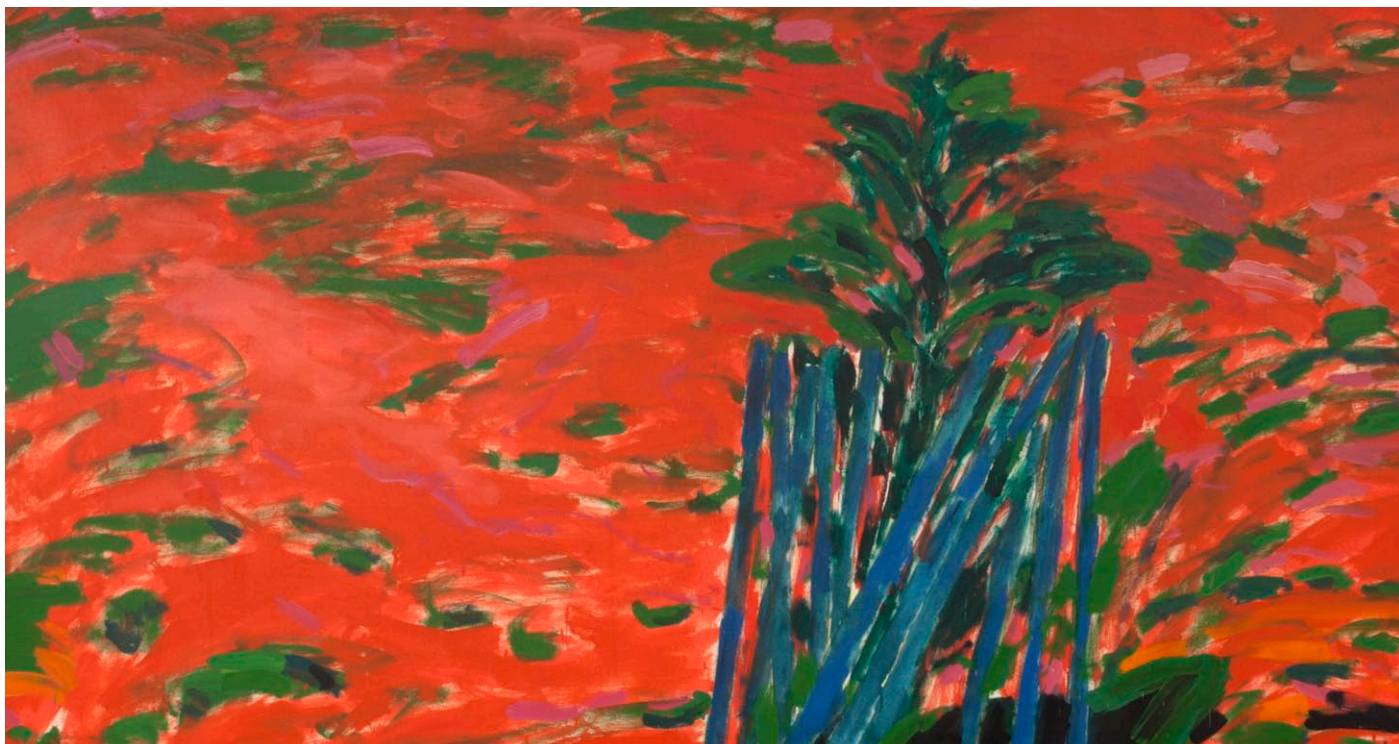


COLOURIST®



WILLIAM CROZIER
ALBERT IRVIN
LUCY JONES

9 NOVEMBER — 1 DECEMBER 2012

PRIVATE VIEW 8 November 18.00 - 20.00



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There lies the deepest freshness deep down things Gerard Manley Hopkins

At a time when much contemporary art is characterised by coolly distanced irony, etiolated conceptualism and a scathing disregard for sensuous painterliness, it is exhilarating to encounter the works of three colourists of subtle vibrancy and a flaring expressionism: William Crozier (1930-2011), Albert Irvin (b.1922) and Lucy Jones (b.1955). These artists have in common a raw spontaneity and freshness of seeing, expressed through heightened acuity of colour and an acute sensitivity to the possibilities of mobile mark-making which has a magical improvisatory edginess to it. Their pictures are rooted in a dynamically spacious navigation of place – even Bert Irvin's abstract paintings, which he says are 'never depictive and not relived experiences in any particular way', musically conjure up, as it were, the quotidian jostling urbanity of making his way to the studio each morning.

Lucy Jones recalled to me with pleasure a long weekend she spent in the South West of Ireland, along with Albert Irvin, when they went to William Crozier's studio. She discerned 'an affinity to, rather than a direct relationship' with Crozier's art. She says too how much she appreciates Albert Irvin's fecund use of colour, responding to which, she notes that 'in a way I've always wanted to be a non-figurative artist but I also need to tie the painting to a particular place. So I can never quite let go of the strong figurative side of the work.'

It was coming to live (for part of the time) in Cork in the early 1980s that William Crozier, 'a refugee from London', found that he 'cast off something. There was this almost pristine landscape that nobody had painted. Somehow I felt it was my landscape really. I was seeing it afresh. I wasn't seeing it through anybody else's eyes. Maybe artists have to find their own little territory.'

