

ART ALLEGORY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

My research for the Doctorate programme began in 2007 by exploring how to translate and reinvent cinematic imagery and searching for ways of combining cinema, painting, and autobiography.

Initially I looked at theories of allegory in order to establish how to integrate those ideas and elements in my own work. I then experimented with a variety of ways of using cinema imagery coupled with my own photographs to make large scale autobiographical paintings. From time to time social commentary would occur in the work as I responded with anger or despair at current events.

My research into art and allegory led me to the writings of Walter Benjamin, Craig Owens and Bainard Cowan. After considering a range of artists I selected the painter Daniel Richter and the filmmaker Peter Greenaway, to research in depth.

I experimented by manipulating imagery on a computer prior to making a painting. My supervisors saw one of the paintings that resulted from this process as a significant breakthrough piece. (*Oh Carole* 2009 Fig.15 Page 24)) What I did not acknowledge or recognise was that the genesis of this particular work was a deep-seated emotional response to a past event. My continued research into film literature and interpretations of allegory was leading me in many directions, each seemingly more interesting than the last, and each providing me with a mass of imagery which I felt compelled to act upon.

Part of this compulsion was the need I felt to continually justify the work as an obligation to the status or hierarchy of the Doctorate programme. This sense of obligation became the driver for the compulsive production of my work.

My supervisors identified a second significant painting. This was a portrait of my late father (*Dad* 2010 Fig.18 Page28) which, once again was my response to the release of deeply felt emotion that had surfaced. These feelings were buried, as I continued making a high volume of work, with often as many as three separate genres of paintings being made at the same time. I was not allowing time to reflect or analyse the significant meaning in those works.

I reached a further turning point, a breakthrough painting, which was a self-portrait (*Child Me* 2010 Fig.19 Page29) in which I was accessing a genuine emotional response to past events in my life rather than using second hand emotions suggested by cinema or literature. I went on to make other paintings in which I tried to respond honestly, emotionally and imaginatively to events in my past. There was a sense of release in making this new body of work. I began to reflect that the earlier work was impersonal and was made to satisfy a self-imposed obligation and work ethic.

With the latest work I cannot wholly explain how I arrive at the images or necessarily what they are about but I recognise that they are informed by my imagination, which the previous way of working and thinking did not allow for. In the later work there is a far greater sense of self expression, and the self imposed constraints and self conscious attitudes are disappearing. Accessing these new imaginative and emotional responses has not been an easy process for me. I think that the perseverance and excessive volume of work made throughout the programme may well have been a necessary process to enable me to arrive at a point where my imagination and intuition are a trusted part of my methodology.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

I left school at 15 to work as a watercolour artist for a company making Masonic regalia and military flags. In 1961 I joined a stockbrokers in the city of London where I remained for 10 years. After this I worked for Lloyds Bank in Kings Cross, London and at this time became interested in the burgeoning self-sufficiency movement. In 1977 together with my young family I moved to a small cottage with 4 acres of land in rural Suffolk. We built up a smallholding and were self-sufficient in food production although I continued working full time for Lloyds bank, in Norwich. Working in finance had always been anathema to me and when my children left for college I gave up my job at the Bank and went to art school.

During the course of my BA at UEL, from 1992 to 1995, I concentrated on the formal aspects of my paintings by producing a series of large oil paintings complemented by etchings and mono-prints. My subject matter was wholly politically motivated: I was responding to a London that was greatly changed from the London that I had left 11 years previously. The economic experiment of monetarism had left its scars on the streets in the form of homelessness, beggars and general social deprivation.

At the same time as this I became interested in Classical Greek Drama, Poetry, and Myth and I used images relating to these as a vehicle to comment on current social problems. I placed myself within a tradition of British political figurative art that could be traced from Hogarth through Sickert and the Camden Group to the Glasgow boys and the contemporary figures of Peter Howson and John Keane. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1, *Bacchus and His Retinue*, Oil on canvas 127x 102cms, 1994

I took part in a high profile residency with the City of London Sinfonia working at the Langdon Comprehensive School in East London. The musicians and a mime artist worked with the children to create musical and theatrical interpretations of two myths: Homer's *Odyssey*, and *Anancy*, a West African folk story. My role was to help in workshops with the children, record events in drawings and paintings and to make and paint the scenery that was to be used for the production at All Saints, Spitalfields. I also had a residency at Kings College, London University working with the students on their production of *Agamemnon*. In both cases I made and painted scenery and promotional artwork and materials that were used in the final productions. Exhibitions of the paintings I had made during each of the residencies were shown at the same time as the theatrical productions.

My written work accompanying these residencies was in the form of a report and commentary on what I saw as the enduring influences of Homeric poetry and Greek Myth on contemporary art practice. Fortuitously, Anthony Caro had just completed an exhibition called *The Trojan Wars* based on Homer's *Illiad*. I corresponded with him and this dialogue complemented and reinforced my own conceptual concerns.

After graduating in 1995 I returned to rural Suffolk and continued making and exhibiting paintings commenting on the negative aspects of rural life. I thought that artists had always treated the countryside as a vehicle for aesthetic concerns or in a completely idealised way. At this time agriculture, the most important local industry, was in meltdown and the whole stratum of rural society was undergoing great changes. Inner City problems were appearing in villages and small market towns. My paintings dealt with social realism and I considered them to be history paintings as I was recording these social changes. (Fig.2.)



Fig. 2, *Preserving the Myth*, Oil on canvas 92 x 117 cms, 1997

There was always an element of black humour in the paintings but this was replaced by more scornful and judgmental elements, as I began to feel more and more the outsider and further detached from any creative contemporary

art dialogue. I saw a production of the *Bacchae* by Euripides at the National Theatre, and was struck by the relevance of the story to the current rise of Islamic militancy. I based a series of paintings on the *Bacchae* using contemporary Muslim and US Army imagery derived from newspapers and magazines. Despite several attempts I was never able to get these paintings shown. (Fig.3)

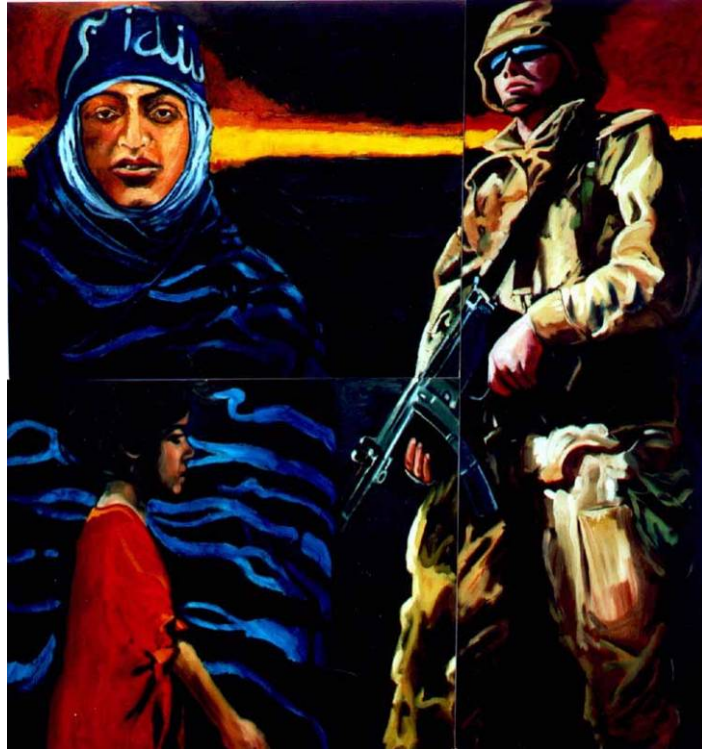


Fig. 3, *Witness*, Oil on canvas 153 x 123 cms, 2003

After completing the *Bacchae* series in 2003 I rediscovered medals, photographs, a prayer book and Bible that belonged to my father's brother who was killed in action in WW1. His photographs bore a striking resemblance to my own son who was 22, the same age as my uncle was when he was killed. I embarked upon a long period of research culminating in a visit to France 80 years to the day after he had died. I found the place where he had been killed and where his remains probably still lie.

This experience was psychologically and emotionally moving and I felt I had the basis for a body of work. I made a series of paintings using inkjet prints taken from WW1 photos and incorporating these into heavily impasto oils on canvas. I felt I had completed a memorial and a debt to a small fragment of personal history. (Fig.4)

The works were shown at two local galleries and also at Norwich Cathedral and received an enormous response not only during the exhibitions but subsequently in letters and telephone calls.



Fig. 4, 1000 yards from Mory, Oil and inkjet on paper, 46 x 76 cms, 2004

I was successful in obtaining Lottery Funding for a Home Front project celebrating the roles of civilians who served in WW2. I constructed a life-size facsimile of a public air raid shelter and wrote, directed and filmed four friends acting the roles and telling the stories of Air Raid Wardens, nurses, an ENSA actress and a householder. These stories were adapted from testimonies taken from contemporary letters at the Imperial War Museum. The film was projected in the shelter with a surround sound background of an air raid taking place and local schools also used the installation as a learning resource. (Fig.5)



Fig.5, Still taken from film of *The Air Raid Shelter*, 2005

A second series of war paintings followed, focussing on another uncle's experience in WW2, but by this time I had spent several years researching war and its effect; I was becoming tired of conflict and wanted to take a step back and reassess.

I wanted to find new subject matter and also change the way that I painted. I wanted my work to have a more contemporary feel to it. It was at this point and for those reasons that I enrolled on the MA course at the UEL in 2005. Initially I made a series of paintings of family members taken from photographs. Many of the paintings were of single figures in the snow and a connection was made between those and the work of Peter Doig whose work I began to look at more closely.

With ongoing tutorial assistance I started making painting compositions of appropriated images taken from Sunday supplements coupled with my own photographs. These were assembled as collages and then scanned into Photoshop and further manipulated before being turned into paintings. There was a much lighter and more playful feel to these paintings. There was always an implied narrative, which I strived to leave open-ended. I found this lack of prescribed narrative liberating because it allowed meanings to accrue.

I experimented with inverting colours and raising colour temperatures, again using Photoshop as a tool. I also discovered the work of a contemporary and friend of Peter Doig, Daniel Richter an artist who is much more politically motivated. He describes himself as a 'punk anarchist'.

The personal photos that I was using for the paintings were beginning to contain a stronger and stronger autobiographical element and I decided to pursue this further.

From the age of two I accompanied my mother at least once a week to the cinema and so throughout my most impressionable years I was steeped in cinema and developed a life-long love of cinema. Looking back now I realise that Hollywood had heavily informed a lot of my moral codes and attitudes. I had subliminally absorbed the Hollywood versions of history and the Hollywood dreams of how life should be lived. I began re-watching films that I remember had had a powerful impact on me, often for reasons I was unable to comprehend at the time.

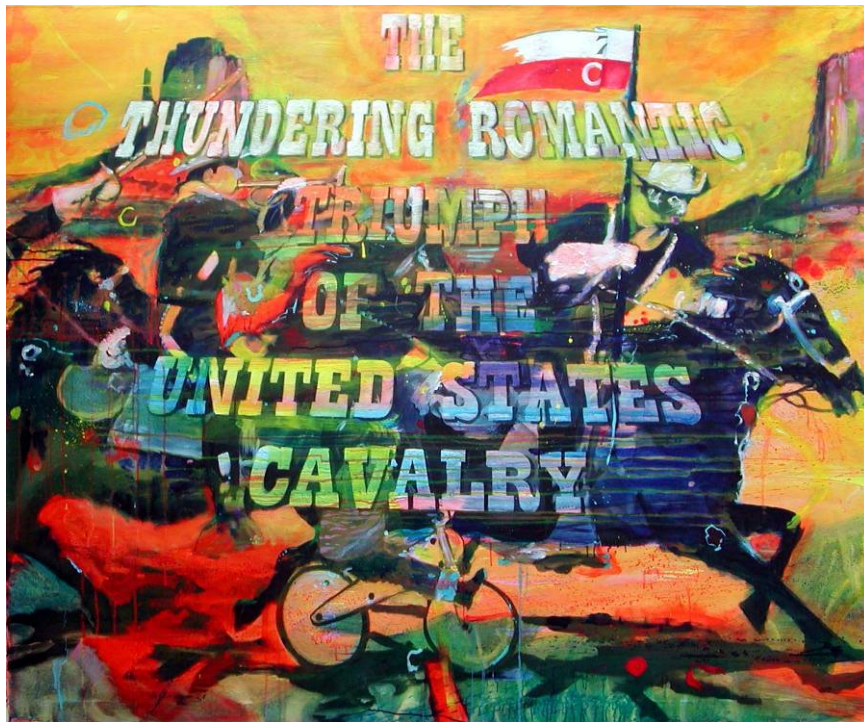


Fig. 6, *Thundering Romantic Triumph*, Acrylic on canvas 183 cms x 153 cms

Initially to make paintings I took iconic images from the cinema that already carried their own narrative. I looked for ways of subverting that original image and decided to introduce a child figure. This child figure is the surrogate me. By introducing the child figure a whole new narrative has been created; personal to me but open enough to create a context in which the spectator is encouraged to re-think the original image. (Fig 6)

This process of appropriation and displacement was creating fresh narratives, where to my surprise, political commentary began to appear. Despite my efforts not to impose meanings, subconsciously this was happening. I also looked for ways of making the painted surface as significant as the figurative and narrative elements.

CREATIVE PRACTICE AND THEORY

Over the five years of the Professional Doctorate programme my work has evolved and changed far beyond my expectations. I have developed a personal vocabulary rather than one borrowed or imposed. There is a synthesis and transformation in my work that was completely missing and a greater instinctual and imaginative freedom has been realised.

I began my research by identifying the main issues and areas of interest that have recurred in my work as a painter. The most prominent of these were autobiography and the visualisation of memories. My interest in popular culture, in particular cinema and literature, together with narrative, social commentary, historical and mythological references all could serve as allegory in my paintings.

I became interested in the theories of allegory as proposed by Walter Benjamin in the 1930s and subsequently by theorists Bainard Cowan and Craig Owens fifty years later. Allegory as a concept draws together elements and ideas in my own work. Collage, cinema, political themes, the past existing in the present and the combining of fragments was given a context by the theories of allegory in contemporary art. Having established allegory as a significant strand in my own work my initial research identified the changing interpretations and attitudes to the use of allegory which I felt supported and illuminated my own working methodologies.

From Mediaeval times to the Renaissance, allegory was an interpretative methodology for seeking indirect or obscure meanings from Biblical texts. Interpretations were developed which could account for as many as twelve different layers in a single text. Allegorical schematics became the most widely established form of interpretation of both word and image.

However, the status of allegory was weakened after the Renaissance as new ideas about nature and knowledge developed. As the study of sciences and verifiable knowledge displaced traditional assumptions, allegory as a technique of analysis was seen as too artificial as many interpretations could not be proven.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines allegory as: 'speaking otherwise than one seems to speak, or the description of a subject under the guise of another subject, or aptly suggestive resemblance'.

