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The 500 Painter Richard Cook

Richard Cook
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1

I would describe my painting as a search, a search in nature for something that exists within me. Maybe this is soul, maybe it is for my lost wife and my hope is to find her held within the memory of wilderness.

The recent paintings have a sense of the liminal, and are created in a mode of abandon in which my hand is allowed to trace its own pathway. Although my daily walks take me out into the landscape I would say that the topographical is less important than the dynamic of the present moment.

The internalised memory is what seems to motivate me. The drawings I make on the spot are rapid and calligraphic in quality. These quick drawings serve as the impulse for the larger studio works.



2

Painting has become for me almost a form of magic whereby like Orpheus I enter an underworld and might, if an extraordinary occurrence takes place, return with a flask of gold.

Maybe my need is also to withstand the temptations of an easy answer or an incomplete image, which will return to haunt my nights.

Picasso once said 'to draw you must close your eyes and sing'. I cannot think of a more marvellous way of describing how the experience of drawing and painting feels. So I dedicate this work to the inner places of the human soul, the golden ocean.



3

The image seems to be something that lies already formed deep in the unconscious memory, hidden but with shape and form, out of reach. Although I cannot consciously know these images, their presence is real, and demands expression through painting.

The imposition of my will on this would destroy the magic that is imagination, and golden, and cannot be thought-up. I have to surrender to this force, this unconscious will, that comes from inside. It is richer than anything else. The image is thus born in freedom.

Richard Cook (born 1947, Cheltenham, England) is a British painter living and working in Newlyn, Cornwall. Cook has been exhibiting for over twenty-five years and has received awards from the British Council and the Arts Council. In 2001 he was given a solo show at Tate St Ives, with a related publication, and a major painting was acquired for the collection in 2006. Further works are held in the British Museum collection.

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