th Birthday Exhibition)
Kunsthandel Leeman, Amsterdam (with Stephen Gilbert)
1992: Galerie von Loeper, Hamburg, Galerie Wullkopf, Darmstadt & Redfern, London
1995: Scottish Arts Club, Edinburgh (with Patrick Heron)
1996: 1996: Galerie Scheffel, Bad Homburg
1997: Redfern Gallery, London (Golden Jubilee Exhibition)
Sprenge Museum, Hanover

With regard to Group Exhibitions, Gear exhibited in over 600 shows; this is a small selection:

- 1950: *Contemporary British Art*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London
1951: *British Abstract Art*, Gimpel Fils, London
Sixty Paintings for '51 Arts Council Festival of Britain (touring exhibition)
1952: *17 Collectors*, Contemporary Art Society, Tate Gallery, London
Five Contemporary Painters (British Council touring exhibition of Canada)
Artists International Association Touring Exhibition (South Australia)
First International Art Exhibition, Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo
1953: *Figures in their Setting*, Contemporary Art Society, Tate Gallery, London
Coronation Exhibition of Contemporary British Paintings, Redfern gallery, London
British and French Contemporaries, Gimpel Fils, London
The Mirror and the Square, Artists International Association touring exhibition,
Also two British Council touring exhibitions to Sweden and Brazil.
1954: *Trends in British Art*, Guildhall Art Gallery, London
Of Light and Colour, Gimpel Fils, London
27th Biennale, British Pavilion, Venice
1955: *10 Years of English Landscape Painting 1945-55*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
1956: *The Seasons*, Contemporary Art Society, Tate Gallery, London
Contemporary British Art, Silberman Galleries, New York
1957: *Metavisual Tachiste Abstract: Painting in England Today*, Redfern Gallery, London
Britannique Contemporaine, Salle Balzac, Paris
1958: *British Abstract Painting*, City Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.
1959: *The Graven Image*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
1963: *British Art Today*, San Francisco Museum of Art (and tour of the USA)
1964: *London Group Jubilee Exhibition 1914-64*, Tate Gallery, London
Contemporary British Painting and Sculpture, Allbright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, USA



Landscape Study, June '61
Signed, signed & titled verso
Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 61 cm, 36 x 24 in

- 1965: *International Art 1965-1966*, United States Art Gallery, Copenhagen
- 1966: *Metamorphosis: Figure into Abstract*, Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry
- 1968: *Three Centuries of Scottish Painting* (National Gallery of Canada touring exhibition)
- 1969: *Painting 1964-67* (Arts Council touring exhibition of England)
- 1972: *The Non-Objective World 1939-1955*, Anneli Juda Fine Art, Basel and Milan
Decade: Painting, Sculpture and Drawing in Britain 1940-49 (Arts Council touring exhibition)
- 1974: *100 Years of Scottish Painting*, Fine Art Society, Edinburgh
- 1975: *British Painting 1900-1960*, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield and Aberdeen Art Gallery
- 1977: *British Painting 1952-77*, Royal Academy of Arts, London
- 1978: *Painters in Parallel*, Scottish Arts Council, Edinburgh College of Art
- 1979: *British Drawings since 1945*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
- 1982: *British Watercolours and Drawings*, British Council touring exhibition of China
Cobra 1948-51, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris
- 1984: *British Art and Design*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 1986: *Works on Paper by British Artists 1920-1985*, Redfern Gallery, London
The Modern Spirit in Scottish Painting, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
 Also two *Cobra* exhibitions abroad
- 1988: *The Avant-Garde in Britain 1910-1960*, Fine Art Associates, London
Fifteen British Artists: Works from the Fifties, Gimpel Fils, London
20th Century Scottish Paintings, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
 Also two *Cobra* exhibitions abroad
- 1989: *Portrait of the Artist*, Tate Gallery, London
- 1991: *Scottish Art in the 20th Century*, Royal West of England Academy, Bristol
- 1992: *Scottish Abstraction*, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1993: *The Edinburgh School*, Edinburgh Festival Exhibition, Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
The Line of Tradition, Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh
Cobra exhibitions in Amstelveen and the Musée d'Art Moderne, Liège
- 1994: *The Colourist Legacy: Colour in 20th Century Scottish Painting*, City Art Centre, Edinburgh
Cobra exhibitions in Santiago and Buenos Aires
- 1995: *William Gear: Past and Present Friends*, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham
Cobra 1945-1995, Meir 47, Antwerp
The Cobra Group 1948-1951, *Avanti Galleries*, New York
- 1997: *William Gear and Cobra*, Aberdeen Art Gallery (and touring to Eastbourne, Edinburgh and Ayr)

