COVER:
View to Croome Court from the Park, 2019 | oil on canvas
30 x 60 inches | FG©139378

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CHARLES NEAL

Assembly of Time

Benefiting

The Royal Oak Foundation

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

It is a pleasure for us to, once again, have Charles Neal exhibit his paintings for the benefit of the National Trust. This is the first time an exhibition of his paintings, in conjunction with The Royal Oak Foundation, has been mounted in the United States.

This exhibition presents a collection of National Trust estates that evoke our shared heritage and an appreciation of the history and craftsmanship that makes each property unique: some for the history that the property represents like Blickling Hall, and others that reflect great historical figures such as Churchill's Chartwell.

His paintings evoke a contemporary style, and through a combination of exterior, interior, and garden views, Charles brings to life the design and historical importance of each property. All of which are under the thoughtful care of the National Trust.

The National Trust cares for over 500 historic homes and we are excited to introduce Charles' paintings of some of these significant properties to a US audience on such a large scale. We thank him and the Royal Oak Foundation for generously supporting the cause of the National Trust.

Hilary McGrady
Director General
National Trust of England, Wales & N. Ireland

Ian Murray
Executive Director
The Royal Oak Foundation

Assembly of Time

Dreams • Visions • Heritage

Each National Trust property embodies a distinct sense of history, being the summation of lives lived out; the individual and collective dreams and visions manifested over time to what we see today. The assembly of time, in most cases, is measured in centuries.

Walking through such properties and estates the visitor can experience a form of suspended moment; thereby providing a chance to appreciate our fore-bears.

From a contemporary standpoint, engaging with the history of these estates and with the people that were also associated at all levels, in such physical and material ways; affords the chance to appreciate the unfolding of their individual and unique lives in all aspects.

It is vital that we have a tangible link to the past, for the sake of our collective identity, in relation to values, concepts, philosophy and social conscience of the past that has by degrees shaped the present. Their journey is to a certain extent our journey, their pathways in negotiating the prevailing contemporary conditions and situations - the religious, philosophical, political and social dynamics of the period had to be met, which had a consequence on the estates.

Great estates are inextricably a result of their owners or occupants. They have survived wars and in some cases revolutions, social changes, the outcome of alteration and even calamity. Many of the NT properties have a unique history, wherein great personalities have lived who had either great power or influence, or families who, over the centuries owned, managed and passed on the guardianship to the next generation.

It is by the skill and craftmanship by many artisans in working with materials that their labour now bears testimony and affirmation to those that lived in the past and the dreams and visions of those who wished to create their estates and properties as a personal statement.

The properties are maintained and curated in such a unique and professional way. When walking into an interior there is a palpable sensation of entering another time, to the point of the sense of disturbing the ambience with our contemporary selves.

Most importantly, this collection of exhibition paintings not only captures, but also celebrates, the immense work that the National Trust has invested in the various properties held in their care; much of the work being carried out behind the scenes, yet outwardly resulting in great delight to all the visitors that see this collective national heritage.

The National Trust we know today would not be the case if it was not for the generosity of individuals bequeathing their homes or estates to the National Trust during their life time. The heritage we all enjoy today most probably would not exist. Equally, through generous donations, bequeaths and effective fund raising, the support of the Royal Oak Foundation (the American arm of the National Trust), national and international membership, the properties, their contents and land (especially our coastline), that has been purchased for protection would be missed. However, the running of such a vast organisation is held together not only by National Trust staff, but through the generosity of the army of volunteers who give their time and effort.

Summing up the National Trust; the ambience created in the landscape, gardens and houses, are a consequence of such care and devotion which approaches the sublime. Incredible beauty and stunning interiors, all of which is a great upliftment to thousands of visitors of all ages. The room stewards and guides provide helpful instruction and comments on the history of the place, personally bringing alive what so often as a subject, is seen as dull and unrelating, but now provides a major educational role, especially for the benefit of children – the future generations.

I would like to finish with an extraction of my legend within my catalogue from the exhibition entitled ‘Places and Spaces’ 2000, a special fund-raising project for the National Trust and held at Osterley Park House, London, in support of the Enterprise Neptune Coastline Campaign:

“The fundamental axiom of Art is the forming of a medium with a design, it is the encapsulation of evidence from a living moment within a human life. That evidence is drawn from one’s surroundings, landscape, architecture, life, fashion, the arts and the common-place. The experience of the external world is internalised within us and forms part of our personal value, through emotional attachment and association, with our own identity and expression of personality; our personal history. The loss of any aspect of our external associations becomes a personal loss of a part of ourselves, hence, to diminish the greater heritage is to diminish our own heritage.”

- Charles Neal, October 2019

Charles Neal
Contemporary British Impressionist

Objectives in Approach to Painting

The intention of the collection is to portray the amazing diversity of properties that exist in terms of historical importance. The layout of the gardens, estates and their designs as well as the aesthetic values all make each place its own individual ambiance.

This exhibition being held in New York at Findlay Galleries is the first of its kind connecting with the Royal Oak Foundation and the National Trust and being represented in this format in America. The objective has been to effectively transport, by a material means, the essence of the National Trust - a much respected and loved national institution and what it stands for; to an American audience, and particularly to the Royal Oak Foundation membership who collectively, over decades, have supported, saved, and preserved the British heritage stock.

Having said that; this heritage directly relates to America's historical narrative and people, and in many cases has contributed and formed the basis and direction of the 'Founding Fathers' and the drafting of the Constitution. From the evolving political and social European history, events culminated profoundly through conditions and situations which steered the course of people and their lives and future generations yet to become part of America's people. This is especially the case that led to the independence of a colony formed in America's own identity. Many of the properties within the collection existed pre-Independence and many more have direct connections with America.

Implicit in this approach is the notion that history is not to be viewed and considered as past in its value, and ineffectual on the present or indeed the future. On the contrary, our present contemporary world and individual lives have been shaped by the resultant collective historical events of the past. By the fact that all history is continually present, either physically, materially or through resultant effects, this means that our history is contemporary, by the fact that we live and respond, internalise and express the past in the now, through our contemporary lives. History is there to guide us as we create our future, only to become history to ourselves and in the future.

So many photographic images and films have been made of the National Trust's properties, as well as the images presented within the Trust's collections; so what new perspective can be made? My approach is to use the physicality of paint and the dynamics and language of the painted surface, and thereby the spatial presence of the painting statement. I have chosen to effectively invite the viewer to engage with the history that is depicted and referred to, through a composition that is relevant to a property. This can be through citing a specific event or period, or the ambience of the place. By the fact that the compositions are directly derived from the properties and painted in the present, reinforces the notion that history continues to be relevant. In all cases it is the celebration of the aesthetical value which is the triumph of the Artisan, Architect, Designer of Gardens or Interiors. The vision and expression of the owners, in many cases continue to be intertwined with their lives and in such individual ways.

- Charles Neal, October 2019

The Secret Garden, Hatchlands, Surrey, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 59 inches | FG©139382

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Blickling Estate, Norfolk

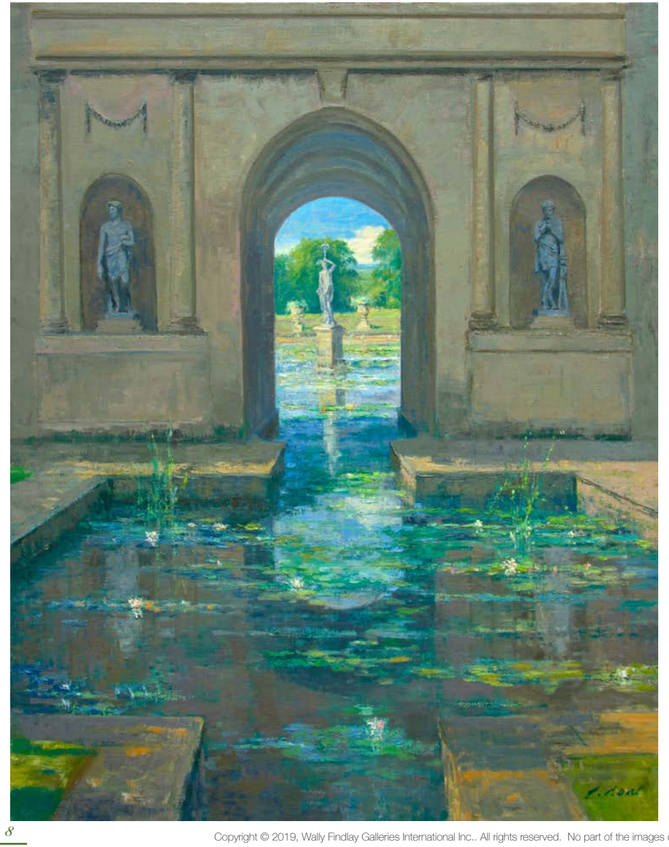
The ever-changing Norfolk sky casts fleeting shadows and flashes of sunlight over the parkland and gardens.

