How time flies. This time last year, we were eagerly awaiting the very first Fortnum’s X Frank exhibition. Now, in what seems the merest blink of an eye, we stand on the cusp of unveiling Fortnum’s X Frank 2017.

Last year, collector Frank Cohen - the man whose name forms half of our exhibition’s title - brought more than 80 pieces of British Modern art from his world class collection to our Piccadilly home. Across all six floors and in our storefront windows, we played host to the likes of Frank Auerbach, Tracey Emin, Howard Hodgkin, Leon Kossoff and Bridget Riley.

This year, we’re taking a slightly different approach and focusing on a single artist, a giant of British art: the inimitable John Bellany, who numbered among his many admirers the likes of Damien Hirst and David Bowie. John enjoyed a long, successful, hugely influential career and with more than 50 pieces from every period of his working life - selected from Frank’s personal collection and from the Bellany Estate - this will be the first exhibition of John’s work in London since his death in 2013. We’re delighted that, once again, former Head of Modern British Art at Tate, Robert Upstone, will be our curator.

John’s work was endlessly inspired by the lives and culture of the people working in the local fishing and boat building industries of his native Port Seton. While his contemporaries were making abstracts and Pop art, John was creating tough, raw and emotive work to canvas, and engaging with the grand themes of life and death, good and evil.

Needless to say, we are delighted to be playing host to John’s wonderful paintings - and thrilled to be working once again with Frank Cohen and with the wonderful Bellany Estate for the first time. I am absolutely certain that every person who walks through the doors at Piccadilly during this year’s exhibition will find something truly extraordinary, moving and beautiful in the work on display.

As a fellow Scot, an art lover, and - last but not least - as CEO of Fortnum & Mason, I am tremendously excited to welcome you all to the shop, and to the show.

Ewan Vентers
CEO Fortnum & Mason, September 2017

John Bellany's paintings are instantly recognisable. They’re full of the same haunting figures. They use a similar palette. But what I see when I look at John’s paintings is the sheer freedom with which he painted.

I spent time with John during the making of a BBC programme about his work. He was warm, he loved company, he was jovial, musical, passionate and opinionated: we got on famously. During the time John and I spent together, I got the chance to see him work. What stays with me today is his sheer mastery of the brush, his dazzling dexterity.

In front of a canvas, he was supremely confident. I remember asking him what he did when he made an error. Did he stop? Did he start again? Oh no, he said. He simply continued to work, adding paint, defying the very idea of an ‘error’, certain that the work would progress.

An umbilical cord forever linked John with his childhood in Scotland: in his work, and in his life. I returned to his hometown of Eyemouth with him and he seemed to know everyone, and everyone him. But he didn’t like to talk about his work; he did not enjoy deconstructing it. Perhaps that is why some painters paint: it is a better way for them to talk about things. I felt that very much with John.

Above all else, he simply loved painting. And John painted exactly what he wished. He followed his own star. He painted every day, or near enough, and on the days when he did not paint he was unhappy about it. At his funeral, I remember his coffin entering the church - not with flowers on top, but with a bunch of his dirty brushes lying there. That was the man he was.

I remember on one occasion, being at a gallery exhibition - I think it was Van Dyck - and he looked at each painting with care, before declaring ‘you know, there must be some 25 different shades of black in this work.’ I recall thinking how incredible it was that John could so acutely distinguish the intricacies of this painting, and the subtleties of colour within it.

And in a way, that is a neat summation of John Bellany, the painter.

He was an artist superbly attuned to the subtleties of the human condition, to joy, pain, loss, celebration, friendship – the essentials of life – and he was determined to capture it all.

Joan Bakewell
Acclaimed broadcaster, journalist and novelist

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John Bellany (1942-2013) grew up in the small, tight-knit fishing communities of Port Seton and Eyemouth on the South East coast of Scotland. That experience, that point of reference, never left him. Both his grandfathers and his father were fishermen, and the lives of the villagers were dominated by the precarious fortunes of fishing and the ever present dangers of the sea. The rituals and superstitions of the seafarers were ingrained, and so too was the strict Calvinist upbringing of his childhood. All these elements found expression in paintings that brilliantly combine the personal with the epic, containing archetypal, timeless themes of good and evil, love and death, sin and redemption.

