Joash Woodrow

Reflections

Joash Woodrow was a visionary, reclusive artist whose lifetime’s work was discovered only towards the end of his life.

After studying at the Royal College of Art in the early 1950s, Woodrow retreated to live and paint at the family home in North Leeds, embarking on a lifetime’s artistic endeavour in increasing solitude and with astonishing perseverance. A bizarre series of events leading to the rediscovery of his lifetime’s work revealed what is now considered by many to be one of the most significant and visionary British artists of the post-war period.

The paintings of this enigmatic artist were exhibited for the first time in 2002. Since then his work has attracted widespread acclaim from artists, critics and collectors, with exhibitions held in numerous public art galleries in the U.K., his paintings now in an increasing number of major public and private collections.

This exhibition marks what would have been the artist’s 90th year and provides an opportunity to view a cross section of his work, from the dark, brooding pictures of the late 1940’s, through to the highly original and expressive paintings of his final decades; luminous explorations of scruffy allotments with their ramshackle huts and glistening white picket fences, alongside the re-birth of inner city Leeds with its mix of stark modern buildings and worn Victorian elegance.

*If he had not been a recluse, would dealers, collectors, have squashed Woodrow’s unique vision, in which so many strands of 20th century art and culture converged, or streamlined and developed it? “There are people who love nature even though they are cracked and ill”, wrote Van Gogh to his brother; “those are the painters”. Jackie Wullschlager, chief art critic, The Financial Times*
McInroy & Wood are delighted to support this exhibition of works by Joash Woodrow who would have celebrated his 90th year in 2017.

Our colleagues, Robin Irwin and Liz Wild, in the Harrogate office first brought the story of Joash Woodrow and his work to our attention. They have subsequently worked with Andrew Stewart at 108 Fine Art in support of the research for this exhibition. The pictures comprise a rich and diverse collection which afford an insight into the painter’s life in Leeds, the people he met and the places he visited – a city that Joash treasured and drew on for his inspiration.

The firm has a personal connection with the arts in that my own aunt (Flora Wood) was a painter and sculptor. As a firm we have long supported creative artists and performers, particularly young ones. We are glad therefore to extend that support to cultural endeavour in the area of our Harrogate office. We hope in this way to give support where it is needed and so perhaps to build the firm’s goodwill. Even more to the point in our fractured and increasingly disunited society, we are keen to affirm the healing and harmonising value of the creative and performing arts. Long may they bridge the gaps in our shared understanding.

I hope you enjoy this exhibition.

Victor Wood
Crown Place, Harrogate
Oil on board, circa 1975 (jw432)
90 x 69cm
Illustrated page 117 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
"Portrait of a Man in Profile"
Oil based paint on sackcloth, circa 1960 (jw236)
84 x 66cm
Illustrated page 105 Joash Woodrow ‘Portraits’ book
The Young Cantor
Oil based paint on hessian, circa 1960-65   110 x 67.6cm
Exhibited at The Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, London 2005
Portrait of a Man Looking Down
Oil on canvas, circa 1955-60 (jw262)
51 x 40cm
Illustrated page 74 Joash Woodrow ‘Portraits’ book
Woman Wearing a High Necked Top
Oil on sackcloth, circa 1960 (jw260)
89 x 70cm
Illustrated page 120 Joash Woodrow ‘Portraits’ book
Portrait of Danny Padmore
Oil on hessian, circa 1960 (jw239)  90 x 70cm
Illustrated page 60 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ and page 107 ‘Portraits’ book.
Exhibited at The Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, Manchester Art Gallery 2005

Portrait of Cyril Satorsky
Oil on sackcloth, circa 1960-65 (jw367)
104 x 90cm
Portrait of Danny Padmore
Oil on hessian, circa 1960 (jw239) 90 x 70cm
Illustrated page 60 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ and page 107 ‘Portraits’ book.
Exhibited at The Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, Manchester Art Gallery 2005
Woman With a Guitar
Oil on canvas, circa 1965 (jw649)  194 x 151.5cm
Illustrated page 133 Joash Woodrow ‘Portraits’ book
Woman With Blue and Pink Face
Oil on canvas, circa 1965 (jw619) 86 x 76cm
Two Figures in a Garden (II)
Oil on canvas, circa 1970 (jw025)
101 x 128cm
Illustrated page 83 Joash Woodrow 'Monograph'
Three Figures
Oil on board, circa 1965  (jw386)
69 x 76cm
Family
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw312)
77 x 62cm
Four Figures
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw344)
39 x 52cm
Illustrated page 11 ‘Figurative’ catalogue

