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# JOHN HOYLAND: THE MAKING AND SUSTAINING OF A CAREER - 1960-82

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**JOHN HOYLAND: THE MAKING AND SUSTAINING OF A CAREER -  
1960-82**

By

**CHRISTOPHER ANTHONY DAVIES**

**Volume 1: Thesis**

A thesis submitted to Plymouth University  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Art & Humanities Doctoral Training Centre

**June 2015**

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## Abstract

JOHN HOYLAND: THE MAKING AND SUSTAINING OF A CAREER - 1960-82

by

CHRISTOPHER ANTHONY DAVIES

June 2015

The thesis explores the making and sustaining of the career of the English abstract artist, John Hoyland from his inclusion in the seminal *Situation* exhibition of 1960 to his winning the John Moores First (Purchase Prize) in 1982. It investigates the institutional and critical contexts that supported Hoyland's rise to prominence in the 1960s and situates him within the art world of the time: its galleries, exhibitions, advocates, dealers, critics, patrons and collectors (public and private). It notes the improvements to the art infrastructure in the United Kingdom and assesses whether these improvements had any impact on Hoyland's career. Careful analytical attention is paid to the work of John Hoyland and how his work was presented to numerous audiences and critically received. Hoyland's career is considered in relation to the changes in art practice both in the United Kingdom and the United States during these two decades, and the challenges that these changes in practice and fashion through up, The thesis examines John Hoyland's early career with these critical and institutional contexts in mind. It considers the challenges he faced throughout the 1970s to sustain a professional career and offers reasons to explain why his trajectory towards professional success was neither smooth nor consistent. The thesis explores the correlation between art production, art markets, critical reception and acclaim, and commercial success. The fundamental question that this thesis seeks to answer is whether whatever recognition Hoyland's work received was solely because of its quality or whether there is an element of Hoyland being buoyed up by the system and promoted with more enthusiasm than was merited - as American critics suggested - and thus being to some extent a product of these institutional forces. The mapping and analysis of John Hoyland's early career contributes to similar inquiries concerning how careers are made and sustained in the visual arts. The thesis works with the established models used to explore this process and offers some adaptations of them.

## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

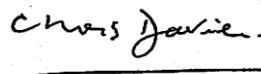
Work submitted for this research degree at the Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included research visits to the British Library, the Tate Gallery, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Archives. Archives were accessed and formed a major part of the thesis. Of great importance was being granted access to the archival material at John Hoyland Studio Ltd. Electronic communications with national and international institutions formed part of the research process.

Relevant art history seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was presented.

Word count of main body of thesis: 80,431

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Jarvis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Date: 1 June 2015

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support I received from a number of individuals and institutions. I owe a particular debt to Professor Sam Smiles, whose constant advice, knowledge and support enabled me to complete the thesis on time. My thanks to Pauline; Beverley Heath-Hoylan; Wizz J Patterson Kelly, Emma Lilley, (Hoyland Studio Ltd); Gary Haines, Archivist, Whitechapel Art Gallery; staff at Tate Gallery Archives; Rebecca Atkins, Librarian, Graduate School, Bath Spa University; staff at Bath Spa University Library(Sion Hill); Nikki Frater; and Tim Batchelor, DTC Administrator, Arts & Humanities Doctoral Training Centre, Graduate School, Plymouth University.

## Introduction

This thesis explores the making and consolidation of the career of the English non-figurative painter, John Hoyland from the commencement of his professional art career in 1960 when his painting was included in the seminal *Situation* exhibition to his winning the John Moores First Prize (Purchase Prize) in 1982. The principal reason for undertaking this research is to extend the body of knowledge and provide a deeper understanding of Hoyland and his work. By carefully analysing his oeuvre and connecting his artistic output to commercial considerations, and the wider art world, a more accurate account of John Hoyland, the professional artist, emerges.

There is a reasonable quantity of literature on John Hoyland. Three monographs on him were published in his lifetime, two by Mel Gooding and one by Andrew Lambirth<sup>1</sup>, the last being in 2009. In addition, numerous journal articles, reviews and catalogue essays and transcripts of interviews with Hoyland provide the materials for an account of his critical reception to be constructed. However, each of the three monographs was intended for general readership, presenting Hoyland's work in an ordered, chronological manner. Although this thesis recognises the contribution made by both authors to understanding Hoyland and his work, their publications tend to be descriptive rather than analytical. For example, in their assessment of Hoyland's work each painting is given equal weight and there is a lack of critical edge in the appraisal of his output. Gooding and Lambirth knew Hoyland and there is a tendency, because of this closeness, for each author to forego the critical distance that would subject the work to rigorous examination. The first monograph by Gooding was financially supported by Hoyland's dealer, Leslie Waddington, and Gooding's second publication was dedicated to members of Hoyland's family. Such relationships necessarily affected how exacting a critique could be offered.

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<sup>1</sup> The three publications were, Gooding, M. *John Hoyland*, London: John Taylor in association with Lund Humphries, 1990; Gooding, M. *John Hoyland*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2006; and Lambirth, A. *Scatter the Devils*, Norwich: 2009

This thesis adopts a different approach and aims to be more balanced in its judgements. It acknowledges that not all of the work that came out of Hoyland's studio was either exemplary or fully resolved. Because of Hoyland's approach towards his craft, one of constant experimentation, inevitably there were failures as well as successes.

The principal motivation behind this thesis is to show how Hoyland's career was made and in particular, it explores the relationship between the aesthetic and the commercial. Earlier accounts of Hoyland concentrated on biographical details and on his work in general and largely ignored or merely touched upon his relationship with the art market and the theoretical discourses accounting for the ascription of value, as played out in aesthetic and commercial reckonings. This thesis redresses this position by demonstrating how Hoyland's career success can be situated within a more subtle and nuanced account of the critical and institutional contexts he negotiated. To achieve this, it aims to identify, quantify and analyse the factors that assisted in the making of Hoyland's career. Notwithstanding this intention, the thesis does not proffer a deterministic account; it accepts that there are intangible factors, for instance, timing and simple good fortune, which are difficult to quantify but which clearly played a part in Hoyland's success. Instead of viewing the tangible factors or determinants in isolation the thesis recognises the inter-connectivity between them and endeavours to map them as a field of actual or potential influence on Hoyland's career. Underpinning the thesis is the view that the making of a career in the arts is a complex, multi-layered affair and that to try to isolate one or a small number of determinants would fail to provide a comprehensive account of any artist's professional career. The thesis therefore seeks to identify significant patterns and to demonstrate the importance of a number of correlates in the making of his career.

At the outset, the thesis acknowledges the impossibility of an absolute answer to the question - How did Hoyland sustain his career? However it attempts to provide explanations for his success. To achieve this, the thesis interrogates Hoyland's

artistic output, the matrix of influences he was subjected to, the art support system and the contexts in which he presented his work. Although Hoyland's artistic practice is put at the forefront of the debate, nonetheless, the thesis concurs with the opinion expressed by Sarah Thornton, that 'the work alone does not determine the way it moves through the world'.<sup>2</sup> Through a detailed narration of four specific aspects, a fuller and more detailed account of the development of his career is provided. These aspects comprise his work; his public exposure and critical reception in the United Kingdom and overseas; and his private and institutional recognition. Such an approach provides a more accurate picture of how careers are actually made. As well as adopting art historical concerns, its overall stance is informed by perspectives adopted from other disciplines: economics; business theory, in particular, marketing; and critical theory. The fundamental question that this thesis seeks to answer is whether the recognition Hoyland's work received was solely because of its quality or whether the support he received played a major part in advancing his career.

Although earlier accounts of Hoyland have touched upon the importance of exhibitions and patronage, there is little depth or breadth in these accounts. To arrive at a greater understanding of Hoyland's career a micro approach was adopted, to search out the minutiae that reflect more accurately the development of that career. This avoids the risk of making unsubstantiated generalisations based on theoretical positions alone. By exploring Hoyland's career in a holistic way, through a detailed narration and interrogation of the art world in which he operated, and by identifying patterns of development and contexts for them, a fuller account is offered. Hoyland's professional standing is explored not in isolation but against the wider backdrop of aesthetic, social, economic and political contexts, all of which can be shown to have had a bearing on his career. From this case study, it is hoped that inferences can be drawn and insights provided into how, in general, art careers are made and sustained.

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<sup>2</sup> Thornton, S. *Seven Days in the Art World*, London: Granta, 2008, pp.258-9

The thesis concentrates on the period 1960 to 1982 because these were the years in which Hoyland's career was forged and by the end of the period his reputation had been established. However, it should be noted that after 1982, as was evident in earlier times, Hoyland's career trajectory was not straightforward and his fortunes were mixed.<sup>3</sup>

The thesis is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides the intellectual framework for the interrogation of Hoyland's career. The starting point is the position outlined by Alan Bowness in the 1989 Walter Neurath memorial lecture. However, since 1989 there has been extensive new research into the relationship between art production and the making of careers and the chapter reflects this literature. Economic, business and marketing theories are summarised and discussed and are related to the art world. This chapter provides the critical underpinning of the thesis. The account advanced by these analyses provides a model of career development in the arts against which Hoyland's example can be assessed.

Chapter 2 explores in detail Hoyland's painting practice. A decision was taken early on to concentrate on his painting. Although Hoyland was a good print-maker this aspect of his oeuvre is included infrequently in the thesis as a whole. The chapter maps the development of his work and discusses his studio practice.

Chapter 3 investigates the relationship between public exposure, critical reception in British art markets and success. It distinguishes between dealer exhibitions and public exhibitions. It is clear that public exhibitions garnered more critical attention than those held at commercial galleries. Hoyland first came to the attention of critics

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<sup>3</sup> Until 1990 he continued to show with Waddington Galleries but for the next ten years he was without regular gallery representation, until the Beaux Arts gallery started to represent him in 2001. In 1987 he was awarded the prestigious Athena Art Award and two years later elected a Royal Academician. In 1988 Hoyland was invited by the Tate Gallery to arrange and curate a survey exhibition of Hans Hofmann's late paintings. In 1999 on the insistence of fellow Royal Academician and friend, Sir Antony Caro, he was granted a small retrospective showing of his work at the Royal Academy. In 2006 Hoyland's exhibition *John Hoyland: The Trajectory of a Fallen Angel* was held at Tate St Ives. Until his death in 2011 he continued to garner critical acclaim.

in 1960 when his work was included in the *Situation* exhibition but it was a cluster of exhibitions at the Whitechapel Art Gallery that did most to advance his career. The importance of well-known exhibitions, among them the 1964 *New Generation* exhibition, is duly recognised, but attention is paid to lesser-known but equally significant exhibitions. Hoyland's retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1967 marked the zenith of his early achievements. The period 1968 to 1974 were difficult years for Hoyland. Reasons for this are explored. The renaissance in Hoyland's career began in 1974 when his work was included in the *British Painting '74* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery but it was two exhibitions, the 1977 Hayward Annual and Hoyland's second retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery in 1979 that did most to consolidate his career. These are analysed in detail.

Chapter 4 explores Hoyland's exhibition record beyond Britain. Throughout the 1960s Hoyland's work was presented to American audiences with the intention of establishing a platform for his work on that side of the Atlantic. Initially, this exposure was gained through a number of group exhibitions arranged in England and intended to promote British art in the USA. The chapter documents the critical reception for Hoyland's oeuvre and the impact it had on his career in America. Reasons for this critical reception are considered in the light of discussions about the course of modern painting taking place on both sides of the Atlantic. Consideration is also given to the exhibitions in which Hoyland participated in Europe and South America.

Chapter 5 explores the role played by private galleries, private collectors and public institutions in supporting Hoyland's professional career. However these are not interrogated in isolation but are considered contextually. The level of demand for Hoyland's paintings was contingent on a number of social, economic and political factors. Having been granted access and permission to use archival material by the Hoyland Studio and also making use of other previously unpublished archival material it was possible to provide new insights into the personal relationships and

the institutional interconnectivity between Hoyland's dealers, sales, collectors, and public collections. Clear patterns reveal themselves and these are discussed fully throughout the chapter.

A brief conclusion to the thesis returns to the model outlined in Chapter 1 and explores the extent to which Hoyland's career may be said to vindicate that model, or whether his example suggests the need for more nuanced approaches to career development. Brief comparisons are made with the careers of nine abstract artists working at the same time as Hoyland. Comparative evidence is provided in appendix 9.

## Chapter 1 - The Art Infrastructure and the Making of Careers

### An Intellectual Framework

This chapter explores the intellectual framework and discourses - art historical, economic, marketing - around which art careers are made and sustained. Rarely is an artist or his representative in total control of the development of an artist's career. Instead a number of extraneous factors impact on a career; important contexts and interstices converge, elide, and sometimes, collide, during the making of a career. The underpinning proposition of this thesis is that reputations are not accidental or coincidental; instead careers are formed and constructed. For as Thornton correctly asserts, 'the work alone does not determine the way it moves through the world'.<sup>4</sup> As will be demonstrated later, the career of John Hoyland supports this proposition.

The starting point for this thesis is a position outlined by Alan Bowness the Director of the Tate Gallery between 1980 and 1988. In the 1989 Walter Neurath memorial lecture Bowness argued that there is nothing arbitrary about artistic success.

There is a general supposition even among the educated public that there is something arbitrary about artistic success. Stories about genius dying unrecognized, or artists starving in garrets, are common enough. The public perception of the way in which the artist rises to fame is coloured by such myths. Even if it is accepted that they are untrue, or at least exaggerated, people are reluctant to believe that chance does not generally play a major role in the rising fortunes of an artist. I want to propose a contrary position, and argue that there is a clear and regular progression towards artistic success. There are, in my view, conditions of success, which can be exactly described. And success is conditioned, in an almost deterministic way. Artists' fame is predictable.<sup>5</sup>

He identified four criteria for success: peer recognition; critical recognition; patronage by dealers and collectors; and public acclaim. The first stage, peer recognition, was according to Bowness 'the most significant'. His definition of 'peers' was narrow, 'the young artist's equals, his exact contemporaries and then the wider

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<sup>4</sup> Thornton (2008), pp.258-9

<sup>5</sup> Bowness, A. *The Condition of Success: How the Modern Artist Rises to Fame*, Text of the Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture given on the 7 March 1989 at Birkbeck College, University of London, London: Thames and Hudson, 1989, p.7

circle of practising artists'.<sup>6</sup> Usually the earliest peer recognition is achieved either by word-of-mouth or the inclusion of an emerging artist's work in an exhibition dedicated to contemporary practice. Word gets around that there is a new artist worth looking at. In marketing this is referred to as 'buzz marketing'. In the early 1960s there was a 'buzz' around John Hoyland but this is difficult to substantiate because little was written down by his peers at the time.

The second stage in the process arises when an artist and the body of work receives positive attention from serious critics. Bowness differentiates between the critic and the art journalist and excludes the latter from his model. According to Bowness, the critic performs two important functions, the first 'is to help create the verbal language that allows us to talk about art' and the second, concerns 'his contribution to the critical debate'.<sup>7</sup> As will be demonstrated later in this thesis, the generally positive critical reception that Hoyland enjoyed played a major role in the shaping, orchestrating and consolidation of his career (see chapter 3 and 4). According to Bowness, as the artist achieves critical recognition, 'he is likely to find himself supported by collectors and dealers'.<sup>8</sup> Throughout his career, the work of Hoyland was collected by a number of key British collectors, especially in the 1960s, and acquired for the collections of public institutions, including the Arts Council, the British Council, the Government Art Collection, and a number of corporate institutions, notably the Calouste Gulbenkian and the Peter Stuyvesant foundations, as well as university and provincial collections (see chapter 5). And excluding a brief three year period in the early 1960s, Hoyland was represented by two of the most prestigious and influential London galleries, the Marlborough and the Waddington galleries.

The final stage is public acclaim. According to Bowness, it 'takes about twenty-five years for the truly original artist to win public recognition. In the first ten years or so

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<sup>6</sup> Bowness (1989), p.11

<sup>7</sup> Bowness (1989), pp.21-27

<sup>8</sup> Bowness (1989), p.39

the work is too uncomfortable for it to be accepted, but slowly it wins through. In mid-career the artist can expect a change in public attitude. The corollary is that the artist must live into middle age to enjoy the benefits of this situation, If he dies young, for whatever reason, then the artistic career is likely to be a failure'.<sup>9</sup> The endorsement of Hoyland's achievements was a long, slow process; not until the late 1970s and early 1980s can it be reasonably claimed that, in the eyes of the public, he had made it (see chapter 5).

There is much to commend in Bowness' model, but nevertheless this thesis takes issue with it on two accounts. First, the model assumes that there is a clearly defined linear progression in the making of a career but in reality not all artists' careers progress in this rational, ordered fashion. Some artists receive critical attention without enjoying agent representation or interest from collectors. Between 1964 and 1967 Hoyland was without gallery representation yet these were the years when interest in his work grew and the notices posted were generally positive. The absence of gallery representation was offset by the inclusion of Hoyland's work in major public exhibitions. This critical acclaim can largely be attributed to this marked exhibition record (see chapters 3 and 4).

Second, Bowness fails to describe in detail the specific measures or mechanisms employed by various agents to bring about success. The model, although a sound starting point, is too general and requires adaptation, which this thesis endeavours to attempt. Thinking has moved on since Bowness presented his views. More commentators and theorists, among them art historians, marketers, economists, and critical thinkers have pronounced on the nodal points between art, art careers and the marketplace, with the result that more sophisticated ideas and positions have been developed and new paradigms and models have been constructed. This thesis argues that a multi-disciplinary and multi-positional approach, one that is first and

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<sup>9</sup> Bowness (1989), pp.47-8

foremost art historical, provides a fuller insight into how careers are made and sustained.

This thesis argues that the triumvirate of artistic practice and production, the making of careers, and the capitalist marketplace are inextricably linked and it would be foolhardy to try to separate them. This view is supported by Buck, 'art history confirms that the relationship between art and money is a time-honoured one. Ever since the church, the crown and the aristocracy ceased to be significant sources of patronage art has been inextricably involved in and subject to the vicissitudes of the market place'.<sup>10</sup>

The marketplace has not always been overtly recognised or that well received by some artists during the modern era. However as Seabrook explains:

The Romantic concept of culture held that what real artists and writers produced was a superior reality – a kind of work that, being imaginative, transcended the workaday world of ordinary cultural production. The artists themselves were taught to be exceptional, gifted beings whose talents were extraordinary - impassioned geniuses who created not for the market but some higher ideal...[But] in fact, the idea of 'culture' was always in part a clever marketing concept.<sup>11</sup>

For as Dettmar and Watt highlighted in their survey of modernism, many writers and artists, 'wanted us not to think too deeply in the light of market concerns, For such an interrogation would tend to contradict notions of the aesthetic purity of the modernist artefact'.<sup>12</sup> The consequence of this has often been among the artistic community a resistance to acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between artistic production and its presentation and positioning in the market. This inevitably has led to an oppositional discourse, contestations and outright rejection by some artists of the market system, the result being, according to Grosenick and Stange, 'as long as the history of the gallery is the history of the artists' rebellion against any secularisation of their work, secularisation that is supposedly expressed in the

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<sup>10</sup> Buck, L. *Market Matters: the Dynamics of the Contemporary Art Market*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 2004, p.6

<sup>11</sup> Seabrook, J. *Nobrow: the Culture of Marketing – The Marketing of Culture*, New York: Knopf, 2000, p.68

<sup>12</sup> Dettmar, K.J.H. and Watt, S. Introduction. Dettmar J.H and Watt, s. (eds) *Marketing Modernisms: self-promotion, canonization, re-reading*, Michigan: Ann Arbor University of Michigan, 1996, p.5

reification and eventual marketing of aesthetics; if art can circulate only as a commodity...then understandably there will be resistance'.<sup>13</sup>

Irrespective of the scepticism voiced by some modernist artists and critics towards market forces, art, nonetheless, circulates as a commodity. Whilst acknowledging that it often displays unique properties, when it is positioned in the capitalist marketplace it is governed by, and responds, to market forces and abides by the same economic laws that apply to other products positioned there. This is a view shared by Frey and Pommererhne who, whilst acknowledging that 'the number of determinants of artistic production and consumption is much larger, and the relationship between them more complex, than in the production and consumption of, say, bread', nevertheless, contend that artworks and their markets function in similar ways: 'the commercial value of art is based on collective intentionality. There is no intrinsic, objective value. Human stipulation and declaration create and sustain the commercial value'.<sup>14</sup> Thus all value attributed to an art object is a construct; art does not stand in isolation, instead many agents are involved in establishing its meaning and value. It is important to recognise that for artistic success to occur art must be presented and positioned in the market. The recognition of an artist's achievements is rarely straightforward and is gained through a number of convergences, operating in a complex matrix of influences and determinants.

In reality few artists are entirely uninterested in the market; in fact, most are mindful of both its necessity and its earning potential. Artists need to live. Most artists do not want their work hidden from the public gaze; most artists wish to share their creativity with others. The romantic notion that artists enjoy working away at their craft in seclusion is the exception rather than the norm and is largely a constructed narrative. This is a view shared by Jensen, who argues that the concept of the alienated artist is largely a myth and that 'alienation was as much a role, a

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<sup>13</sup> Grosenick, U. and Stange, R. *International Art Galleries: Post-War to Post-Millennium: A Narrative Chronology of the Dealers, Artists and Spaces That Have Defined Modern Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2005, p.7

<sup>14</sup> Frey, B.S. *Arts & Economics: Analysis & Cultural Policy*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2003, p.23

way of establishing a professional identity, as occupying a position in the academy... the "alienation" of the artist was, at least as far as the market was concerned, largely a fiction that served rather than denied the commodification of art'.<sup>15</sup> From his time at the Royal Academy Schools Hoyland gained, wittingly or unwittingly, a reputation as a 'Young Turk' (see chapter 2). This enhanced his reputation when he entered the art market in the early 1960s, capturing the spirit of the times and contributing to, in marketing terminology, his USP.<sup>16</sup> Hoyland's apparent rebelliousness was captured somewhat when his work was included in two seminal exhibitions at the start of his professional career: *Situation* (1960) and *New Generation* (1964) (see chapter 3).

Because art is a means of communication artists wish to present their work to audiences, have it noticed, gain recognition for their achievements and, without compromising their work, achieve commercial success: Thornton concurs with this view: 'I don't think wilful ignorance or self-delusion is ever a good thing. Most artists who have gained recognition of some kind have a pretty clear picture of the world that first receives their art. They have tactics of engagement or avoidance that suit their temperament'.<sup>17</sup> This was definitely the case with Hoyland, who from an early in his career endeavoured to position his work and shape his career (see chapter 2). This was reflected in his advocacy of and commitment to the notion of professionalism.

In reality, rarely is critical acclaim achieved without some modicum of commercial success. Therefore, what is more interesting to the practising professional artist than the adoption of a position of denial of the market is reconciling the inevitable tensions between aesthetic value and monetary value. The challenge is to balance idealism with pragmatism, the aesthetic with the mercantile. And although for many artists, recognition and the forging of a long lasting reputation is of the upmost

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<sup>15</sup> Jensen, R. *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p.10

<sup>16</sup> In marketing USP refers to Unique Selling Proposal or Proposition. Businesses, including commercial art galleries, use the strategy to differentiate one product from another, the work of one artist from the work of another artist. In art worlds it is usually predicated by the notion of originality.

<sup>17</sup> Thornton (2008), p.208

importance, nevertheless most artists recognise the importance of sales, that the income earned from sales enables the production of art to continue.

### Art Markets and Specific Market Strategies

*The art market is the place where, by some secret alchemy, the cultural good becomes a commodity*<sup>18</sup>

Accepting that art is a commodity, a product operating within a capitalist framework raises an important question: what specific factors or forces contribute to an artist's success? It can be argued that art operates within the triumvirate of production, supply, and demand, which forms the underpinning aspect of the market, where the market is defined as 'the practice of exchange, the site where daily marketing occurs, as well as a wider notion of commerce and the values it produces'.<sup>19</sup> Art market relationships are complex and frequently symbiotic, and should not be viewed in isolation; instead they need to be considered in the light of cultural, economic, political, social, and technological contexts, all of which have a bearing on the impact and efficacy of the marketing of an artist, a style, or a movement. The art market in the broadest sense is pluralistic; in fact, it is more accurate to refer to it as a multitude of markets, each addressing different needs and wants and catering for different tastes. Many types and categories of art are constantly available, all competing for critical attention and market share. A matrix of influences, made up of numerous agents, stakeholders and intermediaries, with a plurality of discourses and positions, affects the reception of art at any one time. The consumer is spoilt for choice. Therefore careful market positioning and the marketing of art production are crucial if success is to be achieved. One view of the market is that it acts as a filtering system, a system of gateways overseen and managed by a number of gatekeepers, which an artist or his representative needs to negotiate if success is to be achieved. Art does not make its journey from production to consumption unaided:

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<sup>18</sup> Moulin, R. *The French Art Market: A Sociological View*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987, p.3

<sup>19</sup> Honig, E. *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp*, London: Yale University Press, 1998, p.13.

Judgements, selections, rejections, and withdrawals are made, and discourses and positions constructed and contested. Later chapters in this thesis demonstrate that each of these factors or considerations played a part in the making of Hoyland's career.

The 'classical' economic view of product success is that the market is efficient in positioning and arriving at judgements about art, as it is with any other product, and thus plays a crucial role in determining success or otherwise; successful artists are those who bring the 'best' quality and most desirable product to the marketplace. Such models rely heavily on one determinant or measure of success: commercial or monetary success. In this model success is largely determined and guaranteed by market forces; with numerous mechanisms and rules, notably supply and demand, operating. A number of classical economists who have investigated the art market concur with this view. Gramp treats art as no different from any other product, 'art is scarce, it has a price. And like all other things, the price is determined by supply and demand'.<sup>20</sup> Consequently the market determines both levels of supply and demand, mediates prices and establishes value, either aesthetic value or monetary value or both. To some, value equates only with monetary value and aesthetic judgements are either inferior or secondary considerations. This is the position adopted by Gramp: 'the demand [for art] can be analysed in the same way as the demand for goods and services of all kinds...art is not demeaned by being treated in this way' and 'whether it is worth its price depends on the value it has to the people to whom it is offered, the public'.<sup>21</sup>

In a similar vein, Frey sees, 'advantages of using markets. They tend to be efficient and allow the different artistic preferences of the population to be met', and rejects the notion that the market only produces low quality art; instead the market 'permits and fosters variety.' According to Frey, 'the concept of art, as understood by economists, starts with the preferences or values of the individual. This distinguishes

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<sup>20</sup> Gramp, W.D. *Pricing the Priceless: Art, Artists, and Economics*, New York: Basic Books, 1989, p.4

<sup>21</sup> Gramp (1989), p.4

the economic concept of art fundamentally from other definitions of art which derive from quite different principles, e.g. from a notion of aesthetic beauty based on deeper philosophical grounds.' He rejects the opinions and views of 'art experts', those who 'pass judgement on what art is' and, instead claims that there is 'no normative judgement about [art]... art ...is what people think art is...All judgements are relative, relative to, and decided by the market and consequently, the concept of 'art' changes over time as a result of changing constraints, in particular changes in income, prices and the value of time'.<sup>22</sup>

### The Market: Production, Supply, Demand and Market Forces: A Macro View

#### Production and Supply

Production can be defined as, 'what motivates artists to produce work, how artists and their intermediaries view the market, and how they orientate themselves towards it'.<sup>23</sup> The production and presentation of artworks conforms to the market 'rules' of supply and demand.

In 'art worlds', supply can be defined as the quantity of artworks that an artist is willing to sell, to release on to the marketplace. In economic terms it is the propensity to sell rather than actual sales which defines the term. Three major determinants affect supply: price; cost of production; and technological advances. Supply is usually coincident with production, with most artists, either advertently or inadvertently, wishing for their art to enter the supply chain but not always; some artists produce work solely for personal consumption. Art markets, in theory, are open markets, that is, any producer of art can proclaim themselves an artist and enter the marketplace; the market for art, unlike the market for other products, is largely unregulated, with few restrictions on entry.

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<sup>22</sup> Frey (2003), p.9

<sup>23</sup> Morris Hargreaves McIntyre - Executive Report - *Taste Buds: How to Cultivate the Art Market*, London: Arts Council England, 2004, p.3

When art enters the supply chain a monetary value is placed on it. Price is determined by what the market can sustain. In theory, all things being equal, the higher the expected, stated, or anticipated price, the greater the number of works that will be offered up for sale by the artist. But it is not as straightforward as this because there is the danger that by 'flooding' the market eventually prices will become depressed; the ideal scenario is when market equilibrium is achieved.

Usually it is the responsibility of the gallery or its agents to convert aesthetic value into monetary value without compromising the integrity of either the artist or his work; and marketing is central to this underpinning aim. Therefore it can be stated that the art object works on two different planes, the cultural plane and the economic plane.

In such models the market by making adjustments is always in equilibrium. If an artist's work does not sell, his gallery will release him. The market is an institution which responds to demand.<sup>24</sup> The market reflects and responds to demand or anticipated demand and acts as a filtering system, disposing of art that is no longer wanted. Art is simply withdrawn, be it from display in a commercial gallery or from the walls of a museum. Adjustments in price can attract otherwise reluctant would-be purchasers. Many works by Hoyland were sold to public collections discounted, by the trade norm of 10%. Similarly, if demand for an artist's work outstrips supply the market will make price adjustments, coinciding with a rise in prices. This mechanism is operational in both primary and secondary markets. Art is like any other product and is vulnerable to obsolescence, to changes in taste and fashion. According to Gramp, 'not all art survives, most is lost or soon forgotten...most art has proved to be worthless...if the obsolescence of art were not so and works of art were in danger of being discarded while they still had value - instead of being discarded because no one valued them- the market would rescue them'.<sup>25</sup> In theory, a lack of demand

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<sup>24</sup> Frey, B.S. and Pommerehne, W.W. *Muses and Markets: Explorations in the Economics of the Arts*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, p.11

<sup>25</sup> Gramp (1989), pp.68-9

leads to the artist withdrawing both himself and his product from the market. Alternatively, the artist can change his product by making his product more attractive, commercially, to actual or potential customers or find better agents, dealers or marketers, or take greater advantage of the marketing function and potential. But in practice this rarely occurs; many artists are driven to continue to make art even if there is no sustainable market for it, aside from his self. Thus, the challenge facing any artist is how to sustain a career over a protracted timeline; how to address and respond to the machinations of the marketplace, how to manage changes in taste and fashion without, for most artists, compromising one's creativity.

### Demand

In art worlds demand can be defined as the quantity of artworks that buyers are willing to buy at a particular price at a particular moment in time. Levels of demand are determined by a number of factors including: the disposable and dispensable income of potential buyers, price, and rate of returns of alternative investment opportunities: aesthetic judgements; the general economic climate at a particular time: rates of inflation; scarcity value; and marketing.

The demand for art displays particular characteristics. For instance one can consume and enjoy art without necessarily owning or wishing to acquire it, as evidenced by the number of people who attend exhibitions and visit museums and art galleries, without actually owning any original artworks. Those persons who display a willingness to purchase art are, in marketing terms, referred to as 'demanders'.

In a perfect art market, where the aim is to stimulate demand, potential customers have full access to choice and information. There is no absolute reason why art should be demanded. It is the primary function of marketing to stimulate and satisfy demand and to contribute to the distribution of art, supplying art to potential customers. Providing potential customers with both choice and information is part of this process. There is no guarantee that because art has been placed in the

marketplace that a corresponding demand necessarily follows; it can simply be noticed by audiences but ignored thereafter. Often there is a time lag between the production of art, its placement into the marketplace, its reception and validation, and it being demanded. Without demand, in its widest sense, there would be no artistic careers. Demanders are an eclectic group and include fellow artists, dealers, collectors, corporate collections, auction houses, museum and gallery directors, state collections, curators, critics, art historians, art journalists, television and radio producers, the mass media, and the general public.

Similarly, consumer behaviour which impacts on levels of demand can be modified through education, and advertising. Important conditions need to be met if art is to be demanded. Demand for art is culturally determined. This is a view posited by Pierre Bourdieu who contends that cultural practices are closely linked to educational capital and that it is the role of educational institutions to impose these. He identified and distinguished between three types of capital: Economic Capital, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital. Bourdieu defined 'economic capital' as when capital is 'directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights.'

Cultural capital can exist in three forms:

In the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.

Finally, according to Bourdieu, social capital can be defined as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group'.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu, P. 'The Forms of Capital', in J. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York: Greenwood, 1986, pp.241-258.

Generally the interest in and reception of art requires an educated middle class audience. In her study of the New York art scene of the 1940s, Crane noted that the dissemination and acceptance of Abstract Expressionism was partly attributable to a rise in educational opportunities, 'a significant role must be attributed to the growth of educational motivations in the post-war period'.<sup>27</sup>

The number of stakeholders interested in art at any one time is relatively small. Art like any other product is controlled by market forces, where the forces of supply and demand, both from the private and public sectors are frequently manipulated and controlled by the elite few; art remains a marginal interest. As Pearson highlights, 'the visual arts have traditionally and historically reflected the interests and tastes of small and powerful sections of society. These classes have tended to universalise their tastes, experiences and culture as being the culture of the nation'.<sup>28</sup>

#### Acceptance and Assimilation

As stated earlier, for art to enter the marketplace and be recognised as art it must move through the protracted process of acceptance and assimilation. Not all art finds its way onto the market. Art once it has been produced must be brought to the attention of interested parties; for assimilation and acceptance to occur. These parties include galleries, auction houses, museums, government agencies, corporations, and the mass media. This matrix of influences and convergences determine artistic success or otherwise. This was touched upon by Becker when he wrote, 'every aspect of art world activities and organizations contributes to and affects the making of reputations and their results' and continuing, argued that 'reputations develop through a process of consensus building...and...from the collective activity of [these] art worlds'.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Crane, D. *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York World 1940-1985*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.8

<sup>28</sup> Pearson, N. *The State and the Visual Arts*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982, p.109

<sup>29</sup> Becker (1986), p.359

Numerous terms have been adopted to define and explain this process. The Arts Council has called this process subscription: 'the process by which art is filtered and legitimised'.<sup>30</sup> Endorsement is another term associated with acceptance and assimilation. A common belief is that the aesthetic and/or monetary value of an artist's work increases or decreases dependent on the degree of endorsement or subscription that it attracts. The 'classical' economic view is that the market acts as the primary filter, the mediation point, where the mechanism of supply and demand functions to moderate production and set prices. Once it has been established that there is a demand for the work of a particular artist the next stage in reaching equilibrium between supply and demand involves marketing, the presentation of work to audiences.

#### Marketing and the Making of a Career

Markets and marketing are inseparable. Throughout this thesis, marketing is defined and used in the broadest sense and its importance is recognised and discussed in relation to the making and sustaining of John Hoyland's career.

All art worlds engage in marketing activities. At the most elemental, marketing involves the 4 'P's: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. This basic model can be extended to include the principles of, and devices used in, marketing: product design, product development, product differentiation, the distribution network, branding and re-branding, market segmentation, product positioning, brand extension, and promotion.

The classical or traditional view of marketing is one where the consumer is placed firmly at the forefront of the marketing equation and activities, where the needs or wants of consumers are first identified and then producers respond to these needs and through communication channels the two attain market equilibrium, through the mechanism of supply and demand, in the marketplace. But this particular view of

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<sup>30</sup> Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2004), p.4

marketing does not sit comfortably with art production. The majority of artists do not set out to make specific artworks to satisfy customer needs. According to Hirschman the equation works the other way round for artists: 'An artist... may first create a product that flows from his or her own internal desires...and then present this product to consumers who choose to either accept or reject it'.<sup>31</sup> It is the responsibility of those responsible for the presentation of that artwork, be it the artist, a dealer, or auctioneer, to promote and promulgate its merits. Inevitably this involves a number of other agents or stakeholders, including museum and gallery directors and curators, collectors, critics, art journalists, and advocates. For as Bradshaw, Kerrigan and Holbrook pointed out, 'many fundamental tenets' underpinning marketing can be applied to the art world. Art is no different from any other product, though the art product has its own characters and conventions, and aesthetic considerations'.<sup>32</sup>

However even this extension of the marketing concept may not go far enough; definitions and descriptions of marketing need not be so narrow in focus, concentrating solely on market-driven, commercial perspectives. Instead a case can be made to include an intellectual dimension; this is the approach adopted by Dettmar and West. They argue that it is important to understand 'marketing as embracing both the material and the intellectual – finally ideological practices. These include a wide gambit of activities that have as their goals both the facilitation of transactions between the producers of cultural goods and their consumers, and the elaboration of criteria to define both the relative value of these goods and the aesthetic experience of apprehending them'.<sup>33</sup> This is an interesting deviation from the norm for it includes the artist as a consumer.

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<sup>31</sup> Hirschman, E.C. 'Aesthetics, Ideologies and the Limits of the Marketing Concept', *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47, Summer 1983, pp.45-55

<sup>32</sup> Hirschman (1983), pp.45-55

<sup>33</sup> Dettmar and West (1996), p.1

## Product

Both the artist, as brand,<sup>34</sup> and the art produced by that artist is the primary product. Secondary products include catalogues, monographs and other publications; media (journals, popular magazines, newspapers, web material, television and radio); merchandise; and ultimately, visit to museums and galleries. John Hoyland received widespread coverage and attention in the media (see chapter 3). Inevitably, there is a convergence between media and public exposure. Exhibitions provide the opportunity to write on an artist's work and there would appear to be a direct correlation between the type and status of an exhibition and the degree of media attention accorded it. In the case of Hoyland it was the major public exhibitions, at the Whitechapel, to a certain extent, the Tate and the Hayward and Serpentine galleries, not regular showings with his representative gallery, which attracted most critical attention (see chapters 3, 4, and 5).

## Place: Markets and Distribution Networks

Once the decision has been taken that the product, the artwork, should be presented to audiences, including potential customers, then a 'place' needs to be identified. These are known as markets. As Becker asserts, 'artists, having made a work, need to distribute it, to find a mechanism which will give people with the taste to appreciate it, to access it and simultaneously will repay the investment of time, money, and materials in the work so that more time, materials and cooperative activity will be available with which to make more works'.<sup>35</sup> This appreciation applies not only to commercial considerations but also to aesthetic reception. Critical reception is as much part and parcel of a marketing plan as point of sales opportunities; it forms part of the endorsement process. If a critic or art historian is unaware of an artist or his work, how can endorsement take place? If an artwork is

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<sup>34</sup> Although the idea of an artist being seen as a brand may sit somewhat uncomfortably with some artists, nevertheless, that is what they are. For as Schroeder rightly points out, 'perhaps in no other market is the relationship between name recognition, value and branding so clear' from Schroeder, J.E. 'The Artist in Brand Culture' in O'Reilly, D. and Kerrigan, F. (eds), *Marketing the Arts: a Fresh Approach*, London: Routledge, 2010, p.26

<sup>35</sup> Becker (1982), p.92

hidden in the artist's studio no external judgement on its merits can be made. Thus the distribution network supports and endorses aesthetic receptivity and public appreciation, 'Distribution has a crucial effect on reputations. What is not distributed is not known and this cannot be well thought of or have historical importance'.<sup>36</sup>

In the modern capitalist art worlds the principal agents or nodal points for the distribution of art are the exhibition, the private gallery, art fairs, auction houses, private sales and state institutions. Work can also be displayed and sold from an artist's studio.

### Types of Markets

The exchange of artworks takes place in two markets, the primary market and the secondary market. The primary market is where an artwork is first exchanged, usually resulting in a financial transaction, though occasionally an artwork may be exchanged or part-exchanged for another. Such transactions usually emanate between the artist and a buyer, from his studio or a privately arranged exhibition but more frequently between an artist's representative, usually a commercial gallery/dealer, and a buyer. The secondary market is any subsequent exchange of an artwork. Such transactions include sales at auction, one collector selling to another collector, a dealer selling already-purchased stock to collectors or collections. There was little secondary trading in Hoyland's work between 1960 and 1982. This is unsurprising; the secondary market was largely restricted to European modern masters. According to Findlay, who was employed by Sotheby's, 'there were only a few living artists whose works regularly appeared in the secondary market'.<sup>37</sup>

Traditionally the lucrative markets for art have been capital-city-centred: Paris, New York, London, Berlin, Edinburgh, and now Beijing. Smaller markets can be found in the provinces, for instance, private collectors, provincial collections and university

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<sup>36</sup> Becker (1982), p.97

<sup>37</sup> Findlay, M. *The Value of Art: Money, Power, Beauty*, London: Prestel, 2012, p.18

collections, but the principal markets are found in major cities.<sup>38</sup> Art markets have not been unaffected by the globalisation effect; increasingly positioning art in international markets is an important part of establishing an artist's reputation. Although this is often viewed as relatively new phenomenon in fact the beginnings of globalisation can be traced back to the beginning of the modern period.

## The Private Sector

### The Commercial Gallery

With few artists possessing the necessary business acumen or marketing skills to successfully launch and sustain a career or the desire to engage actively in the business side of their careers, the majority instead opt to use the services of 'experts' to market their product. Arguably the most effective place remains the private commercial gallery. The primary function of a gallery is to stimulate demand for an artist's work and to realise sales, with the price mechanism an important tool in this aim. Prices are usually negotiated between the artist and the gallery, where it is sensible to take the advice of the dealer, who has a greater knowledge of market conditions. Galleries can adopt one of two economic strategies when drafting the assignment note; contracts are rarely used in commercial art worlds. They can negotiate a set commission, where the artworks remain the legal property of the artist, who receives payment after the sale or they can purchase an artist's entire stock in advance and hold onto it until a future date. Such an approach is predicated by the notion of speculation, with the express intention of the dealer to 'cash-in' when the economic value of the art is on the rise. For an emerging artist or art movement, the dealer may recommend keeping initial prices low to create demand and attract attention and interest among audiences. Price, according to Michael Findlay, an art trader with Sotheby's New York in the 1960s, was carefully managed to stimulate demand, 'there were relatively few dedicated collectors willing to look at

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<sup>38</sup> A recent feasibility study of the British art markets concluded that, 'there is no infrastructure outside of London for selling critically engaged, innovative, contemporary art'. Quoted in Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2004), p.2

emerging artists, and dealers had to encourage them with prices that were modest for those times'.<sup>39</sup>

The private gallery mediates between the numerous stakeholders operating in the various art worlds; between the artist, potential customers, the tastemakers - critics, fellow artists, art historians - and the public galleries and museums and other organisations who exist to support, patronise and acquire art. In Britain, the Arts Council, the British Council, the Government Art Collection, the Contemporary Art Society, the Art Fund (previously named the National Art Collection Fund) - and the media. Dealers have the business skills and network of influence to successfully launch, sustain, and develop an artist's career and possess the principal motivation for being in business, profit, to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all parties. A range of strategies are employed by the private gallery to achieve this aim. For ease of categorisation these activities will be bracketed under the umbrella term of 'marketing'. The positioning of, and the discourses built around, art often begin in the domain of the private gallery; initial notice and attention generated in the gallery space can lead to media coverage and critical acclaim. Philosophically, the gallery helps to define the object, be it a painting or sculpture, as art. O'Doherty asserts, 'the ideal gallery subtracts from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is 'art' ', and through which, 'the work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself'.<sup>40</sup>

Thus value, both economic and aesthetic is generated through the portal of the gallery: 'Dealers integrate the artist into the society's economy by transforming aesthetic value into economic value', argues Moulin, 'thus making it possible for artists to live by their work'.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the relationship between an artist and his agent is mutual, functioning in a symbiotic relationship; although the gallery is largely instrumental in establishing the reputation and economic cachet of the artist

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<sup>39</sup> Findlay (2012), pp.16-17

<sup>40</sup> O' Doherty, B. and Hanks, N. (eds) *Museums in Crisis*, New York: Braziller, 1972, p.74

<sup>41</sup> Moulin (1987), p.109

it is the artist who plays a significant role in the endorsement of the dealer, a gallery's reputation depends upon the prestige of the artists in its stable. It is through this relationship that critical reception, commercial success and the maximisation of profits, benefitting both artist and dealer, are, according to Fitzgerald, managed and sustained. Reflecting on the early careers of Matisse and Picasso, he concluded, 'the critical reception was directly dependent on their commercial desirability, since the exhibitions necessary to publicise their work would not occur unless the dealers foresaw a chance for a profit'.<sup>42</sup>

The art gallery exists primarily to maximise profits and adopts a range of economic mechanisms to achieve this aim: achieving the highest possible prices for an artist's work, negotiating consignment deals and, notably, the commission taken by the gallery, keeping costs, both fixed and variable costs, to a minimum. Also, because there are few regulatory forces controlling the trading behaviour of galleries business is conducted on ethical rather than legal terms; few contracts exist between gallery and artist. Principally because the market is an open one the network of dealers is competitive. Artists have the freedom to move from one gallery to another.

An artist may switch dealer because another firm has been established longer, or has a greater reputation, or operates in a prime location, or has better resources or an extended network of influence, or provides more frequent exhibition opportunities, or the ability to extend markets or niches, or provides greater financial support, in the form of stipends. A gallery will often persuade an artist to move from a competitor to its gallery. For as Moulin points out few artists make it without the support of a dealer. Each gallery and dealer needs to be considered on an individual basis. Jensen distinguishes between the ideological dealer and the entrepreneurial dealer. The former is 'an advocate for a particular kind of art' held above all others in the name of its 'authenticity'. Jensen contends that 'we should understand the ideological character of these dealers rather than their speculative attitude toward contemporary

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<sup>42</sup> Fitzgerald, M.C. *Making Modernism: Picasso and the Creation of the Market for Twentieth-Century Art*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p.32

art. Whereas the entrepreneurial dealer markets artists through their contemporary reputations won through public exhibitions, the ideological dealer markets his artists vis-à-vis a supposed historical position'.<sup>43</sup> Not all dealers are driven solely by the profit motive. Models on the motivations of dealers are often too simplistic, too mechanistic, and ultimately reductive. The assumption that all galleries and dealers behave in similar ways is erroneous and the role of the dealer is more complicated than Classical economists assign. The owner of Hoyland's major gallery, Leslie Waddington, stated that one of the reasons he continued to support Hoyland was simply that he liked and admired the work.

The art dealer's gallery is the risk taker. They put up the finances to provide exhibiting opportunities and may provide financial support to the artist, sometimes paying out stipends; Hoyland received an annual stipend of £500 from his first gallery, the Marlborough. Dealers often buy work from the artists they represent, ensuring a continuation in production. As Moulin points out, 'the innovative dealer bets on the unknown work; his objective is to give it a public existence and impose it on the market'.<sup>44</sup> The dealer packages the artist and his work into a saleable commodity and then presents the product to audiences. Reputations are established through a combination of critical acclaim and sales. Dealers act as the interface between the artist, the artwork, and the collector and when the three converge, the potential for a sale are there. Galleries strive to extend their fields of influence. The gallery is the mediation point between the other numerous stakeholders, including the critic, the media, gallery and museum directors and curators, and the heads of the fine art departments of the Arts Council, the British Council, and the Government Art Collection. In an attempt to maximise returns dealers endeavour to extend the distribution networks, to develop markets beyond local arrangements, to disseminate the product into other potentially worthwhile markets. This requires an intuitive grasp of both current and future trends and fashions in art and the wherewithal to

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<sup>43</sup> Jensen (1994), p.49

<sup>44</sup> Moulin (1987), p.118

maximise benefits from this extension. This entails assessing the commercial viability of potential venues, locations, and market share. In general galleries tend to specialise in a particular art form, style, 'school of art', or period, and use business acumen to maximise the niche. Marketing is central to this, with the artist and his work at the centre of the marketing plan. Galleries construct, arrange, and re-align, when necessary, structures around an artist, building a public profile, with the intent of gaining critical and public attention and acclaim. Working in partnership with other agents, for instance, critics and art historians, dealers cultivate an artist's reputation yet simultaneously provide reassurance to the customer, commonly referred to as 'the collector'. The power of persuasion is used with potential customers to endorse an artist and his art. This involves resolving conflicting goals, for instance, between aesthetic value and monetary value, between a cultural good and a commodity. It inevitably involves promoting the concept of 'expertise' or 'expert knowledge' which is reassuring to potential purchasers.

Dealers frequently speculate, for both their own gain and the benefit of their customers. This can sometimes benefit the artist by providing income and raising the monetary value of an artist's stock in the secondary markets. Conversely, it can have the opposite effect, when an artist's reputation declines and the value of his stock depreciates. This is particularly so when the art has been sought on its investment potential. Some collectors acquire art for investment reasons. 'Collectors and dealers' according to Fitzgerald, 'often buy up a complete portfolio of an artist's work as a speculative venture'.<sup>45</sup> In the late 1950s New York - based Robert and Ethel Scull began to collect art by contemporary American artists and it is claimed that their main motivation was its investment potential (see chapter 4).

Galleries function in both markets: the primary market and the secondary market. An interesting relationship exists between gallery owners and the auction houses. Auction houses play a significant role in the management of secondary markets. One

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<sup>45</sup> Fitzgerald (1996), p.110

view of auction houses is that they deprive galleries of stock and potential sales opportunities. However, this may not always be the case; in fact, auction houses often support the price mechanism, frequently pushing up the prices of secondary market art. As the New York gallery owner, Leo Castelli pointed out, 'it was favourable to my cause to see works of my artists attaining high prices in auction sales because it suggested to collectors that the prices we charge here are not in any way excessive'.<sup>46</sup>

The importance of the commercial gallery cannot be over-estimated. For as Rene Gimpel, the owner of one of London's most successful galleries proclaimed during a public debate at the ICA in 1978, 'no art movement of any significance can by-pass the gallery system because art, like any commodity, can only reach its essential market through the medium of exchange'.<sup>47</sup> This is borne out by the difference in experiences Hoyland received from the two galleries who represented him between 1960 and 1982. His experience with the Marlborough New London gallery did little to advance his career; in contrast the support that Hoyland received from Leslie Waddington, undoubtedly assisted with the consolidation of his career (chapter 5).

### Exhibitions

Exhibitions are a major element of the marketing strategy for an artist's career development, acting as the point-of-sale for that work, the shop window for potential customers to view and make purchasing decisions; in marketing terms the exhibition is one of the main 'distribution' points for the product. Exhibitions also perform the function of showcasing an artist's portfolio to influential tastemakers, critics, gallery and museum directors, gallery owners, and the public at large. Exhibitions function as the means by which disparate audiences - artists, curators, dealers, collectors, critics, art journalists, art historians, and the public - converge, where a promotional mix is constructed, blending production, distribution and discourse into one.

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<sup>46</sup> Castelli, L. - Quoted in Ratcliff, C. 'The Marriage of Art and Money', *Art in America*, July 1988, p.78

<sup>47</sup> Gimpel, R. - Quoted in Fuller, P. 'The Crisis in Professionalism', *Studio International*, Vol.194, No.989, 1978, p.83

Beyond the commercial gallery, exhibitions also take place in public museums and galleries. One such public exhibition is the 'survey' exhibitions. There are two kinds of survey exhibition, one, where the art from a specific timeline is put on show, for example, *British Painting 1952-1977* (Royal Academy of Arts London, 1977), or two, where the art of a particular genre or movement, for instance, *Colour in British Painting* (British Council, Various venues, 1983) was arranged thematically.

Hoyland's work was included in both of the exhibitions. Other types of exhibitions include, group, and retrospective exhibitions. Hoyland's career benefitted from inclusion in a number of group exhibitions in the 1960s (see chapter 3).

The intention behind an exhibition is often indicated in its title, for instance *Situation*, referred to the 'situation now' and the 1964 *New Generation* clearly signposted to audiences that the exhibition included work by emerging artists. Other exhibitions can be 'solo' ones or 'mixed/group' ones. A public exhibition acts as a mediation point between the curator, and audiences other than purchasers of art – the viewing public, critics, museum and gallery directors, art journalists, one's peers, and other important tastemakers. The venue and the reputation of the organisation or individual curating the exhibition are also important. Exhibitions held in London generally carry more weight than exhibitions outside of the capital. They can be the venue for solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, or larger survey exhibitions, or retrospective showings. They provide exhibition opportunities for emerging artists that may be denied them by the commercial gallery.

There is another important aspect to exhibitions, the positive psychological effect.

Reflecting on the importance of the 1980 *Hayward Annual* exhibition, which he had curated, Hoyland emphasised this point:

There's another aspect to a show of this kind and it's to do with giving people encouragement. Psychologically, it's very important for some of these artists, who've never shown on that level, to be put in the spotlight, to be put under pressure, and just to be given something to aim at, to get them out of this very boring life of teaching and painting and nobody ever looking at their work - and certainly nobody ever buying it. That's part of the crisis in this country,

it's psychological more than anything else; it's not to do with a lack of painters and a lack of talented people. There are just as many here as probably anywhere else. But every time an artist pops his head up and puts on a show he gets shot down, goes back with his tail between his legs and licks his wounds, and tries to pick up and go on again. So psychologically, it's very important to give all these artists a boost.<sup>48</sup>

Retrospective exhibitions can be particularly beneficial in the development of an artist's career. Retrospectives are usually arranged long after the initial arrival of an artist on the art scene and they provide critics with the opportunity to construct a profile on the artist and to re-evaluate the artist's career to date. Retrospectives attract media attention.<sup>49</sup> It was the two retrospectives, in 1967 and 1979, of Hoyland's work that did most to move his career forward (see chapter 3).

### Private Patrons

Private patrons are fundamental to a dynamic art market; they often anticipate trends in art and are more likely to take risks, buying art from non-established artists shortly after the work has been produced. In general they are less cautious and more visionary than the directors and curators of public institutions. In her survey of the French art markets, Morel claims that the rise of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century contributed to the establishment of new art markets and that one of the reasons for France's subsequent decline as a major international art market can be attributed to, 'the absence of a strong body of French private collectors (individuals and business corporations), crowded out of the market by the overwhelming presence of public institutions'.<sup>50</sup> The motivations for and patterns in collecting at a specific time needs to be contextualised. When Hoyland emerged onto the London art scene in the early 1960s, despite the fact that Britain was leaving behind the post-war austerity years coincident with a growing middle class base, the number of private collectors remained stubbornly low. A similar picture could be seen in the

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<sup>48</sup> Hoyland, J. Interview with James Faure Walker, 'John Hoyland and the Hayward Annual', *Artscribe* No. 24, August 1980, p.35

<sup>49</sup> According to House, Claude Monet's commercial breakthrough came in the wake of the large Monet-Rodin retrospective held in Paris in 1889. Quoted in House, J. *Monet: Nature into Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1986, p.213

<sup>50</sup> Morel, C. 'Private Patrons in the Development of a Dynamic Contemporary Art Market: Does France need more private patrons?' in Robertson, I. and Chong, D. *The Art Business*, London: Routledge, 2008 p.99

corporate sector. Between 1960 and 1982, in contrast to the situation in the United States, the number of corporate collections that were interested in and acquired abstract art was low (see chapter 5).

### The Public Sector

There is no absolute obligation for government to take an active interest or role in supporting the arts; the arts could simply be left to the private sector to address production and supply and demand issues. In America, according to Feinstein, the Abstract Expressionists in the 1950s complained about the lack of state support for the arts.<sup>51</sup> But in Britain the State has intervened in and been part of the art worlds and art markets for some time. The motivations for these interventions are numerous. Some of the reasons are ideological and abstract. The justification for arts funding is predicated on the belief that it is good for the national economy, contributes to social cohesion and cultural identity and the well-being of all. Sometimes governments intervene in the art markets to address what economists refer to as 'market failures', which has been defined 'as the failure of the market economy to achieve an efficient allocation of resources'.<sup>52</sup> But often governments intervene for perceived economic gains. Through the multiplier effect, the expenditure expended on the arts can assist in stimulating the economy through art tourism.<sup>53</sup> Another valid justification or reason is political expediency or opportunism; pleasing or placating a particular social grouping, usually the middle classes, the perceived main consumers for the arts or a dominant pressure group, may garner votes. The increased interest in arts provision shown by successive British governments at the end of the 1950s and throughout the 1970s can be largely attributed to a combination of these factors.

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<sup>51</sup> Feinstein, R. 'The Scull Collection', *Art in America*, [Online] <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/the-scul-collection> [4 June 2010]

<sup>52</sup> Lipsey, R.G. and Chrystal, K.A. *Economics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p.227

<sup>53</sup> For a fuller account see Frey, B.S. *Art and Economics: Analysis and Cultural Policy*, Berlin London: Springer, 2003

## Public Museums and Galleries

Public museums and galleries play a crucial role in the endorsement process: including providing exhibition space as well as the acquisition and the legitimisation of an artist's work. They provide invaluable exhibition space for permanent and temporary displays: the mounting of specific exhibitions; solo, group, and arguably, the most important, retrospective showings. In general the footfall for exhibitions in public museums and galleries exceeds the footfall for exhibitions held in commercial galleries. Similarly the status assigned public exhibitions is greater. Reputations are often made because of the attention received through a major exhibition. This was the case with John Hoyland and his two retrospective exhibitions, at the Whitechapel in 1967 and the Serpentine in 1979. The former was instrumental in establishing his reputation, whilst the latter show consolidated his place in the history of British post-war art. But what is more difficult to judge is the long-term effect of an exhibition held in 1967 or 1979, unless it has been interpreted as a seminal exhibition and held its position in the canon and on the timeline of modern art history. Showcase exhibitions often assist with the garnering of later public acclaim. Canons, orthodoxies, and value, in general, are established through the mediation of public museums and galleries; exhibitions held in commercial galleries are soon forgotten. Value, both aesthetic and monetary, correlates with the degree of endorsement and subscription accorded an artist and his body of work by major museums and art galleries. Acquisition decisions taken by public museums and art galleries are rarely straightforward and are contingent on a number of factors, factors working in a range of symbiotic relationships. The first obvious consideration is aesthetic and a number of questions need to be considered by museum directors and those serving on acquisition committees or panels: Is the work worth acquiring? What are its merits? How does it capture the moment in time? Is longevity imbued in the work? Does it represent value for money? The next consideration is a simple financial one: Are the funds available to acquire the work? Where are the funds available from? Without

question, funding was one of the most important factors in the minds of museum directors and curators when deliberating whether to acquire work by Hoyland. Resources are finite but artworks are infinite and decision-makers have difficult decisions to make. The law of opportunity costs inevitably features in the decision-making process. If the museum acquires a work by Hoyland, what alternative work by other artists will the museum miss out on? Hoyland was not the only British abstract painter working in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>54</sup> Many decisions can be attributed to the personal preference of individual directors and curators or those serving on acquisition committees or panels. Differences of opinion on the merit of the work, often highlighting tensions between different parties or agents, sometimes aesthetic, sometimes purely financial, often affect final decisions.<sup>55</sup> Although it makes sense to concentrate on the positive question – Why was Hoyland chosen for public collections?, nonetheless, the converse, somewhat, negative question – Why was Hoyland ignored by some custodians of public collections: directors, museum curators, and selection panels, is equally interesting.

Timing is another factor. At what stage in the artist's career will the decision be taken by a museum to acquire his work? The conundrum often facing decision makers is when to buy an artist's work. Work is usually acquired at two points in an artist's career: either near the commencement of the career, when the work is affordable but the artist's reputation has not been consolidated, or later when the artist's standing and stature is clearer. From a marketing perspective, early collectors are

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<sup>54</sup> The list of abstract artists working at the same time as Hoyland was endless; the following is a small yet representative sample: Gillian Ayres, Basil Beattie, Bernard Cohen, Robyn Denny, Terry Frost, Paul Huxley, Albert Irvin, Jeremy Moon, Victor Pasmore, Bridget Riley, Michael Tzack, William Turnbull and Marc Vaux.

<sup>55</sup> Two examples illustrate this point: In 1969 the Walker Art Gallery made an application to Liverpool Council for a grant of £900 towards the purchase of Hoyland's painting – 18.1.69 – which had been well received in that year's John Moores Painting exhibition. The record of proceedings makes interesting reading and highlights the challenge that faced abstract painters, including Hoyland, to sell work to a largely uninitiated, disinterested, and somewhat sceptical public: 'Despite the plea by the then chairman of the arts committee, John Fischer, that the piece be examined with an open mind, many of the councillors were aghast. Labour leader Bill Sefton said nothing would convince him that 'the piece of merchandise out there' was a work of art. Tory leader Macdonald Steward said there would be an argument for purchasing it if its face were turned to the wall and people realised its value would increase over the years. 'But as soon as you turn it face to face, you will reject it.' From Key, J. 'This Way Up and It's Art: Key Previews the John Moore Exhibition', *Liverpool Post*, 25 November 1982, n.p. The Bristol Museum and Art Gallery houses one of the best collections of modern art within the United Kingdom and according to one observer is a 'prince among regional museums'. This can be attributed largely to the visionary approach adopted by its post-war German curator Hans Schubert and the active financial support from its friends' group. From 1953 to 1968 he was instrumental in developing the museum's art collection. An enthusiastic advocate of modern contemporary art he recommended paintings by Prunella Clough, Victor Pasmore, William Scott, and Ian Stephenson, to be acquired but found no place in the collection for John Hoyland. But there are no abstract paintings from after 1977 in its collection.

referred to as 'innovators' and later collectors as 'laggards' and each group is targeted. Some museums and public collections speculated on acquiring work by Hoyland early in his career whilst others waited until much later in his career. Some museums acquired work from the primary market or from Hoyland directly whereas other museums bought from auction houses (see chapter 5).

The public holding of an artist's work is vulnerable to the foibles of artistic fashion and taste. The demand for a particular genre of art is rarely constant, art drifts in and out of fashion; ideologies and tastes change and the values of individuals, for instance - directors, curators - can impact on these trends. But another factor may be a practical one, that of limited wall space. Museums, with insufficient wall space to hang all of the works in the collections at any one time, are selective and this frequently leads to the withdrawal of an artist's work from the public gaze.

Acquisition decisions for a public collection are taken by a relatively few individuals. Public museums and galleries can make or break an artist's reputation, by acquiring work or not. Museums can support or undermine a genre or art movement at a particular moment in time. Museums can actively promote one art movement at the expense of another, can promote one artist and neglect another. This is not a new phenomenon.<sup>56</sup> Although the Tate has a major holding of works by John Hoyland there has been no major showing of his work at the Tate<sup>57</sup> and individual works are only displayed occasionally. Directors and curators form the lynchpin in this process. Museums and galleries play a role in forming audiences and cultivating taste and thus create demand for art.

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<sup>56</sup> There are numerous instances of this occurring: Cockcroft has argued that American museums played a part in the positive reception and establishment of Abstract Expressionism in the United States: 'Museums, for their part, enlarged their role to become more than mere repositories of past art, and began to exhibit and collect contemporary art, particularly in the United States, museums became a dominant force on the art scene. In many ways, American Museums came to fulfil the role of official patronage.', from Cockcroft, E. 'Abstract Expressionism, Weapons of the Cold War' Essay first published in *Artforum* in 1974, and reprinted in Frascina, F., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.147 This blatant promotion angered some American figurative painters, including Edward Hopper to such a degree that in 1953 they established a pressure group The Reality Group to counter the official position.

<sup>57</sup> A small exhibition of Hoyland's work - *John Hoyland : The Trajectory of a Fallen Angel*- was held at Tate St Ives in 2006. His seminal painting 28.5.66 is currently displayed in the BP Walk through British Art display at Tate Britain.

The positioning of an artist's work into a major museum or gallery's collection usually takes place near the end of the distribution chain and can be interpreted as the final stage of the endorsement, assimilation and acceptance process managed by the art establishment, the final accolade.

### Promotion

Promotion involves a full gamut of activities: advertising, publicity, the publication of catalogues and website entries, display communications, including captions and audio guides, point-of-sale displays, including posters and flyers, exhibition previews and private invitations, reviews, and website entries, including social media. However, because of the timeline for Hoyland's career this thesis concentrates on the principal aspect of the promotional mix - critical reception.

