



Adelaide Cool marks 50th anniversary of a breakthrough Adelaide abstraction exhibition

Adelaide Cool: The abstract art of David and John Dallwitz, a new display celebrating fifty years since a breakthrough exhibition in Australian hard-edge painting, opens at the Art Gallery of South Australia this weekend.

Featuring the work of South Australian father-and-son artists, David and John Dallwitz, the display takes its lead from David Dallwitz's milestone solo exhibition at Sydney's Central Street Gallery. This was his first solo exhibition and the only public showing of his radical explorations into abstraction that defined this movement. Documenting this 1969 moment was his artist-photographer-designer son, John, who, simultaneously, was experimenting with hard-edge painting.

Influenced by the North American origins of hard-edge painting and the abstract art movement in the United States at the time, the works of both artists explore dynamic colour and formal geometric relationships, often with a characteristic sense of humour.

Being geographically removed from the centre of the abstraction movement, their works were poorly understood by Australian audiences, and both artists abandoned their intense investigations into colour field painting, never to return. David moved into figure painting and John into his photography practice and heritage conservation work.

This nostalgic revisit to the past includes paintings that have not been publicly seen since 1969 and not previously exhibited in Adelaide. Most of the works have been retrieved from private collections and recently conserved, giving audiences a fresh opportunity to appreciate locally created works of art that were in direct dialogue with an international art movement. The richness of the artistic engagement repositions Adelaide in 1969 within the avant-garde of Australian art practice.

Highlights of the show include ephemera, sculpture, photographs, textiles and jewellery, substantially drawn from Dallwitz family archives, as well as David's *Blue flash*, one of the small number of surviving works from 1969, which, since being gifted to the Art Gallery of South Australia by the artist in 1986, has ironically become one of the Gallery's most loved paintings. The display is a remarkable story of retrieval from the margins of Australian art history.

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