

Jane Phillips | Live Out Loud



Mission Gallery | Gloucester Place | Maritime Quarter | Yr Ardal Forl | Swansea | Abertawe | SAI ITY | t 01792 652016 | e info@missiongallery.co.uk | www.missiongallery.co.uk

Open Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 5pm | Ar agor dydd Mawrth i ddydd Sul 11am - 5pm | Closed Mondays except Bank Holidays | Ar gau bob dydd Llun, ac eithrio Gwyliau Banc | Admission free | Mynediad am ddim



If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, I will answer you: 'I am here to live out loud'.¹

Emile Zola

The words, 'I recall Jane sitting and staring at her paintings for hours'² do not flow freely in the memory of those who knew the reputation of Jane Phillips as Mission Gallery's first Director.

There are very few that would be able to recall Jane's black leather jacket or her black hardback book in which she kept notes, drawings and ideas for paintings during the late 1970's.

Discovering the origin of Jane Phillips as an artist and her influences as an ambitious art student, allows for deeper understanding how, through Jane's dedication, Mission Gallery (originally Swansea Arts Workshop) developed its reputation for supporting emerging artists; taking risks and offering challenging opportunities.

Jane studied BA Hons Fine Art (Painting) during 1977 - 1979 at Central School of Art & Design, London (now Central Saint Martins). Her personal tutor was Marc Vaux, but Jane requested Garth Lewis whose work she admired and whose expert knowledge of colour was of great influence. Additional tutors of great acclaim, among others included; Paul Huxley, John Plumb, John Copnall and Head of Fine, Patrick Reyntiens. Many of the tutors were working predominantly in abstraction, although there had been a shift to figurative work amongst the students, leaving Jane's style of painting to be quite unusual amongst her peers.

A fellow student at Central School of Art & Design, Roy Willingham recalls;

'In addition to her larger canvases, Jane would also do small colour studies on paper. I recall Jane sitting and staring at her paintings for hours; many of us seemed to spend a lot of time doing that. Her paintings appeared to be fully formed and then over a period of time she would make adjustments to the tones, colours, shapes and the edges between areas.'

Jane filled sketch books with obsessive drawing studies that essentially dominated her work. Mark making, geometric patterns and a dedicated repetition of the same drawing in different colour ways was carried out until the desired effect had been achieved and could be transferred to canvas. Landscapes, coastal studies and sketches of trees also filled early sketchbooks; some of her early works derived from images of tree trunks and many were in aggressively contrasting reds and greens.

There is an unrelenting vertical composition within the work Jane produced. In later pieces it becomes less overt, but an arrangement that leads your eyes vertically still remains. Before she left college Jane started to use a more expanded palette of colours, but her work continued to be tonally dark. Later works have a lighter, more airy feel to them with much greater depth; there is experimentation with subtle broken colours and textures within the colour shapes.

At college Jane painted on stretched cotton duck that was acrylic primed. The understanding of material was paramount and her choice of paint was Bocour Aquatec acrylic for its consistency and covering power. The students of Central School of Art & Design had a certain amount of materials free from the painting technician, Noel Myles each term and Jane stockpiled as much Bocour Aquatec acrylic as she could when it was available.

When recalling Jane's method of painting, Roy Willingham explains;

'When she was making paintings Jane had paint mixed up in old plastic food containers - cottage cheese tubs were a favourite. She used long handled hog brushes; I think she preferred rounds to flats. Her space would be littered with long strips of paper that she used for masking edges in the paintings. I recall at one point her being very pleased with a roll of paper because of the particular edges it made when torn. Often these papers were white or grey but I remember us joking once about patterned wallpaper she had used.

Jane would tape paper strips or shapes over two edges of the canvas with masking tape and then brush paint from the masking paper onto the canvas to create the look of torn edges in the paint surface. I remember sometimes her space would be almost knee-high in these discarded strips which were distinctively hers - torn edges and only half covered with paint.'

Jane began to travel to visit exhibitions of interest; Amsterdam included visiting the work of Ad Reinhardt, Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly, Paris included visiting the exhibition of Cezanne. Jane Phillips was a rare energy and her influences were vast, she loved Josef Albers book 'The Interaction of Colour'³ and worked her way through all the exercises in it. Her love was across the arts, from the pop artists to writing from Emile Zola. Of course to those that knew Jane, her social life and music were also great loves and continued to be so throughout her career; Bob Dylan and David Bowie were particular favourites.

