

About the Paintings

I began by painting landscapes each as as a view, a depiction of a place from a particular position, with direct reference to its formal characteristics and the environmental qualities of light, shade and movement at play: a more or less direct representation of

'a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour.....together these things determine an 'environmental character' which is the essence of place'¹

But this, for me, was not enough.

Landscape and nature are shaped by the ways in which we think, act and feel: Our understanding of a place is formulated not only through our observation and our physical and sensory experience of a particular environment, but also by our memory of previous experiences and, to an extent, by our imagination. When we view a natural landscape we think we are looking at a total physical construct, a pure observation, but largely we are *creating that landscape* in our mind's eye, formulating it as a synthesis of the place's tangible characteristics combined with our memories and past experiences; our abstract logic and our preconceptions; and perhaps also imbuing it with our frustrations, anxieties, hopes and fears.

'...landscape is as much in our minds (the subject) as it is in the environment (the object).....'²

This is the starting point for my current work: I seek to study more of the totality of my experience of an object, place or situation than a straightforward representational depiction permits. Sometimes this involves the simplification of a perceived landscape down to its vital characteristics in order to allow for an emotional or imaginative interpretation to pervade, or the imaginative interpretation of a tiny object as a habitable world. In more formal townscape and architectural subjects this might be the juxtaposition of textures and conflicting perspectives which combine to convey more of an object, building or place than a single viewpoint alone can provide.

The premise that 'landscape' is in our mind as much as it is in the environment is similarly true for buildings, though perhaps the rational nature of our architecture means that its physical components tend to predominate over the more personal and less tangible elements of our experience. This, however, is not always the case, and the ritual and personal histories evident in the fabric of our ancient buildings is certainly food for emotion and imagination...

¹ Norberg-Schultz, Christian *Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*

² Ashbee, Brian *A Future for Landscape* in Art Review, September 1999