

A still life painting by John Armstrong. The composition features three terracotta vases of different shapes and sizes. The central vase is a large, rounded amphora with a handle, filled with pink flowers and green leaves. To its left is a tall, slender vase, and to its right is a smaller, rounded vase, both also containing pink flowers and green leaves. The background is a light, neutral color, and the floor is a warm, brownish-yellow. The lighting is soft, creating gentle shadows. The overall style is realistic and detailed.

# JOHN ARMSTRONG

UPSTONE





# JOHN ARMSTRONG

22<sup>nd</sup> September - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021

UPSTONE

Back cover: *The Swan* 1955 [cat.15]

Front cover: Detail from *Clematis Montana* 1951 [cat.10]

Opposite: Detail from *Harlequin* 1949 [cat.6]







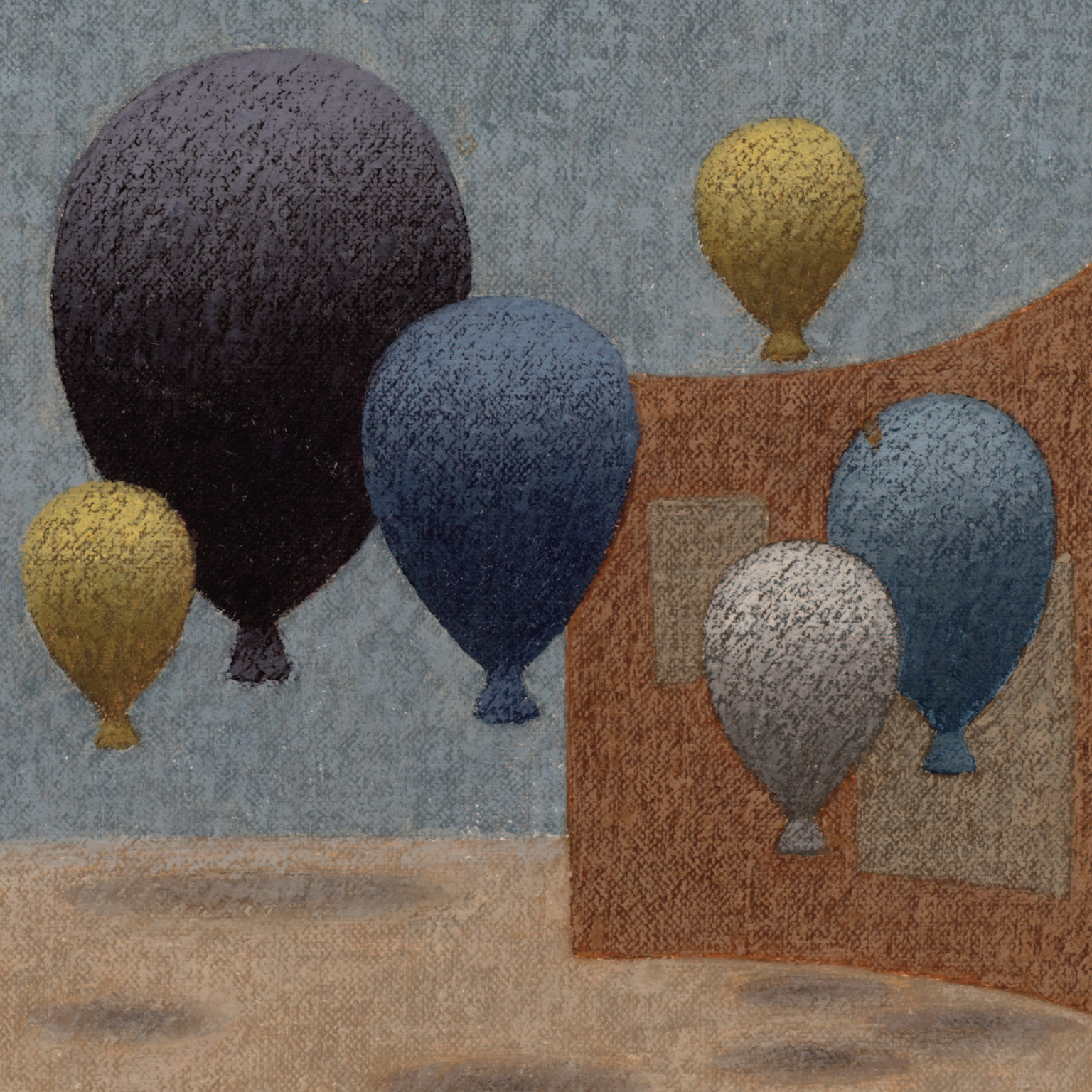
# FOREWORD

This exhibition of paintings by John Armstrong spans five decades of his life and clearly shows why he has been so difficult to categorise. All are on a domestic scale, varied in style and imagery but instantly recognisable. He was a painter above all else but had a successful parallel career as a designer for theatre, film and advertising.

A soldier in the First World War, he was a war artist in the Second, and a campaigner against nuclear proliferation afterwards. He was a humanist with a strong political conscience and, fuelled by a classical education, used ancient myths to create metaphors for today's menacing predicaments.

He had a surreal imagination but often painted his dreams naturalistically, although he never claimed to be a surrealist. He was witty but not comic, open to change but never idiomatic, elegiac but not sentimental, and all his work has the same clarity of thought and execution. In contrast to his innate gifts for narration and illustration he finally found the freedom to express his ideas and emotion in abstracts. Painting remained, as always, his entry into another world.

**Annette Armstrong**





# JOHN ARMSTRONG

John Armstrong was one of the most singular and original painters in twentieth-century Britain. We are lucky to have in the present exhibition works from each decade of his career, which cover the principal subjects of his art. Armstrong's work has a highly individual character, and his was a distinctive voice in the evolution of modern art in Britain. The earliest painting shown here, *Composition with Figure* (no.1, 1927-8), is a remarkable construction of intersecting planes and forms painted in soft pastel colours, and more advanced than anything then being made in Britain. Its closest affinities are with Russian Constructivist and Italian Futurist painting, which had barely touched British consciousness in this period. The slanting Constructivist compositions and dream like character of works like this led to Armstrong being acclaimed as a leading modernist in the late 1920s, and the most authentic voice of British progressive art.

In 1933 Paul Nash invited Armstrong to exhibit with Unit One, the group that would establish London as a centre of modernist and abstract art and architecture in the mid-1930s. Only a handful of artists were selected, and alongside Armstrong were Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth, Nash, Henry Moore, Edward Burra, Tristram Hillier and Edward Wadsworth. Herbert Read published the seminal modernist book that accompanied their exhibition at The Mayor Gallery in April 1934, and which then toured throughout Great Britain. Unit One marked the first appreciation, since the end of the First World War, of the need for a distinctively modern art that was not just reserved for abstraction. Thus the group's strong attachment to non-figuration was also compatible with the new imaginative or

metaphysical strain which marked the first tentative British address to surrealism. Armstrong said he did not understand the suggestion that he was a Surrealist, but his art was similarly enriched by an intersection of archetypal myth, psychoanalysis and the world of the imagination. But between Unit One and his election as an Associate Member of the Royal Academy in 1966, Armstrong joined no more groups.

