

ALAN DODD



Baroque & Gothick

architectural studies from the Grand Tour
and nearer home

DODD

During a snoop in 1989 at that Edwardian 'ye olde English' make-over house, Great Fosters at Egham in Surrey, then a hotel, I came across an artist painting the near 80 foot long Hunting Ceiling. All I glimpsed were the feet of a body lying prone on scaffolded boards, as might Michelangelo when painting the Sistine ceiling. I now discover the feet belonged to my friend Alan Dodd.

Fifteen years on, and there is a host of neo-gothick and chinoiserie mural works in between, we have an exhibition of what Dodd calls his Grand Tour works. Sometimes over the past 10 years I have exclaimed, 'Where is Dodd?'. Now we know; on one of his many painting tours, in Greece in 1993, in Prague and Bohemia 2001-2003, in Sicily and Italy in 1990, 1997, and 2003. He titles his selection of 70 topographical paintings *Baroque & Gothick*, purposely borrowed from the title of a book of evocative photographs of Prague published in 1946, but before that lovely city was brutalised by Russian invaders and made out of bounds. It was a record of a place that would send you immediately there. When I bought my copy of the book I associated it with Sacheverell Sitwell and his travels.

Unless the artistic photographer possesses an old-fashioned plate camera, the latest technical inventions such as digital photography only allow for the briefest visual contact between the taker and the taken. It is over in a trice. In contrast, the painter must set up an easel and often for some hours converse with the subject. Rather like fishing, it is a contemplative recreation, and Dodd is a contemplative artist. I can transfer myself to that piazza in front of the Duomo in Syracuse with its baroque facade glued onto a Greek temple and share the hot Sicilian sun with him painting his *Duomo and Santa Lucia*. This matter of conversing with the eyes – and I am thinking particularly of architecture – and transferring that dialogue onto canvas or paper, was one in which Thomas Jones, that earlier grand tourist painter, excelled. It is not too much to detect in Dodd's generally small-scale works a reverence for those oil studies by Jones of Roman and Neopolitan architecture, so often in decay. I am thinking of his broken-windowed *Immacolata, Lipari* in 1990, or his crumbly *Vojteska I, Brevnov, Prague* of 2001, and the secret garden with the ruins of *Sant'Andrea, Ferrara*, in 2003. The collection that he presents forms a cohesive body of smallish works of cabinet size, meant to be seen and enjoyed as a group.

John Harris

ALAN DODD



The Immacolata, Lipari 1990

10½ x 14 ins. Cat.4

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at The Georgian Group, 6 Fitzroy Square
London W1

29th October - 12th November
2004

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Athens, Temple of the Winds 1990
9¼ x 6 ins. Cat.21



Granny's House, Charlecote 1978

8¾ x 10½ ins. Cat.2

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Syracuse, Duomo & Santa Lucia 1990
10½ x 6 ins. Cat.8



San Domenico, Noto 1990

11 x 13¼ ins. Cat.9

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Lipari, Immacolata & Addolorata 1990 10¼ x 8¾ ins.
Cat.7



Finale, Villa Saraceno 1995

10½ x 12½ ins. Cat.17

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Rome, San Trinita del Monte 1991

15½ x 21½ ins. Cat.10



Ferrara, Ruins of Sant' Andrea 2003
Cat.13

10¾ x 8¾ ins.



Stramovka, Gothick bothy 2002

10 x 13 ins. Cat.50



Troja, Chinese pavilions & vineyard 2001
Cat.36

13 x 9½ ins.

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Troja, Gate to the Chinese village 2001 11½ x 10 ins. Cat.34



Stramovka, Gothick Palace 2002

11 x 14½ ins. Cat.49

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Brevnov, Gatehouse 2002 10½ x 7¾ ins.
Cat.42



Prague, Villa America pavilion 2003 11 x 8 ins.
Cat.31

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Brevnov, Vojteska I 2002

10½ x 13¼ ins. Cat45



Prague, Gatehouse to Saint John of the Rock 2002 9½ x 10¼ ins.
Cat.27

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Portico to the Kinsky Summer Palace 2002

10 x 13 ins. Cat.53



Prague, Our Lady of Sorrows 2003 13¾ x 9½ ins. Cat.30

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Covehithe Church 2002

11½ x 16½ ins. Cat.61



Grove at Benacre 2001

10½ x 9¼ ins. Cat.65

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Act II of Verdi's *Ballo in Maschera*, Opera Omnibus 2000 production, Haslemere, Surrey
Sets and Proscenium designed by Alan Dodd
Miss Catherine Pope as Amelia and Mr Brendan MacBride as Gustavus

24 x 30 ins.
Cat.66

Baroque & Gothic

ALAN DODD was born at Kennington near Ashford in Kent on 23rd November 1942. He attended Ashford Grammar School and Maidstone College of Art, where his teachers included the brothers Ironside, Christopher and Robin, Gerard de Rose, and David Hockney. Later at the Painting School at the Royal Academy, he was taught by Charles Mahoney, Peter Greenham, Edward Bawden, Richard Eurich, Anthony Eyton, and Fred Dubery.

He exhibited at the Royal Academy Bicentenary Exhibition in 1967-68, and has shown at many R.A. Summer Exhibitions.

Following three successful exhibitions of his surrealist paintings with David Wolfers at the New Grafton Gallery (then at 1a Grafton Street) in 1969, 1971 and 1972, he was teaching, but also beginning to paint murals, with particular emphasis on historic styles and their relation to architecture. At the same time he was lecturing on the history of furniture.

Mural works have included the five large architectural *capricci* for the Painted Room at the Victoria & Albert Museum, commissioned by Sir Roy Strong in 1986; architectural panels after Piranesi for decorations at Alexandra Palace in 1987; re-creation of the *trompe l'oeil* decoration on the Vardy staircase at Spencer House, 1990; and the Pompeiian ceiling decoration in the New Picture Room at Sir John Soane's Museum in 1992, based on designs approved by Lord Leighton one hundred years earlier. In 1998, working from the Adam drawings for the house, he re-created the three large wall paintings of ruins with figure subjects from Virgil after the lost and unrecorded canvasses by Antonio Zucchi, for the Eating Room at Home House, 20 Portman Square.

Apart from other mural commissions, a few garden follies, and advisory work he has designed Gustavian opera sets for Verdi's 'Masked Ball' for Opera Omnibus, Haslemere, in 2000.

He designed the Millennium Cross, a memorial to Cardinal Hume, set up outside Westminster Cathedral in October 2001.

The title for this exhibition seemed too good to pass over; but also shown are pictures of neo-classical and mediaeval gothic buildings, and even the odd landscape.

Special thanks are due to John Harris; the Georgian Group; Brian Webb for advice on this catalogue and to many friends for their help and support.



Ferrara, Palazzo Bevilacqua 2003

16½ x 12¼ Cat.12

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www.alandodd.co.uk

+44 (0)7788 151248

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