



Margaret Hunter

Stepping Places

ART FIRST

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ART FIRST

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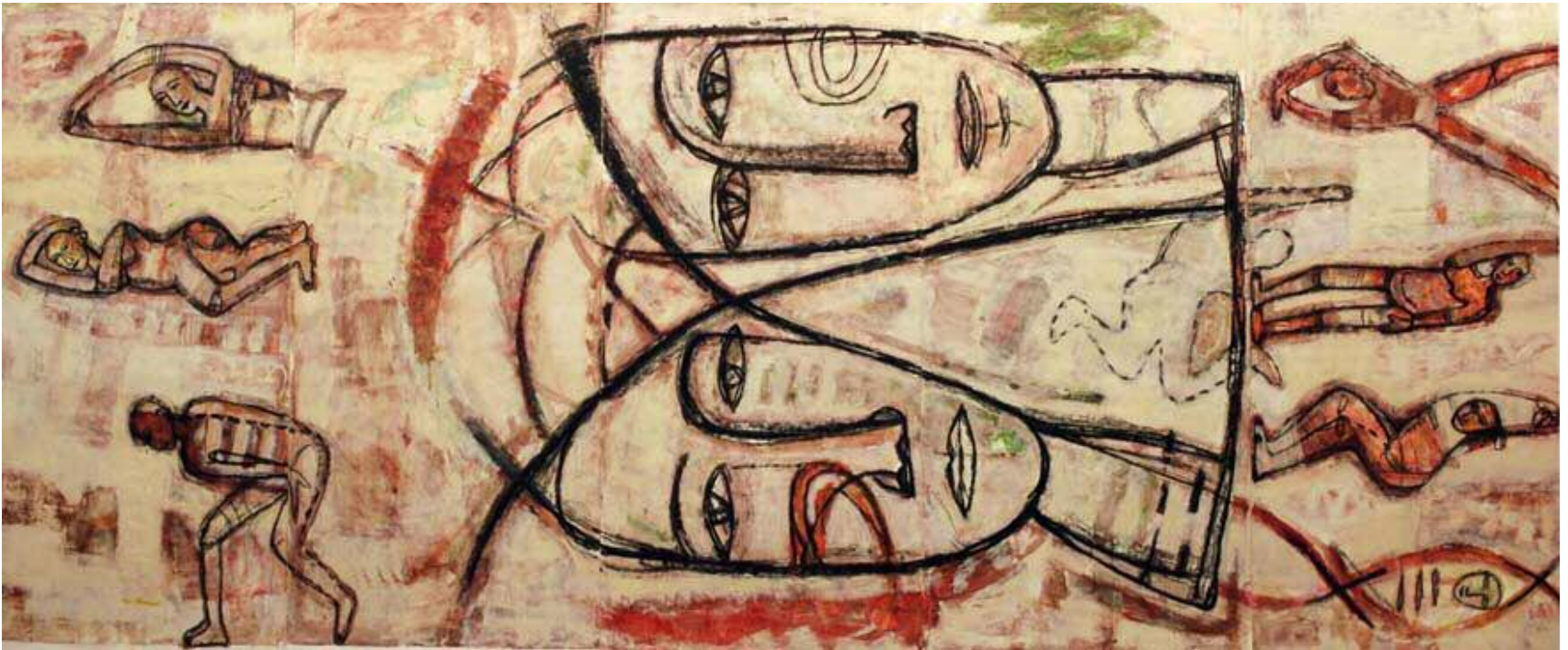
Berlin is a radically transformed city from the one Margaret Hunter came to know when she moved there from Glasgow in 1985. She witnessed the heady moments in 1990 when in a triumphant celebration of the defeat of communism, the Wall was pulled down, and she joined 119 international artists to mark this precise moment of liberation with paintings, on a specific section of the previously inaccessible eastern side of the wall. Joint Venture portrays two heads, the two Germans, lying side by side surrounded by small figures responding to their new situation. The East Side Gallery, as it came to be known, is now an international memorial for freedom, 1.3 km long. Over twenty years it was subjected to graffiti and general erosion, but to commemorate Germany's unification, a renovation was completed in 2009, to international acclaim.