However, Craig Owens' influential articles on allegory identified postmodern artistic practice closely with allegorical procedures because it allowed for the proliferation of irony and parody through eclecticism. Craig Owens theorises that allegory was a unifying concept in the diverse and eclectic practices of Post-modernism. His most illuminating text is in *The Allegorical Impulse Towards A Theory of Post-modernism* (B. Wallis 1984: 203-235) in which he theorises: 'It is the apparent re-emergence of allegorical modes in the period of Modernism which renders the art so different from, indeed incomprehensible to, Modernist criteria of artistic quality.'

At the beginning of his essay Owens quotes from Walter Benjamin's *Thesis on the Philosophy of History* (Wallis 1984:247) 'Every image of the past that is not recognised by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.' Owens says of this: 'Allegory first emerged in response to a sense of estrangement from tradition; throughout its history it has functioned in the gap between a present and a past which, without allegorical reinterpretation, might have remained foreclosed. A conviction of the remoteness of the past, and a desire to redeem it for the present, these are its fundamental impulses.' (Wallis, 1984: 221)

In *Thesis on the Philosophy of History* Walter Benjamin (Wallis, 1984: 247) states that allegory can be a way of defining the past or of accessing a historical moment, which he refers to as a dialectic image. 'The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognised and is never seen again.'

My intention was to combine personal images, together with images from the history of cinema. My hope was that such a collision would bring a moment of the past to light. The use of appropriated imagery seems to be a cornerstone of the contemporary definition of allegory. Allegorical imagery is also therefore, appropriated imagery. Bainard Cowan (1981: 75) in his *Theory of Allegory* writes: 'The allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as its interpreter and in his hands the image becomes something else. He does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured; rather he adds another meaning to the image. If he adds however, he does so only to replace; the allegorical meaning supplants an antecedent one; it is a supplement.' Benjamin goes further (Wallis 1984: 221) saying that it is a common practice of allegory: 'To pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal.'

Appropriated images can take many forms. Film stills, photographs, record covers and transcription drawings may all be used to generate other imagery. Most importantly, the original meanings of the images were to be lost; they should be empty of their original significance and their authoritative claim to meaning. However, I wanted to challenge some of these assumptions. My use of film stills was carefully chosen, as I wanted some of the emotive quality or atmosphere generated by the film to inform the paintings. I hoped that these visual and cinematic cultures could be used to mediate an individual's relationship to the past, which in turn could also reshape the way in which we respond to the present.

I considered a range of artists, whose work had included Allegory, cinema and memory in the context of their practice, including Gerhard Richter, John Baldassari, R.B. Kitaj and Peter Doig. In particular I have researched the work and critical discourse surrounding the painter Daniel Richter and the painter and filmmaker Peter Greenaway.

I was initially influenced in my own practice by the paintings of Peter Doig, having identified in his work strong cinematic links and ideas of memory. He

takes a range of personal photographs together with appropriated and found images which he uses to recollect and revisit scenes of his youth. Fact merges with fiction, autobiographical elements are blended with invented scenes.

He describes his work as abstractions of memories distilled into frozen moments, like scenes in a series of mysterious narratives. His painting techniques are varied and inventive; thick half-mixed paint is scrubbed over thinner delicate washes, which in turn may be sprayed or splattered.

The study of Peter Doig led me to Daniel Richter, whose work I felt was more confident, stronger and edgier than Doig's, but who shared very similar painting techniques. I found Richter's work more powerful and I assumed that Doig had developed his painting techniques from a study of Richter's work but in fact the reverse is true. Daniel Richter started out as an abstract painter before moving into figuration. Although Richter has never said this, I suspect the reorientation of his work from abstract to figurative was prompted by the arrival in Berlin of Peter Doig and Chris Ofili, both of whom exhibit at the same gallery as Richter.

Daniel Richter is 46 years old, part of a new wave of German painters. He creates large-scale paintings that combine political themes and Fellini-esque fantasy in a highly theatrical manner. Different kinds of brushwork and layers of strident colour enrich the large canvasses. The figures he paints are seemingly lit from within by a colour range associated with infra red or thermal imagery. Pictorial flatness is mixed with perspectival space. (Fig.7)

Of the compositions, Helen Chang writes "The composition is less perspective than layered, the foreground doesn't work spatially, it's a seamless collage of disparate inter-changeable elements." Richter uses a vast collection of



Fig. 7, Daniel Richter *Spagotzen* Oil on canvas 100cmsx123cms

appropriated images to structure his paintings, which may account for Helen Chang's analysis of the compositions." The images he creates are as delirious and operatic as the subject matter they contain." (Frieze, March 2010)

Raphael Rubenstein (2004: 15) considers Richter to be one of the most influential artists working today and compares him to Sigmar Polke, Martin Kippenberger and Gerhard Richter (no relation to Daniel). The broad theme of Richter's work is the history of the left in the Twentieth century, which includes Independent Communists, Anarchists and their latest descendants, punks and urban warriors. The common subject in the paintings is of final battles and grotesque comical stand-offs. The paintings often contain a dramatic collision of references. The collaged nature of his imagery with its collisions and ruptures mirror the artist's belief in the inescapability of conflict.

Wayne Baerwaldt (2004:10), director of the Power Plant Gallery in Toronto, considers the implied violence in Richters paintings: "Richter insists on the ubiquity of conflict in social life. For Richter, conflict is the irredeemable fact of the human condition, the inescapable source of much that is creative as well as destructive in human society."



Fig. 8, Daniel Richter, *Captain Jack* Oil on canvas 184cmsx123cms

His work like that of other German painters is unable to escape the weight of German history. For example *Captain Jack*, (Fig. 8) shows an armed,

uniformed military figure confronting a group of emaciated figures, which immediately conjures up images of the Holocaust. This is not however overwhelming as he also draws on other historical and cultural references. Kealy Seamus writes (2004: 21) “The dazzling pictures deny the quotidian implications of these original representations whether album covers, historical paintings or journalistic photos while perversely involving the social strata associated with them.”

Peter Greenaway is one of the most original film directors to emerge in the last two decades. His work has a sumptuous visual style with peculiarly artificial structural principles derived from his use of allegory. Greenaway rejected formal narrative structure and used allegory as a structuring device to communicate his ideas on different levels. He secured a reputation with films such as *A Zed and Two Noughts*, *The Draughtsman's Contract* and what is seen as the ultimate allegory of the Thatcherite years *The Cook the Thief his Wife and her Lover*. Each of these films has strong art historical references; *Zed and Two Noughts* is heavily influenced by Vermeer, and *The Draughtsman's Contract* references Hogarth, George de la Tour and Gainsborough. (Fig. 9 & 10)



Fig. 9, Hogarth *The Lady's Last Stake*



Fig. 10, Film Still from *The Draughtsman's Contract*

The Cook the Thief his Wife and her Lover (1987) uses Frans Hals and the genre of Dutch still life painters. The plots of history, art history and sexual politics are mapped onto and over one another; what is striking is the way these elements interject and inform one another, asserting artifice and narrative on many levels. *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, is a vitriolic attack on Thatcher and Thatcherism. Greenaway devised the film as an opulent and decadent riposte to Thatcher's England. The 'thief' of the title is Spica, a monstrous and insufferable oaf holding regular court at his fashionable London restaurant surrounded by sycophants and servants as well as his trophy wife.

Greenaway himself in interview (Elliott and Purdy 1975: 15) said: 'The film is a passionate, angry dissertation for me on the rich vulgarian, philistine arts intellectual stance of the present Government in Great Britain. There's a lull in the film where Spica says to the 'lover' who is reading, 'does this book make money?' That line sums up the whole theme. In England now there is only one currency as one might say of the whole capitalist world. Spica knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.'

Greenaway references Dutch painting throughout the film and there are displays of cunningly arranged assemblages of food which reference 17th century still life painting. There are displays of fish set out in the manner of Abraham Van Beyeran. The use of large pieces of meat resembles and suggests to the viewer Rembrandt's or Soutine's slaughtered oxen. One complete wall of the restaurant is covered with a reproduction of *The Banquet of the Officers of the Haarlam Militia Company of St George* by Frans Hals. The colours in the painting mimic those in the restaurant so cleverly that it appears that the actors share the same space as the painted characters in the

painting. The painting represents the bourgeoisie who Spica is unable to escape from despite his wealth and pretensions. Spica lives in a very male dominated world, which is echoed in the painting by the Haarlam officers at their table. Spica and his followers match the conspicuous consumption in the painting. Peter Greenaway comments (Elliott and Purdy 1975: 15): "The surface of my films is very Baroque. They use every device I can think of to indicate the richness and munificence of the world, but always with the central characters behaving in some misanthropic way. If you want to extract some meaning from this, it is that the world is a most magnificent place but people are constantly fucking it up."

This brief philosophical quote could be applied equally to both Richter and Greenaway's work: humanity is flawed and learns little from the lessons of history. Passionate political commentary and references to art history also connect the two artists. Richter's multi-figured compositions borrow from French nineteenth century naturalism or the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the twentieth century. Greenaway's films are composed using the conventions of representational art, and in particular the techniques and styles of seventeenth century painting. More important links are to be found in the artists' use of allegory. Their work is informed by a vocabulary taken from art galleries and museums 'laying claim to the culturally significant', which forms part of Bainard Cowan's definition of allegory (1981: 75). There is also a strong narrative element to both their works but this is often obscure and not easily accessed as it is hidden in layers of imagery. Both artists are drawn to fragmented and juxtaposed images taken from their personal archives of appropriated materials.

Greenaway's films are intended to stimulate the mind as well as the eye and he encourages his audience to think about why things are placed as they are and not just what the story is revealing. Reviewing the films of Peter Greenaway has led me in unexpected directions. As well as the art historical references that I have already cited, I have studied the films of Jean Luc Godard and British Director, Terence Davies. His films have a uniqueness of structure in which fragments of the past are unlocked and remembered before our eyes and ears, without nostalgia or sentimentality.

My use of social reportage is often linked to my response of anger, frustration or despair at current events and in particular how they are reported by the media. An example of this occurred at the beginning of my studies for the professional doctorate in 2007, which coincided with the murder of five prostitutes in Ipswich, close to where I live. I was angered by the manipulative television reportage, which turned these tragedies into a circus. Initially the coverage of the first murder was almost cursory; journalists only became interested when it appeared that a serial killer might be involved.

Initial attitudes to the girls were dismissive. They were drug using streetwalkers and being murdered by a lunatic was seen as almost an occupational hazard. The Police identified three more missing girls and the media went into overdrive, with twenty-four hour coverage from Ipswich. The parents of the girls pleaded on T.V. for the lives of their beloved children. With

this the attitude of the media changed. They were now the girls next door; their ambitions and happy personalities were reported. The story drew to its awful conclusion when all five bodies were found and an arrest made. The media packed up and went home.

The pictures of the girls had been everywhere throughout Suffolk, mostly poor quality snapshots or surveillance camera images. I collected these, initially wanting to make some kind of dignified memorial in terms of a painting. I decided I would make a series of portraits of the girls interspersed with portraits of Hollywood stars that had played prostitutes in romanticised films that were so different from the reality of the lives of the five girls.

On contemplating the completed series of paintings, I reflected that the girls had been used by their dealers, used by their pimps and their punters, used by their murderer and by the press coverage and now by me. The ethics of what I was doing was too close to the media coverage I was criticising. I decided to make a second piece of work, a single painting on a much larger scale. I found a still from a Peter Greenaway film *The Cook the Thief His Wife and Her Lover*, of a back street roamed by scrounging dogs and littered with dog shit. I also found a photo of blond film star Jean Harlow lying on a bearskin. I changed this into a stalking predatory bear carrying a girl on its back. Considering further allegory I introduced fragments of information that the viewer could piece together to deduce the subject matter. The night club sign "Roxanne" refers to the song of the same name about a man in love with a streetwalker. A stylised Orwell bridge in the background locates the setting as Ipswich. Girls are displayed in the back of a van like a market trader's pitch. (Fig. 11)

Initially I was disappointed with the result, but I reworked some passages darkening and removing details. Over time I have come to revalue the painting in that it allowed me to comment on those terrible events without including direct reference to the girls involved. The painting generated considerable press coverage when it was included in a solo exhibition at the Cut Arts Centre in Halesworth Suffolk, in 2008.

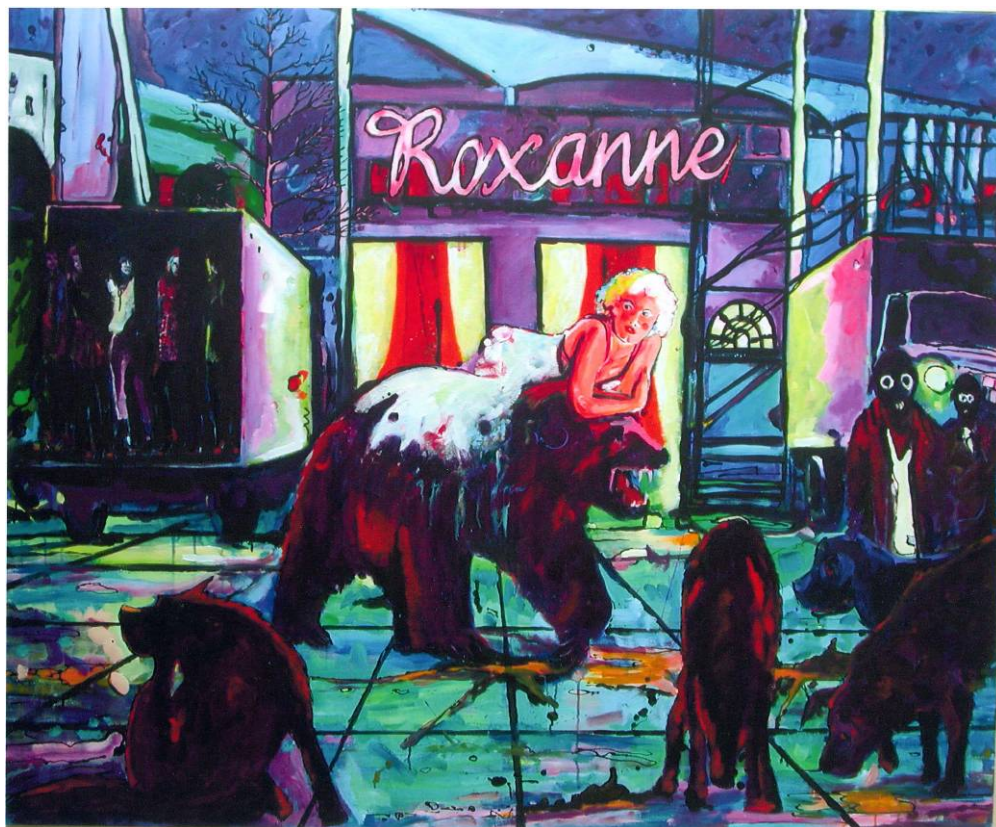


Fig. 11, *Roxanne*, Acrylic on Canvas 153cmx122cm, 2007

I had reached a point where I was starting to look back and reflect on the shape of my life. Looking back brought a heightened consciousness of my past, which I wanted to explore further in my work.

My adolescence, 1958 to 1963, coincided with fundamental changes in society. The post-war period of austerity and social hierarchies were irrevocably changed. New Wave French cinema made an impact on me, in particular the work of director Jean Luc Godard. Peter Greenaway in numerous interviews has acknowledged a debt to Godard, in particular his abandoning of the traditional Hollywood style of narrative cinema and his interest in exploring non narrative forms in his films. Godard's famous quote made to the French film maker Georges Framyn in 1965 is: "A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end but not necessarily in that order".

