

JANET NATHAN



First published in 2011 by Campden Gallery Ltd
High Street, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6AG

www.campdengallery.co.uk

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ISBN: 978-0-9566856-5-0

Cover:

Silent Arc

140 x 145 x 5 cm mixed media on wood (detail)

JANET NATHAN

16 July – 7 August 2011


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In a career now of over four decades, Janet Nathan has been quietly putting together a body of work as impressive as it is substantial. It is the more remarkable, moreover, not just for its innate qualities of formal consistency and creative judgement, but most of all, perhaps, for its particularity. For while, as with all true artists, we may pick up in her work a reference here, a sympathy there, it remains entirely and unmistakably her own.

Its physical nature serves only to emphasise this essential distinctiveness: for quite what do we call it? Assemblage, construction, collage, painting, sculpture, the found object – any one of these generic labels will do, up to a point, but only up to a point. They all have their place in the work, though not necessarily always all together. But there is rather more to it than that.

For we have only to add, to whichever term we choose, the qualification of 'Relief' to point the difference. For by its very nature, standing as it does on that debatable territory between the pictorial and the physical, the actual and the inferred, the 'Relief' is something of the odd-one-out of the plastic arts. Seen from the single viewpoint, with the wall as the ground or picture-plane against which to read it, the image remains at once both the object it is, and what you may imagine it to be.

So, with Janet's work, we look into it on the one hand for the stuff itself, which is wood for the most part. The scraps and trophies, trawled from skip or shoreline (and regrettably harder to come by these days), she may well leave in their natural and distressed state and shape, yet is quite as likely to repaint and alter them. Then there are the elements she has cut or contrived herself, or cast in resin, to fit a particular formal requirement in the composition – a disc or crescent, a rod or serpent-shape. The colour is rich and deep – blues, reds, ochres, greys, or that of the wood itself, stained or vanished or just itself.

This formal challenge of the Relief, of reconciling the actual object with the pictorial, is met with a formidable assurance, yet is no mere formalist exercise in basic composition or design. For these shapes, more than mere shapes, are also instinct with an unspecific yet powerful symbolism, as one might find in the work of Miro, perhaps, or of Alan Davie or Terry Frost. What are they – suns, moons, snakes, rocks, rivers, lily pads, stepping stones? And what quite is this pictorial world they move into, or conjure up, this dreamscape set by that simplest of pictorial devices, an horizontal bar for skyline beneath the moon? There is to it, in short an odd surrealist ambiguity. Abstract? Figurative? Both at once? But if Janet Nathan is indeed a surrealist, it is of the gentlest kind.

