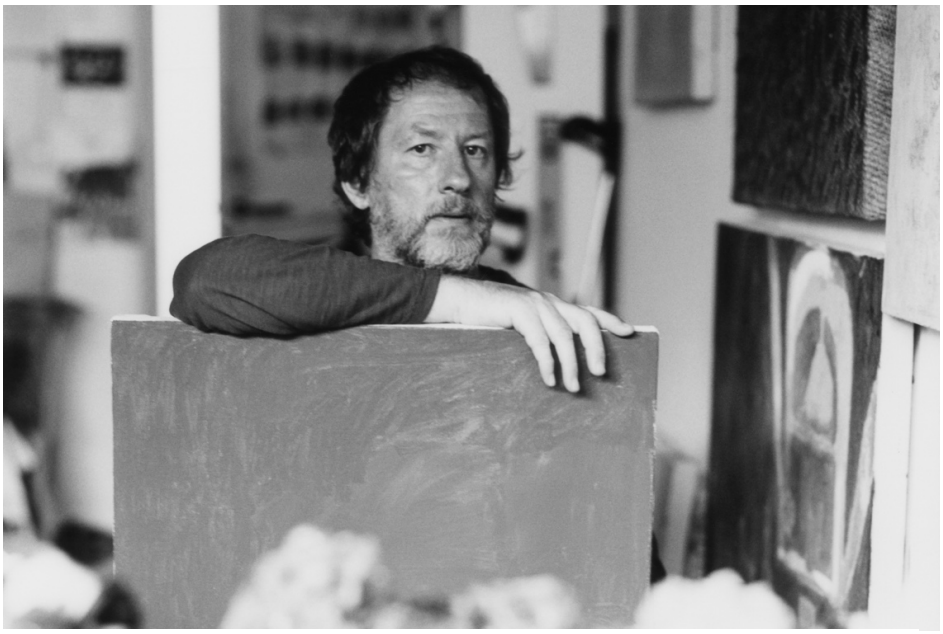
# ANDREW CRANSTON
## *Birds, beasts and flowers*

at the Ryosokuin Temple, Kyoto, 591 Komatsucho, Higashiyama Ward, Kyoto, 605-0811, Japan
6th - 22nd November, 2026.

*Andrew Cranston's first exhibition in Asia will take place this November in the historic and haunting spaces of Kyoto's celebrated Ryosokuin Temple.*



Portrait of Andrew Cranston in his studio, 2025. Photograph: Norman Wilcox-Geissen

Cranston's response to the 668-year-old temple is a series of paintings gathered under the banner *beasts, birds and flowers*, a title borrowed from a book of poems by DH Lawrence, first published in 1923, which Cranston has described as "poems discovered studying in an English night class when I was 19. They opened so many modes of feeling and ways of thinking, models of how one could switch between objective and subjective registers. I liked their observational approach, recording what is being seen and thought, meandering, seemingly unedited, unpoetic, uneven, circular, even repetitive."

Lawrence's poems stand as individual texts but taken together they build towards a philosophical reflection on ideas of the otherness in the natural world. Thematically Cranston's paintings take a similar turn, each individually discreet and yet loosely related, suggesting stories that merge and mingle into a kind of connected narrative. Collectively they address the refined spaces of the temple in an almost site-specific exploration of architecture and scale that shifts from room to room. There is the 'Hojo' - home to ceremonies and zazen meditations; the 'Daishoin' - once used as a study by the monks with its views of the ponds and paths of the Temple garden, and the 'Rinchi-tei', a pair of tiny tea houses across the garden.

Cranston's approach to painting draws extensively on his personal experience – passing moments seen, felt or remembered - which are filtered, embellished, and occasionally obliterated, through the process of being painted. Motifs sometimes reappear from one painting to another lending an apparent sense of familiarity, and a sense of the subject being somehow shared rather than simply described, yet it is always familiarity made strange or viewed from an unexpected angle. The paintings, as the critic Ben Luke has noted are rich in cultural resonance: "Images and ideas from the history of art and cinema, from poems and television series, are central to his work, whether as a core motif or a subtle reference in the title. As a result, his practice is deeply concerned with time and history – not just recalling past events and experiences and transforming them in the present, but in his materials and methods".

