



Sheffield University Fine Art Society – MA History Placement:

Researched and written by Leanne Massey, MA American History

The following artists, and their artworks, were once showcased at exhibitions organised by the previous Sheffield University Fine Art Society (SUFAS).

With its origins in the 1960s, the society flourished throughout the decades and has only recently, in 2012, been brought to an end. Upon its dissolution, the artworks which SUFAS had purchased throughout the years, were gifted to the University of Sheffield's Heritage Collection where they remain today. As part of a research project to further understand the widely unknown history of SUFAS, the following information has been taken from what remains of the society in its archive.

The following paintings have been selected as part of my research within the SUFAS archive.

ID: 1073 - Chillies 3 (SUFAS126) by Ade Suberu



Born in 1968, Ade Suberu grew up in Manchester. After pursuing artistic interests at both GCSE and ALevel, Suberdu attended Sheffield City Polytechnic between 1987- 1990 and undertook a BA in Fine Art.

A statement by Suberu from the SUFAS archive outlines that her work involves a “direct personal response” to her immediate surroundings. Subsequently, she applies this ethos to any “subject matter within any kind of environment”. Similarly, Suberu says that her work is mostly representational but sometimes “slightly abstract” as her work often takes on

“another dimension”.

The media Suberu used was important, if not more, than the subject matter when it came to trying to create different textual qualities, tones, light and colour.

The results of which are pieces of work, which are strong, vibrant and exciting to the eye. This is certainly evident in **Chillies 3**.

Chillies 3 is an acrylic on canvas.

ID: 1236 - Pink Sky (SUFAS140) by Amrik Varkalis



Amrik Varkalis was born in Punjab (India) and moved to England at the age of eight. She moved to Leamington Spa upon arrival to the UK but then moved to Yorkshire in 1975 where she resided ever since.

The exhibition for Sheffield Fine Art Society was dedicated towards ‘relationships’, in particular the relationship between people and the landscape and consequently Varkalis herself to her medium.

After growing up in Yorkshire, her artwork is an observation of English culture, whether that be the landscape or the people itself.

Paying homage to her childhood in Punjab, Varkalis uses a vibrant colour palette. Her landscapes were not intended to be representational but instead exhibit warmth, permanence and oneness with the environment. The inspiration of a vibrant landscape is

certainly evident in **Pink Sky**, her oil on canvas that was showcased at her exhibition with Sheffield Fine Art Society in 2008.

ID: 1458 - Peak District Cottages (SUFAS150) by Bert Broomhead



Bert Broomhead (1921-1990) discovered his passion and talent for art at an early age. Son of J. H. Broomhead, an antiques dealer and carpenter based in Bakewell, Bert grew up in Bakewell and surrounded by the beauty of the Peak District– which was often the inspiration for his work. In 1941, at age 19, Bert became a soldier in the Grenadier Guards during the Second World War, an experience which undoubtedly and evidently had an effect on him for the rest of his life.

After the war, Broomhead was awarded a Rehabilitation Grant to study at the new Sheffield School of Art in 1949. During which he excelled and in 1951 he was awarded a coveted medallion as the student who produced the best work.

Much of his artistic work reflects inspiration from Van Gogh, such as short and effective brush strokes used to express emotions and give movement to paintings. Bert then worked as an artist for the rest of his life. In June 2010, in collaboration with Bert's daughter, the Sheffield University Fine Art Society displayed a posthumous exhibition, 'June Ghosts', as an homage to Bert, his work and life experiences.

Peak District Cottages is a combination of watercolour wash and pencil on paper.

ID: 1280 - Arrangement Before a Void (SUFAS142) and ID: 1279 - Heroic Still Life with Hanging Nut (SUFAS141) by Graham Underhill



Arrangement Before a Void



Heroic Still Life with Hanging Nut

For his exhibition with the Sheffield University Fine Art Society, 'Objects and Identities' in September 2008, Graham Underhill took inspiration from the belief that human beings are inseparable from their objects. Underhill said that "it is through the objects created, used and coveted and discarded that our species defines its identity". His SUFAS exhibition aims to demonstrate that objects also have an identity which is separate from their association with humans and highlights the indisputable fact that most objects have the potential to survive whilst their nominal owners leave little physical trace of their existence.

With **Arrangement Before a Void** and **Heroic Still Life with Hanging Nut**, Underhill aimed to "liberate overlooked containers from their visual anonymity by removing referencing labels" and choosing to explore the objects as "pure forms in new combinations and at different scales".

The exhibition, overall, was based on taking humble containers and removing their labels which ultimately removes their functional anonymity and presents them as pure forms in new combinations.

For his works on canvas, oil paint is applied using different techniques whereas the works on paper often use mixed media collage.

Heroic Still Life with Hanging Nut was part of a polyptych and within their original exhibition would have been hung accordingly in a way that derives maximal impact.