### The Importance of Critical Reception

Critical reception, in its broadest sense, includes peer recognition, the production of exhibition catalogue essays and website entries; academic and scholarly résumés, press and television coverage; promotional and educational literature; monographs; and miscellaneous ephemera. Collectively, these create a profile of the artist and help to filter and legitimise artworks; they are a major ingredient in the endorsement process. For as Buck asserts, 'reviews and profiles in the arts press are nonetheless a crucial part of the endorsement process; and a series of well-designed and edited catalogues complete with erudite essays by respected writers and good-quality reproductions are a must for any artist seeking endorsement'.<sup>58</sup>

Critical reception provides both knowledge and reassurance for the various audiences. For the artist it acts as a motivator, providing justification and support for continuing to produce art. Marketers write of the need to re-assure customers, after purchase, that they have made the right choice. For the collector the endorsement process justifies and validates both his purchase decision and aesthetic judgement;

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<sup>58</sup> Buck (2004), p.16

without this psychological reassurance the likelihood of repeat sales diminishes. For the museum and gallery director it justifies the public money expended. For the viewer and public at large, it justifies the time and effort spent looking at and arriving at an understanding and the meaning of the art object. But there is an inherent danger surrounding critical reception: When does critical interpretation shift to being simply a promotional device, functioning as part of marketing strategy?

Critical reception formed the second stage in Bowness' model, the point when an artist and his work receive attention from serious critics. Critics use a range of different strategies to draw attention to an artist's work: Catalogue essays, academic journal articles, reviews and articles in newspapers, lectures and talks, and word-of-mouth. The role of the critic includes reviewing exhibitions and commenting on museum acquisitions, contributing to the initial legitimacy of an artist's work and assisting with its movement through the distribution networks, providing explication/exegesis of both the artist and his work, establishing discourses around the artist and his work, contextualising the work, positioning the artist and his work on an art historical timeline, and sometimes, inadvertently, performing a direct marketing function, that of presenting the artist and his work to wider audiences, stimulating demand, with the resulting consolidation of an artist's reputation and place in the market. Critics are especially important in disseminating new ideas and art practices to new audiences; explaining the characteristic features of these new art forms. It is unlikely that the views of critics change an artist's direction but the influence on the public is undeniably greater. As Garlake claims, 'while they probably had a minimal influence on the production of the artists they championed, they assisted greatly in the formation of perceptions by the public and other critics'.<sup>59</sup>

Conventions are constructed and at times other conventions are contested and challenged, with the express intention of altering perceptions and behaviour. The

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<sup>59</sup> Garlake, M. 'The Relationship between Institutional Patronage and Abstract Art in Britain 1945-1956': in Garlake, M (ed) *Artists and Patrons in Post-War Britain: Essays by Postgraduate Students at the Courtauld Institute of Art*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, p.47

audiences include fellow critics, art historians, artists, curators, directors of galleries and museums, dealers, auction houses, and the public.

The critic rarely operates in isolation; collaborative intent defines the relationships and roles carried out by the critic. Such arrangements are often informal and at times inadvertent. An example of such collaboration is the tripartite relationship between artist, dealer, and critic. Arguably one of the closest relationships exists between the critic and the dealer. As Becker points out, 'the dealers show the work, and the critics provide the reasoning which makes it acceptable and worth appreciating'.<sup>60</sup>

According to the contemporary gallery owner Larry Gagosian:

For reputations to arise and persist, critics and aestheticians must establish theories of art and criteria by which art, good art, and great art can be distinguished and identified...historians and scholars must establish the canon of authenticated works which can be attributed to an artist, so that the rest of us can base our judgements on the appropriate evidence.<sup>61</sup>

### Curators

Curators are key players in the endorsement process. The art historian David Sylvester claimed that the most important people in the cultural world are not the artists but the curators, in his words, 'the brokers of the art world'. Curators make decisions, along with Trustees, on what art is to enter the gallery or museum's collection, what art is given priority, for instance, what art is displayed and what art is included in survey exhibitions. Without doubt there is collaboration and convergence between curators, artists, critics and their agents and commercial gallery owners, to the mutual benefit of all parties. Decisions are often down to either personal preference or trends in the art worlds. Few curators are unaware of commercial pressures and the need to generate income streams; a watchful eye is

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<sup>60</sup> Becker (1986), p.113

<sup>61</sup> Becker (1986), p.360

kept on actual and predicted footfall figures, hence the proclivity for exhibitions of popular art or blockbuster shows.

### Conclusion

To ignore the marketplace in the making of an artistic career leaves too many questions unanswered. Bowness's model is a sound starting point but as has been explored in this opening chapter there is a compelling case to develop his ideas further, to include additional factors and contexts: commercial, economic, political, social and technological, all of which have a bearing on artistic success. More sophisticated models factor in and incorporate these disparate elements into a hybrid matrix, a complex inter-connected network; engaging a number of institutions and stakeholders and agents. This would seem to be required and appropriate. Whilst acknowledging this need, however, too many models are mechanistic, assuming that capitalist economic markets behave in predictable and rational ways. This is not always the case. Sweeping generalisations are often made and macro viewpoints adopted, whereas what is needed is a careful analysis of micro determinants. A concrete microeconomic approach rather than an abstract macroeconomic approach may act as a corrective.

No one factor or determinant establishes a reputation; instead matrixes of inter-connected factors, a series of convergences assist in the making of a career. Work is produced, placed into the marketplace, where, hopefully it is noticed and commented upon; discourses are built, and frequently contested, around both the artist and the work, and numerous contexts are considered. Later, art historians decide whether or not to consolidate the work into the canon of art history.

Whilst acknowledging the role of the market in art production, there are nevertheless inherent dangers in adopting such a reductionist approach when value is solely determined by market forces, where the only benchmark of value is commercial success. Such models do not address adequately the question that given the same

commercial and economic conditions and marketing support systems - why does one artist succeed and enjoy critical acclaim whereas another artist fail to make it? The answer may be in the differences in the quality of the product, in the actual artwork offered to the market. It can be argued that the artist who ultimately succeeds displays originality in his work and extends the language of the genre; this is recognized by those taking an active interest in it. When reductionist models are adopted, too little attention is devoted to the aesthetic value imbued in art or the diversity of motivations for engaging with it. Economics and marketing can only take one so far. Larry Gagosian, one of the world's most powerful contemporary art dealers summed up the contradictions:

Art is a commodity but of a funny kind. It is held by relatively few people...People don't wake up in the morning and decide to buy or sell a Van Gogh. Art is more beautiful than gold. It has a spiritual quality. People who buy art like art. I know of no collector who has absolutely no feeling for what he's buying.<sup>62</sup>

This thesis aims to explore a middle position, a position that mediates between the aesthetic and the economic and monetary. According to Schroeder:

Art history and criticism, traditionally outside the realm of marketing and management research, add a necessary component to understanding contemporary marketing practise as well as useful methods for interpreting and analysing historical trends in representing, consuming and critiquing cultural goods. Art-historical tools can provide a rich picture of the underlying mechanisms driving the evolution of consumer culture.<sup>63</sup>

And as Thornton stresses, 'it is vital not to forget the work of art itself. One of the reasons there is such a poor dialogue between art historians and sociologists is that the latter do not give enough credence to the work itself...(but) it is obvious that the work alone does not determine the way it moves through the world'.<sup>64</sup> A subtle differentiation needs to be drawn between art produced specifically with an eye on the market and art produced with the market being viewed by the artist as a secondary, though necessary adjunct to the creative process. From the outset this thesis challenges the proposition that clever marketers can 'sell' any product,

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<sup>62</sup> Gagosian (1988), p.82

<sup>63</sup> Schroeder, J.E. 'The Artist in Brand Culture' in O'Reilly and Kerrigan (2010), p.20

<sup>64</sup> Thornton (2008), pp.258-9

irrespective of its aesthetic qualities, instead it proposes that audiences - collectors, art historians, critics, art journalists, museum and gallery directors for art are often more discerning than they are often credited with and that it is possible to make aesthetic judgements and arrive at critical positions. This may explain why one artist makes it at the expense of another.

In a seminal investigation into the making of careers in the early modernist period Fitzgerald highlighted how Picasso and Matisse nurtured and depended upon commercial success for their 'immediate survival and future reputations', seeing no contradiction between aesthetic value and monetary value: 'artists' frequent reliance on galleries, where the critical reception was directly dependent on their commercial desirability, since the exhibitions necessary to publicize their work would not occur unless the dealers foresaw a chance for a profit.' Continuing, Fitzgerald asserted:

Picasso's frank acknowledgement of his commercial goal may shock those who were trained to believe that, at least among the avant-garde, art was created without concern for financial gain, but such idealism clearly does not correspond to Picasso's motivations...his acceptance of art as a commercial instrument places the avant-garde artist solidly within the tradition of entrepreneurship.<sup>65</sup>

A sophisticated matrix of interconnected determinants and variables are at play. A concrete microeconomic approach rather than an abstract macroeconomic approach may prove to be more useful, one where each determinant is interrogated and assessed.

No one factor makes a reputation; instead matrixes of inter-connected factors work, ideally, in tandem. Work is produced, placed into the marketplace, where, hopefully it is noticed and commented upon; discourses are built around the artist, the work, and the contexts. Later, art historians decide whether or not to ....the canon of art history.

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<sup>65</sup> Fitzgerald (1996), pp.22-28

The principles and models outlined in this introductory chapter will be applied, 'tested' and interrogated against the career of the British abstract painter John Hoyland in subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 2: Work

An artist whose integrity sustains his strength to make no compromise with expediency is never downgraded <sup>66</sup>

Born in Sheffield in 1934 John Hoyland moved to London in 1956 to continue with his art education at the Royal Academy Schools, graduating in 1960. His time at the Royal Academy was not without its issues. In his last year his diploma display of abstract paintings was ordered to be taken down by Sir Charles Wheeler, the President of the Royal Academy; it was only after representations were made on his behalf by the Acting Keeper of the Schools, Peter Greenham, that Hoyland was finally awarded his Diploma. There was a traditional bias at the Royal Academy and a reluctance to endorse modern art.<sup>67</sup>

The development of Hoyland's career cannot be viewed in isolation. He emerged on to the London professional art scene in 1959 at a time conducive to launching a successful career. Britain in 1959 was on the cusp of social, economic, political and cultural change, changes that heralded new attitudes and new practices in the art world and, importantly, the availability of greater institutional support (see chapter 5).

During the first half of 1960s Britain was a very different nation than it had been in the previous decade. Towards the end of the Fifties, the years of austerity seemed behind the nation, replaced by relative prosperity and optimism. As Akhtar and Humphries rightly observed, 'the fifties and sixties were watershed years. Britain changed from a land that was war-torn, bleak and economically depressed into one that was more affluent, confident and colourful... Everything seemed more colourful whether it was clothes, cars or home décor'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bomberg D. - Quoted in *David Bomberg: The Later Years*. Exhibition catalogue by John Spurling, London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1979, n.p.

<sup>67</sup> For as Hoyland's friend and fellow painter Basil Beattie recalled, 'Year after year propaganda went out about the Academy being able to accept a bit of modern work. Almost without exception we had our work turfed out'. Beattie, B.- Quoted in Maloon, T. 'Basil Beattie interviewed by Terence Maloon', *Artscribe*, No 24, 1980, p.40

<sup>68</sup> Akhtar, M. and Humphries, S. *The Fifties and Sixties: a Lifestyle Revolution*, London: Boxtree, 2001, p.8

The group defined as middle-class, as a percentage of the population, increased from 30% to 40% between 1951 and 1961.<sup>69</sup> The white-collar, professional sector expanded, whilst the blue-collar sector declined.<sup>70</sup> There was more disposable and dispensable income, especially among the middle classes, which contributed to the emergence of the aspirational, home-orientated, nuclear family. One result was the rise of consumerism,<sup>71</sup> concurrent with the expansion of the modern-day leisure industry. Easier and cheaper modes of travel opened up new markets and marked the beginning of modern global trade, including the trading of art. New marketing techniques were imported from the United States, along with technological developments in printing, which contributed, along with a more educated populace, to greater interest being shown in the arts. The public and private sectors responded to meet this new demand. Access to higher education opportunities improved and there were greater opportunities for those from working class backgrounds, John Hoyland among them, to go to art school. The number and types of public exhibitions arranged increased, with a greater emphasis on Transatlantic dialogue. As will be discussed later in the chapter, four seminal exhibitions of American art had a profound effect on British artistic practice during the late Fifties and early Sixties. The Whitechapel Art Gallery, under the visionary directorship of Bryan Robertson, was at the forefront of exhibiting new art and in disseminating ideas. One example illustrates this: The exhibition, *This is Tomorrow*, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1956<sup>72</sup> anticipated the emergence of Pop art and captured the zeitgeist. A series of Whitechapel *New Generation* exhibitions in the Sixties presented and recognised contemporary artistic practice. Hierarchies and demarcations between various art forms were increasingly challenged, and this, according to Mellor resulted in 'a more inclusive redefinition of culture... crucial to the development of art throughout the

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<sup>69</sup> See Akhtar and Humphries (2001), p.8 and Benson, J. *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880-1980*, London: Longman, 1994, p.22

<sup>70</sup> Benson (1994), p.24

<sup>71</sup> There was an exponential growth in demand for a whole range of products: homes, washing machines, spin dryers, cookers, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, radios, television sets, motor cars and convenience foods. Financial and hire purchase facilities were made available. Many of these products freed up time for leisure pursuits. See Akhtar and Humphries (2001) and Benson (1994).

<sup>72</sup> For a fuller overview see *Art & The 60s -This was Tomorrow*. Exhibition catalogue by Chris Stephens and Katharine Stott et al., Tate Britain, London: Tate Publishing, 2004

Sixties'.<sup>73</sup> New private galleries opened and established galleries expanded to meet anticipated demand.

Although it would be unwise to over-state the long-term importance of the Sixties, nevertheless, for a short time Britain was seen, despite most of the changes being restricted to London and the Home Counties, as a beacon of change, with the old order replaced with one predicated on youth. In recent years some revisionists have argued to the contrary<sup>74</sup> but this thesis argues that important societal changes, which impacted on art production, did take place, albeit the gains were short-lived. The window of opportunity was a narrow one, running approximately, from 1959 to 1966. Thereafter many of the gains that had been made, because of worsening economic and political circumstances, were lost. And the arts were not unaffected. A new generation of British artists emerged, who challenged the previous hegemonies. According to Robertson, who was cautious about making generalisations, 'the art of the new generation had become rather spent by about 1966-67', although he excluded the work of Hoyland, Huxley and Riley from this judgement.<sup>75</sup> This is reflected in the fact that many abstract artists were unable to sustain their careers beyond this point (see chapter 5 and appendix 9). The positive circumstances of the early Sixties assisted Hoyland in the positioning and shaping of his career. Despite numerous difficulties and challenges, for over fifty years, until his death in 2011, John Hoyland was able to maintain a professional career as a non-figurative painter. This chapter explores the body of work that Hoyland created between 1960 and 1982 as his reputation was established. Particular attention is paid to his aesthetic and studio practice and how this reflected the evolving challenges to working in the non-

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<sup>73</sup> *The Sixties Art Scene in London*. Exhibition catalogue by David Mellor, London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1993, p.10

<sup>74</sup> In his detailed study of the decade, the historian Dominic Sandbrook contests many of the myths and clichés surrounding the so-called 'cultural revolution' of the 1960s. Britain, in his opinion, remained traditional and conservative, and avant-garde activities appealed, even in the capital, only to a minority. Whilst acknowledging, 'that by 1964 the pace of change had greatly increased, thanks largely to the economic boom of the day' he notes that, 'popular accounts of the era concentrate on the small group of affluent, self-confident young people who welcomed change, whilst millions of others clung firmly to what they knew and loved' and concludes, 'although the Sixties is often seen as a period of utopian optimism, the culture of the time...was suffused with a powerful sense of nostalgia'. See Sandbrook, D. *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties 1964-1970*, London: Abacus, 2009. He contrasts the Sixties with the previous decade in Sandbrook, D. *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*, London: Abacus, 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Robertson, B. 'John Hoyland, Bridget Riley, Paul Huxley', *Harpers and Queen*, October 1978, p.249

figurative idiom. Influences on his practice and his influence on others are also considered. Mention is made throughout of exhibitions to which Hoyland contributed. These are discussed further in chapter 3. But before discussing Hoyland's work a corrective needs to be stated in relation to his artistic practice. Although categorised as an abstract painter, it was a term that he did not use when defining or explaining his work, preferring instead to be referred to as a non-figurative painter.<sup>76</sup>

Although it is unrealistic to try to categorise Hoyland's work into neat phases, on a clearly defined and demarcated timeline (the career trajectories of artists rarely follow such neat classifications) nonetheless, the thesis notes the numerous changes of direction that defined certain productive periods in his career and the subsequent changes in style. Three phases are identified: 1960-1967, 1968-1972, and 1973-1982. The developmental aspect of each phase and the adjustments to the techniques adopted in order to accommodate and facilitate changes of direction are explored. A number of paintings are used to illustrate each phase and to demonstrate the evolution of Hoyland's work. Comparative analysis with other artists' practice is also undertaken.

### Work 1960-67

British abstract painters, including Hoyland, towards the end of the 1950s and during the first half of the following decade, were striving to develop a new abstract language. This was partly in response to the challenge set down by American post-war art. The results were wide-ranging and eclectic, from hard-edge abstraction to gestural painting.

The paintings included in the *Situation* and *New London Situation* exhibitions first presented and drew critical attention to Hoyland's work. *Situation painting 1* (Fig.1)

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<sup>76</sup> In conversation with Megan Fishpool, Hoyland clarified his position regarding the term 'abstract': 'I don't like the word 'abstract'. Abstract for me would be Josef Albers or Bridget Riley. I like associations – abstract is too abstract a word.' - Quoted in Hoyland, J. 'On the Studio Floor, in Conversation with Megan Fishpool', *Printmaking Today*, Summer, 2008, p.6. However, it should be noted that over the years there were inconsistencies from Hoyland on this issue, with the two terms being used inter-changeably by him.

was included in the *Situation* exhibition of 1960. Painted in oil on a square support the image in the painting consists of two hues - deep green and violet - which are ordered into a field of alternating geometric, somewhat 'architectural' form. On to the ground horizontal bands of varying width ascend, creating the visual illusion of the top band being in front of the two other bands, which conversely appear to be receding into the contained space of the formal rectangle. The bands energise the ground and assist in dividing the composition into carefully calculated zones. Linear intricacy and geometrical complexity is clearly evident. The repeated asymmetrical bands do not represent an image in the pictorial field but constitute it. Colour is used both to expand the space of the actual canvas and capture the notion of volume. The irregular repeated bands, parallel to the framing edge, create tensions between the visual information, simultaneously proclaiming the flatness of the pictorial plane whilst acknowledging the restraining aspects of the edges of the picture. The internal image is framed within a green mount which assists in defining the confines of the support.

Another seminal Hoyland painting from this period is *April 1961* (Fig.2). The image is a series of horizontal lines, varying in thickness, of singular colour - purples, violets, pinks, oranges, greens and blues - set off against a contrasting coloured ground. Care has been taken in the placement of colour onto the colour field; lighter hues are set off against darker ones. The lines suggest shapes and assist in creating light and dark. The edge is crucial to the success of the painting: lines are taken close to and then bent towards the vertical edges. The lower horizontal edge is a thicker line of purple. This manipulation of line and shape creates the illusion of movement and recessionary space, inviting a direct perceptual response. In *Situation painting 1* and *April 1961* the overall canvas plane is energised and recessionary space and illusion is generated through variations in line and tone. Both paintings were painted on square canvases to avoid any association with landscape. The repeated bands of horizontal colour, the painting technique, and the underpinning ideas imbued in the two

paintings may echo and reference Frank Stella's *Coney Island* (Fig.51). But the influence of Stella may go deeper (see p.80).

From early in his career Hoyland made the conscious decision to explore an idea through a series of outcomes, with each painting a critique of earlier ones from the same series. A number of artists admired by Hoyland worked in this way.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, it is important not to view individual paintings in isolation but as part of a creative continuum. *April 1961* was one of a series of paintings that Hoyland painted in the same year, one 'cousin' in a 'family'. Six paintings similar in style to *April 1961* were included in the *Neue Malerei in England* exhibition held at the Städtisches Museum in Leverkusen, Germany between September and November 1961.

In the early Sixties, John Hoyland was one of a number of British non-figurative artists, loosely referred to as the 'new generation'.<sup>78</sup> A comparison of his work with that of some of his contemporaries provides an interesting insight into what was happening at the time. It shows the breadth and scope of British abstraction, and the attempt being made by British abstract painters to arrive at an international style. Peer comparisons, moreover, grant an opportunity to contextualise and place Hoyland's work and to arrive at qualitative judgements about his output. This thesis argues that there was a quality about Hoyland's work which made it stand out, and which is reflected in the critical and commercial attention it received (see subsequent chapters).

Comparisons were made between Hoyland's work and that of Bridget Riley<sup>79</sup> (Fig.3).

In the early Sixties, both artists were interested in perception theories (see pp.74-6)

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<sup>77</sup> Hoyland admired Claude Monet's *Grainstack* (1888-89) and *Rouen Cathedral* (1892-94) paintings, and Van Gogh's series of *Sunflowers* pictures - See Gooding (2005-2007). In 1964 Hoyland met Robert Motherwell for the first time and it is highly probable that he knew Motherwell's statement, 'I often paint in series, a dozen or more versions of the same thing at once - of the same theme...all these pictures are in one sense - they're all sentences or paragraphs or slices from a continuum that has gone on my whole life'. Motherwell, R. - Quoted in Caws, M. A. *Robert Motherwell: With Pen and Brush*, London: Reaktion Books, 2003, p.32

<sup>78</sup> British artists who were included in the *Situation* (1960), *New London Situation* (1961) and *New Generation* (1964) exhibitions were seen at the time to represent a 'new generation' of British artists. Their work was influenced by American art.

Bryan Robertson referred to the 'new generation' - see Robertson (1978), p.249

<sup>79</sup> In 1964 the critic and painter Guy Burn wrote, 'their [Riley's and Hoyland's] pictures really act, for they both set off optical illusions which worm their way into the brain, attack the sense of balance, produce colour echoes like mirages and generally invoke mixed feelings of nausea, bewilderment and delight which must bid fair to rival the effects of mescaline.' Burn, G. 'The New Generation', *Arts Review*, Vol.44, 18 April 1964, p.10

but that was where the shared interests ended; there are important differences between the two artists' work, both in intent and approach. Riley in the early Sixties was working monochromatically, whereas Hoyland was exploring colour. The surfaces of *April 1961* and *Situation painting 1* are textured and painterly, with the underpainting and brushstrokes clearly visible, displaying painterly gesture, making the presence of the 'hand' evident, whereas Riley's practice was more neutral and objective, with the absence of the 'touch' part of her preferred practice. For as Follin pointed out, 'an important aim [in Riley's work] was to eliminate the expressiveness of the brushstroke as a signature of the artist's individual personality, so as to create an objective, anonymous mode of expression, which in turn connotes a scientific approach'.<sup>80</sup>

In the early Sixties the paintings of John Plumb were categorised as Op Art. But there is little to connect, visually or intellectually, Plumb's work with that of Hoyland's. *Edgehill* (Fig.4) was one of Plumb's most successful paintings from this period<sup>81</sup> and although it appears abstract it is in fact allusory or associational. It was, according to Plumb, 'one of a series of paintings in which I developed an emblematic quality', where the title has a 'battle and legendary reference'.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, Hoyland's early Sixties paintings remained resolutely non-figurative and he denounced any reference to nature.

Robyn Denny was an influential artist on the London art scene at the time of *Situation*: as artist, curator, and networker. *Baby is Three* (Fig.5) is a summation of Denny's thinking in 1960, and is imbued with ideas which extended beyond the

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<sup>80</sup> Follin, F. *Embodied Visions: Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2004, p.47 Hoyland's views may have been influenced by those of Robert Motherwell. In 1965 a major retrospective of Motherwell's work was held at the Whitechapel. In an interview with Bryan Robertson, Motherwell made his views clear about the possible relationship between art and the sciences, 'I have seen painters in a mystique of scientific thought. I think painting and science have little to do with each other'. Motherwell, R. 'Interview with Bryan Robertson, Addenda (1965)', reprinted in Terenzio, S. *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.140

<sup>81</sup> *Edgehill* was included in the *Situation* exhibition and subsequently purchased by Ted Power and presented to the Tate Gallery in 1962.

<sup>82</sup> According to Plumb, 'A lot of abstract painting, my own included, from the early 60s onwards was concerned with setting up allusory values, i.e., the means being linked with some kind of experience in human, i.e., emotional terms. The involvement being essentially tragic and constantly linked with abstract expressionist values. The act of painting was essentially concerned with incisive and contextual reaction. The result being of oneness and field situations formally. The paintings were intended to be read from edge to edge and the less that happened on the surface the more the intention seemed to have meaning, in fact "less meant more"'. John Plumb. - Quoted

[Online]<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/plumb-untitled-august-1969-t01156/text-catalogue-entry> [2 March 2015]

actual process of painting. Categorised as hard-edged, the concept of 'neutrality', in a fashion similar to that of Riley's, was being explored in his painting. To avoid any disruption to this intended neutrality, the paint was applied evenly, with the brushstrokes barely visible. According to Denny, 'I made the painterly aspect of the works as neutral and impersonal as possible. So there was no chance of relying on any kind of *effect* which could be misinterpreted'.<sup>83</sup> This neutrality of style allowed Denny to observe 'the basic ingredients of a work...the properties of form and scale and colour and tone and so on'<sup>84</sup> without associations being made.

Bernard Cohen also worked in a hard-edged geometric abstract mode. *Painting 96* (Fig.6) was included in the *Situation* exhibition. In *Painting 96* two circles have been centrally positioned on to a blue ground. These are contained within two rectangles, defined in red and yellow. The symmetry of the design has been ruptured by the insertion of a pink blob, attached to the right circle. The scale of the work and its landscape orientation reflects Cohen's interest in the cinema at the time. As Morphet pointed out, 'Cohen was pre-occupied by the disorienting non-space experienced by the spectator in darkened cinema interiors'.<sup>85</sup>

Although Hoyland was categorised, along with Denny and Cohen, as hard-edged, this categorisation was not really accurate, his painting displayed 'softer' qualities and greater painterly gesture. In the paintings, *Situation Painting 1* and *April 1961*, although the images may appear geometric in design, and the work mistaken for being hard-edged, there is evidence of varied mark-making and brushstrokes, and greater variation in the manipulation of paint across the planar surface; the underpainting is clearly visible. Hoyland may have been impressed with the scale of Denny's and Cohen's work and with their commitment to non-figurative painting, nevertheless, he had little empathy with their aesthetic, arguing that Denny and

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<sup>83</sup> Denny, R. 'Situation: The British Abstract Art Scene in 1960', *Isis*, 6 June 1964, pp.6-8

<sup>84</sup> [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/denny-baby-is-three-t01730/text-catalogue-entry> [11 March 2015]

<sup>85</sup> Morphet, R. 'Introduction', *Bernard Cohen: Paintings and Drawings 1959-71*. Exhibition catalogue by Richard Morphet, London: Hayward Gallery, 1972, p.8. According to Morphet, Cohen was 'willing to embrace themes and images that were considered vulgar by the accepted taste of the day'. His paintings were named after cinemas, for example, 'Empire', a Las Vegas nightclub, hotels, shops, a restaurant, and film titles. Morphet (1972), p.9

Cohen, 'weren't emotional painters...they were always rational painters in a way, they took an intellectual stance and they proceeded to exhibit those ideas'.<sup>86</sup>

Hoyland's work was less formulaic and more about structural relations and the act of painting.

Gillian Ayres exhibited with Hoyland, but their work could not have been more different. *Distillation* (Fig.7) is characteristic of her work in the late Fifties and is clearly indebted to the painting and studio practice of Jackson Pollock.<sup>87</sup> By the time of the *New London Situation* exhibition, Ayres had simplified her painting. *Break-Off* (Fig.8), announced Ayres' return to more traditional painting methods, of applying paint by brush, with greater care being taken with the painting's structure. However, in general, Hoyland eschewed Ayres' style of painting or gestural painting, feeling that it was too random and lacked considered compositional structuring. It can be argued that Ayres' drawing with paint and 'changing the edge of things' in *Break Off*<sup>88</sup> are the only threads of connectivity with Hoyland's aesthetic.

In 1960 Marc Vaux was striving to come to terms with the challenge set by Mark Rothko and Ellsworth Kelly. *Composition: Red and Green*, (Fig.9) exemplifies Vaux's response. Two shapes rendered in green, one hard-edged, the other displaying softer qualities, have been carefully positioned on to a red ground. The tension between the soft and hard edges may have interested Hoyland but there is no record of any direct influence. However, it is likely that Vaux's 'soft formal' aesthetic appealed more to Hoyland than hard-edged geometric abstraction.

In the early 1960s Hoyland and Paul Huxley were close friends. The work of both artists was included in the 1964 Whitechapel *New Generation* exhibition. At the time they were exchanging ideas, a fact acknowledged by Hoyland, 'I was influenced of

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<sup>86</sup> Hoyland, J. - Quoted in John Hoyland interviewed by Mel Gooding, 2005-2007, *Artists' Lives*, British Library, Sound Archive catalogue reference: C466/205 © British Library, p.129 For the remainder of his career Hoyland endeavoured to 'break up the geometry, the tyranny of geometry', Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.198

<sup>87</sup> To create *Distillation* Ayres dripped oil and Ripolin household enamel paint on to the stretched canvas laid flat on her studio floor. By diluting the pigments with turpentine spirits she was able to manipulate the paint across the planar surface. *Distillation* is representative of her Tachist style.

<sup>88</sup> Ayres, G. - Quoted [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ayres-break-off-t01715/text-catalogue-entry> [13 March 2015]

course by Paul Huxley'.<sup>89</sup> This is evident when comparing two of their paintings: Huxley's *Untitled no 36* (Fig.10) and Hoyland's *28.12.63*. (Fig.12). The two paintings incorporate ellipses in space on a single colour field but there are the subtle differences between the two works. *Untitled no 36* is painted in oil whereas *28.12.63* is rendered in acrylic, the choice of medium affecting surface qualities. In *Untitled no 28* the paint appears to sit on the surface but in *28.12.63* the acrylic has soaked into the weave. There are more colours, eight, in *28.12.63*, and the painting is more vibrant than *Untitled no 36*, which is composed of only two hues.

In *Untitled no 36* (Fig.10) and *Untitled no 48* (Fig.11), Huxley has placed the internal shapes diagonally onto colour fields. Hoyland deployed a similar compositional device in *7.11.63* (Fig.16). Both Hoyland and Huxley incorporated sinuous line into their paintings and there do appear to be similarities in their work around 1963 and 1964. However, Hoyland has disputed this, arguing that there were notable differences, that his work was concerned with mass and colour, where drawing is used obliquely, and analytical delineation avoided, whereas Huxley's painting was predicated, first and foremost, on drawing.<sup>90</sup> He also felt that his painting was more open than Huxley's: 'The big difference between me and Paul was I wanted oxygen in my painting, I always wanted breathing quality'.<sup>91</sup> The intent in the work of the two artists was different. By 1964 Hoyland had moved his work beyond 'optical problems' but Hoyland believed that Huxley's interest remained with the figure/ground relationship, between flatness and recessional space, and whether one shape was in front of another or not.<sup>92</sup>

Other abstract artists not included in the *Situation or New Generation* exhibitions were making interesting paintings. An alternative to the London shows was the *John Moores Biennial*. Since its inauguration in 1957, the John Moores Prize has provided an interesting insight, a useful barometer, into trends in British painting. The first

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<sup>89</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.126

<sup>90</sup> *Marks on a Canvas*. Exhibition catalogue by Anne Seymour, Dortmund: Museum am Ostwall, 1969, p.47

<sup>91</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.124

<sup>92</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.104

John Moores Prize was won by the Kitchen Sink painter, Jack Smith, for his figurative painting *Creation and Crucifixion* (Fig.14). The next four winners were abstract painters; this is unsurprising, given the upsurge of interest in abstraction.

In 1965 Michael Tyzack won the principal prize for *Alesso "B"* (Fig.15), with Hoyland and Denny being awarded Non-Purchase prizes. *Alesso "B"* has clear affinities with Hoyland's 1963 series of paintings. With its bright Pop colours and organic shapes, it is similar to the image and palette adopted by Hoyland in his painting *7.11.63* (Fig 16). Both artists have constructed the images out of a series of wavy lines, incorporated on to singular colour fields. The chosen palette share similarities: reds, greens, purples and blues, but that is where the resemblance ends. Hoyland's painting is arranged in the diagonal and the swirling lines generate a sense of movement, where the fractured lines create dissonance. In contrast, *Alesso "B"* gives the impression of solidity, generated by the vertical arrangement of the internal shapes; the form is more architectural and less fluid.

In the early Sixties, Hoyland became friends with fellow painter, Albert Irvin. At the time Irvin was responding to the challenge laid down by American painting, and began to adapt his style accordingly. *Evening* (Fig.17) is a dark, brooding, picture, a painting undoubtedly indebted to the English landscape tradition (Figs.18-19).<sup>93</sup> Although personally close, stylistically there is less to connect them. The colours in *Evening* are low key, whereas Hoyland's paintings deploy high key colour and are, unreservedly, self-referential; there is no hint of nature in the work. It can be argued that the only shared influence was the writings of Harold Rosenberg.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Towards the end of the Fifties, Irvin started a friendship with Peter Lanyon. According to Moorhouse, 'central to Lanyon's ethos was the principle that the work drew on a wide range of sensory experience which *informed* the movement of paint. Rather than illustrating appearances, the images evolved from an inner fusion of imagination, knowledge, memory and feeling. Through his contact with such ideas, Irvin's own thinking shifted. Previously he had begun with a visual perception and had progressively abstracted the pictorial elements from that original idea. He now saw that it was possible to create abstract shapes, colours and marks that were impregnated with his perceptions and sensations, and which formed visual equivalents for those experiences'. From Moorhouse, P. *Albert Irvin: Life to Painting*, London: Lund Humphries, 1998, p.48.

<sup>94</sup> Hoyland and Irvin were particularly influenced by the following Rosenberg statement: 'At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act-rather than space to reproduce, re-design, analyse, or 'express' an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event. The painter no longer approached his easel with an image in mind; he went up it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter'. From Rosenberg, H. 'The American Action Painters', *Art News*, December 1952, pp.22-3

The inclusion of *Situation painting 1* and *April 1961* in the *Situation* and *New London Situation* exhibitions marked the commencement of Hoyland's professional career. Although radical and difficult for some viewers to read, nevertheless, when presented to new audiences the paintings attracted positive critical attention and were acquired for collections. *April 1961* was purchased by Ted Power at the close of the *New London Situation* exhibition and later presented to the Tate Gallery.

After the initial critical attention and commercial success generated by these early paintings, it would have been easy for Hoyland to have continued in the same vein but he underwent, in his own words a 'period of crisis.' Two factors contributed to this. First, he became aware of the limitations of adhering too closely to, for him, an objective method of working, feeling that his 'interest in optics and spatial games' had entrapped him, resulting in forgetting 'the beauty of paint...it seemed to me the next thing to incorporate into my work...the magic of what paint can do by taking advantage of the way paint behaves naturally'.<sup>95</sup>

Second, when fellow artist and critic Denis Bowen referred to Hoyland's paintings as 'exquisite and fine'<sup>96</sup> Hoyland realised that he was not being true to himself. Reflecting later, Hoyland wrote, 'When I read the word 'exquisite', I thought, well, if they're exquisite, they're not me. And I thought I want to be true to...my own character...painting should be a seismograph of the person and if I'm being exquisite then I'm being false. And that is why I ditched all that exquisite optical, hard-edged painting'.<sup>97</sup>

His response was immediate; Hoyland shifted direction, amended his painting style, and in the process abandoned carefully calibrated hard-edge geometric painting, and, instead, worked towards a more organic, process-driven style. He was clear about his reasons for this change of direction:

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<sup>95</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.172

<sup>96</sup> Bowen, D. 'New London Situation', *Arts Review*, 26 August-9 September 1961, p.10

<sup>97</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.105

A number of factors brought about this situation, a desire to make process more important again, to find a method which would be sufficiently quick and casual, a process combining the natural and the planned in order to weld the colours into one another. I also wanted to approach each painting in a more open-minded state, to leave possibilities and choices open until the last minute. The forms or themes I use grew from a need for simple shapes ... to house colour where the colour is placed and its proportions are more important. Tone is something else. I wanted to make use of all the natural properties of this paint to make gradations of tone as well as chromatic colour. I began to feel restricted by the use of adjacent areas of colour, in stripes or bands where you start at one side and know more or less exactly how you are going to finish up, it had become too academic, also it limited the amount of colour and tonal change one could make in a picture. It's a question of temperament really finding out how one operates best, I cannot stand working across a surface just filling in divisions anymore.<sup>98</sup>

Nevertheless, the decision to change direction was not without its problems. A period of uncertainty and transition followed.

In spite of the difficulties facing Hoyland he managed to produce one final, fine painting before moving his art in new directions. 22.20.2.62 (Fig.20) was one of the last paintings by Hoyland rendered in oil on canvas before his switch to acrylic. It is important because it was the first painting to enter the Tate collection (see chapter 5), presented by the Contemporary Art Society in 1964.<sup>99</sup> Working a square format, intended to stop any readings of landscape, Hoyland set down on a magenta ground, dozens of rippled lines, of varying thicknesses, rendered in blue/lilac which give the appearance of moving across the horizontal plane. The flow pattern is interrupted by the imposition of a swirling vertical column, a form not unlike a 'twister' in nature, painted in crimson. The organic nature of the ground and set forms are ruptured by the two pointed straight-lined forms, in ivory black and chrome yellow, adjoining the two vertical edges, acting as a counterpoint. A subtle nuance is the horizontal line running close to the top horizontal right-sided edge. The painting poses more questions than answers for the viewer.

For a time, between March 1962 and May 1963, little work came out of Hoyland's studio. After much reflection, deliberation and effort he eventually managed to move

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<sup>98</sup> Hoyland, J. Written response to questionnaire, Tate Public records: Tate Exhibitions - Correspondence: Recent British Painting from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation (25 Nov-22 Dec 1967), 23 Mar 1966-3 Dec 1967, TG 92/208/1

<sup>99</sup> [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hoyland-no-22-20-2-62-t00710> [8 May 2015]

his work forward. He was assisted by the availability in Britain for the first time of one of the most significant technological developments for artists of the modern era, acrylic paints. In 1963 George Rowney and Sons launched their Cryla Acrylic emulsion range and in the autumn of that year he began experimenting with the new medium. For Hoyland, this was revelatory yet a leap into the dark.

It seemed something different. People talked vaguely about how significant changes had taken place historically: techniques had changed, materials had changed and that [acrylic] seemed to be like the new material. I mean I didn't really think it out, I was just sort of following the general rush.<sup>100</sup>

There were other reasons for his decision to work in acrylic: associations can be drawn between acrylic's synthetic base associations and late modernity. According to Hoyland, 'oil paint smacked of garrets and starving artists and acrylic paint was like a "brave new world" ... acrylic was a more vivid colour, a brighter, stronger colour and of course it had the benefit of being quick drying, which, when you painted pictures that size, was a factor'.<sup>101</sup> Acrylic paint, in Hoyland's opinion, heralded a new phase in painting, claiming that, 'historically, art always changed when techniques changed, from gesso to oil and so on and so forth, and this had the faint hum of new technology about it that was behind the new philosophy...[it] seemed exciting in the way people got excited about the use of plastics, aluminium...and other industrial material'.<sup>102</sup> Acrylic seemed to Hoyland to be perfectly suited to creating a new kind of urban art.

By the end of 1963 and into the following spring, Hoyland produced a series of paintings dominated by organic swirling shapes, painted in citrus greens, pinks, purples, oranges, lilacs, and blues, set against a rather uniformly bland background of one hue. A typical painting from this series is *7.11.63*. (Fig.16). On to a square canvas, a pink ground is laid down. Eight snake-like lines, in blue, green, red and black rest on an imaginary diagonal line running from the bottom left right angle to the top right angle, or vice versa, depending on the reading taken by the viewer. No

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<sup>100</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.101

<sup>101</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.100

<sup>102</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.101

uninterrupted line reaches any edge. On first looking, it appears that the black line is continuous but this is not so, the line is broken in the middle of the composition. At the time Hoyland was spending time with the British sculptors, David Annesley (Fig.21) and Philip King (Fig.22) and their influence is evident in the work. The paintings of this period are not entirely successful. Hoyland's choice of artificial, unfamiliar colours resulted in the paintings appearing too playful and lacking the gravitas of his later work. The shapes rest on the planar surface, and are somewhat tentative. There is an aridity and coolness in the paintings which, aside from their scale, does little to engage the viewer for too long, they are one-glance images. They display an 'intellectual stance',<sup>103</sup> which it can be argued does not reflect Hoyland's later view, 'that a painting could actually induce feeling'.<sup>104</sup> It is clear Hoyland was struggling to use acrylic and it can be argued that the neutrality in his choice of colour and minimal working of the paint is not a true reflection of Hoyland's abilities. This series of paintings may be regarded as experimental works, as works of transition, and Hoyland was right to move his work in new directions soon afterwards. For as he later admitted, 'I never felt comfortable with those forms...by accident my paintings had slipped into what became known as optical painting, I found that quite repellent...that kind of illusionistic games playing. Is it flat, is it an oval, is this a pool or is it a disc?, is it a shape on the canvas et cetera?'<sup>105</sup> Unsurprisingly, Hoyland did not include any of these paintings in his 1967 Whitechapel retrospective (see chapter 3).

One of the major challenges facing Hoyland in 1964 was how to remain true to the concept of flatness without resorting either to sterile geometric forms or spatial illusion. His introduction to the work of Anthony Caro (see pp.92-4) and Hans Hofmann, (see pp.81-3) and a renewed interest in drawing (see pp.94-6) assisted Hoyland in responding to the challenge. His attention shifted to painting which

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<sup>103</sup> From early in his career Hoyland had reservations about intellectualism displacing the physical act of making paintings. By 1969 he had turned against "ideas painting" or a highly conceptualised kind of art, which he regarded as being too dominant in English painting at the time. Instead he found himself turning towards 'a naïve physical relationship with colours and materials'. See Seymour (1969), p.48

<sup>104</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.130

<sup>105</sup> Hoyland levelled this criticism at the work of his friend, Paul Huxley. Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.124

explored the perceptual effect of different arrangements of colours and shapes. Form, according to Hoyland, was the agency through which to explore the relationship between structure, colour, and space. Starting in May 1964 the previous biomorphic forms were replaced with rectangular 'lozenges' set against a ground stained in acrylic, green or red. The ground for each painting was carefully considered, with Hoyland's intention to make each ground an active dynamic area. This was achieved by experimenting with the density of the applied acrylic, with stains of pigment applied 'wet on wet' onto an unprimed ground. The layering of paint countered the risk of the surface resembling lino. The placement of internal shapes, usually starting as rectangles, on to the saturated fields created pulsating and stunning visual effects, prompting some critics to refer to the presence of an aura in the paintings. Hoyland explored new configurations between figure and ground and arrived at radical confluences of colour, shapes, scale, space, aura, and light. His painting from this time invited comparisons with music; where each aspect in the painting could be read as equivalent to notes in music where individual notes and chords are arranged into a whole; each mark made on the canvas by Hoyland cohered into a harmonious, balanced, though not symmetrical, composition. A number of aspects and emphases were explored: ground, figure, surface, front, edges, sides, tops, bottoms, and depth. Importantly, the challenge of extending non-figurative painting beyond flatness was resolved through the exploration of the tensions between frontality and oblique perspectives and recessive space. Colour and form become both the subject and content of the painting.

A fine example from this series of paintings of 1964 is *14.4.64*. (Fig.23). A deep green, possibly Perylene Green, has been applied to an unprimed canvas, the swirling brushstrokes of the underpainting, moving in all directions, clearly visible. The paint creates, or rather 'is', the movement in the picture. On to this ground, Hoyland has painted eight elliptical lozenges, in red, blue, maroon, green, yellow and orange, arranged in a chevron form. Careful choice of hues and the positioning of the

elliptical lozenges create the sensation of the forms appearing to either advance or recede. This painting was important in the development of Hoyland's career for it was the first work acquired for a provincial public collection and one of only two paintings sold by Marlborough Fine Art (see chapter 5). For the next eighteen months Hoyland continued to explore implied movement through the careful positioning of lozenge internal forms on mono-colour grounds.

By early spring of 1965, Hoyland was painting with greater confidence; *30.1.65* (Fig. 24) demonstrates this. *30.1.65* depicts two sets of four elliptical lozenges, coloured red, blue and purple, carefully positioned, half way down the canvas. The internal shapes partition the painting into two informal sections along the horizontal, but geometric symmetry is avoided by the positioning of the two lines of shapes close to the right vertical edge. Onto a lime citrus green ground several layers of paint were applied. A sense of rhythm is created between the eight internal lozenge forms, which appear to move from left to right across the horizontal plane. The illusion of recessionary space is generated through the careful selection of green for the ground, and the internal shapes appear to recede or advance depending on their colour. These elliptical shapes and the overall composition became, in Hoyland's words, 'building blocks, containers for colour'.<sup>106</sup> In this series Hoyland explored the nature of colour and its capacity for creating illusion, movement and atmosphere. The paintings create the impression of advancing into the exhibition space; the viewer is invited to look onto and into the painting's internal spaces; in return the picture appears to advance towards the viewer, who, hopefully, engages spatially, physically and kinetically with both the painting and the architectural space it occupies, capturing the idea of presence, encounter, and engagement.

Gradually Hoyland created more complex paintings, believing that 'painting can only go forward by becoming more complex. ..I don't think you can just go for simplicity. You've got to put in all these other things that are on your mind too, just to see what

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<sup>106</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.127

emerges, what comes to the forefront. You've got to put in all this turmoil, all of one's ideas... You can't go back and emulate Rothko's late paintings'.<sup>107</sup> The re-discovery of drawing assisted him with this ambition (see pp.94-6) 'Getting drawing in without going back to drawing'<sup>108</sup> was one way of complicating his paintings.

This realisation coincided with his return to England after his first trip to New York in 1964. There he saw the work of Hans Hofmann for the first time. (see pp. 81-3). On his return to England, Hoyland extended his visual vocabulary and studio practice. This coincided with his move to a more spacious purpose-built studio in Kingston-upon-Thames. The new facilities provided Hoyland with the opportunity to work on a grander scale and this was reflected in the size of supports used thereafter: 243 x 228 cm; 228 x 254 cm; 243 x 213 cm; and 254 x 243 cm.

From the beginning of his career Hoyland had been aware of the role of the 'edge' in painting, believing 'everything relates to the edge'.<sup>109</sup> The 'edge' acts as a tension point, acknowledges the support, and proclaims painting as artifice. Also, it paid homage to the modernist idea that the literal shape of the support defines, restricts, and controls the figure/ground relationship. As his style evolved during the 1960s the 'edge' took on greater significance and increasingly informed his studio practice.

With growing confidence Hoyland produced a series of paintings in the mid-1960s that can be deemed to be his first truly mature work. The following three paintings are characteristic of Hoyland's work from the period. In *9.11.65*. (Fig.25) three forms, one blue, one black and the other, green, have been carefully positioned close to the top edge of a red cadmium ground. An interruption has been generated by not taking the blue form to the very edge; a small band of the red underpainting is clearly visible. Perfect symmetry is denied by the imposition of deliberate ruptures to the forms, the lines created by the blue not coming to a perfect point and the fracturing of the right angle in the green. Hoyland became increasingly subtle in his

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<sup>107</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>108</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>109</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.103

use of the 'edge'. In some paintings, lines and shapes were positioned to the very edge, which created the illusion of either a figure being present within the support or, in a manner similar to Mondrian, extended the 'image' into the environmental space beyond the support. In other works, lines are taken close to the edge of the support but then stopped. The lines creating shapes within the picture were also carefully constructed. In a considered manner Hoyland ensured that lines, especially vertical ones, were feathery edged. These shapes were used to construct spaces, usually between the central figure and the adjacent shapes. There was a sound reason for this: soft or feathery edges worked as a 'device to enmesh the so-called figure into the ground'.<sup>110</sup> But at the same time this certainty was deliberately ruptured by Hoyland, a dissonance was created, with the feathery edge denying this apparent anchoring effect. The floating forms created the sense of recessional space on an otherwise flat plane. These soft, blurred edges also performed another function, to reduce the risk of the painting appearing 'designed' and not painterly. The nuances and texture in the surface proclaimed the object as painting and avoided them being read as decorative designs. Between the figure and the 'edge' Hoyland created spatial strips, to the right, to the left, above, below. The width of these strips in relation to the edge of the support determined the feel of the picture - airy or claustrophobic. Mass and weight were generated through variations in the size of the inner figures. In some paintings the inner figures give the illusion of floating forms but in other paintings where the one dominant figure, usually a rectangle, is pushed close to the edge of the support, a different ambience is created, that of a weighty heaviness, of mass, of monumentality. Aside from exploring the 'edge', by 1966, Hoyland was imbuing his work with greater architectural solidity, taking greater care with the size of the support, ensuring that it did not correlate directly with the dimensions of the human form. The canvases allude to 'squareness' but never reflect perfect geometry and this was achieved by the careful tweaking of the dimensions of

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<sup>110</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.103

the support. Shapes and forms were carefully positioned in relation to these dimensions, with care taken in relation to the support's edge.

In 28.5.66 (Fig.26) two vertical forms, rendered in green and blue and the purplish lilac vertical strip are united by the red ground. These two vertical shapes divide the colour field into three distinct zones and though heavier than the red ground, nevertheless, give the appearance of weightlessness and of floating in front of this ground. The blue vertical form and the purple horizontal one abut and form an inverted L shape, drawing the viewer's eye to both the horizontal and vertical edges. Whilst acknowledging the flatness of the support, however, the dense red creates the illusion of recessional space, with the two towers appearing to float in front of the ground. But this reading is disrupted by the fact that the bases of the two vertical forms actually touch the lower edge, anchoring the forms, whilst, at the same time, projecting the diagonal lines outwards, into the space of the viewer. The red ground ensures that the asymmetry of the three forms painted into it cohere and appear harmonious. The variation in the weight of the internal shapes was achieved by varying the consistency of the paint. The cadmium red was laid down first, followed by the other colours. The slight diagonal accents at the bottom of each vertical band in 28.5.66 contest the flatness of the canvas. A subtle interplay between opaqueness and translucency is played out on the canvas, flatness challenged by the weight and depth created by the opacity of the two vertical forms. Evident in 28.5.66 are flecks, drips of paint, splashes and encrustations of paint. On first viewing, these may be interpreted as random gestures, mistakes almost, but they were according to Hoyland, 'controlled accidents'. Hoyland used these 'ties' as a formal spatial device. According to Hoyland, 'it can tie a form to the edge of the canvas, it can bridge a gap in the surface, it can be read across and back and inwards but not too far'.<sup>111</sup> In 28.5.66 the 'ties', emanating from the green band re-assert and emphasise the actual two-dimensionality of the painting, drawing the viewer's eye to the bottom

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<sup>111</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Seymour (1969), p.47

horizontal edge of the canvas. This was an important recurring feature in Hoyland's painting and demonstrated his belief that 'everything relates to the edge.' They assisted in the creation of 'all-over' painting, with the intention of enticing the viewer to pause, to reflect, not to feel comfortable with any one resting point, but instead to scan across and into the painting, waiting for the painting to reveal itself. Moreover, the 'ties' reinforced the organic nature of the painting process, ruptured the apparent order and geometry of the painted forms, and created a dissonance. This technique, in the words of Hoyland, 'softens the so-called geometry' and imported an element of calculated, managed chance into the work and enhanced 'the impression of a living theatre of colour'.<sup>112</sup>

The quality and originality in 28.5.66 was recognised by the Tate Gallery, when it was acquired for its collection in 1966, the first painting of Hoyland's to be purchased by the gallery.<sup>113</sup>

Another important painting from 1966 was 22.8.66. (Fig.27). On a large-scale horizontal canvas dominated once more by cadmium red, Hoyland interposed three vertical forms, one painted green, another orange, and the third a blue-green, and two horizontal forms, one in a lighter green, the other mauve. Hoyland's choice of red is deliberate; the red expands the picture into the space beyond the support, taking the image into the adjacent external space. Variety has been achieved in this field of red by changing the density of the pigment. The painting works simply because of Hoyland's careful choice of hues. The combination of primary and secondary colours - red/green and blue/orange - results in a painting vibrating with luminous colour. Each application and movement of paint in this painting, and others from the series, created, in Hoyland's words, 'another strand of structure' and emotion. There is nothing random or gestural about the painting, it has been carefully thought through. The vibrancy of the red is set off by the opacity of the

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<sup>112</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Seymour (1969), p.47

<sup>113</sup> In 1964 the Contemporary Art Society presented 22.20.2.62 to the Tate Gallery. [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hoyland-28-5-66-t00886> [8 May 2015]

green, orange and mauve. Importantly, this painting address constructed not perspectival space. The tensions between the vertical and the horizontal and the ground and field are explored, creating ambiguous spatial relationships but one, ultimately, where reconciliation of ground/field is achieved. The red gives the appearance of a solid plane of colour, appearing so because the paint has been applied, vertically, with the downward brushstrokes clearly visible. Into, not on to, this red ground, the other shapes have been imposed, the central green vertical form carefully positioned alongside the lighter green horizontal form but resting in front of the orange form. A series of L-shaped configurations have been captured, reconciling the tension between the vertical and the horizontal.

At this stage of his career Hoyland decided to experiment with and extend his use of materials. In earlier works paint was applied without much alteration but this changed in the mid-Sixties. Hoyland paid greater attention to the possibilities of acrylic. Usually, Hoyland began by laying down a ground, paint thinned, and rolled onto the canvas, soaking in to the weave of the cotton duck, applied wet on wet. Layers of paint of the other colours were built up and its consistency altered but Hoyland took care to ensure that the underpainting was visible. Masking tape was used to create straight lines. After their removal Hoyland then painted the feathery edges. The paintings were painted in the upright position; Hoyland had no interest in working the canvas on the floor. These paintings garnered critical acclaim when included in his first retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1967 and helped to establish his reputation.

There are echoes of Rothko's, Newman's and Still's (Figs.28-30) paintings in these works but Hoyland cleverly absorbed the influence and then moved his painting beyond theirs. The scale of the paintings is ambitious and although Hoyland may have referenced the work of Newman and Rothko there is no slavish copying of their paintings. The influence of sculpture on his practice from 1964 onwards cannot be over-estimated. Hoyland felt that British and American painting had reached an

impasse and sculptors, notably Anthony Caro, not painters, were finding answers. Hoyland's belief is reflected in the fact that paintings made by him in the mid-Sixties were 'suggestive of sculpture...more about imagined form, imagined conceptualised space'.<sup>114</sup>

### Work 1968-1972

The palette employed by Hoyland between 1964 and 1967 had been dominated by red and green but in 1968 he began to explore different colours, in response to the challenges thrown up by actual events in the studio. Subtle changes emerged in his colour range, with grey, blue and orange replacing the reds and greens. This change reflected Hoyland's interest and mood; as he explained, '[I wanted] to move beyond the boring basic design course practice where titillating effects are produced by juxtaposing tonal equivalents – a deep orange against a light red, for example'.<sup>115</sup>

The change can be partly attributed to his interest in the still life paintings of Giorgio Morandi (Fig.31), a painter greatly admired by Hoyland's tutor at the Royal Academy, William Scott (Fig.32).<sup>116</sup> In the later 1960s Hoyland was endeavouring to make 'quieter' paintings, ones that 'sit there serene and quiet as in a picture of Morandi'.<sup>117</sup> But Hoyland's experimentation with ochre proved fruitless so he switched to grey, admired by Hoyland for its 'deadpan, dumb appearance, its less obvious vibrations... when used it seemed to make the picture more abstract'<sup>118</sup> as a means of 'quietening' his paintings down. In *14.5.68* (Fig.33) grey forms the ground colour, applied freely in vertical downward strokes which creates a frame for the two solid blocks of an intense blue hovering on the picture plane; the two rectangles separated by a vertical band of darker grey; the grey ground energises the blue rectangular forms. Small drips of paint, Hoyland's trademark 'ties', are clearly visible, disrupting the pure geometry of the blue rectangles and the grey band yet connecting the two

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<sup>114</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.102

<sup>115</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Seymour (1969), p.47

<sup>116</sup> See Lynton, N. *William Scott*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2004, pp.153, 154, 207, 456

<sup>117</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.116

<sup>118</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Seymour (1969), p.48

inner forms with both horizontal edges. In *20.5.68* (Fig.34) on to a ground of grey a simple blue trapezium form has been placed in the lower half of the picture, the underpainting clearly visible. The 'edge' is once more explored; the trapezium is stopped short of the horizontal and vertical edges. The downward brushstrokes are clearly visible, reinforcing the idea of the picture being painterly. Although the Arts Council decided to purchase *20.5.68* and Bryan Robertson acquired *12.12.68* (Fig.35) Hoyland did not pursue this line of inquiry and returned to his familiar palette of brighter hues.

By the end of the decade, translucent rectangles had become major aspects in Hoyland's paintings. Viewers coming to paintings like *2.8.69* (Fig.36) and *5.9.70* (Fig.37) for the first time would have been surprised to discover they were paintings by Hoyland, being so unlike his past and most recent work. Mel Gooding referred to *5.9.70* as 'the great 1970 painting', and justified his claim with reference to natural phenomena:

The tumultuous atmospheric exuberance in the upper section is created out of a furore of automatic pouring, splashing and flicking, which in its central section gives way to a succession of complexly worked, poured and stippled recessive layers, like banking clouds or a range of hills seen in violent weather.<sup>119</sup>

However, it can be argued that this series marked the beginning of a weak period in Hoyland's creative journey, which coincided with him criss-crossing the Atlantic. Whilst in New York he was making one style of painting, possibly to assuage criticism there, and to make work acceptable to the New York market, and in his Wiltshire studio another style. The paintings made in America were not included in exhibitions of his work until after his return to England in 1973. The differences in the acrylic paint made by American manufacturers and Rowney in this country did not help, nor did not having a secure studio in New York or travelling with Eloise Laws. Despite Gooding's claim for *5.9.70* and, by inference, other paintings from between 1969 and

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<sup>119</sup> Gooding (2006), pp.81-2

1973 (Figs.38-39), on Hoyland's own admission 'every painting was a struggle'.<sup>120</sup> This series of paintings completed in New York were unconvincing. The well-considered form and strong colours of earlier work were gradually replaced by an untypical palette of pastel hues: pinks, lilacs, peaches and lemons, and off-white creams. As Gooding has pointed out, the palette seemed too indebted to the idea expressed at the time by Clement Greenberg, that new colour was the only avenue left for abstract painters to explore.<sup>121</sup> And Hoyland admitted, 'I was putting myself in the position, quite consciously, of using colours which didn't come easy to me. I made myself use all kinds of strange, high-key colour relationships. I didn't know how the hell to mix them or what to do with them'.<sup>122</sup>

The technique was loose and gestural, with little evidence of control. Paint has been splashed, dripped and simply allowed to run. For a painter who had not signed-up to gestural painting these paintings by Hoyland appear to have slipped into this style. The paintings are over-worked and over-complicated. Many of the canvases were re-worked and re-considered over long periods, with layers of pigment removed and new layers applied. The work seemed too derivative, too influenced by the paintings of Larry Poons (Fig.40) and other New York painters.

At this stage of his career one of the challenges Hoyland confronted was the use of colour in a more expressive manner. He was endeavouring to find the most appropriate shapes to hold the colours. This remained an abiding challenge for Hoyland. Colour was combined with increased concern and consideration of surface and texture. This resulted in a changed approach towards his painting, adapting the use of materials and applying different techniques. Whereas his painting of the 1960s was produced quickly with few later revisions his painting throughout the 1970s was

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<sup>120</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>121</sup> 'These and other paintings of the period, whether made in New York or Wiltshire, tend to be characterised by 'difficult' achromatic colours, blancmange creams and pistachio greens and ice cream pinks, as if in line with Greenberg's rather absurd dictum of the period, that *new* colour was the only thing left for painting to explore. Certainly the synthetic colours and ice-cream tones of the new acrylic paints were much in favour in New York painting at the time.' Gooding (2006) pp.87-88

<sup>122</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978) n.p.

more considered, with each painting taking longer to produce, and revisions made to canvases later, after reflection.

### Work 1973-1982

After 1973, following his return to Britain, Hoyland's painting became once more, structured, with the internal shapes more carefully considered. A new range of forms were introduced and other aspects explored: pure colour set off against opaque hues; multiple planes overlapping or masked; flatness against recession space. Planes of colour were layered or elided, one colour on top of or next to another colour, the process continued until a heavily impastoed surface was achieved. Hoyland's palette became more expansive with more hues used. And importantly, Hoyland modified the pigment. In the body of work from the 1960s the range of colour was limited and the paint applied without mixing. During the 1970s Hoyland, for the first time, mixed and experimented with colours before applying them.

For the next two decades and beyond, Hoyland explored ways of increasing acrylic's potential as a medium. In the 1970s he experimented with its use, but was aware of its limitations. Acrylic can give the surface an appearance akin to that of printing inks and when not handled correctly 'this stuff can look like lino'.<sup>123</sup> To overcome this he experimented with subtractions or additions. He diluted it or increased its density by adding polyfilla to the raw pigment. But sensibly he always worked with rather than against his materials, respecting their unique properties and characteristics and over the years discovered the means to extend their creative possibilities. Between 1973 and 1977 Hoyland's predominant form became the square. *Red over Yellow, 18.9.73.* (Fig.41) was the beginning of a productive period in his career, culminating in the series of paintings that received universal critical acclaim when included in his 1979 retrospective exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery. Several of these paintings were bought by private collectors and for public collections (see chapter 5). Working on an off-square format, a dominant red form creates the illusion of sitting on two further

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<sup>123</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.109

layered squares, an impure yellow ground, as indicated in the title, and a violet, purple, pink square. This red square gives the appearance of a curtain masking the underpainting but traces of the pigment, nonetheless, remain clearly visible through the layers. The edge is crucial to the composition. There are no straight lines, each edge has been softened and appears feathery. The red square, positioned equidistant from the vertical edge however has been pushed close to the top edge of the support. A thin, feathery 'mount' made up of red, pink, violet and purple hues creates a boundary around the central form whilst simultaneously connecting it to the edge of the support. The paint has been vigorously applied, with striations in the brushwork visible, suggesting movement and energising the apparent inertness of the acrylic pigment. A variable surface has been achieved through the incorporation of a number of accents, emphases and disruptions. These interventions animate the surface. The purity of the geometric inner shape has been ruptured by interposing a strip of ultramarine violet at the top right hand corner. In the lower area of the canvas, the paint has been applied more densely and flecks and runs of paint are clearly visible.