Bellany began to draw at an early and precocious age, and by the age of four he could make minutely detailed, accurate drawings of the fishing boats in the harbour. ‘They were like portraits’, Bellany recalled, ‘except they were of boats rather than people.’ His destiny to become an artist was set. Aged eighteen Bellany enrolled at Edinburgh College of Art where he was a student from 1960-65. Although not much further along the coast from Port Seton Bellany remembered it as like going to another country altogether, but it was a community in which he immediately settled and thrived. In 1965 he started his post-graduate studies at the Royal College of Art in London, where he lived for most of his life while at the same time returning often and regularly to Scotland where his heart lay. At the Royal College his tutors were the painters Carel Weight, who nurtured in his students a confidence in their own style and originality, and Peter de Francia, a politically committed artist who supported Bellany’s commitment to making art that was immediate and vital.

‘Good and evil, love and death, sin and redemption.’

At Edinburgh Bellany had rejected the prevailing fashion of following American prototypes, either of gestural abstract expressionism or the advertising-derived imagery of Pop art and instead stayed true to his own language and poetry in which to embrace the great issues of existence.

He also rejected the backward-looking tendency then still prevalent in Scotland to continue the still life and landscape subjects of the Scottish Colourists, painting that in the 1960s Bellany considered fit only for the drawing room. Bellany devoted himself instead to figurative painting, then being written off as being in its death throes. And it was a figurative painting that was truly heroic in its scale and ambition. These were tough, gritty paintings based on the characters and experiences of Bellany’s upbringing - fish gutters and fishermen, the toughness and resilience they epitomised and the stark contrast of the sacred and the profane within the life of the fishing community. All this was a metaphor for the inevitable corporeality of human existence. Bellany’s great hero was the French painter Gustave Courbet (1819-77) who believed in using ordinary people as the subject for his art. In 1855 Courbet exhibited his paintings unofficially outside the Exposition Universelle in Paris in a tent to bring his art to the people. Bellany and his friend and fellow student Sandy Moffatt were inspired by this to hang their own pictures on the railings of Castle Terrace in Edinburgh during the Festival in 1963. In 1964 and 1965 they did it again, this time outside the Royal Scottish Academy, explicitly claiming their own work as being more relevant for ordinary people than that shown inside: ‘It seemed wrong that painting should be cut off from large sections of the public’, Moffatt later wrote, ‘we enjoyed discussing art with all sorts of people, making new friends and above all bringing a sense of fun, coupled with seriousness, to the Edinburgh Festival’. In 1966 Bellany set out his commitment to what they had been doing with the outdoor exhibitions - ‘The belief that we are the only two painters not caught up in the fashionable rat-race... Our belief in the revitalising of a dead tradition to the world.’

At Edinburgh, Bellany started to look at the artists of the Northern European tradition - the nightmarish scenes of Hieronymus Bosch and the rough, imperfect humanity of Peter Brueghel and Lucas Cranach; later he would look to the Expressionist painters Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, Oskar Kokoschka and Edvard Munch, artists who depicted and communicated raw emotional states. This was a rejection of the classicising impetus of Southern Europe. Instead human form and human life was depicted in all its roughness and ugliness, a more truthful rendering of the human experience. This dichotomy between
Northern and Southern European aesthetics also held fairly explicitly nationalistic dimensions and whilst studying, Bellany and Moffatt discussed the potential for forging a renewed Scottish school of art. In this they were encouraged by their contact with the Nationalist poet and writer Hugh MacDiarmid.

Around this time Bellany also discovered a cache of reproductions of Old Master drawings. He consumed them hungrily, inspiring him to experiment with and extend his draughtsmanship and throughout his career he was able to draw with unmatched brilliance. Indeed, there is a sense that the primacy of drawing sits at the very heart of his art - his oil paintings demonstrate the significance of outline, and their highly complex composition rest upon the strength of his draughtsmanship. Many of Bellany’s drawings - and especially his etchings - resonate with the evidence of his absorption with Rembrandt. Like the Dutch master, Bellany frequently placed himself at the centre of his own art and painted a sequence of probing self-portraits. Self-portraiture is a thread that runs through his painting from his time as a student. At a certain point he started painting a sequence of portraits. Self-portraiture is a thread that runs through his painting from his time as a student. At a certain point he started painting a sequence of portraits.