Armstrong's deep attachment to the mythology and history of the ancient world began at St Paul's School and lasted the rest of his life. In the archetypal myths of antiquity Armstrong saw reflected all humanity's strengths and fatal weaknesses, and the inevitable foundering of great civilisations. There is a suggestion of the crumbling of ancient belief systems in works such as *The Gods Abandoned* (no.18) and *The Departure of Aphrodite* (no.21), as well as a valedictory quality. The figures are resonant of the sculptural forms of Henry Moore, and both share a common root in the oversize draped figures of the Parthenon which Armstrong studied in the British Museum. Armstrong's choice of tempera for his early paintings recall the early Italian painters and the simple expressive forms of their human figures. Stanley Spencer - who like Armstrong served in Macedonia in the Great War - revered Giotto and the Arena Chapel frescoes. Spencer's complex figure group compositions share a certain affinity with Armstrong's battle pictures. But where Spencer's figures are distorted and to a certain degree grotesque, Armstrong's are beautifully drawn, complex arrangements, the protagonists anxious but deadly serious about their struggle.

Opposite: Detail from *Balloons* 1965 [cat.29]

Alongside this fascination with the ancient past was a very pressing concern for the present. Although he never joined a political party, Armstrong was deeply committed to socialism (and designed Labour's 'Winning the Peace' poster in the 1945 general election and the Manifesto cover). The battle paintings he started making in the 1950s symbolise the threat and futility of war, and specifically nuclear annihilation. Armstrong had lived through a period of considerable collapse and destruction. He went from the stable, structured society of Edwardian England into four years serving in the Royal Field Artillery in Egypt and Macedonia. In works such as *The Precipice* (c.1938, private collection) - which depicts a semi-human, blindfolded bust on a robotic armature about to tip over the edge of a blasted ruin - he warned of the wider cataclysm of the Spanish Civil War, as Picasso had in *Guernica* (which he had seen in 1938). The symbolism was powerful and direct - democracy and individual freedom are toppling into the abyss. In 1939 Armstrong made what was to be the first of an important series of paintings symbolising the ruined ambition of Icarus, adapting the symbolism of classical mythology to reflect concerns about the present day. Armstrong was an Official War Artist in the Second World War and painted the destruction on the home front - ruined, bombed out buildings and churches, such as *Coggleshall Church* (1940) in the Tate. These continued the thematic sequence of paintings begun in the later 1930s in which ruined buildings served as symbols for political violence, such as the Spanish Civil War, but now brought to England itself. In the 1950s Armstrong was greatly troubled by the very real threat of nuclear annihilation. His battle paintings represent this futility and anxiety, the figures' clown costumes a reference to the traditions of the Commedia dell'Arte but also a visualisation of the fatuousness of international power politics. Armstrong's abhorrence of nuclear weapons

alienated him from the political idealism of the Labour Party for which unilateralism became a highly divisive issue. His concerns were echoed by other British artists such as Henry Moore, whose sequence of Helmet Head bronzes begun in 1950 were another response to the threat of nuclear destruction, articulated through reference to the ancient world.

From the late 1940s Armstrong painted a sequence of paintings which featured figures dressed in the costumes associated with Pierrot and his protagonist Harlequin in the Commedia dell'Arte. Popular in Italy from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth century, these antique pantomimes were vehicles for all the deep ironies of existence, and humanity's moral frailties and failings. Picasso and other modern artists in Paris had used Pierrot as an emblematic modern hero. Pierrot embodied the contradictions and checks to human ambitions, its efforts ultimately doomed to failure despite its best intentions. The Italian Futurist artist Gino Severini had famously been commissioned by Sir George Sitwell to decorate the walls of Montegufoni castle with scenes from the Commedia in 1921-2, painted in a modern Classical style.

Armstrong's Commedia figures are achingly beautiful invocations of Neo-Romantic longing, the wonderfully rendered lighting of *Harlequin* (no.7) and *The Lute Player* (no.8) suggesting the warm gathering of dusk before the onset of darkness. In *The Death of Harlequin* (no.6) Armstrong portrays the Commedia character set in the attitude of a pietà, his Christ-like body supported by a retainer. This is the last moment of Harlequin's life as he slips away, still wearing his flamboyant ruff. Will Harlequin rise again to delight his audience and confound his opponents? That remains deeply uncertain. In all these paintings there is an expression of lyrical melancholy,



beautiful yet poignant, as if they represent the fading of the old world and its certainties, with beauty and merriment passing into the gathering darkness. This sort of Neo-Romantic sensibility can be found in a diverse range of British art made in the 1940s and '50s, such as in the works of John Minton. Yet Armstrong articulates a highly individual sentiment, expressed in a way unlike any other artist and with much more complex layers of allusion and meaning.

For his 1951 exhibition at The Lefevre Gallery Armstrong explained some of the symbolism of these paintings, noting the abstract satisfaction in painting certain forms and costumes alongside their deeper intended meaning:

*Since a common field of reference no longer exists it is appropriate for a painter to explain the symbolism he uses. The Aesthetic and the Emotional both being of importance in the present case, symbols have a double value. For example, umbrellas are interesting objects in themselves to paint, but they symbolise also the inadequate beliefs under which men attempt to shelter from the growing storm of despair. The clown gives an excuse for full draperies and the varied colours and patterns of the circus. He is, as well, the image of frustration, fighting battles of nothing, attempting a leap forward but doing a back somersault instead ... The women and flowers express states of love. The flowers are of simple types and suitable to the play of light which, from association with the theatre, has been imagined coming from the footlights. Equally it may be the light of dawn or dusk, the end or the beginning of an era - we are uncertain which.*

The lighting, Armstrong notes, can be read in two ways, leaving an uncertainty that the story can continue in wholly different ways. Such lighting effects are remarkable technical

achievements and very challenging for any painter to attain. 'It's all about the lighting', Armstrong's widow Annette recalls him saying. And contained in this is the intuitive knowledge of how the lighting in a painting - or a film or a play - can directly affect the mood of the viewer and trigger a direct and indefinable emotional response.

