



*Southwell Minster (from an ongoing collection)*

*Opposite page: Poppies (from a collection of 60 images), and Collared Dove (from a collection of 40 images);*

The drawings David did of Gedling Colliery (featured recently on the Southwell Artists website) exemplify this: the coalmine is now long gone, and so it was a subject that fed into David's interest in the theme of presence and absence. He admits that absence dominates much of his work – which could well have resulted from the fact that much of his early work which consisted of large canvases, was destroyed. 'It's perhaps not surprising,' he says, 'that I have an interest in loss!'

It could also well explain David's concentration on smaller, more portable, work. He showed me a series of sketchbooks full of paintings from his travels to America – the Grand Canyon, the Yosemite National Park – to Kenya, and other places. As with the changes in the

clivia plant, here lions, elephants, cheetahs seem to move in slow-motion as the pages are turned.

Just now the books 'encapsulate my concerns more completely,' David says, 'because they are self-contained and cannot be broken into without destroying the integrity of the whole.' Unlike a series which can be broken up, the fracturing of a collection forfeits an integral part of the meaning. Or does it release a new dimension? – 'after all, fracture is also part of what I claim to be central to the work.' It's a dilemma he has yet to resolve.

Artists' sketchbooks are, of course, a record of a journey or particular time in their life, but they are also 'the most direct thing you can get, the most unaltered – as opposed to a more formal painting – and the most personal'. For example, in Turner's sketchbooks you can follow him from one situation to another, walking through time, as in a film. Sketch-

*Left: Storm near Blanding, Utah (from the America sketch book)*



books are about travelling, in all senses. 'I like the fact that the book has travelled with me and shows the effects, and sometimes damage, of the journey. You move from day to day and there is no going back.'

They record a journey, with its experiences and insights, the changes it brings: changes in subject matter and in the development of artistic ability, perhaps decline as the journey takes its toll, but also, along with that, constant refreshing and renewal that inspires and is creative.

*Red pepper (from a collection of 32 images)*

