

BULB MAGAZINE

WINTER 2022 ISSUE #3



ART, CULTURE, SCIENCE & MORE

Happy New Year and welcome to issue # 3 of BULB Magazine. In this issue the content is deliberately slanted towards ecological issues, however, the selection is varied to include a wider range of reading. In PLATFORM we continue to encourage discussion and debate. We are pleased to include original writing and artwork and would like to thank to all our contributors who continue to support the magazine. More at – www.mylastboard.com
Contact us at – mylastboard@outlook.com

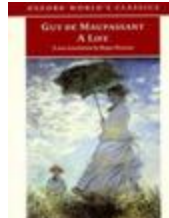
Cathy Bell (Editor)



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FEATURES

RICHARD ROGERS - ARCHITECT

Richard Rogers was born in Florence in 1933. Architecture was already prominent in this Anglo-Italian family, his father's cousin being well-known Italian architect Ernesto Rogers, however, at an early age, any aspirations the young Rogers may have had to follow in his father's cousin's footsteps seemed remote as he struggled at school, only learning to read at the age of eleven; a later diagnosis that he was in fact dyslexic explained why this was the case.

The family had returned to England in 1938, just before the outbreak of the war, and in 1949 Richard undertook his first hesitant steps to becoming an architect, enrolling to a foundation course at Epsom School of Art. National Service then followed between 1951 and 1953, and in 1954 he was able to continue his studies at The Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, graduating with an Associations Architecture Diploma in 1959. From London, Rogers then moved, by way of a scholarship, to The Yale School of Architecture in America where he completed his Master's degree and met, for the first time, Norman Foster. The meeting with Foster resulted in the two young architects setting up business together on their return to London, alongside Rogers's future wife, Su Brumwell, whom he met at Yale, and Foster's future wife, Wendy Cheeseman. By the mid nineteen-sixties, both Foster and Rogers, had chosen to pursue separate careers, although both continued to pursue what had become known as *High Technology Architecture* and in 1968 Rogers completed the first of his glass cube, I-framed houses for Humphrey Spender in Essex, before creating a similar house for his parents in Wimbledon. In both, cases structural simplicity and prefabrication methods were key – see image below – and, in a way, signalling Rogers 'inside out' approach that would come to characterise some of his best known future projects.



And so to 1971, when Rogers reputation for 'inside out' designs was to come to the attention of architects, designers and the general public throughout the world as he, Renzo Piano and Gianfranco Franchini won the competition to design the new Pompidou Modern Art Centre in Paris. Common to Rogers' late nineteen-sixties houses, and the Pompidou Centre, was the need to create open, often very large, uninterrupted interior spaces. Shifting escalators and normally interior services outside, as is the case with the Pompidou Centre (below), was the obvious way to achieve this, leaving people who entered a sense of being in a cathedral sized pantheon of art, but now modernised and brightly lit by a combination of natural and modern artificial light. The fact that as many people come to see the building, as the art inside, is further testament to Rogers' and Piano's pioneering and innovative work, in short, the building not only provides a fabulous space in which to view and enjoy modern art but it has also become a major Parisian landmark.



With the success of the Pompidou Centre, Rogers' reputation for innovation and modernist design was now at an all-time high and, with that, commissions followed from around the world, however, it was closer to home that his next large scale project was to take place. The insurance giant Lloyd's of London, in desperate need of new headquarters, launched a competition in 1978 for architects to submit designs that would not only promote Lloyd's as a successful, future looking company but also rival the nearby, still under-construction NatWest Tower (opened in 1981), which at 183m, was set to dominate the City of London business district. Roger's company won the competition with construction starting soon after, however, unlike the Pompidou Centre, the design, for another large 'inside-out' building was not welcomed by all, however, after almost eight years, it opened its doors to its first occupants in 1986.

REDUCING PLASTIC CONSUMPTION

Alison Smith, from Livingston, West Lothian, is passionate about reducing our consumption of plastic and, as a result, runs a business that allows consumers to simply re-fill many household products instead of buying yet more plastic bottles once products have run out. Alison talks about her business model below.

What is the main goal of Green with Envi?

Our main goal at Green with Envi is to help reduce single use plastic being produced. We have carefully sourced suppliers who are also passionate about reducing waste. All liquids that are supplied to us are then returned when empty to our supplier, cleaned, refilled and sent back to us, i.e. zero waste filling up on your household products

Tell us about your suppliers?

Not only have we sourced suppliers who are passionate about reducing waste they are also based in the UK. Our refill supplier is completely Vegan too. Our current products range includes: home cleaning (e.g. kitchen and bathroom cleaners); laundry (e.g. liquids and fabric conditioners); personal (e.g. soap and shampoo).

So, how does it work?

Simply bring along your empty bottles and refill them at the shop or we offer home delivery in West Lothian. We also have a subscription service where you receive your order once a month in glass bottles - just leave your empty bottles out for collection when your delivery is due – see subscriptions@greenwithenvi.uk.

Is it expensive?

No, our prices are comparable with other eco-friendly products.

Any local products?

We stock coffee and soap made locally in West Lothian.

Why did you start the refillery?

I started trying to reduce my single use plastic and found it very difficult to do. I hope having a local refillery will help others on their journey to reduce single use plastic. (For more info see back page).



The Lloyd's Building

Small offices with only a few workers in each was now abandoned in favour of huge open plan spaces, where workers could look up and down at people on other floors. A huge atrium welcomed open-mouthed visitors into the building itself, only to be beaten, for a sense of futuristic living, by the thrill of riding in a glass elevator mounted on the exterior of the main building.

In the next two decades, Rogers' name was to become synonymous with two other major London landmarks – The Millennium Dome and, the so-called, 'Cheesegrater' Leadenhall Building. Further afield, notable designs include: The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France ; 3 World Trade Centre in New York, USA ; Senedd Building (Welsh Assembly) in Cardiff, Wales ; Madrid Airport Terminal 4, Spain.

In all of Rogers' designs he has, without doubt, sought to change urban landscape for the better; in appearance as well as functionality. His buildings have also had a huge impact on designs across the globe by other architects, many of whom will now become his successors, building cityscapes which speak of the 21st century and continue Rogers' philosophy of High Technology Architecture.

Richard Rogers died on the 18th of December 2021 at the age of 88.



*Madrid Airport (above),
'Cheesegrater', London (left)*

PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

If philosophy is the nature of understanding of knowledge, its reality and existence, then science is the delivery guy. But the delivery guy is delivering less and less that either makes any sense or can be verified mathematically or by empirical means. A lot of the ideas are intriguing and the mathematics both elegant and beautiful but other than aesthetically pleasing they have reached an impasse that either demands too much money, energy or else the violation of the laws of nature; including exceeding the speed of light or evolutionary constraints. Don't get me wrong, there is still much to learn and even more to understand fully, but the reality is one of diminishing returns in that for the huge amounts of money spent, a lot of the most recent discoveries don't really provide anything which is genuinely useful to humanity other than satisfying its quest for knowledge. Black holes evaporate and gravitational waves distort space time, making everything they pass through alter their dimensions by an amount impossible to measure. Does anyone have a use for any of this?



LIGO – Gravitational Wave detector built at a cost of over \$1 billion. This meant that other projects either had funding reduced or were cancelled.

A Holy Grail in physics has been the search for a theory that combines the known quantum forces in one unified theory. Electromagnetism is what keeps electrons in orbit around the atomic nuclei. The weak nuclear force is responsible for the decay of particles as they transition into other particles or release energy. The combined theory of electromagnetism and the weak force is known as the electroweak theory. Quantum Chromo Dynamics (QCD) describes the strong quantum force which is responsible for holding together the elementary particles, known as quarks, that make up protons and neutrons, together in the atomic nuclei. Combining

the electroweak theory and QCD would provide physicists with their longed for and, so far, elusive goal. Unfortunately, if such a unified theory is found, many people, including physics Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg, believes that it probably won't have any practical use.

