

Passion from a Falcon Eye
Will Alsop

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27 November – 21 December 2013

Indar Pasricha Fine Arts

22 Connaught Street
London W2 2AF

T +44 (0)20 7724 9541
info@ipfa.co.uk

Mon – Fri 10 – 6 Sat 11 – 3
www.ipfa.co.uk



When I first knew Will Alsop he was already the celebrated figurehead of a large and pioneering architectural practice, with a place in history assured by the massive *Hotel du Department des Bouches-du-Rhone*, Marseilles, completed in 1994. Visiting his large Battersea studio for the first time, the usual clutter of a busy studio was seen to dominate the ground plane; the computers, the plotters, the dusty models of schemes unbuilt and endless piles of paper. The walls, by contrast, were owned by something else rather more idiosyncratic. Crowding each other out, seemingly to the rafters, were a collection of large canvases, each one exploding with colour and imagined forms. More canvas frames lined the halls, stairways, they were stacked in all available stores. The wonder was that the principal of a successful architecture firm found the time for this prodigious output. Moreover, upon closer study, the pictures had a liberty of line, confidence in texture and tone, which seemed to be at variance with that clear and lucid appraisal of dimension, structure and detail necessary to the modern construction process. It soon became clear that in this studio the creative process, in its early stages, was conducted through these large canvases, three dimensional spaces imagined in advance through acrylic. More recently, digital media has come to play an important part though, as far as I know, has not yet displaced traditional paper, pencils and paint in the visioning process.

This wealth of artistic output is evidenced in the latest series of Will's paintings. Their richness and depth of field is the signature of a confident creator of bold spaces, real and imaginary. Colour, pattern and texture all play their part on canvas as well as on site. There is hardly a building designed by Will that does not glorify in colour – not for nothing was his major project in Marseilles dubbed *Le Grand Bleu*. Schiaparelli pink window mounts in West Bromwich, arsenic green copper cladding in Peckham, rainbow raked legs to a stalking box of a flying art school (yes really, 5 storeys up) in Toronto. Will's confidence in the right colour is firmly in the lineage of Matisse, Gauguin and Chagall, and like them

he reproduces the magical effect of southern light on frozen northern ways of seeing. As his international architectural career was taking off, he spent a good deal of time in the Mediterranean, not only on account of the Marseille building but through an ongoing art project with his collaborator Bruce McLean on the island of Menorca. In the last ten years, his sights have turned progressively further East; fulfilling a long held ambition to visit India with his wife Sheila, he has been able to appreciate the vivid beauty of Kerala's coast and the green Nilgiri Hills. The pull of globalisation has taken him on frequent visits to China, completing a large mixed use project on the Shanghai waterfront, and in Singapore masterplanning a successful revival of historic Clarke Quay. The flashes of colour represented in the paintings here reflect the influences of both South and East; the birds and flowers take us back to the foundation of Alsop's creative philosophy, a pleasure in simple things, rare experiences. His career has been the crystallisation of that pleasure into permanent forms.

James Hulme

London

November 2013

The paintings for this exhibition were stimulated by looking at birds in my garden in London.

The birds chosen are primarily Indian, of which many are under threat, or indeed already extinct.

The birds are colourful and act as a starting point for making a painting. Each work is a series of decisions to make – of which the most difficult one is to decide when they are finished.

Evolution is becoming a more important part of my work, both in architecture, as well as painting. With age, rules become replaced by experience. Concept gives way to trust.

The ultimate is to achieve satisfaction in having 'no idea'.

Will Alsop

From the Kitchen Table, Kensington

13th October 2013



Spotted Heart Woodpecker | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



White Bellied Cynclodies | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Nilgiri Flycatcher | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Shikra | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Pitta | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Malaba Parakeet | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Scarlet Tanager | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Fire Tailed Myzornis | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



There's a bird in my room | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Shrike | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Mrs. Gould's Songbird | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Golden Oriole | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Mountain Quail | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Asian Paradise Flycatcher | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Indian Roller | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Satyr Tragopan | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



White Shama | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Pallas's Fish Eagle | acrylic on paper | 30 x 22"



Tulip Room Xian | acrylic on canvas | 79 x 76"



Rose Room Xian | acrylic on canvas | 79 x 76"



Lilly Room Xian | acrylic on canvas | 79 x 76"



Great Indian Bustard | acrylic on paper | 48 x 16"

Will Alsop OBE RA

Will Alsop is one of the best known architects practicing in the world today. Over a career of 40 years he has designed some of the most ground-breaking cultural, commercial, education and transportation buildings in the UK and Europe, establishing a free-form vocabulary for architecture that represents a clear break from rectilinear 20th Century modernism. His diverse works have commonality in their use of colour, curve, and liberation from the right angle. Designed in a spirit of enquiry, a continuous dialogue between architect, commissioner and ultimate consumer in the creative phase of a project leads to built outcomes that enjoy popular appeal and critical appraisal. Noteworthy amongst many completed projects are the *Hotel du Department des Bouches-du-Rhone, Marseille* (1994), *Peckham Library* for which he was awarded the Stirling Prize (2000), and *Gao Yang*, a large mixed use development on the Shanghai Waterfront (2010).

Professor of architecture at Vienna TU and at the Canterbury School of Architecture at UCA, Will combines architectural and academic careers with success as a fine artist. He was elected to the Royal Academy in May 2000.



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