From the late Sixties and throughout the 1970s, Hoyland continued to explore the means of capturing emotive expression through texture, colour, and painterly gesture. Working serially and referring back to both previous work and the work of others assisted with this process. Hoyland's own comments provide an interesting insight into his painting of the 1970s and beyond:

I'd been trying to get away from geometry and what had become known as formalism. I was trying to do so without resorting back to some kind of quasi-illustrational painting which the Germans were doing...I felt restricted by the idea of formalism because I'd been struggling for about ten years to get away from [its] unspoken rules of flatness and overlapping...these large rectangles, breaking the edges on them with patches of colour that I could place more freely.<sup>124</sup>

This process was recognised by Charles Harrison, who believed it assisted Hoyland in avoiding reliance 'upon a narrow range of forms and of formal relationships' and

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<sup>124</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007) pp.192-3

'when exploring new experiences in colour...depending upon those formal situations within which he has found previous solutions'.<sup>125</sup>

Three paintings, *Trickster* (1977), *Saracen* (1977), and *North Sound* (1979), from the late 1970s, stand out. In the second half of the 1970s Hoyland introduced new shapes into his painting: trapeziums, triangles, diagonal divisions. *Trickster* (Fig.42) illustrates this development. The composition is made up of two distinct sections, partitioned by a diagonal line. One half denies the formal elements in the other half. The diagonal section nearest the top edge is dominated by a heavily impastoed cobalt blue triangle, with specks of colour revealed from a layer of painting underneath. The dense impasto is set off against the ground. The use of saturated colour that fills the space of the support reduces distance, and works to bring the work closer, inviting the viewer into the architectural construction of the picture, creating intimacy between the viewer and the object. Careful observation reveals that the triangle is incomplete, with the top corner cropped. Above the triangle a strip of painting is made up of brushstrokes of purple and red. Paint has been applied vigorously in a gestural fashion along the horizontal, reminiscent of waves. The other section is dominated by two rectangular forms of different sizes, one red, and the other orange. By varying the size and weight of the rectangles the illusion of a flat plane is questioned; shapes appear behind and in front. Hoyland frequently spoke of forms being revealed and of going into the canvas. Again underpainting is revealed through the internal shapes. Paint has been allowed to run down the canvas and near the lower edge the unprimed canvas is clearly visible. The two forms have been pushed to the margins denying overt illusion, whilst creating and acknowledging limits, notably the edge of the stretched support.

*Saracen* (Fig.43) is a conglomeration, an explosion, of colours, too many to identify or single out.<sup>126</sup> The colours have not been applied randomly, instead colour

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<sup>125</sup> Harrison, C. 'Introduction', *X Bienal de São Paulo: Gra-Bretanha 1969: Anthony Caro, John Hoyland*. Exhibition catalogue by Charles Harrison, London: British Council, 1969, n.p.

combinations have been carefully considered, where primary colours have been situated next or close to complementary ones. The mark-making though rough is nevertheless subtle. Paint is fluid and layered. The intention in these paintings was 'to impose an overall colour radiance, reminiscent of the work of the Fauves and Van Gogh across the surface'.<sup>127</sup> (see p.89) The meaning of the image was left open, 'I didn't want them to be limited to being read as anything in particular but they could be landscapes; they could be houses, they could be portraits'.<sup>128</sup>

*Saracen* and *North Sound* (Fig.44) were acquired by the Tate. According to the Tate, though painted almost two years apart John Hoyland considers them as 'possibly cousins, at least part of the same family of configurations which go back ... to the early sixties'.<sup>129</sup> This may be so; however, *Saracen* and *North Sound* can be viewed as the culmination of Hoyland's ideas for his painting which began in 1973 when he painted *Red Over Yellow*, 18.9.73.(Fig.41)

In the series of paintings from this period colours are revealed through layers. As Hoyland explained, 'I've always liked the idea of colours coming through from behind other colours, which I've done in the pouring. So this is a way of breaking down the geometry effect, first of all stressing the edges...and putting colour on in such a way that colour would come through from behind. It's like mixing colour on the painting'.<sup>130</sup> Paint was applied with a palette knife but at later stage some of the paint has been scraped away and effaced. The paintings were worked on over a period of months and revisions carefully considered and applied. They can be seen as visual records of the stages involved in the painting process

In 1982 Hoyland's achievements were recognised when he was awarded the 13<sup>th</sup> John Moores First Prize for his submission, *Broken Bride* 13.6.82. (Fig.45). On a

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<sup>126</sup> According to Hoyland Studio, the sheer number of colours in Hoyland's paintings from 1977 onwards has made it difficult for professional printers to get an 'exact' colour match or high quality reproductions when attempting to print the images. In conversation with Beverley Heath-Hoyland and Wizz Kelly, 13 August 2014.

<sup>127</sup> Crook and Learner (2000), p.108

<sup>128</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.108

<sup>129</sup> [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hoyland-north-sound-t02403/text-catalogue-entry> [17 September 2014]

<sup>130</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.109

washed ground of sap green and buff titanium yellow, a feathery dark rectangular form, with flashes of red revealed, occupies the central position. Runs of paint, 'ties', draw the eye vertically to the lower edge of the support. On to this anchor, a holding mechanism, six geometric forms, four triangular and two rectangular have been embedded, each form connected by the 'edge' or the apex. Blue dominates the painting though red, violet, green and burnt umber<sup>131</sup> have been used to create the inner forms; the elongated red rectangle positioned diagonally, the violet/purple pyramidal form and the green tower. The surface is textured with paint revealing itself through the layers and the visible mark-making.

It can be argued that the composition and rhythm in *Broken Bride* echoes the concentric pattern in Matisse's *The Snail* (Fig.46) (see p.89). The dark spaces between the inner forms mimic the white spaces in *The Snail*; the dark blackish rectangular form alludes to the black rectangle in Matisse's masterpiece and Hoyland was aware of Matisse's preferred title, *Chromatic Composition*, with its non-figurative connotation. The spaces in both paintings define and harmonise the compositions.

### Studio Practice

Hoyland's career was marked by his unflinching and unapologetic commitment to painting. He held strong views on what painting meant to him: 'Painting doesn't need any gadgetry and disallows gimmickry. It survives unaided as a pure force'.<sup>132</sup> Early in his career he aligned 'with what seemed to me to be the most advanced painting of the day. Since then non-figurative imagery ... possessed the potential for the most profound depth of feeling and meaning'.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> It is difficult to identify accurately the hues used by Hoyland because by this stage of his career he was mixing pigments. The starting violet may have been Ultramarine Violet; the red may have been a combination of Cadmium red and Perylene Maroon; the green a mixture of Perylene Green and Permanent Sap Green.

<sup>132</sup>Hoyland, J. 'Introduction', *The Hayward Annual 1980*. Exhibition catalogue by John Hoyland et al., London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1980

<sup>133</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding, M. *John Hoyland*, London: John Taylor in association with Lund Humphries, 1990, p.19. In this declaration Hoyland fails to fully explain or justify the premise 'the most advanced painting of the day' One can only speculate. In 1988 Hoyland reflecting on his early career explained that he had been 'trying to make new urban, more uncompromisingly abstract art based on rational thinking and visual perception. Until the end of the fifties, we had been starved of an intellectual perception 'raison d'être' for our work and were reacting against what we saw as the quasi-romantic English tradition; what we saw as compromise and also the violent excesses of post de Kooning

Painting remained his main focus of attention,<sup>134</sup> being perceived by Hoyland as an extension of self: 'I think painting is very much an extension of one's interior self. If you can get the painting to be the true extension of the way you feel – physically and mentally, all the emotions – if you can make that concrete, then you've got this authentic thing'.<sup>135</sup>

A painting, according to Hoyland, is an object in its own right, is self-referential, an artifice, and not a device to represent nature; it resides in space, proudly proclaiming its objecthood.<sup>136</sup> Notwithstanding this affirmation of the self-sufficiency of painting, Hoyland throughout his life drew on nature for inspiration and strove to make paintings that were equivalences to the harmonies and structures found in nature but without copying or depicting it.

Process was important to him. It is through process, according to Hoyland, that 'self' and the painting are reconciled. For Hoyland each phase of the creative journey is more about the process and dynamics of painting than the finished object, although he fully understood the need to exhibit, place work in the market and achieve sales. According to Hoyland, 'the importance of process, the way the paint is put on, is a constant. It should be natural like the way water flows, and if there is an accident it must be controlled. The painting must come to life in its own way, as a natural process. Temperament, process and image all come together: you cannot use one without the other'.<sup>137</sup> Throughout his career Hoyland constantly questioned his artistic process; at each stage he pushed the boundaries of self-expression and abstraction and, at each juncture, arrived at part-solutions to fundamental questions:

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abstraction' cited in Hoyland, J. 'An Appreciation', *Hofmann: Late Paintings*, Exhibition catalogue by John Hoyland et al., London: Tate Gallery, 1988, p.9

<sup>134</sup> From time to time Hoyland explored printmaking, glassmaking and ceramics but these activities remained of marginal interest. A reason for not making prints may have been commercial. Hoyland has stated that he could make a painting quicker than he could make a print and that selling paintings was more lucrative. To support this belief Hoyland quoted from the painter and his tutor at the Royal Academy, William Scott, 'For every print you sell, you sell one less painting'. Hoyland – Quoted in Gooding (2205-2007), p.132

<sup>135</sup> Hoyland – Quoted in Searle (1979), n.p.

<sup>136</sup> For a fuller explanation of objecthood see Fried, M. 'Art and Objecthood', *Artforum*, Vol.5, No.10, Summer 1965, pp.12-23 and Fried, M. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997

<sup>137</sup> Hoyland – Quoted in 'Jones, A. 'His First One-Man Show', *East London Advertiser*, 21 April 1967, Whitechapel Gallery Archive, John Hoyland Exhibition (1967) Press Cuttings, WAG/EXH/2/11, n.p.

What is non-figurative painting? Is it still valid? What direction can and should it take?

Hoyland's paintings were often noticed and commended for their innovative and exuberant use of colour. However such praise and narrow reading was often at variance with the artist's own views and concerns and the meaning in the work. Although doubtlessly pleased with the attention that his work attracted because of the use of colour, nonetheless, the label of 'good colourist' was one that Hoyland became increasingly unhappy and frustrated with. Hoyland's paintings were not statements about colour *per se*. As he explained in 1976: 'I'm not interested in colour. Colour is just part of painting. I'm more interested in defining a formal vocabulary of shapes, in structure, in drawing'.<sup>138</sup> Hoyland believed that paintings must express their structure and that viewers appreciate this.

The big problem - I've said this over and over again - is structure. How do you structure? How do you create a structure to carry feeling? Feelings, you can't really go into. You can't really discuss it or even identify it, but obviously, if a painting is not about feeling, over and above structure, then it's nothing. So you have to find ways to channel feeling.<sup>139</sup>

Painting for Hoyland was about reconciling oppositional tensions, a major one being between gesture and order. There was nothing arbitrary or gestural in his painting. Without structure, 'you'll just paint chaos'.<sup>140</sup> Hoyland believed that painting can never be wholly spontaneous or accidental, although 'accidents' form an integral part of the managed process: 'Every accident or chance that occurs in a painting has to take its place. If you put colour on a painting it probably won't come out in the way you thought it would. So any decision, or choice of tone, will be determined by what has already happened. Everything develops from what preceded it'.<sup>141</sup> Reflection is part of the process of making a painting, its importance recognised by Hoyland:

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<sup>138</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Ollie, J. 'John Hoyland (Paintings '66-69) Waddington Galleries (Review of)', *Art Monthly*, No. 2, November 1976, p.26

<sup>139</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Painter (1981), n.p.

<sup>140</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Walker, E. 'Blood on the canvas, by a modern master', *The Independent*, 25 April 2008 [Online] <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/john-hoyland-blood-on-the-canvas-by-a-modern-master-814958.html> [12 March 2015]

<sup>141</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.162

'getting analytical can get you out of trouble in a painting. If you can't solve a problem you can break things down analytically and find a way of solving it'.<sup>142</sup>

He felt readings that concentrated exclusively on one aspect of his painting at the expense of other concerns and pictorial challenges missed the point, that the immediacy of colour was easy to write about, and that the true nature and complexity of his painting needed to be addressed more fully. Some critics approached the work superficially and this prompted Hoyland to plead for more multi-faceted and holistic interpretations. For as he explained:

When I had the Whitechapel show everyone went on about the colour. In fact I really hadn't thought about colour very much: it had been the least of my preoccupations. I wanted brilliant, full, unmixed colour, but basically it was reds, greens and oranges. I was much more preoccupied with shape, where to locate colours, what kind of shapes to use, and so on. This was all in the wake of Rothko, etc. - it was trying to come to terms with those paintings of his, but knowing that one couldn't go on making them that simple. I just happened to like those colours, and I still do. But the way edges met; how colours impinged on one another and the way that they affected the space was much more of a problem.<sup>143</sup>

Colour, nonetheless, remained a key aspect and emphasis of Hoyland's work. In the introduction to Hoyland's 1967 retrospective at the Whitechapel, Robertson, who clearly had discussed the subject with Hoyland beforehand, paraphrased Hoyland's understanding and use of colour:

A colour is used as the key for a painting or series of paintings. Red or green, for example, can satisfy two polarities of some kind or an antithesis, like black and white. And if the paintings are not all about one thing, you can only understand one thing at a time: there is a need to explore its possibilities very fully, as colour for example. Green is immensely variable in possibilities, blue-green up to lemon or lime-green, dark to light, and in range of feeling. Red is more limited but you can activate it by what happens on it. Red passes through pink to orange and near-violet or crimson but it is no longer red. Green retains its character. In doing this, green is also more open, and wider in potentiality; red only achieves this by what occurs with it or on it. All colours change so much from weight or volume in atmosphere or mood, or by the way in which they sit on the canvas. A red on the horizontal tends to look less solid than red on the vertical. This tends to work with most colours; but format, the shape of the canvas, affects everything. In some canvases, a shift from dark to light or a change in hue can be echoed by the forms that lie within it. In the red pictures these tend to be predominately dark tones. In green pictures, they are lighter, or equivalent in tone to the green.

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<sup>142</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.106

<sup>143</sup> Searle (1979), n.p.

Colour is used instinctively, not intellectually. But once an instinctive choice is made, the colour tends to be played through as a long sequence. Where to put colour is the crucial question and decision, and always the problem.<sup>144</sup>

In each phase of his career Hoyland strove to maintain a balance between order and arbitrariness in his painting but rigorously eschewed the tenets of some gestural painting. Each mark, in the opinion of Hoyland, had to be purposeful and applied with intent, with each accent - including drips and splatters - serving a specific purpose. As he explained, 'I try to make everything necessary. I don't like anything that is not doing a particular job'.<sup>145</sup>

### Influences

John Hoyland's painting was informed by multiple sources of influence. These included his education, American painting and critical ideas, and European art history, including British art.

Underpinning his practice was his early education. Although Hoyland had reservations about some of the traditional teaching practices at the Royal Academy, nevertheless, the grounding he received in basic principles, notably colour theory and practice: 'learning the colours of the spectrum', 'the exercises to see how many blacks you can make', trying 'to get a red that's the purest red', and learning 'about complementaries and discords and inverted discords', proved invaluable.<sup>146</sup>

However, his education extended beyond the Royal Academy. He spent consecutive summer holidays attending extra-mural schools run by Henry Thubron and Victor Pasmore in Scarborough. These schools focused on design principles, especially the *Basic Form* ideas of the Bauhaus, and the work of Paul Klee<sup>147</sup>, which, according to Hoyland, were 'more relevant to modern art'.<sup>148</sup> In 1957 Hoyland attended one of

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<sup>144</sup> Robertson, B. 'Introduction'. *John Hoyland: Paintings 1960 - 67*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1967, p.4

<sup>145</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Schilling, S.A. 'On Colour - John Hoyland', *The Artist*, September 1986, p.14

<sup>146</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Schilling (1986), p.15

<sup>147</sup> The morning sessions were, according to Hoyland, 'based on Paul Klee's notebooks'. Hoyland, J. - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.62

<sup>148</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Schilling (1986), p.15

these summer schools, where the theme was *Colour, Form and Space*.<sup>149</sup> According to Hoyland, the course was 'roughly based on visual perception...it gave me a kind of intellectual framework to my work – the things I'd been intuitively trying to do'.<sup>150</sup> Pasmore was an inspirational teacher.<sup>151</sup> Two years later, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London hosted - *The Developing Process* - an exhibition planned and curated by Thubron and Pasmore.<sup>152</sup> Though no record exists that Hoyland actually attended the show it is inconceivable that he would have missed it, taking into account his admiration for his two tutors and the fact that he was a regular visitor to ICA events. Hoyland's first teaching post, in 1960, was teaching basic design, not fine art, at Hornsey College of Art. This had a major bearing on the importance Hoyland placed on structure in his painting.

Although Hoyland often claimed he was not an intellectual artist this is not entirely accurate; he was well-read. He used the critical ideas of others to articulate and defend his position. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the writings of Merleau-Ponty were being discussed in the circles that Hoyland moved in and although there is no evidence that he actually read Merleau-Ponty, nonetheless Hoyland, as other artists of the early 1960s, may have been introduced to Merleau-Ponty's ideas through the discussions held at the ICA and in other informal settings. In her reading of Merleau-Ponty, Follin explains that he 'wrote about the relationship between the bodily nature of perception and the nature of art...all vision is to some extent, an illusion, a "delirium" of the waking mind, where to see a painting gives the illusion of "having it at a distance" but it also involves being "had" by the painting, as the being of the beholder "enters into the work of art".' Follin claims that:

For Merleau-Ponty, it was the artist's bodily, physical experience of the world that had to be translated into the medium of the paint. He used

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<sup>149</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.62

<sup>150</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Von Joel, M. 'Hoyland at Home', *Art Line Magazine* (UK), Vol. 1, No 4, 1983, p.10

<sup>151</sup> From Pasmore, he learned 'the difference between renaissance space and space at that time, how space was conceived. And he talked about perspective and how perspective had been eliminated by, you know, he said we're exploring space now'. Hoyland, J. - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.64

<sup>152</sup> The exhibition was of 'work in progress towards a new foundation of art teaching as developed at the Department of Fine Art, King's College, Durham University, Newcastle upon Tyne, and at Leeds College of Art / [with contributions by Victor Pasmore, Harry Thubron, Richard Hamilton, Tom Hudson, and others]'. [Online] <http://library.tate.org.uk/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=vGJ4jiRp9N/LIBRARY/9200007/5/0> [4 March 2015]

the term “transubstantiations” imparting a sense of the religious or spiritual; the world is changed into paintings, the better to be ingested by the body of the viewer, a body that is not merely a physiological machine but both product and expression of its own vision and movement. The eye is not merely a subordinate physical link between the outside world and the mind: “eye and mind” constitute an inseparable unity, parts of one system.<sup>153</sup>

And although it is improbable that Hoyland would have shown any interest in the spiritual aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s writing, nonetheless, a new way of looking at the relationship between the viewer and the object would have appealed to him. The connection between Merleau-Ponty’s ideas and Hoyland’s painting was noted by one critic in 1964 (see chapter 4).

Building on the knowledge gleaned from Scarborough summer schools, Hoyland advanced his interest in perception theories by reading books by J.J. Gibson, especially his influential *The Perception of the Visual World* (1950).<sup>154</sup> Gibson introduced the term *affordance perception* to define the relationship between an object, the environment in which it functions, and the actor. *Optical flow* was, according to Gibson, the visual stimulus provided to Man moving through the physical environment. It is easy to see the attraction to Hoyland and his interest in the relation between his paintings, the environment they are shown in, and their impact and the reaction of the viewer to them. Hoyland read numerous articles on perception that appeared regularly in the journal *Scientific American* throughout the 1950s.<sup>155</sup>

It is clear that the developments which had occurred in American painting throughout the 1950s resonated with Hoyland. He viewed the painting produced between 1945 and 1960 by Rothko, Newman, Motherwell, and to a lesser extent, Pollock and de Kooning, and others, as inspirational. Hoyland first saw their work in four seminal

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<sup>153</sup> Follin (2004), p.81

<sup>154</sup> See Gibson, J.J. *The Perception of the Visual World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1950. In the late 1980s one of Gibson’s followers, David Norman extended the concept of *affordance perception* to include not just physical relation between the object, the environment, and the actor but also the latter’s past experiences, belief and cultural systems, personal intentions and goals, and ambitions. See Norman, D.A. *The Design of Everyday Things*, London: MIT, 1998

<sup>155</sup> Hoyland spoke of his ‘background knowledge of optical painting and having taught optical ideas to students, I had to do a certain amount of reading... I knew quite a bit about visual optics.’ See Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.127

exhibitions - *Modern Art in the United States: A Selection from the Collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York* (1956 - Tate Gallery, London), *Jackson Pollock* (1958 - Whitechapel Art Gallery, London), *New American Painting* (1959 - Tate Gallery, London) and *Mark Rothko* (1961 - Whitechapel Art Gallery, London). Hoyland has spoken of the impact on him of first seeing the work of Mark Rothko and his compatriots in the *New American Painting* exhibition. He found the exhibition 'mystifying' and 'awesome'<sup>156</sup> but:

We didn't know how to analyse it or put it into any kind of historical context...all the younger artists were very aware of Rothko and all were aware that he'd done something remarkable. We tried to apply all the lessons we knew... and we couldn't...we felt, you know, sort of angry about it.<sup>157</sup>

However, Hoyland felt that Rothko's paintings 'looked like a denial of paint'.<sup>158</sup> In 1959 the Tate Gallery purchased Rothko's, *Light Red Over Black* (1957)(Fig.28), the first painting by the artist to enter a British national collection, a painting greatly admired by Hoyland and one that he was able to view regularly. In *Light Red Over Black*, two black rectangles appear to float away from the surface of the vertical support. But do they? The title suggests that it's the other way around; that the red form is over the black ones. Looking closely at the painting reveals touches of blue and a reddish rectangle above the black forms, and a 'wash' of diluted red layering the entire picture. According to Rothko, these shapes 'have no direct association with any particular visible experience, but in them one recognises the principle and passion of organisms'.<sup>159</sup> The softness in Rothko's forms appealed.

Hoyland recognised the impact of Surrealism on the American painters, a fact that drew him to the painting of Rothko, Newman and others:

The other big difference is that British art had never taken Surrealism on board, really. And so these paintings of Rothko and Newman, they were more like a kind of, if they were anything to do with landscape, they were

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<sup>156</sup> Hoyland (1988), p.9

<sup>157</sup> Hoyland, J. 'Interview' for *Rothko in Britain* exhibition, 22 July 2011, Whitechapel Gallery Archives, (uncatalogued), n.p.

<sup>158</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.100

<sup>159</sup> Rothko, M. - Quoted at [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rothko-light-red-over-black-t00275/text-display-caption> [16 March 2015]

dream landscape, as opposed to physical landscape. English art was always based on reality and theirs were ideal paintings, dream paintings. That's why they had a different kind of space.<sup>160</sup>

Newman's work also appealed to Hoyland for its purity and directness, painting that connected immediately the object with the viewer; his work was invitational, paintings were intended to be viewed close up.<sup>161</sup> Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (Fig.29) is characteristic of what became known as colour-field painting. By combining colour and scale with the intention to engage directly the viewer would, according to Newman, create a sublime experience. *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* is a large-scale painting, a red colour field interrupted by five vertical zips. The title is important and translates as 'Man, Heroic and the Sublime'. In his essay "The Sublime is Now," Newman posed the question, 'if we are living in a time without a legend or mythos that can be called sublime, if we refuse to admit any exaltation in pure relations, if we refuse to live in the abstract, how can we be living in the sublime?'<sup>162</sup> Newman also offered practical possibilities and reassurance to the young Hoyland.<sup>163</sup>

Whereas the painting of Rothko and Newman was predicated on geometry, Clyfford Still's paintings explored more organic configurations. In *1949-H* (Fig.30) thick layers of paint, appearing to peel away, are layered on to the surface. *1949-H* is dominated by a field of red but other colours are present: blues, yellows, oranges, black, and white. The paint has been applied with a palette knife.

The challenge set by the American Abstract expressionists was daunting to the young Hoyland: 'I couldn't see the connections'. But despite the difficulties in interpreting the work of the American painters, nevertheless, he 'recognised in Rothko in

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<sup>160</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.85

<sup>161</sup> According to the Tate Gallery, 'they require us to stand before them, close enough to experience all their nuances of colour and structure. So adamant was Newman about the way his art should be viewed that he once typed a statement and stuck it to the gallery wall instructing people to stand at only a 'short distance' from his canvases. Seen in proximity, Newman believed that his work could engender feelings of heightened self-awareness. 'I hope that my painting has the impact of giving someone, as it did me, the feeling of his own totality, of his own separateness, of his own individuality,' he said' [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/barnett-newman> [12 January 2015]

<sup>162</sup> Newman, B. 'The Sublime is Now', *Tiger's Eye*, Vol.1, No.6, December 1948, p.53

<sup>163</sup> For instance, Hoyland 'found he couldn't work with the canvas in the way some of the American artists at the time preferred, whereby they determined the precise dimensions of the work after its completion. 'They'd used this thing called cropping, where they actually take the best bit. I remember Barnett Newman saying "cropping that's for photography", because he always painted on a canvas with an edge'. From Crook and Learner (2000), p.103

particular and in Newman and Clyfford Still that something important was going on, something that seemed to be quite alien and non-European'.<sup>164</sup>

In spite of his initial attraction to what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic eventually Hoyland arrived at the conclusion that the work of these painters led to a dead end: 'Marvellous as their paintings were they didn't really give one any room to go into in painting: they opened up the door for minimal art and even conceptualism, but for painting they seemed to close the door'.<sup>165</sup>

Hoyland saw the work of other American artists before his first trip to New York. He recalls the Ellsworth Kelly and Sam Francis works in exhibitions held at the American Embassy.<sup>166</sup> Also, on a visit to London in 1963 Helen Frankenthaler was introduced to Hoyland. In 1964, as the recipient of a Peter Stuyvesant Travel Bursary, Hoyland travelled to New York for the first time. Soon after arrival, 'I rang her (Frankenthaler) up and, she welcomed me, introduced me to Robert Motherwell, her husband, and it all sort of rolled on from there'.<sup>167</sup> He admired some of Frankenthaler's work but felt that, 'the less successful ones that there's not enough there – they somehow got flaccid or flabby, they need to be tied down'.<sup>168</sup>

Helen Frankenthaler was one of the first artists to use acrylic. Her paintings from the early 1950s established her reputation. *Mountains and Sea* (Fig.47) is characteristic of her work from that time. Fluid organic shapes, captured in pinks, blues and greens, have been arranged centrally, in a lyrical configuration. This emphasis ignores the edge of the canvas. The oil paint has been diluted, what Frankenthaler referred to as 'soak stain',<sup>169</sup> to achieve the lyrical effect. In 1964, Frankenthaler's

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<sup>164</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.80

<sup>165</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>166</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.86

<sup>167</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.110

<sup>168</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>169</sup> According to Carmean, 'Certainly the making of *Mountains and Sea* was radical'. It had a profound effect on Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Clement Greenberg and led to the emergence of Colour Field painting. But 'the general reception at the time was less than enthusiastic, and Frankenthaler remembers that "at the time the painting looked to many people like a large paint rag, casually accidental and incomplete." Priced at around a hundred dollars, it did not sell. Shortly thereafter it was rolled up and kept in storage, reappearing twice in exhibitions during the 1950s'. Quoted in Carmean, E.A. *Helen Frankenthaler: A Paintings Retrospective*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989, p.12. Frankenthaler recalled how she arrived at the stain-soak technique, though she did not actually use this term; it was attributed to her

work was included in the *Post-Painterly Abstraction* exhibition curated by Clement Greenberg at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which then travelled to Minneapolis and Toronto. Whilst in New York, he saw the 'Woman' Drawings' exhibition by de Kooning at the James Goodman Gallery and thought they were 'fabulous'.<sup>170</sup>

Importantly, Hoyland met some of the second generation of American abstract painters, the post-painterly abstraction school. He 'saw some Morris Louis's (Fig.48) and some Noland's (Fig.49) in this big, big warehouse', [and] 'thought they were terrific',<sup>171</sup> and later, the work of Jules Olitski (Fig.50). Hoyland acknowledged the influence of Louis's 'Veils' on his painting after 1964.<sup>172</sup> It is easy to see why. In these paintings Louis was responding to the challenge of how to fill a canvas without returning to all-over painting or resorting to exploring illusionary perspectival space. In *Blue Veil* the figure is reconciled with the ground, through the creation of expansive fields of colour. The paint has been poured down the canvas in striated patterns, respecting verticality and gravity, the paint stopped only by the lower horizontal edge. There is an aura around the internal image created by the presence of a silhouetted image, which has been created by the layering of paint. The overall effect of the painting is openness, a sense that the picture is breathing. Through his engagement with Olitski's and Louis's work, Hoyland was able to imbue his own work with 'oxygen... breathing quality', where the 'colour burns with intensity', and 'painterlyness'.<sup>173</sup> He admired some of their paintings but had reservations about

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work by others. In 1967 Frankenthaler explained, 'Before the Fall of 1952, I had always painted on sized and primed canvas – but my paint was becoming thinner and more fluid and cried out to be soaked, not resting. In *Mountains and Sea* I put in the charcoal line gestures first, because I wanted to draw in with color and shape the totally abstract memory of the landscape. I spilled on the drawing in paint from the coffee cans. The charcoal lines were original guideposts that eventually became unnecessary'. Quoted in Baro, G. 'The Achievement of Helen Frankenthaler', *Art International*, 20 September 1967, p.36

<sup>170</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.115

<sup>171</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.121. Recollecting the first Noland's he saw, Hoyland noted, 'I remember the first Noland's I saw were some of those target paintings...which I thought, and still think, were the best things Noland ever did, and they were done in acrylic. They were like the cutting edge of painting. [Noland] was ten years older than me and it just seemed like the most exciting thing around. And it broke with nature; it was a new sort of urban art'. Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.107

<sup>172</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.126

<sup>173</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.124

aspects of the work. He thought the compositional devices, the forms in Olitski's and Louis's paintings, 'seemed a very kind of weak solution structurally'.<sup>174</sup>

After staying with Kenneth Noland at his home, Hoyland formed a lasting friendship with the artist, but arrived at the view 'that by that time Noland was already going too commercial, too saccharine, too repetitive'.<sup>175</sup> Hoyland preferred the work of Stella, (Fig.51) not because of its colour, which was 'never great' but 'his thinking at that time' and for eliminating the 'figure/ground' relationship which was still prevalent in European painting then.<sup>176</sup> There is a correlation between Stella's series of paintings from the late 1950s<sup>177</sup> and Hoyland's early work. Stella's scumbled technique, his use of repeated horizontal bands of colour, and importantly, his views on the relationship between drawing and colour, chimed with the young Hoyland. In the early 1960s Hoyland had been attempting to move away from traditional drawing intentions and Stella helped him with this. The following extended quote on drawing by Stella would have interested Hoyland:

I didn't like the Abstract Expressionists' use of drawing because of its modelling and value-difference implications. But I think their instinct to put skeletal and gestural drawing back into painting was shrewd and fruitful. It forced me to think hard about the integral relationship of surface, structure, and painting methods...this drawing-painting problem forced me into structural and spatial considerations...I ended by only painting with the brush; I didn't do the drawing with it.<sup>178</sup>

Hoyland's insistence on structure in his painting and his constant exploration of the ground/figure relationship, notably the relationship between form and space, can be partly attributed to Stella.

But the most significant moment on the trip was when Hoyland saw for the first time the paintings of Hans Hofmann. He was introduced to the artist's work by Clement Greenberg who took him to view two small Hofmann paintings at the Kootz Gallery.

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<sup>174</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.123

<sup>175</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.121

<sup>176</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.123

<sup>177</sup> These include *Coney Island* (1958), *Astoria* (1958), *Delta* (1958) *Die Fahne Hoch* (1959) and *Tomlinson Court Park* (1959).

<sup>178</sup> Stella, F. Quoted in Rubin, W.S. *Frank Stella*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970, p.18

Henceforth, Hoyland looked carefully at the work of Hofmann, admiring it for 'his love of paint as surface', 'strong colour' and structured compositional awareness, where 'the rectangle had become the main forms in the spatial articulation of his paintings and the anchor'. It was Hofmann among the American painters who, according to Hoyland, realised Cézanne's ambition of 'where colour is fullest form is richest'.<sup>179</sup>

However, Hoyland's admiration for Hofmann was not without qualification. When acknowledging the influence of Hofmann on his work towards the end of the 1960s, Hoyland made it very clear that he was appropriating from the European Hofmann. According to Hoyland, 'the reason Hofmann was so influential was that basically he was an old-type European artist, stuck with those values. He was the guy who really set about complicating the surface again, dealing with illusion again, with the plasticity of paint, using a full chromatic range, using all these things that had been eliminated from painting by the second generation of American artists'.<sup>180</sup> Hofmann provided an alternative vision because he had 'taken European art and made something new out of it in California, in a different light...it seemed to have the influence of Cubism, the Fauves, Van Gogh and Matisse...but it had this kind of expanded quality that America had given it'.<sup>181</sup>

There was another possible reason for his advocacy of Hofmann, 'Hoyland wanted to represent Hofmann's paintings as important elements in a European attack on American modernist dominance'.<sup>182</sup> Although this is an interesting idea it may be exaggerating Hoyland's position. In Hoyland's writings there is little to suggest that he was pro-European and anti-American; instead, there is much to support the position that he was simply endeavouring to reconcile, in a similar way to Robert Motherwell, the two, equally valid, traditions.

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<sup>179</sup> Hoyland, J. 'Hans Hofmann 1880-1966' *Hans Hofmann: Late Paintings*. Exhibition catalogue by John Hoyland et al., London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1988, pp.9-10

<sup>180</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>181</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.103

<sup>182</sup> Harris, J. 'Ideologies of the Aesthetic: Hans Hofmann's 'Abstract Expressionism' and the New York School', in Thistlewood, D. (ed) *American Abstract Expressionism*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993, p.82

Despite his admiration for Hofmann, Hoyland was acutely aware of the perils of drawing too close to Hofmann, of unwittingly returning the figure ground relationship to his painting:

There was a risk...when you look at a Hofmann painting you see it could easily be a figure in the foreground, a figure in the background, or some flowers in the foreground and a boat in the background. I mean that's the kind of space they occupy, in a way, or can occupy. Whereas Noland, Olitski and Louis, their space, for want of a better word, particularly in the case of Louis, it's like a kind of inventive dream space, it doesn't relate to the natural world, the object's world.<sup>183</sup>

Caution needs to be taken when comparing the work of the two artists. Some Sixties American critics drew parallels between Hofmann's and Hoyland's paintings, suggesting the overbearing influence of Hofmann on the younger artist<sup>184</sup> but English writers disagreed. Norbert Lynton asserted, 'his paintings never looked like Hofmann's neither then nor subsequently. Hofmann's paintings speak of a stage-management, a too-conscious choreography that has always looked old-fashioned, even though he contravened, in a startlingly up-front way what Modernism had taught as the essential base of progressive painting: "a flat surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order" '.<sup>185</sup> Bryan Robertson concurred with this view: 'Hoyland has often been compared, inaccurately in my view, with Hans Hofmann. Since 1969, Hoyland has used paint in an expressionist manner but otherwise there is only a tenuous connection between these artists in one shared concern, for a period, with the placement of squares within a rectangular format'.<sup>186</sup>

Although it is undeniable that Hoyland admired Hofmann's work, nevertheless, there were divergences. The contexts in which both artists were exploring geometric forms in their paintings were different. Hofmann's work was predicated on the idea of push/pull whereas Hoyland was more interested in 'going into the painting'. As Hoyland explained, 'his "push pull" I didn't actually do...I didn't want to use it [space]

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<sup>183</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.123

<sup>184</sup> See Pincus-Witten, R. 'John Hoyland', *Artforum*, Vol.9, No.12, December 1970, p.77

<sup>185</sup> Lynton, N. 'John Hoyland', [Online] [http://www.beauxartslondon.co.uk/Artists/John%20Hoyland/S%20070503-070603/J\\_Hoyland-070503\\_070603\\_Essay.html](http://www.beauxartslondon.co.uk/Artists/John%20Hoyland/S%20070503-070603/J_Hoyland-070503_070603_Essay.html) [11 September 2012]

<sup>186</sup> Robertson, B. 'Introduction'. *John Hoyland: Paintings, Australia 1980*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1980, p.7

in a perspectival way, the way that Hoffmann used space'.<sup>187</sup> Hofmann's painting remained resolutely 'easel painting' whereas Hoyland's painting was, in the 1960s, using architectural scale.

According to Hoyland, '[Hofmann was] an influence, but not so much as people like to make out. It becomes very convenient to point up the similarities but it is more difficult to point to the differences. People tend to be lazy and go for the convenient and the obvious'.<sup>188</sup> The affinity with Hofmann's work was stronger in Hoyland's later work, when Hoyland was painting more layered, more textured surfaces and placing feathered geometric shapes onto a scumbled ground. The impastoed blue section in Hofmann's *Pompeii* (Fig.52) has echoes in Hoyland's *Memory Mirror* (Fig.53) with the heavily worked green/yellow section towards the top right edge. Hoyland never denied the importance of American art on his practice, as this quote proves, 'the pouring came from Louis and the blocks came from Hofmann' but Hoyland then adds an important qualification, 'except Hofmann never did a block like that'.<sup>189</sup>

Although it must remain a conjecture, it is reasonable to claim that Hoyland's aesthetic, with the passage of time, fitted more comfortably with the views of Harold Rosenberg<sup>190</sup> than those of Clement Greenberg. Surprisingly few commentators on Hoyland's work have applied the ideas of Harold Rosenberg to Hoyland's aesthetic. There are parallels between the two. A strong advocate of Joan Miró, Robert Motherwell and Hans Hofmann, three painters admired by Hoyland, Rosenberg's emphasis on the relevance of drawing, his endorsement of Surrealism, an art movement frequently mentioned by critics when explaining Hoyland's painting, his belief in the process of painting and, inevitably, the theatricality of action painting appear similar to Hoyland's. There are also similarities in the language adopted by both. For instance, in his 1952 seminal essay, 'The American Action Painters',<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.123

<sup>188</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1979), n.p.

<sup>189</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Crook and Learner (2000), p.105

<sup>190</sup> The ideas of Rosenberg influenced Albert Irvin, who was a close friend of Hoyland's. - See Moorhouse, P. *Albert Irvin: Life to Painting*, London: Lund Humphries, 1998, p.51

<sup>191</sup> Rosenberg, R. 'The American Action Painters', *Art News*, No.51, 11 December, 1952, pp.22-3

Rosenberg, importantly, drew no distinction between preparatory work and the finished object, 'if a painting is an action the sketch is one action, the painting that follows it another. The second cannot be "better" or more complete than the first...there is no reason why an act cannot be prolonged from a piece of paper to a canvas. Or repeated on another scale and with more control. A sketch can have the function of a skirmish.' As will be discussed later, Hoyland used the sketch to fix a concept and said of painting being 'like shadow boxing'.<sup>192</sup> Rosenberg claimed, 'the test of any of the new paintings is its seriousness—and the test of its seriousness is the degree to which the act on the canvas is an extension of the artist's total effort to make over his experience' and Hoyland wrote of 'painting [being] an extension of one's interior self. If you can get the painting to be the true extension of the way you feel then you've got this authentic thing'.<sup>193</sup> The obvious similarities are in the shared belief in 'the event'. According to Rosenberg the canvas was 'an arena in which to act...what was to go in the canvas was not a picture but an event'<sup>194</sup> and 'since the painter has become an actor, the spectator has to think in a vocabulary of action.' Hoyland wrote, 'paintings are there to be experienced, they are events'.<sup>195</sup>

From early in his career Hoyland fully understood the visceral potential impact of large-scale work on the viewer, where the actual physical environment with the painting plays a role in the viewing experience and through the concept of monumentality the spectator is invited into the arena of theatricality; the painting as experienced by the spectator takes on the characteristics of 'an event'. Hoyland wrote of going into the painting and Rosenberg of 'getting inside the canvas'. Rosenberg wrote of 'each stroke had to be a decision and was answered by a new question...a medium of difficulties' and Hoyland believed that painting was about

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<sup>192</sup> Hoyland – Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>193</sup> Searle (1979), n.p.

<sup>194</sup> See Rosenberg (1952), pp.22-3

<sup>195</sup> At the time of his 1967 retrospective Hoyland wrote: 'Paintings are there to be experienced, they are events. They are also to be mediated on and to be enjoyed by the senses; to be felt through the eye. The way that they are perceived, as with nature, will be conditioned by the individual's feelings, background and temperament. Paintings are not intellectual, they don't describe events, don't tell a story, they are not concerned with history, literature, science, theatre, mathematics or movements; they are still'. Hoyland, J. 'Artist's statement', *John Hoyland: Paintings 1967-1979*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., London: Serpentine Gallery (Arts Council of Great Britain), (1979) - Reproduced at [Online] <http://www.johnhoyland.com/about/quotes-from-a-life/> [12 June 2014]

finding solutions. Rosenberg believed, similarly to Hoyland, that painting was a creative act.

In the Fifties, Rosenberg and Robert Motherwell were close<sup>196</sup> and it is unsurprising that some of Motherwell's views would have resonated with Hoyland; they met in 1964, and there was much common ground between the two painters. Both admired the work of Hans Hofmann and other European painters and writers.<sup>197</sup> Hoyland would have understood and approved of Motherwell's sentiments, which were similar to his own: 'to choose emotion rather than intellection can be an intellectual position',<sup>198</sup> and 'I have never had a thought about painting while painting, but only afterwards',<sup>199</sup> and 'we know what we believe by what we paint'.<sup>200</sup> With Motherwell, the practice preceded the theory and he often pointed out that 'Matisse painted without theory'.<sup>201</sup> But there were differences between the two: unlike Motherwell, Hoyland showed little interest in imbuing his work with direct political or ethical visual statements.<sup>202</sup> Motherwell started a painting 'on the floor' because the sense of the pictorial surface as a whole is better sustained under your feet',<sup>203</sup> but Hoyland always worked his paintings from the vertical. There is little similarity between their paintings; it was Motherwell's ideas that particularly appealed to Hoyland. It was Motherwell's willingness and ability to reconcile the European and American traditions, which he referred to as a 'swinging back and forth from expressionism (an emotional thing) to American classicism, a felt thing'<sup>204</sup> that interested Hoyland. Interestingly, little criticism was aimed at Motherwell for his affection and admiration

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<sup>196</sup> In the early late 1940s, with Rosenberg, the musician John Cage and the architect Harold Chareau, Motherwell established the journal *Possibilities*, as a forum for the exchange of ideas and work. Caws, M.A. *Robert Motherwell: With Pen and Brushes*, London: Reaktion, 2003, p.22

<sup>197</sup> Hoyland would have been drawn to Motherwell's admiration for all things European. Motherwell made no secret of his closeness to the French Symbolists – Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Stéphane Mallarmé – the School of Paris, to Henri Matisse and to Goya, Lorca, Octavio Paz, Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka, and James Joyce. Motherwell also admired John Constable. See Caws (2003)

<sup>198</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Terenzio, S. (ed), *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.77-8

<sup>199</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Terenzio (1992), p.98

<sup>200</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Terenzio (1992), p.107

<sup>201</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Caws (2003), p.41

<sup>202</sup> Many of Motherwell's paintings addressed political or ethical concerns, for example, *The Little Spanish Prison*, or *Elegy to the Spanish Republic* or *In Plato's Cave*.

<sup>203</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Caws (2003), p.31

<sup>204</sup> Motherwell – Quoted in Terenzio (1992), p.125.

for all things European whereas Hoyland was attacked for his loyalty to European-ness.

Although the American influence was evident, it may, however, be time for an adjustment to be made to the view that Hoyland's painting was overtly influenced or exclusively indebted to the work of the American Abstract Expressionists and Post-Painterly Abstraction, and American critical ideas. This thesis does not set out to reject outright the influence of American painting on Hoyland's artistic practice but rather to argue for a more nuanced approach.

The often-stated art historical position is that after seeing American Abstract Expressionism in the four seminal London exhibitions - (*Modern Art in the United States: A Selection from the Collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Jackson Pollock, New American Painting, and Mark Rothko*) - British non-figurative painters, Hoyland included, unreservedly began to mimic their practice. The view has not gone unchallenged. In 1966 the painter Patrick Heron contested the idea that American art was all-dominant.<sup>205</sup> And in 1982, David Brown, in the catalogue introduction for the British Council exhibition *Aspects of British Painting Today*, stressed that 'some painters in Britain were to respond to the gestural aspect of American Abstract expressionism, but many of the younger artists were more impressed by the increase in picture size and had a cooler approach to the way paint was applied'.<sup>206</sup>

In 1990 Thomas Crow writing on the late 1950s and early 1960s stated his reservations. In his view, 'knowledge of large-scale Abstract Expressionism had been assembled piecemeal by younger London artists and critics around the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) since the beginning of the decade'. And Crow made a further important point, 'that knowledge had been interpreted in ways that ran contrary to the critical orthodoxies developing on the other side of the Atlantic'. In other words,

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<sup>205</sup> See Heron, P. 'The Ascendancy of London in the Sixties', *Studio International*, Vol.172, No.884, December 1966, pp. 280-1

<sup>206</sup> Brown, D. 'Introduction', *Aspects of British Painting Today*. Exhibition catalogue by David Brown et al., London: British Council, 1982, n.p.

the British artists took something completely different from the American art than was claimed. According to Crow, 'modes of presentation scavenged from a heterogeneous urban environment, came first, then came the belated submission to Modernist protocols'. This was true of Hoyland, who appropriated from an eclectic range of influences, depending on the challenges thrown up in his studio. The historical record, according to Crow, has been distorted and this distortion has contributed to the 'misleading linear history predicated on the centrality of New York'.<sup>207</sup>

American painting could not be ignored by British abstract painters. For Hoyland the weight of American post-war art history was challenging. As he explained:

It was more difficult for painters because we were still labouring under the enormous shadows of Newman, Rothko, Still and the rest of them. I think Rothko is a really good example of an artist who painted himself into a corner. So I felt – as a young painter - that one had to re-examine the basic things, in the way that the sculptors were doing. At that time most American artists were saying that these were old-type European preoccupations. Maybe so, but the reason Hofmann was so influential was that basically he was an old-type European artist, stuck with those values.<sup>208</sup>

Eventually Hoyland resolved the problem, as did Motherwell, through the assimilation and reconciliation of the American and European traditions. This was recognised by Rothko in 1965, who, according to Robertson, 'was impressed by certain canvases of John Hoyland that I took him to see in an exhibition organised in New York in 1965 called *The English Eye*...after a preliminary inspection of a Hoyland fourteen footer, with his spectacles pushed up on his forehead he exclaimed, "if there has to be any post-Rothko painting I guess this is as good as it gets" '.<sup>209</sup>

Hoyland was steeped in the European tradition.<sup>210</sup> A major influence throughout his career was the painting of Nicolas de Staël (Fig.54). Hoyland first became aware of de Staël's work in 1956 when two ground-breaking exhibitions of de Staël's work

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<sup>207</sup> Crow, T. 'London Calling: The Sixties Art Scene in London', *Artforum*, Vol. 31, June 1993, p.82

<sup>208</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978), n.p.

<sup>209</sup> Robertson, B. 'Mark Rothko', *Spectator*, 7 March 1970, pp.314-15

<sup>210</sup> Hoyland constantly mentioned European artists as sources of inspiration. These included Rembrandt Turner, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse, Munch, Soutine, and Rouault. See Hoyland - See Gooding (2005-2007), pp.42, 47, 48, 49, 61, 63, 162, and 199.

were held in London: The first - *Hommage à Nicolas de Staël* - at the gallery of Arthur Tooth & Sons in March 1956, was followed two months later by a major survey exhibition of the artist's work - *Memorial Exhibition: Nicolas de Staël 1914-55*, curated by Hoyland's future patron Bryan Robertson, and held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. It is also highly probable that Hoyland saw the work of de Staël at Ted Power's flat in Grosvenor Square because Power owned nine paintings by de Staël in his extensive collection of modern art.<sup>211</sup> The painter William Scott, one of Hoyland's tutors at the Royal Academy, discussed the work of de Staël with Hoyland during studio sessions and tutorials. Scott was, according to Hoyland, 'one of my heroes'<sup>212</sup> and their mutual respect for de Staël worked its way into their painting. In the middle of the 1950s Scott was looking carefully at de Staël's paintings to resolve issues in his own painting, assisting him in creating abstract forms whilst not abandoning fully figurative elements, reconciling the tension between the two. Hoyland made no secret of his admiration for de Staël, 'the other big influence of course was Nicolas de Staël's show at the Whitechapel and the way he'd managed more brilliantly than anyone else, to combine abstraction with figuration...and I just liked his use of paint and colour and his freedom of it. I liked his touch'. He referred to him as 'a dominant figure' (in the mid-to-late 1950s) and 'a tremendous colourist'. Hoyland considered de Staël's unfinished 1955 canvas *Le Concert* (Fig.55) 'a great masterpiece'.<sup>213</sup> The influence on Hoyland's practice was not missed by Bryan Robertson: 'it is the simple truth that Hoyland began where de Staël ended'.<sup>214</sup> Similar observations were made by Edward Lucie-Smith and Patricia White in the 1960s.<sup>215</sup>

Although not directly evident in Hoyland's earliest paintings, de Staël's influence informed Hoyland's work from the mid-1960s and beyond. In his late paintings, de

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<sup>211</sup> Ted Power developed a fine collection of modern art including paintings by Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman and European painters including Matthew Smith.

<sup>212</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.82

<sup>213</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), pp.82-3

<sup>214</sup> Robertson, B. 'Looking for Hoyland', *Spectator*, 2 July 1977, p.22

<sup>215</sup> Lucie-Smith, E. and White, P. *Art in Britain 1969/70*, London: J M Dent & Sons, 1970, p.119

Staël was addressing the issue of creating the illusion of movement in abstract and semi-abstract compositions. Although the influence of de Staël may have been evident to some observers on this side of the Atlantic at the time, it was not politic to pronounce on it too greatly if one wished to garner positive critical attention and establish a commercial platform in the United States, where de Staël's reputation remained poor. But Hoyland's admiration, in private, was unwavering, constant, and undimmed by the passage of time.<sup>216</sup>

The work of Henri Matisse, as it was for Motherwell, was of great importance to Hoyland. Matisse's *The Snail* (Fig.46) which was acquired by the Tate Gallery in 1962, and the cut-outs, notably those for *Jazz*, resonated with Hoyland; Matisse's 'cutting into colour' being of particular interest. Matisse's essay *The Path of Colour*, in which Matisse argued that colour exists only as colour and not as a device to describe nature was both inspirational and informative; in interviews Hoyland often cited Matisse's statement on colour, 'colour must not clothe art, it must constitute it'.<sup>217</sup> Hoyland was also an admirer of the English painter Sir Matthew Smith, in whose work the influence of the Fauvists and Matisse is evident. A postcard of Smith's painting *Nude, Fitzroy Street No 1*, (Fig.56) along with reproductions of Van Gogh's *The Bedroom* (Fig.57) and the work of Rothko (Fig.28) and Poliakoff (Fig.58) took pride of place on the walls of Hoyland's studio.<sup>218</sup>

Hoyland was often praised for his use of colour. This thesis argues that his feeling and use of colour can be traced back to European art. Early in his career a synthesis of the ideas and techniques of European painters, such as Matisse, the Fauvists, de

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<sup>216</sup> In 2009 John Hoyland noted, '[Nicolas] de Staël's one of my heroes. My son is named Nicolas after him...' Interestingly and somewhat poignantly Hoyland alluded to the insularity of American critical opinion and its protectionism towards home grown artists: 'The Americans never mention de Staël because he wasn't American. I'm sure Hofmann must have seen him. De Staël was a fantastic artist. He had this terrible problem which everybody was trying to solve at the time, and he did it better than anyone else, of trying to reconcile figurative and abstract painting. That was the big issue. And they couldn't seem to let go of the figurative aspect. After then we were able to do paintings that stand on their own without any obvious external influences. But it is very hard to get out of the parochialism of English landscape-based abstraction'. Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007) p.162

<sup>217</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Robertson, B. 'John Hoyland', *Modern Painters*, Vol. 7, Spring 1994, p.34

<sup>218</sup> Observed on visit to John Hoyland's studio, 14 June 2014

Staël, and Matthew Smith were evident in two figurative landscape paintings by Hoyland from 1960 (Figs.59-60), the last such work he produced.<sup>219</sup>

During his early career two British artists, William Turnbull and Anthony Caro played their part in Hoyland's development. In the late 1950s Turnbull and Caro were heavily influenced by American Abstract Expressionism and it can be argued that along with the seminal American exhibitions mentioned earlier, Turnbull and Caro did most to introduce Hoyland to what was happening in the United States at the time.

It was his friendship with Turnbull that made the initial connection between the American and European traditions. In 1958 Hoyland enrolled in Turnbull's evening classes at the Central School of Art. It was during these sessions, with their focus on the still-life, that Hoyland began to explore the possibilities of abstracting from actual objects. But as important were the informal conversations with Turnbull which proved invaluable. As Hoyland explained:

And then poor fellow, he happened to live on my bus route, so even when he'd finished talking to us and teaching us, I would collar him on the bus and sort of pump him all the way home and he was very, very helpful. I mean he was one of the few people who'd been to America and who'd met Helen Frankenthaler and a lot of the American artists, Barnett Newman and he was probably the most knowledgeable person in the country about what we needed to know. He'd also lived in Paris, you know, if you remember he shared a flat with Eduardo Paolozzi, and so he was the man, he was the biz, so I could sit there and talk to him and try to put all of this into practice uninterrupted at the School, at the Academy School.<sup>220</sup>

Turnbull's ideas inspired the young Hoyland and this is borne out by the similarities in Turnbull's and Hoyland's proclamations on painting. In his discussion of the paintings of William Turnbull in 1967, Frank Whitford posited that Abstract Expressionism:

...liberated the artist from the traditional kinds of formalism: from neo-platonic geometry, from Cubism and from all its derivatives. The problem for the artists who came after was to retain the emotional content, the quality of deeply felt and directly communicated experience, while shifting the emphasis away from the importance of the artist's 'signature' and towards a condition in

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<sup>219</sup> These two landscapes, clearly indebted to a synthesis of the European painting tradition, in particular the influence of de Staël's late style, appear to be the last figurative works painted by Hoyland. His transition to non-figuration, as seen in his *Situation* exhibitions, was probably a gradual process from 1957-60.

<sup>220</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.54

which the painting itself could gain greater autonomous power. Content had to be retained without a return to the 'image'.<sup>221</sup>

Whitford cites Turnbull's view that a painting is 'a dialogue between the artist and his material' and is 'a live performance'. According to Whitford, '[Turnbull's paintings] are the empirical solutions for emotional rather than formal problems', that colour is used 'not to make 'colourful paintings'... but to create experiences'. Colour is pivotal in achieving this aim: 'Colour is direct emotion and [defines] an area of ambiguity, sets up conditions in terms of which the spectator will react', where 'spectator participation and response is therefore of vital importance to Turnbull's idea of art.' Whitford closes the essay with one of Turnbull's own quotations, a quotation that could equally be applied to Hoyland's ideas and painting:

[Pictures are] acting outwards into our own world, large environmental shields changing our lives but leaving us in its centre, provocations to contemplation and action. But they are also troublesome, demanding your participation, your commitment in the act of looking, with little comfort from the usual frame of reference.<sup>222</sup>

Central to the work of both Turnbull and Hoyland was the engagement of the viewer. For both artists a painting was more than a formalist exercise, a painting must be a vessel for feeling and for both artists non-figurative painting provided the greatest opportunity to achieve this.

The connection was not only an intellectual one. Close examination of the two artists' work shows a symbiotic relationship. A pattern emerges with regard to Hoyland's assimilation and utilization of influence. Hoyland often absorbed and stored influence which did not reveal itself until a later date. This was so in his admiration for Nicholas de Staël. An admirer of de Staël since the late 1950s, it was not until the 1970s that the affinity with de Staël's work revealed itself directly in Hoyland's paintings. The same was so with Turnbull. It is difficult to see the impact of Turnbull on Hoyland's earliest work, the series of paintings from 1961 to 1962, though there is a vague intimation in 22.20.2.62. (Fig.20). But by the mid-1960s the influence is more

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<sup>221</sup> Whitford, F. 'The Paintings of William Turnbull', *Studio International*, Vol.173, No.888, April 1967, pp.202-4

<sup>222</sup> Whitford (1967), pp.202-4

obvious. In 1962 Hoyland and Turnbull were included in an exhibition at Marlborough Fine Art.<sup>223</sup> Echoes of Turnbull's influence can be detected in Hoyland's 'stain' paintings of the mid-1960s: the monochromatic field of colour in Turnbull's paintings of the early 1960s (Figs.61 and 62) are mirrored in paintings like 9.11.65 (Fig.25), 22.8.66 (Fig.27) and later, in Hoyland's 1973 painting, *Red Over Yellow*, 18.9.73 (Fig.41). Turnbull's 'soft formal'<sup>224</sup> aesthetic inspired Hoyland.

But it was seeing Anthony Caro's exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1963 which enabled Hoyland to move his work in new directions. He stopped painting and re-evaluated his practice via an intellectual and aesthetic engagement with Caro's work. At this time Caro was exploring the relationship between sculpture and painting. The originality of Caro's work was noted by Compton, 'this original way of making sculpture is most easily described in terms usually applied to abstract painting, for Caro creates a fluid arrangement of horizontals, verticals and diagonals of flat planes and more solid shapes'.<sup>225</sup> This structuring of materials into space provided Hoyland with the idea of arranging columnar, rectangular forms into landscape-format paintings. As important was Caro's underpinning philosophy. His belief that artistic conventions can and should be challenged, and that art is self-referential particularly impressed the young Hoyland. On a practical level, Caro's use of colour, his use of industrial materials, their associations with the urban landscape, and the directness of Caro's work, its materiality and its relationship with the viewer/participant resonated with Hoyland. The influence of Caro, whose own practice had been altered after his residency in America and his exposure to the work of David Smith, contributed to Hoyland's artistic development.

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<sup>223</sup> The title of the exhibition was 'Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull'. It ran between the 28 August and the 15 September. [Online] <http://library.tate.org.uk/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=pLdIYmLhun/LIBRARY/77570008/9> [29 January 2015]

<sup>224</sup> In 1959, Turnbull wrote, 'My recent paintings in no way relate to the geometric abstracts of the 'thirties. They are neither platonic nor geometric. I'd like to be able to make one saturated field of colour, so that you didn't feel you were short of all the others'. Quoted in Gooding (2006), p.27

<sup>225</sup> Compton, S. 'Anthony Caro and Sixties Abstraction', *British Art in the Twentieth Century*. Exhibition catalogue by Simon Compton et al., London: Prestel, 1987, p.356

In the early 1960s Caro explored the idea of painted steel sculptural forms and his work developed an abstract language for sculpture influenced partly by American abstract painting. There are parallels between Caro's work of the early 1960s and Hoyland's paintings of 1964 and 1965. It is reasonable to claim that Hoyland entered into a 'dialogue' with Caro's abstract sculptural forms, for instance, *Early One Morning* (1962)(Fig.63), a typical and seminal work by Caro from the period. In this sculpture a number of flat rectangular forms, red painted steel, have been arranged horizontally, into a welded assemblage, in a rhythmic formation bringing a sense of movement and rhythm to a static form, a form that because it was positioned on the floor was going to ground, and where the spaces in between are as important as the actual material forms; the viewer's eye drawn into and through and around the sculpture. It is an uncomfortable experience for the viewer because there is no one place to rest the eye, no single viewing point; instead the viewer is invited, standing frontally, to scan the sculpture, waiting for it to unfold and expand into the viewer's space, which reveals itself slowly and somewhat discretely. But then the viewer is tempted to move along the dominant horizontal axis, to shift from the frontal façade to various viewing points or platforms. The eye moves in and out of the various planes where, cleverly the mode of unification is achieved through Caro's choice of one colour, red. The structure as well as the colour in Caro's work, provided Hoyland with the idea that unity and cohesion of the other emphases in a painting, for instance the shapes or figure positioned on the ground, can be achieved through the use of a singular colour, for instance, red or green, two hues favoured by Hoyland for grounds or figures in his painting throughout the mid-to-late 1960s. Hoyland's choice of red and green can be attributed to a number of influences; red and green were used by both Turnbull and Newman, and Hoyland would have been aware that the original colour for *Early One Morning* was green until Caro was persuaded by his wife, the artist, Sheila Girling, to change his mind and replace the green with red.

This engagement with Caro's work assisted in Hoyland making his paintings more complex and helped him out of the impasse he found himself in. A return to the first principles of drawing, shape, colour, and form helped Hoyland to make more complex paintings. This involved replacing symmetrical compositions with asymmetrical ones and incorporating different shapes into the image. As Hoyland explained:

To get back to something more complex, I started to put shapes into a canvas rather than using a device to unify a surface. Of course then it became very easy to get involved in drawing in one kind or another. Using curved lines causes biomorphic forms to emerge. One really has to redefine a vocabulary of forms for oneself. Scale has been terrifically important for the past ten years. When working with forms within a canvas, scale has been both within and without the work.<sup>226</sup>

Working up large expanses of colour, the series of paintings from the mid-1960s explore the tension between shapes and ground. Rejecting the circle favoured by Kenneth Noland and the strict adherence to rectangular bands of colour and zips in Barnett Newman's painting, Hoyland created canvases where the shapes appear to shimmer and move across the picture plane. But this illusion of movement can also be attributed to the paintings of Scott and de Staël, who both explored the idea of static internal shapes giving the appearance of movement across horizontal and vertical planes.

According to Hoyland, Caro's sculpture was really about collage, 'using the floor as a ground'<sup>227</sup> and was as influenced as much by Analytical Cubism as by David Smith's sculpture. Caro also explored texture and materiality in his sculpture. The welded assemblages of Caro's work, it can be argued, have echoes in Hoyland's careful structuring of his paintings from the mid-Sixties. It is likely that the cut-outs of Matisse, greatly admired by Hoyland, may also have been an influence.

Caro was at the forefront of Hoyland's return to 'first principles' and drawing was to play a major part in this process. 'Some of the best drawing I know', posited

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<sup>226</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Bardo, A. 'Portrait of the Artist', *Montreal Star*, 7 February 1970, p.8

<sup>227</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978) n.p.

Hoyland, 'is in Caro's sculptures'.<sup>228</sup> For the first three months as a student at the Royal Academy Hoyland was 'only allowed to draw'. But soon Hoyland abandoned traditional drawing, where line and contour is used to capture tonality, and in its place 'began to draw with charcoal and coloured crayon, looking for plane and volume and arriving at the form from inside rather than outside...you arrive at the contour through volume'.<sup>229</sup> 1964 marked a return to drawing for Hoyland. He began to explore, in his own words, 'a more painterly way of drawing'. Drawing was not an end in itself but a means to an end. This thesis argues that there was drawing within and outside Hoyland's painting. Although he worked on and finished paintings speedily, considerable planning took place and numerous drawings were made before painting commenced. According to Hoyland's widow Beverley Heath-Hoyland, 'when John started out he was poor and could barely afford to buy materials, thus the use of scraps of paper'.<sup>230</sup> (Figs.64-70). These were used for such drawings.

The 'loose' portfolio of uncatalogued sketches in Hoyland's studio bear witness to the idea that Hoyland often made preliminary sketches before starting a painting.<sup>231</sup> But care needs to be taken when analysing the sketches because the purpose of the sketches varies. Some sketches have been made to 'fix the concept' (Fig.70) whereas other sketches are records of finished paintings (Figs.71-72). The idea of keeping a record of finished paintings was one that he shared with his close friend, Anthony Caro.

In his early career some commentators expressed doubts, erroneously, about the value in Hoyland's work because he could finish paintings so quickly, completing a number of paintings on consecutive days. The apparent evidence was in the titling system adopted by Hoyland; that of simply dating work (day, month, year). The assumption was made that Hoyland's approach to his painting was spontaneous.

Hoyland's drawings have never been exhibited and include personal notes,

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<sup>228</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Searle (1978) n.p.

<sup>229</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Robertson (1994), p.32

<sup>230</sup> In conversation with Beverley Heath-Hoyland, Hoyland Studio, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2014

<sup>231</sup> The importance of drawing was iterated by Hoyland in an interview with Jo Crook and Tom Learner: 'He tends to "do masses and masses of drawings of different possibilities and variations"'. Crook and Learner (2000), p.98

explorations, and preparatory studies for his paintings. The drawings provide both an invaluable insight into the genesis for his work and a record of the development of his ideas captured in subsequent paintings.

