

Preface

The idea for a multiples exhibition was suggested by Hilary Lane in the course of preparing 'Ready Steady Go', an Arts Council Collection exhibition of paintings from the 1960s. Multiples were a vital and international aspect of that optimistic decade and deftly reflected its myriad preoccupations. The Collection, moreover, owned a large number of multiples which had been bought from an exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1970, called '3→∞: new multiple art'. The idea took hold, finally, because the time was right – since the late 1980s, artists have been making multiples again.

This exhibition is of multiples made during the 1960s and the 1990s, and includes new commissions from British-based artists, in addition to recent purchases for the Collection. It highlights differences and similarities in artists' concerns. In the 1960s, artists used mass production for ideological reasons, they wanted a wider swathe of society to experience art, and were serious and up-front in their approach. In comparison, artists working now take mass production for granted, are content with less accessibility, and the intention is more ironic and mysterious. However, multiples were, and continue to be, ideal vehicles for wit and playfulness.

We are most grateful to Hilary Lane for selecting the exhibition and for her illuminating commentary in this catalogue. Our thanks are also due to Paul Martin, who brought a wealth of knowledge to bear on the subject and proved an intrepid researcher. In this regard Hugh Shaw's catalogue to

the Whitechapel exhibition deserves special mention, as essential reading for all multiples enthusiasts.

'Art Unlimited' has been organised in collaboration with Nicola White, Exhibitions Director at the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow, whose help and good advice have been invaluable. The following individuals and institutions have also helped in various ways: Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton, Director of Visual Arts, the Arts Council of England; Chelsea College of Art and Design; Wolfgang Feelisch; Laure Genillard; Matthew Higgs; Marc Jancou; Parkett; Biddy Peppin; Harry Ruhé; Karsten Schubert; Bettina Smith; Galerie Der Spiegel; Sarah Staton 'Supastore boutique' at Laure Genillard Gallery; Robert Whitacker; White Cube. We should like to thank the many colleagues at the South Bank Centre who contributed in numerous ways to the realisation of the exhibition.

Finally, we acknowledge with particular gratitude the endeavours of so many artists of unlimited ambition.

Henry Meyric Hughes *Director of Exhibitions*

Isobel Johnstone *Curator, Arts Council Collection*