

Introduction

Dominic Kemp

*It is one thing to paint on a cave wall;
it is quite another to print on it.
Printmaking is art and civilisation combined.*

Terry Frost is one of the most significant British printmakers of the twentieth century. His prints span seven decades and make use of virtually every process available. They are inventive, exciting and emotive, and have always been at the core of his work as an artist. They are united with his paintings and are a true distillation of his work. This book aims to catalogue and celebrate Terry's prints. It began more for my own reference than anything else and will always remain a labour of love.

There are close to four hundred prints in total, most of which have various peculiarities. There is no recorded archive; a vast mixture of mediums, publishers and printers; editions ranging from one solitary proof up to 275 printed over a period of years; and then, finally, there is the mercurial nature of the printmaker ... it all becomes quite a tangle. One of the skills I have learnt during this process is the ability to decide what to leave out rather than what to include.

For example, I decided quite early on that it would be almost impossible to offer anything approaching a catalogue of monotypes. Because of their individual and speedy nature, Terry was able to produce hundreds. From his beginnings as a student at Camberwell School of Art (1947–50) – when a general mania for monotypes had erupted – right

through to the end of his life, Terry produced many more monotypes than editioned prints. For instance, the ones commissioned by Austin/Desmond Fine Art in 1990, which were printed at the Print Centre by Hugh Stoneman (1947–2005) and Alan Cox to mark Terry's 75th birthday, are among the most important and certainly the largest prints he ever created, with some measuring eight feet (2.5 m) long (Fig. 3). Even assuming that they have survived, they are no doubt flung far and wide and will probably never be brought together in a single published volume.

So I thought it far better to concentrate on editioned prints – or at least prints whose matrices lend themselves to editioning, even if only a few proofs had been pulled – so that this catalogue could provide a more complete assimilation and 'through-line' to Terry's work as a printmaker.

Although I have strived to make this catalogue as comprehensive as possible, no doubt there will be gaps and un-flagged peculiarities. Terry's nature as an artist was full of quirks and eccentricities: delightful and unique on the one hand, but distinctly frustrating to try and catalogue on the other.

A couple of years ago, I came across a *Tolcarne Moon Blue Newlyn*, 1997 (Cat. 171), only it was pink and the other way up. It was identical in



Fig. 3
Arizona, 1990
Monotype, 243.8 x 121.9 cm (96 x 48 in)
Courtesy © Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London, 2010

every way to the blue one, except the background was pink and it was signed upside down. Terry would never have signed anything upside down, even as a joke; he was very precious about making sure his work was known the right way up. There are many sharp letters from him addressed to auction house cataloguers across the country, which scolded them for including a photograph of one of his pictures upside down in one of their sale catalogues. So I immediately thought that this pink *Tolcarne* must be bogus, but I was wrong. I mentioned it to Brad Faine at the Coriander Studio (where the print had been pulled), and he confirmed that, while it was not exactly common practice, Terry would occasionally, chimerically, ask for a different colourway to be printed during the proofing stage. More often than not, they were discarded. Sometimes, though, Terry would take them home and work over them or use them as collage elements in other works. Every now and then, however the odd one has managed to pick its way out into the open world, and this pink *Tolcarne* is an example. Whoever owns it now has a unique screenprint by Terry Frost with an anomalous signature. No doubt there are more anomalies to be found.

Now and again, Terry had a tendency to sign and date things not necessarily contemporaneous with their creation. If, ten years later, he chose to add some extra touches to a print that was pulled in 1974, for example (see *Cats 70* and *71*), he would probably sign and date it '84 or perhaps '74/84 to show both the date of its original creation and the date of the additions. Furthermore, dealers might ask him to sign an unsigned work at a later date and, to make matters even more abstruse, he might add a signature and a date to an earlier work (sometimes decades earlier), which he thought was the correct year of the original creation of the work and which, in some cases, was in fact out by a year or two. An example cropped up in a sale at Christie's South Kensington: *Modern British Prints*, 9 April 2009, lot 90, *Orange and Brown Sun*, 1956 (Cat. 19). The work had been given a signature from the 1990s and the date 1957. The signature examples at the back of this book will help decrypt some of the aberrations, but a safe recourse is always the numbered edition.