The Jacobean mansion was designed by Robert Lyminge for Sir Henry Hobart, James I's Chief of Justice of Common Pleas. During the 18th century the mansion was further revised by Thomas and William Ivory for John Hobart the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire. The present mansion is the culmination of three centuries of changes.

The distant parkland and lake were created by the 2nd Earl and remain an important feature that connects the wider park to the mansion. The present grid parterre was introduced in the Victorian period by the 8th Marquis of Lothian.

The Parterre, Blickling Estate, 2019 | oil on canvas
32 x 48 inches | FG©139371

Buscot Park, Oxfordshire



The ‘Alter Realist’ composition superimposes three separate aspects of the parkland and gardens. Water acts as a common thread to the overall narrative. The inner space, which includes the statue of Mercury purchased by the 2nd Lord Faringdon, is set within an ornamental lily pond located on the North Terrace with distant views of the surrounding Cotswold countryside. The classical structure with its central archway and two niches, where the left-hand niche Dionysus half- brother of Apollo, god of excess is placed, and on the right stands Apollo, god of measure and proportion. Both are copies of 18th C French sculpture.

The structure was part of a scheme to make extensions to the east and west elevations of the house and were carried out in the 1930’s for the 2nd Lord Faringdon. The foreground squared lily pond is part of the water garden designed by the landscape designer Harold Peto.

Alter Realism – Convergence of Aesthetics, Buscot Park, 2019 | oil on canvas
60 x 48 inches | FG©139373

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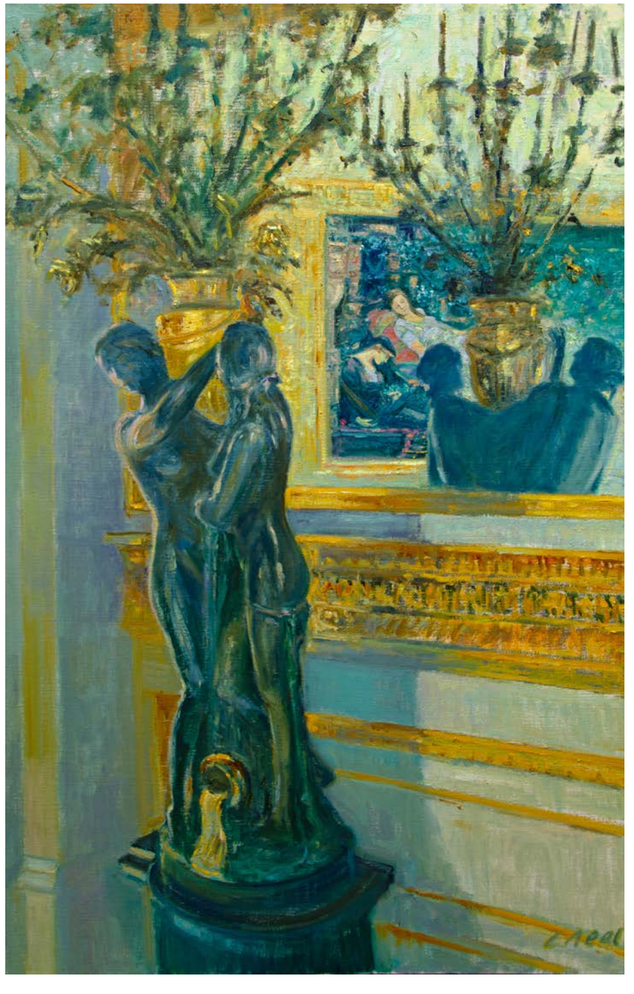

The reflected Saloon interior within the mirror creates a visual integration of the nearby Louis XIV candelabra and the reflection of the Pre-Raphaelite Burne-Jones painting entitled ‘The Rose Bower’. This is one of four paintings specially commissioned for the Saloon, thereby creating a visual relationship between aesthetic expressions.

Integral to each piece is a unique narrative and a style expressed, yet when juxtaposed to other works of art or object d’art the special visual relationship changes the context by the shared space.

The series of paintings within the Saloon depict the story of Sleeping Beauty. ‘The Briar Wood’, ‘The Council Room’, ‘The Garden Court’ and ‘The Rose Bower’ were begun in 1871 and was the fruit of twenty years work.

The giant bronze candelabra composed of the two water nymphs holding a vase containing a spray of Ormolu flowers, was part of a set of four presented by King Louis Phillipe {1773-1850} to the Iron Duke, Arthur 1st Duke of Wellington {1769-1852} for Apsley House, London.

Mirror Composition, The Saloon, Buscot Park, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 32 inches | FG©139374

Bodnant Gardens, Tal-y-Cafn, Wales

The scene captures the late afternoon light and colours of autumn in the Italianate Garden, which is a continuation of the Acer Glade. The terrace design repeats the theme of the great series of terraces near the house. Prominent in the background is the Gothic revival style of the Mausoleum known as 'The Poem' which is reached by a set of descending stairs.

The estate was purchased by Henry Pochin, the late Lord Aberconway's great grandfather in 1874. At the time, the garden and grounds were much as they were in the 18th century. Pochin, with his landscape architect, Edward Milner, began laying out what he termed a 'reposeful garden'. This was comprised of spacious terrace lawns, extending further into the valley sections and adding the Mausoleum and Laburnum Arch. In 1877, Henry Pochin's daughter Laura married barrister Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren, MP for Stafford and Bosworth. He became a peer in 1911 and chose the title Lord Aberconway, {meaning Mouth of the Conway}.

With their business and political commitments keeping them in London, Laura, being equally passionate about the garden as her father, gave the care of the gardens over to their son Henry after he left Oxford University in 1901 when he was 21. It was Henry, as the 2nd Lord Aberconway who envisioned the idea of the great terraces and supervised the construction work. The garden has continued to evolve through the direction of the Honorable Michael McLaren, whose father, Charles, 3rd Lord Aberconway, former President of the Royal Horticultural Society, guided the development of the garden from 1953 – 2003.

The Italianate Garden, Bodnant Gardens, 2019 | oil on canvas
40 x 60 inches | FG©139372

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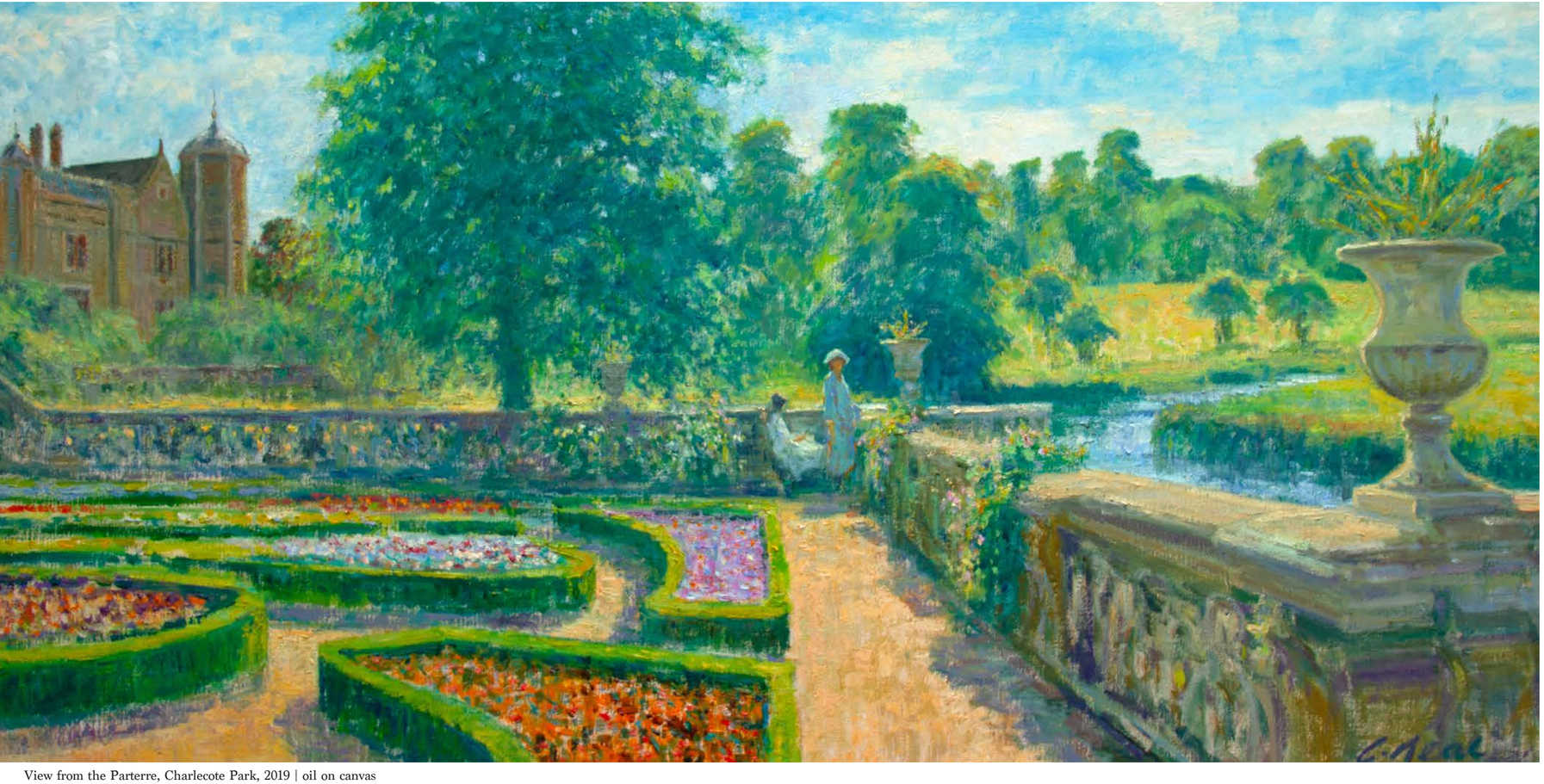

