

NELL RACE painter

BIOGRAPHY

Nell Race was born in 1950 in London. At a low, hard-scrubbed and deeply-grooved pine table, with legs that didn't match, she began a painting career about three years later, overlooking Beverley Brook and Barnes Common.

Her father, who had lived for many years on a Thames barge, whose profession was haematological research and whose passionate interest was English literature, and an uncle (Ernest Race) and aunt who were designers, were all very influential. They provided a background to a childhood which was altogether nonconformist and there was an unspoken assumption that you had freedom of thought and freedom of choice. To them, Nell says she is perpetually indebted.

In attic painting studios far removed from the frenetic classrooms of an academic school in London, she was taught by Winifred Pasmore. While she had an imposing presence, Winifred Pasmore had a gentle manner, allowing time for discovery and experimentation.

During these school years week-ends were frequently spent in a clinker-built dinghy; rowing, and investigating the shingle beaches, muddy shores and islands of the Thames. The river - and the intoxicating mix of city and nature - has been a lasting influence on Nell's work.

Countless visits to museums and galleries in London in the sixties brought closer the work of Matisse, Ben Nicholson and Eric Ravilious - besides many others - for whom Nell developed a particular empathy which continues today. The work of Lewis Carroll, Dylan Thomas, D. H. Lawrence and Mervyn Peake in particular was also helping to feed a creative energy which was gathering pace.

Three years at West Surrey College of Art and Design, now the Surrey Institute of Art and Design, in the Department of Textiles, were enhanced by the teaching of Susan Bosence, a specialist craftswoman in hand printing and dyeing with a tremendous reputation in the field of textiles. She was also an outstanding teacher, conveying not only her knowledge and craftsmanship in a way that made any practical printing sessions with her an inspiring experience, but also communicating an inference (through her own example) that the qualities found within art and craft, clearly exposed in her own work, could be all part of a wider philosophy of life.

Although stylistically there is no immediate link with the Arts and Crafts Movement which played such an important part in 19th century English cultural life, a Brussels critic, Mon de Voghelaer, speaking in 1995, felt there were similarities in the way in which art, craft and the natural world constantly interact in Nell's life and work.

The images Nell uses emerge from an enormous variety of sources - she is reluctant to be slotted into any thematic box - but they refer to both the natural and the artificial world. The life-blood to a steady flow of ideas lies in an ever-expanding collection of sketch-books, filled with words as much as images, and a pocket-sized camera. A high standard of craftsmanship forms the foundation to her work.

Nell Race's work has been described as "...impossible to pigeon-hole, profound, original and haunting".

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EDUCATION

- 1969 – 1970 Foundation Course, Central School of Art and Design
1970 – 1971 Foundation Course, Wimbledon College of Art and Design
1971 – 1974 BA Hons. Printed Textiles, West Surrey College of Art and Design

Exhibiting work since 1977 in England and Belgium. 15 solo shows.
Works also in collections in France and the USA.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 Dorset Art Weeks, open studio
2007 Atkinson Gallery Summer Show, Millfield, Street
2007 Brimstone Press, Slade Centre, Gillingham
2007 Purbeck Art Weeks, open studio
2006 Dorset Art Weeks, open studio
2005 Sherborne House, Sherborne
2005 Oliver Burns Interiors, Dalton House, St. Albans
2005 Oberon Art, Spring Fair, Birmingham
2004 Society of Graphic Fine Art, Cork Street, London
2004 Somerset Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury (with David Brooke)
2004 Wellbeloved Gallery, Portland
2004 Dorset Art Weeks, open studio
2003 Yeovil Arts Centre, Somerset
2003 Society of Graphic Fine Art, London
2003 Slade Centre, Gillingham, Dorset (with David Marl)
2002 Obsidian Art, Opening Exhibition, Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire
2002 Maltby Contemporary Art, Winchester
2002 Nature in Art, Autumn Exhibition, Wallsworth Hall, Gloucester
2002 Battersea Contemporary Art Fair, London
2001, 02, 03, 04 The Society of Graphic Fine Art, Annual Exhibition, Bath
2001 The Dorset County Museum, Dorchester (with David Brooke)
2001 Residency at Nature in Art, Wallsworth Hall, Gloucester
2001 Christmas Exhibition, Bettles Gallery, Ringwood
2000, 01, 02 Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, Autumn Exhibition
1999 Devizes Festival Summer and Autumn Shows, Handel House Gallery
1998,2000, 02, 04 Dorset Art Week (Open Studio)
1998 The Turner Gallery, Exeter
1998 Touchstone Gallery, Bristol
1998 Four Seasons Gallery, Wimborne
1998 The Mayfield Gallery, Bournemouth
1998 Dorset Art Weeks, Bryanston Arts Centre, Blandford Forum
1998 The Society of Graphic Fine Art, Art Connoisseur Gallery, London
1997 Baljuwhuis, Galmaarden, Belgium (solo)
1995 't Laurierblad - Briel, Berlare, Belgium (solo)
1993 Cultuurcentrum De Plotter, Ternat, Belgium (solo)
1992 IMI, Roosdaal, Belgium (solo)
1991 Gemeentebibliotheek, Gooik, Belgium (solo)
1987 Thornhill Gallery, Poole
1986 Walford Mill Craft Centre, Wimborne Minster (solo)
1985 Grove Arts Centre, Dorchester (solo)
1982 Staircase Gallery, Kew Studio, Richmond (solo)
1978 Warehouse Gallery, Covent Garden, London
1977 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London
1977 Crane Arts, King's Road, London