

Tethered to Reality

*Meet Devon Life's
first Landscape
Painter of the Year*

mayne
GALLERY

Showcasing the 6 finalists of the
Devon Life Landscape Painter of the year
competition 2016.



CAN YOU SEE WHAT IT IS? Is that a tree? A beach? A mountain? Within art we too often put paintings into a single category – representational, abstract or nonrepresentational. This exercise is often a split second reaction to take us into a comfort zone – and give us that all important ‘in’ to understanding the work before us. But too often these labels give us an ‘out’. We don’t know art, but we know we don’t like that kind of art.

So it’s not surprising that our winning artist of Devon Life’s Landscape Painter of the Year rejects labels for his own work – and is perhaps one of the reasons the judges were wowed by his work.

“I think that the terms ‘abstract’ or ‘representational’ as they apply to my paintings are inadequate and even misleading,” he says. “All of my paintings are based on close observation of reality, yet my paintings do not necessarily ‘represent’ things, but are things in themselves.

“My life line is careful observation of reality, including nature; my painting may be selective, simplified, or exaggerated depending on how I feel about a place.”

Not, ‘this is that’ but ‘this is this.’”

But there is always a vital connection between his painting and the reality we observe. “My life line is careful observation of reality, including nature,” he says. “My painting may be selective, simplified, or exaggerated depending on how I feel about a place.”

Looking at the work it is impossible to separate the image from the process of how the work is created. “My paintings are the direct result of my observations and experiences on actual locations,” he explains. “All of my paintings begin *en plein air* with drawings, water colours or acrylic sketches. The larger works are then completed in my studio either in acrylics or oils.

“My goal in painting is to show the world in a new and personal way,” he explains. “It often involves simplifying the scene to try to capture its essence and inner spirit as I see it. I am particularly interested in the effects of light, shadow and movement. The paintings often incorporate the use of rough textures as the picture may warrant. I am interested in trying to capture my direct and often passionate responses to a scene which convey ▶



Untitled by James Tatum

Private View: Saturday 1st April
Exhibition: Monday 3rd - Saturday 22nd April.

www.maynegallery.co.uk info@maynegallery.co.uk

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Untitled by James Tatum

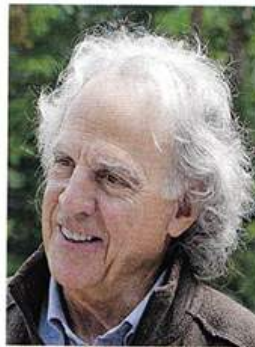
something of what it felt like to be there.”

“Some people look to art to confirm everything they already know, but James’s artistic enquiry embraces the unknown,” says judge Carol Burns, arts editor of *Devon Life*, and herself a trained professional artist. “Artists are always finding new ways to represent not only the view, but its texture, its feel and a visual reflection of our emotional response to what is before us. And James’ work has that in spades.”

Fellow judge Jane Price is owner of Kingsbridge’s Mayne Gallery which will be exhibiting the finalists of the competition in April. “The things that most strike me about the submissions received are the range of styles and the genuine richness of talent that have chosen to enter the competition,” she says. “Watercolours, oils washes - a mix of realistic and abstract renditions of the beautiful scenery we have around us in the region. And after all, that is what the competition sought to find: something magical in art that captivates us, tells us something new that a photograph could never do; take us on a journey into the landscape through the eyes and the hands of the artists that will impart an essence of the moments they experienced, transformed and rendered with the power of the compositions, textures, paint and the interactions of the brush on the surfaces.

“The work creates a personal relationship between the viewer and the work that questions, informs, delights and creates the desire to spend your life with the work, knowing that each time you see the piece it will be a memory and a chance for something new to be discovered! And with that point in mind I feel that, for me, James Tatum is the one most deserving of the honour.

“Here at Mayne Gallery we are really



Devon Life Landscape Painter of the Year winner James Tatum is largely self-taught although he has drawn for most of his life and became a professional artist in 2010.

looking forward to featuring the finalists in the gallery. A fantastic array of art that deserves to be showcased under the banner of Devon Life Landscape Painter of the Year.”

Largely self-taught, James says that although he has been drawing all his life, he only became a professional artist in 2010. “Art teaches us how to live with uncertainty and mystery,” he adds. “For me, painting is a celebration of that mystery. The power of painting lies in its position between the illusion of complete understanding and complete obscurity. It is not about representation versus non-representation or figurative versus abstraction. For me, all painting is abstract.

“My painting is a physical process, not a theoretical one. It’s an expression of the essence and energy of what I observe. It is as rough and real as nature. Making a painting is a fight and a struggle, and you do not always win; that’s the risk – but a risk that has to be taken.” ♦

Meet the finalists

Devon’s leading gallery, the Mayne Gallery in Kingsbridge, has a reputation for discovering new artists as well as showcasing established artists.

In April the gallery will open its exhibition showcasing the six finalists of the Devon Life Landscape Painter of the Year Competition 2016, including our winner James Tatum. The exhibition opens 3 April and runs to 22 April with an invitation-only private view planned for Saturday, 1 April featuring an evening of fine art with suitably celebratory canapés and bubbles. You can book tickets for the event through the gallery on 01548 853 848.

The other finalists featured in the exhibition are Cherry Lyons, Johanna McWeeney, Mike Jory, Laura Boyd and Peter Blakesley.

Don’t miss this opportunity to admire the works of some of the most talented artists in the region.

Mayne Gallery, 14 Fore Street, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 1NY
maynegallery.co.uk