Another whimsicality that was strong in Terry (and destined to stymie the diligent cataloguer) was his frequent and integral habit of supplementing his prints with additions by hand: sometimes with paint or crayon, often with collage, occasionally with ink or pencil, or a combination of them all (Fig. 4). In some cases, such as *Eleven Poems* by Federico García Lorca, 1989 (*Cats 98–108*), known colloquially as the *Lorca Suite*, these additions by hand were intended to be the same in



Fig. 7
Double Quay, 1952-54 (Cat. 7)
 Linocut printed in blue
 Courtesy © Belgrave Gallery,
 London and St Ives, 2010

'It was important to me, the accident of that double print opened up the imagination to all kinds of possibilities'.⁶ He also applied colours with a brush to different parts of the same block in order to print more than one at a time. He used different weights of paint on the brush too, to produce extra texture, sometimes in a single colour (Fig. 7). This process also allowed him to print monotypes from lino blocks cut down and overlaid. As a result, he was able to use these images as a pathway towards a painting. In the case of *Double Quay*, the later painting was *Blue Movement*, 1953 (illustrated in *Terry Frost* by David Lewis, Lund Humphries, London, 1994, p.61), which is now in the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Its first form was that of a pencil drawing, then a monotone, then one, two and three colour linocuts, a small painting of similar proportions and finally the *Blue Movement* itself. These progressive stages help me clarify my ideas, to adjust the various forms to a state of dynamic equilibrium, and to arrive at a final proportion for the canvas.⁷

Terry Frost, 1954

Teaching helped Terry's printmaking tremendously. He was able to use his teaching posts as an extension of his studio, and the equipment and presses at the schools enabled him to produce more complex and evolved work. In 1952-4 he began a stint of teaching at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham, which was something of a hot-bed for artists after the war. William Scott said: 'One could as well talk about a West Country Movement as a St Ives School, for it was at Corsham Court where we all met.' Terry created the fabulously inventive lithograph and linocut *Blue Moon*, 1952 (Cat. 6) at Corsham. Much larger than anything he had made up to that date, and making use of a combination of matrices, bold imagery and the division of the circle – it was a prophetic token of things to come and one of his most important prints.⁸

His printmaking was gathering momentum and the next significant step was his association with Denis Mitchell (1912-93) and his 'School of How to be Helpful to Others'⁹ back in St Ives. Denis had set up a press in his studio to make screenprints, a relatively new process at the time, and he invited artists to come along and have a go. Terry took to it like a boat to the sea, producing his *First Silkscreen*, 1953 (Cat. 12) and later

Tablemat, 1955 (Cat. 15). The two men became lifelong friends, with Denis often helping Terry in the print studio.

Between 1954 and 1957, Terry was based in West Yorkshire. He was one of the first Gregory Fellows at Leeds University and he went on to teach at Leeds College of Art. Always inspired by his immediate surroundings, the prints he made in Leeds, especially the drypoints reflecting the landscape, seem stark and spiky (in contrast to the curvy boat shapes inspired by St Ives). It was here that the image of the sun depicted in his work turned hexagonal for a while (see Cats 19, 26 and 29). He was free to use the college's large press, which enabled him to produce deeper and fresher impressions than before, and he experimented with different techniques of wiping the plate clean after inking, to produce darker or lighter backgrounds to his proofs. He also had a greater variety of burins (steel cutting tools) at his disposal for drypoints, so that he could create different thicknesses and textures of line within the plate (see *Wave, Leeds*, 1956, Cat. 21). His output from Leeds was considerable, as the Gregory Fellowship had allowed him his first taste of material freedom as an artist.

Up until this point, Terry had been doing most of the printing himself, using presses in Leeds, Corsham and St Ives, with mixed results. He continued experimenting with different inks and paper types, and turned out proofs with slight variations, rarely deciding to pull an entire edition. It was only when John Erskine from St George's Gallery, London commissioned him to produce *Composition in Red and Black* in 1957 (Cat. 27) that Terry was introduced to the professional realm of printers and publishers. The results were clean, bright colours and bold shapes on a much larger scale. It was a whole new universe and Terry launched himself into it with characteristic gusto.