I found a photograph of myself taken in 1959 which coincided with the release and my viewing of the Godard film *A Bout De Souffle* (Breathless). The film employed various innovative techniques. Filming indoors at close quarters led to a new form of cinematic technique referred to as "visual study"; in which a sequence of just slightly different views offer a mosaic of the many moods and aspects of the actors involved.

I wanted to experiment with this technique in a painting by using images from the film *Breathless* and splicing in the photograph of me together with other images from that year. Included were a scene from an ATV advertisement for Strand cigarettes, which referenced Frank Sinatra and an image from the film *Expresso Bongo*. (Fig.12)

Initially the painting was made in monochrome but after my research into Daniel Richter and his use of vibrant colour I decided to introduce a range of overlapping complementary colours. I used this technique in other paintings but I had not foreseen that this mix of collaged images all over the canvas, coupled with high colour values, would make the images too complex and almost unreadable.



Fig. 12, *Breathless*, Acrylic on Canvas 122cm x 152cm, 2008

At this point in time, the spring of 2008, I was successful in negotiating an exhibition at the Fisher Theatre and Arts Centre in Bungay Suffolk. The venue was small and had limited wall space and would not accommodate my recent paintings. I decided to make a body of work specifically for this exhibition. I titled the show 'Island Hopping'. It consisted of thirty-two small-scale paintings, abstractions inspired by Greece and the Greek Islands. (Fig13) The scale and the subject matter suggested to me a different technical process, and I made the paintings in a more direct and spontaneous manner than I had been employing.

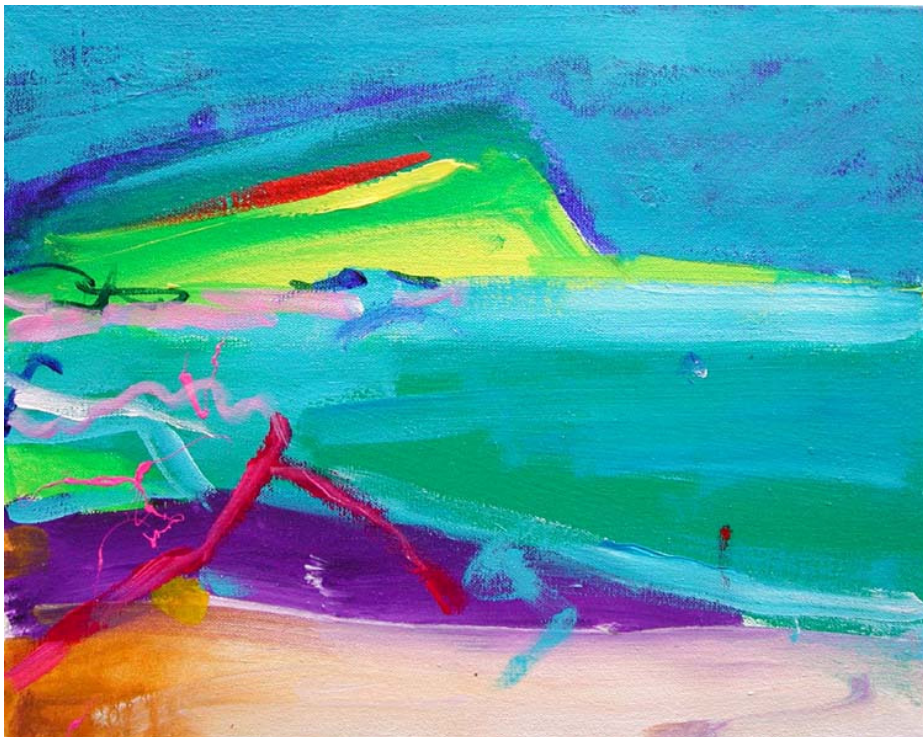


Fig. 13, Beach, Paxos Acrylic on canvas 30cmx35cm, 2008

These paintings were something quite distinct and different from the work for the Doctorate programme. They were too simple and light-hearted and I felt they lacked the serious intent and gravitas required by the programme. The spontaneity of these small paintings was recognised in tutorials as, 'the spirit of adventure that is lost in the larger paintings, has returned in these Greek landscapes', however I was still focused on the idea of large-scale paintings combining cinematic culture and my relationship to the past. This was the first occasion in which I had two bodies of work being made in parallel to one another which I did not consider to be of equal value.

In order to address the problems in the collaged high colour paintings, I began a series of large-scale paintings simplifying the compositions to one, or no figures. They were set in wider, deeper spaces than I had previously used.

I had been researching and selecting imagery from films which I felt carried a particular mood. I considered this as a way of recreating and redirecting scenes from films. I had been experimenting with and developing a method of applying paint by using a simple plastic bathroom sprayer filled with fluid acrylic paint. Working on the paintings horizontally I was able to build up layers of colour, rather in the manner of a glazing technique. I thought this would be useful to keep my paint handling fluid, more direct and would offer a strategy for a greater element of chance in the painting process. (Fig.14)

At a tutorial review the following comments were made about these paintings. 'Can you just take a film still and make a painting from it, is that enough?' 'The figures seem less personal and where is the allegory?' 'Why does the James Dean figure keep recurring?'



Fig 14, I Keep Going Back to Joe's Acrylic on canvas 183cmx153cm, 2008

My response was that the paintings were not simple film stills. They were invented scenes, sometimes using one small element from the film, rather in the manner of Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled Film Stills'. I created scenes that were never shot. The question of allegory, I think, is one of interpretation and the difference between the historical and the post-modern meaning of the word. The James Dean figures represent the surrogate teenage me. The original film sources I am using are not of James Dean but other actors referencing him, another layer of allegory.



Fig. 15, *Oh Carole*, Acrylic on canvas 122cms x 246cms, 2009

The final painting in this series was titled *Oh Carole*. (Fig.15) The imagery was taken from the film, *Empire of the Sun*. I started with a series of stills from the film, but they did not provide the composition I was looking for. I found a photograph of an aeroplane from the internet and juxtaposed photographs of my grandson for the boy.

Part of the rationale for using film is to allow the original emotion created in the film to transfer into the painting. In this instance the scene in the film is about a boy's moment of euphoria, when he has an encounter with the object of his dreams, a fighter-bomber. The subtext of the painting for me was a similarly heart stopping moment of first love. I was the same age as the boy in the film, eleven years old. Although I was an innocent, nevertheless the emotion was deeply felt.

This painting was seen in seminars to be a breakthrough work. The autobiographical element is more oblique and the psychological element stronger. The high colour values, which were not working in earlier paintings, had been resolved and tutorial reviews were extremely positive. The comments were that there was a dreamlike quality and that the figure above the ground and the aeroplane just above him successfully played with scale. The fence in the painting was seen as psychologically interesting, as the boy is separated from the rest of the world and that this fence motif appears in several of my paintings.

Regrettably I did not consolidate the progress made with this painting. I failed to recognise that I was allowing personal emotion to surface in this painting. I saw it as a conclusion to that particular body of work and was already rushing headlong into the next series of paintings.

The films I had been researching for this work came under the generic title of Road Movies. This genre of film has its roots in spoken and written tales of epic journeys dating back to the origins of Western literature, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. The road movie is to filmmakers what the heroic quest was to medieval writers. The road movie has a standard plot device in which the hero changes, grows or transforms during the course of a journey. It tends to be episodic in structure, and in each episode a challenge is confronted, or a truth revealed. All of this appealed to me greatly as an ideal subject with which to look back and explore my past. I had noted that from the 1950s to date two models of car, the Cadillac Coupe de Ville and the Ford Thunderbird, recurred and have been used symbolically or allegorically to suggest breaking with convention or rebellion. These cars appear in such diverse films as *A Bout de Soufflé*, *La Dolce Vita* and *Thelma and Louise*.

In the film *Badlands*, which reflects on the rise of teenage rebellion and the rejection of adult authority, the Coup de Ville is the escape vehicle. Whereas in *Thelma and Louise*, made in the 1980s, highlighting how women were asserting their place in the world, the Ford Thunderbird is used as the symbol of freedom.

I referenced these cars and used film stills combined with other appropriated imagery as a basis for paintings. I wished to recreate those symbolic meanings, to comment on my past and the changes in conventions and attitudes in society. These paintings formed solo exhibitions at the Wingfield Art Centre Suffolk and at the Playhouse Theatre Gallery, Norwich, Norfolk. The biggest of these shows was at Wingfield Barns, an arts complex in mid-Suffolk. The original agreement was that the show would run for two weeks in the main gallery and I would move my studio to a smaller gallery on site and work as artist in residence throughout the period of the exhibition.

To complement the exhibition there would be two screenings of *Badlands* and *Thelma and Louise*. I would introduce, analyse and explore the relationship of the films to the paintings and afterwards hold a discussion. This plan did not come to fruition because of poor gallery management; however the Private View was successful and the work was well received.

Throughout this period I was constantly looking for fresh narratives that would drive the work along. For example my study of the genre of road movies led me back to Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Inferno* both of which provided me with a rich source of material. I used this for my next series of work, which was based upon family history.

My family were descended from French Huguenots who were smuggled out of France fleeing religious persecution. To me this seemed an integral link in a

chain of ideas, which included both coming to terms with the past, and an explanation of the narrative of an epic journey which was based around my family history.



Fig. 16, Campfire, Acrylic on canvas 122cmsx153cms, 2010

I made a series of nine large paintings based around images of refugees and mass migrations. (Fig.16) On reflection, my compulsion for making so many works at once was ill-considered and left little time for contemplation and evaluation. I had not yet reached the point where I could rein in this compulsion, despite repeated criticisms that the work had high colour values, too literal an interpretation of ideas, were overcrowded with meaning, sentimental and melodramatic. I was working on three parallel strands of work: the large overblown melodramas, smaller works trying ways of developing cinema ideas and family history, and another strand to do with family portraits. I was experimenting with these different genres without analysing my motivation. At a seminar I was asked 'what are you searching for?' and I rather facetiously answered 'I will know it when I find it'. There is some truth in this. I was striving to find a methodology to unlock the creative drive and honesty in my work that I knew was missing, but which I could still not locate.

In 2010, my continuing research into the work of Daniel Richter revealed a radical change in his painting methodologies. His latest works are the first small format pieces he has exhibited and they take a different direction, devoid of people. His imagery has become more realistic and accurate in their

detailed descriptions of objects. His painting *Die Grenze* is an example of this change in style. The surface is a synthesis of thick and thinly applied paint. In the image the watchtower roof is open to the sky and yet it has cosy curtains at the windows. Against the dark shape, is the profile of a kneeling figure, the same blue as the sky. (Fig 17) Sabine Vogel (2010: 32) writes: 'They are steeped in a new forlornness, these paintings recall closed national borders. Richter depicts surveillance towers and border situations that he then enriches with palette knife techniques and dismal colours.'



Fig 17, Daniel Richter, *Die Grenze*, Oil on canvas 60cms x 100cms

Of his new paintings Helen Chang (2010: 51) concludes: 'Richter seems to say, in what feels like an act of resignation, he appears to be entrusting viewers increasingly to make what they will of the paintings instead of pointing the ways with intricate and explicit references.'

Previously I had been too polite in my work to engage in the radical nature of Richter's work. However, having seen his recent paintings they suggested a way I could simplify and bring a more ambiguous use of space into my own work.



Fig 18, *Dad* Acrylic on canvas 60cms x 60cms, 2010

This began with a portrait of my father who had died aged 50 when I was 11 and this was a way of dealing with an unexpected wave of grief at his loss. (Fig 18)

During the seminars this painting generated a lot of positive comment. This was a much more complex work. It was proffered that some of my paintings try

too hard for meaning whereas this was much subtler. The relationship between the tree and the figure was seen as more poignant and ambiguous, and the transformation of material as more complex. It was also said that it was painted with sophisticated sensitivity but at the same time with gusto. It was seen as a further breakthrough work. I went on to make other portraits of family members whose loss I had felt most strongly. (See Appendix 5).

I continued to try to develop this theme, although I felt their success relied on the photographic source material, of which I had little. I tried to expand the work by introducing cinema imagery. But by now I had to acknowledge that trying to use cinema as a way of introducing emotional elements into the paintings was not working. Instead I used personal photographs to revisit past autobiographical events. I returned to the portraits and painted a self-portrait as a child, which had an unexpected Expressionist element to it. (Fig. 19)



Fig.19, Child Me, Acrylic on Canvas 50cms x 20cms, 2010

Art journalist Nicholas Usherwood commented on this painting: "It has a sense of British imaginative painting. The revisiting of the landscape of childhood has nothing to do with any sense of nostalgic longing but rather one of imaginative transformation. You are recognising something deep within your own subconscious memory that makes this painting so profoundly significant."

My tutors also considered this painting a major breakthrough and a further turning point in the work. I decided it was time to jettison the obvious references to classical mythology and to the cinema. This allowed for allegory and autobiography to surface naturally and organically in the work rather than being imposed by me in the first instance as a methodology. Nicholas Usherwood quoted Rilke: (2009:12)

'It is not enough to have memories. One must be able to forget them when they are many, and one must have great patience to wait until they come again. For it is not yet the memories themselves not until they have turned to blood within us, to glance, to gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves. Not until then can it happen, that in the most rare hour the first word of a verse arises in their mists and goes forth from them.'

I began making small gestural drawings, which sprang almost in their entirety from my imagination. The drawings were unlaboured and had immediacy and fluidity that I had not achieved before and I went on to make paintings from them. There was a sense of release in making these new imaginative paintings. My research began to include ideas on the use of the imagination in contemporary art practice. Accessing the imagination has not been an easy process and reading my life through the medium of cinema imagery has been a way of dealing with the difficulties in releasing a form of purer imagery. Richard Kearney (1994: 2) argues that it is no longer a simple matter to access the imagination as both our conscious and our unconscious minds have been corrupted by consumerist images:

'It is virtually impossible today to contemplate so called natural settings without some consumerist media image lurking in the back of one's mind: a beach without an Ambre Solaire body, a meadow without a Cadbury's Flake, a mountain stream without a Marlborough cigarette.'

The lines of work that I have had running in parallel have by endeavour coalesced into a more imaginative methodology, which enables me to represent a synthesis of my experience. Artist Wynn Jones describes this experience: (Usherwood, n.d. www.wynnjones.net)

'Going beneath the surface to deeper levels that draw in and pool together impressions and experiences from a sort of unforced gathering of the arbitrary and intuitive; allowing these surprising and unexpected forces into the creative act can energise and revitalise it.'

I could no longer wholly explain how I had arrived at the images or necessarily what they were about but they allowed for a space to exist in my imagination, which the previous work did not allow for. The earlier cinematic and allegorical paintings had called for a much more structured approach. My most recent work has its genesis in an emotional response to a past event or a psychological state of mind, which is created and interrogated initially as a small drawing. This drawing then becomes the basis of a painting with little or no revision to the original image. This makes these paintings more immediate and not at all informed by second-hand imagery. The subject matter to date has been largely childhood and it's associated fears and losses. Fig. 20



Fig. 20, Interrogation, Oil on Canvas 80cms x 80cms, 2011

Nicholas Usherwood pointed out an affinity of my most recent work with that of Carel Weight. He identified the use of family autobiographical materials, and a sympathetic open feeling to the work. Above all he linked my sometimes disturbing use of imagination with Weight's imagery.