Before the first mark was made it was, according to Hoyland, important that the 'concept be fixed'. In his words, 'there's nothing spontaneous about [my] paintings except the colours and the way they're resolved'.<sup>232</sup> The ordering of colour and the structure which formed the basis of form was worked out in the sketches. Working in watercolour or marker pens he used drawing to define areas, shapes and to select colour, and to suggest compositional possibilities. According to Hoyland, 'I have a lot of small drawings and sketches which I keep sifting to see which one floats to the surface and seems like the one which would be the best way to carry whatever I want to make that painting at the particular point in time'.<sup>233</sup>

Sketches helped Hoyland to define, describe and position internal shapes into a coherent structured whole. Although in his lifetime Hoyland was dismissive of the value of these sketches, 'I've always made working drawings, which are often only diagrams of great simplicity. They've never been exhibited because they are of no real interest as drawings in their own right',<sup>234</sup> nonetheless, the sketches do provide an invaluable insight into his working practice.

Exploring possibilities through drawing also guarded against repetition. For as Hoyland pointed out:

Whether I would wish to, or not, I find it impossible to paint the same problems over and over again. I find it difficult even to paint another version of the same image. I have to change the image formally with each picture, even though I habitually work in series. I've always thought of my work being dialectical, in the sense of being aware of contemporary art as well as art of the past.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Gooding (2006), p.98

<sup>233</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Painter (1981), n.p.

<sup>234</sup> Robertson (1994), p.34

<sup>235</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Robertson, B. 'The Finally Inexplicable', *The Independent*, 5 April 1990, [Online] [www.johnhoyland.com/press-media/press/1990s/](http://www.johnhoyland.com/press-media/press/1990s/) [18 July 2014]

Selections were made from initial sketches and a chosen sketch was transcribed into a larger scale painting. It would be inaccurate to suggest that a literal translation of the sketch to a specific painting occurred. Instead, possibilities were worked out before the first mark was rendered on the blank canvas. Hoyland's drawings/sketches were not merely illustrative but carefully considered visual responses to the demands of formalist questions, especially structure. Three sketches on one sheet (Fig.64) clearly demonstrate the planning that went into the finished painting *30.1.65.* (Fig.24) But what is particularly interesting is that despite ticking the preferred composition; the finished canvas shows that Hoyland made revisions as he went along. Some sketches remain as sketches and have not been transcribed into any recognisable painting (Figs.68-69).

### Conclusion

Hoyland was one of a number of British painters exploring abstraction in the early 1960s. At each stage of his career Hoyland was praised for his handling of materials and his colour sense. Structure and emotional resonance were key aspects of his work. He worked serially, taking an idea and working it through to semi-completion, not all of his output was fully realised; there were weaker paintings as well as exemplary ones. Constant re-invention and experimentation defined his artistic practice.

His creative journey was the endeavour to find an answer to the question - what is non-figurative painting? However, those visitors who showed an interest in his work recognised the journey he was taking and appreciated the integrity in the work.

It is undeniable that an early major influence was American Abstract Expressionism but eventually, for a number of reasons, he recognised the shortcomings in the work. Despite his admiration for Rothko, Newman, and, most importantly, Hans Hofmann, and some of the work of the Louis, Frankenthaler and Noland, Hoyland also looked to European art for inspiration. He was able to assimilate the best from both traditions

and arrived at his own original style. What made Hoyland's work interesting, but missed generally by American critics, was the particular and productive tensions between the European and American aspects in his painting.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> This was noted by several critics at the time. Annette Dixon wrote, 'Hoyland has been able to absorb influences from across the Atlantic without losing his own identity'. Dixon, A. 'Acquisitions of Modern Art by Museums – John Hoyland', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.115, No.838, January 1973, p.65



### Chapter 3: Public Exposure and Critical Reception in the United Kingdom

#### Early Career: 1959-1967

In 1959 in his final year at the Royal Academy Hoyland started to shape his professional career, when his work was included in an exhibition for the first time – the *Young Contemporaries*.

It is reasonable to claim that Hoyland emerged onto the London art scene at the right time. Hoyland's first patron, Bryan Robertson observed:

Hoyland was aware of most of the changes that I have described; the new public for art; the new awareness of European and American innovations in art; the new professionalism with more concrete standards of support; the increase in the number of galleries and exhibitions; the new standards in catalogues for practising artists; the fresh sources of patronage; and, quite separately, the new polarity in art between an abstract expressionist version of structure and appearance, and another quite different kind of absolute in hard-edged or generic abstraction. He was also quite consciously part of another new phenomenon in England; the cult of youth in general and in particular, opportunities and even a basic status for young artists, half romanticised but also half practical, which did not exist before the fifties.<sup>237</sup>

Hoyland endeavoured to take advantage of these conditions. He understood the importance of networking and was adept and successful at it. As early as 1958 Hoyland, with his friend and mentor William Turnbull, regularly attended events at the ICA. This enabled him to engage with current ideas and critical discourses, which assisted with the reflection on and positioning of his work. Moreover, it provided an ideal opportunity to network. According to Colin Wheeler, fellow student of Hoyland's at the RA, '[John] began to build the circle of friends, among artists, sculptors, and critics, crucial to the survival of his development as a painter'.<sup>238</sup>

During the late 1950's and early 1960's the ICA contested traditional views of fine art and presented alternatives. Its Assistant Director, Lawrence Alloway, established a rolling programme of public lectures and exhibitions and the ICA became the creative and intellectual hub of the emerging new London art scene, attracting artists, writers,

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<sup>237</sup> Robertson, B. *The Transition from the Fifties to the Sixties, 1958-1968*: Unpublished typed manuscript, TGA 9215 Tate Public Records: Bryan Robertson: Additional Records of the Contemporary Art Society 1946-1990 file, n.p.

<sup>238</sup> Wheeler, C. 'Driven to Abstraction', *The Independent*, 10 April 1990, p.30

critics, collectors of art, directors of museums and galleries, musicians, actors, scientists, and anyone interested in ideas. The importance of the ICA's and Alloway's contribution to British art was aptly summed up by John Russell in 1965, 'When the history of post-war Britain art comes to be written, much of the dialectic behind it will be traced to discussions at the ICA'.<sup>239</sup>

Alloway's writings on British art identified the latest trends and endorsed new art practices. He assisted with the positioning and assimilation of the type of non-figurative painting, broadly defined as 'urban abstraction', practised by Hoyland in the early 1960's. Both Alloway and Hoyland understood fully that in order to create the intellectual room for the acceptance of this new style of painting, earlier styles of painting had to be challenged and undermined, their hegemony contested. Since the late 1950s a concerted effort had been mounted among the new generation of artists and some critics, notably Alloway, to distance abstract painting from the English landscape tradition and European art, and to position it more closely with art practice in the United States.<sup>240</sup> Alloway used the 1959 *PLACE* exhibition,<sup>241</sup> (a forerunner to the *Situation* exhibition), as a platform to promote his views. *PLACE* marked an important milestone in British painting, shifting painting away from an aesthetic founded on the English landscape tradition towards one informed by the urban. The *PLACE* and *Situation* exhibitions distanced contemporary painting from historical precedents, in particular, the St Ives School of painters, the 'middle generation' of British painters.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Robertson, B. Russell, J. and Lord Snowdon, *Private View*, London: Nelson, 1965, p.31

<sup>240</sup> According to Alloway, Romanticism and gestural painting had been 'challenged by a more urban-driven, hard-edged abstraction, painting that reflected more accurately the dynamism, the pulse, the scale and impact, change and expendability of the city' See Alloway, L. 'Size Wise', *Art News and Review*, Vol.12, Part 17, 1960, p.2

<sup>241</sup> Thomas Crow has highlighted the importance of Lawrence Alloway, the ICA, the ICA's Independent Group, and the *PLACE* exhibition in bringing about a change in attitudes among young British artists in the late 1950s. According to Crow, 'Lawrence Alloway, the principal promoter of these enthusiasms within the ICA's Independent Group, had a hand in the mounting of "PLACE" and this connection underscores the absence of a partisan divide in Britain between large-scale abstraction and art that manipulated found vernacular images. Abstract painters, at least in from the beginning, were encouraged to think of painting as a way-station for currents from any quarter of the urban environment. Nor did this exclude artists conventionally classified as Pop'. From Crow (1993) p.84. Hoyland concurred with this view, for he, unlike David Hockney, saw no distinction between figurative and non-figurative art. Two of his closest friends, Patrick Caulfield and Allen Jones both worked the non-figurative idiom.

<sup>242</sup> Coleman, R. 'Introduction', *Situation*. Exhibition catalogue by Roger Coleman et al., London: RBA Galleries, 1960, n.p.

Indirectly this combative rejection of Romanticism and the articulation of a new painting aesthetic assisted with the launch of Hoyland's career; providing both the intellectual justification and articulation of his style of painting. Importantly, Alloway differentiated between 'painterly' abstraction and 'geometric' abstraction, with the former defined as 'allusive' and 'non-figurative', and the latter 'rigorous' or 'non-rigorous'. Roger Coleman, a close friend of Alloway's, and the author of the introductory essay for the 1960 *Situation* exhibition used the terms 'hard formal' and 'soft formal'. Hoyland was positioned in the latter categories by Coleman and Alloway.<sup>243</sup>

But Alloway's influence extended beyond the purely aesthetic. He was conscious of the need for artists in Britain to adopt a more professional approach towards their careers and be aware of the challenges facing them, especially the lack of exhibition opportunities, an issue which, according to Hoyland, was debated regularly at the ICA.<sup>244</sup> The majority of commercial galleries were reluctant to show the work of recently graduated artists, their preference being to exhibit only the work of established artists. Alloway was an active advocate and supporter of art students and recent graduates. Also, few commercial galleries were equipped to display large-scale work. Out of these debates emerged *The Young Contemporaries* and *Situation* exhibitions.

The professional side of shaping a career also formed part of the ICA talks. It is not unreasonable to claim that this had a bearing, along with his pragmatism, on the young Hoyland and influenced his future thoughts, attitudes and actions towards the development of his professional career. From early in his career Hoyland strove to be professional. Coming from a working class background, the opportunity for

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<sup>243</sup> See the discussions on this matter in Whitley, N. *Art and Pluralism: Lawrence Alloway's Cultural Criticism*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012, pp.147-150

<sup>244</sup> According to Meaker, 'In early 1960 several artists grouped around Lawrence Alloway started discussing the possibilities of circumventing the commercial gallery system and putting on their own show.' Quoted in Meaker, C., *The Situation exhibitions, 1960-1963*, unpublished Thesis (PhD), London: University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art), 1981, p.36

Hoyland to go to art school was largely due to a state scholarship.<sup>245</sup> Throughout his career Hoyland was prepared to stand up for his beliefs and, as will be revealed later, was a pragmatist when it came to the shaping of his career; he was only too aware of the need to earn a living in order to sustain his career and he had no fall-back position. An early example demonstrates this. In 1963 he was a signatory to a letter sent to *The Sunday Times* rejecting David Sylvester's support of the amateur artist. In his article, Sylvester, whilst promoting Francis Bacon condemned professionalism because in his view, whereas Bacon's painting, for example, 'speaks of the problem and difficulties of its own gestation', the work of the professional artist, 'seeks to make the difficult look easy and covers up the strain...the amateur rejects the ready-made market and the ready-made formula'.<sup>246</sup> It is not entirely clear what point Sylvester was trying to prove but it provoked an angry response from thirteen contemporary artists, including Hoyland. Their letter made their position very clear:

A professional painter is one whose profession is painting not art politics, not market manipulation, not commodity manufacture but painting. The amateur, in art as in other aspects of our society, is characterised by his diminished commitment, and consequently by his diminished responsibility...amateurism has been strangling British art...the very idea of amateurism can so easily become a mask behind which lurks another kind of professional. The amateur painter, the dilettante critic.<sup>247</sup>

The reasons for Sylvester's strident position are unclear but there are two plausible explanations. First, that Sylvester held strong moral and aesthetic positions. His antagonism towards commercialism was not new. He admired Giacometti for redeeming 'art from facility and commercialism'.<sup>248</sup> Throughout the 1950s, until he discovered American Abstract Expressionism in 1957, he was a strident advocate of figurative art. In contrast to abstraction, which was, in his opinion, 'an incomplete kind of art; that at its best did not achieve all that art could do', Sylvester believed

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<sup>245</sup> According to Hoyland's widow Beverley Heath-Hoyland, 'if it hadn't been for a grant from the Yorkshire Education Authority he would never have had the funds to stay on at the Royal Academy Schools and pursue his ambition of becoming an artist.' Quoted in 'Damien Hirst Gives Thumbs Up to New Art Scholarship Honouring John Hoyland', *Artlyst*, 24 July 2014 [Online] <http://www.artlyst.com/articles/damien-hirst-gives-thumbs-up-to-new-art-scholarship-honouring-john-hoyland> [10 January 2015]

<sup>246</sup> Sylvester, D. 'Dark Sunlight', *The Sunday Times*, 2 June 1963, p.8

<sup>247</sup> Ascott, R et al., 'Amateurs in Art', *The Sunday Times*, 9 June 1963 Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

<sup>248</sup> Sylvester, D. 'Curriculum Vitae' in *About Modern Art: Critical Essays 1948-96*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1996, p.15

that figurative art 'could be more complex, more specific, richer in human content'.<sup>249</sup>

Throughout his career, starting in 1945, Sylvester championed figurative painters and sculptors, Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti, Paul Klee, Frank Auerbach, Henry Moore and Lucian Freud, among them.

The second possible explanation reflects the machinations of the London art scene in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the posturing among the small band of key players and the rivalry amongst them. It may be that Sylvester was manoeuvring for position. Whilst Bryan Robertson's position at the Whitechapel was safe, Lawrence Alloway's at the ICA was more vulnerable; there were rumblings at the time of the growing bitter animosity between Alloway and Sir Roland Penrose, the co-founder and President of the ICA, which led to Alloway's resignation as Assistant Director of the ICA in 1963. Sylvester's attitude towards Alloway was ambivalent; he referred to Alloway as my 'friend and enemy'.<sup>250</sup> In 1957 he wrote a scathing review of the survey exhibition of English abstract art, *Dimensions*, arranged and curated by Alloway at the O'Hara Gallery in London. Sylvester claimed in comparison with American Abstract Expressionism, English painters working the abstract idiom were, 'lacking in physical substance, physical presence, in a word, *concreteness*'.<sup>251</sup> Worse was to follow. In 1961 Sylvester again endeavoured to undermine Alloway's aesthetic position:

[Caro's] *The Horse* had been the dominant piece in the second *Situation* group show organised by Lawrence Alloway. I had visited the exhibition on a Saturday morning with my two-year-old daughter, and when I encouraged her, in the presence of other visitors I knew, to climb on the Caro and walk up and down the slope, it had not only been to show the pretty child off and keep her entertained; it had the deliberate act of provocation directed...against Alloway.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Sylvester (1996), pp.15-16

<sup>250</sup> Sylvester, D. 'Bits of the Cat', Introduction, *Anthony Caro: Recent Sculpture*. Exhibition catalogue by David Sylvester, Koedler Gallery and the Waddington Galleries, 1 -25 October 1986, reprinted in Sylvester, (1996), p.288

<sup>251</sup> See Sylvester, D. 'British Abstract Art', *New Statesman*, 21 December 1957, pp.21-2 and Sylvester, D. 'Absence of Presence', *New Statesman*, 28 December 1957, pp.876-7

<sup>252</sup> Sylvester (1996), p.288

### Young Contemporaries 1959 and 1960

The years 1959 to 1963 were pivotal ones in the making of Hoyland's career. The first public showing of his work was through the *Young Contemporaries*<sup>253</sup> exhibitions of 1959 and 1960. No notices for Hoyland exist for the *Young Contemporaries'* exhibition of 1959 but his work in the *Young Contemporaries* exhibition held at the RBA Galleries in March 1960 was commented upon. The art critic of *The Times*, after raising concerns about the derivativeness of some British abstract painting, excluded Hoyland's painting from this judgement:

Art students, on this showing, think big and think abstract, even if they also think derivatively. The fashionable scruffiness of the past two years has disappeared, and with it the apparent conviction that any happy daub would prove a student's mastery of abstraction. A more intelligent understanding is now apparent of what gives American painting or the symbolist ambiguities of Mr Davie their cogency, John Hoyland has grasped the wide stretch and span of the first.<sup>254</sup>

Taking into account that Hoyland had only recently left the Royal Academy Schools and was at best an emerging artist, it is unsurprising that early critical reception for Hoyland's work was brief. Nevertheless, the *Young Contemporaries* exhibition of spring 1960 was important for another reason; it was in this exhibition that Lawrence Alloway first saw Hoyland's work

#### *Situation: an exhibition of British abstract painting - RBA Galleries, 1960*

*Situation: an exhibition of British abstract painting* was held at the RBA Galleries in London in September 1960 and grew out of collaboration between Lawrence Alloway and those artists, including Hoyland, who frequented the ICA. The impetus and need for the exhibition came from the artists themselves, frustrated at the lack of exhibition opportunities in London. Only 50% of the artists included in the *Situation* exhibitions had had previous commercial gallery representation. However, the claim

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<sup>253</sup> According to Anthony Caro the *Young Contemporaries'* exhibitions were sponsored by the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation. See *Kasmin, Caro & Miller recall the Sixties* [Online] <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2013/the-new-situation-13144/the-new-situation-art-in-london-in-the-sixties/2013/07/kasmin-caro-miller-recall-the-sixties-london-art-scene.htm> [12 September 2014]. In 1964 Hoyland was awarded a Peter Stuyvesant Travel Bursary, which enabled him to travel to the United States for the first time, and his work was first acquired for the Peter Stuyvesant collection. It is likely that representatives of the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation first noticed Hoyland's work in *the Young Contemporaries'* exhibitions.

<sup>254</sup> Anon. 'Art Students Think Big', *The Times*, 17 March 1960, p.16

that the show had been arranged by students for students is not entirely accurate; it would appear that Alloway was the driving force behind the whole concept, initiating and stage-managing the event.<sup>255</sup> According to the painter, Malcolm Hughes, Alloway was the 'commanding hand', the one who assembled a stable of favoured artists, 'more or less by invitation', chosen because their work reflected Alloway's aesthetic. In Hughes view, [he] 'was very much like a team manager picking a group of painters...almost hand-picked. He being the most informed, regarding the developments in America, fed them with the ideas [and] they were receptive to them'.<sup>256</sup> The aesthetic under-pinning the exhibition was clear, 'that the works should be abstract and not less than thirty square feet'.<sup>257</sup> Reflecting on the *Situation* exhibition, Hoyland opined:

We were trying to make a new urban, more uncompromisingly abstract, art based on rational thinking and visual perception. Until the end of the 1950s, we had felt starved of an intellectual and perceptual *raison d'être* for our work and were reacting against what we saw as the quasi-romantic English tradition; what we saw as compromise and also the violent excesses of post de Kooning abstraction. I felt, as did many others, that the most uncompromising new art of the time was the work of Rothko, Still, Newman and Motherwell. It was powerful, huge, overwhelming and mysterious, and for those of us who had a passing interest in Zen, Zen calligraphy and the Beat Poets had a spiritual content we had not experienced before. It must be remembered that all but a few in Britain after the war were unfamiliar with what had taken place in Paris and most who knew either hated it or didn't tell.<sup>258</sup>

But there was another important and equally valid objective and subtext to the *Situation* exhibition; to challenge the existing distribution system and to empower artists. Writing at the time, Alloway proclaimed, 'the purpose of '*Situation*' is to make public what the public has not been seeing and public, used in this sense, includes the art critics who only see art as it reaches the galleries, heavily filtered'.<sup>259</sup> To a large extent *Situation* was an attempt to extend the London art market, to create, present, and support a new form of art and new generation of young British artists.

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<sup>255</sup> The invitation to show in *Situation* did not come directly from Alloway. but from fellow artist, Peter Coviello, who was close to Alloway. William Turnbull, another of Alloway's acolytes, recommended Hoyland to Coviello, who after visiting Hoyland in his studio, a small back room in his home, extended the invitation to Hoyland.

<sup>256</sup> Hughes, M. Kidner, M. and Tyzack, M. 'Developments out of Situation', *Isis*, 6 June 1964, p.7

<sup>257</sup> Coleman(1960), n.p.

<sup>258</sup> Hoyland (1988), pp.74-5

<sup>259</sup> Alloway, (1960), p.2

*Situation* addressed the apparent lack of opportunities to exhibit by providing an alternative market to the established art market.

Hoyland concurred with this view: 'I had just left the Royal Academy and had little experience of galleries, but they were certainly not showing the large new works being made at that time' and 'I was just happy to be in a show.' He was, in his own words, 'the last person to be invited into *Situation*, I got in by the skin of my teeth as it were'.<sup>260</sup> To ensure that his work was selected Hoyland compromised on the size of his painting. During his initial meeting with fellow non-figurative painter Peter Coviello it was explained to him that large paintings were required, and according to Hoyland, 'I did a couple of large paintings [*Situation 1* and *Situation 1960*] (Fig.1) and I was in'.<sup>261</sup>

There are no known notices for Hoyland's contribution to *Situation* (1960). This is not unusual because in the early 1960's the importance of exhibitions arranged by young and relatively unknown artists and which included only their work, was not appreciated and reviews for these shows either lacked detail or were not even commented on. But this did not mean that the shows went unnoticed by their peers. The *Situation* (1960) exhibition apparently received unofficial attention from those on the London art scene. Its importance as a defining exhibition has subsequently been recognised. The *Situation* exhibition raised important issues and generated debate, especially about the monetary and aesthetic value of art, and was one of the pressures that led to the modification of the British art market (see chapter 5). For as Turnbull correctly pointed out, '[*Situation*] was an attempt that succeeded for a short time in showing that critics and dealers and museum directors are not the only people who create values in Art...[it] seemed to cause a lot of provocation, and create quite violent responses for London. It was much admired by artists, critics, etc. from abroad; and I think it had an influence in its attitudes against provincialism and

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<sup>260</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.73

<sup>261</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.73

amateurism'.<sup>262</sup> But not everyone was convinced by the show. David Sylvester, unsurprisingly, was highly critical of it, arguing that it was too indebted to the Abstract Expressionists, the result was a:

A new orthodoxy, a new style and nothing could be further removed from the spirit which has informed the New York School, with its repugnance for the idea of style...[which]has produced more artists who have acted upon all the consequences of the fact that art is no longer a profession - that is, for those who want to make art as distinct from those who want to make something out of art. For the New York painters who matter, the practice of painting is a process of self-discovery, not the exercise of an idea. For most of the painters in "Situation", the practice of art is a form of art criticism.<sup>263</sup>

The only painters excluded from Sylvester's criticism were William Turnbull and Harold Cohen. By implication Sylvester argued that Hoyland was making paintings as 'a form of art criticism'. Many of the points raised by Sylvester are contentious. As discussed earlier it was no wonder three years later a group of artists, Hoyland among them, lambasted Sylvester for his belief in the amateur.

Hoyland's inclusion in *Situation* was an important step in the making of his early career because, although no sales were realised, his work was exhibited alongside the work of artists who shared his aesthetic and defined and positioned it as a new direction. His inclusion in the *Situation* exhibition also assisted with the consolidation of his career in another way. Although not recognised at the time as a seminal exhibition, nonetheless, in retrospect, it assisted with the future consolidation of Hoyland's career. With the passage of time the exhibition gained iconic status and this assisted Hoyland's career by ensuring that his work was included in subsequent survey exhibitions of British art of the 1960s.<sup>264</sup>

*New London Situation: an exhibition of British abstract art - Marlborough Fine Art, 1961*

The *New London Situation: an exhibition of British abstract art* exhibition was held at Marlborough Fine Art in the summer of 1961. The publicity noted the attention given

<sup>262</sup> Turnbull, W. Quoted in *A Blast to Pop: Aspects of Modern British Art, 1915-1965* Exhibition catalogue by Richard A. Born et al., The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1997, p.121

<sup>263</sup> Sylvester, D. 'A New Orthodoxy', *New Statesman*, 10 September 1960, p.337

<sup>264</sup> These exhibitions include *Situation and After: British Abstract Art 1960-1975* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1978), *British Abstract Painting*, (Flowers East, London, 2001), and *Formal Situations: Abstraction in Britain 1960-1970* (Tate Liverpool, 2003).

to the *Situation* exhibition, 'due to the great interest which surrounded the exhibition last year, we felt that people in London and visitors from abroad should have a further opportunity to see works painted in the last twelve months'.<sup>265</sup>

Although on a smaller scale and working to a narrower remit, *New London Situation* attracted work from sixteen out of the eighteen artists who had exhibited in the first *Situation* exhibition. Hoyland's work attracted the attention of the art correspondent for *The Times*: 'the multi-coloured lines, horizontally disposed, of Mr Hoyland's two paintings of this year give with magnetic effect the impression of expanding and contracting as one looks'.<sup>266</sup> Writing in *The Listener*, Keith Sutton praised Hoyland's work for employing theoretical ideas without losing [his] personal identity.<sup>267</sup>

*New London Situation* was not only a critical success for Hoyland, it was a commercial one too, with his paintings bought by Ted Power (Fig.2)(see chapter 5), followed by the invitation to show with the Marlborough New London Gallery. The contract with the Marlborough should have led to the development of Hoyland's career but this was not the case. Critical reception is dependent on exhibition opportunities and unfortunately for Hoyland during the four years he was with the Marlborough his work was included in only two exhibitions, one group and one solo exhibition (see below and chapter 5).<sup>268</sup>

It can be argued that the *Situation* exhibitions marked an important shift in both artistic practice and the marketing of a new generation of artists. For Hoyland, his inclusion in the two *Situation* exhibitions heralded the launch of his career. Their importance was acknowledged by Hoyland in 1980. Whilst conceding that many of the paintings in the two shows were 'very conceptual' and displayed a rationalised approach towards painting, especially in the use of colour, nonetheless, Hoyland, despite these minor reservations, believed that the rationale of the two exhibitions

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<sup>265</sup> Photocopy of '*New London Situation: An exhibition of British abstract art*', New London Gallery, 1961, Tate Archive: Colin Booth TGA 200731/2/4/6

<sup>266</sup> Anon. 'Trend in British Abstract Art', *The Times*, 24 August 1961, p.12

<sup>267</sup> Sutton, K. 'Round the London Art Galleries', *The Listener*, 24 August 1961, p.283

<sup>268</sup> The two exhibitions were *Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull* (1962) and *John Hoyland: Exhibition of Paintings* (1964)

was 'very important in that it conferred a more adult serious, professional approach to making art' and 'a coming to terms with modern art'.<sup>269</sup>

The importance of the *Situation* exhibitions was officially endorsed the following year when Hoyland's painting was included in the touring exhibition - *Situation: an Exhibition of Recent British Art* - arranged by the Arts Council and the *British Painting Today* exhibition, organised to present the work of the artists included in the *Situation* exhibitions to American audiences (see chapter 4).<sup>270</sup>

*Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull* - Marlborough Fine Art, 1962

It was important for Hoyland after the critical and commercial success of the two *Situation* exhibitions to maintain momentum and he managed to achieve this when his work was included in two group exhibitions in 1962. In the summer of 1962 five of his paintings<sup>271</sup> were included in a group exhibition, *Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull* held at Marlborough Fine Art. Hoyland's contribution to the exhibition attracted a brief notice from *The Times*: 'Mr Hoyland's large oil paintings contrast sharply cut forms with areas toned by linear pattern in a striking fashion, and *No 2* is especially of note for its elaborated wave movement'.<sup>272</sup> T G Rosenthal in an otherwise sceptical review of the work on display, nevertheless, singled Hoyland out for praise:

The most distinguishing characteristic is the striving for something new. Novelty for novelty's sake, however, has never been a wholly satisfactory doctrine and it is certainly not so here...only John Hoyland with his elegantly coloured and ingeniously worked-out optically illusory canvases, gives one any real pleasure.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in 'John Hoyland and the Hayward Annual - Interviewed by James Faure Walker, *Artscribe*, No. 24, August 1980, p.25

<sup>270</sup> The exhibition toured to six British cities between November 1962 and May 1963.

<sup>271</sup> The paintings were *No 15 19.11.61*; *No 18 12.12.61*; *No 19.26.12.61*; *No 22.20.2.62*; and *No 23.23.2.62*

<sup>272</sup> Anon. 'Four Abstract Artists', *The Times*, 1 September 1962, p.9

<sup>273</sup> Rosenthal, T.G. 'The Painter as Humanist', *The Listener*, 20 September, 1962, p.437 In Rosenthal's view, John Plumb 'has produced some fashionable and slick hard edge works, Peter Stroud's 'constructions are rectangular to the point of dullness', and 'that William Turnbull's powerful sculptures sell is a good thing; that people should buy his canvases, some of which consists of two panels uniformly painted in a single colour for a vertical stripe in a different tone, would be depressing if it were not so funny.'

With this exhibition Hoyland had started to receive greater critical attention, which may be attributable to the fact that his work was exhibited at Marlborough Fine Art, one of London's leading galleries. But, unfortunately for the development of his career a further two years lapsed before his work was shown there again (see chapter 5).

*Six Young Painters : Peter Blake, William Crozier, John Hoyland, Sonia Lawson, Dorothy Mead, Euan Uglow - Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (Cheltenham), 1962*

A month after the closure of *Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull*, paintings by Hoyland were included in the group exhibition, *Six Young Painters: Peter Blake, William Crozier, John Hoyland, Sonia Lawson, Dorothy Mead, Euan Uglow*, in Cheltenham, as part of the city's art week. Although not a major exhibition, nevertheless it was the first time Hoyland's work was seen outside London. Moreover, the pricing of his paintings makes this exhibition interesting; the prices were higher than those of his contemporaries, a measure of his standing at the time.<sup>274</sup> It also provides a clear indication of Hoyland's professionalism. From early on in his career he knew his worth and was astute in setting prices, no work was going to leave his studio discounted. This was to continue throughout his career.

*One Year of British Art – Arthur Tooth & Sons, 1963*

In the spring of 1963 Edward Lucie-Smith selected three Hoyland paintings<sup>275</sup> for *One Year of British Art*, a small survey exhibition of British contemporary art, which was held at the commercial gallery of Arthur Tooth & Sons. Hoyland's paintings were displayed alongside the work of, among others, Frank Auerbach and David Hockney.<sup>276</sup> In the catalogue introduction, Lucie-Smith stated:

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<sup>274</sup> The prices of Hoyland's paintings had shown a threefold increase since the *Situation* exhibition. The prices for Hoyland's paintings were: *No 17.23.10.61* (£140), *No 14. 22.11.61* (£100), *No 18 12.12.61* (£250), *No 13.17.12.61* (£100), *No 23.23.2.62* (£250), and *No 30.25.4.62* (£80). In contrast, Peter Blake's paintings were priced between 120gns and 150 gns, and Euan Uglow's paintings between 50gns and 150gns.

<sup>275</sup> The three paintings were *4.11.62*, *13.7.62*, *2.7.62*

<sup>276</sup> The artists included in the exhibition were Frank Auerbach, Peter Blake, David Hockney, John Hoyland, Patrick Hughes, Gwyther Irvin, John Latham, Bridget Riley, Jack Smith, and Ian Stephenson.

What I have set out to give is a view of what British art looks like now. Not what it used to look like in the recent past... [it is] predicated by youth - the average age of the artists exhibiting here is hopefully low...they have a ruthlessness, a determination in pursuing a given end which seems to me a basic necessity of art, and which has until recently been somewhat lacking in British painting.<sup>277</sup>

This early endorsement of Hoyland by a well-respected critic coming so soon after the *New London Situation* exhibition was significant, building on earlier critical attention. Importantly, being positioned by Lucie-Smith in 'what British art looks like now' clearly identified Hoyland with 'the new'.

*British Painting in the Sixties - the Tate Gallery and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1963*

In 1963, three paintings by Hoyland: *10.12.62*, *16.12.62*, *18.1.63.*,<sup>278</sup> were included in the *British Painting in the Sixties* exhibition arranged by the Contemporary Art Society and held jointly at two venues, Tate Gallery and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, with Hoyland's work on show at the latter. It marked the beginning of the most important relationship of Hoyland's early career, that with the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

The exhibition included works from the Contemporary Art Society's collection, but not exclusively so. Interestingly, the exhibition marked a radical departure for the Tate and announced a changing emphasis in its exhibition policy. The underpinning aim of the exhibition was, 'to give the artists and public alike a greater understanding and appreciation of British painting today. It is a moment that, with the art situation for once in our favour, seems remarkably full of promise and potentiality for British art'.<sup>279</sup> The criterion for the inclusion of work reflected to a large extent the egalitarian spirit of the times and the increasingly perceived empowerment of artists; each invited artist was permitted to submit two or three of their works of their choosing<sup>280</sup> The work of the 'middle generation' artists was displayed at the Tate

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<sup>277</sup> *One Year of British Art*. Exhibition catalogue by Edward Lucie-Smith, London: Arthur Tooth & Son, 1962, n.p.

<sup>278</sup> The three paintings were loaned by Hoyland's dealer, Marlborough Fine Art

<sup>279</sup> Sainsbury, J. 'Introduction', *British Painting in the Sixties*, Exhibition catalogue by Whitney Straight et al., London: The Contemporary Art Society, 1963 n.p

<sup>280</sup> By the time the exhibition opened sixty three artists had submitted 186 works.

Gallery whilst the work of the 'new generation' of artists, Hoyland among them, was shown at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Interestingly, the one work by Hoyland, 22.20.2.62 (Fig. 20), already acquired by the Contemporary Art Society was not included in the exhibition. There are two plausible explanations for this: firstly, that Hoyland wished to announce that his work had moved on from the paintings shown previously. And secondly, by including unsold paintings Hoyland was aiming for sales.

The decision on who to invite was taken by an exhibition sub-committee, made up of John Sainsbury, Bryan Robertson, Alan Bowness, and Lord Croft. They acknowledged the difficulties with the selection, of trying to include more than one work by each artist and to maintain a balance between the different generations of artists but finally decided, 'to put the emphasis upon what is new and most original'.<sup>281</sup> It is clear that Hoyland was perceived as an 'original' artist. The exhibition presented modern and contemporary British art to new markets in the hope of promoting to new members, collectors, and the public the Contemporary Art Society.<sup>282</sup> It offered a riposte to the oft-stated perception that American painting was superior to British art and instead argued that British art was in the ascendancy. This view and the aims of the exhibition were endorsed in press coverage of the exhibition. Pierre Jeannerat wrote, '[the] majority of the exhibits pulsate with the feelings of our times and no other country, not even the US or France, is distinctly ahead in the search for new art dimensions'.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Another critic proudly announced that, 'British art has woken up. It has been a struggle, but now the younger wilder British artists are causing worldwide stirs. There has been a breakthrough'. Mario Amaya proclaimed, 'The exhibition is staggering in its promise...what impresses most is the highly consistent professionalism.' *The East London Advertiser* referred to it, 'As one of the most exciting collections of modern art shown so far at the Whitechapel'. And the *London Evening Standard* wrote that it was a *show* 'not to be missed by those interested in modern British painting'. *The Times* correspondent was equally impressed, referring to it as a 'Noteworthy show... [which] focuses upon...a new coolness. These young painters have a self-possession, a crisp elegance' and commended the exhibition for its 'unity and panache which are by no means common'. Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, *British Painting in the Sixties* (1963): Press Cuttings - WAG/EXH/2/91, n.p.

<sup>282</sup> Since the late 1950s it had become increasingly apparent that to survive the CAS had to attract new members and income streams. In 1960, Raymond Mortimer, the chairman of the Contemporary Art Society, had bemoaned the apparent lack of support and questioned the prevailing attitudes among British art collectors, 'granted that the English are incomparably less rich than the Americans, are we not also incomparably less interested in contemporary art?' The lack of private British collectors had a profound effect on the commercial side of Hoyland's career (see chapter 5).

<sup>283</sup> Jeannerat, P. 'Artists of 1964 Show Their Paces', *The Daily Mail*, 26 March 1964. And, 'this display is far livelier than the Ecole de Paris exhibition at the Tate last year', enthused Edward Mullins, in Mullins, E. 'Eyes of Individuals' *Sunday Telegraph*, 15 March 1964, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, *The New Generation Exhibition* (1964): Press Cuttings - WAG/EXH/2/95, n.p.

But there were dissenting voices. In 1963 David Sylvester dismissed aspects of British art at that time, claiming that, 'British painting always inclines to have a somewhat forced, unnatural air, like ladies' cricket or hip clergymen. It's obviously the product of a nation that prefers dreaming, reflecting, moralising, story-telling to that of looking. It doesn't rejoice in an easy animal spontaneity, and on the other hand doesn't attain a high perfection of style. It can be very elegant, it can be poetic, but there's virtually something incomplete about it, something tentative, something unfilled'.<sup>284</sup>

Hoyland's relationship with the Whitechapel Art Gallery was further strengthened in early 1964 when he was introduced to the Whitechapel Gallery's director, Bryan Robertson by his fellow painter and friend Paul Huxley. Robertson became Hoyland's first supporter and the person who did most to shape Hoyland's career. The support he gave took two forms. First, through Hoyland's work being included in future exhibitions at the Whitechapel (see list on page 118). And, second, through the Whitechapel exhibition catalogue essays he presented Hoyland's work to relatively new audiences.

#### *New Generation – Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1964*

Hoyland was invited to show in the *New Generation* exhibition held at the Whitechapel in the spring of 1964. The cost of mounting the exhibition, £4,500, including travel bursaries totalling £2,300, was met by the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation. Bryan Robertson was given the responsibility by the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation to select four works by twelve artists under the age of thirty,<sup>285</sup> the aim being to provide a, 'reasonably broad cross section of work from our younger artists'.<sup>286</sup> The title of the exhibition was revealing. No reference was made to any new, emerging art movement, instead the title simply referred to the rise of a new

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<sup>284</sup> Sylvester (1963), p.5

<sup>285</sup> The twelve artists were Derek Boshier, Patrick Caulfield, Anthony Donaldson, David Hockney, John Hoyland, Paul Huxley, Allen Jones, Peter Phillips, Patrick Procktor, Bridget Riley, Michael Vaughan, and Brett Whiteley.

<sup>286</sup> Robertson, B. 'Preface', *The New Generation*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1964, p.5

generation of individual artists. The *New Generation* exhibition was an attempt to promote British art and encourage commercial sponsorship of the arts in Britain which was regularly discussed at the time. Robertson complained, 'private patronage for modern art in England is still inadequate, though it is improving', and urged, 'the banks, the insurance companies, the large business corporations of all kinds...[to] face up to the challenge and the great accomplishments of present day culture in England'.<sup>287</sup> This was not entirely accurate. Records show that there were around fifty corporate collections in the United Kingdom at the time. (see appendix 1). It is also inaccurate to claim that these collections only acquired more traditional forms of art.<sup>288</sup> In the early stages of his career, Hoyland benefitted from the increasing corporate patronage of the arts, desired by Robertson. His work was acquired for a number of corporate collections (see chapter 5). Shortly before the opening of the exhibition the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation decided to form a permanent collection and Hoyland's painting *21.8.63* was acquired for its collection (see chapter 5). Equally important was the award of one of the travel bursaries to Hoyland<sup>289</sup> which enabled him to travel to New York later in 1964.

The catalogue for *The New Generation* exhibition of 1964 was an exemplary publication for its time. Prefaced by Robertson, with an introductory essay by David Thompson, and illustrated with iconic photographs by Lord Snowdon, and a detailed entry for each artist was provided. It showcased the fact that the exhibition was predicated on the notion of 'youth' and represented a radical break with the past, reflecting the mood of optimism that prevailed at the time. In his introduction David Thompson wrote of, 'a boom period for modern art. British art in particular has suddenly woken up out of a long provincial doze, is seriously entering the

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<sup>287</sup> Robertson (1964), p.5

<sup>288</sup> See Osbourne, A. (ed) *Patron: Industry Supports the Arts*, London: Connoisseur, 1966 for full extent of corporate patronage.

<sup>289</sup> The Stuyvesant Foundation set aside £2,300 for six travel bursaries, five for travel within Europe and one for travel to America. Hoyland was awarded the American bursary.

international lists and winning prestige for itself'.<sup>290</sup> The catalogue set the standard for the design aesthetic of future exhibition catalogues,<sup>291</sup>

The *New Generation* exhibition deliberately distanced itself from the previous *Situation* exhibitions; as David Thompson explained, 'this exhibition has nothing to do with any artistic grouping, or "movement", or "situation"'.<sup>292</sup> This may have been a ploy by Thompson to court favour with Robertson who had not been enamoured by the *Situation* exhibitions and displayed personal animosity towards the ICA and Lawrence Alloway. For as Hoyland iterated, 'Robertson ....hated all the *Situation* thing, he hated all the people in it and as a consequence nobody from there except me got into that show, that *New Generation* show'.<sup>293</sup> It was a measure of Robertson's admiration for Hoyland's painting that he was the only artist out of the artists who had exhibited in the two *Situation* exhibitions to be included in the *New Generation* exhibition.

Hoyland exhibited four paintings in the exhibition: *7.11.63*, *14.2.64*, *20.11.63* (Fig.13) and *21.8.63*. In his introduction Thompson described the change in the artist's direction. It is apparent that Thompson had spoken with Hoyland prior to writing the essay because it reads like Hoyland's artistic statement rather than an objective interpretation. During the six months leading to *New Generation*, according to Thompson, 'Hoyland found himself in time reacting against the restrictions of "*Situation*" practice... to get away from his taut, compressing use of line, partly because he felt he was not working intuitively enough'.<sup>294</sup> The result was a series of paintings that had moved from a formulaic approach to a freer, more intuitive, picture-making process. Hoyland concurred with this analysis:

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<sup>290</sup> Thompson, D. 'Introduction', *The New Generation: 1964*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1964, p.7

<sup>291</sup> The exhibition catalogue would play a greater role in the marketing of art products: art, artists and art movements. Despite its radical design the catalogue, nonetheless, did not impress all. The critic Guy Brett referred to it as 'a rather grim catalogue half an inch thick'. But Brett, however, was very much a minority voice; most critics recognised its innovation and it did much to present and promote Hoyland's work. From Brett, G. 'The New Generation at the Whitechapel Gallery', *The Guardian*, 28 March 1964, p.6

<sup>292</sup> Thompson (1964), p.7

<sup>293</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.103

<sup>294</sup> Robertson (1964), p.44

The shapes and colours I paint and the significance I attach to them I cannot explain in any coherent way. The exploration of colour, mass, shape is, I believe, a self-exploration constantly varied and changing in nature: a reality made tangible on the painted surface.<sup>295</sup>

Catalogue entries perform a dual function, acting as both promotional and publicity devices. The *New Generation* exhibition catalogue was no exception; the entry by Thompson introduced Hoyland's challenging painting to new audiences as well as providing readymade copy for art journalists and critics to work with (Thompson's ideas, though slightly adapted, appeared in reviews of the exhibition). The publicity produced by the Whitechapel resulted in the exhibition receiving widespread media coverage, with the response being generally favourable.<sup>296</sup> A typical review appeared in the *Observer*. Its reviewer concluded, 'all in all, this is probably as healthy a show as any country in the world could mount today. It has the insouciance of young people who are not so much resentful or rebellious about their elders as uninterested in them. This is because they are passionately absorbed in their own problems. It is a pleasure to watch how they tackle them'.<sup>297</sup>

However, not all critics were so enthusiastic; the painter Robyn Denny complained of a lack of originality and an unwanted return to 'Englishness' in the painting, 'the *New Generation*' is bedevilled by plagiarism, parody, guileful make-believe, and the absence of any kind of risk, and it is a combination of just these things which, handed gift-wrapped from one generation to another, has doomed in English art all attempts, in the past, to come to terms with the future, and which makes the new generation so like the old'.<sup>298</sup> Caution needs to be taken when considering this comment; it may have been resentment on Denny's part because he had not been invited to show in the exhibition; as stated earlier Hoyland was the only artist to be included in the two *Situation* and the *New Generation* exhibitions.

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<sup>295</sup> Hoyland, J. 'Artist statement', *The New Generation: 1964*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson et al., London: Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1964 p.48

<sup>296</sup> At least fifteen notices posted in print media. The *New Generation* exhibition was one of the first exhibitions in Britain to attract television coverage. See Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, *The New Generation Exhibition (1964)*: Press Cuttings - WAG/EXH/2/95

<sup>297</sup> Gosling, N. 'Here are the Young Ones', *Observer*, 29 March 1964, p. A20

<sup>298</sup> Denny, R. 'London Letter', *Art International*, May 1964, p.53

Notwithstanding the few negative notices, for the first time Hoyland's work attracted widespread attention, with critics noting the changes in his practice and the different aspects to his work and personal and creative development. According to Mario Amaya, Hoyland's earlier paintings, predicated on optical illusionism had been replaced by monumental, architectural-size fields of colour, paintings that filled, 'the total field of vision for the spectator' creating 'compelling colour-tensions'.<sup>299</sup> Other critics also noted the evolutionary nature of his practice and the underpinning intellectualism informing it. Guy Brett writing in *The Guardian* alluded to the writings of Merleau-Ponty:

If you feel that there is no spiritual experience, no message to move one, nor any human communication then the point is lost. For there is no attempt at any internal tension between forces opposing each other in the picture, but an external tension, an alchemy between picture and spectator. You move on feeling that you have not been a spectator but a participant.<sup>300</sup>

These notices correctly identified Hoyland's stated intention; that of engaging the viewer and how this was achieved by imbuing his work with emotion (see chapter 2).

Hoyland's use of colour was highlighted by some critics. In his review for the *Sunday Times* John Russell claimed, 'today it [Hoyland's work] has a relaxed, not admonitory largeness: the colour spills all over, slow and easy and sumptuous: the organisation can afford to look lazy (though it isn't) because the picture is no longer operating on a narrow front and has plenty in reserve'.<sup>301</sup> The *Daily Mail*, a newspaper not known for its support of the avant-garde, agreed, 'John Hoyland's sharp colours spread irresistibly'.<sup>302</sup> However, the reviews which focused on Hoyland as a colourist created issues for him because he knew that his work, as discussed earlier, was more than just about colour.

Another important strand of criticism re-positioned Hoyland's work. As early as 1963 attempts were made to distance his work and that of other British painters from that of their American counterparts. An editorial for *The Times* challenged the stereotyped

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<sup>299</sup> Amaya, M. British Mods and Rockers, *Financial Times*, 22 April 1964, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

<sup>300</sup> Brett (1964), p.6

<sup>301</sup> Russell, J. 'The Confirmatory Push', *The Times*, 29 March 1964, p.32

<sup>302</sup> Anon. *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1964, p.16

position adopted by some American critics that British art was provincial and instead made the case that 'there is none of the old talk of British painters being per se, provincial' and 'there is much about a feeling of optimism and assurance in the air'.<sup>303</sup> The extent and degree of the American influence on Hoyland's work divided critical opinion. The review in the *Sunday Telegraph* saw a direct link between his paintings and the hard-edge painting of Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly and concluded, 'John Hoyland, who is less familiar, makes the strongest impact'.<sup>304</sup> The *Evening Standard* enthused, 'one of the revelations of the show is the work of John Hoyland, a relatively ignored Yorkshireman, whose three paintings on the end wall make a tremendous impact, particularly the plum-coloured one with a yellow snake of colour wriggling around seven balls of green, blue, and red. A remarkable painting'.<sup>305</sup>

For the first time, Hoyland's work was, through the detailed catalogue entry, carefully presented to audiences and the outcome was extensive attention in the media. His work began to attract the attention of art historians. Articles appearing in specialist art journals were longer, more erudite, more detailed and were aimed at a specialist rather than general readership. In a detailed essay on the *New Generation* exhibition, the art historian Stephen Bann made an important observation about the intent and outcomes of this new grouping of urban artists, which included Hoyland. He attributed the toughness in their work to the, 'fact that the picture is regarded not as a means of expression – a unique deployment of the personality of the artist - but as a self-sufficient entity'. Bann understood that the subtext for these painters was the desire 'to break down the distance from the spectator which arises from self-sufficiency and to provide an element that is immediately accessible'. The spectator instead of being a passive onlooker became an active participant in the painting,

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<sup>303</sup> Anon. *The Times*, 31 May 1963. The *Daily Mail* concurred with this position: Reviewing the Contemporary Art Society arranged exhibition '*British Painting in the Sixties*' held at two locations, the Tate Gallery and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, in May 1963 its critic noted 'the most ambitious survey of Britain's pictorial position since the war...(the majority of the exhibits pulsate with the feelings of our times and because no other country, not even the United States or France, is distinctly ahead in the search for new art directions' (The *Daily Mail*, 31 May 1963, p.18)

<sup>304</sup> Anon. 'Young Variety', *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 March 1964, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, *The New Generation Exhibition* (1964): Press Cuttings - WAG/EXH/2/95,n.p.

<sup>305</sup> Anon. *Evening Standard*, 28 March 1964, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, (1964), n.p.

often uncertain as to the meaning of the work but nevertheless unable to avoid the work; the size of the painting drew one in. He singled Hoyland out for note, being particularly impressed with the duality in Hoyland's paintings. On one level the paintings seem impregnable and present a serious aesthetic challenge to the viewer: 'with Hoyland the spectator is at first entranced by the sheer clarity and vibrancy of the painted surface, but presently encounters the impregnability of the work itself'.<sup>306</sup> In this review, Bann, alluding to the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, was one of the first critics to correctly identify a major aspect of Hoyland's aesthetic, that of engaging the viewer, which became a recurring consideration in Hoyland's future work (see chapter 2). According to Bann there is a degree of uncertainty in Hoyland's work. In Hoyland's view there are no absolutes, only relative positions. The discourses between the artist, the object and the spectator remain somewhat mysterious; paintings cannot be explained, only experienced. This expansive analysis, the first of many, would have pleased Hoyland. It indicated that he was a serious artist whose work was being noticed other than by art journalists and commented on in a serious academic art journal.

Hoyland's career benefitted from his inclusion in the exhibition for a number of reasons. *New Generation* was the kind of high profile, heavily publicised exhibition, crucial to the development of his career. Moreover, it engendered detailed critical examination of his work. The award of the travel bursary proved to be most significant benefit and provided Hoyland with the financial means to travel to the United States for the first time. Initially the bursary had been offered to Paul Huxley, but unable to take advantage of it Huxley recommended that Hoyland receive it instead. Another bonus was the fact that his paintings sold (see chapter 5).

Not only was Hoyland's work attracting critical acclaim but importantly the interrogation of the painting was more detailed and was validated by key persons on the London art scene. In the space of four years Hoyland's painting was endorsed by,

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<sup>306</sup> Bann, S. 'Review of New Generation exhibition', *The Cambridge Review*, 9 May 1964, n.p.

among others, Lawrence Alloway, Stephen Bann, Alan Bowness, David Thompson, and the influential collector, Ted Power. But arguably the most long-lasting outcome was the commencement of Robertson's patronage, which continued unabated until Robertson's death in 2002.

*John Hoyland: Exhibition of Paintings – Marlborough Fine Art, 1964*

In December 1964, with critical attention for his work increasing and after being taken up by the Marlborough, Hoyland was included in his one and only solo exhibition there, *John Hoyland: Exhibition of Paintings*. Generally the critical reception was positive. *The Times* believed '[his] paintings are good and well worth seeing' and noted the change of direction in his work, 'over the past few years Mr. Hoyland's subject matter and stylistic approach have changed radically, and the content of his pictures has grown progressively more absorbing... [and] is painting which would have pleased Matisse'. The review quoted Matisse to support its position: 'I want people who feel worried, exhausted, overworked to get a feeling of repose when they look at my paintings' and concluded, 'that is no mean function for pictures'.<sup>307</sup> Two paintings were sold (see chapter 5).

The solo exhibition proved to be the only one at the Marlborough. However, the lack of support from the Marlborough was compensated by the continuing support Hoyland received from Bryan Robertson. Consequently, during the following four years Hoyland's painting was included in five exhibitions at the Whitechapel Art Gallery: *Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, a collection in the making: 1965 purchases* (1965); *The New Generation* (1966); *John Hoyland: Paintings 1960-67* (1967); *Leicestershire Collection: Part II* (1968) and *The New Generation: Interim* (1968). Without question the most significant exhibition was Hoyland's first major retrospective in 1967.

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<sup>307</sup>Anon. 'John Hoyland's New Paintings at the Marlborough New London Gallery', *The Times*, 17 December 1964, p.14

*John Hoyland: Paintings 1960-67 – Whitechapel Art Gallery 1967*

Retrospectives are ideal for a linear description and assessment of an artist's career. In 1967 Robertson granted Hoyland his first retrospective, and only Hoyland's second solo exhibition.<sup>308</sup> The exhibition *John Hoyland: Paintings 1960-1967* was held at the Whitechapel Gallery in the early summer of 1967. It came relatively early in his career as was noted by Norbert Lynton (see below); few British artists of his generation had enjoyed a retrospective at such an early age. Importantly, Hoyland was granted full curatorial responsibility, with the freedom to select and display the paintings as he saw fit. The arrangements for the exhibition highlighted Hoyland's professionalism. Although the previous years had been difficult ones this did not deter Hoyland from being assured when it came to curatorial and financial considerations. He made a careful selection of work, focusing on paintings from two periods - 1960-1962 and 1964-1967 (Figs.75-76) (see chapter 2). Although Hoyland was an experimental artist, one interested in the process of painting as much as the finished object, nevertheless, for this major survey exhibition Hoyland decided not to include any paintings from what he deemed to have been an unsuccessful period, between February 1962 and May 1963, fearing their inclusion might damage his reputation. At various times throughout his career Hoyland was criticised for his apparent poor judgement when it came to the selection of his own work for exhibitions but on this occasion he was right. The paintings from 1962 and 1963 were of their time but viewed retrospectively they can be considered not wholly successful ones (see chapter 2). However, the final selection and the way the paintings were displayed were both ambitious and innovative. Hoyland was undeterred by the challenge of hanging large work. With nearly 40 out of the 63 paintings measuring over 10 feet in breadth, and most measuring 12 feet or more he took care with the hang. At the exhibition's mid-point Hoyland replaced some displayed paintings with others, claiming that there was insufficient space to hang

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<sup>308</sup> As stated earlier, Hoyland's first solo exhibition, *John Hoyland: Exhibition of Paintings* was held at the Marlborough Gallery in December 1964

simultaneously all the paintings he wanted to exhibit. There were two advantages with this approach. Firstly, it provided audiences with the opportunity to see an extensive body of work and, secondly, and importantly, to follow the development in his work. Moreover, by adopting this approach he pronounced publicly on the experimental and organic nature of his practice and emphasised the process of production; that paintings, although created in the studio, remain living objects and their meaning and impact changes when hung and re-hung in different spaces. The venue was ideal, spacious and well lit.

All 63 paintings were for sale. Once more Hoyland was assertive over the conditions of sale. He successfully contested the Whitechapel's commission rates on sales. After protracted negotiations the commission was reduced from 33% to 20%. This was confirmed in a letter to the artist, 'it has always been our custom for us to receive a donation from the artist of one-third of the sale price. However, as you did not seem to be agreeable to these figures I would like to suggest a figure of 20% of the sale price to be donated to the gallery'.<sup>309</sup> Hoyland's stance was adopted despite the fact that he was aware of the precarious financial position of the Whitechapel and appreciated the support he was receiving from Robertson. In the previous year Robertson in a personal letter to Hoyland, explained that because of the Whitechapel's' dire financial position the planned retrospective had to be postponed until the next financial year at the earliest: 'for long years the Gallery's income has been so small that after paying modest wages and salaries and meeting essential recurring overhead expenditure, we have had less than £1,000 per annum with which to support our exhibition policy – each of which could cost from £2,000 - £3,500 to present...we have spent all the money available, under the old system of grants, for this year's exhibitions, and have to clear our overdraft and settle outstanding bills'.<sup>310</sup> Although still relatively young, nevertheless, it demonstrated that Hoyland was prepared to strike a hard bargain, and knew the monetary value of his efforts; at no

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<sup>309</sup> Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive (1964), n.p.

<sup>310</sup> Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive (1964), n.p.

time in his career was he prepared to sell his output cheaply, and he remained a consummate professional artist, a trait which contributed to the sustenance, in good and bad times, of his career.

Although the exhibition was delayed, when it finally opened the Whitechapel produced an illustrated catalogue to accompany it. The catalogue proved an ideal vehicle to both present and promote Hoyland's work. In the introductory essay Bryan Robertson focused on key expositive points and carefully set out the case for Hoyland's originality. Robertson argued Hoyland was as much a cerebral painter as he was a visceral one, a painter who reflected on and worked through complex issues concerning painting, rather than concentrating solely on the 'arbitrariness of perception' or 'atmosphere'. Hoyland was positioned and distanced away from both English Romanticism and the American gestural Abstract Expressionist painters, with Robertson alluding to Hoyland's urban abstraction: 'His paintings are 'structural declarations' rather than romantic declamations because rhetoric is avoided together with the possible vagaries of perception or any suggestion of equivocal atmospheres'. Whilst acknowledging Hoyland was an expressive painter, his work differed greatly from the New York gestural painters because Hoyland was not interested in 'self-scrutiny'. Moreover, Robertson provided a corrective to the view that the best painting was only coming from the other side of the Atlantic. Anticipating negative comparisons with American abstract painters, whilst acknowledging their influence, he nevertheless claimed that Hoyland was an original artist: '[The] derivations seem often to be obvious: Rothko, Hofmann and Louis come easily to mind: but these references, in turn, shift from their proper focus and Hoyland's painting assumes its own individual authority'. This would prove to be an important intervention and provided an invaluable counterpoint to the views of several American critics who during the 1960s disparaged Hoyland's work for its apparent derivativeness. This has already been briefly discussed and will be discussed further later in the thesis (see chapter 4).

Robertson presented a strong case for the artist. According to Robertson, Hoyland's work was intellectual, interrogatory, and polemical. It was challenging to both the artist and the viewer, 'a Hoyland painting opens up possibilities and does not close them down: departure is the objective rather than arrival'. Equally important was the method of reading Hoyland's paintings. Hoyland's work should, in the opinion of Robertson, be read as a series of paintings, representing part-pictorial solutions, rather than fully resolved canvases, and not be seen as individual paintings, which have been brought to some kind of closure. The viewer finds a part-solution in one canvas, moves on to the next painting where he or she is confronted by a new set of aesthetic challenges and, hopefully, continues to find part-answers to the questions – what is painting about? And, more specifically, what is non-figurative painting trying to achieve? Robertson detailed Hoyland's working methods. Two quotations illustrate this point: 'Colour here is the only animation. Elsewhere, it is broken by uneven handling in which the solid area is lightened or deepened in places, irregularly, and so implies a more traditional "colour space" rendered tonally by a form of chiaroscuro'. And 'these small rectangles are greatly enlarged and change into big squares or rectangles of colour, sometimes with rounded corners, set against a contrasting ground, either isolated or in close juxtaposition'.<sup>311</sup>

In Robertson's view, Hoyland's painting was about process: 'a process of meditation about the nature of painting itself', Robertson, in detail, explained Hoyland's practice and its underpinning aesthetic. He described Hoyland's manner of working, as 'intuitive and impetuous at the outset (though far from mindless) rather than calculatedly programmatic' and his aesthetic, as pure, where the paintings in no way reference nature, but acted as 'equivalences' for nature.<sup>312</sup> A number of specific qualities impressed Robertson about Hoyland's work. He admired the artist's expressive use of paint, his intuitive feel for colour, and Hoyland's energetic painting technique. This practice aligned with a sound grasp of art history and underpinned by

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<sup>311</sup> Robertson, R. 'Introduction', *John Hoyland: Paintings*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson, London: Waddington Galleries, 1967

<sup>312</sup> Robertson (1967), p.3

an understanding of the intellectual challenges facing abstraction at the time, resulted in Hoyland being an interesting and thoughtful non-figurative painter.

Finally, Robertson distinguished and distanced Hoyland from other contemporary non-figurative British artists; in, particular from the work of Bridget Riley, with whom Hoyland had frequently been compared earlier in the decade; a comparison that Hoyland vociferously disagreed with and contested. In one interview Hoyland made his feelings known: 'Bridget Riley had only discovered the eye'. He later backtracked slightly and commented, '...No we'll leave that'.<sup>313</sup> This observation by Hoyland is somewhat disingenuous and ignores the fact that his earlier works undoubtedly addressed concerns about optical illusionism, though soon he moved on.

In many ways, Robertson's catalogue entry, with its esoteric language, was not aimed at the lay reader but at art professionals: fellow artists, critics and curators, and gallery and museum directors. The importance of Robertson's entry cannot be over-stated. It provided an erudite and persuasive argument for Hoyland's creativity and offered the most comprehensive explication of his painting to date. Moreover, it acted as invaluable publicity for Hoyland's cause; the entry provided clear pointers and aesthetic prompts on Hoyland's behalf. The retrospective, because of the way that the work was presented (the display changed half way through), and the timeline (eight years), enabled detailed evaluation of Hoyland's work to be made.

Importantly, for the development of Hoyland's career the retrospective generated much interest in Hoyland's work and received critical attention from two leading British art journals: *Studio International* and *Art International*. In his review for *Studio International*, Edward Lucie-Smith asserted that it, 'must be one of the most spectacular exhibitions to hit London for a long time...the show looks superb when one first walks into the gallery; it looks even better after one has stayed there for half an hour'.<sup>314</sup> He praised Hoyland for his grittiness and his ability to create drama

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<sup>313</sup> Fishpool (2008), p.6

<sup>314</sup> Lucie-Smith, E. 'London', *Studio International*, April 1967, Vol.173, No.88, p.309

through the tension created between the formalism of the compositions and their sensual painterliness. Furthermore, he believed that the drips of paint, the uneven edges to the forms on the canvas, and the aggressiveness of the combination of red and green, were deliberate ploys by the artist to offset the charge of exquisiteness and decoration. In this series of paintings, Lucie-Smith recognised that the viewer was being invited to immerse him or herself in the paintings, to become part of the theatrical event taking place in the gallery space. Finally, Lucie-Smith believed that it was not the intention of the artist to arrive at resolution, but instead each painting was simply another stopping point on the journey to artistic self-discovery.<sup>315</sup>

The art historian Norbert Lynton was initially surprised that a retrospective exhibition was granted to such a relatively young artist and at an early stage in his professional career, but concluded it was 'abundantly justified on several grounds', the principal one being 'the altogether exceptional quality of his work'. Lynton was aware of the limitations of Hoyland's earlier painting but recognised that the early work was significant because it announced the artist's arrival on the contemporary London art scene. However, as paintings they were not fully resolved, being in Lynton's opinion, too formulaic; 'there was something slightly fidgety about these, even though the colour is good'. 1964 was, according to Lynton, a defining year for Hoyland. It was the year when Hoyland's artistic practice moved in new directions and when his work was being increasingly critically received, with notices more nuanced; Lynton argued that Robertson was instrumental in this development. In the spring of 1964, according to Lynton, Hoyland's use of pigment became softer: 'the forms have softer edges and thus become less emphatically separate from each other or from the ground, and the ground becomes more atmospheric ...these grounds having become more spatial (and also more luminous, on the whole) the forms now begin to act more directly visually...their contribution as events is more narrative than sheerly

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<sup>315</sup> Lucie-Smith (1967), p.309

visual: one is looking at a still from an action'. Concluding, Lynton reflected on Hoyland's career to date and singled out the artist's use of colour for especial praise:

Hoyland is an outstanding colourist...his colours have a commanding presence such as I have rarely seen before. This comes from the extraordinary range of hues and tones he uses, especially his red and green ranges, partly also of course from his sense of the just scale for each unit of colour, and most of all from his ability to set contrasting colours into situations of maximum sonority without producing that optical dazzle that tends ultimately to impoverish colour experience by making headlong involvement with it too painful.<sup>316</sup>

Once again references to Hoyland's use of colour were featured in several reviews.

