

MICHAEL ENGLISH

Ozono Thérapie Combiné 1980 (acrylic on canvas, 117 x 117cm)

Michael English, held in high regard for his work with Nigel Waymouth, as Hapshash and the Coloured Coat, began as a conceptual artist working with Stephen Willats in an early incarnation of Land Art, described in David Mellor's 'The 60s Art Scene In London' as "preceding Richard Long and Mark Boyle's maps and landscape interventions" (Phaidon).

The highly stylised series of posters for International Times offshoot Osiris Visions, (1967-68, silkscreen inks, 93 x 62 cms, handmade paper, printed San Francisco) were enhanced by UV light tubes in Hapshash's Indica exhibition. The work was contemporary with the High Art of San Franciscan 'acid' poster artists Rick Griffin and Wes Wilson. English and Waymouth's delicate but impactful imagery adorned both student bedrooms and street corners but was already becoming collectable by the early seventies. Posters were screenprinted in unknown editions - sometimes only a handful were produced. An important development was that 'pure' art was being created for the street but its content was more 'pure image' than readable text, i.e. without compromising the concept to promote or sell a product.

In the hyper-realist 'Ozono Thérapie Combiné, (acrylic on canvas, 1980, 117 x 117cm) a masterly technique is united with Pop subject matter (advertising imagery) and the irony present in almost all of his work. He says "I don't paint to communicate. I paint for myself"

Michael English, in January 2007, remembering the Indica exhibition, July 1967: *"Everyone was there and the evening was beautifully warm which allowed them to come in their most exotic clothes. A steel band played in a corner. Then, quite unexpectedly, to everybody's surprise, Mason's Yard started to glow with a strange green light as it very, very slowly began to rise vertically into the air..."*

Public Collections: Museum Of Modern Art, New York, Arts Council Of Great Britain, British Council Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum