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A SCOTTISH PHENOMENON?
SCOTTISH ART IN THE EIGHTIES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

In the Thatcher years people were buying with their ears and not with their eyes.
(Peter Blake, 1994, Radio 4)

The 1980's were hailed as a remarkable success story for Scottish art. They were however a time of debateable vitality. This "new" Scottish art was spearheaded by the success of several artists, the most prominent of which were Steven Campbell, Adrian Wiszniewski, Peter Howson and Ken Currie. They were all figurative painters fresh out of the Glasgow School of Art. Campbell uses the forms of figurative and narrative painting to comment on the human condition: Wiszniewski's work seeks to define the developing, dreaming and longing ego of the artist: Howson and Currie's monumental canvasses deal with the heroic human figure in the face of social, historical and urban oppression, a form of social realism. It was as if this work had been created by and for a newly born nation.

This however was not a phenomenon, rather the rise in popularity of Scottish figurative painting in the eighties was due to a well orchestrated series of events and new political climate, namely Thatcherism.

In order to establish this it is necessary to explore Scotland's inherent need to distinguish its own national identity, which leads us into the political arena and ultimately to Thatcherist Britain. Such issues will be explored in this theses in so far as they are relevant to Scottish art of the eighties.

We must distinguish the main figures behind the rise of interest in figurative art in Scotland. Initially we must look to the artists Alexander Moffat and John Bellany who had set out in the 1960's to return the figure to prominent importance and who in the 1980's sought finally to achieve this goal. We must also examine the critics who played a major role in over-promoting Scottish art and examine other forms of art that existed in Scotland in the eighties.

In my initial chapter I will lay the foundations for the return of figurative art in the eighties, discussing Scotland's long search for a national identity and how the political climate has effected Scottish art in the 1980's. Here I will introduce Alexander Moffat and his programme to forge a new national iconography in figuration. I will also examine the exhibition in London "A New Spirit in Painting" (1981) as the starting point for the return to figurative painting in Scotland.

Chapter 2 will discuss the major breakthroughs in art in Scotland in the seventies when painting was not the dominant art form. Through to the changes that were made at the Glasgow School of Art and the young artists that emerged.

Chapter 3 will analyze the critical over-hype in the eighties, the packaging and marketing of these young vulnerable artists.

In Chapter 4 I will discuss the loss of momentum of the "Glasgow Pups" in the 1990's and its lasting effect on life in Scotland and at the art school.

CHAPTER 1

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

> Scotland is unique among European nations in its failure to develop a nationalist sentiment strong enough to be a vital factor in its affairs ... The reason probably lies in the fact that no comprehensive enough agency had emerged; and the commonsense of our people had rejected one-sided expedients incapable of addressing the organic complexity of our national life. For it must be recognised that the absence of nationalism is, paradoxically, a form of Scottish self-determination. If that self-determination which ... had reduced Scottish arts and affairs to a lamentable pass is to be induced to take different forms and express itself taken for the past two hundred and twenty years, the persuading programme must embody considerations of superior power to those which have considerations of superior power to those which have so long ensured the opposite process. Scottish opinion is anachronism - proof in matters of this kind ...
>
> Hugh MacDiarmid
> (Scotland and the Future, 1927)

Questions concerning the Scottish artistic tradition and Scottish identity are reoccurring themes that run throughout the history of art in Scotland this century. Questions of identity will naturally arise, when a small country finds itself a nation within a nation, when all things 'British' are looked on as being 'English', simply because England is the dominant culture in the union. Scottish artists, as a result, either tend to emphasise what they feel are their specifically Scottish characteristics, or they categorize themselves in an international context, rather than submit to being 'British'.

"A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." (Joseph Stalin 1879-1953.)

The problem for Scotland was how to assert a national identity against the grain of British nationalism. Just as the Soviet Union and Russia had once been virtually interchangeable in the language of international politics. The search for national identity, had played a major part in developing some twentieth century art movements. German expressionism grew out of a desire to stress the Germanness of German art and deal with concerns of spirituality in a spontaneous way, rather than the order and balance of French art. The increasingly rapid spread of information this century, from one country to another, means that movements started in one country have appeared almost simultaneously in another. National artistic consciousness however, had not disappeared and individualism is sought in a world of increasing standardization.

Certain Scottish artists such as John Bellany and J. D. Fergusson have sought to define a Scottish tradition within which they could work, in order to form a solid basis for future artists to develop. In his book 'Modern Scottish Painting' (1943), Fergusson describes

> The Scots characteristics of independence and vigour, colour and particularly quality of paint, which means paint that is living and not merely a coat of any sort of paint placed between containing lines like a map.

These painterly qualities are also evident in Bellany's work although he is more concerned with human value rather than formal ones. Scotland is a small country that feels the cultural and material presence of its larger nation, England. In asserting its non-identity it feels it has to differentiate itself from English culture.

The revival of Scottish cultural self-confidence can be traced, according to Angus Calder, back to many sources; to the experiments in Scottish writing by Hugh MacDiarmid and Grassic Gibbon in the twenties and thirties; to the 'revival' of Scottish folk music in the fifties; to the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Party in the sixties; and to the stirrings, around the same time of a new 'avant-garde' attitude to writing in Glasgow. (Calder, 1993, p. 24.) But above all it involved a renewed sense of Scottish cultural consciousness which led to an increasing sense of distance from the United Kingdom and an urge to relate art, music and literature in Scotland to European tendencies.

Isolated angry voices, such as that of the writer Hugh MacDiarmid, hammered out against the types of unrepresentative art produced by the colourists and the 'belle peintres', that prevailed around the first half of the twentieth century. He played the role of a conscientious objector through the 1960's and '70's.

The debate on Scottish identity goes back to the Union of 1707 when Scotland gave up its political independence to become what was ultimately a minor partner in the State of Great Britain and the British Empire. This left Scotland better off financially, but a national without a civic government this created a two-fold situation for Scotland; their hearts were in the Highlands, while they were politically controlled from London.

Britain was a State composed of four nations and many nationalities, but in 1922, Catholic Ireland broke away from Britain. At the time there seemed little reason to believe that the Protestants of Northern Ireland or the other minor nationalities of Wales or Scotland would follow their example. Conditions were different in these other cases.

Southern Ireland had been a conquered country with deep-laid cultural differences underpinned by Catholicism. A largely peasant society had produced the classical nationalist reaction against alien rule. Through battle and political achievements Southern Ireland had been separated from Britain by a great political gulf. For this reason, MacDiarmid saw that it appeared improbably that other regions of the British Isles would follow Ireland's example.

Unlike Ireland, they had become significantly industrialized in the course of this century and all three had turned into important sub-centres of Victorian capitalist economy. Around the great urban centres of Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff, evolved middle and working classes who, "consciously and indisputably, gave their primary allegiance to the imperial state". (Nairn, 1981, p. 75.) Anglicization was left to the slower,more natural-seeming pressures of one large central nationality upon the smaller peripheral areas.

Until the succession of Southern Ireland in 1922, a general formula of Home Rule for all three countries was widely discussed and approved of, while Britain remained strong economically, such an approach did not appear too threatening. Britain had a strong magnetic pull over its lands due to Anglicization, its economic factors benefiting these minor nations, therefore pressure for genuine self-government was not very great. Apart from the exception of Southern Ireland in 1922, pressure for self-determination remained weak until the 1970's. In the 1970's Scottish national identity, then swelled into a major political issue, Ruth Levitas suggests that this was due to the defeat of the British Empire and the feeling that the old British State was collapsing. This breakdown was occurring in the form of territorial disintegration, rather than as a long awaited political revolution.

(Levitas, 1986, p. 109.) Therefore Scotland began to assert its own identity upon popular culture. As Willy Marley put it

> The Bay City Rollers were not the Beatles, their appeal had overlapping features, but their national identity the incorporation of tartan into casual clothes, waistbands, seams, scarves - was a prime factor in their popularity.
>
> (Mally, 1994, p. 79)

The political situation in Scotland has continually fed back into its art. For most of the 19th century Scottish art, along with Scottish industry, expanded into the export business. So, instead of working for the direct demands of a Scottish public, painters were supplying manufactured images of Scotland for an outside market. This ultimately fed back into the home demands for painting, where the private patron preferred images of Scotland that were steeped in rural nostalgia. Scottish Victorian art, therefore presented a one-side distorted view of life in Scotland.

In the late nineteenth century however, Glasgow nurtured a group of young painters, who were later to become renowned throughout Europe and North America as 'The Glasgow Boys'. They were not all born and trained in Glasgow, nor did they all live in Glasgow but in the 1880's they shared or were frequent visitors to the studios of the Glasgow School of Art. Most of these artists, who included James Guthrie; John Lavery; E. A. Walton; Arthur Melville; George Henby and E. A. Hornell were in their mid-twenties and what brought them together was their enthusiasm for realism in subject matter. They favoured clean, fresh colours, such as James Guthrie's 'A Hind's Daughter', 1883 (fig. 1). The clear bright light is achieved without showing the sun or

(Figure 1) James Guthrie "A Hind's Daughter" 1883
oil on canvas, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

a blue sky, there is no attempt to depict perspective through modelling but a reliance on the creation of depth through the handling and the distinct changes of brush stroke. Although many of the boys were to succeed in later years, the attitude of the Glasgow press and public towards them in the 1880's was not appreciative. When Europe, however, took them to its heart, the Glasgow public hurriedly did likewise. This characteristic repeats itself again throughout Scottish history, especially in the 1980's as we shall see later. By 1900, the Glasgow Boys had ceased to be the innovative force they had once been. Artists such as James Guthrie and John Lavery turned increasingly to painting fashionable society portraits.

