

HYDRO POWER

An exhibition of contemporary watercolours at The Clock Tower Gallery,
Northern General Hospital, Sheffield September 2011

Richard Bartle www.richardbartle.co.uk rich@richardbartle.co.uk

A study of faith.

I have always sought to observe the fundamental driving forces behind society and its ideas of political, economic, and philosophical progress. Douglas Adams's witty model set out in 'The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy' summarizes three basic stages of social evolution: Survival (how do we eat); Enquiry (why do we eat); and Sophistication (where do we have lunch). In my work I attempt to identify and examine these ideas of progress; exposing the tension that exists between utopian ideals of civilization; the ethics of modern society; and the basic human drives of survival, procreation, and spiritual need.

Patrick Bridge patbridged@yahoo.com <http://herecomesthereverie.blogspot.com>

The paintings come about firstly from an idea or an image. After that it's all chance. The residue of the initial idea is there but that's all. During the painting another idea may take over. Eventually the painting comes to an end, sometimes destroyed or more usually left in a kind of limbo that is more or less acceptable. All the rest is looking and conjecture. Anyway regardless, in some way they're always about life.

Gemma Brookes <http://www.behance.net/gemmabrookes> <http://www.behance.net/gemmabrookes>

My art is strongly influenced by the world we live in and often shows my concerns for the environment. I have chosen to take advantage of this wonderful medium to show how beautiful life is, as I feel that watercolours are perfect for portraying the calmness and colour of our surroundings. I hope that others will take something from my art and share my appreciation and respect for our planet.

Andy Cropper andy@artbyandyonline.com www.artbyandyonline.com

I am fascinated by the world around me but not in an engaging way, but as an observer. I love watching the world go by. I am a voyeur. This would suggest photography as being a way to go, but I want to reconstruct that moment that disappeared. I want to pay homage to it, actively deconstruct it, actively reconstruct it, add myself to the mix as after all I am the person that had the moment and is choosing to portray it.

Hondartza Fraga www.hondartzafraga.com

I am a Sheffield-based Spanish artist. I completed an MA in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University in 2007. I am currently a studio holder at Bloc Studios and work primarily with video, photography and drawing as well as with found objects and images. I am interested in tensions between different image-making systems, analogue and digital technologies and how they affect the way we understand images. My work is based around notions of memory, travel, narrative and what happens when one is lost somewhere between home and elsewhere.

James Newman Gray jamesnewmangray@hotmail.com

My aim in the watercolour pieces on display was to push the possibilities of the medium as far as possible. Traditionally watercolour is used for its fluid quality and is often used in an expressive manner. I therefore chose two of my favourite views of Sheffield to paint in a very regimented and attentive fashion; that of the view over Sharrowvale Road from Hunter House Road and the view over Sheffield train station from Shrewsbury Road. My challenge was to document in as much detail as I could manage the scenes before me. I have also included two scenes of the old Hyde Park stump and the old Sheffield 'Egg Box', which are painted in sepia to give them a nostalgic theme, and in a similar detailed manner.

Lesley Guy cicada_base@yahoo.com www.lesleyguy.com

My practice is experimental and multi-disciplinary, often driven by an interest in contradiction or paradox. I use photography, sculpture, sound and drawing to construct scenarios or images that manipulate the 'real' or recognisable.

I use drawing and painting as a tool for thinking and exploring; I enjoy solving the problems of surface, picture plane, illusion and form. The appropriated imagery acts as a boundary within which to play, it sets the rules.

Iris Harris irispharris@gmail.com

A series of five watercolours, by using wax and thread I have attempted to suggest an undercurrent of resistance.

"Un-inhibited", "free", "un-complicated", "not-channelled", "free ranging", and "diverse". "Inhibited", "controlled", "complicated", "directed and narrowly focused".

These words describe the opposites of some of the qualities and terror of water. It has a tremendously important global force, both life giving and life reducing. The watercolours have been produced from my imagination and are completely random. The nature of water in the medium has not been harnessed, enabling the images to form themselves. A dichotomy occurs as the images are representing a point in time when water is life-giving and benign; the opposite is just out of the picture, waiting to wreak destruction and disintegration.

Warren Hayes warrenleehayes@gmail.com

My watercolours are a response to the continual change taking place within the man-made environment and the implications it has on the sociological and cultural well-being of its inhabitants. Although the paintings are my response to changes viewed within one country they can be seen as representations of the same taking place throughout the developing world. Some paintings are a response to man's preoccupation/desire to conquer nature through astonishing feats of engineering.

