

## News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

# Tony Bevan

2 May – 22 June 2003

Admission free

Preview Fri 2 May 17.30-20.00 All press and media welcome



Tony Bevan, *Blue Interior*, 1999



Tony Bevan, *Head*, 1996

Tony Bevan is one of Britain's most distinguished contemporary painters. Born in Bradford in 1951, he trained at the Slade School of Art and has exhibited widely since his first solo show in 1976. This year Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal is celebrating his prolific career with a retrospective of paintings and drawings (14 April – 26 June). MK G's exhibition will focus on the very large-scale paintings which Bevan has made in the last 5-10 years of his career, some of which he has never been able to show before due to their size, including one new piece.

The human figure, particularly the head, has occupied Bevan for much of his career. Many of his paintings show heads, often with elongated necks, reaching upwards or outwards into the blank space of the rest of the canvas. They are powerfully suggestive of isolation and suffering, but also offer the hope of human resilience and the will to survive. In the last decade or so Bevan has also been concentrating on the interiors of buildings, producing monochromatic, stark canvases which focus on the structural elements of an interior and in which repeating patterns are emphasised. All the works due to be shown at MK G deal with these two subjects.

Bevan paints on a monumentally large scale, laying his canvases out on the ground as well as pinning them to the wall in a manner reminiscent of Jackson Pollock. Bevan's emphasis on materials has led him to make his own paint and to insist on the different quality of marks generated by charcoal made of different woods. He makes no attempt to conceal the fall-out of the painting process – his canvases are littered with small fragments of charcoal, studio dust and other debris which testify to the physicality of the process. The strong visual impact and large scale of Bevan's work will be complemented by the clean elegance of MK G's three gallery spaces.

Although inspired by a diverse range of art historical sources, including Mantegna, Holbein, Géricault, Manet and Bacon, Bevan is well known for his highly distinctive, wholly original style. He pushes the boundaries between drawing and painting, representation and abstraction in ways which make his limited subject-matter seem full of meaning and possibility.

**In Conversation with Tony Bevan and Richard Cork**

Tues 13 May | 19.30 | Tickets £5 (£3 concs) to include a glass of wine  
Tony Bevan will be discussing his work with Richard Cork, art critic, historian and broadcaster. Tickets must be booked on 01908 676 900 during MK G opening hours.

**Free Family Exhibition Tour**

Sat 3 May | 11.00 |  
Join a member of MK G staff for a short, informal tour before starting Art Trolley Activities. Book on 01908 676 900.

**The Saturday Art Trolley**

Every Saturday | 11.00-13.00 | Free | No need to book  
Art activities for ages 4-12 based on the current exhibition. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Free Exhibition Tour with MK G's Director**

Wed 7 May | 13.30-14.00  
Join Stephen Snoddy for an informal tour. Book on 01908 676 900.

**Family Day at MK G**

Sat 17 May | 11.00-16.00  
A day of free art activities for all ages – ideal for new as well as regular visitors.

**Limited edition book**

Last October Enitharmon Editions published a limited edition book, Harold Pinter's *The Disappeared and other poems* with images by Tony Bevan. For further details contact Stephen Stuart-Smith on 020 7482 5967 or email [books@enitharmon.co.uk](mailto:books@enitharmon.co.uk)

**Abbot Hall catalogue**

To accompany its retrospective exhibition, Abbot Hall is publishing a catalogue written by Catherine Lampert. Available from the MK G shop.

**Listings Information**

Tony Bevan (2 May – 22 June) at Milton Keynes Gallery, 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3QA. Admission free. Open Tues-Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 11.00-17.00. Closed Mondays and for exhibition changeovers. Visit [www.mk-g.org](http://www.mk-g.org) for up to the minute information.

**Press information and images**

Contact Katharine Sorensen or Emma Dummett on 01908 558 302 or email [e.dummett@mktgc.co.uk](mailto:e.dummett@mktgc.co.uk). Both images overleaf are available as 35mm slides and jpegs for reproduction by press. Captions: both works ©The artist, courtesy Michael Hue-Williams, London. *Blue Interior* also needs to be credited courtesy Global Art Holdings. For Abbot Hall information ring Sandy Kitching on 015394 46191 or email [sk@abbothall.org.uk](mailto:sk@abbothall.org.uk).

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