At this time, many other Scottish artists, such a F. C. B. Cadell (1883-1937) and S. J. Peploe (1871-1935), were still reacting strong against Victorian paintings, with their sentimental narratives and romanticized Highland landscape. They were to become known as Scottish Colourists and were responsible for moving the subject matter of Scottish painting away from the human figure, within a particular social context, to concentrate on 'pure' non-literary motifs such as still lifes, so they could fix all their energies on the pictorial problems of compositional arrangements and colour harmonies, such as S. J. Peploe's 'Roses in a Blue Vase, Black Background' 1904-5, (fig. 2) with its pronounced outlines that produce a strongly faceted effect. However this did not represent a specifically Scottish identity, although the colourist painterly tradition has stayed strong in Scotland to this date.

From the 1960's onwards the visual arts began to change significantly although some of those improvements were more psychological than practical. The opening in Edinburgh

(Figure 2) S. J. Peploe "Roses in a Blue Vase, Black Background", 1904-5, oil on canvas, Private Collection

of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 1960, for instance, granted a degree of status to modern art at the time which the general public had previously refused to recognise, while the creation of the Scottish Arts Council in 1967 gave artists concrete financial help.

In Edinburgh in the early sixties, two students, Alexander Moffat and John Bellany led a return to monumental painting as a vehicle for the expression of present needs. They had met with MacDiarmid and had been powerfully affected, so much so that as Moffat reiterates, they were to 'reflect the prevailing watered down tradition of French painting as unsuitable for a modern Scottish painter'.

In 1962 they defiantly hung their realist paintings on the railings outside the Royal Scottish Academy, (fig. 3) during Edinburgh's International Festival. Such a gesture was to emphasize that art, if it has any real justification for serious critical attention, should be both relevant to a whole range of human experience, and accessible to all who wish to widen their social, intellectual and emotional awareness. They then set forth a programme to forge a new national iconography, looking to Beckmann, Dix, Leger and the contemporary East Germans for inspiration. Moffat, like MacDiarmid, saw himself as both part of the tradition of European Radicalism as well as an exponent of the living traditions of Scottish culture.

In 1971, there was a Scottish Arts Council exhibition called 'Scottish Realism' which toured all over Scotland and included amongst these two, the likes of Ian McLeod, Bill Gillon and Bill Crozier. Their approach showed a willingness to take direct inspiration from the great art that came from the past in a way that was fashionable at the time.

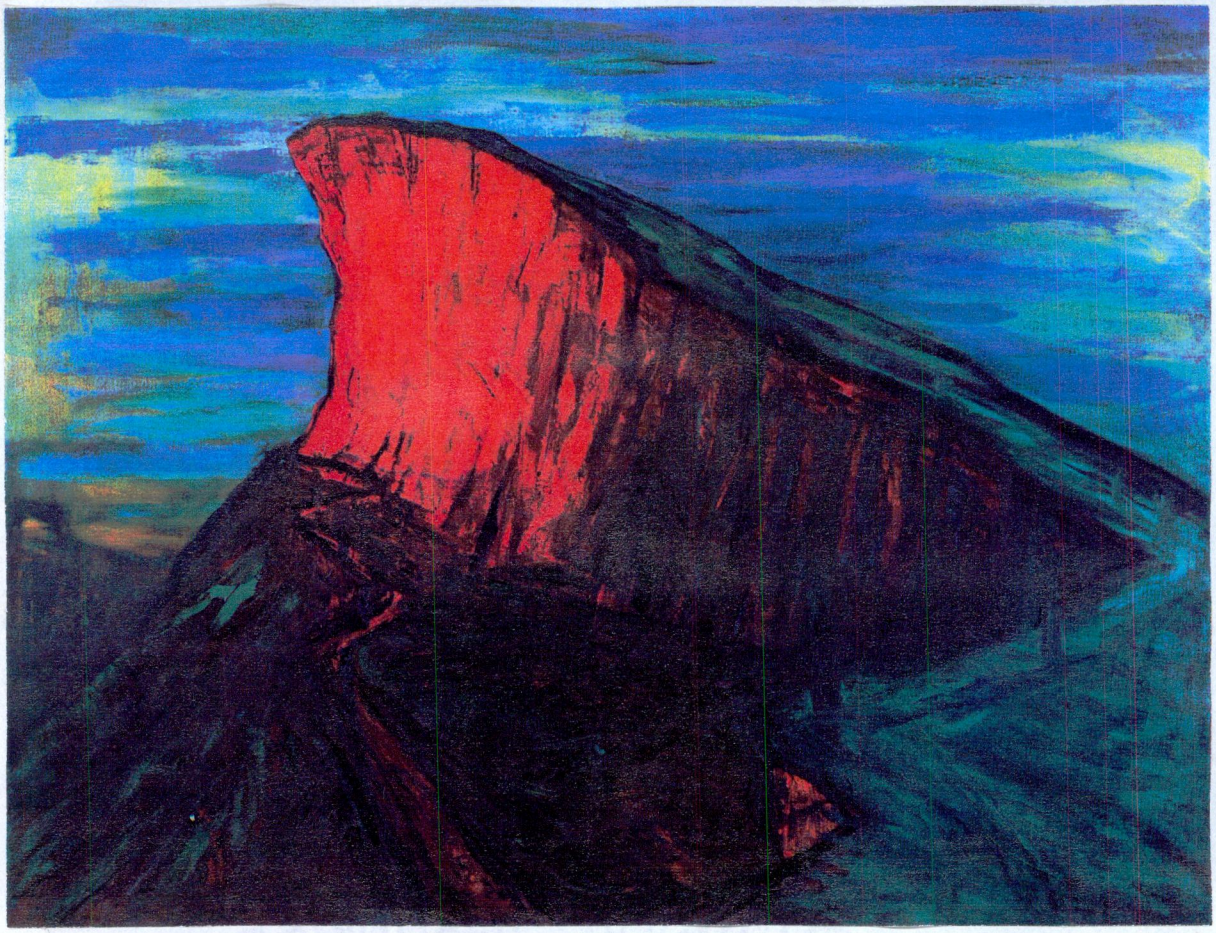
(Figure 3) Moffat and Bellany outside Royal Scottish Academy 1965

Bellany and Moffat saw themselves as the first to offer a serious challenge in Scotland to previous manners of Scottish painting. Following the example of the leader of modern Scottish literature, MacDiarmid, Bellany also attached his paintings to the realist/metaphysical tradition of Northern European art. While still at college in Edinburgh he produced work that dealt with the harsh physical and social realities of the fishing community, with which he had a deep personal attachments. They were painted in a dark, brooding manner of expression on a huge scale, such as the painting 'Celtic Fish People', 1977 (fig. 4). These themes have consisted through his paintings to date.

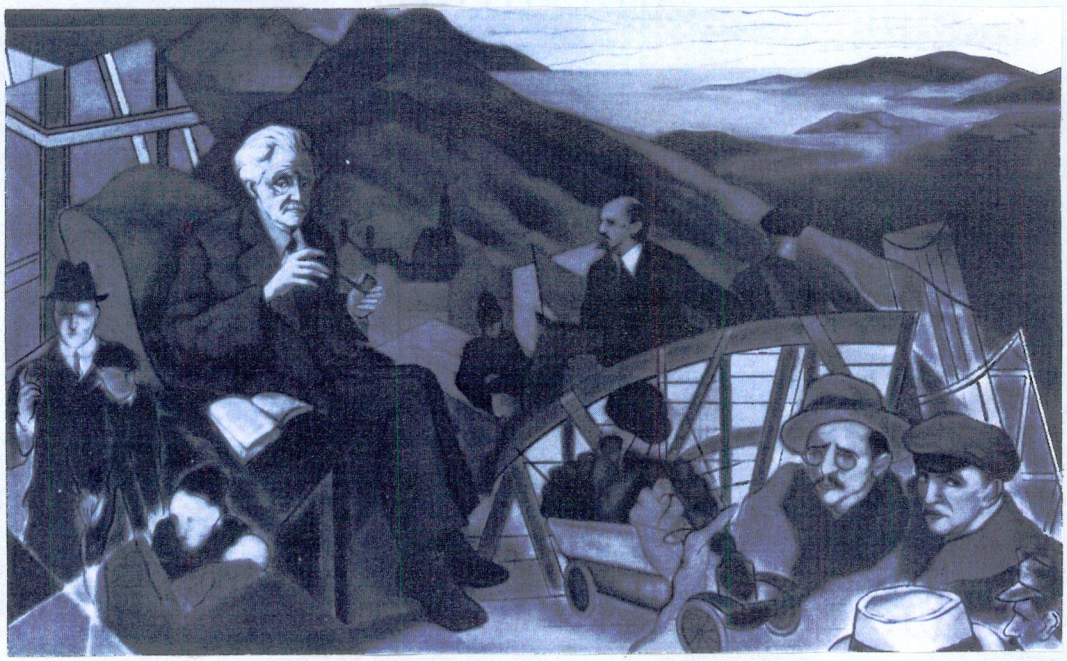
More recently, Moffat reverted to landscape painting to record the changes occurring in Germany and warning of the disasters which befell Germany under Fascism. His style allows little concentration on the physical sensual qualities of paint, as seen in his painting 'The Rock', 1989-90 (fig. 5) but these qualities can be seen more clearly in his painting of Hugh MacDiarmid entitled 'Hugh MacDiarmid, (Hymn to Lenin), 1979 (fig. 6). His political interests are evident here, as he invokes myths and figures of romantic cultural communism, an icon of Lenin merged one of the saints of Scottish renaissance.