Works in Public Collections, UK

Aberdeen City Art Gallery and Museum, Arts Council of Northern Island, Belfast, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, University of Birmingham, University of Central England, Birmingham, Brighton University, University College, Chichester, McManus Galleries, Dundee, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, City Art Centre, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow, Hereford Museum, Abbott Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery, Arts Council, London, British Council, London, The British Museum, the Government Art Collection, The Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, The Tate Gallery, The Victoria & Albert Museum, Manchester City Art Gallery, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, New College, Oxford, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Rye Art Gallery, Southampton Art Gallery, Smith Art Gallery, Stirling and Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney.

Works in Public Collections, overseas

Cobra Museum, Amstelveen, Allbright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, USA, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Cincinatti Art Gallery, USA, Fort Lauderdale Art Gallery, USA, Musée d'Art Moderne, Liège, Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson, New Zealand, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, National Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Museum of Art, Tel Aviv and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Landscape with Blue 1962
Signed Gear Jan '62
Oil on canvas, 122 x 81.5 cm, 48 x 32 in

Exhibited: San Francisco Museum, 1962
The Dallas Museum for Contemporary
Arts 'British Art Today' 1963



An Ocean

Oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, 35½ x 47¼ in

David Ralph Simpson

b. 1963

David Ralph Simpson is one of the 'purest' artists I know, one of the most 'hooked –up'. By this I mean that the chain of events that leads to this artist's resulting imagery is about as seamless as I can imagine in an artist whose semi abstract mark-making is mostly derived from things he has observed or pictured in his mind. A sublime draughtsman, not everyone might guess this from his paintings. But looking into his sketchbooks this is what you find. The key is that, as you can read into the summary or explanation of abstract art on the front cover, here we have an artist who is not particularly interested in reproducing the likeness of things. Yet drawing remains a major part of his picture making.

The mode of drawing that he does in his sketch books I had never encountered before; he draws through carbon paper so that he does not see the drawing in progress. He doesn't want to be tempted to improve the drawing for its own sake, and wants the experience of first observing whatever it is he has drawn to be preserved until he reveals the drawing in the studio. This could be weeks or months later, when he will take one of his sketch books off the shelf, open it up and be transported back to that moment when he was on the spot out in the open; or even in the studio; some of the things he draws, he draws from his mind's eye.

Thus the creation of a painting will start. But the process is not descriptive in the sense of working to create a likeness. The idea in the sketch book is likely to survive into a painting, but will be subject to a whole chain of contextual or even non-contextual associations in the artist's head. It could be make a single statement, or be juxtaposed with many other elements introduced into the composition that spark each other off; there is a strong meaning to this artist for every one of his compositions, but he never really enjoys explaining that to an enquirer. He wants the painting to be enjoyed for its own sake, for its abstract qualities, its colour, and the handling of the paint. And this is where his sublime draughtsmanship comes back into play. His touch, his mark making, the handling of the paint in many of the gestures employed is hugely gifted. Back to meaning though, his brilliant, witty titles usually offer a pretty full explanation of a painting's narrative content.

David Ralph Simpson has a considerable exhibition history dating from 1987. He was artist in residence at Glyndebourne Opera 2000/004.



