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JUDGEMENT BY EYE  
THE ART COLLECTING LIFE OF E. J. POWER  
1950 to 1990

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## **Abstract**

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### **JUDGEMENT BY EYE**

The art collecting life of E J Power

The thesis examines the pattern of art collecting of E J Power, the leading British patron of contemporary painting and sculpture in the period after the Second World War from 1950 to the 1970s. The dissertation draws attention to Power's unusual method of collecting which was characterised by his buying of work in quantity, considering it in depth and at leisure in his own home, and only then deciding on what to keep or discard.

Because of the auto-didactic nature of his education in contemporary art, Power acquired work from a wide cross section of artists and sculptors in order to interrogate the paintings in his own mind. He paid particular attention to the works of Nicolas de Stael, Jean Dubuffet, Asger Jorn, Sam Francis, Barnett Newman, Ellsworth Kelly, Francis Picabia, William Turnbull and Howard Hodgkin. Power strongly believed that to fully appreciate an artist's development, it was necessary to acquire work from different stages of his career.

The thesis investigates the reasons behind the important shifts made by Power from one group of artists to another and also examines how he kept an open mind about new creative ideas and remained at the cutting edge of art collecting into his old age. Power's influence on the younger artists of the period and his support of public exhibitions of contemporary art are also discussed.

New, previously unpublished, material from Power's archives is used in the dissertation which also includes a DVD of taped interviews with artists and leading figures from the art world who talked about many aspects of Power's personality and the range of his collection. The thesis demonstrates how Power influenced more than one generation of artists and how he made an important contribution towards the furthering of an appreciation of contemporary art among the general public.

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I have quoted extensively in this dissertation from a catalogue edited by Dr Jennifer Mundy of the Tate Gallery of a 1996 exhibition called *Brancusi to Beuys, Works from the Ted Power Collection*, which I found indispensable to my research.

I would also thank all the people I interviewed about Ted Power, in particular Leslie Waddington and William Turnbull for their invaluable recollections, as well as my wife, Janet, and other members of the Power family for their uniquely personal memories.

## Introduction

The subject of this thesis is my late father-in-law, E. J. (Ted) Power who was the leading British collector of contemporary art in the period after the Second World War from 1950 to the 1970s. I decided to research Power's collecting career for a number of reasons, not least because there has been very little written about him or about the extraordinarily wide range of his acquisitions. I knew Ted Power myself for 14 years and I am in the fortunate position of having access to Power's own archive material and being able to discuss the man and his collecting with my wife and my brothers-in-law. I hope to show in this dissertation that a highly individual collector such as Power can influence more than one generation of artists and make a real contribution towards the furthering of an appreciation of contemporary art among the wider public. Furthermore, I believe that a detailed analysis of Power's eclectic collection will give another perspective on the subject of post-war British art and its relationship with continental European and American painting and sculpture.

One of the key factors in Power's role as an art patron was that he did not come from an academic background and was therefore self-taught in many aspects of artistic endeavour. He had to develop his own eye – his own way of looking and assessing a work of art – and this in turn led to his unusual method of collecting in which he bought paintings in quantity, examined the work in depth and at leisure in his own home, and then made his own decision about what to keep or discard. This independence of mind was an important trait in Power's character and in my opinion, accounts for his great success as an entrepreneur in business. The other point I would emphasise at this stage is that Power was always at the cutting edge in his own field of radio and television manufacturing and that was why he was always receptive later in life to the new ideas coming from the artists he admired. Power had appreciated the importance of good design from the early 1930s and the external styling of the radios his company manufactured were, to him, as important as the technical innovations for which they were famous. During and after the War, he was too busy to develop his latent interest in art and it was 1950 before his long-term involvement in design could be extended to other visual forms.

The diversity of Power's collection is one of its most striking features. Because he was educating himself about the various art movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Power acquired work from a very wide cross section of artists and sculptors. This dissertation will show how he purchased Irish, French, Belgian, Dutch, Spanish and Italian art as well as examples of British and American abstraction and Pop Art, among others. With his business background, Power was accustomed to buying in quantity and he continued this practice with works of art in a manner which was more American than British, but he sold only those paintings which no longer 'spoke' to him and then only after careful consideration. He accumulated an

extensive and remarkable collection, but this was known only to a few people connected to the art world, for Power was essentially a very modest man with no interest in self-aggrandizement and it was some years before he allowed his name to become known as a lender to public exhibitions.

Although Power was Irish and loved a discussion or even a good argument, he was an exceptionally perceptive listener and readily accepted advice and comment from a small group of artist friends and professional dealers at all stages of his collecting life. One of his other great assets was his ability to relate to people much younger than himself and he assiduously visited artists' studios and attended exhibition openings to meet them, continuing to do so when he was over ninety years of age. Above all, he kept an open mind and did not turn down new work on doctrinaire grounds. He remained intensely curious, always interrogating in his own mind the artist, the work and his own reactions to it.

In this thesis, I want to discuss the overall pattern of Power's collecting, in particular, the reasons for the important shifts from one group of artists to another. I will also consider the way he seemed to be ahead of the field in his purchasing of new work, often a year ahead of the first British exhibitions of artists such as Sam Francis, Asger Jorn, Ellsworth Kelly and R. B. Kitaj. Although he travelled regularly to Paris, it is surprising to note that Power only visited the United States once in his life and yet he was buying American art before the ground-breaking 'Modern Art in the United States' exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1956. A further aspect I will be examining is Power's belief that the only way to fully appreciate an artist's development is to buy work from all the different stages of his *oeuvre* and this he did in the case of painters such as Jean Dubuffet and Francis Picabia as well as sculptors like William Turnbull and Barry Flanagan.

Because of the lack of detailed information about Power and his collection, I decided to begin this thesis with a biography of the man himself and his previous career, and then to explore the extent of his collecting chronologically to show its development over the decades. I also thought it relevant to write a section about some of the other British collectors of contemporary art from the same period, to put Power in the wider context of art patronage. I knew that Power had been happiest talking and listening to people who actually produced paintings and sculpture and so I recorded 16 interviews with some of his artist friends (those who were still alive) as well as other people who could give me an insight into Power as a collector rather than as the patriarch of his family. These interviews are on a DVD included with this thesis and I apologise if the sound quality is not always up to professional standards. Power kept an accurate record of his acquisitions from 1952 to 1966 in his archive and I have used this information extensively as well other papers and letters from the same source. I have also researched further material about Power from the Hyman Kreitman Research Centre at the Tate Gallery, the Courtauld Institute of

Art, the National Art Library, the Fondation Dubuffet in Paris, the Barnett Newman Foundation in New York and Waddington Galleries in London.

The only extensive published source of material about Power is the catalogue for *Brancusi to Beuys, Works from the Ted Power Collection*, an exhibition held at the Tate Gallery in 1996, three years after Power's death. This was edited by Dr Jennifer Mundy and I have consulted it frequently.

I have included in the Appendix all Power's personal notes, written in the 1950s, about his thoughts on art and on the artists whose work he admired. I have also included a foreword which he wrote (anonymously) in the catalogue of an exhibition of a group of paintings lent by him in Norwich. This sets out clearly his reasons for buying works of contemporary art and his belief that a painting or sculpture should represent a challenge to one's intellectual capabilities.

## **Chapter 1**

### **E J Power – a brief biography**

In this section I will be showing how Ted Power developed his career, firstly as an electrical engineer and then as chairman and managing director of a large manufacturing company. Power left school aged 15 and I will also explain how his attitude to life, to business and to art was formed by his lack of formal education. His independence of character and his entrepreneurship began at an early age and although he took advice readily, he made his own mind up when decisions had to be taken.

I will be discussing his own art collecting separately but I hope to illustrate here that his interest in design which started in his thirties, was the forerunner to his appreciation of painting and sculpture. Design in the 1920s and 1930s became an aesthetic and a vital part of the competition between brands of domestic products – one element in the birth of consumerism. Radio and later television, were two of the fastest developing industries at that time and Power's company was at the cutting edge of new design and technical innovation and this was reflected later when Power began to collect art which had not yet been understood, even by the professionals. Although he was an imposing figure, Power was not interested in self-publicity (he turned down honours on more than one occasion) and he was happiest talking to artists, many of whom became his close friends.

E J Power, who was always known as Ted or EJP to his family and friends, was born in Birr in County Offaly in Ireland on 11 September 1899. His father, Patrick Power, was a sergeant in the Leinster Regiment (King's County Militia) the headquarters of which were in Birr at the time, and his mother was Alice Hart who came from a farming family. Power was the eldest son with two younger brothers, Michael and Patrick, and a sister, Alice, who was the youngest sibling. His parents separated and in 1910 his mother took the children to Manchester where they were enrolled in a Catholic church school attached to the Jesuit Church of the Holy Name. Although Power was not a religious man, he always had a healthy regard for the Jesuits which may well have stemmed from his early schooling and the help he received from a Father Kirby who encouraged his interest in things mechanical. Power was allowed to use the priest's library where he read avidly but his particular bible at the time was the 'Naval Radio Handbook' which he studied at length.

Power was fascinated by the Morse Code and the concept of radio signals from a very early age. He always told his family that it was the case of Dr Crippen in 1910 which fired his eleven-year old imagination. Crippen was the first criminal to be arrested in another country by means of a radio signal,



on board the SS Montrose in the St. Lawrence river in Canada, on a warrant issued in London. Power's enthusiasm for this very new form of communication was further developed when he left school and went on a four month, private course at the Wilmslow Radio School studying Morse, signals, crystal receivers, electric motors and many other aspects of this new world. He was awarded a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Certificate, aged just 17 years of age. The following year, he volunteered for the Royal Navy and after initial training was sent to the Crystal Palace Communications Centre where he felt frustrated as he was more qualified than the officers. Eventually he obtained a transfer to an active unit based at Lowestoft, his first connection with East Anglia which he maintained for the rest of his life. Power had an unusual naval service because of his technical skills. He often told of a 'heated discussion' with a gunnery officer who objected violently to the removal of one of his guns to make way for some new-fangled radio equipment (especially when it was at the request of an ordinary seaman).

In 1917, Power volunteered for minesweeping duties because it paid extra (at the rate of 'three ha'pence per mine') and because the ships carried radio equipment. Yet he kept studying his subject not least via the 'Admiralty Handbook of Wireless Telegraphy'. He stayed on after the war to build up his savings before he enrolled at the Marconi Radio School, where he obtained a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Certificate in order to join the Merchant Navy and see the world. Power's singleness of purpose came to the fore as he never drank alcohol during his three years of service but saved consistently to accumulate capital to start his own business. This he did in 1922, producing crystal sets and transformers and selling them to retailers such as Gamages before joining one of the very early manufacturers, McMichael Radio, in 1926 as chief engineer. His independence of spirit coupled with the lack of reliability of radio sets of the day, made him set up a workshop in Slough repairing wirelesses and making radio receivers which he continued to do until 1929. By then 'Power was a seasoned veteran of the wireless business, lively and resourceful yet with both feet on the ground, a practical engineer with experience of running a factory.'<sup>1</sup> He was ideally suited to team up with his friend Frank Murphy as partner and chief engineer and to establish Murphy Radio in that year.

Initially, the new company continued Power's connection with Gamages, making low-priced sets for the store to support the business while they tested out their own production lines until they finally launched the first Murphy radio in 1930. This four-valve portable was enthusiastically received by the trade and thanks to Power's strategy of selling only to appointed dealers (of which 200 were approved nationwide in the first year and trained by the company) proved to be the first of a long line of successful Murphy

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Geddes, *Setmakers*, (London, 1991) 158

radios which continued for more than three decades. Not content with manufacturing a set of the highest technical standards, Power and Murphy felt that the appearance and styling of a radio was equally important and to this end, in 1931, they went to Broadway in Worcestershire to visit a firm of furniture designers called Gordon Russell. It is not an exaggeration to say that this meeting changed the lives of all the participants, both their companies and influenced the whole course of British industrial design. In his autobiography, *Designer's Trade*, Gordon Russell amusingly recalls that:

Murphy and Power came wearing old mackintoshes and cloth caps, looking as if they worked round the clock. They felt that radio was too complicated: they wanted simpler, better built cabinets which were as good as the sets. "Look at this", said Murphy producing a portable cabinet, "it's just a box. No ideas. Ted and I have spent many hours trying to find out how we can keep these ugly knobs out of the way without making them inaccessible but we haven't got anywhere."<sup>2</sup>

R D (Dick) Russell took on the task and the Murphy cabinets were the first to be planned from the start of production by a design team, with Dick Russell acting as the *aesthetic* designer – a term introduced by Power himself – and the first indication that he was becoming aware of other disciplines beyond radio engineering.

Although the radio and television cabinets designed by Dick Russell for Murphy Radio went on to become international classics of modern design, the first new sets were initially loathed by the Murphy sales force and indeed, some dealers. However, by the time the Radiolympia exhibition in 1933 took place they had become the benchmarks of innovation and had influenced other radio manufacturers. The *Gramophone* magazine noted that 'Since he designed the cabinets for Murphy's some time ago, Mr Russell has simply swept the board. I should hate to ascribe to him some of the monstrous developments that have been made from his clean lines and simple beauty of form. But even these exaggerations are in their way a tribute to his success.'<sup>3</sup> It is possible to speculate on how much those designs in the 1930s affected Power later, in particular in his choice of such artists as Constantin Brancusi and William Turnbull. Through the early 1930s, Murphy Radio and their factory in Welwyn Garden City steadily expanded and they continued to work with the design team at Gordon Russell to such an extent that when Power (by this time a married man with four children) decided to move to a new house nearer the factory,

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon Russell, *Designers Trade*, (London, 1968) 147 and cited by Mundy p.11

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in catalogue *R D Russell*, Marian Pepler, (London, 1983) 10

he asked them to incorporate some of their new furniture ideas in his own home. His daughter, Janet, remembers Bentwood chairs and a rug of abstract design made by Dick Russell's wife, Marian Pepler who was an established weaver. By 1936, many changes began to develop with Dick Russell becoming a salaried member of staff at Murphy's; Nikolaus Pevsner joining Gordon Russell as chief buyer; and most important of all, in January 1937, Power taking over as chairman of Murphy Radio. From then until the outbreak of the Second World War, the company under Power's leadership established itself as one of the most innovative and successful radio manufacturers in Britain launching a stream of new models including radiograms and television sets as well as console and table wirelesses. Power also developed and patented the advanced 'automatic frequency control' which became yet another industry standard.

The advent of war in 1939 meant that Murphy's entire output was switched to military communication equipment and the development of radar and high-power valves, all vital contributions to the war effort. In his eulogy at Power's memorial service in 1993, Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn recalled that during the early part of the war when high-powered valves were in very short supply, Power would sometimes drive the newly manufactured valves all over the south of England in his Lancia Aprilia to ensure that they were delivered to the front line radio stations. After the war, while the Electronics Division continued to make military equipment, Power concentrated on the re-establishment of television set production. As chairman of BREMA (the British Radio and Electrical Manufacturers Association) he successfully campaigned in the Ministry of Supply for a workable allocation of the country's meagre resources, particularly of steel, so that the whole industry could expand into the future. Power was always looking ahead and in the early 1950s, he was instrumental with others in urging the government to start new television channels with commercial advertising and greater consumer choice. By this time, Murphy Radio had been floated on the stock market as a public company (in 1949) and had the resources to enjoy the great boom in the television industry. In 1953, Power opened a large new factory (of 30,000 square feet) in Welwyn Garden City followed by new works in South Wales and Skegness as well as assembly plants in South Africa, India, New Zealand and in his birthplace, Ireland. In total he was employing more than 4000 people, some highly skilled in a new division manufacturing medical and acoustical equipment as well as electronic control systems for the nuclear power industry. Perhaps because of his own background, Power fully understood the importance of education and he was a founder trustee of the Hatfield Polytechnic, one of the first Further Education Colleges, later to become the University of Hertfordshire.

By 1962, however, the booming television market was saturated and Power could see that independent manufacturers would have to combine to survive the highly competitive trading conditions and he sold Murphy Radio to the Rank Organisation thus enabling him to develop much further his long standing

interest in contemporary art. Power had started buying the work of Irish artists such as Daniel O'Neill and Jack Yeats from the Victor Waddington gallery in Dublin as early as 1950 and by the time he retired, he had become one of the leading collectors of contemporary art in Britain.

Power's long association with the Russell brothers continued after the war with Dick becoming a consultant to Murphy Radio. He continued to design their radio and television cabinets until 1948 when he was appointed Professor of Wood, Metals and Plastic at the Royal College of Art. Meanwhile, Gordon Russell was part of the Board of Trade team who organised the important post-war exhibition 'Britain Can Make It' at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1946 when various leading designers were invited to 'build' and decorate a room which Dick carried through, using his latest furniture ideas including a Murphy radiogram. In the following year, Gordon became Director of the Council of Industrial Design and subsequently he and Dick were asked to put forward ideas for a building which was to be a central part of the Festival of Britain in 1951. This resulted in their pavilion 'The Lion and the Unicorn' which was only one of two in the Festival where the building and its contents were designed and selected by the same people. Once again, one of Power's televisions was on display. Both the Russell brothers and Ted Power had come a long way since their first meeting in Broadway in 1931 and undoubtedly they had influenced each other, triggering off Power's latent interest and passion for good design which he later continued in his art collecting. By mixing with the Russells and their friends and contacts at institutions like the Royal College, Power must have begun to develop his own attitudes towards contemporary sculpture and painting which would come to fruition when he had the time to start looking at what was around in London and Paris.

From the start of his career, Power was clear on what he preferred in matters of design for himself. In the early 1930s, Power's office was designed by Dick Russell and described by his brother, Gordon, as 'severe', although they both regarded it as simplicity of design. They still agreed on such matters in the late 1950s when Power asked Russell to design his new flat in London. It is worth quoting in detail from Russell's description of the completed apartment because many of his ideas and beliefs were shared by Power and are reflected to a degree in his choice of art:

Two flats were knocked into one, to give an unusually long L-shaped living room with a dining area in the shorter end. As an engineer, Power was more impressed by function than decoration and wanted as little movable furniture as possible. Thus, a long teak seating unit was designed to extend the whole length of the window wall which hides the radiators, acts as a shelf for plants and sculptures and seats up to 60 people if necessary. A pine-panelled suspended ceiling covers

the room linking both ends in a smooth uncluttered way. No light fittings are visible to break this flow – all lights are hidden above the ceiling.<sup>4</sup> (see Figure 16)

This was a perfect example of Dick Russell's design aesthetic which he himself described as 'purity of expression, absence of complication and contrivance, extensive use of natural materials and textures, a preoccupation with quality and a clever exploitation of space, a sympathetic setting not only for people but also for works of art.'<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Power's flat was deliberately designed as a setting for large paintings and sculpture and was the scene of many a discussion among artists over the years. Russell's design philosophy was inspired by one branch of Modernism from the 1930s onwards, and the idea that architects and designers were part of a common cause in the aesthetic planning of a better world. It is difficult to estimate how much Power was influenced by this, but looking at the Murphy Radio catalogues, one can readily see many aspects of Modernist thinking which ran as a consistent theme throughout these publications.

Power and his wife, Rene, moved permanently into the flat in 1962 and he continued to live there after his wife died in 1978, until his own death in Norfolk in 1993.

Because he was such a modest man, it is easy to forget how much Power contributed to the public showing of contemporary art over more than four decades (all the exhibitions mentioned in this section will be discussed later in this work). As early as 1956 he was anonymously lending some of his paintings to an Arts Council touring exhibition. The following year the exhibition was shown at the ICA when he did agree to having his name published in the catalogue. The paintings he chose were all by artists who were living in Paris at the time and this important exhibition with an essay by Lawrence Alloway was described by the art critic, David Sylvester, as one of the best exhibitions of post-war painting to have been seen in the country.<sup>6</sup> In 1958, Power lent all the paintings for a second ICA show organised by Alloway called 'Some Paintings from the E J Power Collection' which showed for the first time Power's switching of interest from the School of Paris and CoBrA movements to the new American art of Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline and Willem De Kooning. This exhibition predated the famous Tate show 'The New American Painting' of 1959 at which Power was the only British lender and (anonymously) a major contributor to the costs of the catalogue. In the same year, he maintained his East Anglian connection by lending all the paintings for a small show in Norwich called '10 International Artists'.

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in catalogue *R D Russell, Marian Pepler*, (London, 1983) 24

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 25

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Brancusi to Beuys, Works from the Ted Power Collection*, edited by Jennifer Mundy, (London, 1996) 16 (thereafter Mundy)

The 1960 'Situation' show also benefited from Power's patronage, as he firstly lent a number of works by young British painters and then subsequently donated a selection of them to the Tate in order to strengthen their holdings of avant garde British art.

In 1963 the Tate asked a number of people associated with the Gallery to select works owned by themselves to appear in the 'Friends of the Tate' exhibition. This time, Power extended his range to include painters such as Piet Mondrian, Robert Delaunay and Gino Severini. His interest in the work of Francis Picabia is illustrated by the fact that he lent ten paintings to an exhibition on that artist which was held in Newcastle in 1964 and later that year at the ICA. Through the next two decades Power continued to donate paintings to the Tate or sometimes sell them works at very favourable prices. He bought *Fat Battery* (1963) by Joseph Beuys after the Tate had declined it, then lent the piece to the Gallery and ten years later presented it to the Tate as a gift. As late as the 1980s, he was continuing to offer important paintings by Jean Dubuffet and Barnett Newman which he thought should be part of the nation's public works of art.

Throughout his career, Power was involved with various organisations connected with contemporary art. He was a founder member of the ICA and was closely associated with a number of ICA exhibitions through the 1950s and 1960s. In 1961 he was elected to the Council of the Royal College of Art and served for two years. After his death, Power's family continued this association with the College by giving an annual bursary in his honour to a post-graduate student.

One of the important public positions held by Power was his period as a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1968 to 1975, when Norman Reid was Director and Robert Sainsbury was chairman of the Trustees. When I interviewed Reid (just before his death) he mentioned that Power had no basic prejudice against new ideas and that he always tried to see things from the artist's point of view at Trustee meetings. 'Ted had a most receptive, uncluttered mind which was attracted by a new vision and this meant he often argued forcefully for new work to be acquired, sometimes with fellow Trustees much younger than himself.'<sup>7</sup> Power was instrumental in pushing for the purchase of Carl Andre's *Equivalent VIII* (1966), the famous bricks which later became a *cause célèbre* in the early 1970s among the popular press. As Howard Hodgkin said when I talked to him about that incident, 'Ted did push the Trustees to buy Andre's bricks but when they were shown later and all the fuss happened, the visitor numbers went up!'<sup>8</sup> Power

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<sup>7</sup> Track 10 on the DVD of my interviews.

<sup>8</sup> Track 11 on the DVD of my interviews.

remained closely involved with the Tate for the rest of his life, as the current Director, Nicholas Serota, is the first to acknowledge:

The Tate has been enormously enriched in particular ways by what Ted gave, sold, bequeathed, received in lieu and so on. I think also that he was important for two generations of British artists – the Turnbull, Hamilton generation on the one hand, and then the Hodgkin, Caulfield, Hoyland one later.<sup>9</sup>

Power collected contemporary art assiduously for more than 35 years and delighted in showing his pictures to young British painters who did not always have the opportunity to visit continental Europe or America. That generosity of spirit coupled with his support for many exhibitions and his donations to national museums, had a lasting effect on the British art world which this dissertation will explore.

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<sup>9</sup> Track 1 on the DVD of my interviews.

## Chapter 2

### Post-war British collectors of contemporary art

The purpose of examining some of the other collectors of the period is to put Ted Power in the context of the wider art world and demonstrate that the scale and range of his collecting was unmatched and this list consists, in my view, of the main British collectors of contemporary art over the three decades after the War. It is by no means definitive but it does show a diverse group of people who were passionate about the art that they collected, were closely involved with the artists who made the work and who consistently supported them. Despite the wide-reaching changes to post-war Britain, only a few people were prepared to patronise the new art and go against the traditional British collecting style of looking backwards to the work of previous generations. The collectors discussed in this section were all gamblers – none of them bought for investment or profit – and not all were wealthy enough to take risks with their choices of artist to support. But they did.

All but one of the collectors (Jim Ede) formed a relationship with art dealers, sometimes with only one but often with a small number depending on which artists they represented or showed. Even in those days, the contemporary art world was changing rapidly and collectors needed the professional dealers who kept their fingers on the pulse and who could advise on the quality and range of work on offer. The art press was at an early stage then and the dealer was often the only source of information about trends or new work from overseas. A new group of young dealers set up in business in the 1950s and 1960s including Freddy Mayor, Robert Fraser and John Kasmin to rival the older sellers such as Tooths and Gimpel fils who were themselves beginning to promote up- and- coming painters and sculptors. At the same time the London auction houses like Sotheby's and Christie's re-established themselves and began to influence the buying patterns of collectors.

It is interesting to note how many of this group of collectors started with respected European painters before switching to the younger generation of British artists as their confidence and knowledge developed. None were fixated on one artist or movement and most sold some work before they moved on to fresh fields which perhaps shows the influence of the American style of collecting.

**Sir Robert Adeane** (1905-1979) was an aristocratic financier and businessman who was born in Babraham House in Cambridgeshire which had previously belonged to his family, the Wyndhams. His older cousin, the painter Richard Wyndham, introduced Adeane to contemporary art after the war and specifically to the art dealer, Freddy Mayor, who became a lifelong friend. Adeane started collecting on



his own behalf in 1946 and continued contemporaneously with Power for more than three decades. The first picture he ever bought was *Winter in Provence* (1925) by Matthew Smith just a few years before Power purchased *Anemones in Blue Vase* (1928) by the same artist. Their interest in various painters overlapped on a number of occasions. They both bought Ernst, Gear, Hamilton Fraser, Matisse, Ozenfant, Picabia, Picasso, Scott, Tilson and Warhol among others. This was usually through the Mayor Gallery in Adeane's case, while Power used either Tooths or Gimpel fils.

Although they both used dealers, they kept their own independence and had similar views on why they bought certain paintings. Adeane wrote 'my method of collecting was a simple one – I bought what I liked, what I was advised was good and what, at the time, I could afford'.<sup>10</sup> Like Power he rarely used the word 'collection' and went on to write 'such a word is not applicable to these acquisitions made by an individual untrained in Art with an ambivalent taste,'<sup>11</sup> a description of Power's views to the letter. Adeane never bought in the quantities that Power did, preferring generally to have a limited number or a single example of a particular artist's work and he had an interest in Surrealism not shared by Power. He was passionate about colour and the excellent paintings by Chagall, Kandinsky and Nolde which he owned reflected this. Adeane was a trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1955 -1962 (a few years before Power) but he was most famous for founding the Friends of the Tate Gallery in 1958, a very effective fund raising group of supporters. He became chairman of the Mayor Gallery in 1973.

Adeane was a major benefactor to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, donating £100,000 towards the cost of building the Adeane Gallery in addition to the painting *Camels* (1962) by Larry Rivers and *Pom* (1976) by Andy Warhol – a drawing of one of Adeane's dogs. On his death, he also bequeathed important works by Ernst and Delvaux to the Tate. His wife Jane Adeane later left most of the paintings she had inherited from his collection to the East Anglia Art Foundation and they are now kept at the Castle Museum in Norwich. Adeane was knighted in 1961 for his services to art and his very personal choice of artists illustrates the fact that he kept an open mind about trends in painting and followed his own convictions about the quality of new work. He was closer to the traditional English collector who was updating his family's paintings and in that way he was on a different trajectory to Power.

