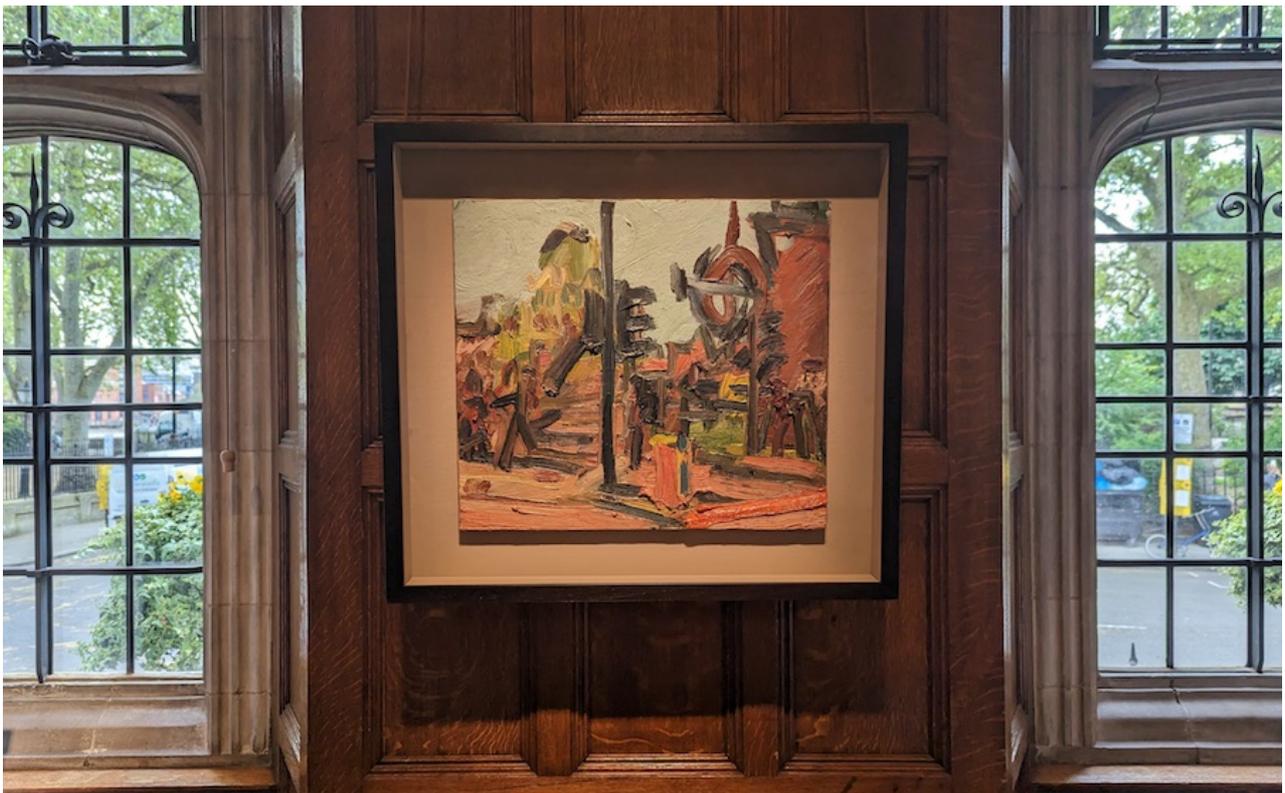


The Eye of the Collector Fair Round Up – Nico Kos Earle

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The Eye of the Collector, 2 Temple Place (17 – 20 May), is a quietly disruptive art platform that comprises a boutique London art fair, an accompanying online/social platform and a genuine network of collectors related to its founder Nazy Vassegh. A tonic to the tented claustrophobia of the monster fair, curated across all floors of a historic home in central London by Nazy, who imagines each edition as an ideal capsule collection, this fair reminds us that art is not a commodity but an essential component of fine living. Instead of booths, galleries are invited to submit works for consideration; those selected are then placed sympathetically in conversation with one another throughout the varnished-panelled rooms of this historic building at 2 Temple Place. Walking through the fair feels like being given private access to a collector's home, on the eve of their daughter's wedding, with the chance to rub shoulders with the VIP guests. Here are some of our favourite pieces:

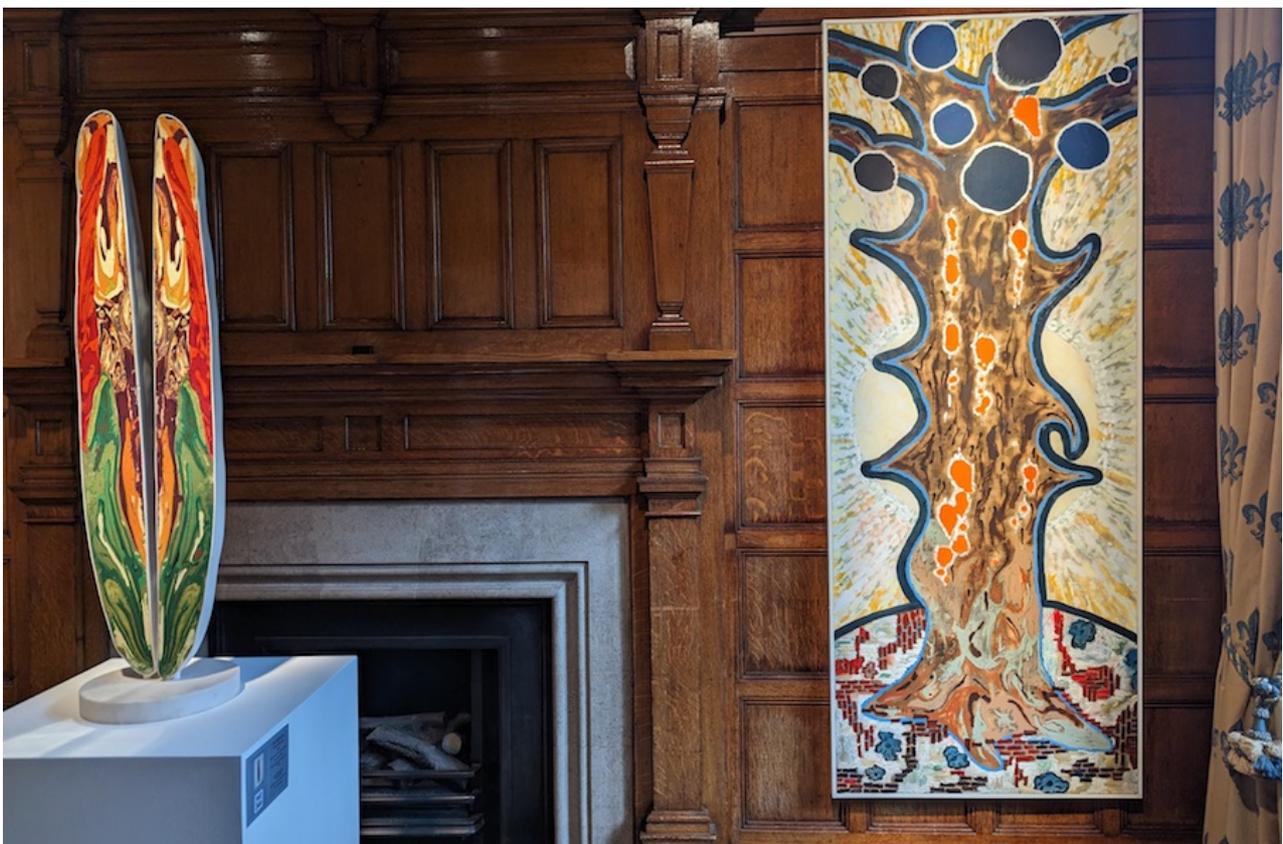


Walking into the softly lit room, I was instantly drawn to a pair of masterpieces set into the panelled columns between pixellating diamond-shaped quarries of glass of the historic, latticed lead windows overlooking the Thames. Two exceptional pieces by Frank Auerbach, arguably London's greatest living painter, were presented by Tanya Baxter along with a selection of highly covetable works that would upgrade any collection from Bridget Riley, Antony Gormley, John Hoyland and Bridget Riley. Frank Auerbach once described London as "... an extraordinary, marvellously unpainted city where whenever

somebody tries to get something going... this higgledy-piggledy mess of a city.' Naturalised in 1947, the German-British Auerbach painted his first view of London in 1954.

