

Beaux Arts London announce *Four Giants of British Modernism* exhibition

Four Giants of British Modernism:  
Terry Frost, William Scott, Peter Lanyon and Patrick Heron  
Beaux Arts Gallery  
48 Maddox Street  
London W1S 1AY

19 September - 19 October 2019  
Press Preview: Tuesday 17 September, 2-4pm  
Private View: Wednesday 18 September 2019, 6-8.30pm

Beaux Arts London announce *Four Giants of British Modernism*, an exhibition of celebrated British modern artists: Terry Frost, William Scott, Peter Lanyon and Patrick Heron.

The exhibition will feature 5-6 works from each of the Post Second World War modernists, sourced from private collections.

Beaux Arts Gallery worked with the late artists Frost, Scott, Lanyon and Heron during their careers and this exhibition offers a retrospective of some of their greatest works created as they revolutionised British Art.

The four artists lived and worked through the harsh time of post war Britain, and through their art were seeking to convey a new world of hope. They were pioneers of British Abstract Art and were associated with the celebrated St. Ives School along with Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Roger Hilton, Bernard Leach and many others. In the wake of the war, St. Ives, a fishing village in West Cornwall began to attract a wide range of young emerging artists due to its breath-taking scenery and clarity of light, owing to its peninsula positioning. Beaux Arts' first gallery, Will's Lane Gallery, was located there and thus became a central platform for exhibiting the work of artists of the St. Ives school from the early 70s.

While the artists had varied upbringings, all of them had profound connections with Cornwall. Terry Frost was brought up by his grandparents in a working-class family in Leamington Spa. At the age of 18 he joined the army and had his first artistic experience when painting rounders in red, white and blue on the wings of fighter planes and bombers. In 1942 he was captured by Nazis and held as prisoner of war for four years. After his release in 1946 he moved to St. Ives and lived in a one room cottage with his six children. Frost would take early morning walks by the sea and this is when he started to notice the reflections of boats and sails in the water, which became a source of inspiration for his geometric abstractions. Frost became a Royal Academician in 1992 and in 1998 was knighted.

Peter Lanyon was born in St. Ives to a Cornish family. In 1939 he began studying under Ben Nicholson before serving with the Royal Air Force in 1940-45. Lanyon used paint, collage, construction and pottery to create works that drew on elements of Constructivism through Abstract Expressionism and in some cases Pop Art. Visiting Mexico had a huge influence on Lanyon's work in this show, as did his hobby of gliding, which eventually caused his early death at the age of 46.

Patrick Heron was born in Leeds and studied at the Slade School of Art in London, permanently moving to Cornwall after the war. In Heron's work the fields, rocks and trees of the St. Ives' coast are visible. He also made great use of the light quality of the area which

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helped him develop his distinctive colour palette. Heron's modernist ideas manifested through his work and its accompanying critical writings.

William Scott was born in Scotland and joined the army in 1942. In the Royal Engineers he learnt lithography through map making, which later influenced his work. He visited the USA in 1953 and there met Rothko, De Kooning, Klein and Pollock. In 1984 he was elected a Royal Academician. Scott's work often blurs the boundaries between still life and abstract. Scott said of his work: "I am an abstract artist in the sense that I abstract. I cannot be called non-figurative while I am still interested in the modern magic of space, primitive sex forms, the sensual and the erotic, disconcerting contours, the things of life."

The abstract works on show in *Four Giants of British Modernism* are all based on figurative ideas yet seek to highlight the expressive potential of the paint itself, drawing attention to the mark making while retaining the subject matter and imagery. The four artists went on to influence an entire generation of others. Frost, Lanyon and Scott all lectured at The Bath Academy of Art at Corsham, a leading institution amongst young artists of the time, offering a unique opportunity for students to work with professional working artists. The artist's influence on one another is also evident in the exhibition with some of the works being shown side by side for the very first time.

For more information please contact Anna Beketov, Damson PR, [anna.beketov@damsonpr.com](mailto:anna.beketov@damsonpr.com), +44 (0)20 3981 5200.

Notes to editors:

About the artists:

### **Terry Frost RA (1915 – 2003)**

Sir Terry Frost was born in Leamington Spa in 1915. After several jobs, Frost joined the Territorial Army in 1933 and was called up for service upon the declaration of war in 1939. Frost was taken prisoner of war in 1941 and began painting during his internment, sending paintings home in 1944. Whilst in captivity he met British artist and fellow prisoner Adrian Heath, who was instrumental in getting Frost a place to study at art school. Upon his return to England and on the advice of Heath, Frost moved with his wife to St Ives, and coincidentally the same road as Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. An artistic community built up, drawn by Nicholson and Hepworth, and included Peter Lanyon and Bryan Winter amongst others. In 1947, Frost returned to London until 1950 to train at Camberwell School of Art, and Frost was heavily influenced by Victor Pasmore, then a teacher at Camberwell. Frost's family remained in Cornwall, and it was the motifs of the Cornish landscape that dominate throughout Frost's career. Coastlines, quays, boats, sails, waves and the sun constitute the building blocks of Frost's formal qualities in his continual negotiation between abstraction and figuration, exploring aspects of balance, rhythm, relational shapes, line, colour, space and depth. During the 1950s Frost, alongside Patrick Heron, Bryan Winter and, in particular, Roger Hilton, became one of Britain's most creative, prominent and prolific painters.