Nicholas Usherwood theorises that the first fifteen years of an artist's life are an absolutely seminal period and all else stems from this. My early childhood was characterised by insecurities and acute anxieties followed by harsh regimes at school, dominated by physical beatings.

Children under stress tend to live through and in their imaginations. The fears of my childhood have long since disappeared into my subconscious but the memories still haunt and surface periodically in the form of other images.

My research into a more intuitive and imaginative methodology has triggered deep and at times painful memories and I have recently realised that these past traumas are my subject matter. The difficulty inherent in allowing these emotions to surface has prevented me from making these imaginative self-revelations until now.

A reconsideration of my earlier work reveals evidence of unconscious symbolism. Allegory is therefore still central to the work; the difference now is that it is arrived at through the imagination rather than being imposed rationally.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

EDUCATION

- 2007 - Professional Doctorate in Fine Art – University of East London
- 2005-07 MA in Fine Art – Distinction – University of East London
- 1992-1995 BAHons Fine Art Painting and Printmaking –
University of East London
- 1991-1992 Foundation Course – Norwich Art School

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- Oct 2009 Playhouse Gallery, Norwich, Norfolk
10 large paintings
- Aug/Sep 2009 Wingfield Barns Art Centre, Suffolk
15 large scale paintings
- Feb/Mar 2009 The Cut Art Centre, Suffolk
9 large scale paintings
- Aug/Sep 2008 The Fisher Theatre Gallery, Bungay, Suffolk
Island Hopping, 24 small scale paintings, abstractions based on visits to Greece.
- Sep 2007 AVA Gallery, Docklands, MA Show
Hooray for Hollywood, 20 large scale paintings on the themes of autobiography and cinema
- Oct 2005 Arts Centre, Kings Lynn
Distant Conflicts, 30 oil paintings incorporating inkjet prints centred on the experience of two family members in WW1 and WW2
- July/Aug 2005 The Gallery, Bungay, Suffolk
The Air Raid Shelter, Lottery Funded Digital Film and Audiovisual Installation
- Nov 2004 Norwich Cathedral, *Once There Was a War*
- Aug/Sep 2004 The Gallery, Bungay *Once There Was a War*,
a series of 15 oil paintings incorporating inkjet prints chronicling the final days of an uncle in WW1

- Sep/Oct 2002 Kunstverein Hofatelier, Weimar, Germany
Uncompromising Images, 20 oil paintings commenting on contemporary news stories.
- May 2000 Steeple Gallery, Halesworth, Suffolk
 Down in the Country, a series of 10 oil paintings describing the negative elements of rural life.
- Aug 1996 Steeple Gallery, Halesworth, Suffolk
Dark Heart, series of 10 oil paintings commenting on the last days of the 1990s.
- June 1995 BA Exhibition UEL, Series of paintings and prints using Greek mythology to comment on current social problems.
- Nov 1994 Christchurch, Spitalfields, London
Myths, paintings and prints made during a residency with the City of London Symphonia

SELECTED

- March/Apr 2011 Harleston Gallery, Harleston, Norfolk
Have I Got Nudes For You, three large scale oil paintings with classical myth as the subject matter
- Dec 2006 The Cut, Halesworth, Suffolk.
 Halesworth Festival, 5 oil paintings from a series called *The Last Medieval War, based on the invasion of Sicily in WW2*
- May 2003 Eastern Open, Kings Lynn
 A range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
- Aug/Dec 2002 Buckenham Gallery, Southwold, Suffolk
Summer and Winter, a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
- May 2002 Eastern Open, Kings Lynn
 A range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
- Aug/Dec 2001 Buckenham Gallery, Southwold, Suffolk
Summer and Winter, a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
- May 2001 Eastern Open, Kings Lynn
 A range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions

Aug/Dec 2000	Buckenham Gallery, Southwold, Suffolk <i>Summer and Winter</i> , a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
May 2000	Eastern Open, Kings Lynn A range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
Dec 1999	John Russell Gallery, Ipswich, Suffolk <i>Christmas Show</i> , small political commentary paintings
Aug/Dec 1999	Buckenham Gallery, Southwold, Suffolk <i>Summer and Winter</i> , a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
May 1999	Eastern Open, Kings Lynn, a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
June 1999	Extreme Art, Hitchin, Herts <i>Figurative Art</i> , 4 large scale paintings from the <i>Dark Heart</i> series
Oct 1998	Beatrice Royal Gallery, Eastleigh, Hants <i>Figurative Art</i> , 3 large scale paintings based on Greek myth
May 1997	Eastern Open, Kings Lynn a range of oil paintings selected from previous exhibitions
Dec 1997	John Russell Gallery, Ipswich, Suffolk <i>Christmas Show</i> , 5 small political commentary paintings
July/Aug 1996	John Russell Gallery, Ipswich, Suffolk <i>Summer Show</i> , 2 acrylic paintings
May 1996	John Hunt, Redchurch Street, EC1 4 large scale paintings from BA Degree Show
Sep 1995	Contact Gallery, Norwich <i>Greek Echoes</i>
June/July 1993	Courtauld Gallery, <i>UEL at Swemmers</i> and <i>Prints After Poussin</i> lino cuts and monoprints, transcription pieces from Poussin drawings
March 1992	Whitechapel Art Gallery, 4 oil paintings, <i>Depictions of Rural Life</i>
Sep 1992	Contact Gallery, Norwich <i>Cars</i> , one mixed media painting on the theme of the environment

GROUP

- June 2011 AVA Gallery, UEL, Professional Doctorate Interim Exhibition
3 oil paintings
- March 2011 AVA Gallery, UEL, Professional Doctorate Interim Exhibition
4 paintings of family members
- June 2010 AVA Gallery, UEL, Professional Doctorate Interim Exhibition
3 large scale acrylic paintings from the Regugee series
- Feb 2010 AVA Gallery, UEL, Professional Doctorate Interim Exhibition
1 large painting from the Cinema series
- June 2009 AVA Gallery, UEL, Professional Doctorate Interim Exhibition
2 large scale acrylic painting from the Cinema series
- July 2005 R K Burt Gallery, *The House of Ours*,
The Flat Pack Rodin, cardboard sculpture based on *The Kiss*
- June 1998 Yoxford Gallery/Leiston Barn, Suffolk Open Studios
5 large scale oil paintings
- Aug 1995 East West Gallery, Ladbroke Grove, London
Summer Fizz, selection of oil paintings from BA Degree Show
- Aug 1995 Blue Egg Gallery, Southend
Interpretations, selection of oil paintings from BA Degree Show
- Aug 1995 Halesworth Steeple Gallery, Halesworth, Suffolk
Open, a range of oil paintings
- April 1995 Tate Gallery, London
Making and Meaning, transcription paintings and drawings,
based on Whistler exhibition
- Aug 1994 Halesworth Steeple Gallery, Halesworth, Suffolk
Open, a range of oil paintings
- Aug 1992 Halesworth Steeple Gallery, Halesworth, Suffolk
Open, a range of oil paintings

RESIDENCIES

- April/May 2007 Digital Photography and digital display exhibition. Working with the public at Norwich Millennium Library to create digital mosaics of literary figures, using 200 photos of library users.

Sep/Oct 2007	<i>I Thought We'd Nearly Lost Him</i> – Parapatetic art projects on theme and experiences of being an evacuee, taken to 10 schools in rural Norfolk culminating in a DVD and a book.
Nov/Dec 2004	<i>Imagine Project, The Georgians</i> , Thetford, Norfolk Working as part of a team bringing art projects to 13 Primary schools using Museum artefacts.
July/Aug 2003	<i>Imagine Project, The Great Fire of London</i> , Thetford, Norfolk Working as part of a team bringing art projects to 20 Primary Schools
Nov 1994	Selected as Artist in Residence for high profile residency with the City of London Symponia, working with schools in East London in a production of a musical event based around Greek and African myths.
April 1994	Selected as Artist in Residence by Kings College London University production of <i>Agamemnon</i> as part of the London Festival of Greek Drama, creating paintings, scenery and stage props
January 1994	Invited to take part in <i>Open Door to the Public</i> residency with 5 other artists producing work in the Gill Gallery, Newham, London

WORKSHOPS

December 1995	Selected to take part in Tate Gallery, <i>Making and Meaning</i> workshops, based around the Whistler Exhibition, culminating in an exhibition of work in the Tate Gallery in April 1995
June 1994	Invited to take part in <i>Prints after Poussin</i> workshops and subsequent exhibition at the Courtauld Galleries, London.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Royal Ulster Constabulary Museum, Belfast
Oil paintings of RUC Officers

COMMISSIONS

Caribbean Cruise Lines, 1999 and 2001, 2002, 2003
Series of paintings on various Opera themes

TEACHING

1996-2012	Tutor on private one day a week art workshops for adults.
2004-06	Life drawing tutor at Adult Evening Classes, Sir John Leman High School, Beccles, Suffolk.

CONCLUSION

I have experimented with and experienced a variety of methodologies for making paintings. Initially I had a reliance on working practices and vocabularies borrowed from other artists. As the programme progressed this reliance changed slowly and sporadically until I reached the position where I was able to develop a personal vocabulary.

On reflection, I consider that my creative practice was burdened by my idea of the status of work for the Doctorate programme having to be deconstructed and justified through explanation. My methodologies have changed from making planned, plotted and predetermined work. They have evolved and now allow for the use of intuition and a synthesis of experience. Rather than the self-consciousness that previously dominated there is a greater sense of self-expression in the work and my self imposed constraints and restraints are lessening. My research at times became so all engrossing that I failed to recognise the significant changes that took place within the work I was producing.

The cinematic references in my work became a constraint, but I was loath to abandon these as they provided me with a continuous stream of imagery that I could exploit and manipulate and produce a high volume of paintings. My research into film prompted me to form a small cinema club shared with fellow artists. We meet on a regular basis to view and discuss films we select from those shown on the art house circuit.

In terms of professional practice I have exhibited widely and successfully throughout East Anglia and have established a reputation for staging stimulating and challenging exhibitions. This year I was successful in having a painting accepted for the prestigious Threadneedle Prize exhibition.

I was extremely fortunate to meet and become a friend of Nicholas Usherwood, a highly regarded art journalist, author, and curator. Nicholas has advised me with the hanging of my exhibitions; he has also given me perceptive and constructive advice and has recommended reading material that has enlightened my research. I was able to reintroduce him to my Director of Studies, and Nicholas has been involved with the programme as a visiting art professional at the annual Doctorate forums.

On many occasions I have referred to the idea of the epic journey. My interest in the journey is as a metaphor for exploring and coming to terms with events in my own life and has led me to acknowledge deep and painful experiences from my childhood which have become my dominant subject matter.

My most recent body of work exhibited in the viva exhibition is the most autobiographical yet. I intended this body of work to have a more documentary element and for it to be in the nature of history painting. With these current paintings I am imaginatively exploring, reconstructing and

confronting the harsh regimes imposed on myself and friends whilst attending primary school in the early 1950s. I chose a square format for these works as I reflected that much of my early visual stimulus comes from film, record covers and early en-print photographs all of which were in that format.

The first of these paintings *Douglas* was a visualisation of a narrative event in which a friend was persuaded to stop using his left hand by denying him the use of it. This resulted in him developing a profound stutter. I am the second figure who had just been caned.



Fig 21, Douglas, oil on canvas 80cms x 80cms, 2012

This work stimulated me to explore further events and each painting suggested or prompted me to recall other incidents. I wanted the imagery to refer specifically to that period of austerity Britain and was careful to make the clothes and haircuts reflect that time. I chose to present the figures in a shallow space with a blended background in the manner of board room portraits as I felt this gave a dignity to my remembered friends who were treated with such indignity in their childhoods.



Fig 22, Tugwood and His .38 Webley
Oil on canvas 80cms x 80cms, 2012

The colour range is subdued into the flat, dull landscape of my memories of that time. On reviewing and reflecting on the paintings I can still trace cinematic elements in them; although none referred to cinema directly, nevertheless they have the feeling of a still taken from a film. There is also a limited amount of appropriated imagery which has been reworked and modified by me to fit within the context of this work.



Fig 23, Dumb Insolence, oil on canvas 80cms x 80cms 2012

Having unpicked these memories I am moved to anger at our compliance with the sometimes brutal treatment, and the fear that was instilled in us in those days, still echoes within me now.

The most recent painting in the series is a reflection on my relationship with my late father. Throughout the years depicted in the paintings he was in various sanatoriums and I scarcely knew him. He died shortly after I left primary school



Fig. 24, *Whisper, Dad* oil on canvas 80 x 80cm, 2012

In the painting he is a young man, smartly dressed in the fashions of the 1920s. I am the boy in the 1950s school uniform of grey serge. I am commenting on the unbridgeable gap that existed and will always exist between us.

The entire body of work, entitled *St James*, reflects on my memories of people who are still powerfully present to me and documents the lost world of my past. The synthesis and transformation in my work that I had been searching for is realised in these paintings made in the final weeks of the Doctorate. They are the most honest and closest to revealing who I am and what made me who I am in both a formal and conceptual sense. I now have the confidence and methodologies to continue with these explorations.