**H S (Jim) Ede** (1895-1990) is always inextricably linked to Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, a unique museum he established in 1965 which places superb examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century sculpture and paintings in a

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<sup>10</sup>Quoted in catalogue *Loan Exhibition of Modern Pictures from the Collection of Sir Robert Adeane*, (Norwich, 1962) 5

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 6

domestic setting. By doing that, Ede successfully broke down the artificial barriers between the museum culture of much contemporary art of the time and the perceptions and attitudes of the interested man in the street – something also dear to Power’s heart, as he often explained to his family. Ede attended the Leys School in Cambridge and although his later art training was interrupted by the First World War, by the early 1920s he was a curatorial assistant at the Tate Gallery and one of the few members of staff who had a genuine interest in modern art, especially Picasso and Braque. It was while Ede was working at the Tate that an extraordinary event occurred which had repercussions for his career many years later. In 1926, a large quantity of the work of Henri Gaudier- Brzeska was dumped in his office which happened to be the board room and so had a large table. This was 10 years after the artist’s tragic death in combat and the work somehow had become the property of the Treasury. Ede explains with some irony in his memoir that:

The enlightened Solicitor General thought that the nation should acquire it, but no, not even as a gift. In the end I got a friend to buy *Chanteuse triste* (1913) for the Tate, together with three more works which I gave them, three others to the Contemporary Art Society and the rest, for a song, I bought.<sup>12</sup>

Thus Ede’s lifetime of collecting began and he continued for the rest of his long life with virtually no money available, relying instead on hard bargaining and frequent gifts from the artists themselves or from wealthier friends. He was strongly influenced in his early life by the views of Ben and Winifred Nicholson who subsequently led him on to Alfred Wallis and Christopher Wood. The works of all four artists are hanging in Kettles Yard. His experience of becoming, by accident, the leading British collector of Gaudier-Brzeska made him appreciate Brancusi whom he came to regard as being the benchmark for modern sculpture. He acquired two Brancusi pieces, *Prometheus* and *Fish* – the latter in the same series as one Power had bought in 1964 and which is now in the Tate. Ede also had an affinity with naïve art, most notably in the work of Wallis but it would be wrong to classify his taste as being unsophisticated. He also collected Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, the younger Japanese sculptor Kenji Umeda, as well as Italo Valenti, the Italian artist whose abstract collages in a *tachiste* style have shapes that can be compared to Ellsworth Kelly. Perhaps the most highly personal of Ede’s choices was William Congdon whose early work in New York had been influenced by Paul Klee and then by Abstract Expressionism. He had been shown at the Betty Parsons gallery in New York and later was collected by Peggy

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<sup>12</sup> H S Ede, *A Way of Life – Kettles Yard*, (Cambridge, 1984) 16

Guggenheim in Venice, but in 1959 he changed his style completely and developed more religious themes. Today he is largely unknown.

Gaudier-Brzeska, however, remained the centrepiece of Ede's collection and the range of his work to be seen at Kettle's Yard is a testament to his talent and a sad reminder of his tragically short life. His reputation was in decline for many years and it is thanks to the writing of Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound and most of all to Jim Ede's long-standing support and publicising that he is now regarded as one of the foremost sculptors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The clean lines and smooth surfaces of Gaudier-Brzeska's work seem to embody the energy of modernism coupled with the influences of early African art. From that first chance encounter with the sculptures and drawings of Gaudier-Brzeska in the 1920s, Jim Ede built up a highly personal and interesting collection with few resources but with a most perceptive eye. He went his own way within the confines of his view of art, hardly ever using a dealer but nevertheless ensuring that a high level of coherence was achieved in his collection. His great gift was to build a remarkable environment in which the public can see for themselves what drew him to the artists he enjoyed.

**Gabrielle Keiller** (1908 – 1995) was an unusual patron of contemporary art in that she did not start collecting seriously until she was in her fifties. She had previously bought a few Old Masters but in 1960 she had a conversion to modern art of almost Damascene proportions when she went to Venice for the Biennale and met Peggy Guggenheim who took her to the British Pavilion and showed her the work of Eduardo Paolozzi. He and Keiller became lifelong friends and she collected his drawings, prints and sculptures for the next 25 years. By coincidence, Power was also in Venice at the same time as he knew Guggenheim and had acquired some of Paolozzi's prints, and it is quite possible that he and Keiller met at Guggenheim's extraordinary house.

Keiller had been an accomplished golfer in her youth and had won the Ladies Open Championships in Luxembourg, Switzerland and Monaco and had represented Britain a number of times. Her husband, Alexander Keiller, as well as being the heir to his family's marmalade business in Dundee, was an archaeologist of some repute. Over many decades he and his team excavated and reconstructed the site at Avebury, one of the most important prehistoric archaeological sites in Britain and he later established a museum to show the results of their painstaking work, which is now owned by English Heritage.

Once she had been introduced to 'modern' art, Keiller began to study it in her usual organised way and developed a liking for the Dada and Surrealist movements, buying examples of Yves Tanguy and Picabia

from the Robert Fraser gallery in 1962. She also bought more Paolozzi sculptures from the Mayor gallery and then, interestingly, she acquired two Francis Bacon paintings the following year from Marlborough Fine Art including one of his 'Pope' pictures. Much later, as a member of the advisory committee of the Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, she made a telling comment about buying paintings 'I think if we [the committee] decide to buy a Bacon, it should really be a strong, poignant, typical work. It doesn't matter if we personally don't all like the subject matter, so long as the painting is what Bacon stands for...' <sup>13</sup> Whether Keiller carried this philosophy into her private collecting is a moot point but like Power, she would look at a painting for years and when it stopped being half of a dialogue for her, she would sell it and buy another work by the same artist or by another painter all together. Through the 1970s Keiller continued to build her collection adding works by Jean Arp, André Breton, Edward Burra, Paul Delvaux, René Magritte, Salvador Dali and Joan Miró, at the same time selling most of her earlier Cubist pictures to pay for her new purchases. During this period Keiller was a popular volunteer guide at the Tate Gallery meticulously preparing her lectures on artists as varied as Pollock and Stubbs. She was also asked by the Contemporary Art Society to act as their buyer for 1979 and given a budget of £11000 with which she managed to purchase works by nineteen different artists.

Keiller had a similar transition from established European painters to British artists as Power did, and by the 1980s she had started to explore the work of some of the younger ones including Barry Flanagan, Gilbert and George, John Davies, Bruce McClean, William Turnbull and Richard Long who installed one of his *Six Stone Circles* (1981) in her large garden in Kingston near London. She was so enthusiastic about this new wave of British sculptors that she had a special garden room added to her house to display the work of Flanagan and Turnbull, leaving her Paolozzis in the garden. One of her personal favourites, also purchased at that time, was an edition of Marcel Duchamp's *Boite-en-valise* (1935-41) which was literally a leather box containing miniature replicas and photographs of his work and which Keiller loved to open up and browse through in a very personal way. Keiller, almost inevitably, became a great friend of Roland Penrose, who sold her various works of his own (including *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook* (1936) which she subsequently gave to the Tate in 1982) as well as some key Magritte paintings from his own collection such as *La representation* (1937). But the most consistent strand throughout her years of collecting was Paolozzi and at one time she owned more than 70 examples of his work. In 1987 the Serpentine gallery mounted a large exhibition of her Paolozzi collection, much of which went later to the Museum of Modern Art in Edinburgh and her Scottish connection continued the following year when an extensive exhibition of her Dada and Surrealist paintings and sculptures was held to coincide with the

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Surrealism and After, the Gabrielle Keiller Collection*, (Edinburgh, 1997)17

Edinburgh Festival. Again, most of these were acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in the late 1990s after her death. Keiller always wanted to learn as much as she could about the lives of the artists she collected and to this end she amassed a large collection of books, manuscripts, letters, posters, handbills and other ephemera which she continually reviewed and updated. Her reasons for doing this over many years was completely personal and is explained by Elizabeth Cowling in her essay on Keiller:

Had this collection been formed by an erstwhile member of either movement [Dada or Surrealist] - or by an historian – it would not be surprising to find a substantial amount of this documentary material. But it was not. It is testimony to Mrs Keiller's insight into and desire fully to comprehend the deepest motives of the painters and poets whose work had come to fascinate her.<sup>14</sup>

This important collection is now housed in the Keiller Room in the Dean Gallery in Edinburgh. Gabrielle Keillor was a lively and charismatic person (always immaculately turned out) who, like Power, started collecting with an untrained eye but soon developed into a perceptive and discriminating patron. She was a perfectionist who studied her subjects in detail and yet was also a welcoming host to the many people who came to visit her – one of whom was Andy Warhol who took photographs of her favourite dachshund before producing his *Portrait of Maurice* (1976), one of his most famous images.

**Alistair McAlpine** (Lord McAlpine of West Green) was born in 1942 and is a member of the Scottish building and construction family and an inveterate collector of anything which strikes his fancy. That is not to belittle his vibrant curiosity in fields as varied as Australian art, 19<sup>th</sup>- century French literary manuscripts, photography, first editions, and porcelain; but his collecting could also run to American rag dolls, Soviet manifestos, shells and even police truncheons. His library of books on pre-historic, Celtic and Anglo Saxon Art was a major research source and his textile collection was one of the finest in the world. The use of the past tense in these descriptions is an indication that over the years he has acquired, and then sold, nearly 40 collections of the most eclectic artefacts and items. Among these were paintings and sculpture from the 1950s and 1960s and in this he overlapped with the final period of Power's collecting. Indeed they both used the same dealer, Leslie Waddington. McAlpine first collected the animal sculptures of David Wynne but in 1964 he was introduced to non-figurative art and began to buy the work of Mark Rothko, Ellsworth Kelly and Morris Louis. His great interest however in the late 1960s

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid 26

(about the same time as Ken Powell) was in the group of young British constructionist sculptors called the 'New Generation'. McAlpine bought Philip King, Tim Scott, William Tucker and Michael Bolus among others, building a special gallery at his house near Henley to display their colourful sculptures before typically giving the entire collection of sixty pieces to the Tate in 1971. He once said 'I collect, I suppose, to learn, for I have never collected to possess. When a collection passes from my hands it goes in total – nothing remains.'<sup>15</sup>

McAlpine continued to patronise many British painters such as Patrick Heron, John Hoyland and Allen Jones as well as sculptors like Elizabeth Frink, Lynn Chadwick and Turnbull to which he added, in the 1980s, the Australian artist Sydney Nolan, along with many Aboriginal painters. This was as a result of his visit to Broome an obscure town in north west Australia which he completely redeveloped with a cinema, zoo and later luxury hotels and houses. By the 1990s, he was living in Italy and had become a prolific author writing four books about the joys and pains of collecting in addition to volumes on such diverse subjects as the techniques of Machiavelli in relation to modern business and a philosophy of life for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. McAlpine is unlike any other private collector in Britain but the sheer scale and diversity of his interests makes him an essential factor in any review of the subject. His curious habit of jumping from one field of collecting to another should not detract from his own scholarly research – his huge collection of natural history books, for example, was sold at Christie's in 1973 for a benchmark figure. One aspect of his attitude towards collecting can be illustrated in his own words:

The form a collection takes is largely due to the dealers and artists a collector meets. It certainly was in my case, for although I feel confident that the initial choice of direction was mine, both dealers and artists have introduced me to the works of other artists in the same feeling, whom I would not otherwise have come across or found until it was too late.<sup>16</sup>

McAlpine is a man of many parts. In addition to his business interests across Europe, he was Treasurer of the Conservative party from 1975-1990 and its Deputy Chairman from 1979-1983. He has managed to combine a diverse range of activities with a genuine curiosity into art in many of its manifestations.

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<sup>15</sup> J Stourton, *Great Collectors of Our Time*, (London, 2007) 327

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in catalogue *The Alistair McAlpine Gift*, (London, 1971) 7

**Roland Penrose** (1900 -1984) was an influential figure in the British art world from the 1930s until he retired in 1976 to his country house in East Sussex. Penrose was a truly multi-talented man; a painter, a sculptor, a collagist, a poet, an author, a gallery owner and exhibition organiser, and a patron and promoter of Surrealism. He became involved in Surrealism as early as the 1920s when he was introduced by his then wife to André Breton and Paul Eluard and through them to Max Ernst who was an important influence on Penrose's own creativity. He also met Joan Miró, Giorgio de Chirico and Salvador Dali in Paris and later became a close friend of Picasso, buying *Nu sur la plage* (1935) in 1937, his first acquisition by the artist. At the same time, he actually saw Picasso painting *Guernica* and later that same year, after he and E L T Mesens had set up the London Gallery, he arranged for the painting to tour Britain in 1938 to raise money for the Spanish Republican cause. Throughout the 1930s, Penrose continued to champion Surrealism and in 1936 he organised the 'First International Surrealist Exhibition' at the New Burlington Galleries in London. This was a successful but controversial show as it was the first time a rather bewildered British public had seen such art and almost inevitably the press reaction was in Penrose's own words, 'abysmal'. Yet undoubtedly it was an extraordinary achievement to fill one of the biggest galleries in London with dozens of paintings as well as sculptures by Moore, Alberto Giacometti, and Brancusi. Penrose did not neglect his own work during this period and his painting *Portrait of a Leaf* (1934) and his sculpture *Captain Cook's Last Voyage* (1936) are good examples of the diversity of his skills. By this time he had met his future second wife, the American photographer Lee Miller, whom he painted many times and who later achieved fame in her own right for her excruciating photographs of the horrors of the death camps in the Second World War. Penrose and Miller travelled to the Balkans together in 1938 and Penrose wrote a famous Surrealist poetic diary called *The Road is Wider than Long* about their travels.

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) became a major part of Penrose's life after the War. He and Mesens with Herbert Read, Peter Gregory and others felt there was a need in London for some sort of meeting place for like-minded people. Penrose described the original concept as:

something which was not a copy of the café life in Paris nor an imitation of the Museum of Modern Art in New York with its rich patrons. In London there were no rich patrons and no cafes and an organisation had to be formed to provide a place where poets, artists, actors, musicians, scientists and the public could be brought together.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> R Penrose, *Scrap book*, (London, 1981) 142

Penrose was the Chairman of the ICA from its inception until 1969 (later its President) and he was instrumental in organising and funding its first exhibition 'Forty Years of Modern Art' in 1948, a show held in the basement of the Academy cinema in Oxford Street. In the following year, the ICA mounted a much larger exhibition 'Forty Thousand Years of Modern Art' which included not only Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) but also examples of ethnographic art to show the links between man's creativity through the ages. After these ground breaking exhibitions, the ICA continued its pioneering work in the 1950s and it was at this time that Power, himself an early member of the group, became more closely involved.

Penrose continued to promote some of the younger British artists such as Hamilton, Turnbull and Paolozzi, who were all members of the Independent Group (and all collected by Power at various times), but his real passion was still for Surrealism which was beginning to seem out of step with post-war Britain and the strong influence of American culture and art. Increasingly, he turned to writing and produced two books on his friend Picasso – *Portrait of Picasso* in 1956 and *Picasso, his Life and Work* in 1958 as well as subsequently, other titles on Miró, Man Ray, and Antoni Tàpies before his own unusual autobiography *Scrap Book, 1900 – 1981*. One artist who was a mutual friend of both Penrose and Power was William Turnbull who, like Power, was a self-confessed 'non-pub' man and liked to meet in the environment of the ICA to talk about art. Turnbull once said that:

the ICA whose outlook towards European and international art was important and it was a view characteristic of Roland Penrose as well. It was also the first place I'd come across in London outside a pub where you could meet friends in a casual way – it was as close as you could get to café life in Paris.<sup>18</sup>

This was as good a recommendation as Penrose could hope for. Although Penrose's own collection was largely connected with Surrealism and Picasso, he also acquired over the years a number of other artists whom he admired including Eileen Agar, Giacometti, Moore, Bacon, Dubuffet, Chadwick and Reg Butler. He was most famous for his involvement with the ICA and for the many exhibitions he organised there and at the Tate and other galleries. This made him very much a public figure and his steady output of books, articles and lectures kept him at the forefront of cultural opinion. He was knighted in 1966 for his services to contemporary art and remains an important and unusual figure in British culture because he combined his own talent for painting and sculpture with great organising skills and leadership – something rare among artists.

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<sup>18</sup> A Penrose, *Roland Penrose, the Friendly Surrealist*, (Munich, 2001) 140



**Kenneth Powell** (1923- 2006) is a good example of someone with limited resources who nevertheless built up more than one impressive collection of paintings and sculpture by means of ‘an unswerving insistence on quality and never hesitating to sell works in order to refine and improve his collection.’<sup>19</sup> He started collecting Chinese porcelain in the 1950s but an exhibition at Agnews in Old Bond Street near his office, in 1962, sparked his interest in the Camden Town Group and he began to buy work by Harold Gilman, Robert Bevan and Spencer Gore, selling his entire porcelain collection to do so. Indeed, Powell remortgaged his house (without telling his wife) in order to buy four paintings by Spencer Gore in the late 1960s. He also bought paintings by Robert MacBryde, Winifred Nicholson and Christopher Wood among others, but as the price of Camden Town pictures escalated out of his reach, a chance visit to the Annely Juda gallery in 1972 changed the pattern of his collecting.

Powell had not been aware of the quality and range of works of the British Constructivist and abstract painters of the 1950s who, it must be said, were out of fashion at the time and thus were selling at prices which he could afford. This was a different but necessary tactic for a person on a limited budget. Once again he started to sell his previous purchases to buy his first piece in the new genre *Construction with Aluminium Plates* (1954) by Stephen Gilbert, an artist who had previously been part of the CoBrA group. Gilbert had been enrolled in the group by Asger Jorn one of the main artists in Power’s collection. Powell continued to collect British abstract artists such as Victor Pasmore, Adrian Heath, William Scott and Anthony Hill, all of whom had been featured in an important book of 1954 by the art critic, Lawrence Alloway, called ‘Nine Abstract Artists’. Except for William Scott, Power never bought British abstract artists of this period even though Alloway was one of his closest friends and advisors.

One of the other painters collected by Powell in some quantity was Prunella Clough who has been rather under-valued until quite recently, but Powell responded to the gritty realism of her earlier work and her paintings formed the largest single group in his collection. Clough became a close friend of Powell’s as did most of the other artists he collected and for many years they all assembled in Powell’s beautiful garden for an annual party to celebrate his enthusiastic support and patronage. More than seventy works from the Powell collection formed an exhibition at the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh in 1992, including paintings by Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost and Turnbull and sculptures by Butler and Paolozzi. This important body of work is now held by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh along with most of Powell’s collection of works on paper. Some of these latter items were designated to be given to the British Museum. Powell was a dedicated collector of modest

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in catalogue *New Beginnings: Postwar Art from the Collection of Ken Powell*. (Edinburgh, 1992) 9

means and in the catalogue for the 1992 exhibition, his philosophy was described in the following terms, 'truly successful collecting is not an amassing of expensive items to decorate one's walls, but a willingness on the collector's part to integrate the art into his own life.'<sup>20</sup>

**Robert Sainsbury and Lisa Sainsbury** (1906-2000/ 1912 - ) were regarded as a pair in life, as well as in the world of collecting. Their tastes were extraordinarily complementary although he had a preference for small objects, sculpture and drawings, whereas she liked paintings and colour. They are inseparably linked to the world famous Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts on the campus of the University of East Anglia in Norwich. This building designed by Norman Foster houses their huge collection of paintings, sculpture, ceramics and artefacts from all over the world and includes works from the very earliest time to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Robert Sainsbury did not welcome being referred to as a 'collector' for his reaction to any work of art was 'a personal compound of sensuous, emotional and intellectual responses.'<sup>21</sup> and he believed there was no such thing as 'good' taste or 'bad' taste, only an individual's personal taste. His first purchase in 1931 was Jacob Epstein's *Baby Asleep* (1902- 4) which was a bold choice at the time as the artist was being vilified by almost all the media and many art critics. Undeterred, he went on to buy Moore's *Mother and Child* (1932) and continued through the 1930s buying many Moore drawings, a Picasso watercolour from the Mayor gallery and artists such as Matthew Smith from Tooth's. As early as 1935, however, he had begun to collect West African art some of which could be linked to the smooth surfaces and shapes of the work of Epstein and Moore. In those early days Sainsbury, even though he was a scion of the famous retailing family, set himself a modest budget for his art purchases and he maintained this self-imposed discipline right through to the 1950s. His own family had no connection with the arts, in contrast to his wife Lisa who had been brought up in a cultured French *milieu* and had studied art history in Paris and Geneva. They married (in secret) in 1937 and from then on shared a genuine passion for African and Oceanic artefacts, possibly influenced by Epstein who had a substantial collection himself.

After the war, while continuing to collect art from different continents, the Sainsburys began to become involved with the embryo ICA and lent some of their sculptures to two early ICA shows, in particular 'Forty Thousand Years of Modern Art' in 1949. In the same year, they met Giacometti and acquired a number of the drawings he had produced of his brother Diego - a decade later buying the Giacometti

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid 10

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in catalogue *The Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection*, edited by S. Hooper, (London, 1997) Vol. 1 lix

sculpture *Standing Woman* (1958/9). They also met John Hewett, a leading dealer in 'primitive' art who influenced their purchases in that field for many years. In 1953 their collection took on a new and very different slant when Lisa Sainsbury met Francis Bacon and bought his *Study of a Nude* (1952-3). From then on the Sainsburys gave their unstinting financial support to the artist (even guaranteeing his overdraft at one stage) and in 1955 he painted a commissioned portrait of Robert and, in turn, three of Lisa – one of which her husband thought was one of the most beautiful pictures Bacon had ever painted. It is likely that Robert Sainsbury had met Power by this time as they were both involved with the ICA and had both collected Giacometti, César and Henri Michaux, among others. Their association continued into the 1960s and 1970s when they both became Trustees of the Tate, with Sainsbury serving as chairman from 1969 to 1973. One of their other mutual friends was Howard Hodgkin, who painted two pictures of the Sainsburys' house including *Dinner at Smith Square* (1975-9) as well as four works commissioned by Power, one of which *Mr and Mrs E J P* (1972-3) is in the Tate.

In the early 1970s parts of the Sainsburys' collection were loaned to exhibitions in New York and Holland and the public reaction was so positive that it was decided by the family that a suitable site should be found to display the entire collection and it fell to their son David to carry this out. Originally, Sainsbury wanted to choose Cambridge where he had been at university, but they both selected the new campus in Norwich because they could keep the whole collection together, and in 1973 the Sainsburys gifted more than 500 pieces for the opening of their Centre for Visual Arts. Their commitment to world art also resulted in the creation of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures which was founded in Norwich in 1999 and which houses the Lisa Sainsbury Library. Robert Sainsbury was knighted for services to the arts in 1967 and died aged 93 in 2000. He was a dedicated and hard working supporter of a range of cultural activities over many years but he retained his personal enthusiasm for the 'passionate acquiring' of art - more an emotional than an intellectual response - but always with an discerning eye for the quality of the works he collected. The range of the Sainsburys' interest in the visual arts is unsurpassed by any other British post-war collector and they undoubtedly made a most important contribution to the cultural life of this country.

**Sandy Wilson** (1922-2007) or, more correctly, Professor Sir Colin St Wilson ARA, RA was a renowned architect as well as an inspired collector of art from 1946 onwards. He is most famous for his acclaimed design of the new British Library and for his masterplan for the Royal Academy and the RA Schools. Wilson, of all the private collectors discussed in this section, was best known to Power. They served together as Trustees of the Tate and shared enthusiastic support for artists such as William Turnbull, Richard Hamilton, Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield and Howard Hodgkin. They both started collecting at

the end of the War and Wilson described his first purchase as a portrait by Spencer Gore:- ‘I had a £35 gratuity on being demobbed from the Navy and I suspect I bought it as the nearest thing that I could afford to a Sickert.’<sup>22</sup> He went on to collect a number of Sickerts as well as David Bomberg and William Coldstream and visited Paris where he met Brancusi, Giacometti and inevitably, Le Corbusier. He had a particular admiration for Nigel Henderson, an artist whom Wilson felt had not been given the credit he deserved. He spoke of Henderson as having pre-war contacts in Paris which enabled him to ‘act as bear leader on visits there, introducing the younger members of the Independent Group to their role models.’<sup>23</sup> As early as 1953, Wilson was getting to know the young artists emerging from the Royal College and the Slade and becoming involved with the Independent Group – even giving a lecture at one of their seminars on ‘Proportion and Symmetry’ appropriately enough. By 1956 that same Group together with Reyner Banham of the ‘Architectural Review’ and Lawrence Alloway, among others, had become involved with the idea for the ‘This is Tomorrow’ exhibition at the Whitechapel gallery in 1956 which can be described as a precursor to Pop Art. Wilson designed part of the layout of this rather chaotic show and changed the pattern of his collecting from then on to include Paolozzi, Hamilton, Turnbull and later on Ron Kitaj and Michael Andrews, who were to become his lifelong friends.

Wilson believed passionately in the symbiotic relationship between art and architecture and that the combination of the two can make a real difference to the overall effect of a building. He practised what he preached and the British Library has an enormous tapestry in the entrance hall by Kitaj and a powerful statue of Isaac Newton by Paolozzi in the courtyard – both key elements in his design from the start. When he became head of the Cambridge University School of Architecture in 1975, he continued to emphasise the importance of other cultural disciplines and carried this through to one of his last projects, the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester. The original gallery was in a Queen Anne town house which was restored in 1982 but the popularity of the exhibitions put on display there, eventually meant a much larger space was needed. This was a difficult challenge which Wilson with his wife and fellow architect, M. J. Long, achieved and the new building, opened in 2006, won the Gulbenkian award for public architecture. Wilson had carefully analysed the details of geometry and light so that the pictures and sculptures could be shown to the best advantage without affecting visitor access and all within the framework of an 18<sup>th</sup> century building. Wilson successfully maintained an interaction between his professional life as an architect of great sensibility and what one might call his amateur collecting of art.

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Colin St. John Wilson, Collector and Architect*, (Chichester, 2008) 30

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in *Apollo* magazine, (Sittingbourne, January 2007) 29

During the last two decades of his life, Wilson had given parts of his collection to various public galleries but on the completion of the Pallant House gallery, he gave all the remaining paintings and sculptures to it in the form of the Wilson Gift. There one can see an eclectic range of work by artists as varied as Frank Auerbach, Lucien Freud, Jann Haworth, Victor Willing and Patrick Caulfield. Wilson was a man of many talents, a disciple of Modernism in his professional life and also a perspicacious collector of paintings, usually by artists with whom he was personally involved. He was aware, even more than Power, of the emotional problem of selling a painting in order to buy another one, something most collectors have to face. His attitude towards acquiring art is best summed up by his friend Ron Kitaj who said:

Sandy lives in a quest for new factors in art often neglected by the most avid collectors of modern art. Many private collections are indistinguishable from so many others, fluent in the artspeak of the moment, but I would say that Sandy's collection, in its master's reflection, will be seen to be the most singular in these islands.<sup>24</sup>

This was one man's view, which could equally have been said about Power's collection but does not diminish the importance of Wilson and his generous legacy.

In conclusion, I would point out that, as one would expect, there was no pattern of British collecting in the thirty years after the War but it is interesting to note that few patrons, other than Power, made the transition from European to American art during that period. They supported British artists but generally they looked east rather than west when they decided to acquire paintings from foreign countries. Power's empirical attitude to art meant that although he tended to move from one artist or movement to another, he made sure that he bought in sufficient quantity to be able to really examine the work and choose which examples to keep. This was not a typical British way of collecting and could be regarded as the major difference between Power and the other collectors I have discussed. Power was always looking ahead and thought that artists were the 'antennae of the future' as he liked to say. As Nicholas Serota said about him, 'A defining characteristic of Ted was that he was always interested in the next generation.'<sup>25</sup> Even in his old age, Power continued to visit studios and attend openings - always with his eyes and his mind open to new ideas. He followed his instincts, listening as well as talking and often suggesting possible new paths for the creative people he admired so much. Leslie Waddington, his dealer and close friend for

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Wilson*, (Chichester, 2007) 36

<sup>25</sup> Track 1 on the DVD of my interviews.

many years, always felt that Power 'was one of the most curious minded people I've ever come across, who was always questioning. He was very Irish and liked conversation and he liked arguing.'<sup>26</sup> Power did indeed concern himself with the present and the future and rarely with the past – an aspect of his personality I will be discussing in the next stage of this work when I examine the pattern of his collecting.

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<sup>26</sup> Track 2 on the DVD of my interviews.

## Chapter 3

### A voyage of discovery – Dublin, London, Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen.

Ted Power's first purchase of what could be called contemporary art occurred in 1936 when he bought two black and white photographs by Laslo Moholy-Nagy the Hungarian artist, author, film-maker, photographer and teacher who was a colleague of Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus. When the School was closed by the National Socialists in 1933, Moholy-Nagy worked in various capacities in Europe before being invited by Herbert Read to come to London in 1936. There he was soon asked by Simpsons, the department store in Piccadilly, to take charge of the redesign of their decoration and floor arrangement. Power's eldest son, Alan, recalls that Power met Moholy-Nagy at that time, probably through Dick Russell who was by then working for Murphy Radio as a designer and who had been an admirer of the Bauhaus philosophy for many years. In the same year, Moholy-Nagy had a solo show of his photographs at the London Gallery and with extraordinary speed, produced three published albums of his work. I do not know whether Power bought the two photographs directly from the artist or from the gallery, but Alan Power remembers that one was of a cat (*Cat Negative*, c.1926) and one of a street scene taken from a height of 100 feet (*View from a Rooftop*, c.1929).<sup>27</sup>

From 1936 until 1944, Power was busy developing his company and, during the War, producing military communication equipment and radar sets, with no time to indulge his nascent interest in art. He had been stationed in Lowestoft for part of his time in the Royal Navy in 1917 and he and his family had spent annual holidays there in the 1930s. Towards the end of the War, it became possible to revisit the town and Power used to spend afternoons there and in Great Yarmouth, browsing in the small galleries which sold paintings by East Anglian artists such as John Sell Cotman and John Crome. Power bought two seascapes by Cotman and a small landscape by Crome but no information is available about them. They were, however, some of the very few pre-20<sup>th</sup> century pictures he ever acquired.

