





The Start of a Perfect Day, 40 x 40cm

Front Cover: Waiting for Their Grandfather, 80 x 100cm

Mark Edwards

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CATTO GALLERY

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One day, not long after Mark Edwards had completed his first collection of 'white wood' paintings, he got chatting to a tourist visiting his adopted homeland of Scotland. The visitor was a psychologist and he was very interested in the work. "The trees in your paintings..." said the psychologist. "They're all dead aren't they?"

The comment stunned Mark. He hadn't intended the trees that way. But he had to concede the guy had a point. Perhaps they are all dead. And if they are, what does this mean?

Well, Mark certainly doesn't know. Chat with the artist and it quickly becomes clear that he is not in the business of explaining his work. Not because it's a secret. But because *there is no explicit meaning*. And maybe this is the secret of their success. The viewer can stand in front of these intriguing little dramas and decide for themselves.

Why? Because the paintings are just the right side of oblique. The mysterious men in their overcoats and bowler hats are never at the centre of the drama. Instead, the action is taking place somewhere else: in that mysterious house or on the train that's disappearing into the distance. The point is that the men are stuck here instead, in a kind of eternal limbo. And this limbo might even be self-imposed. Titles such as "Deciding not to go Further" and "Stopping at the Boundary" certainly suggest so.

As you can see, it's possible to go very deep when you start thinking about Mark's work. However, it should also be pointed out that the artist cares just as much about the composition as he does the 'story'. Mark says he sees his figures – like his trees, houses and trains – as 'pieces' that can be moved around the canvas until the right effect is achieved. This explains in part why the men often look the same. "I've come to realise that I have this small repertory of about 10 men that reappear constantly in the paintings. I used to worry that this was a bit repetitive. But the postures just work. And anyway, they're my paintings so I can do what I like!"

Mark started creating his 'white wood' paintings one day in 2007. He'd been painting since the 1970s at his remote home in the Scottish Highlands – so remote he had no mains electricity for many years. He was mostly depicting the deer stalkers on the nearby Duke of Westminster estate. He'd also earned a living as a book illustrator.

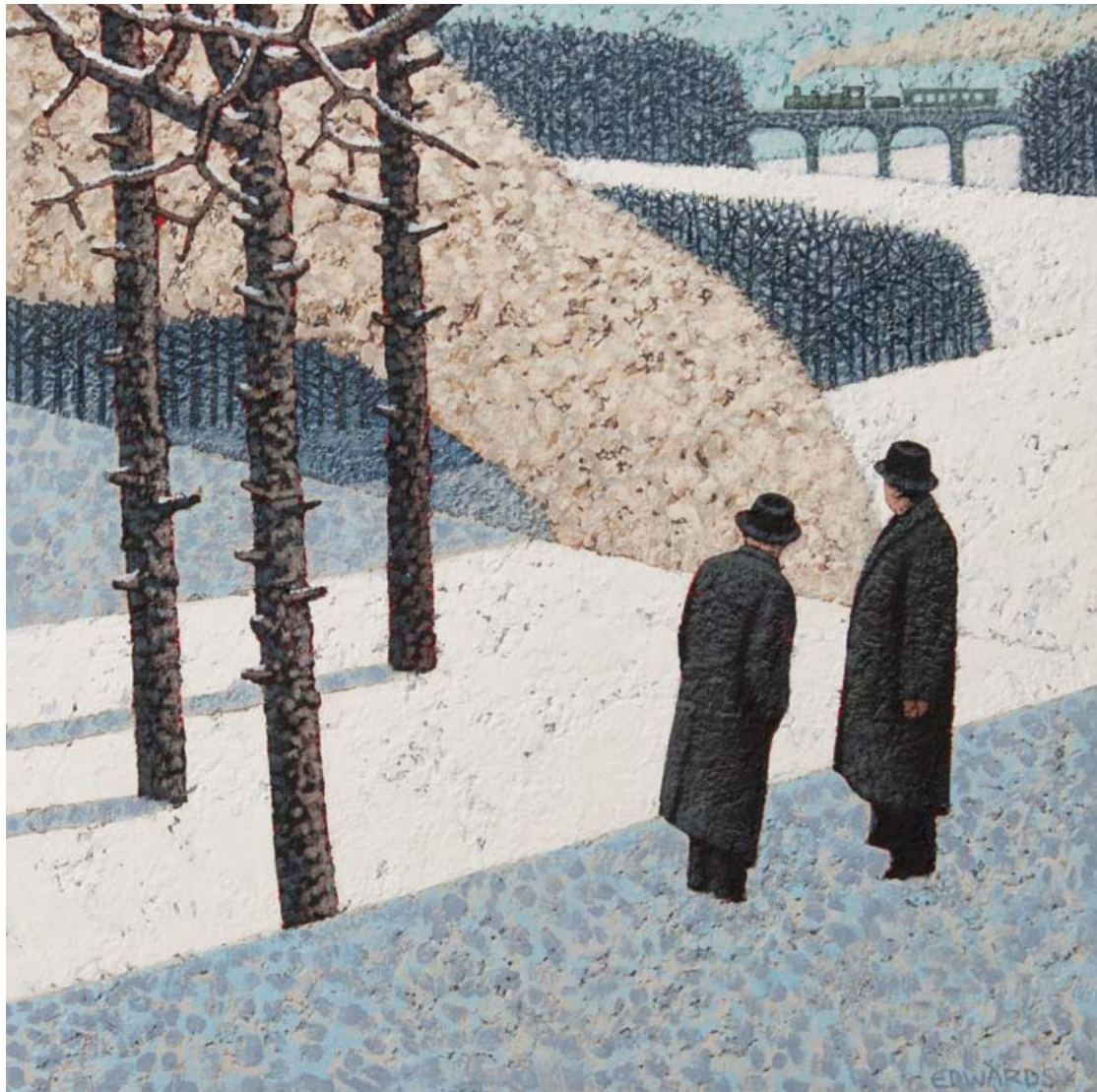
His change of direction was sparked when he saw a 1950s photo of James Dean on a New York street. In the background was a man in a bowler hat. It triggered something. Mark bought some hats and overcoats, and ventured into the woods with a few friends to try out some compositions. He had found a style that generated untold artistic possibilities. Happily, the public absolutely loved the work.

