

Words from the Arts Council Collection

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

21 September - 9 November 2002

The role of language in art is the focus of a new exhibition, **Words from the Arts Council Collection**. It features works by 29 artists, ranging from the modern master Ben Nicholson and senior figures Gilbert & George and David Hockney, to the younger generation including Tracey Emin, Mona Hatoum and Martin Boyce. This new National Touring Exhibition, organised by the Hayward Gallery, has been selected from the Arts Council Collection in collaboration with Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, and comes to Aberystwyth in September before touring extensively around the UK.

Artists' engagement with language as a visual and conceptual tool takes many forms. It offers many ways to explore the potential of a means of communication we often take for granted. Words find their way into art in both conventional and unexpected ways, replacing the image, or functioning as a code for it. Ian Hamilton Finlay's neon poem *Strawberry Camouflage* appeals to the viewer with its seductive colours and simple wordplay. Fiona Banner's *The desert* covers a huge length of gallery wall, and transcribes, in the artist's own words, the events of the film *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Ben Nicholson worked within the Cubist tradition and in his painting *Bocque*, 1932, mimicked the style of lettering found in the bar or the café of the period. David Hockney used the idea of graffiti in his early 'Pop' masterpiece, *We Two Boys Together Clinging*, 1961. An artwork may consist only of its description, a proposal for its making, or instructions for looking. It can

take the form of a diary, a story or a dialogue between artist and viewer. Glen Baxter and David Shrigley use words in the form of a caption or verbal punch-line to create a visual joke.

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The written, painted, collaged and spoken word has played an important part in the development of modern art, from the newsprint that structured Cubist collage and the wordplay that delighted Surrealists, to the definitions and instructions that were an integral part of 1970s conceptual art and the inventive use of language by artists working today.

A fully illustrated catalogue, written by the Hayward Gallery curator Fiona Bradley, accompanies the exhibition. Price £9.95

Notes to Editors

Managed by the Hayward Gallery, the **Arts Council Collection** is one of the largest collections of modern and contemporary British art in the world. It has some 7,000 works by over 1,700 artists, including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures and prints. The Collection has been built up since 1945 and lends to museums, galleries and public buildings around the country and to exhibitions both in Britain and abroad.

The Hayward Gallery is a constituent part of SBC, which is also responsible for the 27-acre site from Waterloo Bridge to County Hall., including as well the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Poetry Library, the Hungerford car park and Jubilee Gardens.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Penglais Hill, Aberystwyth SY23 3DE

Telephone: 01970 621 634

Admission: Free.

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 5pm

Open till 8pm on Thursdays

Closed Sundays

FUTURE TOUR DATES

16 November 2002 - 5 January 2003 YORK, City Art Gallery

11 January - 2 March PRESTON, Harris Museum & Art Gallery

8 March - 27 April OLDHAM, Gallery Oldham

TOUR CONTINUES

*Public enquiries about National Touring Exhibitions: 020
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Hayward Gallery online www.hayward.org.uk

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