

# Undiscovered work of 'genius' gay artist in new exhibition

David Evans died tragically young and before receiving the recognition and acclaim that many feel he deserves. A new show hopes to highlight his talent.



David Evans (1929-1988) *Man and cat in sitting room*, circa 1975. Watercolour. 30 x 24 in. (76 x 61 cm).



Stewart Cumiskey  
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*David Evans –Twist and Shout* (4 April – 12 July 2025) is an exhibition in collaboration with Three Highgate. This is the first exhibition and celebration of Evans' work since his retrospective at Salisbury in 2018, which itself took place 20 years after his untimely death in a road accident aged 58 in 1988. The show reflects Liss Llewellyn's and Three Highgate's ongoing commitment to championing the legacies of post-war artists whose work is in danger of being lost or forgotten.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 240 page book, reproducing for the first time over 100 works spanning his entire career. The prices of the works range from low to mid thousands, with some larger watercolours moving into high thousands. The introduction will be written by the musician Pete Gage, a friend of Evans best known as the vocalist from the pop group Dr Feelgood. Gage first met Evans when he visited the artist's record shop as a teenager.

"I loved collecting vinyl," he recalls. "He had a shop in Brompton Road, just round the corner from us.

"I was interested in buying second-hand jazz albums and I remember the first time I went in – I bought a second-hand copy of Bolero by Ravel and a Charlie Parker LP. We struck up a friendship. He set about educating me, in a roundabout and ad hoc way, about classical music."



David Evans *Driving Past the Electricity Pylons*. Signed, watercolour, 26in x 40in (68 x 104cm).

Gage believes David deserves the same recognition as his contemporaries David Hockney and Peter Blake, and his mentor, Keith Vaughan, who taught at the Slade, Camberwell and the Central School of Art.

"He was subtly figurative," he says. "He was always determined to see great artists and composers as human beings who created great works of art."



“For many years I thought he would never get the recognition his genius deserves,” Pete says. “The works can be idiosyncratic – but I have always thought he should be a household name. He died on the cusp of becoming famous. Regular shows were increasing his popularity.”



David Evans (1929 - 1988). *An Evening Out; (The Magic Circle)*, 1960. Photomontage on paper, with the printed title, *The Magic Circle*.

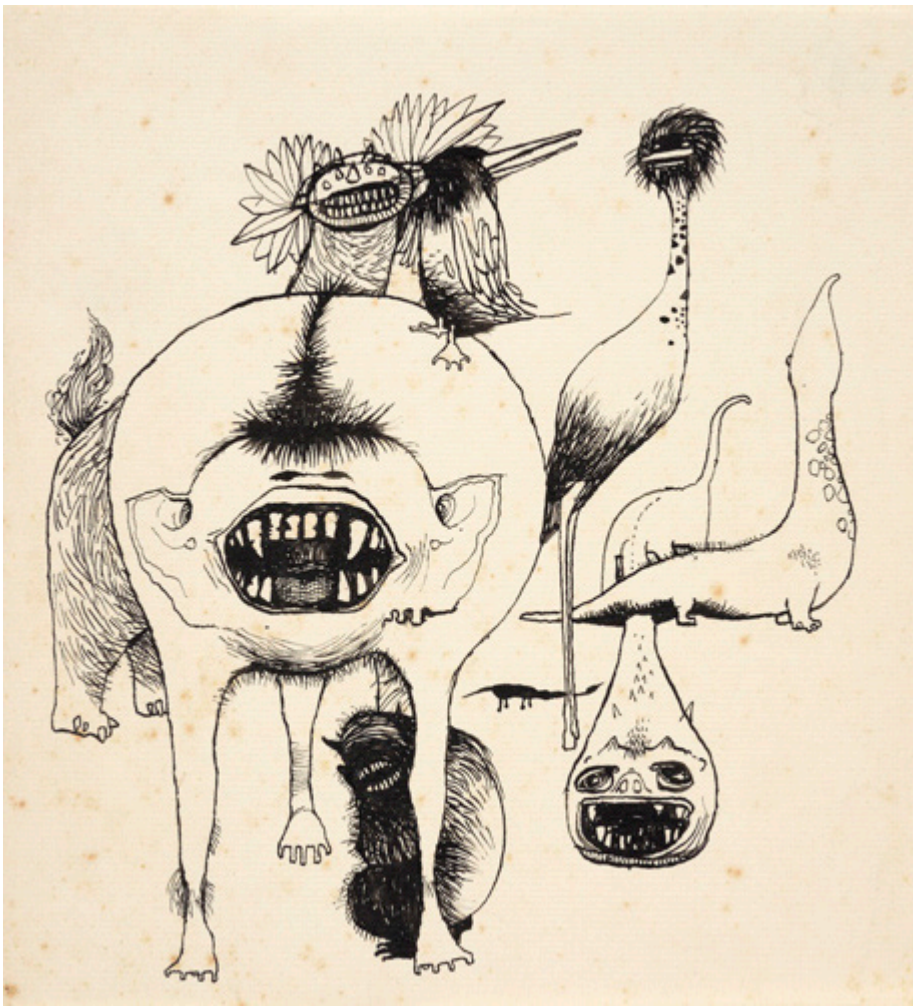
Evans was mostly known for his strikingly large and somewhat subversive watercolours. The paintings often measured over one metre in width or height. The exhibition will include a range of Evans' previously unseen works from his early photo montages to those epic watercolours.

