LOVE

STEVEN

CAMPBELL
Steven Campbell (1953–2007) was a singular and charismatic figure whose work holds a unique place in the history of Scottish Contemporary art and embraced a particular experience of Scottish identity and culture. Distinctly international in outlook, Campbell’s work built on a foundation of intellectual pursuit and a close relationship with the natural world, underpinned by the socialist values that fuelled his notorious work ethic.

Born and raised in Burnside, Rutherglen, Campbell moved from high school to an engineering apprenticeship in Bellshill, Glasgow and it was at this time, at the age of 18 that he met his future wife Carol. On completing his training he took a job at British Steel in Cambuslang where he would work for the next seven years as the pair set about building their life together. Marrying in 1975 the couple spent a year travelling in Europe, following their interest in art and literature before Campbell gained a place at art school.

Campbell attended Glasgow School of Art between 1978 and 1982. Initially studying within Drawing and Painting, in 1979/80 he moved to the short lived, but highly influential, Mixed Media Department. Founded by Roger Hoare, and operating from 1977–1981, the department functioned separately
from the wider school and encouraged a high degree of experimentation. Its structure was loose and student centred, encouraging the participants to expand their interests and perspectives through discourse. For example, rather than undertaking crits on their own work, students gave presentations that could be on any subject that was of interest to them, fuelling discussion and debate within the close knit community.

The range and depth of Campbell’s own points of reference was dizzying from the very beginning, spanning the history of art, the natural world, literature, poetry, philosophy, theology, theory, architecture, music, film and subcultural figures; topics through which he tested the shape of the world around him. Mapping connections and proposing relationships between seemingly disparate elements, this open and inquisitive way of approaching the task of art making allowed him to flourish within the progressive environment of the new department.

His work at this time is remembered particularly for its rooting in literature and the cinematic, and in the performances through which Campbell combined these passions with the business of painting. Performances such as *Zoo Opera, The Trip* (1980) and the celebrated *Poised Murder* (1981) expanded the notion of painting and included sets composed of canvases, built structures, painted floors and props, alongside multiple costumed performers and music. They also included many of the staged performative or dramatic poses that would become a feature of characters in his later work. Ronnie Forbes, who taught in the Mixed Media department
at Glasgow School of Art, has described these performances as ‘wonderful things...I have to say, all the imagination that eventually went into his painting showed up in these sets, a very particular vision.’

On graduating, Campbell was awarded a Fulbright scholarship and subsequently traveled to New York to study at the Pratt Institute, spending his first year locked in the studio day and night working furiously. He burst onto the New York art scene in 1983 with a solo exhibition at Barbara Toll Gallery and his subsequent years in New York were incredibly fruitful with numerous solo shows across the country. However, in 1986, Campbell and his young family made the decision to return to Scotland, first to Glasgow and then finally settling—by way of the Campsie Foothills—in Kippen Stirlingshire where the artist lived and worked until his untimely death in 2007.

The studio at Kippen is in a small garage to the front of the artist’s family home. Intended for a car it, like all of Campbell’s previous studios, has no natural light, perhaps accounting for the often sombre palette of his works. The painterly world that Campbell created in this restricted space is expansive, inhabited by a cast of mysterious characters drawn from fiction, fantasy and domestic life; although any recognisable element of person or place is always slightly ‘off’ just beyond the limit of comfortable or familiar reach. Thick limbed with large, piercing eyes and often sharply dressed in tweeds and tailored suits, his figures can be found caught in moments of trauma or danger,
performing ambiguous actions or engaged in the completion of some unknown adventure. His landscapes and environments too are imbued with a sense of disjuncture, as though the boundaries between our material world and some other transcendental realm are at risk of being breached, making way for what Neil Mulholland has described as ‘a heterogeneous and sensual way of knowing and experiencing the world.’

While these paintings—which form the bulk of Campbell’s output and for which he is best known—might make reference to the history of Scottish figurative painting, to the German expressionists and to his beloved Picasso and Cezanne, they do so without nostalgia. Campbell’s mission seems to have been to learn from his chosen masters (be they artists, writers, musicians or directors) and apply his understanding of their world to a modern sensibility, one inflected with the specific anxieties, dangers and idiosyncratic jumble of inherited tradition and fractured narrative that characterises contemporary life.