As the title suggests, the work takes the iconic Camden Palace Theatre as its subject, painted after 1965 when Auerbach left the relative calm of Primrose Hill. Turning his attention to the chaotic hustle and bustle of Morning Crescent station, his serial observations numbered fifty-seven, marking it as Auerbach's most frequently occurring landscape subject. In 1976, Auerbach embarked on his first paintings of the theatre, completing a series of four thick impasto works saturated with vibrant tones, capturing the frenetic energy of the place. This vibrancy remains 25 years later, with a masterful handling of colour – mauves, pinks and browns – interspersed with areas of muddy green and yellow and zig-zags and stripes of black, all united against a muted cyan-blue sky. The spontaneity implied in these quick, thick brushstrokes belies the strong sense of structure and pattern which underpins all of Auerbach's paintings, which emerge out of a rigorous commitment to the drawing process.

Draws every morning, these impressions allow a structure for the painting to emerge, determined by a strong sense of line. In Camden Palace- Spring Morning II, 2000, one black line runs down the centre of the picture, balanced by a thicker red line drawn across the lower right hand of the canvas. Beyond these, the theatre is described in short, quick marks of green, yellow, blue and pink set against the smooth blue of the spring sky. A powerful sense of perspective governs our understanding of the painting, as Catherine Lampert acknowledges, "cumulatively they constitute a half a century of readings, a kind of weathervane, a suggestion of time travel." Catherine Lampert, Frank Auerbach, *Speaking and Painting*, Thames and Hudson, 2015, p221



Yew (seed), 2023, Thom Trojanowski at Brooke Bennington

This bold, expressive painting by Thom Trojanowski comes from the series Glade shown at Brooke Bennington in Fitzrovia, also curators of the Fulmer Sculpture, which just opened for the season. Through vivid and warm colours, Trojanowski's paintings were conceived in the dark, fantastical heart of wintertime. Imagined through the architecture of a glade – a large clearing or open area within a forest – the artist presents us with a sense of expansion, of things growing from the smallest kernel. Like daydreaming of summer, this work channels the bright and unabating desire to reconnect with the outside – to the richness and magic of the ecological world around us. It was perfectly paired by @theeyeofthecollector with a sculpture that ties in with Brooke Bennington's broader programme and a domestic scale piece Vert, 2020, in violet hour tones, by the highly sought-after Olivia Bax.

<https://www.brookebennington.com/exhibitions/32-glade-thom-trojanowski/cover/>



Tension, 2022, Sara Berman at the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

You know, an artist has a moment when her work is given pride of place by the curator, who has also dressed to match the specific coral tone of the work's subject. Sara Berman is a rock star who understands the cultural dialogue between art and fashion. "Feeding into each other, joining at the seams, meeting in uncomfortable," she says. "There is a

bleed in my work, a contamination. I can attempt a sanitisation, a cleaning up of the domestic detritus into a cupboard marked 'Practice', but the bleed is the point, the uncomfortable nooks of the female bodily experience."

Whilst making each work is bloody hard – layers of paint are built up, scraped back, and bruised – what emerges is mysteriously beautiful – like a femme fatale. We are drawn into the quiet resolution of the finished work, but behind the soft, muted façade is a troubled soul symbolically adorned in the diamonds of The Harlequin. "An outfit, a costume – the perfect disguise... It all starts with her. The Harlequin as a woman is no joker", Sara tells me, taking my hand for what might be a twirl. "She is the Trickster Whore." We can all relate to this idea of painting over our secret – shameful? – alter ego for public outings, it just never occurred to me that another, stronger more iconic figure is what emerges. Strident and gorgeous – this is the product of a well-heeled mind. Get in line @Kristin Hjellegjerde for one of these works.

You can still see the fantastic lineup of works, including the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, Galerie Oliv Read Moreier Waltman, GBS Fine Art, Arusha Gallery, Ed Cross Fine Art, Delaposa, Whitford Fine Art, Circle Art Gallery, Peter Fetterman Gallery, McCollin Bryan and the Gillian Jason Gallery

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