

# Waddington Galleries

## PRESS RELEASE

### **PATRICK HERON** WORKS FROM 1956 TO 1969

13 February – 16 March 2002

*'My main interest, in my painting, has always been in colour, space and light...and space in colour is the subject of my painting today to the exclusion of everything else'*

Patrick Heron 1958

Waddington Galleries is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Patrick Heron from 1956 to 1969. The earlier paintings and works on paper in this exhibition from the 50's depict Heron's progression from figuration to abstraction. The majority of works in the current exhibition come directly from the artist's family, and several have never been previously exhibited.

In 1956 Heron returned to Cornwall after spending over a decade in London and inspired by the gardens surrounding his new home Eagles Nest, he began his 'stripe paintings' such as *Cave : September : 1956*. Alongside these came his first 'garden paintings' such as *Red Painting : June 1957*. The development from his figurative work was in part a response to the work of American Abstract Expressionists whose work he saw as bringing 'a new kind of energy and inventiveness', but also from the continual influence of the great French colourists Bonnard and Matisse. From 1958 he began to paint fields of colour containing soft edged squares and discs. In 1963 the critic Norbert Lynton wrote the defining phrase about Heron's latest paintings, 'it is not possible even to distinguish significantly between the forms and the colour fields they inhabit'. By the late sixties he was working on a much larger scale and applying paint with tiny brushes which, in paintings such as *Dark Red with Venetian, Violet and Two Scarlets : 1969*, give an overall texture to the richly coloured surface of the canvas.

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 began to write as an art critic for periodicals such as *The New English Weekly* and *The New Statesman and Nation*. In 1956 Heron 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 1993 Heron was made an Honorary Fellow of Bretton Hall College at the University of Leeds. In 1998 the Tate Gallery, London, exhibited a major retrospective of Heron's work and last year Tate St Ives held an exhibition of his early and late garden paintings.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an introduction by Michael McNay accompanies the exhibition.

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