It is most likely that a contemporary audience would come across one of these paintings on canvas or paper in isolation, in one of the many national and international art galleries that collect Campbell’s work. However—as demonstrated by his seminal installation On Form and Fiction (1990) acquired jointly by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Glasgow Life in 2017—experimentation through working with installation, found objects, printmaking, collage and clay or papier-mâché sculpture were also important elements in Campbell’s practice.
The collages in this exhibition; eight of which were exhibited at Talbot Rice, Edinburgh in 1993, come from two distinct periods of making, the first between 1988–1989 and the second between 1990–1991. While the artist made no further performance works after leaving art school, a sense of the theatrical runs through all of his subsequent work, particularly in relation to the collages and the manner of their making, which reflects a process of durational performance. Campbell pushed himself to the extreme, not through dramatic or violent gestures, but through a concentrated period of directed labour, the kind that focuses every ounce of your being—a form of ritualistic action leading to a cleansing or clearing out of the old.

While Campbell’s paintings were often executed with terrific speed, (he claimed a canvas could be completed in five days) these large scale, predominantly two dimensional collages were each made over a period of weeks and months. Campbell worked on them relentlessly, going out of his way to make the process as labour intensive as possible and working instinctively with his materials which included feathers, found paper, textiles and tapestry kits that he completed himself. The palette of the collages, directed in part by that of the artist’s found materials, is brighter than the paintings, coupled with a looseness that comes perhaps from Campbell having developed them without the use of underdrawings or sketches, instead building them up piece by piece and letting the materials lead the way.
Progressed slowly and painstakingly at the kitchen table, amid the rhythms of family life, the resulting works are testament to Campbell’s modest needs, his restless imagination and his experimental nature but, above all, to his sensitivity to the world around him. As he said himself, ‘I’m in art for the romance, the beauty of it.’

1 Ronnie Forbes in conversation with Debi Banerjee as part of Talk, Make, Play, episode 4 in the podcast series New Wave: Materials, Methods and Media, Glasgow School of Art 1970–1986 by Debi Banerjee.


3 Interview with Keith Patrick, Art Line International 1993

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On the Art of Steven Campbell

Michael Bracewell

Young Men Doing Art In Dangerous Places

On the Art of Steven Campbell
Whence this luxuriant melancholia, this backwards fall into the arms of nostalgia and nervy epiphany?

Love, spring, elegance, evening, youth, age, hope, literature, loss; lost bearings—a search for meaning, but in dream-time; as though, channeling Lord Byron: “I saw two beings in the hues of youth, Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill, Green and of mild declivity...”

But could never reach them again, and were faced with change, and age, and the end of an age, and the end of age...

An airy, celestial, modernist Eternity, with vast white rooms, cool colonnades, expanses of piazza; a desert garden in which to watch the twin suns set.

All you get is the art. The works are displayed according to the wishes, if known, of the artist who made them; each has the space to be solely itself, labeled only with the artist’s name and the date when it was made. There is only the work; and the viewer’s aim, reprising Matthew Arnold on ‘The Function of Criticism at the Present Time’ (1865): “to see the object in itself, as it really is.”

But how? Walter Pater informed us, eight years later, in his book—much cherished by the young Oscar Wilde—‘The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry’ (1873):

‘To see the object as in itself it really is,’ has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever, and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one’s object as it really is, is to know one’s own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly. The objects with which aesthetic criticism deals—music, poetry, artistic
and accomplished forms of human life—are indeed receptacles of so many powers or forces: they possess, like the products of nature, so many virtues or qualities. What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do...

Here is the experiential-descriptive nature of Husserl’s phenomenology anticipated by a quarter of a century. With all but the art itself ‘bracketed out’ (Husserl’s “epoche”) the viewer becomes Dante, guided.

And here is a painting by Steven Campbell, made in 1986. What do you see and where are you taken?