William Packer, London, June 2011

Silent Arc

140 x 145 x 5 cm mixed media on wood



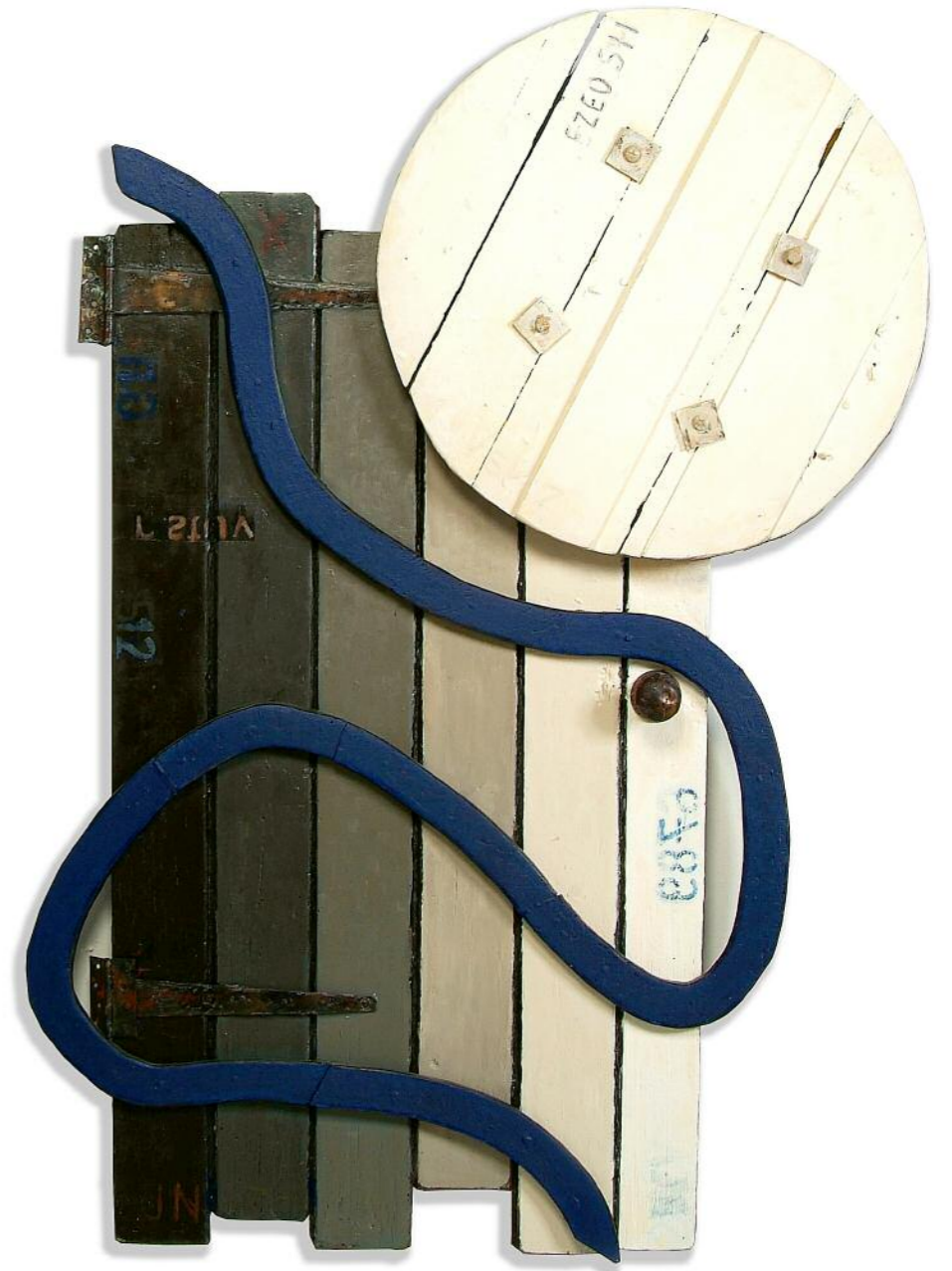


Ivory Prelude
124 x 56 x 7 cm mixed media on wood (detail above)





Evening Gateway
157 x 115 x 5 cm mixed media on wood (detail above)





