



David Dallas
CEO and Old Master Specialist



You have £5,000 to spend...

David Oxtoby prints

If my godfather left me £5,000, I wouldn't hesitate to spend every penny buying the suite of etchings (24), which Dave Oxtoby produced in 1974.

David Jowett Greaves Oxtoby is undoubtedly one of Britain's greatest printmakers, as the show at the British Museum proved two summers ago. He was one of the notorious 'Bradford Mafia', a group of young Yorkshire artists, who after attending the Regional College of Art in Bradford, came to London to further their education at the Royal College of Art and The Royal Academy schools. As well as Oxtoby, the group included David Hockney, Norman Stevens A.R.A, John Loker and Mick Vaughn. Before he had left the Royal Academy schools, Oxtoby had his first one man show in New York. His was and is a prodigious talent.

By the early 1970s his hands were starting to crack, and he was told that he was allergic to the acrylic paints he was using. After taking medical advice, he took up etching and what a triumph that was. In collaboration with J.C. Editons he produced a suite of 24 immensely complicated, in some cases, 4 colour, etchings. I have the good fortune to own a set of artist's proofs.

In 1974 I worked for Alex Postan Fine Art and was entrusted with getting publicity for the show of etchings, which included watercolours and acrylics as well as prints. It was the easiest job I have ever had. Marina Vaizey wrote a half page review of it in The Telegraph, Bill Packer, a half page in the Financial Times and it was in the list of the 10 best things to do this Christmas in London in the Daily Express. Rod Stewart came to the private view. Oxtoby went on to exhibit with the Redfern Gallery in Cork Street in the 70s where the private views would sell out. Elton John bought Oxtoby's canvases in vast numbers, for prices that were somewhere between Hockney and Picasso. He is still with the Redfern.

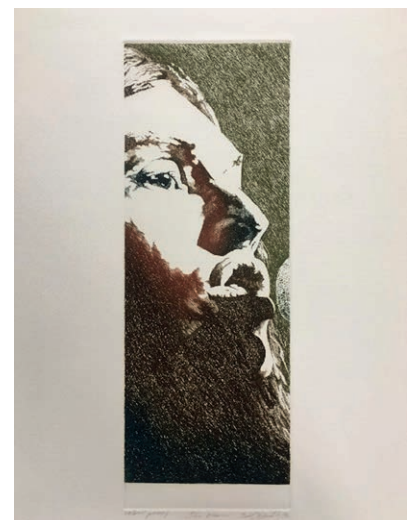
He has had more than 50 solo exhibitions and taken part in more than 70 group shows, yet for much of the last 30 years has lived like a recluse and kept all his latest work from public scrutiny. The result of this has had an adverse effect on the value of his work.

Oxtoby has not had the recognition for the brilliance of his draftsmanship and use of colour from the establishment that his oeuvre deserves. This seems to be because his work is inspired by popular culture, pop, rock and blues music, which is considered low brow and because he works from photographs, despite knowing subjects like Jimi Hendrix, George Harrison and Roger Daltrey well.

He was 82 in January and is not in good health. The cracked hands, which turned him into a printmaker, were actually caused by misdiagnosed diabetes. What future generations will make of his work remains to be seen, but I believe he is ready for a critical re-assessment and should take his rightful place amongst the greats of late 20th/early 21st century British art.



"S'wonderful": Stevie Wonder. Signed, inscribed and dated '74. Published Sept 1974. Artist's proof for an edition of 50. 3 colour etching on handmade English paper. Plate size: 165 x 142 mm



"The Man": Stevie Winwood. Signed, inscribed and dated '74. Published Sept '74. Artist's proof for an edition of 50. 4 colour etching on handmade English paper. Plate size: 335 x 115 mm



Private View at Alex Postan Fine Art, Dec 1974. Dave Oxtoby and Rod Stewart in front of a 5 ft high watercolour by Oxtoby. Photograph by Miki Slingsby

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