First, surely, some sense of being lost... ‘because there’s panic on the streets of Carlisle...’ In the woods, on the mountains, in territories that the viewer might guess are also metaphysical territories, destabilized... And of being indeed in between days, if not in between half centuries. As though invisible forces were redrawing the map, even as you stepped out, one soaring blue and golden morning in late August, on the path across the hills... But the path was changing beneath your feet; the signpost showed the same destination in opposite directions; and by misty evening were there eerie electronics and husky vocals on a dying fall; or wry fictions; or the edge of forests and corn fields in the illustrations to
a children’s story written in Poland or Cornwall in 1922?

Steven Campbell made art that caught a moment when cultural vertigo reflected personal vertigo. Pictorially, the translation of a postmodern alloy of stylized-styles and cryptic meaning into an allegorical landscape; a place that was literary, Tenniel-like, eerie, elegiac, filled with ambiguous symbol, clever and mad. There is in hindsight the sense of an ending—of many endings, perhaps; the dusk of pre-digital society summoning up a particularly intense Romanticism; for with the birth of the digital world, Modernism—electrical, mechanical, analogue, material culture—would finally end.

Campbell depicts entranced-yet-inscrutable elegant young men: archaic and dandified, yet sturdily dressed for country pursuits; only crazy, stunned or possessed, hair on end, hurrying over perilous moorland, benighted on cliff paths (round collared shirts and stiff, ice-blue tweed)—precariously placed in what we might call magical-surrealist situations, figuratively painted.

The romanticism of these figures lies partly in the stylized archaism of their appearance, personal and sartorial—Edwardian, Georgian, Victorian or some costume drama hybrid; a fusion, in appearance, of pre-pop era childhood and young adulthood; but also in the Wonderlands of where they ended up and what they were doing.

They move it seems through landscape-tableaux at once symbolic and reminiscent of early or mid twentieth century children’s fiction: adventure stories, camping, hiking,
summers in the country, school holiday encounters with magical worlds; and always, but always, non-metropolitan.

The contortions of these elegant adventurers, caught up as though in a Divine Comedy of their own, real or imagined or both, seemed during the middle years of the 1980s to be describing a cultural situation—to do with painting, its history, and what to paint now, and how and why and just letting go... Not so much History Painting, as End-of-History Painting—a postmodern proposition; a low beamed smoky ceilinged tea parlor version cataclysm; and with these conservative looking young men circling the blast...

And so the stocky young man with the brushed or blown forward shock of hair, wearing checked jacket and waistcoat, herringbone plus fours, collar, short tie, his muscled calves in stout socks, rucksack—the schoolboy hero, maybe—appears at first glance to be beaming as he straightens his right arm to seemingly land a fist, bang, square on the nose of a curious winged figure who has an infant by the arm, roughly it seems... Between puncher and punched is another figure, with a downturned face, angular featured like a primitive mask. The incident appears moonlit or search-lit: an episode in a story.

The woodcut depicting this scene, black and white, is enormous. In the bottom left quadrant of the picture is a pitched tent, school holidays type, circa 1949. To the right, a cup and toothbrush have fallen to the ground in the melee. Made by Campbell in 1983, the title of this picture seems to hit the viewer as hard as the hiker’s fist: ‘The Hiker said, “Death, you shall not take the child.”’
This early woodcut seems to summarize all that will follow in the art of Steven Campbell, in which incident seems often so violent (murderous) crazy or perilous. Expressionist landscapes and nursery rhyme—Dr Caligari interiors become as weirdly hostile and combative as destiny or character—cataracts and torrents, mountains and pine trees, dim lit rooms, clearings in the forest. Like a Scottish Germany or vice versa.

Highland dandyism and Dada pose prevail. Scenes from a performance, in temper—more country house charades, church hall amateur dramatics; Cluedo murder mystery put into the service of literary-romantic allegories of art. ...Another young man, dressed in a Norfolk jacket, lassoed with a candy-striped rope, all in a Scots-Alpine landscape, with tea on a table beneath an old tree, and a girl in a blue dress fleeing towards a tangerine colored Tyrolean looking lake house.

