



fire
&
frost

This is a show of pots, paintings, works on paper and cloth. It features three artists: Vincent Black (b.1975), Dante Elsner (1920-1997) and Matthew Harris (b.1966). It is inspired by the idea of burning embers and dancing frosts. The source of its inspiration is T.S. Eliot's 'Little Gidding', first published in 1942.

We hope you enjoy it...

With love from Alice Black Gallery
X

LITTLE GIDDING, T.S ELIOT

1942

Midwinter spring is its own season
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.
When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
Reflecting in a watery mirror
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.
And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire
In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing
The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell
Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time
But not in time's covenant. Now the hedgerow
Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
Of snow, a bloom more sudden
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
Not in the scheme of generation.
Where is the summer, the unimaginable Zero summer?

If you came this way,
Taking the route you would be likely to take
From the place you would be likely to come from,
If you came this way in may time, you would find the hedges
White again, in May, with voluptuary sweetness.
It would be the same at the end of the journey,
If you came at night like a broken king,
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,
It would be the same, when you leave the rough road
And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull facade
And the tombstone. And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment. There are other places
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city--
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and in England.



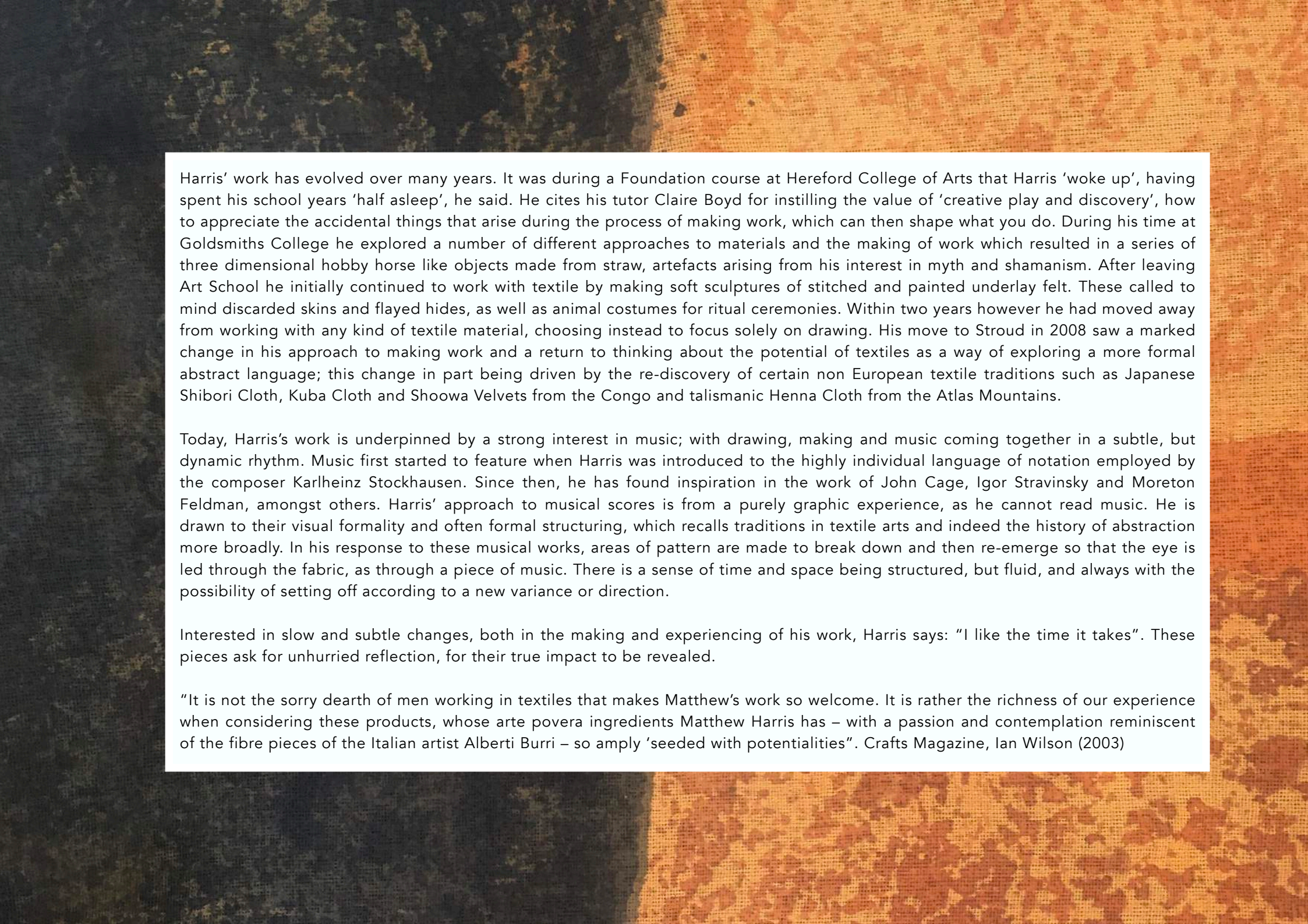
MATTHEW HARRIS



Matthew Harris was born in 1966 in Kent, he studied at The Hereford School of Art (1982-4) and Goldsmiths College of Art (1984-7) and now lives and works in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Matthew Harris has exhibited widely throughout the U.K, Europe, the United States and Japan. He has work in the Crafts Council Collection, The Whitworth Museum and Art Gallery (United Kingdom) and the International Quilt Museum, Nebraska, U.S.A, as well as numerous private collections. In 2010 he was shortlisted for the first Arts Foundation Award for Textile Art and in 2009 completed 'Scorched' a ten metre long Graphic Score for the refurbished Bristol Beacon Concert Hall, Bristol. In 2014 he collaborated with the British composer Howard Skempton and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group on 'Field Notes', an Arts Council funded, U.K concert tour.