In his review, the art historian Robert Hughes recognised the radicalism in Hoyland's painting and positioned him, because of his innovative use of colour, at the forefront of British abstract painting:

In most English painting since the war, colour has seldom been an issue. It was localised into blandness. It sat on the surface of the picture and it worked as icing on the cake of form: 'Look what a pretty patch I am'...the development of colour as a consistent structural principle, and even as the subject-matter of a painting, has to a great extent been concentrated into the last 10 years. And in such a context, it is a radical development. John Hoyland's exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery shows how radical it is. Hoyland's work is not in the nuance: it is in the explicit statement of a visual event. The paintings are beyond interpretation, just as Bridget Riley's or Newman's are. You cannot describe them in terms of something else, since they do not allude to nature, or even to the constants of pure geometric form. But as investigations of the way colour works, loaded with intense feeling (but never bothered with self-disclosure), they are an unforgettable experience.<sup>317</sup>

And Hughes concluded, 'this is an immensely enjoyable exhibition...(one's) eye basks in front of colour...only two or three times before has the Whitechapel been more sumptuously filled'.<sup>318</sup> Colour, according to Hughes, was the defining quality of Hoyland's painting, the aspect that distinguished Hoyland from many of his peers working in the same non-figurative idiom.

In his article for the *Sunday Telegraph*, Edwin Mullins expressed a similar sentiment to Hughes and wrote of the radicalism of Hoyland's use of colour. The highest possible commendation Mullins made was drawing comparisons with Matisse's use of pure colour: 'Matisse had the nerve to place violent red against violent orange and

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<sup>316</sup> Lynton, N. 'London: John Hoyland', *Art International*, Summer 1967, p.54

<sup>317</sup> Lynton (1967), p.54

<sup>318</sup> Hughes, H. 'How Colour Really Works', *Observer*, 30 April 1967, p.25

show how they burn against one another, and these are two colours which Hoyland employs with a confidence one would not have believed possible of an English artist even 10 years ago'.<sup>319</sup>

But colour was not the only element noted in criticism; Hoyland's method of working was commented upon by some critics, acknowledging that Hoyland was experimental in his approach. He was seen as an artist who strove at each juncture to avoid mannerism and predictability, an artist who endeavoured to find original part-solutions to the fundamental aesthetic challenges facing non-figurative painting. There was a consensus among critics that Hoyland's painting displayed qualities that would ensure that it would continuously progress and evolve. This can be attributed to Hoyland's experimental approach and unwillingness to be complacent about his artistic practice. John Russell writing in *The Sunday Times* observed: 'Hoyland has over and over again been within reach of an established, accepted kind of painting, only to break away from it and start over again...the idea of progression has remained one of Hoyland's main preoccupations'.<sup>320</sup>

The continuous quest by Hoyland to find answers to the questions of what painting and the process of painting is and what is painting's continuing relevance was noted by a number of critics. David Thompson, an early advocate of Hoyland, writing for *Queen* claimed that whilst Hoyland had attracted much attention and interest he had not 'really hit the headlines' but that his most recent work had arrived 'at a particularly grand and imposing solution'. These paintings were 'cunning' and 'strong', creating 'that feeling of transparent simplicity of means mysteriously charged with emotion which refutes every argument that this kind of painting somehow doesn't say enough'.<sup>321</sup>

But not all reviews were so fulsome in their praise; some critics expressed reservations. Writing for the *Spectator* Paul Grinke believed that 'a lot of pruning

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<sup>319</sup> Mullins, E. 'John Hoyland', *Sunday Telegraph*, 23 April 1967, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, John Hoyland Exhibition (1967): Press Cuttings – WAG/EXH/2/11

<sup>320</sup> Russell, J. 'A challenge won', *The Sunday Times*, 27 August, 1967, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archive, (1967), n.p.

<sup>321</sup> Thompson, D. 'Art: John Hoyland', *Queen*, 10 May 1967, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

should have been done to present Hoyland to best advantage'. Nevertheless, he conceded, 'this kind of show which reveals the falterings, set-backs and hesitations is more valuable and certainly more honest'. Continuing, Grinke posited that 'Hoyland's prime concern is with colour, to which everything else is subordinate. The forms he employs are of extreme simplicity, starting with meandering oval shapes and becoming increasingly bolder and less obtrusive as geometry...the two colours he favours are red and green in varying strengths, and the whole sequence of his work can be seen as a dialogue between these two, with the occasional intervention of a third party as prompter or silent witness. Recent paintings have a strong vertical emphasis in bands of colour which dissect the canvas, an American device Hoyland uses in a highly personal way'.<sup>322</sup>

The 1967 retrospective provided support at the right moment in Hoyland's career. After a positive start to his career, demonstrated by his inclusion in a number of key public exhibitions, followed by a lack of commercial gallery representation, the Whitechapel show defined and described his artistic practice, firmly re-positioned his work in the market place, and consolidated his career. The retrospective helped to sustain Hoyland's career and provided a platform for it and his practice to develop. The positive reception of his work ensured that future exhibitions of his work would be reviewed. The retrospective rounded off what had been a successful four year period of public exhibitions for Hoyland. More generally, the exhibition came at an apposite moment, for as Sarah Kent recalled, '1967...was an exciting time to be an artist. The media and the public were expressing an unprecedented interest in painting and sculpture, critics were enthusiastic, and the market was buoyant. Hoyland seemed set for a spectacular career as a professional painter'.<sup>323</sup>

After the critical success of the retrospective, and shortly after it closed Hoyland was invited by Leslie Waddington to show with his gallery. He was also invited to show

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<sup>322</sup> Grinke P. 'Scarlet and Green', *Spectator*, 5 May 1967, p.532

<sup>323</sup> Kent, S. 'The Modernist Despot Refuses to Die', *Time Out*, October 1979, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

with two prestigious American dealers, the Robert Elkon Gallery in New York and the Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles (see chapter 4).

These interventions would prove invaluable because, with the resignation of Bryan Robertson as Director of the Whitechapel, Hoyland's special relationship with that public gallery came to an end. At this juncture, despite the fact that Robertson would continue to support Hoyland, his career could have faltered with the loss of this institutional patronage. The *New Generation Interim* in 1968 was the last time Hoyland showed there. Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that the relationship with the Waddington Galleries did much to bolster Hoyland's career during the difficult times ahead, helping to fill the void left by Robertson's resignation.

#### *New Generation Interim – Whitechapel Art Gallery 1968*

*New Generation Interim* was held in the spring of 1968 and was one of the last Whitechapel exhibitions to be curated by Bryan Robertson before his departure. *Interim* was a continuation of earlier *New Generation* exhibitions, with each artist from the three previous *New Generation* shows invited to submit one work; John Hoyland submitted *15.10.67*. The exhibition received widespread coverage, in art journals, both broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, and was featured on Radio 4's *The Critics* programme.

Norbert Lynton, whilst praising the financial support the exhibition received from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, nonetheless, thought the show was not a success:

There is a fundamental and fatal difference between this show and its predecessors: the exhibitors in those were selected for the quality and character of their work, the exhibitors in this one are there as of right, with the result being like one of those school reunions: some people have hardly changed at all, for better or for worse, others are just as tiresome as one knew they would be, and a few have actually grown and prospered.<sup>324</sup>

However, and fortunately for Hoyland, Lynton placed his new work in the last category, that there had been a distinct development in his painting since the start of his career.

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<sup>324</sup> Lynton, N. 'Interim Report', *The Guardian*, 8 May 1968, p.6

John Hoyland: Paintings Waddington Galleries 1969

Although interest in painting declined and its hegemony was being challenged by the end of the 1960s, nonetheless, Hoyland's solo exhibitions at the Waddington Galleries continued to garner interest. The exhibition of large-scale new paintings held at Waddington Galleries in the summer of 1969 was well-received and, importantly, was commented on in detail by influential critics. It was chosen by Edward Lucie-Smith and Patricia White as one of the most important exhibitions of the year, an exhibition that 'had a very considerable impact on British critics, and few one one-man shows during the year under review were greeted with such praise, or indeed with such apparently genuine and generous enthusiasm'.<sup>325</sup> They highlighted the importance of Matthew Smith and Nicholas de Staël on Hoyland's artistic practice. 'The richness of the palette', in the view of Lucie-Smith and White, 'harks back to the late figurative-painter Matthew Smith, and is quite outside the accepted tradition of British art'. This clearly positions Hoyland in the European tradition, for Smith viewed himself first and foremost a European painter, one following in the footsteps of Cézanne and the Fauvists. But a more telling observation highlighted the reasons for Hoyland's poor reception on the other side of the Atlantic, which is discussed elsewhere in the thesis, and it is worth quoting the relevant passage in full:

In Hoyland's work a comparison with American colour-field painters of the Noland-Olitski group seems inevitable, and it is interesting to note that there are marked differences as well as similarities. Hoyland, for example, retains a lingering allegiance to the ideas and the technical practices of Abstract Expressionism, which makes him seem less 'pure' than his American colleagues. The principles of pictorial organisation which he employs have a traditionally architectural side, they are not merely a means of activating the colour, and it is possible to see traces of Hoyland's early infatuation with Nicolas de Staël's late landscapes. Perhaps for these reasons Hoyland's work has always been much less well received in America than it is in Britain. His tendency to try to achieve a working compromise between the Continental and the trans-Atlantic tradition makes him an especially typical figure among British artists.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Lucie-Smith, E. and White, P. *Art in Britain 1969/70*, London: J M Dent & Sons, 1970 p.119

<sup>326</sup> Lucie-Smith and White (1970), p.119

This observation is accurate because the paintings of de Staël were never that well received in the United States. The authors are also correct in identifying the architectural structuring of Hoyland's painting (see chapter 2).

The exhibition provided Bryan Robertson, before his imminent departure to the United States, with the opportunity once more to promote Hoyland. In his detailed review for the *Observer*, Robertson explained and endorsed Hoyland's painting and in the process subtly mentioned the key aspects to his painting. According to

Robertson, Hoyland's paintings:

All severely rectangular or narrowly vertical...resolve abstract 'situations' in which elisions or collisions and confrontations between square or rectangular shapes and enjoining or bordering bands of contrasted colour are deployed inside a neo- atmospheric space in various ways. These range from silkily calm and balanced resolutions of quasi-geometric themes to implosive projections of a similar set-piece which then, in handling, bursts out at us from the canvas in the roughest and most bristling manner.<sup>327</sup>

Interestingly, Robertson drew comparison with Hoyland's early landscape paintings (Figs.59-60) and argued that this interest has not left him:

[It] has fed its way into a series of rectangular tableaux containing edgy placements of simple elements like squares or bands of colour, invariably recessed (as in landscape) and does not refer to any sort of physical space: it is simply a contrasted viscosity of paint, lighter or darker than the square or rectangular protagonists storming the boards out in front and usually broken up, texturally, with modulations of light and inflexions of climax, of direction, in the brushstrokes.<sup>328</sup>

Writing in the *New Statesman* Robert Melville was equally complimentary:

John Hoyland took to the 'soak-stain' method several years ago, and the technique has yielded him some large and handsome paintings, usually in red or green, which look like semi-transparent curtains trembling in a slight breeze. The curtain of thin colour remains as a background, but it only emerges as narrow margins above and below large rectangular slabs of rich, groovy paint. Random flecks of thick pigment cling like blowflies to the vestiges of staining. There is so much paint about, looking strong and active, that it seems like a new way of doing physical exercises.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Robertson, B. 'Repose, rasp and vitality', *Observer*, 18 May 1969, p.27

<sup>328</sup> Robertson (1969), p.27

<sup>329</sup> Melville, R. 'Splash Down', *New Statesman*, 6 June 1969, p.813

Summarising Hoyland's career to this point it is clear that after a promising start to his career, in 1960 and 1961, albeit with limited commercial success, the next seven years proved to be problematic for the development of his career. Between 1964 and 1967 Hoyland was without a dealer and depended on non-dealer exhibitions to present his work to audiences. Despite this, his work continued to attract growing critical attention and on the whole this criticism was positive. These reviews reveal the fact that despite his style changing over the years he took important critics with him. Crucially, Hoyland enjoyed support from a number of influential people on the London art scene, notably Bryan Robertson. The zenith of Hoyland's career, undoubtedly, was the 1967 Whitechapel retrospective.

#### 1969-1974

The years between 1969 and 1974 were challenging ones for the sustainment of Hoyland's career. The reasons are far from straightforward; some were of his making whilst others were beyond his control. For a while Hoyland lived a vagabond, rather unsettled existence, cutting across the United States with his then girlfriend, the jazz singer Eloise Laws, or travelling to the Caribbean, and when he was back in England spending time at his studio in his rural retreat at Market Lavington in Wiltshire. But changes in fashion and taste for art, coincident with changes to the art infrastructure and in particular to the art markets made it more difficult for Hoyland to sustain, let alone develop his career. The circumstances and conditions in the first half of the 1960s had been conducive to support its development, but towards the end of the 1960s this was no longer so.

At the time of Hoyland's retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1967 the optimism of the first half of the decade had faded, to be replaced by the stark social and economic realities of the times. In 1967 the Labour Government attempted to redress a growing trade deficit and rising National Debt, which stood at £1.5 billion, and increased the Bank Base Rate by 0.5%. Public spending was reduced and taxation on

business rose. The situation was exacerbated by rising unemployment, which doubled between 1967 and 1968. Worse was to follow. In 1968 the pound was devalued by 14% and in the following year the world economy slipped into recession. Inflation reached a peak of 24% under Harold Wilson's administration. Beyond British shores the oil crisis of the early 1970s created turmoil and uncertainty throughout Western economies. In Britain the public art infrastructure found itself under threat and had its funding reduced. The Arts Council, under pressure from the avant-garde and the left, acknowledged that alternative art forms, often with a political message, should be given more recognition. With reduced funding, support for the traditional art forms of painting and sculpture by the public institutions dropped.<sup>330</sup> This coincided with the hegemony of painting being challenged from within.

The commercial art market was not immune to these conditions and many of the gains made in the previous decade were lost in the 1970s as the art market made the necessary adjustments. As Margaret Garlake has pointed out, 'by the early 1970s Swinging London was dead, along with many of the new galleries'.<sup>331</sup> At the time Judy Marle noted, 'the commercial gallery situation in London at present is bad. Pitifully few galleries are in the market for serious contemporary non-representational painting'.<sup>332</sup> In one instance Hoyland benefitted from the downturn. With galleries looking for new markets, one of Hoyland's paintings was acquired for the new museum in Tehran (see chapter 5).

The contestations that had taken place within the Fine Art discipline during the late 1960's and throughout most of the 1970's was probably the greatest challenge. In 1980 Hoyland recalled:

Painting and sculpture have been under the hammer so continuously over the last ten years, from various critics... And if their work is not fashionable, and is

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<sup>330</sup> For example, in 1962 Alan Bowness and Lord Croft purchased Hoyland's *Number 22* for the Contemporary Art Society. In contrast, in 1969 David Sylvester bought performance-based art of concrete poetry. Barry Flanagan's *Sand Muslin* (1966) and Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Drift* (1968) were just two examples.

<sup>331</sup> Garlake, M. 'The Contemporary Art Society in the Sixties and Seventies', in Bowness, A. et al., *British Contemporary Art: Eighty Years of Collecting by The Contemporary Art Society*, London: The Herbert Press, 1991, p.100

<sup>332</sup> Marle, J. 'John Hoyland at the Waddington Gallery', *Studio International*, Vol.186, No.961, December 1973, p.249

not *seen*, all they've got to cling to are their own values, and just a few painting chums.<sup>333</sup>

One consequence was that painting and in particular abstraction slipped from view and for nearly ten years Hoyland's body of work received limited critical attention. For Hoyland, aside from his regular showing with the Waddington Gallery, the number of opportunities to exhibit in major public exhibitions declined and, understandably, this had a direct bearing on the degree and extent of attention paid to his work by critics.

Any attention that Hoyland's work did receive, nonetheless, seemed to be more comprehensive and extensive. An example of such criticism was the essay published in 1971 by the art historian Charles Harrison, who had already written the catalogue entry for Hoyland's contribution to the 1969 *São Paulo Bienal* (see chapter 4). In spite of his involvement with the *Art and Language* movement, Harrison remained an acute, incisive and erudite observer of, and writer on abstraction. His 1971 essay on abstraction focused on the exhibition - *John Hoyland: Recent Paintings* - held at the Waddington Galleries in the summer of 1971. Importantly, he positioned Hoyland's work within the history of Modernist painting and paid particular attention to the writings of Clement Greenberg. Harrison started the essay by identifying 'two types of space available to abstract painting: the first is the illusionary space generated by the relationship or isolation of forms upon a ground which appears relatively transparent' and 'the second kind of space is more purely optical and is not so indiscriminately open to the influence of the individual imagination'. Continuing, and without simple categorisation, he singled out Rothko, Newman, Louis, and late Matisse as exemplary Modernist painters. The challenge facing the abstract painter in the late Modernist period, according to Harrison, was 'to make the picture shape particular in terms of what he has created for it and in no other terms. If there is an illusion of depth it must be envisaged in particularly visual rather than literary

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<sup>333</sup> Hoyland, (1980), p.25

imaginative terms and must be felt as particular to the arrangement of colours in one format'.

After providing this contextual introduction Harrison dedicated the remainder of the essay specifically to the painting of John Hoyland. According to Harrison:

John Hoyland has associated himself with a search for those virtues of richness and openness which these painters display...(and) responded unequivocally, as did all the best English painters of his generation, to the impact of American painting in London in the late 1950s, and in particular to the work of Rothko which he saw in the US painting exhibition at the Tate in 1956...it is now becoming clear that of all the English painters of his generation Hoyland has most successfully assimilated major influences from the American painters (but importantly) without compromising his own integrity.

As discussed earlier (see chapter 2), although Hoyland respected American painters this did not come at the expense of other equally important influences or without qualification, and with the passage of time the European influences became as important. Examining Hoyland's paintings from the late 1960s Harrison argued that, 'Hoyland's painting has recently become more abstract by becoming more physical and more textural...As far as I am aware, Hoyland's development is without significant precedent in the painting of the last ten years; it certainly marks him off from his American contemporaries', and Harrison identified the reasons for this: 'Hoyland's best paintings turn on the difference between the different kinds of self-expression, between free and active process (pouring liquid paint) and conscious decision (applying colour in certain precise areas and thicknesses and in certain precisely controlled conjunctions). In these recent works he appears to be close to resolution of the two extremes.' Harrison recognised the importance of materiality in Hoyland's rendered surfaces: 'in Hoyland's work the paint is not a medium for the resurrection of choice experience or for the recreation of familiar emotion. The experience is in the paint itself and emotion is generated in painting and mixing colour'.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Harrison, C. 'London Commentary: John Hoyland: Recent Paintings at the Waddington Galleries, 6-31 May', *Studio International*, Vol.177, No.911, May/June 1969, pp.238-40

Drawing distinctions between Hoyland's painting and the work of American painters was an important corrective to the American view that Hoyland had added little to the language of abstraction. Concluding the article, Harrison applauded Hoyland for his resolve, for his dedication to the process of painting exclusively, and for his 'commendable unwillingness to take decisions outside the painting process. The things which change painting from the outside are the things which change life for the painter – like getting a new studio. Everything else changes painting from inside. Hoyland's latest paintings are hard to see, difficult to resolve, and replete with the evidence of actions and decisions which seem inexplicable and unprecedented. Careful and open-minded consideration reveals the best of them to be full, rich and generous'.<sup>335</sup> The essay was a timely intervention by Harrison on behalf of the artist and his idiom and was a powerful riposte to the often-stated view that painting at that time had lost its significance.

Between 1969 and 1974 there was a clear inversion of the exhibition pattern from the one for the previous period. After 1968 Hoyland was increasingly dependent on the private sector for support. In Britain this support was provided by the Waddington Galleries. Without this support it is difficult to see how his career and reputation would have been sustained because aside from these exhibitions his work was rarely exhibited in the United Kingdom (see chapter 5). Writing in 1975, Barry Martin claimed correctly, 'much of John Hoyland's painting has not been seen in this country. From 1970 until the present time he has had three shows in London which represents a small fraction of his total output'.<sup>336</sup> During this period his paintings were only shown either at the Waddington Galleries or in regional exhibitions. Though welcome, the problem with this relatively low-key exposure was that the footfall for such exhibitions was much lower than that for non-dealer shows. The result was that critical attention fell away. Notwithstanding this observation, his regular shows at the Waddington Galleries continued to attract positive notices.

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<sup>335</sup> Harrison (1969), pp.238-40

<sup>336</sup> Martin, B. 'John Hoyland', *Studio International*, Vol. 189, No.975, May/June 1975, pp.177-8

Reviewing Hoyland's solo show at Waddington's in 1971 Andrew Forge commended Hoyland for the outcomes created through his combination of soft colours with sophisticated textural qualities and concluded:

That between the two of them they are responsible for what I think is the most extraordinary aspect of these pictures. This is that looking at them one gets the feeling that it is a kind of sculpture one is looking at. Each area of colour is like a thing in its own right, made of its own special substance. I can think of no other pictures in which the terms of pictorial space have been so stretched and the virtual seems to be so truly on the point of becoming actual.<sup>337</sup>

This review correctly identified the self-sufficiency in Hoyland's work and how the blocks of information in his paintings from this period possess resilience. Hoyland, in these works, pushed the internal spaces to the very edge of the support and invaded the adjoining external space (see chapter 2).

In an extended review of Hoyland's 1973 exhibition at Waddington's, Judy Marle, who later, in 1979, made the documentary on Hoyland, *6 Days in September*, for BBC Arena, drew connections between Hoyland's work and Cubism, as well as the sculpture of Anthony Caro and carefully noted, 'the handling of matter evokes de Staël rather than Hofmann or Olitski'. And although she acknowledged that 'he continues to carry on an intelligent dialogue between mainstream American painting and those properties lumped together under the generic term of 'European tradition' it is clear from the examples she cited that, unlike Harrison, she positioned him firmly in the European tradition and concluded, 'Hoyland's previous paintings gave off the feeling that he was still mining the raw material of his art. Now he seems to be consolidating those discoveries in paintings that have greater refinement'.<sup>338</sup>

In 1974 Hoyland's fortunes began to change. This can be attributed to three significant factors: firstly, the general renewed interest in painting, and, secondly, the support he began to receive from the Arts Council. Two government decisions taken in the Sixties had a major bearing on Hoyland's career, the opening of the

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<sup>337</sup> Forge, A. 'Andrew Forge Looks at the Paintings of John Hoyland', *The Listener*, 22 July 1971, p.124

<sup>338</sup> Marle (1973), p.250

Hayward and Serpentine Galleries (see chapter 5). Without these facilities it is inconceivable that his work would have been seen in major public spaces in London. Thirdly, for the first time in six years his work was included in a non-dealer exhibition, *British Painting '74*.

#### *British Painting '74 – The Hayward Gallery 1974*

Hoyland's inclusion in the Arts Council arranged *British Painting '74* exhibition marked a renaissance of interest in his work and heralded the commencement of a supportive and productive relationship with the Arts Council, a relationship that helped to resurrect and consolidate what can only be described as a faltering career. In some respects Hoyland's relationship with the Arts Council was not dissimilar to the one that he had enjoyed with the Whitechapel Gallery in the 1960s. The exposure that Hoyland's work received at the Whitechapel had launched his career and in a similar fashion, the cluster of exhibitions arranged by the Arts Council between 1974 and 1980, in which Hoyland exhibited, once more raised his profile and drew attention to his work. This endorsement from the Arts Council helped to secure his reputation, and it can be argued, influenced the judges when deciding to award the John Moore's Painting Prize to the artist in 1982 (see Chapter 5).

Although only two paintings by Hoyland, *Red over Yellow 18.9.73* (Fig.41) and *Purple over Brown 20.5.74* (1974)( image not available), were included in the *British Painting '74* exhibition, nonetheless, it marked a turning point in his career. His two submitted paintings were large-scale and were positioned alongside the work of over one hundred other British painters. The exhibition heralded the return of painting to the main stage of British art and this indirectly assisted Hoyland. An acknowledgement of the difficulties faced by painters during the years preceding the exhibition was noted by Robin Campbell<sup>339</sup> and Norbert Lynton in the exhibition catalogue:

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<sup>339</sup> Robin Campbell was Director of Art at the Arts Council

The last eight to ten years have seen a lot of art activity outside the range of painting and sculpture (categories that had become very accommodating). Much of this has been of great interest, but it is has been backed by a swelling chorus in denunciation of painting. This might in itself be taken as evidence of painting's survival. In any case, it is clear that a great number of professional artists of all ages are focusing their energies and abilities on the act of painting, in Britain as in the United States and all over the world.<sup>340</sup>

The exhibition was unapologetically dedicated to 'the language and enterprise of painting' and concentrated on what was happening in British painting at the time.

The aim of the exhibition was to show, that despite its many detractors, painting was still being practised, for as the organiser of the exhibition, Andrew Forge pointed out, 'the range and vigour of the painting that has been going on in this country during the last years is astounding, particularly when one considers the almost complete absence of a genuinely involved public'.<sup>341</sup> This observation is apt; few painters had stopped painting, Hoyland among them. It was only that for a number of years their efforts were under-appreciated or ignored by mainstream critics whose attention had been directed elsewhere.

### 1975-1982

The growing interest in Hoyland's work continued and his exhibitions at the Waddington Galleries were praised. Reviewing Hoyland's new work on show at the Waddington Galleries in 1975, William Feaver claimed, 'they show him on top form, working in what is now the classic painterly-abstract idiom. He uses each canvas as an exercise space, the first layer and subsequent paint dribbles left around the edges and the centre stifled'.<sup>342</sup> A year later, Feaver once more commended Hoyland's solo exhibition at the Waddington Galleries, 'eight vintage John Hoyland's, whisk us back to the days of canvas-staining and optimistic scale: wider still. The reds on green,

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<sup>340</sup> Campbell, R and Lynton, N, 'Preface', *British Painting '74*, Exhibition catalogue by Robin Campbell et al., London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974, n.p.

<sup>341</sup> Forge, A. 'Introduction', *British Painting '74*, Exhibition catalogue by Robin Campbell et al., London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974, n.p.

<sup>342</sup> Feaver, W. 'Setting Fire to Sodom', *The Observer*, 2 November 1975, p.29

the reds set against further reds, one colour area bled into the next as though by some translucent welding process, still looks tough but eloquent'.<sup>343</sup>

But it was the *Hayward Annual* exhibition of 1977 that had the greatest initial impact on the future development of Hoyland's career. Hoyland's pugnacious and vociferous defence of both the exhibition and the Arts Council resulted in benefits: In 1979 he was granted a major retrospective - *John Hoyland: Paintings 1967-1979* - at the Serpentine Gallery; he was invited to curate the *1980 Hayward Annual*; and his work was included in the inaugural *British Art Show – The British Art Show: Recent Paintings and Sculpture* (1979-80). The outcome of this exposure was renewed interest in Hoyland's work, sales, and, effectively the renaissance of his career, which culminated in his being awarded the John Moores Painting Prize in 1982.

#### *1977 Hayward Annual – Hayward Gallery 1977*

The *1977 Hayward Annual* was the first in a series of annual exhibitions established to showcase what was taking place in British art at the time. The exhibition was curated and the work chosen by a selection panel of three: Michael Compton, the Tate Gallery's Keeper of Education and Exhibitions, the painter Howard Hodgkin, and the sculptor William Turnbull. The exhibition was arranged in two parts, running concurrently from the beginning of May through to early September.

From its opening the exhibition was shrouded in controversy, and although the exhibition garnered much media interest and attention much of this was negative; it was criticised by many - by some critics, some artists, some journalists and the public - and praised by relatively few. As Edward Lucie-Smith correctly pointed out, 'the Hayward Annual took a tremendous knocking from the reviewers. Almost every critic on a national newspaper disliked it.' Concluding, Lucie-Smith claimed, 'the long-threatened backlash against the avant-garde visual arts is now fully apparent'.<sup>344</sup> (see appendix 2). Although the exhibition was not well received, in a strange twist of

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<sup>343</sup> Feaver, W. 'Painting Prose', *The Observer*, 17 October 1976, p.22

<sup>344</sup> Lucie-Smith, E. 'Robbie in war paint', *Evening Standard*, 18 August 1977, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

fate Hoyland's career benefitted from his inclusion in the show. His work received favourable reviews but as will be revealed later the benefits can be attributed less to his actual work on show or its critical reception, but more to do with his involvement in the controversy surrounding the exhibition.

A degree of commonality informed and linked the negative criticism: the repudiation of formalist tendencies; alleged nepotism displayed by the Arts Council; the power and influence of the art establishment especially the commercial gallery system; and the minimalist abstraction of Bob Law which rankled with some critics, the public and also David Hockney.

The most vociferous and damning criticism in the press reviews of the exhibition came from the pens of three critics: Richard Cork, editor of *Studio International* and art critic for the *Evening Standard*; Paul Overy writing for *The Times*; and *The Guardian's* Caroline Tisdall. All three seemed to concur in their views; all three took the opportunity to mount scathing attacks either on the art establishment or traditional art practice or both. Cork voiced his concerns about the apparent nepotism behind the selection process (see appendix 2). But more lay behind Cork's attack on Waddington and Tooth than simply the charge of nepotism. To the leftist ideologue Cork, the Waddington and Tooth gallery signified and represented the capitalist system; the commercial art gallery was the agency through which the capitalist art market was sustained and the work of artists mediated and advocated, or not. Cork took umbrage with the fact that many of the artists, including Hoyland were contracted to Waddington Galleries and believed that some kind of conspiracy or cartel existed between Waddington Galleries and the exhibition's curators and selectors. The artists represented by Waddington Galleries, in his opinion received favourable treatment, prompting Cork to refer to these artists as 'the charmed circle'. He claimed that commercial galleries wielded disproportionate power in the marketing and endorsement process.

However, Cork's position should not be viewed in isolation, a criticism of a single exhibition, but as a continuation and, it can be argued, a culmination of the debates that had taken place from the end of the 1960s and throughout the first half of the 1970s, a period marked by competition for supremacy in the fine arts. Art in Britain during these years was contested territory and Cork played a major role in this contestation, using his positions at the Arts Council, and the offices of *Studio International* and the *Evening Standard*, to promote his favoured art or espouse his political ideas, to the detriment of the traditional art forms of painting and sculpture. This contributed to the difficulties faced by Hoyland in sustaining his professional career.

In the early 1970s Cork had advocated and endorsed conceptual art. This art form had raised questions about the value of cultural objects in an idealistic, utopian non-consumerist society favoured by Cork and his sympathisers, and the debate concentrated on the value accorded to art production. It posed a number of questions, principally what value should be placed on the actual object? It strove to illustrate how art is inextricably linked to capitalism and it discussed alternatives to the existing system of production and distribution. But by the time of the 1977 *Hayward*, Cork had changed his aesthetic position, replacing his support for conceptual art with an advocacy for art with a social purpose.<sup>345</sup> The commercial gallery, in his opinion, showed little or no interest in art with a social purpose and therefore a radical re-alignment of the distribution system was needed.

The other two critics, Overy and Tisdall, were equally damning of the exhibition. Overy, writing in *The Times* compared the Hayward exhibition with the Tate's exhibition *British Art of the '60's* and concluded: 'the two exhibitions...have a strong relationship. This is not surprising as Michael Compton played a large part in organising both shows. Compton is Keeper of Education and Exhibitions at the Tate and also a member of the Arts Council. He is thus a man of consummate power in

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<sup>345</sup> See Cork, R. 'The Charmed Circle...or the West End Connection at the Hayward', *Evening Standard*, 7 June 1977, p.23

the art world'.<sup>346</sup> This was an attack on the perceived power bases within the British art establishment. Overy was scathing about the art on show, arguing that the overriding aesthetic of much of the work could be traced back to the 1960's. In a similar fashion to Cork he criticised the fact that much of the work on display came from one gallery, the Waddington (see appendices 2 and 3). Reviewing the first part of the exhibition for *The Guardian*, Caroline Tisdall made similar observations; firstly, that much of the art on show came from one of the most powerful London galleries and, secondly, that the work on display was not contemporary but was a throwback to the 1960's:

The retreat into the past is now in full swing, thinly disguised as a middle-aged nostalgia for the Swinging Sixties...in fact the mental space it works in is somewhere around 1965...when art was jolly and pop and there was no shortage of cotton duck for large paintings...the sixties was the prime time, perhaps even a happy time, for the generation that now rules the roost through established reputations and Establishment positions...the art world is small and works in little clubs...the club at present lording it at the Tate and Hayward is the art for art's sake.<sup>347</sup>

John Hoyland, as one of the artists represented by Leslie Waddington since 1967, was singled out by Tisdall for especial mention: 'much of the show looked like a museum-scale plug for the stable of artists attached to one powerful West End dealer, Leslie Waddington' and continued with a stinging criticism of Hoyland: 'himself a champion thoroughbred in that stable'.

The *1977 Hayward Annual* was arranged in two parts, the first part from 25 May to 4 July and the second part from 20 July to 4 September. When Hoyland pointed out that the exhibition continues 'far longer than a normal gallery showing period, the aim being to allow the work to be seen by large numbers of people passing through London at this time of year, a public who might not normally see or have access to the smaller galleries', Tisdall went on the offensive, 'John Hoyland apparently labours under the complacent delusion that the way to make establishment modernism popular in this country is simply to transport it from Bond Street to a bigger venue...

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<sup>346</sup> Overy, P. 'Precious little space to spare', *The Times*, 7 June 1977, p.16

<sup>347</sup> Tisdall, C. 'They know what they like', *The Guardian*, 2 June 1977, p.11.

contemporary art's relationship with the public is now far too diseased for any superficial panacea to cope with. Moving the afflicted to a more prominent hospital is hardly calculated to cure their ailment outright'.<sup>348</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, Hoyland mounted a tenacious defence of the work on display and rejected the views expressed by these critics. In a letter to *The Guardian* he lambasted the three critics, especially Cork, for their failure to explain the work on display and pointed out Cork's failings as a critic:

What I find more irritating than Cork's misrepresentation is that he still does not understand his job, which should be to explain and interpret the aims of the artist to the public. He is not the creator; he is merely the critic...as usual a critic of a few years standing once again has the impertinence to tell two of our leading artists (Kitaj and Buckley) that were they to think like him their work would immediately take on a new importance. It is like some minor shop steward saying that if Winston Churchill and Clement Atlee had managed to combine Gandhi's qualities, then they might possibly have come close to his own standards.<sup>349</sup>

Hoyland's comments reflected his and many of his contemporaries' frustration with the way that painting had been presented and received during the past decade, a presentation that had had negative effects on Hoyland's career as we shall see. This concern was adequately summed up by Hoyland's friend and fellow painter, Jeremy Moon in 1971:

An attempt is currently being made, partly conscious and partly by default, to undermine belief in the continuing viability of the art of painting...painting is being subjected not just to indifference and the damning of faint praise but increasingly to a campaign of denigration and an attempt to destroy by indiscriminate blanket condemnation a major area of artistic endeavour...one of the prime roles allotted to contemporary so-called experimental or avant-garde art is that of being a stick with which to beat conventional art.<sup>350</sup>

In the Introduction to the catalogue of the *1980 Hayward Annual*, which he arranged and curated, Hoyland defended his position:

In the past ten years, we have seen a great deal of hostility towards painting and sculpture. But real art cannot be grasped, learned or understood quickly. Real art evades easy description, discourages amusing anecdotes, confronts glamour and camp with a stony, unblinking eye, and is not welcome in colour

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<sup>348</sup> Tisdall, C. 'The fresh energies which may help to change British art in any case operate outside the gallery system altogether', *The Guardian*, 20 July 1977, p.10

<sup>349</sup> Hoyland, J. 'An open letter to three critics', *The Guardian*, 20 July 1977, p.6

<sup>350</sup> Moon, J. 'Enemies of Painting', *Studio International*, Vol.182, No.839, December 1971, p.226

supplement land. Audiences have become accustomed to being shocked, to expect innovation via the cult of entertainment and novelty, or conversely live in hopes of returning to the illusion of stability via the old order of academic figurative art.<sup>351</sup>

Hoyland saw Cork as an ideal target, understanding fully the role played by Cork in the perceived denigration of painting although Cork later refuted such suggestions. Cork had wielded power and influence on the British art scene since the early 1970's. Between 1971 and 1974 he had served on the Arts Council's Art Panel, with responsibility for selecting work for the Arts Council Collection and in arranging or supporting the exhibition programme. The impact on painting was immediate: a reduction in public exhibition opportunities, resulting in a decline in critical reception. Between 1967 and 1974 Hoyland had not been immune from these impacts. Cork's appointment reflected the times. In 1968 under pressure from the avant-garde and leftist critics, including Cork, the Arts Council acknowledged that more attention should be paid to the emerging art forms: conceptual art, photography, film, installation and environmental art, and happenings. With limited available funds attention shifted away from the traditional art forms of painting and sculpture. The new art practices were creating cultural capital amongst the British art establishment. Reflecting this view, in 1968 the Arts Council established a New Activities committee with the express remit to address these changing circumstances, of changes in art taste and fashion at the time, and thus to incorporate the new art forms into Arts Council policy, specifically into its exhibition and acquisitions policies and programmes.

In 1974 Cork was invited to curate a touring exhibition for the council. He made his ideological and aesthetic position clear through his chosen title for the exhibition - *Beyond Painting and Sculpture* - and the selection of work. Cork used the exhibition and the introduction in the exhibition to promote the kind of art that he deemed to be relevant, advocating those artists who challenged both the hegemony of the traditional art forms of painting and sculpture and the capitalist art system. He

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<sup>351</sup> Hoyland, J. 'Introduction', *1980 Hayward Annual*, Exhibition catalogue by John Hoyland, London: Hayward Gallery, 1980, p.6

justified his selection of artists, arguing that the chosen artists wished 'to question the supremacy of a value-system which until recently remained unchallenged except for a few outstanding twentieth-century pioneers.'<sup>352</sup> To all intents and purposes *Beyond Painting and Sculpture* was a continuation of the *New Art* exhibition curated by Anne Seymour for the Hayward Gallery in 1972 when Seymour made the conscious decision not to include painting or sculpture.<sup>353</sup>

A year later, in 1975, Cork was provided with a further platform to promote his views when he was appointed editor of *Studio International*, taking over from Peter Townsend. Combined with his weekly columns for the *Evening Standard*, Cork was provided with two influential platforms from which to promulgate his views on the state and relevance of contemporary art, to challenge the hegemony of painting and sculpture, and to criticise the art establishment.<sup>354</sup> Until he resigned as editor of the journal in 1980 it can be argued that he took every opportunity to undermine painting and sculpture and in its place to promote his favoured kind of art, initially conceptual art and, later, an art imbued with a social purpose. This was achieved by his editorial planning and decision-making. As editor of *Studio International* one of his innovations was the adoption of a thematic approach towards content.<sup>355</sup> This resulted in painting, and in particular, abstraction, receiving less critical attention within the pages of the leading art journal of its day. Furthermore, Cork was selective in the exhibitions reviewed for the *Evening Standard*, London's only daily newspaper,

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<sup>352</sup> Cork, R. 'Introduction', *Beyond Painting and Sculpture: Works bought for the Arts Council by Richard Cork*. Exhibition catalogue by Richard Cork et al., Hayward Gallery, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974, p.3

<sup>353</sup> In the Introduction to the exhibition catalogue Seymour made her position very clear: 'it seemed that even after 6 or 7 years of getting accustomed to it, there was still a really bad area of mystification surrounding the kind of work which has recently extended the historical continuum of art a little further. Land art, Conceptual Art, Art Povera, Process Art, are some of the labels which have been allotted to parts of it. I have taken it to include a rather wider range of things, but basically work which does not necessarily presuppose the traditional categories of painting and sculpture – involving written material, philosophical ideas, photographs, film, sound, light, the earth itself, the artists themselves, actual objects. However, the ideas and attitudes contained in the work are equally if not more important than the media.' - Quoted in Seymour, A. 'Introduction'. *New Art: Keith Arnatt, Art-Language, Victor Burgin, Michael Craig-Martin, David Dye, Barry Flanagan, Hamish Fulton, Gilbert and George, John Hilliard, Richard Long, Keith Milow, Gerald Newman, John Stezaker, David Tremlett*. Exhibition catalogue by Anne Seymour, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972.

<sup>354</sup> A selection of some of the titles of the articles that appeared in the *Evening Standard* between 1970 and 1977 provide a clear picture of Cork's concerns and ideological positions: *The Money and Art Equation* (23.9.70); *Art and Capitalism* (17.12.70); *The Art-Obsessed Myopia of the Avant-Garde* (28.1.71); *No Room for New Artists at the Tate* (9.3.72); *Widening the Audience for Art* (6.9.73); *The Perverted Priorities of the Arts Council* (21.2.74); *Architecture and the Man in the Street* (12.9.74); *The Social Purpose of the National Gallery* (12.6.75); *An Alternative to the Dealer's Gallery* (13.5.76); *Dropping a Brick* (30.12.76); *The Hayward Annual and the Power of the Dealer* (26.5.77); These articles were collected and published in Cork, R. *The Social Role of Art: 34 Essays in Criticism for a Newspaper Public*, London: Gordon Fraser, 1979.

<sup>355</sup> Themes included *Avant-Garde Film in England & Europe* (1975) *Art & Experimental Music* (1976). See also footnote <sup>354</sup>

with a large circulation, potentially determining taste for its readers. The lack of attention paid to painting in the pages of *Studio International* and other publications prompted the sculptor Ben Jones and the critic and painter James Faure Walker in 1976, financially backed by Leslie Waddington, to establish a rival publication, *Artscribe*, to redress the situation. *Artscribe* was unapologetically dedicated to British modernist painting and over the years Hoyland's work enjoyed good coverage in the journal.

Although the negative reception of the 1977 *Hayward Annual* from the triumvirate of critics led by Cork and some members of the public was unwelcome it was the views expressed on a television programme that did the most damage to the exhibition's reputation. In his populist weekly television programme *Robbie* the self-opinionated, anti-contemporary art and self-appointed spokesperson for the 'common man', Fyffe Robertson, referred to the art on show as 'Phoney art - or phart'. This prompted a considered response from the art community and disbelief from the Arts Council. Michael Craig Martin's letter to Joanna Drew summed up the feelings of many practising artists, 'I do feel that I was let down by the Arts Council in whose trust I had placed my work...it is too late now to undo the harm done by Mr Robertson...that good will was seriously damaged by the circumstances of the television programme'.<sup>356</sup> But others expanded the debate. The artist Tim Head wrote simultaneously to Bill Cotton and Humphrey Burton at the BBC, and to *The Times* criticising the BBC's long running campaign against contemporary art.<sup>357</sup>

The poor critical reception from some critics and some members of the public and the resultant backlash from artists prompted the Arts Council to take action. Fearing

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<sup>356</sup> Craig-Martin, M. Letter to Joanna Drew, dated 10 September, 1977, Arts Council Records, ACGB/121/143

<sup>357</sup> The letter read: 'A strong protest, already long overdue, must be made against what appears to amount to a consistent campaign of hostility by the BBC towards contemporary art...Monday's peak-time half-hour programme of self-righteous uninformed personal invective from Fyffe Robertson would on its own be too trivial to take seriously, but seen in the wider context of consistent verbal attack, not only presented on general news programmes but also, sadly, on so-called 'serious arts programmes, the gradual build-up of assault becomes surprisingly malicious and pointed. Invariably the mouth pieces for these opinions are either people with respectable academic pedigrees in other fields or simply likeable TV personalities. These people are invested with the status of 'art expert' by the BBC, to preside in judgement (on behalf of the ordinary person in the street of course) on the merit, or predictably the lack of merit, of an art they feel threatened by and therefore antagonistic towards.' From Tim Head, Letters to Bill Cotton and Humphrey Burton at the BBC and the Editor of the Times, letters dated 16 August 1977, Arts Council Records, ACGB/121/509

government interference, notably the real risk of a reduction in funding, in early September the Arts Council hastily convened a public forum to be held at the Hayward Gallery. The press release, acknowledged that, 'the Hayward Annual exhibition of British painting and sculpture has been attended by a certain amount of controversy, between artists and between critics and artists. The exhibition and so-called avant-garde contemporary art in general have been attacked by Fyfe Robertson in the programme 'Robbie', a programme which further argued that the concerns and aims of modern artists are incompatible or ridiculous, or both'.<sup>358</sup> The forum took place on 5 September 1977. The public were invited to attend and over 400 attended. Three artists - David Hockney, John Hoyland, and Ron Kitaj (non-speaking) - were joined on the platform by Fyfe Robertson and Edward Lucie-Smith. Although Arts Council records fail to provide any explanation for the choice of participants on the platform, nonetheless, the invitation extended to Hoyland would seem to reflect the artist's standing and stature with senior managers at the Arts Council at the time and the fact that Hoyland had been prepared, very recently, to stand up to Cork. His contributions to the debate make interesting reading. He stridently defended the Arts Council whilst affirming his belief in, and commitment to painting, but also highlighted his long running feuds with those who had criticised painting and in particular abstraction:

A lot of people come to exhibitions who have never studied art, who have never painted themselves, and want desperately to understand...The Arts Council tries to show what is going on in Britain in the field of art and the people who are practising artists. If this is not art to you, it could be art to someone else...the public has to make a bigger effort. You have to study it.<sup>359</sup>

In particular Hoyland poured scorn on Hockney's invitation to Bob Law to explain his work and it became clear that there was no love lost between the two artists;

Hoyland's later intervention illustrated the degree of animosity:

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<sup>358</sup> Arts Council Press Release dated 31 August 1977, Arts Council Records, ACGB/121/143

<sup>359</sup> Hoyland J. 'Contribution', 1977 *Hayward Annual* Exhibition, Notes on public debate held at the Hayward Gallery, 5 September, 1977, Arts Council Records, ACGB/36/10

I think it is amusing to hear David Hockney ask Bob Law to justify his art. We all know about David Hockney's work and his life. I am amazed to see the level of philistinism emerging in this country. Who asks jazz musicians to justify their music? How much does he know about poetry, theatre? Why do you expect to have instant answers? This is a visual language that you are dealing with. You have to begin to learn the language. You don't look at Japanese writing and say "what does it mean?" It takes time and effort. Whatever kind of art it is, even to understand the subtleties of David Hockney's painting - Harold Robbins re-visited - you have to understand. You have to know about art. People don't make enough effort. Fyffe Robertson has just left, I notice. He heard what he wanted to hear and then he went.<sup>360</sup>

Although Hoyland's comparison of Hockney's work with the popular page-turning airport novelist Robbins may appear disingenuous, however, this needs to be contextualised. In some ways Hoyland's stance was justified because for a number of years Hockney had undermined abstraction, and publicly referred to it as an 'arid' art form.

Immediately after the forum, Joanna Drew used a radio broadcast to defend the Arts Council policy of mounting exhibitions of well-established artists: 'there were suggestions made last night that the art that is officially supported should be the art which is not supported by the private sector and I think this would be entirely disastrous if one did not give officially sponsored exhibitions to artists who had received support from the private sector including buyers and foreign galleries and museums'.<sup>361</sup> Unlike others, including Cork, Drew fully understood and appreciated the symbiotic relationship between the private and public sectors. Without the commercial gallery system the production and marketing of art would be more problematic. Her approach was pragmatic and realistic rather than ideological.

Notwithstanding the controversy surrounding the *1977 Hayward Annual* it is reasonable to claim that Hoyland's career actually benefitted from events. His support for the Arts Council did not go unnoticed and, it can be argued, assisted in the positive response to his request to stage a retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery in 1979. Once the furore had died down the Arts Council decided to amend its

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<sup>360</sup> Hoyland (1977), n.p.

<sup>361</sup> Drew, J. Contribution to BBC Radio 4's Kaleidoscope, 6 September 1977, typed transcript, Arts Council Records, ACGB/36/10

policies and practices. It took the decision that future *Hayward Annual* exhibitions should be curated by one individual instead of by committee. This decision bolstered Hoyland's reputation; in 1980 he was invited by the Arts Council to curate the *1980 Hayward Annual* exhibition. This attested to his standing with one of the key figures at the Arts Council, Joanna Drew, and can be seen as a reward for his past defence of and loyalty to the institution. But there was a further reason. By 1980 the influence of the other competing art forms had declined; the Arts Council recognised that painting was once more in the ascendency and fearful of a financial backlash from the newly elected Conservative government decided that painting was a safer aesthetic option, one that would not upset the more conservative figures in the Treasury. Painting was back in vogue.

The *1977 Hayward Annual* marked the beginning of attention once more being paid to painting, coincident with increased demand for it from private and public collectors, and viewing audiences. Hoyland's career undoubtedly benefitted from this change in fashion. As McEwen pointed out, '1977 was a good year for John Hoyland. He was the star of the first Hayward Annual exhibition in London - just as he had been of the *Arte Inglesi Oggi* show in Milan the previous year - and most commentators singled him out from the 200 participants at the Burlington House Jubilee survey of British painting since 1952'.<sup>362</sup>

This observation is borne out by the praise and recognition Hoyland received and continued to receive. William Packer, a fellow painter, writing in the *Financial Times* recognised the quality in Hoyland's painting: 'the two large paintings by Hoyland must be the best things he has done, luxuriant welts of pigment disposed magisterially across the surface. They are enough in themselves to justify his inclusion here'.<sup>363</sup> In his review for the *Observer*, William Feaver concurred with Packer's sentiment, 'John Hoyland, who I keep thinking must be fast approaching that last gasp where abstract expressionist painting runs out of rhetoric, pulls it off

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<sup>362</sup> McEwen, J, 'John Hoyland in Mid-Career', *Arts Canada*, April/May 1978, p.36

<sup>363</sup> Packer, W. 'Current British Art', *Financial Times*, 14 June 1977, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

yet again with four crammed and scraped pictures. '*Citar*'<sup>364</sup> in particular and '*Linen*' are as good as anything he has done in years; far from type-cast or relapse'.<sup>365</sup> And Frances Spalding praised Hoyland for 'the impressive selection of paintings' which 'reveals his subtle variation of means from canvas to canvas.' Spalding then described in detail two of the most impressive paintings: The final central layer in 3.2.77(*Citar*) is scraped across the surface leaving shreds of orange to show through the blue, whereas 23.9.76 (*Vale*) the last layer of mid-blue has been pulled softly across with a large brush, allowing streaks of green and purple to float within it, suggesting space, not surface as in '*Citar*'. Energetic, raw and encrusted, they present monolithic slabs of pictorial reality'. Concluding, Spalding stated that they 'have similarities with the Auerbach paintings exhibited'.<sup>366</sup> For viewers the exposition provided ways into the work and would have particularly pleased Hoyland because an attempt had been made to explain the work to the viewer. As stated earlier the role of the critic, in the opinion of Hoyland, was to explain and not condemn work to potential audiences. Bryan Robertson wrote an extended essay in the *Spectator* extolling the artist's virtues. He compared the integrity and gravitas in Hoyland's work to that of Ben Nicholson, 'today Hoyland is the next best thing to Ben Nicholson' and proclaimed, 'Hoyland is a terrific artist' and 'a far bigger artist than Louis'.<sup>367</sup>

To all intents and purposes Hoyland had overcome the challenges and difficulties of the first half of the decade and once more found himself back in favour. Increasingly his work was re-assessed, even by those critics who hitherto had been hostile towards him and dismissive of his achievements. In particular he received a degree of enthusiastic acknowledgement from those who had previously dismissed his approach to painting as decadent and irrelevant. More sympathetic critics continued to commend his work. Critics who hitherto had been scathing about Hoyland's achievements amended their positions. Richard Cork in a short cursory statement

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<sup>364</sup> No image available

<sup>365</sup> Feaver, W. 'Great British Show', *Observer*, 25 September 1977, p.29

<sup>366</sup> Spalding, F. 'The Hayward Annual (Part 1)', *Arts Review* (UK), Vol. 29, No. 12, 10 June 1977, p.373

<sup>367</sup> Robertson, B, 'Looking for Hoyland', *Spectator*, 2 July 1977, p.22

acknowledged, 'John Hoyland's abstracts are forthright and unfussy'.<sup>368</sup> Hoyland's contribution also received attention beyond the print medium, with his work discussed on the radio. One of the most interesting and telling observations was made by John Spurling - who had previously purchased Hoyland's *15.7.68* - on the BBC Radio 3 Critics Forum programme. Spurling took umbrage with writer Malcolm Bradbury's claim that the Hayward exhibition showcased 'a group of artists whose strength lay in their work in the 60's and who represent the activities, preoccupations and the aesthetics of the 1960s... many of these pieces are from 74/75 and there is no significant development'. He cited assertively the painting of John Hoyland to refute Bradbury's view:

John Hoyland is I think an extremely fine artist. And again he is very fine in this show. There's a room of Hoyland's paintings which are very strong, the very reverse of arid, he is still exploring his extraordinary excitement in colour, the way that colour becomes shape, the way that colour escapes from behind a sort of curtain that he puts in front of it. The curtain used to be very smooth paint ...now he's begun to texture the curtain itself and he is still exploring the same things... [but] he seems to be developing all the time.<sup>369</sup>

After the *1977 Hayward Annual* the critical acclaim for Hoyland continued and without question Hoyland's second retrospective, at the Serpentine Gallery, in 1979 confirmed his position as one of Britain's leading non-figurative painters.

Acknowledgement was made that the body of work completed by the artist during the second half of the 1970s engaged with the discourses and addressed some of the challenges faced by non-figurative painters during the previous fifteen years.

William Packer began his review by asserting that 'John Hoyland is one of the best of our middle generation artists and by any standard a distinguished abstract painter'. He argued that Hoyland's painting was more than just about colour, seeing the exhibited works as intelligent, thought-provoking paintings and he was particularly impressed with the most recent paintings, 'the most exciting, and physically the most

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<sup>368</sup> Cork, R. 'The Charmed Circle...or the West End Connection at the Hayward', *Evening Standard*, 7 June 1977, p.16

<sup>369</sup> Spurling, J. BBC Radio 3 Critics Forum, typed transcript, Arts Council Records, ACGB/121/143

beautiful, oddly relaxed'. According to Packer, Hoyland had reached maturity with this body of work.<sup>370</sup>

As noted above Hoyland benefitted directly from the emergence of *Artscribe*, with painting and, specifically, his work commented on regularly in its pages.<sup>371</sup> In 1976 Terence Maloon wrote a lengthy explication of Hoyland's most recent painting. Starting out, Maloon claimed that 'John Hoyland's painting has a perceptual density rarely equalled in contemporary painting...the works take on the character of traditional masterpieces.' He positioned Hoyland's work clearly in the European tradition and argued that his paintings from 1975 critiqued contemporary American abstract painting, what Maloon referred to as 'Post-Post-Painterly Painterly Abstraction' (PPPPA). From this starting point Maloon carefully analysed a number of specific Hoyland paintings and contextualised them against the writings of Greenberg, Fried, and Jameson.<sup>372</sup> This was an important intervention on Hoyland's behalf because by the early 1970's Hoyland realised that the market potential for his work in the United States was extremely limited and that from the perspective of his career it made more sense to position himself and his art within the European tradition and manage any future criticism of being parochial.

Some critics, who had been dismissive of Hoyland's work, changed their tune. In an otherwise sceptical appraisal of his achievements, Peter Fuller, nevertheless, acknowledged, 'one reason why Hoyland himself is so much better than his South London protégés is that his experience is rooted in classical skills'.<sup>373</sup>

In 1980 Hoyland was invited to curate and arrange the *1980 Hayward Annual* exhibition and though he took the wise decision not to include any of his own work in the show, nonetheless, he was paid a fee of £2,200,<sup>374</sup> [the equivalent of selling two

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<sup>370</sup> Packer, W, 'John Hoyland and the Abstract', *Financial Times*, 16 October 1979, p.17

<sup>371</sup> See Walker, J F, 'Towards a Definition of the Progressive in Painting', *Artscribe*, No.3, Summer 1976; Walker, J F. 'Painting at the Hayward', *Artscribe* No 8, 1977; and Walker, J. F. 'John Hoyland and the Hayward Annual', *Artscribe*, No.24, August 1980

<sup>372</sup> Maloon, T 'John Hoyland Paintings 1974-1976', *Artscribe*, No.5, February 1977, p.8-9

<sup>373</sup> Fuller, P. 'Hayward Annual 1980 Reviewed by Peter Fuller', *Aspects*, Autumn 1980, Part 12, pp.20-3

<sup>374</sup> 'Approval was given at the meeting of Directorate on 30 October 1979 for a fee of £2,200 to be paid to John Hoyland for the selection of the above exhibition'. *Hayward Annual 1980*, Arts Council Records, ACGB/121/515.

to three major paintings at the time] and received praise for his selection of work and his overall contribution. The show indirectly benefitted his career and followed on from the critical success Hoyland's retrospective the previous year had enjoyed. In his review of the *1980 Hayward Annual*, Shepherd concluded, 'it is in short the best, and surely the most enjoyable, show of its kind, ever, and one that could not be equalled anywhere else in the world'.<sup>375</sup> Ironically, by excluding himself from the exhibition, some critics used the omission to praise Hoyland's work: 'This year he chose the Hayward Annual and in focusing on a group of abstract painters whom he considers insufficiently known and appreciated', noted Spalding, 'he has thrown into relief the quality of his own work'.<sup>376</sup> The invitation to Hoyland demonstrated the esteem he was held in among many influential tastemakers on the London art scene. It also acknowledged his judgement when it came to abstraction, that he was an ideal person to select from the number of abstract artists working in the idiom. The *1980 Hayward Annual* also provided an invaluable platform for the presentation and promotion of non-figurative painting and, importantly, collectively announced, once more, its presence as a major art force, albeit with limited appeal. And importantly, Hoyland was singled out as a flag bearer for British non-figurative painting.

On a personal note, the support Hoyland received from the Arts Council compensated for the general lack of endorsement by the Tate Gallery of his achievements. According to Beverley Heath-Hoyland, her husband, until his death, despite public comments to the contrary, was disappointed that no major survey of his work was ever held at the Tate Gallery.<sup>377</sup>

### Conclusion

John Hoyland emerged on to the London art scene at an apposite time and benefitted from the cultural changes and improvements to the art infrastructure that took place in the first half of the 1960s. His talents were recognised early in his career and this

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<sup>375</sup> Shepherd, M. 'The Colour of Britain', *Sunday Telegraph*, 7 September 1980, Tate Gallery Library, John Hoyland: Press Cuttings, 170059-1001, n.p.

<sup>376</sup> Spalding, F. 'Hayward Annual Part 1', *Arts Review*, Vol. 29, Pt.1212, September 1980, p.373

<sup>377</sup> In conversation with Beverley Heath-Hoyland, Hoyland Studio, 24 July 2014.

is reflected in the support and critical recognition he received. His work was deemed worthy of selection and his subsequent exhibition record assisted in his work being presented and promoted to potential customers and numerous public audiences. It is unquestionable that public exhibitions played a key role in the validation and endorsement process. The decline in interest in non-figurative painting from the mid-1960s onwards, coincident with poor economic, political and social conditions, was challenging but with the support he received from Leslie Waddington he was able to continue painting. Conditions for him improved in the second half of the 1970s and by 1982 his reputation in the United Kingdom had been secured and his achievements as one of Britain's finest non-figurative painters, a vociferous advocate and exemplar for this idiom, were recognised by the art establishment.

## Chapter 4: Public Exposure and Critical Reception Overseas

### The United States

By the mid-1950s it was increasingly evident that America, and notably New York, had displaced Paris as the global art capital. By 1964, the year Hoyland first visited the United States, a sophisticated and well-developed art infrastructure, including both primary and secondary markets, had been established. Demographic factors, notably the emergence of an educated and art-aware middle class, combined with the expansion of museums and arts centres and the emergence of new art magazines created demand, which in turn led to increases in art production, in the supply chain. The marketing of art, in contrast to the situation in Britain, was more advanced and highly efficient.<sup>378</sup> Culturally, America appeared to be open to new ideas, a perception that appealed to British artists. Increasingly artists and their representatives came to recognise this fact and responded accordingly.

Understandably, artists were aware of this market potential and gravitated towards New York. Its importance was recognised by John Kaye, a partner in London's Kasmin Gallery, '[I] couldn't make the gallery work by selling to the English alone – there wasn't enough of a collecting class – so it was necessary to sell to the Americans, the Belgians and, to a lesser extent, in Germany and Italy'.<sup>379</sup> Funded by the Peter Stuyvesant travel bursary, in 1964 John Hoyland embarked for the United States. In New York he met the artists he admired and crucially the most influential critic of his generation, Clement Greenberg, who he was introduced to by Helen Frankenthaler, and saw seminal works of modern art including paintings by Klee, Matisse, Picasso and other European modern masters. For as Hoyland recalled:

During those years, the early sixties, we were regularly bombarded by American art and we awaited each new instalment like food parcels to a half-starved community. I had been fortunate to meet Motherwell, Rothko,

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<sup>378</sup> Avant-garde art was mediated through a sophisticated matrix of production sites, exhibition opportunities, distribution and promotional systems, exemplified by the commercial gallery system of New York.

<sup>379</sup> Tickner, L. 'The Kasmin Gallery', *Oxford Art Journal* 2007, Vol.30, Issue 2 (2007), p.246

Reinhardt, Frankenthaler, Noland and Olitski both here and in the USA; and was very much in awe of them, particularly the older generation. They were my Gods and seemed remote and unreachable, with the exception of Barney (Newman)'.<sup>380</sup>

Hoyland's intention was to learn the process of painting from the New York painters. Initially this seemed to have worked for Hoyland, he was lauded there, with Helen Frankenthaler claiming that he was 'painting real paintings'.<sup>381</sup> Early on, his work was endorsed by Greenberg because the paintings Hoyland exhibited in the two *Situation* exhibitions conformed to Greenberg's dictum of flatness and self-sufficiency. This endorsement was confirmed in 1965 when Greenberg, a judge for the *1965 John Moores* exhibition awarded Third Prize to Hoyland. It is reasonable to claim by 1965, with Greenberg's advocacy, Hoyland's work was known in New York.

Aside from learning about contemporary American art there was the added dimension, a business dynamic, for Hoyland's gravitation towards America. He was aware that there were well-informed and receptive audiences for non-figurative art there, especially in New York. Knowledgeable museum directors, curators and critics and affluent collectors, created the potential for good money to be made there. Reflecting on his decision to go to America, Hoyland explained, 'it's a bit like the music world, if you crack America, the English will come for you, but if you're in England they're not interested. Nothing impresses them more than if you are admired outside of England'.<sup>382</sup> Later, he recalled a conversation he had with Anthony Caro, who he had met before his first visit to New York: 'He suddenly hinted that Henry Moore had you know, a lamb chop in every plaza, from Tokyo to Toronto. He'd achieved this sort of world domination. And Tony suddenly realised that although he was in a lot of private collections, he hadn't achieved this kind of big name, world international name'.<sup>383</sup> From early in his career Hoyland understood clearly the machinations of the art markets. Knowing about the building of a reputation and achieving it are two separate things. This chapter argues that despite his best

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<sup>380</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.100

<sup>381</sup> Frankenthaler - Quoted in Gooding (2006), p.49

<sup>382</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.81

<sup>383</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.142

attempts Hoyland was not a success in America. This is borne out by the fact that few of his works are in American museums and it was only after Sam and Gabrielle Lurie in 1977 began to assemble a collection of his work that a major private collector recognised Hoyland's achievements through acquisition (see chapter 5 and appendix 3). Before his solo exhibitions first, in the Robert Elkon Gallery in 1967 and later, in the Andre Emmerich Gallery, Hoyland's early exhibition record in America displays a particular pattern, that of a reliance on group exhibitions, usually arranged from this side of the Atlantic and supported by those such as Lawrence Alloway and Bryan Robertson, who endorsed his work in England. In contrast, with a few exceptions, Hoyland did not enjoy such support from American museum directors and curators or critics.

The intention behind the public exhibitions in which Hoyland's work first featured in America was to highlight the achievements of British artists and promote their work. The feeling among these curators was that British art was undervalued in America and they were attempting to redress the situation.

*British Art Today - Museum of Art, San Francisco, 1962*

Before he had visited New York for the first time, in 1964, Hoyland's work had already been shown in America. In the winter of 1962 four paintings by Hoyland were included in a group exhibition, *British Art Today*, which opened initially at San Francisco's Museum of Art before touring to museums in Dallas and Santa Barbara in the spring of 1963. The four paintings were displayed alongside work by established British artists including Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Graham Sutherland, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore, and Barbara Hepworth.

