

## Exhibitions

that remains to be fully explored, the academic discipline known as sexology (*Sexualwissenschaft*), as developed in Germany and Austria by Richard von Krafft-Ebing and others. Hack Tuke was aware of this research but did not encourage its promulgation in England by two friends of his son, John Addington Symonds and Havelock Ellis, who were to collaborate on the first medical textbook in English on homosexuality, *Sexual Inversion* (1897). The essential point of dispute concerned the long-standing belief that homosexuality was learned behaviour and as a result was regarded as an acquired vice. Krafft-Ebing argued that it was an inborn orientation, and so for Symonds, Ellis and, we may assume, Henry Scott Tuke too, it was therefore natural and as such morally neutral. Tromans writes that Hack Tuke's silence on the subject was matched by that of his son: 'Neither was minded to be a revolutionary. In the case of Henry Scott Tuke, it is surely unreasonable to expect him to have done more than he in fact did to promote the pleasures of what we would now recognise as a queer gaze' (p.111). It can be argued, however, that he did a lot more: by his celebration of an idealised vision of male youths, who are natural both in their nudity and their embrace by nature, yet are offered up as objects of desire as well as admiration, Tuke was making an argument for the acceptance of his sexuality that was indeed radical.

1 Accompanying publication: *Henry Scott Tuke*. Edited by Cicely Robinson. 160 pp. incl. 130 col. ills. (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2021), £30. ISBN 978-0-300-24758-9. Several of the works in the exhibition, including *Summer dreams*, are not mentioned in the book. The exhibition will travel to Falmouth Art Gallery, 18th September–20th November.

2 *Catching the Light: A Retrospective of Henry Scott Tuke* was shown at the Falmouth Art Gallery, the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, and the Fine Art Society, London. See the accompanying publication, C. Wallace: *Catching the Light: The Art and Life of Henry Scott Tuke 1858–1929*, Edinburgh 2008, from which the information about *Summer dreams* is taken (p.124).

3 M.T. Sainsbury: *Henry Scott Tuke R.A., R.W.S.: A Memoir*, London 1933, p.81.

4 Some of these contexts for Tuke's work were discussed in an online conference organised by the Watts Gallery on 8th July, 'Boyhood: Re-examining an Edwardian Obsession'.

### Marine: Ian Hamilton Finlay

City Art Centre, Edinburgh  
22nd May–3rd October

by GREG THOMAS

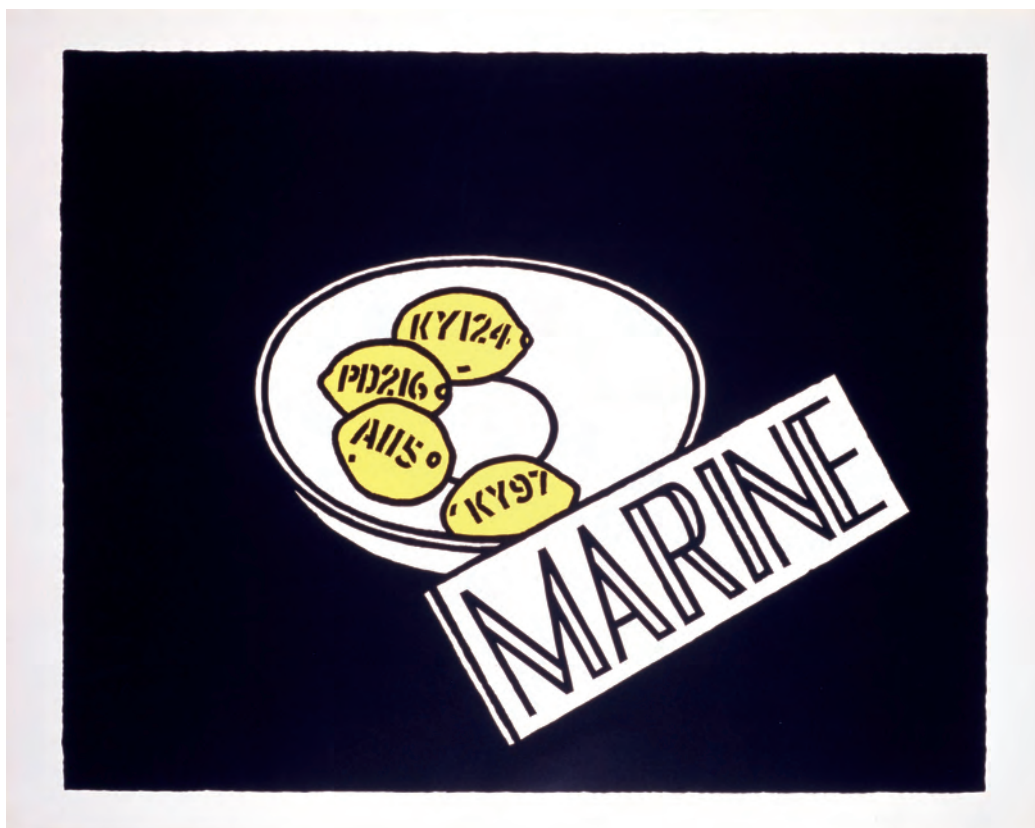
Every work by Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925–2006) carries the unmistakable charge of his creative persona, but it is often another artist's or craftsman's style that defines its surface qualities. *Marine* (cat. no.1; Fig.19), the title print from the survey of maritime themes in Finlay's practice at the City Art Centre, Edinburgh, is a case in point.<sup>1</sup> The thick black outlines and sumptuously clean colour blocks are immediately recognisable as the handiwork of painter and printmaker Patrick Caulfield (1936–2005). Every aspect of the work's conceptual framing, however, is Finlay's. Affixed to each of the lemons resting in their white bowl is a port code of the type used to identify boats registered at harbours across Scotland – 'KY 124' would mark out the 124th ship registered at Kirkcaldy, for example. Thus, the lemons not only evoke the world of Cubist still life, a recurrent allusion of Finlay's, but also the sweet,