Matthew Harris makes abstract works in paper and cloth, which oscillate with colour, texture and rhythm. In his hands, the process of painting and textile art become inextricable. Using techniques of painting, patching, darning and stitching, he delights in pushing the bounds of both mediums into new territories. For the cloth works, strata of cotton and muslin are layered, pleated and then cut into, before being opened out and re-joined, in new configurations that are then hand stitched with a waxed linen thread. The works made from paper are also sewn and stitched, in a manner akin to the cloth. "These various processes create a palimpsest of visual and tactile layering and also give body and weight to the work. When viewed from a distance they seem to pulsate – an effect created by the layering, and the repetition of shape and alteration of colouring" (Ian Wilson, Crafts Magazine). In both his paper and his cloth works, Harris welcomes the juxtapositions that come about as he begins to layer and realign his material – their sense of progression and discordance, bringing energy and dynamism to the final works.





Harris' work has evolved over many years. It was during a Foundation course at Hereford College of Arts that Harris 'woke up', having spent his school years 'half asleep', he said. He cites his tutor Claire Boyd for instilling the value of 'creative play and discovery', how to appreciate the accidental things that arise during the process of making work, which can then shape what you do. During his time at Goldsmiths College he explored a number of different approaches to materials and the making of work which resulted in a series of three dimensional hobby horse like objects made from straw, artefacts arising from his interest in myth and shamanism. After leaving Art School he initially continued to work with textile by making soft sculptures of stitched and painted underlay felt. These called to mind discarded skins and flayed hides, as well as animal costumes for ritual ceremonies. Within two years however he had moved away from working with any kind of textile material, choosing instead to focus solely on drawing. His move to Stroud in 2008 saw a marked change in his approach to making work and a return to thinking about the potential of textiles as a way of exploring a more formal abstract language; this change in part being driven by the re-discovery of certain non European textile traditions such as Japanese Shibori Cloth, Kuba Cloth and Shoowa Velvets from the Congo and talismanic Henna Cloth from the Atlas Mountains.

