

## The Primacy of Colour

Graham Boyd's abstract paintings are alive. The eye moves restlessly across the surface of the canvas, forwards and backwards through illusory space, through layers of colour, or jumping from one singular element to the next; frozen, floating elements held apart by magnetic force, vibrating in stillness.

There are the familiar components that make up Boyd's paintings, but the constantly changing use of colour makes each painting entirely unique, fresh and mesmerizing. Characterised by precision and luminosity, the paintings embody a poetic tension that surfaces only through the abstract; creating the sense of a joyful place without representation.

Even so, Boyd still manages to evoke associations with the natural world; autumn leaves caught on a gust of wind, ancient flints that are carved into layers of colour to reveal the substrate beneath. The landscape is important to Boyd; the sense of space and layers of history.

Boyd's paintings embody a simultaneity where we see everything at once. The past and present exist on equal terms; the start of the painting is revealed alongside something that is a late arrival. Layers and textures correspond to geology, archaeology or aerial photography; all capable of revealing hidden traces of something underground.



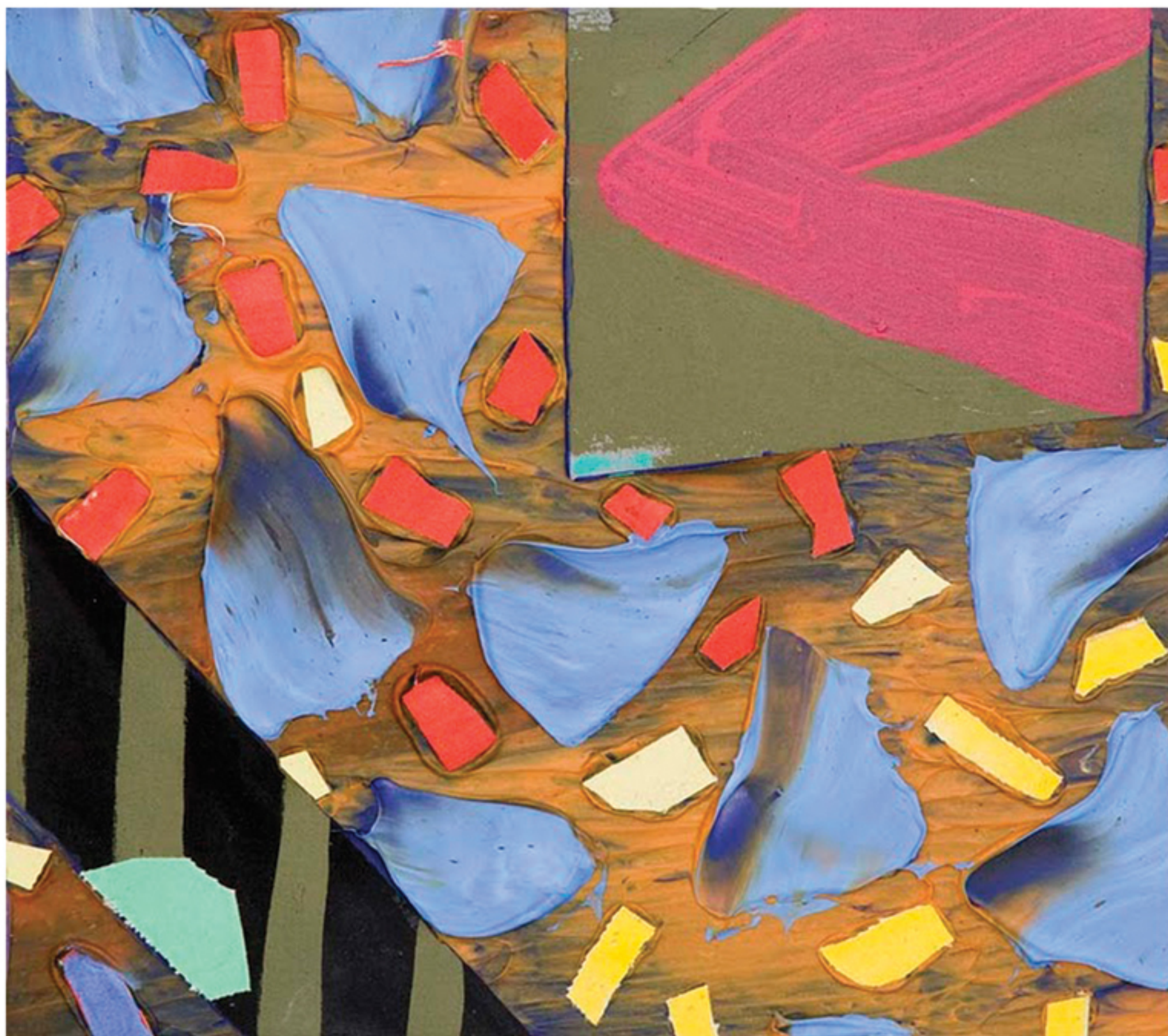


Recurring components – the textured background, forms like wings, small irregular rectangles, larger geometric blocks penetrating or rupturing the surface - refer to a visual language developed and revisited for more than half a century. But there is also more, which places Boyd within the history of abstract painting, and subjects him to its influences.

The single tone elements created by cutting and pushing canvas shapes or fragments into paint are a reminder of Matisse's collages. The underlying grid utilised by generations of western painters, provides the hidden structure for “finding out where you are in space” and for creating compositional order.

**Clubland** 2010 Acrylic on canvas 45 x 53 cm





**Alto Aulto** 2010 Acrylic on canvas 35 x 40 cm





The sheer energy of the large scale works produced by the Abstract Expressionists filters into Boyd's work: the physical production of working from above the unframed canvas and the action of applying paint to a surface beneath, reminiscent of Jackson Pollock, and the colour field painters of the 1960's, creating energy by placing one colour against another, in a particular way.

In the words of Boyd, the paintings are about particles, light and space. Particles that build the whole picture, light created from base pigment, and space which reflects the inner world of feelings or spirituality. But the paintings also have an inner life of their own, an inherent integrity and truthfulness, which is ultimately the measure of Boyd's own quality control.

Maxine E King March 2011

**Quarry** 2010 Acrylic on canvas 153 x 122 cm