

**Emily Kngwarreye,
Axel Poignant**

REBECCA HOSSACK

Emily Kame Kngwarreye from Utopia, north east of Alice Springs, is in her eighties and has recently won an Australian Arts Council Fellowship. She is an important leader in Aboriginal women's ceremonies, when the body is ritually painted. Many of the designs have been incorporated into her paintings, as have the arcane symbols and 'dreamings' intrinsic to Aboriginal culture. She paints in the familiar dot style, though her dots are large, fused and blurred rather than 'pointillist'. An aura of depth, of spiritual complexity, lurks beneath the subtle interplay of colour. Her palette is dark: intense maroons, greys and blacks transmit a sense of mystical profundity. But talk of an equivalence with Titian or late Monet is nonsense. I doubt that Emily Kame Kngwarreye has ever heard of them. If we are to 'understand' Aboriginal art, we must deal with it in its own terms, without reference to First-World culture.

Downstairs is a collection of photographs of the Tiwi and Nagalarramba, largely taken in the late '40s and '50s by



'Tiwi Dancers' (details) by Axel Poignant.

Axel Poignant, one of Australia's most important post-war photographers. Poignant was well aware that the delicate social 'ecology' of these Aboriginal groups was threatened by growing involvement with 'mainstream' white culture. He recorded dance ceremonies and initiation rites, hunting trips and scenes of domestic tenderness. They form a dignified and moving document of a fast-disappearing world, a document that a younger generation has recognised as a valuable record of endangered traditions. *Sue Hubbard*

Snapshots, Part II

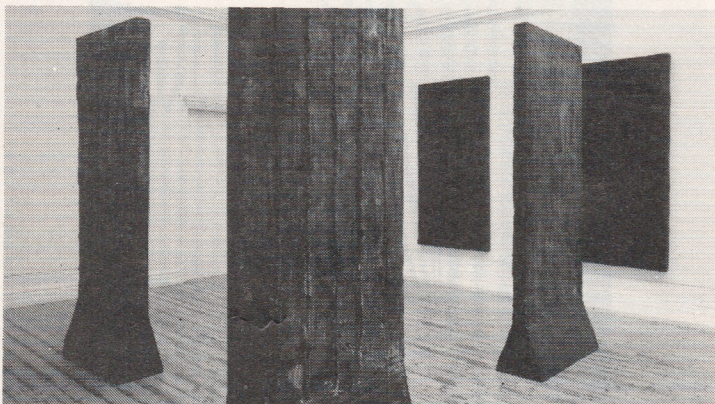
EAGLE

It's hard to imagine anyone not liking Peter Doig's paintings. They are highly perceptive about landscape and images of landscape. Doig not only captures the feeling of the isolated place, but also of the myths that attend such places and feelings. Irony flows from him more naturally than from the other two artists in this exhibition. Along with his hallmark of the bitter-sweet picturesque, his painting of shadowy figures in a canoe has its share of seriousness. But he is also an extremely humorous painter.

The three artists are united by an interest in photography, including video. I

suggested to Edward Chell that his paintings were a bit 'Gulf War'. He readily agreed. One seems to show an aerial photo of a reflection in a lake, at night, out of focus and blurred by clouds. That's the effect anyway. The image is repeated to form a pattern, as if seen through a kaleidoscope. It's hard to look at, intelligent and a little pessimistic.

Mark Francis' paintings of pale blobs floating against dark grounds are getting better and better. He spends more time preparing the canvas than painting the picture, which is very quick. The result is a smooth, immaculate surface and a new kind of dot painting with a surprising amount of rhythm: the luminous fields of floating blobs are well drawn. *David Lillington*



Günther Förg

CUBITT STREET

The Villa Malaparte, built in the 1930s off the Isle of Capri, was designed to frame the landscape. Each wall is punctured by a picture window overlooking cliffs and sea. The floor, a crazy paving of undressed stone, continues this dialogue between indoors and out while the lack of furnishings makes the building more like a hide than a house — a place for watching *from* rather than living *in*. Günther Förg's photographs of the villa emphasise this ambiguity. Large, dark and framed in wood, they become weighty sculptural panels. But they are also glazed to reflect other exhibits and the viewer: to act as mirrors rather than pictures.

A building that frames, pictures that reflect: the issue must surely be the relationship between identity and a sense of

place, between looking and being. Dense philosophical terrain, but Förg explores it playfully. Each element of the installation echoes another. Out of focus, the sea views look like impressionist paintings. The overlapping window panes slice them into segments like the divisions of a Barnett Newman. Förg reiterates the geometry in a series of washy, gestural abstracts that contain references to architecture. Some paintings have been translated into bronze slabs and stelae — pictures as objects choreographed into 3D compositions. A section of wall is painted the orange of the pictures, a large photograph of a woman introduces a human presence, a large mirror punctures the space. Everything establishes itself in relation to everything else: as an echo or mirror, creating a world of shifting relations in which identities slide and elide, merge and diverge. *Sarah Kent*

American Prints

FINE ART SOCIETY

The RA's American blockbuster (see *TO 1205*) starts from the time of the Armory Show — the 1913 exhibition that introduced Paris-based modernism to the USA. But while the RA show lays emphasis on artists like Stuart Davis and Charles Sheeler who picked up on the new languages proposed by the Armory Show, it is much thinner on the home-grown realist tradition. This show includes work from both sides of the divide by artists whose work refuses such categorisations.

