

F A G G I O N A T O F I N E A R T S

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PRESS RELEASE

Rodrigo Moynihan (1910 -1990)

Portraits

20 September - 11 October, 2002

Reception and private view on 25 September, 2002, 6.00 - 8.00pm, for John Moynihan on the publication of the book, Restless Lives, the Bohemian World of Rodrigo and Elinor Moynihan

Faggionato Fine Arts is pleased to announce the opening of the exhibition, Portraits by Rodrigo Moynihan on 20 September until 11 October 2002.

Rodrigo Moynihan was an elusive figure, both an establishment player and soloist, whose alternations between abstraction and figurative art are representative of a wider schism in British Art at the time. However, it is his portraits for which Moynihan is possibly best known. His sitters included, HRH The Princess Elizabeth, and the Rt. Hon. Clement Attlee, Peggy Ashcroft, Anthony Powell and the Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

The exhibition at Faggionato Fine Arts includes portraits which are both intimate and formal, all are of people he knew well. Included are his friends, Victor Pasmore and William Coldstream, founders of the Euston Road School, the art critic and historian, David Sylvester and artists such as Francis Bacon and the sculptress Fiore de Henriques, as well as members of his family and self portraits.

Rarely known for sentimentality, the portraits on show alternate between a seductive charm, as in *Portrait of John*, as a young boy and his first wife the artist Elinor Bellingham Smith, the colours are vibrant and the paint relaxed. In stark contrast, are the portraits of public men. In these, the colours are sombre and muted, the plain and empty backgrounds, give the sitters their status along with a dignity and loneliness. While the portrait of Olivier Popham, 1944 returns him to the Euston Road school.

Moynihan gained a reputation "of being somebody who could do a boardroom portrait which was also a work of art". His major commissions include his masterpieces, The Teaching Staff of the Painting School, Royal College of Art now at the Tate and After the Conference, The Editors of Penguin Books, the cartoon of which is included in the exhibition.

The show coincides with the publication of the book **Restless Lives: the Bohemian World of Rodrigo and Elinor Moynihan** by his son John Moynihan, an affectionate and humorous account of the Moynihans' life in the London art world of the 1930s and 1940s.

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Gallery hours: Monday - Friday 10.00 am - 5.30pm