

# NORTH NORFOLK

## James Hart Dyke

21st August – 2nd September 2020  
12pm – 7pm

THE BOATHOUSE  
The Quay, East Harbour Way, Burnham Overy Staithe,  
Norfolk, PE31 8FF

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This catalogue only shows a selection of paintings in the exhibition.  
To view all paintings go to [www.johnmitchell.net](http://www.johnmitchell.net).  
All paintings are for sale.

JOHN MITCHELL  
FINE PAINTINGS  
EST 1931

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Two trees in the shape of a lion on the skyline to the south; the dark headland jutting out at Thornham to the west; to the north the steel-rule horizon of the North Sea stretching all the way up to the Arctic, and, looking east, the imposing sand dune on Scolt Head watching over the harbour entrance: immutable and familiar, these are some of the landmarks which come to mind when I think of North Norfolk. To have known a place all one's life is to become faintly possessive of it, and shielding of the interpretations of others. How, I ask myself, can anyone else see things here the way I do; who else might include in a picture those sunlit hazes of sea lavender among the grey-greens of the saltmarsh? How could you paint those often complicated skies, with their bands of purple strata backlit by towering cumulonimbus clouds above, interspersed with dazzling expanses of clear blue? In decades of going to auctions and exhibitions, we have too often seen the efforts of artists who 'worked in East Anglia', some of which are still enduringly popular today, and yet never quite has one been stopped in one's tracks by views of this special stretch of the Norfolk coastline. Happily, this recent series of paintings by James Hart Dyke now has every claim to make good that omission. Having worked with me and my brother for nearly twenty years, and knowing of our long association with the locality, Hart Dyke faced his sternest critics with this project, and it comes as no surprise to learn that, once again, his hard work over more than a year has gone hand-in-hand with his prodigious gifts to create a breathtaking group of landscapes which will thrill and move all those who love the place.

As with each of his previous exhibitions with us, the most recent being the remarkable scenery of Patagonia in 2018, James Hart Dyke has fully immersed himself in the landscape once again - quite literally on one occasion last summer, when he walked from Brancaster Staithe to Wells-next-the-Sea in torrential rain - for this is how he likes to work, seeking out compositions that will both challenge him creatively and then satisfy his audience. Numerous are the occasions over the last year when we have steered him in the direction of what we considered an ideal vantage point, only for him to rebuff our suggestions on the grounds of there being 'nothing to paint!' Furthermore, we should acknowledge that, for a leading painter of Alpine and Himalayan majesty, in the endless marshes and protracted horizons here Hart Dyke found that his subject had effectively been taken away, hence the rightful preoccupation in many of his paintings with the sky, in itself a subliminal nod to the influence he continuously derives from an early East Anglian hero of his, John Constable. Roaming the marshes, the creeks and the quiet woods just inland, and often pitching his tent right where he had at last stumbled on the perfect vista, James's methods of patient reconnaissance and careful acclimatisation with a tract of countryside have been fully in keeping with his genesis as an expedition painter. In this sense there is a powerful sense of continuity in this latest exhibition which stretches right back to his beginnings as an artist at The Royal College of Art. As Hart Dyke's work matures, one notices an ever greater attention to what he himself refers to as 'quality of paintwork', and this is evident in so many of these latest landscapes, with the result that viewers of the paintings will quietly decide for themselves at what time of year, and even at what time of day, some of them were done. The scarcity of trees and cultivated land along the foreshore here denies the artist his customary pointers to the seasons, and yet I am certain you will instinctively know which season is being suggested from his innate understanding of the light. Note how the walls of certain houses dotted along the coast in their luminosity suddenly assume a disproportionate influence in the composition; note, too, the intensity of the darkness in the storm clouds looming beyond Scolt Head, a warning of

impending inclemency known to golfers and mariners alike! As a child walking out to the famous wreck, I remember the feeling of remoteness and the apparently enormous distance back to what A.E.Housman called those 'blue-remembered hills' inland, shimmering in the summer heat. James has reconjured so many similar optical illusions which the area gives rise to, even appearing to note in one painting the actual fact that the wreck is slowly being swallowed up in the inexorable westward march of the golden sandbar at the tip of Scolt Head. In the windswept and remote coastal loneliness of other paintings, one is reminded of the great American painter of the last century, Andrew Wyeth, and I trust that this other side of James's work will be seen to complement the more straightforward interest in the holidaymaker's impressions of Norfolk.

Originally we had planned to hold this exhibition in our London gallery in the spring, and yet the opportunity to now do so in the very heart of the subject matter seems a more than felicitous compromise. The idea came from our friend, Damian Delahunty, art dealer and Norfolk lover; by a happy coincidence, it was at his gallery very nearly ten years ago that we held the famous 'M16' exhibition which brought Hart Dyke international recognition. We are grateful to Tim Gatti of the splendid Overy Boathouse for allowing us to use his distinctive space, and enabling us to bring James Hart Dyke from London out to a new audience.

James Mitchell,  
August 2020



*Burnham Overy Staithe* 2019  
acrylic on card 29.5 x 14 cm



*Dusk, Burnham Overy Staithe* 2019  
oil on acrylic on card 15 x 20 cm



*Light Stripe* 2020  
oil on gesso on panel 30 x 61 cm



*Low Cloud* 2020  
oil on gesso on board 30 x 61 cm



*Storm and Shipwreck, Brancaster 2020*  
oil on gesso on panel 30 x 42 cm



*Trees, Grey and Green 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Storm, Scolt Head - study 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Storm, Scott Head 2020*  
oil on canvas 80 x 130 cm



*Boats, Burnham Overy Staithe 2020*  
oil on gesso on panel 42 x 61 cm



*Landscape on Brilliant Blue 2020*  
oil on acrylic on panel 42 x 61 cm



*Orange Horizon 2020*  
oil on gesso on panel 42 x 61 cm



*Pink and Purple, Scolt Head 2020*  
oil on gesso on panel 42 x 61 cm

Edge, Brancaster Church 2020  
oil on canvas 80 x 130 cm





*Edge, Brancaster Church – study 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Boat, Evening 2019*  
oil on gesso on board 30 x 42 cm



*Cloud over Royal West Norfolk Golf Club 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Dusk, Burham Overy Staithe* 2020  
oil on gesso on board 42 x 61 cm



*Evening Sky from Brancaster Common* 2020  
oil on gesso on board 42 x 61 cm



*Horizontal with Boats, Burnham Overy Staithe* 2020  
oil on gesso on panel 42 x 61 cm



*Rainstorm - study 1* 2019  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Red Sail - study* 2020  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Rainstorm 2020*  
oil on canvas 80 x 130 cm



*Grey and Green, Holkham Hall 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card



*Burnham Overy Staithe, Evening – study 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Grey and Pink 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm



*Blue and Red Boat 2020*  
oil on acrylic on card 20 x 30 cm

*Burnham Overy Staithe, Evening 2020*  
oil on canvas 110 x 160 cm





*Holkham Hall* 2019  
oil on gesso on board 43 x 62 cm



*Last Light*, R.W.N.G.C 2020  
oil on gesso on panel 30 x 62 cm



*Light on Horizon* 2019  
oil on acrylic on card 15 x 20 cm



*Sail on Horizontal 2020*  
linocut on paper 14 x 23 cm, edition of 20