Adrian Wiszniewski

Exhibition 8 December 1990- 3 February 1991
Admission Free

Adrian Wiszniewski (b.1958), who was born in Glasgow and studied at Glasgow School of Art, was a prominent member of the loose knit group of young, Glasgow painters who achieved widespread recognition during the eighties. In contrast to the active, expressive approach to style and content favoured by his Glaswegian contemporaries, Wiszniewski's work is distinctive for the contemplative, poetic and often romantic mood which is conveyed in his pictures. The broad category 'new figuration' was one of a number of terms employed to describe the art produced in reaction to the austere, theoretical work which held sway during the sixties and seventies. While Wiszniewski is undoubtedly associated with the tendency he is also driven by a more grandiose romantic concern to unveil the 'essential' truths of 'being'. In this respect his work identifies with a British nineteenth century tradition. Central to his art is the figure and the spatial and thematic exploration of the relationships and interaction between figures. His dreamy Arcadian landscapes are populated by hypnotic, alluring youths who evoke a sense of nostalgia for the childhood feelings of innocence and joy. The figures are often read as latent self-portraits in that they serve as vehicles for the artist to articulate and communicate his internal dialogue. The narrative in Wiszniewski's work, be it mythological, contemporary or highly personal, provides the figures with a framework. The laws of time have no currency in these dramas which disrupt and linear, temporal logic. His method of working exploits the unconscious mind; starting, for example, from an eye and progressing to the final image in a process which has been compared to James Joyce's stream of consciousness. The work is highly symbolic and often implies a philosophical or political motivation. In *An Attack of a Right Wing Nature*, 1967, the vicious hybrid bird dives down to assault the naked youth, who turns for solace to a detached figure, deified by his wide-brimmed hat. The pun in the title establishes nature as the right, wing aggressor. The liberal who struggles for survival seeks comfort in a distant, but not unsympathetic God. The decorative ground detracts from the bird's attack, thereby re-enforcing that the violence is not incidental but omnipresent in the battle for power in both politics and nature. The subject matter is frequently determined by the medium which the artist employs. In *Gentleman's Club*, 1990, the use of neon is not only highly appropriate for its subject but also enables him to enhance the natural fluidity of his style through enigmatic lines of light. Wiszniewski's art combines romanticism, symbolism and narrative in a weave which presents a plurality of viewpoints and demands continual concentration

from the viewer. Fundamental to his art is the exploration of a moral stature and thereby the seriousness of intent. The exhibition is the first major survey of Wiszniewski's career to date. It will tour to Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Southampton City Art Gallery.

The Fruitmarket Gallery

45 Market Street
Edinburgh, EH1 1DF, Scotland

P +44 (0)131 225 2383
F +44 (0)131 220 3130

info@fruitmarket.co.uk
www.fruitmarket.co.uk

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