



MARK EDWARDS



First to Arrive, 60 x 60cm

Some of the most memorable moments in art take place 'off screen'. For example, after two hours of unbearable tension, we never actually see what's in the box in the movie *Se7en*. The power of this suggestive method is obvious: it asks the viewer's imagination to fill in the gaps. And this is where the magic lives. As Claude Debussy said: "Music is in the space between the notes."

Artist Mark Edwards knows this well. His 'white wood' paintings take place in a strange wintery inbetween-world populated by men in hats and coats. Though we rarely see their faces, we sense that these men are lost and a little desperate. And they appear to be pulled towards some invisible force that we can't see.

The titles of the works bear this out: *Waiting To Be Called*, *Unsure Of The Way In*, *The Last To Arrive*. In these paintings, the men trudge, stare and debate. Sometimes they appear to

Front Cover: *Waiting at the Coat*, 120 x 200cm

be on their way somewhere. More often, they stand rooted to the spot as if mesmerised. In the distance we get hints of what might be diverting them. A passing train. A deserted house in the middle of a forest. A fire.

What does it all mean? Don't ask Mark. He's not getting involved. By his own admission, he doesn't know. He just loves to move his pieces (men, coats, trees, houses) around until he achieves just the right level of ambiguity. Then it's up to you.

Mark has grown very adept at this process. He started creating these 'white wood' paintings in 2007 at his remote home in the Scottish Highlands. Prior to that he had painted much more traditional works, but a sudden epiphany moved him in a new direction. He bought some hats and overcoats, borrowed some friends and tried out some compositions in the nearby forest. He was away.

Artistically, the white wood paintings have proved endlessly inspiring to the artist. Mark says he never runs out of new avenues to explore in this strange parallel universe. The paintings have succeeded commercially too. All of Mark's Catto shows have sold out. Many collectors buy again and again. There's so much to say about these amazing works. So we thought we'd ask Mark a few questions...

Which painters do you admire and why?

There are too many to choose. But I love the work of Christopher Wood, Mary Newcomb and Hammershoi and I also get inspired by illustration.

Where else do you look for inspiration?

I like to browse YouTube for old British black and white films featuring bowler-hatted gentlemen. I'm always looking out for anything

that could be added to the world of the white wood: an old grand house, a figure walking in a long coat and so on.

Do you paint every day? Are you disciplined?

I'm in my beloved studio every day from 9am to 7pm six days a week. If I can get away with it I might creep down on Sunday too.

How important is texture to the world you create in your work and how do you achieve it?

Very important, as it creates depth within the painting. By building up the various layers of colour I hope to exaggerate the surface of the finished painting. I'm usually aiming for random sand paper!

What is the most memorable thing anyone said about your work?

At one of my first shows a visitor came over and pointed to the painting of a man standing in the wood with his arms open and his face looking up at the sky. He told me with some certainty that the man works in a busy office, has travelled on a bus out of town, walked deep into the wood, raised his arms wide, then looked up to the sky and screamed.

What's on fire?

I don't know! But the flames give me an excuse to use red and suggest something else is happening in this dark wood.

Do you ever wear an overcoat and bowler hat?

I have three hats. I'm one of the men in the wood, so whenever we have heavy snow I'm out there with the camera.

Are the men dead?

Good question! I'd say no. But I can imagine some viewers might think they are.

All paintings are Acrylic on Canvas

Red Scarf Red
Door Red Balloon,
60 x 60cm





Three Clouds, 40 x 50cm

The Appointment,
80 x 80cm





The Way In, 40 x 40cm



House on the Hill, 40 x 40cm



Midnight Sleep Walk, 40 x 40cm



Going Home, 40 x 40cm



Waiting in the Garden, 40 x 50cm



Two Men Talking Quietly, 60 x 60cm



The First to Arrive, 40 x 50cm



The Last to Arrive (Triptych), 120 x 200cm



A Day at the Seaside, 40 x 40cm



Counting Coats, 40 x 40cm



Discussing the Coat, 40 x 40cm



A Gentle Walk to the Office, 40 x 40cm



Showing them the House, 65 x 80cm

Speeding Train,
60 x 60cm





Volcano, 40 x 40cm



Hill Fire, 50 x 60cm



The Fire, 65 x 80cm



Stopping to Watch, 60 x 60cm



Leaving, 65 x 80cm



Trainspotters, 40 x 50cm



Unsure of the Way In, 65 x 80cm



Waiting at the Path, 60 x 60cm



At the Trees, 50 x 60cm



CATTO GALLERY

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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 with
Mark Edwards on Thursday 24th October 5.30-8.00pm**

Exhibition Dates: 24th Oct – 11th Nov 2024