By the late 1940s, Power was taking regular golfing holidays in Ireland and in 1950 he came to Dublin and met the art dealer Victor Waddington. He has been described as 'one of the most powerful forces in introducing modernism to the Irish public. He had a seventh sense in picking his artists'.<sup>28</sup>

Waddington had graduated from picture framing and print selling to become a far-seeing and successful art dealer in Dublin representing some of the leading Irish painters of the time including

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Brancusi to Beuys, Works from the Ted Power Collection*, edited by Jennifer Mundy, (London, 1996)

<sup>22</sup> Thereafter - Mundy

<sup>28</sup> Brian Fallon, *Irish Art*, (Belfast, 1994) 171

such figures as Jack Yeats, Colin Middleton and Daniel O'Neill. It is worthwhile considering the work of these three artists because they were the first to strike a chord with Power and their expressionistic and in one case, later abstract, styles opened his eyes to the world of contemporary art. It was remarkable that someone with an untrained eye should appreciate such work when the figurative paintings of Sir William Orpen and Sir John Lavery were still the most sought after in Dublin.

Jack Yeats (1871-1957) was 79 when Power first saw his work in 1950 and he was a very well-established Irish painter who had been exhibited in the National Gallery in London (1942) and in Dublin (1945) and had had a retrospective at the Tate in 1948. He was the most Irish of the three painters under discussion and his love for his country and its myths and history was coupled with a deep understanding of its ordinary people. Yeats painted real people and his great skill was to install them in an imaginary setting and by the subtlety and complexity of his imagery and colour, allow them to speak for all men and women. His late paintings showed his own pictorial language to the full, a rhythm of colour and texture that became almost abstract. Power, probably under the guidance of Victor Waddington, responded to this and to the obvious Irishness of Yeats's paintings and in 1951 he bought *Westard the Morning* (1947) and two years later, *The Challenger* (1951).

Daniel O'Neill (1920-1974) was a younger artist than Yeats, equally Irish but also the most figurative of the three. He painted in two distinct styles. First, delicate, dreamlike landscapes which reflected his love of nature but a forlorn, rather desolate nature in which he expressed his own personality and consciousness. His other work was much more realistic, showing the hard life of rural Irish working people. One of his paintings bought by Power in the year it was painted, *Figures in a Landscape* (1952) is a throwback to the dreadful period of the Irish potato famine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. O'Neill had a more restrained palette than either Yeats or Middleton but his paintings are often emotionally charged and this could have possibly appealed to the Irish side of Power's character. It is reasonable to deduce that O'Neill's work was a staging post in Power's learning curve for he sold the three pictures he had bought the following year, although he might have seen further examples when Arthur Tooth arranged a solo show for O'Neill in London in 1952.

Colin Middleton (1910-1983) was a very different artist to O'Neill, continually experimenting through Surrealism, then Cubism, then as an expressionistic figurative painter until finally developing in the 1950s his own language which has been defined as 'a crisp abstraction which sometimes echoes the work of Pasmore.'<sup>29</sup> Middleton was technically skilled although impulsive in style but when he was painting his most sensitive work in the 1950s, the effect was of the highest quality. He was actively

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<sup>29</sup> Kenneth McConkey, *A Free Spirit- Irish Art 1860-1960*, (London, 1990) 202



promoted by Victor Waddington from 1949 and soon achieved a wider international reputation with an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston in 1952 and participation in Tooth's 'Five Irish Painters' show (along with O'Neill) in London in the same year. Power bought four paintings at that exhibition including Middleton's *June, Ballyclandon* (1952) which, interestingly, was not an abstract work but more a rather sentimental Irish landscape, as well as another O'Neill portrait *Haide* (1952).

It would appear that Power was still experimenting in his quest to find art which 'spoke' to him. He was still being influenced by the persuasive Victor Waddington and by his own boyhood Irish memories which were all the more nostalgic because he had been made to leave Ireland at a young age. It was not until he met Peter Cochrane, a director of Tooths, at their Irish exhibition in 1952 that the pattern of his collecting would look beyond Ireland to England and continental Europe. Arthur Tooth & Sons, founded in 1842 was a famous London gallery which had specialised in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century British painters, but after the Second World War, Cochrane and another partner, David Gibbs, began to shift the emphasis towards contemporary art. Cochrane became a life-long friend of Power's and, at least in the early days of his collecting, introduced him to the work of new artists both in Europe and the United States. The other London gallery used by Power from the early 1950s was Gimpel Fils which had been founded in 1946 by Charles and Peter Gimpel. They used the word 'Fils' in the name of their gallery in honour of their father René who had been a notable dealer in pre-war Paris and was the author of the famous book *Diary of an Art Dealer* in which he amusingly recounted his experiences with the likes of Claude Monet and Auguste Renoir. The two Gimpel brothers were adept at spotting rising talent and were exhibiting the work of William Gear, Richard Hamilton, Alan Davie, William Turnbull and Patrick Heron as early as 1949 and 1950. More importantly, they also showed European artists and by the time Power had begun to buy from them, they already had represented for some time artists such as Jean-Paul Riopelle, Bernard Buffet and Victor Vasarely, all of whose work Power subsequently purchased.

In 1952, two other events occurred in London which indirectly affected Power's future collecting. The first was the appointment of Bryan Robertson as Director of the Whitechapel Gallery and the second was the exhibition of Nicolas de Stael's paintings at the Mathiesen Gallery which had a profound effect on so many British artists.

Robertson had learnt the commercial side of the art market at the Lefevre Gallery in London before realising his true *métier* at the Heffer Gallery in Cambridge where he organised an eclectic series of exhibitions featuring artists as diverse as Henry Moore and Lucie Rie. He also curated an important show of contemporary French painting at the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1951 with works by Bonnard,

Braque and Picasso which stood him in good stead when he applied, at the young age of 27, for the directorship of the Whitechapel against strong competition from the likes of Lawrence Alloway and David Sylvester. From then until 1968, Robertson brought an extraordinary range of contemporary British, European and American artists to the east end of London, in many cases giving the public their first sight of such work. By the time he left in 1968 to take up a new post in New York, Robertson had left an indelible mark on the London art world as Bridget Riley acknowledged:

The British contemporary art scene after the war was marked by an infectious apathy and vicious insularity. What Bryan Robertson did at the Whitechapel was simply this: he made people aware of the developments outside these islands, he provided a focus for British artists and encouraged them to work in an international context.<sup>30</sup>

Although Power was not on such close terms with Robertson as he was with Norman Reid at the Tate, he admired what Robertson had achieved at the Whitechapel and he visited the gallery regularly. It is likely that he saw the 'British Painting and Sculpture' exhibition in 1954 and by the following year, because of his friendship with Alloway and Turnbull, Power became closely involved with the 'This is Tomorrow' exhibition and began to meet Robertson on a more frequent basis.

Nicolas de Stael (1914-1955), was comparatively unknown outside France until his 1952 solo exhibition in London which was a very important milestone in his short-lived career. He had started painting purely abstract pictures in the 1940s using patches of dark paint applied with a palette knife on top of bright linear colour bases, but by the time of his Mathiesen show he had become more figurative using his blocks of colour to represent people or objects yet never losing the impastoed, painterly quality. De Stael's stylised arrangements of pure form and his vivid juxtapositions of colour, half-way between abstraction and figuration, appealed to a number of British artists - most of whom had not seen examples of American Abstract Expressionism at that time. In his essay for the catalogue of the 1956 Whitechapel exhibition (the year after the artist's tragic suicide) Denys Sutton made a surprising observation when he noted that de Stael in 1951-2 felt that his style of painting had reached a full stop. It was a casual visit to a football match played at night, that triggered off a change of direction. 'It enabled him to take risks. The intensity of the contact between the players, the *jeu*, as he expressed it, of the *rouge et bleu* compelled him actually to represent the figures'.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Robertson's obituary in The Independent 26/11/2002.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in catalogue *Nicolas de Stael*, Tate Gallery (London, 1981) 15

note that Power bought one of de Stael's subsequent footballer paintings in 1955, *Les footballeurs sous les éclairages*, although it would be incorrect to infer that he preferred the more figurative work as he also bought five other paintings which were more abstract. Power's 1954 purchases of ten of de Stael's works will be discussed later in my dissertation as part of the section on L'École de Paris.

By 1953, Power's connection with Tooths and with Peter Cochrane had begun to grow stronger and although he continued to buy Irish art, in particular Daniel O'Neill, probably as a result of that artist's solo show at Tooths the previous year, he turned his attention for the first time to some of the English and French painters attached to the gallery. He started with Matthew Smith an artist who had been strongly influenced by French painting. Smith went to Paris in 1908 and although his work, with its simplified areas of strong flat colour owes something to the Fauve tradition, by the 1920s he had developed his own rugged interpretation of nude portraiture and still life with a painterliness and luminous colour much admired by later artists such as Howard Hodgkin. Patrick Heron when writing about the Tooths 1952 exhibition felt that Smith 'draws in colour – his painting is all about painting.'<sup>32</sup> Power bought a striking earlier work *Anemones in a Blue Vase* (1928) in Smith's more traditional style but full of bold swirls of colour and vigorous brushstrokes. He also continued with his exploration of older painters by purchasing a typical late Alfred Sisley *L'abreuvoir* (1891) which shows the artist's fascination with the sky together with the influence of Monet in his treatment of the water in a lake. Power then acquired one of Walter Sickert's Venetian paintings *Santa Maria Della Salute* (1896). Although Sickert was well known for his urban pictures of music hall actors and theatre musicians, in the 1890s he began to paint architectural subjects when he wintered abroad and Power's choice was a good example of this genre with a beautifully executed view across the lagoon.

By the end of that year, however, it would appear that Power had had enough of looking backward and he asked Cochrane to find him some non-figurative works by some of the younger British artists. This was an important shift, but it is worth re-emphasising that Power had always been at the cutting edge of technology in his own field and he would therefore have been more likely to look towards artists who were trying out new ideas and one can assume that Cochrane was very much aware of this as a result of conversations with his new client. Cochrane turned to Charles Gimpel who represented two artists whose work would introduce Power to the art of the present rather than of the past. It happened that Gimpel had organised in that same year (1953), a solo exhibition of Donald Hamilton Fraser's student work in addition to the first paintings he had produced in Paris where he had been studying on a scholarship. There he had seen and been influenced by some of the painters of L'École de Paris and

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<sup>32</sup> Patrick Heron, *Matthew Smith*, The New Statesman (London, April 1952)

he incorporated their ideas of colour and surface texture in his own figurative landscapes and especially, his almost hard-edged, seascapes. Power bought his *Beachscape, Incoming Tide* (1953). He also bought a painting by another Gimpel artist, Peter Kinley (1926-1988), who had come to England as a refugee from Vienna in 1938 and had served in the British Army during the War. Kinley had been selected for the 'Young Contemporaries' exhibition at the RBA Galleries in 1951 while still a student at St Martin's School of Art and he was one of the artists strongly affected by the de Stael exhibition at Mathiesens in 1952. He began to use thickly painted blocks of colour to represent outdoor scenes and studio still-lives and it is likely that Kinley's impasto style was a precursor, in Power's eyes at least, of the de Stael pictures he subsequently acquired. Power bought two of Kinley's paintings one of which was *Landscape* (1953).

In November 1953, Power took a major step forward in his collecting career when he acquired his first truly abstract painting – *Peinture 19 Novembre 1951* by Pierre Soulages (b.1919), again from Charles Gimpel. This was probably done on the recommendation of Peter Cochrane who was beginning to come to terms with Power's developing enthusiasm for new ideas in art. Soulages is most famous for his black paintings and black meant more to him than just another colour on his palette. 'Black is an element I like', he said, 'the more the means are limited, the stronger the expression'.<sup>33</sup> He felt that black was the most intense, the most violent, absence of colour which heightened other shades round it or in it. Soulages painted trees in winter when he was younger because they were like black abstract sculptures to him, but by the late 1940s he had begun 'to group his large brush strokes into a sign which could be read at a single glance, in an abrupt way. Movement is no longer described; it becomes tension, movement under control, that is to say dynamism'.<sup>34</sup> It is possible that Power with his technical background, could have understood what Soulages meant by dynamism expressed through flat, linear, black shapes repeated across the canvas so that a spatial rhythm is created. Power bought three more Soulages pictures over the next few years before disposing of all of them in 1960.

After his initial foray into continental European art, Power turned again to an English painter, William Brooker (1918-1983), whom he first saw at Tooths and who later became a long-standing friend. Brooker was a more conventional artist who had originally been influenced by the theatrical scenes which Sickert painted so successfully, but by the early 1950s he was concentrating on studio-based work. Power's first purchase was *The Striped Tablecloth* (1953) which was reminiscent of the work of Edouard Vuillard of the Nabi School, with its static, carefully observed patterns of textile colours. Interestingly, Power bought a Vuillard the following year on his first visit to Paris with Peter

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<sup>33</sup> J J Sweeney, *Soulages*, (London, 1972) 13

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* 22

Cochrane, but also four more Brookers in the next few years. Brooker was one of the post-war British artists who managed to combine effectively both teaching and painting and he went on to become Principal of Wimbledon College of Art where he taught Howard Hodgkin, who much admired his tutorial methods.

William Turnbull (b.1922) was a life-long friend of Power's and someone whose sculptures and paintings he bought regularly through all the phases of Turnbull's creative development. They were introduced to each other in the early 1950s by Peter Cochrane who had probably seen Turnbull's work at a 1950 joint exhibition with Eduardo Paolozzi at the Hanover Gallery. This had been curated by David Sylvester (an early champion of both artists, who went on to become an influential art critic and writer on contemporary art, regularly meeting Power over the next three decades). Turnbull had been a forward thinking artist from a young age, living in Paris from 1947-1950 with no scholarships or grants because he felt the English art scene after the Second World War was sterile and obsessed with the past. While in France, he seized the opportunity to meet his idol, Brancusi. 'I just knocked on his door and surprisingly, this bearded figure told me to come in and look around. Very unusual!'<sup>35</sup> Turnbull also met Giacometti who made a strong impact on him and influenced much of his future work, such as his *Idols* series. With Paolozzi, he also visited the Foyer de l'Art Brut in Paris where he first came across the ideas and the work of Jean Dubuffet who became a source of inspiration to both artists. By the time he returned to London, Turnbull had therefore a much wider cultural perspective than many of his English contemporaries. He had read Klee and shared his belief that 'artwork is a process involving the artist, the work and the spectator, not a fait accompli.'<sup>36</sup> He became interested in movement and one of his important early sculptures *Mobile Stabile* (1949) reflects this.

Turnbull had and still has an instinctively questioning mind and frequently disagreed with what he regarded as the art establishment. Although he was supportive of the newly formed ICA in the 1940s and even took part in their 1950 exhibition 'Aspects of British Art' along with Paolozzi and Hamilton, he found the attitudes of the ICA towards British art too negative. Turnbull found that his two fellow artists agreed with him and so they met a number of other like-minded people such as Nigel Henderson, Reyner Banham and Lawrence Alloway to form a small informal gathering which became known as the Independent Group. For the next three years, the IG (as they were later known) organised a series of seminars on the 'Aesthetic Problems of Contemporary Art' many of which were concerned with modern design and new technology and their relationship with art. The design and technology elements were areas in which Power had been involved for many years and it is likely that

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<sup>35</sup> Track 17 on the DVD of my interviews.

<sup>36</sup> A Davidson, *The Sculpture of William Turnbull*, (Much Hadham, 2005) 8

Turnbull showed him how they were relevant to wider cultural aspects. Turnbull himself gave a joint lecture with the architect Fello Atkinson on 'New Concepts in Space' in which they discussed the idea of space existing inside a work of art and the separation of volume from solid mass.<sup>37</sup>

Turnbull recalls meeting Power around this time and finding a common interest in the modernist designs of Murphy Radio's radio and television cabinets. Turnbull was also instrumental in introducing Power to the kind of contemporary art which he would not normally have seen. An example was the important 1953 IG exhibition called 'Parallel of Life and Art' which challenged the viewer's perception of what was beautiful and worthy of inclusion in an art gallery by hanging big photographs of images from newspapers, magazines and scientific journals. Many of these were of radio valves and television sets and Bryan Robertson when reviewing the exhibition in 'Art News and Review' commented that 'the barriers between the artist, the scientist and the technician are dissolving in a singularly potent way'.<sup>38</sup> This would have appealed to Power and certainly the IG felt that society was being restructured by the new technology of mass media and mass-produced consumer goods – and no society more so than in America. One of the IG lectures given by Toni del Renzio in 1953 was on the subject of American Abstract Expressionism and followed on from an ICA exhibition 'Opposing Forces' earlier in the same year which included work by Jackson Pollock, Sam Francis and Georges Mathieu (Power bought works by all of these painters within the next few years).

There are a number of reasons why Turnbull and Power remained friends for so many years apart from the mutual admiration they felt for their respective skills. Turnbull's sculptures offered the viewer a mystery rather than a narrative; they were deliberately ambiguous but their meaning could be understood by anyone with ordinary experience of materials and artefacts. The idea that Turnbull's sculptures emerged from the working process rather than from a pre-existing art concept would have been appreciated by Power and he bought a sculpture, *Head 1* (1955) and a painting *Diptych* (1955) in 1956 and continued to support his friend for the next three decades. Both men were also interested in the idea of innovative design for domestic products and to this end, Power suggested that Turnbull should visit his factory in Welwyn Garden City on a regular basis to discuss ideas with the Murphy Radio design team. Turnbull obliged and worked on two television sets:

One was to have a transparent case while the other was to be covered with blue goat skin or something exotic, and both were to be placed on pull-out tracks. They were never meant for

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<sup>37</sup> A Massey, *The Independent Group, Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945-59*, (Manchester, 1995) 140

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid* 60.

production and Turnbull describes the experience as an early example of Power's attachment to the concepts underlying the chaos theory<sup>39</sup>

The philosophical implications of this theory were certainly discussed by the two men, often at the many Sunday lunches they enjoyed together in later years. Turnbull's wife, the sculptor Kim Lim and Leslie Waddington, the art dealer, also attended many of those lively debates. Turnbull's later sculptures became simpler and calmer without losing their inner strength and he used texture, marks and different patinas in ways to distance his work from naturalistic sculpture. He was a genuine 'cross-over' artist and his abstract, colourful paintings sometimes influenced his works in bronze – above all he was remarkably consistent in quality and inventiveness with his own personal vocabulary in both media. Although many of his sculptures had references to antiquity, Turnbull is unmistakably modern and he has no doctrinaire attitude towards his work which is more intuitive than theoretical, attributes to which Power responded.

1954 was an important year for Power as the pace of his collecting began to quicken. He made his first visit to Paris with Peter Cochrane of Tooths and began to buy works in some quantity, both there and in London, by artists of the L'École de Paris. The artists he was drawn to in that first year included Maurice Brianchon, Bernard Buffet, the Spanish artist Antoni Clavé as well as André Minaux and Paul Rebeyrolle. As this was a further stage in Power's collecting career, I would like to discuss some of these painters to try to establish what attracted Power to their work and whether they led him on to more important artists or were just painters that Cochrane happened to stock. Tooths, it should be noted, held solo exhibitions for Brianchon, Buffet and Clavé in 1955 but, as was often the case, Power had bought their paintings the year before.

Maurice Brianchon (1899-1979) was influenced by Matisse and used brightly coloured textile patterns to highlight his nude studies and still-lives which he painted in the studio in the 1930s and 1940s. He later moved *en plein air* to paint landscapes and a series of pictures of St Jean de Luz which became popular as prints and were reproduced as late as 1964. Rather surprisingly, Brianchon was asked in 1953 by the British government to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth and record the event in another series of paintings which brought his work to the attention of the London art market. Power bought examples of both types of Brianchon's work when he acquired *Nu* (undated) and *Le compotier de cerises* (1942) followed by *Plage à St Jean de Luz* (1951) and *Paysage de Dordogne* (1953) which were more reminiscent of Post Impressionism than some of the other French artists Power subsequently bought that

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<sup>39</sup> Mundy 18

year. It was almost as if he was beginning with the established figures in European painting before deciding if their work meant anything to him.

Bernard Buffet (1928-1999) was a very popular artist with the general public in France and Britain in the 1950s and his prints and posters hung in many a student bedroom. He was extremely prolific and achieved fame at a young age which led some critics to decry his work and it must be said that Buffet does seem almost out of place in Power's collection. As the Musée Bernard Buffet notes 'his style can be recognised by a network of "dry" straight lines, grey faces, wrinkled foreheads, scarce straight hair and tensed hands in only greys, black and greens'.<sup>40</sup> Over the next two years, Power bought three *Tête de femme* paintings (1950, 1953, 1955), two still-lives, two flower paintings and a harbour scene before selling them all in the early 1960s. This was a familiar pattern of Power's collecting, although in most cases he kept one or two examples of an artist's work if they still meant something to him.

With Antoni Clavé (1913-2005) one can begin to see the first signs of Power's interest in the process as an end in itself. Although based in Paris, Clavé was a Catalan from Barcelona who had sided with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War and consequently had to flee to France in 1938. He later worked as a stage designer before being encouraged by his friend Picasso to paint full-time and one can see Picasso's influence in Clavé's flat figures although they owe nothing to Cubism and have more to do with the idea of graffiti and the textures of walls. Clavé mixed scraps of newspapers with paint to give a collage effect which he used effectively in two of his pictures bought by Power in 1954, *L'atelier fond gris* (1954) and *L'atelier fond jaune* (1954) as well as two 1955 paintings both called *Le cavalier* and one entitled *Trois figures* (1954). In all these paintings, Clavé's figures are totemic with the heads often in profile and set in square blocks of white against a heavily worked background like a wall. Over the next two years, Power acquired 14 of these enigmatic works, some of which he kept and handed down to his family. They seem to me to represent a distinct move on Power's part towards European abstraction and led him to more readily understand the work of Dubuffet which he saw for the first time the following year. Clavé's symbolism obviously struck a chord with Power because a few years later he wrote in his personal notes at some length about both symbols and symbolism in the context of various artists whose work he was examining at the time.<sup>41</sup>

Power's enthusiasm for the paintings he saw in Paris that year extended to two of the greatest painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Picasso and Matisse. His purchase of Picasso's *Tête de femme* (1953) is well remembered by Power's daughter, Janet. 'I came home from college on a visit and my mother's beloved

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<sup>40</sup> Musée Bernard Buffet on [www.museebernardbuffet.com](http://www.museebernardbuffet.com) (June 2008)

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix 1



Sisley was down and in its place was a picture of a cross-eyed woman trying to stare at me. My father never pushed us to like a new painting, he just suggested we look at it, talk about it and see if something develops - and often it did'.<sup>42</sup> The Matisse picture was a somewhat curious choice for Power and it could be that he only bought it because it was available and reasonably priced – a common practice among many collectors. It was a sketch-like landscape of the famous alabaster cliffs at Étretat in Normandy painted in 1921 and appears to be contrary to Power's normal custom of buying the best work of each artist. At the same time, he acquired another more traditional French picture in *La grandmère* (1892) by Edouard Vuillard who like Matisse was interested in textile patterns and who painted them in soft, blurred colours as a backdrop to his family portraits.

Back in London, Power continued to purchase Soulages with his *Peinture 18 fevrier* (1952) and Brooker with his atmospheric picture *The Red Lamp* (1954) but he also bought a conventional still-life *Fruit on a Plate* (1943) by Adrian Ryan (1920-1998) from the Redfern Gallery, which had consistently supported this artist. Ryan became a lecturer at Goldsmiths College and later at Cambridge University and it not clear if he ever met Power. But he once stated his approach to painting, which matched Power's view:

Man is not a camera. The object of his painting is not to copy but to express one's delight in the colours, shapes, form and relationships of the objects of one's contemplation.<sup>43</sup>

By the autumn of 1954, however, Power had moved on from representational still-lives no matter how well painted, and through Cochrane at Tooths he bought ten paintings by Nicolas de Stael. As this action was such a fundamental shift in Power's collecting career, it would be useful to list these pictures because they belonged to the artist's more recent figurative works (but with obvious elements of abstraction) and they were the first example of Power buying in quantity. Many of the writers and critics in Britain at the time regarded de Stael as one of the most original painters to emerge since World War Two and his 1952 London show, already mentioned, influenced a number of younger British artists. That exhibition had taken place only a few months earlier, when Power made his positive commitment to de Stael and both Peter Cochrane and Charles Gimpel then no doubt realised that a major new collector had arrived on the London art scene. The ten paintings were:

*Palette fond brun* (1954), *Route d'Uzes* (1954), *Canal à Gravelines* (1954), *Grisaille* (1954), *Nature morte au fond jaune* (1953), *Marina à Dieppe* (1952)\*, *Bateaux gris* (1953), *Deux poires et pommes* (1954), *Une pomme* (1954) and *Nature morte poires, fond oranges et vert* (1954). \*(Figure 1)

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<sup>42</sup> Conversation with Power's daughter (2007)

<sup>43</sup> 'Still Life Painting Techniques' by Adrian Ryan on [www.adrianryan.co.uk](http://www.adrianryan.co.uk). (June, 2008)

Power continued to acquire de Stael paintings over the next three years including some of his purely abstract work such as *Composition* (1951) and *Composition* (1954) as his confidence in his own perception grew. *Composition* (1951), is full of subtle shades of grey and was purchased by the Tate from Power in 1980 and is an example ‘of signalling not so much that the images are non-representational but they had been literally ‘composed’, using areas or blocks of carefully modulated colour to create the impression of light, space and movement’.<sup>44</sup> De Stael was Power’s first taste of *Tachisme*, part of the French art movement sometimes called *L’Art Informel* and characterised by the intuitive and spontaneous, almost haphazard use of colourful drips and blobs of paint to create work which broke away from the restraints of Cubism and was more relevant in a postwar context. Power seemed to respond to the idea of free spontaneity and de Stael himself talked about the absence of an *a priori* aesthetic. ‘I lose contact with the canvas every moment and find it again and lose it. This is absolutely necessary because I believe in accident’.<sup>45</sup> Once Power grasped the fundamental philosophy behind *Tachisme*, he looked for other artists who were working to the same principles and pursued a line from Georges Mathieu and Wols (Wolfgang Schulze) to Sam Francis, Henri Michaux and Jean-Paul Riopelle - all of whose work he bought in future years.

In 1955 Power bought seven paintings by Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985) and began a relationship with the artist and his work which lasted until Dubuffet’s death. Power purchased more pictures by Dubuffet than by any other artist he collected and he owned 64 by 1962 and over 80 by the early 1970s. Because Dubuffet was such an important artist for Power and because of their long-standing friendship, I think it would be worthwhile trying to assess what attributes in the artist’s work over many phases so attracted Power as a collector. It seems to me that one of the most fundamental of these is the unfinished character of so many of his paintings. Dubuffet appeals to the imagination of the viewer to interpret the work in his own way and give his own meaning to it. The former Surrealist Georges Limbour said ‘That is why lazy minds are not attracted very much by Dubuffet’s painting – it leaves them to do half the work’.<sup>46</sup> This would have appealed to Power instinctively with his empirical mind although I think it unlikely that Power at that time knew about Dubuffet’s long-held rejection of ‘culture’ and all the classifications of art. Dubuffet gave a lecture to the Arts Club in Chicago in 1951 in which he stated one aspect of his work that again would have had Power’s full agreement – ‘For myself, I am for an art which would be in immediate connection with daily life and which would be a very direct and sincere expression of our real life and our

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<sup>44</sup> Mundy 34.

<sup>45</sup> D Brett (ed) *Modern Art*, (London, 1989) 297.

<sup>46</sup> G Limbour, *An Overview of Jean Dubuffet’s Work*, (1958) E J Power archive

real moods'.<sup>47</sup> This was true up to a point but one of the other aspects of Dubuffet's painting – its sheer savagery and violence – would not necessarily have attracted Power to the same degree. Already in 1955, Power in his private notes to himself, was defining what he looked for in a painting. 'Something which emanates a 'sense' of its meaning in the simplest possible terms. A strong sense rather than a pictorial detail and this sense can be violent or peaceful. I prefer the peaceful.'<sup>48</sup> Power also analyses the symbols in Dubuffet's work in a perceptive way in these notes by stressing 'the strong rhythmic lines, busy, sometimes being unpleasantly ridiculous to other humans.'