They had both moved to London in the 1960's which they found 'a breath of fresh air' after the 'narrow-minded and moribund Scottish art circles'. Bellany, from 1968 onwards, taught in Southern English art schools and by 1980, after completing several portraits of Scottish poets, Moffat returned to Scotland, to a four-day a week job teaching at the Glasgow School of Art. During the 1960's and '70's their project had not taken hold through Scotland, but in the 1980's their influence helped return the figure and pictorial narrative to a position of central importance, specifically in Glasgow. Timothy

(Figure 4) John Bellany "Celtic Fish People", 1977, oil on canvas



(Figure 5) Alexander Moffat, "The Rock" 1989-90
oil on canvas, Collection of the Artist



(Figure 6) Alexander Moffat, "Hugh MacDiarmid (Hymn to Lenin)", 1979
oil on canvas, Collection of the Scottish Arts Council

Hyman reflects how in many respects, Campbell and his fellow students in the 1980's at the Glasgow School of Art can be seen as the fulfilment of the Bellany Moffat project (Hyman, 1987, p. 689).

What made this possible also was the political situation in Britain as a whole at this time. The rise of Thatcherism in the 1970's was made possible by the widespread perception in the Conservative Party that the Heath government had been a failure and that Britain was becoming ungovernable. This coincided with the onset of world recession and increasing relative decline. The climate of failure and indecision that clung to British governments in the 1960's and 1970's gave the political opportunity for a sharp break. The alliance that was forged under the Thatcher leadership between the populists and the ideologists in the Conservative Party proved a powerful one. It was accepted that to reverse Britain's relative economic decline, a major break with post-war social democracy had to be carried out. It was the vision of a new social order and the faith that it could be brought about, which made the Thatcher government appear radical.

The extrovert sixties gave way to a more inward looking art in the seventies. an art that was considered the latest emanation of the avant-garde spirit, Christos M. Joachimides asserts that the avant-garde of the seventies, with its narrow puritan approach was devoid of the joy of the senses, it lost its creative impetus and as a result began to stagnate (Joachimides, 1981, p. 15). However, the seventies were a time, when alternative interpretations of the development of modern art began to emerge. With the influence of centres of cultural authority starting to be challenged from all angels, Scotland, as with other previously marginalized countries, saw that there was an opportunity that it could

flourish in a new critical, democratic eliminate. In Scotland at the time there was some very interesting work going on, specifically in their reaction against the painterly medium as we shall see later.

With the rise in the oil crisis at the end of the seventies and the threat to material needs, a new art, which would ensure hope for the future was in demand. This came in the form of an exhibition in 1981 at the Royal Academic London, called "A New Spirit in Painting", and was the first international contemporary painting exhibition to take place for nearly twenty years.

Thirty-eight artists from all over Europe and America were invited to exhibit, such as Lucien Freud, Sando Chia, Philip Guston and Bruce McLean (fig. 7). There were three generations of artists involved and each had a considerable body of work behind them. The exhibition reasserted traditional painterly values and marked a return to more conservative concerns, rediscovery of the sheer joy of painting. an art that was concerned with personal relationships and personal worlds.

> this new spirit in painting is one which has swept aside unnecessary convention to establish a new relationship between image and reality through a painting of intrinsic poetic force and piercing imagination.
>
> (Joachimides, 1981, p. 16)

Scottish critics and artists alike were quick to assimilate themselves with this new painterly ethos. They achieved this through their use of similar terminology as used in the 1981 exhibition. Joachimides uses terms like "creative imagination" or "expressive imagination" which reappear again and again through Scottish art in the eighties. We just have to look to 1987 and "The Vigorous Imagination Exhibition". All this helped pave the way for the "New Glasgow Boys".

(Figure 7) Bruce McLean, "Yucca Gloriosa", 1989
acrylic on wax crayon on photographic paper

CHAPTER 2

A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Defining a specific school of Scottish painting is a complex issue. One of the discourses that emerges is the alternating importance of Glasgow and Edinburgh as artistic centres. Robin Stemp proposes that there are two identifiable schools, which he identifies as "the Glasgow Swagger and Edinburgh-carry-on-the-colourist tradition", (Stemp, 1987, p. 811).

After an exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in London in 1890, a London critic likened the "Glasgow Boys" style to that of a "School". Although the painters still considered themselves as "just the boys". The Glasgow Boys handling of paint and colour established a tradition in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow which continues to set apart the work of the Glasgow trained painter from that of his colleagues from the East.

> ... a century ago, Scotland was certainly in need of a "New School" for Scottish schools didn't have the style or flair of other schools in London.
>
> (Billcliffe, 1985, p. 47)

The reputation of the Glasgow School of Art was still high in the 1920's but by the 1930's, Edinburgh college of Art eclipsed Glasgow, with a reputation as being the liveliest and most liberal art school in Britain thanks to the Andrew Grant Bequest, Hubert Willington, principal (1932-43) was able to award travelling scholarships to his students, in order "to make the students good Europeans". The characteristics of Scottish painting at this point, could still be termed in one word "painterliness".

However, during the 1940's and '50's several Scottish artists demonstrated an intelligent interest in the European abstraction of constructivism. In the 1950's, Gear, Paolozzi, Davie and Pulsford made significant contributions to abstraction in Scotland but they had to leave Scotland to make this possible.

The 1960's and '70's were an extraordinary time in London with a challenge to inherited cultural institutions with official events like the Hayward Gallery exhibition in 1977, exhibiting a selection of the then current British art, which included work by Peter Blake, David Hockney, Eduardo Paolozzi, Anthony Coro among others.

Internationally in the mid-1970's there was a reaction against painting, but in Scotland this found particular focus in the reflection of the particular subjective painterly ethos that prevailed in the art schools. Individuals of the older generation had always stood out against this, but with Ian Hamilton Finlay, his rejection had happened much earlier and it had taken him out of art altogether for a while, until he returned to it via poetry.

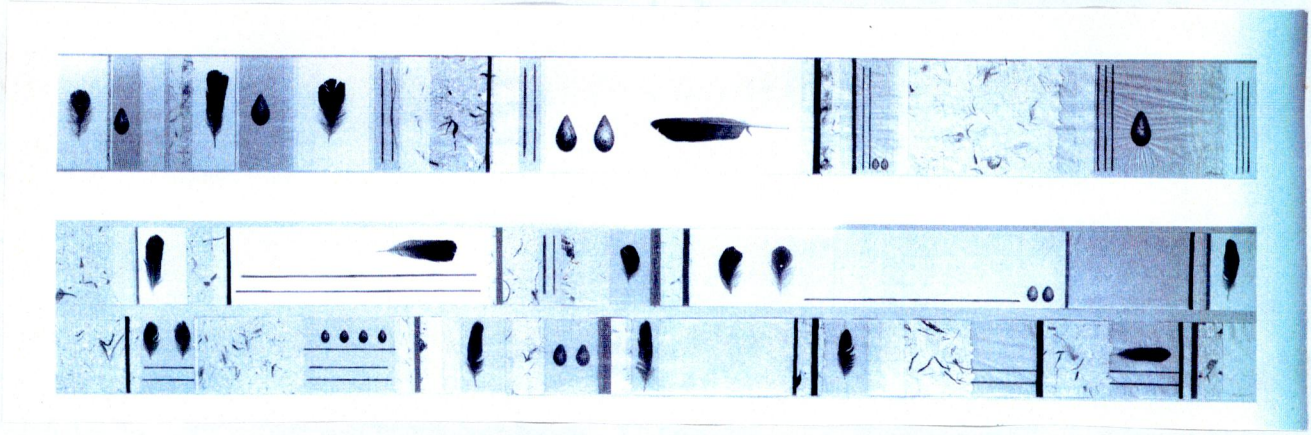
One of the most important innovations to be introduced in the 1960's was assemblage. John Elderfield asserts that assemblage is one of the two most important innovations of modern art, the other being abstraction and may be said to encompass that which is most modern in modernism (Elderfield, 1992, p. 7).