Hunters of Fish
Oil on board, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



Shepherd's Delight
Oil on board, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



The Progress of the Rake (Part 2)
Oil on board, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



What are we going to do now?
Oil on board, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



Rose Garden
Oil on board, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



Sardinellas
Oil on board, 47 x 47 cm, 18½ x 18½ in



Buoyant

Oil on board, 52 x 52 cm, 20½ x 20½ in



Pickled Red

Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 101.5 cm, 36 x 40 in



Ebb 2
Watercolour, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



Ebb 3
Watercolour, 18 x 18 cm, 7 x 7 in



Adrift (All together, now)
Oil on canvas, 92 x 101.5 cm, 36¼ x 40 in



Untitled

Acrylic on yarn, 60 x 80 cm, 23½ x 31½ in

Rogér Walschots

b. 1974

When writing the small introduction to Ian Burch's work in this catalogue, I mentioned that both he and Rogér's work shared a certain amount of common ground. The most obvious similarity between the two is that neither artist is concerned with the description of any seen objects within their compositions. Another similarity is that both artists are concerned about the sensory perception of space that their finished works stimulate in the viewer.

This is probably just about where any similarity between their paintings ends; their working methods are highly contrasting, and so too has the route that each of these artists has taken to their established modes of working.

Rogér was born in the Kruiskamp district of 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands in 1974. Like Ian Burch, he went to art college, in his case The Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam, 1995/99. But long before this Rogér had become an established graffiti artist. He found growing up in Kruiskamp, described by one observer as a 'dull 1960's neighbourhood of broad, straight streets, built to house many people on short notice', very exciting. 'With a bunch of guys we would explore the empty industrial zones in the evenings. That is where my fascination with graffiti started. Very boyish. Drawing on something with a marker and then making a run for it.'

In the late 1980's, when the fashion for graffiti art had spread to Europe from the States, Rogér found these wide open spaces ideal to employ his drawing talent and express himself. His individual approach of choosing difficult locations, challenging surfaces and using a brush rather than a spray can, earned him great respect within the movement.

At the De Kooning Academy, '...my voyage of discovery' he was introduced to the work of such artists as Tapiès and Wagemaker; he also clashed with the rules. Some tutors found Walschots difficult to handle, others admired his search for freedom of expression. He wanted his work to be increasingly raw.

After graduating, he returned to s'Hertogenbosch and embarked upon a comprehensive exploration of surfaces on which to work, including wood, glass and yarn wrapped around stretchers and other supports. The strong influence of Jackson Pollock became well established in his work. Now in his early forties, Walschots has matured into producing delicately and sensitively produced abstract works – some two dimensional, some three dimensional, highly characterised by highly individual application of paint, dripped, sprayed, flicked – any manner of means, with exquisite contrasts of colour. The results are all about freedom and space.

Walschots has exhibited extensively since 2000, and his work is included in the Fontys Kunstcollectie, Tilburg and with Van Lanschot Bankiers s'Hertogenbosch.

Bibl:

Rogér Walschots: Vrij (Free), Gerrit van den Hoven, & Ruimte (*Space*) Ulco Mes
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Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 63 x 53 cm, 24¾ x 21 in



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Acrylic on wood, 63 x 53 cm, 24¾ x 21 in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 63 x 53 cm, 24¾ x 21 in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 65 x 44.5 cm, 25½ x 17½ in



Untitled
Acrylic on canvas, 62.5 x 60.5 cm, 24½ x 23¾ in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 82 x 58 cm, 32¼ x 22¾ in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 82 x 58 cm, 32¼ x 22¾ in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 45 x 33 cm, 17¾ x 13 in



Untitled
Acrylic on wood, 45 x 33 cm, 17¾ x 13 in



Untitled
Acrylic on board, 29 x 21.5cm, 11½ x 8½in



Untitled
Acrylic on board, 33 x 23 cm, 13 x 9 in



Untitled

Oil on canvas, 76 x 102 cm, 30 x 40 in



Embrace

Oil on 15 ply, 53 x 44.5 cm, 21 x 17½ in

Ian Burch

b. 1952

There is a direct link between Ian Burch and William Gear; Gear was Head of Art, Birmingham College of Art when Ian Burch was a student from 1971-75. Further, Gear, recognising Burch as a promising and talented student, made a purchase of a still-life from the young artist on behalf of Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery. This very painting has a topical presence now; it is hanging next to a Winifred Nicholson and in the same room as a Georges Braque in the exhibition *Static: Still Life Reconsidered* on show in the Waterhall, Birmingham Art Gallery until December 31st 2014.

