

**NEW GLASGOW BOYS
AT
THE FLEMING COLLECTION
13 BERKELEY ST, LONDON W1**

7 January – 29 March 2003



STEPHEN CONROY *Study for a Painting*

The first exhibition of 2003 at the Fleming Collection focuses on the group of young figurative painters of the 1980s collectively known as ‘The New Glasgow Boys’. This group of artists first came to public attention after the 1985 *New Image Glasgow* show which brought together the work of six painters all of whom had trained at Glasgow School of Art. This was followed by another show, *The Vigorous Imagination*, at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 1987. Many of the artists who took part in these shows have become widely known and collected over the years and this exhibition re-examines their early paintings and drawings.

Stephen Barclay (b.1961), Steven Campbell (b.1953), Ken Currie (b.1960), Peter Howson (b.1958), Adrian Wiszniewski (b.1958) and Stephen Conroy (b.1964) are all featured in the exhibition. Their style of strong drawing is combined with a fertile

imagination and a generally extrovert approach. The human figure is central to their work albeit fulfilling differing roles for each artist. Artists in the exhibition include:

STEVEN CAMPBELL (born 1953)

Steven Campbell was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1954. He worked for seven years as a steel works maintenance engineer before attending Glasgow School of Art between 1978 and 1982, after which he won a Fulbright Scholarship to New York. After internationally acclaimed success in painting in New York he has returned to Scotland where he currently lives and works. Of all the Scottish artists who rose to prominence in the 1980's, Campbell perhaps made the biggest international impact. Campbell embraces a wealth of ideas and a huge cast of characters taken from all aspects of life and fiction. His early works at Glasgow School of Art consisted of performance art, and an intense theatricality and feeling of farce is carried over into many of his paintings. Campbell's paintings are littered with traditionally dressed figures and are set amongst claustrophobic surroundings, such as forests and derelict buildings. There exists in each work a complex layering of meanings which counterpoints the density of the detail that the artist crams in. Campbell's first solo exhibition was at the Barbara Toll Fine Arts, New York, in 1983 and he has subsequently shown extensively around the world in major shows in European, Japan, the United States and Australia.

KEN CURRIE (b. 1960)

Ken Currie was born in North Shields, Northumberland in 1960 to Scottish parents. After studying social sciences in Scotland, he trained as a painter at the Glasgow School of Art from 1978-83. He still lives and works in Glasgow. Currie soon rose to prominence for his assertive and graphic images of working-class life. A thoughtful political artist, Currie in his early work sought to highlight the plight of whole communities, especially those who were seen as the victims of industry and urban decay. The Glasgow shipyards, the protest march, the slums and the bars have all been his subjects. His latest work has shown more attention to the plight of the individual, rather than the group, within that society. In 1987 Currie completed a panoramic commission for Glasgow's People's Palace Museum, which depicts two centuries of the city's history, starting with the Calton Weaver's Massacre of 1787 and leading up to life in the front line of recent industrial unrest. Although Currie's work can often seem pessimistic, it is the complex mixture of past injustices and future possibilities which remains the essential theme. Currie's first solo exhibition was at the Glasgow Arts Centre in 1982, called 'Art and Social Commitment' whilst his first international show was at the RAAB Galerie in Berlin in 1988. He has been in numerous group exhibitions, most particularly 'New Image Glasgow' (1985). 'The Vigorous Imagination' (1987) and 'Scottish Art Since 1900' (1989).

PETER HOWSON (b. 1958)

Peter Howson was born in London in 1958, moving to Scotland in 1962. He trained at Glasgow School of Art from 1975-77, returning two years later to complete his studies in 1981. After teaching briefly at Glasgow School of Art in 1985, he now lives and paints full time in Glasgow. Howson's work is characterised by strong draughtsmanship and even stronger images. He achieved international recognition in

the 1980s for his aggressive and direct images of working class life. In general he depicts a male-dominated world, populated by victim and victimiser, which is drawn from his experiences in the Army and of Glasgow working-class life when he dropped out from Glasgow School of Art for two years. Aggression (as, for example, in *The Fleet*) and depression (as in *The Brisk*) are recurring themes in Howson's work. The artist's work is represented in many major public and private collections throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Tate Gallery, London. Howson's paintings

ADRIAN WISZNIEWSKI (b.1958)

Adrian Wiszniewski was born in Glasgow in 1958. After studying from 1978-79 at the Mackintosh School of Architecture he transferred to painting at Glasgow School of Art, where he graduated in 1983. From 1986-87 he was artist-in-residence at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. He currently lives and works near Glasgow.

Wiszniewski's fluid, sinuous treatment of male groups is very different from his contemporaries. His paintings often employ figures, motifs and symbols pressed to the very front of the picture surface. Wiszniewski has held one-person exhibitions worldwide, including London, Sydney, Ghent, Tokyo, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Major group shows have included the British Art Show II (1984) and New Image, Glasgow (1985). He is represented in numerous major public and private collections around the world, including the Tate Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

STEPHEN CONROY (Born 1964)

Stephen Conroy was born in Helensburgh, Scotland in 1964. He enrolled at the Glasgow School of Art in 1982, completing his postgraduate studies there in 1987. Conroy is one of the most prominent new names to emerge after the ascendancy of contemporary Scottish figurative painting in the mid-1980s. Conroy's favoured subjects have often been of populated interiors. Often his subjects inhabit an airless environment, where the artist manipulates a variety of light sources. To bring out their poetic quality, Conroy chooses oblique titles, such as *One Idea Too Many or Further and Better Particulars* – a technique of secrecy reminiscent of Steven Campbell. The influence of an important Scottish artist of the 20th century, James Cowie, is evident in his work. Cowie also worked in a highly self-conscious Surrealist style. Conroy's manner, like Cowie's, clearly represents a reaction to the overly expressionist, colourist tradition in Scottish art. In a relatively short career to date, Conroy has exhibited solo exhibitions in London, Glasgow and Manchester, as well as group shows including *The Vigorous Imagination* (1987), Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. He is represented in public collection throughout the United Kingdom, including the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow Museums and the Scottish Arts Council.

The Fleming Collection is supported by the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation

For further information and images:

Cawdell Douglas

10-11 Lower John Street

London W1F 9EB

Tel: + 44 20 7439 2822

Fax: + 44 20 7287 5488

www.flemingcollection.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

Opening hours:

Monday Closed to general public/Open by appointment for group visits
and educational events

Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5.30pm

Sunday Closed

Admission Free

Gallery Contact details:

The Fleming Collection

13 Berkeley Street

London W1

Tel: 0207 409 5730

Fax: 0207 409 5731