



Press Information For Immediate Release, 3 Oct

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PAINT OUT NORWICH, OCTOBER 15-29, 2016

En Plein Air Painting - its relevance, skill, and background by James Colman, artist

Norfolk born artist and former London gallerist, James Colman, is the entrepreneur behind 'Paint Out', a Norwich-based outdoor painting event, now in its third year.

As an artist, Colman's work takes his practice out of doors in all weathers, all year round. His ambition and mission is for exponents of outdoor painting from all over the world to be recognised through a series of juried three and five-day long competitions, such as Paint Out. As well as the professional, he wants to simultaneously galvanise the aspiring amateur, to get outdoors and give this style a crack.

"The perception that *plein air* painting is the preserve of the Sunday amateur is in dire need of revision," he says. "There are amazing works of art being made at all levels that are pushing the boundaries both in terms of technique, use of media, and scale, that sometimes defy what is humanly possible.

"The sheer accessibility of outdoor painting, by the very fact that the art is being made on the streets or in the field, means that it provides a positive, therapeutic outlet, a formidable challenge as well as a very vital link to interpreting the world other than via a screen.

"It is an exciting, challenging and rewarding journey, open to all ages and abilities. Our events cater for both aspiring and professional artists and we have come to realise that the socialising and resulting friendships play as much a part of the event as the process of creating a beautiful work of art."

[James...biog link in here](#)

The family link

James' great grandfather J J Colman, founder of the mustard manufacturing empire, was an early collector of the Norwich School group of painters in the 19th century, advised by the then curator at the castle James Reeve. Colman had been collecting paintings since the mid 1850s and Reeve catalogued the collection in detail, often tracing the provenance to the artist.

The collection was passed to his son Russell James Colman, who in 1946 not only bequeathed the collection of thousands of Norwich School paintings, but also many major works by Cotman and Crome and provided for construction of two galleries in which to exhibit them...the Colman Galleries as they are known today at the Castle Museum in Norwich.

John Crome, leading watercolourist John Sell Cotman, famed for his painting in 1807 depicting the hustle and bustle of Norwich Market place, and John Stannard are some of the exponents of this genre. Within the collection are many urban and architectural landscapes of Norwich and its environs.

As part of this year's Paint Out, James is keen to identify an image by John Sell Cotman and create a painting point for some of the artists so they can recreate the scene as it appears today. The painting may even need to be created while sitting in a boat...who knows.

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