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ANTENNAE



## Hard Times?

Though the economic news might be alarming and disquieting droit de suite changes are just coming into force (see Sarah Drury's article on p36) it's not immediately obvious from the more than healthy-looking exhibitors' lists for the first two London art fairs of 2012, the **London Art Fair** (18 to 22 January) and the **Watercolours + Works on Paper Fair 2012** (2 to 5 February). The former has its usual complement of c.100 galleries in the main halls while the 32 in the Art Projects section – with its younger, experimental bias possibly more vulnerable to economic vagaries – appears to have gained five or so from last year. With the Photo50 section also still very much in evidence, it is, in short, business as usual here.

Meanwhile the Watercolours + Works on Paper Fair has settled comfortably into its somehow unlikely Science Museum venue for a third year running. With a full house of 45+ galleries, the wonderfully eclectic range of this fair – 16th C. to the present day and absolutely anything on paper from Old Master drawings to contemporary photography – always makes for some marvellous serendipity, while its setting also means fascinating loan exhibitions from the Museum's own archive. This year the show is called 'The Moon Observed' and includes James Nasmyth's astonishing mid-19th C. paintings on paper and pastels of the moon's surface, some of

the latter drawn through his 20 inch reflecting telescope, and John Russell's beautiful *Telescopic Study of the Moon* of 1796, among many other delights both ancient and modern.

## Have a Go Hero

£350 in cash was recently snatched by two Romanian girls from **Le Mur Vivant** in London's Pimlico, whilst a painting was being wrapped for a client. As the "Pimlico Prowlers" ran off down the street, gallery owner Caro Lyle-Skyrme, bravely gave chase. "I actually shouted "Stop Thief!" three times as I ran," said Caro later, "and think it is very important people do this if in pursuit as it alerts others to join in!" Fortunately some joggers did join the chase, the thieves were apprehended and the money retrieved. Nevertheless they had to wait a whole hour in the street for the police to arrive . . . RC

## All Ship Shape

Things are afoot in the Bristol art world currently, with **Innocent Fine Art** re-opening later this month after a major five month refurbishment and **R E Bucheli Fine Art Frames** recently launching a handsome new space in the middle of town.

Carol Innocent is particularly pleased, the work having given her a whole new room which she is planning to use as a permanent 'Collectors' Gallery' show-

ing established names, Sandra Blow and Peter Blake among them, and prints by 20th Century. French artists, Picasso et al. It will mean she now also has the extra space to take on some new, younger Bristol-based artists from the city's particularly rich pool of talent.

Meanwhile Rocio Bucheli, until recently based in Bath, has similar plans for the rather grand historical rooms in Albion House she has just taken on and, as well as her specialist frame business, she plans 3 open exhibitions a year from a collective of artists, plus, on occasion, her own work. And while we are down west, a note that **Anthony Hepworth** is moving back to Bath, the lease on his Kensington space having now come to an end.

## The Hovering

It's good to see that it's not always a London-based artist that wins one of the big art prizes – the main £10,000 Towry Award at the **National Open Art Competition** in Chichester has just gone to the Cornish-based painter David Whitaker with his powerful painting *The Hovering*. A nice moment, too, for the **Millennium Gallery** who have been showing him for several years now.

From left: **John Russell** 'Telescopic Study of the Moon' at Watercolours & Works on Paper Fair. **Richard Snowden** 'Cockereel' at Pepper Gallery. **Basil Beattie** 'When the First is Last and the Last is First' at James Hyman Gallery

# GALLERIES

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## And the Winner is . . .

Every August for the last four years, the Cork Street Open Exhibitions have filled 'The Street's' **Gallery 27** and **The Gallery** with works selected from an open submission of thousands. With the intention of both raising the profile of contemporary artists and benefiting a selected children's charity, this has always proved an extremely lively event. Now, in a further development of the idea, Director Kathryn Roberts is putting on a show this January (18 to 27) at Gallery 27 which will showcase all the prizewinners from these four shows – a neat way to catch up with this very worthwhile venture if you don't already know it and to support, again, the charities it has been aiding over this period.

## Helping the Tricycle

An incomprehensible victim of the government's recent spending cuts – it lost £350,000 funding per year – the Tricycle Theatre has just received a marvellous boost from an unlikely direction, the gift for auction of 35 paintings by the Victorian watercolourist Hercules Brabazon Brabazon.

Donated by 89 year old collector and philanthropist Al Weil, the work will be going on show first at the Tricycle (to 7 January) and then at **Pyms Gallery** in Mount Street (from 11 January) before being auctioned, at a time and place still to be finalised. Watch this space!

## Double Lives

Farming, publishing, the law, make up artists and (even) banking comprise just some of the day jobs of the eight artists participating in the **Pepper Gallery's** latest show at 54 Shepherd Market in Mayfair, entitled 'The Double Lives of Artists'.

In many cases, without formal art training, most have a considerable track record of previous shows. I'm particularly struck by Richard Snowden's vibrantly coloured and confidently painted townscapes and animal subjects, undertaken at night when he has stopped being one of Yorkshire's biggest salad growers, but there's plenty of extremely professional-looking work here for all tastes. Choose your profession . . .

## The Gremlins

They really struck last month. First we called the curator of **Studio Sienko's** show of Ukrainian artists Olga, rather than Tamara, Demidenko; then, in our piece on the **Blythswood Gallery's** show we stated that the painter David Artz was Belgian rather than Dutch and a pupil of Isaac Israels not the Maris Brothers, while a misread 'I' led us to confuse J. Phillip (18th C. Scottish) with J. (Jackie) Philip – very much alive! Apologies to all.

**Tony Feld** 'Brighton Bandstand - Sunday Evening Dance' at Cork St Open. **Hercules Brabazon Brabazon** 'View of the Doge's Palace, Venice' at Pyms Gallery. **David Whittaker** 'The Hovering' at NOAC courtesy of Millennium

## Ziggurats & Towers

Basil Beattie's gradual emergence over the last two decades or so as perhaps the finest abstract painter of his generation in this country is a remarkable story of sheer tenacity and determination in a history dogged by critical and curatorial indifference and, often, ignorance too. All of which makes the current exhibition, at **James Hyman Fine Art**, celebrating the last 25 years of a painting career that goes back to 1958, so significant. Of the same generation as the late John Hoyland (they more or less coincided at the RA Schools), Beattie initially shared Hoyland's enthusiasm for Abstract Expressionism but then, unlike Hoyland (and others such as Ayres and Irvin) he started experimenting with the poured and saturated painting processes pioneered by Louis and Olitski in the late 60s and early 70s.

By the time this show picks up the thread c.1986 though, this had in turn long been overwhelmed by a fierceness and intensity of mark making, ostensibly architectural in character – ziggurats, stairways and towers – but which has, in truth, nothing to do with literal representation and everything to do with metaphor and symbolism.

The outcome has been a steady flow of paintings bursting with internal vitality and life and which, not unlike late Guston, speak unmistakably to the human condition. **NU**