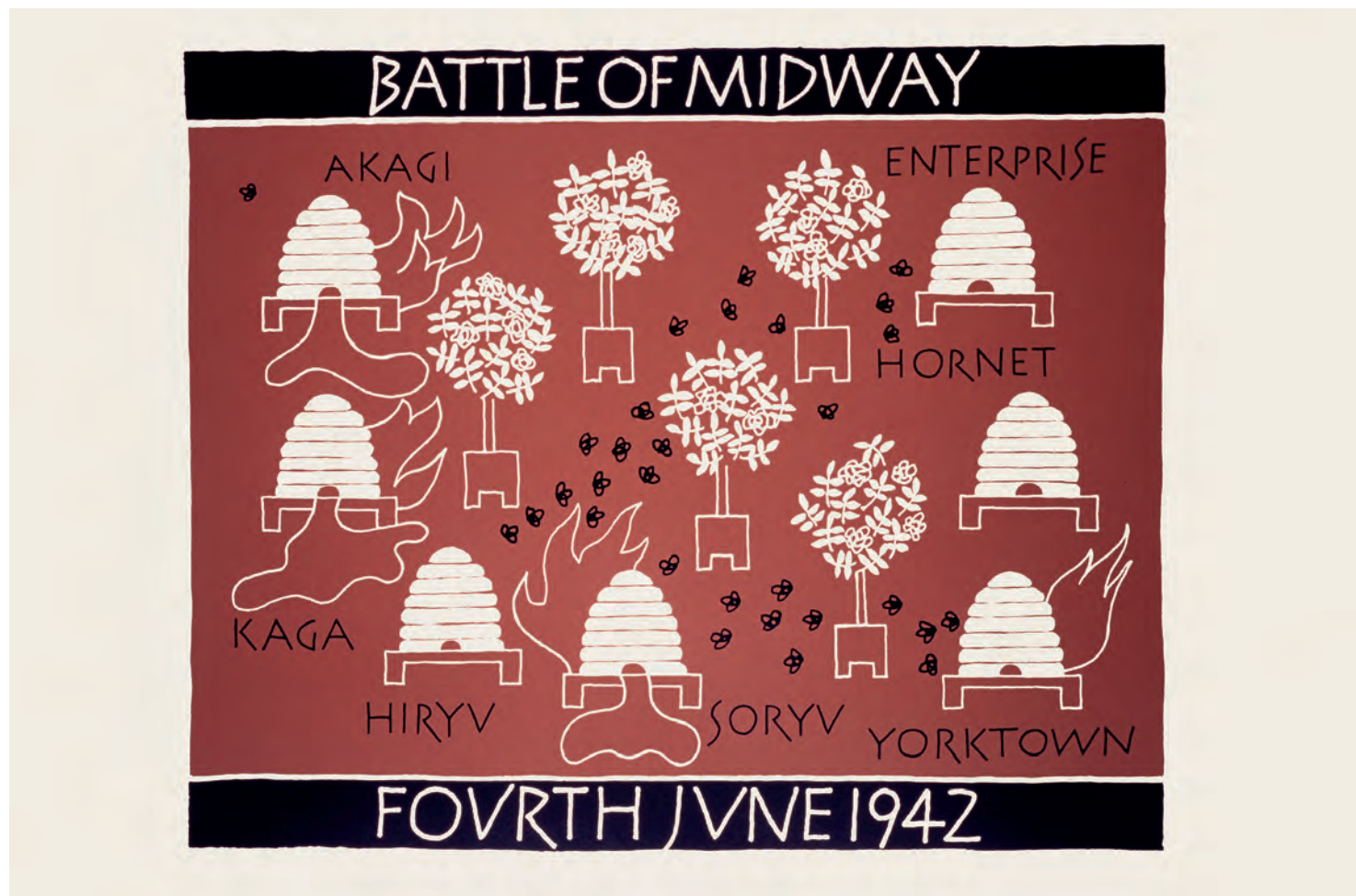
squat fishing vessels dotted across his imaginative universe, as confirmed by a quint cargo label bearing the word 'MARINE'.