Still life formed a recurring subject for Armstrong's art in the 1950s and '60s, a traditional painterly form but presented by him in a highly distinctive and modern fashion. The elements within the still life relate to each as abstract forms - somewhat in the manner of Barbara Hepworth's groupings of carved element sculptures. Armstrong acknowledged that the attraction for him in many of these compositions was partly their abstract temperament:

*The representation of objects seen or imagined is necessary to me, not for the objects in themselves but for certain of their material qualities or for their power of material suggestion. The material qualities that attract me to particular objects are those of convexity, concavity and flatness. Anything through which these can be clearly expressed and contrasted will serve to try to resolve the conflict between pattern and tactile form which is to me one of the most absorbing of the conflicts of art ... I imagine that the desire to produce the tactile is sexual while pattern making is magical in origin.*

In many paintings Armstrong reveals an underlying and sometimes imaginatively elaborated interior of the fruits and vegetables he depicts. This x-ray character blends both medical science and the sexual - the interior of *The Red Apple* (no.34) links the symbol of Eve's temptation and fecundity to the cycle of life.

The still lifes often feature items that would have still been considered exotic in post-War British kitchens - aubergines, peppers, avocados - and offer a link to the Mediterranean world. Annette Armstrong recalls Elizabeth David's cook books were a feature of their kitchen, with their illustrations by John Minton. Other still lifes feature pots, urns and bowls. Almost all of these, Armstrong's widow explains, were items of ancient origin in the painter's possession, transforming the subject into a form of vanitas alluding to temporality and the passage of time. Armstrong sometimes suggested the still lifes were just paintings of what attracted him visually, yet they are also consistent with other branches of his symbolism.

Their focus on form and texture also link with the abstract paintings that Armstrong started to produce from the end of the 1950s. Armstrong made no strong differentiation between these and his other pictures, and never abandoned figuration. They fall generally into two types - the formal, pure abstracts of juxtaposed circles, triangles and rectangles in which overlapping forms create satisfying transparent

variations of colour and tone. The second type is much more organic in its form, recalling biomorphic painting of the 1930s. They resemble ever-evolving modern cityscapes, sometimes lyrical, sometimes anxious. They somewhat recall the imagery of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). But there is also a resonance, like the still lifes, to the imagery of science, a little like the cellular structure of materials viewed through a microscope or a rapidly reproducing organism. Works such as *City Profile* (no.26), *Blue Abstract (City Blueprint)* (no.28) and *New Day* (no.29) seem to presage some new reality, while the pure abstracts express thought and emotion by colour, form and proportion alone.

John Armstrong was one of the most varied British artists of the twentieth century, his career covering figurative and abstract painting, murals, posters, and set and costume designs for film, ballet and theatre. In all these varied forms there is a consistent rigour of composition and variety of texture, and a unifying expression of idealism that looked to the future by imaginatively recasting the mythology of the past to create a new reality in the present.

Robert Upstone

Opposite: Detail from *Clematis Montana* 1951 [cat.10]











[cat.1]

# Composition with Figure 1927/8

Tempera on panel

19 x 12 inches (48.2 x 30.4 cm)





[cat. 2]

Wild Horses c.1937-8

Tempera on gessoed panel 16 x 23 inches (40.6 x 58.4 cm)

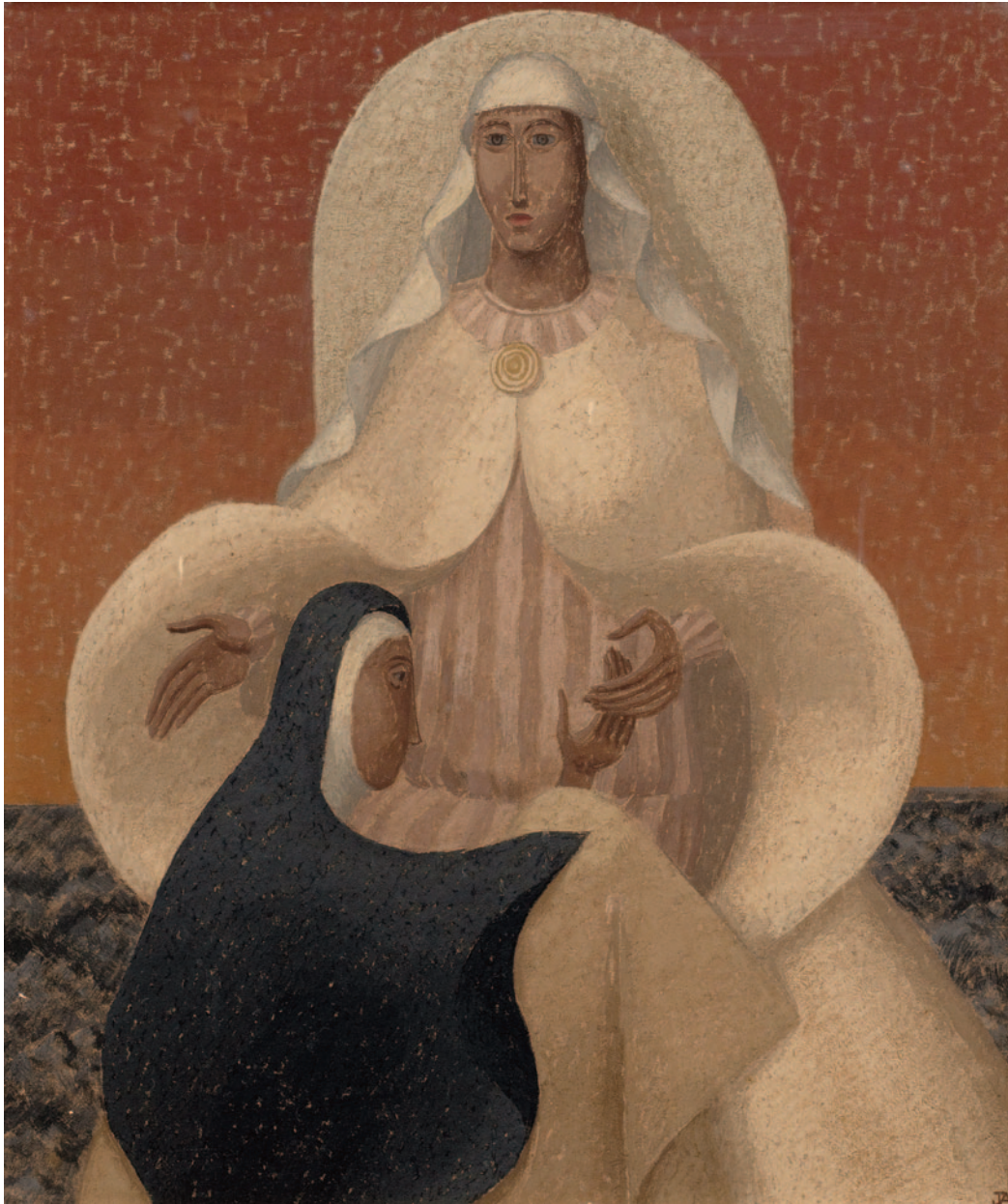


[cat. 3]

Contemplation 1945

Tempera on board 16 ½ x 21 inches (41.9 x 53.3 cm)