From Edward Hopper to Grant Wood, Adolph Gottlieb and a variety of lesser-known artists — wonderfully hokey



'Shriner Quartet' (detail) by Grant Wood.

names like Benton Spruance and Ralston Crawford — there are some terrific prints on show. 'Shriner Quartet', a lithograph by Grant Wood, shows four men in suits and fezzes, mouths agape, singing. Sounds familiar? Tony Bevan apparently had the image in mind when painting the eerie picture of singing men recently seen at the Whitechapel. From the early years of the century there's John Sloan, now mainly interesting as a point of departure for Hopper. Sloan's roofscapes and warm-hearted glimpses into crowded tenements emphasise togetherness, continuity; in a print like 'Night Shadows' Hopper introduces the ever-solitary viewer-voyeur and prefigures the Berenice Abbott, *film noir*, 'Rear Window' vision of NYC. Catch also George Bellows' amazingly bloody WWI propaganda; Calder's '0-100' DIY ballet score and Gottlieb's Klee-ish 'pictograph'. *Rose Jennings*

Critics' choice

1. American Art in the 20th Century

Royal Academy / Saatchi Collection

2. Agnes Martin

Serpentine Gallery

3. Lucian Freud

Whitechapel

4. Aratjara

Hayward

5. Wonderful Life

Lisson

Art

*Selections &
Reviews*

Events, meetings, talks and competitions in London. Please send information by Monday, eight days before publication. Since space is limited inclusion is not guaranteed.

PUBLIC SPACES & MUSEUMS

Barbican

Barbican Centre, EC2 (071 638 4141) Barbican tube.

Showing together with a retrospective of the photographer **Bill Brandt**, a retrospective of **Alphonse Mucha**, a key figure in the 'Art Nouveau' movement at the turn of the century (Sep 30 until Dec 12); Mon, Wed-Sat 10am-6.45pm, Tue 10am-5.45pm, Sun 12noon-6.45pm. £4.50 (£2.50). **Images of persuasion: propaganda posters from Stalin's Soviet Union** (until Oct 3); free. Also **Bow's Arts**: mixed show of work by 8 artists and 50 students who work in London's East End (Oct 4-31); free. Mon-Sat 10am-7.30pm, Sun 12noon-7.30pm.

British Museum

Great Russell St, WC1 (071 636 1555) Tottenham Court Rd tube. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm.

Old master drawings from Chatsworth: 220 outstanding works from the 15th to 18th century from the collection of the Duke of Devonshire (until Jan 9).

Buckingham Palace

SW1 (071 799 2331) Victoria tube. Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm, last admission 4.30pm. £2.50 (OAP £1.80; kids £1.20) family ticket £6.

From the fabulous Royal Collection, **A King's purchase**: The king was George III, the purchase the collection of British Consul in Venice Joseph Smith, who died in 1770. It's a show about 18th century taste with some wonders: notably Vermeer's 'A Lady at the Virginals'. And a brilliant selection of Canaletto. Canaletto is more interesting than many people think, with his analytical gaze. It's hard to like the white-flesh-and-clouds confections of *Liberi*, but Marco Ricci now seems interesting, with his landscapes in gouache on leather. (DL) (until Dec 23)

Camden Arts Centre

Arkwright Rd, NW3 (071 435 2643) Finchley Rd tube. Tue-Thu 12noon-8pm, Fri-Sun 12noon-6pm.

Erotically charged paintings, soft sculpture and works on paper made over the past 50 years by **Dorothea Tanning**, one of the pioneer surrealist artists (until Nov 21).

Camerawork

121 Roman Rd, E2 (081 980 6256) Bethnal Green tube. Tue-Sat 1-6pm.

'Archaeology': multi-media work by **Penny McCarthy** (Sep 30 until Nov 6).

Centre 181

181 King St, W6 (081 748 3020) Hammersmith tube. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm.

Using a matt black woodgrain veneer as a drawing medium, **Nicky Hirst** has added windows and panelling to this white corridor. It is like stepping into a colourless Patrick Caulfield painting and forces you to think about the act of looking both at art and through windows: a cool, knowing and witty exercise in visual criticism. (NJ) (until Oct 1)

Chelsea Harbour

SW10 (071 839 8533) bus 11, 22, C3. All day, everyday.

Chelsea Harbour Sculpture show: open air show of public works by 60 sculptors. Chelsea Harbour is Thatcher's dream: luxury flats with river views, restaurants and shopping malls that exude the self-congratulatory odour of Yuppie-dom. There are notable works by internationally known artists, yet the Lego-like architecture reduces them to mere decoration. The work inside fares even worse. Most at home are Sokari Douglas Camp's exuberant Nigerian women, who look as if they were out shopping, and Niki de Saint Phalle's brightly painted fat lady who doesn't seem to give a damn. (SH) (extended until Oct 2)

Chisenhale

64 Chisenhale Rd, E3 (081 981 4518) Mile End tube. Wed-Sun 1-6pm.

Wall-mounted sculptures exploring sexual politics by **Cathy de Monchaux** (until Oct 17).

Courtauld Institute

Somerset House, Strand, WC2 (071 873 2526)

Holborn tube. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Adults £3 (£1.50) Friends of the Courtauld free. The Courtauld has a splendid permanent collection of impressionist and post impressionist