Finlay first used this analogy in 1956, in his short story 'The Splash', at a time when he defined himself as a writer. By 1960 he had moved from prose to faux-naïve lyric poetry and reworked the metaphor in the poem 'The English Colonel Explains an Orkney Boat': 'The boat swims full of air / You see it has a point at both / Ends, sir, somewhat / As lemons'. We find the trope reiterated throughout the exhibition, in the form of late postcard poems and even, in a vitrine on the upper floor, a small sculptural lemon wrapped in fishing net with a port code stamped on its side: a three-dimensional re-creation of the motif in *Marine*. One of the remarkable things about Finlay's oeuvre is his capacity to ferry metaphors from one medium to another, and a brave aspect of this show's curation is that these diachronic links dictate the rhythm of the visitor's journey, rather than suggesting a chronological narrative.

Some understanding of concrete poetry, wherein the visual aspects of

19. *Marine*, by Ian Hamilton Finlay with Patrick Caulfield. 1968. Silkscreen, 51 by 64.2 cm. (City Art Centre, Edinburgh).





20. *Battle of Midway I*, by Ian Hamilton Finlay with Ron Costley, 1977. Silkscreen, 64 by 97 cm. (Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay, Dunsyre; exh. City Art Centre, Edinburgh).

language are central to poetic effect, is crucial to understanding Finlay's career. However, after having been entranced by it in the early 1960s, by the end of the decade he had fallen out with most of the genre's practitioners in Britain. Their Neo-Dadaist enthusiasm for mixing language and image in a haphazard, anarchic manner offended Finlay's love of conceptual and emotional clarity. *Marine*, by contrast, is the product of a meticulously clear sense of the different roles of textual and visual symbol. Over the course of the 1970s, Finlay came to define his work through an increasingly historically expansive set of connections, including eighteenth-century landscape gardening and Neo-classical sculpture. His work also migrated from the world of literature to multimedia and environmental art, a shift borne out in the construction, from 1966 until his death, of his extraordinary poet's

garden Little Sparta, in the Pentland Hills south of Edinburgh. Populated with poems etched into gateposts, paving stones, columns, archways and way-markers, the garden became a multifaceted expression of Finlay's sense of interconnection between different cultures, epochs, landscapes and media. A selection of Robin Gillanders's photographs of Finlay's toy boats afloat on one of Little Sparta's lochs (no.24) brings a soupçon of its atmosphere into the gallery space.

