

We look forward to seeing you for the rescheduled London Art Fair

LONDON ART FAIR

Thursday 21 – Sunday 24 April 2022

Preview: Wednesday 20 April

Thursday 21 April 11-9m

Friday 22 April 11-7pm

Saturday 23 April 11-7pm

Sunday 24 April 11-5pm

Business Design Centre, Upper St, Islington N1 0QH

Tickets or invitations received earlier will be transferred to the new date.

In this year's edition of the fair we commemorate **Simon Lewty** (1941-2021) and celebrate his rare legacy. Art First has presented Lewty's work at LAF over many years – each time resulting in discoveries by new collectors, curators and the young, whose fascination with his beautiful hand-writing, with the word as a visual form, chimes well with his intentions. For the first time we are showing his 1988 drawing, *Badly Frightened*, an early work, full of resonances with the strangeness of COVID-19.

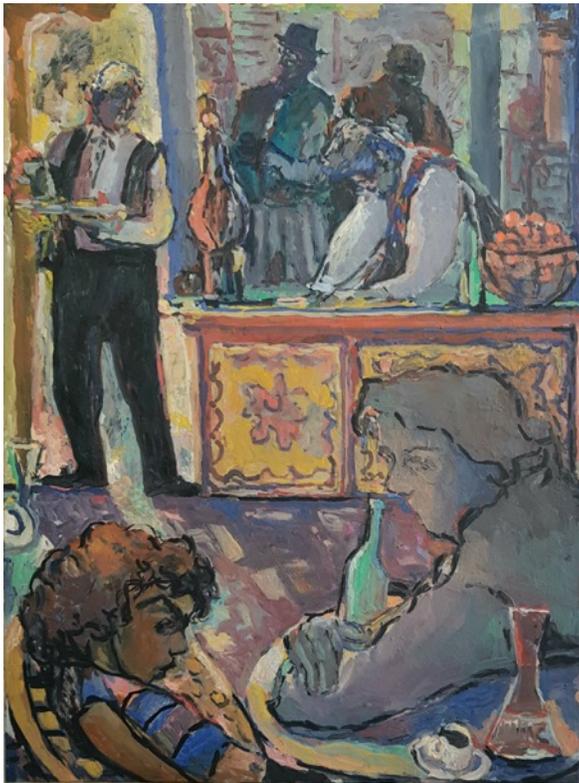
Timothy Hyman, artist, writer and curator posted *Badly Frightened* on instagram, after reading Lewty's obituary:

"I've loved and admired the imagery of Simon Lewty for at least 25 years, and even did a half hour dialogue with him on Radio 3 'Third Ear'. Several distinguished writers, including Stuart Morgan have written well on his work and he was something of a celebrity in his native Warwickshire.....

His best work related to both map making and a more personal cosmography, and his writing succeeds in being completely lucid in syntax and completely opaque in meaning. I think he will come to be valued as one of the really interesting 20th century English artists."



Simon Lewty
Badly Frightened 1988
120 x 115cm



Kate McCrickard
Café au Folies, 2020
 82 x 50cm

Simon Lewty's later works being presented are entirely text based. They demonstrate his mastery of the calligraphic with scripts in different hands, including the use of 'tachygraphy', a now obsolete system of 17th century shorthand used by Samuel Pepys in his famous diary.

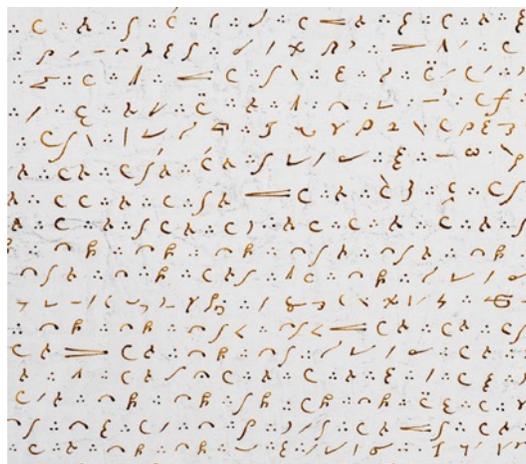
Exciting new work by **Kate McCrickard, Jack Milroy** and **Mimei Thompson** accompany Lewty on the stand.

Kate McCrickard's paintings are largely Paris based, derived from sketches made after life; in a local café, in transit, in parks, on the beach in Arcachon. "I work up line sketches into paintings in the studio, leaving space for imagination and memory to inform choices of colour and form. There is a constant battle between abstraction and figuration." The vivid, life-affirming results have caught the attention of collectors and her work is held in the British Museum, the Royal Scottish Academy, The New York Central Library, the Metropolitan Museum and the Los Angeles County Art Museum.

Mimei Thompson's bug parties appear in luminous high-octane colour, brushed in continuous strokes to reveal moths, caterpillars and other insects on plants from her *Metamorphosis* series. Her urban closeups in London are closely observed yet treated in a reductive manner, with silken brushstrokes creating a refined botanical calligraphy that is decoratively pleasing and minimal; a fresh, contemporary take on flower painting, still life and landscape. Her work is held in the Arts Council of England, the Royal College of Art, Clare College, Cambridge.



