

RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

PATRICK HERON

Headingley 1920 - 1999 Zennor

Ref: CB 214

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*Cover of Barbican Catalogue : April 24 1985 : III*



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Signed, dated and inscribed on the reverse:  
*Patrick Heron / COVER OF BARBICAN /  
CATALOGUE : APRIL 24 1985 : III*  
Gouache: 9 ¼ x 23 ½ in / 23.5 x 59.7 cm  
Frame size: 17 x 31 in / 43.2 x 78.7 cm  
In a white waxed tenoned frame



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# RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

*Provenance:*

Waddington Galleries, London [B20166];  
private collection, Wales, acquired from the above in 1992

*Exhibited:*

London, Waddington Galleries, *Patrick Heron: Gouaches 1961-1989*, 26<sup>th</sup> April-20<sup>th</sup> May 1989, no.12

Heron is known to have painted four designs for the cover of the catalogue which accompanied his retrospective at the Barbican Art Gallery in the summer of 1985. Three of these, including the present work, were later shown together at his exhibition of gouaches at the Waddington Galleries four years later. The extraordinary, elongated composition, designed to wrap-around the front and back covers of the landscape format catalogue, allowed for what feels like an unprecedented freedom in the artist's forms, visible in panoramic view in all their sensuous wonder. In his essay on Heron's 'Recent Paintings' in the Barbican catalogue, the artist and writer, Alan Gouk noted a relaxation in his work of the 1980s, which 'allowed perhaps greater diversity of incident, variety of type of silhouette, and textural variety, than at any time in Heron's previous work.'<sup>1</sup>

Full of energy and light, Heron's colour-shapes in sweeping sections of yellow, red, ultramarine and cobalt blue, have the greatest opacity, but even these solid forms softly fray and dissolve at the edges in the most delightful ways, creating new, beautifully visceral forms, like exquisite patterns of lace. In contrast, lighter, translucent areas washed in pale pink, sky blue and mint green, illuminate and balance the arrangement with areas of white unpainted paper shining between more spacious forms. This exceptional, mature work on paper demonstrates Heron's mastery of the medium in all its vibrance and fluidity.

In the summer of 1967 Heron badly broke his leg in a canoeing accident with fellow artist Bryan Wynter at Lamorna Cove. Consequently, he was unable to paint a single canvas for almost a year and turned his attention to gouache, a smaller-scale, more fluid medium which could be handled from a seated position. This ushered in over a decade of exploration of the medium, resulting in some of Heron's most intense and delightful works.

Heron explained that his works in gouache were 'not a substitute for the oil paintings. Nor are they preliminary sketches, or means for trying out new colour-shapes or configurations of dovetailed colour-shapes to feature in later paintings on canvas. They are works in their own right; and their quality, in fact, doesn't even overlap with the canvases' in many respects... In my gouaches, the tempo is dictated, quite apart from the particular needs of the area-shapes I make, by the nature of the wet medium itself. I like the water in the paint mixture to lead me; to suggest the scribbled drawing which gives birth to the images. My gouaches have always had this fast-moving fluidity of drawing, and a softness, coming from the watery medium itself, which the oil paintings cannot share.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Gouk, 'Recent Paintings', *Patrick Heron*, exh. cat., Barbican Art Gallery, London 1985, p.23.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Heron, 'A note on my gouaches' written to accompany an exhibition at the Caledonian Club, Edinburgh, 1985, quoted in Vivien Knight (ed.), *Patrick Heron*, John Taylor in association with Lund Humphries, London 1988, p.38.

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