

GALLERIES

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ANTENNAE



Another Opening . . .

The gallery season always seems to swing from August 'gone away' signs to September full-on, 'here we go again', bustle with an astonishing swiftness. This year, economic and social woes notwithstanding, it appears no different to any other – not just the 20/21 British Art Fair – which we will come to in a moment – but all sorts of new or relaunched spaces around the country. Among the more significant, certainly, is the opening of a London branch of Russia's 'biggest non-governmental museum of contemporary art', St Petersburg-based **Erarta**, in Mayfair's Berkeley Street. The initial show (from 15 September), 'Peter and the Wolf', brings together six artists, three from the older, or unofficial, generation. In short, an intriguing addition to London's ever-diversifying and internationalised art scene.

Less an opening, more a major relaunch, is Caroline Skyrme's **Le Mur Vivant** in Pimlico. First opened in 1996, the gallery has been comparatively low-key more recently as she pursued other art-world ventures. Now, with a brand-new stable of artists, working in big and bold, abstract and expressive styles, she starts this month with a mixed show, then has solo exhibitions of painters Alan Senior and Liz Calthorpe before Christmas.

Meanwhile, Folkestone based sculptor Frank Magnus-Hirshfield moves from a one-man on-line

gallery to opening his own space (**Galerie d'art**) and, with advice from veteran Folkestone gallerist Neville Pundole, showing other artists as well. This is a bold move after 50 years of working privately, so to speak, and, with Folkestone currently in full contemporary *triennale* mode, Frank's insistence on more traditional or mainstream art, a marvellously contrarian one too . . .

Form, Matter, Material

Having marked the 'back to school' moment for the London art scene for 24 years, **20/21 British Art Fair** (14 to 18 September) looks in fine fettle with the 56 galleries taking part amounting to a full house. To see what many are showing turn to our feature on p32, but mention must be made here of the thoughtful and innovative special item, a sculpture trail in which a dozen galleries present 22 outstanding pieces of 20th Century British Sculpture. Entitled 'Form-Matter-Material' and curated by Rene Gimpel and Peter Osborne, it takes as its point of departure the RA's eponymous show at the beginning of the year by placing a particular emphasis on those artists and groupings that show chose largely to ignore. Most notably this includes the 50s 'Geometry of Fear' artists – Armitage, Clarke, Butler in particular – all represented by seminal, museum-quality, 1950s pieces. Much else catches the eye too – an exuberant 30s Under-

wood terracotta, an early Paolozzi bronze, a rare 60s Jan Haworth large, sewn 'Lindner Doll' and, into 21st C., rising star Phyllida Barlow's striking mixed media sculpture of quasi-Surrealistic character. Clearly a radically alternative view of Britain's 20th C. sculptural riches.

Autumn in Cornwall

In the great demographic scheme of things it's well known that St Ives in Cornwall is home to more than a fair few artists. Not all will be exhibiting in September but many will be contributing to group shows. At the Mariners Gallery the **St Ives Society of Artists** unveil their new exhibition on the 7th while downstairs in the Crypt, the scrabble for a bargain in the £50 donated works show begins on the 10th. The **Porthminster Gallery's** 'St Ives Summer' lasts until September 26 while at the historic **Penwith Galleries** autumn begins on the 1st. If an antidote to St Ives is needed, a trip to **Kestle Barton** for their celebration of Ray Exworth's monumental sculptural oeuvre would be the thing, whilst in Truro, **Lemon Street** are showing 'Tree: Gwedhem' – new paintings by Cornwall's favourite son Kurt Jackson, surely too good to miss. **Pip Palmer**

Graham Crowley

The last decade has seen landscape, specifically the landscape of the west coast of Ireland, be-

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TRIPLEVISION

come Graham Crowley's central preoccupation. But, as this large show of recent works (**Atkinson**, Millfield) elucidates, these are paintings which exist simultaneously as a window on the changing environment of rural County Cork – in particular its creeping suburbanisation – and as objects in themselves, exercises in the effect of expansive colour fields, variations of surface texture and contrasts of geometric forms. One colour dominates each canvas, spread over sky, field and even the exteriors of farm buildings. Black strokes provide outline and the figurative detail of hedgerow and trees, and occasional outcrops of other bright chroma, on the odd wall, chimney or telegraph pole, punctuate and clash with the main colour. Crowley's 'Drift' series disorients us further by representing this landscape as reflected in an estuary or river. Here, the quadrilaterals and triangles of roof, gable and wall are upside-down and intercede with ellipses of sunlight, clusters of clouds, the stocky but sleek forms of rowing boats and semi-circular white lines, swiftly brushed to evoke water ripples. The series has the graphic impact of Crowley's neocubist, dystopian still lifes and cityscapes of the 1970s and '80s, with which he came to prominence, but also some of the picturesque qualities of the British landscape tradition, as water, sky, house and boat merge as one in the viewer's eyes. **Sam Phillips**

Richard Corbett

Twenty or so small but intense landscape images by the painter and printmaker Richard Corbett are showing at **New Leaf** in Monmouth until the end of the month. The smallest measures no more than 4 x 6 inches (excluding its frame), the largest, called *Still Pool*, is about 20 inches square. The old-fashioned subject matter – sun-saturated trees in full leaf, thickly wooded hills under scudding clouds, sparkling seas at dusk, each one brought to life by the artist's sensitivity to the way light moves – is no turn-off, even if you feel that scenes as perfect as these are the result of a selective vision that ignores all ugly intrusions. Psychologically speaking, trees (which feature in a lot of these pictures) are good for you and we need more of them. Government statistics show that about 12% of the UK is covered by woodland, which is well below the EU average (37% in 2000). A nostalgia for the wild wood haunts a lot of us whether we are living in a densely populated city or in the sticks. Trees give us security. Richard Corbett's latest figurative paintings play to a need for contemplation and their smallness becomes entirely irrelevant. **Caroline Juler**

Images from Left: **Jan Haworth**, 'Lindner Doll', 1964, mixed media, 97cm high at Whitford Fine Art. **Nick Bodin**, 'Vantage', oil on canvas at Porthminster Gallery. captions continued overleaf

John Craxton

John Craxton, who died in 2009 at the age of 87, has long been curiously neglected in modern British art consciousness. That lack will be repaired by his current retrospective show at **Tate Britain** and the revelatory new book, *John Craxton* by Ian Collins, (Lund Humphries, £35). His early art – including ominous wartime drawings of meditative poets and shepherds amid menacingly animate woods and foliage – is relatively well known but the works that followed his ecstatically liberating move to Greece in 1946 have, undeservingly, achieved less prominence. In the monumental *Pastoral for P.W.* (1948), dedicated to his progressive art benefactor Peter Watson, wartime angst is jettisoned as a young piping goatherd is an enchanting pantheistic presence within an intricately abstracted Greek landscape of gnawing, frolicking and startled goats. In such works, Craxton absorbed inspiring notes from Picasso, Chagall and Miró into his own vision, his unique Arcadian in-scape. In later paintings, a European modernist influence is enriched by a complementary growing appreciation of archaic icons and Byzantine mosaics. The resulting paintings of dancing, feasting and resting Greek sailors – as well as vibrantly tessellated landscapes, seascapes and treescapes – are marvellous achievements. **Philip Vann**