You may have already noticed that something was missing from our, so called, unified theory; and that is gravity. The problem with gravity is that it doesn't fit well with theories of the very small such as those that describe the quantum world. Instead, our understanding of gravity comes from the very large and from people such as Newton and Einstein. So what exactly is gravity? Gravity is the distortion of space time; the fabric which makes up the universe. A large object, such as a star, will bend space time such that any nearby objects fall towards it; think of a bowling ball in the centre of a large rubber mat suspended in mid-air; the mat sags in the centre due to the weight of the bowling ball. Now consider what happens when a golf ball is placed at the edge of the rubber mat; the golf ball falls into the middle, attracted by the presence of the larger ball. Time is also bent, since the distance from one side of the mat to the other is now longer, due to the sagging of the mat. This means that travel time is now longer. So everything with mass has gravity, with the gravitational force determined only by the object's mass. The good news is that there is another alternative theory which has the capability of combining what we know about the quantum world and gravity: it is called String Theory. In String Theory, the Universe is criss-crossed by tiny strings (so small that even sub-atomic particles such as protons are vast in comparison) that vibrate, with each differing frequency of vibration determining it to be a type of elementary particle or force. Many, however, argue that the theory may never be empirically verified; the ten dimensions needed don't help either!

Certainly, we have been here before. A famous scientist at the end of the nineteenth century (Lord Kelvin?) declared, with great confidence, that every scientific discovery had been made, only for Einstein et al to come along and spoil his argument. It is also the case that today's scientists are often compared, derogatively, to their earlier counterparts. I have to admit that most of the scientists I know of are dead. This, however, is no reason to dismiss the work of today's biologists,

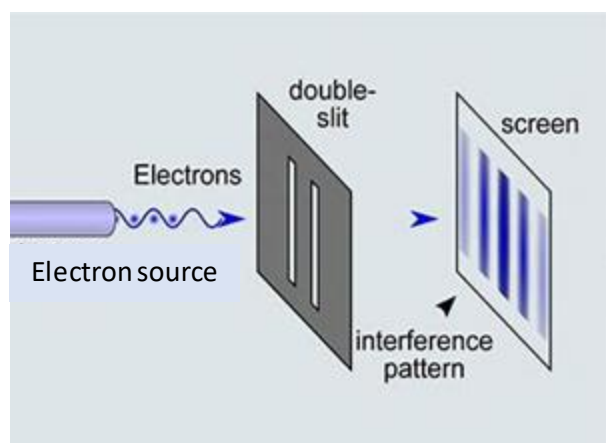
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chemists and physicists; it is more complicated than that. Quantum mechanics predicts with almost absolute certainty the behaviour of the very small; but ask someone why a particle behaves in a certain way ('nobody understands quantum mechanics' – Richard Feynman) and most will shake their heads or else say that they don't know why, or how, but they do know what the outcome will be; much like watching a magician tell you your card was the king of hearts. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of science, such as String Theory, is that it has captivated some of the best minds on the planet and, consequently, if shown to be another dead end in the quest for a theory that describes our universe, then those involved will have wasted an entire career and their legacy will be one of derision or simply to never be as much as a footnote in the history of science.

It is impossible to read about a lot of science without feeling that you have accidentally picked up the wrong book and are in fact reading about philosophy; the reality is that scientific discoveries and theories are a large part of the philosopher's diet; never more so that when the theories involved may never be verified; which in itself gives rise to some ideas that are border line insane. Consider, for example, the theory that when our universe was created, countless other also came into existence, and that every action we could have taken is played out in some other parallel world in some other dimension; instead of the king of hearts you picked the queen (not too mad). Another idea, from a renowned British scientist, is that space is filled with clouds of viruses and that at certain points in its journey through space, the earth passes through such a cloud, hence the regular occurrences of plagues and pandemics (definitely madder). The fact is, in quantum and astronomical physics, there is so much which is open to conjecture and, in a way, this opens the door for the multitude of opinions and theories that abound and, you never know, it might be the maddest of the lot which is right.

It is perhaps the strangeness and uncertainty about the quantum world that so entices philosophers. How strange? Consider the double slit experiment where electrons are aimed at a barrier containing two vertical slits. With both slits left open the electrons appear to behave like a wave producing a pattern on a target wall beyond the barrier of vertically very dark regions and far lighter vertical regions – the waves arriving at the wall have either reinforced the pattern or cancelled it – peaks and troughs. With only one slit open, the electrons now behave as particles, striking the wall continuously in roughly the same place, creating a single dark region.

So the experiment shows that electrons may be regarded as waves or particles depending on how they are observed. Now the strange bit! Repeat the experiment with both slits and you should expect the wave pattern. Without observing the pattern, cover one of the slits and now look (don't fire off any more electrons). The pattern you observe is the one you would expect if one of the slits had been covered during the entire experiment. The electrons appear to know in advance how they will be observed! Very strange! No one, certainly not the physicists, know what's happening – enter the philosophers.



People like a challenge, none more so than a philosopher who's quest in life is about trying to understand what life, existence and reality is all about. Someone once said of quantum mechanics that as good an answer as any, to most questions, is 42 (The answer to the meaning of life in The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy). They may be right – who knows? The German philosopher Kant famously said that every answer begets another question. And it gets worse, as philosophers with an ironic bent come up with questions which are unanswerable, meaning that what we thought was correct or true, is now uncertain and incomplete. And anyway what is truth? Can anything be true in the absolute, irrefutable sense? Can someone who has witnessed the same result of an experiment thousands of times, say with complete certainty that the same result will always be achieved even if we continue to perform the experiment for eternity? Is truth only ever partial? You see Kant was right, questions, questions and even more questions. Another definition of truth, by the logical positivism branch of philosophy, is that, in order to be true, something has to be logically or empirically demonstrated. Mathematics is often a big part of this, but critics argue that too many

theories are being pursued and presented in a purely mathematical way and are, as a result, difficult to understand, often preferring to have mathematical elegance over truth and substance and lacking in any real ability for people to visualise the theory (Einstein said that if he could not visualise something then he couldn't understand it). The reality is that we, as a species, tend to see something as true when it repeatedly fulfils certain expectations and, for the most part, this is fine, it is only when we get deeper and deeper in that these difficulties arise. In other words, is it not crucial to have a complete understanding of everything, only a working knowledge. The alternative is to continue, perhaps for eternity, to keep going, opening up ever more complexity and even more unanswerable questions. This being the case, has science, at least in some areas of research, gone as far as it needs to and should it now concentrate more effort on use and application of what is already known?

Philosophy and science will be forever intertwined and both, in my opinion, will continue discovering new things to add to our already over-burdened knowledge bank. How much will be of any use is open for discussion and will we ever understand what is going on in the quantum world or be able to say for sure what's going on inside a black hole? Some have said that understanding the quantum world will provide us with the answer. What then? Will everyone simply stop what they are doing? Maybe, only then, will the philosophers take over and try to make sense of it all.

And what of the future? Many believe that intelligent machines will one day produce everything we need and that our limited cognitive abilities will lag so far behind such machines that they will also take over the search for more knowledge and greater understanding. Others go further, believing that the ultimate goal of artificial intelligence will be to turn the universe into a super-massive super computer. And what of consciousness and memory? Will we ever fully understand these enough to transfer them into a virtual version of our-selves?

The reality is..... what? That we don't really know that much about ourselves or the universe. Just as we only know about 5% or so of what is out there, dark matter and dark energy still being a mystery to us, maybe this is where we also are with our understanding of everything. To be honest, in my opinion, this is generous; I think we know a lot less. But this is no bad thing, because it means that instead of reaching the end of its life, science, in fact is only at the beginning and that means that for the foreseeable future, humankind will still have a purpose. Now that's philosophy!

NATURE IN EXCESS

In this feature Matis Leggiadro describes the exhibition *Nature in excess* which he curated at his school in 2019, in Albi. Along with the contemporary art centre *Le Lait*, Matis has staged a series of artworks in which the main objective was to show how art and ecology can be considered complimentary. Indeed, art can be a vehicle for understanding the individual and human factors involved in these complex issues. The commitment of the teachers and students, in this little exhibition, sets an inspiring example of how teenagers can be sensitised to ecological values.