Today, Harris's work is underpinned by a strong interest in music; with drawing, making and music coming together in a subtle, but dynamic rhythm. Music first started to feature when Harris was introduced to the highly individual language of notation employed by the composer Karlheinz Stockhausen. Since then, he has found inspiration in the work of John Cage, Igor Stravinsky and Moreton Feldman, amongst others. Harris' approach to musical scores is from a purely graphic experience, as he cannot read music. He is drawn to their visual formality and often formal structuring, which recalls traditions in textile arts and indeed the history of abstraction more broadly. In his response to these musical works, areas of pattern are made to break down and then re-emerge so that the eye is led through the fabric, as through a piece of music. There is a sense of time and space being structured, but fluid, and always with the possibility of setting off according to a new variance or direction.

Interested in slow and subtle changes, both in the making and experiencing of his work, Harris says: "I like the time it takes". These pieces ask for unhurried reflection, for their true impact to be revealed.

"It is not the sorry dearth of men working in textiles that makes Matthew's work so welcome. It is rather the richness of our experience when considering these products, whose arte povera ingredients Matthew Harris has – with a passion and contemplation reminiscent of the fibre pieces of the Italian artist Alberti Burri – so amply 'seeded with potentialities". Crafts Magazine, Ian Wilson (2003)



Matthew Harris
Cellophane Scrap, 2019
Mixed media and beeswax on linen
bound paper
25.5 x 34 cm
33.5 x 42.5 cm [Framed]
£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)



Matthew Harris
Cellophane Scrap, 2019

£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)

Dante Esler
Raku pot

£ 1, 400 (excl. VAT)





Matthew Harris
Bric-a-Brac Variation XII (cartoon for
cloth)
Mixed media and beeswax on linen
bound paper
34 x 49 cm
41.5 x 57 cm [Framed]
£ 3,750 (excl. VAT)





Matthew Harris
Bric-a-Brac Cloth, 2019
Acrylic paint and linen thread on
constructed cotton cloth
52 x 74.5 cm
55 x 78 cm [Framed]

£ 4,500 (excl. VAT)





Matthew Harris
Small Bundle I, 2016
Mixed media and beeswax on linen
bound paper
23 x 32 cm
31 x 41 cm [Framed]

£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)

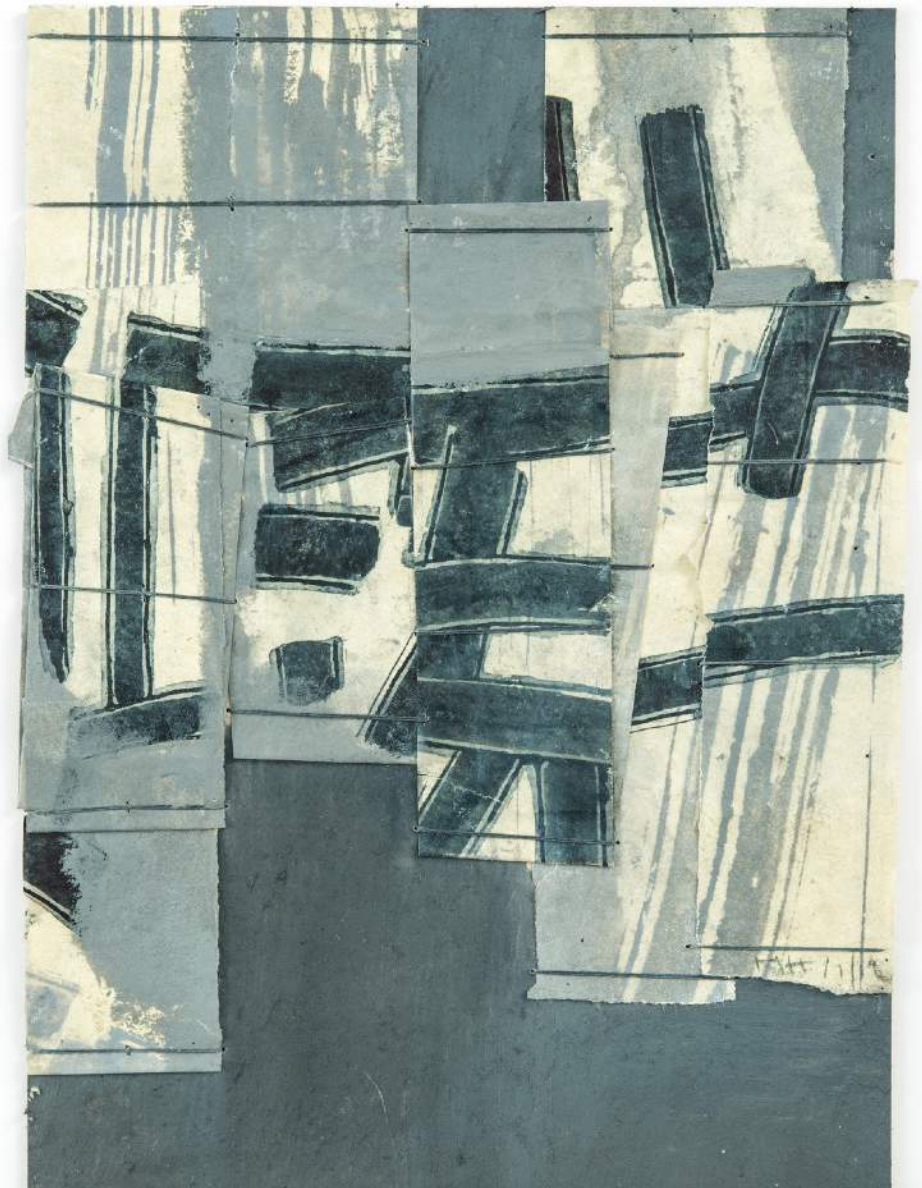
Matthew Harris
Small Bundle I, II, III, 2016
31 x 41 cm [Framed]