Death had been a familiar ghost in his childhood. Until the age of five, Bellany and his mother lived in Eyemouth with his grandparents while his father was away in the War and to be further away from the German bombing runs attacking the dockyards at Leith. His grandfather was born in 1881, the year of the Eyemouth Disaster, when 189 of its fishermen perished in a storm - Bellany’s great grandfather being one of the very few survivors. As a child one of Bellany’s schoolmates drowned, an experience which he said had a great effect upon him. At night in Eyemouth his grandfather read to him from the Bible rather than children’s stories and he recalled how his bedtime prayer as a child ‘If I die before I wake, I pray oh Lord my soul to take’ terrified him. But Bellany also emphasised the great, instinctive warmth and encouraging humanity of his grandparents that stood as a guiding example to him all his life. Port Seton in the 1940s and ’50s was a strict, God-fearing community, and Bellany’s family diligently observed the Sabbath, attending Church both morning and night with John attending Sunday School in between, where games of any sort were forbidden. At home there was a mood of sombre contemplation making, he said, Sundays seem to stretch endlessly. But Port Seton was also in those days a community driven by ancient ritual - at the Autumn equinox, Halloween, they would burn the oldest boat in the village, a sacrificial ritual of death and renewal that continued riotously late into the night. Next morning the men would set off fishing as usual.

Bellany’s life reached a crisis in 1988 when, after years of hard drinking he became desperately ill. Dramatically his life was saved by a liver transplant. It was then still a pioneering and dangerous process but the operation was a success. He began drawing and painting again in his hospital bed almost immediately and the operation marked the beginning of a new life and a new optimism in his work. This was personified by a new, wide-eyed female figure who began to recur in his canvases - beautiful, enigmatic, she seemed to pose the same unanswerable questions of life and fate that are constant throughout his career but is a calming and reassuring presence. Bellany’s remarriage of his first wife Helen in 1986 had brought harmony back into his life, and together with the renewed energy of his transplant his work took on a new vigour. His palette lightened and brightened and the terrifying creatures that haunted his earlier paintings - emblems of anxieties, traumas and fears - while they did not disappear altogether, changed from being threatening to being companions in the journey through life.

The human figure was always at the epicentre of Bellany’s art, and the moral drama of human life its subject matter. Bellany himself was the main character of that drama, based on human experience, almost like the character in a Biblical story. Whether in his early paintings of fishermen or later allegories Bellany drew upon his own life and experience for references. Such an approach established a very direct, open, trusting relationship with the viewer. The epic ambition of Bellany’s art and the unflinching courage to make his own emotions its focus indicate the profundity of his vision. ‘We’re not messing about’, Helen recalls him saying regularly, ‘We’re taking on the world.’

Robert Upstone
Curator of Fortnum’s X Frank
FAÇADE

GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS

1. The Artist in his Studio
2. Elegy
3. Eyemouth Roadstead
4. The Pianist
5. Intrepid
6. Danae Shower of Gold ‘Homage to Titian’
7. Bonjour Monsieur Bowie
8. Bonjour Mr Tuxedo
1. The Artist in his Studio (2001)
   Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm

2. Elegy (1993)
   Oil on canvas, 183 x 244 cm
Oil on canvas, 172.7 x 152.4 cm

4. The Planist (1987)
Oil on canvas, 213.3 x 172.2 cm
5. Intrepid (2007)
Oil on canvas, 172.2 x 152.4 cm

6. Danae Shower of Gold
‘Homage to Titian’ (1991)
Oil on canvas, 152.5 x 172.7 cm
Oil on canvas, 172.7 x 152.4 cm

8. Bonjour Mr Tuxedo (1997)
Oil on canvas, 152 x 152.4 cm
LG

THE WINE BAR

9. Death series 1 of 6
10. Death series 2 of 6
11. Death series 3 of 6
12. Death series 4 of 6
13. Death series 5 of 6
14. Death series 6 of 6
15. Celtic Serendipity
   Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm

    Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm

    Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm
   Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm

   Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm

   Ink wash, 25.4 x 22.8 cm

   Drawing, 38.1 x 55.8 cm
G

SHOP FLOOR - TILL POINT
16. Prospero
17. The Old Man and the Sea
18. Port Seton Dog Man
19. The Long Wait
20. Bass Rock

DUKE STREET STAIRCASE
21. You're 50 Today John
22. David Brown
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 60.9 cm