View from the Parterre, Charlecote Park, 2019 | oil on canvas
30 x 60 inches | FG©139375

Charlecote Park, Warwickshire

The view takes in the Parterre and distant parkland, which was once part of the ancient Forest of Arden. The Parterre can be considered as the most prominent and significant part of the gardens adjacent to the house. In the 19th century an Elizabethan revival took place, at that point in time the present Parterre was recreated.

The Parterre, with its elaborate balustraded wall, drops to the River Avon via a series of landings which visually connects the river and outer parkland to the west elevation of the house, affording stunning views all around.

The composition takes in the Elizabethan house and the design of the Parterre, but also the result of the alterations to the landscape made by Capability Brown, commissioned by George Lucy in the Mid-18th century, to landscape the grounds in the new style. Brown remoulded the river banks creating a 'natural easy level', while the River Dene that flowed to the south of the house and joined the Avon was brought closer and made to flow into the Avon via a cascade.

In measure of time, the scene accounts for the centuries of ownership. Charlecote Park has been the seat of the Lucy family since the 12th century, and consequently there have been various expressions of style and objectives for the estate.

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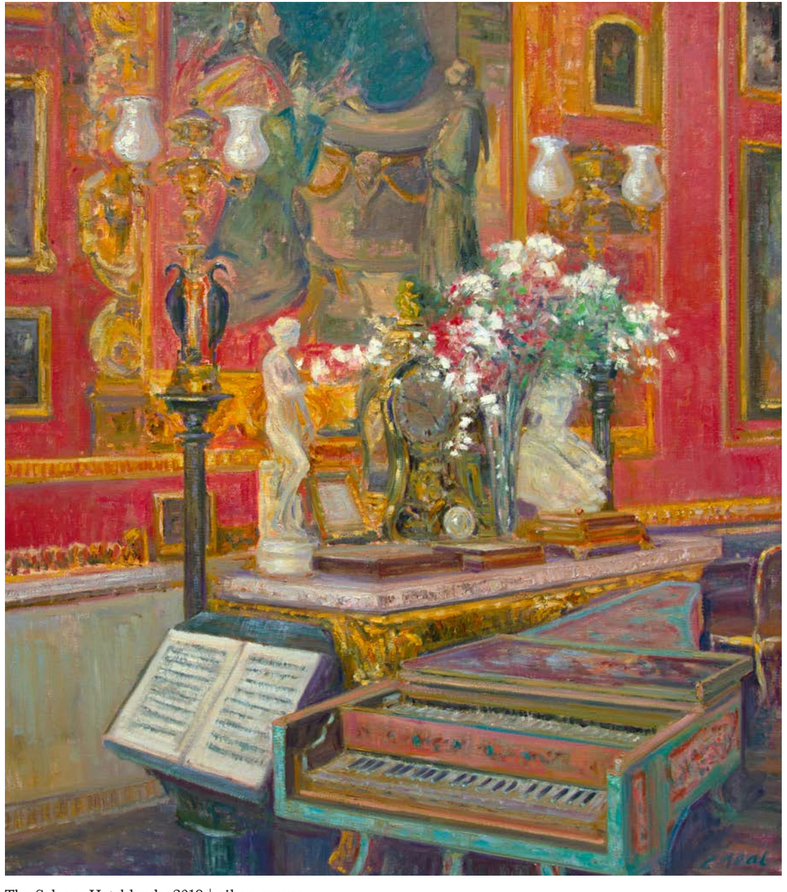


The Saloon, Hatchlands, 2019 | oil on canvas
54 X 48 inches | FG©139381

Hatchlands Park, Surrey

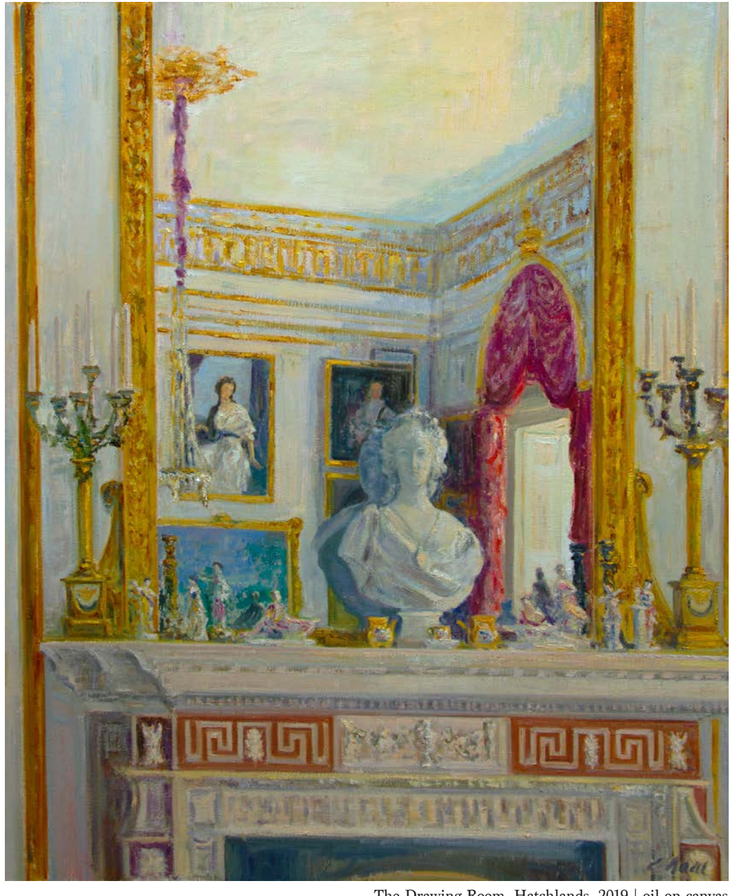
Originally the Saloon was conceived as a Drawing Room, now it is used as a picture gallery for the Cobbe Collection. The Cobbe Collection began in the Mid 18th century by Archbishop Cobbe with the assistance of his young Dublin Clergyman, Matthew Pilkington, who came to work as his private secretary and vicar in 1740 in Dublin.

The composition focuses in on the Saloon in part as an interior subject, but emphasis is made with a still life approach. The painting explores the relationship in expressions of styles and individual pieces that make up part of the Cobbe Collection, which has been lent and displayed at Hatchlands by Mr Alec Cobbe to the National Trust throughout his tenancy.

The 1622 harpsichord made by Girolamo Zenti is foremost in the painting. Behind the harpsichord an assembly of fine pieces are set on a console table (circa 1750) which is original to the house and is made of Brecia marble with eagle supports of carved wood.

