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Balloon paintings, Baroque altarpieces and opera

Thomas Marks



School IV: Barracuda under Skipjack Tuna (detail; 1978), Michael Andrews. © The Estate of Michael Andrews. Courtesy James Hyman Gallery, London

Top billing, since it opens in January, goes to ‘Michael Andrews: Earth Air Water’ at Gagosian London (20 January–25 March). Andrews has never had the exposure of his School of London contemporaries such as Lucian Freud and Leon Kossoff: he didn’t create a large body of work and was never very interested in the limelight. There haven’t been many opportunities to see a crop of his works hung together since the Tate Britain retrospective in 2001. This show includes a focus on his Lights series from the early 1970s, enigmatic metaphysical landscapes, in which piers, bridges and shorelines are seen from a balloonist’s perspective – the painter, or his mind, on a quest to find a resting place.