17. The Old Man and the Sea (1987)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 91.4 cm

19. The Long Wait (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 91.4 cm

20. Bass Rock (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 121.9 cm

Oil on canvas, 152.5 x 122 cm
1

11 FIRST FLOOR - STATIONERY
23. Self Portrait with Sad Monkey

12 FIRST FLOOR - TOILET
24. Shanghai

13 DUKE STREET STAIRCASE
25. By The Sea
26. Fate
Watercolour, 76.2 x 55.8 cm

Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 152.4 cm
25. By The Sea (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm

26. Fate (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm
2

21. FRAGRANCE
   27. Across the Firth

22. BEAUTY STAIRCASE
   28. Requiem for my Father
   29. Lost Soul

23. DUKE STREET STAIRCASE
   30. Amelia
   31. Fish Gutters

24. SPEAKING STAIRCASE
   32. Salubrious Soiree
   33. Scottish Fish Gutters
   34. Odyssey
27. Across the Firth (c. 1990s)
Watercolour, 55.8 x 76.2 cm

28. Requiem for my Father (1985)
Oil on canvas, 218.4 x 177.4 cm

29. Lost Soul (1967)
Oil on board, 187 x 156 cm
30. Amelia (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 152.4 cm

31. Fish Gutters (c. 1980s)
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 152.4 cm
32. Salubrious Soiree (1987)
   Oil on canvas, 213.3 x 172.7 cm

33. Scottish Fish Gutter (1965)
   Oil on board, 244 x 183 cm

34. Odyssey (1998)
   Oil on canvas, 203.2 x 330.2 cm
3

3.1 ACCESSORIES & GIFTS

35. Mother and Child
36. Italian Girl
37. Listening
38. Lovers

3.2 3’6 BAR

39. Celtic Maiden
40. Untitled
41. Flowers I
42. Cannes
43. Italian Landscape
44. Landscape
45. Homage to Rossetti
46. Age

3.3 DUKE STREET STAIRCASE

47. By the Habour
48. Lover by the Bay
35. Mother and Child (2010)
   Conte Drawing, 50.8 x 40.6 cm

   Oil on canvas, 60.9 x 55.8 cm

37. Listening (1993)
   Watercolour, 76.2 x 55.8 cm
38. Lovers (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm

Oil on canvas, 76 x 60 cm

Oil on canvas, 70 x 60 cm
41. Flowers I (1991)
Drawing, 76.2 x 55.8 cm

42. Cannes (1986)
Ink wash, 71.1 x 91.4 cm

43. Italian Landscape (2009)
Ink wash, 55.8 x 76.2 cm
44. Landscape (2009)
   Ink wash, 55.8 x 76.2 cm

   Drawing, 55.8 x 38.1 cm

46. Age (1989)
   Conte Drawing, 55.8 x 76.2 cm
47. By the Harbour (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm

48. Lover by the Bay (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.4 cm
41. DUKE STREET STAIRCASE

49. Conversation
50. The Encounter
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 91.4 cm

50. The Encounter (1988)
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 152.4 cm
5

5.1 THE BOARDROOM
(by appointment only, telephone +44 (0) 20 7734 8040)

51. Volambrosa I

5.2 FOURTH / FIFTH FLOOR MEZZANINE

52. Budapest

5.3 DUKE STREET STAIRCASE

53. Storm over Jerusalem
54. Port Seton Harbour
51. Volambrosa I (1991)
Conte Drawing, 76.2 x 55.8 cm

52. Budapest (1990)
Oil on canvas, 172.7 x 152.4 cm
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 121.9 cm

54. Port Seton Harbour (c. 1990s)
Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 121.9 cm
JOHN BELLANY

SELECTED LANDMARKS

1942 – Born Port Seton, Scotland
1960–65 – Attended Edinburgh College of Art
1965–68 – Attended Royal College of Art, London
1968 – Lecturer in Painting, Brighton College of Art
1969–73 – Lecturer in Painting, Royal College of Art, London; Visiting Lecturer at Royal College of Art and Goldsmith’s College of Art
1973–78 – Lecturer in Painting, Winchester College of Art; Visiting Lecturer at Royal College of Art and Goldsmith’s College of Art
1978–84 – Lecturer in Painting at Royal College of Art; Visiting Lecturer at Royal College of Art and Goldsmith’s College of Art
1983 – Artist in Residence, Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia
1987 – Wollaston Award, Royal Academy, London
1988 – Elected Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge
1991 – Elected Royal Academician
1993 – Korn/Ferry Picture of the Year, Royal Academy, London
1994 – Awarded CBE by Her Majesty, The Queen
1996 – Awarded Honorary Doctorate, University of Edinburgh
1998 – Awarded Honorary Doctorate, Herriot Watt University; becomes Honorary Senior Fellow at Royal College of Art, London
2002 – Awarded the Chevalier Medal, Florence
2005 – Awarded Freedom of East Lothian
2013 – Died

