

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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BRITISH PAINTING AND SCULPTURE OF THE SIXTIES

GOES ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. October 28, 1970. "British Painting and Sculpture 1960-1970," a major exhibition of 65 works by contemporary British artists, will go on view at the National Gallery of Art on November 12 in the main floor galleries off the east garden court.

The exhibition, which marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the English-Speaking Union in the United States, will not be seen elsewhere. It will continue on view at the Gallery through January 3.

Twenty-six contemporary British artists are represented in the exhibition, including both established figures (among them Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Graham Sutherland, Francis Bacon and Anthony Caro) and younger artists who have risen to prominence in the 1960's (including David Hockney, Peter Blake, Robyn Denny, Richard Smith and Richard Hamilton).

"The vitality of the contemporary art scene in Great Britain deserves far wider recognition on these shores than it has received. We are delighted by this chance to bring a bit of it to Washington," J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, has said.

The exhibition, coordinated at the National Gallery by H. Lester Cooke, Curator of Painting, was selected by Sir Norman Reid, director of the Tate Gallery, London. It was organized by the British Council under the supervision of Lilian Somerville, director of fine arts, and by Margaret McLeod, assistant to Miss Somerville.

(MORE)

"The period covered by the Exhibition," Sir Norman Reid explains in his foreword to the catalog, "was narrowed to the decade of the nineteen sixties and the choice of artists similarly was limited in number as it seemed more worthwhile to represent each artist by several works even if this meant omitting a number of others who were equally worthy.

"Most of the younger artists in this exhibition have worked for a time in the United States, producing there work whose importance testifies to the ease of the change of location. It is...misleading to think of today's art in primarily nationalistic terms."

The exhibition, he says, is "something in the nature of a report but one which endeavours to show paintings and sculpture as unique images..." It does not "try to demonstrate an artistic grouping or movement as the artists have little in common except that they are British."

A bronze sculpture by Henry Moore, Working model for Locking-piece, exemplifies his "relatively recent preoccupation with the shapes of bones, and in particular the way in which these shapes fit and lock together," as Edward Lucie-Smith describes it in his introduction to the catalog. Mr. Lucie-Smith is a British art and literary critic and editor.

The Window and Trefoil by Anthony Caro, a former engineering student, are graceful, painted-steel constructions of curves, lines and planes. Barbara Hepworth's bronze Figure is a tall form, refined to extreme smoothness and penetrated by sharp-edged hollows.

Paintings by David Hockney and Peter Blake relate to pop art. But Blake's works, often involving collage, appear more light-hearted than Hockney's, which incorporate an austere realism. Selections by Richard Hamilton, in which he "juxtaposes popular imagery and demonstrations of the essential ambiguity of the

(MORE)

processes of perception," as Mr. Lucie-Smith goes on to say, show the influences of pop and Dada.

Francis Bacon's well-known Triptych: 2 figures lying on a bed with attendants reflects his "ability to convey extremes of feeling, especially extremes of horror, loneliness and fear."

Ben Nicholson's work, influenced by the primitivism of Douanier Rousseau and the Cornish painter Alfred Wallis, combines painting and relief in compositions of simple forms and subtle color effects. Robyn Denny's works also make use of simple geometric patterns and symmetry, reflecting this newer figure's interest in pure abstraction.

Paintings by Graham Sutherland, exemplifying his own particular development from surrealism, draw on naturalistic forms, often combined in architectonic relationships.

A preview of the exhibition the evening of November 10 will highlight the English-Speaking Union of the United States' Jubilee Conference, being held in Washington November 8-12. Approximately 500 local members, national delegates, over-seas observers and U.S. officials from Congress, the White House and the State Department will view the exhibition following buffet receptions at the embassies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The English-Speaking Union of the United States was founded "to foster goodwill and understanding between the English-speaking people of the world." Programs it sponsors include scholarships for American and Commonwealth students, travel grants, and a variety of informational activities.

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