How can art be a vector for the diffusion of ecological values?

Today is a fragile world but today is no more fragile than yesterday, the only difference lies in the idea that humanity has become fully aware of its capacity for destabilization. In 2019, I had the pleasure of imagining and designing the outline of an exhibition: my first exhibition as – at the time – an apprentice curator. Named *Nature in excess*, the exhibition was an opportunity for me to think of a project in which art and ecology were a coherent whole. Indeed, the idea that guided me was this: make an exhibition of artworks that question the human capacity to act for his planet.



Nature in excess exhibition at Laperouse School, Albi

I did not design the cultural event alone. On the contrary, friends of mine helped me, especially in the brainstorming phase. Also, it is through this project that I made the wonderful meeting of the contemporary art centre *Le Lait* and precisely of H el ene LAPEYRERE and Murielle EDET, two beautiful people with whom I always maintain ties and with whom I learn a lot. Indeed, it's the art centre *Le Lait* that allowed me to choose artworks in the contemporary art collection called *Artoth eque du Tarn* (Art Library of the Tarn).

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Art as a testimony of this Nature in excess

Art is the mirror of societies, as much as literature. This is confirmed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during which art illustrates humanist values and highlights emerging sciences. The art of the twenty-first century, as for it, reflected, is depicted a vanity and decadent civilization with brilliance. He is often the main actor of this decadence! Thus, this contemporary art undoubtedly questions **the capacity of the world to be towards sapiens and conversely.**

Within the exhibition, it was possible to discover:

- an artwork by Tony CRAGG that plays with the notion of primitivity and proposes the image of an abstract and totemic world
- two artworks by ZAO WOU KI that are representations of an exploded and magnificent nature opening the door to the viewer's imagination

So it was a question of *Nature*. But then, *why in excess?* We must look further: it is human nature that is unreasonable and uses nature excessively. The polysemic dimension of *Nature* explains the title of the exhibition. Also, this is the reason why many works have been chosen especially to put into doubt human nature.

Visitors were able to discover:

- an artwork by Barbara KRUGER on which the face of a woman was the support of a moralizing maxim: *Savoir c'est pouvoir* (Knowledge is power)
- a portrait of Yan PEI-MING whose unreadable face seemed to be the testimony of a deep desolation



Yan
Pei-Ming,
1996

The double interest of the exhibition

The first strength of the exhibition was to **present a theme** and not a chronology. I think that this is the future of the museum route...and I'm not the only one! The theme is more accessible, broader and more open: it plays on the sensitive before having a historical utility. Also, the exhibition was set up in a school, in two classrooms prepared for the occasion. The exhibition therefore received an overwhelming majority of adolescents and was thus **aimed at young people**. For example, I have made visits to entire classes and the feedback from both students and teachers has always been very positive.

As Jacques Chirac, former French President, said at the Earth Summit in 2002: "*Our house burns and we look elsewhere*". And I believe that art is a good way to see things and to look at them with insistence and intensity.



Knowledge is Power by Barbara Kruger, 1989

VEGANUARY

It seems like Veganuary is causing a stir amongst farmers and people such as Lord Deben (or John Gummer as he used to be called). Gummer was the Minister for the Environment who famously tried to feed his four-year-old daughter a beefburger during the BSE (also known as Mad Cow Disease) outbreak in 1990. Thankfully, the child only took a nibble and one suspects that was only of the bread roll that the burger was encased in. As it turned out, however, BSE was

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transmissible to humans in the form of CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease) and, sadly 177 people in the UK are known to have died after contracting it. So, here we have a man who was willing to play Russian Roulette with his child's health in order to prove the point that eating meat (in this case beef) was a good thing.

And, he is at it again, having a go at vegans saying that they (we) are "muddying" the debate on climate change to support an animal rights agenda. I am no expert, but I would imagine that the opposite is true, i.e., it is crystal clear that eating red meat in particular is harmful to the environment. A statement from The United Nations claims that "the greenhouse gas footprint of animal agriculture rivals every car, truck, bus, ship, aeroplane and rocket-ship combined. There is no pathway to achieve the Paris climate objectives without a massive decline in the scale of animal agriculture." Therefore, to suggest that vegans such as myself are using the environmental debate to promote animal rights issues seems a quite desperate attempt to turn attention away from the real issue which is that global agriculture is harming the planet. And, furthermore, what is wrong with having an animal rights agenda? As a vegan (for well over twenty years now), I believe that meat eaters don't quite understand what motivates veganism. From my experience, it is a mixture of things such as health considerations, animal welfare and concern for the planet, but it is also instinctive, it feels right to me. Having said that, it goes both ways and I admit that I am not fully understanding of what it means to be a meat eater, it feels alien but I would not claim that "meat is murder" or try to discourage anyone from eating it. However, I would prefer if there was less consuming of meat since it has been proved that it harms the environment. We vegans have been the butt of criticism and rubbish jokes over the years (especially during my early years of veganism). I remember complaining to the Spectator magazine about remarks directed towards vegans by the outspoken columnist Rod Liddle which went beyond humour and were offensive. Also, the food critic William Sitwell's comments made in the Waitrose Food magazine saying he was up for "killing vegans one by one". He had replied to a request to feature vegan recipes by telling the unsuspecting inquirer that the way to integrate vegans within the magazine was to "expose their hypocrisy, force-feed them meat and make them eat steak and drink red wine". Sitwell

was forced to resign following these comments and rightly so. I have a sense of humour; however, some people go too far.

Now vegans are fighting back – not by throwing nasty insults at carnivores but by launching initiatives such as the already mentioned Veganuary which advocates the idea of trying to eat mostly vegan meals for a month. Of course, UK's farmers have launched their own campaign whilst accusing Veganuary of promoting "misinformation and false truths". They claim that their, 'We Eat Better' campaign, is not competing with veganism but rather trying to encourage people to buy British meat and dairy produce. Personally, I don't see what difference that would make but the main point is that, even if they say they are running a "fair" campaign, they are actually making scandalous comments regarding the motivation behind Veganuary and accusing the organisers of lying.

On December 31st 2021 Sandra Higgins co-founder of Go Vegan World challenged John Gummer's claims in an interview on Talk RADIO. She said, "far from being bogus, vegan's claims with respect to diet and climate change are evidence based". She also challenged the assumption that eating British products are acceptable because of the low rate of GHG emissions from animal agriculture in the UK saying that "it is important not to forget that it is a global problem facing all of us." Higgins believes that, if press reports attributed to Gummer are correct, "he shows scant understanding of veganism", meaning that he confuses the issue of animal rights with the climate change and environmental harm that is partially a result of animal agriculture (and this has been proved using scientific based evidence). She argues that if Gummer was concerned about the plight of farmers, he would encourage them to "transition to a sustainable plant-based system of agriculture based on veganic methods." Of course, in the real world, this is not going to happen overnight, that is, people who enjoy their meat, dairy and eggs will not suddenly go vegan. However, with the evidence that is crystal clear and not "muddying" in any way, it has to be acknowledged that steps to encourage veganism should be given a chance and not rubbished by people like Gummer whose track-record on issues regarding red meat are not to be trusted.

GALLERY – EDGARDO GASTINI

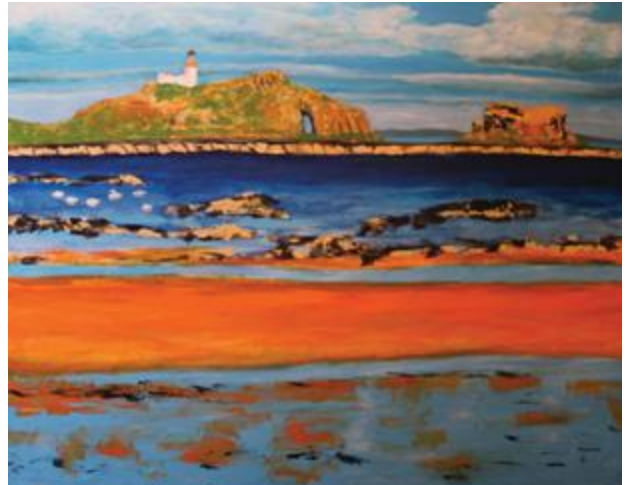
Edgardo Gastini from Turin in Italy belongs to a family of artists and stone carvers. According to Edgardo, painting has not “to explain” what is visible but reveal what is invisible (see with new eyes).