The exhibition demonstrated the importance of the Anglo-American relationship established between the ICA, Lawrence Alloway, and Stefan P Munsing, the Cultural Affairs Officer of the American Embassy in London, towards the end of the 1950s. Munsing had been instrumental in developing the cultural programme at the

American Embassy, and arranging an eclectic range of events and functions which were attended by important persons in the London art scene, several of which had been attended by Hoyland in the late 1950s.

*British Art Today* was the result of collaboration between Alloway, recently appointed curator to the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Munsing, the Chairman of P & O Orient Lines, Colin Anderson, the influential art collector Ted Power and a number of London galleries including the Marlborough Fine Art Gallery, who represented Hoyland at the time. P & O Orient arranged and transported *gratis* the art works from England to the United States, an early example of corporate sponsorship. Munsing was given responsibility for the selection of the works and the writing of the Preface to the exhibition catalogue. In this preface he stated the rationale for his choices, 'I have tried to select the most representative and interesting works available. The exhibition reflects what is in the forefront today...the exhibition reflects primarily non-figurative art which is one of the dominant post-war tendencies of the British art scene'.<sup>384</sup> In his catalogue essay Alloway reiterated his reservations about the English Romantic tradition, and instead endorsed and promoted what he deemed to be the two most dominant trends in British art: Constructionist and 'Situation' artistic practice. He deliberately distanced the painting of this new generation of artists, including Hoyland, from the earlier Romantic 'middle generation' painters, exemplified by the St Ives School of painters. It is unclear why Alloway felt the need to take such a strident position against the 'middle generation' of painters' because they had achieved only moderate recognition in America and posed no threat to the reception of the work being promulgated by him. And, somewhat ironically Alloway's views seemed to conflict with the actual selection of works made by Munsing whose selection included paintings by the very same English landscape painters, including Ivon Hitchens and Graham Sutherland, and the St Ives School artists, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon, and Bryan Wynter, castigated by Alloway.

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<sup>384</sup> Munsing, S.P. 'Preface', *British Art Today*. Exhibition catalogue by Lawrence Alloway et al., San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art USA, 1962 n.p.

Hoyland's paintings were critically positioned and displayed by Alloway alongside those of William Turnbull, John Plumb, Peter Stroud, Robyn Denny and Bernard Cohen in the 'Situation' category, painters, 'who create, in their own personal ways, colouristic abstract art without getting picturesque in handling, and who use firmly structured form without resembling earlier geometric artists'.<sup>385</sup>

Unfortunately for Hoyland's reputation, the exhibition was generally not well-received, the over-riding impression from critics being that the British painters were simply followers and not originators and that the standard of the work presented was second-rate in comparison with American painting, '[the British] are turning out paintings that look and act like much of the miles and miles of canvas we've scrutinized on our rounds, especially those expressed in the last 12 or 15 years'.<sup>386</sup> Another reviewer concurred with this view, 'some of it seems rather old hat in relation to American art of the last decade and a half' and in a rather pompous declaration asserted that 'it is to be remembered that American painting in this time has led the world in the expression of the common themes of 20<sup>th</sup> century art'.<sup>387</sup> This response was not a good start to Hoyland's American career. Although Hoyland was not named in the actual reviews, nevertheless, the charge of derivativeness would be levelled against his work and as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter would undermine his achievements there.

#### English Eye - Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1965

In 1965 Hoyland's work was presented once more to an American audience when it was included in the exhibition, *The English Eye*, another exhibition intended to showcase English art. The exhibition, a major group survey show of 20<sup>th</sup> -Century paintings and sculptures by over thirty English artists, was curated by Bryan Robertson and Robert Melville and opened at the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery in New York in November 1965. Four paintings by Hoyland - *25.10.64*, *29.6.65*, *3.8.65*,

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<sup>385</sup> Alloway (1962), n.p.

<sup>386</sup> Askew, R. 'It's a Smallish World', *Dallas Morning News*, 27 January 1963, p.2

<sup>387</sup> Porter, B. 'British Reserve Missing in Show Now at DMCA', *Dallas Times Herald*, 14 January 1963 Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

12.8.65 - were selected by Robertson and were shown alongside the work of established artists: Ben Nicholson, Victor Pasmore, and contemporaries of Hoyland's, including Peter Blake and Bridget Riley.<sup>388</sup>

The exhibition catalogue was impressive, an illustrated 130 page monograph, with the introductory essay, constructed in the form of a dialogue, written jointly by Bryan Robertson and Robert Melville. The basic premise of the exhibition, to promote English art, was clearly stated in the introduction, along with a brief résumé on each artist.

In his notice for Hoyland, Melville, whilst acknowledging that Hoyland had been influenced by 'the American masters of the Abstract Sublime', nonetheless, strove to distance Hoyland's body of work from these American painters, arguing that Hoyland's subtle nuances in the application of paint differentiated his work from theirs. Melville anticipated and offered a riposte to the often negative American critical reception of Hoyland, that he was little more than a follower, a plagiarist, and a minor artist compared to American painters. According to Melville the difference was in Hoyland's handling of paint and the effects achieved, the tonal variations taking the viewer into the picture:

But just as the small blocks of colour which represent the 'figure' in his 'figure-ground' schema seem to have equivocal reasons for being there, as if they had just alighted and were about to start a reconnaissance, so the 'ground' assumes the appearance of a curtain suspended from somewhere above the canvas, and the deliberate shifts of tone in the colour invite the surmise that they may be determined by something moving on the other side of the canvas. One will not find such an effect in American abstraction.<sup>389</sup>

In 1967 for the first time Hoyland was invited to present his work in solo exhibitions. The invitations from the Robert Elkon Gallery in New York and the Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles were the direct consequence of the critical success of his first retrospective exhibition at the Whitechapel in 1967, supported by a recommendation

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<sup>388</sup> The artists in the exhibition were Kenneth Armitage, Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Peter Blake, Edward Burra, Roger Cook, Merlyn Evans, Barbara Hepworth, John Hoyland, Thelma Hulbert, Paul Huxley, Phillip King, R.B. Kitaj, Bryan Kneale, Justin Knowles, Richard Lin, Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson, Sidney Nolan, Victor Pasmore, Roland Piche, John Piper, Ceri Richards, Bridget Riley, Christopher Sanderson, Richard Smith, Graham Sutherland, Joe Tilson, Keith Vaughan, Brett Whiteley, and Derrick Woodham

<sup>389</sup> *The English Eye*. Exhibition catalogue by Robert Melville et al., London: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1965, n.p.

from Robertson. No extant records survive for these two shows and it can only be assumed that the exhibitions went largely unnoticed and therefore that the exhibitions were not a success. Few sales were realised (see appendix 3). This is probably the explanation for Hoyland's time with both galleries being short-lived: he showed only once with the Wilder Gallery and twice with the Elkon Gallery. However, Hoyland viewed it differently; according to him the show with the Elkon Gallery was significant because 'it started a network'. The 'network' referred to by Hoyland is difficult to identify and its impact, if at all, even more difficult to evaluate. There is little evidence to suggest that his knowing the New York artists had much bearing on his career on that side of the Atlantic. Notwithstanding this observation, Hoyland's work continued to be exhibited in America, albeit in exhibitions arranged in England; there was little or no direct American participation. In 1968 Hoyland's work was included in two group exhibitions, one in New York, the other in California.

*British Painting Here and Now - Macy's New York, 1968*

The *British Painting Here and Now* exhibition was held at the prestigious New York department store Macy's in September 1968. The exhibition formed part of the store's Great Festival of Great Britain, the result of collaboration between the Board of Trade, the British Consulate in New York, and Macy's London Buying Offices. By all accounts it was a grand affair, with little expense spared to promote British commercial interests and showcase Macy's. The bold and blatant objective was to introduce American consumers to 'some of Britain's finest consumer merchandise', which included contemporary British art. Earl Mountbatten of Burma opened proceedings, accompanied with a fanfare of trumpets, followed by a parade in Herald Square of 160 soldiers and 47 horses from the Royal Regiment of the Queen's Guards. British manufacturers and designers featured prominently on the exclusive guest list: Terence Conran, Ossie Clark, Mary Quant, and Christopher McDonald were among those in attendance. To attract potential customers to the numerous displays and exhibitions a shuttle bus service operated between Macy's store and various

parts of the city and also Yale University in New Haven. To highlight English culture a cricket match between Yale University and BOAC staff took place in the grounds of the university, and machines featured in the British film *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* were displayed. The responsibility for the promotional aspect of the festival was delegated to Sir Roland Penrose, the then Chairman of the ICA, and the London art critic, Mario Amaya. *British Painting Here and Now* included paintings by, among others, David Hockney, John Walker, Allen Jones, Paul Huxley, Patrick Caulfield and John Hoyland. Interestingly, the painting Hoyland submitted, *October 4 1968*, was valued at \$2,200, higher than the works of the other exhibited artists and this can be attributed to the value placed on his work by Leslie Waddington and Hoyland's lifetime reluctance to sell his work too cheaply, another example of his professionalism.<sup>390</sup> The company's press release for the exhibition provided an interesting insight into the perceived status of the new generation of British artists, noting: 'Highly praised in Europe and awarded prizes at important international exhibitions, these artists as a group, present a solid front of British talent which has emerged in less than a decade'.<sup>391</sup>

The festival was well promoted<sup>392</sup> and was successful.<sup>393</sup> Jane S Collier, the secretary to one of Macy's Vice Presidents, in a letter to Penrose wrote of 'the overwhelming success story of Macy's Great Festival of Britain'.<sup>394</sup> In reply, Penrose commented, 'apart from the stories that appeared in the New York press and the fact that two important galleries, Rhode Island and Trenton have taken on further showings of the exhibition thanks to the initiative taken in the first place by Macy's I have little to add. The outstanding feature of its success was the interest shown by art critics and

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<sup>390</sup> David Hockney's *Sunbather* (1966) was valued at \$2000; Peter Blake's *Portrait of David Hockney in a Spanish Interior* (1965) was valued at \$1500; Patrick Caulfield's *Still Life on Checked Table* (1967) was valued at \$1400; John Walker's *Tense* (1967) was valued at \$300; and Paul Huxley's *Untitled No 96* (1996) was valued at \$450. Only Allen Jones' *Diptych* (nd) was valued higher, at \$2500. Information extracted from *News from Macys New York* Press Release : New York: Macys, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1968, Robertson, B. Unpublished Personal Papers, Tate TGA 200301

<sup>391</sup> Macy's Press Release for '*British Painting Here and Now*' exhibition, Macy's department Store, New York, September, 1968 Robertson, B. Unpublished papers, Tate TGA/200310

<sup>392</sup> Over 150 full page advertisements placed around New York and surrounding areas and full page advertisements in newspapers and 'spots' bought on television and radio channels.

<sup>393</sup> Anon. 'Macy's Great Festival of Great Britain', *Board of Trade Journal*, 11 October 1968, p.990

<sup>394</sup> Robertson, B. Unpublished papers, Tate TGA/200310

those important patrons of the arts which came to the cocktail party so generously offered by Macy's during the exhibition'.<sup>395</sup>

*New British Painting and Sculpture - UCLA Galleries, 1968*

Later in 1968 Hoyland's strong relationship with the Whitechapel Gallery resulted in another positive outcome, his work being included in the group exhibition, *New British Painting and Sculpture*, the intention being, once more, to present British art to North American audiences. The exhibition opened in the spring of 1968 at the University of California Art Galleries in Los Angeles (UCLA) before travelling to Vancouver, Seattle, Chicago, and Houston. But the exhibition was not well received. A clear pattern was emerging. Despite the best attempts by curators and critics on this side of the Atlantic to promote British art in America there was reluctance among their American counterparts to endorse British artistic achievements. A number of charges were levelled against British painting.

One critic noted: 'a sense of equilibrium, of individualism often bordering on a subdued romanticism, of very personal understatement and of committed inventiveness informs the exhibition'. He then proceeded to claim that, 'a number of the young artists we encounter here have been influenced by contemporary American idioms, from Abstract Expressionism through Neo-Dada to reductive art, they demonstrate neither the audacity and new vitality found at the end of the American vanguard spectrum nor the idealisation of indifference or depersonalisation found at the other polarity'. His specific observation on Hoyland's work was especially scathing, 'the underlying romanticism mentioned before can be found in the earthy color forms of John Hoyland'.<sup>396</sup> Associating Hoyland's work with that of the previous generation of English painters demonstrated how little American critics understood about the differences between the European and American art traditions and in particular about Hoyland's careful manipulation of materials.

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<sup>395</sup> Robertson, B. Unpublished papers, Tate TGA/200310

<sup>396</sup> Seldin, H.J. 'Review', *Artforum*, February 1968, p.84

### John Hoyland - Andre Emmerich Gallery, 1969-1973

Continued interest in Hoyland's work became evident in 1969 when he was invited to show with the Andre Emmerich Gallery in New York. The Andre Emmerich opened in 1954 and until its closure in 1998 was one of New York's, if not America's, premier commercial art galleries. It was situated in the Fuller Building on Fifty-Seventh Street in midtown Manhattan. During that time he managed an impressive stable of modern and contemporary artists, among them, the colour-field painters Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Helen Frankenthaler.<sup>397</sup> In the late 1950s he welcomed these artists into his stable after their previous gallery, French & Company, closed. He also represented David Hockney and Anthony Caro, granting Caro his first New York solo exhibition in 1964. Although it must remain conjecture, it is likely that Caro played a part in the Emmerich Gallery inviting Hoyland to show there five years later.<sup>398</sup> But the part played by Greenberg may have been more significant (see p.164).

Over the next four years Hoyland's work was exhibited there on four occasions. The gallery promoted his work, taking out full page advertisements in *Artforum* but the end results were far from convincing. There is little to support the proposition that he was a commercial success.

### British Painting and Sculpture 1960-1970 - National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, 1971

In 1971 Hoyland's work was included in a survey exhibition arranged by the Tate Gallery and the British Council for the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. *British Painting and Sculpture 1960-1970* promoted the achievements of contemporary British art. The preface was written by Norman Reid, Director of the Tate Gallery, and a lengthy introduction was provided by Edward Lucie-Smith. In reply to his own question – Why an exhibition of British painting and sculpture? Reid, responded, in a carefully worded statement that implied the importance and

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<sup>397</sup> Other artists included, Sam Francis, Al Held, Herbert Ferber, Karel Appel, and Pierre Alechinsky

<sup>398</sup> According to Theo Waddington, it was Greenberg who was instrumental in Hoyland being invited to show with the Andre Emmerich Gallery. See p.178 and Footnote <sup>395</sup>

influence of trends in American art, 'during the last twenty years or so the tide was turned with a vengeance: the centuries-old flood of works of art coming out of Europe has been met by a strong counter culture, an artistic Gulf Stream with remarkable effects on the artistic climate in England and among the younger artists no one of significance has escaped these powerful influences'.<sup>399</sup>

But American critics remained largely unmoved and unimpressed. The critical reception of Hoyland's work in the United States, notably in New York, where Clement Greenberg continued to wield considerable power, was at best lukewarm, and at worst dismissive. As stated earlier, at the commencement of Hoyland's career Greenberg commended his work but this position changed when Hoyland moved in new directions, extending his painting beyond self-sufficiency and flatness, which challenged Greenberg's narrow definition of what painting is. The animosity between the two can be traced to Hoyland's first retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1967. When Greenberg asked Hoyland, why do you paint more than one image? Hoyland's replied, 'because I've got more than one idea'. Greenberg retaliated with 'I'll never forget this. That betrays a psychological weakness'.<sup>400</sup> The tension between the two was exacerbated in 1969, on the occasion of Hoyland's first solo exhibition at the Andre Emmerich. Greenberg told Hoyland that he had hung the wrong paintings, claiming that the better work was in the back room and Hoyland should re-hang the show. Hoyland refused. At the preview Greenberg provocatively took collectors into the back room. However, the relationship between Hoyland and Greenberg is not as straightforward as this implies. Correspondence from Theo Waddington provides an invaluable insight:

Clem did not mind differences of opinion. It was Clem who helped Leslie get John into Andre Emmerich's Gallery. Clem supported Morris Louis, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Ken Noland and Jules Olitski all of whom were John's friends and all met with John at Clem's apartment. I was involved in many such exchanges of ideas. Unlike, in England, in New York artists visited each other's studios for an exchange of ideas. John loved that. Clem came to

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<sup>399</sup> Reid, N. 'Foreword', *British Painting and Sculpture 1960-1970*. Exhibition catalogue by Edward Lucie-Smith et al., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1970, p.8

<sup>400</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.13

Montreal with Ken Noland for my Hoyland show in 1969 and spent the day with John and me helping hang the show. John was not keen on Clem's hang but I persuaded him to be quiet, as they were leaving before the vernissage and we had time to put it back the way John and I wanted!! The important point was that Clem and Ken cared enough about John to make the journey.<sup>401</sup>

Less than enthusiastic press coverage of Hoyland's work continued. The idea that abstraction had become mannerist was adopted by some critics when reviewing his work. The *Artforum* review of Hoyland's second exhibition in New York, at the Elkon Gallery, (in 1968) concurred:

John Hoyland is a young Englishman exhibiting here for the first time [sic] who gives one pause to worry about what appears to be the growing academism in stained field painting. In Hoyland's case, the heritage of Morris Louis's long glowing neon stripes is especially sensible. That Hoyland has successfully integrated this heritage into his vocabulary (as have, it must be admitted, so many others) is also a measurement of the painting scholasticism that it has become.<sup>402</sup>

Later that year the critic Jane Livingston, again, writing in *Artforum* about Hoyland's exhibition at UCLA, observed, somewhat disparagingly, 'Hoyland's rampant plagiarism seems a mere scratch on the adscititious<sup>403</sup> surface beside the exhaustive array of borrowed tricks surrounding him'.<sup>404</sup>

This review infuriated Hoyland's supporter, Bryan Robertson and provoked an angry response. In a letter to the editor of *Artforum* Robertson wrote:

It is also informative to find included in the sub-title of the Los Angeles newsletter a reference to John Hoyland's show at the Nicholas Wilder Gallery and then to find no mention of the show whatever in the text that follows. What went wrong? Having read on page 37 of your journal that "Hoyland's...results are impressive to say the very least" and that "his paintings would hold their own alongside the best recent American color painting", it is disappointing to find on page 64 a reference by another writer to "Hoyland's rampant plagiarism" and other disagreeable qualities. Editorial generosity is a fine thing but it requires the discipline of objective congruence, if not consistency.<sup>405</sup>

Unsurprisingly, there was no response from *Artforum's* senior editorial team. Worse was to follow. Reviewing Hoyland's 1970 exhibition at the Andre Emmerich Gallery in

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<sup>401</sup> Waddington, T ([theo@theowaddington.com](mailto:theo@theowaddington.com)) Email to Emma Lilley ([emma.lilley@btinternet.com](mailto:emma.lilley@btinternet.com)) forwarded to Chris Davies ([c.davies5@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:c.davies5@bathspa.ac.uk)) 27 February 2015

<sup>402</sup> Pincus-Witten, R. 'John Hoyland at the Elkon Gallery, New York', *Artforum*, Vol.6, No.2, February 1968, p.50

<sup>403</sup> Definition of adscititious is 'not inherent or essential; derived from something outside'. [Online] <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/adscititious> [15 January 2015]

<sup>404</sup> Livingston, J. 'Review of *New British Painting and Sculpture*, UCLA Galleries', *Artforum*, Vol.6, No.7, March 1968, p.64

<sup>405</sup> Robertson, B. 'Letter to the Editor', *Artforum*, Vol.7, No.9, September 1968, p.4

New York for *Artforum*, Robert Pincus-Witten disparagingly referred to Hoyland's work as 'decorative', and asserted that Hoyland's problem was 'how to be an American painter while being English and situated in England'; that his painting was too derivative, as 'one sees his work as not being authentically his own but something on the order of here a Hofmann, there a Poons, this from early Guston, that from immediate considerations of flat field painting.' He concluded, 'despite his patent good-naturedness, I find his painting artistically oppressive because I sense no conviction, no *raison d'être* for this "push-pull", "drip", "gesture", "openness", "all over", "big canvas", "horizontal-binary composition", "flat fields", "dayglo acrylic", and so on'.<sup>406</sup> Ironically, Pincus-Witten was inaccurate: in 1970 Hoyland was not situated in England but living in New York. Moreover, the review reflects America's obsession with the notion of originality and a misreading of the historical importance of influence on the practice of European painters. As Crow has correctly observed, 'knowledge had been interpreted in ways that ran contrary to the critical orthodoxies developing on the other side of the Atlantic'.<sup>407</sup> And as one art historian has pointed out, 'artists scrutinise other artists in distinctive and idiosyncratic ways, through the filter of their own preoccupations'.<sup>408</sup> As demonstrated in chapter 2, Hoyland's influences extended beyond that of the New York School of Painters and the European painting tradition was of equal if not greater importance. Hoyland took the most appropriate stimuli from both traditions and forged them into his own style. However, not all American critics were so dismissive of Hoyland's work. The art historian Dore Ashton, reviewing Hoyland's 1969 exhibition at the Elkon Gallery began her review with, 'among painting exhibitions which have been admittedly sparse for several seasons I found John Hoyland's at the Elkon Gallery to be the most impressive'. Whilst stating her concerns, 'that Hoyland's fusion of recognisable "school" mannerisms is sometimes disheartening' and noting how Hoyland 'has

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<sup>406</sup> Pincus-Witten, R. 'John Hoyland', *Artforum*, Vol.9, No.12, December 1970, p.77

<sup>407</sup> Crow (1993), p.8

<sup>408</sup> Hammer, M. *Francis Bacon: Back to Degas*, Rothenstein Lecture 2011, Tate Papers 17, London: Tate Gallery, 2012, p. 2 <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/francis-bacon-back-degas>. Hammer cited Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, New Haven and London 1991, pp.58–62 to support his argument.

apparently been hit far too forcefully by the American "post-painterly" abstraction rhetoric, and has had difficulty extracting his own imagery', she, nevertheless, ended the review on a positive note:

There were two canvases which I felt could be dealt with entirely on their own terms, and of the two, one of which I would rate as an excellent painting in any terms. This latter is a large canvas, bisected by a red bar which has a curiously activating function in relation to its two equal neighbouring forms, and the blackish ground on which they all sit ambiguously. Hoyland's casual paint application is highly effective in making of this relatively simple and familiar spatial division a complex and unfamiliar experience.<sup>409</sup>

In the 1960s, and beyond, American critics lined up to undermine the achievements of British and most European artists. The principal charge was that British art was somewhat restrained and parochial and unable to move away from its Romantic tradition. Providing 'an American View' of British painting in 1964, Max Kozloff, Art Editor of *The Nation*, scathingly observed:

It is hard to be unaware of a general deficiency in British art. Timorousness, in itself, does not accurately express it. Rather, the word underlies the withdrawals and missed opportunities which have resulted from a certain ethical nicety, a fastidious and yet involuntary equilibrium of pictorial impulses. Sacrifices of radical positions in British painting, when known as sacrifices, are made for the sake of imaginary virtues. Sensuous restraints, further, cannot be respected when there is little sensuous responsiveness. And one questions a moral husbanding of energy in a picture when there is no implication of energy. Less than wilful reticence, the paintings on display seemed imbued with a rigidity of feeling. Their undemonstrative, well-bred tone, in fact, has been eliciting ever-increasing criticism, a criticism all the more impatient because it has not succeeded in deflecting its subject from the blandness of its best intentions.<sup>410</sup>

And when praise was accorded to British painting it was often back-handed, with the claim made it was the American influence which elevated the former from its apparent parochialism. A good example of such reviews was the one posted by Gene Baro. Reviewing the exhibition - *Young British Painters* - at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Baro seemed to support the twelve painters on show, who he referred to

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<sup>409</sup> Ashton, D. 'New York Commentary - John Hoyland at the Elkon Gallery', *Studio International*, Vol.177, No.912, June 1969, p.289

<sup>410</sup> Kozloff, M. 'British Painting: An American View', *Encounter*, Vol. XXII Part 1, January 1 1964, p.39. David Sylvester made similar observations about British art, in a review of the *Situation* artists, arguing that British painting was only about style', what we have seen here is a new kind of orthodoxy, a new Style, and nothing could be further removed from the spirit which has informed the New York School, with its repugnance for the idea of style. New York has produced more good artists than Europe since the war because it has produced more artists who have acted upon all the consequences of the fact that art is no longer a profession'. Sylvester (1960), p.337

as 'a good index of current preoccupations' but then attributed the 'improvement' in British painting to the exemplary lead taken by American painters:

Familiarity with avant-garde American art has given young British painters of the post-war generation a somewhat more rigorous view of the art of painting than has been common here among established artists in this century. They are certainly less derivative and imitative than earlier generations. American influence, where it has reached them, has been special and personal, relevant to individual sensibility, not just a good idea to try; or else it has been on the level of attitude, requiring a seriousness and professionalism often absent from the arts in Britain.<sup>411</sup>

But despite this apparent commendation, Baro dedicated most of the extended essay to highlighting the problems with British art whilst simultaneously promoting the strengths of American abstract art. According to Baro, 'the dominating strain in English painting has been romantic and narrative'; noting that this 'romantic disposition in English art is pervasive' and 'characteristically, if the painting is not merely a narrative, the artist works to capture a quality of appearance'. And even when British painters turned their hand to abstraction they did not get it, misunderstanding 'the rigours of Abstract Expressionism'. In Baro's opinion, 'the idea that art is a species of formal statement concerning reality – that the artist has something to say, and that his statement is nothing more than the organisation of the medium is still pretty much a foreign one in Britain'. Subsequently, 'abstract art (in Britain) can claim no exemption from the strictures noted above. It too has been overwhelmingly romantic in orientation. Where it has drawn upon foreign models, it has misunderstood or adapted or reduced them'.<sup>412</sup> Implicit in these statements is the view that the only artists qualified to produce abstract paintings were his fellow countrymen or women, that a second-rate American abstract painter (and there were many) was somehow preferable to a first class, if such existed, British abstract painter.

The American critic Michael Fried typified the position of many American art historians and critics when in the introduction to his 1965 study of the work of three

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<sup>411</sup> Baro, G. 'British Painting: the Post-War Generation', *Studio International*, Vol.174, No.893, October 1967, pp.133-141

<sup>412</sup> Baro (1967) pp.133-141

Post-Painterly Abstractionists - Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, and Frank Stella - he claimed that, 'for twenty years or more almost all the best new painting and sculpture has been done in America'.<sup>413</sup> In her introduction to the group exhibition *Marks on a Canvas*<sup>414</sup>, which opened at the Museum am Ostwall in Dortmund in the summer of 1969, before moving on to Vienna in the autumn, Anne Seymour noted:

One of the by-products of the intense artistic activity everywhere in the past ten years has been a certain amount of odious comparison. Numerous critical stones have been flung across the Atlantic at British painting.<sup>415</sup>

However, the view that the Americans were wholly Anglophobic was challenged in 1968 by Kermit Champa, then Assistant Professor of Art History at Yale University. In his review for *Artforum* of the exhibition, *Recent British Painting: Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Collection* at the Tate and Whitechapel galleries in the winter of 1967, Champa claimed, 'owing to the deep-rooted and frequently ludicrous anglophilia of many American museum directors and private collectors, most of the artists represented in the Stuyvesant holdings have appeared both singly and in groups in exhibitions all over the United States. Beyond this, British artists and/or critics have been regular visitors to the major American universities'.<sup>416</sup> Part of this claim was true for Hoyland. As shown above, he was included in a number of exhibitions in the United States but few American collectors or collections acquired his work (see chapter 5). And it was not until 1972 was he able to secure paid employment there, when he was appointed Charles A. Dana Professor of Fine Art at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. However, this had little bearing on either his critical reception or commercial success on the other side of the Atlantic. The only painting of Hoyland's in the university collection was one given to the university by him.

In his review Champa advocated Hoyland, '[his] paintings are, in fact the only really promising statements in that part of recent British painting which parallels American

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<sup>413</sup> Fried, M. 'Three American Painters' in Fried, M. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997, p.21

<sup>414</sup> Patrick Caulfield, Bernard Cohen, David Hockney, John Hoyland, Paul Huxley, Allen Jones, Mark Lancaster, Jeremy Moon, Bridget Riley, Richard Smith, and John Walker were selected for the exhibition.

<sup>415</sup> Seymour was arguing that many American critics had criticised British painting. Seymour (1969), p.4

<sup>416</sup> Champa, K. 'Recent British Painting at the Tate', *Artforum*, Vol.7, No.3, March 1968, p.33

work'. And although he was cautious about Hoyland's choice of colours, 'at present his color choices tend to be safe (complementary contrasts, etc)', nevertheless, Champa ended the review on a positive note:

For the moment, Hoyland has everything working in his favor, and his results are impressive to say the very least. His paintings would hold their own alongside the best recent American color painting. In Hoyland the English have, whether they like it or not, a figure of potential international importance and it is a fortunate country indeed that can offer the promise of a painter like Hoyland and the fulfilment of a sculptor like Tony Caro.<sup>417</sup>

What is equally interesting, and revealing, is an aside made by Champa, which demonstrated a degree of animosity from some British quarters towards America. Before commending Hoyland's work, Champa noted, 'one is tempted to moderate one's praise of Hoyland's work in writing for an American magazine for fear of compromising his reputation in England'.<sup>418</sup> It implies that scepticism about British artists attempting to position themselves and their work in the United States was not one way; that on this side of the Atlantic there were some among the artistic establishment who were hostile towards what was taking place on the opposite shores.

These anti-British sentiments rankled with many English painters, including Patrick Heron. Angered by what he defined as cultural imperialism he began his defence of British art in a passionate speech at the ICA in July 1965 and followed it with two journal articles.<sup>419</sup> It was surely these articles that prompted Champa's remark about American magazines. Heron argued that 'a kind of cultural imperialism' was operational in the American art establishment, the undermining of British art from American critics was commonplace and Heron provided a list of examples supporting this. In particular, he lambasted Gene Baro, who despite commending twelve British painters, including Hoyland, for being 'less derivative and imitative than earlier

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<sup>417</sup> Champa (1968), p.37

<sup>418</sup> Champa (1968), p.37

<sup>419</sup> See Heron, P. 'The Ascendency of London in the Sixties', *Studio International*, Vol.172, No.884, February 1968, pp. 280-1 and Heron, P. 'A Kind of Cultural Imperialism?', *Studio International*, Vol.175, No.892, February 1968, pp.62-3. There was no love lost between Heron and Greenberg. According to Theo Waddington, Greenberg's 'main focus as an enemy in England was Patrick Heron'. Email to Emma Lilley ([emma.lilley@btinternet](mailto:emma.lilley@btinternet)) forwarded to Chris Davies ([c.davies5@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:c.davies5@bathspa.ac.uk)) 27 February 2015

generations', nonetheless, in Heron's view, actively promoted this American "cultural imperialism" (as I'm afraid we must now label so much art criticism - or, rather, art promotion - now emanating from the United States) and for implying 'that any painting of significance in Britain exists solely under the *aegis* of American painting'.<sup>420</sup>

Much has been written about the apparent protectionism operated by the American art establishment, of a cartel in operation, safeguarding the interests of American artists and promoting the view that the history of late Modernism is exclusively the history of American painting. For as Charles Harrison argued, 'Modernism itself...had now to be perceived and understood in terms of the dynamic of American painting and the rationalization of theory for which Greenberg was largely responsible'.<sup>421</sup> It can be argued that gatekeepers, led by Greenberg, granted or denied access to the New York art world and wielded disproportionate power and influence. As becomes evident in subsequent chapters, although Hoyland networked and knew New York-based artists as well as Greenberg himself, he failed to gain a foothold in American, especially New York, art markets. Hoyland referred to those on the inner circle of the New York art scene as 'the gang'.<sup>422</sup> Hoyland did not have an influential sponsor in the United States and without doubt this impacted on his career there.

One outcome of this protectionism was the acquisition policies of major American museums and this may partly explain the reason for Hoyland's under-representation in their collections (see chapter 5). American museums were actively engaged in the promotion of home-grown talent at the expense of art from other nations, operating an informal embargo. As Tooby points out, 'the Museum of Modern Art, New York promoted a singular, highly structured view of art history which saw art's progression

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<sup>420</sup> Heron (1968), p.281

<sup>421</sup> Harrison, C. 'Modernism and the Transatlantic Dialogue' in Frascina, F. (ed) *Pollock and After: the Critical Debate*, New York: Harper & Row, 1985, pp.217-32

<sup>422</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), pp.161-2

as a series of logical developments, culminating in Abstract Expressionism from New York'.<sup>423</sup>

But this apparent patriotism runs deeper and, it can be argued, can be traced to the origins of the Abstract Expressionist movement, and from the beginning the shaping of the movement had never been neutral. According to Gibson, the construction of the hegemony and mythology surrounding Abstract Expressionism was deliberate and carefully choreographed.<sup>424</sup> It was organised and operated as a closed system, predicated by selection, with inclusions and exclusions. To join the 'club' one had to be American, male, and, most importantly, original. 'Originality' extended beyond the purely aesthetic; from a commercial perspective it was an excellent selling point, for as Resnick pointed out, 'collectors were already convinced that the only good art is original art. You've got to have your trademark. You've got to convince everybody that you're different from everybody else. Its potential is economical, it's the function of value to be different'.<sup>425</sup>

Thus it is easy to see why the prevailing view of British art among many American tastemakers remained one of negativity and this attitude lingered well beyond the timeline of this thesis. This can be attributed to 'cultural chauvinism', the belief that American art was superior to the art produced elsewhere. Consequently, reasons, difficult to substantiate, were found to under-value British art. Reflecting on Sixties British art, including Hoyland's painting, Robert Rosenblum expressed such views, when he suggested that British art is predicated on:

Compromise and flexibility...Britain is a land in which all things forceful, intense and direct are clouded by veils of restraint and fluctuation and...the British mode of reticence, understatement and gentility, internationally recognized to the point of caricature, is instantly savoured, making the outside world quite shrill and emphatic by contrast. All this permeates much

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<sup>423</sup> Tooby, M. 'Introduction', *The Presence of Painting: Aspects of British Abstraction 1957-1988*. Exhibition catalogue by Michael Tooby et al., London: The Arts Council, 1988, p.3

<sup>424</sup> Gibson, A.E. *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics*, London: Yale University Press, 1997, pp.1-167

<sup>425</sup> Resnik, M. - Quoted in Gibson (1997), p.25

British art, which, especially for Americans used to noisier, more muscular stuff, may seem hushed, diminutive, pallid.<sup>426</sup>

In his observations on Hoyland, Rosenblum paid an ambiguous and back-handed compliment, claiming once more that American art was tough whereas British art was somewhat moderate and confused:

And when, as first proclaimed by Roger Coleman in the 1960 "Situation" exhibition, British abstract painting swelled to a minimum of thirty square feet, most of the newer generation, such as Robyn Denny, John Hoyland and Richard Smith, continued through the 1960s to soften the blow of first Newman and then Noland and Stella. With usual British moderation, they offered more soft-spoken and temperate variations on these clear and loud blasts from America.<sup>427</sup>

Critics writing reviews for newspapers outside New York and also Canadian critics were more sympathetic to Hoyland's cause. Reviewing Hoyland's paintings at the Royal Oak's Rubiner Gallery, Detroit, in 1974, Richard Findlater started with a commendation and recognised that for Hoyland commercial or critical success in America had proved difficult. Findlater's judgement is worth quoting extensively.

For those who feel the heyday of contemporary American art was in the '50s and early '60s – and that it has been downhill ever since – the current show at the Royal Oak's Rubiner Gallery is a wonderful reminder of things recently past. Ironically, it is an Englishman's rather than an American artist's work that is being shown. However, John Hoyland's paintings make it an easy matter to remember the vitality and strength of our own abstract expressionists' efforts.<sup>428</sup>

Continuing, he noted Hoyland's non-American influences but also recognised:

With the long history of English painting to draw upon and his being so close to the churning art world of Europe, the British painter has benefitted in having several influences on his development...As a student he was fascinated with the work of several British artists, primarily Turner, and later, he became intrigued with Matisse and the Fauvists.<sup>429</sup>

This raises an interesting question? How did the art critic writing for the *Detroit Free Press* arrive at this judgement? It is plausible that by 1974 Hoyland was trying to re-

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<sup>426</sup> Rosenblum, R. 'British Twentieth-Century Art: A Transatlantic View', in *British Art in the Twentieth Century Exhibition* catalogue by Susan Compton et al., The Royal Academy of Arts, London: Prestel, 1987, p.90. See Sylvester's comments. See Footnote.<sup>404</sup> It can be argued that Sylvester's statement is opinion not argument; there is little in the statement or subsequent evidence in the article to support his opinion. Sylvester made no attempt to define 'style' or differentiate, with visual examples, the apparent difference between American or European art, or establish the 'supremacy' of American art. Sylvester failed to distinguish between European and British art in an article dedicated to reviewing the *Situation* (1960) exhibition, of British, not European, art, if there is such a clear and defining distinction between the two.

<sup>427</sup> Rosenblum (1987) pp.91-2

<sup>428</sup> Findlater, R. 'A Briton's Contemporary Clusters Show a Touch of American Influence', *Detroit Free Press*, 27 October 1974, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

<sup>429</sup> Findlater (1974), n.p.

align his career, and thus he or Waddington Galleries, was careful in the promotional copy that was supplied to American gallery owners, to ensure that the European influences on his work were not missed by critics.

After carefully describing the nuances in Hoyland's painting, Findlater observed that they are 'beautifully detailed, though at first their scale and colourful brilliance overshadow their precision and they have a vibrancy that makes it possible to enjoy them on many different levels of sophistication'. He concluded, 'whatever the motivations behind John Hoyland, his paintings display both these qualities [style and taste], as well as a vibrancy that excites the most blasé viewer'.<sup>430</sup>

Interestingly, when Hoyland's work was shown alongside or compared with the work of American artists in exhibitions in England his work was not deemed to be inferior. In the reviews for two exhibitions in the early 1970s, Nigel Gosling, the critic for the *Observer*, noted, 'Hoyland makes a very creditable European echo – contained, gravitational and soundly based – to the wide non-dimensional expansiveness of Louis. That he can stand up to such devastating competition is a high tribute'.<sup>431</sup>

Without question the protectionism and cultural chauvinism outlined above had a detrimental effect on the reception of Hoyland's career on that side of the Atlantic. A further possible reason for Hoyland's failure to establish himself in America was simply that abstraction as a product had reached its sell-by-date. Hoyland entered the American art market at the wrong time, at the point when interest in Abstract Expressionism was in decline, when other art forms were competing for ascendancy and garnering critical acclaim and taking market share. One of Abstract Expressionism's most avid advocates, Harold Rosenberg, acknowledged as much in 1964 when he observed, 'a new mode to replace Abstract Expressionism was felt to be long overdue, if for no other reason than that some of the leaders had been with us for as many as twenty years. By all the presumed laws of vanguardism, no

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<sup>430</sup> Findlater (1974), n.p.

<sup>431</sup> Gosling, N. 'Visions off Bond Street', *Observer*, 17 May 1970, p.28

innovating style can survive for that length of time without losing its radical verve and turning into an Academy'.<sup>432</sup> And O'Brien, writing on Greenberg pointed out, that although 'the period 1960 to 1965 marked the apogee of Greenberg's reputation as a critic it also marked the beginning of a round of challenges to his critical position'.<sup>433</sup> This coincided with the emergence of a stronger secondary market and a new type of collector.

Hoyland's New York dealer, Andre Emmerich, concurred with this view. According to Emmerich, the blame lay with the changing status of art collectors towards the end of the 1950s: 'In the '50s, all sorts of people bought, essentially eccentrics. A few doctors and lawyers. A few other people. It was a very quiet sort of art world. And people bought not in a very programmatic way, without great expectation of anything except the pleasure of owning the thing'. But then the market changed, with different collectors emerging, displaying different taste and motivations. At the time this new breed of collector, exemplified by Robert and Ethel Scull, began to collect or, it can be argued, speculate in art. The Sculls, in the opinion of Emmerich, were:

The presages of a certain future. Newly well-off, fairly vulgar people...He and Ethel discovered that collecting art can also be a shoehorn into the whole social level. And they were the bellwethers, the Sculls, of a whole slew of collectors, the phalanx who came behind them. They were the phalanx of people who made a lot of money and who, after they bought their third car and the fourth mink and the ski lodge and so forth, discovered that buying art opened up the upper reaches of society in their town far more effectively than anything else...they moved strongly into pop art.<sup>434</sup>

If Emmerich is correct in his recollections and judgement about the American art market in the 1960s; that the new emerging audiences bought into Pop art not abstraction, this may partly explain Hoyland's lack of commercial success in America.

For as Emmerich explained:

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<sup>432</sup> Rosenberg was making the assumption that Abstract Expressionism is abstraction and makes no reference to Post-Painterly Abstraction, which succeeded the earlier movement. See Rosenberg, H. 'Past and Possibility' in Rosenberg, R. *The Anxious Object*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, p.26

<sup>433</sup> O'Brien, J. 'Introduction', Greenberg, C., *The Collected Essays Vol. 4: Modernism with a Vengeance* (ed.) O'Brien, J. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993, p.11

<sup>434</sup> Emmerich, A. Quoted in 'Oral history interview with André Emmerich', *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution*. [Online] <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-andr-emmerich-12571> [10 February 2014]

And the masses started to go into the museums. Mass taste is always vulgar, by definition, because as you know the Latin bible is the Vulgate bible, the language of the people. *Vulgus* is people. The taste of the masses is always a pop one. Fast food is more popular than good food. When you had mass attendance and mass buying of art and mass influx into the art world the kind of art that appeals to the masses became the most popular. My view is that it was not the best art possible but the most popular, the most accessible art. And that was most easily understood by newcomers. And it is this that caused popularity, immense popularity, of certain kinds of art beginning in the '60s, late '60s.<sup>435</sup>

The new type of collector coincided with the emergence of a more aggressive secondary market, where auction houses began to take a more active role in controlling the production and supply of art. More sophisticated marketing plans increased demand. This supported the changing American art world. Speculation and quick profit, not collecting, took on greater importance with bull markets the inevitable outcome.

Once again timing played a part in Hoyland's career trajectory. By the time he had entered the American art world interest in and the demand for the type of painting he was producing was on the wane, replaced by Pop art.

If John Hoyland's success is measured by public exposure then it is difficult to support the claim that his attempts to establish a platform for his work in the United States had been successful. Over a twenty year period, from 1963 to 1982, his work was included in six group exhibitions in American non-dealer exhibitions, none of which can be defined as seminal exhibitions held at first-rate venues. Out of the fourteen solo exhibitions eight were at either at the Elkon, Wilder, or Emmerich galleries, but the rest were at less prestigious galleries. Undoubtedly, the four solo exhibitions held between 1969 and 1972 at the Emmerich gallery marks the high point of his achievement but, according to Hoyland's records, sales were poor.

On reflection Hoyland's decision to accept Andre Emmerich's invitation to show with his New York gallery may also have been a mistake. The competition from the major

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<sup>435</sup> Emmerich (1993) [Online] <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-andr-emmerich-12571> [10 February 2104]

well-established American artists in Emmerich's stable may have been too intense. Bearing in mind the apparent Anglophobia among the American, in particular the New York, art establishment and given the choice collectors and museum staff probably decided to buy the work of American artists in preference to the work of John Hoyland. One can only speculate but Hoyland may have sold more work if he had shown with a second tier New York gallery. For as Leo Castelli, one of America's most astute post-war dealers noted:

The buying public, clients, museums, and others who came to buy, are only interested in those stars, and not in others whom they consider, correctly or incorrectly, second rate, whereas in a smaller gallery with less competition, they might be the main artists.<sup>436</sup>

Therefore, he and his New York dealer was unable to capitalise on these shows and his exhibition record in America, apart from the occasional one-off show effectively came to a close in 1973, coincident with his return to the United Kingdom in that year, having divided his time for four years between New York and England or travelling with Eloise Laws. After 1973 following the completion of his appointment as Charles A. Dana Professor of Fine Art for twelve months at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York in 1972, Hoyland returned only to America for the occasional visit.

### Canada

In the mid-1960s Leslie Waddington expanded his business interests and potential market by opening a gallery in Montreal, managed and run by his brother Theo. Between 1968 and 1982 Hoyland enjoyed five exhibitions at the Waddington's Montreal galleries.<sup>437</sup> The second of these exhibitions received good notices. The critic for the *Montreal Star* explained, 'there are artists who explore every avenue of a creative stage, moving on to the next only when they have exhausted each

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<sup>436</sup> Castelli, L. Quoted in De Coppett, L. and Jones, A. *The Art Dealers*, New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1984, p.110

<sup>437</sup> Hoyland showed five times in Montreal, four times at Waddington Fine Art, Montreal, in 1967, 1968, 1971, 1975 and once, in 1978, when the gallery was renamed Waddington Galleries. [Online] <http://www.johnhoyland.com/exhibitions/> [10 January 2015]

inventive possibility. When they do so, action becomes reaction. John Hoyland in this exhibition shows both the before and after of the change'.<sup>438</sup>

### South America and Australia

#### São Paulo Bienal 1969

Following the success of his 1967 Whitechapel retrospective Hoyland was selected, along with Anthony Caro, to represent Britain at the 1969 São Paulo X Bienal. It should have marked a high point in Hoyland's international career but this did not happen. This was not the first time that Hoyland enjoyed exposure in Latin America. In 1966 his work was included in a well-received group exhibition held at the Instituto de Arte Contemporaneo in Lima in Peru.<sup>439</sup> The work was selected by Alan Bowness, Sir Herbert Read and David Thompson, three past advocates of Hoyland's. Apparently the exhibition was arranged after the 1965 *São Paulo Bienal* was postponed.

The *Bienal de São Paulo* is the second oldest and most prestigious art biennial in the world after the *Venice Biennale*. Throughout the 1950s the *São Paulo Bienal* attracted entries from well-established European artists including the British artists Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. The *1969 São Paulo Bienal* should have provided both Caro and Hoyland with an ideal marketing opportunity, an opportunity to break into and position their art and extend influence in the growing Latin American art markets but because the exhibition was shrouded in controversy this did not come about. At the planning stage and in the months leading to the exhibition the prospects looked promising. São Paulo was a well-established bastion of Modernism. In 1922 the city had hosted the first *Semana de Arte Moderna*

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<sup>438</sup> Anon. 'John Hoyland at Waddington Galleries, 1456 Sherbrooke W', *Montreal Star*, 14 September 1971, Press Cuttings, Hoyland Studio, n.p.

<sup>439</sup> It was well received: 'This small exhibition was warmly welcomed by the Instituto and appreciated by the critics. In addition to comment on each of the six works, and after acknowledging the collaboration between the Council and the IAC, La Prensa added: London is to-day the centre of the most powerful pictorial movements. Historical and social circumstances have transformed Empire...and contributed to the surging of a generation seeking new forms, avid for change but without rancour, sincere in its plans, which are not to break with the past but to live with the age. In this exhibition which Lima has the privilege to admire, there is a message of illumination, full of colour...realised with audacity, imagination, humour and quality'. British Council Fine Arts Advisory Committee: Minutes of Meetings – Purchases February 1967 Eccles, D. ([diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org](mailto:diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org)) *John Hoyland*. Email to Chris Davies ([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 15 October 2010

(Modern Art Week). Middle class audiences were familiar with Modernism and avant-garde art genres. Abstraction was not a new phenomenon, not after the Ruptura movement had been established itself in the city in 1952. São Paulo in 1969 appeared to be the ideal setting for an exhibition of Hoyland's work; it complemented Hoyland's self-proclaimed urban aesthetic. In the carefully crafted essay for the exhibition catalogue the critic and art historian Charles Harrison endorsed Hoyland's credentials as an international artist, an artist with the ability to transcend provincialism, an artist who could be taken seriously with his American counterparts:

He is also one of the very few members of this generation whose work is not made to look provincial by the achievements of the Americans. Where many British painters, struggling to preserve their independence, have merely given prominence to qualities which do not bear isolating, Hoyland has willingly accepted and absorbed influences which have expanded his art without altering his identity.<sup>440</sup>

Political events had a serious impact on the 1969 Bienal, events that would restrict the potential reception of Hoyland's work and undermine commercial possibilities. In 1964 a military junta overthrew the democratically elected government of Goulart. In a brutal crackdown, democratic institutions were suspended and scores of Brazilians, including intellectuals and artists, were arrested and imprisoned. The political situation worsened in 1967 with the ratification of a new constitution that granted unlimited powers to the coalition of generals, frequently referred to as the 'national security regime', and which led to widespread human rights abuses. The response from both within Brazil and beyond was swift: a demand for a boycott of the X Bienal, which was seen by opponents of the junta to be promoting its 'respectable face'. The events that unfolded divided the art establishment and artists in Britain. The British Council discussed the controversy at length, and noted that, 'several countries including Belgium and the Netherlands would not be represented as a result'. But 'after consideration the two British artists John Hoyland and Anthony Caro and the architect Denys Lasdun had decided to take part'.<sup>441</sup> Both artists

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<sup>440</sup> *X Bienal de São Paulo: Gra Bretanta, 1969: Anthony Caro, John Hoyland*. Exhibition catalogue by Charles Harrison, London: The British Council, 1969, n.p.

<sup>441</sup> British Council Fine Arts Advisory Committee: Minutes of Meetings 1968-1969, National Archives BW 78/5

endeavoured to provide justification for going. Caro, in a somewhat ambiguous and oblique manner, defended the regime: 'how can the regime be repressive to modern art, if it is holding the biennale at São Paulo? If there are non-artistic reasons for the Brazilians arresting artists and critics, that's a separate thing. I'll look into it when I get there'. And Hoyland was even more strident in his views: 'I don't want to confuse art with politics. I suspect political manifestos coming out of Paris. They're always at it. I wouldn't refuse to show in Russia. Anyway, what's Spain doing joining the boycott? Do they think the regime in Brazil is not repressive enough for them?'<sup>442</sup>

Eventually fifteen major, large-scale works by Hoyland were selected and collected for the exhibition; fourteen of the works were in public, corporate, or private collections.<sup>443</sup> Both Hoyland and Caro, at the expense of the British Council, spent two weeks in São Paulo setting up the exhibition and attending the opening.

However, unlike previous Bienals the exhibition did not tour to other Latin America countries because 'the size and fragility of the works proposed make it impossible to consider a tour of other Latin American countries'.<sup>444</sup>

### Europe

Germany and Italy were seen as enthusiastic and potentially lucrative markets for British art in the 1960s and beyond, with British art being particularly well received in Italy.

Between 1961 and 1982 Hoyland's work was featured in twenty six exhibitions across Europe but the majority, seventeen, were in either Germany or Italy. Out of the total of twenty-six exhibitions, eighteen were group exhibitions and the remaining eight exhibitions were solo ones.

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<sup>442</sup> Quoted in Pearson, K. 'News in the Arts', *The Sunday Times*, 27 July 1969, p.45

<sup>443</sup> The works were owned by the Ulster Museum(1), Arts Council(1), the British Council(1), the Contemporary Arts Society(1), the Peter Stuyvesant Collection(1), Waddington Galleries (4), the Nicholas Wilder Gallery, Los Angeles (1), the McCrory Corporation, New York(1), Robert Elkon Gallery, New York(1), Lord and Lady Balmiel, London(1), Mr and Mrs Ira S. Agress, New York(1)

<sup>444</sup> British Council Minutes of the Fine Arts Advisory Committee 14 January 1969 National Archives BW78/5

Shortly after the close of the 1961 *New London Situation* exhibition Hoyland exhibited in Europe for the first time. Six of his paintings were included in the group exhibition *Neue Malerei in England* held at the Städtisches Museum in Leverkusen in Germany between September and November of that year. A year later Hoyland enjoyed his first exposure in Italy when his painting *12.12.61* was selected for the group exhibition, *Painters from England*, which was held at the Galerie Trastevere in Rome. The painting was displayed alongside the work of four other 'hard-edge' abstract painters (Bernard Cohen, Robyn Denny, Gordon House, and Marc Vaux), and two other artists (Tess Jaray and William Turnbull).

One important centre was Milan. Throughout the 1960s it was the leading Italian city for avant-garde art and the Galleria dell'Ariete one of its leading commercial galleries. The Galleria dell'Ariete had strong links with the leading avant-garde artists in Britain at the time, and was highly respected. It provided exhibition opportunities for British artists, Hoyland included, who showed with the gallery on numerous occasions. Its reputation was confirmed by the fact that a diverse range of well-established international artists, including Lucio Fontana, Antoni Tapies, Robert Rauschenberg and Francis Bacon, were prepared to have their work displayed there.

Although the number of exhibitions in which Hoyland exhibited appears impressive, however, the majority were low-key affairs, where interest in the work on display and the actual footfall was relatively low. There were only three European exhibitions of note in Hoyland's career: *European Painters of Today* (1968); *Marks on a Canvas* (1969); and *Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-1976* (1976).

The group exhibition *European Painters of Today* opened at the Musée des arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1968 before touring to the Jewish Museum in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and other US cities. It was an important exhibition because the selection of work was made by six museum directors from Europe and America. Hoyland was one of 49

painters selected but it is unclear by whom or why he was selected. For Hoyland the exhibition was significant: the fact that his work was selected by an unnamed museum director, possibly Robertson, provided a modicum of legitimacy and credence to the paintings on view and formed part of the endorsement process for Hoyland. Another important consideration was the cross-Atlantic connection, the fact that the exhibition toured to numerous American cities. The exhibition was favourably reviewed in *The Times* of 12 November 1968. The review stated that most of the British artists, excepting John Walker, (who) 'has yet to make his mark in America', had already forged reputations across the Atlantic.<sup>445</sup>

In the summer of 1969 Hoyland's paintings were included in major survey exhibition of British art, *Marks on a Canvas*. The exhibition opened at the Museum am Ostwall in Dortmund, Germany in the summer of 1969 before touring later in the year to in the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts in Vienna. Hoyland was one of only eleven British painters selected by Anne Seymour, through the work on show, to explore the 'concerns of the language of painting'.<sup>446</sup> According to Seymour these concerns included:

The emotional impact of colour and line; the possibility of physically influencing how the spectator looks at a picture; illusionism in abstract and figurative art; the relationship of the canvas to its setting; the role of the painting as object; the role of the painting as a visual event or an optical experience; the shaped canvas; the use of acrylic paint; the new impetus given to figurative painting by Pop Art; the obsolescence of the abstract-figurative battle; the use of conventions outside fine art; the need for multiple meanings and readings in a painting; the desire to simplify; the ability of the spectator to find his own links between represented shapes or objects, and to decode in various ways the meaning of marks on a canvas relating sometimes directly, sometimes only obliquely to the environment in which he lives.<sup>447</sup>

A detailed illustrated essay based on conversations with the artists was dedicated to each artist. As discussed earlier, Seymour acknowledged the difficulties British art had faced in the previous decade.

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<sup>445</sup> Davis, A. 'Fifty European Painters of Today', *The Times*, 12 November 1968, p.7

<sup>446</sup> Artists selected were Patrick Caulfield, Bernard Cohen, David Hockney, John Hoyland, Paul Huxley, Allen Jones, Mark Lancaster, Jeremy Moon, Bridget Riley, Richard Smith and John Walker.

<sup>447</sup> Seymour (1969), p.3

The other notable exhibition was *Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-1976*, a joint initiative between the British Council and the Commune di Milano. *Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-1976* was held at Milan's Palazzo Reale in the spring of 1976.<sup>448</sup> The exhibition was divided into five distinction categories: Paintings: Situation and Extensions; Sculpture; Alternative Developments; Performance Art; and Film. Twenty eight painters, including Hoyland were selected for the 'painting' category. The composition of the Selection Committee highlights the importance of patronage. Chaired by Sir Norman Reid, the panel included Norbert Lynton and David Thompson, two writers who had supported Hoyland in the past. A lavish two part illustrated catalogue, with colour plates, and essays by Norbert Lynton, Richard Cork, David Thompson, Ted Little, and David Curtis was published to complement the exhibition. Eight major paintings by Hoyland were included in the exhibition, five paintings on loan from the Arts Council Collection, a seminal work of the 1960s borrowed from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, and the two paintings in the private collections of Anthony Caro and the Waddington Galleries. Interestingly, one painting notably absent from the exhibition was *8.1.69*, the only major work by Hoyland owned by the British Council at the time. One can only speculate for this exclusion – was it out on loan or was it deemed to be a less important work by the Selection Committee? One outcome for Hoyland from the exhibition was sales (see chapter 5).

### Conclusion

In 1964 Hoyland visited America for the first time. Aside from the opportunity to see great art and to meet artists he admired, Hoyland understood fully the potential commercial opportunities for the development of his career. Initially his work was included in group exhibitions arranged on this side of the Atlantic to promote British art in America. Generally, his work received, at best, lukewarm notices and this undermined his attempts to build a platform for his work there. He was accused of

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<sup>448</sup> According to Ogliari and Forty, 'it was born of the jointly held conviction that while there was in Italy a growing interest in contemporary British art which would justify the mounting of a large scale exhibition, there was equally a gap in the knowledge of the full range of activity which lay behind the few names which for most Italians represented British achievement.' - Quoted in *Arte Inglese Oggi:1960-76*, Exhibition catalogue by Norbert Lynton et al., Milan: Palazzo Reale di Milano, 1976, p.6

being derivative and second-rate in comparison with American painters. A window of opportunity opened for him when, after the critical success of his 1967 Whitechapel retrospective, he was invited to show with the Andre Emmerich and the Robert Elkon galleries. Although he networked, met artists and the critic Clement Greenberg, he realised that it was unlikely he would be able to gain a foothold in New York and in 1973 Hoyland made the decision to return to England.

In 1969, with Anthony Caro, he represented Britain at the São Paulo Bienal. Unfortunately it was shrouded in political controversy and very little benefit was gained from it. But what is more surprising, bearing in mind the support he received from a number of important tastemakers on the inner circle at the British Council, is that Hoyland was not selected for the Venice Biennale in the mid-1960s when he was producing a strong body of work. Other artists were preferred to him (see appendix 8). In a somewhat bitter tone Hoyland said, 'they didn't send me to Venice, they sent Bridget Riley and Philip King'.<sup>449</sup> One plausible explanation is that those who had supported Hoyland in the past feared a charge of nepotism.

In the 1960s Hoyland exhibited in Germany but few sales emanated from this exposure. However, during the second half of the 1970s he showed regularly in Italy and through the support of Helen Sutton and Beatrice Monti sales of his work were realised.

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<sup>449</sup> Hoyland - Quoted in Gooding (2005-2007), p.221



## Chapter 5: Private and Institutional Recognition

### Introduction

This chapter explores the role played by private galleries, private collectors and public institutions in the making and sustaining of Hoyland's career. No artistic career can be made or developed without a strong symbiotic relationship between the private and public sectors. A well developed and sophisticated art infrastructure is a prerequisite for artistic success (see chapter 1).

Inevitably and realistically Hoyland's career was determined and sustained through the sales of work. Throughout his career Hoyland kept fairly detailed record of his output, making sketches of each painting leaving his studio and noting its destination. The records include sales and exhibition provenance and notes paintings destroyed and, occasionally, prices; though these are not always accurate, there are gaps and omissions.<sup>450</sup> Between 1960 and 1982 the records show that over 160 paintings by Hoyland were sold or gifted (see appendix 4). These records exclude works on paper, the sales of which were important. But a note of caution needs to be stated at this point. Although the records indicate sales, nevertheless, it is not possible to ascertain, with any certainty, the actual date a particular painting was sold, whether it was sold soon after completion or at a later date. One example illustrates this point: at the time of Hoyland's retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1967 only twelve paintings included in the exhibition were in collections, implying low sales.<sup>451</sup> But the personal records kept by Hoyland seem to contradict this and show that thirty four paintings completed before the 13 April 1967 had been sold. What possible explanations can be suggested for the apparent discrepancy? One possibility is that some of the paintings were sold later. Records show that eleven of the

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<sup>450</sup> Out of the records of one hundred and sixty-four paintings it is not possible to identify the provenance of nearly 50% of them. It is clear that the works have been sold or have left Hoyland's studio but the records are inconclusive as to the purchasers, the dates of purchases, and prices. This problem is exacerbated by the fact, according to Hoyland Studios, that Hoyland frequently changed the titles of paintings later.

<sup>451</sup> However, Hoyland's personal records indicate that by 1967, he had sold thirty five paintings. There are two possible reasons why only twelve sold paintings were included in the 1967 retrospective: Firstly, there may have been reluctance by private collectors to loan their works and, secondly, more probably, Hoyland wanted to present unsold works to potential purchasers.

paintings were sold either 'by *Leslie*' or by 'Waddington' and it is known that Hoyland's relationship with Waddington Galleries did not commence until after the close of the Whitechapel show. Another plausible explanation is that some of the paintings sold were in collections overseas and the collectors were unwilling to lend the works or Hoyland himself was not prepared to pay out for transportation or the costs of insurance, and in 1967 with the Whitechapel's financial position dire, the additional cost of transporting large-scale paintings from across the globe was not viable. Or perhaps Hoyland did not think them worthy of inclusion. Another possibility, a very likely one, is that by including new, unsold works Hoyland saw an opportunity to effect further sales.

Clear patterns emerge from an analysis of these sale records: first, the importance of Leslie Waddington and the Waddington Galleries in the generation of sales. Second, sales to public institutions represented Hoyland's 'bread and butter', and helped to sustain his professional career (see appendix 6). Third, the market for Hoyland's work was stronger in Europe than in the United States, with the United Kingdom the principal market, but with some interest shown in his work from dealers and collectors in Italy, and to a lesser extent other European countries. The market for his work in the United States was weak, with less than ten paintings sold to American collections.<sup>452</sup>

### Gallery Representation

As discussed in the opening chapter, private galleries play a pivotal role in artistic success or otherwise. Those artists who emerged on the art scene in the late Fifties and early Sixties, including Hoyland, and who went on to forge successful careers can attribute it largely to the support received from private galleries.

Between 1960 and 1982 Hoyland was represented by two West End galleries, the Marlborough Gallery and the Waddington Galleries. His experience with the

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<sup>452</sup> According to Hoyland's records the Andre Emmerich Gallery sold six paintings and the Elkon Gallery three paintings.

Marlborough Gallery turned out to be far from ideal and did little to advance his career. In contrast, the support Hoyland later received from the Waddington Galleries, in particular, the personal advocacy from Leslie Waddington, assisted in the renaissance and consolidation of Hoyland's career after 1967, providing a stable base from which Hoyland was able to produce and present work.

### The Marlborough Gallery

In 1961 the future looked bright for Hoyland. Shortly after the success of the two *Situation* exhibitions Hoyland was invited to exhibit with the Marlborough New London Gallery. According to Hoyland:

The other thing that was wonderful was having your name in the list of artists that Marlborough handled. You know, on all their advertising and everything, you were on their list with all the big names you know, Graham Sutherland...it was very prestigious, at that time it was probably the most powerful gallery in the world. So that was all great, you know, you could say I'm with the Marlborough and so on and so forth.<sup>453</sup>

The initial contract with the Marlborough gallery guaranteed Hoyland an annual stipend of £500, a tidy sum for 1960. To the young Hoyland this payment must have seemed a windfall and in fact was most welcome and 'meant one less teaching job a week, so that was quite a good thing'.<sup>454</sup> For Hoyland the contract with the Marlborough Gallery should have been a defining, proud, and significant moment in his early career but as events transpired this was not to be. Representation with the Marlborough should have advanced Hoyland's career but this did not happen. In fact, it can be argued that the relationship with the Marlborough had a detrimental effect on the development of Hoyland's career, at best, creating a state of stasis, at worst, severely restricting it. A mood of genuine optimism was soon displaced by one of bewilderment. During the four years that he was represented by the Marlborough, his work was featured in only two exhibitions, first, in 1962, in the group exhibition, *Paintings & Sculpture by Hoyland, Plumb, Stroud & Turnbull*, and two years later, in 1964, in the only solo exhibition granted him, *John Hoyland: Exhibition of Paintings*.

