

SOUTH WEST ACADEMY

ART • PEOPLE • PLACE

This book is a celebration of the lives and work of the artists of The South West Academy. Included here is some of the best of the Academy's art accompanied by photographic portraits of the Academicians and personal accounts of visits to their studios. Together with its introductory essay, this richly-illustrated book offers a complete and vivid picture of the private and public face of the Academy.

Founded at the turn of the century the artist-members of the Academy follow in the illustrious footsteps of those celebrated groups who, while often lacking formal structure, joined together for the purposes of mutual support and fellowship – a meetings of minds that inspired and encouraged individual creativity, or furthered a more original vision of art than that of the mainstream.

In the Westcountry these included the internationally renowned Newlyn and St Ives Schools, colonies of artists drawn together by both practical considerations and by the elements of landscape and quality of light that gave their work a cohesive identity while yet maintaining recognisable individuality. Mindful of this diverse historical context the first ambitions of those who founded the South West Academy may have varied widely, but it was ultimately a single vision that prevailed.

As the title of the book suggests, *South West Academy: Art • People • Place* establishes the importance of the Academy within the wider social and artistic context of the region. The achievement of its members, past and present, goes well beyond collective self-absorption, determining always to fulfill one of the Academies original precepts: 'to advance the education of the public in the Fine and Applied Arts and in particular to promote the appreciation and practice of the Fine and Applied Arts'.

Michael Carter's superb photographs and impressionistic pen portraits of each artist, combined with the story of the Academy's successful annual Open Exhibitions, its work with schools and with young artists, provides a compelling study of the vitality of the artistic community in the South West. Here the reader is able to share both in celebrating the best work of these artists but also in acknowledging the importance of art, and those who make art, in all our lives today.

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Carter - Photographer

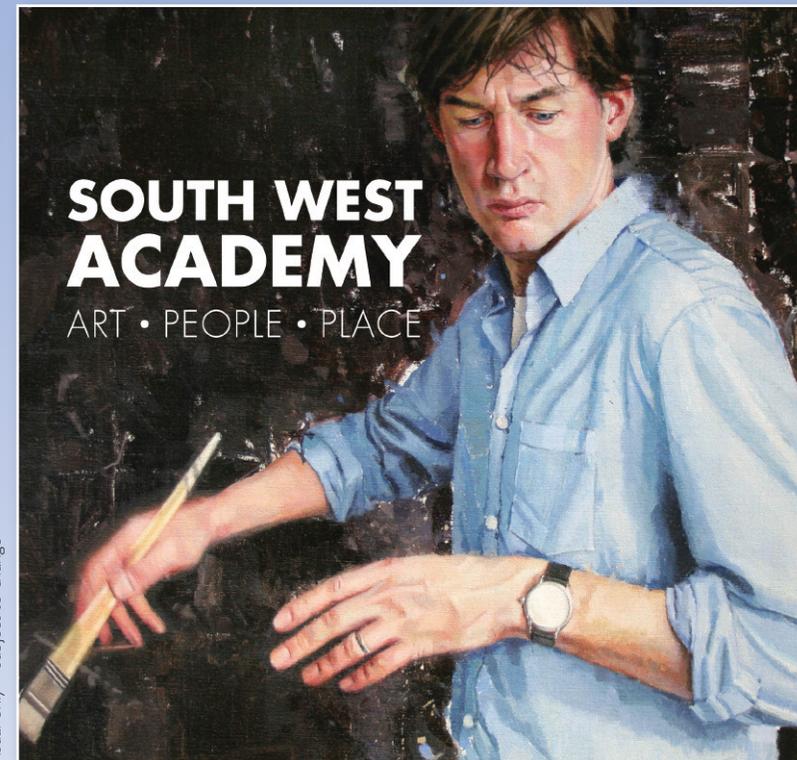
Alan Fynn - Chairman of the Academy

With a Foreword by Professor Alan Cotton Hon D.Litt (Exeter), FRSA, SWAc

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SOUTH WEST ACADEMY – ART • PEOPLE • PLACE



Pedantic Babylon
acrylic on canvas,
110x110cm
Sean Hewitt



River Dart Light
mixed media,
60x60cm
Gre Ramsden

Top right: *Fructus and Corpus*, Kilkenny limestone,
265x254cm, Peter Randall-Page
The Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Photo: Jonty Wilde

Bottom right: *Heat and Clear Water*
oil, 41x56cm, Tony Williams



Example of a double-page spread.



Charlie O'Sullivan

CHARLIE O'SULLIVAN

Garden Days
mixed media on aluminium,
30x50cm

Charlie told me that the family had only been in the house six months and there was still a mess because her studio was being built. She also had a cold. Then I arrive after a night of gales and flood, and the roof is leaking. As no one with badgers goes upstairs before my tripod I see in Charlie a buoyant and patient resilience. It was probably this that got her through the time a few years ago when she was hospitalized and treading the crumbling edges of life. Certainly it was then that the decision was made that if she recovered she would end her career in illustration and start painting. We discuss how illness often leads to a new kind of health. She felt lucky to be alive. And now she feels lucky to be an artist, a painter.

One of the no-does stays behind when Charlie goes off with the other, and he looks around, stopping when a picture is too going from one to another, the wall, the floor that he looks back at what he's seen, detained by something appearing to compare one vision with another – not the familiar gallery visitor merely progressing the paintings on the under-ground escalator watching the adverts slide past their eyes. Maybe he has supernatural vision and can detect the message that Charlie writes on the picture base before blotting it out under the flat colored area typical of her work. It's this idea of something underneath, of meaningful matter surfacing on inspection, that seems to defuse her attitude, as if what she truly has to say has to be done indirectly, more cryptically.

I know that this is a former police house where the upstairs rooms were once holding cells for those to be taken to Plymouth. And as I stare I'm amazed at what I demonstrate, and think of the strange shifts in life, and that old defacement: art is the fit in the prison tag!

Coming Home
mixed media on wood,
30x50cm

115