A component of this, concrete art, was a powerful and fascinating current of which Paolozzi was a forerunner, ran alongside abstract painting and modernism and offered an alternative to both, called after the concrete poetry of its practitioner Ian Hamilton

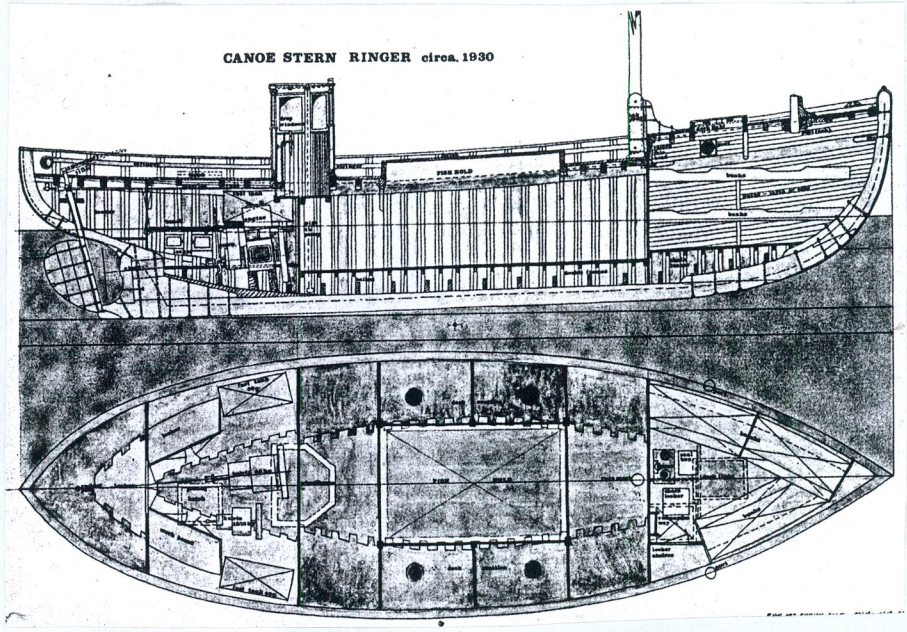
Finlay, it was the exact opposite of abstraction. Others who practised this type of art were Will Maclean, Bruce McLean, Robert Callender and Glen Orwin.

For artists as different as Eduardo Paolozzi and Will Maclean, it evoked the direct feelings of the real world. In 1977, an Arts Council exhibition, selected by Paul Overy, called "Inscape", grouped together six artists including Will Maclean, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Glen Onwin, Eileen Lawrence, Fred Steen and Ainslie Yule. Duncan Macmillan points to the work of Will Maclean as a typical example of the characteristics of the exhibition. Eileen Lawrence was making drawings of collections of natural objects, such as "Scroll I" and "Scroll III" (fig. 8) not unlike some of Maclean's "Ring Net" drawings (fig. 9) was making drawings for sculptors of mysterious surreal objects which suggest the same kind of pseudo-archaeological mystery that Maclean was exploring in some of his constructions. Fred Steen was making boxes, but their use of a formal aesthetic underlined the disconstructiveness of Maclean's approach. Finlay was also using ships and fishing in a way opened up its poetic and metaphysical possibilities, linking past and present.

In his introduction to the catalogue for "Inscape", Overy remarked that there were no painted canvasses in the show. This was not by design but it simply reflected the current concerns of some of the most thoughtful artists then working in Scotland. One of these artists, Maclean (who is presently a tutor at The Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee) did not have to leave Scotland to sustain his artistic career. He still works and lives in Scotland today, and was recently honoured with a retrospective exhibition in Scotland in 1993. His work concerns itself with the fishing communities and the



(Figure 8) Eileen Lawrence, "Scroll I", 1977, watercolour on paper, 25 x 240 cms
"Scroll III", 1977, watercolour on paper, 38 x 244 cms



(Figure 9) William Maclean, "Ring Net Drawing", 1981

(Figure 10) William Maclean, "Skye Fisherman in Memoriam", 1989

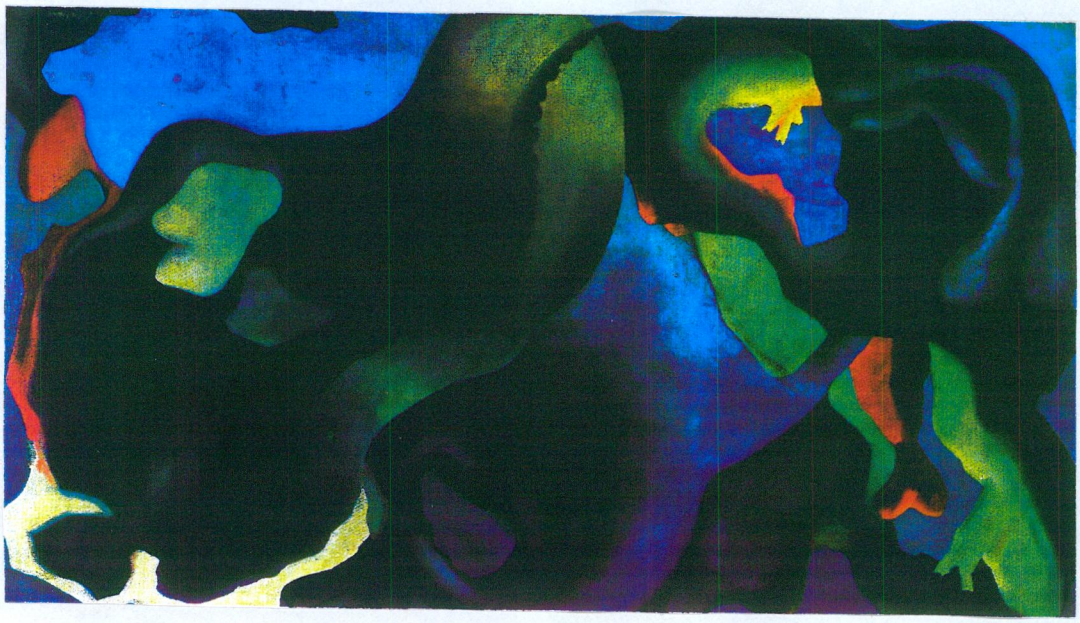
Highlands where he was raised such as "Skye Fisherman in Memoriam", 1989 (fig. 10). His work has stood the test of time, and he can be truly seen as a distinct Scottish artist.

Although Scottish figurative painting received much of the critical attention during the 1980's, high quality abstract painting continued to be produced throughout the decade. The Scots in fact, could be seen to be the pioneers of the development of 20th century British abstraction, especially through the paintings of Alan Davies "Portrait of a Scribe No. 2", 1965 (fig. 11) and William Johnstone, "A Point in Time", 1929-37, (fig. 12). These abstract painters were closely connected with surrealism. Thus, in their paintings, they used the power of intuitive gesture, forceful expressive colour and the associative meaning of shapes and colours. Gesture and application of paint are still of crucial importance, but now more for their own sake rather than for any symbolic or metaphysical expression. As Michael Spens expresses (Spens, 1986, p. 2):

> The middle generation of Scottish artists are outstanding in retrospect, although they have, to date, suffered a wayward and intermittent exposure with barely an enterprising Scot to back them.
>
> (Spens, 1986, p. 2)

The 1960's and '70's, saw the primary discipline of easel painting being questioned, but despite all the extensions of boundaries, of techniques, materials and subject matter, William Hardie recalls that "The challenge of the plain surface will always be there as the ultimate test". (Hardie, 1990, p. 7.) Whether this is true or not what is important is that the establishment has never fully acknowledged the importance of much of these artists while lately and dilutedly using many of their ideas.

(Figure 11) Alan Davie, "Portrait of a Scribe No. 2", 1965
oil on canvas, Private Collection, USA



(Figure 12) William Johnstone, "A Point in Time", 1929-37
oil on canvas, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

Edinburgh's role in the reactionary sixties passed into history and events such as the rise of the Richard Demarco Gallery, who helped to promote young Scottish artists, and the Edinburgh Festival all helped to secure Edinburgh's place in the international map.

These two decades are of crucial importance in determining that Scotland has produced exemplary abstract and assemblage artists, such as Bruce McLean, Eduardo Paolozzi, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Will Maclean.

More recently, Glasgow has reasserted its position as Scotland's leading cultural city. It has come more specifically from the studios of the Department of Drawing and Painting at the Glasgow School of Art.

In 1981, the painter Jack Knox, was appointed Head of this Department. He made the transfer from the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, where he had taught the likes of Ian Hughs, Phil Braham and Keith McIntire, who were grouped amongst other Glaswegian artists, and came under the banner "The Glasgow Pups". Knox's return to Glasgow had a direct, immediate and reviving effect on the studios.