Dubuffet and Clavé were probably the first exponents of *matière* painting that Power had come across. The idea of adding other materials such as sand, tar and even pieces of glass to the paint to create a composite medium (called *hautes pâtes* by Dubuffet) into which the artist incised images with a scraper or a trowel or even his own fingers, could well have been appreciated by someone who had designed and built radios and who retained his 'hands on' approach to life into old age. Power believed that innovation or progress could only be achieved by means of intellectual and physical struggle which was a view shared by Dubuffet who argued that 'art should be the product of a competitive interaction between the artist, his tools and his medium and that the finished work should retain the marks of that struggle'.<sup>49</sup> Power talked later in his life about the extraordinary contrast between the various phases of Dubuffet's art which never stopped developing and made him continue collecting his work for more than 30 years. He believed that the best way to fully appreciate Dubuffet's progression as an artist, was to collect a key example from all the series of paintings he produced over the years, and this was exactly what Power did.<sup>50</sup> He seemed to understand that Dubuffet's paintings were more complex than when first viewed, almost as if the artist's well known fascination with the simpler, non-professional 'outsider art' of mental patients and children, disguised the deeper meanings inherent in the work. For long periods, Dubuffet was obsessed with the surface texture of his paintings. He felt that the surface of the canvas must speak its own language and Power, too, found the subject endlessly interesting. He wrote about this in his personal notes in 1957:

To make symbols as directly perceptive and communicative as possible is the aim, so use  
TEXTURE to reduce colour and/or line complication and fussiness to convey some attribute and

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<sup>47</sup> J Dubuffet, *Anticultural Positions*, (1951) E J Power archive.

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>49</sup> J Dubuffet, *Notes for the Well-Read*, (1945) E J Power archive.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 3

so help towards simplification and directness. Texture very, very important – latter rises as simplification becomes more imperative.<sup>51</sup>

Dubuffet's thick, textured, dark surfaces removed the need for colour and yet produced a finished painting of great power. An example of this is *Grand paysage noir* (1946) which Power acquired in 1958 and is now in the Tate. Here the flat plane is scratched like graffiti on a wall and one must study it carefully to discover adults and children and houses. The same concept of a flattened image on a two-dimensional plane is taken to the extreme with Dubuffet's famous *Corps de dames* series. Power bought three of these distorted paintings in which Dubuffet was trying to make people reevaluate their ideas of female beauty that he believed were falsely based on antique Greek imagery and subsequent Western culture. Even today, these pictures are difficult to come to terms with. One of them, bought later by Power in 1961 and titled *L'arbre de fluides* (1950) can be seen in the Tate. Power continued to acquire Dubuffet's work even when in 1962, the artist changed direction yet again and arbitrarily restricted his palette to red, white and blue within a strong keyline of black. This Hourloupe style began originally as a doodle using a ballpoint pen, but soon developed into colourful, striking paintings of people and their relationships with each other and the world. Dubuffet used his childlike, cartoon figures to challenge our ideas of reality and the 'proper' place of objects in our society. He later went on to make huge Hourloupe sculptures in the same style using white polystyrene as a medium although I can find no evidence that Power ever acquired any. It seems to me that both men were down-to-earth, practical people who disliked pretension and were looking for truthfulness and reality in art, each in their own way and from their own perspective. They both felt that argument about different styles is sterile – there is only good art or bad art, but they both shared a tendency to '*épater les bourgeois*' as Howard Hodgkin said in my interview with him.

Power could possibly have seen examples of Dubuffet's *matière* paintings at the first British exhibition of his work organised by Roland Penrose at the ICA in 1955 (although the show was largely ignored by the critics) but by September of that year he had visited the Galerie Rive Gauche in Paris to meet Rudy Augustinci and buy four quite different Dubuffet paintings. *Le sang vif* (1955) and *L'homme au papillon* (1955) were both colourful portraits with some elements of humour. *Visiteur au chapeau bleu* (1955) was a busy city scene and *Les deux deserteurs* (1953) was an example of Dubuffet's frequent distortion of scale and dimensions which Power enjoyed so much. It is interesting to note that the gallery owner wrote immediately to Dubuffet to tell him about '*un nouveau client anglais*'.<sup>52</sup> The artist replied and thus began years of correspondence between Dubuffet, Power and Cochrane of Tooths. It is not clear when Power

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<sup>51</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>52</sup> Cochrane papers (uncatalogued) Box 5 in the Tate Archive.

and Dubuffet first met, but by 1959 Power wrote a postcard to Cochrane telling about a visit he had made to the Dubuffet household in Vence where he had met ‘ Dubuffet and femme, very hospitable and friendly’.<sup>53</sup> The artist showed Power some of his *Éléments botaniques* series on that occasion. The two men exchanged Christmas cards for years and met when Dubuffet was in London or whenever Power visited Paris or Vence. On one such visit, Power met the Danish artist, Asger Jorn who was experimenting with Dubuffet on the idea of combining music with painting, presumably as a sort of precursor of Performance Art. The rest of the group that day included Power’s wife, Rene, together with Lawrence Alloway and his artist wife, Sylvia Sleigh, and Peter Cochrane. They were all dragooned to join a musical session which Power recalled years later to Guy Atkins, the CoBrA specialist:

Dubuffet went on the double bass. Asger was on a little harmonium in the corner. And then Sylvia, Lawrence, Peter, Rene and I were given a long table where we found some little pipes, silver paper to shake, rattles and God knows what .... It was marvellous because at first it was just cacophony. We were roaring with laughter. Dubuffet wasn’t laughing, he was deadly serious. But Asger from his corner was winking at us. The odd thing was that after five minutes, it all dropped into place and everybody was doing things at the right moment and it wasn’t bad.’<sup>54</sup>

In his usual focussed way, Dubuffet carried on with his musical experiments and produced a work of 20 pieces called *Nez Casse* in 1960.

In addition to purchasing more work by Clavé, Buffet and Brooker, all of whom had solo exhibitions at Tooths in 1955, Power bought three of de Stael’s more abstract paintings and a Soulages, before moving on to another phase of his collecting career. In that same year he acquired his first pictures by Karel Appel (1921-2006) from the CoBrA school and his first American paintings by the abstract artist, Paul Jenkins. It would appear that Power was still pursuing his policy of keeping an open mind when approaching new art, still looking at alternative ways of understanding what artists were trying to say but certainly in the case of Appel, there was a direct link with Dubuffet. The two artists met in Paris in 1950 when Appel moved there from his native Amsterdam having had his commissioned mural in the City Hall covered up on the orders of the Council. The Council members were disconcerted by Appel’s turbulent, sinister depictions of children painted in bold, swirling colours contained within heavy black lines like a child’s drawing. Appel, like Dubuffet, was fascinated by the *Art Brut* paintings of children and mentally-ill people which to both artists were more truthful than the Western rationalistic approach they had rejected as being no longer meaningful after the horrors of war. I will be commenting on the CoBrA

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Mundy 14

movement and Appel's links to it when I discuss the work of the Danish artist, Asger Jorn later in this dissertation, because the first two Appel pictures bought by Power were painted in Paris after the artist had split from the Group to follow his own path. They were *Tête* (1954)\* a textured, mask-like image in thick impasto and *Composition* (1955) a more abstract work full of bright, sweeping brushstrokes which give one the impression of frenetic spontaneity.\*(Figure 2) Although Power bought further examples of Appel's work over the next two years, he obviously found the paintings of Jorn more stimulating and rewarding.

Paul Jenkins (b.1923) is an interesting American painter who has not yet been given the recognition he deserves in my opinion. Power came across his work in 1955 when he visited Paris with Peter Cochrane to buy his first Dubuffets and was impressed by the highly unusual technique used by Jenkins at that time – something he saw again many years later in the work of Morris Louis. The artist often poured paint on to the surface in a controlled manner and then manipulated the whole canvas to give liquid skeins and stains of colour. Power's first purchase, *The Leap* (1955) is an example of this style. At other times, Jenkins painted huge pictures with veils of translucent colour which owed something to the works of Mathieu and Wols, two artists whom he had met and admired when he lived in Paris in the 1950s. Jenkins had previously known Jackson Pollock in America (Lee Krasner was in fact staying at his studio in Paris when she had the telephone call to tell her of her husband's fatal car accident) and the idea of large scale painting was not new to him. Although Jenkins knew the Gimpel family well, it was Cochrane and Tooths who invited him to participate in a group show in London in 1957 called 'The Exploration of Paint' and the gallery showed his work in solo shows regularly from then until the 1970s. It is likely that Power, in his usual practical way, was interested in the whole subject of paint application and that he experimented with artists such as Jenkins and Wols to learn more about their techniques as well as their subjective improvisation. Jenkins, who was not aligned with American Abstract Expressionism, does seem to be the first artist Power had experienced who thought in terms of a scale which would be one of the hallmarks of American painting in the future.

Jenkins was also not the only American artist bought by Power in 1955, as Alan Power recalls that his father acquired a small Pollock that year but I can find no information about the title. One of the other major painters possibly seen by Power in 1955 was Piet Mondrian (1872-1944). Bryan Robertson had been the Director of the Whitechapel Gallery for three years by then and was continuing to show important European art to the general public. That summer he mounted a large Mondrian exhibition and it is probable that Dick Russell, Power's friend and design colleague who admired the De Stijl ideas of the unification of the visual arts would have suggested that they visit the Whitechapel together. At some

time in the middle 1950s, Power eventually did purchase a Mondrian painting and this was *Composition No 2 with Red and Blue* (1937) which he kept for many years and lent to various exhibitions.

Power's enthusiasm for the CoBrA movement blossomed in 1956 when he discovered the paintings of the Danish artist Asger Jorn (1914-1973), who became a personal friend and whose work he bought in quantity every year until 1961. Jorn was more than just a painter working on his own in his studio. He was a genuine activist for the arts even during his country's occupation by the Germans, when he co-founded an underground art movement called Helhesten or 'hell-horse'. Later, in 1948, he was one of the six founders of the short-lived but influential CoBrA movement which attempted to find new ways of combining a way of living with the practice of art by working together but, at the same time, retaining individual creativity. Unusually, many of the artists and writers did cooperate and they maintained this for some years generating a range of activity across painting, sculpture, poetry, films, magazines, books, exhibitions and conferences which did produce some evidence of a common visual style. 'For a historic moment, they – though by no means all of them – cherished the romantic ideal of collective labour and even more or less put it into practice on many occasions.'<sup>55</sup> Jorn was someone with incredible energy, always moving on to the next cause like the formation of The International Movement For An Imaginist Bauhaus or the organisation of a Congress in 1956 which led to the establishment of the Situationist International movement the following year. He later enthusiastically took up one of the concepts of Situationism called *détournement* which involved the rearrangement of existing sign-systems to 'undermine' the visual images of advertising. Jorn began his 'modifications' as he called them, buying up 19<sup>th</sup> century sentimental pictures in flea markets and painting over them with mystical figures in his own dramatic style. Power was intrigued by these and bought *Le hollandais volant* (1959).

Jorn was an intensely political person who, like many of his friends, believed that the world had to change and that radical socialism was the way to do that. He battled with tuberculosis for most of his life but still found time to write many books and articles as well as produce more than 2500 paintings, prints, ceramics, sculptures and tapestries, most of which he left to the Silkeborg Museum in Denmark. He struggled with reconciling his belief in socialism and equality with his idea that a creative elite could add value to any future society. He once said 'I create, I think and I speak and we speak with gestures as well as with the tongue. It is this transmission of the gesture that we call pictorial creation.'<sup>56</sup> Jorn believed, like Dubuffet, that there was no such thing as ugliness. 'Tension in a work of art is negative-positive, repulsive-attractive, ugly-beautiful. If one of these poles is removed, only boredom is left.'<sup>57</sup> Peter

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<sup>55</sup> W Stokvis, *COBRA, the Last Avant-garde Movement of the Twentieth Century*, (Aldershot. 2004) 327

<sup>56</sup> Opening Speech to the First World Congress of Free Artists, 1956.

<sup>57</sup> Guy Atkins, *Asger Jorn*, (London, 1964)1

Cochrane of Tooths must have been aware of similarities between the two painters and that Power's enthusiasm for Dubuffet could well extend to the work of Jorn, and he was completely correct in that assessment. He obtained a Jorn painting entitled *Les belles phrases* (1955) which was a current example of the artist's post-CoBrA style and showed it to Power in London, probably not realising that the floodgates were about to open.

Power felt that here was something new and lively. 'It was figurative work but not figurative in the ordinary sense. It was an abstract look at life – in my view Asger paints the emotion behind the figure. This is the distinction I noticed at the time. Dubuffet is the same.'<sup>58</sup> As usual Power backed his judgement and bought a total of 19 other Jorn paintings over the next few months.\*(See Figure 2)

I have researched the Tooths and Cochrane records in the Tate archives and can find no information about how Cochrane obtained so many Jorn pictures, especially when one considers that this was a year before the artist had his first major exhibition in Paris and two years before the ICA show of his work. As far as I can ascertain, Power bought all these paintings before he had met the artist but subsequently they became good friends even though they held widely differing views on all subjects except art. From 1955, Power continued to collect Jorn paintings (52 in total) including four of his 'Luxury' or drip pictures of 1961 which were particular 'anti-art' works and disappointed him. He hung one of them, *Chaosmos* (1961) in his London flat to see why he did not like it but came to no conclusion, perhaps because by that time he had already begun to look seriously at American art.. Power's interest in Jorn's work extended over a number of different phases, from his earlier CoBrA influenced paintings to his drawings, collages, and his 'modifications', as well as his ceramics which were highly regarded at that time.

The hyper-active Jorn was not the easiest of artists to deal with. He shunned publicity (unless he was involved in a new political cause) and rarely attended openings. Cochrane wrote numerous letters to him urging him to finish paintings scheduled for exhibitions only weeks away and sometimes Jorn delivered the work and other times he did not.<sup>59</sup> His own health suffered on these occasions and this was not helped by his disinterest in financial matters – a trait which Power used to recall with some amusement. Jorn was undoubtedly a charismatic character and he could often inspire people who held contrary views to himself. One such was Pierre Wemaere (b.1913), a French painter and weaver with whom Jorn jointly produced an extraordinary tapestry *The Long Voyage* (1947) which was 14 metres long and 1.8 metres high. Jorn encouraged Wemaere to start painting again in the 1950s with some success, as Tooths

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<sup>58</sup> Mundy 14

<sup>59</sup> Cochrane uncatalogued papers, Box 4, in the Tate archives.



mounted exhibitions of his work from 1958 until 1960 when Power bought one of his abstract works *Composition fond violet* (1959).

Up to 1956 Power had only bought one piece of sculpture (Turnbull's *Head I*) but now he turned his attention to a somewhat surprising artist for his second choice – César Baldaccini (1921-1998). He would have probably seen his work at a group exhibition at the Hanover Gallery that year, along with sculptures by Turnbull and Paolozzi. This was the first time César had been seen in England and it is possible to discern the influence of Turnbull on Power's choice of a new artist to examine, as César was admired by both his fellow exhibitors and Power's knowledge of sculpture was still developing. César had not yet started on his famous 'crushed cars' series that caused so much controversy, but he was using scrap metal, which was cheap and plentiful, in his Bestiary series in which he welded iron into grotesque, almost science-fiction shapes. Power bought a piece from the Bestiary series, *Un animal* (1956) as well as *Seated Figure* (1956) and then later in the year *Elephant Insect* (1955) again from the same series.

Another artist who was regularly shown by the Hanover Gallery was Max Ernst (1891-1976) and it is likely that Power had met Roland Penrose by this time and had been introduced to Surrealism by him. Ernst was the only Surrealist painter bought by Power and as was his custom he acquired a number of works to see if he could learn something from them. In Ernst's case, perhaps to look at his technique of *grattage* for a possible link to Dubuffet and other examples of interesting methods of paint application. Ernst was one of the most inventive artists of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Power bought work from the 1920s such as *Forêt sombre et oiseaux* (1926) and *Fleurs* (1928) as well as his more abstract, post-war paintings to study the development of his creativity. Power also acquired two of the artist's *Obelisks* as well as three of his most recent paintings *Composition* (1954), *Hommage à Yves Tanguy* (1955) and *La lune bleue* (1956).

While still exploring the world of *matière* painting, Power was introduced to the Dutch artist Bram Bogart (b. 1921) who was represented by Gimpel Fils at the time. Although Bogart had lived for a few months in the same house in Paris as Karel Appel, he was too independent a character to become involved in the CoBrA movement and preferred to experiment with three-dimensional surfaces using encrusted paste on which, at that time, he inscribed geometric motifs such as crosses. Power's first Bogart painting was more restrained in colour but equally as aggressive as his later work with brush strokes thrust at the canvas. This was *Abstract* (1955) which was smaller (and lighter) than Bogart's subsequent work in which the paste in his paintings was sometimes as much as six inches thick and so heavy that steel supports were required. Power lent the painting to an Arts Council exhibition the same year and continued buying Bogart with *Composition brune* (1954), *Préhistorique* (1956) and *Silence du nord* (1956).

Power regularly visited the ICA in Dover Street where he often met William Turnbull to have a coffee and talk about art. One of the group exhibitions organised by the ICA in 1956 featured Appel, Wols and the aristocratic, Italian artist, Giuseppe Capogrossi (1900-1972) whose calligraphic paintings based on primitive signs were of passing interest to Power. Capogrossi repeated specific motifs in multiple combinations in his pictures so that they became recognised as his personal visual form of writing. Although I would assume that they were perhaps too decorative and without any depth of meaning for Power, he did buy two of Capogrossi's *Surface* series painted in 1953 but sold them a few years later. He continued to visit Paris with Peter Cochrane and there he first saw the work of two artists whose paintings he did collect for a number of years. They were the Catalan painter Antoni Tàpies (b.1923) and the Canadian Jean-Paul Riopelle (1923-2002). Power caught up with Tàpies at an early stage in the artist's career when he was still experimenting with his *matière* style of painting and before he began to construct his larger pieces like *Desk With Straw*. Power was still fascinated with the process of painting and Tàpies, who was exploring the transformative qualities of matter using detritus such as earth, sand and rags mixed with his paint in an attempt to transform man's view of the world, was someone whose work was increasingly being understood by Power, as he showed in his personal notes when writing about the importance of symbols for certain artists

‘Tàpies – human to human, dark, strong, unharmonious – rough cut-up texture but solid, determinate, active (very). Obviously HUMAN on background of NATURE. A good example of non-figurative symbolism.’<sup>60</sup>

Power's first purchases were *Peinture vert* (1954) and *Peinture grise* (1954) which were concerned with marks scratched on the surface of the paint but by the following year, with *Peinture grise et rouge* (1957) and *Peinture noire et grise* (1957), Tàpies was incising and gouging lines deep into an impasto surface like a wall. Peter Cochrane thought that Tàpies was one of the greatest painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, certainly, Tàpies was highly regarded in both Europe and America in the late 1950s. It is interesting to note that Tooths were one of the first British galleries to show his work in a group exhibition called ‘Exploration of Form’ in 1958, two years after Power had bought his work in Paris. The other two artists in the show were Jorn and Turnbull, both friends of Power's - which could mean that he was beginning to influence Cochrane, rather than the other way round.

Jean-Paul Riopelle was a *tachiste* painter and it is reasonable to deduce that Power saw him as a continuation of de Stael. Riopelle had an affection for landscape and his technique of using paint directly from the tube and then working with a palette knife to layer it into dense blocks of colour like a mosaic,

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<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 1

gave the impression of an aerial image. He had met Wols and Mathieu when he first came to France and, like them, he avoided solid forms and points of focus so that his paintings have an all-over quality which is accentuated by the profusion of colour. Power seemed to like Riopelle's apparent freedom of gesture and appreciated that the artist was inspired by nature and man's relationship with it – something which was also occupying Power's thoughts at the time, as can be seen in his personal notes mentioned above. Riopelle once said 'nature is still a mystery, you can never see it whole.'<sup>61</sup> and he tried all his life to show the many forms of landscape, using colour as a means of expression as well as a painter's tool. Power was obviously fascinated by colour during this phase of his collecting and he then turned to another artist who used colour to great effect.

This was the American painter, Sam Francis (1923-1994), but he used it in a completely different way to Riopelle and indeed to the other artists whose work Power had been collecting in Paris. The luminous but thinly applied layers of paint which Francis used in his pictures of bio-morphic forms were more closely linked to the technique of Paul Jenkins than Jean Dubuffet. One can see in that perhaps, the early signs of a shift in emphasis from Europe towards America in Power's collecting. Francis had been living in Paris from 1950 and for a number of years had abandoned the idea of colour in his work but resumed its use only the year before Power walked into his studio in 1956. As he would explain in later years, Power knew instinctively that here was an artist using harmonious colour and the surface of paint to express his ideas in a way that made Power think of concepts which he was already writing about in his own notes - 'cosmic phenomena and images external to our earth. Science fiction is a type of this approach, dangerous but exhilarating, so forward looking and making man do what he alone can i.e. think deeply.'<sup>62</sup> Power obviously felt that Francis and he were thinking along the same lines and his enthusiasm must have showed, because he managed to persuade the rather reluctant artist to sell him two seminal paintings 'off the easel' as he used to recall to his family. These were *Blue and Black* (1956) and *Orange, Red and Black* (1956) and Power continued to explore Francis's thought processes for the next four years buying 25 paintings in total, including such large pictures as *White Painting* (1951) and later works like *Red, Yellow, Blue. New York-Paris* (1959-60).

Power appeared to respond just as strongly to the later work of Francis who had travelled widely in the late 1950s, particularly to Japan, whose culture influenced his painting. It is likely that he also appreciated another aspect of Francis's work which was identified by Lawrence Alloway and that was his use of space. Writing in a catalogue for a group exhibition in 1956, Alloway noted 'Space to Francis is not a gap between things, but an active area full of the vibrations of light and the pull of gravity (recorded

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<sup>61</sup> Quoted from the *Catalogue Raisonné* on [www.riopelle.ca](http://www.riopelle.ca) (June 2008)

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix 1

by the downward trickle of his paint.’<sup>63</sup> Francis, having seen as a young man (but not followed) the work of Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still in New York, approached painting without much of the *angst* of American Abstract Expressionism and once having found his own language, developed it progressively within its limits. It seems to me that he was an effective bridge for Power to cross towards the new American art which he embraced in depth over the next few years. Furthermore, Francis was much admired in Britain in the late 1950s and critics such as Herbert Read, Alloway and Heron wrote about his work extensively, and it is likely that Power had read some of these articles. Heron as an artist was affected by the lyricism of Francis as he later mentioned ‘ I have often said that the only influence really that I admit to from the other side of the Atlantic was that of Sam Francis ...’<sup>64</sup>

Coincidentally, Cochrane had obtained a Rothko painting in the autumn of 1956 which reinforced his view that the centre of contemporary art was shifting from Paris to New York and Power assumedly agreed, as he acquired *Golden Composition* (1949). I will be discussing the American artists in more detail later in this dissertation. He also bought that year his only Claude Monet painting, *Les Falaises d’Étretat* (1886), which was the same location as his Matisse acquisition and leads one to think that he bought both pictures for sentimental reasons after holidaying there. There is also the possibility (according to his daughter) that he bought the Monet as a present for his wife, Rene, who did not fully share his enthusiasm for contemporary art. Having stopped buying the work of Irish artists three years before, Power next renewed his interest in that area and purchased work by William Scott (1913-1989) who had visited America in 1953 and was one of the first British artists to meet many of the leading Abstract Expressionists there. Scott was an established painter and had been shown in various galleries in London as well as at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York in a group exhibition with Barbara Hepworth and Francis Bacon. Scott was moving to a more abstract style by 1956, reducing the objects in his still-life paintings to their flat, basic outlines which hovered above the picture plane. He simplified his colours into tones to create a homogenous yet complementary background for those shapes, which still retained some figurative elements in the first three examples that Power acquired, *Still Life* (1954), *Grey Still Life* (1955) and *Red and Orange* (1957).

Possibly one of the most important occasions for Power in 1956 was when he was approached by the Arts Council to lend some paintings for their next touring show of contemporary art. This was the first time that Power had been invited to participate in such an event and a clear indication that he was becoming recognised officially as owning an innovative and extensive collection. After some discussion and presumably when the organisers realised the extent and range of the works he had acquired, it was

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<sup>63</sup> Catalogue of *New Trends in Painting*, (London, 1956) unpaginated.

<sup>64</sup> J A Walker, *Cultural Offensive, America’s Impact on British Art Since 1945*, (London, 1998) 55.

decided to ask Power if he was willing to lend all the pictures for the exhibition. He agreed to do so provided he could remain anonymous and there was some debate in later years among his family and friends as to the reason for his decision. Power was naturally a modest man, disliking ostentation, and in my view not quite ready so early in his collecting career to stand out as a major figure in the London art world and, consequently, the exhibition of 27 paintings was labelled as being from a 'private collection'. The introduction for the small catalogue of the show was written by Lawrence Alloway who was an important influence on Power's collecting for the next 25 years and the two men must have discussed the choice of paintings at some length. The exhibition was to be called 'New Trends in Painting' and they concentrated mainly on European artists living in Paris at the time with an emphasis on the action of the artist and on the basic physical ingredients of painting. They therefore selected five Dubuffets, including *L'orateur* (1955) and *Paysage américain* (1952); five de Staels, including *Canal à Gravelines* (1954) and *Le football la nuit* (1952); four Ernsts including *Fleurs* (1928) and *Tableau de printemps* (1954) and two each by Appel, Bogart, Riopelle and Soulages. They also chose two American artists, Francis and Jenkins, who were currently working in Paris. Alloway when writing about why the chosen artists represented a new trend, mentioned that 'l'art autre is a rejection of the rest of modern art. An academy of modern styles has been established and is limiting.'<sup>65</sup> The exhibition toured three cities in England and proved so popular that in the following year, the Arts Council arranged a showing in London where it again drew large audiences.

Margaret Garlake has described the paintings in that exhibition as 'concentrating on the recent interactions between European and American painting and containing names known only to a few artists in Britain.'<sup>66</sup> When comparing the collections of Kenneth Clark and Power, she felt:

they were equally important as exemplars to different generations of artists and act as symbolic markers of the period. One represented, on a grand scale, the collector as expert and arbiter of taste, while Power's approach was experimental, idiosyncratic and closely focussed on a single strand in postwar art.<sup>67</sup>

The content of the exhibition became part of an on-going argument at the time about the terminology of abstract art and *The Times* reviewer summed up the problem when he wrote that the exhibition was 'the first representative collection to be seen in this country devoted to what has variously been called 'tachisme', 'l'art brut', 'action painting', and even, in a mood of semantic desperation, 'l'art autre'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Catalogue of *New Trends in Painting* (London, 1956) unpaginated.

<sup>66</sup> M Garlake, *New Art New World, British Art in Postwar Society*, (New Haven. (1998) 16

<sup>67</sup> Ibid 17

<sup>68</sup> Ibid 37

This whole problem of the language of contemporary art, was a subject that Lawrence Alloway also felt very strongly about as part of his campaign to break down the differences between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art which he later defined in his 1959 essay ‘The Long Front of Culture’.

Alloway and Power remained friends for many years and influenced each other greatly but it is difficult to assess when they first met. It could have been in the early 1950s at the ICA where they had mutual friends such as Turnbull, Paolozzi and Hamilton. They were certainly aware of each other by 1955 when Alloway was writing regularly in ‘ARK’, the Royal College magazine, which Power was subsidising with Murphy Radio advertising, and obviously they worked together on the 1956 exhibition of Power’s paintings mentioned earlier. At that time, they shared a common interest in the ideas of communications and cybernetics and Alloway at least was influenced by Marshall McLuhan’s theories on the social and cultural effects of mass media which Power, as a radio and television manufacturer, would also have understood. Their views, additionally, coincided on the subject of the artist and his materials and the need for improvisation, which led them both to appreciate the work of Dubuffet and Jorn. ‘The artist’s relation to his materials is the dominant factor. The forms of the picture cannot be predicted ahead of the action of the artist in making the work of art’ Alloway wrote.<sup>69</sup> At this period in the 1950s, neither man had visited the United States although Alloway was the English correspondent of ‘Art News’, the American magazine which many regarded as the house journal of Abstract Expressionism. Subsequently another mutual friend, Stefan Munsing, the Cultural Affairs Officer at the American Embassy, arranged for Alloway to travel to the United States in 1958 where he met a number of the Abstract Expressionists whose work Power had bought and shown to Alloway the year before in London.

Alloway was an extremely energetic and influential figure in the London art world throughout the 1950s. He was active in the ICA and was one of the founder members of the Independent Group where he lectured and wrote about popular and mass culture as early as 1953 but in the broader context of American advertising and packaging rather than the art which subsequently drew upon their imagery. Alloway was very pro-American and became the leading advocate of Abstract Expressionism in Britain having been involved with the ICA’s ground-breaking ‘Opposing Forces’ exhibition in 1953 which featured Pollock’s huge painting *One: Number 31, 1950*. He continually tried, however, to link avant-garde movements in Britain and Europe with the new world of global communications and travel, and for a while thought the British Constructivists were a possible route. In 1954 he published his first book *Nine Abstract Artists* in which he promoted them as the cutting edge of contemporary art but later changed his mind as he turned to the more radical CoBrA artists such as Asger Jorn before passionately embracing the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid 121

work of the new American painters which he saw at the famous Tate exhibition in 1956. Alloway wrote prolifically for both British and American art and architectural magazines throughout his life, but is best known for his writings on Pop Art in particular his book *American Pop Art* published to coincide with the Whitney Museum exhibition in 1974.