[cat. 4]

**The Blessing** 1949

Tempera on card

10  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 9 inches

(26.5 x 23 cm)

[cat. 5]  
Death of Harlequin 1949  
Oil on board  
14 ½ x 10 ½ inches  
(36.8 x 26.7 cm)







[cat.6]

Harlequin 1949

Tempera on board

19 ¼ x 10 ¾ inches (48.9 x 27.3 cm)



[cat. 7]

**The Lute Player 1949**

Tempera on board

19 1/4 x 10 3/4 inches (48.9 x 27.3 cm)





[cat. 10]

**Clematis Montana**  
1951

Oil on canvas  
23 ¼ x 19 ½ inches  
(59.1 x 49.5 cm)





[cat. 9]

### Umbrella Men 1950

Oil on canvas 14 x 19 1/8 inches (35.5 x 48.5 cm)



[cat. 8]

**Clowns** 1950

Oil on board

20 ½ x 14 ½ inches (52.1 x 36.8 cm)



[cat. 11]

## The Drummer

1953

Gouache on paper

16 x 12 inches (40.6 x 30.5 cm)





[cat. 12]

The Cannonade 1953

Gouache on paper

16 x 12 cm (40.6 x 30.5 cm)



[cat. 13]

The Swordsmen 1954

Oil on paper

7 ½ x 5 inches (19.1 x 12.7 cm)





[cat. 16]

The Gods Abandoned 1956

Oil on board 13 x 18 inches (33 x 45.7 cm)





[cat. 15]

**The Swan 1955**

Oil on canvas

28 x 24 inches

(71.1 x 61 cm)



[cat. 14]

Laureate 1955

Oil on paper 7 ½ x 7 ½ inches (19.1 x 19.1 cm)





[cat. 17]

The Departure of Aphrodite 1956

Oil on board 12 ½ x 14 ½ inches (31.8 x 36.8 cm)



[cat. 19]

Still Life 1956

Oil on canvas 22 x 27 inches (55.9 x 68.6 cm)





[cat. 21]

The Red Flowers 1956

Oil on canvas 9 ½ x 11 ½ inches (24.1 x 29.2 cm)

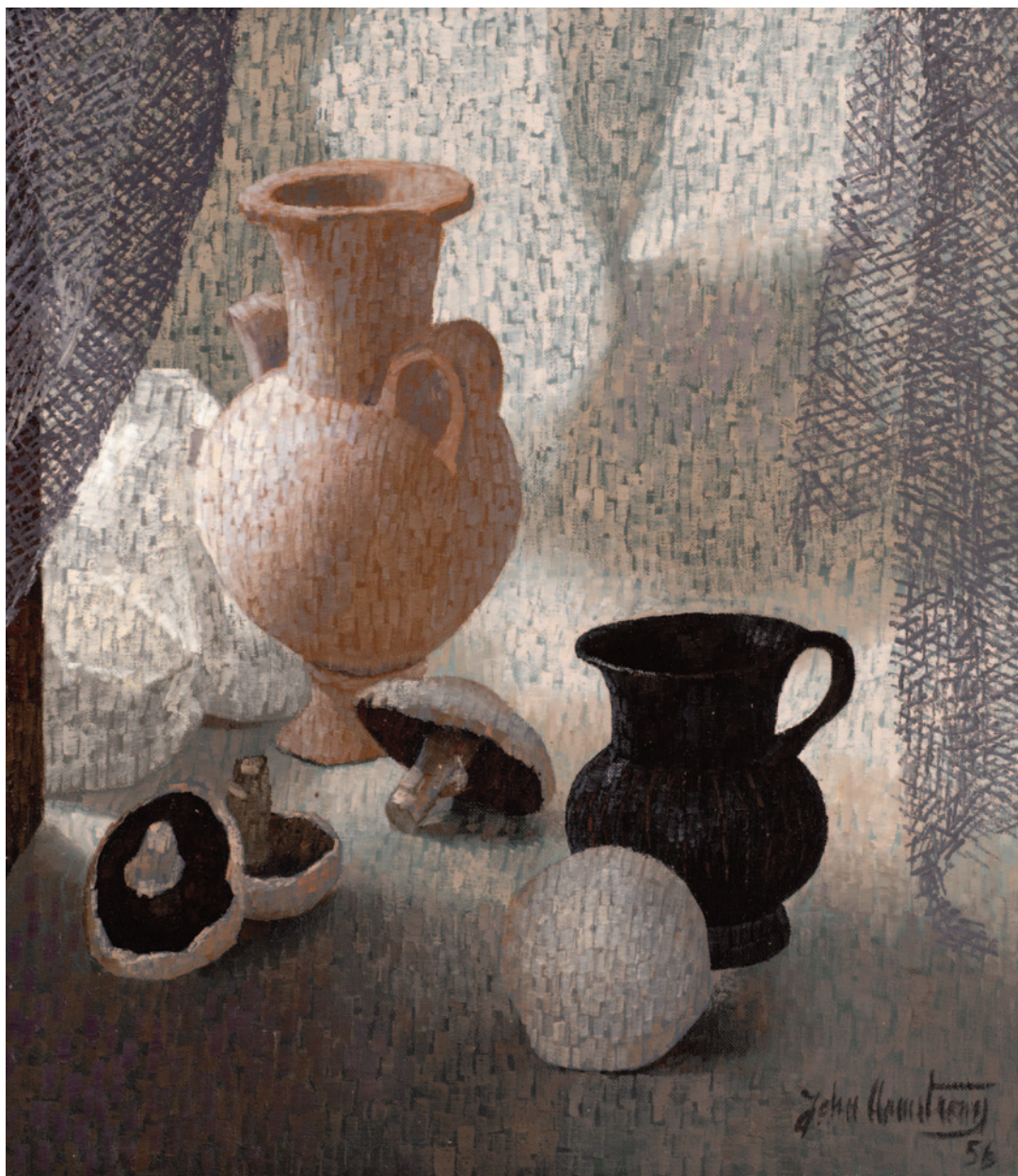


[cat. 18]

The Artichoke 1956

Oil on board 14 x 16 inches (35.6 x 40.6 cm)





[cat. 20]

Still Life 1956

Oil on canvas

15 ½ x 13 ⅝ inches  
(39.5 x 34.5 cm)



[cat. 22]

Still Life with Bowl 1957

Oil on canvas 12 x 18 inches (30.5 x 45.7 cm)





[cat. 26]

Still Life with Stone Vase 1963

Oil on canvas 14 x 16 inches (35.6 x 40.6 cm)



[cat. 23]

Autumn Still Life 1957

Oil on board 10 x 14 ½ inches (25.4 x 36.8 cm)