The mirror composition juxtaposes two visual spaces; firstly, exterior to the mirror, with the collection of figurines comprising of Meissen reclining figures, Dresden shepherds and shepherdesses and male and female Derby figurines create a self-contained miniature rustic world. The ornate candelabras on either end of the Adam fireplace compliment the grace of the Marie Antoinette Sévres style biscuit bust wearing a Louis XVI medallion. Secondly, within the mirror reflection of the Drawing Room interior far wall is a self-portrait of Angelica Kauffman RA {1741-1807} who was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy in 1768 and a prominent painter in London. She was also a member of the 1750 Blue Stocking Society.

The silk valences {pelmets} within the Drawing Room were supplied c 1750 by Ince and Mayhew for the Grand Cabinet at Blenheim Palace, and were purchased by Mrs Cobbe's aunt, Lady Iliffe at a sale of Blenheim chattels during the 1950's. The walls are decorated in a greyish white and gold which, with the red silk curtains, create the appropriate setting for the Marie Antoinette's pianoforte made by Sebastion Erard in 1787. Equally, the room decoration compliments the geometric design of the Adams fireplace details.



The Drawing Room, Hatchlands, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 40 inches | FG©139380

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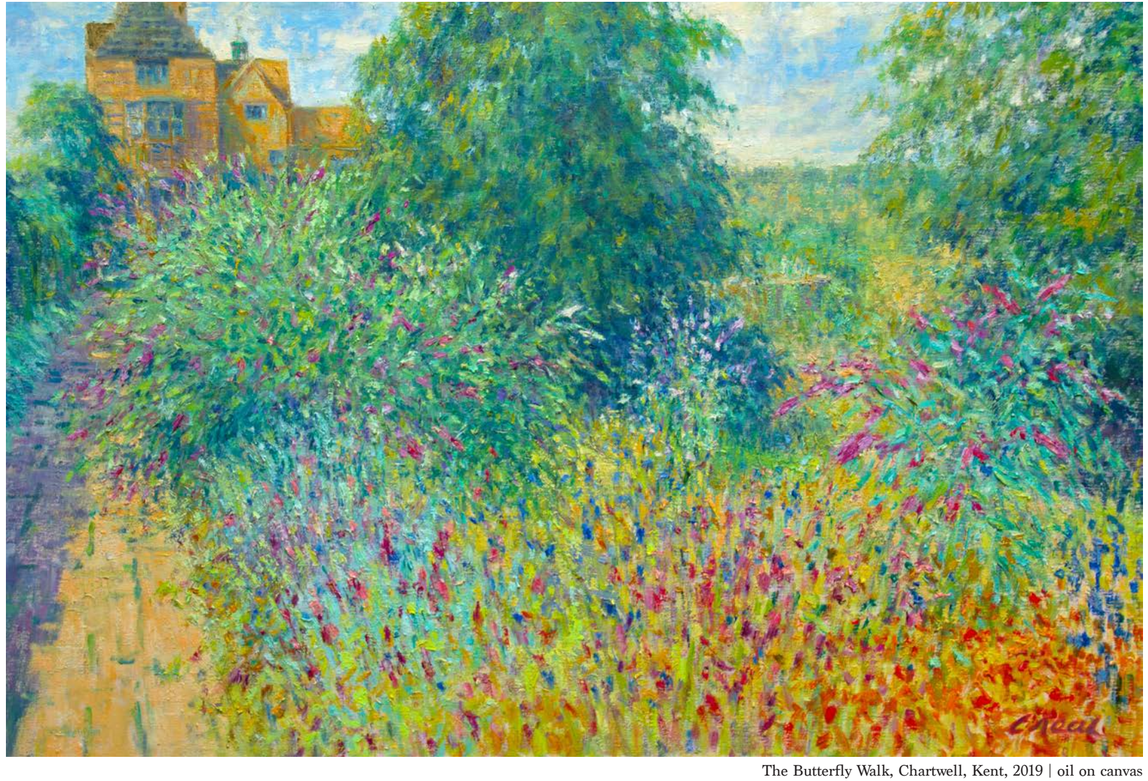
Sir Winston Churchill's Studio, Chartwell, Kent, 2019 | oil on canvas
60 x 40 inches | FG©139376

Chartwell, Kent

The composition captures the juxtaposition of the studio interior and the window view to the grounds beyond, which rises to the upper terraces and house. This "Sir Winston Churchill's Studio" painting can be realised as an allegorical portrayal of Churchill's life, through the collective curated aspects of his studio.

The outer view to the gardens and house beyond reminds us of his passion for gardening and his love of Chartwell as a home and its location in the Kentish countryside.

The Butterfly Walk extends from the south-west corner of the house, along the top terrace. The borders are planted out with Buddleia and plants to attract and support butterflies and other insects. The composition forms the second part in the allegorical portrayal of Sir Winston Churchill. The contrasting, yet mutually supporting and balancing aspects to Churchill's personality can be clearly seen, when considering his interests, especially his fascination with butterflies and wildlife.



The Butterfly Walk, Chartwell, Kent, 2019 | oil on canvas
32 x 48 inches | FG©139377

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Farnborough Hall, Warwickshire

Ambrose Holbech of Mollington purchased Farnborough in 1685 from the Raleigh's, and here his descendants still live today. The house and parkland was created by William Holbech between 1745-1750 to form a setting likened to Roman Campagna and revising the existing manor house that he inherited from his father, resulting in a Palladian style villa for his sculpture and art collection acquired on his extended tours to Italy.

This outstanding and unique setting of parkland and ornamental Italianate rose garden is rare indeed and makes for the most perfect compositional narrative of English landscape and garden design. The parkland, inclusive of the 'River Pool' follows the picturesque landscape – that sense of Arcadia which was much in vogue during the 1700's. Equally unique is the view, which takes in various uses of the land and its management, engaging with nature from pasture for grazing, parkland, lake and distant hay meadows along with the formal Italianate style rose garden, planted with roses, delphiniums and yew bushes.

This outstanding place which survives as a complete concept from a fascinating moment in the development of English landscaping is one of very few Grade 1 parks and gardens in the English Heritage Parks and Gardens Register.

View over the Parkland from the Italian Garden, Farnborough Hall, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 72 inches | FG©139379

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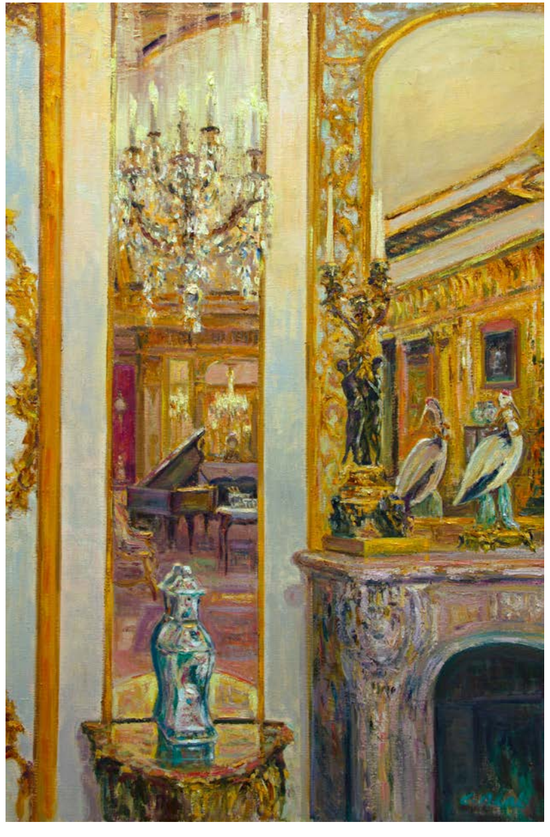

The Gold Saloon, Polesdon Lacey, Surrey, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 32 inches | FG©139393

Polesden Lacey, Surrey

The mirrored room glitters in the 17th Century gilded Italian panelling and glass Baccarat Chandelier. The Saloon would have been the entertainment showpiece for glittering parties at Polesden Lacey. The composition emphasises the opulence by viewing through mirror reflections which focuses on and integrates the spatial and light quality of the Saloon, through two focal planes. Namely; the intermediate foreground space of the 18th century marble fire surround, gilded mirror, candelabra and porcelain exotic bird, and the inner space of the wall mirror which visually extends the composition into the reflected saloon interior, where the far opposite mirror reflects back - a piano can be seen with a table set to serve guests champagne.

