

EDINBURGH
Cordelia Oliver

Scottish Artists

FOR THE first time, maybe, in its 92-year history, the Society of Scottish Artists finds its centre of gravity moving away from painting towards — well not sculpture in the purist sense, but certainly to three-dimensional exhibits. Youth, too, is having its fling this year, almost literally in a video installation, *Faction: All The King's Fortes*, in which a battery of TV sets is used to demonstrate (with appropriate, ear-splitting cacophony) the clash of individual, stone-throwing, violence with the calculated, authorised police kind, and the way the media exploit the confrontation.

This year the president elect, George Wyllie, dominates the entrance to the RSA Galleries with a headlong descent, down the grand marble staircase, of a lem-

ming rush of concrete, suitcase-handled blocks, each neatly inscribed with a single word, *Destiny*. I like the reverse process which only later allows us to discover what must be the prototype block, discreet on its little plinth in the sculpture hall, and clearly unaware of the imminent disaster of its race.

Elsewhere in the same hall, wood, metal and other materials come variously hacked, carved, painted, assembled, with different degrees of insight, formal skill and, for once, a welcome deal of humour. It is intriguing, for instance, to see how John McGuinness's random collection of plastic ephemera, caged into a rigidly formal shape and painted matt black, takes on a mysterious totemic presence. I was impressed, too, by the crude eloquence of Khassem Shah's painted wood figures.

Lys Hansen and Fred Crayk use colour more successfully than most for its emotional weight; bleak and scary in *Say Nothing, Hear Nothing, But See All*; dark and rich and resonant in *The Lovers*. Peter Russell's big, shattered spiral. On The Sur-

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for/ its emotional weight, blue and scary in *The Fall*, dark and rich and resonant in *The Lovers*. John Johnstone's *Potato Pickers* have something of the vital intensity of figures in a mediaeval tapestry, jeans and teeshirts notwithstanding, ^{but} ~~and~~ there is another sort of innate vitality in Peter Russell's big, shattered spiral with its obvious debt to analytical cubism, and in the prints by Philip Reeves, George Donald and Reinhard Behrens in the lower gallery.

End.

The cutting is from a southern edition of the Guardian. (the Scottish edition did not publish this review). Unfortunately last para. is missing, but Cordelia Oliver's copy to Guardian gives total contents of review — not all of which was printed.
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