



24 July – 29 August 2009

BRITISH SELF-PORTRAITS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Ruth Borchard Collection

Ruth Borchard started collecting British self-portraits in the late 1950s, her interest spurred by viewing art school shows, the 'Young Contemporaries' exhibition of student art and by Jack Beddington's book *Young Artists of Promise*. With astonishing bravado, she set herself a ceiling of 21 guineas for any one picture, irrespective of the artist's fame, and usually succeeded.

The earliest in this remarkable collection of 100 British self-portraits includes work by Raymond Coxon, Ithell Colquhoun, Carel Weight and Anne Redpath from the inter-war years, but most are from the 1950s and 1960s, helping to evoke an entire period in British art and its myriad developing strands. All kinds of artistic influences are evident – art school academicism, Camden Town, Expressionism, the Euston Road School and Kitchen Sink.

Among young artists spotted by Ruth Borchard in their student days were Mario Dubsy, Peter Philips and Patrick Proctor, along with Antony Eyton, Antony Green, Ken Howard, David Tindle, Euan Uglow and others relatively early in their careers. As the collection and her confidence grew, she approached artists at the height of their careers: some declined to participate, but many such as Michael Ayrton, Roger Hilton, Felik Topolski and Keith Vaughan, co-operated. Most were intrigued by the project, while Michael Ayrton wrote: 'I will accept the 21 gns and I much admire anyone who can obtain so many works for no more than that figure.'

She collected only five self-portraits by women artists and, in 1966, Jean Cooke RA (who exhibited under her then married name Jean Bratby) wrote her a brusque letter: "I am not a feminist but to have only three women painters out of 91 (as it was at that point) makes rather poor odds so 21gns it is."

In her autobiographical notes Ruth Borchard explained the impetus for the collection: "In literature, my taste was to introspective books: diaries, autobiographies, letters. Over the years I often felt tempted to collect first editions of these moderns. Then, one day, mounting up the stairs in our house, I was struck by the idea that introspection in painting meant self-portraits."

IMAGES: David Tindle 1951, 42 x 21cm oil on board; Peter Coker, 1966 37 x 14cm, oil on board; Brian Rees, 1955-63, gouache, pen, ink on paper; Jean Cooke 1954, 41 x 31cm, oil on canvas.

Born in 1910 and brought up near Hamburg, Ruth Borchard and her husband Kurt fled to England in 1939 to escape Hitler's National Socialists. They had four children. By the time she stopped buying self-portraits her collection amounted to 100 works, spanning fifty years, from 1921 – 1971. Apart from drawing attention to an extraordinary number of almost unknown paintings and drawings, the collection evokes the atmosphere of the London art world shortly after the Festival of Britain and, as such, represents a remarkable historical archive.

Ruth Borchard died in Jerusalem in 2000, and it is to her heirs' credit that the collection has been kept intact and is now based in London, at Kings Place Gallery, where it will be shown annually. In 2010, one hundred years after her birth, a national self-portrait prize will be announced, with the intention that the collection will continue to grow in the spirit of the original.