It is worth reiterating that, although there were always publishers and printers, technicians and studio assistants available – all offering their input – the hand at the tiller of every print was always firmly that of Sir Terry. He was a very exacting taskmaster. During the production of *On the Edge*, 2002 (Cat. 233), Terry asked for 13 different variants on the black to be mixed and proofed before eventually deciding on the one to use for the edition. Legend has it that the master printer Hugh Stoneman (always a match for Terry's antics) showed him the very first black again on the 13th request, and that was the one Terry finally approved.¹⁰ Another master printer, Kip Gresham this time, was sent a postcard by Terry requesting the colour of the central circle in *Variations*, 1987 (Cat. 93) to be 'the blue of Frenchman's overalls'.¹¹ Terry was exceptionally precise in his vision and its requirements and, if necessary, he could make his prints emulate as near as perfectly their maquette counterparts.

As the success of his editions became redoubtable, more and more publishers wanted a herring from the net. Terry refused more than he accepted, never losing sight of his printmaking roots. For, all this time, swimming alongside his published prints, remained the little linocuts and etchings: uneditioned, tiddler scraps of paper pressed with the back of a spoon, a thought, a note, a tip or an idea worth a quick visit up the road to proof at Hugh's. If he felt the urge to manufacture an edition, he would simply go ahead and do it himself, without bothering with a publisher. It was all part of the same great abstraction. Ideas from prints took form as paintings in just the same way as a study from 1950 might make it into an edition 40 years later (Fig. 8): painter and printmaker in symbiosis.



Figure 8
Studies, c.1957
 Oil on brown paper, 380 x 140 mm (15 x 5½ in)
 Courtesy © Sir Terry Frost Estate, 2010
 Note that two of the images relate directly to *Bull Black*,
 1991 (Cat. 124) and *Ghost I (Red)*, 1991 (Cat. 126)

A Bowl of Cherries

Brad Faine

The artist Patrick Hughes introduced me to Terry Frost at the Chelsea Arts Club in 1984, as I wanted to invite him to be one of the artists on the 'Visual Aid for Band Aid' print. He agreed to take part in the project and thus began a working relationship that lasted until his death in 2003.

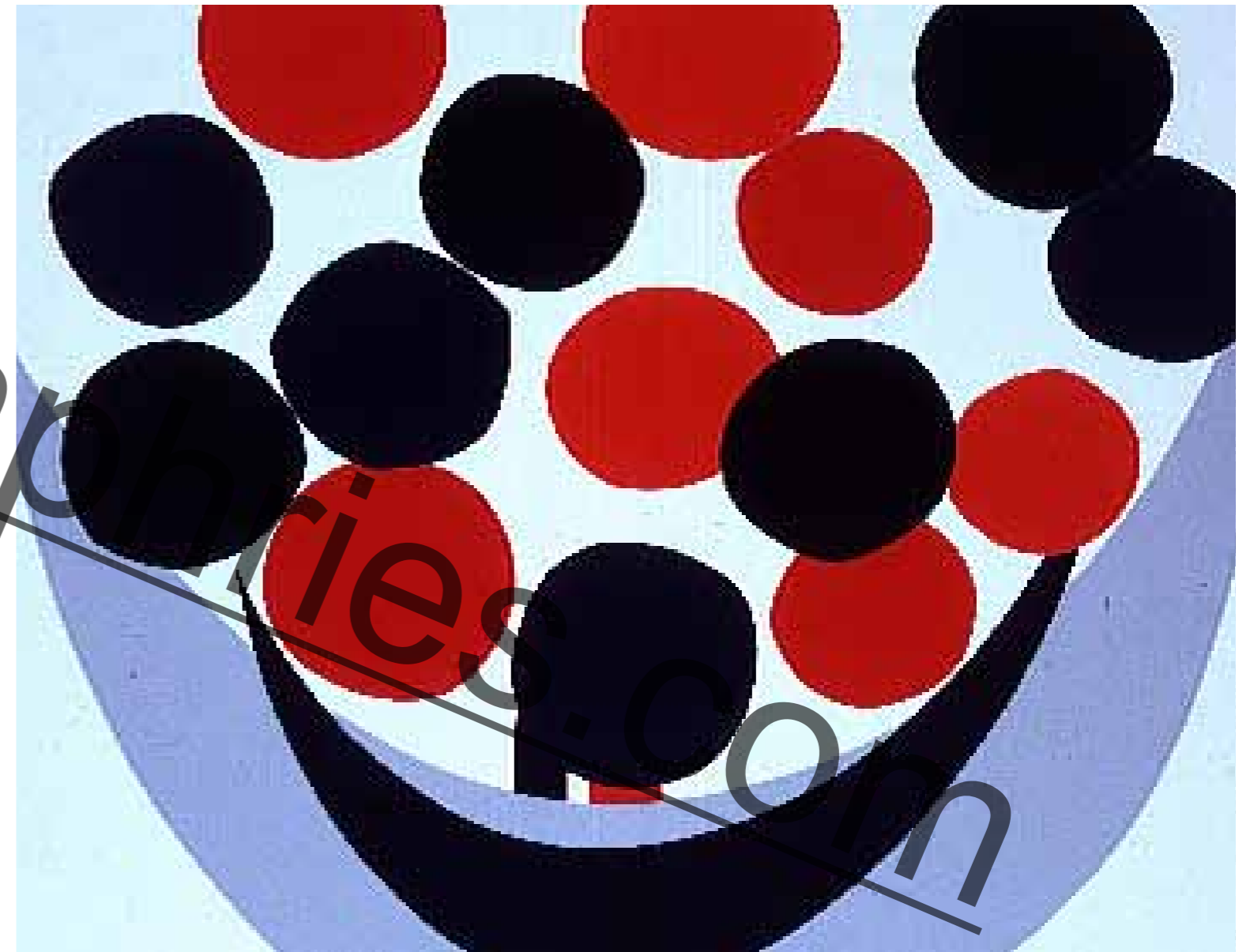
The late Chris Prater, director of Kelpra Studio, told me that printmaking is essentially about personal relationships. In this I concur for, although it is possible to work with an artist with whom one is unsympathetic, I believe the best prints are made when there is empathy between artist and printmaker. In Terry's case, empathy was accompanied by a spirit of boundless joy and an abiding interest in anything that would enhance his visual vocabulary. Whenever a new print is made, the symbiotic relationship between artist and printmaker deepens and the working process is refined. The printer learns more about the requirements of the artist, and the artist recognises and integrates into his work the potential and limitations of the medium.