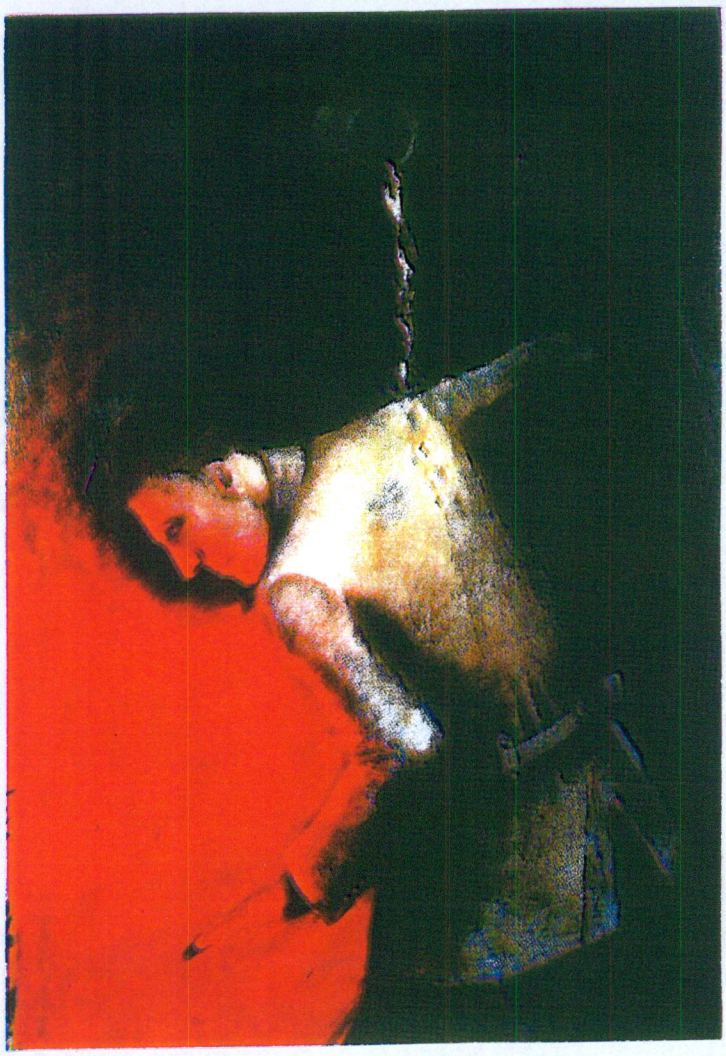
His department consisted of well-known artist teachers, namely Jimmie Robertson, Barbara Rae, Neil Dallas Browne, Tim Hardie, Geoff Squire, but more importantly, Alexander Moffat. They operated a teaching team rather than offering individual approaches. The eighties were a period of dramatic reorganisation. There were over fifty staff changes. Their degree show generated commentary about the rise of a "New Painting" in Scotland. It was easy to assimilate the work of these students with the

exhibition "A New Spirit in Painting" just the previous year Moffat had instilled in his students, this renewed interest in figurative art, looking towards the German expressionists such as Dix and Beckmann for inspiration. The influence of the German artists on the Glasgow School of Art was so evident that John Griffiths was to term these works produced as "Glasgow Beckmannian Paintings" (Griffith, 1987, p. 74). And so began the Moffat-Bellany revival. Scotland's search for a renewed way of asserting its national identity, through art, could now it seemed be achieved.

Another crucial factor which would help the Scottish public to associate Scottish art with major international artistic movements, was the exposure in London in 1981 of the Italian neo-expressionists like Cucchi, Chia and Clemente. Chia's work was certainly reflected in some of Campbell's art school paintings.

Steven Campbell's images were figurative and narrative. He comments on the human condition as seen in his painting "Accidental Baptism", 1981 (fig. 13). It shows a man between an accidental baptism as a jar of water spills over him and the red light of the fires of hell. He places figures in a dilemma.

Adrian Wiszniewski paintings employ figures, motifs and symbols. His handling of line and colour is highly active, employing closely knit brush marks such as his painting "Landscape", 1987 (fig. 14). He is concerned with the theme of developing dreams and the longing ego of the artist.



(Figure 13) Steven Campbell, "Accidental Baptism", 1981
oil on paper

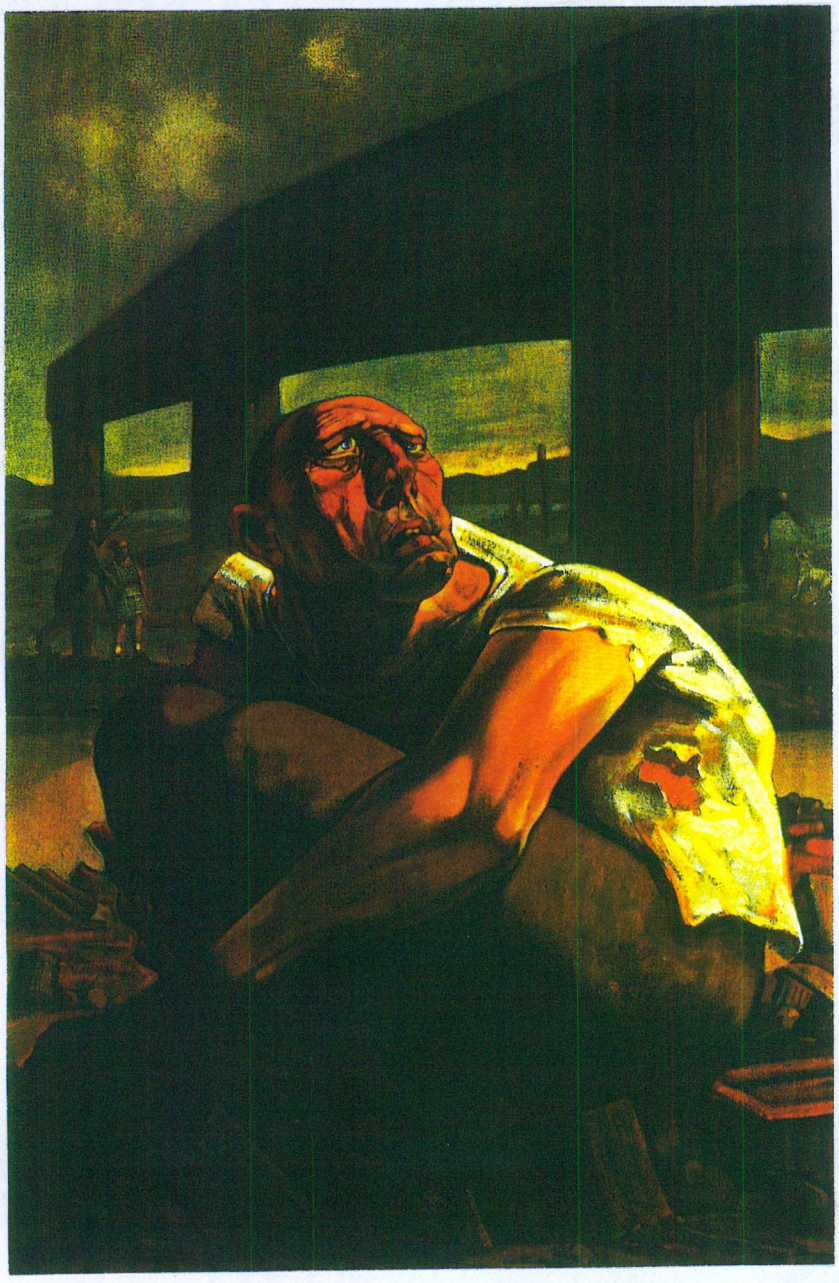
(Figure 14) Adrian Wiszniewski, "Landscape", 1987
acrylic on canvas, Collection of Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Peter Howsons paintings often explore as their subject the male environment from mercenaries to dossers. His handling of paint is gritty and earthy but they have a distinct caricature style, such as "The Bridge to Nowhere", 1991 (fig. 15). He uses national heroic figures in a present day Scotland.

Ken Currie graduated the following year but is grouped closely with these other three artists. He is thought of as a political artist above all them. In his early work he sought to highlight the plight of communities, he viewed, as victims of industry and urban decay as seen in his painting "The Street", 1990 (fig. 16). Lately his work has shown more attention to the plight of the individual rather than groups.

They all share a certain monumentality, which gives the impression that this is a public and not a private art. The figures share a bold chunky quality. "They look back to the major themes of Western art: suffering abandonment and heroism in the midst of disaster." (Griffith, 1987, p. 70.) Like the description of the exhibition "A New Spirit in Painting", 1981, the dream and ordeals of the personality are the main themes in the subject of art.

Critics who assess the main characteristics in the 1980's seem vague in their interpretations. Keith Hartley, is of the opinion that these new Glasgow Boys share a "fertile imagination" and that they create images freely drawn from a wide range of sources. This on the surface tells us virtually nothing. He notes their "lack of manners, forethoughtness and its ability to throw at us something new and unknown". This art however could not be termed as new, in the sense that Bellany and Moffat had laid the



(Figure 15) Peter Howson, "A Bridge to Nowhere", 1991
oil on canvas, Angela Flowers Gallery, London

(Figure 16) Ken Currie, "The Street", 1990
oil on canvas, Raab Gallery, London

foundations twenty years previously. "To my mind the one quality that runs through the warp and weft is a thread of gold; pure gold talent." (Henry, 1987, p. 8.) This again is vague and hardly the basis of "new schools".

Hartley also suggests that their traditional training, that of solid draughtsmanship is what sets them apart from their contemporaries in England or elsewhere. He suggests that it provided them with a superbly trained eye and sound technique.

Many pioneering abstract artists believe that the mind cannot produce anything unless it has first been filled with real images and the hand cannot execute the minds imaginings, until it has mastered the depiction of reality. Yet the ability of ones superb draughtsmanship does not automatically mean that one would produce superb abstraction paintings.

After their degree show Adrian Wiszniewski and Ken Currie remained in Scotland, though Ken was awarded the Newberry Medal and travelled to France. Ken and Adrian were awarded a postgraduate year at Glasgow in 1982-83. Steven Campbell above all showed a distinct quality that set him apart from the others and was awarded the Fulbright Award to the U.S.A. and left in 1982 for New York, the centre of the art world, where he enrolled at the Pratt Institute. He showed work in a group exhibition in 1983 which was reviewed by John Russell in the New York Times, where he was described as an artist of great originality and vision. This commentary, by such an influential and distinguished critics was quite unusual and helped to launch Campbell's career. Barbara Toll became Campbell's dealer and promoted his work, giving it even

greater exposure, leading to a string of successful solo and mixed exhibitions which were well reported in Scotland.