*The exhibition is being staged by the artist's representing galleries Ingleby, Edinburgh and Modern Art, London. The opening days will coincide with Art Collaboration Kyoto (an art fair at Kyoto International Conference Centre) which pairs Japanese and international galleries and where Cranston's work will also appear on a booth shared by Ingleby and Modern Art with the Kyoto-based Nonaka-Hill.*

**Andrew Cranston** was born in Hawick, Scotland on 22nd July 1969 "during the Apollo moon landing" as he noted in a recently published autobiographical sketch. "…school was a disaster generally: a long exercise in boredom, distraction and avoidance. I leaned virtually nothing. I left at 15 and became a joiner but was sacked after a year. I then spent two years on a factory assembly line making timber frame houses, an experience of abject existential emptiness". Despite what he describes as 'minimal qualifications' he managed to get onto a foundation course at Manchester Polytechnic which was followed by studying painting at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen and at the Royal College of Art in London - "…these three art school experiences in different cities developed in me different attributes which I think are useful to an artist: *imagination and commitment* (Manchester); *discipline and critical thinking* (Aberdeen); *confidence* (London). Cranston's work is housed in collections around the world, including: TATE, London, UK; He Art Museum, Shunde, China; H+, Suzhou, China; Royal College of Art, London, UK; Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, UK; National Gallery of Scotland, UK; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; Hall Art Foundation, Vermont, USA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, USA; Portland Art Museum, Oregon, USA and the MAXI Rome, Italy. Recent museum exhibitions include Hepworth Wakefield, The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, and the Holburne Museum, Bath.


The Ryosokuin Temple, Kyoto, Japan.

**The Ryosokuin Temple** was founded in 1358 by disciples of Zen master Ryuzan Tokken (1284–1358) a prominent exponent of the Huanglong branch of the Linzai school of Zen Buddhism, which had previously been on the verge of extinction. Ryuzan served as the abbot of prominent Kyoto temples such as Kenninji, Nanzenji, and Tenryūji, and laid the foundation for Ryosokuin to become one of the foremost temples of 'Gozan Bungaku' (the literature of the Five Mountain Temples) which flourished throughout the Muromachi period. In the Edo period, Ryosokuin continued to play a central role in the academic world. Its 10th abbot, Ungai Tochiku, was awarded the prestigious title of 'Sekigakuroku' - the highest honor bestowed on scholars of the Five Mountains temples and over time the temple amassed one of the finest collections of Chinese-style paintings (Karamono). During the Muromachi to Edo periods, many cultural luminaries frequented Ryosokuin including the artists Hasegawa Tohaku, and Ito Jakuchu, as well as literary figures like Ueda Akinari. In recent years, under the stewardship of Vice Abbot Toryo Ito, the Temple has played host to an occasional series of exhibitions by prominent contemporary artists including Michaël Borremans (2014), Hiroshi Sugimoto (2021), and Elizabeth Peyton (2024) reflecting Ryosokuin's ongoing commitment to exploring new expressions of Zen that resonate with the present day.

*General Admission:*
Date : 6 November - 22 November, 2026
Open daily throughout the exhibition
Time : 13:00 - 17:00 (Doors close at 16:30)
Place : Ryosokuin Temple, 591 Komatsu-cho, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto City, Kyoto
Admission : JPY 1,000, highschool students or younger JPY 500.

*Press Preview:*
Date : 5 November, 2026
Time : 15:00 - 17:00

*Tea Ceremony:*
A series of specially devised tea ceremonies will take place throughout the exhibition. Details of the dates and application process will be available from the Temple and shared on Instagram.

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Alexander Glover: (alexander@modernart.net).