



DUALITY

Margaret Hunter

**GALERIE
LISTROS**

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8 September to 27 October 2016

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LISTROS**

Kurfürstendstrasse, Berlin

A significant element in this exhibition is a re-working of Margaret Hunter's painting *Joint Venture* which illustrates the German Reunification in a symbolic format. It reflects a particular form of **Duality** - the theme and title for this exhibition.

Joint Venture was painted immediately after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. It depicts two mask-like heads representing the two Germanys lying side-by-side, seemingly (in Hunter's words) 'strange bedfellows', with lines crossing from one head to the other to suggest communication, exchange and partnerships. On each side with little stitch like marks, Hunter attached what she felt was the reality; a series of small figures, bending and stretching to suit their new situation. That reality of tension, adjustment and compromise but also hope is a relevant today as it was in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell.

It is therefore appropriate that *Joint Venture* has been re-created in 2016 in Gallery Listros— where the development of dialogue between communities is a fundamental aim.



Margaret Hunter renovating *Joint Venture*
at the *East Side Gallery* in 2009



Gallery version of *Joint Venture*



Margaret Hunter:

"I've enjoyed a long association with Gallery Listros relating strongly to its work addressing issues facing Africa today. I spent part of my childhood in Nigeria and it is often said that my work includes symbols and motifs of an African nature.

I am therefore taking this opportunity to present some of my existing work alongside new pieces. I've drawn on strong elements in older sculptures especially works which complemented the intensive images and symbolism of the gallery "box room".

*Various paintings, drawings and sculptures continue the theme of **Duality** by referencing double or multiple figures. Alternatively, some works (for example the 2004 collection of watercolours) relate to each other by drawing on common elements. To bring my work up to date, the exhibition also includes twelve new and unique monoprints.*

This exhibition therefore represents some of my work over a significant period in the same way as Joint Venture has accompanied much of my time here in Berlin. It is appropriate that the opportunity has been taken to re-visit Joint Venture in this exhibition."



Left to right:

Six watercolours on paper, 2004, 54 x 44 cm

Flow Day, screenprint, 2002, 76 x 56 cm

Dreamings, steel plate etching & chine collé, 2002, 76 x 56 cm

Rooms, pastel on paper, 1999, 140 x 105 cm

The installation on the previous page reflects several of the symbols frequently used by Margaret Hunter. Predominantly female figures are seen reacting to their environment while simultaneously being integrated in the landscape; the figures are subjected to forces while also exerting their own. Hunter's strength of drawn line, depth of colour, challenging compositional elements and determined but compassionate figures are clearly evident.

Hunter's persona has, by her own admission, been strongly influenced by sometimes conflicting demands: an art career in Berlin and a family in Scotland; a life in West Berlin at a time of dynamic change in the city as East and West were joined; a need to study but no knowledge of the language. Margaret Hunter has been associated very directly with the theme and title of this exhibition: *Duality*. She has observed that in her work she often "explores the duality of the emotional and physical self; the individual and collective identity". Unsurprisingly, duality is a recurrent theme in her work.

Ribbons That Tie is one such example. The two figures are at once detached and connected; both are contemplative but there is no evidence that their thoughts are necessarily related. We are also left to wonder where the figures are located because their environments are very different. Hunter has admitted that this is frequently intentional in her work: "it is important for me that certain elements of the work are left open, ambiguous, allowing space for the painting or sculpture to take on another life through a dialogue with the onlooker".

