

Mark Edwards

Front Cover: Waiting for the Light to come on, 100 x 180cm

All works are acrylic on canvas

Mark Edwards

Solo Exhibition October 2016

CATTO GALLERY

100 Heath Street • Hampstead • London NW3 1DP
Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6660 • art@cattogallery.co.uk

Mark Edwards - 'a very British form of surrealism'

If you wanted to be very reductive, you could sum up Mark Edwards' artistic vision in just ten words: men, coats, hats, trains, snow, crows, trees, balloons, dogs, waiting. Take any three of four of them, mix them up and you have the Mark Edwards recipe, ready to go. But to repeat, this is to drastically simplify things. In Mark's hands these simple ingredients are combined together to form haunting, complex, unforgettable paintings.



They are just so wonderfully strange. Take *Waiting to be Invited* from Mark's new Catto show. Three men in coats and hats (naturally) stand in a snowy forest (again, naturally). They have their backs to the viewer and face a distant house. The two on the outside have linked arms with the man on the inside. Are they holding him up? Or preventing his escape? What exactly are they waiting to be invited to? And who's in that house?

Now check out *Looking at all the Coats*. A man peers upwards at something we can't see. There's a coat hanging on a tree branch. There's very often a coat hanging on a tree branch in Mark Edwards' world. So is the man looking at more coats, as the title suggests? If so, why are there all these coats in an isolated forest in winter?

Don't expect any answers. Mark doesn't paint documentaries. Instead, he deals in mystery and suggestion. What's happening outside the frame is just as interesting and what's in it. Indeed, Mark sometimes titles his paintings with this in mind. You look at *Three Men, Three Trains* and you think: wait a minute, there's only one train. But then you see the two plumes of smoke, and you realise that Mark has worked his suggestive magic again.

This is Mark Edwards' third Catto show. His last two were sell-outs, vindicating his decision to focus all his artistic energy on one aesthetic. One setting, actually: the White Wood. He switched his focus to this strange other world from around 2007, when he was growing restless with his 'deerstalker' painting. Despite a growing reputation, he needed new inspiration.

Mark had been painting for nearly 30 years by that point. He had done the 'impoverished artist' thing, living with his wife Sally hand to mouth in a remote cottage in the Scottish Highlands for 28 years - the first 10 without electricity. During this period he painted and exhibited across Scotland, supplementing his income by working as a gillie on the neighbouring Duke of Westminster estate.

By 1984 Mark's art was winning fans and he was signed to the prestigious London agency to work as a book jacket illustrator. His work appeared on books by Kingsley Amis, Beryl Bainbridge, Sue Townsend, Michael Morpurgo and others. Happily, enough success followed for Mark and Sally, now with three children, to move from their remote shepherd's cottage to the local village.

Then came his 'white wood' moment. He says: "One day, instead of placing a deer in the wood, I came across a 1950s photo in a magazine of a man reflected in a window on a busy New York street, dressed in a bowler hat and coat. So I placed him in the wood. Instantly there was an immediate tension: what was he doing there?"

In every new painting, Mark is still trying to find the answer. And so are his legions of fans, across the UK, Europe, Australia, Asia and North America, queuing up for his sell-out shows.



