



Fred Cuming: A Passion for Coast and Sky

Adam Gallery, 24 Cork Street, London W1S 3NJ, 26 October – 17 November 2010

Fred Cuming is a vital part of the English landscape painting tradition. Like John Constable and Alexander Cozens before him, he is fascinated by cloud formations – such as feather and wing shapes in the sky. These formations can be seen in his new paintings of Somerset (illustrated above) and show the close observation from nature and meticulous precision of his painting.

Other new paintings show the 'Angel of the South': it is a navigation sign at Dungeness. It was put up earlier in the twentieth century to help fishermen navigate the channel before modern technological methods emerged, and it remains as a mysterious T shaped sculpture rising out of the water. The artist has painted several new paintings with this surreal shape, near the old and new lighthouses there.

Cuming remains 'terribly moved' by landscapes and his motivation is to communicate that to people through his painting. By his explorations of light and colour, he conveys a 'visual magic'. He has always been fascinated by the changing landscape around us: the skies, fabulous rainbows and wonderful rapid violent storms. After a lifetime of exploring these subjects, only now is he finally gaining the ability and clarity to find 'little tracks' of his own to follow.

Inspired by masters of colour such as J.M.W. Turner, Pierre Bonnard, Henri Matisse and Paul Nash, Cuming explains 'Marvellous colourists are few and far between – I would love to be one!' Cuming's major subject is how to use colour and light in his painting to represent the natural world.

Unfazed by fashions 'that come and go' such as the Pop Art movement of the 50s, Cuming is painting the same things now as when he was a 'young lad'. He has been looking at them for years and striving to find some way of saying how much he loves them. These paintings show an artist at the height of his powers: in his own words he rejoices in 'finally understanding what I'm all about. I am in my own little boat and trying to find something to say'.

Born in 1930, in London, Fred attended Sidcup School of Art from 1945-1949. After having completed his National Service, he attended the Royal College of Art in 1951, winning a Rome Scholarship and an Abbey Minor Scholarship. In 1964, he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA), and a Royal Academician (RA) in 1974. A member of the New English Art Club, Associate of the Royal College of Art, Fred lives and works in East Sussex.

Cuming's first one-man show was held in 1978 at the Thackeray Gallery, London, and since then he has exhibited regularly in solo shows throughout the UK and more recently in the United States. His work has also been included in many group exhibitions since 1953, and in 2001, he was given the honour of being the featured artist in the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, with an entire gallery within the show being dedicated to his work.