

Bacon · Baselitz · Kiefer

Thanks to the generosity of a number of private collectors, the Gallery is now able to show a spectacular group of works by three of the most significant artists of our time: Francis Bacon (b. 1909), Georg Baselitz (b. 1938) and Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945). The roomful of Bacon's paintings, first shown last year, has been enhanced by the addition of the artist's 1981 *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*. This extraordinary work, which seems to refer to Aeschylus's violent and bloody imagery and especially to the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, was the climax of the Tate Gallery's Bacon retrospective in 1985.

Six paintings and one sculpture by Baselitz, ranging in date from 1964 (*The Idol*) to the Gallery's own picture *Pillow* 1987, are displayed in room 9. Somewhat in the manner of Bacon, Baselitz has been concerned to reinterpret the theme of the Crucifixion for our

secular and atrocity-conscious age. The paintings illustrate the development in Baselitz's work from a monumental figurative style to the fracturing and eventual inversion of the figure. By overturning the subject Baselitz hopes to divert attention from matters of content to the picture as a piece of pure painting.

Anselm Kiefer reinstates Germanic themes which, owing to their appropriation by the Nazis, became 'sensitive' or even taboo in post-war Germany: Teutonic myth, the music of Wagner, classical architecture. Kiefer's landscapes are landscapes of loss and devastation, informed by an ironical awareness of the artist's ambiguous role in historical events. Kiefer's work represents a relatively new tendency among German artists and intellectuals born since the last war to go beyond feelings of guilt in an effort to come to terms with their country's recent past.

A Renaissance



John Bellamy has always used his immediate surroundings and his own experiences as raw material for his art. They provide the depth of feeling and sense of immediacy that give life to his allegories and symbols. A year ago the artist underwent liver transplant surgery, the longest and one of the most complicated operations a person can have. Almost as soon as he came round from the anaesthetic in the intensive care unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, Bellamy asked for pencil, paper and a looking glass. He did not believe that he was



still alive until he began to draw. Over the next few weeks he charted the course of his hospitalization and convalescence in what may prove to be the most extraordinary series of self-portraits by a British artist this



century. Some forty of these often harrowing images, together with portraits of the hospital staff and members of his own family, make up the exhibition *John Bellamy: A Renaissance* on show until 30 April. They reflect the inevitable ups and downs of the patient: the intense physical pain, the discomfort and fears that he may not pull through and, then, the optimism about a new lease of life and the heartfelt gratitude to those who saved his life. Bellamy's surgeon, Sir Roy Calne, believes that his patient's sustained 'will to draw' greatly contributed to the speed of recovery.

This remarkable story was the subject of a television programme, in the series *The Heart of the Matter*, screened on BBC1 on Easter Sunday.



Anselm Kiefer *Untitled* 1983 private collection courtesy of Anthony d'Office

Antony Gormley: Sculpture

Antony Gormley (b. 1950) is the most individual of the young British sculptors who have risen to international prominence in the 1980s. He is best known for a continuing series of figures, moulded from his own body and clad in lead, which are concerned less with autobiographical likeness than with communicating a range of sensations and ideas about man and his relation to the world. In pose and gesture these figures vary from the contemplative to the active, from inward-looking to outward-looking, making the viewer aware of the inner space contained within the figure's lead skin as well as the external

space shared by viewer and figure alike.

In the last few years Gormley has become involved in a number of public projects, reflecting his wish to place his sculptures 'directly in the world'. This exhibition of ten works runs from 22 April until 29 May. It was organised by the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art at Humlebaek in Denmark, where it was first shown earlier this year. A fully illustrated catalogue is available.

Gallery Talk

Antony Gormley will be talking about his work at 12 noon on Saturday 22 April.



Antony Gormley *Hold* 1986 collection: Shearson Lehman Brothers courtesy of Diamond Page Ltd

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND

National Gallery of Scotland *The Mound, Edinburgh EH2 2EL* An outstanding collection of paintings, drawings and prints by the greatest artists from the Renaissance to Post-Impressionism, including Velázquez, El Greco, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Degas, Monet and Van Gogh; shown alongside the national collection of Scottish art.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery *Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD* Portraits in all media of people who have played a significant rôle in Scottish history from the 16th century to the present, recorded by the most famous artists of the day; also the national collection of photography.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art *Belford Road, Edinburgh EH4 3DR* Scotland's choice collection of the painting, sculpture and graphic art of this century. The work of the established masters – Picasso, Matisse, Ernst, Kirchner, Dix, Moore; major Scottish artists; and the leading figures of the contemporary international scene.

Opening Times Monday to Saturday 10.00 – 17.00, Sunday 14.00 – 17.00. Closed 1 May.

Admission to the permanent collections is free. A charge is made for some loan exhibitions.

Recorded Information on 031-332 4939 gives details of current exhibitions, displays and events.

Study Rooms The Department of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery and the Print Room and Reference Section at the Portrait Gallery are open to visitors by arrangement at the front desk of the Galleries: Monday to Friday 10.00 – 12.30, 14.00 – 16.30. The Prints and Drawings Study Room at the Gallery of Modern Art is open by prior appointment only: Monday to Friday 10.00 – 13.00.

For the Disabled Wheelchair access is possible throughout the Galleries. *Artlink*, a free transport service, is available to anyone with a disability to visit arts events in Edinburgh.

Parking There is limited meter parking near the National Gallery and the Portrait Gallery; the Gallery of Modern Art has a free car park.

Gallery Shops at all three galleries sell a wide range of books, catalogues and guides, cards, posters, slides and related gifts.

The Gallery Café at the Gallery of Modern Art is open Monday to Saturday 10.30 – 16.30 (lunches served 12.00 – 14.30), Sunday 14.00 – 16.30 (lunches served until 15.00).

Photography is not allowed unless permission has been granted by the Keeper of the Gallery.

Further Information about the Galleries, the collections and activities is available from the Information Department. Telephone 031-556 8921

COVER Thomas Girtin *A View of Jedburgh* 1800 (detail)