Opposite page top right: Two Figures
Oil on board, circa 1970 (jw348)
45 x 61cm
Illustrated page 81 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’

Opposite page lower right: Gladiators (II)
Oil on board, circa 1969 (jw164)
31.5 x 42cm
Illustrated page 81 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Two Men Fighting

Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1969 (jw111)
122 x 91cm
Illustrated page 78 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Three Figures
Oil on sackcloth, circa 1970 (jw582)  110 x 122cm
Illustrated page 87 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Exhibited Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, 2005
Manchester Art Gallery & the Ben Uri Gallery, London
Two Figures (Moon Landing Series)
Oil on board, circa 1970 (jw499)
215 x 163cm
Figures and Floating Chair  Oil on board, circa 1970 (jw495)
213 x 165cm  Illustrated page 104 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Exhibited at the Fine Art Society, London 2009
Family Group
Oil on hessian, circa 1960 (jw073)
69 x 91.5cm
Two Ponies in a Field
Oil on hessian, circa 1960 (jw072)
34 x 55cm
Still Life with Yellow Jug

Oil based paint on board, circa 1965 (jw599) 122 x 183 cm
Illustrated pages 110, 111, 124 ‘Monograph’
Exhibited Royal College of Art, 2005
Still Life with Yellow Jug
Oil based paint on board, circa 1965  (jw599)   122 x 183cm
Illustrated pages 110, 111, 124  'Monograph'
Exhibited Royal College of Art, 2005
Still Life with Jugs and Cup
Oil on board, circa 1970 (jw421)
54 x 72cm
Still Life with Three Flowers and a Jug
Oil on board, circa 1970 (jw144)
48 x 75cm
Still Life With Yellow Bowl
Oil based paint on board, circa 1965-70 (jw406)
91.5 x 91cm
Illustrated page 126 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Still Life With Yellow Jug & Vase Of Flowers
Oil based paint on sackcloth, circa 1960 (jw162)
76 x 65.5cm
Illustrated page 123 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Table Top Still Life with Fish
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw093)
65 x 81cm
Still Life with Jugs and Cup
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw369)  76.5 x 99cm
Illustrated page 128 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Exhibited at the Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, 2005
Manchester Art Gallery and at the The Ben Uri Gallery, London
Abstracted Still Life Forms
Oil on board, circa 1965-70 (jw664)
160 x 200cm
Illustrated page 129 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Exhibited at the Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, Royal College of Art, London, 2005
Abstracted Still Life Forms
Oil on board, circa 1965-70 (jw664)
160 x 200cm
Illustrated page 129 Joash Woodrow 'Monograph'
Exhibited at the Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition, Royal College of Art, London, 2005
"Allotment Reflection"
Oil on board, circa 1985-90 (jw696)
100 x 122cm
Illustrated page 155 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery
‘Visions of Leeds’ exhibition, 2004
City Rooftops
Oil on board, circa 1950-55 (jw323)
49 x 63cm
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery, 2004
Black Trees
Oil on board. Signed, circa 1955 (jw553)
99 x 92cm
Illustrated page 72 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Swerving Path, House & Trees
Oil on board, circa 1955 (jw554)
121 x 73.5cm
The White House
Oil on board, circa 1955 (jw556)
122 x 91cm
Yellow House and Black Trees
Oil on sackcloth, circa 1955-60 (jw447)  96 x 68cm
Illustrated page 68 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Row of Allotment Buildings in Summer
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw530)
123 x 151cm
Illustrated page 155 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ & page 98 ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery ‘Visions of Leeds’ Exhibition, 2004
White Blossoms, Clouds and Sky
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw560)
122 x 184cm
Illustrated page 151 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ and page 75 ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery ‘Visions of Leeds’ Exhibition, 2004
White Flowers and Blue Stems
Oil on board, circa 1965 (jw514)
122 x 123cm
Illustrated page 120 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ and page 76 ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at The Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition,
Royal College of Art, London, 2005
Autumnal Allotment View