Terry always made a collage study to use as a point of departure for his prints. From these collages we made stencils and initially matched colours to produce a rough proof. We would continue to adjust the proof until he was happy with the colour balance. Sometimes this required

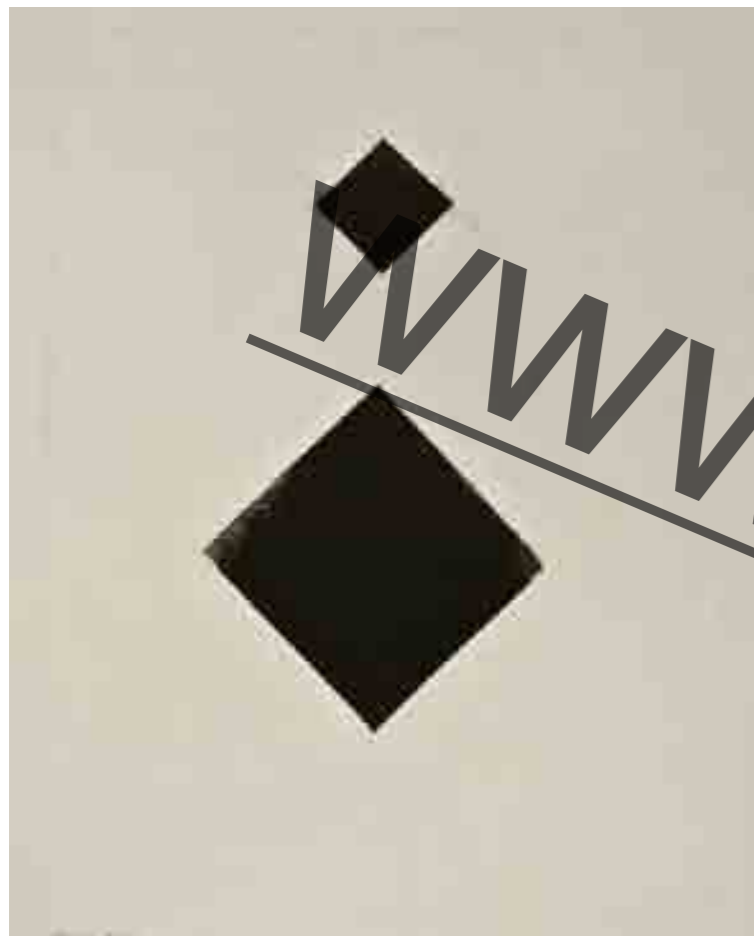
a number of 'stage proofs', each one a refinement of its predecessor, in which the forms and colours were subtly adjusted until we achieved Terry's vision for the piece. His colour acumen was legendary. Before we made our first print, he told me about another studio he had worked with, where they had insisted he had signed off on an edition that was in his opinion totally 'wrong'. 'I'd never have used a yellow like that, not with the blue. And you know what, Brad, they said my memory was probably failing! Failing be bugged! They had printed the wrong colour, and wouldn't admit it – so I wouldn't sign it.' I figured this might have been a gentle if unnecessary warning not to underestimate him.