From 1906 this was the home of Mrs Greville and her husband the Honorable Ronald Greville, who was the eldest son and heir of the 2nd Baron Greville.
Prior to the Greville's ownership of Polesden Lacey, the house had been rebuilt in 1821-3 for Joseph Bonsor - a stationer and bookseller who purchased the house in 1818, and commissioned Thomas Cubitt to rebuild it. Later, Sir Walter Farquhar presided over the Victorian estate but changed little of the building and design of Cubitt's. Finally, in 1902, Polesden was purchased by Sir Clinton Dawkins, an ex-colonial civil servant and member of 'The Souls' who were a social group of distinguished politicians and intellectuals of the day. He was also a business partner with the American banker J.P. Morgan.

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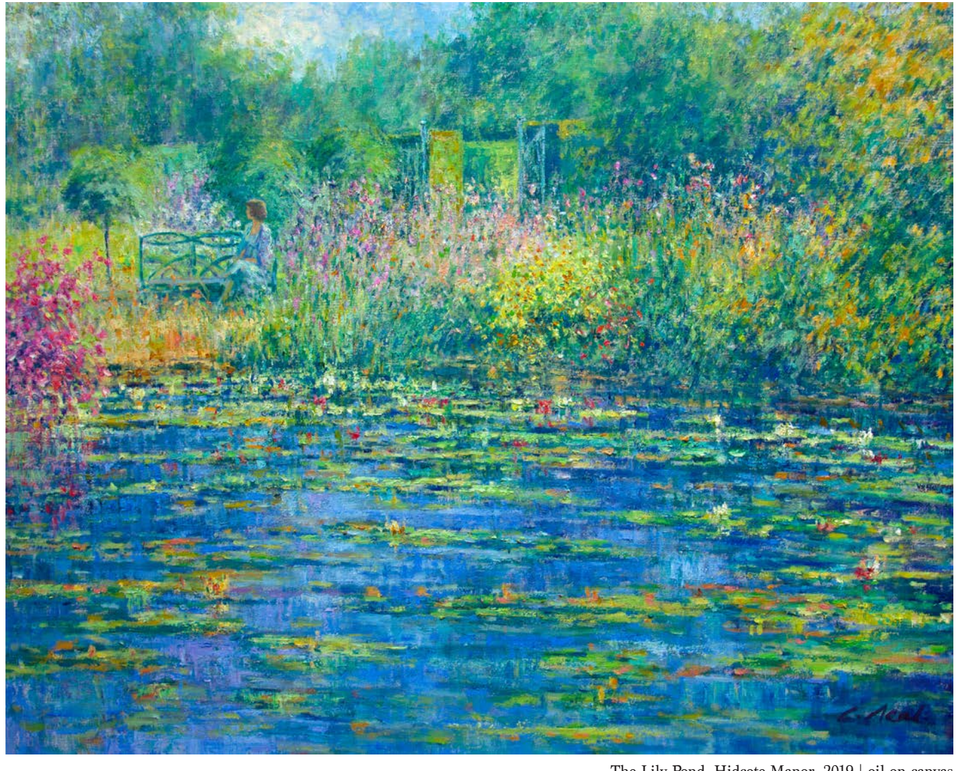
Hidcote, Gloucestershire

The Lily Pond is situated towards the Vegetable Garden and Hothouse.
The painting captures the vibrant colours of the planted borders that distinguish Hidcote.



The Lily Pond, Hidcote Manor, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 60 inches | FG©139383

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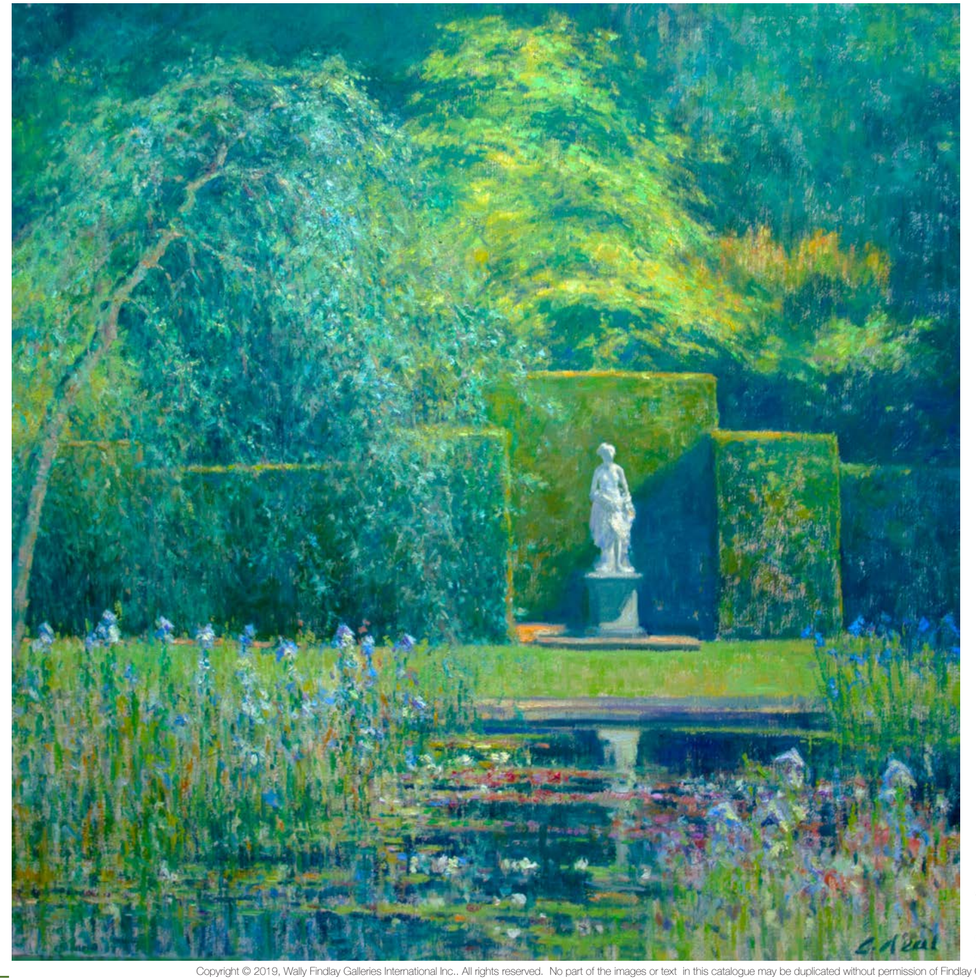

The Pool Garden,
Knightshayes, Devon, 2019
oil on canvas
48 X 48 inches | FG©139384

Knightshayes Court, Devon

Originally designed by Edward Kemp as a bowling green in the 1870's, it was revised by Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory in 1957 as the Pool Garden when they had made it a priority after World War 2 to rescue and reinvigorate the gardens.

The composition explores the relationship between the various plantings and their textures, shapes and colours. The strict geometric form of the original yew hedged battlements contrasts with the soft delicate fall of the silver weeping pear tree. The brilliance in colours of the irises and water lilies, red nymphaea 'Escarboucle', white nymphaea 'Gladstoniana' and yellow nymphaea 'Moorei' also complement the backdrop tints of green. The Victorian statue of a female bather adds a timeless classical ambiance to the Pool Garden. The contrasting of sun-lit and shaded areas and especially the brilliance of the acer tree add to the dynamic transience; set in contrast to the serene pose of the bather, all of which amounts to a dreamlike setting.

Knightshayes was the family home of the Heathcoat Amory family for 125 years from 1827 to 1997. Originally starting as a farming family in Derbyshire, they evolved through their industry and became the owners of the world's largest lace making factory at Tiverton. All royal wedding veils from Queen Victoria to Princess Diana have been made at Tiverton. John Heathcoat {1783-1861} moved to Tiverton along with much of his workforce after a negative reaction was acted out by traditional lace makers to his patented alternative lace making method using mechanised looms. In 1816 the factory at Loughborough in the midlands was vandalised, machinery smashed, and the building was a total loss and put 200 men out of work.

When John Heathcoat died, he had three daughters, (a son died at infancy), so the business passed to his grandson John {1829-1914} when he was 32. He made the family name Heathcoat Amory as his father Samuel Amory, John Heathcoat's business partner, had married John Heathcoat's daughter Anne. John became Sir John and had received a baronecy in 1874 from William Gladstone for' political services'. In 1868 he purchased the Knightshayes etstate. The existing house was built in 1787 by the merchant banker Benjamin Dickson. The house was demolished and a new house built as a grand family home. Sir John commissioned the leading architect William Burges who was a designer of church buildings. Burges had a passion for Gothic architecture and Knightshayes was an expression of high Victorian Gothic. Due to the overly eccentric designs for the interior, Burges was replaced by John Dibblee Crace {1838-1919} to complete the interior schemes.