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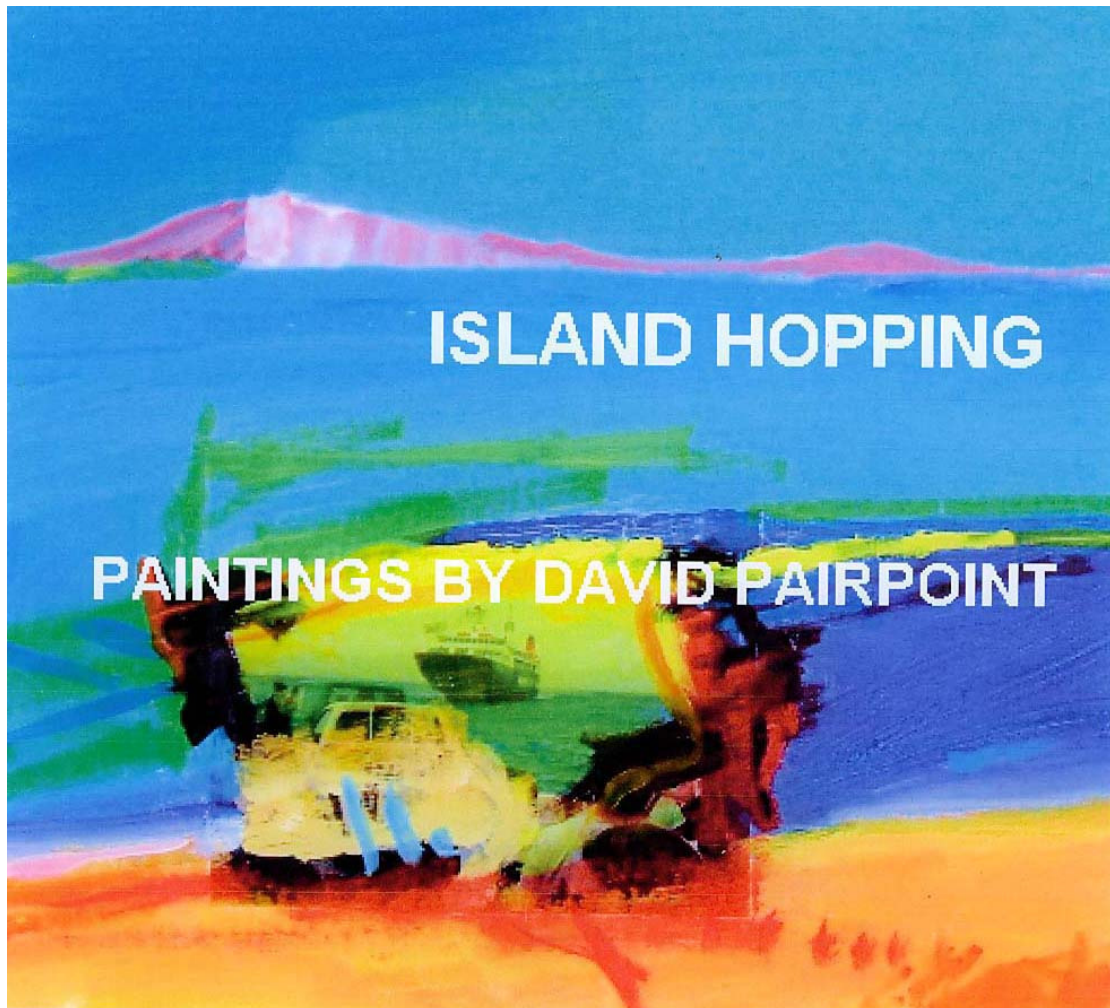
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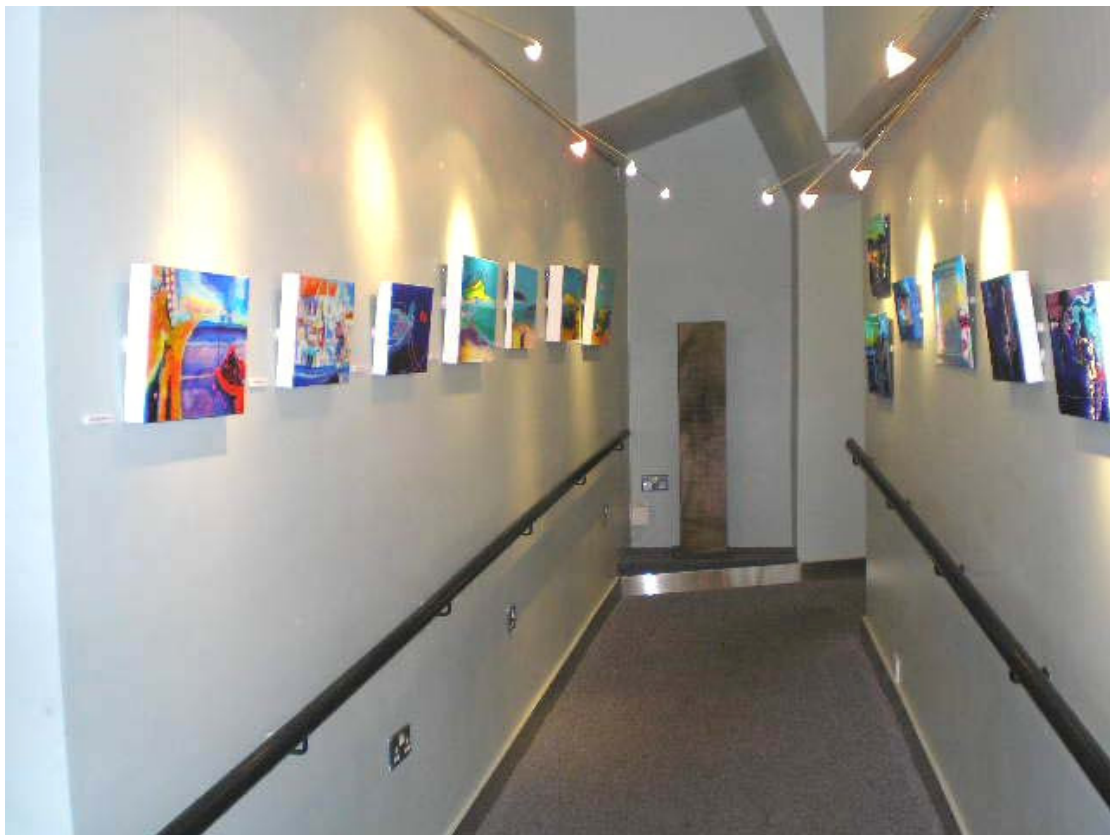
APPENDIX ONE

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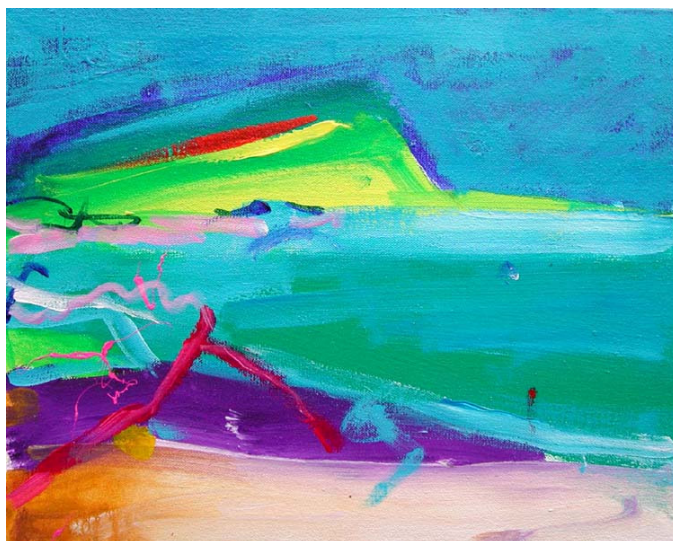
Poster, installation pictures and further images of paintings from
Island Hopping Exhibition at Fisher Theatre Bungay
From 29 August to 30 September 2008



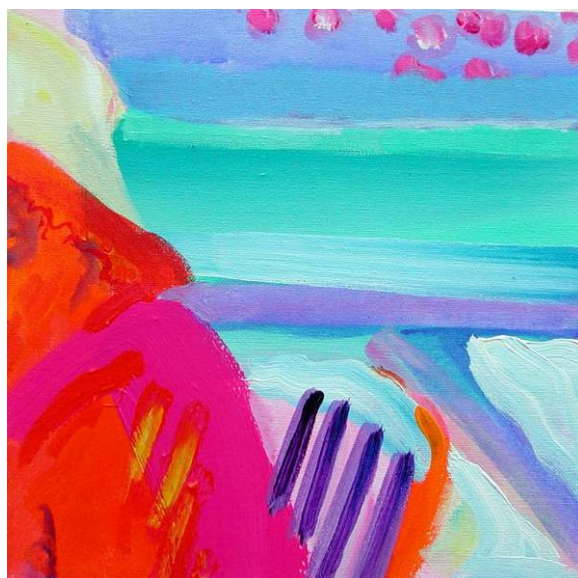
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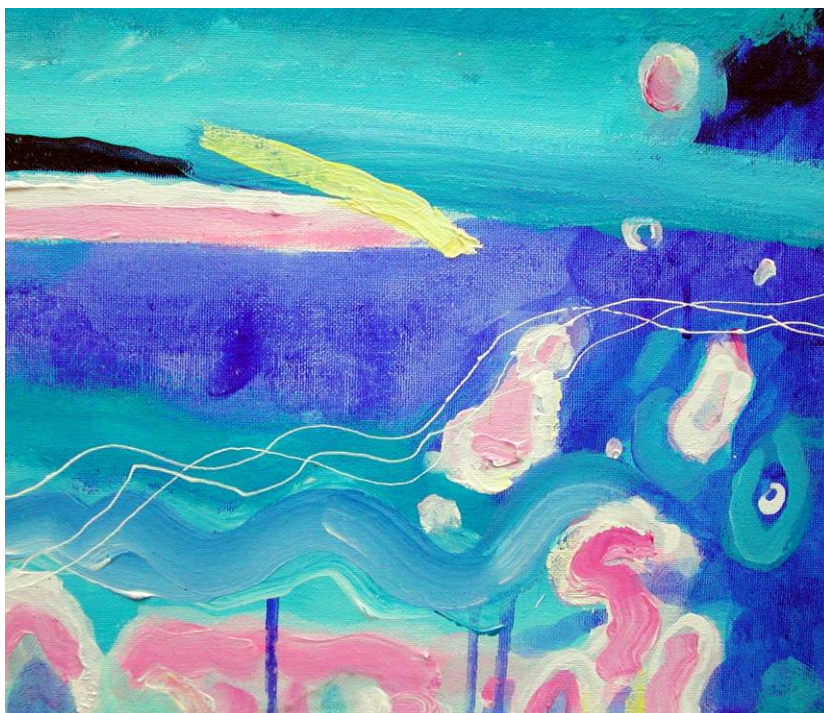
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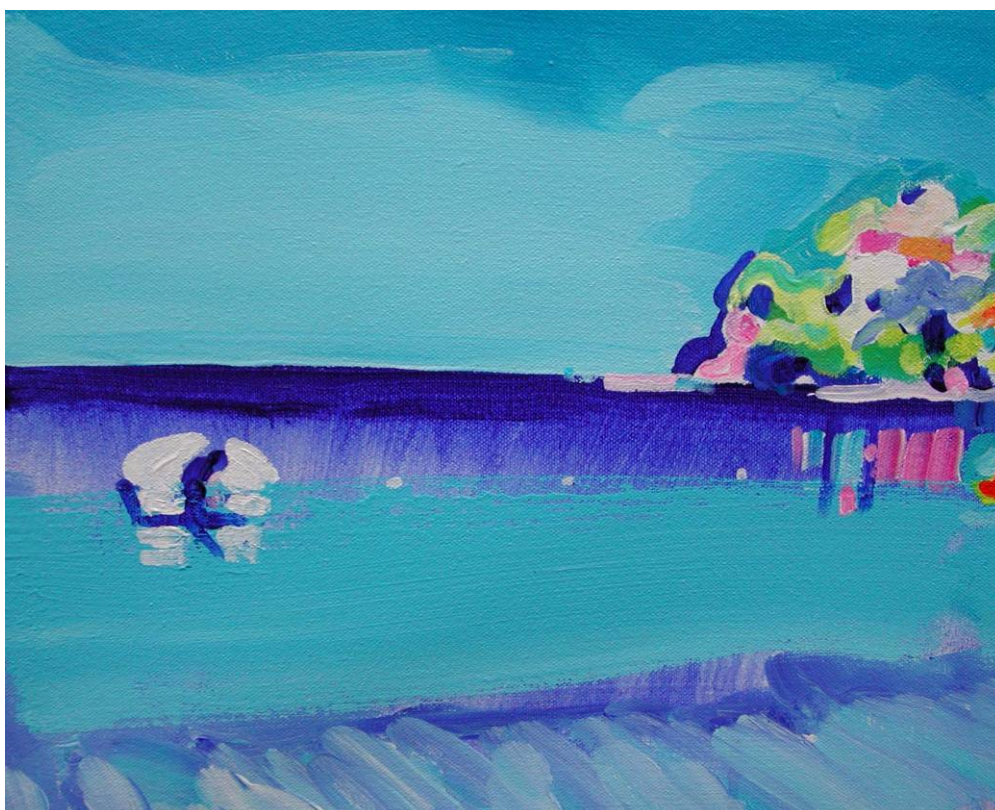
Beach Paxos Acrylic on canvas 40x36 cm.



Carole on Antipaxos Acrylic on canvas 30x30



Beach Kefalonia Acrylic on canvas 30x30 cm



Beach Loggos Acrylic on canvas 40x30 cm



Reflections Loggos Acrylic on canvas 40x30 cm



APPENDIX TWO

Contents

Newspaper and internet stories and images together with installation photographs and further images of paintings from *Hooray for Hollywood* exhibition at The Cut Art Centre, Halesworth, Suffolk from 10 February to 14 March 2009.



Suffolk artist David Pairpoint worked for 20 years in a bank until he decided to shed the collar and tie and become a mature art student. Now studying for a Phd, he has a powerful exhibition at the New Cut Arts Centre which looks at the way Hollywood glamorises the most tragic of professions. Arts Editor **Andrew Clarke** spoke to him.

It takes a great deal of nerve to step away from a secure, well-paid job with a reasonably secure future and a guaranteed pension at the end in order to enrol as a mature student at university and embark on a hazardous career as a freelance artist.

David Pairpoint, 64, of Elixton, near Bungay, is currently studying for his doctorate in fine art having gained a degree and then a masters degree at the University of East London.

Although he didn't have his life changing epiphany until the age of 40, he has never regretted the change of career from reasonably well-paid bank employee to impoverished artist.

"It took a lot of courage at the time – not only on my part but on the part of my family as well, he said."

Now David's talent and hard-work are being recognised with an exhibition at the New Cut Arts Centre in Halesworth.

David's exhibition takes as its

part of our visual language in everyday life and makes a link between the way that Julia Roberts' prostitute was portrayed in *Pretty Woman* and the way that the five murdered Ipswich women were portrayed by the media while the search was on for their killer.

"I suppose I have always been interested in movies. It started when I was very young. My mother used to take me to the cinema from the age of about 18 months and from about the age of 11, I went on my own. It was during those most impressionable years that I really fell in love with films and with the experience of going to the cinema.

"In later life I have come to realise how much of my outlook on the world has been shaped by Hollywood and how the film industry portrays the world. It shapes our thinking without us really being aware of it."

He said that this has been brought home to him since he has been looking at the world afresh – through an artist's eyes. "I decided

through the medium of iconic cinema images but then to subvert them by introducing a child-figure, an innocent, if you like, which could be a younger version of myself."

He said that he has been amazed by the various different ways that people have reacted to the

“What I have found very gratifying is that people have been developing a narrative for the pictures

David Pairpoint

paintings. "People have read them, or interpreted them in a wide variety of different ways simply because there is now a child figure present in what otherwise would have been a reasonably well-

reproduction of an image from a Hollywood film."

David is pleased that his foray into the world Hollywood glamour has provoked such a strong response from viewers and he hopes that the Halesworth exhibition will provoke an equally strong response – particularly as Roxanne, which tackles the subject of the Ipswich murders, is being exhibited much closer to home than a viewing in London would be.

"What I have found very gratifying is that people have been developing a narrative for the pictures. They have been developing theories, little stories, about what they feel is going on in the pictures which give them an added sense of life."

He said that he created Roxanne, named after the hit-song by the Police, towards the end of the series of paintings. He was working on the Hollywood series as the murders were taking place and found the events portrayed on the evening news had a bearing on

to full colour



PASSION FOR ART: David Pairpoint, right, and a collection of his splendid artwork featuring *Breathless*, left, which is featured as part of his exhibition *Hooray for Hollywood* at New Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth
Main photos: PHIL MORLEY

"I was struck at the way that the TV coverage changed as the events unfolded over the days and weeks. At the beginning the girls were being portrayed as drug addicts and sleazy prostitutes and then a couple of the parents made some televised appeals and the whole attitude of the television coverage changed. Suddenly, these were no longer sleazy prostitutes, they were somebody's daughters, they were young women with friends and families and it immediately put me in my of the way that Hollywood romanticises and glamorises prostitution or working girls as they were called. Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman* is the obvious one but it stretches all the way back to the way that Jean Harlow and Marlene Dietrich were portrayed – the way that the film world sanitises these things."