The period from 1983 to 1985 saw a remarkable rising of tide of interest in the work of these Glasgow artists, and artists in other parts of Scotland, created for them both personal and critical success and acclaim. In Scotland, Sandy Moffat focused the talk of a potential Scottish movement towards an exhibition which he arranged at the Third Eye Centre, Glasgow under the title "New Image Glasgow" (1985). It showed the work of Campbell, Wiszniewski, Currie, Howson, Rossi and Barclay. Waldermar Januszczak, writing in The Guardian newspaper under the title "The Glow that came from Glasgow" was responsible for titling these artists as "The Glasgow Pups".

The exhibition later went on to be shown in London's Air Gallery, which was a shrewd move on the part of Sandy Moffat, after the hype that had been carefully built up in Scotland. When it arrived in London, the media coverage was intense and the news of "what was happening in Glasgow" spread widely. Its success was such that works were bought by the Tate Gallery, Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

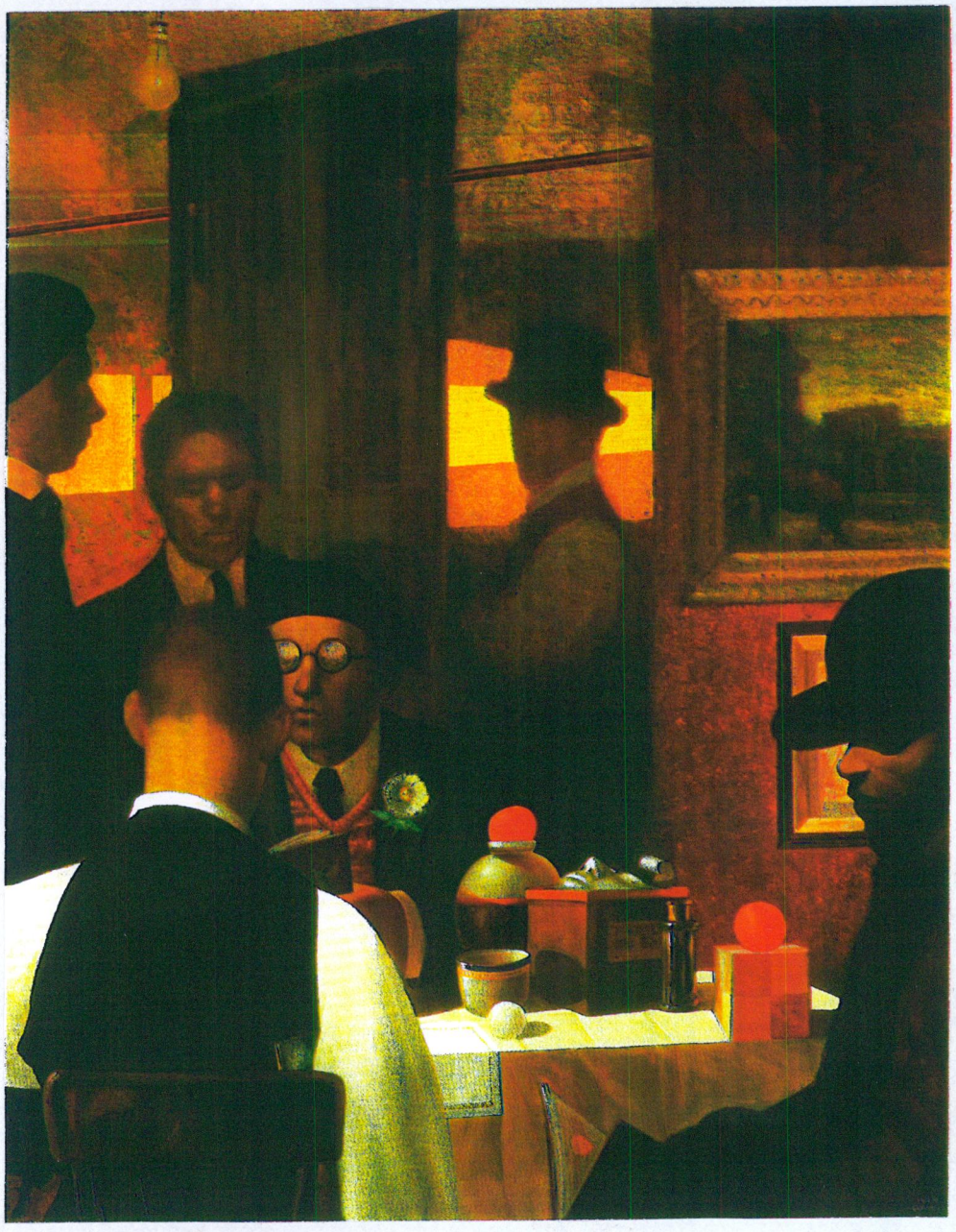
A newer second generation of "new" Scottish artists emerged from the Glasgow School of Art in 1986. It was almost as if a factory mentality prevailed in school during those crucial years in the early eighties. Jones denies that the Glasgow College was developing a house style of painting (Jones, 1987, p. 26), but the similarities in style were still there, especially in the work of Stephen Conroy. His favoured subjects have been, populated

interiors such as "Living the Life", 1988 (fig. 16). A sense of theatre is deliberately evoked, similar to Campbell's. He also chooses oblique titles such as "One Idea too Many, or Further and Better Particulars", a technique of secrecy reminiscent of Campbell again.

The second wave of students, however predominantly women in contrast to the all male preceding group, apart from Steven Conroy that is. The success of Campbell and others instilled in this new generation the belief that they too were going to gain the same recognition. Jones talks of them as having "no doubt they were going to make it" (Jones, 1987, p. 28). This group consisted among others of Rosemary Beaton, Helen Flockhart, Alison Harper, Margaret Hunter, Mary McLean and Karen Strong.

> Much fuss is made of Steven Conroy, who at 23 paints with instant patina and embodies precisely the slick Scottish academicism Campbell and his contemporaries hoped to see off.
>
> (Hyman, 1987, p. 689)

Art journalism asserts that there are consistencies of style, theme and location in contemporary Scottish art, but this is only true of the Glasgow School of Art. Modern Scottish painting in the other three art schools are extremely varied. What was happening in Glasgow was not reflected throughout Scotland. In 1987, an annual exhibition of Scottish contemporary art in Cambridge showed the work of the four Scottish schools. This was a mixed show according to Robin Stemp. It could have been in danger of being overpowered by the Will Maclean's, but what more importantly came across was the fact that even the work of the Dundee College could not have been called a Dundee School of thought or attitude or style (Stemp, 1987, p. 812). What came across here was



(Figure 17) Steven Conroy, "Living the Life", 1988
oil on canvas

individualism. Mary Rose Beaumont observed that the exhibition had no single theme, rather there were as many styles as there were artists.

The sculptor, David Mach, uses real objects to create large structures, a Greek temple, a submarine or a tank. The photographers Calum Colvin and Ron O'Donnell (both graduates of the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee) make permanent chronalin prints, containing real objects. They combine photography, collage and assemblage, in large scale pieces. Colvin dealing with the inadequacy of man before woman, such as "Incubus", 1988 (fig. 18). Ron O'Donnell deals how society is menaced by nuclear catastrophe and mindless consumption, such as "Nuclear Wasties", 1987, (fig. 19). These three artists and the work of Sam Ainsley, Kate Whiteford, helped supply the vigorous imagination with valuable relief, not having any flag to fly for painting. They also helped reassure the visitors to the exhibition that Scottish artists were not slaves to paint and canvas as the media might lead one to believe.

(Figure 18) Calum Colvin, "Incubus", 1988
Photograph, Salama-Caro Gallery

(Figure 19) Ron O'Donnell, "Nuclear Wasties", 1987

CHAPTER 3

PACKAGING AND MARKETING

There is little serious art criticism in Scotland. This deficiency has led to many detrimental problems. Without good critical support, it is difficult to create a more informed public, who are seriously interested in the visual arts. It is also difficult for Scottish critics not to be biased towards Scottish art, in their desire to expand Scotland's international artistic reputation. The wider international status of Scottish art in general and individual artists in particular, are dependent on the attention that is given by non-Scottish critics. Occasional visitors cannot be expected to have the same degree of understanding and sympathy as that of home based writers. Without solid critical back-up, artists are even more vulnerable to the shifting moods of taste and fashion on the international art scene. The most prominent of these writers involved in the critical hype over Scottish art in the eighties were, Clare Henry of The Glasgow Herald, Waldemar Januszczak of The Guardian, Marina Vaizey of The Sunday Times and Bill Packer of The Financial Times, who were responsible for a tremendous amount of press, television and radio hype.

What happened in Scotland, McIntire muses, came along at a convenient time "Committed Scottish artists, as well as slick post-modernist ones, arrived when the art market was booming", (McIntire, Calder, 1993, p. 26). There was money about and the hype by the likes of Henry, Januszczak and others, also meant that they made contacts, which secured them exhibitions abroad.

Campbell's success in America focused international attention on Scottish art. Sandy Moffat saw this as an opportunity for the taking and grouped together six painters, Steven Campbell, Adrian Wiszniewski, Peter Howson, Ken Currie, Stephen Barclay and Mario Rossi, in an exhibition, under the auspicious banner "New Glasgow Image" in 1985. This led to a belief, compounded by the hype surrounding the show, of a renaissance in Scottish art.