All seem caught in strong and swift currents of fate, but the male figures in Campbell's magic-allegorical-comic-surreal tableaux appear somehow to have a doomed air, they and the world around them, mad, convulsed, malign. In this Campbell's vision and art seem close Germany—to the Expressionism of Max Beckman, and the neo-Expressionism of its neo-punk descendant, the paintings of Jorg Immendorff: narrative naturalism, yet stylized, thickened and heavily weighted, pugnacious, sinister, chaotic, neurasthenic slapstick, as though violently prised away from love and hope and clean air.

The early work of Steven Campbell (and that of his equally celebrated
Glasgow School of Art contemporary, Adrian Wiszniewski) achieved prominence in Scotland, England and New York during the middle years of the 1980s, when the term ‘postmodern’ had only recently taken up residence in the cultural conversation, meaning, as shorthand: a collage of historical styles and games with cultural quotation, to create clever, audacious, aesthetically seductive new forms that were also an arch commentary upon themselves and their origins.

The case of these young Scottish artists was a curious one. For they appeared to make art that flamboyantly eschewed the intellectualism, political concern and seriousness that had dominated much (but not quite all) contemporary British art since Richard Hamilton (ever the exception to the rule) had pronounced in 1966 that most Fine Arts graduates could teach, “but that was about all”. Their bachelor uncles, always sending a book token at Christmas, might well have been Gilbert & George; their elder brother, Bruce McLean and his ‘Nice Style’ pose group.

The mood of their art was youthful, dandified, declamatory, poetic, at times portentous, at others comic (slapstick, even); then Classical, spring-like or autumnal, disoriented. The experience of youth accosted by some sense of existential unease—emotionally and/or intellectually; a bundle of angst and love’s vagaries and the capriciousness of art, and the falling backwards into the arms of... what? That ecstatic unhappiness shared by some music of the period, from Cocteau Twins to New Order to The Blue Nile?
But whatever, this art had an air of being *tableaux* — as though the figures depicted were players in some surrealist home movie or amateur dramatics performance, and had frozen, mid-gesture, ceremonially, at the conclusion of a scene. To some extent, the themes explored by Campbell would seem to chime — on occasion — with those encountered in the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, whose ‘Little Sparta’, neo-Arcadian garden-as-artwork, with its blend of Roman pastoral, pseudo-fascist iconography and poetry-sculpture park idyll was created in the countryside outside Edinburgh.

But where Finlay’s art, however elegant, seemed all pugnacity and revolutionary zeal, that of Campbell (and Wiszniewski) was both playful and far stranger. At the same time, it made its own revolutionary break with much contemporary British art of the period, while looking to art, mythology, literature and history for the energy and extravagance of its postmodern imagination, drama, and seemingly aphoristic yet epic events.

The young men (there were very few women or girls, and those there were seemed muse-like, sinister, homely or august) in Campbell’s art tended to look similar to one another. Their staring, leonine gleefulness or vacancy; collared shirts and ties, suit jackets and general air of archaic modern lost-in-time other-worldliness, was matched by their fantastical, seemingly ceremonial-allegorical situations.

These figures appeared poised, arrested in time and space, *posed*, above all; at times as though they were mannequins, arranged to depict
a scene, at others as though they were figures in a charade, or elite stylists, or illustrations from some mystery story or yarn. There was often a density to the image making that seemed to make the landscapes appear tense or brooding or slowed down with sunset. In some the viewer might have been reminded of the work of Samuel Palmer, or Palmer’s British neo-Romantic admirers of the 1930s: a sense of place, enigmatically numinous, in which the natural and supernatural worlds seemed separated by the lightest of veils.

The terrain of these paintings had a metaphysical air; for these young men seemed to be (and were sometimes confirmed to be, in the titles of the pictures) seekers-after-truth, of one sort another; they seemed to act out Brian Eno’s poetically philosophic-sounding titular phrase, ‘Before and After Science’.

They might be naturalists, poets, philosophers—or perhaps just observers of these pursuits: fellow travelers with an eye to the Natural Sciences, or chance bystanders who had somehow got mixed up in something, and were taking their place as players in a masque... Or were utterly lost, but perhaps not (yet) aware of the fact? They seemed also reminiscent of New Romantic musicians—all they needed was a keyboard and a sad song—the alienated nouveau-romo poet-philosopher Outsider.

