



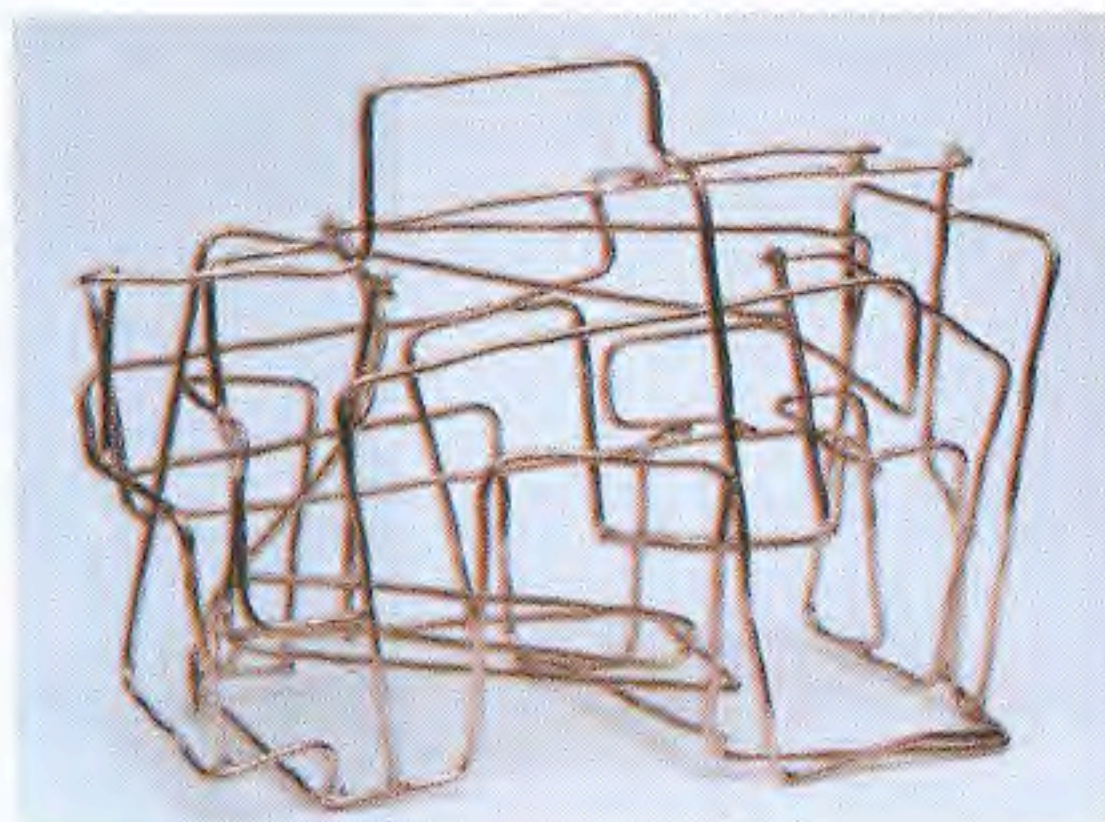
MATTHEW SMITH

Matthew Smith's voluptuous nudes and flower studies are well known; his vibrant landscapes, currently at **Crane Kalman**, deserve quite as much recognition. A friend described Smith: 'On a short acquaintance no one would have suspected, from his mild exterior, the hidden fires within.' His early 1920s' Cornish landscapes are suffused with the severe, scorching Fauvist palette that Smith had partly learned from his teacher, Matisse. Roderic O'Connor, whom Smith befriended in 1918, was another strong influence. Smith always claimed that 'even the reddest and most apparently anti-naturalistic of his Cornish landscapes' was based on natural conditions – yet the crimsons, viridian greens and indigos of such pictures are imbued with an explosive, claustrophobic force that surely owed much to recent experiences at Ypres and Passchendaele, and his determination thereafter to affirm life in his art.

Laurie Lee wrote that 'oil is incendiary on your moving brush'. Incendiary but also exquisitely sensitive to every calligraphic curlicue and nuance of tree, rock, water and cloud in Smith's 1930s' French landscapes – whose painterly scope, capable of conjuring up autumnal delicacy and summer's pristine grandeur, is astounding.

Philip Vann

## TRIPLE VISION



JEFF LOWE

At a moment when sculpture seems to have become more fixated with monumentality and artistic celebrity and less with the considered pursuit of a serious, personal language, Jeff Lowe's powerfully conceived and immaculately rendered space structures hark back, very refreshingly it has to be said, to an altogether more purist age.

A student of Caro et al at St Martin's in the early 70s, Lowe was a willing beneficiary of those New Generation ideals that insisted upon an organic relationship between 'looking' and 'making', the intuition a sculptor has to develop for those visual discoveries, accidents and moments of recognition that shape an artist's individual voice.

It has not made for an easy journey – after the initial breakthrough promised by a show at the Leicester Galleries in 1974, Lowe's career has tended to prosper more in Europe than the UK – and it says something about London dealers' timidity that Lowe has had to put this show on for himself (at **The Gallery in Cork Street**). Entitled 'Building Space', the variously coated steel rods all the pieces employ do indeed build or draw in space, in the two bigger pieces animating and playing with the more solid structures contained within them. Sculpture for adults.

Blake Hall



RCM

Spare moments in Truro this month could be spent happily at the **Royal Cornwall Museum**. It has a fascinating permanent collection covering Cornish life, its history, wildlife and mineralogy (important in an area that based its wealth on mining) plus a splendidly eclectic selection of pieces from around the globe – where else could an Egyptian mummy case rub shoulders with a samurai sword, Roman glass and a Whieldon teapot (just one of a fine collection of European ceramics).

Until May 29 prints from the Hugh Stoneman Archive illustrate the skill and flair that this master printmaker had for working with artists both international and local (Terry Frost's *Orchard Tambourine* is here) to produce exquisite works on paper. David Kemp's wry look at our consumer society will delight just about everyone, especially the young. Constructed from rubbish found around Kemp's Penwith studio – old agricultural ironmongery, redundant telephones, plastic waste etc – the bizarre and extraordinary artefacts of the 'Botallack Hoard' are proposed as the totems and grave goods of a strange and defunct Iron Age society. Querying, could he touch? I noted a child fondling a dog made entirely of old gum boots; eulogy or epitaph, it's hugely enjoyable.

Pip Palmer