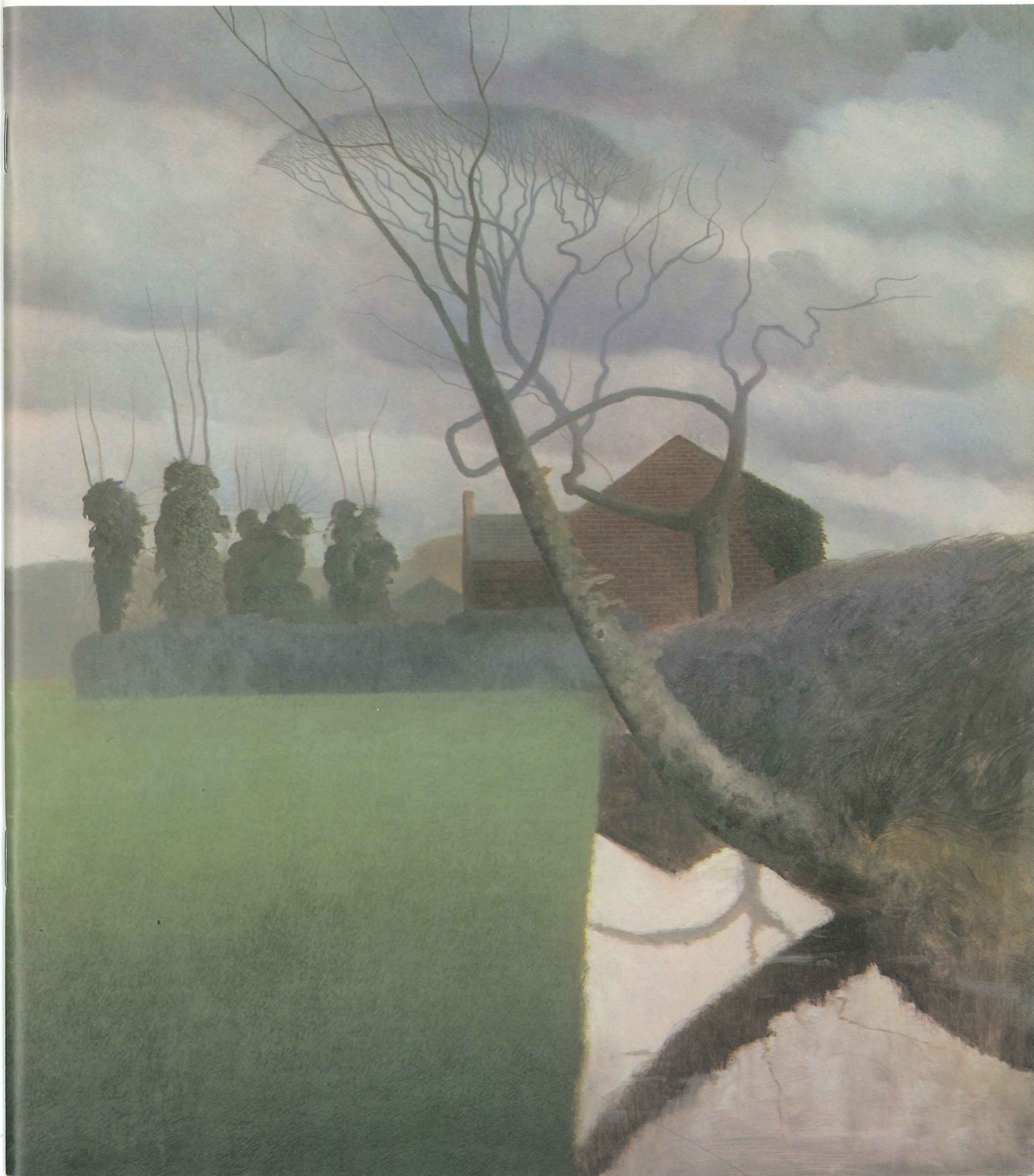


Arts Review

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Douglas Wilson at the Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham, Suffolk (below)



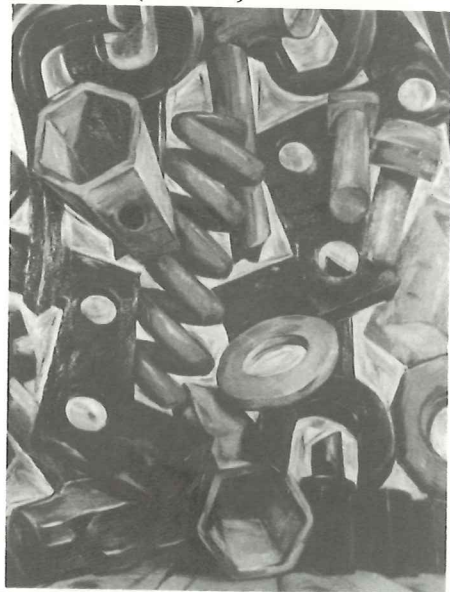
column. Large pieces look good at the Hansard and these command the two ends of the gallery.

