

Callum Innes

From Memory

Exhibition 30 September – 19 November 2006

You challenge people to look at things. You challenge people to pull something out of the work that's interesting for them... It's the idea that something exists beyond the studio and beyond the exhibition afterwards in the head. Every artist hopes that happens, that something lasts in the time after somebody has viewed their work... It's like listening to radio plays. They're fantastic because you think beyond them and through them and after them.

Callum Innes, 2006

Callum Innes is known for a painting practice that involves the removal as well as the application of paint. Pitting oil paint against turpentine, he balances painting against un-painting, brushing on and dissolving off layers of colour. His work is abstract, though it has its roots in figuration, and it remains connected to the natural world, both that of landscape and the figure, a sense of which lingers in the scale and proportions of the paintings.

Innes paints prolifically, often working on several paintings at once. His practice is divided into different kinds of paintings, examples of all of which are included in this exhibition. He is, however, perhaps best known for his Exposed Paintings. Among the earliest of his mature ways of working, these form by far the most substantial body of work within his practice, and seem to represent his most insistent idiom. The development of his mature painterly language is

linked to the development of this series, regularly punctuated as it is with examples from others.

This exhibition opens with five large violet Exposed Paintings, painted specially for this exhibition. It is the first time Callum Innes has conceived of a group of paintings to be seen together on one wall, and offers a particular opportunity to trace the development of the paintings from one to another. Taken together, these paintings create a powerful effect, the subtle differences and similarities between them revealing themselves over time. The violets, areas where layers of both violet and black have been dissolved with turpentine, are all different. The blacks are all the same, the result of a single layer of matt black applied after the rest of the painting is finished.

The violet and black Exposed Paintings are interrupted (as they undoubtedly were while being painted, though not with this particular work) by a work from a different series, in this case the monumental *Monologue Seven*. Monologues are rare within Innes's practice – he has only made sixteen, and of these only eight have survived his rigorous editing process – but they seem vital to the development of his work. In contrast to the Exposed Paintings, in which Innes leaves significant areas of the painting untreated by turpentine, when painting Monologues he attacks the entire surface.

The physicality of the Monologues is immense because the whole surface is covered. What appears to have fallen down is actually brushed from the bottom up, and then falls down. And I

have to stand off it because something up there is going to come down and it starts to move, and then I can adjust it. But there's only a certain amount of time in which I can do that. As I'm adjusting one section, another section is in flow, so I'm constantly going backwards and forwards. I like to have control over the event. And it is an event. It's a performance that has to be controlled. You do have moments where you don't expect things to happen, but they do, and if I accept them I can use them later on.

Monologues are completed in a single painted session, whereas Exposed Paintings can be worked and reworked over several weeks, the artist, in his words, 'going back in' to the paintings, often taking with him lessons learned while making other works. Also painted in a single, lengthy, session are the Resonances, a black example of which dominates the small downstairs gallery. In making these works, Innes makes a mark, then dissolves a mark, working both rhythmically and repetitively until the surface is moving the way he wants it to. The traces of this movement are clearly, if subtly, discernable in the finished painting.

Upstairs, the exhibition opens out, with more paintings from different series providing both a context for the Exposed Paintings and a reminder of the breadth of the practice within which they have developed. *From Memory*, the earliest work in the exhibition, is the work that enabled Innes to make the leap from the figuration of his student practice towards the abstraction of his mature style:

I did a drawing of a leaf and then transferred it onto a found piece of corrugated cardboard. I sank the image into the corrugations so it became part of the history of the material... It was a revelation. From that point on I realised that I could retain an image, by painting an image on, then dissolving it off.

The paintings in the upstairs gallery, though many of them belong to different series and have much less obvious links between them than the Exposed Paintings downstairs, clearly share a sensibility and approach to the expressive and associative potential of painted and dissolved colour in close relation to its support. They also share a physical connection to their creator: the movement of turpentine against paint is also the movement of painter against canvas, and certain gestures or movements recur throughout the work. Principal among these is a vertical line, which is the origin of much of the activity of turpentine in the work. This line may clearly be seen in *Agitated Vertical*. In this painting it is inscribed, as in fact it always is, as an upstroke, the artist guiding turpentine up the canvas in order to let it run down within the channel it has created. The line reappears in *Repetition Seventeen*, where it is duplicated and reduplicated, the rhythmical movement up and down inherent in the artist's method of making the work as well as in the impression it gives when exhibited. While the line is somewhat obscured in later Exposed Paintings, the way in which it in fact anchors each work, forming the first division of painted and unpainted areas of canvas can be clearly seen in *Exposed Olive Painting No. 3*, and *Exposed Painting Cadmium Orange*.

Most surprisingly, perhaps, the vertical upstroke structures the Identified Forms. Although it seems almost counter-intuitive, to make these paintings Innes guides turpentine up the canvas, over and into the deep olive green ground, to the point at which the form will be identified, or summoned into being. When that point is reached, the turpentine is slowed down and allowed to pool, before being run off the canvas, flowing into and over the guiding channel formed by the upstroke.