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Overbeck's, Devon

Overbeck's affords spectacular views over the Salcombe Estuary. The home is set in a 7 acre garden filled with exotic and tender plants. Palms, salvias and olive trees growing alongside bananas, agaves and acacias.

Positioned on a high vantage point, the garden is arranged in terraces, each affording a unique view and vantage point of the surrounding coast and garden.

The painting instills a sense of suspended time, tea has been served at the Upper Terrace and where time is allowed to pass by in the warm, summer, late afternoon light. The same vistas can still be experienced today, and a place where one can still enjoy refreshments.

The Terrace, Early Summer Evening, Overbeck's, 2019
oil on canvas
30 X 60 inches | FG©139386

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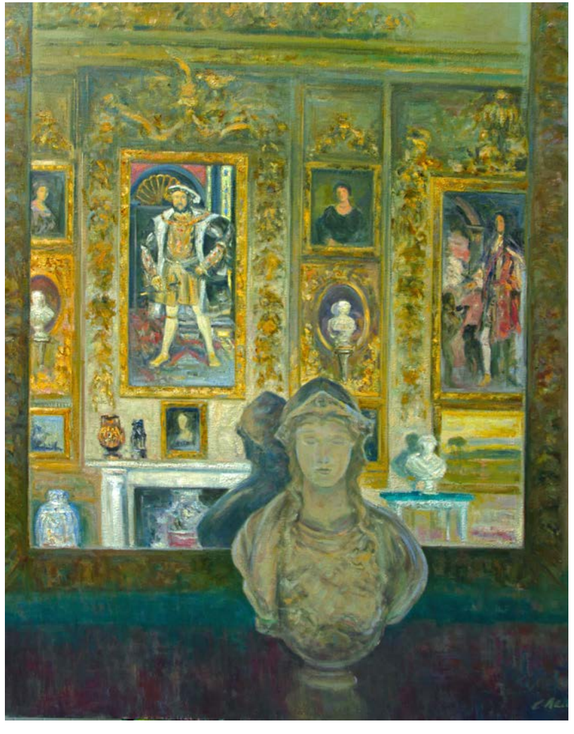
Petworth, Sussex



Through the mirrored reflection of the Carved Room the composition captures the room and curated collection as the 3rd Earl of Egremont {1751-1837} had arranged. Collections are by their assembly and curation a creative act and reflect, as well as define, the collector.

The Great House of Petworth was built in the French Baroque style. It was the creation of Charles Seymour the 6th Earl of Somerset {1662-1748}, known as the 'Proud Duke'. The scheme for the new house was to remodel the existing manor house of the Earls of Northumberland, on his marriage to Lady Elizabeth Percy (the heiress to the estate) and the daughter of the 11th and last Earl. The Duke added to the existing 'art collection' started by the Earls of Northumberland.

The 2nd Earl from his Grand Tour and time in the diplomatic service, had created a collection of Italian, French and Dutch old masters. In addition, he acquired ancient sculpture from Greece and Rome. The collection is of importance due to it being intact for the period. The 2nd Earl's son, George O'Brien Wyndham, on becoming the 3rd Earl of Egremont and over the 74 years at Petworth, further evolved the 'Petworth Collection' and became the patron of Turner.

The reflected space of the Carved Room takes in the high quality copy of Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII, the small pastiche portrait of Anne Boleyn, the full length portrait of the 6th Duke of Somerset and one of a series of four paintings by Turner and commissioned by the 3rd Earl. In the outer forefront space is the Greek bust of 'Athena with an Aegis', the Greek Goddess of wisdom, war, the arts, industry, justice and skill.

Mirror Composition the Carved Room, Petworth, 2019 | oil on canvas
60 x 48 inches | FG©139388

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Powis Castle, Wales

View from the Aviary Terrace, Powis Castle, Wales 2019 | oil on canvas
54 x 72 inches | FG©139394

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Nymans, West Sussex

The chosen time of day for this composition was mid to late morning, wherein the light direction accentuates what had become a romantic ruined house, gutted by fire on the 19th of February 1947. The windows now empty of glass and frames, along with the stone and brick structure, take on the semblance of a past romantic age, a dream of the past, especially when the building is softened by nature and weathering.

The Forecourt Garden, Nymans, 2019 | oil on canvas
40 x 60 inches | FG©139385

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Trelissick, Cornwall

Sited on its own peninsular, Trellisick has had five previous owners. It has been revised, experienced prosperity, collapse and change. Donated to the National Trust by Ida Copeland in 1955 after the death of her son Geoffrey.

The composition explores the notion of being lost in the music. Firstly; the sister playing and absorbed in concentration, and the other who is listening whilst gazing out to the scene beyond. The music connects the inner space of the room, the experience of the notes being played and the expanse of the outer world beyond. The painting evokes the sense of time past, when such activities were common place by the various past owners of Trelissick.

The Music Room, Trelissick Estate, 2019 | oil on canvas
40 x 48 inches | FG©139395

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Tyntesfield, North Somerset

Set aside from the Broad Walk, the self-contained intimate garden retains a complete sense of the Victorian era. The timber and stone gazebo depicted is one of a pair constructed at the time of the building of Tyntesfield and the establishment of the gardens. Internally decorated on both walls and floor are elaborate designed tiles made by Milton the leading decorative tile manufacturers of the Victorian period. The style of the gazebos and surrounding walls directly relate to the high Victorian Gothic style expressed in the main house. The garden at the time provided fine views over the valley and Yeo river, towards the Mendip Hills.

The painting depicts a sense of the private world of the Gibbs family - a moment to be absorbed in the delightful garden that was created.

The Rose Garden Pergola, Tyntesfield, 2019 | oil on canvas
40 x 20 inches | FG©139396

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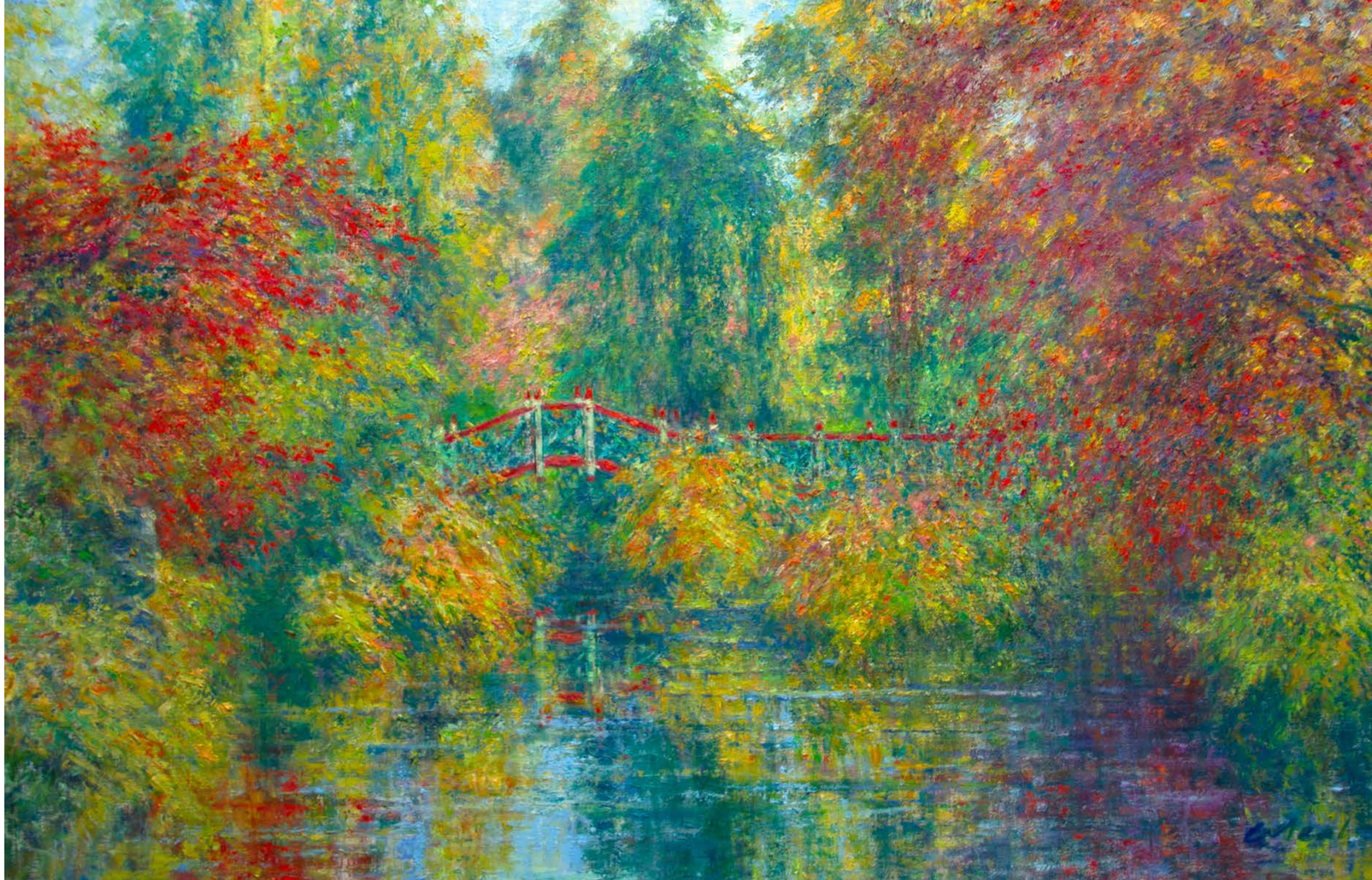
Biddulph Grange, Staffordshire