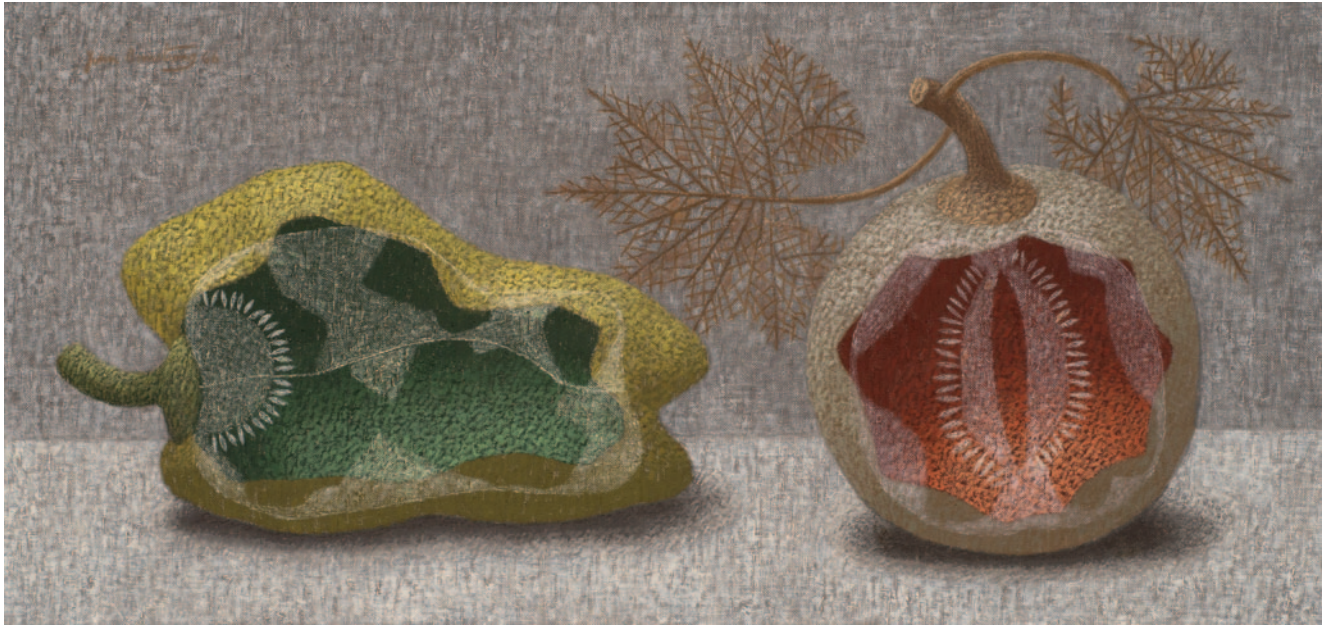




[cat. 34]

Red Apple and Green Pepper 1967

Oil on canvas 10 x 20 inches (25.4 x 50.8 cm)



[cat. 32]

Pepper and Melon Analysis 1966  
Oil on canvas 12 x 25 inches (30.5 x 63.5 cm)



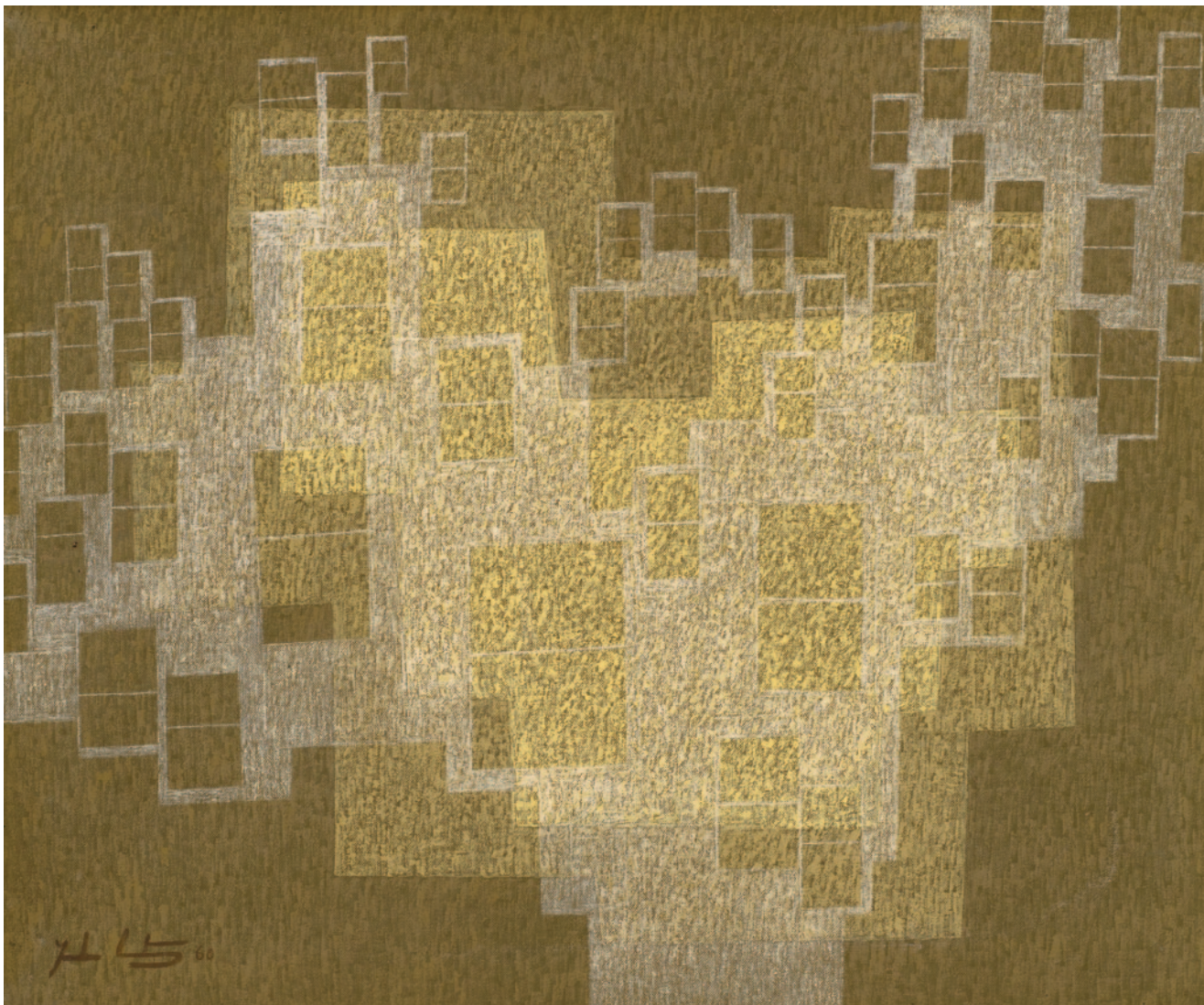


[cat. 33]

