

Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

PATRICK HERON: GOUACHES FROM 1961 TO 1996

9 February – 12 March 2005



Four Square Complex (Reds with Lemon) : May 1968

In my gouaches, the tempo is dictated, quite apart from the particular needs of the area-shapes I make, by the nature of the wet medium itself. I like the water in the paint mixture to lead me; to suggest the scribbled drawing which gives birth to the images. - Patrick Heron, 1985

This is the fourth in a series of posthumous exhibitions at Waddington Galleries tracing the career of Patrick Heron. This exhibition shows the development of his gouaches over three decades: from his softer edged shapes in the 1960s to the looser, more lyrical style of the early 1990s.

Heron wrote that his gouaches were “not a substitute for the oil paintings, nor were they preliminary sketches”, but “works in their own right”. The combined fluidity and chromatic density of gouache allowed him to develop a new form of expression. The impact of his work in gouache can be seen in the fluent, fluid colour of his later oil paintings.

During the 1960s his gouaches displayed an opaque quality and explored – as in his paintings - fields of colour containing soft edged squares, discs and shapes such as in *Four Square Complex (Reds with Lemon) : May 1968*. From the mid 1980s a looser handling of paint accompanied a lighter airier palette. Allowing the fluidity of the medium to lead his hand - especially in the amorphous abstract gouaches - rhythm and dissonance are embraced, as in *January 22 : 1989*. By the late 1990s careful balancing of colour on colour and the sensual flowing of colour into paper created the luminous, playful compositions, which display a multitude of “colourshapes” and “colourforms”.

Patrick Heron was born in Headingley, Leeds, in 1920. He studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, between 1937 and 1939. From 1945, Heron wrote as an art critic for *The New English Weekly* and *The New Statesman and Nation*. In 1956, he returned to Cornwall where he lived and worked until his death in March 1999. Heron was awarded a C.B.E. in 1977. From 1980 to 1987, he was a Trustee of the Tate Gallery, London. He received Honorary Doctorates from Exeter and Kent Universities, Winchester School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. In 1994, a monograph written by Mel Gooding was published by Phaidon Press and in 1998, a major retrospective of Heron's work was organised by the Tate Gallery, London.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany this exhibition.

For further information and images, please contact Louise Kybert.

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