If the line structures most of the paintings in the exhibition, it is of course completely absent from those made using

shellac rather than turpentine. Where turpentine dissolves paint, shellac resists it, and to make these works Innes first pours shellac onto the canvas, then adds paint. Before the shellac dries, the paint does not bond with it, but rather sits on the surface, where it may be moved around. Again, Innes makes these paintings in a single sitting, but here he is working against the clock slowly rather than swiftly.

The works in this exhibition were made over a fifteen year period and, while they represent only a fraction of Callum Innes's total output during that time (many more may be seen in the publication which complements and extends the exhibition), together they provide an insight into his way of working. Repetition and variation of form and colour, modulation of rhythm from a slow grandeur to an agitated staccato, the paintings demand that we look closely at them, spend time with them, and, possibly, take something from them back out into the world.

Exhibition Catalogue

256pp, hardback, 101 col. illustrations

Available from the bookshop at the special exhibition price of £25.

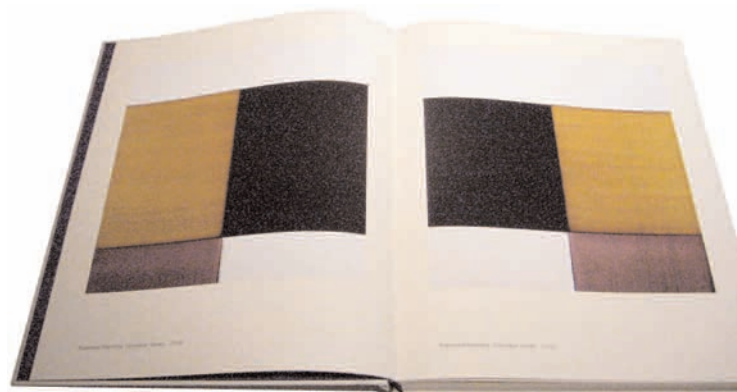
**Callum Innes has created two limited edition etchings
Edition of 60 each
£100 unframed and £150 framed**

**The exhibition DVD is available
from the bookshop priced £15.**

The exhibition will tour to

Modern Art Oxford

10 February – 8 April 2007 and to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, November 2007 – March 2008



For full details and a list of all events which accompany this exhibition **refer to an Events Calendar**

Artist's Talk: Callum Innes in conversation with Fiona Bradley, Director of The Fruitmarket Gallery

Thursday 5 October 6.30–7.30pm. Free.

Secondary School Art Teachers' Workshop

Friday 6 October, 2–5pm. Free.

10 spaces available. Booking Essential.

Artist Andrew Mackenzie leads a practical drawing and painting workshop for teachers, covering ideas on how to relate Callum Innes's work to the Standard Grade curriculum. A free resource pack is provided for each teacher including images, critical information, a free book and a DVD to use in the classroom.

**Seminar: Artist's Resale Right
Your art just got more valuable!**

Wednesday 18 October, 7–9pm. Free.

Find out more about this new right for artists. The Artist's Resale Right pays royalties to artists when their work resells through an art gallery, auction house or art dealer. Presented by the team from DACS (the Design and Artists Copyright Society) this seminar helps artists to understand this new right and what it means for them.

Big Draw Workshops

Opt in for Art: Young People's Drawing Workshops

Thursday 19 and Friday 20 October, 1–4.30pm. Free.

12 places available. Suitable for 13–16 years old.

Young people work alongside artist Andrew Mackenzie to experiment with new techniques and materials to create large-scale drawings inspired by the interior of Old St Paul's Church. Participants are encouraged to try out the process of layering and removing various drawing media to create drawings exploring light and shade. This is an opportunity for young people to create artwork for their portfolio.

Big Draw: Children's Drawing Workshop

Saturday 21 October, 1.30–4.30pm

Tickets £7/£5 concession. 10 places available.

Suitable for 7–11 years old. Booking essential.

A workshop encouraging children to create large drawings using a range of different materials.

Big Draw: Drawing Workshop for Adults

Saturday 28 October, 11am–5pm. Tickets £15/£12

concession. 12 places available. Booking essential.

Andrew Mackenzie leads a workshop enabling participants to try new techniques and media to create large-scale drawings.



Ways of Seeing Gallery Tour

Thursday 16 November, 11.30am–1.30pm. Free.

A guided tour of the exhibition for over 60s led by Education Manager Tracy Morgan and freelance educator Mary Keegan.

Secondary School Group Visits

The Gallery encourages teachers attending the Secondary School Art Teachers' Workshop to book a free class visit to the Callum Innes exhibition.

Assistance with transport costs, a guided tour of the exhibition and a resource pack are provided.

Reading Room

Resource material and an exhibition interpretation film presentation of Curator David Hopkins discussing the work in the exhibition is available in the Gallery reading room. The exhibition film is available on DVD from the bookshop priced £15.

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