SOLE EXHIBITIONS

1965 – Dromidaris Gallery, Holland
1968 – Edinburgh College of Art
1969 – Winchester School of Art
1970 – Hendricks Gallery, Dublin; Drian Gallery, London
1971 – New 57 Gallery, Edinburgh; Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh; Drian Gallery, London
1972 – Royal College of Art, London
1973 – Triad Arts Centre, Bishop’s Stortford; Royal College of Art; Edinburgh City Art Centre; Drian Gallery, London
1975 – Aberdeen City Art Gallery
1977 – Acme Gallery, London
1978 – Scottish Arts Council, Edinburgh; Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh; Crawford Arts Centre, St Andrews; Glasgow Print Studio
1979 – Third Eye Centre, Glasgow; Southampton City Art Gallery; Newcastle Polytechnic; Glasgow Print Studio
1981 – Goldsmiths College of Art, London
1982 – Rosa Esman Gallery, New York
1983 – Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Graves Art Gallery; Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; MacLaurin Art Gallery, Ayr; Rosa Esman Gallery, New York; Christine Abrahams Gallery, New York
1984 – Dusseldorf Gallery, Perth; Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney; Mercury Gallery, Edinburgh; Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney; Rosa Esman Gallery, New York
1987 – Nigel Greenwood Gallery, London; Compass Gallery, Glasgow; Greenhill Galleries, Perth; Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Castle, Ireland; Hendricks Gallery, Dublin; MacLaurin Gallery, Ayr; Third Eye Centre, Glasgow; Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh; Aberdeen Art Gallery; Beau Arts, Bath; National Portrait Gallery, London; The Peacock Gallery, Aberdeen; Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney
1988 – Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh; Aberdeen Art Gallery; Beau Arts, Bath; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund; Ruth Siegel Gallery, New York
1989 – Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; Aberdeen Art Gallery; Beau Arts, Bath; Fischer Fine Art, London
1990 – Raab Gallery, Berlin; Compass Gallery, Glasgow; Ruth Siegel Gallery, New York
1992 – Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow; Beau Arts, Bath; Flowers East Gallery, London
1993 – Berkeley Square Gallery, London
1994 – Flowers East, London
1995 – Terry Dintenfass Gallery, New York; Taibot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh; Edinburgh Festival Exhibition; Strathclyde University Gallery, Glasgow
1996 – Flowers East, London; MacGeary Gallery, Brussels; Galeria Kin, Mexico
1997 – Beaux Arts, London
1998 – Beaux Arts, London; Elaine Baker Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida
1999 – Elaine Baker Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida
2000 – Beaux Arts, London; Solomon Gallery, Dublin
2001 – University of Northumbria; Beaux Arts, London
2002 – Beaux Arts, London; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; Solomon Gallery, Dublin; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh; Commune Galeria, Braga
2003 – Piazza Angelo, Barga, Italy; Beaux Arts, Bath; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh
2004 – Solomon Gallery, Dublin; Beaux Arts Gallery, London; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh
2005 – East Lothian exhibitions; National Gallery of China, Beijing; National Gallery Shanghai, China; Mitchell Library, Glasgow
2006 – Solomon Gallery, Dublin; Beaux Arts, London; Kunsthalle Jesuitenkirche, Aschaffenburg, Germany
2007 – Roger Billcliffe Gallery, Glasgow; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh; Lemon Street Gallery, Truro; Spandau Zitadelle, Berlin
2008 – Beaux Arts, London; Solomon Gallery, Dublin; Harbour Gallery, Port Seton; Gainsborough’s House, Sudbury; Lemon Street Gallery, Truro
2009 – Beaux Arts, London; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh
2010 – Beaux Arts, London
2012 – Beaux Arts, London; Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh
The Bellany Family