Iron blue and cupric orange; an air of thunder at twilight. The apparent impassivity of the young men in these bizarre mise-en-scenes matches inscrutability with sacrifice and ritual — and the viewer might
again speculate that some complex allegory is being acted out by such a constellation of symbols; their visual experience begins also to feel literary: as though one is reading a novella, or a fragment of prose, or lines of poetry.

But if this is the case, and if the viewer is unable to de-code with certainty any such literary meaning, then what remains or takes its place is a potent evocation of a dream-like episode and atmosphere. It is as though the mainspring of Logic in the world of meaning has suddenly snapped and fallen loose, enabling modes and acts and gestures of enquiry that circle around archetypical folk-lore, fantasy, botched epiphany, ineffectuality, discovery, anesthesia, delusion, denouement, abandon, crisis and confusion—all depicted by these nerveless but foppish young men, in frieze-like scenarios.

Carol Campbell

Interview

Linsey Young
Steven entered Glasgow School of Art in 1978 at the age of 25, which is considered a mature student, can you tell me a little about your life together before this time and how the decision to go to art school came about?

Steven and I met on holiday in Ostend when I was 17 and he was an 18-year-old apprentice maintenance engineer. We knew almost instantly that this was it for both of us, the lifelong love, but we followed the very conventional working class path of saving for engagement rings, then two years for a house and finally, four years in, marriage, on July 4th 1975.

We worked for a further year saving to take what is now called a gap year but for us it was a cultural and fun trip to Europe—although to be fair the greatest part of our time away was spent in Greece and our beloved Italy. It was on this trip that Steven made two major decisions. One to make a real friend of his father, (having had the usual rite of passage male head butting) and this he did right up to his father’s death. The other was to embrace art and aim for art school, having been inspired by his maternal grandmother giving him a book about the life of Toulouse-Lautrec.
On our return from Europe he went to night school to get an English higher, but he sat the art exam externally. He made a lot of sculpture pieces—quite Giacometti like—and larger portrait busts. He would go to Kelvingrove museum and draw the statues and paint in our kitchen. He put a portfolio together and the rest, as they say, is history.

LY: This exhibition focuses on a number of collages made between 1988–1991, and also includes some small objects; woodblocks and sculptures of footballers heads made from socks and papier-mâché. Most people know Steven as a painter and might be surprised by the materials in this exhibition, can you talk a little about his work beyond painting?

Steven Campbell Untitled, 2000. Papier mache, football sock and oil paint. photograph, Linsey Young
CC: Steven didn’t start out his love affair with art as a painter. He started with sculpture and performance art. Not sure what else to call it but I remember in pre art school or very early 1st year him going into town to where Glasgow Museum of Modern

Art is now, getting some tape and Do Not Cross signs then taking photographs of people interacting with the situation, walking around the obstacles even though there was no real tangible barrier or reason to avoid the area. The first sculptural piece he made was small and from clay, very Giacometti-like in feel, a female figure he called Zulma. God only knows why.

Around the same time he made a bust of the schoolteacher, socialist and member of the red Clydeside movement John Maclean. Again it was of clay painted black and was exhibited in a shop front window in Sauchiehall Street as part of an open art call.
LY: Found objects also played an important role in the work—I’m thinking about his performances and degree show, right through to *On Form and Fiction*.

CC: Steven very often combined objects with paintings, even as early as his degree show, with the creation of his character ‘Hunt’ and the portrait he made of Hunt with a black and red flag, which was framed with an actual matching flag laid along the top of the painting. The papier-mâché heads and other pieces such as a rat and donut all reflect the paintings of the time and our real life experiences in New York. We did see that rat running along the subway track with its head stuck in the donut bag. Later on in 1997 the exhibition he had at the Pier Art Centre in Orkney ‘Chesterfield Dreams’ was as much sculptural as painted, with objects again being added to the padded background.

