

RICHARD GREEN

PATRICK HERON

Headingley 1920 - 1999 Zennor

Ref: CC 221

Number Seven: August 1970



Signed, dated and inscribed on the reverse:
PATRICK HERON / NUMBER SEVEN : / AUGUST 1970
Gouache: 23 ½ x 30 5/8 in / 59.7 x 77.8 cm
Frame size: 32 x 39 ½ in / 81.3 x 100.3 cm
In a white gessoed box frame



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Provenance:

Waddington Galleries, London, 21st August 1970 [A4604];
Mrs A M D Havelock-Allan (Lucy Mitchell-Innes), acquired from the above 24th January 1977;
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York [MI&N1227];
private collection, New York

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. Throughout the 1970s, in fact, my gouaches and my oil paintings occupied very different departments in the field of pictorial experience.'¹

Against a sea of ultramarine and cerulean blue, one soft-edged, mint green 'lopsided disc inside an uneven square' of blazing orange, glows in the bottom left corner, a favourite shape (or colour-form) of the artist.² The complex watery depths and fiery delights of this striking gouache brilliantly demonstrate the fluidity, vibrance and opacity of the medium and Heron's mastery of it.

¹ Patrick Heron, 'A Note on My Gouaches,' 1985, cited in Vivien Knight (ed.), *Patrick Heron*, John Taylor in association with Lund Humphries, London 1988, p.38.

² Patrick Heron, 'A Note on my Painting', 1963, cited in Mel Gooding (ed.), *Painter as Critic. Patrick Heron: Selected Writings*, Tate Publishing, London 2001, p.154.

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