

PRESS RELEASE

VICTOR PASMORE: TOWARDS A NEW REALITY

26 November 2016 – 19 February 2017
Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham Lakeside Arts



Left: *Reclining Nude*, 1942 © Tate, London 2016
Right: *Abstract in White, Grey and Ochre*, 1949 © Tate, London 2016

The Djanogly Gallery is pleased to announce a forthcoming exhibition of the work of Victor Pasmore. *Victor Pasmore: Towards a New Reality* examines the artist's work between 1930 and 1969 and focuses, for the first time, on the artist's transition from one of this country's leading figurative painters to one of its foremost exponents of abstract art. Exhibitions of Pasmore's work since his death in 1998 have covered various aspects of his artistic and teaching practice. There has, though, been no concerted attempt to consider this memorable period in his artistic trajectory and to re-evaluate the part played by his figurative art within that narrative. 50 key paintings and sculptural reliefs will be displayed in the Djanogly's 400 square metre gallery space including a substantial loan of 9 works from Tate and a number of rarely exhibited works from private collections.

By the beginning of his professional artistic life in the late 1930s, Victor Pasmore had quickly established himself as an assured painter of lyrical landscapes, figures and still-life studies in a style that drew upon his familiarity with the work and writings of a number of post-impressionist masters such as Pierre Bonnard. His work received official sanction in the form of private patronage from Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery, and it was Clark's financial support that enabled him to devote himself entirely to his art and teaching at the newly founded Euston Road School. Typical of the objective approach of the Euston Road period is a group of tender portraits and nude studies of his wife from the early '40s.

Nothing seemed to suggest the radical change in direction Pasmore's work was to take two years after the end of the Second World War. Only in retrospect is it possible to glimpse the first tentative explorations towards more formal concerns of composition that were to lead to his total renunciation of representational art. From Pasmore's works and writings, a fascinating picture emerges of the years from the late 1940s to the early 1950s when landscapes of Hammersmith incorporating increasingly suggestive formal structures led to his first fully abstract paintings and a series of authoritative collages.

These were quickly followed by a number of paintings featuring spiral patterns, the most notable of which in the exhibition is *The Snowstorm* commissioned by the Arts Council for the Festival of Britain in 1951. Around 1955 the artist's search for an objective abstract language led to his constructed reliefs made from pre-formed industrial materials.

Pasmore's conversion to abstract art, made in the face of considerable critical hostility, was later described by Herbert Read as 'the most revolutionary event in post-war British art'. His experiments in sculptural form and spatial relationships led to a number of architectural commissions culminating in his work for a housing estate at Peterlee, County Durham. One of the latest works in the exhibition is Pasmore's maquette for the Apollo pavilion at Peterlee.

Victor Pasmore: Towards a New Reality has been selected and organised by independent curator, Anne Goodchild, alongside Neil Walker, Head of Visual Arts Programming at the Djanogly Gallery. A lavishly illustrated book published by Lund Humphries in association with the Djanogly Gallery will accompany the exhibition. The publication will include essays by Anne Goodchild, the art historian and Pasmore expert, Alastair Grieve, and Curator of Modern and Contemporary British Art at Tate, Elena Crippa. The insights provided by all three authors throw new light on a critical turning point in the career of one of this country's most significant twentieth-century artists, and on a fascinating moment in post-war British art before the arrival of a new order of abstract painting from across the Atlantic.

The exhibition will tour to Pallant House Gallery, Chichester from 11 March – 11 June 2017.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Victor Pasmore (1908 - 1998)

In 1937, Pasmore, William Coldstream and Claude Rogers set up an art school that was to become known as the Euston Road School. The following year he started to receive a stipend from Kenneth Clark that enabled him to leave his job at London County Council to become a professional artist and teacher. In the late 1940s his paintings made the radical move into complete abstraction. Paintings and cubist-inspired collages - in which geometric shapes predominate - morphed into a series of spiral paintings, and then to constructed relief sculptures. From 1954 to 1961 he was an influential teacher and Master of Painting at Durham University where he worked alongside Richard Hamilton. From 1950 he produced a number of architectural art works including a tile mural for the Regatta restaurant at the Festival of Britain and culminating in his designs and plans for a housing estate at Peterlee. His greatest achievement in this field was the construction of the Apollo pavilion at Peterlee completed in 1970. In 1966, Pasmore acquired a house and studio at Malta where he lived until his death in 1998. Pasmore represented Britain at the 1960 Venice Biennale and had a major retrospective at the Tate in 1965. His work is represented in important public collections across the UK including Tate, Arts Council, British Council, and the Government Art Collection, as well as Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) New York.

Djanogly Gallery at Nottingham Lakeside Arts

The Djanogly Gallery opened in 1992 and now forms part of Nottingham Lakeside Arts, The University of Nottingham's public arts centre. It stages a year-round programme of 20th-century and contemporary art exhibitions complemented by a lively programme of public lectures, talks and participatory learning activities. In 2011 the gallery was refurbished, and the newly expanded spaces played host to a major LS Lowry exhibition that broke previous visitor records. Recent exhibitions have included: *In the Shadow of War* and *Lee Miller's War* (29 November 2014 - 22 February 2015); and *Elisabeth Frink: The Presence of Sculpture* (25 November 2015 – 28 February 2016).

Nottingham Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre. Venues include: the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles, and which was awarded the accolade of 'one of the top ten chamber halls in the UK' by Classical Music Magazine; the Djanogly Gallery; the University Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting visiting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre

and dance. There are also a range of studio spaces for devising and developing new work. NLA also runs a huge range of classes and workshops for children, families, young people and adults.

EVENTS:

Lectures:

Sunday painting to national collection with Anne Goodchild, Curator of *Victor Pasmore: Towards a New Reality*.

Wednesday 7 December 6-7pm

Anne Goodchild examines Pasmore's formative years from his precocious entry into the London art scene to his paintings of landscapes and gardens made in Hammersmith during WWII. She considers the factors influencing his move away from figurative painting and the vexed question of whether his 'going abstract' should be seen as a discernible progression or Damascene conversion.

Victor Pasmore's battle for abstract art with Alastair Grieve, art historian previously at the University of East Anglia who has published extensively on constructed abstract art and Pasmore.

Wednesday 18 January 2017 6-7pm

Alastair Grieve takes up Pasmore's story in the late 1940s. He examines the momentous leap to the first abstract paintings and collages, his move into constructed reliefs and his published articles and teaching that promoted abstract art in the face of considerable hostility.

Victor Pasmore and his time with Elena Crippa, Curator, Modern and Contemporary British Art, Tate
Wednesday 8 February 2017 6-7pm

Elena Crippa considers Pasmore's work in relation to the challenges and new possibilities faced by artists in the post-war period in terms of psychological and material reconstruction. His work will be discussed in relation to that of other artists in Britain and abroad, examining Pasmore's engagement with numerous groups and collaboration with architects and fellow artists.

Free guided tours of the exhibition will also take place - please see the website for dates and times.

LISTINGS INFORMATION:

Exhibition Dates: Saturday 26 November 2016 – Sunday 19 February 2017

Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday 11am - 5pm; Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Address: University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

Admissions: Free

Events: For talks and events tickets please book online or call the Box Office on: 0115 846 7777

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