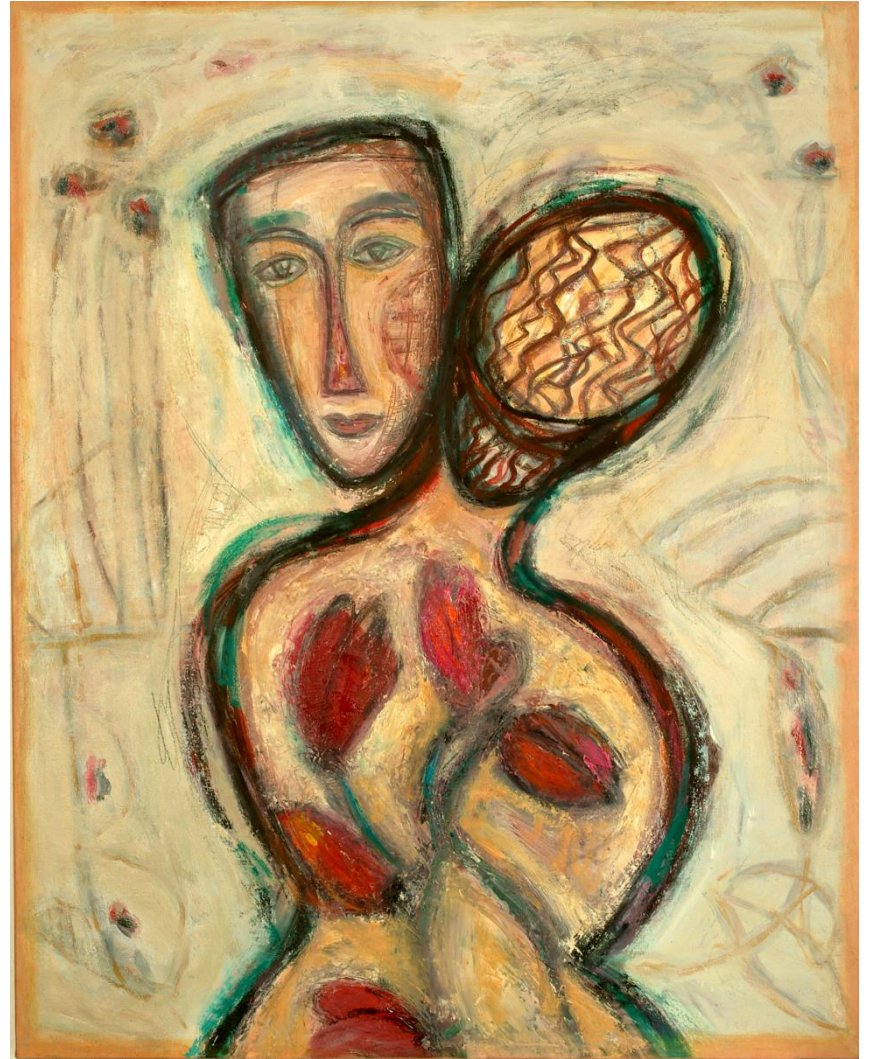


Ribbons That Tie, 2002, oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm

Other Paintings



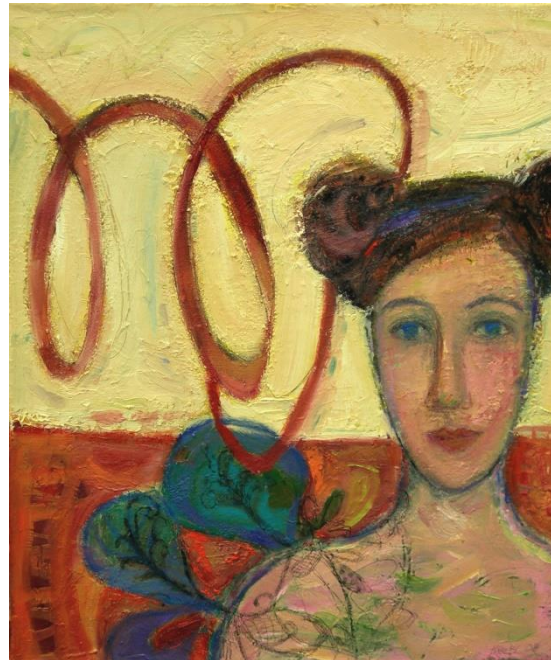
Kith and Kin, acrylic & oil on wood, 2000, 140 x 100 cm