In 1994 we co-published *Tide up Newlyn*, 1995 (Cat. 140), quickly followed by *Lizard Black*, 1995 (Cat. 139). These proved highly successful at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition and, shortly after, we published *Black Moon and Ochre*, 1997 (Cat. 152) and *Black Sun Dipper*, 1997 (Cat. 153) with Anderson O'Day and Innocent Fine Art, London and Bristol respectively.

The following year we introduced computers into the studio to help manipulate and generate stencils for screenprints¹². Terry was astounded by their ability to change colours and forms instantly, and



Detail of *Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries*, 2003 (Cat. 251)



52. Umeå, Sweden 1969–79

Etching with embossing
 Image: 350 x 260 mm (13¾ x 10¼ in)
 Sheet (wove): 560 x 378 mm (22 x 15 in)
 On heavy wove and later thin card with irregular margins
 Printed by the artist at Umeå Summer School, Sweden
 No Edition. Quite a few proofs pulled
 Signed, dated and variously inscribed

NOTE: possibly printed on more than one visit to Umeå

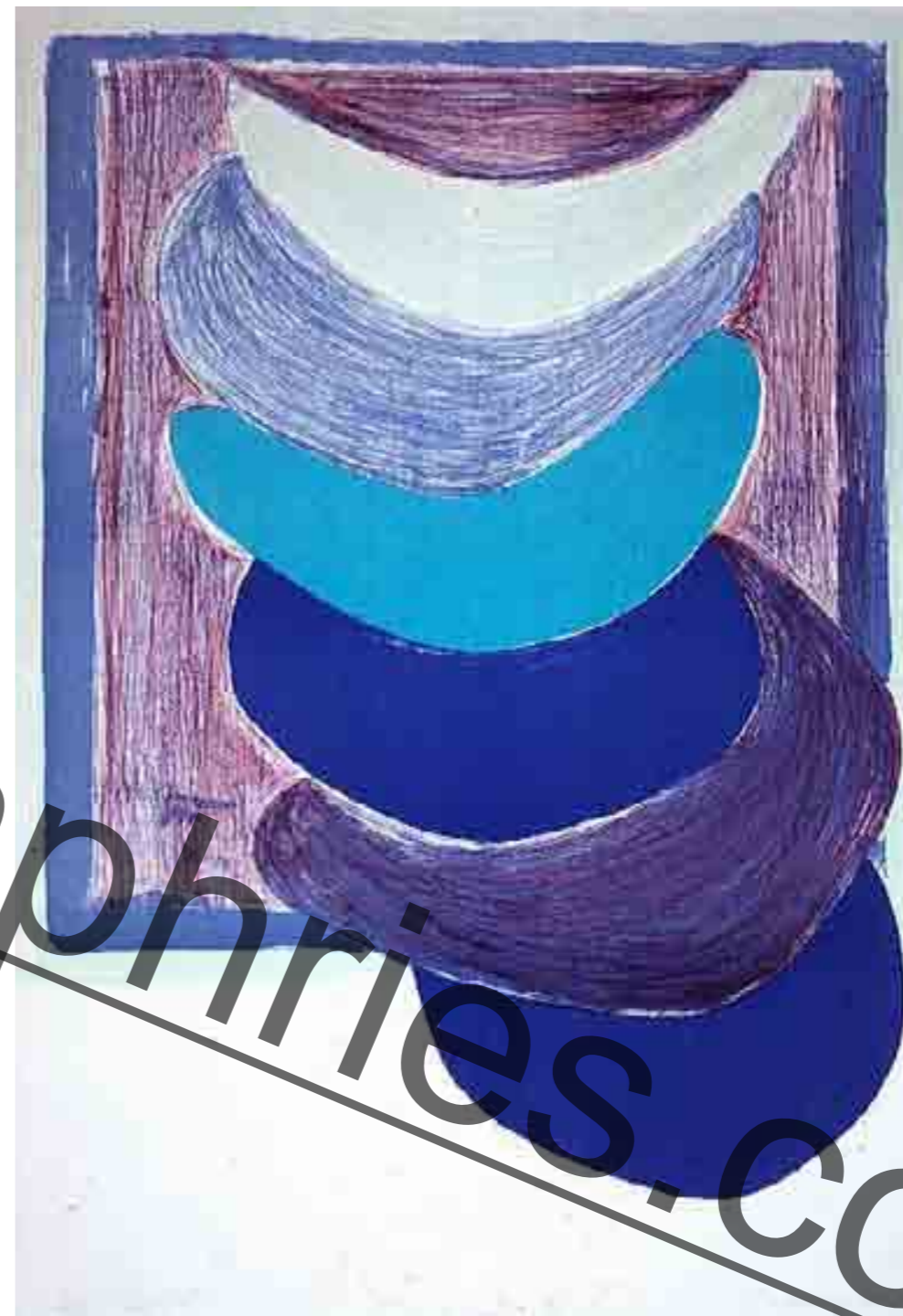
Collection: Tate, London

Literature: *The Tate Gallery Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions 1982–84*, pp 396–8



53. Untitled (Suspended Forms) c.1969

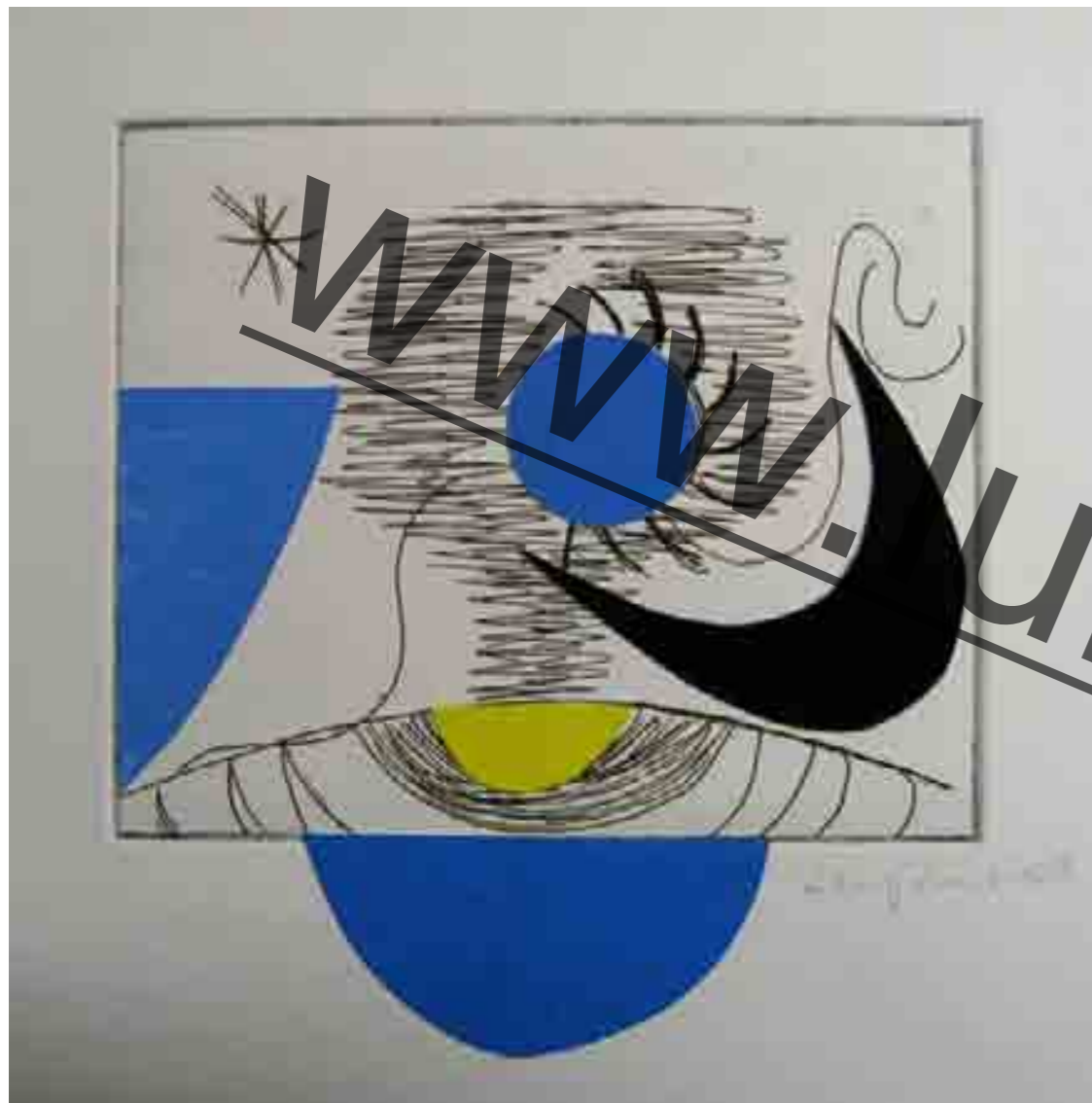
Linocut
 Image: 130 x 62 (5 x 2½ in)
 Sheet: 210 x 135 mm (8¼ x 5¼ in)
 On Croxley Script laid notepaper
 Printed by the artist
 No Edition. Very few proofs exist
 Unsigned. Signed and inscribed 'Lino' at a later date



