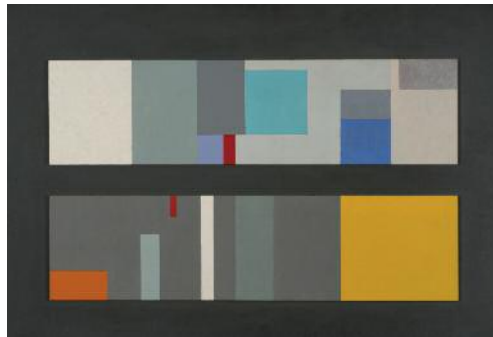




ART FIRST

St Ives Connections  
**Wilhelmina Barns-Graham**  
with works by Roger Hilton, John Wells, Bryan Wynter



TOP

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, **Outside Inside - Meditation Series**, 1978  
acrylic on canvas, 116.6 x 101.4 cm

ABOVE

John Wells, **Two Related Movements**, 1967, oil on board, 64 x 94.5 cm

FACING UPPER

Roger Hilton, **June 1961**, 1961, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 53.3 cm

FACING LOWER

Bryan Wynter, **Untitled**, c. 1958, monotype on paper, 66 x 48.1 cm

## St. Ives Connections

### Wilhelmina Barns-Graham with Roger Hilton, John Wells and Bryan Wynter

Art First is delighted to present paintings by four artists who shared the pioneering environment which followed World War II in St Ives and its surroundings, all born variously in Scotland and Greater London within the decade that included the reign of Edward VII and the outbreak of the Great War; their careers occupied the centre of the 20th century.

The exhibition comprises a presentation of key mid and late works by Barns-Graham and highlights connections with selected pieces by her fellow artists.

John Wells had already adopted the South West of England and had had a medical practice on the Scilly Isles before his 1945 move to Newlyn to pursue the artist's life. Bryan Wynter arrived after war service and Barns-Graham had arrived from Scotland in 1940, meeting Wells in 1941 through her friends Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. Roger Hilton knew Barns-Graham from shared visits to Paris in the early 1950s and his frequent trips to St Ives through the same period and in 1965 he too became a resident of Cornwall.

Wynter and Wells participated in the groundbreaking 1946 Crypt Gallery (St Ives) 'young moderns' show and Barns-Graham joined them in the 1947 and 1948 versions. By this time Wells was already embracing the abstract idioms of Naum Gabo and Nicholson. Wynter remained influenced by Braque and Sutherland before his clear abstract voice emerged in the mid-1950s. Similarly Barns-Graham underwent her transformation through a series of paintings of the Grindelwald glaciers eventually leading to the expressionist abstraction of her late 50's work.

The exhibition features a re-visiting (1987–8) of that glacier theme, *Splintered Ice No. 2*, and also paintings by all three artists which show their different commitments to abstract explorations: Wynter's late *Meander III* (1971–4) presents an overall abstract composition governed by his intense interest in and study of natural forces, whilst Wells' 1967 *Two Related Movements* is a promotion of purist geometry married with a natural colourism—both echoed in Barns-Graham's geometry-based *Expanding Red, Orange and Green on Black* (1980) and *Meditation Series* (1978).

In later interviews Barns-Graham regularly paid tribute to Hilton revealing her admiration for his art. She understood his child-like figurative work for its underlying wisdom and sophistication (famously in his late gouaches on paper, but also evident in *Red Boat* of 1958), and she rated his free-based abstract work, with its indebtedness to roots in Paris of the 1950s. This can be glimpsed in the release she granted herself in very late works such as *Big Day* (2001).

In mounting this exhibition, the directors of Art First are reminded of the enormous support, industry and enthusiasm for these artists demonstrated by the extraordinary curator and collector Dr David Brown, who attended Barns-Graham's 2001 book launch at the gallery. His vital London exhibitions of 1977 and 1985 cemented the St Ives Group in critical and academic minds before it could be obscured by any London/New York preponderance.

*Art First wishes to thank Jonathan Clark Fine Art, Representatives of the artists' estates for their loans and photographic permissions regarding Roger Hilton, John Wells and Bryan Wynter. We would also like to thank the Barns-Graham Charitable Trust for their participation and support.*







FRONT Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, **Variations on a Theme, Splintered Ice No. 2**, 1987/8, oil on canvas, 91,5 x 111 cm

TOP Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, **Big Day**, 2001, acrylic on paper, 56 x 76 cm

ABOVE Roger Hilton, **December 1964**, 1964, gouache and charcoal on wood, 17,3 x 73,1 cm



TOP  
 Wilhelmina Barns-Graham  
**Expanding Red, Orange and Green on Black**, 1980  
 oil on hardboard, 65.5 x 85.5 cm



TOP  
 John Wells  
**Composition - Yellow & Pink**, c.1948  
 oil and pencil on board, 35 x 33.5 cm



ABOVE  
 Bryan Wynter  
**Meander III**, c. 1971-4  
 oil on canvas, 111.7 x 141.1 cm



ABOVE  
 Wilhelmina Barns-Graham  
**Cork and Sand Series**, 1963  
 oil on board, 58.1 x 91 cm

## JOHN WELLS B.1907

Born in London; attended evening classes at St Martins School of Art, London; practised medicine 1936–45; died Newlyn, Cornwall, 2000.

### MAJOR MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

- 1941 Included in *New Movements in Art: Contemporary Work in England*, The London Museum
- 1998 *John Wells: The Fragile Cell*, Tate St Ives
- 2007 *John Wells: Centenary Display*, Tate St Ives

## ROGER HILTON B.1911

Born in Northwood, London; attended the Slade School of Fine Art 1929–31; died Botallack, Cornwall, 1975

### MAJOR MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

- 1994 *Roger Hilton: Paintings and Drawings, 1931–1973*, Serpentine Gallery, London
- 1993/4 *Roger Hilton*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 1997/8 *Roger Hilton*, Tate St Ives
- 2006/7 *Into Seeing New: Roger Hilton*, Tate St Ives
- 2008/9 *Roger Hilton: Late works and the Night Letters*, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
- 2011 *Roger Hilton: A Centenary Celebration*, Newlyn Art Gallery, Newlyn

## WILHELMINA BARNS-GRAHAM B.1912

Born in St. Andrews, Scotland; attended Edinburgh College of Art 1931–7; died at Balmungo, St Andrews, 2004.

### MAJOR MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

- 1989–90 *W. Barns-Graham Retrospective 1940–1989*, tour organised by City Art Centre, Edinburgh
- 1999–2000 *Wilhelmina Barns-Graham: An Enduring Image*, Tate St Ives
- 2001–4 *W. Barns-Graham: Painting as Celebration*, Aberdeen Art Gallery and tour
- 2005 *Wilhelmina Barns-Graham: Movement and Light—Imag(in)ing Time*, Tate St Ives

## BRYAN WYNTER B.1915

Born in 1915 in London; attended Westminster and Slade Schools of Art 1937–40; died Penzance 1975

### MAJOR MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

- 1963 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
- 1966 Arts Council Gallery, Belfast
- 1976 *Bryan Wynter, 1915–1975: Paintings, Kinetics and works on paper*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 2001 *Bryan Wynter*, Tate St Ives

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TOP  
Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, **Volcanic Wind**, 1994  
oil on canvas 68.1 x 88.9 cm

ABOVE  
Roger Hilton, **Red Boat**, 1958,  
oil on board, 11.9 x 50.8 cm

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