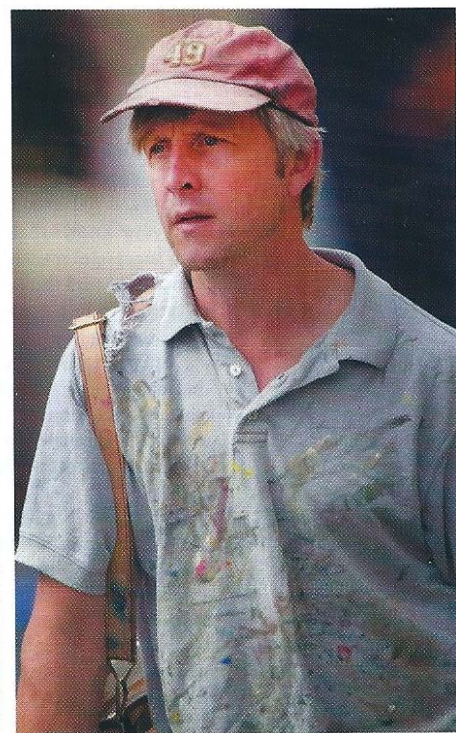


PETER BROWN'S NEW EXHIBITION WILL INSPIRE AND DELIGHT SAYS THE BATH MAGAZINE'S RESIDENT ARTIST, KATHRYN WILLIAMS



LIGHT AND SHADE: main image, *Hattie Drawing in the Studio at Night* (February 2009) by Peter Brown; above the artist
Below: *Snow Over Pulteney Bridge*

Many great artists have proclaimed, in one way or another, that you should 'paint what you see', and local artist Peter Brown certainly does just that. His paintings of street life or landscapes bear testament to that determination to be 'out there' in all weathers, putting down and recording and changing and improvising the slice of life before him.

For the next month, Bath's Victoria Art Gallery is home to 96 new paintings, drawings, and pastels by Peter and for those who have not yet seen the exhibition and fancy a visual treat, this show is a must.

What marks him out as different from some painters in this genre is his capacity to trust his eye and not rely on the photograph to record and then paint later. This is easily detectable, as with those who place reliance on the photograph the mood and excitement is just simply missing.

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Painter John Eaves says: “Peter's ability to capture light and liquid surfaces is masterly. His manipulation of paint to convey this poetry of moods goes way beyond what a photograph can convey. He is a true successor to Sickert in his approach to 'en plein air' painting whether in Bath or London.”

David Cobb, Peter's painting tutor at the Bath Academy of Art (1986, foundation course), says: “Very quickly I noticed that he had a natural sense of 'see and put' reacting to the studio environment and also to the continuing landscape beyond the Georgian windows”.

Peter's paintings are rich, tonally secure, and devoted to the exploration of light cast on Bath stone, wet or snowy pavements, slashing across cars, or people in movement. He has found a shorthand method of handling colour in a beguiling and intriguing way. For every motif that he explores he invests it with a quick-fire emotional response in paint which goes way beyond just making an accurate record of the event seen.

With a show of almost 100 works I was interested to know if he has a favourite. He picks out a domestic interior, *pictured*, of his daughter Hattie.

“*Hattie drawing in the studio at night* – it stayed on the easel over a period of weeks and when it was dark I returned to it over and over. It was a real labour of love. The light really

appealed to me – the black windows reflecting the room, a hint of outside from the street lighting but on the whole, at night it becomes an enclosed space; I don't have to worry about whether I should be outside so it's really personal.

“It's rammed full of stuff that means load to me; Hattie and her drawing, records from student days with my wife in Manchester, the nursing chair I bought just before Edward our youngest was born and the tool box my brother gave me when I was 18 which I still use for carrying my paints in.

“Below that is the painting I did of the Thames near Pangbourne where we spent most of our childhood summers on a punt. I painted it for my Dad's 80th. The big painting in the middle is one of the Edinburgh paintings I did in 2009. I spent three months driving up and down painting the city and found it really hard staying away from the family even in those short spells.

“The painting leans on an easel that I bought from the estate of Charles McCall who was an New English Art Club painter who died in the 90's. He, as many NEAC painters, painted the domestic scene – his wife, house and studio. I bought it covered in his paint and love the idea that I am adding my surplus paint to his carrying on the tradition of quietly painting the everyday.

“Bits from the house find their way into the studio – kitchen roll and a table tennis bat. Of course there is painting paraphernalia everywhere – bottles of glaze medium and old box easels that are essential for my painting on the streets and the stack of empty canvases – the unpainted next show.”

Peter is a painter with huge integrity, who already, at the age of 44, has made an original contribution to the painting of urban landscapes. It's interesting to speculate on how, over the next few years, he embraces new challenges. Whatever he does will inspire, delight, and be extraordinary. ■