The pictures vary from charcoal figure drawings by Andrew Walton, with a mysterious *Man Smelling Flower*, to large oils by Kevin Slingsby. These are full of intertwining spanners and springs celebrating the *Work Experience* against a strong blue background. They make Andrew Mansfield's pictures here look effete — a dark horizon at the bottom of the canvas, a large expanse of pale background with inconclusive shapes. His *Cloud* is small and understated and his *Pink Arrow* is bent.

Those are not qualities of Sylvia Hays. Her *Place for Execution* is painted with a fury of blue strokes just revealing an animal lying across the foreground. The triptych *Milkshed* is a calmer and very impressive treatment of the same concrete stall, becoming altar.

The three artists left are Sara Jane Harper, Neil Taylor and Bhajan Hunjan. Bhajan's work deliberately tackles the conflict between two cultures, with Indian patterns and textures surrounding a caged westernised woman in *Dilemma*.

The problem with group shows at the Hansard is that the quality of the hanging encourages you to interpret them as a cohesive exhibition. In fact these are eight very different artists, combined only by an accident of financial geography. Seen clearly it is this variety that is the pleasure of the show. (to Feb 21) ANDREW HUGHES



Kevin Slingsby's *Factory Flaw* from 'Eight Artists from the South' at John Hansard Gallery, Southampton

Joan Warburton

The Minorities, Colchester

Nigh on 50 years of painting by this highly talented East Anglian artist gives the viewer a trip back into nostalgia of the most intense kind. A work like *Talybont Signal Box*, for instance, with its overall Ravilious-like planning is redolent of thirties' atmosphere. Joan Warburton, one feels, seemed to have ignored the frenetics of the Second World War in her scheme of things, for this was in fact painted in 1949.



Joan Warburton's *The Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent* at the Minorities, Colchester

In these respects, her work on all mediums is very much a continuation of the new East Anglian School with, not surprisingly, her chief influence being its director, Cedric Morris. We need not wait to see the oil *The Burnt School at Dedham* (C.M.'s first HQ) to verify this; the floral still-lives in the gallery entrance will register with all who know the Morris flat decorative style. It is to this intricacy of design that Joan Warburton returns in her more recent work, in her charming and witty fantasies in gouache like *Giraffe's Garden*. Christopher Wood's influence on her painting can be seen appropriately in the oil *Newlyn*, and in paintings like *The Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent*.

There are exercises on abstraction like *Leaving Folkestone*; quite successful attempts to project the warmth of the south of France through the *fauviste* endowment of paintings of Aix-en-Provence; and a touch of a tigher constructivism in *Building Flats in Lexden Gardens*.

Each style, tied up with, but not dominated by, representationalism is an aesthetic adventure of its own. Taken together, and with the addition of confident, reasonably taut drawings in a variety of mediums and with a few pastels, this retrospective show, covering the years 1938-1986, adds up to a glowing testimony of one artist's skills. (to Feb 22)

RAY RUSHTON

Ian Fraser

The Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham, Suffolk

These abstract paintings by Ian Fraser, who died tragically on New Year's Eve at the abysmally early age of 53, for me combine the simple geometric grids of a Mondrian, the high tonality of Ben Nicholson and, strangely, the sensitive pigment handling of a Monet.

In short, they are purist without being austere. In front of each work, large or small, one feels the urge to a constructive but meditative silence, where change of mood is projected simply by the placing of

specific tones of blue, yellow, pink or grey.

Thoughtfully, but nevertheless with a fair degree of emotion, the rectangles, subtly textured, to which he commits his design are manoeuvred through many variations. Hard-edged abstracts as they are, with just the relief in some cases of a sloping base-line, the variation in tone is so slight that, from a distance and with the paintings at the end of the gallery in particular, they may be seen to glow Impressionistically like living, breathing things.

Most would seem to be heading for the ultimate white on white, an interaction perhaps of art with nature — the shimmer of light, the pink and yellow of transitory sunshine, the blue of the sky. Occasionally, he does vary the off-white of the backgrounds — backgrounds which are an essential part of the composition — but when he does as in one pink and one yellow, each dated 23.3.86, the result is similar to that of introducing a jazz trumpeter into a cathedral cloister.

So too with the only titled work here *Elegy for C.C.* with its black base, a painting which introduces an emphatic but sad certainty.

Quietly satisfying, this is an exhibition only shrouded by the regret that there will be no more. (to Feb 23. On show upstairs at *The Phoenix Gallery* is a show of water-colours including works by Reginald Brill, Ernest Greenwood, Eileen Greenwood, Flavia Irwin and Charles Bartlett. See front cover for Douglas Wilson who will be showing at the Gallery Feb 28-Mar 30)

RAY RUSHTON

Nan Youngman

Kettles Yard, Cambridge

I have never met Nan Youngman. For years her name has rung through what can loosely be described as Cambridge art circles and the world beyond, whose exist-