Dance, oil on canvas, 2004, 100 x 80 cm



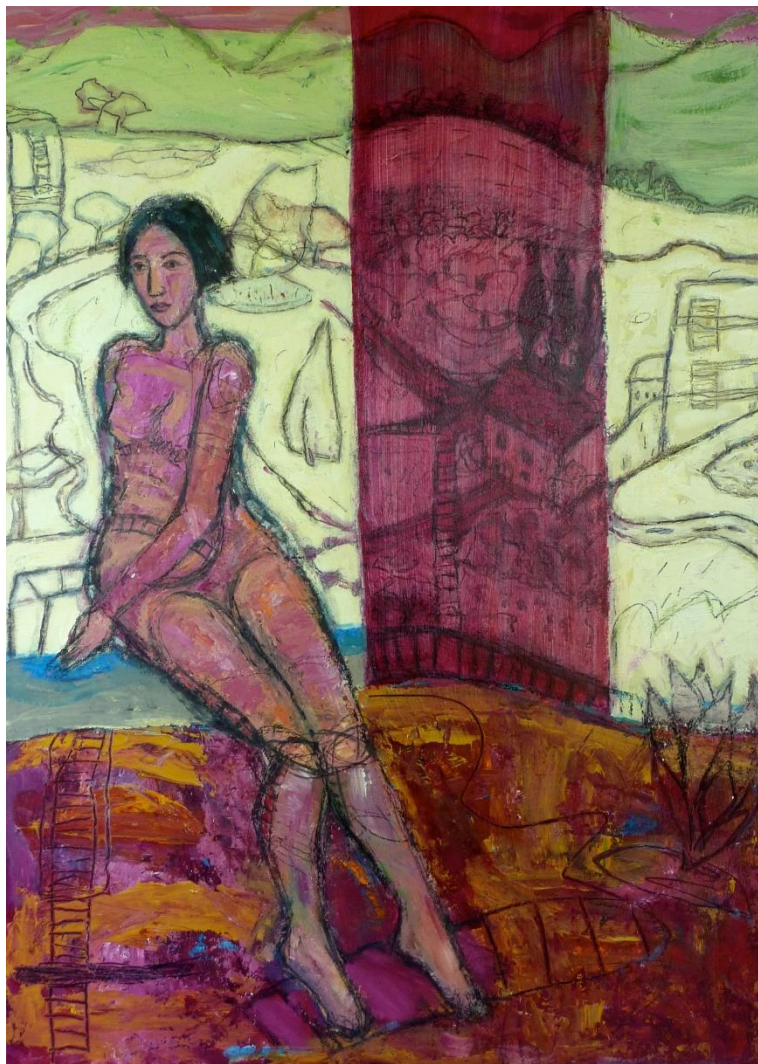
Clashach
oil on canvas, 2004, 140 x 120 cm



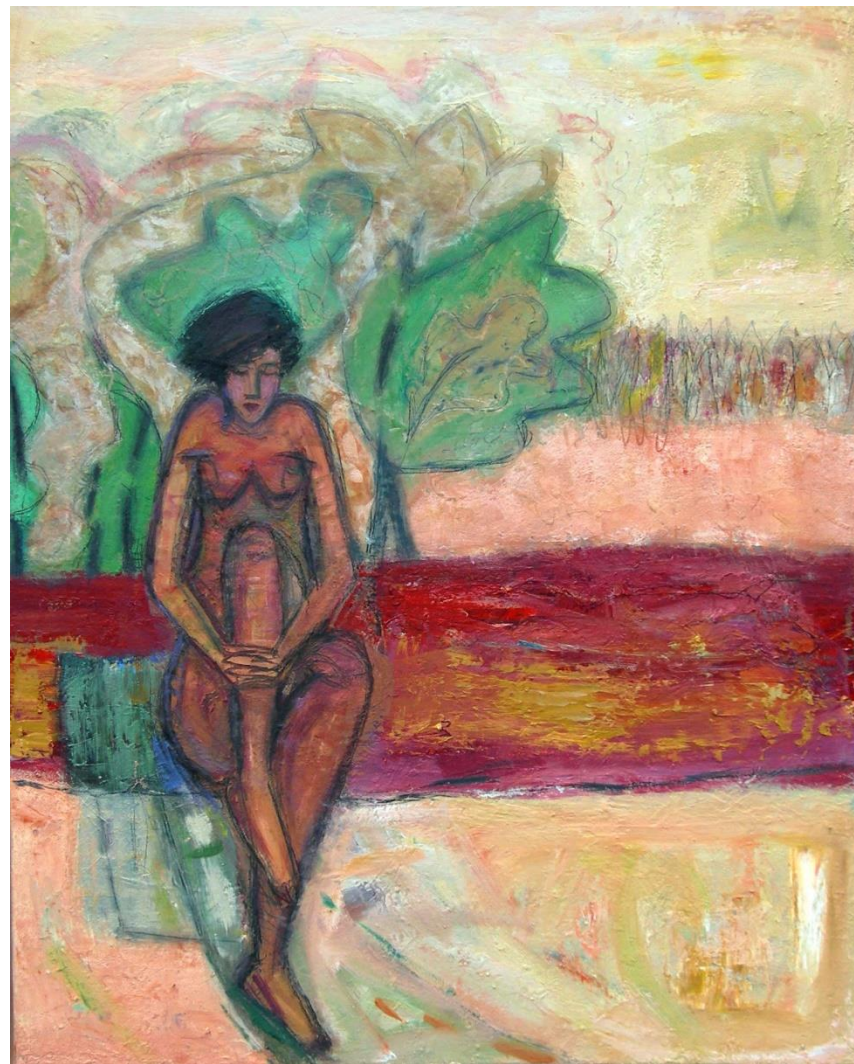
Through the Looking Glass
acrylic on wood, 2009, 60 x 50 cm



