

DAVID PRENTICE (1936 - 2014)

Moseley Road Art Secondary School 1949 - 1952

Artist, Teacher & Co-founder of the IKON gallery



Son of a builder, David Prentice was born in Solihull

He attended the School from the age of 13-16, then went onto Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts 1952-57 where he met his wife Dinah.

His early work was abstract & inspired by his hero Mondrian

In 1964, frustrated at the lack of exhibition space for contemporary artists in Birmingham, he helped found the Ikon Gallery in a glass-walled kiosk in the Bull Ring open air market. Conceived as a gallery without walls, this was to develop into an internationally acclaimed art venue that is now located in Brindleyplace.

David's early work was exhibited at national and international collections including the Arts Council and Birmingham Institutions. In 1971, he started teaching and became Course Director for Fine Art at Birmingham Polytechnic.

In 1986 David retired from teaching in Birmingham and returned to full time painting as resident artist at Nottingham University.

In 1990 they moved to the Malvern Hills, which became a subject that inspired him for the rest of his life

"I retired in 1986... I had been a fairly abstract painter up until that stage... I describe it as giving up being David Prentice. It's sort of theatrical and miles away from the subject matter that I was interested in... Every morning I go out for a two or three-mile walk and do a sketch. There's usually something around to get you going. It's a way of limbering up in the morning and it gets my eyes working."

In contrast to his previous work, David's middle period of work is richly coloured and highly atmospheric. This marked a major change in his subject matter from abstraction to representation, from progressive modernism to traditional English landscape painting.

David's later work embraced a subtle return towards the abstraction of the 1960-70's. In observing the Malvern landscape, he created paintings that convey an incredible sympathy and appreciation of nature:

"Sometimes I do straight-forward watercolours and then sometimes I just make it up. It's like taking notes for an exam: once you have it in your head you are free and you can do what you like..."

In these paintings the shapes and impressions conjured in his minds' eye take on a separate form. They are painted as flat designs that become abstract again.