Fleet
61 x 22 x 2 cm mixed media on wood



Bankside
254 x 102 x 5 cm mixed media on wood

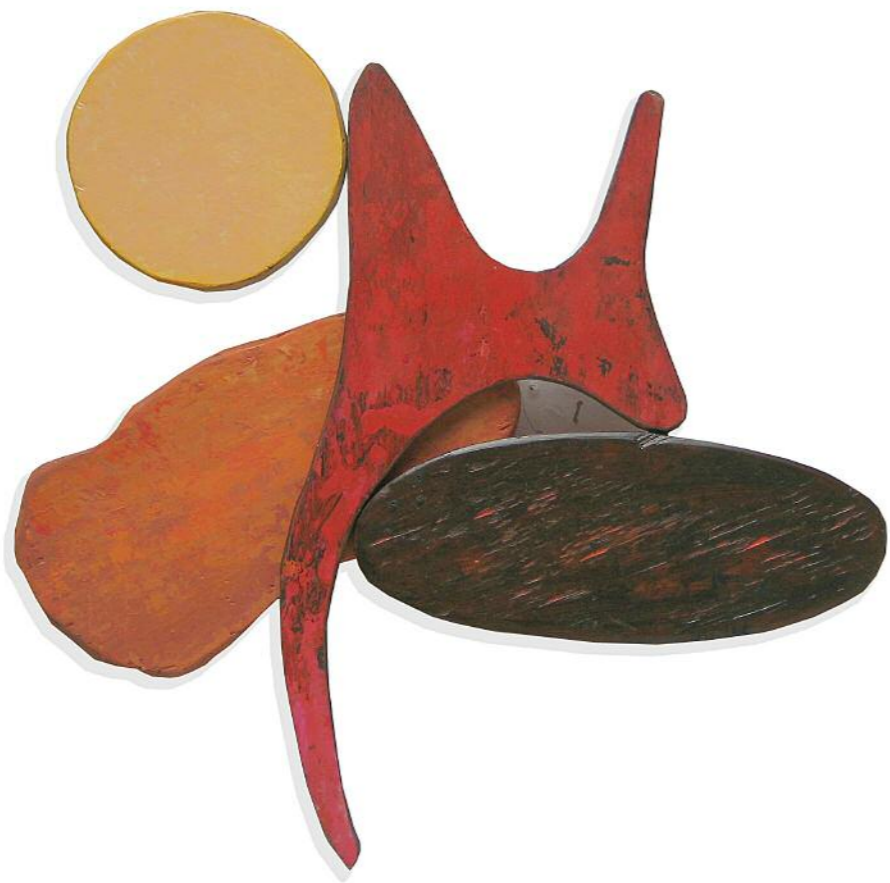


Winter's Drift
192 x 52 x 8 cm mixed media on wood (detail above)