Images: clockwise from top left –
A Longing for Dialogue (2021),
3-Dimensional Painting - Mixed Media,
A Witness for the Future (2021),
A witness in the Past Time (2020),
Cosmic Visions – Exhibition of Paintings

GALLERY – DAVID HUTCHISON

David Hutchison is an artist, writer and filmmaker originally from the Highlands, now based in Edinburgh. He has two feature films to his credit, *Graders* and *Baobhan Sith*. David's paintings here depict the island of Fidra, which is a RSPB nature reserve. Fidra is also the name of a Scottish environmental charity whose aim is to clean-up polluted beaches.



Images: clockwise from top left –

Bass Rock, Fidra Swans ,

Fidra Swans , Fidra ,

Fidra Swan

GALLERY – PIP DENHAM

Pip Denham is a sculptor and mixed media artist who is based in Glasgow, Pip also has a studio in Livingston. His talents are varied so it is no surprise that he received the SSA New Graduate Award in 2018. Pip previously worked in graphic design then went on to study sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art where he gained a BA (Hons).



PIP DENHAM 2018



LEFT: 'SUCCULENT'
LED ED. PRINT
PHOTOGRAPHY & DIGITAL
PAINTING



RIGHT:
'INNER CABBAGE'
LED ED. PRINT
PHOTOGRAPHY &
DIGITAL PAINTING

PIP DENHAM 2018



Images:
Clockwise from
top left -

*Musica Obelisk,
Hand, 'Splice',
MEDS 2, The
Beggar,
'Succulent' &
'Inner Cabbage',
The Instrument*



Fingal was in his Benbecula study staring out of the window doing absolutely nothing. He was good at that.

‘Are you writing today?’ Eilidh asked as she placed a mug of tea on the desk beside his keyboard. Fingal took this as some sort of underlying rebuke and didn’t answer right away, believing she was suggesting writing was some sort of straightforward pastime.

He gazed down the croft to the western shoreline. There, in the silent distance, angry spume was being thrown into the air where the blustery weather was driving waves onto the rocks. He couldn’t see the sea as clearly as he once could as a high bank of shingle was now in place; a wall built to combat erosion and reduce the risk of the land being flooded. He was irritated by Eilidh’s interruption as he had been attempting to remember events from his childhood and struggling to get some sort of idea together.

‘I need total silence to write,’ he told her.

‘Well, I’m not stopping you,’ she said.

‘What do you call vacuuming?’ he said.

A memory flew down and landed on a large rock in the grass a few yards from the window. It was a small finch that was now drinking from the little pool of water that lay in a hollow on the stone’s surface. Fingal’s grandmother had told him that during the time of harvest the appearance of this little puddle was proof that rain had fallen during the night and the fields would be wet. He taxed his mind to recall in greater detail the island of his childhood summers; the stinking byre with mooing morning cows being milked, the smiddy with its roaring bellows where his farrier grandfather shod horses, hiding in dusty barn hay, dozing against a golden hayrick in summer heat or collecting eggs from the Andersen Shelter henhouse where the pungent smell of ammonia would catch in his throat. All long gone. He remembered croaking corncrakes in the warm evenings that were as loud as a pond full of frogs as he tried to get to sleep. Honking geese, shrieking gulls, the curlew’s call, the clucking of hens and now, if lucky, perhaps the lone call of a single corncrake. These sounds could still be heard, but the detail of many childhood events was fading from Fingal’s memory. All his life the island had been his escape, was called home even when it wasn’t.

It was the place where so many of his school holidays had been spent but now it looked like even the land itself could disappear.

His boyhood town had been in his opinion a prison from which any right-thinking individual would want to escape; a place only fifteen feet above sea level that had grown with the rise of factories and the expansion of its dockyard. The smell of chemicals from the plastic works, the soap factory and the refinery hung in the air like poison gas. There were woodyards nearby where in late summer feral cats screamed like fractious babies. It was so unnerving and at the time he had felt he was living in a surrealist nightmare.

His father at one time kept canaries as a hobby in the garden shed, their cages stacked in rows along shelves. Fingal felt sad for the captive birds, identifying with their situation, but he wasn’t allowed to go near them unless his father was present, but he could observe them through the shed’s small window. He held a sparrow once, rescued it from a cat that had pinned it to the ground. Its eyes were closed, but he could feel its tiny heart racing as he gathered it into his hands. Realising it was still alive, he reached up and put it on the edge of the shed roof as the canaries sang inside, watched as it perched precariously for a few seconds, waiting for its eyes to open, to hear it chirrup, to see it spread its wings and fly to freedom. But it didn’t. It simply keeled over and dropped dead onto the earth at his feet. The cat pounced once more, this time grabbing the bird in its mouth, and it hesitated for a second to glare at Fingal before it ran away.

‘How are you getting on now?’ Eilidh asked as she collected his now empty tea mug.

‘I’m not,’ said Fingal.

‘Do you want more tea?’

‘Aye.’

‘What have you been doing all morning?’

‘I was remembering being here when I was a boy.’

‘About what?’

‘Lots of things. I remembered being told that I might find a coconut on the shore that had travelled over an ocean, but I never did. Stuff like that. Sometimes I wish I could go back to those days.

(continued)

Nowadays it's not coconuts that you might find but you will certainly find plastic bottles.'

'I'll get you more tea. I'm sure you'll think of something to write about.'

Through the window he noticed the finch had returned and it was perched on the top strand of the fence that ran behind the rock. Its tail twitched up and down, its head constantly swivelling as it looked out for danger. Fingal imagined the barbed wire could be seen as a metaphor for its life. Perhaps even his own. As the wind buffeted and ruffled its feathers the bird spread its wings and opened its beak to perform an operatic chirping that no one would hear. As it finished it gave a bow and then cleaned its bill on the wire. It looked west. Fingal thought of the day before his grandfather died. When the old man had gazed sadly across those same fields with the knowledge it would be the last time, but this bird looked happy in some way, even although it was simply a small fluff of soft feathers in a big dangerous world. It turned and looked in Fingal's direction, nodded confidently, then fluttered up into the wind and was gone.

'Think I'll give it up for the day,' thought Fingal as he switched off his computer. 'I just can't get any ideas.'

Donald McKenzie

LIFE'S LITTLE LOTTERIES

Michael and Rochelle collided by the magazine stand, she was in her usual hurry and he was in another world, his usual detached and alienated self.

"After you" he said, the refinement of good breeding simply oozing from him.

"Ta" responded Rochelle reaching across to the middle shelf, grabbing a glossy mag.

Michael eyed the girl as unobtrusively as fine manners could allow. He liked the look of her, nice eyes, figure, a terrific smile.

"Yes, very attractive" he thought trying not to make it obvious he was checking her out. "What a pity she's so common".

His assessment continued, he made a thorough job of scrutinising the attractive female going about in the same way a critic might analyse a piece of art;

looking for flaws as much as for perfection. He noted her jewellery – fool's gold and plenty of it. There must have been at least two dozen iron-pyrite rings and studs inserted through those previously immaculate ears. Michael dismissed any attempt to chat her up.

Her choice of magazine only reinforced his prejudice. When he noticed her going for the middle shelf she had gone down a notch in his estimation – the earrings plunged her down a few more.

The middle shelf was where all the "numbers" literature was kept but he did not call it literature. His eyes swung away momentarily from the girl as he surveyed the row of worthless publications which lay spread out across the middle shelf.

Glory of Numbers had an ecclesiastical ring to it, the cover was all stained-glass and churchly looking.

