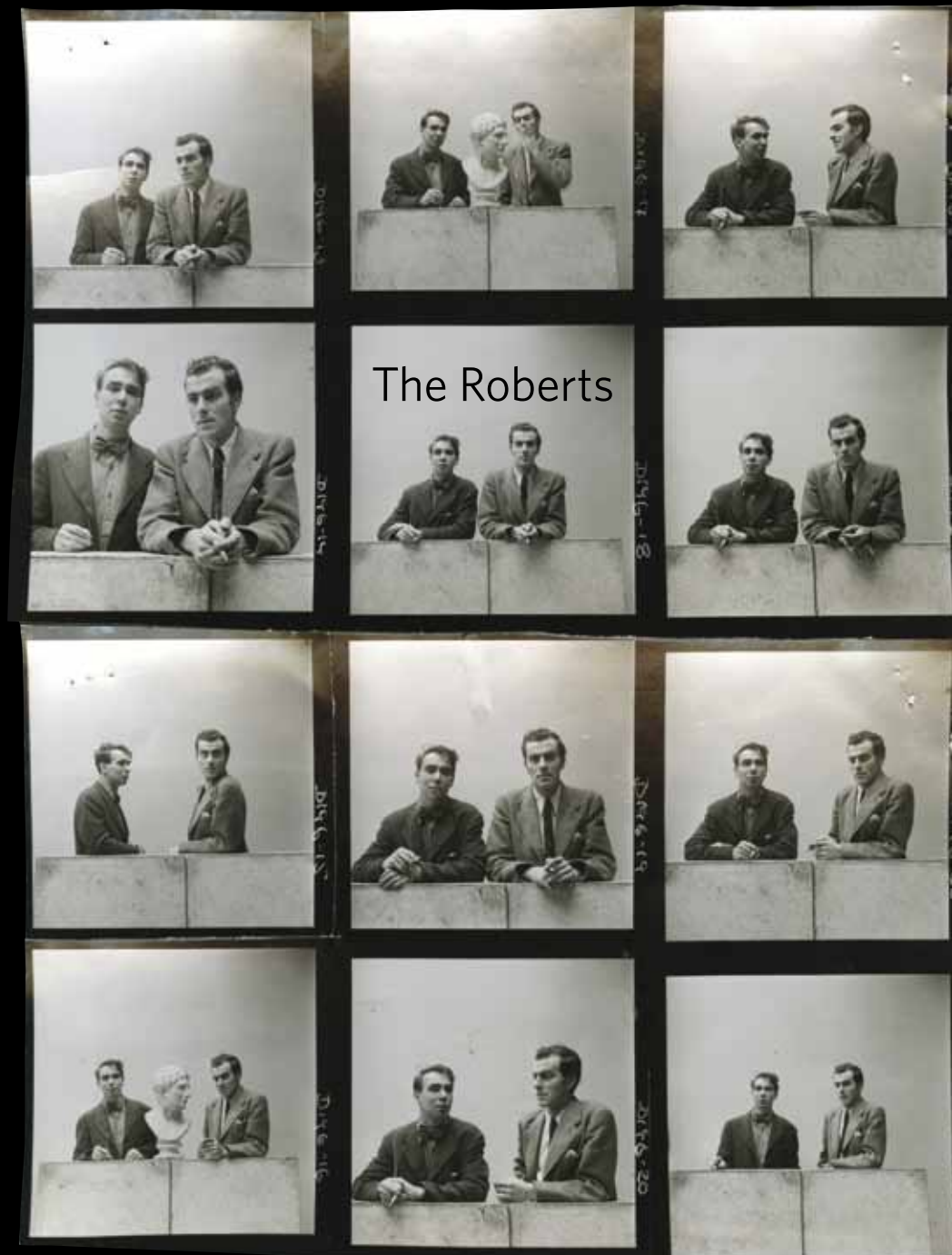


The Roberts

Robert MacBryde (1913-1966)
and Robert Colquhoun (1914-1962)

3 - 31 March 2010

Private View 2 March 6.30 - 8.30pm



Catalogue

Including works for sale, essays and several unpublished photographs of Robert MacBryde and Robert Colquhoun taken by John Deakin and Clifford Coffin from the Vogue Archives.

Book Signing and Talk Saturday 6 March 2010

The Scottish Gallery is hosting a special book signing of *The Last Bohemians* with author Roger Bristow, between 12 - 1pm. This will be followed by a talk and walkabout of the exhibition between 1 - 2pm. Places are limited, RSVP mail@scottish-gallery.co.uk or 0131 558 1200.

THE SCOTTISH GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1842

16 Dundas Street, Edinburgh EH3 6HZ

Tel 0131 558 1200 Email mail@scottish-gallery.co.uk

Web www.scottish-gallery.co.uk

Photographs of Robert MacBryde and Robert Colquhoun by John Deakin (1951).
Courtesy Vogue/© The Condé Nast Publications Ltd.

The Last Bohemians by Roger Bristow

Born and brought up in Ayrshire to poor, working-class families, Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde met at the Glasgow School of Art in the 1930s. They moved to London in 1941 and quickly became associated with the Neo-Romantic group of painters which included Keith Vaughan and John Minton. At a time when homosexuality was not only illegal but actively persecuted, they made little attempt to disguise their relationship and they had a constant stream of admirers, both male and female. The circle of friends that grew around them included the painters Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Michael Ayrton, John Minton and the poets George Barker and Dylan Thomas, all attending the regular weekend soirées held by The Roberts at their fashionable Kensington studio.

I first began to take a serious interest in the work of Colquhoun and MacBryde after visiting an exhibition of Neo-Romantic artists showing at the now defunct Fischer Fine Art gallery in London in the late 1980s. Although I had been aware of the existence of The Two Roberts since I was an art student myself, in the early 1960s, I knew little of their work and even less about their personal history. In a moment that was only later surpassed when I first saw Colquhoun's largest work, *Figures in a Farmyard*, at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, I was literally stopped short by seeing his large, near monochromatic painting, *Bitch and Pup*.

Until that moment I had found it disconcerting that my appreciation of the graphic arts was almost entirely cerebral. It seemed paradoxical to me, as someone who enjoyed the fine arts, how little of it actually appealed to my emotions – unlike literature, music or drama. Here, for the first time, I stood before a painting that forcefully confronted me with gut-wrenching defiance... One thing that spoke so eloquently to me, when viewing this work, was its absolute lack of sentimentality; humanity – yes, and compassion, too, but a work so devoid of anything cloying it seemed, almost brutally, to assault the senses: I determined to discover more.

Over the next few months, I looked at many more works by Colquhoun – and MacBryde, too – as I came to realise how closely their art and lives were intertwined. I became fascinated by their unravelling history; their defiance of convention, their dedication to their craft and, of course, the ultimately tragic course of their lives together.

The fruit of over 20 years' original research, *The Last Bohemians* by Roger Bristow is the first biography of two charismatic, talented and ultimately tragic Scottish painters. It re-establishes their reputation as important figures in the history of 20th Century British art. Includes material based on interviews with George Barker, Prunella Clough, John Craxton, Daniel Farson, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Bryan Robertson, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Patrick Heron and Ken Russell.



Robert Colquhoun **The Necromancer** 1949
Monotype with hand working and pencil on cream wove paper.
Signed and dated lower right, inscribed with title verso. 56 x 45.2 cms