He said that initially he thought of painting portraits of the murdered girls juxtaposed with similar images of Hollywood film stars as a kind of memorial and an ironic comment on the fact that they had had their 15 minutes of fame, their moment in the sun, but it had been a tragic, deadly moment in the sun. On reflection I

thought that was slightly trite, so I went onto make a different, larger painting, the Roxanne painting, which suggests the story of the prostitutes but isn't blatant. It has an allegorical feel to it but is open to interpretation."

He said that film world has always glamorised the world of the prostitute and perhaps now needs to take stock and take responsibility for the messages it sends out. "I'm sure the experiences of the real-life prostitutes on Sunset Strip bear no relation to Julia Roberts' portrayal in *Pretty Woman*. Looking back at Elizabeth Taylor in *Butterfield 8* – she played a prostitute who was decked out in furs and designer clothes. I doubt many prostitutes can aspire to that kind of luxury. Even much closer to home Billie Piper's series on ITV – *Diary of a Call Girl* – still maintains this glamorous image and it is dangerous."

Continued on Page 4



WORKING SPACE: David Pairpoint
in his studio at his home in Flixton



“I didn't have the opportunity to go to university or learn how to be an artist simply because I needed to go out to work to help bring some money into the house

David Pairpoint

Continued from Page 3

He said that although the collection on display at the New Cut in Halesworth is complete he has started another series of works on the similar theme of Hollywood and autobiography. “There just seems to be so much to explore in that whole arena of films, star perception and the world as we know it.

“Films are extremely powerful, if you see one that really strikes you it can stay with you for weeks – months even. The images I have included in the exhibition – movies like *The Searchers*, *Giant*, are all classics that I saw during that impressionable age from nine to 11 and they have all stayed with me – have made an indelible impression on my film-going world. They had a big woa impact at the time and they continue to work their magic.”

He said that 30 years ago, he almost didn't dare dream that he would be making his living from his art. He worked at Lloyds Bank in Norwich for 15 years, painting as a hobby in the evenings but not really realising his potential. Banking was the safe option which he was happy to take in order to provide for his family but when his daughter came home from university with tales of mature students and university life, his outlook on the world dramatically changed.

“I worked at Lloyds Bank for 20 years before chucking the job in and went off to Norwich Art School to do a foundation course, which I then followed up with a BA in fine art at the University of East London and then went back 15 years later to do my masters degree and now I am currently working on my PhD – on a part-time basis.”

He said that to work as an artist is the realisation of a life-long dream. “My Dad died when I was quite young, so I didn't have the opportunity to go to university or learn how to be an artist simply

because I needed to go out to work to help bring some money into the house.

“I had always painted and drawn – and it always was an important part of my life but any thoughts of going to art school had to be shelved because my mum was trying to bring up three boys on her own and we needed food on the table.”

He said that even when he got older, once you are on the work treadmill it is very hard to get off. “You get married, have a family and there you are having to provide again – which you are very happy to do, but there comes a time when you can strike out and change things.

“For me it came when my daughter came home from university and told me that she had come across these things called mature students – people of my age who had gone to university later in life. I had never come across this before but I quickly found out about it.

“I knew immediately that this was a second chance. I was about 40 then and decided to chuck in my job and the bank which was a really unusual thing to do at the time – particularly in banking because you are normally there for life but this was something I really wanted to do, this was my chance to get the life that I wanted for myself as a teenager.”

He said that he has never regretted the change of career and he sees it as proof of the old maxim that it is never too late for a change and to realise a long cherished dream.

“It all sounds a little corny I suppose but it is true – sometimes all you need is the courage to do it and the support of your family. It was a big step but my wife Carole, who was also studying at the time, my daughter was at university studying graphic design and my son Stuart who was at Easton Agricultural College, were all very supportive. Also I found the tutors on the course very accepting of mature students and

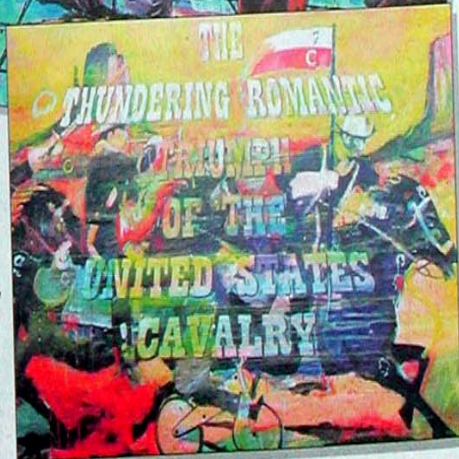


POWERFUL: *Roxanne*, above, and *Thundering Romantic Triumph*, right

enjoyed the fact that we brought some life experience into the lectures and into the studio.

“But at the same time, the experience of art school just took my work in a whole new direction simply because you are exposed to many more new ideas and surrounded by like-minded people. I really do recommend it.”

■ David Pairpoint's *Hooray For Hollywood* exhibition is at the New Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth until March 14.



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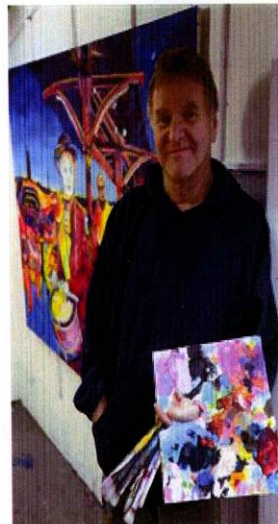
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David Pairpoint

Suffolk artist David Pairpoint worked for 20 years in a bank until he decided to shed the collar and tie and become a mature art student. Now studying for a Phd, he has a powerful exhibition at the New Cut Arts Centre which looks at the way Hollywood glamorises the most tragic of professions. Arts Editor Andrew Clarke spoke to him.

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"It took a lot of courage at the time - not only on my part but on the part of my family as well." David's talent and hard-work are being recognised with an exhibition at the New Cut Arts Centre in Halesworth.

David's exhibition takes as its theme the way that iconic Hollywood images are used as part of our visual language in everyday life and makes a link between the way that Julia Roberts prostitute was portrayed in Pretty Woman and the way that the five murdered prostitutes were portrayed by the media while the search was on for their killer.



David at work

"I suppose I have always been interested in movies. It started when I was very young. My mother used to take me to the cinema from the age of about 18 months and from about the age of 11, I went on my own. It was during those most impressionable years that I really fell in love with films and with the experience of going to the cinema.

"In later life I have come to realise how much of my outlook on the world has been shaped by Hollywood and how the film industry portrays the world. It shapes our thinking without us really being aware of it."

He said that this has been brought home to him since he has been looking at the world afresh - through an artist's eyes. "I decided in my most recent group of paintings to portray the world through the medium of iconic cinema images but then to subvert them by introducing a child-figure, an innocent, if you like, which could be a younger version of myself."

He said that he has been amazed by the various different ways that people have reacted to the paintings. "People have read them, or interpreted them in a wide variety of different ways simply because there is now a child figure

present in what otherwise would have been a reasonably well known image. As a result it has become something more than a reproduction of an image from a Hollywood film."

David is pleased that his foray into the world Hollywood glamour has provoked such a strong response from viewers and he hopes that the Halesworth exhibition will provoke an equally strong response - particularly as Roxanne, which tackles the subject of the prostitute murders, is being exhibited much closer to home than a viewing in London would be.

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Ethan and me

He said that he created Roxanne, named after the hit-song by the Police, towards the end of the series of paintings. He was working on the Hollywood series as the murders were taking place and found the events portrayed on the evening news had a bearing on the work taking shape in his studio.

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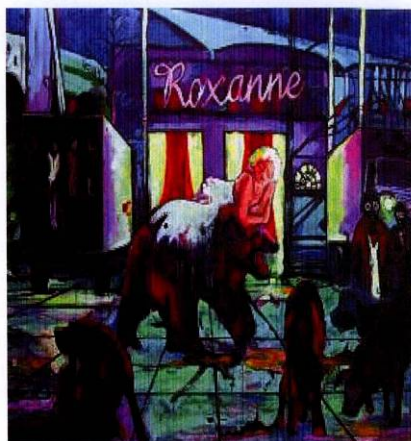
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Roxanne

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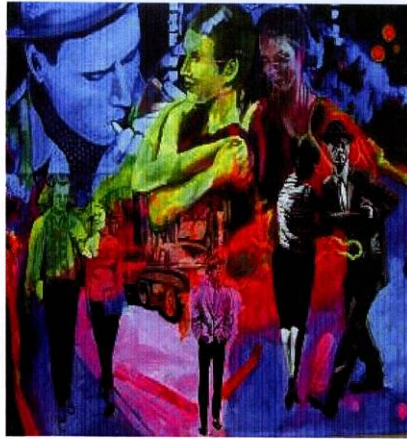
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Breathless painting

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David Pairpoint's Hooray For Hollywood exhibition is at the New Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth until March 14.

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Installation views Halesworth



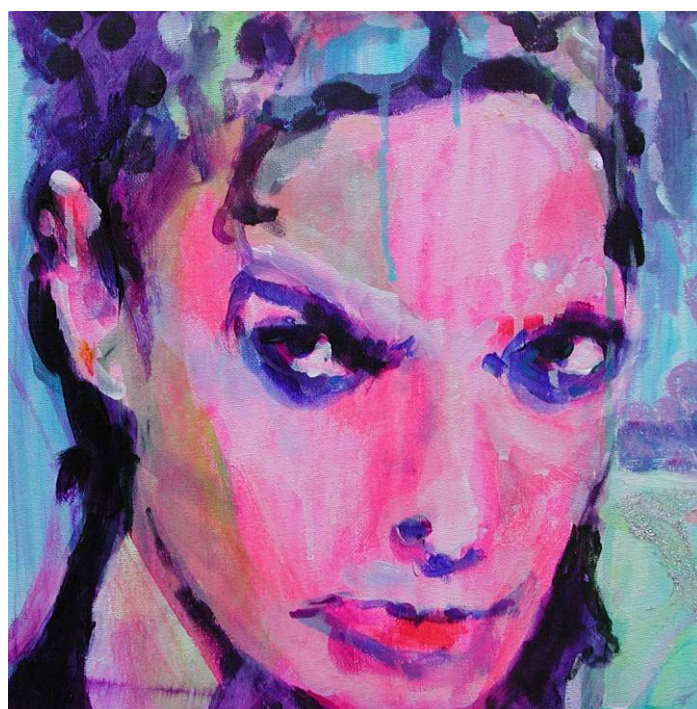
Breathless Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2008



The Day I Ran Away to Join the Fair Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cms 2008



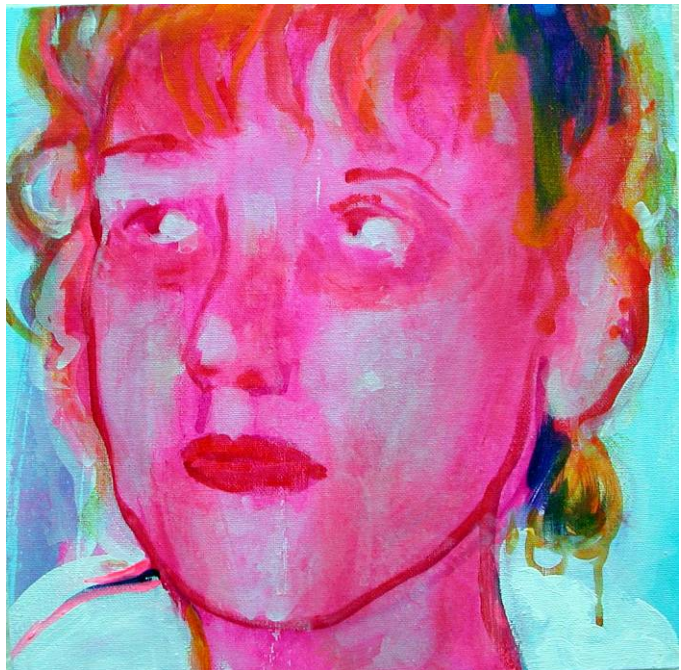
A Lusty Romance and Adventure Acrylic on canvas 244x183 cms 2008



The Girls, Acrylic on Canvas, 30 x 30 cms, 2008



The Girls, Acrylic on Canvas, 30 x 30 cms, 2008



The Girls, Acrylic on canvas 30 x 30 cms, 2008



Boy Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cms 2009

APPENDIX THREE

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Publicity material, installation photographs and further images of paintings in exhibitions at Wingfield Art Centre, Wingfield , Suffolk, 17 August to 30 September 2009 and the Playhouse Theatre Gallery Norwich, Norfolk. 4 to 30 October 2009.



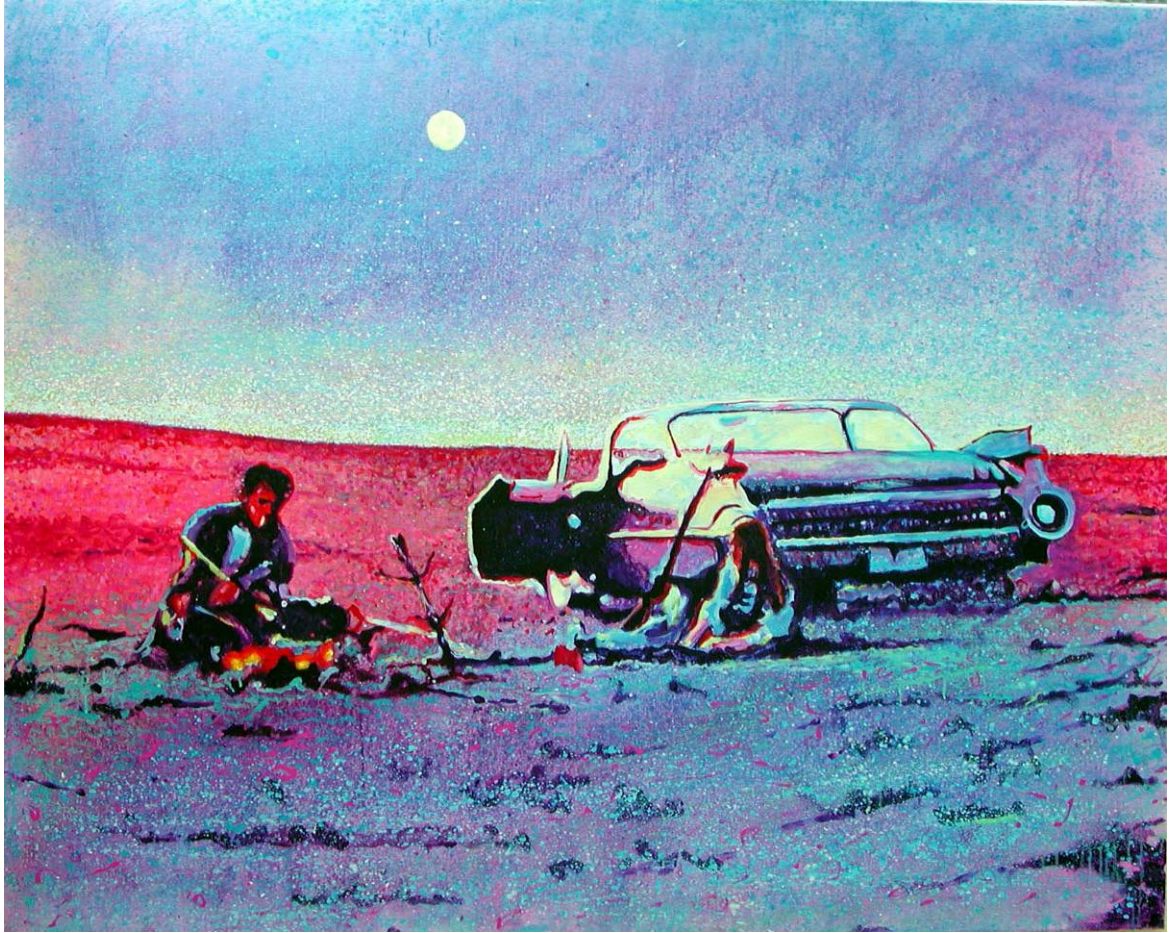
Installation views Wingfield Arts Centre