Mimei Thompson
Metamorphosis Vanilla Plant, 2020
 70 x 50cm



Simon Lewty
 Detail from *A Book of Clouds*

Also looking at things botanical is **Jack Milroy**, whose *Fish Flowers, Flight* is an exuberant assemblage of cut paper birds, fish and flowers mingling in a shared environment. In *Dressed to Kill* he takes a scalpel to books about cottage flowers, and regimental uniforms with their colourful regalia of medals from around the world. The unlikely combination results in a striking 150 x 120cm cut paper construction housed in a Perspex box. Cottage blooms in a blast of colour are surrounded by black silhouettes of themselves and framed by the printed pages of the book on military regalia. Edited and re-paginated, they tell the story of people dressed in military uniforms to kill others in wars that devastate the natural environment. Milroy's work is held in The Imperial War Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, Fidelity Investments and the Caldic Collectie, Rotterdam.



Jack Milroy
Dressed to Kill, 2020
142 x 109 x 12cm

RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION

WILL MACLEAN: POINTS OF DEPARTURE

4 June – 2 October 2022

City Art Centre, Edinburgh

Accompanied by two new publications, this eagerly awaited exhibition will be drawn from public and private collections, with many works going on public display for the first time.

Maclean's work is anchored in the history, archaeology and literature of the Scottish Highlands and the Highland people, including members of his family. The poetic nature of his box constructions, drawings and sculpture often alludes to Surrealist orthodoxies of ready-mades, while they also focus on wide-ranging themes relating to the sea. His narratives are at once personal and universal; on occasion he creates strongly felt, but considered memorials for those who might otherwise never have them.

Spanning fifty years of work, the rich visual feast will celebrate his position as one of the outstanding artists of his generation. The exhibition is presented as part of the Edinburgh Festival 2022.

Compelled by Memory:

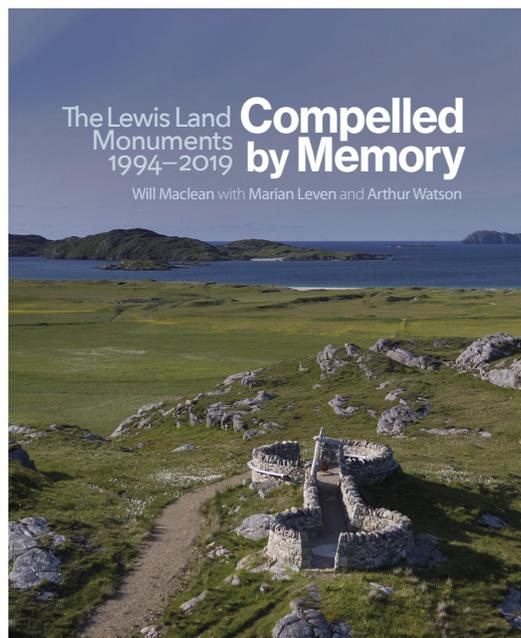
The Lewis Land Monuments 1994 - 2019

To accompany the exhibition catalogue, Art First has produced a book about five award-winning Lewis Land Monuments of extraordinary power and beauty. All overseen by Will Maclean, *An Sùileachan* and the *Iolaire* memorial, both recently completed commissions, were co-designed with Marian Leven. Bronze sculptures by Maclean and Arthur Watson play a central role in the narrative of the *Iolaire* and the photographer Robin Gillanders has documented the structures in their glorious landscape settings on this remote, outer Hebridean Isle. Essays by Lindsay Blair, Joni Buchanan, Duncan Macmillan and Tom Normand bring the history of the events behind the contemporary monuments to light, offering a vivid insight into memory, place and a profound sense of tribute to the courage of the 'land heroes' those crofters who stood up to power and defended their rights and culture over a century ago.



Mariners Museum: Taxonomy of Tides, 2014
Mixed Media Construction
123 x 108 x 9.5 cm

For further information visit www.artfirst.co.uk and www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk



Simon Lewty 1941-2021

Simon Lewty passed away a few days after his 80th Birthday. He had dedicated his life to his art, to writing and drawing, reading, music, poetry, and to pursuing the mysteries of dreams and the intangible passing of time. He leaves a rare visual/verbal legacy and will be missed by his friends and fellow artists. Highly respected, his private, intelligent presence earned the affection of all those who came to know him. His friend the art historian Paul Hills has written with great insight about Lewty's art for over three decades and we were pleased when the Guardian published the obituary:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/jan/06/simon-lewty-obituary>

Louis Khehla Maqhubela 1939 – 2021

Louis exhibited his radiant, spiritual work at Art First from 1995 – 2014. Increasingly he made references to his former home in South Africa and it was marvellous that he was able to return there from his self-imposed exile in London, on two occasions, notably in 2010 for his momentous retrospective exhibition *The Vigil of Departure*, at the Standard Bank Gallery. Marilyn Martin, former Director of the Iziko South African National Gallery wrote this moving tribute for The Conversation:

<https://theconversation.com/remembering-louis-maqhubela-pioneering-and-enigmatic-south-african-painter-174897>



Simon Lewty and Louis Maqhubela at Art First, 2013