



ART IN THE MAKING

Ben Nicholson 1894-1982

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Director: John Read

Production Companies: Balfour Films, RM Arts, Arts International

Sponsor: Arts Council of Great Britain

Executive Producer: Rodney Wilson

Producer: Anne Balfour-Fraser

Researcher: Barbara Ann Taylor

Script: John Read

Commentary written and spoken by: John Read

Photography: Brian Grainger, Derek Waterman

Rostrum Photography: Ivor Richardson

Stills: Felicitas Vogler, Eileen Tweedy

Editor: Colin Sherman

Sound: Robert Allen, Clive Pendry

With:

Patrick Heron

Felicitas Vogler

Leslie Martin

Andras Kalman

Angela Verren

UK 1985

52 mins

Digital

Alfred Wallis – Artist and Mariner

Director: Christopher Mason

Production Company: Mason Bruce Associates

Sponsor: Arts Council of Great Britain

Producer: Christopher Mason

Script: Christopher Mason

Photography: Clive Tickner

Editor: Christopher Mason

Harmonium played by: Ben Nance

Voices recorded by: Roger Slack

Sound: Iain Bruce

UK 1973

22 mins

Digital

Barbara Hepworth at the Tate

Director: Bruce Beresford

Production Company: British Film Institute

Sponsor: Arts Council of Great Britain

Photography: Bruce Beresford

Assistant Photographers: Cedric Pheasant,

Richard Saunders

Editor: Trevor Craig

Art Consultant: Hugh Evans

UK 1969

12 mins

Digital

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**SIGHT
AND
SOUND**

+ intro by Steve Foxon, Curator of Non-Fiction, BFI National Archive

An account of the life and work of the English painter Ben Nicholson, with reminiscences from the artist Patrick Heron, who took over Nicholson's studio in St. Ives; the architect Sir Leslie Martin; the art dealer Andras Kalman; Dr Felicitas Vogler, writer, photographer, and Nicholson's third wife; and Angela Verren, a close friend in the later years.

There are no stylistic frills to *Ben Nicholson*: the artist's portrait is drawn through commentary, camera prowlings over assorted art works, and verbal testimony delivered to the unseen interviewer in largely undemonstrative settings (only the street life seen through Andras Kalman's window threatens to sidetrack the viewer). Director John Read (son of Sir Herbert Read, who championed Nicholson's work in the 30s) has had years of experience in television features on arts and artists, and his conventional approach at least leaves Nicholson's canvasses room to breathe.

The star attraction among the interviewees is undoubtedly the ebullient Patrick Heron, displaying memorabilia left behind in Nicholson's Cornish studio: pencil stubs; the schoolboy compasses used to draw the obsessive circles; the tattered card once pinned to the studio door, whose design, for Heron, resembles a Nicholson painting in miniature. At first this sounds fanciful, yet the film constantly stresses the nourishment Nicholson found in everyday objects. The bottles, vases and jugs inherited from the artist's father Sir William Nicholson helped Ben make the leap into non-representational art; the tools of a plumber summoned for a leaking pipe lent their shapes to a large series of paintings. For all its stylistic antiquity, John Read's film usefully outlines both the intellectual and domestic context of Britain's most celebrated abstract artist.

Geoff Brown, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, October 1985

Alfred Wallis – Artist and Mariner

Christopher Mason's film about the painter Alfred Wallis achieves the same mixture of curiosity and affectionate recall that characterised his earlier art documentary, *Duncan Grant at Charleston*. The film consists of reminiscences by surviving friends and relatives from Wallis' native town of St. Ives, counterpointed by visuals showing us the paintings themselves and the real land- and seascapes that inspired them. The simple, deceptively childlike quality of Wallis' art is stressed throughout: his early works were taken none too seriously by local friends, and it was Ben Nicholson who 'discovered' him, accidentally glimpsing Wallis' paintings through the open door of the painter's house while strolling through St. Ives with a friend. What comes through in Mason's film, however, is not only the beguiling simplicity of the paintings – bright colours, unreal perspectives, doll-like human figures – but their very real and lyrical powers of landscape evocation.

Nigel Andrews, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, December 1973

Barbara Hepworth at the Tate

A record of the famed sculptor's 1968 Tate retrospective, accompanied by a beguiling and crisply enunciated narration by Hepworth herself, which she describes her techniques and the aims of her work. The exhibition illustrates a broad range of Hepworth's output, from early wood carvings to her abstract stringed figures of the 1930s and the monumental grandeur of her 1960s pieces.

Programme notes and credits compiled by Sight and Sound and the BFI Documentation Unit

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