This new collection adds to Mark's substantial repertoire. Although the themes are similar to what has gone before, Mark concedes that there is a slightly darker edge this time. "I'm aware that there's an ominous quality to some of the paintings," he says. "Maybe it's the state of the world."

Interestingly, this oppressive sense even surfaces in the physical quality of the works. "I found myself laying the paint on really thick this time. It was as if I wanted the compositions to be literally heavy." says Mark. "Anyway, if you buy one you will certainly get your money's worth in terms of weight."

The Bridge,
80 x 80cm





Two Men Watching Two Trains, 40 x 40cm



Watching his Friend Climb a Tree, 50 x 60cm



Waiting at the Coat, 30 x 30cm



The Old Family Home, 30 x 30cm



Two Balloon Followers, 30 x 30cm



Passing Through, 30 x 30cm



Father and Son, 60 x 60cm



Father and Son Watching Another Fire, 65 x 80cm



Waiting at the
Five Trees,
60 x 60cm

Red Scarf Still Following
the Red Balloon,
60 x 60cm





Making Their Way to the Gathering, 50 x 60cm



The Gathering, 50 x 60cm



Friends in Conversation, 60 x 60cm

Still Waiting for
Their Grandfather,
80 x 80cm





Deciding What Not to Do, 30 x 40cm



Stopping to Watch Again, 40 x 40cm



Arriving at the House, 40 x 40cm



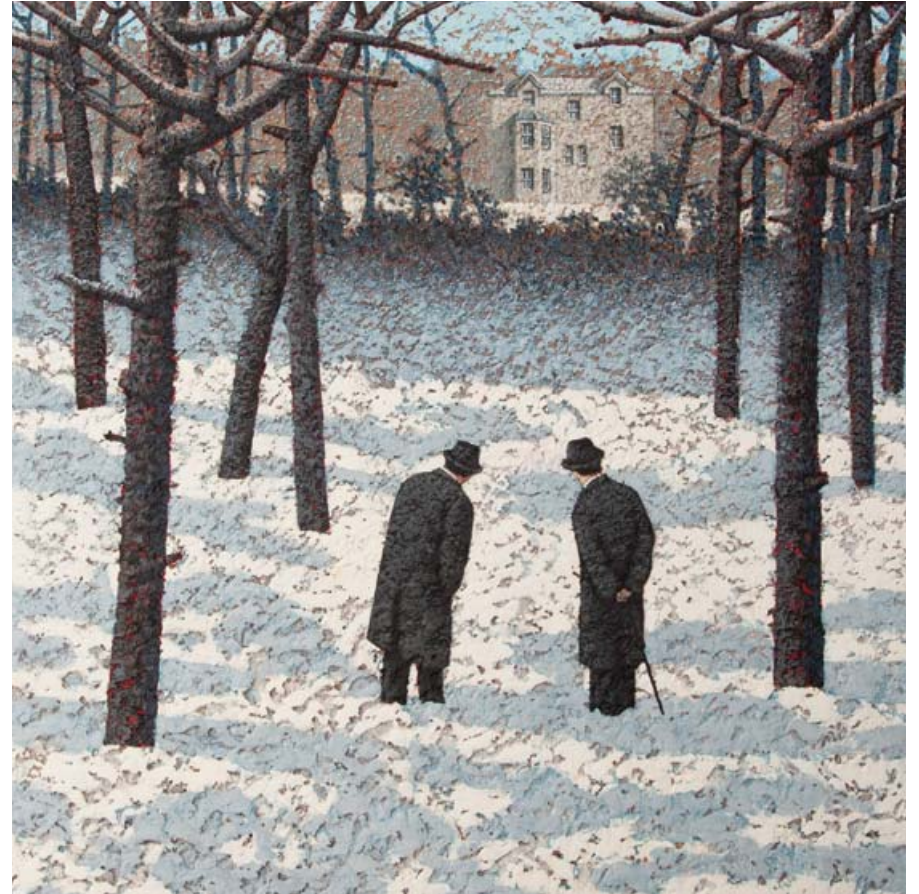
Stopping at the Wall, 50 x 60cm



Last to Arrive, 65 x 81cm



Stopping at the Boundary, 60 x 60cm



Deciding Not to go Further, 60 x 60cm



The End of the Path 40 x 40cm



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

Exhibition dates: 20th October – 7th November 2022