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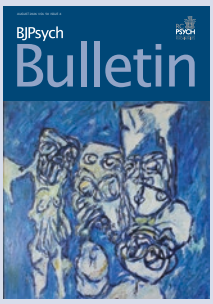
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Tricoteuse by Roland Littlewood

My late husband Roland Littlewood, the groundbreaking psychiatrist and anthropologist (pp. 362–363), drew and painted all his life. He responded to Schwitters (Merz), Alechinsky (CoBrA movement) and Dubuffet and embraced Art Brut (or raw art). Valuing authentic, spontaneous unconventional aesthetics and materials, he worked with many from marginalised backgrounds, homeless and mentally ill. Much of his artistic work embodied the critical radical and anarchistic themes and events of his time. His gift to me is a large painting: The Gardener (133 x 186 cms). It is composed of ribbon, bits from the bin, mainly leftover house paints, oddments and scraps. It is magnificent. Tricoteuse ("Knitting woman"; 155 x 155 cms; 1976) is composed mainly of densely applied oil paint, into which are mixed teasing chunks of cigar ash. It is a tongue-in-cheek response to intense nervousness induced in Roland by the presence of members of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women (later, International Gender Studies Centre) attending his lectures in Oxford, where they sat in front of him, knitting. Echoing the context of the French Revolution Tricoteuses, the dangling blade of a guillotine hovers above the women. I suspect that the ash represents his unconscious wish for the ultimate fate of the modern Tricoteuses.
Jenny Littlewood

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