

Obituaries

Derek Hyatt

Yorkshire landscape artist whose vividly coloured work earned comparisons with the St Ives school

DEREK HYATT, who has died aged 84, was a British artist who painted landscapes of Yorkshire in a bold palette.

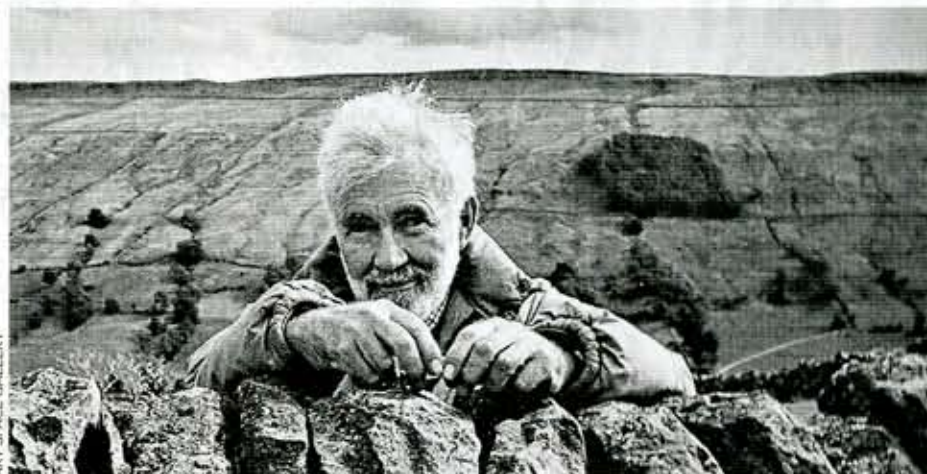
His works blended nature, personal history and symbolism and drew comparison with those of the St Ives set, in particular the aerial views of Peter Lanyon, yet his canvases also embraced the vibrant colour schemes of Fauve artists such as André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck.

In the mid-1960s, having studied in Leeds and Norwich and enjoyed a spell in the limelight of London's art world, Hyatt immersed himself in the North Yorkshire of his youth. He would remain there for the rest of his life.

"I bought a farmhouse on a 1,000 ft contour and you looked down into Bishopdale," Hyatt said. "I tasted another life, another time and history." He painted the surrounding hills, the dry stone walls, the eerie moorland and the curlews and owls passing his window, although as Andrew Lambirth noted in *The Spectator*, "painting for [Hyatt] is not a record of appearances, but an investigation into the mysterious heart of things".

This tendency to abstraction was aptly illustrated by his later work *Grey Rain and Signs (Malham)*, which fused together fault lines in limestone rocks, peculiar figures, a crucifix and a giant raindrop. It was, he said, a "landscape where things are worn away and little clues are wedged in the cracks".

The son of a turf accountant, Derek James Hyatt was born in 1931 in Ilkley, Yorkshire. Derek attended Ilkley Grammar School during the war. On a sketching trip to Langbar Moor he



ART SPACE GALLERY

Hyatt (right, his painting *Hawk's View*, oil on board): he immersed himself in the landscape of his home county

found a live grenade, caked in mud and missing its pin, and "cycled all the way back down from Langbar Moor with the grenade bouncing about in the basket on the front of my bike".

Between 1948 and 1952 he studied at Leeds College of Art before continuing to Norwich School of Art (part-time while he completed his National Service in the RAF) and the Royal College of Art (1954-58). At the RCA he won the Royal Scholar prize and a J Andrew Lloyd Scholarship for Landscape Painting, and edited *Ark*, the college's journal. As a student he was greatly influenced by the colour-blocked landscapes of John Nash.

Hyatt taught at various institutions, including Kingston School of Art (1959-64) and a stint as a visiting professor at the University of Cincinnati in 1980. His longest tenure was at Leeds Polytechnic School of

Creative Arts and Design, where he lectured from 1968 to 1984. His command of words was almost as fine as his handling of paint.

Hyatt exhibited widely in the North – in Halifax, Sheffield, Bradford – but (after his return to Yorkshire) infrequently in London. He showed at the Waddington gallery in the 1970s but there could be gaps of decades before new material was seen in the capital. There were, however, solo presentations in recent years at Art Space in Islington, including *Meetings on the Moor: The Bishopdale Paintings (2012)* and *Time Glides in Secret (2014)*.

He was made a companion of the Guild of St George in 1990 and, five years later, a member of the International Artists for Nature Foundation. His works sit in many corporate and public collections, including those of Balliol College,



something else: in place of argument, he gave the Commons gallery emotion, otherwise known as 'passion'."

Ian Bell was born on January 7 1956, and brought up on an Edinburgh council estate. His great-grandfather was John Connolly, brother of James, the socialist and trade unionist executed by the British Army for his role in the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Dublin, and it was nationalism, albeit of the Scottish variety, that was often the dominant feature of Bell's writing. A prizewinning English pupil at Portobello High School, he went on to read English at Edinburgh University.

He landed his first job as a sub-editor on *The Scotsman*, then in its heyday as Scotland's newspaper of record. But it was as a columnist that Bell quickly made his mark.

For all fiercely held views he had a wide and catholic array of friends of every political persuasion, and

which he won the Orwell Prize, came when as an unashamed Left-wing nationalist writer he was the principal columnist for *The Scotsman*, then under the direction of publisher Andrew Neil and editor Martin Clarke, now editor of *Mail Online*. He followed Clarke to what was a lucrative, but short-lived, spell at the *Daily Record* in Glasgow.

Thereafter, he returned to the *Herald* newspapers, contributing columns to both as well as sketches on proceedings at the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood.

Ian Bell was also a successful author, writing three acclaimed biographies, two of Bob Dylan and one of Robert Louis Stephenson.

In latter years he lived in the Borders. He is survived by his wife, Mandy, and his son, Sean, also a journalist.

Ian Bell, born January 7 1956, died December 10 2015

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Derek Hyatt, born February 21 1931, died December 8 2015