That painting however, a representational work but with a very contemporary feel featuring an inventive use of proportion and handling of space, naturally dates from the mid-1970's. Ian's creative process has evolved unrecognisably since then, and over recent years has become virtually entirely concerned with abstract considerations. Burch's approach shares a good deal with that of Rogér Walschots; neither artist is in the least bit concerned with representation or the description of things within their artwork.

Burch's work is almost wholly concerned with *surface*. They take ages to evolve, but are worked with traditional use of oil paint, almost always on glued together blocks of 15 ply wood. There is a sense of journey in each piece, and they evolve through a "process of chance, concentrated working of the paint surface to give an intense sensory visual abstract moment in time". The results can be transporting, many of his compositions featuring either delicious juxtapositions of colour or rubbed through matured surface or both.

The work is very personal but to those used to viewing abstract work projects a universal appeal. A very private person, up until now Ian Burch has rarely shown in the commercial sector. That said he has a considerable exhibition record within the municipal gallery world. Such appearances include over fifteen one-man or two person shows from a solo exhibition as early as 1979 at the Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry. Inclusion in over thirty group exhibitions between 1973 and 2014, notably *William Gear: Past and Present Friends*, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1996, give an indication of the consistent commitment of this artist to his craft.



Locked In
Oil on 15 ply, 35.5 cm, 14 x 12¾ in



Blue Balanced
Oil on 15 ply, 34 x 30 cm, 13½ x 11 in



Finelines
Oil on 15 ply, 26 x 23 cm, 10¼ x 9 in



Out of the Dark
Oil on 15 ply, 30.5 x 22 cm, 12 x 8¾ in



Dark Emerging
Oil on 15 ply, 49.5 x 40.5 cm, 19½ x 16 in



Overedge
Oil on 15 ply, 35.5 x 30.5 cm, 14 x 12in



Breaking Through
Oil on 15 ply, 38 x 34 cm, 15 x 13½ in



Draw the Line
Oil on 15 ply, 31 x 35 cm, 12¼ x 13¾ in



Pushing In
Oil on 15 ply, 30.5 x 27 cm, 12 x 10¾ in



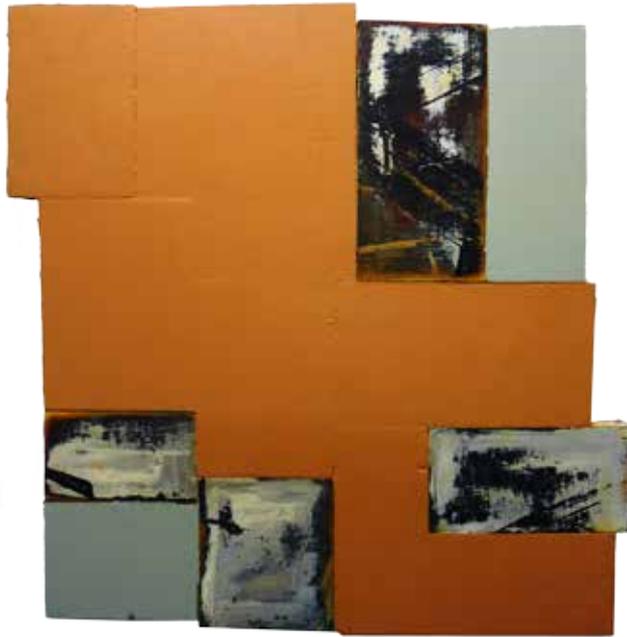
Unbound I
Oil on 15 ply, 51 x 43 cm, 20 x 17 in



Sandshift
Oil on 15 ply, 49 x 50 cm, 19¼ x 19¾ in



Emerging Light III
Oil on 15 ply, 38 x 35.5 cm, 15 x 14 in



Glimpse
Oil on 15 ply, 51 x 47.5 cm, 20 x 18¾ in



Blanche
Oil on 15 ply, 33 x 34 cm, 13 x 13½ in

Back cover illustration:
Rogér Walschots, Untitled
Acrylic on yarn, 30 x 40 cm, 11¾ x 15 in



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