Most of the paintings here reflect 'their own little territory' which each of the artists has questioningly found for him or herself: in William Crozier's case, it was predominantly the South West coast of Ireland but also other terrains which he discerned at the edge of things, on the apocalyptic periphery of history, such as waste grounds in London, burnt-stubble fields in Essex and paradisaical spots of loss and exile on the Mediterranean coast. In Albert Irvin's case, his pictures are inspired by the daily sojourn through his native London, where 'my movements across the canvas are parallel to my movements across the city in reality' – though the titles of his paintings (in recent years mainly based on London street names) sometimes assume a wider metropolitan cast, adopting, on occasion, for example, an Irish nomenclature. Irvin says he loves 'James Joyce' and concurs with Joyce's aphorism, 'I am more interested in the Dublin street names... than in the riddle of the universe.'

Philip Vann is co-author of 'William Crozier' (2007), published by Lund Humphries, and numerous other books on modern British art. He lives in Cambridge.

WILLIAM CROZIER Green Pond, Battersea 1998 Oil on canvas 175 x 213 cm



ALBERT IRVIN
Presence III 2012
Acrylic on canvas
61 x 61 cm

Albert Irvin studied at Northampton School of Art from 1940 to 1941, before serving as a navigator in the RAF during World War II. He went on to study at Goldsmiths College where he later returned to teach between 1962 and 1983. He has also taught at art colleges throughout Britain.

Irvin's first solo exhibition was held in 1960 at 57 Gallery, London. A major retrospective of his work from 1960 to 1989 was held at the Serpentine Gallery, London in 1990. He continues to exhibit regularly at Gimpel Fils, London. Irvin was awarded a Travel Award to America by the Arts Council in 1968 and later received an Arts Council Major Award. He was elected a Royal Academician in 1998 and lives and works in London.

Irvin's work has developed from a time when he considered that in order to give the necessary gravitas to a painting it had to be dark and sombre, through to a growing realisation that high key colour can be crucial in the achievement of full expressive and communicative force. His work has a restless energy and freshness and communicates the sense of an artist in love with his chosen activity.



LUCY JONES
Green Pond, Battersea 1998
Oil on canvas
175 x 213 cm

"Painting is like slowly taking bits of myself out of a box and beginning to examine them. I explore this in strong colour and very directly in paint, and look at views of the outside world.

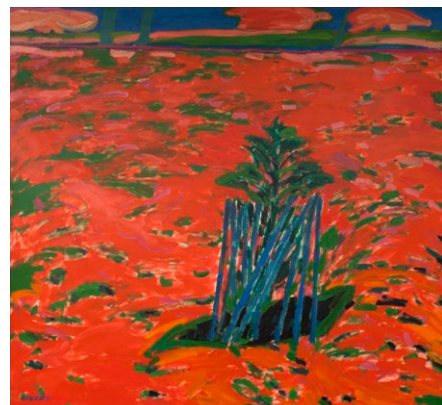
I use myself to find out about the funny and surprising, the awkwardness and ambivalence of looking and moving differently. I look at the hidden parts, which cannot be seen by the outside gaze. I work in the 'space' of a canvas with its defined boundaries where marks and colour can carry my expression. I now sometimes add in objects to the painting, props and metaphors of life.

The other side of my work looks outwards to a world of landscapes and townscapes, depicting the surface memories of life, as if we see the world not as it is but through our projections and hopes.

My work has an immediacy of response that may touch and use everyday awkwardness, seen and unseen, happy or sad, how the world's gaze perceives us and how our gaze can look outwards.

I identify with artists like Matisse, Derain and Charmy but also have a passion for Rothko and Pollock. These artists could be said to be concerned with the purity of the aesthetic language, an autonomous art. But I would extend my list to artists like Boltanski, Baselitz, Warhol, Hatoum and Ayres to name but a few."

Lucy Jones



WILLIAM CROZIER
The Rowan Tree 1982
Oil on canvas
198 x 213 cm

Scottish by birth, Crozier spent his formative years in Paris and Dublin before settling in London. From the 1980s, when he set up studios in Ireland and the UK, Crozier's painting of the landscape has blossomed with an extraordinary radiance that takes inspiration from eastern European as much as western art. His still-lives, which are invariably taken from a subject near to hand in the home, use brilliant colour to engineer a powerful emotional intensity.

Crozier paints 'objects or landscapes which excite or delight after long familiarity'. Nowhere is this more evident than in his vibrant and tautly composed landscapes of West Cork, where he spends long periods of time. The paintings capture the essence and look of the landscape in ways immediately recognisable to the viewer. Crozier believes that when painting the Irish landscape he must 'Tell the truth. Say it simply.'

Crozier has exhibited widely in the UK, Ireland and Continental Europe. He has been awarded the Premio Lissone in Milan and the Oireachtas Gold medal for Painting in Dublin. In 1991 the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork and the Royal Hibernian Academy, of which he is an honorary member, curated a retrospective of his work.