

ALIEN, FEB 12, 1973

Pat Douthwaite

The exhibition of paintings by Pat Douthwaite adds great distinction to the visual side of the Festival and the organisers are to be congratulated on bringing it to us. The setting—what must have once been the drawing-room in Castlecliffe — is far from ideal for paintings on so large a scale, but in some ways the density with which they have had to be hung enhances the claustrophobic effect of Ms Douthwaite's tightly packed surfaces and it certainly makes one look closely at her delicate and controlled handling of texture and line.

In his introduction to the catalogue, Douglas Hall writes of her as an artist who is able to create 'very directly and very beautifully out of the

experience of evil,' and her subject matter is indeed aggressive and often viscious; approached with pathological intensity which is highly personal.

Her paintings, far from being mere discharges of feeling, show great formal control, and in her best works, the content is conveyed by the whole surface, not simply by individual images.

Sometimes, when this all-over coherence is lacking, the images stand by themselves, and on these occasions the paintings are far less strong. But at their best, they have a unity of form and content which makes them a powerful expression of an individual and highly disturbing inner vision.

J. R. S.