Special Place
acrylic on canvas, 2014, 37 x 45 cm



Elsewhere
acrylic on wood, 2013, 70 x 50 cm



Whiling Time
acrylic on canvas, 2008, 100 x 80cm



Girls with Golden Threads
oil on canvas, 2002, 110 x 150 cm

The “box room” in Gallery Listros presented a challenge in considering what to include in it because of the symbolism and structure of the boxes. Each Listro, (shoe cleaner’s box) in this room represents a child and the tough way they earn a living. The boxes are made from whatever materials could be found so they are not therefore neat and tidy but are instead roughly held together with nails, string and metal. Parts are sometimes broken but put back together so that the box is still useable. They show the marks of labour, hard use and a harsh life.

The sculptures included here for the exhibition are also made of various parts but held together to make something significant. They are dark and stained with marks and cuts. They resonate with the surrounding boxes to remind us of dark times many children face in Ethiopia and throughout the world.

One figure is attached to a dog. The dog is dependent on the man for food and shelter. The metal in the centre of the man represents emotional loss and he is dependent on the dog for warmth and companionship. The family of a Listro, shoe shine boy, will often depend on the Listro for all these things.



Dogman, sycamore & steel, 2001, 178 x 76 x 35 cm

Wayfarer, wood, steel & copper, 2001, 190 x 70 x 35 cm

Sculptures

'This sculpture is about cycles of movement, the figure is holding on to something that's always moving.'

The wheel as a symbol can represent the life force, creative energy, or a desire to remain connected with the past while moving into the future. It represents a cyclical rather than linear view of time: 'What goes round comes around'. The stylised figure is at full stretch to seize the wheel, an expression of the effort and perseverance involved in holding on to what is important in life.

There is a sense of insecurity in the sculpture. The figure has thrust her torso forward to counter the pull of the stretch. While she seems grounded, it would not take much to destabilise the figure. She seems to embody the belief that a certain amount of risk of destabilisation is necessary in order to stay in contact with the energy and creative potential of life.

