

A wilder shore



David Cook's landscapes feel like they have been painted in situ. Hot, sticky mediterranean afternoons and cold, blurred Scottish mornings are trapped in tone and temperature with vivid colour. Working in oils, acrylic and watercolour, Cook has thrown down his impressions of places with the urgency and lucidity of a single, intense experience.

Cook studied painting at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art from 1979-1984. During this time, he also traipsed around Europe on college scholarships and spent time in Cyprus. Since graduating, Cook has continued to placate his wanderlust and has travelled between Scotland and the South of France, recording his emotive response to each place.

His style veers between the tortured and the tranquil in every colour from stifling fluorescents to pale sorbets. In *Eclipse of the Moon*, a nightmarish scene is evoked in treacherous hues where a church spire stabs a mashed up moon. *Pine Trees and Forest* are instantly reminiscent of Kandinsky's landscapes with blocks of violet, sunflower yellow, scarlet and lime green, and paint is scraped and pasted in thick swirls and strokes to signal trees curving and creaking in the wind.

Back home in Joan Eardley country, the east coast of Scotland, although the colours are not as scalding, there is still an undercurrent of danger. In *Cliffs by St Cyrus*, three cottages pitch and toss on the top of a cliff while the sea crashes and cascades on the rocks below.

But it is in his quieter and more recent works that Cook really flows. Works such as *Pheasant* by the Hedgerow is painted in rich vanilla and lemon with squat trees and fleeting birds dashed on to the background in jagged black. Likewise, a series of small fluid oils of coastlines and sunsets are made up of long strokes of blushing colour which evoke the sheer joy of being there. (Beatrice Colin)

Recent Paintings by David Cook are at the William Hardie Gallery until Fri 29 Apr.

Shimmering forms

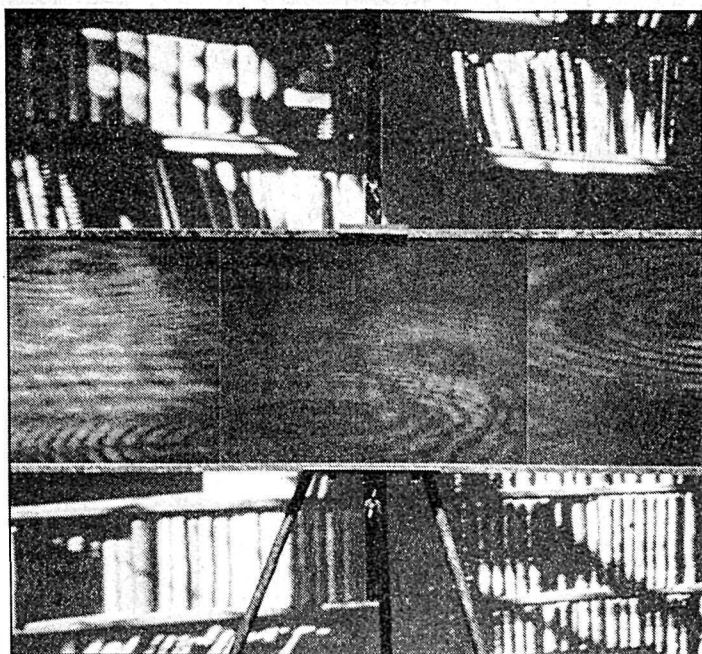
Ann Donald sees the light at a hologram installation in the Collins Gallery.

'The Appliance Of Science' – the Zanussi washing-machine slogan – could equally be used to describe the artistic productions of artists Susan Gamble and Michael Wenyon. For this seemingly incompatible duo are forging ahead in marrying the two traditionally contentious disciplines of science and art in their holographic explorations.

Certainly there is a history of artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci straying into the scientific field. But since the Renaissance and especially after the 18th century in Britain, the two seemed to be on divergent courses. However, in the light of our 20th century technological revolution an increasing number of the artistic fraternity are making tentative steps to harness this untapped techno-power and channel it into some form of artistic expression.

Gamble and Wenyon seem to epitomise this new breed – Gamble studied Fine Art at Goldsmith's while Wenyon studied physics and optics at Bristol University. Since meeting at Goldsmith's Holography Workshop in 1980 they have formed a challenging partnership that seeks to fathom and reflect upon the symbiotic relationship between their separate schools of training. As they explain in the catalogue for their exhibition, 'rather than commenting directly on the aesthetics of nature as revealed by science . . . we set out to refer to the conceptual process of science and its visual manifestations.'