Biddulph Garden was the creation of James Bateman (1811-1897) and his wife Maria (1813-1895). The estate lies in the hilly countryside below Biddulph Moor. It was purchased by Bateman's grandfather for its coal mining potential, with the family living at nearby Knypersley Hall.

Set in its own secluded dell, the imaginative setting of the China Garden was created for displaying Bateman's collection of rare trees, shrubs and plants – collected by the plant hunters Robert Fortune and Joseph Dalton Hooker. The theme was to replicate the willow pattern designs depicting Chinese gardens and landscape. Many of the tree and plant specimens were collected by the plant hunter Robert Fortune, who visited China and Japan in the 1840's and 1850's. In particular, the Golden Larch was one of the first to be introduced to Britain.

The autumn season provides the most dazzling colour displays especially during early morning and late afternoon when the sun is low in the sky, thus creating dramatic contrasts of light and shade. The juxtaposition of the structures and their colour and iconic design compliment the luxuriant planting. Water plays a vital role within the scheme as it connects sky and garden and fuses all within the water surface reflections.



The China Garden, Biddulph Grange, 2019
oil on canvas
40 X 60 inches | FG©139370

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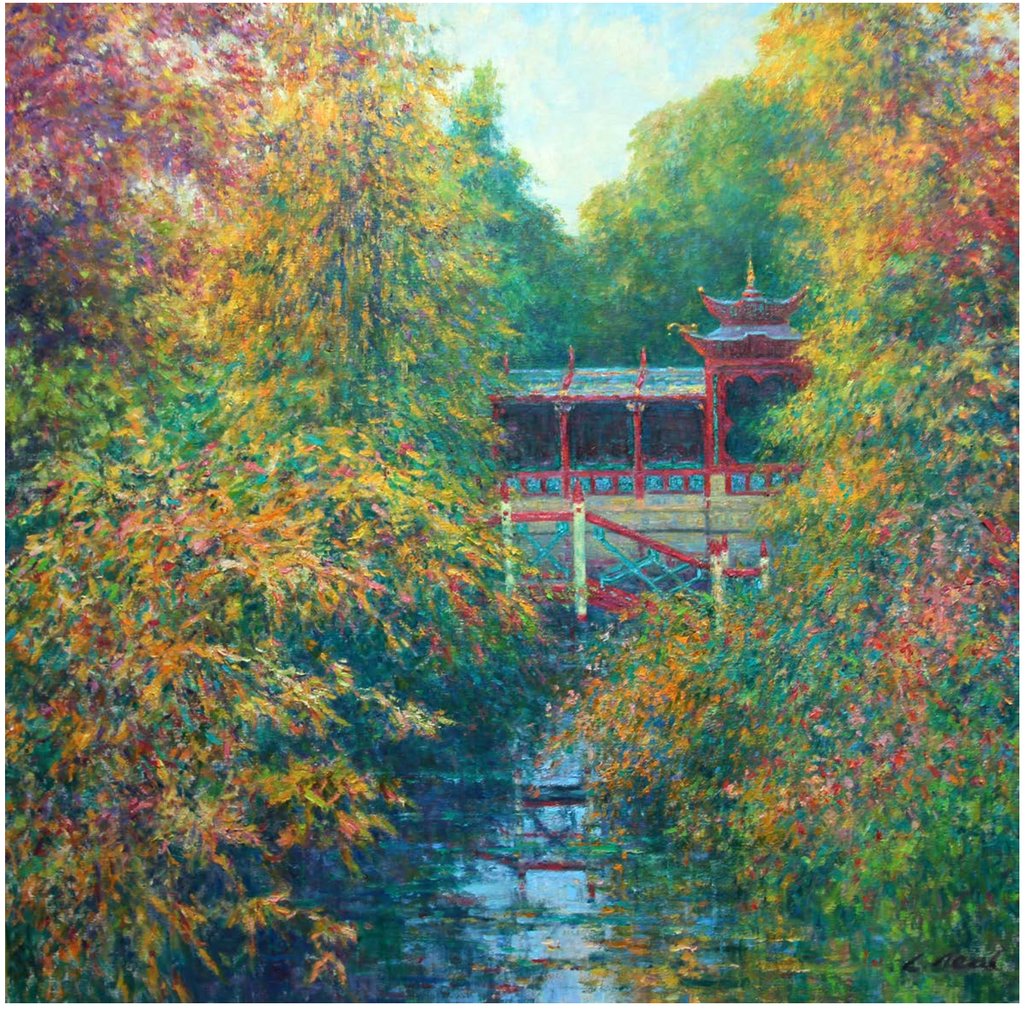

Biddulph Grange, Staffordshire

James and Maria Bateman moved onto the estate in 1840 and started transforming the existing farmhouse into an Italianate mansion as well as commissioning the surrounding land to be landscaped. Bateman had inherited his wealth accumulation through coal and engineering.

His passion for plant collecting and his wealth sponsored expeditions to Mexico and South America to gather rare species. Bateman, together with his wife Maria and friend the marine artist and fellow gardener, Edward Cooke (1811-1880) created and developed the astonishing series of eclectic themed gardens in order to present Bateman's tree, shrub and plant collections. Bateman was a landowner, horticulturalist and one of the world's eminent Orchidologists. A noted botanist, he was a fellow of both the Linnea and Royal Societies, he also served as Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society.

The China Garden, Morning Light, View to the Temple, Biddulph Grange, 2019
oil on canvas
60 X 60 inches | FG©139369

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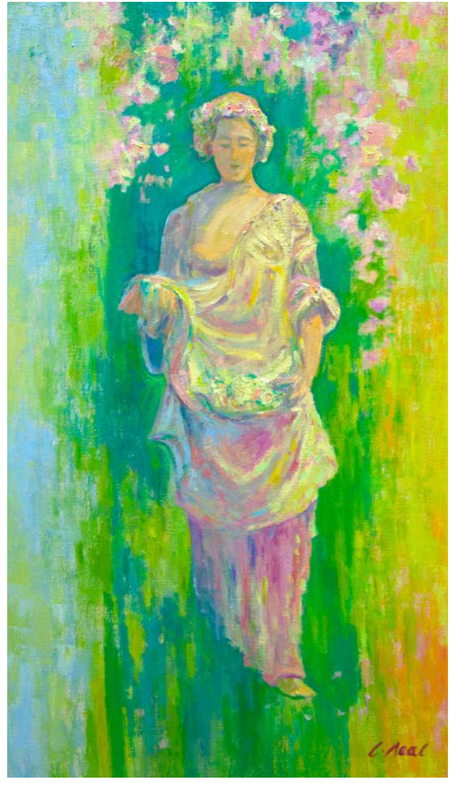
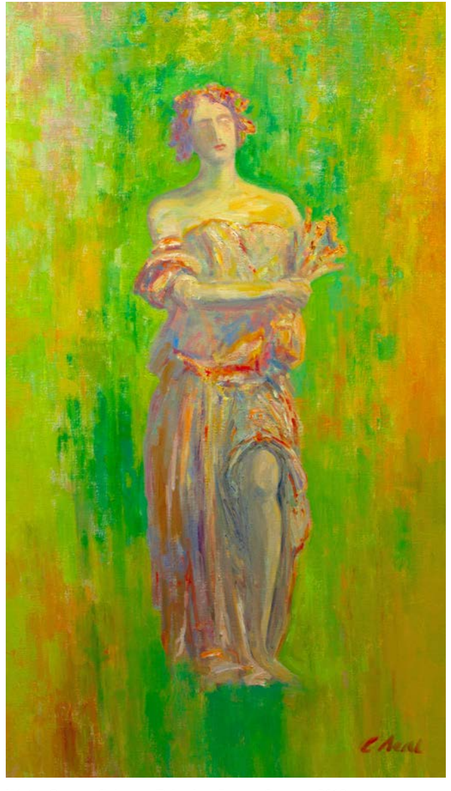