LY: You moved to New York in 1983 when Steven won a Fulbright Scholarship straight out of art school. Your time there was incredibly successful and I’m interested in the move home—what motivated that change?

CC: The move back to Scotland was for a mixture of reasons. We had been in New York
for four years and others who had gone before us had always said that was the kind of time span when you either commit to stay or move back. We had also had our first daughter and she was far away from grandparents and all our oldest friends.

But probably it was Steven joining Marlborough Gallery which meant he literally could live anywhere, so it just seemed right.

**LY:** Where did you move to?

**CC:** We moved back to Inchwood Cottage in the Campsie foothills. We wanted a more rural setting after the full on New York lifestyle and Steven moved into a work space down in the Gallowgate in Glasgow. This was followed a couple of years later by a move to an even more remote farmhouse up in the hills above the village of Kippen which provided a home, a workspace in a disused barn and 20 acres for pet sheep and donkeys.
It was here at Ballochleam that the collages in the Tramway show were created.

LY: Could you describe the painting studio and Steven’s wider working environment to us, you told me he made this series of collages at the kitchen table?

CC: The barn studio was typical of Steven’s studios. They always verged on Parisian garret chic circa 1900! In other words there was no heating, no natural light and very little in the way of facilities. He always was a crazy romantic mixed with Scottish Calvinist (if it hurts it must be doing you good). He never liked natural light which, in many ways I think, is a factor in why the colours really zing when they hit the light of day. The barn had a badly fitting door and was opened to the elements at the back end; he rigged up plastic sheeting in an attempt to keep the elements at bay. He had a palette sometimes on the back of an old painting or a piece of wood which had been lying about. Books would be strewn everywhere with notes, photographs, newspaper or magazine clippings pinned to the wall with quick sketches, never more than a line or two to create a figure and a brief outline of an idea. A small colour palette, he mixed a lot of his colours and usually no more than a dozen brushes at the most.
CC: He was always about keeping costs to a minimum. Not for him your fancy sable brushes, it was student quality all the way and he would only very grudgingly spring for something more expensive if he was desperate.

LY: And always the cheapest ones?!

CC: The collages were different as much of the work had to be done in the kitchen. The painted string needed heat to dry and the glue also worked more efficiently first exhibited) that makes it sound like a very intense process.

‘I thought people would be attracted by the sheer craziness of building a work up starting with a piece of string. It was only the madness I was interested in. To do the task was all I believed in. I only believed in applying string every day.’
in the warmth. We had a tiny Raeburn stove in the kitchen which had three dowling poles above it, so it was here that the lengths of painted string would be hung to dry before being painstakingly cut and applied individually to the canvas or paper. He even made the tapestries that are included from kits that he purchased. It was a contemplative reflective practice allowing for a healing process for body and mind.

LY: It seems to me that in these works there is a particular focus on the domestic, in terms of the architecture and interiors depicted but there are also fewer of the men that generally inhabit his canvases and more women and children?

CC: I guess his work always reflected his inner self and at that point I think the retreat to the security of family life probably does come through in the finished pieces. Although there always remains something intrinsically raw and honest, the courage to still put yourself out there for judgement.
LY: And in terms of the scale, method and palette of these works—there seems to be a clear relationship to Matisse’s late cut outs, is that a reference that you discussed?

CC: Steven was definitely aware of the cut outs. He had taken us to visit the Rosary Chapel at Vence in the South of France and I know he loved it there.

LY: I know Steven had a huge raft of influences across the visual arts, philosophy, film and music, could you talk about some of the things that were particularly important to him at this time?

CC: Steven was just a natural exponent of lifelong learning. His mind would naturally flow from one idea to the next. It was an organic process and always multi layered, where one interest would morph into another; for example a love of Philip Glass’ music would lead to an examination of set designs for the operas. We even bought a drawing by Robert Wilson from his design for *A Letter for Queen*
Victoria (1974) which he collaborated on with Glass, as well as several other productions. I don’t think there are many families out there whose kids would sing Einstein On The Beach in the back of the car going on holiday! Other music would be widely varied from traditional jazz greats to the Lounge Lizards, Gato Barbieri to Brecht and Lotte Lenya, Steve Reich and classicists like Mozart and Haydn.

