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James Stewart Press Pack

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Biography

Originally from Stockport, James has been based in Devon for over 10 years. He studied at the Dyfed College of Art, Carmarthen and worked as a freelance illustrator in Manchester designing book and album covers before moving south to pursue a career in Fine Art. In 2001 he established the Stewart Gallery and Studio after running Artworks in Dartmouth's Foss Street. His work has been shown at such prestigious UK exhibitions as the Royal Festival Hall, the London South Bank Exhibition, the Royal Academy Summer Show, the Benson and Hedges Gold Award and the BP National Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery. As well as running his own gallery and exhibiting locally James manages to show his work as far afield as New York, Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, Sydney and Melbourne. Portrait commissions have included Picasso's model Sylvette David, Sir Terry Frost of the RCA and the late Professor Roland Levinsky.

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Work

James Stewart's training and experience as an illustrator is telling in the trademark precision and detail of his draughtsmanship, but he is difficult to pin down both thematically and stylistically. Subject matter ranges from portraits, to landscapes, to comic icons and household items. Media encompasses enamel, oil and acrylic on board, aluminium and canvas. He claims not to have much time for "signature pieces" and argues that although he has been criticized for this diversity "to me that diversity *is* my style." Exploration is apparently the key: "the only reason I want to do anything is to see what it looks like when it's finished."

This self-effacing nature surfaces again when he is quizzed about his reputation for portraiture which has seen him exhibited at the BP National Portrait Award and receive a commission by Sir Terry Frost of the RCA. Self portraits are apparently a dominant feature of his work because "I'm the only person who'll sit still for long enough."

His workplace reveals he is a great hoarder of consumer flotsam and jetsam; the broken toys and antique marketing bumph that feature so heavily in his work litter the studio. This subject matter as well as the visual in-jokes and vibrant pop-art colours reveal the influence of Peter Blake. There is also a darker side to the humour that pervades his work, especially in clever titles for pieces such as *Self on Shelf* and *Winnie the Pooh is Innocent*.

If there is a unifying theme to James Stewart's eclectic work, it is possibly voyeurism, something that he intends to approach anew in 2007. The stark portraits, bird's eye landscapes and x-ray specs reveal an interest in the hypocrisy, secrecy and taboos of public and private life. "I've always like to have the top bunk", he laughs.

Education and Experience

- 1981 - 1984** **Dyfed College of Art, Carmarthen, Wales**
Wildlife Illustration
- 1985 -1989** **Leisure World International, London**
Theme Park Designer
- 1990 – 1992** **Freelance Illustrator, Manchester**
Advertising commissions, book and album covers
- 1992 – 1995** **World Travel**
China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA
- 1995 – 2001** **Artworks, Foss Street, Dartmouth, Devon**
- 2001 –** **Established Stewart Gallery and Studio, Dartmouth, Devon**

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Selected Past Exhibitions

- 2006 *Out to Launch*, Red Propeller Gallery, Kingsbridge, Devon
- 2006 Affordable Art Fair, Battersea, London
- 2005 Affordable Art Fair, Battersea, London
- 2005 Affordable Art Fair, New York, USA
- 2004 *In the City*, Wills Art Warehouse, Fulham, London
- 2004 Affordable Art Fair, Melbourne and Sydney, Australia
- 2004 Affordable Art Fair, Bristol
- 2004 *Here Comes the Sun*, Coombe Farm Gallery, Dittisham, Devon
- 2004 *BP National Portrait Award*, National Portrait Gallery, London (Glasgow, Bristol, Exeter)
- 2003 *Christmas Exhibition*, One Plus Two Gallery, London
- 2003 *Moor to Sea*, Gallery 22, Ashburton, Devon
- 2003 *Alive*, Wills Art Warehouse, Fulham, London
- 2003 Affordable Art Fair, Bristol
- 2003 Affordable Art Fair, New York, USA
- 2002 Affordable Art Fair, New York, USA
- 2002 *Emerging artists*, Wills Art Warehouse, Fulham, London
- 2001 *South West Artist Exhibition*, Plymouth Museum, Plymouth, Devon
- 2001 Affordable Art Fair, Battersea, London
- 2001 *Above All* Ariel Gallery, Totnes, Devon – *solo show*
- 2001 Plymouth Art Gallery, Plymouth, Devon
- 2000 *Picture Me Now* Coombe Farm Gallery, Dittisham, Devon
- 1999 The Gunfield, Dartmouth, Devon - solo show
- 1999 *We Three Kings*, Coombe Farm Gallery, Dittisham, Devon
- 1998 *Blue is the Colour*, Coombe Farm Gallery, Dittisham, Devon
- 1995 The Seymour gallery, Totnes, Devon
- 1990 *RA Summer Show*, The Royal Academy, London 1990
- 1988 *The South Bank Exhibition*, London 1988 (Highly Commended)
- 1988 *Benson and Hedges Gold Award*, Hamilton's Gallery, Mayfair, London (Second Prize)
- 1987 Royal Festival Hall, London

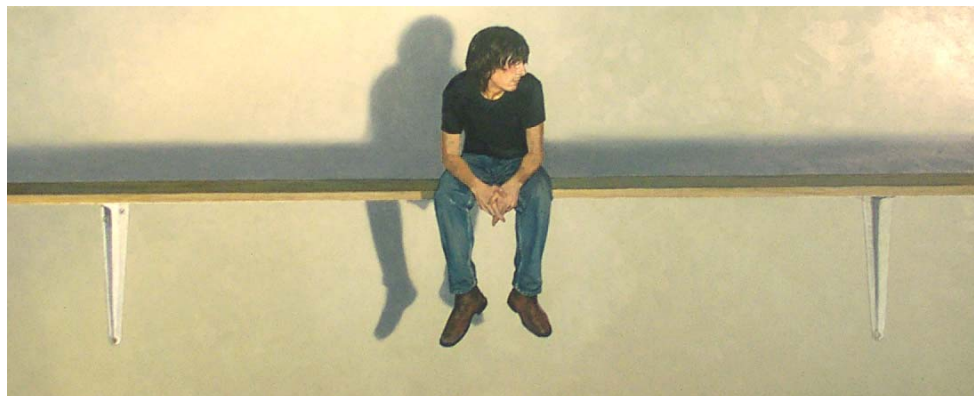
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Images



Winnie the Pooh is Innocent enamel on aluminium 50 x 50 cm (2006)

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Self on Shelf oil on board 120 x 49 cm (2004)



V is for Vacuum Cleaner oil on board 21 x 30 cm (2006)

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James Stewart

For more information, to arrange an interview or studio visit, please contact Jack Corrigan

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