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<sup>453</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.96

<sup>454</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.96

Although the solo exhibition received good notices, according to Hoyland only one work was sold:

I had a one-man show there, the only one of the original four who ever got one, and I was the youngest one, so that probably didn't please them all that much. And it got really fantastic notices, but they were very big paintings and I only sold one painting, which was to the Manchester City Art Gallery.<sup>455</sup>

Hoyland's comment that his paintings were large-scale highlights the difficulties of finding buyers, other than for corporate or museum collections, for work of this scale. But Hoyland's recollections of work sold by the Marlborough are not entirely accurate. Records show that the Marlborough Gallery sold at least two paintings, one to the Manchester City Art Gallery, the other to the Contemporary Art Society.<sup>456</sup> These are discussed later in the chapter. With such low sales it could not have come as much of a surprise to Hoyland when his contract with the Marlborough was terminated in 1964; with such meagre returns and high overheads it would have been impossible for the Marlborough to have continued indefinitely showing Hoyland's work without resultant sales, in effect, subsidising his lifestyle and there was a limit to the amount of time, energy and resources that the Marlborough was prepared to invest in him. However, at the time the Marlborough fully appreciated the challenges in selling modern art. According to Tony Reichardt, Marlborough New London's then manager of 'living artists' and later director of Marlborough Fine Arts, 'in contrast with today, no art gallery in England could survive on selling works by living artists. In 1960 Marlborough had taken on Bacon and no work was sold. The highest grossing British artist at that time was Graham Sutherland'.<sup>457</sup> This invites the questions - why did the Marlborough invite Hoyland to show with them in the first place? And why was Hoyland not a success with the Marlborough? Without question the Marlborough anticipated the art market and saw an opportunity to diversify, thus the name of the new gallery, Marlborough New London Gallery. Existing gallery owners and entrepreneurs considering setting up new galleries, were aware of 'something being

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<sup>455</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.99

<sup>456</sup> see p.217

<sup>457</sup> Reichardt, T. 'The Tony Reichardt Collection: Tony Reichardt on British Modernism' [Online] <http://www.christies.com/sales/modern-british-art-july-2013/reichardt-collection.aspx> [10 June 2014]

in the air', that the potential was there to exploit the emerging middle class audiences taste for art, with market potential and share increasing. The Marlborough did not want to miss out on these opportunities.

A further possible answer to the first question was posited by Hoyland. The initial invitation from the Marlborough was linked to three independent, yet at times, interconnected factors: the London dealer, David Gibbs; American abstraction; and the intrigues and machinations of the London art establishment. In 1959 Gibbs was a director of the long established Arthur Tooth & Sons London gallery but was also dealing independently, from a converted loft above the Yardley perfume shop in Bond Street, London. But arguably more important than his independent dealing was the fact that Gibbs was the owner of a large collection of paintings by Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock and sculptures by David Smith as well as early modern masterpieces, including work by Van Gogh. Apparently, in the summer of 1959, at a New York dinner party, Gibbs met Lee Krasner, the widow of Jackson Pollock and persuaded her, though by all accounts she did not need much persuasion, to grant him the shared rights to co-manage the Pollock estate.<sup>458</sup> Gibbs was a tall, handsome, dashing ex-Guards officer, always impeccably dressed, and the story circulating at the time was that he had seduced Krasner on a train journey.<sup>459</sup> An agreement was reached on the management of the Pollock estate towards the end of 1960.<sup>460</sup> According to Hoyland, who was acquainted with Gibbs:

Marlborough wanted the Pollock estate and he [Gibbs] wanted to show some young artists and he didn't have a gallery, so they agreed to take on these four artists that he nominated in exchange for getting hold of the Pollock estate. Now of course, what we didn't realise at the time was that they didn't

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<sup>458</sup> Lee Krasner's legal advisor, Gerald Dickler (of the Law Office of Hall, Casey, Dickler, Howley, and Braden, New York), explained in a letter to David Gibbs, 'she felt it was very important to move the center of activity revolving around Pollock's work from New York to Europe. This not only made economic sense but even more importantly made personal sense because Lee could not withstand the barrage to which she was being subjected to by American dealers, nor could she take it upon herself to perform the rather arduous duties involved with the arranging of shows, transactions with numerous museums and dealers'. Letter from Gerald Dickler to David Gibbs, dated 13 December 1960: Correspondence Gibbs, David 1960-1964, [Online] <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Gibbs-David-285922> [15 January 2014]

<sup>459</sup> See Gooding (2005-2007), p.93

<sup>460</sup> In a letter to Ben Heller of New York city, Gibbs wrote, 'the day before I left New York, I concluded an arrangement between Lee and Mr Frank Lloyd, whereby some sixty paintings, watercolours and drawings by Jackson Pollock, from 1938 to 1952, will be shown in his New Marlborough Fine Art premises in March next year, and about thirty of them will be for sale'. [Online] <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Gibbs-David-285922> [15 January 2014]

really want us. You know, Marlborough didn't say we want, we must have those people.<sup>461</sup>

Although this may simply be conjecture and is difficult to verify, nevertheless, it would seem plausible and may partly explain the lack of attention paid to the development of the careers of the four young British artists, who had to wait two years before being given the first opportunity to show their work. In contrast, in the winter of 1961, a collaborative exhibition between David Gibbs and Marlborough Fine Art, *New York Scene: Exhibition of Paintings* was held at the Marlborough New London gallery. It showed only work owned by Gibbs. The tripartite arrangement between Gibbs, Lee Krasner, and Marlborough Fine Art benefited all three parties.<sup>462</sup> Not able to sell easily the work of living artists, the Marlborough instead concentrated on the work of dead artists. It can be argued that the annual stipend of £500 paid by the Marlborough to John Hoyland was incidental in this context. Consequently, this may partly explain the reason for the Marlborough's lack of promotion of Hoyland.

Another plausible, sensible, and less conspiratorial explanation is that Hoyland was only one of several artists in the Marlborough 'stable' and to keep the represented artists happy exhibitions were arranged on a rotational basis. According to Reichardt, in order to cover overall costs, the Marlborough New London gave the artists on its books an exhibition every two years, with the more popular figurative artists cross-subsidising the less popular, emerging artists, 'John Piper always sold out completely'.<sup>463</sup>

Displaying and selling large-scale works was challenging and the lack of sales of Hoyland's paintings may possibly be attributed to this factor. Museums and corporate collections remained the best option to realise sales but this was not without its

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<sup>461</sup> The four artists recommended by Gibbs to the Marlborough Gallery were John Hoyland, John Plumb, Peter Stroud, and William Turnbull. Gooding (2005-2007), p.94

<sup>462</sup> Not only did Gibbs continue to sell work; in 1961 he sold Van Gogh's 1889 masterpiece, *Mulberry Tree*, a painting with an excellent provenance, including having once been owned by Camille Pissarro, to the Marlborough Gallery, but he also received a generous annual consultant's fee of \$6,000 from the Pollock estate, initially he asked for a fee of between \$6,000 and \$9,000, plus expenses and commission on sales. Lee Krasner achieved her aim of establishing a commercial platform in Europe for her late husband's work. And the Marlborough Gallery made hefty profits from the sales of works by Jackson Pollock.

<sup>463</sup> Wilson, F. 'Tony Reichardt: How Saatchi drove me from a life of Sixties glamour to bananas' [Online] <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/visualarts/article3811529.ece> [10 June 2014]

problems. As will be demonstrated later, the British Council acquired several works by Hoyland but was reluctant to acquire larger works. For as Diana Eccles the Collections Manager for the British Council Art Collection pointed out:

As the collection work is focussed on overseas, clearly we can only buy works that will fit inside the hold of a plane or the back of a truck which goes some way to explaining why there are few very large paintings in the collection. Although canvases can be rolled for transport it is not always feasible or good practice to do so with heavily impastoed works such as Hoyland's, it also presupposes that there are skilled staff at the other end to re-stretch such works.<sup>464</sup>

Few private collectors would have had the wall space to display large-scale paintings and until the Hayward and Serpentine Galleries opened, aside from the Tate Gallery, there were few suitable exhibition spaces to display Hoyland's work to the best effect.

Moreover, it can be argued that Hoyland did not help his cause with his reluctance to work either on a smaller scale or to explore continuously the medium of printmaking, though he did make and place on the market smaller works, including a number of gouaches on paper, watercolours and etchings and screenprints. These options may have made him more commercially viable because there was, and is, a distinct niche market for smaller paintings and prints. But Hoyland's argument was that he could make paintings quicker and any resultant sales were more lucrative. But a more plausible reason was about integrity, that working on a smaller scale undermined his aesthetic, that of his belief in and commitment to working on an architectural scale. For Hoyland, it was always a balancing act between the aesthetic and the commercial.

Between 1964 and 1967 Hoyland was without gallery representation and resorted to selling work either directly from his studio or privately, at the close of non-dealer exhibitions. The decision by Hoyland to sell direct, thus by-passing the gallery system, may also have worked against him, putting off possible offers from other galleries, who generally frowned upon such practices, fearing that he would continue

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<sup>464</sup> Eccles, D. ([Diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org)) *John Hoyland*. Email to Chris Davies ([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 15 October 2010.

with such behaviour if taken on; few galleries issue contracts, the relationship between dealer and artist is predicated on trust. These were lean years for Hoyland. What eventually became clear to him was that it was extremely difficult to sell work without gallery representation; he did not possess the requisite business skills or access to zones of influence to develop further his career. After 1967 support was provided by the Waddington Galleries. For over twenty years, Hoyland enjoyed virtually uninterrupted representation with one of the most prestigious, successful, and powerful London galleries.<sup>465</sup> Without doubt it was the support he received from the Waddington Galleries during this period that did most to advance his career. But, because of Hoyland's known irascibility and stubbornness it almost did not come about. Shortly after the close of his 1967 retrospective at the Whitechapel, Leslie Waddington invited the artist to join his gallery but Hoyland, in a fit of pique, declined the offer:

Leslie Waddington came to see me and invited me to join his gallery, but I was broke and the three-month summer holiday was looming ahead and I'd said I'd like to join his gallery but I needed some money, would he buy some paintings in and he said, 'We're a selling gallery not a buying gallery'. And I thought, well you know, if you're not even prepared to make any kind of commitment and I'm gonna have to go out and look for a job, possibly driving a van or something, then you know, I don't need this.<sup>466</sup>

But later he relented. How Hoyland arrived at the decision makes interesting reading:

By this time I had a dealer in New York, a dealer in Los Angeles<sup>467</sup> and of course, he was getting keener and keener. And I joined him because life was getting too complicated with all the trying to show people work and all this kind of stuff, you know. I mean not that I was selling much, but I found it burdensome, all that. And I joined him because once you joined him; they do all that for you, for their fifty per cent.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> The history of the Waddington Gallery can be traced back to 1958, when Victor Waddington, after running a successful gallery in Ireland, whose artists included the Irish painter Jack Yeats, decided to open a further gallery in Cork Street in London's west end. This coincided with the return of his son, Leslie Waddington, to England after studying art history in Paris. For the next eight years Leslie Waddington learned the trade of selling art. But in 1966, in an amicable move, father and son decided to split operations into two distinct niches. Victor Waddington traded under his own name, and specialised in modern artists, whilst Leslie Waddington traded as the Waddington Gallery, with a focus on post-war and contemporary art. Leslie Waddington received financial backing from Alex Bernstein, director of the Granada Group, the company established by father Cecil Bernstein and uncle, Sidney, first becoming a director but later the managing director of one of its principal companies, Granada Television. Alex Bernstein was instrumental in establishing the Granada collection of art, which soon became one of the first and most important corporate collections of contemporary art of the 1960's, and which included work by John Hoyland. Soon, Leslie Waddington had built the gallery into one of the most successful art businesses in London.

<sup>466</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.99

<sup>467</sup> In 1967 Hoyland was invited to show with the Robert Elkon Gallery in New York and the Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles

<sup>468</sup> Gooding (2005-2007) p.191

This raises an interesting question, but one that is difficult to answer with any certainty - would Leslie Waddington had been so keen to show Hoyland if the artist had not had an exhibition platform in the United States? Always an astute businessman Leslie Waddington, though a keen advocate of Hoyland's work, would almost certainly have anticipated the future commercial potential of 'Hoyland the artist' if a strong market for his work existed on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1967 the Waddington Galleries was exploring opportunities to expand its operations in North America, and Leslie Waddington would have been mindful of the advantages of having Hoyland on his books, acutely aware of the contacts that Hoyland had made in New York in 1964 and afterwards. At future dates Hoyland exhibited at the Waddington Galleries in Montreal, and Toronto, managed and run by Leslie Waddington's brother, Theo.<sup>469</sup>

Notwithstanding the motivations behind the decision by the Waddington Galleries to approach Hoyland, Leslie Waddington remained a loyal and supportive advocate of the artist and this despite the claim made by Leslie Waddington that supporting Hoyland was never commercially viable.<sup>470</sup> Aside from operating as a 'selling gallery' for Hoyland's work, Leslie was a collector of his work purchasing at least six paintings: *1.11.68*; *24.11.71*; *14.4.74*; *25.5.74*; *Ligeia 1.12.78*; (Fig.81) and *Sacaramal 2.1.81* (see appendix 4).

The statement by Leslie Waddington that Hoyland was not commercially viable has often been read out of context; he was not claiming that he never made money out of sales of Hoyland's work, but rather, that the costs of mounting an exhibition were not recouped from sales of work at the time of the exhibition. In fact Waddington was selling Hoyland's work from the back room and between 1969 and 1984 was very successful at it, selling over sixty works, major paintings and works on paper, to

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<sup>469</sup> Hoyland showed five times in Montreal, four times at Waddington Fine Art, Montreal, in 1967, 1968, 1971, 1975 and once, in 1978, when the gallery was renamed Waddington Galleries. [Online] <http://www.johnhoyland.com/exhibitions/> [10 January 2015]

<sup>470</sup> 'I recently gave John Hoyland three galleries for a show. Now I can't make money out of a John Hoyland show even if I sell everything. But I do it. Not to be nice, but it gives me pleasure. I think my basic instinct is to provide space where the artists' works can be seen and not discard them when they go out of fashion. It's a view I got'. - Quoted in Aitken, J. *The Young Meteors*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1967, p.212

public collections in the United Kingdom, (see appendix 6). According to Hoyland's personal records, over 40 major paintings were sold by the Waddington Galleries between 1967 and 1982, though the figure is likely to have been substantially higher because of the lack of clarity of some of Hoyland's entries. One example illustrates this point: the word 'sold' appears often next to entries after 1967, without stating either the seller or the buyer and it can only be inferred that these had been sold by the Waddington Galleries because it was the only British gallery Hoyland was showing with (see appendix 4). And although Hoyland may have complained about the high commission charges placed on sales of his work, nevertheless, it was the income from these sales that enabled him to give up full-time teaching and concentrate fully on making art after 1969. Despite Hoyland often displaying ambivalence towards his dealers, nonetheless, he recognised the importance of Leslie Waddington in the shaping and the development and consolidation of his career: 'I believe that one can't overestimate the importance of having a good dealer'. Continuing and adopting a pragmatic approach to the relationship between the artist and his dealer, Hoyland accepted that whilst 'dealers take 50% and make a lot of money', nevertheless, 'that doesn't matter if they're making money for you, if they support you economically and morally...I think I've been really lucky to have the sustained support of a good gallery like Waddingtons. If you look at art history you realise the importance of dealers'.<sup>471</sup> In recognition of Leslie Waddington's support, Hoyland gifted him one of his major paintings, *15.6.69*. (no image available). Leslie Waddington's support and respect for and appreciation of Hoyland remained constant. In a letter from him to Hoyland in 1983 he reveals the nature of their relationship and provides an invaluable insight into shared positions on art, pronounces on Hoyland's work, art in general, and the subjectivity of most judgements made about art and concludes by expressing his disbelief that Hoyland had not received the recognition his achievements deserved:

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<sup>471</sup> Hoyland, J. 'Painting is the Head, Hand and the Heart', John Hoyland talks to Liz Finch, *Inside Art*, No.5, June 1984, p.5

I, as your dealer and friend am too prejudiced to make a detached judgement about your art...Each painting is an image in itself and not just another Hoyland. It is your constant awareness of art that stops you getting caught up in a web of your own self-deception; you know but are not dominated by what is going on and are part of a continual spirit of art.<sup>472</sup>

Waddington was not afraid to criticise Hoyland's work, 'I don't like it [*Alpha*]. I suppose that is one of the strengths of the galleries with our different views: it's not all fashion and final solutions like the nappy generation of Museum officials'.

Waddington posited, 'the effect of your best painting is cumulative like in music: I have stolen that idea about music from Proust. It is strange that after all these years your paintings as those of Patrick [Caulfield] and Howard [Hodgkin] have never received the recognition they deserve. Thank you'.<sup>473</sup>

### Private Collectors

Private collectors play a crucial role in the making of an artist's career. Importantly, they often purchase work by an emerging artist in advance of the acquisition of work by government-funded public institutions, which tend to display more conservative traits. In contrast, from a marketing perspective, private collectors are often 'visionary innovators', who are prepared to take greater risks and speculate on an artist's career trajectory; consequently, and understandably, they are targeted by commercial galleries because of the potential for sales. Hoyland's initial commercial success can be attributed to the sales realised to private collectors, corporate collections and the Contemporary Art Society.

How does one measure success? Is it by volume sales or by selective sales? Although Hoyland sold work, however, he never enjoyed great commercial success or the volume sales enjoyed by some of his peers. Notwithstanding, his work sold for good prices and throughout the 1960s and 1970s prices realised were above the rate of inflation and he was more successful than some of his peers (see appendix 9). The paintings Hoyland exhibited in the 1960 *Situation* exhibition were priced at either £70

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<sup>472</sup> Waddington, L. Letter from Leslie Waddington to John Hoyland, dated 14 March 1983, Hoyland Studio: Ephemera, n.p.

<sup>473</sup> Waddington (1983), n.p.

or £80.<sup>474</sup> But by 1965 Hoyland's paintings were fetching between £115 and £235. In 1966 Hoyland's 25.9.66 was acquired by the Sebastian de Ferranti collection for £440 (see appendix 4). And, as will be revealed later, his work was acquired by significant collectors and collections. But despite this fact and in spite of the upsurge in interest and market activity during the first half of the 1960's, the number of British collectors of modern art, and in particular of abstract art, remained resolutely and relatively low. Galleries and artists relied heavily on markets outside Britain or acquisitions by public institutions for business:

Almost every dealer in avant garde art reveals that most of his work is sold to America or Europe, while the bulk of his meagre sales in England of contemporary art are to the British Council, the Arts Council, the Tate Gallery, the Contemporary Art Society, and the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, and it is apparent from the lists of their selection committees that the same few people sit on all of them.<sup>475</sup>

In 1968 Bryan Robertson bemoaned the lack of patronage:

Very few collectors want to buy radically modern works of art – we will exhibit it, use it as an educational ploy, travel it around the country, write about it, lecture on it, anything except take it on its own terms and keep it as a permanent part of everyday life. It is tragic, because although England may be involved in economic complications and suffering from a great upheaval on many fronts, there is plenty of money around: it is not that people cannot afford modern art, it is simply that they see it only as entertainment or as theory, and something separate from life. English artists are really up against the awful fact that behind all the toleration, erratic interest and enthusiasm of their public, nobody actually wants what they are making.<sup>476</sup>

This impacted on the number of private collectors who acquired works by Hoyland.

Lists in exhibition catalogues provide a useful insight into ownership but can be misleading and are not always conclusive; this was so with Hoyland.

Between November 1962 and May 1963 the Arts Council toured the *Situation* artists' work, including paintings by Hoyland, to six major British cities. Out of the thirty six paintings on show only three paintings were in private collections, the rest; including

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<sup>474</sup> From prices hand-written on exhibition catalogue TGA 200731/1/2/4/4/3) By 1982 major works were selling for around the £1000 mark.

<sup>475</sup> Aitken (1967), p.212

<sup>476</sup> Robertson, B. 'Introduction', *New British Painting and Sculpture*. Exhibition catalogue by Bryan Robertson, London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1968, n.p.

the two paintings by Hoyland - *20.3.61* and *29.10.61* - were either in the possession of the artist or on the stock list of representative galleries.

More telling is the ownership details of Hoyland's paintings on show in his first retrospective exhibition held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1967. Out of sixty three paintings exhibited only twelve paintings were in collections, the remainder came from Hoyland's studio. Seven paintings were owned by individuals and five by corporate or public collections. Out of the privately owned works, two paintings were owned by Bryan Robertson, three by the Power family, with another painting in the collection of M. B. Grabowski. The remaining painting was owned by Hoyland's close friend and fellow artist Patrick Caulfield and may have been the result of an exchange of work by the two artists. Five paintings collectively were in public or corporate collections: the Tate Gallery (one painting), the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation (two paintings) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (two paintings). But this picture is misleading. Hoyland's personal records indicate by the time of the exhibition around thirty-five paintings had been sold.<sup>477</sup>

This patronage by a number of private collectors undoubtedly helped to generate interest in, and authority for, his work. Interestingly, despite being part of the so-called 'swinging sixties London scene' this new scene did not bear any apparent tangible results for Hoyland. Hoyland's work was acquired early by a small number of influential private collectors, notably Ted and Alan Power, Robert McAlpine, Dr Alastair Hunter and Bryan Robertson. It can be argued that positioning one's work in signature private collections plays in the long run a more significant role in establishing value than through popular appeal and the generation of volume sales. Although the number of collectors and collections acquiring work by Hoyland was relatively low, nonetheless, the discernment and the status of these collectors and curators undoubtedly assisted with the endorsement of Hoyland's achievements.

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<sup>477</sup> In 2014 the Hoyland Studio began the process of trying to identify the provenance of known paintings by Hoyland, however, the whereabouts of many paintings remain unknown.

## Ted and Alan Power

As early as 1961 Hoyland's work was being collected by two of the most influential collectors of contemporary art, Ted Power and his son Alan.<sup>478</sup> At the close of the *New London Situation* exhibition Ted Power bought *April 1961* (Fig.2) for an undisclosed figure. Based on Hoyland's recollection that both of his paintings included in the exhibition sold on the opening night to Ted and Alan Power it is likely another Hoyland painting in addition to *April 1961* was bought but this cannot be verified because no record exists. However, according to Hoyland's personal records, later in the decade his son, Alan Power, bought 29.12.65 for £375 and 10.4.66 for £300 (see appendix 4). During the 1950's Ted Power built up an impressive collection of modern art including works by the European painters Matthew Smith, Jack B Yeats and, significantly, nine paintings by Nicolas de Staël, and he was one of the first to collect American Abstract Expressionism, including a number of Pollocks, and individual works by Rothko, De Kooning, Kline, and Newman. In 1968 Ted Power agreed to become a trustee of the Tate and was instrumental in shifting attitudes and persuading Tate management to adopt a more radical acquisition policy.<sup>479</sup> The Powers' importance was summed up by the gallery owner Leslie Waddington when he exclaimed, 'except for the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Dover Street, where Lawrence Alloway organised the exhibitions, and the Whitechapel Art Gallery directed by Bryan Robertson, the only place in London where you could continually see great international art was in Ted and Rene's flat'.<sup>480</sup>

Ted Power avoided publicity and few knew the owner of the collection that formed the basis of an Arts Council arranged touring exhibition, *New Trends on Painting:*

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<sup>478</sup> The family's wealth had been made from Murphy Radio, which Ted Power, along with Frank Murphy, had founded in 1929 in Hertfordshire. Ted Power collection included Jack B. Yeats' *Westward the Morning* (1971); Nicolas de Staël's *Les footballeurs sous les éclairages* (1952); Matthew Smith's *Anemones in a Blue Vase* (1928); Barnett Newman's *By Two's* (1949) and Joseph Alber's *Floating* (1958). See McIntyre, I.S. *Judgement by Eye: The Art Collecting Life of E. J. Power*, (MA Thesis), Norwich: University of East Anglia, 2008

[online] [https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/10628/1/Dissertation\\_Complete\\_dissertation\\_mcintyre\\_2008.pdf](https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/10628/1/Dissertation_Complete_dissertation_mcintyre_2008.pdf) [12 July 2014] According to Hoyland's records, Alan Power bought 29.12.65 and 10.4.66. See appendix 4: Sales, Purchases and Gifted Works: John Hoyland, 1960-1982. There may have been more sales emanating from Waddington Galleries.

<sup>479</sup> When the Tate trustees refused to buy Joseph Beuys *Fat Battery* Ted Power stepped in and bought it and later, in an act of generosity, donated the work to the Tate Gallery.

<sup>480</sup> Waddington, L. *Memories in Mundy*, J. (ed) *Brancusi to Beuys: Works from the Ted Power Collection*, London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996, p.22

*Some Pictures from a Private Collection* that took in four English cities between October 1956 and March 1957.<sup>481</sup> The exhibition proved so popular that the Arts Council was forced to hastily arrange a London showing which took place at the ICA in 1958. Hoyland visited the exhibition. At other times the paintings were on show at Ted Power's Grosvenor Square flat, which was visited by the cognoscenti of the London art scene, Hoyland among them. According to Crow:

In that setting the most striking impression made on artists was the fact that a single painting could occupy the entire wall from floor to ceiling. For them, the sheer physical impact of the canvases invited comparisons with the cinema screen, or with the architectural environment, encouraging modes of attention that slipped into place and context.<sup>482</sup>

This impressed Hoyland and it is reasonable to claim that his early paintings, predicated on the notion of these two ideas, the cinema screen and architecture, were influenced by the paintings on show in Ted Power's flat. It is likely that Power took counsel from Lawrence Alloway; however, as Sylvia Sleight, Alloway's wife pointed out, 'although he consulted Lawrence, he had great taste of his own'.<sup>483</sup>

Ted Power was far-sighted in his approach and was one of the first collectors to recognise the future ascendancy of London as a major art centre and art market. He reacted shrewdly, anticipated the market conditions and invested in the work of the emerging British artists of the early 1960's before prices became inflated.

Hoyland recalls the moment that he was told of the sale of his work to the Power:

I got this telegram from Alloway, saying, congratulations, you know, you're a star or something. Both your paintings sold on the opening night to Ted and Alan Power, who were the two biggest collectors. So I was hot, you know. So I came out, I was very, very thrilled because, you know, I'd made about two hundred pounds or something. I think one was a hundred and twenty and one was a hundred. It was a lot of money.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> The exhibition took in the following venues: Arts Council Gallery, Cambridge October - November 1956 ; City Art Gallery, York November - December 1956 ; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool December 1956 - January 1957; and the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle February - March 1957.

<sup>482</sup> Crow (1993), p.83

<sup>483</sup> Sleight, S. - Quoted in Mundy (1996) p.22

<sup>484</sup> Gooding (2005-2007), p.90

## Robert McAlpine

Robert (Alistair) McAlpine was another important collector of modern and contemporary art in the 1960s and an early advocate of Hoyland's work. McAlpine's obsession with collecting began in his childhood when he started to collect stones from the beaches close to where he lived in Dorset. An obsessive, eclectic collector, during the course of his life he assembled more than one hundred different types of collection.<sup>485</sup> But interestingly as soon as each collection was 'complete' McAlpine disposed of it, often for no financial gain and regularly donated his collections to public museums or art galleries.<sup>486</sup> In 1962 McAlpine took the decision to collect contemporary art and soon sought the advice of, and forged a close business relationship, with Leslie Waddington. McAlpine was one of the first collectors to buy 1960s British abstraction, his first acquisitions, acting on Waddington's advice, were ten abstract sculptures by David Annesley, Michael Bolus, Phillip King, Tim Scott, William Tucker, William Turnbull, and Isaac Witkins, a collection he presented to the Tate Gallery in 1971. Introduced to 'serious painting' by Leslie Waddington in the early 1960s he soon started to collect paintings, building a collection that included eight Mark Rothko's, twenty-four Morris Louis's as well as work by Clyfford Still, Ellsworth Kelly, Jackson Pollock, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Jean Dubuffet. McAlpine's recollections provide an interesting insight both into the world of collecting and the prevailing attitudes towards abstraction in Britain in the 1960s; if he is correct in his recollections there were very few individuals purchasing abstract art at the time:

There was only one other person in the country buying contemporary sculpture at the time... at that time, in the 1960s, there was real contempt for art in England. Art was cheap – the Rothkos cost around £2,500 each – and there was no social status in collecting. People would come into my house and be appalled by the beautiful Matisse decoupages. They would ask, "What is

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<sup>485</sup> McAlpine's collections included abstract art, tribal folk art, policemen's truncheons, Alfred Wallis and other folk artists, George Stubbs, early Australian settlement furniture, beads, modern Italian furniture, and the paintings of the Australian artist Sidney Nolan,

<sup>486</sup> The assumption is often made that wealthy collectors acquire art as part of their investment portfolio but this was not so with Alistair McAlpine, who regularly gave complete collections or individual works away. Monetary gain was not the motivator for McAlpine, and he has not generated wealth from 'playing' the art markets. The value of his 1960s art collection was large, 'about 25 years ago, Leslie Waddington found an inventory of (my) collection made in the 1960s and estimated its then market value at £80m'.<sup>486</sup> - Quoted in McAlpine, A. 'Alistair McAlpine: The Inveterate Collector', *Apollo*, July/August 2011, Vol. CLX XIV, No 589, pp.33-4

that – a tube of toothpaste?” Or sneer derisively at the Rothkos and say, “call that a painting? It only has two colours.”<sup>487</sup>

Always drawn to colour McAlpine found abstract art and sculpture ‘compelling’, and therefore it was inevitable that in the mid-1960s he would buy paintings by John Hoyland; this he did in 1966, buying two paintings by Hoyland: 6.3.66 (Fig.82) and 1.3.66 (Fig.83) which on delivery he immediately donated to the University of Warwick collection. McAlpine also bought other paintings by Hoyland for his personal collection. According to Hoyland’s records, in 1967 he acquired 5.1.67 for an undisclosed sum, and two years later purchased 18.6.69 for £850 and 7.8.69 for £562.10.00 from the Waddington Galleries (see appendix 4).

Aside from his ‘eye’ for good art, McAlpine was also an influential person on the London art scene during the two decades covered by this thesis. For over a decade, from 1972 to 1982, McAlpine served on a number of arts organisations: Director of the ICA from 1972 to 1980, Vice-Chairman of the Contemporary Art Society between 1973 and 1980, and an active member of the Arts Council in 1981 and 1982. McAlpine played a major part in the setting up of the Institute of Contemporary Prints in 1975, which, as will be shown later in this chapter, played a major role in developing the Tate Gallery’s print collection.

#### Dr Alastair Hunter

Another early collector of paintings by Hoyland was Dr Alastair Hunter, a relatively unknown but keen, avid, and astute collector of modern art, who, with limited funds at his disposal, nevertheless, managed to build an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art. During the 1950s he collected British painting, including works by Graham Sutherland, Keith Vaughan, Paul Nash, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, and Prunella Clough but in the early sixties turned his attention to the new generation of British painters. He purchased Hoyland’s 29.3.69 (Fig.84) from the Waddington Gallery in 1970 and *Verge* 12.10.76 (Fig.85) for £950 +VAT at an

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<sup>487</sup> McAlpine - Quoted in McAlpine (2011), pp.33-4

unconfirmed date, but obviously after October 1976. At some point Hunter also acquired *Downland* (Fig.86) but there is no mention of the painting in Hoyland's records. The painting was bequeathed to the Courtauld Gallery in 1984.

Bryan Robertson described Hunter as:

A distinguished heart physician and, in later life, an innovative Dean of the Medical School of St George's Hospital...(who) saw Hoyland's work for the first time in the New Generation show at the Whitechapel in 1964 and later, in 1966, bought a large Hoyland painting which he presented to the Royal College of Physicians....Hunter acquired another large Hoyland painting in 1967 which hung for some years at St George's Hospital.<sup>488</sup>

Robertson's recollections are not entirely accurate because the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) records contradict this account. The records show that in 1966 the RCP took, for the time and in view of the somewhat traditional background of the organisation, the bold decision to acquire Hoyland's 4.3.66 (Fig.87) an especially fine example of his work from that period. According to the RCP, 'the painting was bought by a small group of RCP fellows for £500<sup>489</sup> to complement the room after the president complained that he "had nothing but a blank wall to stare at" during dinners. Treasurer Richard Bomford felt "it would go particularly well with the carpet". When purchasing it he noted, "We should not try and strike a bargain. It is not compatible with the dignity of the College" '.<sup>490</sup> It is likely, nevertheless, that Hunter was involved in the decision, proffering his expertise in art and practical advice on the suitability of the work to the RCP.

It was somewhat ironic that a rather traditional establishment, the Royal College of Physicians, granted the Royal Charter during the reign of King Henry VIII, should have been one of the first 'educational' institutions to see merits in Hoyland's work. However, on closer scrutiny, it becomes less surprising because the RCP had displayed innovatory zeal since the late 1950's. In 1959 the RCP had commissioned the modernist architect Sir Denys Lasdun to design a new headquarters for the

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<sup>488</sup> Robertson, B. Tate Archive TGA/200310 - The Personal Papers of Bryan Robertson

<sup>489</sup> Interestingly, Hoyland's records contradict the price paid for the painting. Hoyland records it selling for £450. The Waddington Galleries may have given a trade discount of 10% to the RCP; this would explain the discrepancy.

<sup>490</sup> [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/4-3-66-192378> [1 October 2013]

college. Constructed in concrete the headquarters of the RCP continues to have a distinct presence in London's Regents Park.

The importance of collectors like Hunter was not lost on Bryan Robertson, '[he was] the best representative of the kind of collector, however small in number, who was still almost exclusively devoted to British artists through the fifties and sixties', one who specifically patronised the new generation of British painters of the 1960s, in particular, supporting 'very strongly, Hoyland in the sixties when few English collectors found space or understanding for the new work'.<sup>491</sup> This statement is somewhat ambivalent: Robertson claims that Hunter 'very strongly' supported Hoyland but records indicate that Hunter was only involved in the purchase of three paintings by Hoyland. So what does Robertson actually mean by this claim? Did he feel that Hunter supported Hoyland in ways other than by purchasing his work? Did Hunter advocate and recommend Hoyland's work to others? One can only speculate, but Hunter moved in the kind of social circles that may have been sympathetic to Hoyland's cause.

### Bryan Robertson

It is easy to concentrate solely on Bryan Robertson's advocacy of John Hoyland, the inclusion of his work in seminal exhibitions at the Whitechapel Art Gallery and in the United States, the writing of catalogue essays and entries, defending the artist's reputation and the promotion of Hoyland in later media interventions and ignore the fact that Robertson was a discerning collector of Hoyland's paintings. He purchased at key stages in his career quality paintings, including *17.5.63* (1963), *12.2.68* (1968) (Fig.35), *Untitled* (1970)(Fig.88), and *Untitled* (1975)(Fig.89).<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Robertson, B. Unpublished papers, Tate Archive TGA/200310 - The Personal Papers of Bryan Robertson

<sup>492</sup> Robertson bequeathed the four paintings to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. One other painting by Hoyland is in its collection. *Memory Mirror* (1981) was gifted in 2001 to the museum by Alice Zeitlyn in memory of her late husband, Dr. B. Zeitlyn. No extant records indicate that Robertson bought the work of other non-figurative artists.

## Corporate Collections

John Hoyland commenced his professional career at a moment when a debate on the symbiotic relationship between state support and private sponsorship of the arts was taking place. The debate coincided with renewed interest in contemporary art from a small number of enlightened companies. Many observers bemoaned the apparent lack of corporate support for the arts in the United Kingdom in stark contrast to corporate patronage of the arts the United States.<sup>493</sup> There was concern from some artists that industrial and commercial support and too much state intervention would result in a loss of artistic freedom. According to Jasia Reichardt, the assistant director of the ICA and at the time Tony Reichardt's wife, the general feeling among artists was that commercial patronage was 'unnecessary and that every artist worth his mettle would make his own way and conquer any financial and practical obstacles'.<sup>494</sup> But this was only one view, others disagreed. Reviewing the situation in 1965 Russell celebrated:

[The] merciful increase in public patronage is long overdue in England. The Peter Stuyvesant Foundation spent large sums on giving travel grants to young artists in those New Generation shows at the Whitechapel Gallery, for example. The Foundation also buys a large work from each of the award winners. And for years, the Contemporary Art Society has been buying modern works of art and presenting them to galleries all over the country, as well as staging special shows from which purchases are made.<sup>495</sup>

Hoyland's work was acquired by three of the most influential corporate collections of contemporary art of the first half of the 1960's: The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, and the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection.

## The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

In 1963 Hoyland found himself the recipient of a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Purchase Award, which resulted in two of his major works, *No 19, 26.12.1961*

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<sup>493</sup> This observation was not entirely accurate; there was support for the arts. In 1966 the findings of an important research survey, collaboration between the Arts Advisory Council and the Institute of Directors, *Patron - Industry Supports the Arts* was published. It identified that by 1966 there were fifty-one art collections already established by British businesses. But what was blatantly clear from the research was nature and make-up of these collections; that custodians of the collections, doubtless briefed by owners, directors or senior management preferred art by established artists who working in the more traditional idioms. See Appendix 1: British Corporate Art Collections and Osborne, A, (ed) *Patron-Industry Supports the Arts*, London: Connoisseur, 1966.

<sup>494</sup> Reichardt, J. 'Patronage and Patrons', *Studio International*, Vol.173, No. 887, March 1967, p.114

<sup>495</sup> Robertson and Russell (1965) p.168.

(1961)(Fig.90) and 8.8.63 (1963)(Fig.91) being acquired for the Calouste Gulbenkian art collection. Early on the decision had been taken by the Gulbenkian Foundation only to acquire works by emerging artists and this undoubtedly played a part in the decision by the Gulbenkian to recognise Hoyland's early achievements. Though youth was undoubtedly a factor, however, it was the intervention by Alan Bowness on Hoyland's behalf that was decisive, an intervention that led to the acquisition of the two paintings for the collection. The name Bowness would feature at various junctures in Hoyland's career, as purchaser, as advocate, and as writer on his work. Besides the endorsement by Bowness the acquisition of the two paintings provided further exposure of Hoyland's work because it was the policy of the Gulbenkian to display its collection as often as possible. The two paintings by Hoyland were included for the first time in the group exhibition, *54:64 Painting and Sculpture of a Decade*, held at the Tate Gallery in the summer of 1964. This was no mean feat for an artist just emerging onto the London art scene because the Calouste Gulbenkian collection was highly regarded at the time. It was perceived as a collection that captured what was happening in the art world in London in the early 1960s and, importantly, reinforced the perception of Hoyland as being of that new generation of avant-garde artists who were making their mark on artistic practice. For as Papadrakakis later rightly pointed out, 'the fact that most of the works...were purchased between 1959 and 1964, gives them an air of authenticity which in a way strips them of being relics of the past: they were selected then as documents of a very vibrant present'.<sup>496</sup>

The collection, unlike other collections, including the Peter Stuyvesant and McAlpine collections, has remained intact and forms part of survey exhibitions held at the Calouste Gulbenkian gallery in Lisbon. After the initial acquisitions more works by Hoyland were acquired for the collection (Figs.92, 93, and 94) and feature in

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<sup>496</sup> Papadrakakis, I. 'Why an Exhibition of British Art from the 1960s?' Essay in *Metamorphosis: British Art of the Sixties: Works from the Collections of the British Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*. Exhibition catalogue by Ana de Vasconcelos e Melo et al., Turin, Italy: Umberto Allemandi, 2005, p.33

exhibitions arranged by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.<sup>497</sup> Today there are sixteen works by Hoyland in the collection including five paintings and a complete set of prints, *The New York Suite*, dating from 1971.<sup>498</sup>

### The Peter Stuyvesant Collection

Until the sale of the collection by Sotheby's between 2010 and 2011, the Peter Stuyvesant Collection was from its inception in 1959 one of the most important collections of modern and contemporary art in Europe. The collection and the ethos behind it was the idea of Alexander Orlow, an avid personal collector of abstract art, and the managing director of the Turmac Tobacco Company from 1954 onwards. In 1959 he commissioned thirteen painters from thirteen countries to respond artistically to the theme *Joie de Vivre*, the principal criteria being that the submitted works be large-scale and colourful. A radical approach to the showing of the works formed part of the aesthetic; instead of the works being hidden from view the paintings and sculptures were prominently displayed in the company's factories and offices, among working machinery and office equipment, with the intention of 'taking art to the people'. In 1960 the initial thirteen works were put on show above machines in the Peter Stuyvesant factory in Zevenaar in the Netherlands, one of the Turmac Tobacco Company's brands. Interestingly, the workforce preferred abstract art to representational work: the first paintings acquired were both abstract and figurative, but it was not long before Orlow discovered that the workers tired of the latter almost as swiftly as they tired of their machines. From then on, Orlow bought only abstract works, moving them about his factory every two or three months - sometimes to the vocal displeasure of employees who had grown fond of a particular painting. The rationale was not entirely altruistic; there was a sound business objective to the acquisition and display of art in the working environment: to reduce worker boredom and alienation, and raise productivity levels. However, the impact

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<sup>497</sup> In 2005 both paintings by Hoyland were included in the exhibition, *Metamorphosis - British Art of the Sixties: Works from the Collections of the British Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lisbon. Inclusion in survey exhibitions assist in keeping Hoyland's work in the public domain and garnering critical attention and re-evaluation of his contribution to 1960s British art and beyond.

<sup>498</sup> The collection can be viewed at [Online] <http://cam.gulbenkian.pt/CAM/pt/Colecao/Autores> [15 June 2014]

went well beyond this: the Peter Stuyvesant Factory and the company's head office in Amsterdam were designated as public art galleries.

The collection grew rapidly and by 1966 contained over two hundred paintings, nearly twenty five years later it consisted of over nine hundred works of art by artists from thirty six countries. The Stuyvesant Collection's influence extended beyond the Netherlands; as well as the collection being rotated on a regular basis, works from the collection toured and were loaned to external exhibitions. During the 1960s more than forty exhibitions of works from the collection were mounted in museums across the globe, promoting the concept of 'art in the working environment', for example, in the autumn of 1966 a selection of thirty-one works from the collection were exhibited in Centre Art et Recherches, Pavillon de Marsan in the Louvre Palace, Paris.<sup>499</sup>

After the success of its Dutch collection it was decided to create a similar collection in Britain. Between 1964 and 1967 the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation established its British collection, an important initiative for contemporary art at that time. The aim was to 'create a collection of modern English painting second only to that of the Tate Gallery'. Initially an annual allocation of £20,000 was set aside for the purchase of new works of art. An independent purchasing committee, comprising Alan Bowness, Norman Reid, Director of the Tate Gallery, and Lilian Somerville, Director of the Fine Art Department of the British Council, was established to develop the collection. The decision was taken by the three selectors to concentrate on British painting because 'it was accepted that the purchasing funds, although considerable, would not be enough to buy a representative collection of both sculpture and painting and we decided, for the time being at least and with some reservations to buy only paintings' and 'aware of the cultural activities of the Stuyvesant companies abroad, we decided to purchase only British artists, and those long resident in England'.<sup>500</sup> Importantly, it was the wish of the three selectors that, 'any artist included should be represented

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<sup>499</sup> Salanon, R. 'Introduction', *Le musée dans l'usine: Collection Peter Stuyvesant*. Exhibition catalogue by René Salanon, Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1966, n.p.

<sup>500</sup> Bowness, A. 'Introduction', *Recent British Painting (Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Collection)* Exhibition catalogue by Alan Bowness, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London: Lund Humphries, 1968, p.3

by more than one work... [and hope] eventually to have three or four important paintings by each artist to show how the work has developed', the only other caveat being that, 'no picture will be earlier than 1950'.<sup>501</sup> In fact, at the time of the first public showing of the collection in 1965, out of the fifty two paintings already acquired for the collection only two works dated before 1960, with the vast majority of the works, thirty two, dating from 1963 and after(see appendix 5). This gave the collection a fresh, contemporary feel to it and recognised the emergence of a new generation of artists, John Hoyland, among them.

From the outset the intention was that the collection should be accessible to as many audiences as possible: the collection, in its various stages of development was shown both in London and further afield and individual works were loaned out to 'those public galleries in Britain who collect modern British art'.<sup>502</sup>

Before the funding ran out, two paintings by Hoyland were acquired for the Stuyvesant Collection. In 1964 one of Hoyland's last paintings to be rendered in oil on canvas, *21.8.63*, was purchased from the 1964 *New Generation* exhibition. Then in June 1966, *21.2.66*<sup>503</sup> was purchased directly from Hoyland. From the above general statement by Bowness it can be inferred that the reason for the acquisition of Hoyland's *21.2.66* was that the painting was, according to the selectors, a work of 'particular importance' and 'a crucial picture'. The two paintings by Hoyland were included in two group exhibitions: the *Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Collection: Peter Stuyvesant, A Collection in the Making* (1965) and *Recent British Painting: Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Collection* (1967).

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<sup>501</sup>Letter to Alan Bowness from Alan Kimber, Frank O'Shanohan Associates, acting for the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation dated 30 November 1965, Whitechapel Art Gallery Archives, WAG/EXH/2/104A

<sup>502</sup> When the Stuyvesant collection was dispersed *21.2.66* was sold by Sotheby's in 1985 to Stanley J Seeger for £3,000. In 1987 he added the companion painting *21.8.63* to his collection.<sup>502</sup> In 2007 when the collection of Stanley J Seeger was auctioned off at Sotheby's, *21.2.66* fetched £44,400 and *21.8.63* sold for £19,200.<sup>502</sup> This demonstrates that over the years the monetary value of Hoyland's paintings have risen substantially.

<sup>503</sup> [Online] [http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-hoyland/artwork-21266-J13UtGR\\_1LqiYe8EAG1tkA2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-hoyland/artwork-21266-J13UtGR_1LqiYe8EAG1tkA2) [28 June 2014]

### The Sebastian de Ferranti Collection

Now mainly forgotten, during the late 1960's and 1970's the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection was well respected. Ronald Alley, Keeper of the Modern Collection at the Tate Gallery, in 1970 referred to the collection as 'a significant addition to the artistic scene' and noted 'it is a collection of major works and I know of no collection apart from the Tate's, the British Council and the Stuyvesant Foundation's that can match it in this particular field.'<sup>504</sup>

The collection was started in 1966 by Sebastian de Ferranti, the Chairman of Ferranti Ltd., an engineering company first established in Great Britain in 1882. For over 80 years Ferranti Ltd. was renowned for its innovative engineering designs and ideas.<sup>505</sup>

In 1965 Sebastian Ferranti decided to form a collection of paintings by young British artists. His preference was for abstract works. Initially he engaged the services of the Rowan Gallery. The decision to acquire art was in keeping with the company's innovative history. As Alley pointed out:

In choosing to [start an art collection] he was influenced by his interest in the surprising similarity between the kind of design with which his firm was concerned in the field of heavy electrical engineering and electronics and certain types of contemporary art both of which may be said to involve a kind of 'structured interpretation'. Engineering design of such complexity necessitates at times aesthetic decisions akin to the creation of a work of art. Therefore Mr de Ferranti thought it was especially suitable that his firm, which specialised in some of the most advanced developments of technology, should be associated with unmistakably contemporary art.<sup>506</sup>

Sebastian de Ferranti displayed a proclivity for abstraction because 'Mr de Ferranti finds pop art too flippant' and 'his personal taste seems to be for abstract art of a severe and lyrical kind, especially if it has some definable intellectual content'.<sup>507</sup> The urban aesthetic being explored at the time by Hoyland sat comfortably with this view.

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<sup>504</sup> Alley, R. 'Introduction', *Contemporary Paintings from the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection*. Exhibition catalogue by Ronald Alley, Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery, 1970, p.5

<sup>505</sup> In 1890 the company designed and installed an electrical generating and distribution system for the new Deptford Power Station, the world's largest energy-producing system when it opened. During the subsequent 70 years the company continued to expand, designing and manufacturing a wide range of innovative engineering products: from radar and radio components to guided missile systems, to transformers and computer and telecommunication systems. In 1962, at a high point in the company's history, Ferranti developed the world's first industrial process control computer, technology that was incorporated into numerous British defence systems.

<sup>506</sup> Alley (1970), p.6

<sup>507</sup> Alley (1970), p.6

By 1969 the collection consisted of twelve paintings,<sup>508</sup> including Hoyland's *13.12.66*,<sup>509</sup> which had been purchased direct from the artist for £440.

The importance of the collection was recognised in 1970 when the collection was exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester in the exhibition *Contemporary Paintings from the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection*. A colour reproduction of Hoyland's painting in situ in the chairman's office appeared on the cover of the exhibition catalogue. Ronald Alley's catalogue entry for the painting claimed, 'John Hoyland's *13.12.66* has something in common with the first of these Huxleys but the large expanses of stained colour have a throbbing vehemence which denotes that there is a more intense emotional pressure behind the work'.<sup>510</sup>

Although the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection was essentially a private collection owned by the Ferranti family, the collection itself was displayed in the company's Head office in London and was viewed by employees and visitors. Its reputation extended beyond the United Kingdom. In 1974 the Sebastian de Ferranti Collection was included on The Society for Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago's<sup>511</sup> trip itinerary to Britain, an itinerary that included visits to numerous private collections, the studios of Bridget Riley and Henry Moore, the auction house Sotheby's, the Wallace Collection, with the finale, dinner at the Tate Gallery hosted by Norman Reid, the Tate's Director.<sup>512</sup>

### The Granada Collection

The Granada Art Collection was started in the early 1960's by the television impresario, Sidney Bernstein, who along with his brother Cecil Bernstein, had founded Granada Television. Awarded its broadcasting franchise in 1956, Granada

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<sup>508</sup> The collection included works by Bridget Riley, Paul Huxley, Richard Smith, Patrick Caulfield as well as John Hoyland  
<sup>509</sup> view at [Online] <http://www.artnet.de/k%C3%BCnstler/john-hoyland/artwork-131266-4PxBqb1XHjI1QBpvCAiNdw2> [14 July 2014]

<sup>510</sup> Alley (1970), p.6

<sup>511</sup> The Society for Contemporary Art is one of the most respected art societies outside of New York. Founded in Chicago in 1940 its aim has been to support the acquisition of contemporary art for the Art Institute of Chicago and 'to promote a better understanding and appreciation of art' through its members education programme including a dynamic programme of lectures. Past guest speakers included Clement Greenberg, Robert Motherwell, Richard Serra, and John Cage

<sup>512</sup> Publicity material for the trip published by the society referred to the Sebastian Ferranti Collection as 'his considerable collection of paintings.' [Online] <http://www.scaaic.org/index.php?q=node/859> [12 February 2014]

Television soon established itself as one of the most innovatory companies delivering television programmes in the country.<sup>513</sup> It is, therefore, unsurprising, with its innovatory approach towards popular culture, that Sidney Bernstein took the bold step of establishing an art collection for the company as well as building a personal collection, which he bequeathed to the Whitworth Art Gallery in 1993. From the outset, Sidney Bernstein's approach was to invest in what was seen by many to be avant-garde art. According to Sidney's nephew Alex Bernstein, Sidney 'bought the first Francis Bacon before the artist was so universally accepted'.<sup>514</sup> However, the development of the collection came to an abrupt halt in the 1960's but in 1973 Alex Bernstein<sup>515</sup> persuaded the Granada Television Board to re-commence collecting and as a consequence a major work by John Hoyland - *Trasko* - (Fig. 95) was acquired for the collection in 1979.

Alex Bernstein's criterion for selection was simple:

I simply chose the paintings I liked. There were no other criteria. They were not intended as an investment - although they have turned out to be rather a good one - nor were the paintings intended to be representative of British painting as a whole. Nor were they bought with the ultimate aim of holding an exhibition.<sup>516</sup>

#### European Collections

As stated in chapter 4, Hoyland enjoyed some recognition and commercial success in Italy, with his work being shown regularly in Milan and Verona. One of the founding directors of the Galleria dell'Ariete in Milan, Beatrice Monti, was an avid collector of British art from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s. In a gallery career spanning twenty-five years she arranged over two hundred exhibitions, including solo exhibitions of the work of David Hockney, Richard Smith, Harold Cohen and Bernard

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<sup>513</sup> Within twelve months of its first broadcast Granada Television produced all of the top ten rated programmes. In 1960 the first broadcast of *Coronation Street* took place and in 1962 it was the first television channel to showcase *The Beatles*.

<sup>514</sup> Bernstein, A. 'Introduction'. *The Granada Collection: Recent British Paintings and Drawings*. Exhibition catalogue by Alex Bernstein et al., Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 1983, p.4

<sup>515</sup> Alex Bernstein was the son of Cecil Bernstein and the nephew of Sidney Bernstein. He served on and became managing director of Granada Television during the 1970s. Then, between 1979 and 1996 he was Chairman of the Granada Group.

<sup>516</sup> Bernstein (1983), p.4

Cohen as well as Hoyland. She owned two works by Hoyland: *1.7.68*. (Fig.96) and *Untitled, 1970*. *1.7.68* is an interesting painting because of the colours chosen by Hoyland. As discussed earlier, in 1968, influenced by the paintings of Giorgio Morandi and William Scott, he extended his colour range and this is a good example of what Hoyland was attempting to achieve in his painting at the time. Records show that Hoyland's *4.2.66* was sold to the gallery before the gallery closed in 1980.

Another important advocate of Hoyland's in Italy was Helene Sutton. A collector-cum-dealer, it is evident that Hoyland sold work directly to her and at other times work was supplied on a sale or return basis, with Sutton acting as an agent and striving to find buyers for his work in Italy. There were at least nine transactions involving Helene Sutton. In 1971 Hoyland's *28.11.71* was sold to Sutton for £800 'at 40% discount'. Shortly afterwards she bought *29.11.71* for £850.<sup>517</sup> It is not possible to fathom if the acquired works were for her private collection or bought on behalf of clients, and today the whereabouts of the paintings is unclear. Although Hoyland exhibited in Germany and France, sales of his work in the two countries were low.<sup>518</sup>

#### The State and Public Institutional Support

The social and cultural changes that took place in the late Fifties (outlined in chapter 2) led to demands for government to take a more active role in the promotion of the arts. But it took pressure from an external body before it responded. In 1959 the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was instrumental in the setting up of the informal committee, made up of Lord Bridges, the Countess of Albemarle, Noel Annan, and Sir George Barnes, to investigate arts provision in Britain. The brief to the committee was simple: to identify the needs of the arts and make recommendations. The committee's report - *Help for the Arts* - which became commonly known as the Bridges Report was funded by Calouste Gulbenkian and published in 1959. Without the publication of *Help for the Arts* and the subsequent government financial backing

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<sup>517</sup> John Hoyland Personal notebook 1, Hoyland Studio n.p.

<sup>518</sup> See appendix 4: John Hoyland: Sales, Purchases, and Gifted Works, 1960-1982

for many of its recommendations, it is reasonable to claim that many of the improvements to the public arts infrastructure in the 1960s would not have materialised or would have been subject to delay or cancellation. For as Hewison pointed out,

The report not only proved to be the first of a series of highly influential studies of cultural policy that the United Kingdom Branch has commissioned or co-funded, but also set a pattern by which it would bring together a team of experts to investigate an issue, draw up a policy, and publish a report that would have an influence far beyond the immediate purposes of the Foundation.<sup>519</sup>

But it was over five years before any government action was taken. It was a dispute between a government department, the Ministry of Works and the curators and members of the Advisory Committee of the Government Art Fund that prompted the Labour government to act. The row was over acquisition policy. The Ministry of Works was adamant only 'pleasing works' should be bought for the government; its Advisory Committee disagreed, arguing for the acquisition of good art and not simply 'furnishing pictures'. In time-honoured fashion the government set up a review into the arts. The responsibility for the task was assigned to the newly appointed and more supportive arts minister, Jennie Lee. She immediately set about the task and the subsequent White Paper, *A Policy for the Arts*, was published in 1965. Shortly after publication of the White Paper, the remit of the Arts Council was extended and a pledge made to allocate more funds; with the consequence that the arts budget was almost tripled between 1965 and 1971. By 1968 over £7.2 million had been allocated to the Arts Council.

The result was increased funding for the arts and a commitment to capital projects but the funding came with conditions.<sup>520</sup> One of the recommendations of the White Paper was that the Arts Council would receive more funding in return for extending

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<sup>519</sup> Hewison, R. and Holden, J. *A Short History of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's UK Branch, 1956-2006*, London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2007, p.3

<sup>520</sup> All arts bodies had their budgets increased. Two examples illustrate this: In 1964 the annual purchase budget to the Tate Gallery was increased to £60,000, with additional funding of £250,000, spread over five years, agreed with the Treasury. Arts Council funding also increased. Between 1952 and 1960 its annual budget increased at a set figure of 5% but during the first half of the 1960s the funding increased exponentially. A designated budget of £1.2 m was agreed in 1960 and was quickly followed by a doubling of the annual budget over the next three years.

its appeal beyond London.<sup>521</sup> A major strategy to achieve this specific aim was the policy to 'reach out' to the provinces. This included designing a programme of exhibitions that would be rolled out across the nation and the establishment of regional art prizes.

Hoyland benefitted directly from this policy, with his work included in a number of Arts Council touring exhibitions or other Arts Council initiatives, notably, the Chichester National Art and the Tolly Cobbold/Eastern Arts exhibitions. Although both initiatives were short lived, nonetheless, at the time they were seen as prestigious exhibitions and provided Hoyland with two opportunities to broaden and extend his exhibition record. The Tolly Cobbold/Eastern Arts exhibition usually opened at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and then toured to Ipswich Museum, the Graves Art Gallery in Hoyland's home city, Sheffield and concluded at the Camden Arts Centre in London. In 1975 Hoyland won first prize at that year's Chichester National Art Exhibition and exhibited at three of the five subsequent Tolly Cobbold/Eastern Arts Exhibitions. Hoyland's records indicate that he sold work at the close of one of the Tolly Cobbold/Eastern Art exhibitions.<sup>522</sup> Arguably, the most significant development occurred in 1979 when his successful Serpentine retrospective exhibition travelled to Birmingham and Sheffield.

The commitment to capital projects, especially the building of the Hayward Gallery and the conversion of the Kensington Tea Room into the Serpentine Gallery assisted Hoyland's career after 1974 (see chapter 3). Without these improved facilities the Hayward Annual would not have been introduced. The only viable alternative venue for a major retrospective showing of Hoyland's work, which did take place at the Serpentine Gallery in 1979, would have been the Tate Gallery and his relationship

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<sup>521</sup> Traditionally the art world was concentrated in London. In her study of post-war Britain's institutional structure, Garlake found that, 'With the exception of a small number of important municipal galleries, the resources of the art world were almost entirely concentrated in London. This concentration is an essential part of the organisation and development of post-war art. London was where the majority of critics worked and where their writing was published'.

<sup>522</sup> Hoyland's records indicate that *Winter Journey 3.1.81* was sold at the close of one Tolly Cobbold exhibition (see appendix 4).

with the Tate was strained, with Hoyland feeling that the support he received from the Tate was poor.

The lack of suitable exhibition spaces for large-scale works had been a major topic for discussion on the London art scene since Hoyland attended debates on the subject at the ICA during the late 1950s. The discussions on the subject continued well into the Sixties but this was not a new concern. As far back as the immediate post-war years the Arts Council recognised the need for its own designated exhibition space in London but without central government backing nothing could or was done about it. For over twenty years the Arts Council had to rely on other gallery spaces - the Tate Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and to a limited degree, the National Gallery - to display its collection or hold exhibitions. The completion of the mainly Arts Council funded Hayward Gallery in 1968 provided a much needed facility, with new opportunities for contemporary artists, especially those working on a large scale, in particular, artists working the abstract idiom, to exhibit.

The other exhibition space funded and managed by the Arts Council, the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens, opened to the public in May 1970. As the then Assistant Secretary to the Arts Council recalls:

In 1969 [the Arts Council] responded to an approach from the Minister of Public Building and Works, who was anxious to find a new use for the tea-house in Kensington Gardens, whose original function had been taken over by the new restaurant on the bank of the Serpentine. It seemed to the Council that this building would form an excellent exhibition gallery, which could be used to help young artists who were not yet known to the private gallery world and were sometimes working on a scale or in media beyond the capacity of most of those galleries, to display their work to good effect.<sup>523</sup>

#### Advocacy, Recommendations, Promotion and Institutional Support.

Largely because of his networking abilities and the originality of his work, Hoyland throughout his career enjoyed the patronage of a number of key players on the London art scene. Initially he was supported by, among others, Bryan Robertson,

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<sup>523</sup> White, E.W. *The Arts Council of Great Britain*, London: Davis-Poynter, 1975, p.185

Alan Bowness, David Thompson, and Norbert Lynton. These supporters wrote introductions and entries for exhibition catalogues, critical essays in journals, and provided reviews of the exhibitions in which his work was included. Importantly, they served on acquisition panels or held positions of authority, and therefore it is not coincidence that frequently they made recommendations on the work of Hoyland that should be acquired for public collections, including those of the Tate Gallery, the Arts Council, the British Council and the Government Art Collection and charities supporting the arts, including the Contemporary Art Society. The same names appear on numerous acquisition committees of public institutions because the zone of influence was narrow. John Hoyland, because of their advocacy, is well represented in the collections of the Tate Gallery, Arts Council, the British Council, and the Government Art Collection.

#### The Importance of the Exhibition

A marked exhibition record was the key to Hoyland's success and, unsurprisingly, there was a correlation between it and the acquisition of his work by public institutions. The critical attention that exhibitions attracted assisted in the promotion of his work (see chapters 3 and 4). Increased interest in Hoyland's work often coincided with a major exhibition of his paintings. Two specific examples illustrate this. In the eighteen months after his critically acclaimed retrospective exhibition at the Whitechapel in 1967, over thirty major paintings were sold (see appendix 4). Hoyland's second retrospective in 1979 at the Serpentine Gallery, after a hiatus in his career, led to renewed interest in his work and, importantly, sales. According to Sue Grayson, Director, Serpentine Gallery:

Prior to the show, two of the larger works were sold by Waddington Galleries to private collectors (at approx. £5,000 each). During the exhibition five of the works on paper have been sold at £632 each. The Gulbenkian Foundation has expressed interest in one of the large works on the wall, and there is a possibility that a second will sell. Of course the exhibition has been exceptionally popular and almost rapturously received.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Arts Council internal memo from Sue Grayson, Director Serpentine Gallery to Joanna Drew, Arts Council, dated 23 October 1979 ACGB/29/52

## Public Collections in the United Kingdom

For the purposes of this thesis, a public museum is defined as 'an institution, open to the public that 'conserves and displays for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, collections of objects of cultural and scientific significance'.<sup>525</sup> There are over 2,500 museums in the United Kingdom but less than one hundred have fine art collections and out of these only around sixty collections, because of the nature of their collections, may have shown an interest in Hoyland's work<sup>526</sup> (see appendix 4). The principal British public art collections are the Tate Gallery, the collections of the Arts Council, the British Council, and the Government Art Collection,<sup>527</sup> provincial museums and galleries, and university collections. Out of these, only the Tate Gallery has permanent exhibition facilities; the others exhibit their collections in temporary settings.

A number of factors influence acquisition decisions. Directors, curators and those serving on acquisition panels arrive at their decisions based on a number of factors, including the underpinning objective of the collection, the quality of the work and its suitability for the collection, inclusion in exhibitions, critical reception for the artist, trends in art, government policies and pressure and inevitably, personal preference. An overriding consideration is financial. The need to manage budgets, which have always been modest, is of paramount importance. Acquisition decisions are a combination of aesthetic judgement and practicality; the work of an emerging artist is more affordable and can be justified on the grounds of better 'value for money'. The acquisition policy of the British Council is typical. For as Diana Eccles, the Collections Manager for the British Council Art Collection, pointed out, 'our acquisitions policy is geared towards the formation of touring exhibitions; on the

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<sup>525</sup> Fisher, M. *Britain's Best Museums and Curators: From the Greatest Collections to the Smallest Curiosities*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, p.xv

<sup>526</sup> Museums reflect their time and type of patronage, therefore, it is unsurprising that several of the fine art collections of museums date back to before the modern era and were assembled during the heyday of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

<sup>527</sup> Strictly speaking the Government Art Collection though funded out of general taxation is not a public collection because the work is not on show to the general public. However, it is included in this thesis for two reasons: First, the acquisition of Hoyland's work represented an important income stream for the artist. Second, the work is on show to government officials, visitors and is selectively loaned to public exhibitions.

whole their interest tends to focus on the work of young artists so most of the works in our collection are by artists at the start of the careers'.<sup>528</sup>

Another crucial factor is the support a public institution receives from charities and the public; secondary income streams help greatly. Without the support received from the Contemporary Art Society, the Art Fund and 'friends' groups the collections of many public institutions would be less impressive.