The Red Apple c.1966-7

Oil on canvas 19 x 23 ½ inches (48.3 x 59.7 cm)



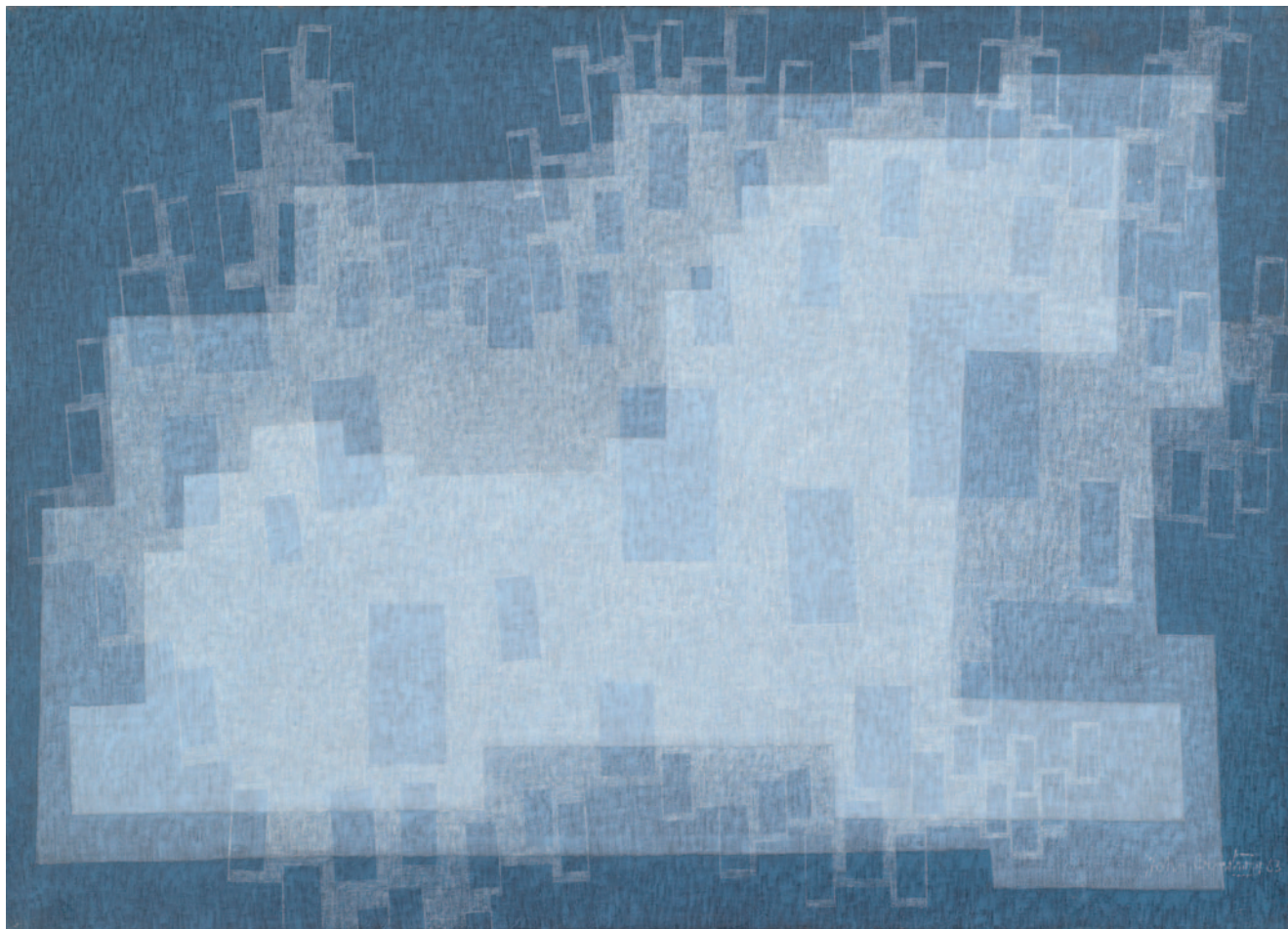


[cat. 24]

Yellow Abstract 1961

Oil on canvas 20 x 24 inches (50.8 x 61 cm)





[cat. 27]

Blue Abstract (City Blueprint) 1963

Oil on canvas 26 x 36 inches (66 x 91.4 cm)



[cat. 25]

## City Profile 1962

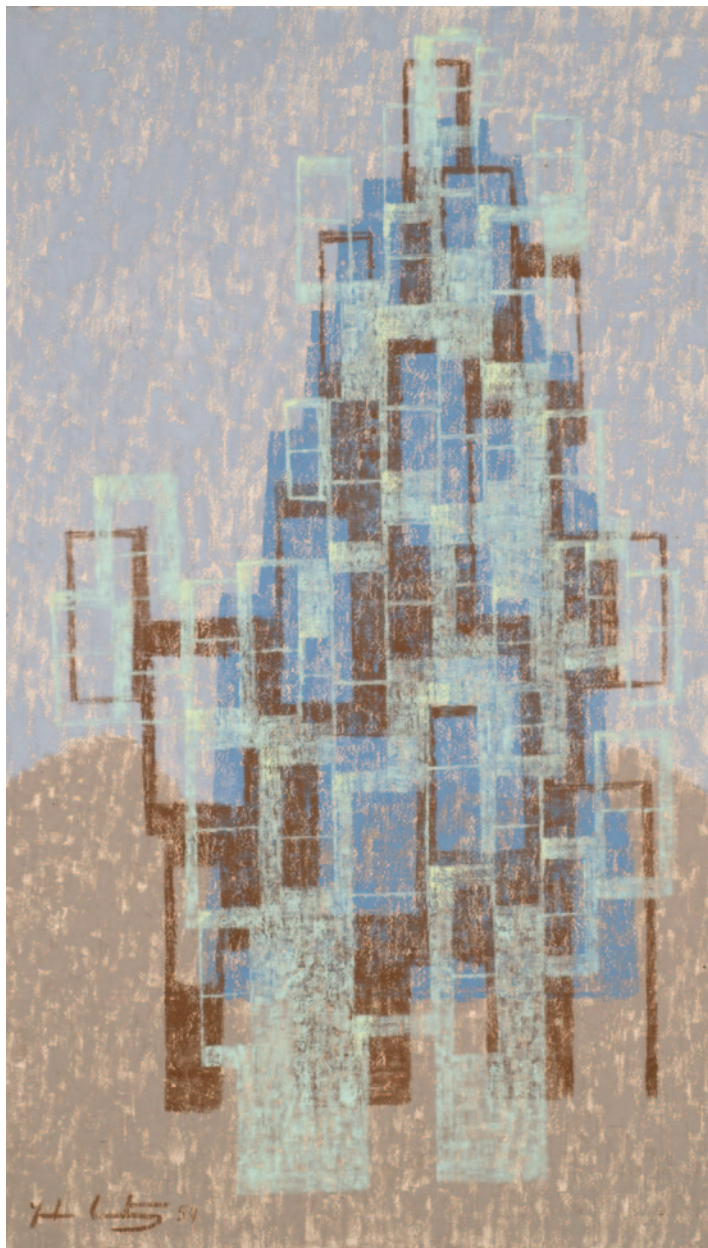
Oil on canvas 11 x 15 inches (28 x 38 cm)