Frost had numerous British and international solo exhibitions in his lifetime, including at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1969), the ICA (1971), a touring Arts Council retrospective (1976), the Mayor Gallery (1989), Tate St Ives (198), the British Council in New York (1998) and an RA retrospective in 2000. He was made an RA in 1992 and awarded a knighthood in 1998. Throughout his career, Frost was revered as a teacher, working at Leeds College of Art, Bath Academy of Art, Coventry Art College, Reading University, and the University of

California. Frost was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Law by the Council for National Academic Awards in 1977, a Doctorate of Letters by the University of Exeter in 1999 and the same doctorate by the University of Warwick in 2000. Frost's work is held in numerous private and public collections around the world including Tate, MoMA, and the National Gallery of Canada.

### **Patrick Heron (1920 – 1999)**

Patrick Heron was born in Headingley, Leeds, in 1920. He studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, between 1937 and 1939. He then lived in Cornwall and Welwyn Garden City before registering as a conscientious objector during the Second World War. Moving back to Cornwall he worked with Bernard Leach, Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. After the war he established a reputation as a leading abstract artist and critic moving permanently to Cornwall in 1956. He married, raised two daughters, and received a CBE in 1977. In the obituary published in *The Independent*, Marc Lopatin reflected that 'Heron used that most rare and uncanny of gifts: the ability to invent an imagery that was unmistakably his own, and yet which connects immediately with the natural world as we perceive it, and transforms our vision of it. Like those of his acknowledged masters, Braque, Matisse and Bonnard, his paintings are at once evocations and celebrations of the visible, discoveries of what he called "the reality of the eye".' Heron was awarded a CBE 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. Solo exhibitions were held at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1968), the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1972) and the Barbican, London (1985) among others. A major retrospective of Heron's work was organised by the Tate Gallery, London (1998) and a second retrospective was held at Tate St Ives in 2018 (touring to the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate, Kent).

### **Peter Lanyon (1918 - 1964)**

Peter Lanyon was born on February 8, 1918 in St. Ives, Cornwall. He began receiving private art lessons at an early age before studying at the Euston Road School and Penzance School of Art. Lanyon created abstracted landscapes of the Cornish countryside that were directly related to his passion for hang-gliding. The views he saw while hovering above the landscape, influenced the linear forms and patterns found in his paintings.

In 1946 he married Shelia St. John Browne and they had six children between 1947 and 1957. After World War II Lanyon was actively involved with the Crypt group and was a founder member of the Penwith School of Art in 1949. Lanyon had his first one-man exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery in London in 1950 and began teaching at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham, until 1957. After his first New York solo exhibition in 1957, his work underwent a change, partly caused by his exposure to the works of Mark Rothko and Robert Motherwell. It was these two artists that encouraged Lanyon to create looser and more abstract compositions. Lanyon had a tragic death aged just 48 as a result of a gliding accident on August 31, 1964 in Taunton, United Kingdom. Today, his works are held in the collections of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., and the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh.

### **William Scott RA (1913 – 1989)**

William Scott was born in Greenock, Scotland and grew up in Northern Ireland where he attended Belfast College of Art 1928-31, and at the Royal College of Art, London 1931-5 where he studied both sculpture and painting.

Scott lived in France from 1937 to 1939, teaching art in Brittany. From 1939 he worked in Dublin, London and Somerset and in 1946 visited Cornwall, meeting Nicholson, Lanyon, Frost and Wynter, and from then on was a frequent visitor to the artistic community of St Ives. Scott

is best known for the still lifes he produced from the mid-1940s. He also experimented with abstract painting in the mid-1950s. Concerned with still-life and ideas of 'primitive realism', his work reflects the influence of Cezanne, Chardin and Nicholson in its deliberately presented, symbolic simplification. Influenced by American painting, he produced larger abstract works between 1952 and 1954 but returned to still-life later in the decade. Later abstracts, 1958-62, used evocative shapes which reflected still-life and the nude; they became increasingly refined and economical. More recent work combines the still-life subject with harmonious, vibrant colour and the purity of the abstract paintings. He exhibited at the Leger Galleries from 1942, at the Hanover Gallery and from 1974 at Gimpel Fils, London. He has shown nationally and internationally and in 1958 a retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Venice Biennale. His work is represented in many public collections including the Tate Gallery and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. He taught painting at the Bath Academy of Art, 1946-56, at the Hamburg Academy in 1965, and from 1963-64 he was Ford Foundation Artist in Residence in Berlin. His awards include a first prize at the John Moores Exhibition of 1959, and in 1966 he received his CBE.