

## Modern British and Contemporary Art (517)

Wed, 18th Apr 2018, Edinburgh

### Lot 224

**Estimate:** £6000 - £8000 + Fees

§ ALAN DAVIE C.B.E., H.R.S.A. (SCOTTISH 1920-2014)  
**OPUS 0.163 - MIRACULOUS FRUIT MAKERS, 1960**

Signed and dated upper left, titled verso, oil on paper

42cm x 53.5cm (16.5in x 21in)

**Exhibited:** 'Collector's Choice', Gimpel Fils, London; July 1967

**Provenance:** The artist's studio; Collection of Caroline Duveen, UK; Gimpel Fils, London; Private Collection, London

**Note:** Few British artists of the 20th century are quite as intriguing as Alan Davie. Low key and independent, Davie operated outwith the art world 'scene' until his death in 2014 which means that, despite his popularity amongst critics and collectors, he isn't the household name he perhaps deserves to be.

Born in Grangemouth, Scotland in 1920, Davie studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, developing a fascination with Continental artists including Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. The quintessential polymath, his artistry encompassed jewellery-making, poetry and, most significantly of all, jazz music. He was an extremely talented musician and constantly sought to find ways to break down the boundaries of expression; seeking to literally convey music on canvas.

The list of his friends and admirers is quite extraordinary given his lack of ego and choice to plough a furrow out of the limelight. He met and was admired by the great collector Peggy Guggenheim in Venice in the late 1940s and was close to members of the American Abstract Expressionist movement including Jackson Pollock. However, Davie gradually moved away from gestural expression to a more clarified vision, as shown in this fantastic example which is amply demonstrative of the complexity of his ideas. Taking reference points from a vast area of art history - Celtic, Buddhist, African, Hindi and Modernist to name but a few - he created a language of emblems and symbols with the aim of capturing the "mysterious and spiritual forces normally beyond our comprehension". Davie's esotericism and eccentricity earned him the reputation as something of a "shaman", a fitting title for an artist who sought to live his entire life as an exploration of the magic that underpins art, music and philosophy.

The artist has had retrospectives at the Barbican, London, Tate St Ives and Tate Britain. He was appointed CBE in 1972 and elected a senior Royal Academician in 2012.