Marjorie Allthorpe Guyton claims that this art was not necessarily "new". Rather, artists such as Campbell and Wiszniewski were being targeted by the market and "had been the victims of more dealer hustling, more unreserved acclaim and more unguarded criticism than any other British artists of their generation" (Guyton, 1987, p. 110). It could therefore be asserted that, the Glasgow painters success stemmed solely from market hype. After the success of the Scottish sculptor, David Mach in New York the market was seeking canvas equivalences, suggesting that the painters grouped by Sandy Moffat, the curator, were merely satisfying the market.

Moffat was criticised personally for opportunism by William Clarke, for "pan handling wares of decorative talentlessness?" (Clarke, 1986, p. 67). Clarke is concerned that Moffat is the only real link between these artists, and points to the only factor connecting these artists, and points to the only factor connecting these artists as a group was their use of the figure. The show he recalls was just a timely seizure of popular art for a completely ulterior motive.

The Edinburgh Festival for its fortieth birthday in 1986, took as its theme, a celebration

of the Scottish Enlightenment, a time when Edinburgh was held in the same artistic esteem as London or Paris. This came at a convenient time for artists and critics, who were set on heightening interest in New Scottish art. An exhibition "Scottish Art Today: Artists at Work (1986)" was the first ever official festival, contemporary event of its sort. Clare Henry and her contemporaries had a field day.

She wrote an article for Arts Review, about the exhibition, subtitled "Clare Henry describes her work of preparation when game keeper turned poacher?" (Henry, 1987, p. 10). After a lot of unnecessary name dropping she described how she was approached in 1985 and asked by Timothy Clifford (Director of the Scottish National Galleries), to help select a major full-scale exhibition of contemporary Scottish art for the festival in 1986. They realised that this task was too immense and there would have to be two shows. One in 1986 and what was later to turn out to be "The Vigorous Imagination" in 1987. "Thus" she concludes "began the exciting two-year project to encourage and promote Scottish Art".

Timothy Hyman notes that Henry is "starry-eyed with success, anxious to judge every issue, just to keep the band wagon rolling". He suggests that "The Vigorous Imagination" could have been a much needed break for the one or two artists who did show "the outline of a great design" (Hyman, 1987, p. 689), but this was hampered by the selection of artists that by any measure were neither vigorous nor imaginative, "the ring-mistress, Clare Henry, has twelve lesser-known clowns on their backs". The real calamity of "The Vigorous Imagination" was that it made a poor case, not only for Scottish art, but for the Glasgow painters themselves.

Clare Henry, introducing the catalogue for "The Vigorous Imagination", asks the question: How did it all start? It started for her, she begins, at the New 57 Gallery in Edinburgh back in 1981. "A group of students organised by Sandy Moffat were having a show" (Henry, 1987, p. 24), it was here she met Steven Campbell. At about the same time at a little exhibition in Ayr, she came across sketches of boxers, prostitutes, drunks and dance hall fights.

> I enquired after the unknown artist and was informed that he was working in a supermarket, stocking shelves. I wrote a rave review, Peter Howson stopped stacking shelves and began to paint again in real earnest. He has not looked back.

And so as Angus Calder so aptly put it "... rather like Yule Brynner in the Magnificent Seven, Henry went on finding new stars" (Calder, 1993, p. 24). Calum Colvin, for example, while he was still a student, she found his great glossy colour photographs "irresistible". Even back in the early seventies, she was involved in placing an advert in The Glasgow Evening Times for evening classes at the Glasgow Print Studios. Joseph Urie, then unemployed, enrolled and "Nine years, two degrees later, he graduated from the prestigious Royal Academy Schools, London, with a clutch of prizes to his name". Henry, unashamedly enjoys taking pleasure in what she sees are her sole achievements.

Critics are divided over the validity of the title "The Vigorous Imagination". Hyman recites that it would be "hard to find art less vigorous, than the washout Braham, and Urie and McIntire", (Hyman, 1987, p. 688). What grounds do the title stand on. When it comes to it, Henry perhaps outsteps her own limitations in suggesting that Scots possess a unique "vivid imagination".

> Go into any Scottish pub on a Saturday, even Monday night and the main characteristics of a new Scottish art are readily apparent. Emotion is high, eloquent gestures accompany leapfrog dialogue. The psychotic leaps of conversation soon turn into high parody and higher flights of fancy, vigorous imagination runs riot.
>
> (Henry, 1987, p. 8)

Critics such as Henry, did not take well to any negative criticism that may have been thrown in their direction. Anthony Jones considered any kind of negative criticism neither "helpful or loyal". Cordelia Oliver's critical view of this new Scottish art as being "short-lived and shallow .... childish high-jinks", was resented by Jones, who retaliated by calling her a "bitter dog-in-the-manger". (Jones, 1987, p. 28.) There was also a feeling on the West coast that their (Glaswegian) "artists were the subject of predictably condescending neers from Edinburgh". But there were those who passionately believed in the energy, vision and originality of the new Scottish painters such as Cyril Gecber, Sylvia Stevenson (whose large collection of art is entirely made up these Scottish painters), Ricky Demarco and Andrew Brown.

Why did this great upsurgence in art in Scotland in the eighties occur. Perhaps one of the most important factors was the growing number of places where Scottish and international art could be shown, like the Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh, (who was deemed as a pioneer for showing art from Eastern Europe and had arranged exhibitions of contemporary art in Edinburgh since the early 1960's). In the seventies, several galleries opened in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Some of the former including the 369 Gallery and the Fruitmarket Gallery and some of the latter including the Compass Gallery and the Third Eye Centre.

The pace of new galleries opening in the eighties quickened as more ad more young artists pressed to have their work shown. Several artist co-operatives opened, such as the Collective Gallery, Edinburgh (1984) and Transmission, Glasgow (1983). The effect of this exhibition activity has been to make artists and public more aware of what is going on at home and abroad. This has helped to slow down the exodus of artistic talent from Scotland as artists feel they can avail of appropriate exhibition space in their own country as well as having the possibility of viewing international art.

> It bothers me that I'm always grouped with the same four or five artists. There isn't that amount in common between me and those artists to justify our being seen as a coherent group, or part of a coherent group. It's done as a convenience. That Glasgow New Image Show in 1985 was really a convenience. It was arranged at no notice whatsoever and now it's more or less the same with The Vigorous Imagination Show. I've nothing to do with the other artists in that.
>
> (Adrian Wiszniewski, Kidson, 1988, p. 6)

As the "New Glasgow Boys" moved on in their separate artistic directions, they could be seen as representing deep and painful contradictions. Campbell and Wiszniewski, it seemed, were turning their backs on the blight of mass unemployment in Scotland towards a more aesthetic value "An art for art's sake atmosphere prevailed over the whole project .... In Campbell's paintings, styles meet without mixing".

Alex Kidson, suggests that it is perhaps not appropriate to see Wiszniewski as some romantic epitome of the eighties, but we should see him as a traditional idealist painter (Kidson, 1988, p. 4). Wiszniewski regards his work (in the same interview) "as in fundamental contrast to the strident character of much contemporary European figurative painting" yet he was grouped amongst the others under the banner "The Glasgow Pups"

of "New Glasgow Boys".

When we look at "The Vigorous Imagination", we must consider why these specific artists were chosen, who was responsible. Henry Mieyric Hughs, one of the chief organisers, says that they decided, from the beginning, that the emphasis should be on a selection of talented young artists. But artists who would be young enough to benefit from "the support and acclaim that had been denied to their elders". This was going to be a sure-fire way for Moffat's teaching to succeed. They (Clare Henry, Keith Hartley and Hughs) chose work, that they considered "bore the seeds of future development". Interestingly enough, the artists they came up with, seventeen in all, were mainly working in the traditional areas of painting and drawing, were mainly male dominated figurative painters.

> I understand that there is a movement happening, but the important thing is to learn whether one is part of it by the fact that one is there, or one is part of it because of something which happened accidentally.
>
> Steven Campbell (Hanley, 1991, p. 16)

The "new" generation Scottish painters, were unified by their use of the figure and their association with the Glasgow School of Art. These artists filled the void Bellany and Moffat had created in the early sixties. In fact, not all these artists were from Glasgow, Brahams, Hughes and Redfern were from Edinburgh, where their painterly tradition contributed to a strong sense of colour harmony and find handling of brush work. They were more concerned with attempting to express their emotions, through the way they handle their paint and put much less emphasis on the image, compared to the Glasgow painters. Calum Colvin and Joseph Urie were from Dundee, yet they were all gathered

loosely under the term "New Glasgow Boys".

Henry in her attempt to reinforce the notion of a united art front, suggests that these artists are determined to stay in Scotland. Scotland, after all its problems of identity, remoteness and poverty gave them their artistic start in life. This is not the case however, Steven Campbell has just moved to Italy "to get away from Scotland, or more specifically, British Conservative rule". Adrian Wiszniewski lives in Liverpool, he notes "I left Glasgow (1987) so as to wash my hands of the parochiality of Scotland". (Kidson, 1988, p. 8.)

The association of the new Scottish painters with the figurative expressionists, gave them a ready-made context for their work, and a nice little niche in the market. Perhaps those celebrating the painters overlooked the economic factors determining the forms, content and direction of art. The market demands for easel painting corresponded with a shift to the right in the social fabric of Britain during the Thatcher years. The decade not only saw a greater interest in the arts, but a more conservative taste, flavouring safe and inoffensive options in painting. The qualification for these new Scottish painters came from potential economic success.