Oil on board, circa 1985 (jw671)

122 x 121cm

Illustrated page 157 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Fenced Allotment Buildings
Oil on board, circa 1975 (jw515)
124 x 122cm
Illustrated page 101 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery ‘Visions of Leeds’ Exhibition, 2004
Landscape With White Cat
Oil based paint on board, circa 1970 (jw363)
76.5 x 98.5cm
Illustrated page 114 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Urban Landscape with Large Trees
Oil on board, circa 1975 (jw507)  101 x 122cm
Illustrated page 159 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’ and page 119 ‘Landscapes’ book
Exhibited at Leeds City Art Gallery ‘Visions of Leeds’ exhibition, 2004
Factory Buildings, Leeds
Oil & dry pigment on board, circa 1975 (jw562)
122 x 130cm
Illustrated page 171 Joash Woodrow ‘Monograph’
Exhibited at the Joash Woodrow Retrospective Exhibition,
The Royal College of Art, London, 2005
Red Metal Frame and White Picket Fence

Oil on board, circa 1980-85 (jw645)

160 x 143cm

Illustrated page 148 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Smoking Chimney and White Fences
Oil on board, circa 1980 (jw545)
128 x 122cm
Illustrated page 152 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Coloured Gable End

Oil on board, circa 1975 (jw525)  145 x 122cm
Illustrated page 119 Joash Woodrow ‘Landscapes’ book
Factory Chimney with White Picket Fence (I)
Oil on board, circa 1980-85 (jw681)
127 x 121cm
Joash Woodrow (1927 - 2006)

Selected Solo Exhibitions

Joash Woodrow  The Fine Art Society, Bond Street, London, 2009

Retrospective Exhibition  Leeds Metropolitan University, 2007

Drawings of the North East Coast  Pannett Art Gallery, Whitby, 2007

Retrospective Exhibition  Liverpool University Art Gallery, 2007

Retrospective Exhibition  Works on Paper  Hull University Art Gallery, 2006

Retrospective Exhibition  Manchester Art Gallery, 2005

Retrospective Exhibition  Ben Uri Gallery, London, 2005

Retrospective Exhibition  Royal College of Art, London, 2005

Images of Leeds  Leeds City Art Gallery, 2004

108 Fine Art Harrogate, 2002 - present
Permanent display of the artists work

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Ben Uri Gallery, London
Leeds City Art Gallery
Manchester Art Gallery
Hull University Art Gallery
Leeds Metropolitan University
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester
Jackie Wullschlager  Art Critic and writer

“Joash Woodrow is the genius of late 20th century British art of whom almost no one has heard...

“Woodrow’s transformation of banality is as lyrical as Chagalls...”

“That painterly intensity and high seriousness links Woodrow to his Jewish contemporaries Kossoff, Auerbach, and Freud...

...a personal vision triumphant”  The Financial Times

Philip Vann  Art critic and writer

‘Just as Lowry is known as the visual poet of Salford, and Eardley similarly of the Gorbals, so Woodrow is now being revealed as the surely unrivalled painter of 20th Century Leeds.”  Galleries Magazine

Laura Gascoigne  Art critic and writer

…The urgency of Woodrow’s creative impulse is obvious not just in the zest with which he tears into the paint surface but also in the patent impatience with which he prepares to his supports. Scraps of potato sacking, darned with wool are nailed to stretchers hurriedly tacked together from bits of wood, picture frame, even tree branches...

To the art historian Woodrow’s work is full of echoes; Picasso, Art Brut, Tachisme, even Sydney Nolan. He was a cultured man who kept up with artistic developments. But being exceptionally his own man, he made of them something quite distinctive – a strange and deeply intriguing outcrop of a European artistic imagination.”  The Spectator

John Russell Taylor  Art Critic

“…fevered, highly coloured expressionist works – bold chalky outlines, distorted perspectives, rich, fat paint that transforms everyday landscapes into the lyrical and elemental … Landscapes in bright colours that suggest, perhaps, classic German Expressionism; and bold, voracious-looking semi-abstracts that appear to parallel in two dimensions the work Eduardo Paolozzi was doing at about the same time…”  The Times