All his work reflects the deeply felt disquiet of a constantly shifting political landscape and Evans' own campaigning and concerns around the environment, which were both rare and radical at the time. As he declared, “Most of the time we are offered by artists only what they have partly digested or more than not what they are still chewing in their mouths...I don't think anyone produces anything of value until it has actually got into the bloodstream.”



David Evans (1929-1988) *Wenlock Edge*, circa 1970 Inscribed: *To Wenlock Edge*. Watercolour over pen and ink.

In his essay *Harmony and Discord in the Age of Glam Rock* Paul Liss of Liss Llewellyn wrote, “[Evans’] compositions are characterised by a kaleidoscopic vision of Thatcher’s Britain: an era of urban redevelopment, the Falklands War, industrial unrest, nuclear power, and the Cold War. Transition is everywhere: new roads carve their way through the countryside; fighter jets cast their shadows across the landscape; the scars left by industrial plants, pylons and landfill permeate throughout.”



David Evans (1929 - 1988) *Strange Beast*. Pen & ink

Born in London. Evans studied at Central School of Arts and Crafts with Keith Vaughan. Early in his career he showed photo montages at Gallery One and gained several commissions; these included a design for the Hollywood Room in the Observer Film Exhibition, 1956, and a mural for the Soup Kitchen, Knightsbridge. His characteristic large-scale watercolours and gouaches date from 1967 onwards. They were first shown in public in 1973, when his work was included in a mixed show at Deben Gallery, Woodbridge. In 1975 his work was included in summer show at Redfern Gallery, which resulted in a series of highly successful solo exhibitions at Redfern in 1979, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1986 and a memorial show in 1988.





David Evans (1929 - 1988) *4 Young Men*, c. 1970. Signed watercolour. 27 x 20in. (69x 52 cm)

After moving to the hamlet of Dallinghoo (Suffolk) in 1969, he and his partner, Basil Lawrence, strove to become self-sufficient – his diary chronicles the cultivation of vegetables and attempts to produce wine. Evans also had one-man shows at McMurray Gallery from 1976-8. In 1981 he was the subject of an Anglia ITV folio documentary. In his pre-1970 London years David ran his own specialist classical record shop in the Brompton Road, and in spite of his later success, he worked in his final years as a porter at a local psychiatric hospital.

The recent discovery of a unique group of pictures by Evans, which remained in his studio, unseen for several decades, has allowed the opportunity to curate the exhibition at Three Highgate.

David Evans: *Twist and Shout* is at Three Gallery, 3 Highgate High Street, N6 5JR

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