Jane continued to paint as a graduate, establishing herself as a dedicated artist of the AADW⁴, her work *Hurricane Charlie* (1986) was bought by the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea. However, the 80's saw Jane move her energy towards the realm of exhibition organisation. Jane dedicated her life and career to Mission Gallery, developing to be one of the most dynamic people working in the visual arts and crafts in Wales. It is with thanks to Jane Phillips that Mission Gallery developed the ethos for supporting young and/or emerging artists; taking risks and giving opportunities and challenges.

This exhibition allows the art to speak for itself; giving insight into an artist that was able to, 'live out loud'.



Os gofynnwch i mi i beth y des i'w wneud yn y byd hwn, byddwn i, fel artistiaid, yn rhoi'r ateb hwn i chi:'rwy wedi dod i fyw i'r eithaf'¹

Emile Zola

Nid yw'r geiriau 'Rwy'n cofio Jane yn eistedd ac yn syllu ar ei pheintïadau am oriau'² yn llifo'n rhydd yng nghof y rhai a oedd yn ymwybodol o enw da Jane Phillips fel Cyfarwyddwr cyntaf Mission Gallery.

Ychydig iawn fyddai'n gallu cofio siaced ledr ddu Jane neu'r llyfr clawr caled du lle cadwa'i nodiadau, ei lluniadau a'i syniadau ar gyfer peintïadau yn ystod diwedd yr 1970au.

Mae darganfod tarddiad Jane Phillips fel artist, a'i dylanwadau fel myfyriwr celf uchelgeisiol, yn caniatáu dealltwriaeth ddyfnach o sut, drwy ymroddiad Jane, y datblygodd Mission Gallery (Gweithdy Celfyddydau Abertawe yn wreiddiol) ei henw da am gefnogi artistiaid newydd; gan gymryd risgiau a chynnig cyfleoedd heriol.

Astudiodd Jane radd BA Anrh. Celfyddyd Gain (Peintio) yn ystod 1977-1979 yn Ysgol Ganolog Celf a Dylunio, Llundain (Central Saint Martins heddiw). Marc Vaux oedd ei thiwtor personol, ond gofynnodd Jane am Garth Lewis am ei bod yn edmygu'i waith, ac roedd ei wybodaeth arbenigol o liw yn ddylanwad mawr. Roedd tiwtoriaid eraill o fri yn cynnwys Paul Huxley, John Plumb, John Copnall a Phennaeth Celfyddyd Gain, Patrick Reyntiens. Roedd nifer o'r tiwtoriaid yn creu gwaith haniaethol yn bennaf, ond bu symud tuag at waith figurol ymhlith y myfyrwyr; gan adael arddull peintio Jane yn eithaf anarferol ymysg ei chymheiriaid.

Mae Roy Willingham , cyd-fyfyriwr yn yr Ysgol Ganolog Celf a Dylunio, yn cofio;

'Yn ogystal â'i chynfasau mwy, byddai Jane hefyd yn gwneud brasluniau lliw llai ar bapur. Rwy'n cofio Jane yn eistedd ac yn syllu ar ei pheintïadau am oriau; roedd nifer ohonom yn tueddu i dreulio llawer o amser yn gwneud hynny. Roedd e fel petai ei pheintïadau yn ymddangos bron wedi'u cwblhau, yna dros gyfnod o amser byddai'n addasu'r naws, y lliwiau, y siapiau a'r ymylon rhwng rhannau gwahanol.'³

Llanwodd Jane lyfrau braslunio gyda darluniadau obsesiynol a ddominyddodd ei gwaith mewn gwirionedd. Byddai'n gwneud marciau, patrymau geometrig ac ailadroddiad pwrpasol o'r un darluniad mewn lliwiau gwahanol tan y cyflawnwyd yr effaith a ddymunwyd ac y gellid ei throsglwyddo i gynfas. Bu tirluniau, astudiaethau arfordirol a brasluniau o goed hefyd yn llenwi'i lyfrau braslunio cynnar; deilliodd rhai o'i gweithiau cynnar o luniau o foncyffion gyda llawer mewn coch a gwyrdd ymosodol o gyferbyniol.

Mae cyfansoddiad fertigol didostur o fewn gwaith Jane. Mewn darnau hwyrach daw'n llai amlwg, ond mae trefniad sy'n arwain ein llygaid yn fertigol yn dal i fodoli. Cyn iddi adael y coleg dechreuodd Jane ehangu ei phalet o liwiau, ond parhaodd naws dywyll ei gwaith. Mae ymdeimlad ysgafnach i'w gweithiau hwyrach, gyda mwy o ddyfnder; ceir arbrofi gyda lliwiau cymysg cynnil a gweddau o fewn y siapiau lliw.