Number Magic was another, and *Numbers to Live By* and *World Numbers* – and more trashy testaments dedicated to the power of numbers. He hated this worshipping of numbers, it was just one irritation among many that made him want to get away from the island – away from the crass environment in which he was forced to live.

Rochelle left the shop with her copy of *Love and Numbers* and, followed by Michael's gaze until she was out of sight, walked passed the street market stalls looking this way and that for inspiration. Her attention was soon caught by some great looking jewellery, stepping up to the stall she could hear the vendor call out in her direction.

"Holy cows on sale here – come an' have a look at these darlin' – next big thing these are"

She had heard from the girls at work about a new craze for the Golden Calf symbol.

"Can I have this please"? She held out an orange and pink fluorescent card onto which a gilt trinket was attached.

Back at the newsagents Michael was buying his daily newspaper. Rows and rows of folded newspapers lay side by side in a repetitive black and white pattern, their design had not changed much over the years. The date on the top right-hand corner read December the sixteenth 2038. Michael bought a broadsheet and left the shop.

His only sanctuary was his home, an apartment decorated in muted shades of brown, green and gold

with sturdy wooden bookcases lining the walls. His only link with the world outside was a telephone and a TV, but it was a tiny set which was hardly ever switched on. He sat down on his antique leather sofa with a Scotch whisky in his hand and reluctantly switched the set on to pass the time until he went out again. Michael was finding it hard to relax, he was sorry he had agreed to meet his colleagues at a wine bar for a Christmas get together.

The TV screen threw intrusive primary colours into the room. Michael took in the images of New Camelot with a grimace as he swallowed the contents of his glass in a one and poured himself another.

“What do they know about Christmas, they’re all heathens”?

He watched the new elite with disgust partying at the exclusive resort, the place where lottery winners invariably found themselves when their numbers came up. There was no royalty by right of birth now, royalty was gone – swept away by a tidal wave of nouveau riche money. He observed the tiny screen wincing as a couple of fledgling millionaires emerged unconvincingly from a vintage Rolls Royce. He watched as the pair entered the foyer of Guinevere’s deluxe apartment complex and cursed inwardly as they wandered obliviously past an exquisite landscape by Camille Pissarro and then a Picasso still-life. It was obvious these people were unaccustomed to the finer things in life, such wealth was wasted on them, all the money in existence could never endow them with even the most minute level of refinement and good-taste.

“It’s the same with the people at work” he reflected, automatically swallowing another drink. Every last one of them lived for the day their numbers would come up “and, for what purpose”?

He thumped his empty glass down onto the coffee-table in frustration. Michael knew only too well that good-breeding was something money could not buy, he knew that alright. His own family tree haunted him, the name remained, the pedigree intact but the family fortune was history and here he was nothing more than fodder for the micro-chip industry.

“Off” he snapped an irritable command at the little television.

This was the only word he enjoyed saying to it so he always made the most of it. He poured himself another drink feeling in less than a party mood but

sadly aware that he would have to go back out into that nightmare world and socialise with a bunch of plebeians.

The Ape and Grape wine-bar was holding a Millennium night which was not unusual, the common people celebrated the New Age endlessly because, for them, it was when things had begun to change. Michael’s mood had not improved, he knocked back whisky after whisky and spent his time despising the décor. The focal point of the cavernous bar was a scaled-down model of The Beagle and the Darwinian theme was followed through by the synthetic creation of a tropical island complete with wild-life noises, pungent-smelling exotic fruit trees and frenzied, savage looking go-go dancers.

His attention shifted from one glass-cased replica of an extinct species to the next causing his morale to sink even lower. Christmas had to be catered for too so a disorientating combination of the tropics meeting the frozen north made him feel as if he was attending a party in an insane asylum. The artificially generated sunshine of a desert island beach turned, without warning, into a chilly, synthetic snowy grotto and monkey chatter competed with jingly bells music while waiters scurried by dressed alternately as a chimp or an elf.

But, worst of all, the lottery draw was about to be broadcast on a massive surround-sound television screen at the opposite end of the vast room. Michael has consciously tried to sit as far away as possible from it but, even with all the distractions, it was the numbers game which dominated the constantly evolving chaos that was the Ape and Grape wine-bar.

With head in hands he was just upright enough to see Vince Gallagher make his way towards him. He looked at the overweight little man with eyes that could hardly bear to stay open, he loathed Gallagher because he was always so cheerful and in tune with his surroundings. Vince was drunk.

“Come on Mike baby, you’re gonna miss the draw”.

He was standing uncomfortably close now and Michael was starting to lose it.

“Fucking numbers mumbo-jumbo” he managed to spit the words out of his mouth – “pagans that’s what I live amongst – pagans and fucking riff-raff running the country – whatever happened to the divine right of kings”?

“All right, all right, keep your shirt on” Vince was

(continued)

visibly wounded by the verbal attack and a little surprised to hear his normally mild-mannered colleague swear.

“And, don’t give me all that royalty crap either” the small fat man was becoming annoyed, “they had their turn now it’s ours – life’s a lottery mate – take it or leave it”.

Michael closed his eyes tightly to block out everything but opened them in time to see Vince mime a low curtsy and say with a sneer, “begging your leave your fucking majesty”. He kept watching as the short, fat man wobbled back towards the massive television screen.

He was trying to leave when he heard the sound of laughter miraculously rise above the cacophony, it was coming from the direction of the TV screen. He just had to look because, somehow, strangely, the sound had pleased him. It had an inexplicable attraction like the sound of a golden saxophone amongst an orchestra of tinny penny-whistles.

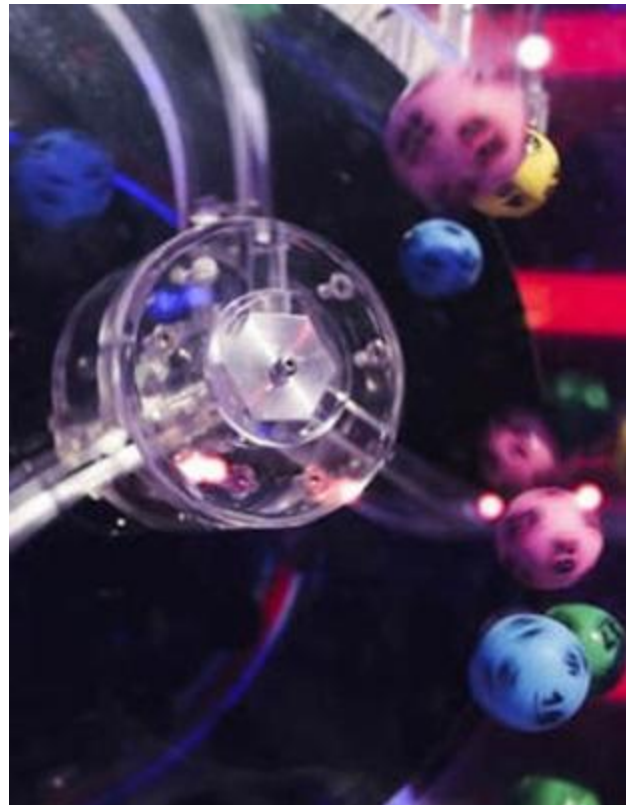
Rochelle was jumping up and down and embracing her friends. Michael felt shock-waves permeate his otherwise alcohol-numbed body when he realised it was the girl he had bumped into at the newsagents. He surprised himself even more when disappointment made him think that she would not be interested in him now – not now that she had won the lottery.

Someone was saying “Hi”.

He took his head out of his hands and, raising it slowly, the first image to hit his bleary eyes was a lovely neck circled by a chain with several tiny, shiny golden cows dangling all the way round. Rochelle noticed his fascination with the necklace.

“It must have brought me luck tonight” she smiled her terrific smile in his direction. He was speechless but she persisted despite no effort on his part to converse, “just celebrating my win on the lottery” she said leaning across the bar trying to attract the attention of a chimpanzee impersonator who was selling drinks.

Michael was unable to draw his attention away from the lovely neck and the jewellery he would normally have found so offensive, yet on this neck it did not seem sacrilegious it seemed harmless, beautiful almost.