ARTISTS: JOHN AINLEY (b.1931) **MICHAEL AYRTON (1921-1975)** **PETER BERRISFORD (b.1932)** **KENNETH BRAZIER (b.1933)** HORACE BRODZKY (1885-1969) **PETER COKER RA (1926 - 2004)** CECIL COLLINS RA (1908-1989) **ITHELL COLQUHOUN (1906-1988)** JEAN COOKE RA(1927 – 2008) **RAYMOND COXON (1896-1997)** DENNIS CREFFIELD (b.1931) **KEITH CRITCHLOW (b.1931)** BRIAN CROUCH (b.1929) **WILLIAM CROZIER (b.1930)** FREDERICK CUMING RA (b.1930) **JEHAN DALY (1918-2001)** ALFRED DANIELS (b.1924) **THOMAS NATHANIEL DAVIES (1922-1996)** ROGER DE GREY RA(1918-1995) **GERARD DE ROSE (1921-1987)** SAMUEL DODWELL (1909-1990) **MARIO DUBSKY (1939-1985)** BERNARD DUNSTAN RA (b.1920) **TERRY DURHAM (b.1936)** ANTHONY FREEMAN (unknown) **ANDREW FREETH (1912-1986)** ANDREW FORGE (1923-2000) **DAVID FREED (b.1936)** JOE EDWARDS (1933-2000) **ANTHONY EYTON RA (b.1923)** PETER FREETH RA (b.1938) **WILLIAM GEAR RA (1915-1997)** HENRYK GOTLIB (1890-1966) **LAWRENCE GOWING RA (1918-1991)** DAVID GRAHAM (b.1926) **ANTHONY GREEN RA (b.1939)** ROBIN GUTHRIE (1902-1971) **CLIFFORD HALL (1904-1974)** WILIIAM HALLE (b.1912) **ROGER HALLET (b.1929)** ANTHONY HARRIS (b.1931) **PATRICK HAYMAN (1915-1988)** ALBERT HERBERT (1925-2008) ROGER HILTON (1911-1975) TREVOR HODGSON (b.1931) **CLIFF HOLDEN (b.1919)** GEORGE HOOPER (1910-1994) **KEN HOWARD RA (b.1932)** ANDRZEJ KUHN (b.1932) **EDWIN LA DELL ARA (1914-1970)** LYNTON LAMB (1907-1977) **GERALD LEVENE RA (b.1938)** RONALD LONG (b.1933) **ROBERT LUTYENS (1901-1972)** LUCINDA MACKAY (b.1941) **DUNBAR MARSHALL (1918-2001)** CHARLES McCALL (1907-1989) **TOM McGUINNESS (1926-2006)** LESLIE MARR (b.1922) **DOROTHY MEAD (1928-1975)** JACK MILLAR (1921-2006) **PAUL MILLICHIP (b.1929)** ROBERT MORGAN (1921- 1994) **PETER MORRELL (b.1931)** ALBERTO MORROCCO (1917-1998) **MICHAEL NOAKES (b.1933)** JOHN O'CONNOR (1913-2004) **PETER PHILLIPS (b.1939)** MICHAEL PIPER (1921-1997) **ALEX PORTNER (b.1920)** HUGO POWELL (b.1919) **PATRICK PROCKTOR RA (1936-2003)** ANNE REDPATH ARA (1895-1965) **BRIAN REES (b.1930)** BRIAN ROBB (1913-1979) **RICHARD ROBBINS (b.1927)** GERALD ROSE (b.1935) **HANS SCHWARZ (1922-2003)** PETER SHACKLETON (b.1933) **JACK SIMCOCK (b.1929)** FRANCIS NEWTON SOUZA (1924-2002) **ALAN STUTTLE (b.1939)** ROWLAND SUDDABY (1912-1972) **TERENCE SULLIVAN (unknown)** ROBERT SINCLAIR THOMSON (1915-1983) **WILLIAM THOMSON (1926-1988)** DAVID TINDLE RA (b.1932) **FELIKS TOPOLSKI RA (1907-1989)** KEN TURNER (b.1926) **EUAN UGLOW (1932-2000)** KEITH VAUGHAN (1912-1977) ERIC WAUGH (b.1929) CAREL WEIGHT RA (1908-1997) **IVON WELLS (unknown)** ANTHONY WHISHAW RA (b.1930) **GEOFFREY WHITE (unknown)** JOHN WHITE (unknown) **FRANK WILCOCK (unknown)** KYFFIN WILLIAMS RA (1918-2006) **JOHN WYNNE-MORGAN (b.1906)** MAREK ZULAWSKI (1908-1985)

24 JULY – 29 AUGUST 2009

RUTH BORCHARD COLLECTION AT KINGS PLACE GALLERY, 90 YORK WAY, LONDON N1 9AG

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