

Art APRIL 05

GALLERIES



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PETER JOYCE

Moira Rudolf

My first thought on seeing Peter Joyce's recent paintings (Anthony Hepworth Fine Art from 23 April) was 'Peter Lanyon' and, at first sight, Lanyon-like elements are indeed there: the fascination with complex, vertiginous viewpoints, the response to the rhythm and form of the landscape (cf Barbara Hepworth: 'I, the sculptor, am the landscape'), the attention to cliffs punctuated with disused quarries and mines, the proximity of the sea. Though based on the atmosphere of Joyce's beloved Dorset, there is a great deal of Cornwall – especially St. Ives – in his 'Isle of Purbeck' paintings: the quality of the light, the whitened tones progressing to stronger tints in accordance with season and time of day; the importance of the weather and the elements. Joyce's overriding concern though is with the junction of land and sea (Purbeck being surrounded

by sea on three sides) whereas Lanyon (in Penwith) was far more preoccupied with a wilder landscape further inland. There are no recognisable locations in Joyce's paintings, his Dorset subjects being created in his studio, without benefit of photographs or sketches and drawing on composite memories of his favourite walks and intimate knowledge of the area – the geology, the moods of the sea, the uses of farmland and the industrial heritage.

The most recent paintings are a new departure, inspired by a completely different working environment: his additional, recently-acquired studio in the salt-marshes of coastal Western France. The steep viewpoint and high horizon has given way to an emphasis on the vast sky and flat land stretching away from the sea. They indicate his interest in exploring a new, almost alien, landscape and reflect his growing



Peter Joyce 'The Green Field' 2005
Anthony Hepworth Fine Art

inclination to work outside.

The common thread in all of Joyce's work is his obvious enjoyment of materials – the way in which paintings are built up in acrylic, mixed media, collage and drawing and are sometimes scraped off, rubbed down and experimented with in Turner-esque fashion – and the attention to detail: the frames, which impose a certain unity, are specified by the artist. An exhibition to enjoy – it could easily turn up in St Ives too! ●