



MICHAEL BENNALLACK HART
A QUIETER WORLD

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25th November - 18th December

JOHN MITCHELL
FINE PAINTINGS

EST 1931

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I am very pleased for a few reasons to be sending out this catalogue to accompany our exhibition of oils and pastels by **Michael Bennallack Hart** (born 1948). Firstly, it is more than twenty years ago since Michael's work came to our attention, and more about that below. Secondly, having hosted several exhibitions of his pictures from 1998 onwards, there is a sense of homecoming in seeing these lyrical and unconventional landscapes assembled here in the gallery.

Having won awards as a designer, illustrator and painter, Michael has been an artist for over forty years [see back page of catalogue for full exhibitions list]. Besides his many private commissions, his clients at various stages have included Esso, Walt Disney, Carlsberg, United Artists, P & O, Guinness, BA and American Airlines to mention but a few. Indeed, it was through his illustration for a book published by Harper Collins that I met Michael. *A Thousand Acres* by the American writer Jane Smiley won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and the landscape in pastel chosen for its cover seemed to befit the story set on a mid-western farm so well that I contacted Michael through the publishers. A visit to his studio in Richmond, a stone's throw from his treasured Kew Gardens, was

followed by his first one-man exhibition which we hosted in our gallery then at 160 New Bond Street. Both dealer and painter were rewarded by a successful and well-received venture and one that represented for our firm an inaugural foray into exhibiting pictures by a living artist.

Across the intervening years, the substance of Michael's paintings has continued to resonate with the bearing of our firm and as further justification for curating this exhibition, this year, of all years, has obliged us all to reflect upon and take another look at the enduring characteristics of our nation's landscape. To define those characteristics is more easily said than done and, in borrowing a phrase from the Victorian author Leslie Stephen, 'even the most eloquent language is but a poor substitute for a painter's brush'. In this instance, with his predilection for sandy coves, cliffs, chalky downlands, the Weald of his native Kent and an array of elegiac nightscapes and dusk scenes, the brush - or pastel - belongs to Michael.

Several catalogues written to accompany previous exhibitions of Michael's landscapes have rightly focused on his affinity with the

great itinerant British landscapists from the late eighteenth century onwards. The splendid '*Holy Island, Lindisfarne*' (cat. 36), for example, is reminiscent of scenes by Thomas Girtin just as *Late September, Knole Park* (cat. 1) elicits a Richard Wilson landscape, but it is more accurate to state that poetic writing has often been the source of Michael's creativity. His pictures are interwoven with aspects of the poems and novels by, in no particular order, Thomas Hardy, F. Scott Fitzgerald (*Daisy's Dock* cat. 22), Robert Frost (*Woods in Winter* cat. 34), Edward Thomas (*The New Forest* cat. 16 and *Dusk, Maiden Castle* cat. 4), Carl Sandburg, John Keats and Anthony Hecht. For instance, in the case of the latter, a simple line from the American Hecht's 1967 poem *Message from the City: 'I think of you out there/on the sandy edge of things'* can bring to mind a Bennallack Hart landscape (*Moon over the Dunes* cat. 15).

The more ambiguous poems have reinforced his long-held preoccupation with the theme of the nocturne, whether experienced in the Mediterranean, the lakes of Northern Italy or the British Isles. (*Venus and Electric Fireflies, Corsica* cat. 5, *Ghost, Palazzo Borromeo* cat. 40,

The Last of Winter cat. 43) In Michael's words, 'I find dusk and twilight the most magical times of day, touched as they are by melancholy.' There is no doubt that his nocturnes equate to some of his most compelling work in either pastel or oil.

Although I agree with Michael about the melancholy feel to the depictions of twilight, especially those depicted near woodland, I would suggest that rather than in its doleful sense, it is that same melancholy experienced as an emotion, often hand-in-hand with solitude, which held sway over the Romantic German painters of the early nineteenth century. Resorting to their language to express it better, these landscapes transmit the notion of *Fernweh* - a longing for far-off places but not in a forlorn way.

In a wider sense, all the pictures offered here for sale do in fact endorse the *Quieter World* of the exhibition's title.

William Mitchell

November 2020

Please visit www.johnmitchell.net
to view our digital viewing room where all the paintings in the exhibition are displayed
with their frames, prices and scaled to furniture. All paintings are for sale.

MICHAEL BENNALLACK HART A QUIETER WORLD

25th November – 18th December 2020
Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm

John Mitchell Fine Paintings
17 Avery Row, Brook Street, London W1K 4BF

The exhibition can be viewed at the gallery by appointment, please contact James Birtwistle
(jamesb@johnmitchell.net / +44 (0)20 7493 7567) to arrange a viewing and for all enquiries.





