

RAPHAEL PEPPER

Solo exhibition, stand P19, London Art Fair, Business Design Centre, January 2006

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The effect of growing up in the 1990's meant being part of a culture that developed a different relationship to what it had artistically produced. There is a lyric from a song by Nirvana that had the line "I found it hard to find, but oh whatever never mind", which is about the nihilistic personal effect that some grandiose achievement may bring. One has got to assume that the work has an emotional power, that it can create an 'aftershock'. It also means that the artist has created a work that feels like every inch of it has been run through and exhausted. If this had not happened I wouldn't have that 'never mind' feeling afterwards.

The work doesn't dwell on or refer to the process of its making. Rather like Tom Stoppard's comment on journalists that 'they think the most important part of the story is that they have turned up to cover it', I have actively sought to question whether what I did matters as much as the 'aftershock'.

Studying drawing at Camberwell for 4 years shocked me because it brought me more into conflict than agreement with what I found. Like my peer group at Camberwell, I refused to accept banal pre-conceptions about drawing: Hoffman, who taught Clement Greenberg said that drawing is best defined by what it is not.

What matters is to follow personal aims which involve primarily a release of emotion. Something that has inspired me is what Mahler said about his symphonic work, that he wanted each piece to cover the scope of human emotion, and I've treated my drawings individually in the same manner.

The surfaces of the drawings offer a tenderness that painting cannot offer. When I realised this I finally felt free from painting. The last painting I completed was about 5 years ago, since then I have not felt anything for the medium.

By using the emotional base that drawing provides, I have aimed to give drawing a greater physicality.

The emotions that under-pin a drawing may make it impossible to simply complete the work in a single drawing. The number of repetitions isn't specific.

The colours are drawn so as to be as natural as possible but I have developed a sort of amplification where some colours amplify others. For example in *Intense Suave I*

James Hyman Fine Art  
6 Mason's Yard  
Duke Street ST. James's  
London SW1Y 6BU

020 7839 3906  
[www.jameshymanfineart.com](http://www.jameshymanfineart.com)

realised that I was only looking at a specific area of my field of vision so I made the green amplify what I was actually looking at. The intensive approach where each drawing takes several months means that I build up individual relationships with each colour. One becomes as emotionally attached to the colour as the content.

The locations are often anonymous, allowing greater emphasis on the drawing itself. The surface becomes the focus for the emotional power that the drawing offers. It could be compared to the attraction that we still feel in museums when we see portraits of people we will never know.

There is a contemporary ambivalence to landscape and the natural world. I challenge myself to present the unimportance of things. I don't want to make drawings that eulogise or depict our shared and already artistically represented landscape. Neither do I want to create work that merely provides a document or testament.

Some drawings are of places that have been built directly into the landscape. The location of *Intense Suave*, which is Station Road in Loughton, Essex involved me drawing with my back directly turned on an enormous section of woodland.

It interests me how we have created our landscape, the artifice in redesigning the 'natural world' to fulfil society's needs. The way that squares are being redesigned today is little different to the Victorian habit of cutting down trees in public parks, so that police could monitor political protests more easily. This is directly referred to in my drawing of Southwark Park, which is based on an old postcard from before the trees were removed for this purpose.

*4 trees, London Bridge (2)* refers to this absence: 'Suppose all the lions got up and walked away', from Auden's poem 'If I could tell you', makes one think how a lot of the most enjoyable landscape would not be here if we weren't, or had decided to live elsewhere.

But it not just the uniqueness of a place. There is sense that what we see in one place will surely be replicated in another. We become bound to places by slight memories.

I want to shift the emphasis of involvement with the art away from the artist and to the viewer, to commit an act of artistic decentralisation. It should be possible to make the assumption that art can have validity through that interaction. For me all art matters only when it is felt.

I draw what I expect to see.

James Hyman Fine Art  
6 Mason's Yard  
Duke Street ST. James's  
London SW1Y 6BU

020 7839 3906  
[www.jameshymanfineart.com](http://www.jameshymanfineart.com)