

reviews
arts

JUNE 1979

FOUR SCOTTISH ARTISTS Artists Space

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James Birrel, Michael Davey, Gareth Fisher, and Thomas Lawson are four young Scottish artists who work in a representational mode. Thomas Lawson, who curated the exhibition, wrote a fine and suggestive introduction to the catalogue. He reminds us again that one of the most important defining characteristics of 20th-century modernism is its relationship to "provincial" culture, to cultures that have been forced to assume the role of modernism without the grace of initiation or "assimilation." Certainly this is the case with the United States, Russia, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

There is in modernism a strong "provincial" element, particularly in American art. Consequently, one marvels at the sensitivity of Lawson's introduction which begins with a description of the Scottish terrain. The works of the four artists make use, to one degree or another, of the photographic mode, which for them is a mode of displacement. James Birrel's untitled works are based on photographs taken from motion pictures, which he renders in pencil and then rephotographs; Michael Davey also uses photographs; Gareth Fisher makes mixed-media collages; and Lawson creates single-image paintings. (Artists Space, March 17-April 10)