

MICHAEL PORTER

9 September – 3 October 2011



Michael Porter is a landscape painter. This, as a statement, sounds pretty straightforward. However, Porter has created a unique voice in dealing with this very English subject-matter. His paintings describe the physical boldness of the landscape combined with the delicate flora and fauna found within it. The forthcoming exhibition at Purdy Hicks Gallery reiterates his position as one of this country's leading contemporary landscape painters, using what is usually seen as the familiar and reinterpreting it with a creative freshness allowing the viewer to see the landscape from a new perspective.

The recent paintings bring together ideas of intimacy and close observation. The works evolve slowly, often taking a year or more to complete. Porter commented recently,

The paintings mature like nature itself, the seeds of an idea are set, take root and allowed to grow, are pruned and reshaped and blossom and hopefully bear fruit



The surfaces are multi-layered: natural elements are camouflaged and concealed and are only just visible, whilst others, painted with painstaking detail, are clearly discernible. The variety of surface texture and the delicate and subtle colours reflect those of the natural world. Although nature is the catalyst, Porter's paintings challenge our perception of how we interpret the world around us. How do we know what we look at is beautiful? Why does a seemingly random mark appear to be highly descriptive or the intricately painted mushroom or leaf look so nondescript? These paintings convey the mystery of the natural world.

Porter's premise that the artist tells people what they already know, but puts it in a different way, is evident in the paintings. They demonstrate an overpowering love of being in the landscape with an ability to stand, stare and appreciate the natural world. Sometimes the work appears extravagant and sometimes restrained, but always displays a serious and single-minded philosophy, permitting the viewer to be both part of the landscape and observer at the same time.



Michael Porter was born 1948 in Derbyshire. From 1974 he worked in the same studio in Hackney, East London until his move to Cornwall in 1997. He has exhibited widely in museums and galleries including Tate St Ives, Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Abbot Hall Art Gallery Kendal, Angel Row Gallery Nottingham. Public collections holding his work include the British Museum, Government Art Collection, National Gallery (Artist in Residence 1982-83), Victoria & Albert Museum, National Gallery of Australia Canberra, New York Public Library.

For the past twenty years he has worked exclusively from the landscape, always using locations that he has been familiar with over long periods of time as the paintings incorporate both time past and time present.

‘He respects the native tradition of landscape painting whilst reinventing it by means of his innovatory techniques and personal vision.....his prolific technical experiments have been harnessed to a radical form of realism resulting in works that are equivalent to natural phenomena and which take the viewer into metaphysical realms’ , Clive Phillpot.