



'YOU AND I'

Introduction to the 2011 Catalogue

In fifteen years as a painter I have sent out 300 still lifes from my studio. A small army of long lasting witnesses to my skill and vision that have taken up their duties in beautiful homes all over this planet as the army grows so does my standing and reputation. These days I often get asked if this army will continue to grow, if it will step from strength to strength, whether i can keep each addition to the ranks consistently focused and keen. When I remove the army metaphor from this question what remains is a mirror that reflects my clients. You appear remarkable to me.

Let me explain how: I live almost every day of my life in a contemporary Art World that has entirely lost the capacity to judge what has true value and what is over-rated. You live in a world that considers long term investment to mean no more than five years and short term investment to be even minutes or hours. Yet here we are looking at each other; me standing beside my work that I have made to last for hundreds of years and you thinking about family and the very long-term future. I have come to know most of those who own my paintings. Almost all of you have this in common: you are interested in beautifully crafted things (the best art and objects, the best wine, the best houses and so on). Your sense of beauty tends toward strength and simplicity. You create fundamentally sound businesses. The things you own and make and build give pleasure and quietly testify to your solid standing. The opposite of this: short term, high- risk speculation on trends and fashion; investing in firework ideas that climb like a rocket, explode spectacularly and fall like the stick is not your style. You don't mind backing yourself and bucking a silly trend.

You have no idea how rare these qualities are.

And I? Why do you and I end up standing side by side like this? Because I am straightforward, I think. I have a rare skill but no pretensions to being a gentleman. I am just your painter. I have painted the world with the very particular colours and the mark you see in this catalogue since I was a child. There is no artifice here.

These quiet little things I paint are filtered through a good and largely innocent life. In the last fifteen years I have married and built a joyful family. I have been tested: twice I have had most of what I own washed away by river water. I have been touched by the deepest things: in that time one of my daughters has died in my lap and the arms of my beloved wife have become my deep water harbour. My paintings get stronger, quieter and wiser.

So here we are once again, you and I. Thankyou for everything.