Reconnected in this way with an earlier work, Hunter chose to recreate a version of her Wall painting in her studio, this time on large sheets of paper. *The Taste of Clouds*, as it is known, was then exhibited at Der Kunstraum in Potsdam. As a continuation of the social interaction generated by the Wall, visitors were invited to inscribe their own comments on Hunter's new painting, echoing the wall graffiti and in turn establishing a 'visitor book' for the exhibition.

The Taste of Clouds takes central position at Art First for this show of new work. There are also sculptures in wood and mixed media, which explore recurring themes and symbols such as the 'Trichter'. These earthed female figures exert a benign presence, in easy dialogue with Hunter's signature rich palette and raw inscribed surfaces of the panel paintings. Completed in a Mallorca studio, the warmth and ease of outdoor living has inspired in these works a fresh range of gestures, with new props, a shift in palette and a different mood from the work made in the environment of the Berlin studio. ►

Hunter's visual thinking often begins in her spontaneous, expressionist drawings. Charcoal predominates, suggesting at once her long held interest in African art and culture, first encountered during her teenage years when living in Nigeria. Combined with selected observations from the everyday, there is a reflective quality here as places and experiences are reassessed and renewed from earlier works.

Hunter's energy and confidence come from an inner strength, and a consistent, singular vision, honed and tested within her two home countries, Scotland and Germany. She is ever mindful of the words in a psalm: 'thou didst widen my stepping-places under me so that mine ankles faltered not'.

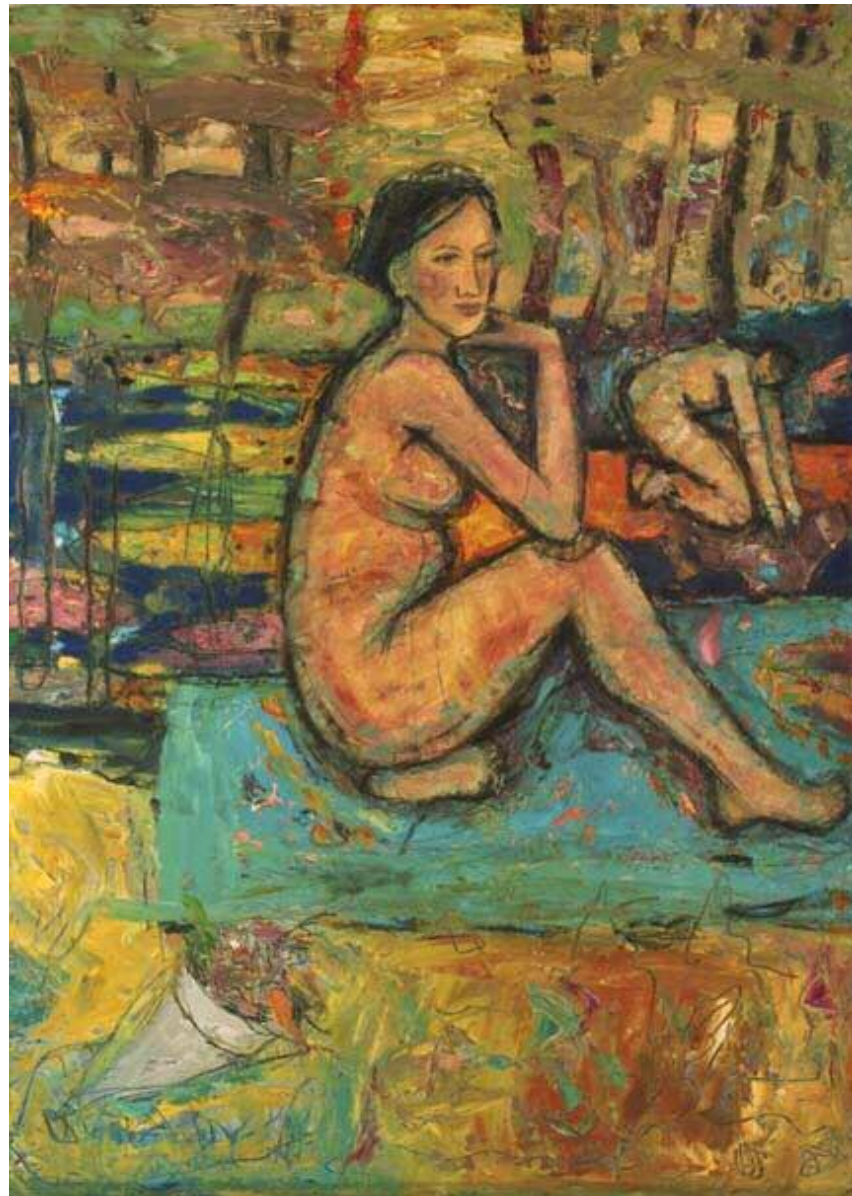


The Taste of Clouds, 2009, acrylic on card, 7 x 3 metres (on 5 panels)

