

# OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

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KEITH VAUGHAN (1912-1977)



**Garden**, 1975  
Oil on Canvas  
101.6 x 91.4 cms  
(39.93 x 35.92 in)

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Signed 'Keith Vaughan', titled and dated verso

Provenance:

Estate of the artist, 1977

Private Collection

Gillian Jason Gallery, London

Private Collection

Literature: &#9

Philip Vann & Gerald Hastings. *Keith Vaughan*, Lund Humphries in association with Osborne Samuel, London, 2012, (illus. pl.128, p.125).

Anthony Hepworth and Ian Massey. *Keith Vaughan: The Mature Oils 1946-1977*, Sansom & Company Ltd., Bristol, 2012, cat.no. AH579, (illus. p.188 in b/w)

In 1964 Vaughan bought a row of derelict cottages on Harrow Hill Lane near Toppesfield, in the heart of rural Essex. He renovated them and spent his weekends and summers there creating an extraordinary garden with the help of his mother and his partner Ramsay McClure.

The garden was, simultaneously, a source of great pride and frustration. It was overrun with nettles

and ivy since no one had lived there for some time. He and Ramsay cleared away banks of knotted

undergrowth, dug out hedges and gnarled tree-roots and cut down brambles. Having dug in the vegetable patches near the entrance to the property, they began to enjoy their garden produce.

They experimented with what best grew in the soil and planted irises, roses and sunflowers along

the walls of the house while a walnut tree rewarded them with an abundance of nuts each season.

Daffodils in spring and, at the height of the summer, numerous other flowers provided sumptuous

colour. Vaughan's intention was to create a private paradise where he could be surrounded by the

peace and calm of nature. Within a comparatively short space of time, he transformed what had been a wasteland into an extraordinary garden paradise which, according to John Ball, he referred

to as 'the Essex Eden.describes the vibrant appearance of his garden and, with kaleidoscopic brilliance,

demonstrates that he was a colourist of powerful intensity. A pale, yellow pathway leads our eye from the bottom right, up and into the composition, where high-key colours and rainbow hues assault us. Couplings of complementary colours, positioned side by side, generate maximum optical delight; orange placed next to blue and green placed next to red help agitate and intensify the visual effect and excite the eye. Advancing hot colours and retreating cold colours set up sensations of 'push and pull' and establish several layers of pictorial space. The pulsations of colour

are thoroughly sensuous and suggest the luxuriance of summertime flora.

Vaughan's handling and application may appear haphazard and fractured but is, in fact, tightly systematized. Parallel hatchings and repeated stripes of paint are carefully laid out against blocks

and slabs of pigment. Our attention is pulled here and there, like summer insects and butterflies,

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visiting blossom after blossom; the eye is not permitted to alight for long, as we take in one colourful incident after another.