[cat. 28]

New Day c.1963

Oil on paper 14 ¼ x 8 ¼ inches (36.3 x 21.2 cm)





[cat. 30]

**Red Abstract** c.1965

Oil on paper

12 x 10 inches

(21 x 25.4 cm)



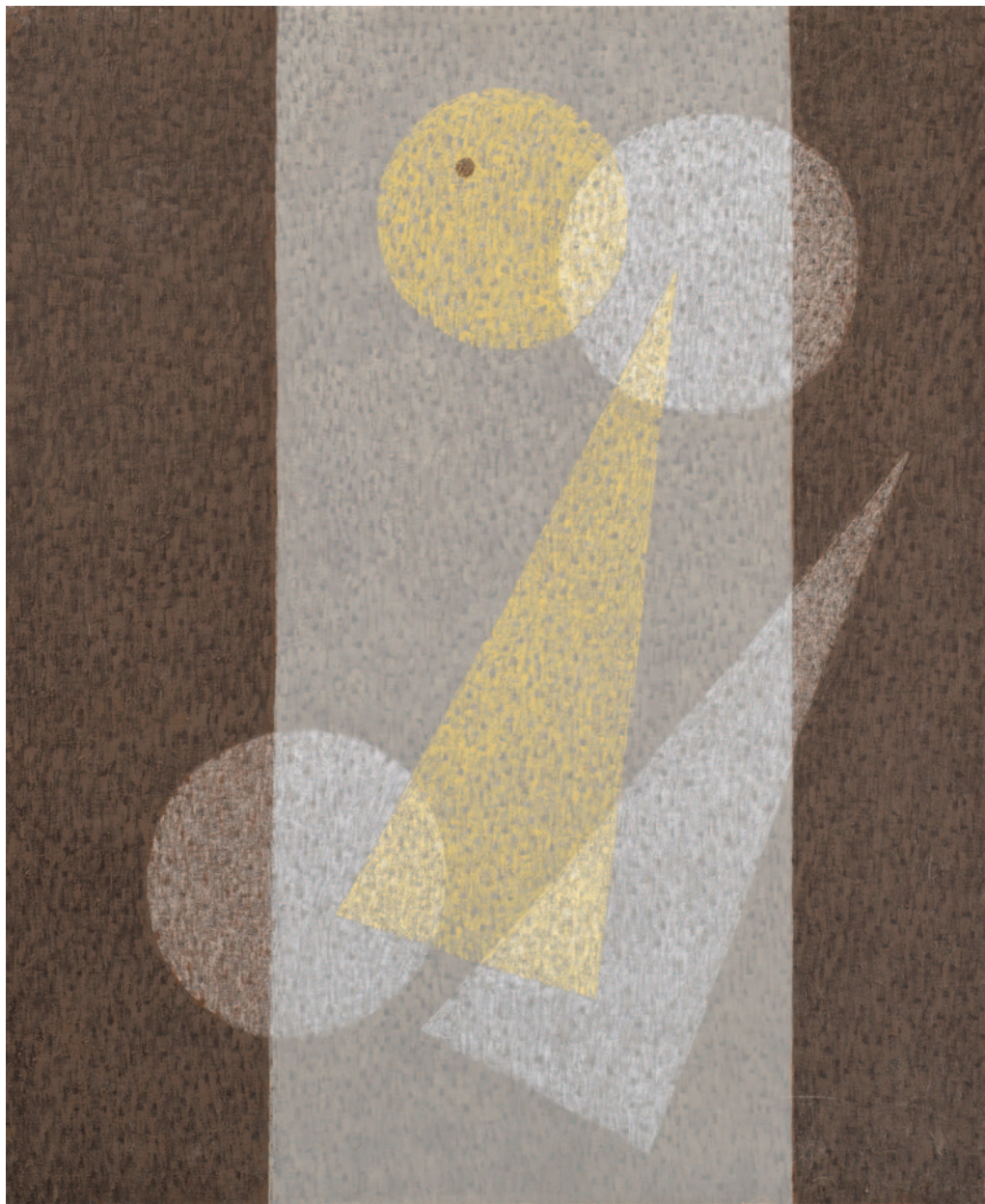
[cat. 31]

**Approach** c.1965

Oil on canvas

30 x 25 inches

(76.2 x 63.5 cm)





[cat. 29]

### Balloons 1965

Oil on canvas 8 ¼ x 12 inches (21 x 30.5 cm)



# CATALOGUE

- [cat. 1] **Composition with Figure** 1927/28  
Tempera on panel 19 x 12 inches (48.2 x 30.4 cm)  
Signed with initials b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong*, Alex, Reid & Lefevre, London 1929 (possibly no.33).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 possibly no.67.
- [cat. 2] **Wild Horses** c.1937-8  
Tempera on gessoed panel 16 x 23 inches (40.6 x 58.4 cm)  
Signed with initials b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong*, Alex, Reid & Lefevre, London 1938 (27); *Art in Britain 1930-1940 centred around Axis Circle Unit One*, Marlborough Gallery, London 1965 (9, as 'The Horses'); *John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (62, as 'Horses').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.167.
- [cat. 3] **Contemplation** 1945  
Tempera on board 16 ½ x 21 inches (41.9 x 53.3 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong*, New Grafton Gallery, London 1984 (4).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.310.
- [cat. 4] **The Blessing** 1949  
Tempera on card 10 ¾ x 9 inches (26.5 x 23 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (102).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.382.
- [cat. 5] **Death of Harlequin** 1949  
Oil on board 14 ½ x 10 ½ inches (36.8 x 26.7 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.384.
- [cat. 6] **Harlequin** 1949  
Tempera on board 19 ¼ x 10 ¾ inches (48.9 x 27.3 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.r.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.387.
- [cat. 7] **The Lute Player** 1949  
Tempera on board 19 ¼ x 10 ¾ inches (48.9 x 27.3 cm)  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.388.
- [cat. 8] **Clowns** 1950  
Oil on board 20 ½ x 14 ½ inches (52.1 x 36.8 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.400.
- [cat. 9] **Umbrella Men** 1950  
Oil on canvas 14 x 19 ⅞ inches (35.5 x 48.5 cm)  
Signed with initials and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (106).  
**Literature**  
John Rothenstein, *Modern English Painters: Nash-Bawden*, II, London 1984 p.155; Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.405.

