





It's a quiet place. The houses have fields and space between them and their lights reach out to each other through the thin twilight. There is a sense that mist or sea fog are never far away. And then they close their shutters to the darkness. However, if you listen in the morning you will hear rock music, maybe Led Zeppelin or Damien Jurado, coming from a flat sided white building - much like the other low flat sided

white buildings that occupy the surrounding marshland – and Peter will be warming his fingers up for the day. He will probably be drinking Jo's coffee from their repertoire of beautiful mugs, each one chosen because it carries the earth and human touch directly in its construction.

Pete and Jo live in a world of beautiful things. Their world is monastic in its dedication to purpose, scientific in its precision and its scrutiny and archaeological in its determination to reveal. They eschew the aesthetics and noise of the town or city, and play out their daily life in a quiet and mutual searching for pleasure in the physical world around them. Their day begins and ends with a walk along the nearby digue, examining the light and texture of the sea, and urging encouragement to Doug the dog. She is similarly curious and alert.

There is something singular and profound about their living arrangements but it would be a mistake to consider it in any way pastoral or old fashioned. They are instinctively contemporary. Sparse, focussed, endlessly restless and anxious for knowledge.

Peter Joyce (b.1964, Poole, England) is a scientist, social historian, archaeologist, cartographer and naturalist. His paintings are immediately beautiful and almost ridiculously complicated. His biggest struggle is always how much information to leave out – that is why they are always scratched and erased. They are *always* scratched and erased.

'Cale et Digue' (plate 7) is a good example. There is a lot going on here. The surface is lightly touched in some places - a hint of colour and texture. The red on the left hand side has been added and removed and painted over but not quite obliterated. The central black shape is almost definitely covering up the first marks as crudely as possible. As you move around the painting each area gives and takes in equal measure. It creates a 'tension' of information; the snow white on the right hand side, the central fin of green and brown, the latticework of corn in the middle.

These hidden landscapes are full of common elements. Here is a corner of a field, a bend of wood, at dusk, in the morning light, after a storm, before the wind changed it, in spring or winter or after the beat of wings passed over. It has taken me over twenty years to understand that Peter's works are not so much composites but exquisite scientific dissections, done with a scalpel and steady hand. Incisive in every way.

Pete and Jo moved from the suburbs of Poole, Dorset, England to the Bouin marshlands, Vendée, France with great care. They had scrutinised the Purbeck landscape (Dorset) for two decades walking every hill and cliff top, pointing out every bird and flower and moss and swimming in every cove. They spent months living on the cliff top and dipping into the quarries. It became the home of their intellects, emotions and, of course, the paintings. But suddenly a new place began to emerge in our conversations. It started with a holiday, and then another and a part time home soon turned into a beautiful white house in the marshes, a short walk from the shoreline, and a wonderful new body of work has evolved.



Across Kimmeridge Bay, Purbeck, England.