Alloway's restless energy meant that he was still involved with many aspects of the British art scene in 1956 and none more so than the Independent Group which had ceased to meet formally but came together to mount the 'This is Tomorrow' exhibition at the Whitechapel Galley – one of the most important art events of the 1950s. Alloway was one of the organisers, wrote the catalogue introduction, participated in one of the twelve displays and acted as press officer to generate such publicity that more than 19,000 visitors came to the exhibition. Although the concept of the exhibition was to have a series of displays to show the interdependence of architect, painter and sculptor, the exhibition is most famous for a legendary work by Richard Hamilton *Just What is it that Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?*. That small collage was truly revolutionary and achieved a goal that Alloway had set out in his introductory essay in the catalogue, of making the public open their eyes and see something new. To many people, that exhibition and that work of Hamilton's represented the birth of Pop Art although it was not until the early 1960s that the term was used to describe the new movement.

Power was almost bound to have seen the exhibition, as so many of his friends and acquaintances had work on display there and the concepts behind the show would have appealed to his own questioning mind. His friendship with Alloway remained strong and they met often to discuss art and artists, but interestingly their relationship changed with the passage of time. Alloway undoubtedly helped to shape Power's understanding of the new art being produced, particularly in America, but certainly by the end of the 1950s, Power was introducing Alloway to the work of artists he would not have seen, even lending him a large Sam Francis painting so that he could study it in detail. Alloway moved to the United States in 1961, to become a curator at the Guggenheim Museum before being appointed Professor of Art History at the State University of New York. The two met again when Power came to America for the first time (surprisingly) in 1964 and it is likely that some of the works he bought on that visit and later, were on Alloway's recommendation, in particular those of Warhol and Lichtenstein.

Power was always an assiduous visitor to artists' studios and one he called on in 1956 was that of Alan Davie, a Scottish born painter who had travelled to the Venice Biennale eight years before and had seen paintings by Jackson Pollock from the Peggy Guggenheim collection. Some of the work in the show included Pollock's 'pre-drip' paintings with their symbolic imagery and these influenced Davie's own painting for some years as he developed his interest in the creation myths of non-Western art. He was also one of the first British artists to experiment with elements of chance and accident in his painting; he

would make spontaneous marks on rich layers of paint, often with the canvas on the floor. Power obviously responded to these techniques and it is quite possible that he showed Davie the early Pollock *Banners of Spring* (1946) which he had just bought, when they became friends. Davie was less committed to Paris than many of his contemporaries, possibly because he had sold a painting to Peggy Guggenheim and looked to America for inspiration. He had been shown regularly at Gimpel Fils but in 1956 he was offered a solo exhibition at the Catherine Viviano gallery in New York which coincided with Power's increasing interest in American art and he decided to fund Davie so that he could attend the opening and stay for a few weeks. Davie was fortunate enough to meet his hero, Jackson Pollock, for the weekend on Long Island just before he died but he also met Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline and a number of other painters. Davie was very grateful for Power's generosity and even more so after he bought four of his recent paintings the following year including *Image of the Fish God No.7* (1956) which was presented to the Tate by Power in 1973. Davy admired his patron for his independence of spirit and his open-mindedness, 'He had an eye. It's a gift, not something you can learn. You have it or not.'<sup>70</sup>

By the end of 1956, it can be argued, that Power had begun to form a clear idea of what he looked for in painting and sculpture. He had acquired, sometimes in great depth, the work of a number of British and continental European artists but increasingly he was turning to America for inspirational and exciting art as part of a new phase in his collecting. I will be discussing this aspect in the next chapter of my thesis.

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<sup>70</sup> Telephone conversation with Alan Davie. June 2008.



## Chapter 4

### A further voyage to American and British abstraction and Pop Art.

1957 was another important year in Power's collecting progression because he made a positive decision to examine American art. It is quite possible that Power's increasing interest in American Abstract Expressionism came about because of discussions he had with friends like Lawrence Alloway and William Turnbull who could see the importance of this new style of painting.

Once again, however, Power relied on Peter Cochrane and David Gibbs of Tooths Gallery, who visited the United States regularly, to actually look for artists whose work would be likely to interest him. Cochrane no doubt discussed with Power the link between artists he had already acquired such as Francis, Jenkins, Kinley and Scott and the American painters he would have seen the year before in the Abstract Expressionist room in the Tate exhibition. Like most people Power would have been intrigued by the sheer size of some of the work, and the paintings of Clyfford Still and Pollock would have struck a chord in his mind because he had already started thinking in 1954 about some of the themes the American artists were exploring, as his personal notes show - 'Man is insignificant in relation to the cosmos and in relation to the natural phenomena of cosmic and pre-cosmic forces (but these) are significant to man.'<sup>71</sup> It is interesting to note that one of the first Abstract Expressionist painters Power had bought was Rothko whose work has been described as 'hovering tiers of dense, atmospheric color or darkness - from a landscape of mystic cosmological character.'<sup>72</sup>

The New York School of artists in the 1940s and early 1950s were intellectually aware of many aspects of American cultural life including some of its newer concepts.

A defining feature of the school was its attempt to assimilate into visual interpretation relatively new knowledge about human nature, mind, and the human condition – knowledge gleaned from psychology, anthropology and philosophy.<sup>73</sup>

It was almost a necessity for those painters to break new ground and it seems to me that Pollock, Still, Rothko and, later, Newman were each searching in their own way for a universal symbol or language of

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<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>72</sup> R Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition, Friedrich to Rothko*, (London, 1975) 212.

<sup>73</sup> M Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism*, (New Haven, 1993) 2

painting which would explain the truth of life in the post-Hiroshima world. They wanted to start from the beginning and rethink form, colour and content to develop a new creative route and, again, Power was thinking along the same lines when he wrote in his personal notes:

To make symbols as directly perceptive and communicative (the least amount of viewer interpretation) as possible is the aim. So, reduce and remove if possible all connections and complications not being the symbol or directly connected with the symbol. Rothko - human, lack of conflict with nature - harmonious, strong, calm – spreading (knowledge).<sup>74</sup>

Power must have been agreeably surprised when he saw paintings which visually encapsulated some of his own thoughts and he would not have been concerned that they were American. In my view, because Power was self-taught, he was less hidebound by past or the (then) current theories about art, and he responded to any person or movement which was attempting to move in a new direction. At a time when many knowledgeable people were rejecting American Abstract Expressionism or at least sitting on the fence, Power was already acquiring important works in a true pioneering spirit. All of the five artists whose work Power purchased in 1957 were concerned with the actual painting process and their flat canvases (with the exception of Pollock) were devoid of the forms and textures of the outside world which might have competed with the reality of the actual paint. This concern with process was a common theme amongst many of the artists Power had previously supported in Europe and so it was an aspect which he understood and appreciated with the Americans. He also enjoyed the periods of quiet reflection when he just looked at the paintings and tried to form his own opinion about them, which could take some time for as Alfred Barr commented - ‘These painters, as a matter of principle, do nothing deliberately in their work to make communication easy.’<sup>75</sup> Power always believed that getting to know a picture should be a challenge.

As I have already mentioned, in 1956 Power had bought Rothko’s *Golden Composition* (1949) which was one of the Multiform series with faint images retained, in this case with whitish outlines to give almost a halo effect. In 1957, he was then offered a number of other paintings by the artist from which he selected two – *Yellow and Orange* (1949) and *Orange and Red* (1956) Both these works were excellent examples of Rothko’s signature style with three or four rectangles of soft-edged colour, aligned vertically so they floated in a void. The colours were not static however, but seemed to move and flow – indeed Rothko

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<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>75</sup> Catalogue for *The New American Painting* (London, 1959) 11

called them his 'performers' although by the time Power acquired the two paintings, the artist had stopped explaining his work, which would have suited Power as he liked to make up his own mind. Both men were concerned with reducing any extraneous obstacles between the painter, the idea, and the viewer or as Power would sometimes say to his friends in scientific terms – interfering with the 'transmission of energy'. It would be interesting to speculate on what the artist and the collector talked about when they met years later in 1964 in New York. Power always felt that Rothko answered one of his stated requirements in a painting, which is that it should 'emanate a "sense" of its meaning in the simplest possible terms. A strong sense rather than pictorial detail.'<sup>76</sup> Subsequently, Power bought two more Rothko pictures – *Light Over Deep* (1956) and *Bottle Green and Deep Reds* (1958).

The other painting which Power purchased early that year was Pollock's *Banners of Spring* (1946) one of a series of mural-like works which he had begun two years before when Peggy Guggenheim had commissioned him to paint a huge 20 foot mural for her apartment in New York. *Banners of Spring* is one of the last semi-figurative pictures Pollock produced before he started his drip paintings in 1947 and is more lyrical and lighter in colour than much of his work. He used a repeat pattern in a sequence of marks and forms with some degree of order to show the banners, with black lines to define the stick-like human forms waving them. Pollock and some other older generation American artists such as Rothko and Still were influenced in their early careers by the imagery of North American native culture and there are possibly symbolic features in the pattern effect of this work. One art historian, Barbara Rose, uses this painting as an example of the artistic interdependence between Pollock and his wife Lee Krasner. In the catalogue essay for a 1981 exhibition she points out that the recently-married couple had moved to a farm in Springs, East Hampton (which may offer an alternative meaning for the title) and that the rural environment temporarily at least, changed the way they worked:

At the moment when Miss Krasner finally seems to break free of geometric abstractions and allows the unfettered power of her imagination to burst forth with dark, primeval force in "Blue Painting," Pollock is shown to be creating his most lyrical works to date, moving away from subjects like dismembered bodies, flames and demons to create such light-filled canvases as "Banners of Spring."<sup>77</sup>

Many myths have been created about Pollock but he was much more sophisticated intellectually than his physical appearance and hard drinking lifestyle suggested. He had studied the work of Kandinsky and

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<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>77</sup> Catalogue essay *Krasner-Pollock, a Working Relationship* (Guildhall, New York, 1981)

Picasso in particular and used elements of the structure of their paintings in his own work up to 1947 but I have no evidence that Power saw the Banners picture in that way. (see Lewison)<sup>78</sup> According to Alan Power, it is likely that David Gibbs, who by this time was acting in a freelance capacity, had been briefed that Power wanted a 'pre-drip' painting to look at before he ventured into Pollock's latest work, and had the opportunity to buy the picture on Power's behalf. He also bought a second earlier work *Gri* (1948) for his client. Power later acquired two of Pollock's drip paintings *Unformed Figure* (1953)\* and *Untitled* (1948). The latter picture hung in Power's London flat until his death in 1993. (\* Figure 5) Both Gibbs and Cochrane continued to search out more of the most highly regarded American Abstract Expressionists in the spring of 1957 and Power then acquired one painting each by Kline, De Kooning and Still so that he could follow his usual custom of studying a new artist's work quietly at leisure. The first of these was Franz Kline (1910-1962) and Power must have responded to the artist's bold calligraphic images in black and white which he could possibly connect to the paintings of Soulages whose work he had previously bought. Kline had lived in England in the 1930s and on his return to the States had struggled to find his own personal creative path and it was his friend Willem De Kooning who showed him a way to develop a new style. In 1948, he demonstrated how Kline could project and greatly enlarge a small painting of his favourite armchair on to a huge canvas by means of a special optical device. Kline noticed that his brush strokes had become completely abstract and more gestural, and thus the most important phase of his work was established. Kline's method of painting was not, however, as spontaneous as would appear because he made careful preliminary studies so that his powerful gestures using housepainter's brushes, often quite sparing in their application, could have maximum impact. The relationship between Kline's black brushstrokes and white space may have reminded Power of the work of Sam Francis, one of his favourite painters. In the catalogue for the 1959 Tate exhibition, one writer points out that 'the whites in Kline's paintings are not negative or positive spaces but mean the same thing as the blacks.'<sup>79</sup> Power always seems to have been fascinated by the juxtaposition of colours including black and white and it is likely that his first Kline picture, *Sassoon* (1955) would have immediately appealed to Power in this context. In the following year, he continued exploring the artist's ideas with the purchase of *Painting* (1952) and *Hewn Forms* (1956).

Willem De Kooning (1904-1997) was a trained European artist who had arrived in America as a young man and experienced many hardships before he achieved wider recognition in the middle 1950s. One of the factors which contributed to his success was his celebrated Woman series of paintings begun in 1950 and the example in Power's collection *Woman* (1955) was a sketch and one of the last De Kooning

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<sup>78</sup> J Lewison, *Interpreting Pollock* (London, 1999) pp 22-30

<sup>79</sup> T B Hess in *Art News*, Vol. 55, March 1956, 64.

painted before moving further into abstraction – although he returned to the subject of women again in the 1960s. At a time when many of the critics and artists who championed abstraction had declared that the human figure was obsolete, De Kooning continued to paint his disturbing, often ferocious ‘portraits’ of the female figure but with the painterly, gestural brushwork of Action Painting, as the art critic Harold Rosenberg called it. His idea of deconstructing his subject and then rebuilding it in a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century form was obvious from the layers of paint which he applied and then scraped away and then restored, often gave his paintings an unfinished character as if they were always ‘in process’.

This point was taken up by Norbert Lynton when he wrote ‘De Kooning’s painting is first and foremost a matter of process: an encounter, on the canvas, with or without preparation, of marks that suggest forms, of forms that suggest spaces that at once convey a configuration.’<sup>80</sup> Power often looked for this aspect in paintings although the picture he actually bought does look finished, if rather sketch-like, as it is already showing a tendency towards abstraction. As Alloway wrote when describing it ‘De Kooning treats the convention-bound theme of the single female figure (Picasso, Matisse) but hits on fresh configurations in which the presence of flesh and blood emerges through his characteristic slashing brushstrokes.’<sup>81</sup> Above all, De Kooning was a master in his handling of brush and paint and it was almost as if he needed a figure, even in the background, to act as a base on which he could work. From my own conversations with Power in later years, I gained the impression that while he admired De Kooning, he did not particularly find that the picture he owned ‘spoke’ to him and to the best of my knowledge he did not extend his collecting of the artist any further.

The fourth artist whose work was acquired by Power in 1957 was Clyfford Still (1904-1980) who was regarded, with Newman, as one of the leading proponents of Colour Field painting. Still always seemed to have a visionary quality about him and he attempted in his work to transcend the act of painting into something greater, beyond the edge of the canvas, towards what some labelled as Abstract Sublime.<sup>82</sup> By all accounts he could be dogmatic about many aspects of his painting and frequently laid down firm rules about how they were to be displayed to such an extent that he declined all public exhibitions from 1952-59 and increasingly worked in isolation. He suffered from what he called ‘moribund oppressions’ which he could only overcome when he was painting and many of his huge, monumental pictures with their monochrome yellows and blacks torn by jagged flashes of white and red reflect this. His work, however, meant something to Power possibly because he himself was attempting to analyse his own thoughts about

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<sup>80</sup> N Lynton, *The Story of Modern Art* (Oxford, 1980) 234

<sup>81</sup> Catalogue for *Some Paintings from the E J Power Collection*, ( London, 1958) unpaginated.

<sup>82</sup> D Britt, (ed) *Modern Art*, (London. 1989) 271

Man's relationship with Man and Man with Nature. When he saw (and bought) Still's *No. 21* (1948) he perhaps felt that the artist was coming close to his own standpoint - as he wrote in his 1957 notes:

The resultant pictures may give the feeling of 'Break Out' rather than 'Break Through'. MAN breaking out from or down his environment of hate of each other through acceptance and development of nature's abundant resources. At present, Still comes nearest to this – disturbing colours and line plus some harmonious but 'floating', colours. If 'me' could really get hold of the latter, things would be a lot neater!! That's the feeling I want. Hopeful but difficult.<sup>83</sup>

A year later, Power bought a second Still painting *No 1* (1951) which was more than 7 feet tall and which he hung in his normal-sized house in Welwyn Garden City to the initial consternation of his family. He sometimes talked about his new American purchases to his children, who were in their twenties by this time, but he never tried to persuade them that they should like them, which enabled them to form their own opinions of contemporary art in their own time.

Although he had found his first foray into American Abstract Expressionism of great interest, Power went regularly to Europe and continued his wide-ranging collecting of European as well as British artists. He was genuinely passionate about the work of Dubuffet and through Tooths bought 24 pictures, even more than in the previous year. These included some painted when Dubuffet visited North Africa such as *Bedouin, chameau et palmiers* (1947) and *Les jardins de l'oasis* (1949) but also Power's first purchase of the famous *Corps de dames* series, *La belle aux seins lourds* (1950) as well as *Monsieur Plume plis au pantaloon* (*Portrait d'Henri Michaux* (1947))\* which is now in the Tate collection. \* (Figure 3) Power also continued his policy of buying a key painting from each of Dubuffet's series. (see Appendix 3) Power was still actively following Jorn's progress and they met again that year to talk about the artist's latest work – carefully avoiding, I would think, any discussion about politics, capitalism and many of the other subjects on which they would disagree. Two notable Jorn paintings which were added to Power's collection at that time were *Conversation equivogue* (1956) and the recently finished *La Pluie* (1957).

Power also returned to de Stael with *Fleurs à Fontenoy* (1954), one of the last of the artist's paintings, and he was still enthusiastic about Tàpies, buying four of his latest paintings including the very powerful *Peinture Grise et Rouge* (1957) in which Tàpies had violently lacerated the thick surface of clay and marble dust with horizontal lines. Like Power, Tàpies thought that learning to look was essential to

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<sup>83</sup> See Appendix 1

understanding and he wrote ‘Let us learn to look like the concert-goer listens. Music is a composition of sonorous forms in time. Painting is a composition of visual forms in space.’<sup>84</sup> In that same year, Tàpies had organised an important exhibition of European and American abstract art in his native Barcelona with an eclectic mix of artists whose work Power had already acquired or was about to, such as Appel, Dubuffet, and Wols as well as Pollock and De Kooning. It is quite possible that Power combined a business trip to Spain with a visit to the exhibition as Murphy Radio was expanding rapidly in the 1950s. By coincidence, Power bought two small watercolours by Wols in 1957, one of which *Longs Batons Verticaux* (1943) was an interesting miniature in the *Tachiste* style with the batons looking like runner beans hanging from a rod. Wols produced many etchings in which he altered the natural structure of plants to show them in an expressionistic way and his work was much admired in Paris in the 1940s by artists like Michaux and de Stael. Power was still buying pictures mainly through the Tooths and Gimpel fils galleries both of which had interesting exhibitions that year. Toth put on ‘Exploration of Paint’ with an introduction by Alloway, showing work by Paris-based artists such as Appel, Dubuffet and Riopelle as well as Jenkins and Francis, the two Americans still living there. Power had paintings by all these artists already in his collection but he would have been intrigued by the ‘Autour du Cubisme’ exhibition at Gimpels which gave him the opportunity to look at pictures by older European and Russian painters he may not have seen before. These included two husband-and-wife pairs, Robert and Sonia Delaunay and Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova in addition to Amedée Ozenfant, Gino Severini and Francis Picabia. Power obviously found their work extremely interesting because within the next five years he bought examples of all their paintings, in particular Picabia.

1958 was the year when the self-effacing Ted Power finally agreed that he should become known as a major collector of contemporary art, with the opening of the ICA exhibition ‘Some Paintings from the E J Power Collection’ on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. It is likely that a number of people exerted gentle pressure on Power to do this, not least Penrose and Alloway as well as his friends Turnbull and Cochrane. They must have felt that it was important to show the public that here was a group of the most contemporary paintings of the moment and they were all in the private collection of a British person, not in an American or French museum.

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<sup>84</sup> Catalogue for *Antoni Tàpies*, (Waddington Galleries, London. 2006) 6

Alloway wrote the catalogue essay and in the first paragraph, he went straight to the point:

When asked what the paintings in this exhibition represented to him the collector answered: By gesture or symbol they record man's reaction to a world teeming with events. The impact of these events are all the stronger for being sensed or felt rather than recorded visually.<sup>85</sup>

Alloway wanted to explain that Action Painting, contrary to what many people thought after seeing examples in London five years before, was clearly a major style which had changed the face of world art. He went on to state that:

We can see that the action painters can do as much with their paint as other painters can do who retain the conventions. In fact, action painting involves the transformation of matter by ordering it to a human purpose, as does any other style.<sup>86</sup>

The exhibition consisted of paintings by De Kooning, Dubuffet, Tàpies, Pollock, Kline and Rothko, all of which I have already mentioned, with the exception of Pollock's superb *Unformed Figure* (1953) the first of the artist's drip paintings which Power had acquired. Alloway wrote at some length in the catalogue about this particular picture as he thought it was a typical example of the way Pollock experimented with ways of 'controlling' pictures which had been produced by free-flowing gestures. The background is of spilled and thrown paint on top of which the artist has superimposed fresh layers of bright colours to create an interplay between them. Pollock featured prominently in London that year as the Whitechapel Gallery mounted a comprehensive exhibition of his work which received much publicity including a review broadcast on BBC radio by the eminent art critic David Sylvester, who had rather changed his views on Pollock. When Sylvester first saw the artist's drip paintings at the 1950 Venice Biennale, he felt they represented the seamier side of America but on the radio he mentioned that he had not had to wait for the Whitechapel show to 'realise what a beautiful painter Pollock was, though I didn't previously realise quite what a master of the medium he was.'<sup>87</sup>

Power cooperated again with Tooths early in 1958 when the gallery organised a large exhibition of Dubuffet's work and he allowed 19 of his own paintings to be shown anonymously. Georges Limbour once again wrote a perceptive essay in the catalogue as the exhibition included examples from many of Dubuffet's series of paintings and he wanted to show that the artist was able to achieve constant renewal

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<sup>85</sup> Catalogue for *Some Paintings from the E J Power Collection* (London, 1958) unpaginated.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> D Sylvester, *About Modern Art*, (London. 2002) 62



of his creativity by having a basis of science and method. Meanwhile Power and Cochrane were still searching out other Dubuffet paintings and found 20 more of interest including *Il tient la flute et le couteau* (1947) from the *Sahara* series and *Element de sol au petit diapre* (1957) from the *Texturologies* series. In that year Power also added to his sculpture collection when he acquired his first work by Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), *Grande tête tranchante* (date unknown). Giacometti, the Swiss-born sculptor, was living in Paris and had been given a retrospective exhibition by the Arts Council in 1955 when Power would have seen his extraordinary sculptures. In 1959 he bought a second Giacometti piece *Grande tête de Diego* (1954), a striking portrait of the artist's brother which stood in Power's flat for many years.

On one of Power's visits to Paris with Cochrane later in 1958, the two friends called at the Galerie Maeght and saw an exhibition of the work of Ellsworth Kelly (b. 1923), a young American painter who had previously lived in France. One of the few European artists who had influenced his work was Hans Arp and in 1950 Kelly produced two works which can be regarded as pointers to his later paintings – *White Relief* and *Childrens' Leftovers Arranged by Chance*. The first of these reflected Arp's idea of showing the accidental aspects of objects where 'the shadow of a thing is as real as the thing itself and can be presented as such even without its cause'.<sup>88</sup> In the second piece, which Kelly produced while he was teaching art at the American School in Paris, he used some of the shapes in primary colours for which he became famous later in his career. The idea of chance and accident in painting had always intrigued Power and when he saw a whole room full of Kelly's bright, powerful pictures, he realised that here was a painter who had developed his own vocabulary of forms which were more than flat shapes on the canvas. In Kelly's early paintings (before the shaped pictures) he created tension between the shapes one to the other and between the shapes and the edge of the canvas often giving the feeling of pressure outwards.

From all accounts, Power was genuinely excited by Kelly's work and, interestingly, he telephoned his friend Alloway almost immediately to tell him about it. In my New York interview with the artist, Kelly recalled that Alloway had never seen his work 'and so Ted phoned him and said you must see this and Lawrence said he didn't have any money and Ted said I'll pay your way over.'<sup>89</sup> In the end both Alloway and his wife, the artist Sylvia Sleigh, came to Paris to see the exhibition that kick-started Kelly's career, for Power decided to buy eight of his paintings and the show was a sell-out 'which was a surprise to me

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<sup>88</sup> E G Goosen, *Ellsworth Kelly*, (New York. 1973) 29

<sup>89</sup> Track 8 on the DVD of my interviews.

until I found out what price my dealer sold them for' as Kelly ruefully pointed out in my interview with him. Ever the business man, Power had waited to the last day of the show and bought the paintings at a substantial discount. Kelly never begrudged him this and readily acknowledged how important Power's initial purchase of so many pictures was for his future success. (Indeed, in 1995 he gave the Tate four of his Mallarmé suite of prints in Power's honour.) One of the Paris paintings was *Broadway* (1958)\* which Power later presented to the Tate and *Manhattan* (1958) which hung for many years in Power's London flat. \* (Figure 4)

When I asked Kelly what he thought attracted Power to his early work, he explained that Power seemed to understand intuitively what he was trying to do.

I wanted to capture something that's mysterious in observations and I said if you look hard enough, everything becomes abstract if you break it down. And I was searching for something to compose a different way. I wanted chance elements like this, this, this and this and it could be different shapes and they are there by chance and I started seeing things that way.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, Kelly frequently took photographs of objects in nature or man-made structures to show that everything can become abstract and examples such as *Beach Cabana* (1950) and *Curve Seen From a Highway* (1970) clearly illustrate this idea.<sup>91</sup>

On his return to London, Power was still enthusiastic about this new work and he acquired three more of Kelly's paintings over the next few years one of which, titled *EK 214 Slip* (1959), had to be exchanged by Kelly as it had been damaged while on loan to a touring exhibition, much to Power's annoyance. He remained a supporter of Kelly through to the 1960s, buying such work as *Blue Pale Grey* (1960) and *Brooklyn Bridge* (1958) by which time the term 'hard-edged' was being used to describe his style of painting, although I can find no record of Power buying his shaped canvases. Kelly met Power from time to time when he came to England and it would appear that they enjoyed each other's company not least because Power did not ask dozens of questions about his art. Kelly had had a speech impediment as a child and preferred not to discuss his work endlessly, as he mentioned to me. He liked people who could 'grab' his ideas themselves and Power was one, in his opinion.

Power was still fascinated by colour and continued to acquire the work of his friend Sam Francis in 1958 with three colourful pictures which are regarded as some of the best of his small paintings, in particular *Black, Orange and Red* (1958).

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> D Waldman, *Ellsworth Kelly: a Retrospective*, (New York. 1996) Fig. 158 and Fig. 162.

Probably the American painter with whom Power had the closest affinity was Barnett Newman (1905-1970). Although Power first saw his work in 1959, they only met in 1964 when Power came to New York on an extended visit but they had corresponded from time to time. The Power archive, for example, has a letter dated July 1962 in which Newman asks for Power's advice and help 'in a personal matter of great concern. You may have seen the outrageous smear Bryan Robertson has committed against my wife and myself in the Listener, May 10. A lot of things have happened in my life but nothing this raw.'<sup>92</sup> This was part of an ongoing row about Newman (and his wife, Annalee) supposedly criticising some of the younger American artists, which Newman said was completely untrue – even writing to the Director General of the BBC to complain. A hand-written note from Power on the envelope shows that he acted with his usual decisiveness 'Agreed with Stefan Musing for him to ring Barney and get him to see Robertson (who is in N.Y.) and settle the matter without more 'rotten egg' throwing which will do nobody any good.'<sup>93</sup> Presumably this happened although I can find no evidence that Power's diplomatic efforts resulted in a published letter of apology.

In my opinion, Newman was more sensitive than most about any slur on his character partly because his paintings in the early 1950s had been given a cool reception by the New York critics and, more importantly, by his fellow artists. He had previously written many articles about the contemporary art world in America and some thought he was a mere scribbler who had decided to try his hand at painting. Newman had struggled for many years with health and financial problems and had not painted at all in 1956 and 1957 because of what he regarded as his rejection by the artistic community. Furthermore, much of Newman's work was strongly influenced by his Jewish faith and some of his huge, colour-saturated paintings bisected by vertical lines (his zips) were concerned with the Jewish idea of creation and the concept of infinity leading to the sublime. These metaphysical themes were not always appreciated by everyone and that too, contributed to his years in the artistic wilderness. However, his inclusion in the 1958 MoMA exhibition 'The New American Painting' in New York and the support of a young American collector called Ben Heller turned his fortunes around. As the first British buyer to acquire his work, Power helped the process along. Power had seen the four Newman paintings in the influential MoMA touring exhibition at the Tate and remarked years later about the effect they had on him, particularly *Concord* (1949) with its two zips of masking tape and *Abraham* (1951-2) a black on black picture which Newman painted following the death of his father and which is regarded as an early

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<sup>92</sup> E J Power archive.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

masterpiece. Both paintings must have stayed in Power's memory because his first Newman purchase was the largely black, *By Two's* (1949) which combined elements from each. When discussing *Abraham* and *By Two's*, Thomas Hess uses the phrase 'secret symmetry' in the sense of a visual metaphor which Newman employed to divide the paintings vertically in specific, quantifiable relationships.

