

PRESS RELEASE 2012

## Adrian Berg: A Memorial exhibition

2 June to 30 September 2012

Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, West Sussex, presents a memorial exhibition of the landscape painter **Adrian Berg RA (1929-2011)**, who was best-known for his depictions of parks and gardens such as Windsor, Kew, Dartington, Nymans, Stourhead and Sheffield Park which he painted in distinctively vibrant colours. This is the first exhibition of Berg's work following his death in November 2011.

Despite winning drawing prizes at school, Berg first studied medicine, then English at Cambridge University in the late 1940s and subsequently a higher diploma in Education at Trinity College, Dublin. After two years of National Service and a short spell of teaching, he eventually began training as a painter at St Martin's in 1955, then Chelsea School of Art and finally the Royal College of Art, where he was a contemporary of **David Hockney and Paul Huxley**.

While still a student in the late 1950s, Berg saw a retrospective exhibition of Monet's work at the Tate Gallery, which left a lifelong impression, he considered them the best paintings he had ever seen. **Monet** remained an important influence throughout his life, evident in his understanding and use of colour and also his tendency to return repeatedly to a single subject, over weeks, months and even years.

His subjects were, in early years the view of Regent's Park from his window at Gloucester Gate where he lived for almost a quarter of a century, and over the subsequent decades the parks and gardens of England. The exhibition includes his vibrant depictions of the Alhambra, the glass houses and trees at Kew, the reflections in the lakes at Sheffield Park in Sussex and Stourhead in Wiltshire.

Berg continuously found new ways of recording the landscape, often examining the effects of the season on the same scenes. Working in oil and watercolour, he used colour and pattern in inventive ways to investigate man's interventions in the natural environment. He experimented with different dilutions of paint, studied the ways in which water alters the forms of the trees it reflects, and intensified or reduced the richness of colour to extract the maximum expressive potential from the subject.



Adrian Berg, Stourhead, 28 June. Oil on canvas © estate of the artist

A Gold Medal winner in 1973 at the Florence Biennale, and a prize winner at the John Moores Liverpool Exhibitions in 1980 and 1982, among the high points of Berg's career was his solo exhibition in 1986 at the Serpentine Gallery in London which subsequently toured the country. In 1992 he was elected a **Royal Academician**, and in 1994, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Art. However, Berg never courted publicity, except the occasional exhibition and annual showing in the RA Summer Exhibition.

Berg's work is held in many collections, both public and corporate. He was a significant tutor at Camberwell, the Central School and later the Royal College of Art, where notable pupils included **Tracey Emin** who affectionately called him 'Bergy Baby'.

**Simon Martin**, Curator of the exhibition says: 'Adrian Berg was the leading British painter of our public parks and gardens. His use of colour was distinctive and vibrant, but his paintings went beyond being just sensuous renditions of verdant foliage and flowers – they were carefully considered paintings about looking itself.'

*Ends.*

INFORMATION | IMAGES | INTERVIEWS

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