He was always constantly reading. In philosophy it would be Wittgenstein and Foucault. While a relaxing read might be Patricia Highsmith, Elmore Leonard, Maj Sjowall and Per Wahloo—Scandi Noir before it was even thought of as being that. In art it would be Giotto, Titian but with a livening of whatever was most current within the pages of Flash Art.

Movies would again be a very broad brush. I do remember watching Le Gloire De Mon Pere and its companion piece Le Château De Ma Mère. Scorsese films, a healthy dose of Woody Allen mixed in with Monsieur Hulot and of course Wings of Desire by the inimitable Wim Wenders.
LY: Two of the largest works in the Tramway show, *Goat Skull in Italy* and *Thoughts of a Vegetarian* seem to refer directly to the Italian holidays that I know were and are a part of family life. Can you talk about your shared interest in European travel, art and culture and what influence you feel it might have had on Steven and the work?

CC: I think Italy is without doubt one of the most deeply rooted influences and experiences of Campbell family life and, as you said, remains so today. We saw holidays as being visits to churches to look at frescoes, art galleries to see Renaissance greatness all mixed with beach fun. It was here Steven would show us why de Chirico created those shadows in his work—you can still see it as the sun moves around a hilltop village with different buildings falling into shadow—but how amazing to learn that as a child or even for me. I can still remember him showing us. So many beautiful things, weren’t we blessed.

Interview conducted by email between Carol Campbell and Linsey Young, December 2017.
Works
Portrait of Two Cousins with the Same Mother who Left them Alone when she was Seventeen

1991, 149 x 121 cm, collage on canvas, p63.
(p64–65; details)
Dream of the Hunter’s Muse
1991, 146.5 x 111 cm, collage on canvas, p66–67.
(p68–69; details)
Penelope At Home Waiting For Dad’s Return

1991, 114 x 158 cm, collage on canvas, p71.
(p72–75: details)
The Family of The Accidental Angel
1991, 174 x 121.5 cm, collage on canvas, p75.
(p76–77; details)
Love
1991, 177 x 121 cm, collage on canvas, p78–79. (p80–81; details)
Birth of Eurithia with Drowned Family

1991, 150 x 120cm, collage on canvas, p83.
(p84–85; details)
Goat Skull in Italy

1998, 224.7 X 227.4 cm, collage on canvas, p86–87. (p88–89; details)
English Palette with Feet of Clay

1988, 231.1 x 129.5 cm, collage on canvas, p90–91.
(p92–93; details)
Thoughts of a Vegetarian

1989, 227.3 x 216 cm, collage on canvas, p94–95.
(p96–97; details)
I Dreamt I Shot Mussolini at Cowes Week

1991, 144 x 115.5 cm, collage on canvas, p99.
(p100–101; details)
The Artist’s Chair
1991, 152.4 x 109.2 cm, collage on canvas, p103.
(p104–105, details)
Study for Frottage of the Void

1988, 132 x 110.5 cm, collage on canvas, p107. (p108–109: details)
BIOGRAPHY

Born in Rutherglen, Glasgow, Steven Campbell (1953–2007), worked as an engineer at the Clydebridge Shipworks for seven years before studying at the Glasgow School of Art from 1978–82 as a mature student. Awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1982, he chose to study at the Pratt Institute in New York, and remained in the city until 1986 when he returned to Glasgow, moving with his family to Stirlingshire in 1989 where he lived and worked until his untimely death in 2007.


SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

The Art of Steven Campbell, Marlborough Fine Art, London, 2017


Neil Mulholland, Steven Campbell (1953–2007)“...Wretched Stars, Insatiable Heaven...” Marlborough Fine Art, 2009


Stuart Morgan and Euan McArthur, On Form and Fiction, Glasgow, Third Eye, 1990

Tony Godfrey, Steven Campbell, Marlborough, London, 1987

Steven Campbell, Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, 1985

Stuart Morgan, Steven Campbell New Paintings, Riverside Gallery and Fruitmarket Gallery, 1984
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