1
Late September, Knole Park, Kent
oil on canvas
76 x 107 cm



2
South Foreland, Kent
oil on canvas
76 x 107 cm



3
On the Downs, Cloud Shadow
oil on canvas
72 x 76 cm

4
Dusk, Maiden Castle, Dorset
oil on canvas
46 x 61 cm





5

Venus and Electric Fireflies, Oletta, Corsica

oil on canvas

72 x 86 cm

6

House by the Sea, Corsica

oil on canvas

52 x 77 cm



7
Snow, Kew Gardens
pastel
73 x 106 cm



8
New Moon, Cuckmere Haven, East Sussex
pastel
26 x 30 cm



9

Jarman's Prospect Cottage, Dungeness

acrylic on canvas

71 x 94 cm



10

After the Beach, Cilento, Italy

oil on canvas

76 x 112 cm



11
Burano, Venice
pastel
50 x 54 cm

12
Edge of the Wood, Hampshire
oil on canvas
61 x 87 cm





13
Anza Borrego I, California
pastel
36 x 41 cm



14
California Crossing
pastel
43 x 48 cm



15
Moon over the Dunes
oil on canvas
66 x 92 cm



16
The New Forest, Hampshire
oil on canvas
40 x 44 cm



17
Viale Vittorio Veneto, Venice
pastel
74 x 78 cm

18
A Roman Park
pastel
71 x 77 cm





19
Cuckmere Haven, East Sussex
pastel
34 x 37 cm



20
Purbeck landscape, Dorset
oil on canvas
36 x 46 cm



21
Edge of the Moor, Dartmoor
pastel
74 x 107 cm



22
Daisy's Dock, from *The Great Gatsby*
oil on canvas
51 x 61 cm



23
Autumn, Kew Gardens
pastel
25 x 28 cm



24
Botany Bay, Kent
oil on canvas
66 x 87 cm



25
Twilight, Corfu
oil on canvas
77 x 102 cm



26
The Road to Half Moon Bay, California
oil on canvas
61 x 92 cm



27
Highway 79, California
pastel
36 x 41 cm



28
Sea Fog, Carmel, California
pastel
43 x 47 cm



29
Maximilian's Garden, Trieste
oil on canvas
76 x 107 cm

30
Fireflies, Liguria
oil on canvas
61 x 66 cm





31
Night Cloud, Ravello, Italy
oil on canvas
46 x 51 cm



32
Dawn
oil on canvas
51 x 76 cm



33
Anza Borrego II, California
pastel
36 x 41 cm



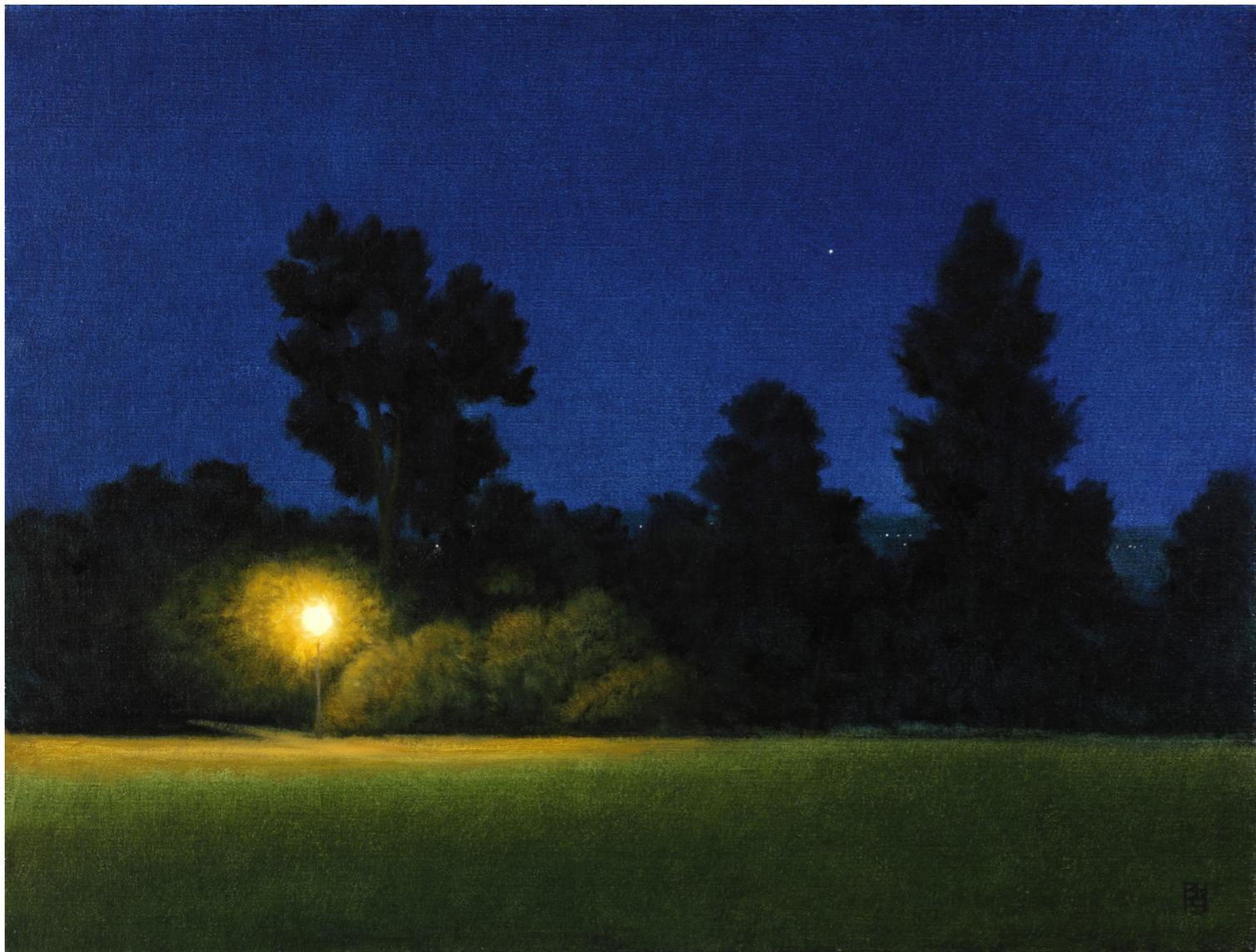
34
The Woods in Winter
oil on canvas
76 x 71 cm