Night Harbour
57 x 108 x 9 cm mixed media on wood



Wybridge
66 x 66 x 5 cm mixed media on wood



Hope Sound
144 x 72 x 7 cm mixed media on wood



Rusty Rhythm
144 x 72 x 7 cm mixed media on wood



Wyford
66 x 60 x 5 cm mixed media on wood



Red Field
74 x 117 x 5 cm mixed media on wood



Poole
100 x 135 x 5 cm mixed media on wood

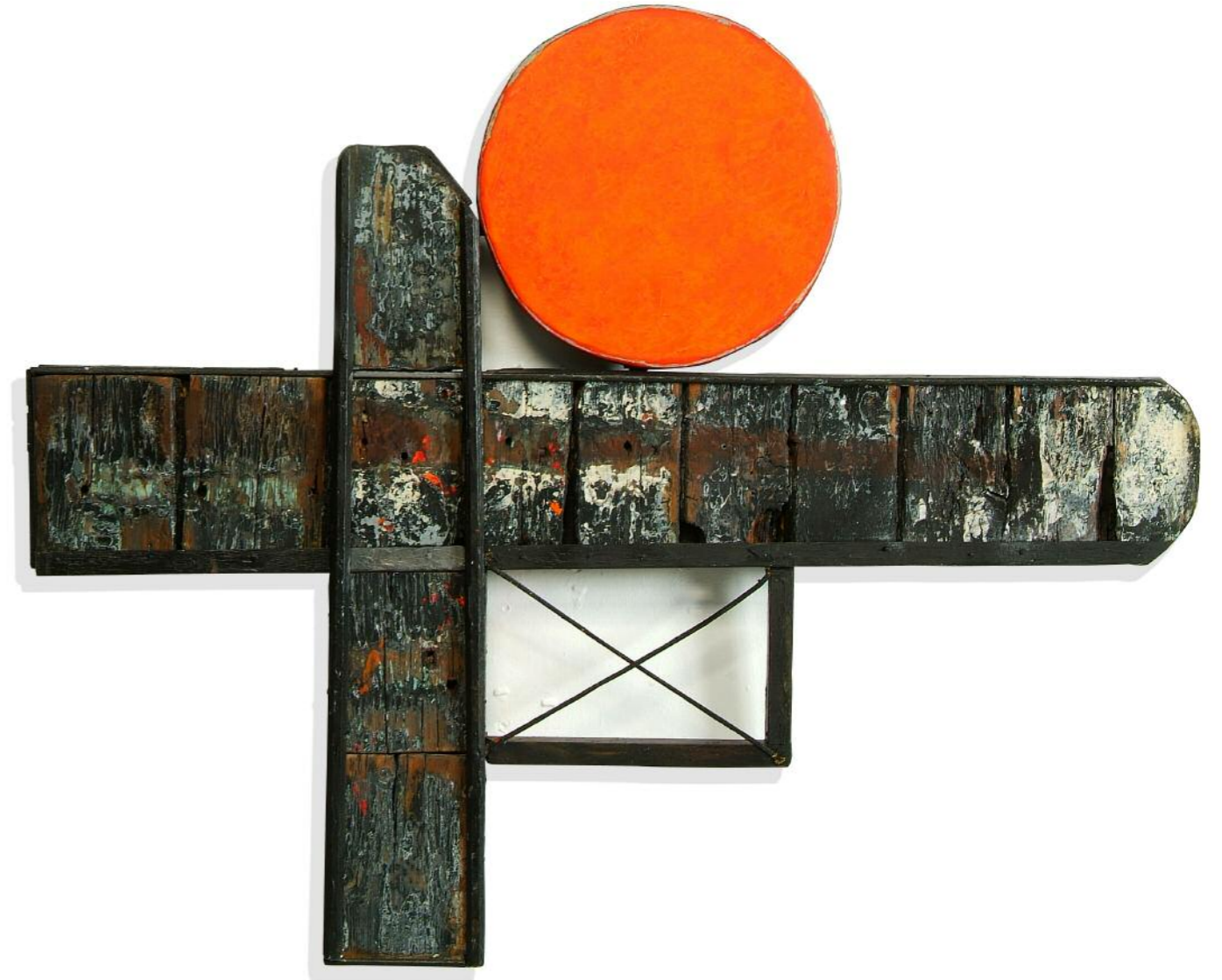


To the East
124 x 62 x 7 cm mixed media on wood (detail above)





Boulders
30 x 20 x 1,5 cm mixed media on wood



Evening Solitude
71 x 100 x 5 cm mixed media on wood

JANET NATHAN

Solo exhibitions

1979	Newcastle Poly Art Gallery
1981	Air Gallery London
1982	Ikon Gallery Birmingham Ferens Art Gallery Hull
1983	Riverside Studios London Howard Gardens Gallery Cardiff
1984	Mappin Art Gallery Sheffield
1986	Windsor Old Ct Windsor
1988	Warwick Arts London
1991	Hampstead Theatre
1992	The Gallery at John Jones
1993	Chelsea Arts Club London
1995	Reeds Wharf Gallery London
1997	Concourse Gallery Barbican Centre London Metropole Arts Centre Folkestone Graves Art Gallery Sheffield Gardner Arts Centre Brighton The Customs House South Shields Tiempos Modernos Madrid
1999-2002	British Airways Terminal 1, Gallery Aalders France
2006	Redfern Gallery
2008	Tiempos Modernos Madrid
2010	Aldeburgh Art

Group and Mixed Exhibitions

1980	The British Art Show
1980-97	Royal Academy Summer Exhibition
1980	Painted Constructions (ICA London)
1981	Art and the Sea (Glasgow)
1982	(London)
1982	Coloured Constructions (Ikon Gallery)
1983 & 1984	Whitechapel Open Exhibition
1983-93	Leicestershire Exhibition (annually)
1983	10 London Artists (Scandinavian tour)
1984	TWSA Touring Exhibition
1984	The London Group (Morley Coll. and RCA)
1985	Crawford Centre for the Arts (St Andrews)
1985	Scarborough Festival
1987	Art on a Plate (Serpentine Gallery London)
1987	John Moores 15 Exhibition
1981-93	London Group Members Exhibition

1990	London Group (RCA)
1990	Riverside One London
1990	The Discerning Eye Exhibition London
1992	Redfern Gallery London
1993	Leicestershire Exhibition
1993	London Group (London Inst. and Barbican)
1993	Bruton Street Gallery 1993, RGI Glasgow
1994	Summer Exhibition (William Jackson Gallery)
1994	London Group (London Inst and Chelsea Arts Club)
1995	Contemporary British Artists
1995	John Moores 19 Exhibition
1995, '96 & 2000	London Group
1996	Cross Currents (Reeds Wharf and Barbican)
1980-2002	RA Summer Exhibitions
1997	Angela Flowers Small Works
1999	RCA Br Art Fair 1998, Olympia Art Fair
2000	Galerie Aalders, La Garde-Freinet, France
2003	London Group Anniversary Exhibition, Cork St
2003	The Walk Gallery
2004-2007	RA Summer Exhibitions
2009 & 2011	RA Summer Exhibitions
2003-2011	London Group

Work in collections

Walker Art Gallery Liverpool
ICI HQ Millbank, Exchange House Broadgate
Leicester Education Authority
Lonrho Group
Smiths Industries
Unilever House
Pentland Industries
Coopers & Lybrand
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
British Council
Arts Council of Great Britain
Private collections in Britain, America and Europe
British Academy

Back cover:

Poole

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Sunday 11.00am – 4.00pm