It suggests a 'felt' situation – an intuition by the artist that such a placement would be 'right' in his general format. A move in a similar direction was defined in *By Two's*, where parallel zips disguise the fact that the left-hand element bisects the long, vertical format. The energy of instant division – the gesture of 'Let there be... – is heightened'.<sup>94</sup>

Power was still using David Gibbs to find American art for him and the second Newman that Gibbs located was *Eve* (1950)\* which, with *Adam* (1950), make a pair of related works obviously concerned with both Jewish and Christian symbols of creation rather than death. \* ( Figure 7)

They were the first of Newman's paintings to incorporate a vertical element along the side of the canvas, in the case of *Eve*, a burgundy stripe on a bright, cadmium orange, field of colour. Both pictures are now in the Tate collection. Having moved from black to orange in Newman's paintings, Power then turned to white and in 1961, bought *White Fire I* (1954)\* the first in a series of four pictures in which the artist is again concerned with the Jewish idea of creation but as described in the Torah. \*(Figure 17) Rather surprisingly, there is no pure white in this painting as Newman took great pains to create unique colours, sometimes mixing hues on his palette or by layering them on the canvas. One catalogue entry for the painting notes 'a pale luminous aqua and turquoise dominates, punctuated by two zips: a wide, pale beige band on the left and a softly bleeding blue stripe on the right.'<sup>95</sup> Three years later Power acquired another in the series when he visited Newman's New York studio in 1964 and persuaded the artist to let him buy the newly completed *White Fire III* before anyone else had seen it. The two photographs in Figure 17 show the collector and the artist standing in front of this painting in Power's flat in London later that year when Newman and his wife made their first visit to England.

The circumstances of that excursion to Britain were unusual in that Power's son, Alan, had become friendly with Newman on his business trips for Murphy Radio to America. In 1964, he had bought *Uriel* (1955) one of the most famous paintings in the Newman *oeuvre* and the culminating picture in his pale aqua series. The picture measured 9 x 18 feet and Alan Power persuaded Newman to come himself to

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<sup>94</sup> T B Hess, *Barnett Newman*, (New York. 1971) 59

<sup>95</sup> Catalogue for *Barnett Newman* (London, 2002) 206

supervise the installation in his flat in London.<sup>96</sup> The Tate Modern catalogue of 2002 describes the painting in the following terms – ‘In Uriel, the pale turquoise is gloriously vast yet not divorced from the concentration of compositional and painterly activity at the right’. During that visit, Power arranged a party for the Newmans to meet some of the artists, writers and dealers in London - two of whom, Allen Jones and William Turnbull remember the occasion well. On another day, Alan Power drove Newman to see Ely cathedral and having previously read the artist’s essay ‘The Sublime is Now’ in *Tiger’s Eye*, was amused to hear the artist exclaim ‘Now that really is sublime!’ Both the Powers remained friends with Newman, regularly corresponding and meeting whenever possible until the artist’s death in 1970. Although Ted Power owned only four Newman paintings, one of them, *White Fire III*, hung in his flat for nearly 30 years and was a favourite of his family’s and an iconic picture in his collection for his friends. Newman’s drive for originality remained undiminished and Power often spoke of his admiration for his friend in this regard. Neither man lost his zest for life in older age and they continued to keep an open mind for new ideas which may account for the reason why Newman became so heated when Robertson accused him of the very opposite.

Power’s involvement with ‘The New American Painting’ exhibition at the Tate in 1959 went beyond the usual attendance at the opening, as Sir John Rothenstein prevailed on him to lend one of his San Francisco paintings, *Blue and Black* (1954), to the show – the sole British collector to be so asked. In addition, Power, in his usual discreet way, anonymously made a substantial contribution towards the cost of the illustrated catalogue of the show.<sup>97</sup> In the opinion of Leslie Waddington (Power’s dealer and close friend in the later stages of his collecting) the two Tate exhibitions of American art in 1956 and 1959 strongly influenced Power’s thinking about art and he was one of the first British collectors to understand that New York rather than Paris was leading the way towards the painting styles of the 1960s and beyond. The other American artist which Power collected that year was a West Coast painter called Fred Thomas Martin (b. 1927) who had studied at the California School of Fine Arts with Rothko and Still. Through Toth, Power acquired four works in which the artist used distemper on paper with titles such as *London and Environs* (undated) and five drawings about which I have no information.

Power, however, did not neglect Europe entirely and attended the Toth’s 1959 ‘Actualities’ exhibition where he saw the work of the French artist Georges Mathieu (b. 1921) and in complete contrast, that of the Belgian, Henri Michaux (1899-1984). Mathieu, one of the founders of the Lyrical Abstraction

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<sup>96</sup> Track 6 on the DVD of my interviews.

<sup>97</sup> Mundy 22

movement in the 1940s, had just started his career as a celebrity painter, covering huge canvases in paint which he hurled spontaneously in public performances lasting 15 to 20 minutes. I have no record of Power ever attending any of these but he perhaps saw some similarity in Mathieu's colours with some early works of Sam Francis. For whatever reason, Power bought eight pictures by Mathieu including *Honorius d'autun* (1956) and a watercolour collage *Rouge et blanc sur noir* (1959) which were more restrained than Mathieu's subsequent public paintings. He also acquired four large examples of Michaux's ink on paper pieces which reflected Power's continuing interest in calligraphic imagery. Whether they were produced during one of the artist's mescaline-induced trances, it is impossible to be certain but undoubtedly a work such as *Encre et chine B104* (1959) is a good example of Michaux's intention of representing an 'objectless world'. On one of his regular visits to Paris with Cochrane, Power saw the work of the artist, Mattia Moreni (1920-1999) who was one of the 'Group of Eight' Italian painters active in the 1950s. Moreni's fierce depictions of decay and man's despair had been selected for the Venice Biennale in 1956 and Power's choice of *L'Homo Dietro la Staccionata* (1954) was a typical example.

Probably one of the most interesting painters Power then examined in detail was the Dadaist Francis Picabia (1879-1953) an artist whose enormous range of work makes him almost impossible to categorise. This represented a major shift in Power's collecting pattern because he had shown little enthusiasm for Dada in the past. In my view, Power approached Picabia's paintings with some of his own Irish humour to the fore, as the first four watercolours he bought were all examples of the artist's diagrammatic drawings of nonsense machines which would never work in reality – in the true Dada tradition. As an engineer, Power would have been amused by such works as *Pompe* (1919) and *Magneto anglaise* (1922) which were parodying human behaviour and turning the established idea of art on its head. He went on, however, to acquire one of Picabia's haunting portraits *Punition de coré* (undated) and a colourful, *tachiste* style landscape *Paysage* (1912) as well as five other paintings by the artist. It is worth noting that (as usual) Power was ahead of the field in his appreciation of Picabia, with most of his purchases being made before the big exhibition of the artist's work at the Mathiesen Gallery that year.<sup>98</sup> His final Picabia acquisition, sometime around 1963, was *Le beau charcutier* (1924-6 and 1929-35)\* a famous painting now in the Tate which the artist reworked on a number of occasions. \* (Figure 8). In its final version, Picabia overlapped the original image of the man with an outline of a glamorous woman, in the style of his 'Transparency' series, an action which William Camfield thought 'bears witness to the artist's

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<sup>98</sup> Mundy 26

constant and sometimes dumbfounding self-liberation from the past'.<sup>99</sup>

Although the European artists which interested Power in 1959 were very different from the American painters he had started to collect, they did illustrate Power's fundamental belief that one must keep an open mind and look at all types of challenging art before being fortunate enough (if ever) to come to any conclusion. He explained his view on this subject in public for the first time when he wrote the foreword (again anonymously) to an exhibition of his paintings which was organised by The Norfolk Contemporary Art Society and shown in Norwich at the Castle Museum in the autumn of that year:

Although it is possible to have some sympathy with those who 'know what they like', and will not stray from it, I think it must be accepted that their judgement is generally both preconceived and superficial. How much better it is to keep an open mind so that one may extend the field of one's appreciation and finally like what one knows.<sup>100</sup>

Power's approach in writing this introduction to the exhibition was to use straightforward language to show why he was so enthusiastic about contemporary art. It is obvious from the phrases he used that he was not from an academic background but was instead a private collector who had his own criteria for choosing one artist or one painting over another. He appeals to the viewer 'to allow the picture to involve him, to allow it to act on him'. He urges the visitor to make up his own mind from his own intellectual reasoning rather than rely solely on the opinions of others.

The 17 paintings in the exhibition were by the same artists whose work Power had lent anonymously to the Arts Council touring exhibition in 1956 (Appel, Bogart, Dubuffet, Francis, Jenkins, Jorn, Riopelle, de Stael, and Tàpies) in addition to a newly acquired, striking watercolour *Green Over Red II* (1957) by the New York painter Norman Bluhm (1921-1999). Bluhm was yet another American artist who had lived in Paris at the same time as Francis and Jenkins after serving in the Air Force as a bomber pilot in the Second World War. When he returned to the United States in 1956, Bluhm developed a style which expressed his innate colour sense but retained the element of spirituality which was important to him. Almost inevitably, Bluhm's paintings became much bigger in the 1960s as he worked in New York and was influenced by the first generation of Abstract Expressionists but he never lost his personal, energetic style and Power's colourful purchase showed his early promise.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid 26

<sup>100</sup> See Appendix 2

The new decade of the 1960s saw Power continuing to acquire paintings by those artists whose work still intrigued him. He bought seven Dubuffets including three from the *Eléments botanique* series and ten Sam Francis paintings, specifically some of the artist's latest work such as *Green Yellow Blue Red* (1960) when he started to use plastic paint on paper. Power still retained his interest in colour as he explored the new art in America and this led inevitably to the work of Joseph Albers (1888-1976) who went on to write his famous treatise 'Interaction of Color' first published in 1963. Power bought five of Albers' famous 'Homage to the Square' series including *Ritardando* (1958), *Red Ritardando* (1962), *Floating* (1958) and in 1969, *Solemn* (1967). These paintings illustrate Power's own thoughts on the whole subject of colour which he had written about some years before in 1953

Colour and line compete and balance between the two is important. Colour is not form. Therefore if high tone colour is required a strong line (but not detailed or highly modelled) is necessary to carry and delineate it. Without this it will become messy and lack force and point.<sup>101</sup>

Tooths in London that year held a show of modern Spanish art and Power saw the work of Modest Cuixart (1925-2007) and Antonio Saura (1930-1998), probably for the first time. Both these artists were profoundly affected by the Spanish Civil War and, subsequently, Franco's authoritarian rule which extended even into the visual arts. Cuixart's abstract paintings were dark and sombre and he used grit and sand to give texture to the canvas - in some ways similarly to Tàpies (his cousin) with whom he had organised a literary and artistic group called 'Dau al Set' broadly based on Dada and Surrealism. Power bought *Nemoroso* (1958) and *Lake Storia* (1959). Still pursuing a rather grim strand at the time, Power then turned to Saura, who worked almost entirely in black and white, and acquired two of his more savage paintings including one called *Portrait of B. Bardot* (1959) which it is unlikely the famous film actress would have been pleased to see.

Another and much more wide-ranging exhibition that year was 'Situation' which was organised by Power's friend Alloway and a group of the younger British artists who Alloway felt shared some of the ideas of the 'New American Painting' exhibition that had confirmed, in his opinion, the shift from Paris to New York. This was the last exhibition organised in London by Alloway before he left for America and in typical fashion, he laid down strict rules about the kind of art which was to be shown. No painting was to be less than 30 square feet in overall area, they were all to be non-figurative and (hopefully) represent a synthesis between European and American models of abstraction. In this process, Alloway

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<sup>101</sup> See Appendix 1



controversially excluded all the St Ives School of painters which may account for the fact that Power never bought any of the St Ives artists with the exception of Patrick Heron. The 'Situation' exhibition was, however, where Power was first drawn to the work of the British painters Bernard Cohen, Peter Stroud and John Plumb and he bought Cohen's *Early Mutation Green No.11* (1960), Stroud's *Six Thin Reds* (1960) and saw some of Plumb's large pictures in which the artist used PVC, vinyl and his trademark plastic tapes to create an industrial design-linked element. As an engineer, Power liked the use of readymade materials in Plumb's work and subsequently purchased one from the painter's battle series, *Edgehill* (1962). He later donated all three paintings to the Tate in 1962 along with work by Stroud in an attempt to bolster its holdings of avant-garde British art.

One of the other leading artists at the 'Situation' show was Power's close friend, William Turnbull, who was showing his large abstract paintings rather than his sculpture. Turnbull travelled regularly to New York and had seen the work of Rothko and Newman and fully subscribed to the new concept of viewing large pictures 'up close' to appreciate the relationship between space and saturated colour which was one of the tenets of the 'Situation' group. Turnbull and Power shared a similar view of the relationship between large blocks of colour and their juxtaposition after seeing the new American art and this was reflected in a number of diptychs which the artist painted at the time. Turnbull himself wrote 'that he was concerned with the canvas as a continuous field, where the edge created by the meeting of coloured areas is more the tension in a field than the boundary of a shape.'<sup>102</sup> This is clearly illustrated by his painting *No 1* (1962) which Power later acquired (and also presented to the Tate) as well as *Untitled* (1960) and *13/60* (1960). Turnbull by this date was an influential teacher as well as a painter and sculptor, and one of his pupils had been John Plumb whom Turnbull guided towards abstraction, suggesting 'that Plumb divide and modulate the blocks of colour with thin black lines, forerunners of those in the 1957 paintings.'<sup>103</sup>

1961 was a year when Power scaled down his purchases of art (by his standards) possibly because he and his wife were preparing to move to their flat in London and at the same time, he was beginning his negotiations to sell Murphy Radio to the Rank Organisation. His enthusiasm for American painting was undiminished however and it was undoubtedly reinforced by the large and well-attended Rothko exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery that year. With Alloway at his side, Power decided to look at the work of three older, 'hard edge', American painters – Ad Reinhardt (1913-1967), Leon Smith (1906-

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<sup>102</sup> Mundy 52

<sup>103</sup> M Garlake, *New Art New World, British Art in Postwar Society*, (New Haven, 1998) 127

1996) and Alexander Liberman (1912-1999). Reinhardt was already famous for the minimalist paintings he had started in 1955, which many regarded as examples of the absolute purity of abstract art. Typically, Power bought two works to make a comparison, *Red Painting* (1952) and *Black Painting* (1955) both brooding monochrome pictures with only the faintest outline of shapes appearing - and then only through the closest inspection. Reinhardt was an influential writer on art as well as a painter and his essays affected a number of 1960s artists. He once said, in his usual precise way, 'Art is Art. Everything else is Everything else' as he continually strived to eliminate all distractions from his extreme, formless pictures.<sup>104</sup> Power saw Leon Smith's colourful, curvaceous paintings at the 1961 Tooth's show of American artists and was obviously struck by the way that Smith made the colour and form of some of his pictures indivisible by means of a sharp, hard edge. Smith was part Cherokee and never joined any group, but he was affected by the work of both Mondrian and Brancusi in his quest to achieve what he regarded as absolute purity. Power acquired a number of his pictures including *Chilacco* (1957) and *Orange, Red, Black on White* (1960).

The other artist Power noticed at the Tooth's exhibition was Alexander Liberman who was an unusual painter in that he had a separate career as a journalist and became editorial director of Condé Nast publications. Liberman became better known as a sculptor but Power bought a small painting called *Red End* (1959) which showed the artist's interest in geometric shapes and intense colour. All three painters had been shown at the Betty Parson's Gallery in New York and it is likely that Cochrane had seen them there on one of his visits and had told Power about the new hard-edge movement.

One of the younger British artists that Power had noticed at the 'Situation' show the previous year was Gwyther Irwin (1931-2008) who also went on to be shown at the Whitechapel Gallery. Irwin had a recognisable style of simple repeated motifs across the picture surface with subtle refinements of colour, and Power's purchases *The Green Scene* (1960) and *Untitled* (1960) were typical examples. Power also liked the work of another 'Situationist' Henry Mundy (b. 1919) particularly his *Blue Disc* (1960) which showed Mundy's unusual juxtapositioning of shapes and colours. In contrast to his interest in such younger artists, Power obviously thought that he should continue his own research into the broader field of abstract colour and he therefore returned to a much earlier period to look at the work of three painters who were part of the Orphist movement which began in Paris just before the First World War. One of the founders of Orphism was Robert Delaunay (1885-1941). He and his Russian-born wife Sonia (1885-1979) were both focussing, each in their own way, on the visual effects of interlocking patches of colour brought together simultaneously to create an intense vibrancy. Clearly impressed, Power bought Robert

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<sup>104</sup> B Rose, (ed) *Art as Art* (Los Angeles, 1991) preface.

Delaunay's *Nature morte portugaise* (1915-16) and, more typically, Sonia's *Mouvement final* (1914) and *Danseuse espagnole* (1917). The other Orphist painter whose work Power acquired was Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957) with a small watercolour *Autour d'un point* (1911) clearly showing the Orphist idea of overlapping planes of contrasting colour, as well as a gouache *Élevation en noir et blanc* (1920).

By 1961, Power was becoming increasingly confident in his search for artists with a different or new approach to their work and one such was R B Kitaj (1932-2007) a controversial artist who was a champion of figurative art at a time when it was out of fashion in London. Although he was American, he had trained at the Royal College of Art at the same time as David Hockney, Allen Jones, Derek Boshier and Peter Phillips but he had always distanced himself from both abstraction and Pop Art. Power was obviously intrigued by Kitaj from the outset because he bought one of the artist's Royal College paintings *Oh Lemuel* (1960) possibly at his degree show. In my view, Power liked Kitaj's breadth of view, an opinion shared by John Russell – 'Kitaj takes his imagery from all over. Sometimes it comes ready made, sometimes he paints it up in a variety of historical styles... a compendium of ideas and devices and throwbacks and associations.'<sup>105</sup> This concept is exemplified by *The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg* (1960)\* which was Power's next acquisition and is now in the Tate. \* (Figure 9) Kitaj was a serious, intellectual painter who genuinely regarded himself as an heir to the tradition of figurative art and although later in life, he felt he was misunderstood and subjected to anti-Semitic attacks, Power always gave him credit for breaking new ground in his early work and was happy to support him. He purchased a number of Kitaj pictures out of the studio including *The Bells of Hell; Priest, Deckchair, Distraught Female; Certain Forms of Association*, all painted in 1961, as well as the heartfelt *Reflections on Violence* (1962).

As has already been mentioned, Power consistently kept himself up to date with the latest exhibitions and one he would have certainly visited was 'The Young Contemporaries' at the RBA Galleries. It featured the work of recently-graduated British Pop artists who were advised by Alloway to re-hang the entire show after the opening. It is interesting to note that a Hockney picture was bought from the exhibition by the Kasmin Gallery for £40, but Power had obviously not made up his own mind about Pop Art and waited until the following year before adding to his own collection. It is safe to say, however, that Power must have been aware of British Pop Art for some years because of his friendship with Lawrence Alloway and Richard Hamilton, two of the the most influential figures connected with the movement. By 1962, Power and his wife Rene were living in the centre of London and he began to hang a number of

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<sup>105</sup> B Robertson, B Russell, Lord Snowdon, (1965) *Private View*, (London, 1965) 193

paintings in their newly refurbished flat. \*(Figure 16) Now that he had sold Murphy Radio and was free of the pressures of business, Power could devote more time to exploring some of the new trends in art, but before he did that, he once again looked back to an earlier period.

He had seen an exhibition at Gimpel fils a few years previously which featured the work of a number of European artists from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and he now had the chance to examine them in more detail. They were the Russian husband and wife, Mikhail Larionov (1881-1964) and Natalia Goncharova (1881-1962) as well as Amedée Ozenfant (1886-1966) the artist and writer who, with Le Corbusier and Léger, founded Purism. Larionov and Goncharova initiated the short-lived 'Rayonist' art movement in 1912 which was influenced by the (then) new fields of photography and cinema and had been partly inspired by Italian 'Futurism'. Power had always been interested in photography and would spend hours experimenting with coloured lenses and filters especially in the late 1940s and 1950s when he was helping to develop colour television. Rayonism's emphasis on colour and line was a subject he had written about in his own notes<sup>106</sup> and it is possible that he hoped to find some evidence in their work that might connect with his own views, but when one looks at the paintings which he in fact bought it is difficult to see a link. All four pictures were of flowers and trees and two of them were painted before 1912. Larionov's *Garden at Tiraspol* (1907) and Goncharova's *Flowers* (1910) did show signs of what was to follow but it is only in Goncharova's two small watercolours *Springtime* and *Flowers*, both of 1912, that one can detect elements of Futurism even in such natural subjects.

On the other hand, one can see what could have attracted Power to Purism which stressed mathematical order, a logical line of thought with precise universal forms and images of machine-made objects from everyday life. This is obviously in complete contrast to Power's interest in the CoBrA painters but only demonstrates that a collector as wide-ranging as Power can acquire work from different artists for different reasons. The first Ozenfant picture that Power purchased had been painted in 1926 in the Paris studio which the artist shared with Fernand Léger and was a classic architectonic work *Ville fortifiée*, while the second painting was a mysterious, larger canvas called *La source, femme au broc* (1927). The final artist whose work Power examined was Auguste Herbin (1882-1960) who had started abstract painting as early as 1917, but by the 1920s was making sculptural forms in painted wood as well as colourful paintings which can be linked to those of Ozenfant. Power bought *Le Moulin Rouge* (1926) which again clearly shows his on-going interest in the use of colour.

According to Peter Blake, Power kept all these paintings in a small room in his flat in London along with works by Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini and Umberto Boccioni from the Italian Futurist movement although I can find no record of which Futurist paintings Power acquired. When I interviewed him, Blake

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<sup>106</sup> See Appendix 1

gave the impression that Power kept them hidden because he was 'rather ashamed' of owning them which seems to me unlikely knowing his character as I did. Indeed, a further, indirect link with Futurism occurred at that time when Jann Howarth, Blake's first wife, gave Power one of her sequined quilts in the style of Severini. (I must apologise for the fact that the taped recording of my interview with Peter Blake is not on the attached DVD because of equipment failure).

By 1962, Power had been appreciating the work of Peter Blake (b. 1932) for some years since he first saw it at the 'Five Young Painters' exhibition at the ICA in 1958 but, as he often did, he waited until he saw how the artist was developing before collecting any of his pictures. Power's interest in British Pop Art represented a major shift in his collecting and it could be argued that it was the influence of Alloway which helped to bring it about. It is also likely that Power had seen examples of Pop Art during his frequent tours of studios and galleries in London and was intrigued by the young, lively, British style of the new movement in all its manifestations. In Blake's case, this was patently obvious as the artist ranged through different forms, and almost different systems, of handling paint, photographs, badges and pop music ephemera in his quest to ask serious artistic questions. The first work Power acquired was *Tuesday* (1961) an enamel and wood collage, now in the Tate, which incorporated press photographs of the film actress Tuesday Weld. Interestingly, Power bought at the same time, one of Blake's more nostalgic paintings *Postcard* (1962). The third Blake picture which Power purchased in the following year was *Drum Majorette* (1957) a typical, striking work full of the artist's trademark badges and medals. The two men remained friends for many years and towards the end of Power's life, when they were both at Sunday lunch in the home of Leslie Waddington in Chelsea, Blake took a polaroid photograph of Power explaining a point in his usual forceful yet humorous way. This formed the basis of a portrait that Blake later gave to his friend and which the family always call 'Do You See There!'<sup>107</sup>

Power continued to develop his interest in British Pop Art and turned to the work of Peter Phillips (b. 1939) and Allen Jones (b. 1937) who had been fellow students at the Royal College of Art. Phillips had been trained as a younger man in the practical skills of silver-smithing, graphic design and technical drawing and his early paintings reflected this. He was fascinated by the imagery of advertising and the iconography of American culture and he used his drawing skills to produce paintings based on machine-made objects such as pinball tables and board games on which he stuck labels and transfers as a montage. As one writer explained 'Yet another solution involved the use of printed transfers, as in *Motorpsycho/Club Tiger* (1962), in which such an image of a tiger in profile is applied over an enlarged

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<sup>107</sup> See Frontispiece.

copy of it painted by hand.’<sup>108</sup> Power was obviously intrigued by this concept because he bought *Motorpsycho/Go* just after it was painted, as well as *Tribal, 1x4* (1962) and *Star Card Table* (1962) with its striking image of a blond film star. Phillips liked to distort the accepted rules of presentation and often used inset panels to alter the spatial elements in his work.

He once described his 1960s attitude to painting as unrestricted:

My awareness of machines, advertising and mass communication is not probably in the same sense as an older generation that’s been without these factors. I’ve been conditioned by them and grew up with it all and use it without a second thought ...<sup>109</sup>

For Phillips, meeting Power - someone 40 years his senior and a former leader in mass communications - must have been an enlightening experience, but many of the artists I interviewed remarked on Power’s ability to bridge the generation gap with ease.

Phillips had been regarded as a troublemaker by the tutors at the Royal College for refusing to paint the set subjects, but at least he was allowed to finish his course. This was not the case with Allen Jones who had been expelled in 1960 but within a year had started to paint one of the most important pictures in British Pop Art, *The Battle of Hastings* (1961-2)\* which Power bought from the studio and is now in the Tate. \*(Figure 11) In this complex painting, Jones broke the accepted rules on the treatment of space and movement as well as both figuration and abstraction and it was this ground-breaking aspect which, according to the artist, most interested Power. Jones himself acknowledged the influence of other artists such as Kandinsky, Klee and even Dubuffet, on this painting as he no doubt explained to Power at the time. ‘Ted liked the process of painting and looking at the painted surface. He collected as part of his life and not just for decorating his flat and he was the only man in London who collected on an American scale.’<sup>110</sup> Jones continued his interest in movement that year when he started to produce shaped canvases for a series on the red London buses and Power acquired three of them as well as a more linear painting *Her Heart Is In The Right Place* (1962) which could owe something to Jones’ friend and fellow artist, Peter Phillips. By 1962, Power was becoming well known in contemporary art circles in London both for his collecting and for his hospitality in his flat which, for many of the younger artists, was the only private residence where they could see internationally recognised paintings of the highest standard. In Jones’

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<sup>108</sup> M Livingstone, *Pop Art, a Continuing History*, (London, 1990) 98.

<sup>109</sup> B Robertson, B Russell, Lord Snowdon, (1965) *Private View*, (London, 1965) 265

<sup>110</sup> Track 12 on the DVD of my interviews.

opinion, Power had a profound effect on British painters of the period. 'If he bought a picture, it was almost a validation of the artist – it was something special if you sold one to him. He always consistently went for work of high quality.'<sup>111</sup>

Power did not neglect American Pop Art in 1962 and saw the work of Jim Dine (b.1935) who at that time was a Performance Artist as well as a painter. He was pre-occupied with making art from everyday objects and his work had been shown in a recent exhibition of American Pop Art called 'New Painting of Common Objects' at the Pasadena Art Museum. He began a series of paintings on the basic artefacts of his work, the palettes, brushes and paint boxes he used everyday but changed in scale, and Power bought *Colourfull Palette* (1961) which was six feet high, as a typical example. In complete contrast, the other American artist whose work interested Power was Cy Twombly (b. 1928) who had lived in Italy since 1959 and had developed there his calligraphic style in which each mark had its own history, personal to him. Many of his paintings at that time had classical references and the three pieces acquired by Power, *Sketch For Io, 1* (1959), *Delian Ode VII* (1961) and *Notes From Sperlonga, 11* (1959) were all from that series with graffiti-style words mixed in with Twombly's trademark scribbles and deletions. Power wrote often about the importance of line and in 1957, posed the question 'Can a line be emotive from a Human point of view? Can it be sad or gay or violent or threatening or calm? I doubt it.'<sup>112</sup> It would be interesting to know if, five years later, Power felt that Twombly was answering any of those points or if he felt that the artist's marks were too subjective and deeply personal.

Power must have needed some light relief from such questions because he bought three small sculptures from Barrie Bates (b. 1935) a New Zealand artist who had just left the Royal College of Art. Bates changed his name to Billy Apple to reflect the subject of his work (which were painted casts of fruit) as a way of self- promotion that seemed to have achieved some degree of success when Power purchased such pieces as *Portrait of a Raspberry Blowing Orange Blonde* (1962). By the end of that year, the diversity of Power's collecting had become apparent as his confidence grew and his independence of mind allowed him to explore new areas of activity in the contemporary art world.