Le printemps - Quatre Saisons, Polesdon Lacey, Surrey, 2019
oil on canvas
48 x 28 inches | FG©139389



l'été - Quatre Saisons, Polesdon Lacey, Surrey, 2019
oil on canvas
48 x 28 inches | FG©139390

l'automne - Quatre Saisons, Polesdon Lacey, Surrey, 2019
oil on canvas
48 x 28 inches | FG©139391

l'hiver - Quatre Saisons, Polesdon Lacey, Surrey, 2019
oil on canvas
48 x 28 inches | FG©139392

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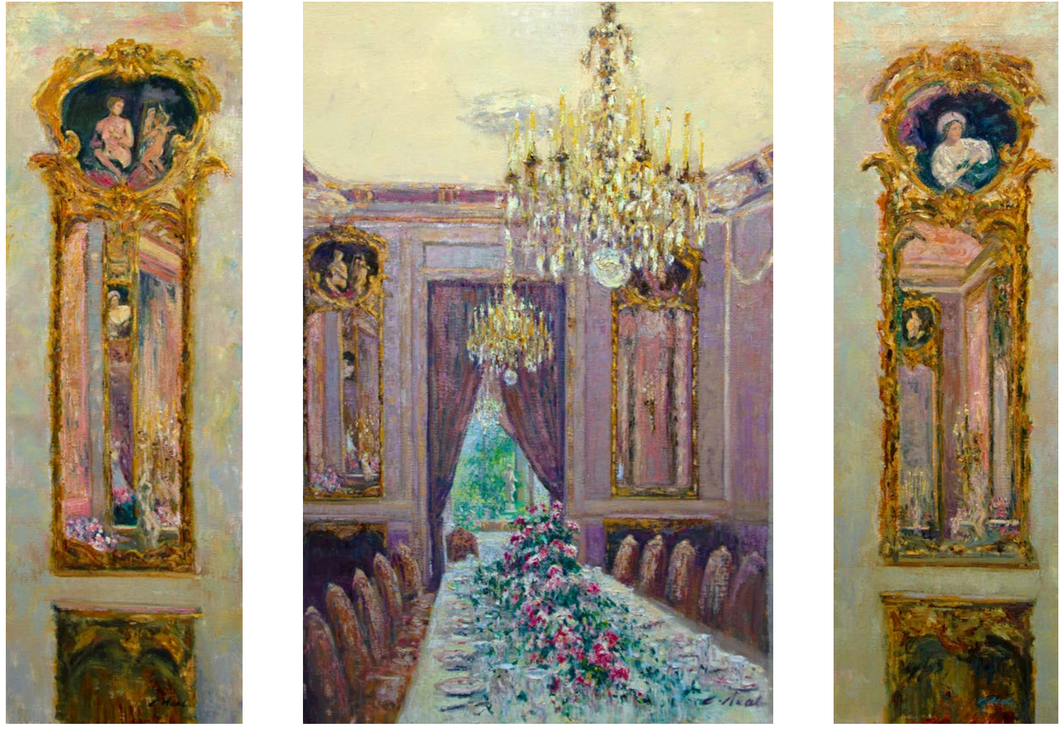
Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire



Dining Room Triptych, Waddesdon Manor, 2019 | oil on canvas
Left: 48 x 16 inches | FG©139398
Centre: 48 x 32 inches | FG©139399
Right: 48 x 16 inches | FG©139400

The south terrace fountain and statues depicted in the painting are in fact part of a separate fountain grouping situated on the north terrace. They were at one time a complete assembly made for the Ducal Palace at Colorno near Parma by Giuliano Mozani around 1700. In this south terrace arrangement, the centre piece statues are of Pluto in the act of seizing Proserpina and kidnapping her in order to force her to be queen of the underworld of Hades. Pluto is attended by merpeople and seahorses.

The South Parterre Fountain, Waddesdon Manor, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 48 inches | FG©139402

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Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire

Mirror Composition, The Grey Room, Waddesdon Manor, 2019 | oil on canvas
48 x 32 inches | FG©139401

Within the mirror's reflecting space, the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds of Mrs Abington {a leading actress of her day} creates an inner focal point. In addition, the natural light delivered through the window becomes a visual linkage between the interior and outer visual space of the mirror. A further relationship coexisting between actual object and reflected counterpart can be experienced with the Sérves porcelain and the 1749 French Ormolu clock. The clock was created through the collaboration between two famous artisans Julien Le Roy, {clockmaker to Louis XV}, and Jacques Caffieri {bronze maker} and his wife, {who was a gilder} which enabled them to achieve the complete gilt-bronze creation.

The female figure at the top of the clock represents Dawn, positioned above a celestial globe. She points her finger at the hours, whilst the clock face indicates the minutes past. At the base of the clock is seated the female figure of Venus with Cupid at her side. The composition explores the transience of time signified by the clock and the solidity of matter, object and apparent object seen as light. The Reynolds portrait further emphasises the passing of time, as for sitter and artist the painting is a captured moment not to be repeated.

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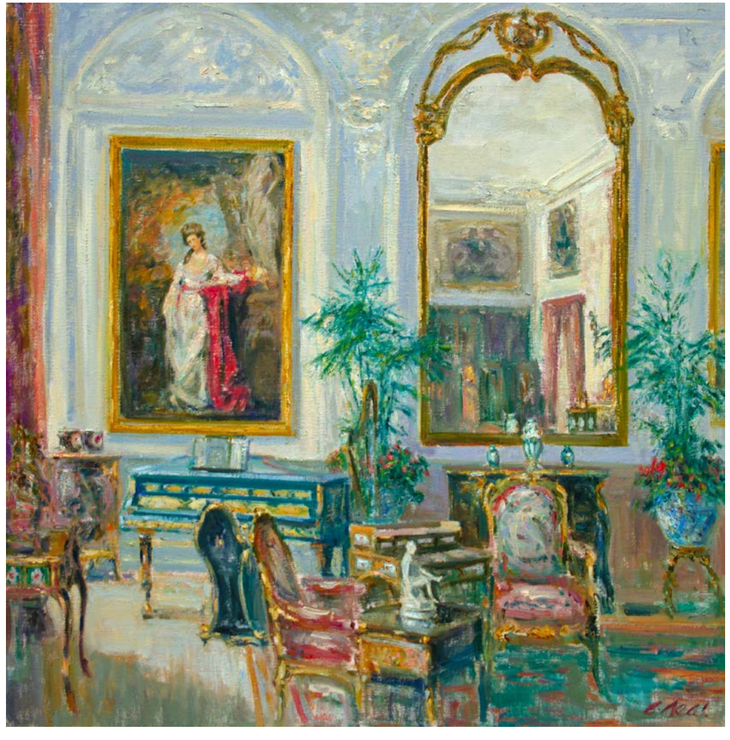
The opulence created at Waddesdon Manor represents what was in vogue for the age in European and New York society in America.

The Grey Room served as a principle withdrawing room where guests could play cards, listen to music or engage in other entertainment after meals.
The wall panelling in the room came from the large saloon of a town house situated in the Saint Germain district of Paris; built for the financier Abraham Peyrenc de Moras in 1728-1732. In aesthetic terms the Grey room is a setting of English paintings by Sir Joshua Reynolds and French furniture. The Reynolds portrait of Mrs Abington, as a comic muse {1764-69} is one of three paintings by the artist that are hanging in the room. Mrs Abington was painted by Reynolds in a classical pose holding the mask of comedy, assuming the stance of the antique statue of Thalia, the muse of comedy against which she leans.

The interior light and its direction from the left is reminiscent to a Vermeer interior composition creating strong contrasts. The small nude figurine in the foreground placed on a table accentuates feminine grace and visually connects with the classical pose depicted in the portrait. The mirror acts as a counterbalance within the composition, allowing for a view back into the room, thereby giving a glimpse of what is adjacent and undisclosed.



The Grey Room, Waddesdon Manor, 2019 | oil on canvas
40 x 40 inches | FG©139397

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