Waiting for the Boat, 100 x 140cm



Train Arriving, 60 x 80cm



Train Leaving, 60 x 80cm



The Way In, 60 x 80cm



Crow-Men, 60 x 80cm



Looking at all the Coats, 30 x 30cm



Passing the House, 30 x 30cm

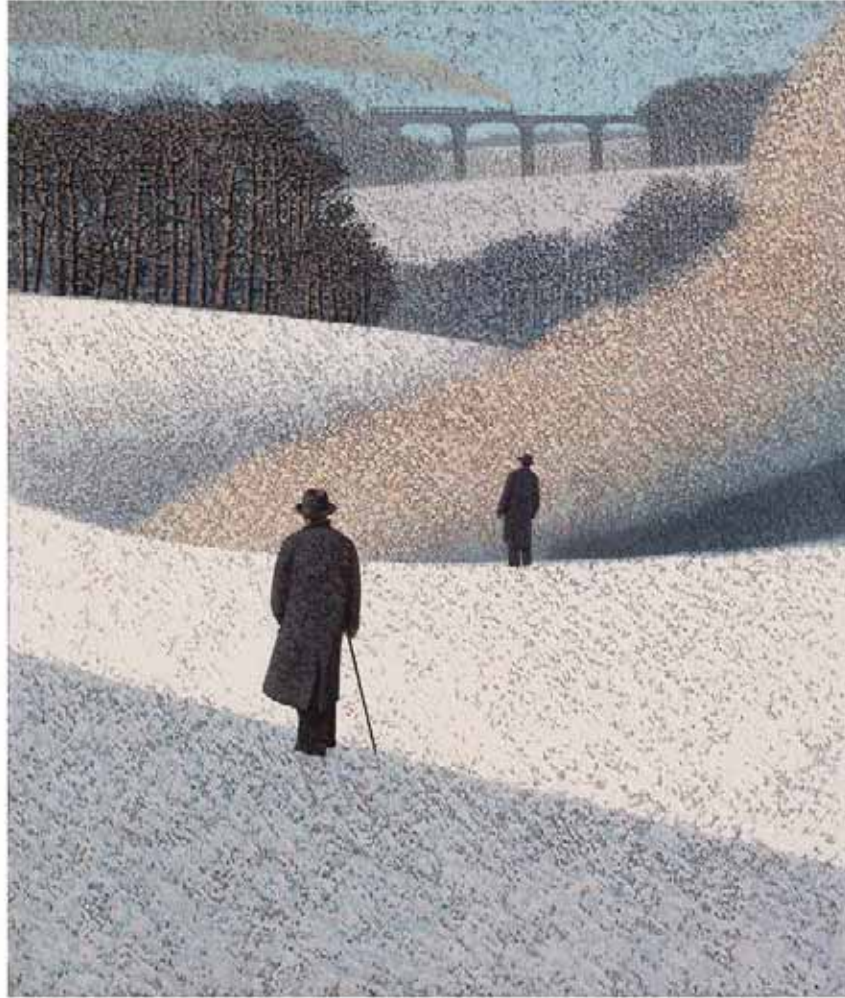


Tired Balloon, 30 x 30cm



Beside the Three Trees, 30 x 30cm

The Tunnel, 120 x 220cm





Two Men Two Coats II, 30 x 30cm



Two Men Two Coats I, 60 x 60cm



Watching the Fire, 30 x 40cm

The Fire,
120 x 120cm





Man with the Red Scarf, 30 x 30cm

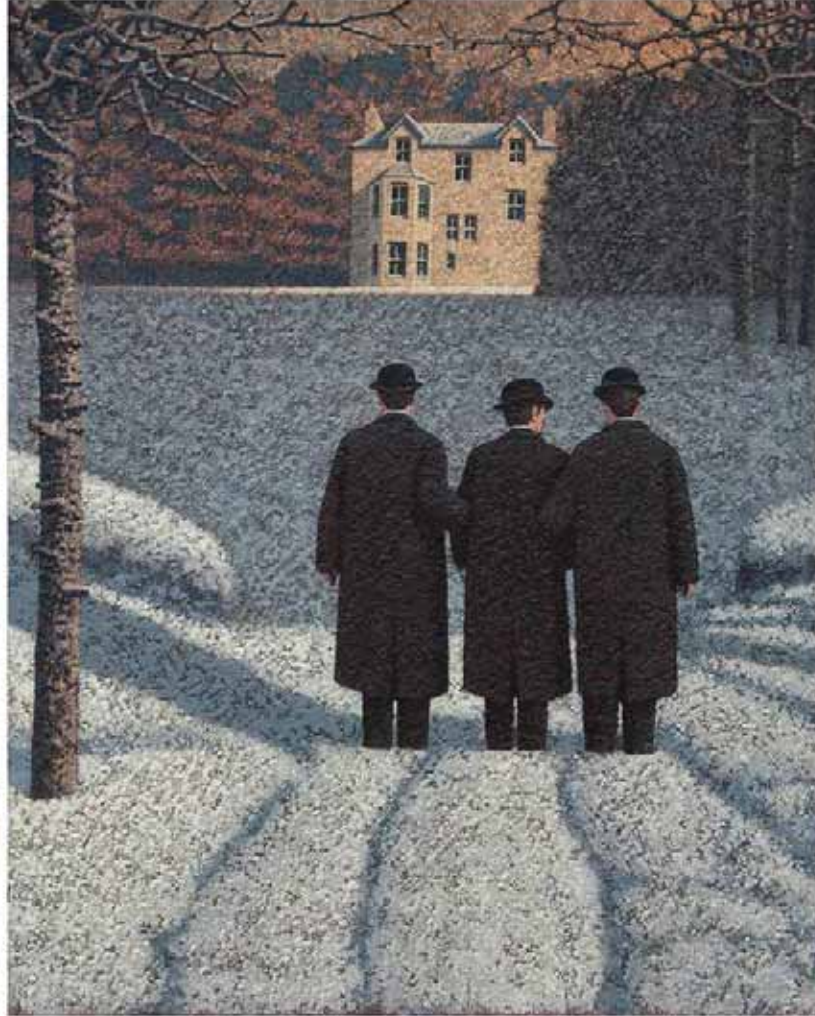


Waiting to be Called, 30 x 30cm



Looking for the Right Path, 60 x 80cm

Waiting to be Invited, 100 x 180cm





Man Dog Train, 60 x 60cm



Dog Watching a Balloon, 100 x 120cm



Stopping to Look, 30 x 40cm



Walking Past, 30 x 40cm



Three Trees, Three Crows, 30 x 30cm



Waiting at the Tree, 30 x 30cm



The Day Dreamers, 30 x 30cm



Walking Home, 30 x 30cm



The Hill, 40 x 40cm



Three Men, Three Trains, 80 x 160cm



Three Clouds, 40 x 40cm

Trying to Remember,
60 x 60cm





Waiting for the Decision, 50 x 60cm



Watching the Night Trains, 65 x 81cm



The Patient Man, 40 x 50cm



Ghost Train, 50 x 60cm

Back Cover: Finding the Balloon, 60 x 80cm



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Opening times: 10am - 6pm Mon - Sat • 12.30pm - 6pm Sunday • and by appointment

EXHIBITION DATES: 20th October – 8th November