

## Obituary: Peter Kalkhof (1933-2014)

Roy Osborne

*Email: art.school@virgin.net*

In 1989 Peter Kalkhof held a retrospective exhibition of works at the Camden Arts Centre. In a letter received at that time, he stated: 'My main concerns as a painter are the abstract phenomena of *colour* and *space* and their symbolic and spiritual implications as they impinge on the human psyche. The contemplation of these mysterious cosmic forces and their manifold complex visual appearances is what has, for many years, engaged my imagination. My life experiences, dreams and conscious thought about measurable and infinite space, in relation with my deep love for the ambiguous and exciting power of strong and intense colour, are given personal meaning and expression in pictorial emblematic metaphors. The colour finds form through a precise and clear shaped geometry and with soft-edged amorphous shapes. The visual impact of the paintings is initially intended as an emotional experience of colour alone. The further aim is to convey and reveal my visual comprehension and intuitive feeling for earthly and cosmic spatial dimensions, which make visible their intrinsic aesthetic harmonies and touch upon the enigmatic and show the diverse joy of timeless beauty.' Following childhood in Magdeburg, Kalkhof studied at the School of Arts, Brunswick, and the Academy of Arts, Stuttgart, followed by postgraduate study at the Slade School of Art, London, and the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He settled in London in 1963, and taught at Reading University 1964-99. After initial, Romantic responses to landscape, and later to sacred sites in Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas, his work became deliberately more ordered and abstract. His influences ranged from Friedrich and Turner to Kandinsky, Mondrian, Malevich and Nolde, and on to the formal and spiritual immensity of Rothko and Newman. Peter painted with supreme skill, variety, daring and judgement. He exhibited widely, notably at Annely Juda, London (1970-2012), and his work is represented in public collections in England, Germany and Chile.

*Published online: 15 March 2016*