These 'manifestations' are 3-D visual experiments eons removed from the



gimmicky bad-taste effects one usually associates with holograms. As well as holograms they employ photographic projections, glass plates, easels and stage-lighting to create art installations that have the added remit of questioning the way in which we understand the phenomena of light and optical illusion.

Newton's Rings is a glowing exploration of philosophical and painterly ideas that was apparently fired by their 1987 residency at the Royal Greenwich Observatory. It was here in the Observatory's library that they discovered Isaac Newton's pivotal 1704 treatise *Optiks*, a text on lenses, mirrors, light and astronomy. The resulting work shows large black and white film images of the library's shelves projected onto backdrops behind a tryptic easel of mesmeric coloured holograms. What the artists are trying to communicate is that the holograms are in fact Newton's Rings, thus demonstrating the visual result of

the scientific information contained in the black and white tomes behind.

This self-reflective method – where the content is about the medium – intensified with their later work as visiting professors at the University of Tsukuba, Japan. In works such as *Bibliography* and *Scroll* the ironic presentation of books in holographic form pays homage to the written word as a source of scientific and artistic ideas. Yet there is a twist in there because the technology and science that Gamble and Wenyon employ is threatening to turn the book into an endangered species.

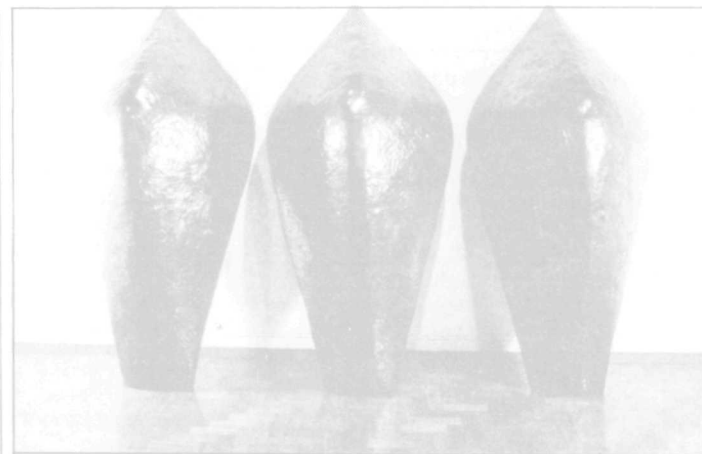
Nevertheless, with a current residency at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh to create an environment of computer-programmed holograms designed to animate the surrounding architecture, Gamble and Wenyon are clearly aiming for the stars.

Volumes is at The Collins Gallery, Glasgow from 3-28 May.

The story of the blues

Out of the blue may be its name, but the purpose behind Edinburgh's newest gallery is not at all surprising. Anne-Marie Culhane and Trudi Gibson – modestly calling themselves co-ordinators of this project – feel there is a clear need for an innovation of this nature. By breaking down barriers that other private galleries erect, their aim is to create a more accessible, experimental, less commercial space for artists and the viewing public. Their plans are big and full of potential, taking in media other than the visual arts. Although it's still very early days, the cautious steps they have taken are promising indeed.

The second exhibition to be mounted is an interesting show of widely differing artforms. Peter Ross's photographic diary of Beijing is a moving documentary of small human actions hidden within a massive urban



environment. Jane Murray's expressive drawings of the human form give the impression of an artist working towards her chosen language. Her lines are sharp and vigorous, and sometimes – but not always – the image works well. Holly Murray's boat sculptures are marvellous hulks: hand-crafted visualisations of remembered childhood shapes. It is notable that the gallery has managed to show her work to good effect despite the

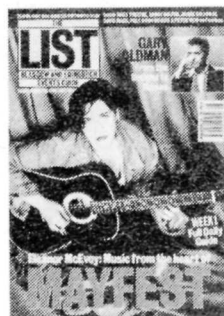
limited space available.

Future shows include an exhibition of young New York artists, and of art by Scottish prisoners. If they inherit half the vitality of a certain arts impresario formerly resident in Blackfriars Street, and none of his accountancy skills, then the prospects for out of the blue are good. Out of the blue's current show is on until 7 May. (Justin McKenzie Smith)

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