£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)

Dante Esler
Raku pot

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)





Matthew Harris
Shide Fragment II, 2012
Mixed media on linen bound paper
29 x 21 cm
48 x 40 cm [Framed]
£ 2,500 (excl. VAT)



Matthew Harris
Small bundle III, 2016
Mixed media and beeswax on linen
bound paper
23 x 32 cm
31 x 41 cm [Framed]

£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)



Matthew Harris
Fragment II, 2012
Acrylic paint and linen thread on
constructed and hand stitched cotton
cloth
34 x 40.5 cm
37 x 44 cm [Framed]

£ 3,000 (excl. VAT)

Dante Elsner
Raku
1980-90

£ 1,400 / £ 1,700 (excl. VAT)

Matthew Harris
Fragment II
44 x 37 cm [Framed]

£ 3,000 (excl. VAT)



Matthew Harris
Small Bundle II, 2016
Mixed media and beeswax on
linen bound paper
23 x 32 cm
31 x 41 cm [Framed]



£ 3,250 (excl. VAT)



Matthew Harris
Scattered Rhythm I
Mixed media on linen bound paper
30 x 42 cm
50 x 61 cm [Framed]
£ 3,500 (excl. VAT)

Matthew Harris
Scattered Rhythm II
Mixed media on linen bound paper
30 x 42cm
50 x 61 cm [Framed]
£ 3,500 (excl. VAT)





Matthew Harris
FRAMED EXAMPLE

£ 3,500 (excl. VAT)



MATTHEW HARRIS

Education:

Education Goldsmith College. B.A. Hons.

Selected Exhibitions

2019

November Taste Contemporary, Geneva. 'Five Cubed'
September Taste Contemporary, Geneva. Matthew Harris, Paul March

2018

Dec Erskine, Hall & Coe, London. Works on paper.

2015

May 11 Spitalfields, London. 'Field Notes'
April Clara Scremini Gallery, Paris

2013

May Collect. Saatchi Gallery, London, Represented by Contemporary Applied Arts.
London
March Erskine, Hall and Coe, London
Matthew Harris work on paper, Tim Rowan ceramics

2012

October Galerie Handwerk, Munich.
October SOFA, Chicago. Represented by Erskine, Hall and Coe
April SOFA, New York. Represented by Erskine, Hall and Coe
March Contemporary Applied Arts, London 50\50. Joint show with Cleo Mussi

2011

March Victoria Art Gallery, Bath 50\50. Joint show with Cleo Mussi
March "Modern Masters" Galerie Handwerk, Munich. 2009
Sept Taking Time. Craft and the Slow Revolution. Birmingham Museum and Art
Gallery. Touring show.

