



NIGEL GREENWOOD INC LTD: RUNNING A PICTURE GALLERY – CHELSEA SPACE

JULY 11, 2016 / CLARE



Vinyl of Gilbert & George's 'Underneath the Arches', 1970, installation view at Chelsea Space



The Reading Room, installation view



The ramp leading to Joel Fisher's 'Apograph'



'Tiffin' 12-2pm for Reclining Drunk by Gilbert & George at Nigel Greenwood Inc Ltd, July 17, 1973

Nigel Greenwood Inc Ltd: running a Picture Gallery is a startling reminder of how much the art world has changed. CHELSEA Space's latest exhibition celebrates the extraordinarily keen eye of the late London gallerist Nigel Greenwood, founder and director of Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd, and ardent lover of art over money. This exhibition, curated by CHELSEA Space director Donald Smith, delves into his archive and puts on show some fascinating materials which have never before been displayed to the public.

The show is laid out over two separate rooms and an adjoining corridor. The first room is the Reading Room, and as your eye travels over the original lever-arch folders, exhibition posters, personal letters, snapshots and various other ephemera, some laid under glass on the desk, some lying on top and others hanging on the walls, one is catapulted back to the heyday of the gallery in 1970s and 80s London. Particularly enjoyable are letters sent to and from Greenwood, including a riotous letter sent by Paul Foster, which opens with "My beautiful JOHN WALKER painting arrived today in bad-ass shape", and goes on to teasingly moan about the state of the work that Greenwood had sent him. From the outset of the exhibition it is made clear that Greenwood harnessed close and warm relationships with his artists and clients, and one of the major joys here is how clear a picture we are able to get of Greenwood's personality and style, as well as the fondness with which many viewed him. This is in no small part due to the involvement and contribution of Greenwood's daughter, Phoebe, to the exhibition and the influence of Smith, who evidently continues a good working relationship with the family and with many of the artists whom Greenwood supported and exhibited.

RECENT POSTS

Nigel Greenwood Inc Ltd: running a Picture gallery – Chelsea Space

Janus Fleuri

On lists & list-making

Exhibition review: Alec Soth – Gathered Leaves facing the shadows

CATEGORIES

Art

Collage

Contemporary Art

Graphic Art

Inspiring words

Installation

Literature

Photography

photomontage

Pictorialism

Poetry

Public Art

Research


Sculpture

Uncategorized

War

LATEST TWEETS

Tweets by @clargrob

 **Clare Robson** @clargrob
HERE YE HERE YE my review // Nigel Greenwood: running a Picture Gallery @CHELSEAspace = wonderful. & FINAL WEEK // clare-robson.co.uk

 **Clare Robson** @clargrob
An interview with Wayne Koestenbaum, an awe-inspiring art writer, a few years old but crackling with inspiration // bit.ly/1PpgMCo

 Clare Robson Retweeted  **edgarwright** @edgarwright
I feel like Britain is going to die of news.

 Clare Robson Retweeted  **Robert Peston** @R_Peston

[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)

There are some big names on display here. As you walk up the ramp to the main exhibition space, you pass photographs of major exhibitions held at the gallery including those by Rita Donagh, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Marcel Broodthaers and Ed Ruscha, as well as a stunning John Stezaker photo-collage. At the top of the ramp is *Apograph*, a wall drawing in pencil re-created by Joel Fisher specifically for this exhibition in collaboration with MA Students from the Curating & Collections course at Chelsea College of Arts. This collaboration is apt for several reasons, the first obviously being CHELSEA Space's situation within an art school, but it also reiterates the particularly strong relationship that the Greenwood Gallery had with students, as a hub for progressive contemporary art in London. Greenwood's gallery, looking back, represented some of the most radical and influential artists of the 1970s and early 80s, as is evidenced in the main space of the exhibition. Two David Tremlett pieces are displayed alongside a fascinating David Lamelas double-projection *Film Script* from 1974 examining the manipulation of action and narrative through film and still photographs. A Marc Camille Chaimowicz installation which includes a table, vase and telephone re-creating Greenwood's gallery is installed alongside photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher. Also on the impressive Greenwood roster, as evidenced by more ephemera on display in the centre of the room, were such giants as Sol De Witt, Gilbert & George and Richard Tuttle. Beyond this, Greenwood was instrumental in the promotion of new forms of display, with the highly influential exhibition *Book as Artwork* in 1972, which re-prioritised the power of placing art in the hands of its audience. From this small but finely curated exhibition it becomes clear that Greenwood was right at the centre of the radical art world at the time, fostering and encouraging the artists at the forefront of the burgeoning movements of Conceptualism and Minimalism, crucially not just in London but internationally. In fact, its international context makes the exhibition an ideal companion to the *Conceptual Art in Britain* exhibition over the road at Tate Britain. The latter features many of the same artists, but without as much sense of Anglo-American networks and artistic exchange.

More than anything, what comes across is Greenwood's brave approach and his warm relationships with both artists and clients, in a vastly smaller and less cynical and profit-orientated art world than is imaginable these days. There is a sincerity and good humour plainly evident, but also a can-do attitude; in the accompanying catalogue Greenwood describes the atmosphere of possibility that existed in the 1960s that allowed him to open a gallery without huge amounts of money. Mounted on the windows to the gallery, and visible across the grand courtyard of Chelsea College of Arts, are life-size vinyl of Gilbert & George as *The Singing Sculptures* from 1970. Their figures are blurry and ghost-like; their bodies once golden and dancing are now caught mid-movement and faded to black and white like the dusty echo of a vaudeville song. This exhibition paints an affectionate picture of a fascinating time for art in London, but fundamentally this is the story of a man surrounded by art and artists, one who brought their bold new work to a new and enduring audience.

FINAL WEEK: *Nigel Greenwood Inc Ltd: running a Picture Gallery* closes on 11 July 2016

<http://www.chelseaspace.org/>