35
Landscape with Rising Moon
oil on canvas
67 x 87 cm



36
Holy Island, Lindisfarne, Northumberland
pastel
74 x 79 cm



37
Royal Crescent, Bath
oil on canvas
46 x 61 cm



38
Moonrise, Corfu
oil on canvas
66 x 87 cm



39
News Stand, Venice
pastel
38 x 39 cm



40
Ghost, Palazzo Borromeo, Lake Maggiore
oil on canvas
57 x 61 cm



41
Clouded Yellow
oil on canvas
66 x 87 cm



42
August, Isle of Purbeck
oil on canvas
76 x 96 cm



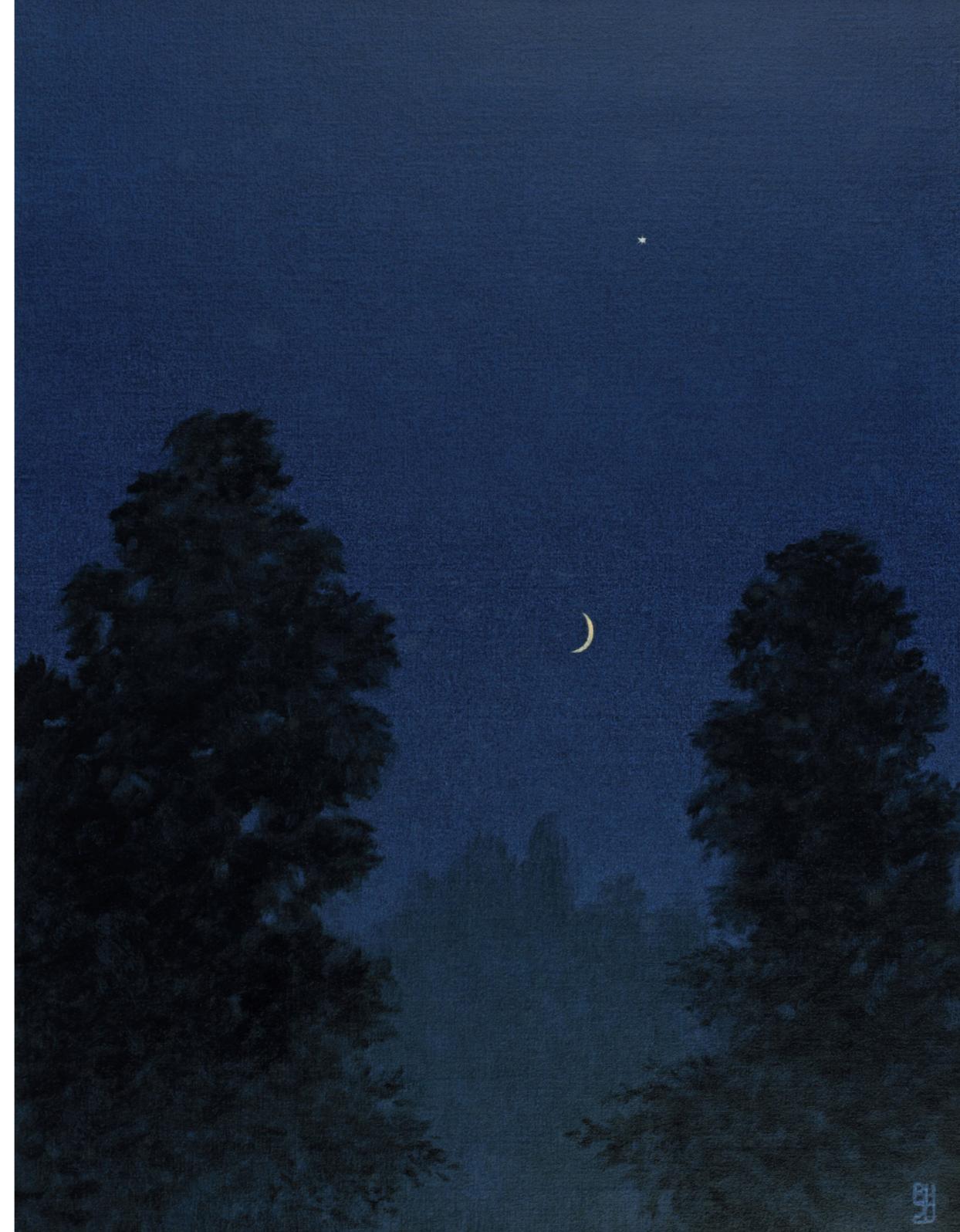
43
**The Last of Winter,
the Mendips, Somerset**
oil on canvas
77 x 72 cm