The artists of "The Vigorous Imagination" were in the minds of critics such as Marjorie Allthorpe Guyton reflecting "that of a culture as facade, nostalgia for a past that never was" (Guyton, 1987, p. 110). The problem with these Glasgow painters, such as Campbell and Wiszniewski, was that instead of portraying a vigorous Scottish sense, they were looking to Germany for inspiration, namely the figurative expressionist movement.

This also brought with it however, certain German values and a taste for a more pretentious type of art, which imposed false convictions on reality, cliches and stereotypes. Guyton notes in Campbell's work "a vague sickly religiosity, where the cliches are deeply bedded.

Nancy Grimes reiterates this in a piece about new Scottish painting. She notes that these artists represent a tradition that seeks to adapt to the demands of a transatlantic fashion "a modernism grounded in post-impressionism" (Grimes, 1988, p. 48), although she did feel that these Scottish painters had achieved a quality that she perceived to be of superior quality to that of their German counterparts.

For a country that was widely known for its landscape painting, this was quite a change, Keith Hartley recognised that there was "a conscious decision to break with the past and confront issues that they felt had more relevance to their everyday lives" (Hartley, 1989, p. 7). This new generation looked on landscape painting as a way of escaping from the real issues. These "new" generation painters were simply reiterating the arguments that Bellany and Moffat had made outside the Royal Scottish Academy back in the early sixties.

Angus Calder asks are we getting art for a "New Scotland". He notes that Currie and McIntire paint on the same scale as renaissance painters (Calder, 1993, p. 24). Renaissance painters deal with the certainties of religion, for example Scottish painters deal with the doubts and despairs of the Scottish people. Ajay Close points out that Currie has "never been interested in bread and butter politics: for him socialism means

intellectual enlightenment" (Close, 1992, p. 33). What solution does he offer to the bitter and hopeless unemployed? A new socialist Scotland I fear that this will possibly only ever exist in books ad magazines. His work poses questions rather than answers. It does not instill confidence, rather he sees his role as an artist, as part of a larger group of cultural workers in various media, seeking to change society through his expression of the plight of people in Scotland. It seems that Currie "foreclosed rather than raised" political questions. Paul Wood notes that if the public responses had been positive, this was because of "admiration at the dexterity and magical skills of the artist in being able .... to conjure illusions of life out of paint and canvas" (Wood, 1985, p. 47).

> ... when the spotlight fell on Glasgow after that show "(The Vigorous Imagination), all of a sudden artists who'd put away their paint brushes ten years before started doing my kind of work, or Steven Campbell's kind of work, pastiches of us, and gaining credibility for it.
>
> Adrian Wiszniewski (Kidson, 1988, p. 7)

So instead of just a limited number of talented and intuitive artists gaining recognition, others jumped on the bandwagon, giving the erroneous impression to those outside Scotland, that this was the only type of art that was being produced there "everywhere Scottish artists are coming out of the woodwork, hot on the heels of Steven Campbell" (Time Out Magazine, July 1986).

By 1986 and just four years out of college, Campbell and his contemporaries were well on their way to becoming art history when two new books charting trends in modern painting devoted space to a discussion of Wiszniewski's work. This makes it increasingly difficult to respond to their work, outside the encumbering constraints of a pre-set historical perspective.

CHAPTER 4

LOSS OF MOMENTUM

As we move into the 1990's, the "new" Glasgow Boys, it seems, have lost much of their momentum. What had started out in the late seventies as a renewed hope for Scottish self-determination or at least a sense of national identity had diminished rapidly. Thatcherism had brought with it a new consumerism. The yuppies with their disposable incomes, ready to invest in anything that they believed to be a good buy and a good investment. With the critical acclaim these artists were achieving, it was difficult not to be convinced that this was great art.

Investment flooded in from all angles. Galleries such as the Molborough Gallery and Raab Gallery took on board some of the most prominent artists. Molborough currently have Steven Campbell and Stephen Conroy. Conroy is working towards a solo exhibition at the Molborough Gallery in New York 1995 and Ian Hughes is still under a seven year containship with the Raab Gallery in London. These galleries were looking for good investments rather than the advancement of new art form. Saatchi and Saatchi also invested heavily in this art. There was no consistent private buying and collecting of contemporary art in Scotland so it was left to these outside markets. As a result, most of the artists have dealers from outside.

In the wake of the April 1992 election results, optimism about Scotland's cultural resurgence was harder to sustain. The Tories still remained in power, the Labour Party (preferred by Scots) could still talk of maintaining the Union and ruling Scotland. As we

move further into the 1990's and begin to experience the harsh effects of the international economic recession, the art scene in Scotland began to exude much less confidence than before. Bill Hare argues that this loss of nerve is more "an attitude to be found in the art market than amongst the artists themselves", (Hare, 1992, p. 17).

This, however, is not the case. Campbell has recently moved to Italy (still under Molborough) after becoming depressed of Conservative policy. Adrian Wiszniewski applied for a position of tutor at the Glasgow School of Art. Although he did make a mess of his slide presentation, the students were adamant that he should not get the position.

Recently, Timothy Clifford (Director of the National Gallery of Scottish Art), described Scottish art, to some outcry, as "a lesser school with a few high points", and dismissed claims that its significance in the development of European art as "absolute nonsense", (Clifford, 1994, p. 5).

The practical influence of Scottish figurative painting on the European art world maybe in their financial success rather than their artistic achievements. None of these "new" Glasgow painter boys have broken down any kind of artistic barriers that have not already been destroyed. Their greatest achievement and the one that has brought them to my notice and that of Clifford is their monetary success, which has forced us to recognise them and their achievements. Though not a fan of these paintings, Clifford will purchase and show work by these artists because they are a good and popular investment. Then, by the nature of art galleries, these paintings will be treated with

reverence and will be regarded as historically significant. This art "served to ram home what most of us already suspected, that art is for the most part uninspired and that its value is more often historical than aesthetic", (J. Hall, 1994, p. 14).

In the early '90's the Glasgow School of Art has chosen a new path of education. The installing of London based conceptual artists from Goldsmith's as tutors has introduced to Glasgow a new and different regime. They have brought with them a history of their own, one based on conceptual ideas and professional practices. Though not always comfortable with the older establishment, they are satisfying the new and more radical requirements of a contemporary student body. This student body will always get attention due to the notice the Glasgow School of Art demands because of its history. The press will always visit the degree show and the college receives the second highest number of portfolio submissions in Britain, (hence letting the college choose the cream of British students). But it is the restrictive expectations of a world-wide press that a graduate from the Glasgow School of Art must paint in the figurative expressionist style, that may halt any ground-breaking developments being publicly recognised. Because of this unwillingness of the art buying public to accept anything from this college other than the figurative expressionist style, it places restricting pressure on a new generation to either conform or be ignored, and the call of financial security can some times be loudest.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored some of the reasons for Scotland's success in the 1980's, by looking at contemporary Scottish painting in relation to its historical and political developments. From the Glasgow Boys through to the colourists, rich colour and fine brush work (with the choice of subject matter being secondary) have been the main line tradition in Scottish art. This painterliness was reassessed by figurative painters in the 1980's. However there exists other traditions in Scottish art.

The 1970's for example produced other challenges to this painterly tradition. Ian Hamilton Finlay's concrete poems and sculptures with their refined and subversive energy,helped prepare the way in Scotland for art that was more conceptually based and more prepared to accept ideas. Edinburgh, for example, produced a quite distinct and lively group of conceptually orientated artists in the 1970's, such as Will Maclean, who are still an active and developing force today, though to a large extent comparatively ignored.

If Mrs Margaret Thatcher was the figurehead on which all Thatcherite economic policy was based, then the minions who devoutly followed were a young upwardly mobile money seeking, world-wise generation who claim they knew what they wanted and they knew how to get it. This yuppie ideal of the rich, fast living lifestyle, travelled through many professions including that of the artist. They, like the yuppie ideal, knew what they wanted and were certainly going to get it. With the fall of the figurehead and all that her policies stood for, the new consumerist generation were left slightly out on a

limb. The economic climate on which these upwardly mobile artists existed fell and the art buying public asked a few more questions before parting with their hard earned cash. For many of these new figurative painters, too many questions were asked for which they had no answer, no substance and hence to the purchaser no point.

Scotland's inherent need to assert its own national identity was behind the enthusiasm of the Scottish general public. For once Scotland had a prized possession that its neighbour, England, had not got. A new art from Scotland and the new economic climate in the early eighties led to a renewed hope in the hearts of the Scottish people that perhaps self-determination was not too far away. However, it could be argued that it was a false revolution in the art world which served to override the longing for self-determination. Was this revolution as a result of the self-confidence brought on by hope, or was it a false hyping of the mediocre in an attempt to create some hope?

These Scottish artists were the willing victims of more dealer hustling than in any other period of Scottish art. Art journalism has led the outside world to believe that this was the only form of art being produced in Scotland. The paintings of these Glaswegian painters was, however, not representative of Scottish art in general.

Scotland is a melting-pot of ideas, beliefs, and convictions and this is brought to fruition through many different art forms. To centre on one form (that of expressionist figurative painting in Glasgow) is to the detriment of every other artistic expression and Scottish creativity as a whole.

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