Louise Johnson



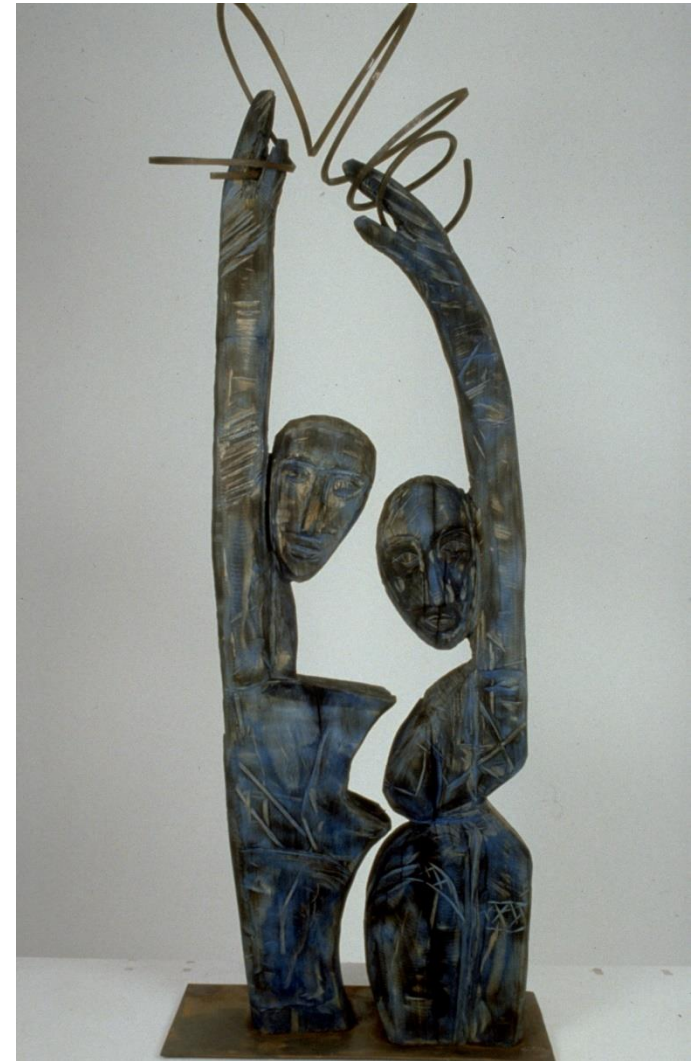
Cycle

lime wood, 2001, 156 x 27 x 26.5 cm

The two figures of *The Arrangement* are split but designed like jigsaw pieces to fit together. They represent two individuals who, when joined, become a single strong unit in the shape of an arch. In earlier works we are often shown two sides of the same figure - a dual identity and an expression of the tension created by contradictory demands of mind or heart. However, in this sculpture there appear to be two distinct individuals, separate yet joined, a couple. They have adapted to each other, appear stable and are linked physically by the energy of the metal coil, which has the potential to contract and expand. Reminiscent of a heat exchanger, the metal coil symbolises the creative energy that flows between the two. The deep blue staining of the patina, colour of intellect and peace, suggests that the figures are compatible in mind as well as body.

The work celebrates a balanced and harmonious relationship where the figures are compatible at all levels. Individually the figures appear awkward, vulnerable, jagged and incomplete. Together they suggest symmetry and inner peace as each balances and defines the other.

Louise Johnson



Arrangement

wood & steel, 2001, 140 x 40 x 20 cm

Other Sculptures



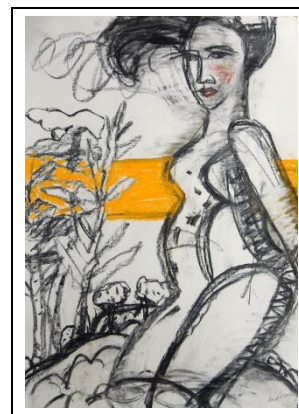
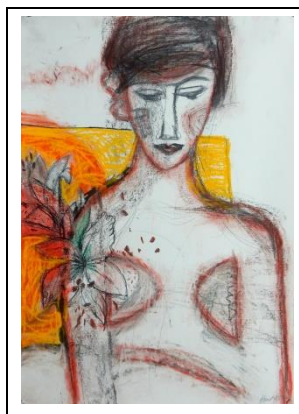
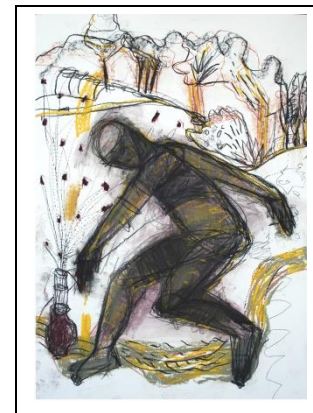
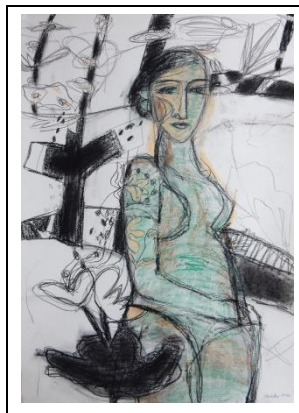
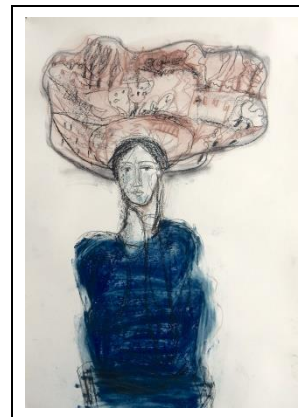
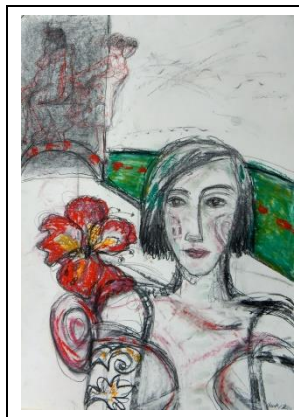
Sculptures: left to right:

Extra Stretch, lime wood, 2006, 156 x 27 x 26.5 cm
Network, wood & copper, 2012, 93 x 32 x 31 cm
Dancer, chestnut & copper, 2006, 153 x 50 x 41.5 cm



Together, lime wood & copper, 2006, 129 x 47 x 33 cm

Drawings



Mixed media on paper, 2013/2014, 59 x 42 cm



Going On, pastel on paper, 2000, 100 x 65 cm



Wayfarer, pastel on paper, 2000, 100 x 65 cm



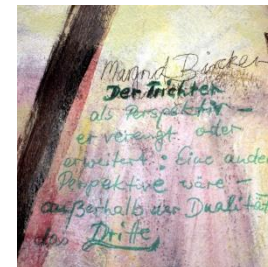
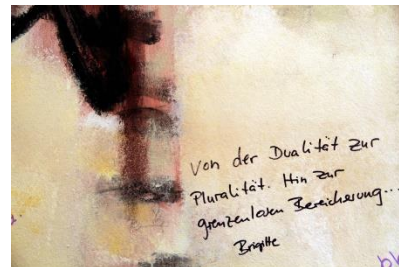
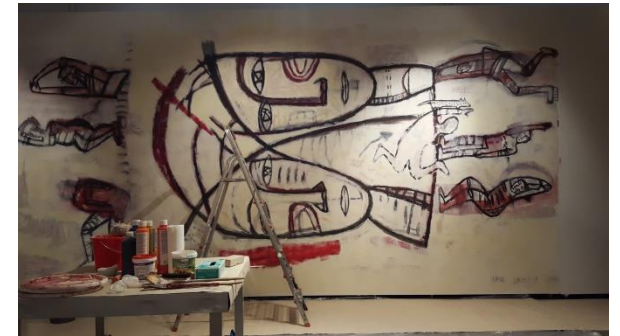
Dogman, pastel on paper, 2000, 100 x 65 cm

Joint Venture in Gallery Listros

The Berlin Wall was the world's most famous border and the longest remaining part of it is the East Side Gallery where Margaret Hunter painted her response to the Fall of the Wall, Joint Venture, in 1990.

She has observed that “the East Side Gallery has accompanied my life since then”. She also notes that “there has been an ongoing dialogue between me and the anonymous mainly young visitors who want to participate by respecting the painting but adding their personal comments to it”.

For this exhibition at Gallery Listros Margaret made an almost 1:1 version of Joint Venture with space for the public to add comments. During the exhibition visitors were invited to write something on the painting, perhaps on the theme of duality and borders. It became a dynamic and a collaborative work; a dialogue.



Joint Venture at Kurfürstendstrasse 33, Berlin

One of the objectives of Listros is to create dialogues. But to be worthwhile, dialogues must be continuous or at least provide opportunities for further exploration and interaction.

It is very appropriate that after this exhibition closed the version of Joint Venture which was at its heart was disassembled and re-erected in the foyer of Kurfürstendstrasse 33, the location of Gallery Listros.

Joint Venture thereby continues to share its message of constructive dialogue and integration with inhabitants and visitors alike.



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acknowledgements

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