44
Romney Marsh, Kent
oil on canvas
36 x 46 cm



45
Park East on Cedar, Chicago
pastel
51 x 25 cm



46
Star and Crescent, Richmond
oil on canvas
66 x 52 cm

MIXED AND SOLO[*] EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** Wykeham Gallery, Stockbridge / Chelsea Arts Club
- 2018** Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond* / Wykeham Gallery, Stockbridge
- 2017** Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond / Wykeham Gallery, Stockbridge / Slader's Yard Gallery, West Bay, Dorset
- 2016** Belgravia Gallery, London / Slader's Yard Gallery, West Bay, Dorset / Blackheath Gallery, London
- 2015** Medici Gallery, London* / Blackheath Gallery, London / Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond
- 2014** Medici Gallery, London / Blackheath Gallery, London
- 2013** Medici Gallery, London* / Blackheath Gallery, London
- 2012** Medici Gallery, London* / Pepper Gallery, London / Red Rag Gallery, Bath / Blackheath Gallery, London / Russell Gallery, London
- 2011** Langham Gallery, London / Russell Gallery, London / Medici Gallery, London*
- 2010** Medici Gallery, London* / Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond / Galerie Carla Magna, Paris / Gloss Gallery, Exeter
- 2009** Medici Gallery, London*
- 2008** Medici Gallery, London* / Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond
- 2007** Medici Gallery, London*
- 2006** Medici Gallery, London*
- 2005** Brian Sinfield Gallery, Burford* / Royal Academy of Arts, London / Medici Gallery, London*
- 2004** Medici Gallery, London* / Collins & Hastie, London*
- 2003** Medici Gallery, London* / Rye Art Gallery / Walton Gallery, London*
- 2002** Chelsea Arts Club* / Mall Galleries, London / Walton Gallery, London* / Pierrepont Fine Art Gallery, Oxford*
- 2001** Montgomery Gallery, San Francisco* / Henry Boxer Gallery, London / Pierrepont Fine Art Gallery, Oxford / John Mitchell & Son, London*
- 2000** Stacy-Marks Gallery, Perth / Island Gallery, Oxford / John Mitchell & Son, London*
- 1999** John Mitchell & Son, London*
- 1998** John Mitchell & Son, London* / Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1995** Mall Galleries, London
- 1994** Edith Grove Gallery, London*
- 1993** Roland Goslett Gallery, Richmond
- 1978-1982** Spectrum Gallery, New York

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17 AVERY ROW, BROOK STREET,
LONDON W1K 4BF
TEL: +44 (0)20 7493 7567
EMAIL: JAMESB@JOHNMITCHELL.NET

WWW.JOHNMITCHELL.NET



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