

**1<sup>st</sup> draft text extract from *Introduction to Contemporary British Art c.1987-2007* (Routledge, 2009). Author Dr Grant Pooke.**

[This chapter section discusses the development of British post-conceptual painting and the extent to which it connects with the legacy of modernist theory and practice].

Modernism remains an implicit source of reference for other contemporary painters. Angus Pryor (b.1966) studied at the Wimbledon School of Art and took his MA at the Kent Institute of Art & Design. Instrumental in establishing the Ashford School of Art & Design (2003), he now convenes and teaches on the Fine Art programme at the University of Kent.

Pryor's canvases are large and highly tactile surfaces based around what he calls 'disguised narratives' which foreground the use of pigment as both the medium and the subject of the work. The painting, *The Deluge* (fig 5), is typical of his working practice. Based on a trip to Venice, Pryor melds the apocalyptic motif of Noah and the Ark which is under the water with that of Venice which floats on top. This chaotic reversal of fortune is themed by the dominant palette of crimsons and reds. The canvas is saturated in multiple layers and skeins of paint (household undercoat mixed with oil paint) to which is added caustic builders' caulk which raises the surface to ridges and buttons of pigment. Discussing his method of painting, Pryor notes:

There's a dialogue between the surface and the mark...overpainting of the mark where there's a line which is definite and then another mark goes on top. It stops it [the painting] becoming an illustration of a mark and starts to be something else.<sup>1</sup>

Pryor models and develops his practice from a modernist lineage which includes Philip Guston, Barnett Newman, De Kooning and what he sees as the partial inheritors of that tradition – Fiona Rae, Cecily Brown and Ian Hunter.

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<sup>1</sup> Angus Pryor, Interview with the author, Tyler Hill studio, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2008