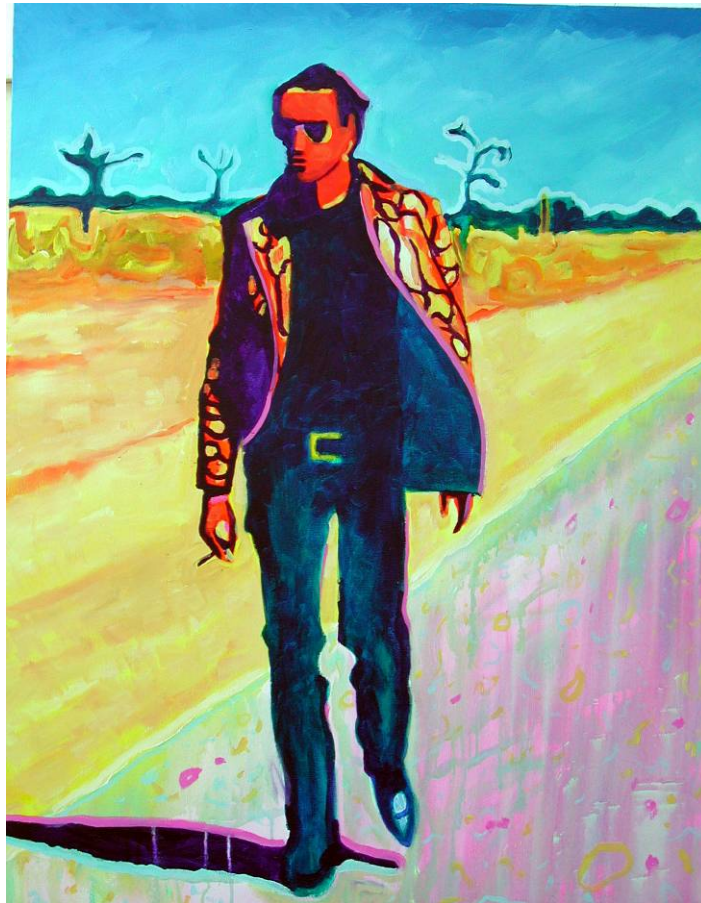
Installation view Wingfield Arts Centre



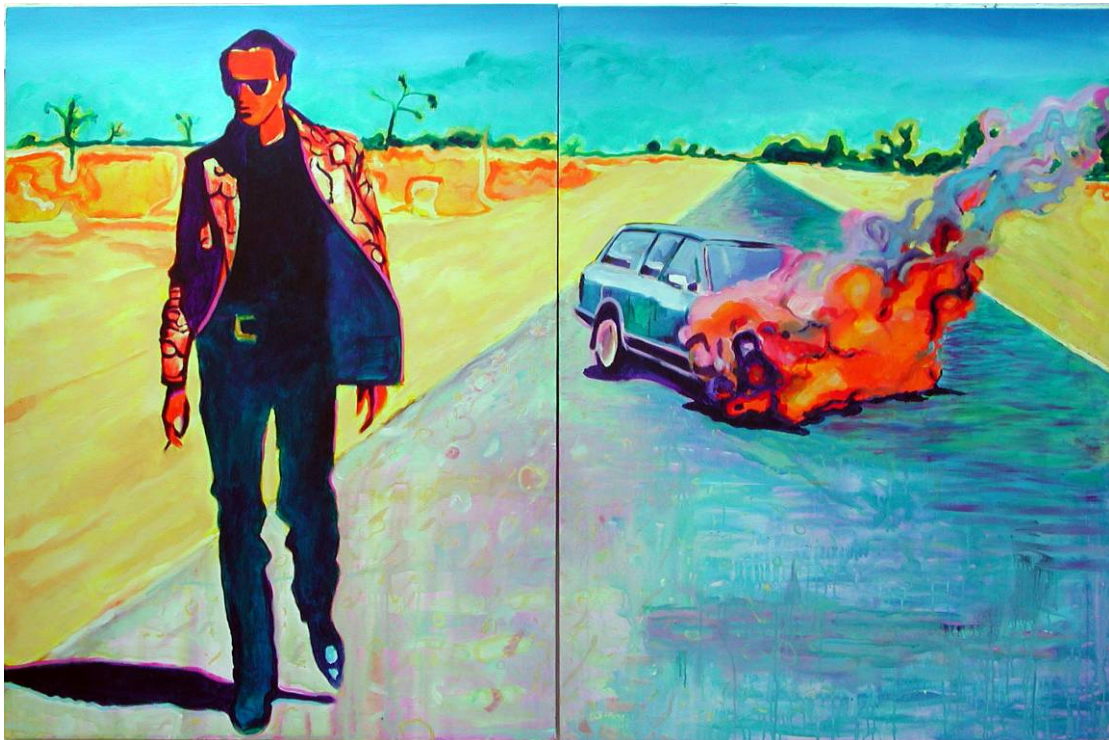
I Keep Going Back to Joes Acrylic on canvas 183x153 2008



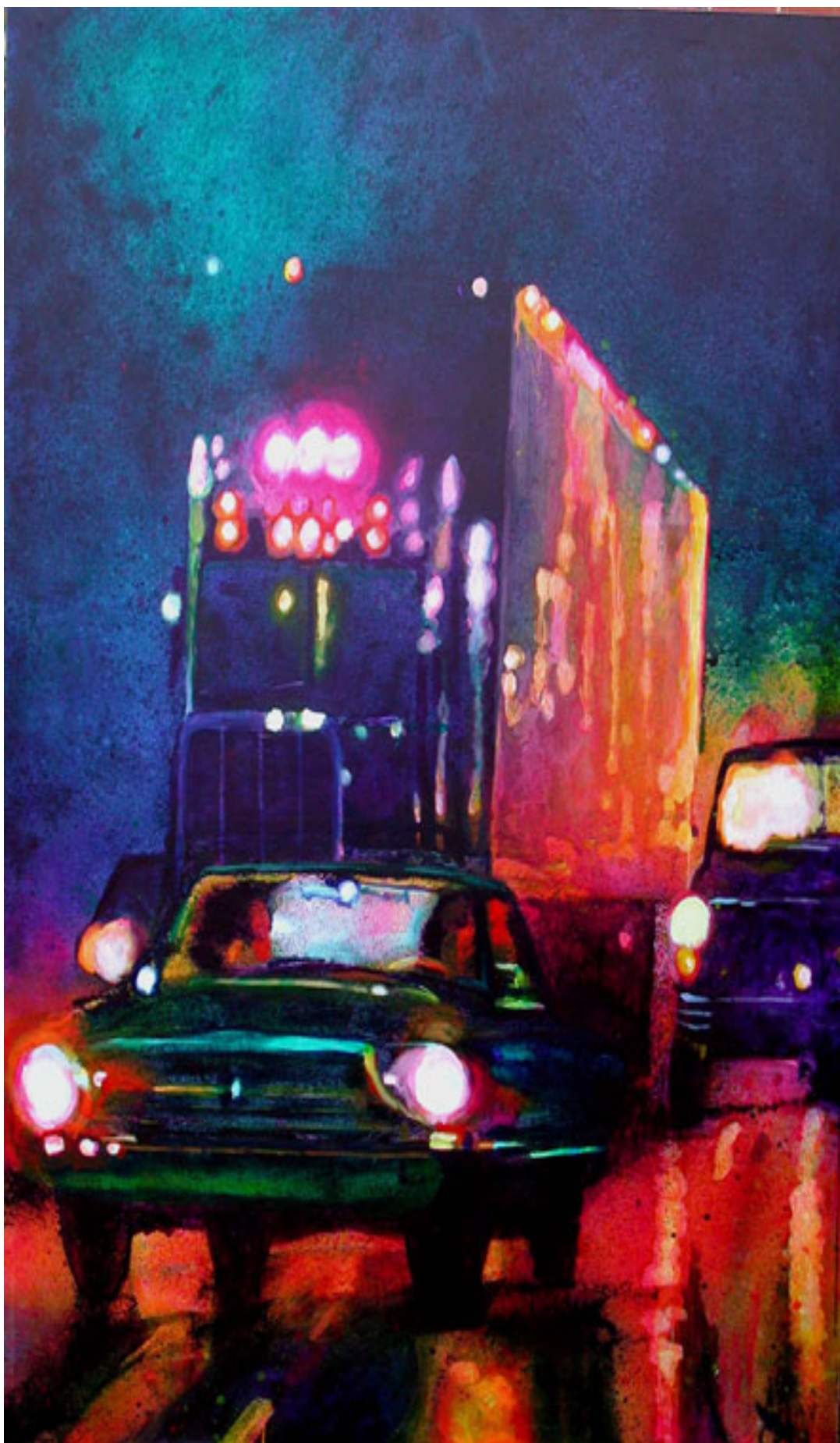
Between Missoula and the Lights of Cheyenne Acrylic on canvas 183x153 2008



Sailor Passed By Acrylic on Canvas 122x92cm 2009



Sailor passed by Wearing His Snakeskin Jacket Acrylic on canvas 244x92cm 2009



Leaving the Silver Bullet

Acrylic on canvas 300x183cm 2009



Stepping Out Acrylic on Canvas 183x153cm 2009



Firestorm Acrylic on canvas 183x153 2009



Divine wind Acrylic on Canvas 152x122cm 2009



Mustang Acrylic on canvas 152x122 cm 2009



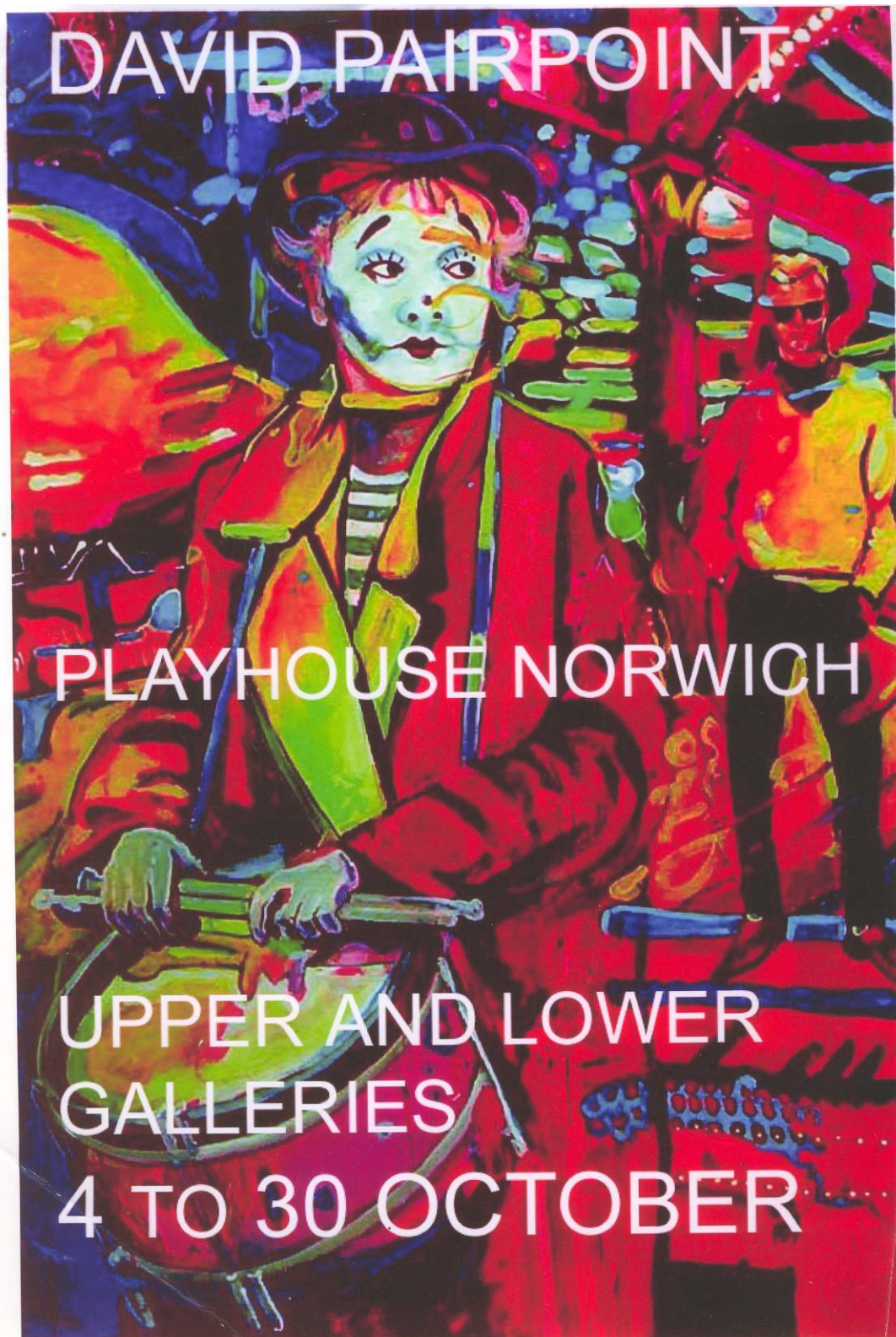
Surviving the Storm Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2009