Rita Kaisen rknartist@live.co.uk www.ritakaisen.com

Most of my work can loosely be described as still life painting/drawing, and is certainly always derived from observation. The challenge for me is to find something new, and not just what I expect to find every time I make an image. Painting and drawing has to be an act of discovery, rather than a confirmation of what I already know.

Using watercolour makes it possible to work fast and immediate. It also allow for a merging of drawing and painting which I find very inspiring. It would be tempting to describe these works as sketch but I prefer to see them as a catalyst. The fluidity, lightness and brightness of watercolour encourage fresh ideas and the result can be quite exciting.

Dominic Mason dominicjmason@gmail.com dominicismason.com

It has been little over a year since I began painting after a long period of not producing artworks. Watercolour with its simplicity, portability and freedom, seemed an ideal medium to begin with after a sustained period of not practicing. The paintings moved through a variety of subjects, from fun-park rides (expressing my own joy and risk in returning to painting as a medium), the Copiapó mine rescue at San José, Chile towards landscapes and more abstract themes. Despite the challenges of the medium, I now see it as central to my own process of creating and exploring art.

More recently I have been using the medium to investigate the act of painting itself. The latest works incorporate experiments using balsa wood (akin to watercolour, balsa has for a long time suffered from hobbyist connotations), forms with multiple meanings, and explorations staging and repetition. Ultimately I hope these will become part of an ongoing exploration of the question "what is a painting?" or 'what is a picture?'

Ladoza Ladoza-uk.blogspot.com ladoza@gmail.com ladoza.bigcartel.com

I am a Sheffield based artist that works with all kinds of media to explore abstract representations inspired from landscape and cultures in both rural and urban settings, often when the two meet. These watercolour designs hold a more literal aesthetic that were inspired by the repeated but random patterns of natural encounters in and throughout Sheffield. Using these patterns I aim to build solid representations of something recognizable only through its shape but to also emphasize its organic and living nature.

Lianne Mellor mellor.lianne@gmail.com www.MellorWare.co.uk

My simple watercolours are inspired by British wildlife. The hints at details allow the viewer to create their own narrative for the pieces. This results in a body of work that is not only playful, but encourages the viewer to escape into a world where badgers drink tea and foxes dance away the night.

Jade Morris www.spiderinthewell.blogspot.com

Tortured, twisted human figures morph into tree trunks; limbs conjoin with branches and suggestions of other body parts emerge – both gruesome and lyrical – legs, or branches, provocatively splayed. As trees are sexualised and humans transmogrified, the undecidability threatens our comforting sense of a world we think we know. This is an agonising insight into personal anguish, whilst also revealing something about a universal unease. Torment and repressed emotion is allowed to surface. The work, obsessively and delicately rendered, makes for uncomfortable viewing.

Undaunted. Unanswered. Unfinished. Unwanted. Unaware. Unnoticed. Unresolved. Unassured. Unadorned. Unnoticed.

Melting away with silence.

My emaciated body inflicts and fixates over, not you, but the unseen and the untouched.

When something goes/is unanswered, it carries on, it lingers, it is left open; to torture and torment. We survive for these unanswered questions. If all the questions of life were answered, what would be the point in living?

An unfinished body, in the primal realm of nature, incomplete and unashamed. Carries on forever.

Jane Walker jane.walker61@yahoo.co.uk

My watercolours are based on images of Marseille, Berlin, London, and Sheffield. They are made on long, thin pieces of Japanese paper, with different pigments and techniques acting as a chemical experiment. Repeating an image and developing it uniquely each time creates variations on a theme, with rhythms forming.

The small images are completed first then collaged together, giving a concentrated, dense effect. They are never finished, revealing endless possibilities. The cut edges of the paper stop the flow of colour, mark time, and a change in mood. Line, form and gestures in paint vary their importance from one piece to another.

Sean Williams swseanwilliams@gmail.com

I aim to depict scenes of inexplicable psychological weight – some minor incident or near silence. Watercolour has its conventional subjects and mine sidle up close to them. They seem wrong, and I like wrong. I like wrong so much more than right.

Watercolour gives me the freedom to experiment with imagery I might not normally use for my larger paintings. I initially see them as sketches but inevitably become too involved with them and use ridiculous, unnecessary detail.

For further information about 'Hydro Power' please contact Sean Williams at swseanwilliams@gmail.com or on 07711 365221.

We would very much like to thank Primebuy UK for their generous support of this exhibition. Primebuy UK is a Sheffield-based company supplying quality electricals worldwide. For more information visit www.primebuy.co.uk