Although the quantity of Power's purchases diminished in 1963, the art he did buy was of the highest quality. As Howard Hodgkin remarked 'Ted always kept his eye on the ball to an extraordinary degree.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix 1

He was his own Geiger counter and it is not true that he was dealer led – at least not when I knew him.’<sup>113</sup> Power had always admired Brancusi’s sculptures and had asked Cochrane in England and Gibbs in America to look out for an exceptional piece and eventually, either Power or they found one at the Marlborough Gallery in London. This was *Fish* (1926)\* one of three bronzes set on a circular mirror supported on a carved oak pedestal and now in the Tate. \*(Figure 6) Brancusi had said in 1919 ‘We do not see real life except by reflections.’<sup>114</sup> He designed the fish shape to rotate on the mirror so that from some angles, it virtually disappears. Power often spoke in admiration about the asymmetry of his Brancusi with its different materials and textures and the fact that the base was an integral part of the whole sculpture. Perhaps this aspect reminded him of the importance he himself attached to the integrated design of the radio and television sets he manufactured so successfully. Brancusi’s *Fish* took pride of place in Power’s London flat for the rest of his life.

One English artist with whom Power had been friendly for many years was Richard Hamilton (b. 1922) whose work he had seen from the time of the famous ‘This is Tomorrow’ show. It is worth pointing out that the 1956 exhibition was primarily about design, a subject which Power and Hamilton agreed was important. Hamilton had been a design consultant in the 1950s and would certainly have met Dick Russell, the Murphy Radio designer who had brought in William Turnbull and Lawrence Alloway to discuss ideas, on Power’s suggestion. Although the two men met regularly, Power had never acquired any of Hamilton’s work, in part because he had not made up his own mind about what it meant to him as a collector. In the catalogue of the 1996 Tate exhibition of Power’s collection, Jennifer Mundy cites a letter of Hamilton’s which explains something of their relationship and why Power came so late to his work.<sup>115</sup> Once he had come to a decision, however, Power chose an iconic Hamilton painting, *Hommage à Chrysler Corp.* (1957)\* which shows many of the elements of Pop Art that Hamilton had defined so accurately in his well-known letter written to the Smithsons in the same year. \*(Figure 10)

It is not clear whether Power also identified with Hamilton’s concept of a parallel between car design and the female form but he certainly could not have chosen a better example of British Pop Art. Power went on to purchase other Hamilton paintings such as *In Horne’s House* (1949), *Whitley Bay* (1965) and *Grove of Academus* (1979) as well as numerous prints of subjects like *My Marilyn*, *Bathers*, *Time Magazine*, *Toaster* and *Casablanca*. Hamilton recalls Power, ever the businessman, negotiating with him on the lines of ‘I’ll buy one of each of those if I can have that one!’ The artist went on to make clear, however,

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<sup>113</sup> Track 11 on the DVD of my interviews

<sup>114</sup> Mundy 24

<sup>115</sup> Ibid 19



his thoughts on Power's standing as a collector – 'There was nobody like Ted at all. There was never any doubt in my mind that British art would not be the same without that sole figure'.<sup>116</sup>

Hamilton had always had a deeply-felt admiration for the work of Marcel Duchamp and in 1965-6 he reconstructed (with Duchamp's approval) the famous artwork *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. In the process, Hamilton made experimental copies in glass of some of the elements, including the four circles on the right hand side of the Bachelors' Domain. He either gave or sold this piece to Power who, for some reason, kept it alongside Oldenburg's *Boots* in his London flat - much to the amusement of visitors.

One of the main exhibitions at the Tate in 1963 was 'Private Views: Works from the Collections of Twenty Friends of the Tate Gallery' and interestingly Power chose older European artists rather than the American painters he had recently begun to buy. He lent paintings by Delaunay, Goncharova, Picabia, Severini and one by Piet Mondrian, some of which he had acquired in the late 1950s from a dealer called Jimmy McMullen who ran Gallery 1 in north London. Power's son Alan recalls that the gallery was on Power's route home from business meetings in the City and he loved to stop and browse through McMullen's back-room stock for bargains.

1964 was an important year for Power as he made his first and only visit to the United States after being urged to do so for some time by his son Alan Power and by his friend Lawrence Alloway who was by then living in New York with his wife, the artist Sylvia Sleigh. Alloway took Power round many of the studios of the American painters whose work he had seen previously in London or Paris, but as usual Power was keen to actually talk to the artists one-to-one and he did that whenever possible during his six week stay. His first purchase was a work by Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) called *Tex* (1962)\* a classic example of the artist's comic strip imagery. \*(Figure 12)

Alloway had written a number of articles about Lichtenstein and other American Pop artists and no doubt helped Power to choose one of the best paintings from that movement. Lichtenstein always stressed that his style of painting only used the mass media images as a starting point and one writer also emphasised that idea – 'it becomes a very exaggerated, a very compelling symbol that has almost nothing to do with the original.'<sup>117</sup> Power may well have seen earlier examples of Lichtenstein's work at the Sonnabend Gallery in Paris on one of his visits the previous year but he obviously waited to meet the artist before making a purchase. Power, however, returned to Sonnabend the following year to acquire *Wall Explosion II* (1965) one of the artist's wall-mounted sculptures which made an even stronger ironic point about the

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<sup>116</sup> Track 5 on the DVD of my interviews

<sup>117</sup> J Coplans, *Art Forum* 1967, 34-39

violence of war. Two other Lichtenstein paintings acquired later by Power were *Ohhh. Alright* (1964) and *Brushstroke* (1966).

That work is now in the Tate, as is another sculpture by a leading figure in American Pop Art – Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929) the Swedish born artist who had lived in America since the early 1950s. This is *Counter and Plates with Potato and Ham* (1961) one of a series known collectively as ‘The Store’ which were inspired by every-day objects that were available in shops near Oldenburg’s studio in Manhattan. The work becomes a parody of the real object but with sensuous undertones even though it is deliberately rough in its execution. Years later, Oldenburg explained his thinking behind these sculptures:

The Store is born in contorted drawings of the female figure and in female underwear and legs, dreams of the proletarian venus, stifled yearnings which transmute into objects, brilliant colours and grossly sensuous surfaces.<sup>118</sup>

Whether Power went along with such an explanation, it is impossible to say, but he did appreciate Oldenburg’s efforts to demystify art which subsequently led to the artist’s famous, huge, ‘soft’ sculptures of rigid, commonplace objects in a collapsed state. Power continued to buy Oldenburg’s work including *Boots* (1963), *Strawberry Pie from ‘Javatime’* (1963) and *Knakkebrod* (1966) all made from different materials such as plastic, plaster or cast iron and using enamel paint. He also bought a number of the artist’s colourful prints.

Another American sculptor whose work interested Power was H C Westerman (1922-1981) who lived in Chicago and took a more craft-based approach to his work, having been trained as a carpenter. His often amusing pieces were frequently made of wood and he liked to make a visual pun with the finished work and this is exemplified in the large pair of sculptures which Power acquired, *Swingin’ Red King and Silver Queen* (1960). Marco Livingstone has described Westerman’s appeal as:

not to the here-and-now but to a world that exists fundamentally in the imagination. The mechanistic forms and brightly painted metallic surfaces of his *Swingin’ Red King and Silver Queen* anticipate by two years the first robotic figures of Eduardo Paolozzi.’<sup>119</sup>

Both these two huge sculptures were kept in a corridor in Power’s flat in London and could startle the unwary visitor before Westerman’s humour became apparent. Another American artist who worked in large scale was James Rosenquist (b.1933) who had originally been a bill board painter and liked to have

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<sup>118</sup> Mundy 46

<sup>119</sup> M Livingstone, *Pop Art – a Continuing History*, (London, 1990) 30

his three-dimensional pictures ‘jump out at the viewer’. One of his most famous paintings *F-111* was 80 feet long but Power contented himself with a normal-sized work, *The Space That Won’t Fail* (1962) which was on show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York where he was taken by Alloway.

Having been attracted a decade earlier to the work of Paul Jenkins (the first American painter Power ever bought) with his technique of manipulating his canvases to produce liquid skeins of colour, it was perhaps natural for Power to look at the paintings of Morris Louis (1912-1962). Louis and Kenneth Noland had visited the studio of Helen Frankenthaler in the 1950s and were intrigued by her skill at pouring stains of colour on to canvas and Louis went on to develop a similar technique using a thinned down commercial paint called Magna to produce a whole series of poured paintings called *Veils*, *Unfurleds*, *Flowers*, and *Stripes*. On his New York visit, Power bought two of the large *Unfurled* paintings in which Louis had poured diagonal rivulets of intense colour so that they flowed on both sides of raw canvas. Power felt that Louis, like Albers, used colour in a psychological sense with no imagery, and in his own notes, he had suggested ways in which this could be done:

Reduce and remove if possible all connections and complications not being the symbol or directly connected to the symbol. ‘Directly connected’ for example, may be the necessary colour to convey the emotion (the thing) as distinct from the line of the symbol.<sup>120</sup>

Power later bought *Number 38* from Louis’ *Stripes* series which hung in his flat in London for many years, so it is maintained a dialogue with the artist’s ideas every time he looked at the painting - as was his custom.

It would have been impossible to visit New York’s art world in 1964 and ignore Andy Warhol (1928-1987) and Power certainly wanted to make up his own mind about one of the most influential artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Once again, Alloway would have been influential in suggesting that Power should have a fresh look at Warhol’s work in the atmosphere of New York. I have no evidence of the two ever meeting, but undoubtedly Power visited Warhol’s Silver Studio where he bought one of the original Death and Disaster series. This was *Blue Electric Chair* (1963) which was a large work with the symbol of execution paired with a minimalist canvas in the same blue colour. It is quite likely that Power understood and agreed with Warhol’s use of silk screen printing to produce work in greater quantities for more of the public to see - and it is also possible that Power had an ironic regard for the artist’s business acumen. On the other hand, Power, who always admired the painterly qualities of the artists he collected,

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<sup>120</sup> See Appendix 1

might have been intrigued by Warhol as a designer of images with no trace of the artist's hand. His son, Alan, recalls in one of my conversations with him, that his father was particularly struck by the relevance of Warhol's work in the context of New York. Power liked the sombre strength and directness gathered from newspaper photographs in some of his work and his use of advertising-style colours. For whatever reason, Power went on to acquire a number of Warhol's famous images over the next few years such as *Troy* (1962), *Merce* (1963), *Flowers* (1963), *Soup Can* (1964) and *Turquoise Marilyn* (1962).\* (Figure 13)

While in New York, Power visited many of the major artists' studios and attended gallery openings as he was well known by this stage as an important British collector. He and his wife, Rene, also met again Barnett and Annalee Newman who entertained them on a number of occasions and introduced them to many of the leading figures in the American art world of the period. Power, as usual however, pursued his own path and was shown the highly-finished, stainless steel or chrome, sculptures of human figures by Ernest Trova (b. 1927) which became famous as the *Falling Man* series. Many commentators thought the small figures represented human beings challenged by a technological society which would have interested Power with his own background in such fields and he travelled to St Louis to meet Trova who was a self-taught artist, presumably to discuss the matter in more detail. The two men must have found much of common interest because Power purchased *No. 54* and *No. 56* of the *Falling Man* series in addition to a large Trova painting on the same theme.

Back in London, Power lent ten of his Picabia paintings to an ICA exhibition and it is interesting to note that they included some of the artist's earliest work such as *Bord de la creuse* (1906) as well as one his last paintings, *Le vert avec le rouge et le noir* (1949). Power made a point of visiting London galleries he admired on a regular basis, and one of these was the Rowan Gallery where he saw the work of the British hard-edge artist Jeremy Moon (1934-1973). Moon was fascinated by dance and often incorporated a sense of movement and balance in his colourful, carefully painted canvases which were sometimes shaped and often shown as a linked sequence in the gallery. One of his supporters was Peter Fuller and it is quite possible that he suggested to Power that Moon was a painter worthy of further investigation and Power bought a number of the artist's works including, appropriately, *La Danse No1* (1964) and *Naxos No 5* (1964).

The detailed Power archives stop at this point and I will therefore be endeavouring to cover the rest of Power's collecting career in more general terms. By the 1960s Power's collection had become better known among the younger artists in London and many visited his flat to see it and enjoy Power's hospitality. Thomas Crow, although writing years later, noted this (albeit with some errors of detail)

The most important encounters with the new painting came not in any museum but in the Hanover Square flat of the electronics manufacturer E. J. Power, an independently minded Yorkshireman who was then the only significant British collector of New York art. In that setting, the most striking impression made on young artists was the fact that a single painting could occupy the entire wall from floor to ceiling. For them, the sheer physical impact of the canvases invited comparisons with the cinema screen.<sup>121</sup>

As I have already shown, Power bought works of art from different sources but his main art advisor from 1952 was Peter Cochrane of Tooths Gallery and this arrangement continued until the early 1970s when Tooths amalgamated with Waddington Galleries. Leslie Waddington, the son of Victor Waddington who had first introduced Power to Irish painters like Jack Yeats, then became one of Power's closest friends and advisors and the two men met frequently until Power's death in 1993. Waddington had a deeply-felt respect both for Power's knowledge of contemporary art and for his business acumen and often consulted the older man on matters concerning his gallery. After his wife died in 1978, Power would regularly enjoy the hospitality of the Waddington household, often in the company of William and Kim Turnbull, when lively discussions would take place across the widest range of subjects. Power bought exclusively through Waddingtons for the last 20 years of his life and indeed on some occasions introduced new artists to the gallery.

Three of the young artists in the 1960s whose careers Power helped and continued to support for many years were Howard Hodgkin, Patrick Caulfield and John Hoyland, and Power was also an enthusiastic purchaser of the sculpture of Barry Flanagan and Kim Lim. As I have already mentioned, Hodgkin and Power were Trustees of the Tate at the same time from 1968 to 1975 and Hodgkin remembers those days:

He and I saw eye to eye for many years as Trustees. He got on extremely well with the others and he had an enormous effect on them and on me. We used to go back to his flat after Trustee meetings and open a bottle of Scotch and just talk – mostly about art. I still think of them today.<sup>122</sup>

Hodgkin's painting *Talking About Art* (1975) was never owned by Power but it is reasonable to assume that the inspiration for it owed something to those lively discussions. Power had bought a Hodgkin

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<sup>121</sup> From *London Calling – London's art scene in the 1950s and 1960s*, *Art Forum*, summer 1993.

<sup>122</sup> Track 11 on the DVD of my interviews.

painting as early as 1963 when Tooths had a solo exhibition of his work. This was *Gardening* (1963) which can be regarded as a transitional picture from the artist's semi-figurative style to his highly personal abstraction where he uses dots and small circles of colour to represent conversation and ambience. Hodgkins's paintings are often full of autobiographical imagery and he frequently extends the painting to include the frame and thus give a sense of continuation. In the early 1970s he accepted four commissions from Power (the first time the collector ever did this) which illustrate his own personal memories of his friend and at the same time show his new abstract style in its mature form. The first was *Family Portrait* (1972) followed by *Interior 9AG* (the postal address of Power's flat), *Mr and Mrs E.J.P* (1972-3)\* and finally *Interior Grosvenor Square* (1971-74). \* (Figure 15) The painting of Power and his wife is now in the Tate and it is worth noting the artist's own comments about the picture as it shows the diversity of Power's collection at that time:

It was an interior containing two sculptures by Westerman, a Brancusi, a Pollock, a panelled wooden ceiling etc, as well as the owners; the wife slipping away to the right and the husband talking in green in the foreground.<sup>123</sup>

Another commentator, John McEwen, writing in a later Whitechapel Gallery catalogue also mentions the painting:

Mr and Mrs E. J. P., for instance, have gathered together probably the most distinguished art collection to have been privately assembled in England since the Second World War. The haze of green, which describes the enveloping conversation of Mr E. J. P. makes reference also to a sculpture by Brancusi.<sup>124</sup>

Power acquired other Hodgkin paintings including *Mr and Mrs Mick Moon* (1968-70) and one of the artist's many works set in India, *Bombay Sunset* (1973). Hodgkin still has the highest regard for Power as a collector. He feels that Power was always ahead of his time and both shrewd and courageous in his choice of artist. 'Once he had made up his mind he always bought the best and wanted it to be seen.'<sup>125</sup>

Patrick Caulfield (1936-2005) was introduced to Power by his son, Alan, who had seen the artist's early work at the Whitechapel Gallery's 'New Generation' exhibition in 1964. The following year, Caulfield was part of mixed show at the Robert Fraser Gallery (with Blake, Hamilton and Paolozzi) and Power

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<sup>123</sup> Catalogue raisonné *Howard Hodgkin Paintings*, (London, 1995) 162

<sup>124</sup> Ibid 162.

<sup>125</sup> Track 11 on the DVD of my interviews.

bought two paintings from that exhibition but I have no information about the titles. It is likely that Power was drawn to Caulfield's deceptively simple paintings of everyday objects, with their trademark black key-lines and primary colours, precisely because he knew that they were much more complex than at first sight. Although Caulfield did not think of himself as a Pop artist, he did sometimes follow the Pop aesthetic of finding beauty and value in the most banal and mundane objects. This was the case in the next painting which Power purchased, *View of the Rooftops* (1965) where Caulfield almost plays a game with the viewer to suggest a form of escapism from banality - over the rooftops and away. Caulfield had studied art history as well as painting and often used references to traditional European art in his work, an idea which he later developed as a painting within a painting. This can also be disconcerting to the viewer when the detailed, almost photographic image of the smaller picture is at odds with the larger, flat painting into which it has been incorporated. Power obviously responded to this contrast in styles and bought a classic example of Caulfield's later work in *Interior with a Picture* (1985-6)\* which is now in the Tate. \* (Figure 14) Here Caulfield makes a detailed, beautifully drawn, copy of a 16<sup>th</sup> century German painting called *Meal by Candlelight* by von Wedig and 'floats' it in a spotlight inside a modern pub room with a dado and flock wallpaper. The improbable juxtaposition of the two elements creates the debate between illusion and reality which Caulfield was often trying to achieve. (It is interesting to note that Power was still buying new art in his eighties.)

Because he was such a slow and meticulous painter, Caulfield became an accomplished print maker so that his work could be seen by a wider audience, and his bright colours with black outlines were ideal for the task. Many of his prints were published by Waddingtons who became Caulfield's dealer in 1969 and Power bought a number of print series over the next two decades. He took great pleasure in seeing an artist develop and Caulfield remained a friend who called regularly at Power's flat to discuss his work and keep the older man abreast of the latest trends in art.

John Hoyland (b. 1934) was a close friend of Caulfield's and it is likely that Power was introduced to him by Lawrence Alloway at the 'Situation' shows in 1960-61 or they could have met in New York in 1964 when they were both visiting America for the first time. Hoyland was much influenced by the work of Hoffman, Noland and Olitski which initiated his lifelong passion for colour. In his early painting, Hoyland was concerned with the idea of perception and he often used linear compositions to create the illusion of a distorted image on a receding background. An example of this is Power's acquisition *April 1961* (1961) 'in which the lines at the mid-point of the canvas appear to advance and the space of the picture seems convex.'<sup>126</sup> This painting was bought by Power in 1977 (and is now in the Tate) and Power

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<sup>126</sup> Mundy 50

continued to support Hoyland when he began painting more free-flowing pictures using acrylic paint in sinuous swirls but still retaining his rivers of colour. The two men remained friends for many years and Hoyland recalled the pleasure he felt to see one of his own pictures hanging beside a De Stael ('my hero') in Power's flat. Hoyland admires Power 'for being a modest man for someone who didn't need to be modest. He took risks with his choices but he was very sharp, like a Yorkshireman – hear all, see all, say nowt!'<sup>127</sup>

A young sculptor who was also supported by Power from the start of his career was Barry Flanagan (b.1941) whose work in the 1960s mainly consisted of temporary forms made from sand, rope and textiles. These soft sculptures, which some thought were related to Arte Povera in concept, disconcerted many viewers because they challenged accepted ideas of what constituted sculpture. This would have appealed to Power and he acquired *Four Hessians, 2 Natural, 1 Purple, 1 Yellow Brown* (1970) which was a free-standing piece filled with sand and plaster. In the 1970s, Flanagan experimented with sculptures made from stone and marble on which he incised spirals and marks, and again Power followed this new interest, buying *Tantric Figures* (1973) and *Cornish Bub* (1979). In that same year, Flanagan cast the first sculpture in a series for which he has become most famous – his bronze hares. In my interview with him, he recalls driving along a country lane with high banks and seeing a hare with mud on its paws running alongside at head height.<sup>128</sup> Flanagan appreciated the naturalness of the movement as well as the symbolic importance of the hare in many cultures, and he developed the idea of showing the hare in a range of human situations in a quizzical, humorous way, almost as an alternative to more serious, intellectual sculpture. Power bought one of the earliest examples *Leaping Hare* in 1970 in which the hare is set on top of a pyramid of gold-coloured metal bars to emphasise its speed and action, but frozen in bronze. Power continued to acquire Flanagan sculptures through the 1970s and 80s including *Shrine* (1981), *Ball and Claw* (1981), a large piece in stone and bronze, *Acrobats* (1981) and *Unicorn and Oak Tree* (1989). Power used to talk to his family about Flanagan as a 'mysterious' friend and certainly the sculptor has his own way of expressing himself in conversation, but they respected each other's talents. Flanagan admired Power's straight-forward, forthright attitude to art and found his encouragement invaluable. 'He voyaged everywhere and moved such a lot forward because of his activities and his purchases.'<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Track 14 on the DVD of my interviews.

<sup>128</sup> Track 13 on the DVD of my interviews.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid



In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I discussed the work of William Turnbull, one of Power's closest friends but Power also admired the sculpture of Turnbull's wife, Kim Lim (1936-1997). Lim was Chinese but brought up in Singapore, and much of her sculpture had an element of Eastern spirituality with its inherent calmness and balance. Her early pieces were in wood, often finished in primary colours but in the 1980s she began to work in stone and marble always retaining, however, her concern for 'space, rhythm and light rather than volume and weight.'<sup>130</sup> Power always placed her sculpture *Wind Stone* (1989) in a special position in his London flat and found its light surface with incised lines, restful and contemplative - as he used to mention to his family. In the last two decades of his life, Power would meet the Turnbolls regularly for Sunday lunch, often in the company of Leslie and Clodagh Waddington, and he always enjoyed Kim's lively personality and appreciated her skill and understanding of the different qualities of the materials in which she worked. Lim was also an accomplished printmaker and Power had a number of her delicate works on paper as well as a special sculpture *Small Stone Carving* (undated) which was dedicated with the words 'For EJP from K'.

As has been previously mentioned, Power generously donated paintings and sculptures from his collection to various museums and he continued to do this into the 1970s when he presented two works on paper by Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. These were *Double Composite* (1971) and *Tear R 106 – From Midpoint of Left side to Middle of the Page* (1973).

Inevitably, when reviewing Power's huge collection, there are a number of artists whose work was acquired only once by him and I cannot find any information about the specific painting or sculpture bought by him. These include :-

Frédéric Benrath, Pierre Bonnard, Theo van Doesburg, Raoul Dufy, Otto Freundlich, William Gear, Patrick Heron, Giorgio Morandi, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Paul Reybeyrolle, Greg Smith, Richard Smith, Joe Tilson, Victor Vasarely.

Barbara Hepworth, E Olsen, William Tucker.

For details of the work of the following British artists supported by Power and donated by him to the Tate, see Mundy pp 58, 59 and 63 :-

Barrie Cook, John Dugger, Tess Jarray, John Loker, John Salt and Marc Vaux.

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<sup>130</sup> Quoted in essay *The Sculpture of Empathy* by Martin Holman 1999 ([www.23.co.uk](http://www.23.co.uk))

## Conclusion

The most interesting aspects of Power's collecting career are, in my opinion, his self-taught approach to contemporary art; his openness to the diversity of his acquisitions; his conscious decision to buy work in quantity so that he could properly examine it for creative progression; his ability to keep an open mind about new ideas - to think about them, sometimes to discuss them with his artist friends and only then form his own view.

In this work, I have tried to demonstrate that the key factor in the overall pattern of Power's collecting was that he came from a background of manufacturing and not from the world of academe. Because of this, he was obliged to learn from looking rather than from studying books and this in turn meant that he was able to develop his own eye uncluttered by pre-conceived ideas or currently fashionable theories. It would be wrong to imply that Power never read about the art he was collecting or that he never took advice from knowledgeable people in the art world, but he used that information only as a tool to help him look more objectively, before coming to his own decisions. A number of people whom I interviewed have pointed out (mostly in admiration) that Power was rather 'un-British' in his method of acquisition, often buying a number of paintings at one time and then eventually keeping only a few after careful consideration. I believe that Power had the resources to purchase art by this method and he used it to immerse himself in the work and thus understand more fully the development of those artists he admired.

I would also suggest that Power's long experience in the technically innovative world of radio, radar and television, meant that he was unusually receptive to the concept of non-figurative painting and that he responded intellectually to the work of both European and American artists who were innovators at the time. This becomes clear when one reads the personal notes Power made in the 1950s in which he also set down some of the guiding principles he used in his early collecting. As he became more confident in his acquisitions and better known in the art world, Power began to lend works from his collection to national exhibitions and at the same time bring some of the younger British artists to the attention of the wider public. A number of those artists recalled to me that Power's London flat was the first place they had ever seen contemporary art in a domestic setting and sometimes even before it was shown in major exhibitions. Power left many works from his collection to posterity and in his quiet way he influenced more than one generation of British artists as they readily acknowledged when I interviewed them.

I hope that this thesis will provide enough information about E J Power, often regarded as Britain's 'unknown' collector, to establish him as an important figure in the history of postwar British art. Ted Power always looked for a challenge in any work of art he bought. A challenge he accepted and enjoyed until the very end of his long life.

## List of Figures

- 1 *Marina à Dieppe* (1952) Nicholas de Stael
  - 2 *Tête* (1954) Karel Appel  
*Spirits* (1957) Asger Jorn
  - 3 *Monsieur Plume plis au pantaloon (Portrait d'Henri Michaux)* (1947) Jean Dubuffet
  - 4 *Broadway* (1958) Ellsworth Kelly
  - 5 *Unformed Figure* (1953) Jackson Pollock
  - 6 *Fish* (1926) Constantin Brancusi
  - 7 *Eve* (1950) Barnett Newman
  - 8 *Le beau charcutier* (1924-6, 1929-35) Francis Picabia
  - 9 *The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg* (1960) R. B. Kitaj
  - 10 *Hommage à Chrysler Corp.* (1957) Richard Hamilton
  - 11 *Battle of Hastings* (1961-62) Allen Jones
  - 12 *Tex* (1962) Roy Lichtenstein
  - 13 *Turquoise Marilyn* (1962) Andy Warhol
  - 14 *Interior with a Picture* (1985-86) Patrick Caulfield
  - 15 *Mr and Mrs E.J.P.* (1969-73) Howard Hodgkin
  - 16 Power's flat in London in 1981 showing paintings by de Stael, Hodgkin, Kelly and sculptures by Paolozzi, Flanagan, César and Turnbull.
  - 17 Power and Barnett Newman standing in front of Newman's *White Fire III* and *White Fire I* in Power's London flat in 1964. Also shown is Brancusi's *Fish*.
  - 18 Power and his daughter Janet, in 1983, discussing a painting by Duncan Hannah.
  - 19 Power in 1990 beside Turnbull's *Eve I*.
- The next five photographs were taken at Power's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party in 1989 in his London flat.
- 20 Power and three generations of his family all saying 'Do you see there!' (see Blake portrait)
  - 21 90<sup>th</sup> birthday montage
    - a) Peter Cochrane
    - b) Power with Leslie and Clodagh Waddington
    - c) Alan Cristea talking to Bill Turnbull and Barry Flanagan in the background.
    - d) Power with John Hoyland and Patrick Caulfield.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Personal notes made by Power in 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1957. These are the total number of notes in Power's archive.

#### 1953

- 1 The higher the quality and form and detail of the line – the drawing, the less in COLOUR required - in fact.
- 2 Colour and line compete and balance between the two is important. (Matisse had to destroy form the more his colour got higher)
- 3 Colour is not form. Therefore if high tone colour is required a strong line (but not detailed or highly coloured) is necessary. To carry and delineate it. Without this it will become messy and lack force and point.
- 4 The more diffuse the drawing the lower and softer should be the colours used.
- 5 There no line drawing colours/ be monochromatic.
- 6 And perhaps the perfect “form” line drawing – NO colour.
- 7 Assuming Corot, Cezanne, Matisse, Bonnard all achieved the optimum cross of form and colour – where do we go from them?
- 8 As it seems “ back to colour”  
(Colour least important) if form is the aim or,  
Back to the primitives or Chinese if colour is the aim.
- 9 But these have been worked out and so perhaps the new direction will be either.
- 10 Drawing with no local colour and block colour using in intensity as line gets stronger and detail weaker. Colours emotional related to subject and in harmony with each (line must always remain dominant)
- 11 Strong line drawing – no “form” no detail – indicating shape plus high colour applied mainly as local colour.
- 12 What seems to emerge is this:-
  - a Line is always dominant
  - b Colour can only rise in intensity as strength of line rises.
  - c As colour rises in intensity, area of high colour must be reduced in area concerned and canvass so vacated filled in with LINE, near BLACK and perhaps a near WHITE.
  - d I think I prefer the LINE to be obviously figurative or representational but it need not be
  - e But even if non-figurative (abstract) a,b and c still apply.
- 13 Guides: - One should see the “line”
  - a First and clearly. No searching for it under the colour (colour too dominant)
  - b KLEE comes out of this analysis as a guide and master of “line” both with and without local colour i.e. at both extremes if one leaves out monochrome. In between these extremes lie all other painting synthesis – Corot, Cezanne, Bonnard, Matisse.

