

RICHARD GREEN

PATRICK HERON

Headingley 1920 - 1999 Zennor

Ref: CC 219

Theme Dissolving - Emerald and Orange in Reds : May 1969



Signed, dated and inscribed on the reverse: *PATRICK HERON /
THEME DISSOLVING - EMERALD / AND ORANGE IN
REDS : MAY 1969*

Gouache: 23 1/4 x 30 5/8 in / 59.1 x 77.8 cm

Frame size: 30 1/4 x 37 3/4 in / 76.8 x 95.9 cm

In a waxed and coloured asymmetric frame



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Provenance:

Comtesse Miranda de Toulouse-Lautrec (1934-2024), Versailles & Roussac, acquired through Waddington Galleries, London in 1970

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...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.'¹

Across the fiery depths of various reds, the jigsaw-like harbour shapes of luminous emerald and blazing orange stretch towards each other from opposite sides of the paper with a burst of violet enlivening the bottom left corner. The complex cartography and brilliance of colour in this striking work on paper, vividly demonstrates the fluidity, vibrance and opacity of the medium and Heron's mastery of it.

In his *Studio International* article, 'Colour in my Painting: 1969', Heron writes of the importance of interaction between differing colours, in particular: 'the meeting lines between areas of colour are utterly crucial to our apprehension of the actual hue of those areas: the linear character of these frontiers cannot avoid changing our sensation of the colour of those areas. Hence a jagged line separating two reds will make them cooler or hotter, pinker or more orange, than a smoothly looping or rippling line. *The line changes the colour of the colours on either side of it.* This being so, it follows that it is the *linear* character that I give to the frontiers between colour-areas that finally determines the apparent colour of my colours.'²

¹ 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, 1988, p.38.

² Patrick Heron, 'Colour In My Painting: 1969', *Studio International*, December 1969.