



Richard Walker
'Taking Colorado No. 1'.
Gallery 77
Elaine Marshall
'Seeds Heads'.
Greenwich Printmakers

Timed, at just under two weeks after Christmas/New Year, to make sure the art world doesn't spend too long on holiday, the **London Art Fair** (14-18 January) returns for its 21st outing. See our special feature on page 48. Meanwhile some early warning of the latest edition of an old favourite happening early next month, the **Watercolours and Drawings Fair with Modern Works on Paper** (4-8 February), as well as a reminder that it is no longer at the RA, having got itself a new venue at the Flower Cellars in Covent Garden (new to me also). As for this year's special exhibition, the organisers are taking the line that, as far as economic conditions are concerned, attack is the best form of defence – with a show entitled "Crisis? What Crisis?" and consisting of some 30 original cartoons by figures such as Heath Robinson and Osbert Lancaster, Mel Calman and Steve Bell. Nice touch!

CELEBRATING PRINTMAKING

When they borrowed a friend's shop in Turnpin Lane, Greenwich, for a weekend's exhibition in Christmas 1978, the small group of artist-printmakers involved can have little thought that they might still be 'in business' some 30 years later. The **Greenwich Printmakers' Association**, as they came to call themselves, had such a response from local residents for their etchings, lithographs, relief and screenprints however, that they stayed in that first venue for another 6 years before moving to the premises in Greenwich Market they still occupy 24 years later! Remarkably enough it remains an entirely artist-led and run venture, staffed

on a 5-week rota by the now 40 strong membership, one of the artists always on hand to explain how work is made. With a changing show every two months as well as a featured artist every two weeks, there's little chance of things getting stale. Way ahead of its time when it started, I still can't think of a nicer way to buy a print. Big celebratory shows are planned in the summer at the OXO Tower and National Theatre.

Still on the subject of printmaking, a quick nod to what a gifted younger generation of printmakers is up to, with the show 'Hot Off The Press' at **Curwen & New Academy Gallery**, the 10th instalment of a venture promoting emerging printmakers from some of London's post-graduate courses – RCA, Camberwell and City & Guilds this year. Pretty lively!

MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

I have always been intrigued by the apparently unlikely connections between the worlds of medicine and art – a survey some time back found doctors and surgeons the most likely professionals to buy art while, in my own admittedly limited experience, a remarkable proportion seem to practice it also. So news of an exhibition at the **Beldam Gallery**, Uxbridge (part of Brunel University in West Middlesex) showing the outcome of a collaboration between photographer Tim Wainwright and sound engineer John Wynne and the heart and lung transplant unit at the renowned Harefield Hospital (near neighbours of Brunel), really grabbed my attention. Consisting essentially of a large-scale photographic sound installation, and

entitled 'Transplant', it proceeds to communicate the world of transplantation through a series of 'portraits' in vision and sound – the latter element consisting of both the personal narratives of those involved and the more abstract sounds of the hospital environment itself. It goes way beyond the merely medical or even artistic into the philosophical and psychological, as one of the consulting surgeons involved recognised when he observed: "Transplant made me look at my work in a different way and has taught me a lot about patients."

NEW DAWN?

The Obama election campaign won unprecedented support from US artists. Many hope 2009 will bring "a cultivating and supportive environment for cinema, arts, science and invention" as Michael Moore has said. Closer to home, in a fraught financial climate, this brief moment of possibility has inspired three London artists. Their show, 'Happy Days (are here again?)', at **Gallery 77** (from 20 January), is collage you can believe in. All three use cut-out shapes and ready-made images with unsettling and lyrical results. In Tim Shaw's mixed-media sculptural portrait, a bust of the incoming president spills out candle wax. Keith Roberts uses the American landscape and cowboys to evoke the Old West, conveying a sense of place and journey. Richard Walker's *Taking Colorado* celebrates the audacity of hope, with sinuous vein-blue rivers mapping out mysteries behind Obama's confident/cool features.

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