2007

March Fibre Art Now. Gallery Handwerk, Munich

2005

May Ozone Gallery Tokyo Meet the British: Crafts.
March Axis Gallery , Tokyo Structure, surface, shape. Crafts Council show.

Commissions

2014

April –Oct Craftspace, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
'Field Notes' Touring collaborative project with composer, Howard Skempton

2006-2008

Colston Hall, Bristol, New Extension Commission. Large Graphic score for wall.

2001

July Cheltenham International Music Festival. Stage backdrop.

Public Collections.

Crafts Council of Great Britain, Whitworth Museum and Art Gallery. Manchester,
Shipley Museum and Art Gallery

C V

DANTE ELSNER

Dante Elsner was born in Kraków, Poland, in 1920 and died in London, at the age of 76 in 1997. Elsner's practice combined both raku pottery and painting.

His life as an artist in many ways represents a series of personal responses to the upheavals of his time. In 1942, at the age of 22, he survived the rounding up of Polish Jews that led to the deaths of the rest of his family. In 1944, at the liberation of Poland by the Soviet Army, he entered art school in Kraków – an invigorating moment when the young were committed to making up for the lost years of their early youth during the war. However, he felt deeply limited by the totalitarian compulsions of the new communist government in Poland. In 1948, as a promising artist, he was allowed by the Communist government to go to Paris to further his art education.

In Paris he pursued the life of the artist in the garret. Though with very limited means, often painting on his own vests, he immersed himself avidly in the European artistic tradition - finding meaning in his daily scrutiny of great works at the major Parisian museums. In moments of despair, including an occasion where the losses he suffered in the war turned him to thoughts of suicide, he found healing in the experience of art.

In 1958 he moved to London and in reaction to the materialism of post-war Western Europe, became influenced by the teachings of the Russian mystic George Gurdjieff (which he came across in Paris in the early 50's), aspects of Sufism (through the works of French spiritual writers like René Guénon), esoteric Christianity and mystical Judaism, the Indian teacher Krishnamurti and Buddhism (most especially Japanese Zen). From these he developed a distinctive and personal practice involving meditation that preceded his daily move either to painting or to making pottery.







In both his painting and his pottery, he prized above all the qualities of spontaneity and honesty in relation to form, line and colour. In his pottery, he was decisively inspired by the Raku technique that had been developed to make the tea bowls used in the Japanese tea ceremony. Raku allows the artist to fire a pot individually, withdrawing it from the kiln (at about 1000 degrees centigrade) to control the chemical reactions that affect the glaze. Forming a part of the turn of British ceramics in the wake of Bernard Leach's (1887-1979) friendship with Shoji Hamada (1894-1978), he also pursued a more modernist European line – especially in his experimentation with forms – that might be more closely related to the work of such emigré potters as Lucy Rie (1902-1995) and Hans Coper (1920-1981).

Elsner's Raku work forms part of the permanent collection at The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, United Kingdom.





Dante Elsner
Raku
1985-90
18 x 14 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1985-90
19 x 17.5 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner

Raku

1985-90

9 x 12.5cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)





Dante Elsner

Raku

1980-5

10.5 x 14 cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1990-5
11 x 18 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1985-90
10.5 x 12 cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)





Dante Elsner
1990-5
Raku
12 x 16 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1985-90
11.5 x 12 cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1980-5
14.5 x 18 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



Raku ware (楽焼, raku-yaki) is a Japanese pottery traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies, most often in the form of chawan tea bowls. It is traditionally characterised by being hand-shaped rather than thrown, fairly porous vessels, which result from low firing temperatures, lead glazes and the removal of pieces from the kiln while still glowing hot. In the traditional Japanese process, the fired raku piece is removed from the hot kiln and is allowed to cool in the open air.