“I suppose you’ll be celebrating Christmas in New Camelot this year now that your numbers have come up”? He slurred a drunken sentence together still obsessing over the sacred cows.

“Hardly” laughed Rochelle. “I only won forty quid, anyway, I don’t give a toss about money and I wouldn’t want to spend half-an-hour in that place”.

His eyes were raised now and he could see her face was alive with laughter and he felt like he had never felt before, he felt like he belonged somewhere.

“What’s your name anyway” she asked him “Michael” the word came out as clear as a Christmas bell. “Well Michael can I buy you a drink, see if we can cheer you up a bit”?

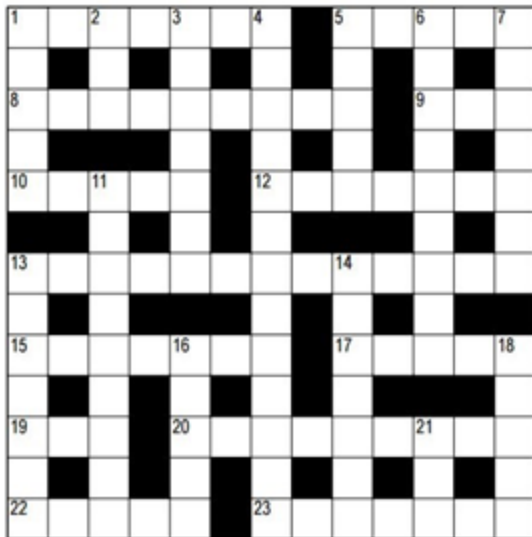
“Thanks, make it a Scotch” he was saying as he watched her scribble something onto a yellow drinks mat which looked, smelt and felt exactly like a flat banana.

He stared enlightened as digit followed, digit, he never realised that six numbers could be so sublime, so full of possibilities. Rochelle handed him his whisky and the flat banana and waved.

“Ring me soon” she said and disappeared into the crowd.

Cathy Bell

Crossword No. 3



Clues Across:

- 1. Obstacle (7). 5. Beginning found in London settlement (5). 8. Period between sunset and sunrise (5,4). 9. Flee or retreat (3). 10. Sweet! (5).
- 12. Just claim to act (7). 13. Adjust picture if not this (5,8). 15. Love it or hate it! (7). 17. Happen (5).
- 19. Small drink (3). 20. Food which has undergone chemical treatment (9). 22. Failure may lead to this (2-3). 23. Lethargy (7).

Clues Down:

- 1. Extra found on bus (5). 2. Pull it from underfoot (3). 3. Trainees without pay (7). 4. Performance said to go well (6,3,4). 5. Readily apparent (5). 6. Long term aim (9). 7. Different line of thought from tartan gentleman (7). 11. Gives rise to – electricity? (9). 13. Burrowing rodent(7). 14. Keep calm and rise (5,2). 16. Entrance for information (5).
- 18 Narrow hilltop bridge? (5). 21. Droop (3)

Solutions:

1. bonus 2. rug 3. interns 4. raises the roof 5. overt 6. strategic 7. tangent 11. generates 13. Hamster 14. above it 16. Input 18. ridge 21. sag

Down:

1. barrier 5. onset 8. nighttime 9. run 10. Sugar 12. entile 13. hangs straight 15. marmite 17. Occur 19. tot 20. processed 22. resit 23. fatigue

Across:

REVIEWS

A LIFE

As with Marcel Proust, the author, Guy de Maupassant came from a French middle-class family. Born 21 years before Proust in Normandy, he led a life typical of many single middle-class men of the time; his main occupations being womanizing and boating. On moving to Paris he counted Flaubert and Zola as friends, at one point becoming France’s second best-selling author behind Zola. The novel, ‘A Life’, is the first of six novels he wrote before his death in 1872 at the age of just 42.

The novel tells the story of Jeanne de Lamare, from when she leaves convent school until, after 29 years, she becomes a grand-mother. As with the author himself, Jeanne has enjoyed a wealthy Normandy upbringing. My initial thought was this novel could be quite Proustian in its delivery, if only due to some similarities between de Maupassant and Proust such as background and subject, however, it is not, instead it is the simple story of someone’s life and as such proceeds in an easy-to-follow series of short chapters; more like his friend Flaubert. It is also with great pleasure that I have found another French writer of great quality whom, up to this point, I had not heard of. And so to the novel itself; or let’s say a short story with an unexpected but optimistic end.

The novel begins with Jeanne and her parents making the journey from their home in Rouen to Jeanne’s new home; the chateau of Les Peuples on the Normandy coast. Making the journey with Jeanne, was her father, Baron Le Perthuis des Vaudes, her mother, Adelaide, and Rosalie the housemaid, described as a tall and strapping Norman girl who was around the same age as Jeanne and was treated almost as a second daughter.

Life at Les Peuples, to begin with, was very enjoyable, with walks down to the sea and spending time with her parents among the poplar tree lined avenue that led to the chateau and its surrounding gardens. Jeanne’s ambition, however, was to find a husband and with the news, brought to them by the local priest, that an eligible bachelor had recently moved to a nearby estate, the second part of Jeanne’s journey was about to begin.

Monsieur le Vicomte de Lamare’s appearance is described as that which, ‘women dream of and men find disagreeable.’ His family history also finds favour

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with Jeanne's father as they discover that de Lamare's father and Jeanne's grandfather shared a mutual friend. In fact, it seems almost as if the Baron is falling for de Lamare and it is not until a boat trip to Etretat that it becomes clear that de Lamare is to become Jeanne's future husband.



Etretat, Normandy by Claude Monet

A new character now enters the story, Jeanne's mother's sister, Lison, an unmarried woman who after various misfortunes lives in a religious house for people who are alone in the world. At forty-two she seems older and rarely speaks, appearing only at mealtimes, before disappearing once more to her room. Hers is a story of little love and little interest in her, rarely being kissed and largely ignored.

Jeanne's happiness was now at its peak with her love for, and marriage to, de Lamare; now known to her as Julien. Their honeymoon to Marseille and then on to Corsica left Jeanne in such a state of utter contentment that she did not want to return to Les Peuples. The first signs of Julien's true character had also begun to emerge, as he took charge of their finances, only allowing Jeanne a small amount of money to spend.

Jeanne's return to Les Peuples seemed to signal the beginning of a new part of her life and one that she seemed uneasy with as the house that she had spent such happy times in, and where she had dreamed of an exciting future, had now all but vanished. She wasn't herself anymore; able to do what she wanted when she wanted; she was now the wife of a man and, although she loved him, some doubts about her future happiness were beginning to appear as Julien's meanness continued

and his drinking increased. Rosalie, in the meantime, had, unknown to Jeanne, been sleeping with Julien which resulted in her giving birth to a child. Attempts were made to find out who the father was but Rosalie remained tight-lipped, until one night Jeanne entered her husband's bedroom to find Rosalie and Julien lying there together. At this discovery, Jeanne's world fell apart, not only because of her husband's adultery but also because now she would lose Rosalie, who had been Jeanne's main support. She also, at this time, realised that Rosalie's son was Julien's and that he and her own soon to be born son would be brothers and share the same father.

As Rosalie had to be sent away from Les Peuples, the Baron had arranged for her to have one of his farms. He had also arranged a husband for her to help run the farm. Jeanne, reluctantly, agreed to continue her marriage to Julien for the sake of her son and to keep the possibility of having a daughter, which she had long dreamed of, alive.

Life at Les Peuples seemed to settle down and Jeanne and Julien began to pay visits to other families nearby. Eventually a close friendship begins to flourish with another family, of similar standing and similar interests, the Fourvilles. Right away this seemed to be a friendship that would benefit both Jeanne and Julien, as the Fourvilles exuded contentment and happiness in their own relationship and, with a genuine affection towards the couple from Les Peuples, both couples became frequent visitors to each other's estates. A common interest between the two couples was horse riding, which Julien and the Comtesse were particularly fond of, however the reader is soon aware that there was more going on than just a fondness for riding horses, as they began to spend more and more time together, often without their partner's knowledge.

