

A rare glimpse into the life, work and talent of Jean Cooke RA



Jean Cooke: Delight in the Thing Seen

24 May – 10 September 2017

Paintings, photographs and personal items provide the basis of an intimate look at the life and work of one of Modern British art's finest - but all too often overlooked - exponents, Jean Cooke RA.

Running throughout the summer (24 May – 10 September 2017) at Jerwood Gallery, Hastings *Delight in the Thing Seen* offers art lovers the chance to see paintings that have rarely, if ever, been seen in public.

Along with previously unseen photographs taken by Cooke, this intimate exhibition has drawn pieces from her children's private collections and reveals not only a truly gifted artist, but also a devoted mother.

Cooke is something of an enigmatic figure in the pantheon of British art. She deserves to have a far higher presence in the public consciousness, but a combination of her marriage to fellow artist John Bratby – who was the subject of the critically acclaimed Jerwood Gallery exhibition *John Bratby: Everything but the Kitchen Sink, including the Kitchen Sink*, in 2016 – her maternal responsibilities to their four children and the fact that she only occasionally exhibited her work, contributed to her not becoming more of a household name.

This new exhibition seeks to redress that balance and offer a unique opportunity for Cooke's voice to be heard. Visitors to the Hastings gallery will be able to gain an insight into her unique artistic vision in a one room display featuring many works that have never before been on public view.

Delight in the Thing Seen includes paintings that relate to her family and personal life, local landscapes and seascapes, still lifes, and a powerful self-portrait. When asked why she painted, Cooke replied: *'It is some sort of love, some sort of devotion. More nun-like than a devouring of life, but still an untiring use of eyes and mind to concoct images . . . A continuous delight in the thing seen.'*

"Cook is the ideal artist for a Jerwood Gallery exhibition" says the show's curator, Victoria Howarth. *"She is so often overlooked and part of our raison d'être is to redress the balance for painters who deserve to be more recognised. From the photos she took to inform her work to paintings such as 'Sofas Galore', these images reflect her delight in everyday family life."*

Cooke's son David Bratby has personally selected paintings by his mother from his own collection, highlighting the intimacy and familial bond that will be revealed in the gallery's Room 6. Bratby says *"She kept painting to the last..."*

"By programming this exhibition at Jerwood Gallery, we hope to provide an introduction to this wonderful artist's work for our audiences. The display will open a door into the domestic and artistic life of a fascinating woman used her considerable skills to create great art on a highly personal level."

For more information follow @jerwoodgallery on Twitter and visit www.jerwoodgallery.org

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Jean Cooke (1927-2008) was a highly celebrated British painter of still life, landscape, portraits and figures. She was a lecturer at the Royal Academy and received high profile commissions to paint portraits for Lincoln College and St Hilda's College, Oxford. Her works can be found in many major public collections, including Tate, the Royal Academy and the Government Art Collection.

IMAGE - *Sofas Galore*, Jean Cooke, c1980's, image courtesy Piano Nobile Fine Art

Jerwood Gallery is in transition to become a charitable organisation in 2017 - More information about this to follow. The gallery opened to the public on 17 March 2012 and welcomes c.45,000 paying visitors each year. Designed by the architectural practice HAT Projects, the gallery houses the Jerwood Collection of modern and contemporary British art, along with a changing exhibitions programme. Previous exhibitions have showcased artists including Jake & Dinos Chapman, Marcus Harvey, Rose Wylie, Gillian Ayres, William Scott, Jeffery Camp, Keith Tyson, Ansel Krut, Chantal Joffe and Rachel Howard. Jerwood Gallery was awarded a Sussex Heritage Trust Public and Community Award and a Civic Trust Award in 2012 and in 2013 was awarded a National RIBA Award and reached the mid-list for the Stirling Prize for the Building of the Year. In 2014, it was awarded the RICS SE Regional Award for Regeneration. For around £35, you can become a Member of Jerwood Gallery and enjoy free admission throughout the year. Benefactors support the gallery with a donation of £400 per year and participate in special events and trips, as well as receiving all the benefits of Membership.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

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