Oh Carole Acrylic on canvas 276x 122 cm 2009



Big Mesa Acrylic on canvas 183x122 cm 2009



Poster Playhouse Theatre Norwich

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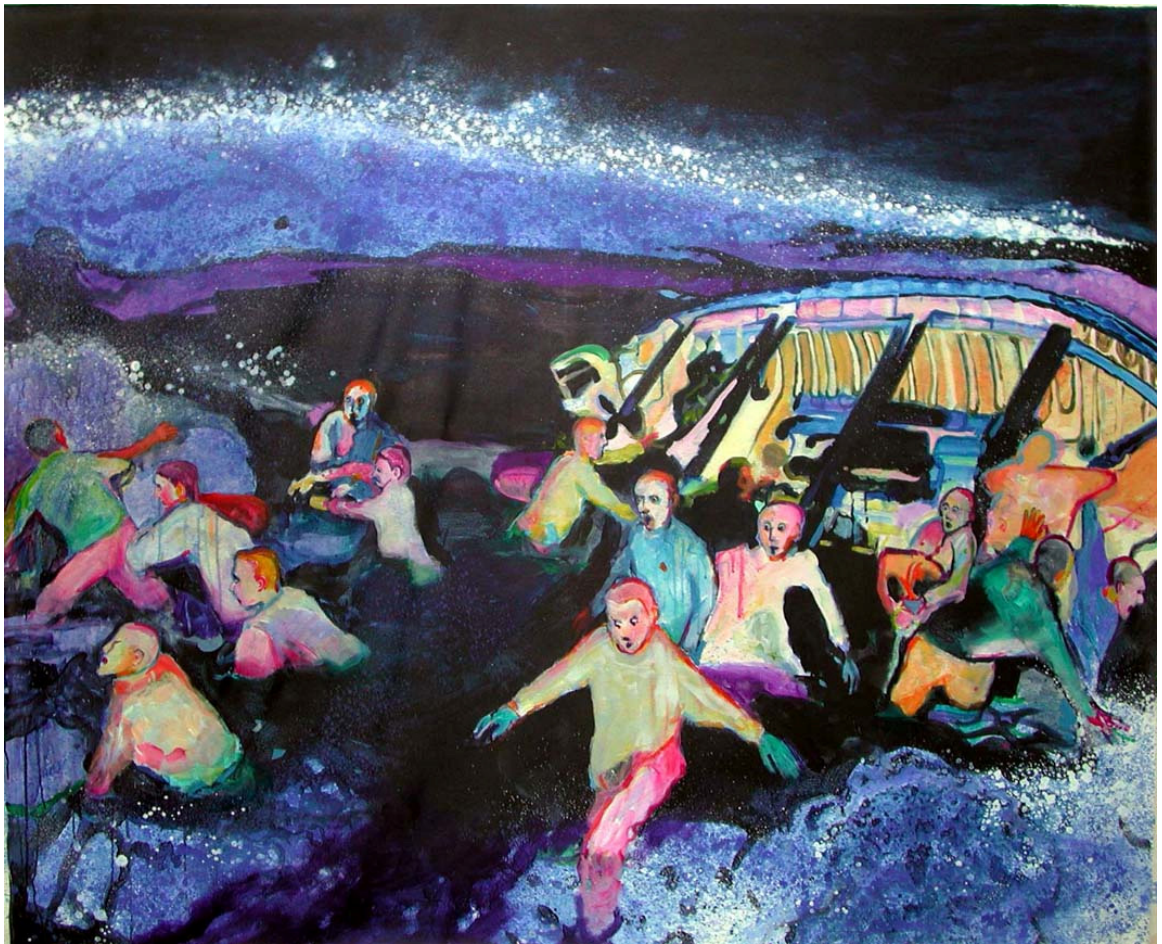
Further images of paintings from the *Refugee* series. 2010



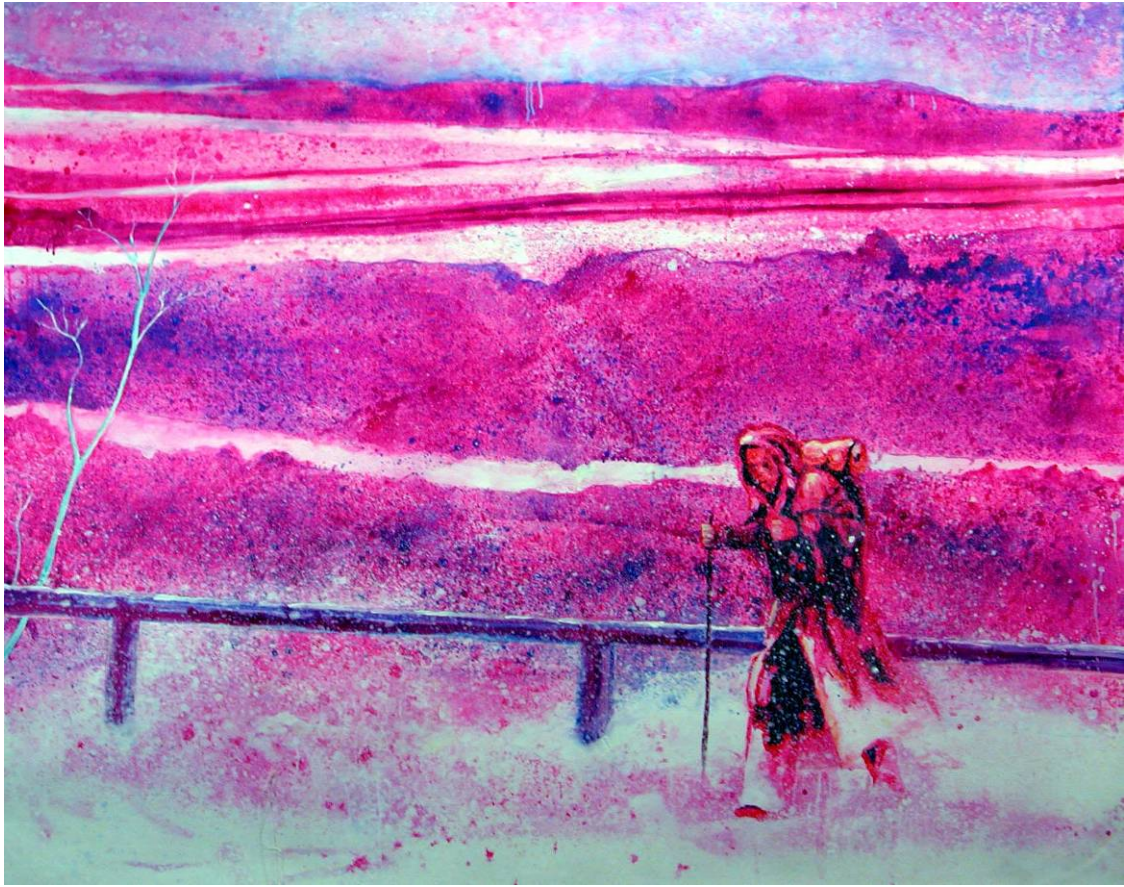
Itinerants Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2010



Refugees 1 Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2010



Refugees 2 Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2010



Traveller Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2010



Boys in snow Oil on canvas 122 x 92 cm 2010



Running Woman Acrylic on canvas 122x92 cm 2010



The Old Country Acrylic on canvas 22x92 cm 2010



Horseman Acrylic on canvas 183x153 cm 2010

APPENDIX FIVE

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Further images of paintings from the family portrait series and associated paintings. 2010 to 2011



Dad Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2010



Mum Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2010



Grandad back from Wipers Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2010



Lionel and Me Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2010



Grandad and Field Punishment No.1 Oil on canvas 183x183 cm 2011



Bill Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



Harry Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



Winter 1 Acrylic on canvas 20 x 20cm 2011



Winter 2 Acrylic on Canvas 20 x 20cms 2011



L A 1969 1 Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



L A 1969 2 Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



L A 1969 3 Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



Orange County Acrylic on canvas 80x80 cm 2011



One Last Visit Oil on canvas 152x92 cm 2011

APPENDIX SIX

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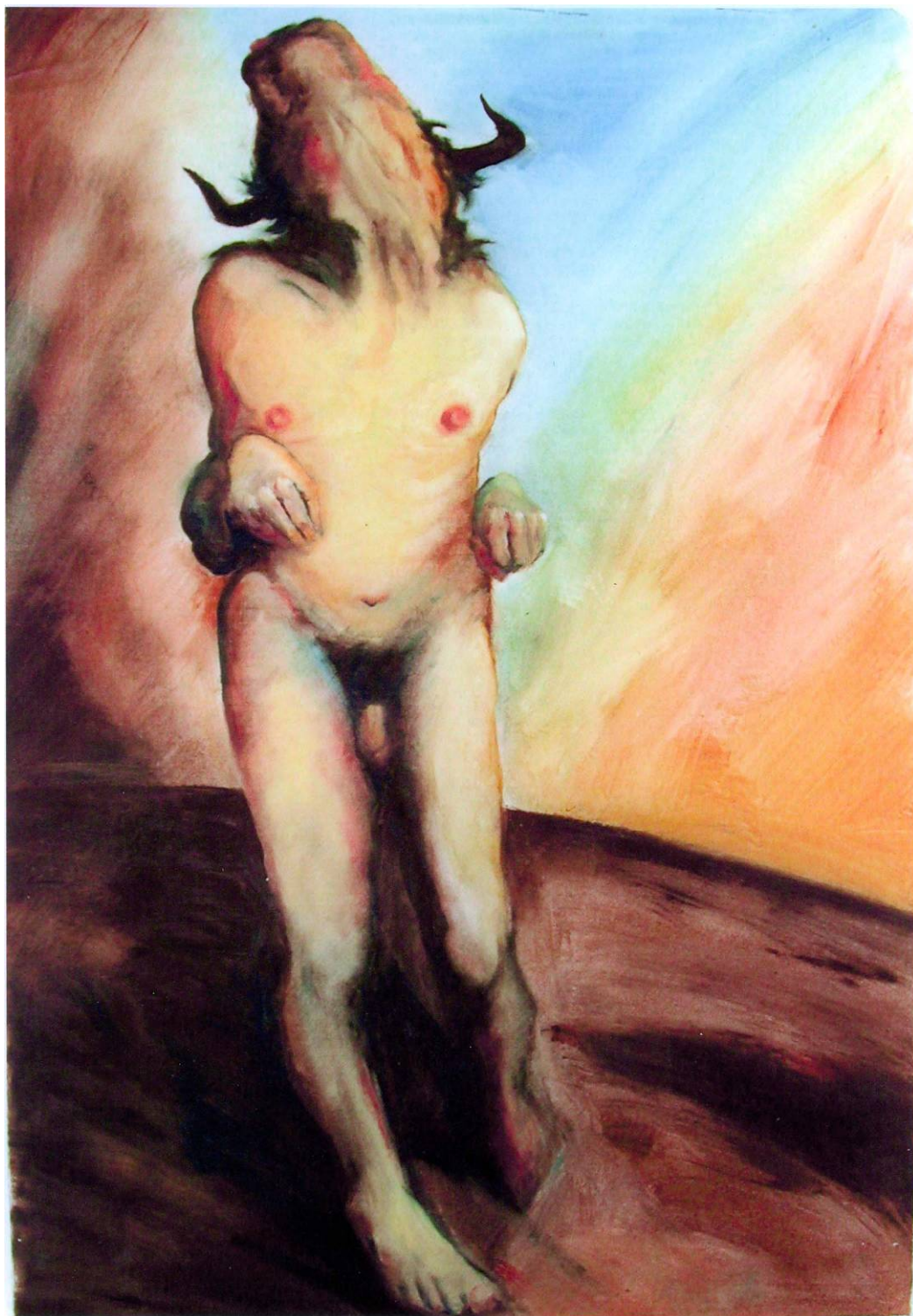
Further images of paintings from the Odyssey and family mythology series and associated paintings.



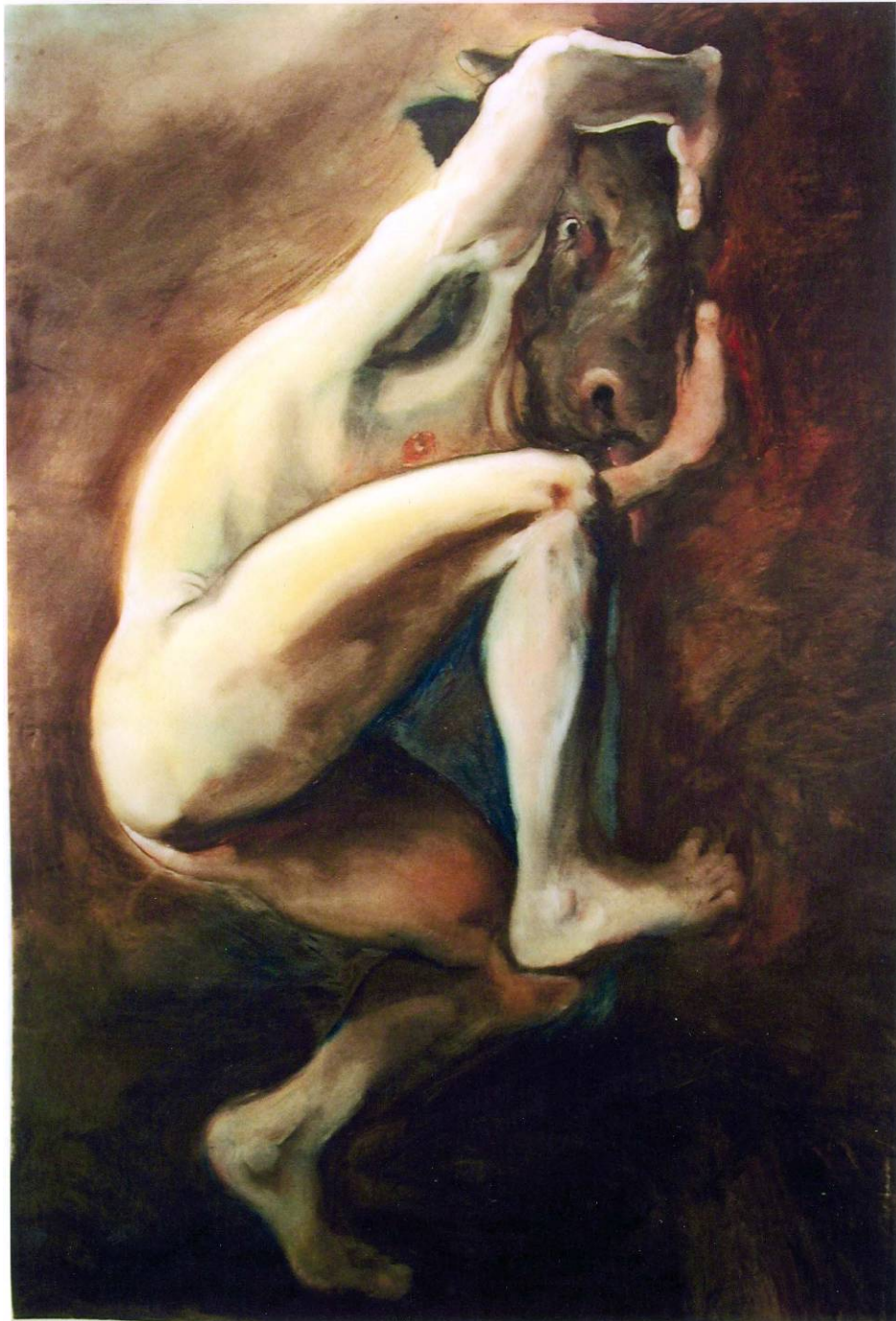
Canto Oil on canvas 183x183cm 2011



Flying Man Oil on canvas 183x153 cm 2011



Minotaur 1 Oil and charcoal on paper 70x100 cm 2011



Minotaur 2 Oil and charcoal on paper 70 x 100cms 2011



Gassed Oil on Canvas 100x100 2011



Big Bird 1 Acrylic on canvas 80 x 80 cms 2012



Big Bird 2 Acrylic on Canvas 80 x 80 cms 2012



Big Bird 3 Acrylic on canvas 80 x 80 cms 2012

APPENDIX SEVEN

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Installation of viva exhibition June 2012.