The next part of Jeanne's life was to be a tragic one. Her mother died suddenly and the Comte became aware of the affair between his wife, whom he loved very much, and Julien. In a fit of rage, he found them together in a shepherds caravan on a steep hillside. Bolting the caravan door from the outside, he then pushed the caravan until it began to gather speed on the slope. Screams came from inside as the caravan bounced several times before launching itself into a gully and shattering like a broken egg, killing both people inside. That same evening, Jeanne gave birth to a still-born daughter.

Now only Jeanne, the Baron, Aunt Lison and Pullie (Paul), her son, were left. Life settled down for a while

(continued)

and Pullie grew taller. One day Jeanne's idyll was broken by the news that Pullie was to leave Les Peuples and attend school. Jeanne was heart-broken and so it proved that from that day on mother and son would never be close again. Pullie made friends, and with a new found independence, visits home became less and less and over the coming months, which then turned into years, his only communication home was to ask for money with which to pay off his gambling debts, resulting in the Baron having to dispose of more and more of his property until even Les Peuples had a large mortgage.

Life only seemed to go from bad to worse for Jeanne as first the Baron died and then, soon after, Aunt Lison also died. Jeanne, now heavily in debt, became ill once more only to awaken one morning to find a familiar figure sitting on an armchair in her room: it was Rosalie. Rosalie promised that she would stay with Jeanne forever now that her son had grown and the farm was doing well.

In the final part of the novel, Jeanne and Rosalie, have moved from Les Peuples (sold to clear debts) to a smaller house in Batteville. At first reluctant to even leave her new home, with Rosalie's help, Jeanne searches Paris for any signs of Pullie; only to return home without success until one day a letter arrives from Pullie telling her that his wife is dying after giving birth to a daughter. Rosalie goes to Paris to bring the infant home with Pullie promising to follow her in a few days, after his wife's funeral has taken place.

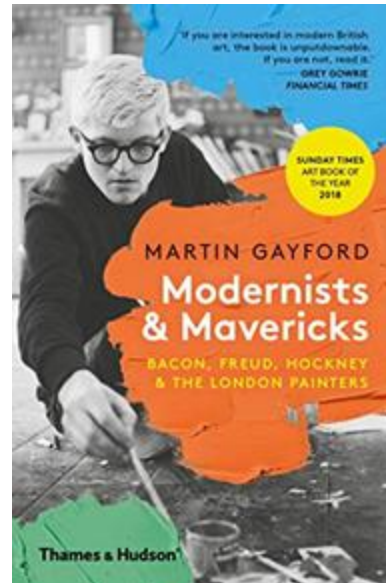
The novel concludes with Rosalie saying to Jeanne, *'You see, life's never as good or as bad as we think.'* And with this the reader is left with a more optimistic view of the life to come for everyone at Batteville.

And so an enjoyable book ends with, perhaps, a happier ending than might have been expected.



Guy de
Maupassant
1850 - 1893

MODERNISTS & MAVERICKS



Reading *Modernists & Mavericks* by Martin Gayford you are immediately aware that this is not a dry academic record of visual art during the mid-twentieth-century. Rather, it surveys the art scene in London (mostly) from the start of the post-war period up to the late 1960's using a lively narrative full of anecdotes and first-hand accounts from people who were there at the time. Gayford comes across as someone who is on intimate terms with some of the players. He is like an insider who has been given special access to this specific place in time and the characters who took part in the evolving story of twentieth-century art history. It is entertaining to read about how young artists came together for the common purpose of shaking up the stuffy academic art world in Britain in the mid 1940's. With stories such as the two well-to-do boys Lucien Freud and John Craxton sharing a flat at 14 Abercorn Place where they would lay glass on the floor – with “a new sheet of glass for a special guest” (this probably meant an establishment figure). It sounds like a strange type of décor but it kind of explains their rebellious intentions right from the start.

And, rebellious they were. Much effort went into annoying the art school masters and, although this might seem like youthful zealotry, it did result in important innovations in style and subject matter. Individual artists come to life in this book, it depicts a creative environment that must have been truly exciting for these pioneers of what could be achieved in the language of the visual. There was an amazing variety of outpouring of ideas, techniques and imagery ranging from the mystifying paintings of Francis Bacon alongside the earlier more traditional (but still different) works by

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Victor Passmore and William Coldstream. In addition there was the abstraction of Howard Hodgkin and Gillian Ayers, pop-art as introduced by artists such as Peter Blake and the painterly, almost excruciatingly dense paintings by Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbach. There is an amusing anecdote about one of Auerbach's life classes. Daphne Todd one of his students recalls "it was a fearsome place", she continues "nobody spoke, and they grunted while they painted. It was very intense. There was no colour". This might sound grim, however, the tale seems to be recounted with affection.

Although some of the art was being created in dark, forbidding art-school rooms, the world outside was becoming anything but intense and colourless. During the period covered by the book the 1960's social and cultural revolution was taking place and this undoubtedly had reverberations with the visual art being produced. Young artists such as the aforementioned Peter Blake, Bridget Riley, Patrick Caulfield, Richard Hamilton, R B Kitaj and David Hockney appeared on the scene. This is only to name but a few. In the midst of the Perfumo Affair, the drug bust of members of The Rolling Stones and all the major changes in society that were taking place, artists were busy recording and interpreting the world around them. Of course, Blake is well known for the Beatles Sgt Pepper LP cover and Hamilton for the image of Mick Jagger and friend in a police car (entitled *Swinging London* 1967). However, Gayford's book explores this further and recounts the interesting story of the female artist Pauline Boty who studied stained-glass due to the fact she was a woman and so was discouraged to do painting. Nevertheless, Gayford tells us, "she gave up stained-glass to become one of the most innovative painters in London". Boty was featured alongside Blake and two other artists Derek Boshier and Peter Phillips in the BBC arts series *Monitor* in a programme entitled *Pop Goes the Easel* (1962). Gayford goes on to explain that Boty, as a woman in a prejudiced, male-oriented art world, broke new ground. With paintings such as *The Only Blonde in the World* (1963) she was taking a sideways swipe at the outmoded attitude towards women artists at the time. Sadly, Pauline Boty passed away due to illness in 1966 at the young age of 28 so it will never be known how her career might have progressed. However, it seems certain that she would have provided inspiration to women artists who came after her.



Pauline Boty – The Only Blonde in the World (1963)

Perhaps three artists stand out for different reasons in this anthology. Following Francis Bacon's story it is intriguing to ponder about what made him tick, he is a mystery. This book, however, is possibly as good as or as close as anyone could get to explain and document his relationships with people and his art. Much is written about David Hockney in the book (he and Gayford are friends and collaborators). Again, this is entertaining and there is no doubt that Hockney is a formidable talent who, interestingly, crossed over British sensibilities with the West Coast American scene. However, personally, the surprise comes in the form of Lucien Freud who has never been a favourite of mine. Gayford managed to win me round to Freud as an artist and a person with his frank and honest portrayal of him.

PLATFORM

THE BEATLES, THE STONES - & THE WHO!

What has got into Paul McCartney and Roger Daltrey? Recently, it has been reported that they have both, separately, been having a dig at the musicality of The Rolling Stones, McCartney claiming that they are no more than a blues cover band and Daltrey calling them a mediocre pub band. That word mediocre gets me – I mean how could you ever describe The Rolling Stones as MEDIOCRE?? These three bands, The Beatles, The Who and The Stones are amazing in their own ways, I don't understand this need to suddenly start putting each other down – or is it the media asking these questions and pitting them off one against the other?

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Anyway, it does not endear one to either McCartney or Daltrey when they come out with such stuff, mainly because it is not true. Have they listened to The Stones recently? I would suggest that they explore their back catalogue where they will find a variety of musical genres all rendered superbly as is the hallmark of the band. For example, they will find tracks in the style of county music (e.g. Dead Flowers on the album Sticky Fingers), the psychedelia of We Love You and She's a Rainbow and the folksiness of Factory Girl (Beggars Banquet) and the orchestral style of Moonlight Mile (Sticky Fingers).