Raku means 'pleasure' or 'enjoyment. ... In essence, Raku is when pots are taken from the kiln while they are still glowing red hot, they are then placed in a material that would be able to catch fire, such as sawdust or newspaper.



Dante Elsner
Raku
1980-5
16 x 13 cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner

Raku

1985-90

14.5 x 9.5 cm

£ 1,400 (excl. VAT)



Dante Elsner
Raku
1990-5
12 x 16 cm

£ 1,700 (excl. VAT)



In painting, Elsner adopted the technique and to some extent the styles of Japanese ink and brush painting; but he used these in pursuit of his own conceptual themes – whether spiritual, social commentary or inspired by literature. Painting on Japanese mulberry paper, on which any brush stroke made by the artist was an instantaneous commitment that could not be covered up, he saw this as a direct confrontation with his own honesty and skill as an artist. Although his painting style and technique was quite unusual by the standards of French and British artists in the second half of the 20th century, he was committed to a kind of existential conceptualism that governed the themes of many of the works he made.

Dante Elsner
Bamboo
Mulberry paper mounted on
hessian covered board
122 x 47 cm

£ 3,000 (excl. VAT)





VINCENT BLACK



Vincent Black (b. 1975), lives and works in London. He studied fine art at Byamshaw (1997-2000). His paintings have been shown extensively in London and are included in the permanent collection of St Mary's Hospital, London, as well as other NHS trusts.

Black's works in oil portray deep personal emotions as he takes the viewer into hazy constructed worlds of solitary figures and vast, enigmatic landscapes. Working between thick impasto and thinly veiled layers of oil paint, the viewer is transported into a world of self-reflection and meditation.

Hovering between abstraction and figuration, Vincent is a fresh voice to emerge from a long lineage of painters who mediate between an interior and exterior experience. Building upon the legacy of the postwar London painters such as: Francis Bacon, Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbach, Black proves the perpetual possibilities still present in oil paint, to imbue striking feeling and emotion into his subjects - both real and imaginary. A painters, painter, Black looks avidly at the works of the past masters, before setting off again to reveal his own singular and moving voice.



Vincent Black
Figures in the Snow, 2019
Oil on canvas
155 x 150 cm

£ 3,500 (excl. VAT)





Vincent Black
Figures Walking at Night, 2018
Oil on canvas
26 x 34 cm
30.5 x 38 framed

£ 1,500 (excl. VAT)

Vincent Black
Portrait of a Woman, 2017
Oil on canvas
76 x 38

£ 2,000 (excl. VAT)





VINCENT BLACK

Education:

1997 - 2000

Byam Shaw School of Art BA Hons. in Fine Art

1996 - 1997

Kensington and Chelsea College, Portfolio Building course

1995

Camberwell School of Art Foundation course

1994

Swindon College of Art Foundation course

Selected Exhibitions:

2019

Twilight of The Idols, ALICE BLACK, London, UK

2017

New Work, Tabernacle Gallery, London, UK

2013

50 Artists/50 Years, Mall Galleries, London, UK

Out There, Tabernacle Gallery, London, UK

2010 - 2012

Open Studios Great Western Studios, London, UK

2009

BIG DEAL, Group exhibition Camden Lock, London, UK

2008

Open Studio - Residency Queens Park, London, UK

2007

Art London, Artist Liberation Front, London, UK

2006

Monsoon Colours, Indian High Commission, London, UK

2005

Out of the Blue, Flextech Television, London, UK

2004

Warriors and Landscapes, Sheridan Russel Gallery, London, UK

2003

Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London, UK

Royal West of England Academy Bristol, Somerset, UK

2002

Dorset Art Week, Group exhibition Shaftesbury, Dorset, UK

2001

Three Colours Black, David Black Gallery, London, UK

Public Collections:

St. Mary's Hospital, London, UK

C V



We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for

But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always--
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

LITTLE GIDDING, T.S ELIOT

1942

We would love to welcome you to the gallery!

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