



David Bomberg

The 60th anniversary of David Bomberg's death has seen a resurgence of curatorial and market interest in his work, his reputation as one of the most significant and influential artists of early 20th century British art now hopefully secured by **Pallant House's** recent retrospective.

There was however, to my mind at least, not quite enough exploration of Bomberg's relation to the wider strands of European art and ideas, so the splendid smaller (circa 30 pieces) show of paintings, watercolours and drawings at **Beaux Arts** this month, originating from the Harry Fischer (of Marlborough Fine Art) collection first formed just after Bomberg's death in 1957, makes for a fascinating and useful coda.

Austrian-born Fischer's particular passion and expertise was for German Expressionism so when he was approached, on critic David Sylvester's recommendation, by the artist's widow Lilian, to take on the artist's estate, it was just this still surprisingly little remarked on aspect (in the UK) of Bomberg's later work that would seem to have particularly attracted him to the idea.

Bomberg certainly had close friendships with emigré German Expressionist painters, in particular Ludwig Meidner, from the late 30s on, while his well rehearsed ideas about the 'Spirit

in the Mass', which emerged out of his polarising experiences in the Spanish mountains, of the weight and mass of the rocks and the radiant, dissolving volumes of light that fell upon them are, essentially, Expressionist in character.

While it was certainly this quality in his work which made his art hard for the British to take to for so long (Expressionism was not, for many years, 'our thing') it now helps to define his greatness. There are plenty of examples in this show too – the late 'Double Self-Portrait' in particular, one of the artist's great paintings.

Lancelot Ribeiro

Modern Indian artists of the late 20th century working in this country have often enjoyed a curiously erratic time of it both critically and commercially. One or two, like Anish Kapoor, Balraj Khanna and even, finally, F N Souza, have achieved significant reputations while others, like Souza's half brother Lancelot Ribeiro for example, after a bright start in the 60s, seemed largely to disappear from general view.

Luckily Ribeiro has had some very active championing over recent years by London's leading gallery for Indian contemporary art **Grosvenor Gallery**, and this has led to two important new exhibitions of his work.

The first is a splendid

retrospective (some seven years after his death) at the New Walk Museum, Leicester, themselves the only public gallery in the country to mount (in 1987) a major show of his work during his lifetime. The other, commercial show, is co-organised by Grosvenor with the Oberon Gallery, also in Leicester.

With its vigorous inventiveness of form and extravagant colour, Ribeiro's painting is at least the equal of his now hugely sought after half brother, and in many ways more original in conception too. Recognition at last, it is to be hoped, and not before time.

Marcelle Hanselaar

As both a painter and a printmaker, Dutch-born Marcelle Hanselaar has evolved a savage, darkly (very) humorous vision of the contemporary human condition quite unlike any other artist currently at work in Britain.

This has become particularly apparent in her etchings and drawings where the jagged, dark line with which she depicts her cruel, monstrous, somehow depraved figures seems to positively quiver with anger and outrage, their very lack of colour forcing us to concentrate even more on the terrible subjects at hand. She has, quite rightly, achieved huge success with them in recent years, sets of work entering our major national collections of prints at the British



Museum and V&A among them.

Now the **12 Star Gallery**, the ever enterprising exhibition wing of the European Union in London, has had the courage to mount what is, in effect, a mini retrospective of her now substantial body of graphic work. "My images are like tableaux vivants showing the hypocrisy of our social graces which gives us a veneer of civilisation but does not protect us from random eruptions of our innate savagery" Hanselaar writes of her work, and there are plenty of those to draw on in our still sadly dysfunctional world. Bosch meets Hogarth meets Dix in Hanselaar's profoundly dystopian and contemporary world, one that also, quite unmistakably, draws on a history coeval with human life itself.

Earl Haig

I am always somewhat in awe of those professional painters who started, or continued, to paint as prisoners of war in the Second World War – just how, in the middle of all that heavily controlled squalor and chaos, did you get hold of the materials you needed and find the quiet space and time, to pursue it? Well, somehow, they did; Adrian Heath teaching Terry Frost to paint in a POW camp is one good case in point and the Scottish painter Earl Haig, the subject of a handsome centenary show at **The Scottish**

Gallery this month is another – and there must surely be others.

Like Frost and Heath too, Earl Haig (son of the Field Marshal) went on to enjoy a long and highly successful career, having a show at The Scottish Gallery immediately on his return to Scotland in 1945 and continuing to exhibit there right up to within a year of his death, at 90, in 2008. This was a 63 year relationship which, as the managing director Guy Peplow points out, must surely be some kind of record.

Haig had been introduced to painting by the Anglo-French post Impressionist painter Paul Maze, and taken together with his admiration for that other French influenced painter William Gillies, Haig then evolved his own highly distinctive style, his predominantly landscape-based subject matter revealing a strong sense of colour along with a powerful sense of underlying structure, vivid and always engaging.

This show focuses mainly on his watercolours but further shows of his oils are promised.

Kurt Jackson

Tourism in its contemporary form could, very arguably, be put down to essentially artistic, spiritual impulses. As the power of religious pilgrimage waned with the Renaissance, the Grand Tour came slowly to replace it, and by the late 18th century became

accessible to a growing wealthy middle class who, if they couldn't make it abroad, became enthusiasts of the picturesque tourism so actively promoted by writers and artists, most notable among them J M W Turner.

Thoughts all suggested by notice of that contemporary enthusiast of the British picturesque, Kurt Jackson, whose latest show at the **Jackson Foundation Gallery** in Cornwall is based on his response to a series of engravings (a set of which is now in the University of Exeter) that Turner made, on commission in 1811, of his travels in the South West and which was produced precisely to promote picturesque tourism to the region.

This Turner inspired exhibition of Jackson's work was previously shown at the **Royal Albert Memorial Museum** in Exeter in 2016 but is now with new and previously unseen additions.

All very apt when you think of just how much Jackson's own enormously popular paintings of the region must have done to encourage modern day tourism.

Nicholas Usherwood

from left
David Bomberg 'Double Self Portrait Side 1' Beaux Arts
Earl Haig 'Children Playing, Villa Samatini, Orzes' The Scottish Gallery
Lancelot Ribeiro 'Untitled (Landscape with Red Sun)' Grosvenor Gallery / Oberon Gallery
Kurt Jackson 'Fog and rain and bog' Jackson Foundation Gallery
Marcelle Hanselaar 'White Collar Black Man' 12 Star Gallery