One implication of Finlay's poetic sensibility is that boats are never just boats, just as any marine object brought into his purview accrued layer upon layer of cultural and historical association, expressed through visual, phonetic and grammatical echoes. In different sections of this show we find a life-size rowing boat, each oar inscribed with the word 'wing' (no.6); a battleship presented as a Neo-classical skyline; beehives depicted

as aircraft carriers (no.21; Fig.20); and large, brightly painted wooden sculptures of boat names, which evoke, by metonymic implication, the vessels to which they refer (nos.8–10). What deeper inclinations underlay this restless tendency to draw connections between disparate objects and entities? The answer may lie partly in the combination of homely and military connotations that defines Finlay's oeuvre, which is as likely to involve kamikaze jets as birdfeeders. The Battle of Midway, a naval conflict fought by US and Japanese fleets during the Second World War, has a central presence in this exhibition. This indicates the artist's desire to bring the narrative closure of Classical myth – as well as the safety of domestic scale and pastoral reference – to the chaos of twentieth-century history. Finlay's *Battle of Midway I*, made in collaboration with Ron Costley, reduces Japanese planes to bees, not as a flippant gesture but in



## Exhibitions

order to render emotionally bearable the weight of recent political history.

This is not to say that there is nothing ineffable or abstract in Finlay's worldview. Among the most dazzling pieces on display here is the poem-print *Evening/Sail* (1970; Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay; no.2), with its elegiac and mysterious prophecy 'Evening will come – they will sew the blue sail'. Also noteworthy is the great late sequence *Reef-Points* (1996; Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay; no.33), a series of luminous, patterned prints somewhat in the spirit of mid-twentieth-century Concrete Art, playing on the visual appeal of 'reef-points' – 'small flat pieces of plaited cordage or soft rope [for] tying up the sail in the act of reefing', as explained in the list of works. It is for the oceanic mysteries, the moments of deep reverie that Finlay's practice can afford us, and not only for the luminous flashes of delight as a riddle is unravelled, that this exhibition is worth visiting.

1 Catalogue: *Marine: Ian Hamilton Finlay*. By Stephen Bann et al.: 54 pp. incl. 32 col. ill. (Museum & Galleries Edinburgh, 2021), £10. ISBN 978-0-900353-3-69.

### Paula Rego

Tate Britain, London  
7th July–24th October

by GILL HEDLEY

Arguably the two best-known Portuguese artists of the twentieth century are women: Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Paula Rego. Both lived during António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship, moved abroad, married a fellow artist, had a career that outshone their husband's and have museums dedicated to them in Portugal. As a painter, Rego redefined figuration and is now considered to be one of the most distinctive artists of her time.

In 2009 the Casa das Histórias Paula Rego, a museum dedicated to the artist, opened in the town of Cascais, near Lisbon; the Portuguese word *histórias* embraces the meaning of story, history, fable, legend and narrative. Rego's focus on storytelling, where the personal is also political,



has also made her a national treasure in her adoptive country of Britain, where she studied and has worked for seven decades. In the same year Rego produced *Escape* (private collection; cat. p.208) – the final work on show in the magnificent retrospective of the artist at Tate Britain, London – which is part of a print series on female genital mutilation.<sup>1</sup> Produced by the artist nearly sixty years earlier at the age of fifteen, the first work to greet the viewer, *Interrogation* (p.68; Fig.22) makes plain and painful Rego's very early comprehension of the psychological as well as physiological impact of torture of all kinds, political and emotional. This theme, implicit or explicit, recurs throughout this chronological survey – one that guides us through her lifelong preoccupation with power and its misuse.

When Paula Rego was one year old, her father's job took her parents away to England for nearly three years, leaving her in the care of her grandmother. In 1939 the family moved to the coast near Lisbon, by which time she was entranced by the

22. *Interrogation*, by Paula Rego. 1950. Oil on canvas, 50.5 by 61 cm. (Private collection; © Paula Rego; exh. Tate Britain, London).

language and imagery of Portuguese folk stories and fairy tales. Her parents later sent her to an English language school in Lisbon and, subsequently, to be 'finished' in Kent. Her mother trained as an artist and her father was an engineer; they were both Anglophile, anti-fascist and anti-Catholic, but Rego did not share their view of England. She visited Frinton-on-Sea, the prim coastal town in Essex where her parents had lived, and was not impressed; nor did she enjoy her finishing school. She left for London in 1952 to study at the Slade School of Fine Art, aged sixteen. Soon she met the painter Victor Willing and, aged twenty-one, left England with him to live in Portugal, which was still under Salazar's dictatorship. Until the mid-1970s Rego, Willing and their children lived between London and Portugal but Rego has never been strictly Anglo-Portuguese in her outlook. Her deep knowledge of art, literature, music, cinema and her travels in a wider Europe are too often overlooked. About halfway through the exhibition a particularly magisterial watercolour, the *Return of the native* (1993; p.166),