The Taste of Clouds, 2009
detail



Après le Dejeuner, 2013
oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cms



Looking Ahead, 2013
acrylic on wood, 70 × 50 cms



Fitting Forms, 2013
oil on wood, 70 × 50 cms



Network reinterprets a previously recurring symbol of great resonance, the Trichter or Funnel.

The sculpture *Nürnberger Trichter* (1992) depicts a large copper funnel inserted into a carved wood head that dominates a body roped together like a bundle of sticks.

The inspiration for the work has its origin in the title of the German 17th century poetic textbook *Nürnberger Trichter*, a jocular expression for an external teaching method, a poetic funnel through which knowledge is simply 'poured' into the student.

In *Network* (2012) the funnel is brought together with contrasting material and patterns that are innovative for Hunter. In so doing she integrates old and new to challenge our understanding of information and process.

Network, 2012
wood and copper, 93 x 32 x 31 cms



Memories Inscribed, 2012–13
wood, 90 × 35 × 30 cms



Indigo Inbetween, 2012–13
wood and copper, 85 × 33 × 30 cms





Taking Time, 2013
oil on canvas, 60 x 90 cms

Of the Moment, 2013
oil on wood, 70 × 50 cms



Over a ten year period Hunter was invited for residencies by the owners of Lorbottle country estate in Northumberland. In rural silence and tranquillity, she completed many sculptures from beautiful, often ancient wood.

Lorbottle Revisited is homage to the estate, the generosity of the owners and the memories of an intensive creative period. The figures depicted are part of a series of sculptures carved in 2006 at Lorbottle. They were subsequently photographed and illustrated the cover of the catalogue for the 2006 exhibition *Bunch of Person*.

Lorbottle Revisited, a painted portrait of the sculptures, now unified by colour and separated by negative space is the final representation in a process of evolution. It traces Hunter's initial ideas, drawings and sculptures to become a painting that reinterprets, reconstructs and evokes the stages of memory.

Lorbottle Revisited, 2013
oil on wood, 70 x 50 cms



Stepping Out, 2013
pastel on paper, 59.3 x 42 cms



Pushing Forward, 2013
pastel on paper, 59.3 × 42 cms



Balance Point, 2013
pastel on paper, 59.3 x 42 cms



Margaret Hunter

b. 1948, Ayrshire, Scotland

She studied at the Glasgow School of Art (1981–85) and under Professor Georg Baselitz at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin and Scotland.

Her programme of exhibitions is as extensive in the UK as it is in Germany.

1988 *Berlin—Scotland—Transfer*, Galerie IX, Berlin

1991 *Berlin—Scotland—Transfer*, Städtisches Museum, Halberstadt

1992–93 *Changing Places*, Collins Gallery, Strathclyde University, and tour

2008 *Maiden Chambers*, paintings and sculpture, Mathematische Fachbibliothek, Technische Universität Berlin

At Art First she has had regular solo exhibitions since 1996. Within a decade, work has entered the collections of Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
Scottish Arts Council
Robert Fleming & Co
Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, London
and many corporate collections in Germany.

She described her own work, as well as Art First's tendencies, as being 'Afro-Hebridean'. Primarily concerned with the human figure as a vehicle for expression, it took an encounter with the art of Georg Baselitz to reconnect Hunter with her own childhood memories of the art and culture of Nigeria.

She makes sculpture in wood, paints in richly textured oil on board or canvas, and produces constant series of drawings or 'ideas' in pastel and charcoal. Themes and symbols evolve through the work as she explores a choreography of gestures that express states of mind or particular feelings. The graphic, physical nature of her art comes from an instinctive approach to the human body and an intuitive sense of freedom fostered by her interest in 'primitive' art and expressionism in general.

The warmth and humanity in the work accompany a lively humour and a tremendous energy which animates every surface and quickly engages the viewer in Hunter's lively formal language.

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