- [cat. 10] **Clematis Montana** 1951  
Oil on canvas 23 ¼ x 19 ½ inches (59.1 x 49.5 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*New Paintings by John Armstrong*, Lefevre Gallery, London 1951 (20); *John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (111, as 'Clematis and Greek Pot').  
**Literature**  
*The Studio*, vol.143, p.60 repr.; Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.427.
- [cat. 11] **The Drummer** 1953  
Gouache on paper 16 x 12 inches (40.6 x 30.5 cm)  
Signed b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (118).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.471.
- [cat. 12] **The Cannonade** 1953  
Gouache on paper 16 x 12 cm (40.6 x 30.5 cm)  
Signed b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong 1893-1973*, Royal Academy, London 1975 (119, as 'The Swordsmen').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.472.
- [cat. 13] **The Swordsmen** 1954  
Oil on paper 7 ½ x 5 inches (19.1 x 12.7 cm)  
Signed b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong*, New Art Centre, London 1977 (14, as 'Battle Line').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 (no.483, as 'Three Swordsmen').
- [cat. 14] **Laureate** 1955  
Oil on paper 7 ½ x 7 ½ inches (19.1 x 19.1 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.
- [cat. 15] **The Swan** 1955  
Oil on canvas 28 x 24 inches (71.1 x 61 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
*Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London, 1955 (638).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.498.
- [cat. 16] **The Gods Abandoned** 1956  
Oil on board 13 x 18 inches (33 x 45.7 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Exhibitions**  
Leicester Galleries, London 1957 (32); *John Armstrong*, New Art Centre, London 1977 (19, as 'Seaborne II'); *John Armstrong*, New Grafton Gallery, Barnes 1984 (19, as 'Seaborne II').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.544.
- [cat. 17] **The Departure of Aphrodite** 1956  
Oil on board 12 ½ x 14 ½ inches (31.8 x 36.8 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.557.
- [cat. 18] **The Artichoke** 1956  
Oil on board 14 x 16 inches (35.6 x 40.6 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Exhibitions**  
Leicester Galleries, London 1957 (27).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.549.
- [cat. 19] **Still Life** 1956  
Oil on canvas 22 x 27 inches (55.9 x 68.6 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
Leicester Galleries 1957 no. 42; *John Armstrong Paintings 1935-1970*, The Minories, Colchester 1977 (27, as 'Still Life with Coffee Pot').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs, *John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.538.



- [cat. 20] **Still Life** 1956  
Oil on canvas 15 ½ x 13 ⅞ inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Exhibitions**  
Leicester Galleries, London 1957 (33).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.554.
- [cat. 21] **The Red Flowers** 1956  
Oil on canvas 9 ½ x 11 ½ inches (24.1 x 29.2 cm)  
Signed and dated t.r.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.569.
- [cat. 22] **Still Life with Bowl** 1957  
Oil on canvas 12 x 18 inches (30.5 x 45.7 cm)  
Signed and dated t.l.  
**Exhibitions**  
*John Armstrong*, New Grafton Gallery, Barnes 1984 (23).  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.601.
- [cat. 23] **Autumn Still Life** 1957  
Oil on board 10 x 14 ½ inches (25.4 x 36.8 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Exhibitions**  
Probably *John Armstrong*, New Grafton Gallery, Barnes  
1984 (24, as 'Still Life').  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.610.
- [cat. 24] **Yellow Abstract** 1961  
Oil on canvas 20 x 24 inches (50.8 x 61 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.691.
- [cat. 25] **City Profile** 1962  
Oil on canvas 11 x 15 inches (28 x 38 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.
- [cat. 26] **Still Life with Stone Vase** 1963  
Oil on canvas 14 x 16 inches (35.6 x 40.6 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.751.
- [cat. 27] **Blue Abstract (City Blueprint)** 1963  
Oil on canvas 26 x 36 inches (66 x 91.4 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.758.
- [cat. 28] **New Day** c.1963  
Oil on paper 14 ¼ x 8 ¼ inches (36.3 x 21.2 cm)  
Signed and dated b.l.
- [cat. 29] **Balloons** 1965  
Oil on canvas 8 ¼ x 12 inches (21 x 30.5 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.834.
- [cat. 30] **Red Abstract** c.1965  
Oil on paper 12 x 10 inches (21 x 25.4 cm)
- [cat. 31] **Approach** c.1965  
Oil on canvas 30 x 25 inches (76.2 x 63.5 cm)
- [cat. 32] **Pepper and Melon Analysis** 1966  
Oil on canvas 12 x 25 inches (30.5 x 63.5 cm)  
Signed and dated t.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.838.
- [cat.33] **The Red Apple** c.1966-7  
Oil on canvas 19 x 23 ½ inches (48.3 x 59.7 cm)  
Signed b.l.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.844.
- [cat. 33] **Red Apple and Green Pepper** 1967  
Oil on canvas 10 x 20 inches (25.4 x 50.8 cm)  
Signed and dated b.r.  
**Literature**  
Andrew Lambirth, Annette Armstrong & Jonathan Gibbs,  
*John Armstrong: The Paintings*, London 2009 no.863.

# CHRONOLOGY

1893	Born in Hastings	1934	Exhibits with Unit One at The Mayor Gallery	1957	Solo exhibition at The Leicester Galleries
1894-12	Brought up in West Dean at the Estate Vicarage	1935-9	Designer for Alexander Korda's films at Denham Studios	1961-3	Paints mural for Royal Marsden Hospital
1907-12	St Paul's School	1938	Moved to Essex; solo exhibition at Lefevre Gallery	1963	Solo exhibition Molton & Lords Gallery
1912-13	St John's College, Oxford	1940-44	Official War Artist	1964	Solo exhibition Shell Mex House
1913-13	St John's Wood School of Art	1945	Designed the Labour Party election Manifesto cover and poster; moves to Lamorna, Cornwall; solo exhibition at Lefevre Gallery	1966	Elected Associate of the Royal Academy
1914-18	Served in Royal Field Artillery in Egypt and Macedonia	1947	Solo exhibition at Lefevre Gallery	1973	Dies
1919-20	St John's Wood School of Art	1951	Exhibited at the Festival of Britain; solo exhibition at Lefevre Gallery	1975	Memorial exhibition at the Royal Academy, touring to City Museum & Art Gallery, Plymouth, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston and Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne
1928	First solo exhibition at The Leicester Galleries	1953-55	Paints mural for Bristol Council Chamber	2017	Major retrospective exhibition at Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance, touring to Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport
1929	Solo exhibition at The Leicester Galleries	1955	Returns to London		
1931	Designer for the first production of the ballet <i>Façade</i>				
1933	Completes murals for Shell-Mex House				

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Opposite: Detail from *The Lute Player* 1949 [cat.7]







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