#### Aug 24th 1954

- 1 Man is insignificant in relation to the cosmos and in relation to the natural phenomena of cosmic and pre-cosmic forces

2 Man is significant to himself and his survival

3 Cosmic forces are significant to man.

A Man must understand the cosmic forces more and more for the purpose of controlling their influence on him. He does now, to some extent, on the early result of those forces – growth of vegetation – chemistry – atomic reactions etc... I believe man is confident of his power, through thought, to him ultimate total control. Therefore these forces can be portrayed to man as powerful. Powerful and in perpetual movement - strong colours. But harmonies (confident – not dreaded)? Harmonious colour arrayed in strong lines of force – not strong line with (absence of definite line) colour laid in.

B Man in relation to natural phenomena – sea – rocks – trees etc etc – an underlying theme (common but now complex). Strong but static? Solid, rather static line but harmonious colour (confident – not dreaded) Monumental but relaxed.

C Man in relation to his own inanimate handywork – transport – head - bottles – chairs etc etc – Ephemeral – transitional – not solid or static or powerful. Well under human control. ? Idealised in form and colour hedonistic in sad – emotive – where the artist can do as he likes – freedom – but generally gay and harmonious in high or low tone colours.

D Man in relation to man (excluding close loved ones) – dangerously inquisitive – NOT understood - frightening – despairing – bewildering – distrustful – depressing.

A relationship to be ashamed of. Strong, powerful, inharmonious

Strong line, low tone discordant colour (a sad line) perhaps little colour only.

END

X Powerful and in perpetual movement – strong colours. Absence of definite line

April 1955

My requirement – painting from which emanates a “sense” of its meaning in the simplest possible terms. A strong “sense” rather than pictorial detail. This “sense” can be violent or peaceful. I prefer to the peaceful. The violent will usually be associated with man – or man’s relationships with man – rather than landscape or spiritual or still life or the universe. The latter means basic origins of the “background” material for which all things come. All except the human can be peaceful and mysterious and strong. Suggesting a welcome metamorphosis even if at times, as we prove, these strong forces temporarily disrupt and destroy. Therefore, harmonious colour, strong or pale – absence of strongly rhythmic line or a fading line – no fussy detail. Strength through repetition but repetition with changes to suggest constant metamorphosis – a “breaking through” of “something” – “repetition” can be through surface texture instead of line from an origin or background of determinacy, of sameness to an over increasing variety to indeterminacy through a constant metamorphosis.

FRANCIS  
DUBUFFET  
BRYEN  
WOLS

OSSORIO  
RIOPELLE  
TOBEY  
POLLOCK  
ALECHINSKY  
BOGART (concrete)  
GOEBEL (oval objects in space)

If surrealism is concerned only with a state of mind (portrayed through odd reality) then not for me because it must be violent or unpleasant.

I want the portrayal of 'reality' seen or unseen but real nevertheless. And the "unseen" (which is everything) must be felt in the painting – a surrealism technique but concerned with things and not humans – maybe with animals or woman's beauty perhaps???

END

April 5th 1957

Appertaining to my notes Aug 24th 1954! : -

Stael – Pollock – Francis – Still – Rothko – Dubuffet – Wols – Tapiés – Kooning – All in one way or another satisfy the conditions then expressed.

Now, it seems, should emerge a type of painting expressing a combination or combinations of A.B.C.D in those notes. See also notes "April 1955".

The violence of MAN (D) (Dubuffet) can be retained, or perhaps transmuted to "LONGING or YEARNING" (some Dubuffet) and combined with the STATIC (B), earth – found natural phenomena (STAEEL) or with Man's handiwork (C) – transitional, NOT static or powerful (late de Stael) or with (A) Francis and Pollock

COSMIC phenomena – natural but external to our earth. To avoid a "literary" or "anecdotal" approach (which would destroy perfection in combining D with A, B or C) it could take the form of LOW tone, DISCORDANT colours with disturbed rhythmic or falling lines (D) in association with harmonious colour of high or low tone, arrayed in strong lines of force (A) – Francis – Pollock – Still – or (B) solid, static line (Stael - Riopelle - Rothko or (C) gay, hedonistic – still life etc – (late Stael).

D with A and/or B would be the most interesting and powerful.

The only DISCORD is D so ... the others – A B C – can be harmonious and contrasting with D. This can be, therefore, the main method of separation of the emotional content but will, of course, call for the highest artistry to get acceptable association.

The resultant pictures may give the feeling of "Break Out" rather than "Break through". MAN breaking out from or down his environment of hate of each other through acceptance and development of nature's abundant resources.

At present, Still comes nearest to this – disturbing colours and line plus some harmonious but "floating", unsecured colours. If "me" could really get hold of the latter, things would be a lot neater!! That's the feeling I want. Hopeful but different.

END

May 27th 1957 – read in conjunction with April 5th 1957

Can a LINE be emotive from a Human point of view? Can it be sad or gay or violent or threatening or calm? I doubt it. It can be calm – rhythmic – dynamic or indicate any other PHYSICAL attribute but as PHYSICAL they can be more easily associated (the line) with natural phenomena - earthly or cosmic – than with human mind or emotion. If in association with colour then it is easier to associate line with a subject or at any rate the colour content is the suggestive element to the human mind. Suggestive of the THING with the line achieving the physical attribute of the THING – dynamic – calm – static – etc.

### SYMBOLS – notes on at various times.

Oct 10th 1957

To make symbols as directly perceptive and communicative (the least amount of viewer interpretation) as possible is the aim. So:-

A Reduce and remove if possible all connections and complications not being the symbol or directly connected with the symbol. (“Directly connected” for example, may be the necessary colour to convey the emotion (the thing) as distinct from the LINE of the symbol which conveys the physical attribute – and the colours may not be ‘local’ to the symbol. Nevertheless it is necessary for the emotional content and must be somewhere

B Use TEXTURE to reduce colour and/or line complication and fussiness to convey some attribute and so help towards simplification and directness. Texture very, very important. Latter rises as simplification becomes more imperative.

Examples of Symbolism in above sense:-

Rothko – Human lack of conflict with nature – harmonious – strong – calm – spreading (knowledge) - variety – smooth texture.

Pollock – Mostly NATURE with some points of Human contact:- Indeterminate – harmonious – strong – fairly rough texture.

Tapies – 1/ Human to human – dark – strong – unharmonious – rough end-up texture.

2/ Human to nature pleasant fine texture background with fine cracks – harmonious – indeterminate – constant movement – harmless: lumpy, spiky rough texture pieces, unpleasant colour – but solid – determinate – active (very) – obviously HUMAN on background of NATURE. As distinct from ROTHKO (Human side not so unpleasant as a rule – but sometimes so by acid colours) Tapies here illustrates mostly side of humans. Could use NATURE for bad purposes and intentions against other Humans.

Dubuffet – Nearly always Human condition to self and other humans – nature not much concerned accept in loose, general way and conveyed by ‘earthy’ colour. Strong, rhythmic lines, busy, sometimes unpleasant, seldom pleasant, always inquisitive, busy purposeful but also slightly stupid, not taking full intelligent advantage of opportunities. Often being unpleasantly ridiculous to other humans.

Sam Francis – Pleasant texture and paint - harmonious colour – determinate – plenty of movement – sometimes black intrudes to interfere with harmony. Cosmic nature – variably infinitely but NOT positively – Non-human except possibly for BLACK intrusion.

END

Oct 10th 1957



Should SYMBOL for MAN be positive – determinate – assertive – self-confident – arrogant – unafraid. At this date I think so – at least in regards to man’s attitude and relationship to natural science and physics – that means unthinking NATURE. And maybe it should be so for Man’s relationship to Man. But this has the other side – fear of the OTHER – suffering etc etc, - so it cannot be as generally accepted as SYMBOL here.

Should SYMBOL for Natural Science – unthinking nature – be negative – indeterminate – non-assertive – “couldn’t-care-less” – harmonious (to man) – useful, Always I think. Unthinking NATURE is not vicious – it means no harm – it is a great and useful force at the disposal of man. It is a creator far more than it is a destroyer.

Should now observe and study what SYMBOLS are best used to convey above attributes as directly as possible

END

Oct 10th 1957

Unthinking nature and thinking nature (HUMANS) are, by artists, generally thought of as in conflict. The existence of the Human depends on his fighting and defeating natural laws. This view is, to me, old hat. Man knows enough now to feel confident of his powers (with exceptions) to use nature for his purposes. Even where he cannot at the moment, he is confident that he will do so. Therefore:- The conflict is only man against man and the point of contact between man and nature can be shown as harmonious. If nature can be shown always as harmonious (as I think it should be) then the harmonious side of man can be shown identically!! A peculiarity and ambiguity which can be seen in the work of some artists. ROTHKO for instance. I think it more true today to show man/nature in harmonious accord instead of in a savage and vicious/decaying relationship. The latter is a man/man relationship and I’ve had enough of it. Now look for the other in painting and, especially, in sculpture\*. This is not hedonistic or avoiding the issue but a true relationship. Science-fiction is a type of this approach – dangerous, but exhilarating so - forward looking – confident – opening up the world to man – useful – challenging. Making man do what he alone can i.e. think deeply – all this (even though for the story’s sake and, no doubt, for variety of emotion) in spite of the introduction of pieces of nasty, man/man relationship and the exhibiting of nature/science as “anti” man.

\*SCULPTURE:- ‘Could be’ material taken by man, worked on obviously and resulting in an ‘enhanced’ material now in the form of calm - monumental – strong – useful, say. The “physical” attribute in the end form – the emotional attribute (man/nature association for good) in the material plus man’s work on it.

A provisional classification of some current image makers.

By ‘image’ I mean a reference to ‘something outside the picture’s formal organisation’. I can think of 2 main divisions (with one subdivision).

A Generalised human referents (head, figures).

A2 Fables with animals (I’art Brut).

B Exploitation of paint properties to symbolise landscape effects (abstract impressionism; or the ‘new landscape of science’, as Kepes calls it).

- 1 Image makers who have never done anything but make images: Appel, Bacon, Dubuffet, Fautrier, Golub, Jorn.
- 2 Image makers who try to make the physical means of painting identical with an image (usually by equating painting with writing): Bryen, Capogrossi, Mathieu, Michaux
- 3 Image makers who have developed from Action Painting and want to find images strong enough to stand up to extremes of technique: De Kooning, Moreni, Pollock, Marca Relli.
- 4 Image makers who use general post-war painterliness as a carrier for images (Spazialismo – except Fontana, Nuclear Art): Baj, Bergolli, Georges, Guston, Viseux.

#### NOTE

Francis and Riopelle are non-image makers in this sense: however, the way their later pictures are organised resembles aspects of image making.

#### SYMBOLISM

Oct 19th 1957

Figurative symbolism – per last phase of Klee – figurative line – suggestive colour (sad – gay etc) – per Dubuffet also figurative line and suggestive colour. More limited to human emotion than Klee who is more metaphysical – what is man to become sort of question, rather than Dubuffet’s how is man behaving now and what are his day-to-day emotions.

Atlan is following fig. symbolism but seems to narrow, too simplified, too drained of humanity which is not replaced by anything such as the metaphysical. De Stael seems to me a figurative symbolist. Especially when his STATIC line was accompanied by colour – most evocative. Didn’t come off with nudes – perhaps too static a line for the subject.

Other fig. sym: - Sugai – Ernst (very good) – Fautrier – Miro – Michaux (poetic) – Sutherland – Lam – Matta – Jorn – Gorky - Riopelle (new phase and only landscape) – Brauner - Kooning.

Klee last picture is worth close study – dead or “stiff” flowers – dark background – acid colours – disembodied flesh – wrestling angels etc. Overdone (or overstated) perhaps, but a very full statement of fig.sym. using in the main, common objects.

2/ Abstract or non-figurative symbolism: - Shapes have now to be evocative – with no readily understandable symbols (dead or stiff flowers) these shapes must use everything at the artists disposal – colour, line, texture, form, position in picture – to the maximum yet be very direct by being made simple. Direct appeal to emotion – not going through understanding sequence of figurative method (stiff flowers = flowers (memory + stiff (dead) = sadness – death – poignant memory etc. Tapiés good example of non-fig. symbolism. Others:- Tanguy – Da Silva – Hartung – Kooning – Tal-Coat – Capogrossi – Still – Rothko – Wols – Stael – Soulages – Kline – Francis – Gillet - Hantai – Pollock

## Appendix 2

### **A foreword written anonymously by Power for an exhibition organised by the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society in 1959 at which Power lent all 17 paintings anonymously.**

#### COLLECTOR'S FOREWORD

A simple answer to the question "Why do you buy pictures?" is usually impossible because the reasons are various and complex. A well-known critic has listed the most usual ones as investment, duty, for decoration, and acquisitiveness. There is a wide emotional range that may influence a collector confronted by a possible purchase from snob appeal to being so overwhelmed that sleep is impossible until possession is achieved.

To me, one of the most fascinating aspects of a painting which I like is that it is an unique expression or statement of an artist's idea and emotions communicated through colour, shape and texture, by him to me, in a form which I can hold, and keep, and own, and live with, and use, and enjoy, and perhaps with time get to know and understand. This knowing of a picture should always be a challenge, too frequently immediate appeal is shortlived. The originality and the uniqueness of each painting are things denied to most other creative art forms. Even when possible, the ownership of a manuscript poem is aesthetically pointless because the handwriting is not integral to the creation. In a picture it is.

Wanting to buy pictures at all may seem strange enough but THESE things!?

I should like to make it clear that this is not the only sort of picture I like or even collect. I am certain that arguments about "realist" and "non-realist" art are entirely "sterile", that if there are two sorts of art the difference is not one of manner but of quality. They are simply "good" or "bad".

These particular pictures have been selected to show some of the new ways in which artists have recently found expression. I agreed to lend them mainly in the hope that there may be some among those who will come to see them, who will be receptive, rather than intolerant, and will allow the pictures themselves a chance to exert their very real authority, and thereby share with me some of the exhilaration and pleasure I have found in them.

Although it is possible to have some sympathy with those who "know what they like", and will not stray from it, I think it must be accepted that their judgement is generally preconceived and superficial. How much better it is to keep an open mind so that one may extend the field of one's appreciation and finally like what one knows.

Every painting that is really successful is more than the sum of material, subject, idea and technique, in the same way that we are more than the sum of flesh, bone and mind. The extra element, the life that is breathed into a painting by its creator when everything else has workings, and which the artist himself cannot explain, is something which defies critical analysis.

Pictures in common with most things, can be appreciated at different levels. For example, someone with a classical education may get enjoyment from the poetry of T.S. Eliot denied to those who do not who Philomela was; this does not mean that at other levels of understanding and emotion the latter may not get more pleasure in total than the former. An engineer's reaction to a machine, because of his knowledge, is different from that of a layman.

Some of the aspects of appreciation of pictures, which have little or nothing to do with aesthetics, such as the sentimental, nostalgic, or other appeal of the subject: the exactness of its representation; or the more

obvious qualities of craftsmanship and finish, are denied to those looking at this new sort of picture. Those who regarded themselves as art connoisseurs, but whose judgements were based on these aspects, naturally feel cheated.

The qualities which are left are, for most people, the most difficult ones: apart from the colour, form and material, they are usually themselves intangible, and among others are philosophical, scientific and mathematical. For this reason these pictures demand a greater effort on the part of the viewer than those which could be enjoyed with more accustomed references. Of course with the advance of knowledge, as has proved the case in the past, many things which are esoteric to-day will be commonplace in the future. At present, however, the spectator must make a greater effort to allow the picture to involve him, and to allow it to act on him, even if he is not wholly able to analyse his reaction.

The main problem of judgement on all truly contemporary art forms is the lack of definite standards. It is not of much use to ask an exclusive connoisseur of whisky – however developed his palate – for judgement on claret. Comparative judgement is something based on experience, at the time when new things are being produced no one has that experience and the best that can be done is an attempt to explain in words what the artist has tried to do, what he has achieved and what are the personal reactions of the writer and his reasons for them.

Because the pleasure experienced is emotional and poetic, it leads to emotional and poetic writing, which, unless one is experiencing a similar reaction, is as difficult for most people to understand as the thing it is trying to explain. Writing about contemporary art is like trying to capture, unharmed, a butterfly, with a net of chain-mail.

I hope that many visitors will find their time well spent, and get pleasure from some, if not all, of what they see.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Chronological list of Power's purchases showing number of works bought, by artist.**

1950 Yeats

1951 Yeats O'Neill

1952 Middleton O'Neill (2)

1953 Brooker Hamilton Fraser (2) Kinley (2) O'Neill (2) Smith M. (2) Sickert Sisley  
Soulages (2) Yeats (2)

1954 Brianchon (4) Brooker Buffet (3) Clavé (4) Matisse Minaux (5) Picasso Rebeyrolle Ryan  
Soulages de Stael (6) Vuillard

1955 Appel (2) Brooker (2) Buffet Clavé (4) Dubuffet (7) Jenkins (3) de Stael (4)  
Soulages

1956 Appel (4) Bogart Buffet (4) Capogrossi (2) César (3) Dubuffet (18) Ernst Francis (5)  
Jorn (20) Monet Riopelle (4) Rothko Scott (3) Tapies (3)

1957 Davie (4) Dubuffet (24) Ernst (6) Francis (7) Jorn (9) Kline de Kooning Pollock Rothko (2)  
Scott Still de Stael (4) Tapies (5) Turnbull (3) Wols (2)

1958 Bogart (3) Dubuffet (20) Francis (4) Giacometti Jorn (5) Kelly (8) Kline (2) Pollock (2) Rothko  
(2) Still Tapies (3)

1959 Bluhm Cuixart (2) Dubuffet (3) Giacometti Jorn (6) Martin (4) Mathieu (8)  
Michaux (3) Moreni Newman Picabia (8) Tapies (2)

1960 Albers (5) Cohen Dubuffet (7) Francis (10) Johns Jorn (8) Martin (6) Michaux Picabia (6) Saura  
(2) de Stael Stroud Tapies (3) Turnbull Wemaere (4)

1961 Benrath Francis Irwin (2) Hoyland Jorn (4) Kelly Kitaj (5) Kupka (2) Liberman  
Newman (2) Reinhardt (2) Smith L. (3)

1962 Bates (2) Blake (2) Dine Goncharova (3) Herbin Jones (3) Jorn Kelly (3) Larionov Mundy  
Olsen (2) Ozenfant (2) Phillips (3) Plumb Twombly (3)

1963 Bates Blake (2) Brancusi Hamilton Hodgkin (2) Jones (3) Louis Westerman

1964 Hamilton (2) Louis (3) Moon (4) Newman (2) Oldenburg (4) Rosenquist (2) Smith R. (2) Trova (4)  
Warhol Westerman

1965 Caulfield Hamilton Lichtenstein (3)

1966 Warhol

1967 Warhol (4) Hamilton (2)

1968

1969

1970 Cook Flanagan

1971

1972 LeWitt (4)

1973 Jarray Vaux

1974 Lichtenstein Beuys Hodgkin

#### **Appendix 4**

##### **List of the first work purchased by Power shown by artist and date acquired.**

Albers <i>Homage to the Square</i> (1960)	1960
Appel <i>Tête</i> (1954)	1955
Bates <i>Portrait of a Raspberry Blowing Orange Blonde</i> (1962)	1962
Benrath <i>Des très grands vents n'ayant garde ni mesure</i> (1960)	1961
Blake <i>Tuesday</i> (1961)	1962
Bluhm <i>Green Over Red 11</i> (1957)	1957
Bogart <i>Abstract</i> (1955)	1956
Brancusi <i>Fish</i> (1924-6)	1963
Brianchon <i>Nu</i> (1939)	1954
Brooker <i>The Striped Tablecloth</i> (1953)	1953
Buffet <i>Nature morte à la cheminée</i> (1954)	1960
Capogrossi <i>Surface No. 169</i> (1953)	1956
Caulfield <i>View of the Rooftops</i> (1965)	1964
César <i>Un animal</i> (1956)	1956
Clavé <i>Cirque</i> (1953 )	1955
Cohen <i>Early Mutation Green 2</i> (1960)	1961
Cuixart <i>Nomoroso</i> (1958)	1959
Davie <i>Image of the Fish God</i> (1956)	1957
Delaunay, R. <i>Nature morte portugaise</i> (1915)	Date unknown
Delaunay, S. <i>Mouvement final</i> (1914)	1961
Dine <i>Colourfull Palette</i> (1961)	1962
Van Doesburg <i>Abstract</i> (1916)	Date unknown
Dubuffet <i>Le sang vif</i> (1955)	1955
Ernst <i>Les oiseaux</i> (1955)	1956
Flanagan <i>Four Hessians, 2 Natural, 1 Purple, 1 Yellow Brown</i> (1970)	1971
Francis <i>Blue and Black</i> (1955)	1956
Gear <i>Wood Structure</i> (1955)	1956
Giacometti <i>Grand Tête Tranchante</i>	Date unknown
Goncharova <i>Flowers</i> (1910)	1962
Hamilton <i>Homage à Chrysler Corp</i> (1957)	1963
Hamilton Fraser <i>Beachscape, Incoming Tide</i> (1953)	1953
Herbin <i>Le Moulin Rouge</i> (1926)	1962
Hodgkin <i>Gardening</i> (1963)	1963
Irwin <i>The Green Scene 1</i> (1960)	1961
Jenkins <i>The Leap</i> (1955)	1955
Johns <i>Grey Painting with Ball</i> (1958)	Date unknown
Jones <i>Battle of Hastings</i> (1961-2)	1962
Jorn <i>Les belles phrases</i> (1955)	1956
Kelly <i>Manhatten</i> (1958)	1958
Kinley <i>Landscape</i> (1951)	1953
Kitaj <i>Oh Lemuel</i> (1960)	1961
Kline <i>Sassoon</i> (1955)	1957
De Kooning <i>Woman</i> (1955)	1957
Kupka <i>Autour d'un point</i> (1911)	1961
Larionov <i>Garden at Tiraspol</i> (1907)	1961
LeWitt <i>Drawing No. 26</i> (1971)	Date unknown

Liberman <i>Red End</i> (1959)	1961
Lichtenstein <i>Tex</i> (1962)	1964
Louis <i>Number 38</i> (1962)	1964
Martin <i>London and Environs</i> (1959)	1959
Mathieu <i>Engagement à Omay</i> (1957)	1959
Matisse <i>Etrétât</i> (1921)	1954
Michaux <i>Encre de Chine</i> (1959)	1959
Middleton <i>June, Ballyclandon</i> (1952)	1957
Moholy-Nagy <i>Cat Negative</i> (1926)	1936
Monet <i>Les falaises d'Etrétât</i> (1886)	1956
Moon <i>La Danse No. 1</i> (1964)	Date unknown
Mundy <i>Blue Disc</i> (1960)	Date unknown
Newman <i>By Two's</i> (1949)	1959
Oldenburg <i>Counter and Plates with Potato and Ham</i> (1961)	1964
Olson <i>Polarised Sculpture No. 607</i> (?)	1962
O'Neill <i>Figures in a Landscape</i> (1952)	1953
Ozenfant <i>Ville Fortifiée</i> (1926)	1962
Pedersen <i>Red Neptune</i> (1973)	Date unknown
Phillips <i>Tribal 1x4</i> (1962)	1962
Picabia <i>Pompe</i> (1919)	1959
Picasso <i>Tête de femme</i>	1954
Plumb <i>Edgehill</i> (1962)	1960
Pollock <i>Banners of Spring</i> (1946)	1957
Reinhardt <i>Red Painting</i> (1952)	1961
Riopelle <i>Composition</i> (1953)	1960
Rosenquist <i>The Space that Won't Fail</i> (1962)	1964
Rothko <i>Golden Composition</i> (1949)	1956
Ryan <i>Fruit on a Plate</i> (1943)	1954
Saura <i>Vara</i> (1959)	1960
Scott <i>Grey Still Life</i> (1955)	1956
Sickert <i>Sta. Maria della Salutare</i> (1896)	1953
Sisley <i>L'Abreuvoir</i> (1891)	1953
Smith (Leon) <i>Orange, Red, Black on White</i> (1960)	1961
Smith (Matthew) <i>Anemones in Blue Vase</i> (1928)	1953
Smith (Richard) <i>Place 1</i> (1959)	Date unknown
Soulages <i>Peinture 19 Novembre</i> (1951)	1960
De Stael <i>Palette fond brun</i> (1954)	1954
Still <i>No. 21</i> (1948)	1957
Stroud <i>Six Thin Reds</i> (1960)	1960
Tapies <i>Peinture vert</i> (1954)	1956
Trova <i>Falling Man No. 56</i> (1963)	1964
Turnbull <i>Head 1</i> (1955)	1957
Twombly <i>Sketch for Io, 1</i> (1959)	1962
Vasarely <i>Maan</i> (1949-51)	Date unknown
Vuillard <i>La Grandmère</i> (1892)	1954
Warhol <i>Blue Electric Chair</i> (1963)	1964
Wemaere <i>Composition fond violet</i> (1959)	1960
Westerman <i>Swingin' Red King and Silver Queen</i> (1960)	1964
Wols <i>Longs Batons Vertical</i> (1943)	1957
Yeats <i>Westard the Morning</i> (1947)	1951



## **Appendix 6**

**List of Dubuffet's series and the title of the painting which Power bought from each, as he examined in depth the development of the artist over 40 years (supplied by the Fondation Dubuffet, Paris)**

- 1 - Le chemin de la gare, january 1944 - Fasc. I, N°220 - **Serie : Marionnettes de la ville et de la campagne**
- 2 - Monsieur Plume plis au pantalon (Portrait d'Henri Michaux), january 1947 - Fasc. III, N°113 - **Serie : Portraits**
- 3 - Il tient la flûte et le couteau, may 1947 - Fasc. IV, N°19 - **Serie : Sahara**
- 4 - La belle aux seins lourds, june 1950 - Fasc. VI, N°96 - **Serie : Corps de dames**
- 5 - Paysage américain, august 1952 - Fasc. VII, N°238 - **Serie : Paysage du mental**
- 6 - Pierre (de nouveau savoir), may 1953 - Fasc. VIII, N°68 - **Serie : Pâtes battues**
- 7 - Couinquet la flibuste, september 1954 - Fasc. X, N°37 - **Serie : Petites statues de la vie précaire**
- 8 - Vache blanche, august 1954 - Fasc. X, N°107 - **Serie : Vaches**
- 9 - Voyageur au bissac, may 1955 - Fasc. XI, N°32 - **Serie : Assemblages d'empreintes**
- 10 - Visiteur au chapeau bleu, april 1955 - Fasc. XI, n°56 - **Serie : Herbes, charrettes, Terres herbeuses**
- 11 - La sang vif, april 1955 - Fasc. XI, n°59 - **Serie : Herbes, charrettes, Terres herbeuses**
- 12 - Jardin ponctué, august 1955 - Fasc. XI, N°137 - **Serie : Ailes de papillons**
- 13 - Botanique au petit spectacle, january 1956 - Fasc. XII, N°18 - **Serie : Tableaux d'assemblages**
- 14 - Élément de sol au petit diapré, october 1957 - Fasc. XIII, N°83 - **Serie : Texturologies**
- 15 - Expansion de barbe, october 1959 - Fasc. XV, N°79 - **Serie : Barbes**
- 16 - Illustration du robinet (Robinet IV), april 1954 - Fasc. XXI, n°123 - **Serie : L'Hourloupe**
- 17 - Main-courante I, november 1984 - Fasc. XXXVI, N°205 - **Serie : Non-lieux (peintures)**

## Appendix 7

### Order of Taped Interviews on DVD

1 Sir Nicholas Serota	November 2006
2 Leslie Waddington	January 2007
3 Lord Colin Renfrew	January 2007
4 Dr Richard Morphet	February 2007
5 Richard Hamilton	April 2007
6 Alan Power	May 2007
7 Alan Power with Heidi Colsman-Freyberger and Sylvia Sleigh	May 2007
8 Ellsworth Kelly	May 2007
9 Dr Margaret Garlake	July 2007
10 Sir Norman Reid	July 2007
11 Sir Howard Hodgkin	November 2007
12 Allen Jones	November 2007
13 Barry Flanagan	December 2007
14 John Hoyland	December 2007
15 Robyn Denny	January 2008
16 William Turnbull	February 2008

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