54. Blue Suspended Form 1970

Lithograph
 Image: 735 x 560 mm (29 x 22 in)
 Sheet: 903 x 635 mm (35½ x 25 in)
 On BFK Rives wove paper
 Published by Leslie Waddington Prints, London
 Printed at Emil Matthieu Atelier, Zurich
 Edition: 75 + 10 APs
 Signed and dated

Collection: Tate, London

**96. Untitled 1988**

Etching in black with additional hand collage
 Image (plate): 125 x 150 mm (5 x 6 in)
 Sheet: 275 x 380 mm (10¾ x 15 in)
 On heavy wove paper
 Printed by the artist, Newlyn
 No Edition. Various proofs exist with individually collaged elements
 Signed and dated

**97. Christmas Card 1989**

Linocut
 Image: 295 x 105 mm (11½ x 4¼ in)
 Sheet: 300 x 110 mm (11¾ x 4¼ in)
 On wove paper
 Printed by the artist, Newlyn
 No Edition. Produced as a Christmas card
 Signed and variously inscribed on the reverse

NOTE: this image was also printed in yellow and black

See Christmas Card, 1955 (Cat. 14)



180. Madron Woodcuts (Half Moons) 1998

10-part woodcut
 Image and sheet (each): 840 x 345 mm (33 x 13½ in)
 Image and sheet (total): 840 x 3450 mm (33 x 135¾ in)
 On Somerset Satin 310gsm paper
 Published by The Paragon Press, London
 Printed by Hugh Stoneman and Michael Ward at Stoneman Graphics, Cornwall
 Edition: 8 + 1 PP + 1 AP
 Each print signed and numbered on the reverse²²

For the purposes of cataloguing, each individual woodcut may be referred to as **180 A-J** (from left to right)

Literature: *Contemporary Art in Print: The Publications of Charles Booth-Clibborn and his imprint The Paragon Press 1995–2000*, pp 158–71, 321

The maquette (collage and acrylic on board 130 x 515 mm / 5 x 20¼ in) for this was exhibited at *Terry Frost – The Art of Collage*, 2002



223. **Black Circle** 2002

Screenprint
 16 colours
 Image: 310 x 750 mm (12¼ x 29½ in)
 Sheet: 475 x 900 mm (18¾ x 35½ in)
 On Arches wove paper (embossed)
 Published by CCA Galleries, Tilford
 Printed at Coriander Studio, London
 Edition: 150 + 15 APs
 Signed



224. (opposite) **Blue Circle** 2002

Screenprint
 24 colours
 Image: 740 x 550 mm (29¼ x 21¾ in)
 Sheet: 911 x 705 mm (35¾ x 27¾ in)
 On Arches wove paper
 Published by CCA Galleries, Tilford
 Printed at Coriander Studio, London
 Edition: 125 + 12 APs
 Signed