



ARTIST STATEMENT

'A Walk in the Park'

Christopher McVinish at Gallery One / October 2020

'I believe at present we must paint nature's rich and magnificent aspects; we need good cheer and happiness, hope and love.'

Vincent Van Gogh 1889

Perhaps it's no surprise that an artist who paints urban subjects might at this moment shift his attention to one that embodies a pause in the narrative of urban living : parks and gardens.

McVinish says " So often parks and gardens are the identity and soul of a town or city. They're more important than ever for the sense of freedom they offer - literal physical space, but a mental space too, a place to throw off concerns, just to breath, take in beauty and peace... hear the sound of birdsong, kid's laughter... gaze on picnickers, lovers strolling, joggers or the happy aimlessness of walkers, or someone just sitting quietly. They offer us a place for revitalisation and contemplation, giving us moments of awareness and quiet in a world that doesn't stop talking. So many of us have memories, too, of being taken to parks as a kid and if you were lucky enough to be in one that had a pond full of ducks or a fountain it was a particular kind of joy... As an adult that feeling can come flooding back - maybe it's that parks make us feel like kids again a little bit."

The subject is rich in compositional interest for a painter like McVinish who is obsessed with capturing light. Commenting on his process he explains that "Even though I'm a realist painter, people are often surprised when I say my paintings are abstract to me! - everything gets distilled into colour, shape and pattern and then with the infusion of light it becomes an atmosphere and a feeling emerges out of that. With this new theme I've really enjoyed studying the shapes and colours of trees, hedges, garden ornaments... the beauty of patterns from dappled shadows and light through foliage, the contrasting broad planes of grassy expanses. He adds "It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the world at the moment. Nature is amazingly restorative. I was inspired to capture the mood of calm embrace that parks and gardens generate."

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