Yn y coleg peintiodd Jane ar gynfas lliain cotwm estynedig wedi'i bremio'n acrylig. Roedd ei dealltwriaeth o'r deunydd yn hollbwysig, a'i dewis o baent oedd acrylig Bocour Aquatec oherwydd ei ansawdd a phwer gorchuddio. Roedd gan fyfyrwyr yr Ysgol Ganolog Celf a Dylunio swm penodol o ddeunyddiau a gafwyd gan y technegydd peintio, Noel Myles, bob tymor; a phentyrrodd Jane gymaint o acrylig Bocour Aquatec ag y gallai bob cyfle posib.

Wrth gofio dull Jane o beintio, eglura Roy Willingham;

'Pan oedd yn peintio roedd gan Jane baent wedi'i gymysgu mewn hen gynwysyddion bwyd plastig - tybiau caws colfran oedd ei ffefryn. Byddai'n defnyddio brwsys ffwlbart dolen hir; rwy'n credu fod yn well ganddi bethau crwn na gwastad. Roedd ei gofod yn llawn stribedi hir o bapur a ddefnyddiai i fasio ymylon y peintïadau. Rwy'n cofio ar un adeg ei bod yn falch iawn o rolyn penodol o bapur oherwydd siâp yr ymylon wrth ei dorri. Yna aml byddai'r papur hwn yn wyn neu'n llwyd, ond rwy'n ein cofio ni'n cellwair un tro am bapur wal patrymog iddi ei ddefnyddio.

Byddai Jane yn tapio stribedi o bapur neu siapiau dros ddwy o ymylon cynfas â thâp masgio, yna'n brwsio paent o'r tâp masgio ar y cynfas i greu ymddangosiad ymylon toredig ar arwyneb y paent. Rwy'n cofio weithiau y byddai ei gofod yn llawn hyd eich pengliniau o stribedi wedi'u taflu i'r llawr; a oedd yn amlwg yn eiddo iddi hi - ymylon toredig wedi'u hanner peintio.'

Dechreuodd Jane deithio i ymweld ag arddangosfeydd o ddiddordeb iddi; yn Amsterdam aeth i weld arddangosfeydd o waith Ad Reinhardt, Barnett Newman ac Ellsworth Kelly, ac ym Mharis aeth i weld gwaith Cezanne. Roedd Jane Phillips yn egni prin a'i dylanwadau yn helaeth. Roedd hi'n dwlu ar lyfr Josef Albers, 'The Interaction of Colour', a gweithiodd drwy bob ymarfer ynddo. Roedd hi'n caru'r celfyddydau i gyd, o ganu pop i ysgrifennu Emile Zola. Wrth gwrs, i'r rhai a oedd yn adnabod Jane roedd ei bywyd cymdeithasol a cherddoriaeth hefyd yn bwysig iawn iddi, a pharhaodd felly drwy gydol ei gyrfa, gyda Bob Dylan a David Bowie yn ffefrynnau.

Parhaodd Jane i beintio ar ôl graddio, gan ei sefydlu ei hun fel artist yn AADW⁴, prynwyd ei gwaith *Hurricane Charlie* (1986) gan Oriel Gelf Glynn Vivian, Abertawe. Fodd bynnag, yn y 80au symudodd Jane ei hegni tuag at drefnu arddangosfeydd. Rhoddodd Jane ei bywyd a'i gyrfa i Mission Gallery, gan ddatblygu yn un o'r bobl fwyaf deinamig yn gweithio mewn celf a chrefft weledol yng Nghymru. Diolch i Jane Phillips fod Mission Gallery wedi datblygu ethos i gefnogi artistiaid ifanc a/neu newydd; gam gymryd risgiau a chynnig cyfleoedd a heriau newydd.

Mae'r arddangosfa hon yn caniatáu'r gelf i siarad ar ei rhan ei hun; gan roi cipolwg i ni ar waith artist a oedd yn gallu 'byw i'r eithaf'.

^[1] Zola, E., 1866. Mes Haines. Translated from French by P.Paves-Yashinsky & J.Yashinsky, 1991. New York: Edwin Meller Press

^[2] Willingham, R., 2011. Recollecting Jane Phillips at Central School of Art & Design. [e-bost] (Gohebiaeth personol 2011).

^[3] Albers, Josef (1975). Interaction of Color. New Haven:Yale University Press.

^[4] AADA - Cymdeithas Artistiaid a Dylunwyr yng Nghymru