



BRUCE YARDLEY

Some art historians argue the invention of photography in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was the trigger for artists to abandon their quest for 'photographic' realism and pursue something more intangible and inward-looking, a pursuit which led in the first place to what we now call impressionism — and eventually on to total abstraction, an art so inscrutable it alienates many viewers.

Bruce Yardley is certainly someone who is happy with that first staging post within the post-photographic art world's journey. Referring to the French impressionism of the late 1860s and early 1870s, he says: "Those years represent the extended moment when art acquired a new painterly language without sacrificing its ability to communicate a recognisable image of the visual world."

Bruce is worth listening to. He is one of this country's most respected impressionist painters. He is also a scholar of this school of painting. Indeed, the quote above appears in his book *Painting like the Impressionists* (Crowood Press, 2021).

So what does Bruce mean by 'a new painterly language'? He's really talking about a loose approach to light, colour and texture that had never been seen before the Impressionists exploded on to the scene. This small band of outsiders broke the rules of establishment art (highly finished classical/religious subjects etc) in order to represent their 'impression' of the contemporary world they saw. At first they were vilified. Today, they are beloved.

Bruce hasn't had to wait as long as his misunderstood nineteenth-century forerunners for public recognition. He first exhibited with the Catto in 1998, shortly after taking up painting full-time, and this will be his 15th solo show at the gallery. That tells you everything you need to know about the enduring popularity of his work.

Comparing his current paintings with those in previous shows, Bruce says he is struck by how much more architectural in subject matter these recent works are. He has a particular enthusiasm for cathedral subjects: St Paul's, Westminster Abbey and Cathedral, Notre-

Dame, Basilica San Marco, Milan and Cologne all feature here — the latter two both making their first appearance in a Bruce Yardley collection.

In many of these buildings the interior, for Bruce, can be as paintable as the more familiar exterior view. As he rightly comments, the cathedral or church interior is a surprisingly neglected subject — only the Dutch in their Golden Age made something of a specialism of this artistic sub-genre. What makes the neglect surprising is that interior spaces like these, lit as they often are by stained glass windows, offer a uniquely atmospheric light experience.

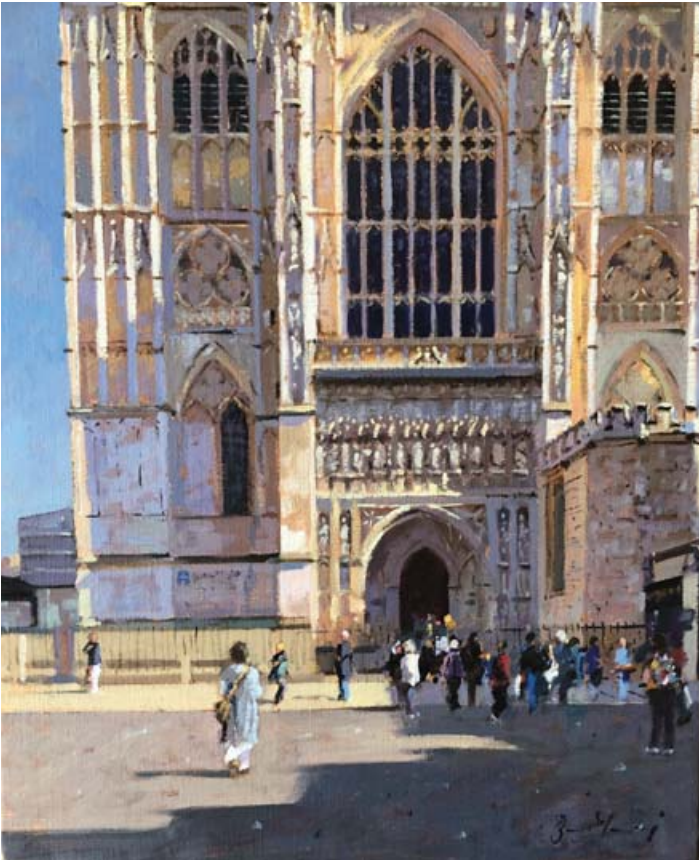
And on this theme, another feature of Bruce's more recent work is a growing willingness to tackle dusk and night subjects, very much inspired by the spare, twinkly Thames nocturnes of Whistler. In these paintings the palette is necessarily restricted and all the tonal contrast is provided by the small amounts of sharply-focused artificial light. These are scenes pared down to their tonal essentials. In other words, they are scenes made for the impressionist.



Lilies and Regency Cabinet, 76 x 51cm, Oil on Canvas



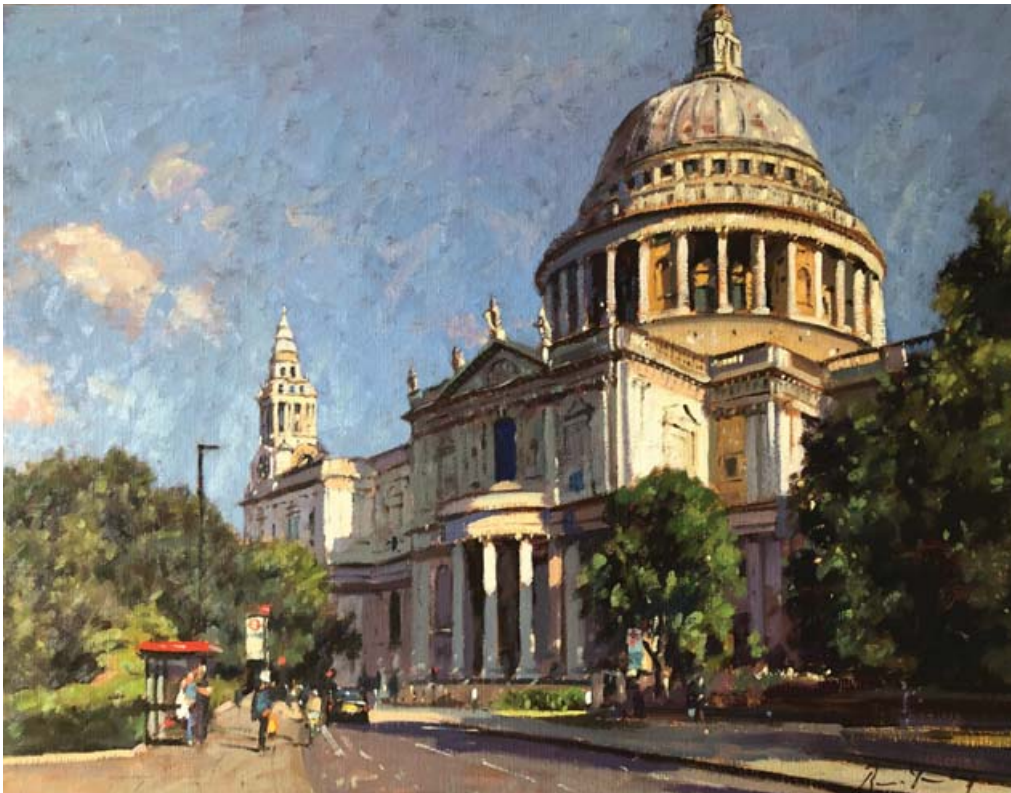
Banners and Pendants, Henry VII Chapel, 122 x 102cm, Oil on Canvas



West Front, Westminster Abbey, 61 x 51cm Oil on Canvas



St Paul's from Little Britain, 51 x 41cm, Oil on Board



St Paul's from the South East, 61 x 76cm, Oil on Canvas



Westminster Sunset, 41 x 51cm, Oil on Board



Umbrellas and Porticoes, Trafalgar Square, 102 x 122cm, Oil on Canvas



Sunset over La Volta, 25 x 25cm, Oil on Board



Dusk on the Grand Canal, 51 x 76cm, Oil on Canvas



Rialto Markets and Grand Canal, 20 x 41cm, Oil on Board



Basilica San Marco, Midday Sun, 61 x 122cm, Oil on Canvas



Notre-Dame West Front: Morning, 51 x 41cm, Oil on Board



Institut de France: Night, 46 x 76cm, Oil on Canvas



Rive Gauche from Pont Neuf, 51 x 127cm, Oil on Canvas



Posing for a Photo, Notre Dame, 76 x 102cm, Oil on Canvas



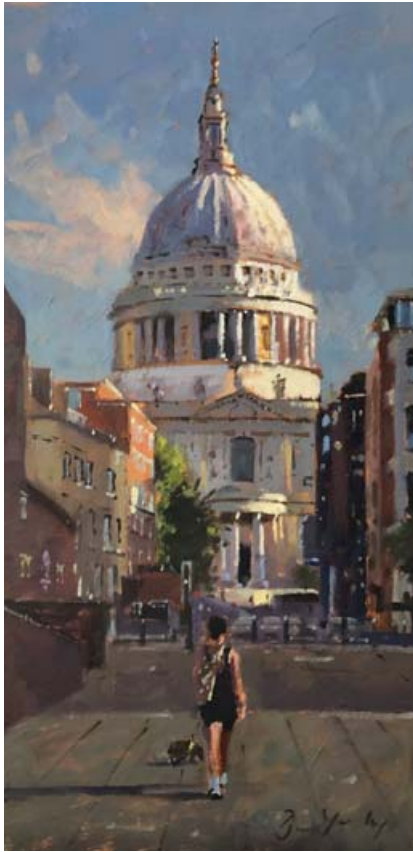
Flowers on the Sutherland Table,
61 x 41cm, Oil on Board



Lilies and Regency Mirror,
76 x 51cm, Oil on Canvas



Candle-decked Rood, Basilica San Marco, 122 x 92cm, Oil on Canvas



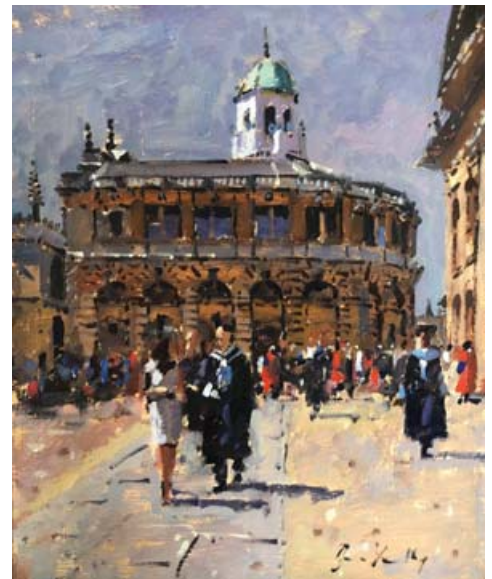
Walking the Dachshund St Paul's,
41 x 20cm, Oil on Board



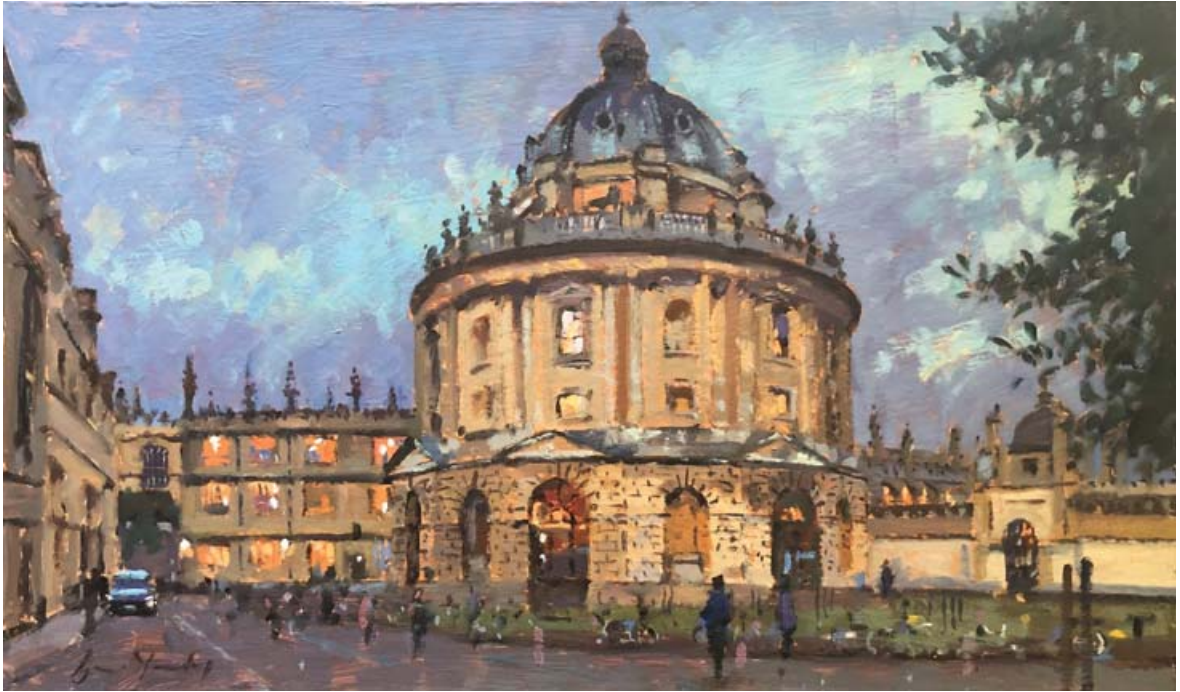
Westminster Bridge and Clock Tower,
30 x 30cm, Oil on Board



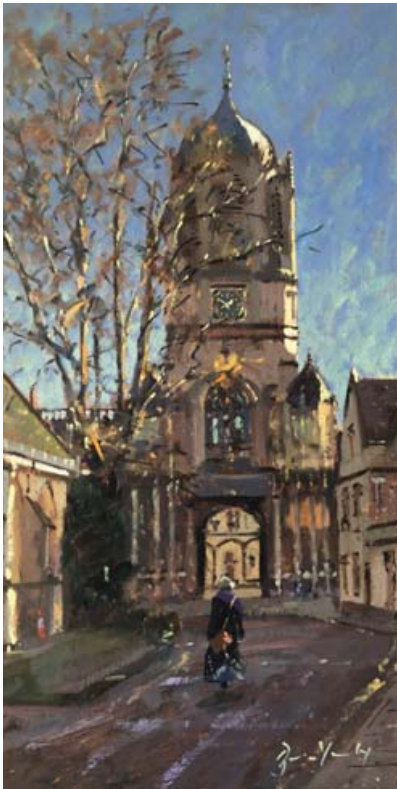
Westminster Cathedral, West Front,
41 x 51cm, Oil on Board



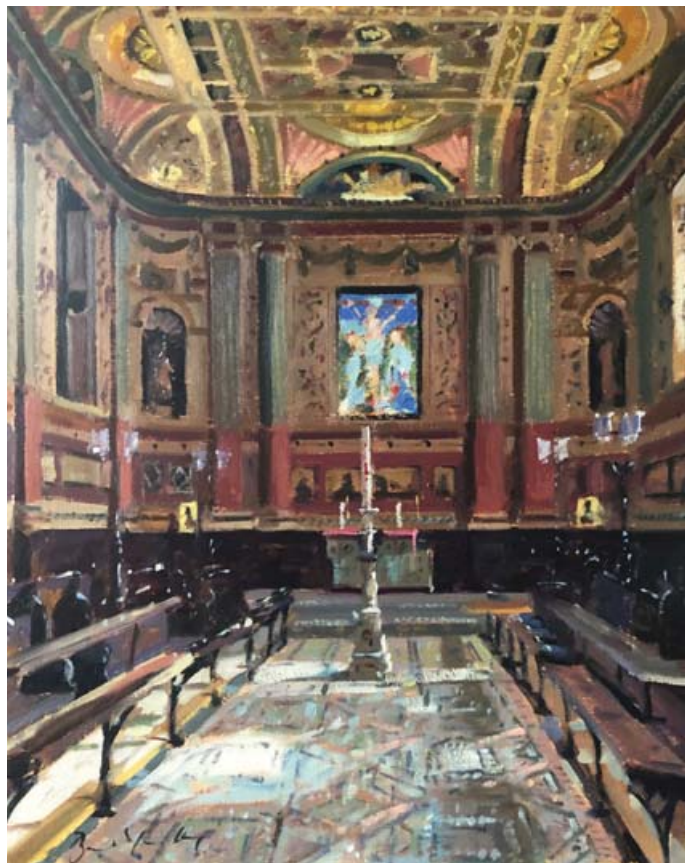
Graduation Day, Oxford,
25 x 20cm Oil on Board



Radcliffe Square Dusk, Oxford, 30 x 51cm, Oil on Board



Tom Tower, Winter Sun,
61 x 30cm, Oil on Board



Worcester College Chapel,
51 x 41cm, Oil on Canvas



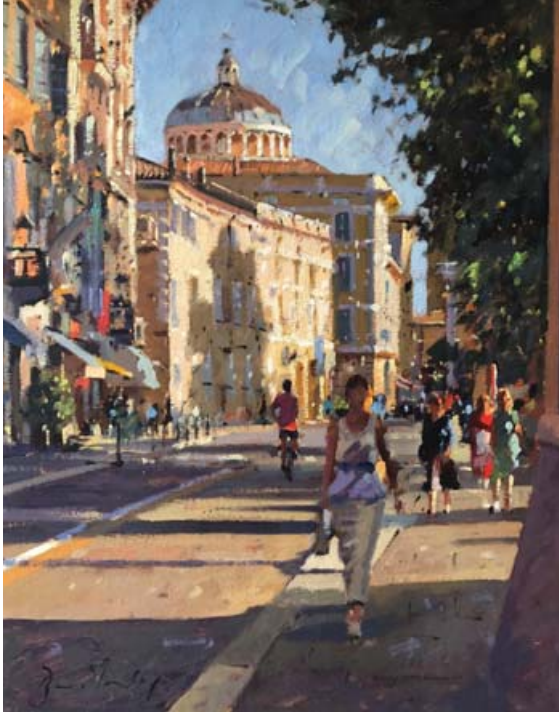
Rive Gauche Morning Sun, 25 x 30cm, Oil on Board



Eiffel Tower from Pont Neuf, 20 x 41cm, Oil on Board



Evening Sun, Notre Dame, 30 x 41cm, Oil on Board



Strada Garibaldi, Parma,
51 x 41cm, Oil on Canvas



Evening Sun, Grand Canal,
41 x 20cm, Oil on Board



Cologne Cathedral and the Rhine: Night, 41 x 51cm, Oil on Board



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Opening times: 10am - 5.30pm Mon – Sat • 12 - 5pm Sunday • and by appointment

**You are welcome to attend the Private View
on Sunday 28th June from 2:30 – 5:00pm
Please RSVP if you would like to attend to art@cattogallery.co.uk.**

Exhibition Dates: 28th June – 17th July