So, enough of this nonsense, The Stones just like The Beatles and The Who are brilliant and they have nothing to prove – It's Only Rock and Roll after all.

MAY CONTAIN MILK = NOT VEGAN

Having been a vegetarian for 25 years – my partner is vegan – I have for a long time been a reader of ingredients on food packaging. Let me begin by saying that the main reason for my vegetarianism is health grounds. I know that meat eaters can still have a healthy diet but for me it just so happened that the meat products that I really liked were the saturated fat loaded ones and so I decided the best course of action was to stop eating meat altogether. I have to say, that now, 25 years on, the thought of eating meat is not a pleasant one and I have now got to the point where I can't actually remember what it tastes like. So, returning to ingredients on food packaging here is my issue. I have found, for example, when shopping for vegan food – our Christmas dinner was vegan, gluten free and delicious – that, to save time, it is best to look underneath the list of ingredients and instead look at the allergy advice or disclaimer. Why? Because this is where you are advised that your 'so-called' vegan food may contain other ingredients such as milk or eggs. For me then, this not vegan food. How can it be when it may have milk, eggs, cream and a whole host of other animal related products in it? The reality is that all of the large supermarkets do this; they all have food somewhere on their shelves that says 'due to manufacturing processes, may contain milk.' And vegetarian food is not exempt either. I recently bought what was advertised as 'vegan spring rolls' only to find the disclaimer 'may contain crustacean.' So my message to all shops that sell vegan or vegetarian food is this: if it MAY contain milk, eggs, cream, crustacean.

IT IS NOT VEGAN / VEGETARIAN SO PLEASE CHANGE YOUR LABELS THAT SAY IT IS. And finally, would most people even consider that something advertised as 'vegan' may have crab in it – probably not. So let's just hope that no one who buys this particular vegan delicacy suffers from an allergy to shellfish. Rant over, I've made my point!

CLIMATE CHANGE ANXIETY

A short story by the science fiction writer Philip K Dick "Foster, You're Dead" written in 1955 seems to have resonance today. Mike Foster is a young schoolboy living under the threat of the H Bomb, he is a child blighted by the condition of Cold War Anxiety. His troubles are compounded because his father refuses to comply with the rules, for example, as a family they do not have access to any kind of fall-out shelter should the need arise. Foster is constantly being reminded that death is imminent – if precautions are not put in place.

Today Cold War Anxiety in children has been replaced by a fairly new phenomenon: that is Climate Change Anxiety. Children are constantly exposed to the news that Planet Earth is in danger and, of course, it is. There is no doubt that challenges lay ahead in tackling climate change but this is a massive undertaking and one that is, for the most part, unwittingly relayed to children who are not always equipped to deal with these particular kinds of complex issues. In the world we live in now many children are extremely aware about the dangers facing the environment, this can be seen by the way they come out and protest. This is commendable but – and it is a big but – it needs to be remembered that they are still CHILDREN. I am not being patronising when I say this, just stating a fact. Philip K Dick's story makes it clear that, in his view back in the 1950's, this child is not equipped to deal with this particular kind of anxiety. Towards the end of the tale we find poor Foster huddled up in the foetal position inside the underground shelter he covets so much and which has become obsessively part of his coping mechanism. Adults should be aware that what they are able to cope with is possibly having a different effect on children. It is irresponsible of some adults who should know better (Barak Obama) to tell children to "stay angry". Children certainly have a right to be engaged in discussions about their future but anger is not always a helpful emotion, surely it would be more constructive to advise children to stay focused, determined and alert?

NEW YEAR – NEW GALLERY

This year 2022 is a special year for Livingston since it is the 60th anniversary of the town. Inaugurated in 1962, Livingston has seen many changes since it became Scotland’s fifth new town. As a resident for around about half the time it has been in existence, I have witnessed these changes. However, one aspect that has been slow to develop is the town’s ability to embrace a contemporary visual arts presence. The main aspect of this endeavour has historically been the excessive commissioning of public art sculpture, first by the LDC (Livingston Development Corporation) and later by the WLC (West Lothian Council). Although this is not a bad thing, a healthy visual environment needs a wider arena in which to present a more comprehensive approach to visual art culture.

That is why for many years I have worked as a freelance, voluntary curator putting on contemporary exhibitions in the town. Over the years I have begged and borrowed temporary spaces such as whole empty shops in the indoor shopping centre and also have been able to acquire permanent spaces inside shops and cafes.

artwork is by myself and two guests, contemporary film by David Hutchison and sculpture by Pip Denham (who is another resident in the building). All of this would not be possible without the wonderful work done by Edinburgh Printmaker Spaces (EP Spaces). They are making life for artists and creatives so much easier with the work they do sourcing empty properties all over Scotland. These spaces provide the many individuals and groups with affordable space in which to pursue their many and varied projects.



Views of PLANET A exhibition (above & below)



PLANET A exhibition showing New Curios film

This has been welcome; however, these spaces are not always ideal so I have always looked forward to having a proper exhibition space. The good news is that in September 2021 we were able to move into a space where we can hold a programme of exhibitions. There is also a studio space and art reference library and much of this magazine is produced in this space.

At the end of January, we plan to open our first exhibition entitled PLANET A to the public. The

We look forward to welcoming visitors to our first exhibition of the programme which starts on **Monday 24th January and runs until Saturday 5th February (closed on Sunday).** We can be found at **Barbara Ritchie House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston (next to Pure Gym).**





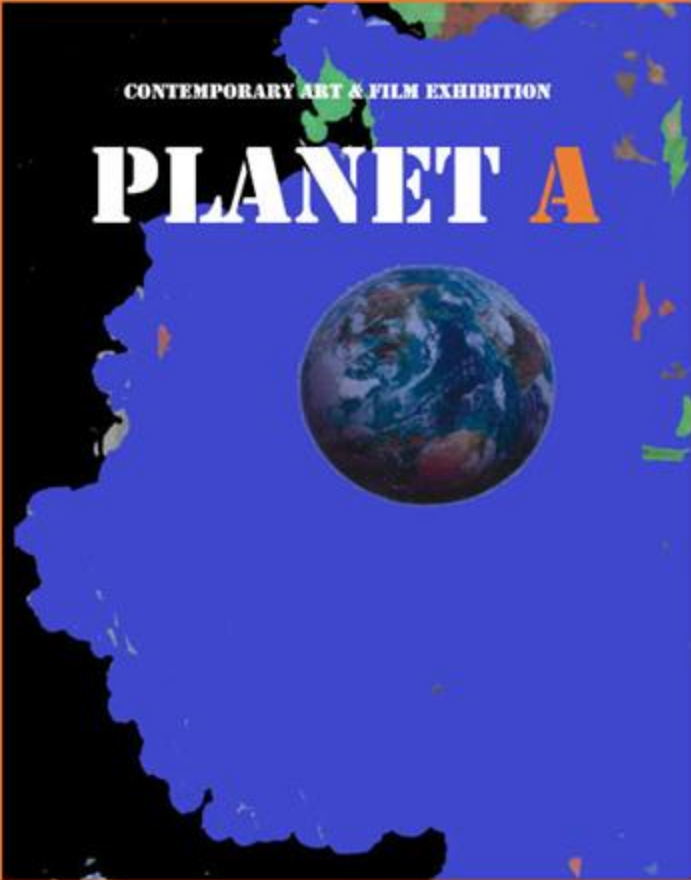
Barbara Ritchie House, Livingston – Venue for PLANET A Exhibition

The Galley is located to the right of the building on the ground floor

CATHY BELL & GUESTS DAVID HUTCHISON & PIP DENHAM

CONTEMPORARY ART & FILM EXHIBITION

PLANET A



MONDAY 24TH JANUARY – SATURDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2022 11AM-2PM
BARBARA RITCHIE HOUSE, ALMONVALE BUSINESS PARK, LIVINGSTON
(NEXT TO PURE GYM – CLOSED SUNDAY 30TH JANUARY)

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