As an emerging artist in the Sixties Hoyland's painting appeared different and innovative; its aesthetic and monetary value was endorsed by a marked exhibition record and the subsequent critical attention accorded it and, importantly, its relative affordability. Therefore, it is unsurprising that at this point in his career the Arts Council, the British Council, and the Government Art Collection, in general, acquired his work. But later as his career developed and other art forms attracted greater critical attention and competed with painting for market share, interest in his work fell away.

### National Collections

The holdings of work by Hoyland in national collections are impressive, with over one hundred works, both major paintings and works on paper placed. Without the support, in the form of income from sales and the endorsement by those institutions it is difficult to see how Hoyland's career, bearing in mind that sales in the private sector were weak, could have been sustained.

### The Tate Gallery Collection

There are forty works by Hoyland in the Tate Gallery collection, eight major paintings, with the rest works on paper (see appendix 6). As with the development of most public collections, Hoyland's art entered the collection at different stages of his career and through various acquisition methods. Some works entered soon after

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<sup>528</sup> Eccles, D. ([Diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Diana.eccles@britishcouncil.org)) *John Hoyland*. Email to Chris Davies ([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 15 October 2010.

production but other works were acquired later. Work was both gifted and purchased; two examples illustrate the point. *April 1961* (Fig.2) was purchased by Ted Power in 1961 but it was over twenty years before he decided to donate it, through the Friends of the Tate Gallery, to the Tate.<sup>529</sup> In 2014, the McMaster Museum of Art in Hamilton, Ontario, gifted Hoyland's *11.7.64* (Fig. 97) to the Tate collection, fifty years after it was painted and after being in its collection for a number of years.<sup>530</sup>

With limited public funds at its disposal the Tate Gallery has always relied heavily on support from both internal and external funding sources. The role played by the Contemporary Art Society,<sup>531</sup> the Friends of the Tate,<sup>532</sup> the Institute of Contemporary Prints (ICP),<sup>533</sup> and the National Art Collection Fund (now known as the Art Fund) continues to be important.

It was through the Contemporary Art Society that Hoyland's work first entered the Tate. Names that appeared on the committees of the Arts Council or the British Council, unsurprisingly, also appeared on Contemporary Art Society committees. The executive committee of CAS in the 1960s was made up of art professionals: gallery directors and curators, private collectors and art critics. Each year two executive

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<sup>529</sup> See [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hoyland-april-1961-t03701> [21 August 2014]

<sup>530</sup> See [Online] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hoyland-11764-t14174> [10 January 2015]

<sup>531</sup> The Contemporary Art Society was founded in 1910 and for over one hundred years it has supported the arts in Britain. Its role has evolved over time and since the Second World War it has acquired art and mounted exhibitions. The Contemporary Art Society has donated over 8,000 works to British art galleries and museums. Its mission statement has remained constant, 'to support and develop public collections of contemporary art in the UK.' It acquires new works for over sixty national museums and galleries that subscribe to its membership scheme. Throughout its history, 'the acquisition and distribution to public galleries of works by living artists has been and remains the prime purpose of the CAS'.<sup>531</sup> Works are always bought by CAS direct from the artist or representing gallery. With limited funds at its disposal the Contemporary Art Society in a similar fashion to other public organisations has generally had to acquire an artist's work near the beginning of his career. According to Garlake, the Contemporary Art Society tried, 'To seek out work by young artists of some reputation, who were likely to establish the prominent trends of the period, before they became well known'.<sup>531</sup> Paul Hobson of The Contemporary Art Society concurred with this view: 'It has always been our policy, largely due to limited funds, to purchase the work of artists early in their careers - contributing to our unrivalled reputation for being 'ahead of the curve' — and to do so with an independent eye'. Hobson, P., [hobson.p@contemporaryartsociety](mailto:hobson.p@contemporaryartsociety) *John Hoyland*. Email to Chris Davies ([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 21 October 2010

<sup>532</sup> The Friends of the Tate Gallery was established in 1958, with the remit to raise funds to support, in the light of inadequate central government funding, the Tate Gallery's acquisition of artworks. In its first year of operation it raised over £18,000 and over the next five years contributed over £85,000 to the Tate. Their financial support enabled the Tate to acquire Matisse's *The Snail* in 1962, a painting that came to influence John Hoyland.

<sup>533</sup> The Institute of Contemporary Prints was set up in 1973. The idea of Alastair McAlpine, one of the most generous art patrons of his generation, and avid collector of contemporary art, this voluntary deposit scheme was funded by the Sir Robert McAlpine Foundation. In an astute move the ICP appointed Stewart Mason, formerly the visionary Director of Education of Leicestershire Education Department and during his tenure in that department responsible for starting and developing one of the best collections of contemporary art outside of London, as curator of the graphic art collection. Working closely with Tate staff, Mason managed to persuade galleries, artists, and individual collectors to donate prints to the Tate Gallery. Among the galleries that donated works to the scheme included Marlborough Fine Art, Rowan Gallery, Henry Moore donated his complete print portfolio to the Tate Gallery via the ICP. By 1975 the Institute of Contemporary Prints had donated over 2,500 artists' prints to the Tate. This was important for Hoyland, helping to sustain his career and also helping to endorse print making, which hitherto had been seen as secondary and somewhat inferior to painting.

members were invited to purchase art on behalf of the organisation. Alan Bowness and Lord Croft were elected on to the executive committee in 1961. In 1962 it was Bowness's decision to purchase Hoyland's *No 22.20.2.1962* (Fig.20) for the CAS from the Marlborough New London Gallery for £112.10.0. The policy to acquire 'the work of artists early in their career' partly accounts for the decision. In 1964 CAS presented the painting to the Tate.

In 1966 Hoyland's painting *28.5.66* (Fig.26) became the first work to be actually purchased by the Tate Gallery, again on Bowness's recommendation. The purchase was made possible with a grant from the Knapping Trust and was acquired for £550 direct from Hoyland's studio.<sup>534</sup>

The development of Hoyland's career in the late 1960s coincided with the emergence of a new generation of curators and critics. In 1966 Richard Morphet was appointed Tate's Assistant Keeper of the Modern Collection and in 1986 was promoted to the position of Keeper of the Modern Collection, a position he held until his retirement in 1998. Morphet advocated Hoyland's work and it was largely due to his influence that the Tate decided to purchase Hoyland's *17.3.69* (Fig.98) from the Waddington Galleries for £810 in the summer of 1969.<sup>535</sup> In the same year the Friends of the Tate Gallery purchased *25.4.69* (Fig.99) after viewing it in Hoyland's solo summer exhibition at the Waddington Galleries and immediately donated it to the Tate.

A ten year gap followed before the Tate bought any further works by Hoyland. There were reasons for this. Firstly, the body of work produced by Hoyland in the interim had not been seen in major exhibitions in Britain between 1967 and 1974. Secondly, Hoyland's profile during the period was not as pronounced as it previously had been. The main reason for this was that he had been spending long periods of time in America. These two factors resulted in less critical attention being paid to his work.

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<sup>534</sup> The purchase of the painting was approved at the Tate Board Meeting of 20 October 1966 and an invoice for £550 dated 28 November 1966 received from John Hoyland. Tate Archive - Hoyland, John Part 1: 1964-1969 TG4/2/509/1

<sup>535</sup> Invoice from the Waddington Galleries dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 1969, Tate Archive John Hoyland TG 4/2/509/1

Thirdly, and somewhat debateable, his painting for periods during the ten years was not wholly convincing. Finally, as discussed earlier, there were alternative art forms competing for the Tate's limited acquisition budget. The renaissance in his career can be largely attributed to his inclusion in a number of public exhibitions between 1974 and 1980 (see chapter 3), the highlight being his 1979 retrospective at the Serpentine.

However, the failure by the Tate to purchase any work by Hoyland between 1969 and 1979 was partly compensated by the gifting of work to its collection, principally through the Institute of Contemporary Prints (ICP), which had been established in 1973 to develop the Tate's print collection.<sup>536</sup> Twenty eight works on paper by Hoyland entered the Tate via the ICP scheme. In 1975 Hoyland's dealer, the Waddington Galleries, presented through this scheme, sixteen prints, including the important complete folio, the *New York Suite*, to the Tate's print collection. The decision by the Waddington Galleries was not entirely altruistic, with the Waddington Galleries being only too aware of the fact that no work by Hoyland had entered the Tate collection since 1969 and that the donation was one way of addressing this situation and of ensuring that Hoyland did not slip from view. A savvy operator, Leslie Waddington fully understood the importance of inclusion in public collections as part of the endorsement process for an artist's work and its impact on prices. Also, private collectors, especially those acquiring art as part of an investment portfolio, feel re-assured when work by the artist in their collection is also in major national collections. Between 1975 and 1981, Rose and Chris Prater, the co-founders in the late 1950s of the pioneering print studio, Kelpra Studio, donated twelve prints by Hoyland to the Tate. A further one-off print was presented to the Tate by the Bernard

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<sup>536</sup> The idea to establish the Institute of Contemporary Prints can be attributed to Alastair McAlpine, one of the most generous art patrons of his generation, and avid collector of contemporary art. This voluntary deposit scheme was funded by the Sir Robert McAlpine Foundation. In an astute move the ICP appointed Stewart Mason, formerly the visionary Director of Education of Leicestershire Education Department and during his tenure in that department responsible for starting and developing one of the best collections of contemporary art outside of London, as curator of the graphic art collection. Working closely with Tate staff, Mason managed to persuade galleries, artists, and individual collectors to donate prints to the Tate Gallery. Among the galleries that donated works to the scheme included Marlborough Fine Art, Rowan Gallery, Henry Moore donated his complete print portfolio to the Tate Gallery via the ICP. By 1975 the Institute of Contemporary Prints had donated over 2,500 artists' prints to the Tate. This was important for Hoyland, helping to sustain his career and also helping to endorse print making, which hitherto had been seen as secondary and somewhat inferior to painting.

Jacobson Gallery. Though Hoyland had reservations<sup>537</sup> about certain aspects of printmaking and working on a reduced scale, nevertheless, prints sold and represented invaluable income for both the artist and the Waddington Gallery. Without the establishment of the ICP it is unlikely that these fine examples of Hoyland's print making would have entered the Tate collection.

However, aware of the critical acclaim accorded his second retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery the Tate found itself under pressure from Leslie Waddington and possibly Richard Morphet to acquire further work by Hoyland. It bought two seminal works from the exhibition, *Saracen* (1977)(Fig.43) and *North Sound* (1979)(Fig.44).

### The Arts Council Collection

There are fifteen works by John Hoyland in the Arts Council collection. Nine of the works were purchased between 1965 and 1973, with the remaining six works acquired between 1977 and 1980. The collection holds four major paintings by Hoyland, two dating from the decade of the 1960's and two from the 1970's. Works on paper make up the rest of the collection (see appendix 6). The acquisitions coincide with significant moments in Hoyland's exhibition record (see chapter 3). Ten out of the fifteen acquisitions were acquired shortly after production but there was a time lag for the remaining five works. With a remit to collect art that reflected the times it is unsurprising that no additional works by Hoyland were acquired by the Arts Council thereafter; by 1980, it can be argued, Hoyland was no longer perceived as 'emerging' or 'cutting edge', but instead, was an established artist, no longer in need of support from the Arts Council. Between 1960 and 1973, key dates in Hoyland's early career the panels of purchasers for the Arts Council<sup>538</sup> were

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<sup>537</sup> According to Wright, after exploring printmaking in the 1960s, 'Hoyland became increasingly worried by the virtuosity and technical prowess that was being developed in screenprinting, and which distanced the artist and his intervention from the image that was to result. He abstained almost entirely from making further prints in the 1970s, as the fashion for elaborate screenprints reached its apogee.' From *John Hoyland Prints 1968-1989*. Exhibition catalogue by Patrick Wright, London: Austin/Desmond Contemporary Books, London: 1990, n.p.

<sup>538</sup> The purchasers for the years in which works by Hoyland were acquired for the Arts Council collection : 1969 - John Golding, Norbert Lynton, and Bryan Robertson; 1972 - Hubert Dalwood, Bryan Robertson, Richard Smith ; 1974 - Michael Compton, Hubert Dalwood, Jeremy Rees; 1977 - Paul Huxley; 1980 - Art Panel Members: Bill Beech, Mary Burkett, Pat Gilmore, Lawrence Gowing, Cindy Hargate, Tim Hilton, Phillip King, Ian Jeffrey, Duncan Robinson, Timothy Stephens, Ian Tregarthan-Jenkin, John Walker, Mike Weaver, Alan Bowness for further information go to [Online] <http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk/pastpurchasers.do> [14 January 2014]

dominated by individuals who supported Hoyland at the time: Ronald Alley, Alan Bowness, John Golding, Norbert Lynton, Bryan Robertson, and John Russell. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Alan Bowness was the purchaser of the first work, *19.12.66* (Fig.79) to enter the collection in 1967. The other major work by Hoyland from the mid-1960's, *20.5.68* (Fig.34), was acquired by the Arts Council in 1969 on the recommendation of Golding, Lynton, and Robertson, the nominated purchasers for that year.

#### The British Council Collection

John Hoyland is well represented in the British Council Collection with twenty-four works in the collection. Twenty works were acquired between 1965 and 1981, purchased either direct from Hoyland's studio or the Waddington Galleries or the merged Waddington and Tooth Gallery. Although the majority of works, in keeping with British Council policy, to acquire prints, are works on paper, nonetheless, the collection does include four major paintings. The first work by Hoyland to enter the British Council collection was the watercolour, *Untitled* (1965)(Fig.100). It was bought for £35 from the Waddington Gallery on the recommendation of Bowness and Lynton. Two years later, another watercolour, *No 6 (Orange)*, was once more recommended for purchase by Bowness and Lynton, and subsequently purchased from the Waddington Galleries for £70. Interestingly, in the space of two years the market price for watercolours by Hoyland had doubled in price. The first major work by Hoyland to enter the British Council collection was *8.1.69* (1969)(Fig.101). The painting was recommended by Norbert Lynton and David Thompson and purchased from the Waddington Gallery for £600 in March 1969. Its importance is highlighted by the fact that it was included in the São Paulo Bienal of 1969. A further nine works on paper were added to the collection between 1969 and 1973 but it was not until 1975 that a further major work by Hoyland was acquired. In that year, Hoyland's *22.5.75* (1975)(Fig.102), was purchased from the Waddington Gallery for £620, on the recommendation of Bowness. Two acrylic on paper works were acquired,

respectively in 1969 and 1971, both recommended by Lynton, at a cost of £250 each, more than a threefold increase in price from the last work on paper acquired, *No 6 (Orange)* in 1967.

In 1976 the procedure for acquiring work was amended. At the meeting in September 1976<sup>539</sup> of the Steering Committee for the British Council Collection, it was decided to establish a sub-committee to oversee and manage acquisitions and the general management of the British Council Collection. The committee was aptly named 'The British Council Collection and Purchasing Committee'. The inaugural committee consisted of four members: Alan Bowness, Dennis Farr, Norbert Lynton, and Nick Serota. Protocols on the acquisition of works were agreed.<sup>540</sup> Therefore, it was unsurprising that shortly after its formation, and bearing in mind that two of the members, Bowness and Lynton, had previously advocated and commended Hoyland's work, two major paintings by Hoyland - *12.8.76* and *31.8.76* - were acquired for the collection, recommended by Bowness. It cannot be coincidence that the acquisition of the two paintings came after Hoyland had been included in the 1976 *Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-1976* exhibition, co-arranged by the British Council and the Comune di Milano (see chapter 4).

#### Government Art Collection

The Government Art Collection was established in 1898 and today has an impressive collection of over 12,000 art and craft works, including over 2,500 paintings and sculptures, around 1800 drawings and watercolours, and 8,000 prints. The principal aim of the collection is to place works of art both in major government buildings in the United Kingdom and abroad. Until the beginning of the Sixties this largely dictated its acquisition policy, which up until then had been rather conservative.

Protocol precludes the Government Art Collection from acquiring controversial works

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<sup>539</sup> Record of a Meeting of the Steering Group for the British Council Collection held at the British Council, Fine Arts Department, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1976, British Council Records FAAC(76) 1, 3rd November 1976

<sup>540</sup> In agenda item, 'Revision of Discretionary Levels' the following was agreed: 3.1 Purchases up to £1000 at Director's discretion. Purchases from £1000 - £5000 one member. Purchases over £5000 - all members of the sub-committee plus one member in exceptional cases. From Record of a Meeting of the Steering Group for the British Council Collection held at the British Council, Fine Arts Department, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1976, British Council Records FAAC(76) 1, 3rd November 1976

because works must be 'pleasing to the eye'. The Ministry of Works made this clear in 1960.<sup>541</sup>

Today there are eighteen works by Hoyland in the Government Art Collection, with ten of the works completed between 1969 and 1980. There are three major paintings in the collection, *20.3.69* (Fig.103) from 1969 and *28.4.73* (Fig.104) from 1973, and *Oceano* (1980)(Fig.105), the rest are works on paper, including four individual screen prints from the *New York Suite*. Except for *Grey Blue*, which was purchased from the Oxford gallery in 1974, the remaining five works were bought from the Waddington Galleries between 1971 and 1974. The works are either on display in various government offices, within the United Kingdom or abroad, or in the case of *20.3.69*, in conservation.<sup>542</sup>

### Provincial Collections

John Hoyland is well represented in provincial collections in the United Kingdom, with over thirty works held (see appendix 6). Some works entered the collections soon after production and early in his career, whilst some museums acquired his work at a later date. Museums often acquire work once an artist's reputation has been more consolidated. One example illustrates this point: Southampton City Art Gallery waited until 1997 before purchasing Hoyland's *16.10.68*. (Fig.106)<sup>543</sup>

The first public museum outside of London to acquire a work by John Hoyland was the Manchester City Art Gallery. In 1964 it purchased *14.6.64* (Fig.23) for £360 from Hoyland's solo exhibition held in December 1964 at the Marlborough New London

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<sup>541</sup> The directive read, 'All the pictures which the Ministry buys must in the first place be furnishing pictures. Moreover, especially in the case of pictures sent overseas, they must be fairly generally acceptable so that ... a future ambassador or his wife will not refuse to have hanging in the house a picture accepted by an earlier occupant; as packing and transport are so expensive, the rule is that once a picture reaches a post it stays there, but an ambassador cannot ... be prevented from keeping it out of sight, and the more extreme the subject or treatment the more likely is it that a picture will have only a short useful life. Consequently, funds being limited and needs many, the Ministry can afford to buy only a very few experimental or controversial works, and must concentrate above all on pictures which are likely to prove acceptable (or at least not unacceptable) to average tastes.' Quoted in Baron, W. 'Introduction', Government Art Collection of the United Kingdom: the Twentieth Century, London: Government Art Collection, 1997, p.xiv

<sup>542</sup> The screenprint *Grey Blue on Green* from the appropriately named *The New York Suite* hangs in the British Government Offices in New York. *Untitled* (1967) was purchased from the Waddington Gallery in 1974 and hangs today in Downing Street. *Galaxy*(1997) hangs in the Treasury. *Untitled* (1971) is in the British Embassy. Other works are on show in Berlin, Jakarta, and Nicosia.

<sup>543</sup> It was purchased with the assistance of the Frederick William Smith Bequest Fund. [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/16-10-68-17751> [12 March 2015]

Gallery.<sup>544</sup> Manchester Art Gallery found itself in the position to buy the painting because in the previous year it had received a grant of £750 from the Gulbenkian Foundation, fund-matched with a £750 grant from Manchester City Council, with the express intention of supporting the purchase of contemporary art works. The decision to buy the painting was taken either by the then Director of Galleries, G. Lorraine Conran or the Keeper of Paintings, Elizabeth Johnston, or jointly. After the selection had been made the final decision was authorised by the Art Galleries Committee, a Manchester City Council committee, consisting of councillors and non-elected advisors. In the Minutes of the Art Galleries' Committee meeting held on 17 December 1964 there is note of a resolution that the purchase of the Hoyland 'be approved'. According to Ruth Shrigley, the current Principal Curator of Collections at Manchester Art Gallery:

It is clear from the pencil notes in our copy of the catalogue of the Marlborough exhibition that Mr Conran or Miss Johnston had considered several works in the show - four, including 14.6.64, are marked with a cross and the prices are recorded. This was the first work by Hoyland purchased by the Gallery and I suspect that, as he was a young artist with his first major solo show, they were keen to buy a good example of his work before the prices went up.<sup>545</sup>

Provincial museums have benefitted from the support of the Contemporary Art Society. In 1969 David Sylvester purchased *12.1.69* (Fig.107) for £800 from the Waddington Gallery and it was presented to the Graves Gallery in Sheffield, now part of Museums Sheffield, in 1971. The decision by Sylvester is interesting because it would appear to run counter to his advocacy of Francis Bacon and Frank Auerbach and the type of painting he appeared to favour. Hoyland made no secret of his disdain for both Bacon and Auerbach's work and Sylvester must have been aware of this fact. However, towards the end of the Fifties and throughout the Sixties Sylvester began to take more interest in non-figurative art and this may explain his decision to purchase of Hoyland's painting.

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<sup>544</sup> This represented a four-fold increase in prices for Hoyland's work in just four years. In 1960 his paintings were priced between £60 and £70

<sup>545</sup> Shrigley, R ([r.shrigley@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:r.shrigley@manchester.gov.uk)) *John Hoyland* Email to Chris Davies ([Christopher.davies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:Christopher.davies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 14 August 2013

Thereafter, five additional works by Hoyland were acquired by the Contemporary Art Society. In 1968, Norman Reid acquired Hoyland's gouache *Untitled* for £63 from the Waddington Gallery and the Contemporary Art Society presented it to Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery in 1975. Reid also purchased another gouache, *Untitled* (1965) for £65 in the same year and two years later presented it to Sunderland Art Gallery. In 1980, *Untitled* (1978)(Fig.108) was bought for £478.30 + vat by Lord Croft from the Waddington Gallery and presented to Oldham Art Gallery in 1982.<sup>546</sup> Hoyland's work featured in the Contemporary Art Society exhibition *British Painting in the Sixties* in 1964 (see chapter 3).

The decision by the Arts Council in the Sixties to reach out to the provinces resulted in a major benefit to Hoyland in 1979. His highly acclaimed Serpentine retrospective, funded by the Arts Council, toured to Birmingham and Sheffield and as a consequence a museum quality painting by Hoyland was acquired for the Birmingham Museum and Gallery's collection. The BMAG's purchase of Hoyland's *10.9.75* (Fig.109) in 1980 for £3,150, discounted from Waddington's list price of £3,500 was only made possible because of match-funding, with grants being awarded from the Victoria and Albert Purchase Grant Fund and the Birmingham Public Picture Gallery Fund. The way the painting was acquired highlights the importance of fund-raising<sup>547</sup> and external income streams for under-funded provincial museums. The then Curator of Fine Art, George Breeze proposed the acquisition and Dennis Farr supported him.

Although there is little in Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery archives to indicate the reason for this particular work having been selected, one paragraph in a memo

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<sup>546</sup> In 1985 Mary Rose Beaumont purchased the monotype *Cajun* (1982), which was presented to Harrogate Art Gallery in 1986. A major painting by Hoyland, *Pact* (1978) was purchased (Information on the date of acquisition or purchaser not supplied) and presented to York Art Gallery in 2001. Information supplied by Mr Phil Ashcroft, Office and Projects Manager, the Contemporary Art Society in an email: Ashcroft, P. ([phil@contemporaryartsociety.org](mailto:phil@contemporaryartsociety.org)) RE: Bert Irvin, John Hoyland, Basil Beattie. Email to Chris Davies([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)), 12 April 2011

<sup>547</sup> Historically the Birmingham Museum and Gallery has enjoyed a strong local support base dating back to Victorian times. Two local organisations have supported the museum. First, the Public Picture Gallery Fund was incorporated in 1871 and its aims have barely changed since. It exists to support the BMAG by, 'making available funds to purchase certain works of art.' Second, since 1931, the Association of Friends has supported Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG) by raising money to help finance BMAG's activities. The Friends give around £25,000 a year to BMAG, raised through subscriptions, events and outings, and donations.

from the Director, Dennis Farr to David Coachworth at the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, nonetheless, briefly touches on the issue:

The BMAG is anxious to acquire a work by John Hoyland to add to its growing collection of works by contemporary British artists. This painting has been selected from among those paintings shown here in November and December 1979. It has, therefore, been possible to consider the proposed acquisition over a period and in the helpful context of an exhibition.<sup>548</sup>

The last statement provides an interesting insight into the importance of being able to view exhibitions locally; although many curators travel to London to view exhibitions and see artworks in private galleries there is no substitute to seeing work in context.

### University Collections

Universities were also among the first to acquire work by Hoyland. Although not large in numbers, nonetheless, the acquisition of work by a number of HE institutions helped financially to bolster Hoyland's career in the 1960s when he was finding it difficult to realise sales. The history of universities' collecting can be traced back largely to the nineteenth century, but the early 1960s heralded a new type of collecting. The publication of the Robbins Report in 1963 led to the expansion of the Higher Education sector. A number of the newly founded universities established art collections and designated space for display opportunities: galleries, adjoining art centres, wall space, outdoor spaces. The timing was apposite for Hoyland's career because the vision for the new universities was that they should be functional yet also belong to the community. His work was acquired by five universities: Manchester, Warwick, Newcastle, Leeds, and Stirling. Although the numbers are small, nevertheless, they are important for four reasons: firstly, as discussed earlier, with the relatively low take-up for his work by private collectors, the public sector took on greater significance, and universities formed an integral part of that sector. Secondly, the work collected by universities was usually exhibited in newly designed

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<sup>548</sup> Flynn, B. ([Brendan.Flynn@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Brendan.Flynn@birmingham.gov.uk)) *Hoyland*. Email to Chris A Davies ([cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)) 24 March 2010

gallery spaces, symbolising the new. Moreover, the collections were, and continue to be, well respected; their collections are perceived as being innovative and of 'museum quality'. And, because the collections are often small and manageable the works were often displayed as part of a 'themed specific collection', for example, 'modern' or 'Pop art'. Hoyland's work was and continues to be out on display in university collections or included in survey exhibitions, thus helping to sustain interest in his work. The date of acquisition is significant, with several of Hoyland's works being acquired early in his career. This ensured that his work was seen and assisted with the legitimisation process. This was reinforced by the fact that a number of the works had been acquired and afterwards donated by visionary, important, private collectors including Sir Robert McAlpine and Anthony Burton, collectors well respected figures in the art establishment. In the narrow contemporary art collecting domain of the 1960s the status of the collector was important; private collectors were influenced by who was collecting what.

The Whitworth Art Gallery was established in 1889 as The Whitworth Institute and Park, and was initially paid for by one of Manchester's most important industrialists and benefactors of the arts, Sir Joseph Whitworth. From the very beginning the ambition of the Whitworth Art Gallery was to be an international centre for the arts. With the publication of the Robbins Report, the Whitworth expanded its facilities. In the mid- 1960's the gallery was completely redesigned by the architects, Bickerdike, Allen and Partners, who were inspired by Scandinavian gallery architecture. The Whitworth soon gained the reputation as 'The Tate of the North'. One of the most important aspects of the Whitworth's collection is its internationally recognised print collection. Throughout the Sixties it extended this collection. In 1965 it purchased Hoyland's gouache *Untitled* from Marlborough Fine Art and later acquired a further four more works on paper by the artist.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> The four works were *Composition 1964 (1964)*, acquired in 1994, through the 'The University of Manchester Picture Loan Scheme'; the watercolour *Untitled (1967)*, purchased for £90 from the Waddington Gallery in 1969; the etching and

The University of Warwick has two major paintings by Hoyland. The collection was started in 1966 with an allocation of £6,000 from the university's Foundation Fund. At the outset there were no written terms of reference for the collection and, although it was assembled in three main phases, nonetheless, its intention was clear, to build a collection that would reflect and enhance the modernist architecture of the university's campus. As Katharine Eustace explained, 'its ambitions from the start were not didactic but entirely decorative, to enhance the buildings and grounds'.<sup>550</sup> The artworks were intended to complement the Bauhaus-inspired architecture, and thus many of the artworks chosen were abstract. A principal player in the early development of the collection was Eugene Rosenberg, a leading exponent of modernist architecture, and the architect responsible for the design of the university. He was given full responsibility for the management of the collection: in March 1969 he was able to provide a complete list of works purchased under 'UW 1st Allocation' by artist, title, medium, size and 'Amount Paid'. In fact, the invoices from Waddington, Marlborough Fine Art, Kasmin and others were sent to him at Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall (in which he was a senior partner) on being forwarded for payment to the university, each invoice was initialled with his monogram 'ER'. Rosenberg favoured three London galleries: Marlborough Fine Art, Waddington's, and Kasmin. Katharine Eustace, the curator of the collection stressed the importance of the *New Generation* exhibitions and the Peter Stuyvesant collection in informing and shaping the Warwick collection. Apparently Rosenberg showed:

A predilection for the unpainterly, the ungestural; of the Americans in stock at Marlborough Fine Art and Waddingtons he avoided Pollock, Rothko and Morris Louis, of the English Lanyon, Mundy and Gillian Ayres. He chose Caulfield, not John Walker; Pasmore, not Ceri Richards. There is no Auerbach, no Kossoff, no Howard Hodgkin and, of course, no David Hockney - artists who take a sensuous delight in their medium, but whose work is based on private experience and emotion.<sup>551</sup>

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aquatint *Splay* from Aitken Dott and Son in 1980; and the linocut *Galaxy* (1987), purchased from The Royal College of Art in 1989.

<sup>550</sup> Eustace, K. and Pomeroy, V. (eds) 'Introduction', *The University of Warwick Collection*, Warwick: The University of Warwick, 1991, p.11

<sup>551</sup> Eustace and Pomeroy (1991). p.12

In 1991 Eustace suggested a possible reason for this, 'maybe this was a conscious in the context of public buildings, where work must hang in the anonymity of much frequented but undomesticated surroundings'.<sup>552</sup> Whatever the reason for Rosenberg's acquisition decisions, nonetheless, it demonstrates that often the acquisition of artworks can be attributed to personal preference.

It is also highly probable that it was Rosenberg who persuaded Robert (Alistair) McAlpine, the chairman of the construction company, Robert McAlpine Ltd, which had been awarded the contract to build the campus, to donate to the new collection nine seminal works, including two major paintings by John Hoyland - 6.3.66 (Fig.82) and 1.3.66 (Fig.83) - but this cannot be substantiated because of the lack of accurate recording at the time. However, what is known is that Alistair McAlpine purchased the two paintings from the Waddington Galleries and presented them immediately to the university. Rosenberg had a very clear vision on the display of the collection: 'Mr Rosenberg has agreed that it (the John Hoyland)<sup>553</sup> should be re-hung in the Rootes Hall Dining Room...and Mr R has said that when the Physics building is completed he wants to reconsider the hanging of the Collection as a whole'.<sup>554</sup>

The early collection was radical for its time, providing a window onto what was happening in one area of contemporary art: abstraction. Unsurprisingly, at the time the acquired art divided opinion, with one commentator noting, 'reaction to it, however, ran from puzzlement to indifference but fell short of open hostility'. However, his personal view was that if there was a degree of derision this was, 'no bad thing since it introduced contemporary art with a shock, and gave food for thought'.<sup>555</sup>

Other universities followed suit. Newcastle University was another early acquirer of Hoyland's work, purchasing the painting *Untitled* (Fig.110) and a drawing directly

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<sup>552</sup> Eustace and Pomeroy (1991), p.12

<sup>553</sup> The internal memo from Juliet Wilson fails to state which Hoyland painting is being referred to. See Eustace and Pomeroy (1991), p.11

<sup>554</sup> Eustace and Pomeroy (1991), p.11

<sup>555</sup> Eustace and Pomeroy (1991), p.8

from his studio in 1966. This came at an opportune moment in Hoyland's career for he was without gallery representation and his career, despite the success of the *New Generation* exhibition (1964) was at a low point; with no gallery representation he was left with no alternative but to sell work direct from his studio, which he found difficult.

The work of Hoyland is also in two other highly respected university collections: Leeds and Stirling. As early as 1904 the University of Leeds had assembled a major collection of art, initially commissioning portraits of its distinguished members and acquiring other works that both reflected and supported its scholarly and educational roles. Today, the collection is recognised for its quality, which owes much to the vision of a succession of both benefactors and directors. A major phase in the development of the collection occurred in the 1960's and can be partly attributed to the expansion of the university's art facilities. The aim of the collection has been to enrich the local area and extend visitors' understanding and appreciation of the arts. But by the late Sixties it became apparent that the facilities for showing its collection were inadequate and additional exhibition space was urgently needed. New exhibition facilities were eventually provided, largely attributable to the benefaction of Stanley Burton.<sup>556</sup> In 1970 Burton liaised with Sir Roger Stevens the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, and Lawrence Gowing, the university's Professor of Fine Art, to provide new exhibition facilities for the university, the result, the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, a suite of existing rooms that were converted to provide airy and light contemporary art exhibition spaces.

In the Sixties Burton bought and donated contemporary art to the university. In 1969 he acquired Hoyland's *30.3.69* (Fig.111) for the university collection. The painting is of particular interest, being untypical of Hoyland's style at the time, a picture rendered in oil rather than acrylic on a vertical rather than a horizontal support.

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<sup>556</sup> Sydney Burton was the son of Montague Burton, founder, in 1903, of the family tailoring business, Burton the Tailors.

The University of Stirling was established in 1970 and its first Vice-Chancellor was Lord Robbins, a strong advocate of the arts, who believed that the arts should form part of the everyday experience at the university. He believed that artworks should be readily accessible, to those who work, study or visit. On his assistance the management of the university set aside 1% of its budget to 'decorate' the buildings with art. The first campus building to be completed was the Pathfoot Building, designed by John Roberts, a building which reflected and encapsulated Robbins' philosophy. The building prompted David Baxandall, then the Director of the National Galleries of Scotland, to refer to it as 'probably the most beautiful, the most civilized, the most sensitive and intelligent piece of large scale modern architecture and planning that has been achieved in Scotland'.<sup>557</sup> During the early days of forming the collection, works were bought from major London dealers, including Hoyland's dealer, the Waddington Galleries, the Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh, and the Compass Gallery in Glasgow. Alongside the paintings and sculpture acquired, a major print collection was also established. In August 1970 the university paid the Waddington Galleries £900 for Hoyland's *Untitled*, (recently re-titled *23.9.69* by the university's curators)(Fig.112) an early oil on canvas painting.<sup>558</sup> In 1970 the Waddington Galleries donated five Hoyland prints to the collection.

### Further Afield

Hoyland is under-represented in the collections of public museums and galleries beyond the shores of Britain.<sup>559</sup> His work is in the collections of only two European

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<sup>557</sup> Baxandall, D. Quoted in *History of the Pathfoot Building* [Online]

<http://www.stir.ac.uk/artcol/thepathfootbuilding/historyofthepathfootbuilding/> [9 January 2014]

<sup>558</sup> According to Clasen, 'In the first few years of the University (founded in 1967) there was an art committee consisting of staff and experts in the art world which decided what to buy, with a specific focus on contemporary art, and they will have made the decision to purchase this work. I am afraid that for this particular picture there is no supporting documentation of any interest.' Information supplied by Ramsay, R. ([rhona.ramsay@stir.ac.uk](mailto:rhona.ramsay@stir.ac.uk)) *John Hoyland* Email to [cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk), 03 July 2014

<sup>559</sup> Hoyland's work has been acquired by the following museums: Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia; Art Museum of the Ateneum, Helsinki, Finland; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, USA; Frederick R Weismann Art Foundation Collection, Los Angeles, USA; Melbourne University Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia; Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, R.I., USA; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Neuberger Collection, University of Purchase, New York, USA; Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia; Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen, Germany; Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran; and the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, USA and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, USA

collections: the National Museum, in Finland and the Städtisches Museum in Leverkusen in Germany. Outside Europe he is represented patchily.

The collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts of Tehran, was assembled in the early 1970s, and is a collection to rival those of New York, Paris and other major centres for art. The inspiration behind the establishment of the collection was Farah Pahlavi, the wife of the Shah of Iran. Although an art lover there was another reason behind the collection. At the time the despotic Shah was trying to curry favour with the West, and he cleverly used culture, especially art, to assist in promoting Iran as a forward thinking nation rather than the backward looking and illiberal country that it was. With money no object it quickly established an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art. Western art dealers were not slow in recognising that good prices and profits made from selling art to the dynasty. According to Jonathan Jones, 'clever dealers jumped in at a time when the art market was flat (there was recession)'.<sup>560</sup>

David Galloway and Donna Stein were appointed as curators, with the brief to acquire works for and to manage the collection. Within a relatively short period of time an impressive collection was assembled. Seminal and museum quality works including works by Degas, Picasso, Giacometti, Magritte, Pollock, Bacon, Moore, and the work of Pop artists, including Warhol and Lichtenstein were acquired.<sup>561</sup> A new gallery to house the collection was designed by the Iranian architect Kamran Diba and opened to the public in 1977. Today the collection is estimated to be worth between \$2 billion and \$5 billion. The museum acquired Hoyland's 6.11.69 for an

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<sup>560</sup> Jones, J, 'Iran is sitting on a modern-art goldmine' , [Online]

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/aug/01/iran-modern-art-gold-mine> [30 March 2014]

<sup>561</sup> The collection includes work by, among others, Francis Bacon, Giacomo Balla , Max Beckmann, Georges Braque, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, André Derain, Jim Dine, Marcel Duchamp, James Ensor, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Adolph Gottlieb, George Grosz, Richard Hamilton, Henry Moore n, Jasper Johns, Frank Kupka F Georges Rouault, Fernand Léger, Roy Lichtenstein, René Magritte, Joan Miró, Claude Monet, Giorgio Morandi, Noreen Motamed , Edvard Munch, Jules Pascin, Peter Phillips, Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Jackson Pollock, Maurice Prendergast, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Diego Rivera, James Rosenquist, André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Pierre Soulages, William Turnbull, Vincent van Gogh, Victor Vasarely, Louis Valtat, Édouard Vuillard, Andy Warhol, James Whistler, and Fritz Winter. [Online] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/01/tehran-exhibition-hidden-warhol-hockney> [ 12 March 2015]

undisclosed sum.<sup>562</sup> For Hoyland this represented an achievement, having his work selected for such a prestigious collection.

The only other major overseas holding of Hoyland's work is the collection at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven in the United States. But with the exception of one painting, *5.2.67*, acquired in 1990, and two prints *Untitled I* (1970) and *Untitled III* (1970), the other thirty works were gifted to the collection by the New York collectors, Samuel and Gabrielle Lurie, in 2010. The low and late direct acquisition of Hoyland's work by the Yale Center is hardly a ringing endorsement of Hoyland's achievements and once more highlights the difficulties faced by Hoyland in establishing a platform for his work on the other side of the Atlantic. There are works by Hoyland in a few other American public collections. The first work by Hoyland to enter an American public collection was *No. 42.10.11.61*. (Fig.113). The painting was purchased by Mr. Seymour Knox, Jr. from the Marlborough-Gerson Art Gallery in 1964 for an undisclosed sum and donated to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, shortly afterwards.<sup>563</sup>

In 1972 Hoyland's *25.7.68* was donated to the Neuberger Museum of Art attached to Purchase College, State University of New York by Ira Agress. There is a Transatlantic connection in how the painting was decided upon and it involves Bryan Robertson. According to Pat Magnani<sup>564</sup> :

Correspondence about the work was between Mr. Agress and Bryan Robertson, the museum's first director. The museum's building was in final construction phase at the time of donation and there is a letter in the file from Mr. Robertson to Mr. Agress indicating that "we shall be in a position to receive the painting...a little later in the summer" (i.e. summer of 1972).

Other than that there is little other information about the acquisition of the painting.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> John Hoyland's personal records, Hoyland Studio: Ephemera, n.p.

<sup>563</sup> According to Catherine Scrivero Baker, 'there is also brief mention of an exhibition at the Gulbenkian entitled "Painting and Sculpture of a Decade," in which the work was previously shown, however, there is no specific information that links the acquisition of the painting to that exhibit.' Information supplied by Catherine Scrivero Baker, Registrar's Office, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, in an email: [cscrivo@albright-knox.org](mailto:cscrivo@albright-knox.org) Re: RE: John Hoyland's *No 42.10.11.61* (1964) to Chris Davies [cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk) 8 July 2014

<sup>564</sup> Pat Magnani is the Registrar of the Neuberger Museum of Art

<sup>565</sup> 'The file is quite sparse, as most of our records are from the early 1970s. It is likely that there was a very small staff and maybe even some volunteers doing administrative work. So, unfortunately, there is no material to ascertain why this

Hoyland's poor standing and stature across the Atlantic is reflected in the fact that two American museums have deaccessioned works by Hoyland. The Frederick R. Weisman Collection sold the only painting of Hoyland's in their collection - *Turn Turn* - in 1989. As stated earlier, in 2014, the McMaster Museum of Art in Hamilton, Ontario, deaccessioned Hoyland's *11.7.64*. (Fig.97) and presented it to the Tate Gallery, presumably because they no longer thought it appropriate for its collection.

There are works by Hoyland in three Australian museums. The Power Gallery of Contemporary Art attached to the University of Sydney acquired Hoyland's *14.12.69* for £740. The Art Gallery of Western Australia owns one major painting, *Pemba* (1977)(Fig.114) and two prints, *Blues Reds* (1969) and *Untitled* 1980. No further information is available.<sup>566</sup> In 1980 Hoyland was artist in residence at the University of Melbourne. The two works by Hoyland in the university collection resulted from this residency. Two minor works, both rendered in acrylic on cardboard, *Untitled (Multicoloured abstract composition on orange background)* (1980) and *Untitled (Multicoloured abstract composition on blue background)* (1980) were gifted to the collection by Hoyland himself. Hoyland also presented the Rio de Janeiro museum in Brazil with his *23.4.73* at an undisclosed date.<sup>567</sup>

Inclusion in public collections, both national and provincial collections, was important for the development and sustainment of Hoyland's career for a number of reasons. It provided an invaluable income stream for both the artist and his dealer. The purchases of his work for public collections, notably the Arts Council, the British Council, the British Council, the Government's art collection, and to a limited extent, the Tate Gallery and major provincial collections, bolstered his career at a time when the numbers of private collectors for his work were relatively low. In the abstract, the

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work was selected and who actually made the decision to accept works into the collection at that time. It is possible that the director was authorized to approve the gift, but in this case there is no subsequent information that this decision was confirmed by an acquisitions committee, museum board, campus administration or even Mr. Neuberger. There are no shipping receipts in the file, so I cannot determine what company delivered the work to us and when it actually arrived on our premises'. Information supplied by Patricia Magnani, Manager Collection Neuberger Museum of Art in an email: Magnani, Pat, [patricia.magnani@purchase.edu](mailto:patricia.magnani@purchase.edu) Re: John Hoyland to Chris Davies [cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk) 7 July 2014

<sup>566</sup> 'I'm not able to assist with your queries about why the works were selected and acquired and the curatorial paper with recommendation to the Board' Information supplied by Belinda Wood in an email: Belinda Wood, [Belinda.wood@artgallery.wa.gov.au](mailto:Belinda.wood@artgallery.wa.gov.au) Re: John Hoyland to Chris Davies [cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:cadavies@plymouth.ac.uk)

<sup>567</sup> See Appendix 4: John Hoyland: Sales, Purchases and Gifted Works, entry 112

placement of his work in public collections reassured collectors and the artist's dealer, signalling to both that the decision to invest in or patronise Hoyland was sound and justified; endorsement by public institutions assisted in this reassurance process. The positioning of Hoyland's work in public museums and collections had a positive effect on the prices for the artist's work, sustaining acceptable levels. The support from public institutions contributed to further exposure for Hoyland's work through the arrangement of solo or inclusion in group exhibitions.

### Endorsement

### Awards and Prizes

Awards and prizes play an important role in the making and sustaining of an artist's career. They endorse the artist and re-assure collectors and museum and gallery directors. The winning of prestigious art prizes, for instance, The John Moores and the Jerwood Painting Prize can support and, occasionally, enhance an artist's reputation and generate and support commercial viability. From early in his career Hoyland's work was being recognised with awards and prizes by fellow professional artists, curators, museum and gallery directors, and judges. In 1963 Hoyland won the first of many prizes, the Gulbenkian Foundation Prize. A year later Hoyland's efforts were first recognised on the international stage when he won the an award at the third Biennale of Young Painters held in Tokyo in November 1964, in the same year, ironically, that the Marlborough Galleries terminated his contract. Hoyland was one of eight artists selected by Mateusz Grabowski to represent Britain. Grabowski was well respected having established the Grabowski Gallery<sup>568</sup> in 1959, where an eclectic range of abstract, pop and op artists exhibited throughout the 1960s.

According to Hoyland's records in 1964 Grabowski purchased his painting *1964* for

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<sup>568</sup> Mateusz Grabowski was born in Lithuania but fled his homeland when it was invaded by the German army in 1940 and thereafter settled permanently in England. A pharmacist by profession Grabowski set up the Grabowski Gallery in 1959 in Chelsea next to his pharmaceutical business. It became, along with the Robert Fraser Gallery, the by-word for the 'swinging sixties' art scene. The gallery was run on non-profit making lines and its mission statement was predicated by two ideas, 'art without borders' and only to show artists who were 'interesting'. The Gallery's private previews took on mythological status and were attended by figures from the art establishment as well as the nouveau-riche and famous. Artists who exhibited at the Grabowski Gallery included Derek Boshier, Frank Bowling, Michael Kidner, Joe Tilson, Michael Tucker, and Bridget Riley. The gallery closed its doors in 1975.

£150<sup>569</sup> (see appendix 4). The art critic for *The Times* noted his success, 'Mr John Hoyland received an award next in importance to the grand prize which went to a Japanese artist'.<sup>570</sup> But in a later review John Russell lamented that this early recognition went unnoticed in Britain: 'I need hardly say that whereas a copper medal in the egg-and spoon race would have been blazoned all over the newspapers, Hoyland's success was received here with the completest indifference'.<sup>571</sup>

In 1965 Hoyland was a prize-winner at the *1965/66 John Moores* exhibition, winning the Non-Purchase Prize of £100 and, importantly, was invited to hang his submitted painting, *7.10.64*. The jury for that year was Patrick Heron, John Russell, and by special invitation, the American critic Clement Greenberg. It was therefore unsurprising that with the calibre and proclivities of the three jurors that Hoyland's work was received favourably. Heron was an advocate of abstraction, in particular British abstraction and supported British art throughout the 1960's. The three major prize winners: Michael Tyzack, Michael Kidner, and John Walker were all working the abstract idiom and almost certainly would have met with the approval of Clement Greenberg, who had been introduced to Hoyland during the latter's first trip to America in 1964. Hoyland's painting fitted comfortably within Greenberg's aesthetic framework and ideas on painting.

This recognition was important because of the kudos attached to the John Moores. The John Moores Exhibition was established in 1957 by John Moores, founder of the Littlewoods Mail Order and Football Pools enterprises. Instead of expecting the populace to travel to the capital Moores was striving to bring art to the people of Liverpool, before the Arts Council adopted a similar approach to the provinces throughout the 1960's. It soon established itself as a major prize in British art and a useful barometer of changing artistic practice, a prize that all professional painters

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<sup>569</sup> It is highly unlikely that *1964* is the full title for the painting and reflects Hoylands' record keeping at the time.

<sup>570</sup> Anon. 'English Award in Tokyo Biennale', *The Times*, November 26 1964, p.7

<sup>571</sup> Russell, R. 'Derivations from Duchamp', *The Sunday Times*, 20 December 1964, p.15

aspired to win. The rewards for winning were clear. It gave support to young, emerging artists and provided them with an opportunity to showcase their work, to compete with other artists. Moreover, it pointed to what was happening in the art world. It was well-attended; in the early 1960s over 20,000 visitors paid to view the John Moores exhibition. Indisputably, it was the most significant painting prize of its time and only with the inauguration of the Turner Prize in 1984 was its importance challenged, though the Turner Prize judges rarely shortlisted painters. During the first ten years of the Turner Prize only fifteen out of the fifty shortlisted artists were painters, with the majority of these not working the abstract idiom and only two winners were painters, Malcolm Morley in 1984 and Howard Hodgkin in 1985, and thereafter painting was largely overlooked. Though the John Moores became somewhat overshadowed by the Turner Prize and arguably reduced in status, nonetheless, it remained, among painters, the national benchmark for painting. Importantly, as stated earlier, winners of the John Moores' prizes saw their work acquired by organisations such as the Contemporary Art Society.

In the year of his retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery, 1967, Hoyland won one of the three £1,000 prizes at the Edinburgh Open 100 exhibition. Unsurprisingly, another of Hoyland's advocates, Norman Reid, was one of the three judges, while the other two were Roland Penrose and David Baxandall. For Hoyland, aside from the recognition, the prize money was useful, being the equivalent of the income gained from the sales of four paintings, after the Waddington Galleries took its commission of 50%. The exhibition was organised by one of Scotland's leading art galleries, the Richard Demarco Gallery, and Edinburgh University and backed by the Scottish Arts Council. Its importance is demonstrated by the fact that it was opened by Jennie Lee, the Minister for the Arts. The exhibition attracted over 1,500 entries from several countries and at the time was viewed as a significant exhibition opportunity, one to rival the John Moores. The succeeding twelve years saw no awards coming Hoyland's way. This can partly be explained that he was living in America or travelling and by

the fact that abstract painting had slipped from critical view. However, during the renaissance period for his career, that of between 1977 and 1983, his work once more received official recognition. In 1979 Hoyland received an Arts Council Purchase Award following his successful retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery. A year later he was applauded for his role in curating the 1980 Hayward Annual.

After that critical success it seemed only a matter of time before Hoyland won a major prize for his painting and it seemed a fitting tribute to his achievements when he won the John Moores for his painting *Broken Bride*, (Fig.45) seventeen years after his success at the 1965 John Moores. Fortunately for Hoyland the rules were changed in 1982. It became a requirement that the prize-winner's entry became the property of John Moores, previously the prize money was given to the prize-winner and the winning painting returned to the artist. It was up to the Walker Art Gallery to decide to acquire the painting or not.

The announcement was generally well received. Although his submitted painting *Broken Bride 13.6.82* may not have been one of his strongest paintings in some respects the award was cumulative, in other words, more a lifetime achievement award, than an award for a specific painting. This was commented upon by Michael Shepherd: 'Prizes are sometimes awarded "from memory", as much in recognition of continued quality on the part of the artist concerned, as on the success of the particular work offered. This is so this year'.<sup>572</sup>

Critics were unanimous in their praise. John McEwen pronounced: 'John Hoyland, certainly the most colourful and, since the mid-Sixties, probably the most internationally admired of this country's abstract painters, at last carries off the £6,000 first prize with a show-stopper of a painting...a dazzling, glamorous painting'. McEwen implied that official recognition of Hoyland's achievements had been a long

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<sup>572</sup> Shepherd, M, 'The Liverpool Look', *Sunday Telegraph* 2 January 1983, Walker Art Gallery Archives, *John Moores 1982: Press Cuttings*, n.p.

time coming.<sup>573</sup> And Marina Vaizey was equally fulsome in her praise, 'it is a pleasure to see in pride of place John Hoyland's great abstract, *Broken Bride*, a sizzle and dazzle of brilliant colour, anchored by floating forms, unusually exhilarating and affirmative, which won a well-deserved first prize'.<sup>574</sup>

Regional newspaper accounts were equally positive. David Freke, writing in the *Merseyside Arts Alive*, acknowledged that 'John Hoyland is an internationally established figure' and his winning entry 'a work which justifies his stature'.<sup>575</sup> The notice in the *Yorkshire Post* simply observed 'that the John Moores contained a preponderance of the large abstracts which we are told are no longer in fashion. Perhaps this is intended to demonstrate that abstract painting is still very much alive.'<sup>576</sup>

Any reservations about the John Moores focused less on the winner and more on the process and the growing 'conservatism' of the prize, the main criticisms being that the same type of art was being awarded prizes and that a kind of 'club' existed.

Deanna Petherbridge writing in *Art Monthly* noted:

There would appear to be a very definite set of unwritten rules which govern the John Moores major prizes...only artists who have already shown at least twice are eligible for a prize, and only artists who have already won a minor prize are eligible for the biggy...jury members all belong to the club too; either artists who have already won prizes themselves or worldly-wise critics and administrators in the know, the consequence the John Moores has become identified with a particular generation, a particular group. It therefore has constituted itself as an Academy, and a very powerful one.<sup>577</sup>

If Petherbridge was correct in her assumptions, then Hoyland had been wise to submit work to the John Moores exhibitions regularly and fortunate to have won a minor prize in 1965.<sup>578</sup> Notwithstanding this slight rebuke, the award firmly

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<sup>573</sup> McEwen, J. 'Flying Colours', *Spectator*, 4 December 1982, p.31

<sup>574</sup> Vaizey, M. 'Review of John Moores', *The Sunday Times*, 28 November, 1982

<sup>575</sup> Freke, D. 'Massaging the Medium', *Merseyside Arts Alive*, December, 1982, p.2

<sup>576</sup> Anon. 'Prize Abstracts' *The Yorkshire Post*, 6 December 1982, Walker Art Gallery, *John Moores 1982: Press Cuttings*, n.p.

<sup>577</sup> Deanna Petherbridge, 'A Walk through the Academy Gardens', *Art Monthly*, February 1983, p.9

<sup>578</sup> Hoyland submitted work to the following John Moores exhibitions: 7.10.64 in 1965; 12.6.67 in 1967; 17.1.69 in 1969; 9.5.73 in 1973; 10.9.75 in 1975; *Dexter* 10.11.77 in 1977. There was no submission in 1971 because he was resident in the United States, and there are no records in the Walker Gallery archives for 1979 and 1981 though it is possible that Hoyland did submit work.

consolidated Hoyland's position as a major force in British painting, ensured his place in the history of post-war British art, and marked the return to view of abstraction.

As demonstrated above, Hoyland throughout his career enjoyed patronage and support from a number of key persons and accolades granted him, however he was not wholeheartedly endorsed by the art establishments in either Britain or America. Although the Tate Gallery has a significant collection of works by Hoyland, it is difficult to make a strong case that over the years it has been a strong advocate for the artist. Endorsement of his achievements was a long time coming. Hoyland concurred with this view and never felt that he had received the recognition from the Tate that his achievements deserved. At a Tate public discussion forum about the Tate Gallery's acquisition policy, chaired by Leslie Waddington with contributions from artists, senior Tate staff, a retired editor of *Studio International* and critics,<sup>579</sup> held at the ICA in August 1979, Hoyland proclaimed, 'Personally I have always felt pretty isolated from the Tate. I think this is a problem that most artists suffer from.....I don't really feel that there is any real contact between the Tate and the art community as it is. I don't think I have had a visit from a curator from the Tate for the last 10 years, to my studio'.<sup>580</sup> This comment seems fair. Between 1969 and 1979 no work of Hoyland's was purchased by the Tate and little attention paid to his achievements. The majority of the works by Hoyland in the Tate collection had been donated, and only six works, four major paintings and two prints, had actually been purchased. Interestingly, not long after the forum, two major paintings were purchased by the Tate from the Waddington Gallery. Then in the early 1980's two works on paper were added. Aside from a small retrospective showing of his work at Tate St Ives in 2006<sup>581</sup> and the occasional display of individual works in Tate Britain, there has been no major exhibition of his work at, arguably, Britain's most important

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<sup>579</sup> The participants were Ronald Alley, Alan Bowness, David Brown, Anthony Caro, Michael Compton, Rita Donagh, Barry Flanagan, Peter Fuller, Pat Gilmour, Adrian Heath, John Hoyland, John Hubbard, Kenneth Martin, John McLean, Terry Measham, Henry Moore, Richard Morphet, Sandy Nairne, , Tom Phillips, Norman Reid, Colin St. John Wilson, Tim Scott, Peter Townsend, and Leslie Waddington.

<sup>580</sup> John Hoyland, Tate Forum, held at the ICA, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1979, Tate Gallery Archive TGA 955/13/5/103

<sup>581</sup> *John Hoyland: the Trajectory of a Fallen Angel* was held at Tate St Ives between 20 May and 24 September 2006. Paul Moorhouse wrote the catalogue essay.

public gallery. John Hoyland was elected a Royal Academician in 1991. In 1999 the Royal Academy granted Hoyland a small retrospective exhibition in a side gallery and this only came about after the intervention of his fellow Academician and friend, Anthony Caro. But, there has been no major showing of Hoyland's work at the Tate Gallery.

### Conclusion

Selling work is pivotal to endorsement. Hoyland's first sales were realised early in his career and from this platform he continued to sell work, albeit not in great quantities but the work sold at prices which supported his lifestyle. During the 1960s initially he sold work to visionary private collectors and corporate collections. Once he became more established, he relied heavily on sales to British public institutions to bolster his earnings. After 1969 he was earning sufficient from sales not to have to teach. His attempts to build platforms for his work abroad were largely unsuccessful. On his own admission he failed to make an impression in the United States, South America and Australia though he received some recognition in Italy and Germany.



## Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned to evaluate John Hoyland's oeuvre up to 1982, not merely in terms of the quality of his work but also by examining the art world which supported his professional career. As such, it elucidates the symbiotic relationship between artistic practice and the market place. A matrix of determinants, made up of numerous agents, stakeholders and intermediaries, played their part in the development of Hoyland's reputation. Timing and good fortune also played their part. Significantly, he entered the professional art market at an opportune moment, at a time when important critical and institutional developments were aligned in support of the kind of painting he produced. In the late Sixties, therefore, Hoyland's future looked bright, but events beyond his control militated against him. Interest and critical attention in his oeuvre fell away and he found it difficult to establish a platform for his work in America. This was less attributable to the quality of his work and more to the contexts in which Hoyland found himself. Art, like any other product, is vulnerable to the foibles of the market and to fluctuations in fashion and taste, and is inextricably linked to these and other contexts, all of which have a bearing on an artist's career.<sup>582</sup> Additionally, the state of the British economy should not be ignored because economic factors impacted on the income stream made available to public institutions by the State, and on the proportion of wealth private collectors were prepared to spend on art.

Throughout his career Hoyland took advantage of opportunities to exhibit and the networks of support and patronage available to a professional artist. His most successful periods occurred when the network of influence and the degree of interconnectivity between numerous factors was strongest. No one factor took precedence; instead, his career was contingent on the interplay between each determinant. Significantly, although he attracted positive critical attention from

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<sup>582</sup> It is worth noting in this regard that American art markets and the contexts in which American artists presented their work and forged their careers were decidedly different from the art worlds on this side of the Atlantic. Crane, D. *The Transformation of the Avant Garde: The New York World 1940-1985*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987

critics and observers this did not always lead to commercial success. Demand for Hoyland's work fluctuated. His critical and commercial success was sporadic rather than sustained. The reasons for this are complex; in Britain, collectors and the public preferred figurative art. Moreover, during the first half of the Sixties, when Hoyland was establishing himself, there were other art forms, notably Pop Art, competing for market share. Additionally, despite his best attempts, Hoyland was unable to establish a firm platform for his work on the other side of the Atlantic. This may be as much to do with protectionism and cultural chauvinism, as it was to do with the quality of the work he exhibited. His sales record demonstrates the importance of support from public institutions and the small number of private collectors in the UK. The positioning of his work in major public collections assisted with the endorsement and legitimisation process.

Whatever success Hoyland enjoyed can be attributed partly to the support he received from, initially, Bryan Robertson and, latterly, Leslie Waddington and others. These supporters recognised the quality in the work, a distinction which set his work aside from his contemporaries. Notwithstanding comparatively low sales, his paintings fetched good prices and the income from these sales after 1969 enabled him to become a full-time artist. Despite changing his style regularly, Hoyland was able to re-position his work and take audiences with him; in fact, it can be argued that constant re-invention formed part of his appeal. This prevented his work from becoming mannerist, his style remaining interesting and challenging. Hoyland was a good painter and there was an integrity about his studio practice which his supporters recognised and valued. It needs to be reiterated, however, that Hoyland developed his practice without an eye on the market and there were some periods where his experimentation proved to be relatively barren.

How does Hoyland's career compare with his contemporaries, given that other non-figurative artists had access to the same support systems? Any judgements about Hoyland's peers are necessarily tentative because the detailed examination of

Hoyland's career in this thesis, the adoption of a micro approach, investigating both the aesthetic and the commercial and social, economic and political contexts, has yet to be applied to the careers of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, by taking two determinants as indices of success - exhibition records and works in UK Public Collections - an approximate comparison can be offered here. Without dispute, Bridget Riley's commercial success and recognition were greater than Hoyland's. Robyn Denny and Paul Huxley enjoyed success on a scale similar to his, but the principal markets for their work was within Europe; recognition further afield was less forthcoming. Bernard Cohen managed to sustain a career over six decades but without the same level of success. Gillian Ayres' career is more problematic, with distinct peaks and lows, reflected in her exhibition record. Albert Irvin's career was modest, although a modicum of commercial success and critical recognition came his way in the early 1980s. Other abstract artists, such as Michael Tyzack and Marc Vaux, found it difficult to sustain their practice. Their career trajectories support the proposition made by Gramp that 'not all art survives', that the marketplace ultimately determines value.<sup>583</sup> (See appendix 9 for a digest of comparative information.)

Between 1960 and 1982 Hoyland's painting was selected regularly for exhibitions and, overall the response was favourable. The work attracted greater critical attention when it was included in public exhibitions. Public exhibitions, rather than the regular dealer exhibition, attract larger audiences and create greater interest among critics and art journalists. Within the history of Hoyland's public exhibition record, the importance of the retrospective exhibition stands out. Retrospectives usually support artists at that juncture when their careers are deemed to be significant enough to warrant a review, providing an ideal opportunity to re-present and re-evaluate an artist's output and to re-position the artist. Hoyland's two retrospectives, in 1967 at the Whitechapel and in 1979 at the Serpentine, were

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<sup>583</sup> Gramp, p.68-9

important markers in his career, endorsing his stature as a leading non-figurative painter. After each exhibition Hoyland benefitted. After his critically acclaimed 1967 retrospective he was invited to showcase his work in New York and Los Angeles and in Britain was taken up by the Waddington Galleries. The 1979 Serpentine retrospective was fortuitous, culminating in renewed interest in his work and growing recognition from the British art establishment. This was reinforced a year later when he was invited to curate the 1980 Hayward Annual. Although he did not include his own work in the show, nevertheless it highlighted Hoyland's credentials, consolidated and enhanced his reputation, especially among fellow non-figurative artists, and positioned him as a flag bearer for British abstraction.

The making and consolidation of John Hoyland's career was a complex affair and provides a valuable insight into how art careers are made. It demonstrates, however, that each artist's career has unique features that generalised models of career-building cannot capture, that each artist's career must be judged on its individual merits. The development of Hoyland's career over this period cannot be represented as a spectacular success story; neither should it be viewed as a narrative of ambition frustrated by limitations in the British art world. His circumstances were sometimes propitious, sometimes unpropitious. John Hoyland's achievement, aside from producing a strong portfolio of work, was to sustain a career, in difficult markets, for two decades and beyond. What makes his career such an interesting case-study is precisely its revelation of the number of agencies that contributed to sustaining his painting practice during a particularly volatile period in the history of British art.