



Press release: April 2009

## **Artist beats recession by painting in miniature**

An Oxfordshire landscape artist has hit on a creative way to beat the credit crunch – by producing miniature versions of his popular impressionist paintings.

David Mynett, who lives in Swerford, near Chipping Norton, came up with the idea of painting postcard-sized watercolours as the recession began to take hold – and already they are flying off art gallery shelves.

His regular-sized contemporary paintings – many of which hang in private and public art collections all over the world – sell for between £500 and £3,000, but the pint-sized pictures are available for about £125.

The 66-year-old artist, a prolific traveller to Europe and North Africa, has painted dozens of miniatures since the beginning of the year and says the recession-busting enterprise has given him a new lease of creative life.

“I didn’t want to panic over the credit crunch, but I knew I had to do something about it, as people are less likely to want to spend hundreds of pounds on art in these difficult times,” says David. “So I came up with the idea of painting much smaller pictures than usual. It was an economic idea initially, but what I didn’t realise at the time was how much fun it would be and how much I would learn from it.”

David, who has exhibited in countries such as America and Morocco, is using his sizeable collection of sketch books to produce the new paintings.

“Over the past 15 or so years, I’ve travelled widely across Europe and North Africa and I always use sketch books to give me the bare bones of paintings,” he explains. “They are now proving invaluable in terms of providing me with the raw material for my new pictures.”

Lee Benson, owner of Number Nine The Gallery in Birmingham, which sells David’s paintings, says the postcard-sized works are proving a hit with customers.

“We’re selling four or five a week, which is brilliant considering the economic climate. It just shows that artists can be financially creative as well as simply artistic. I think one reason the

miniatures are so popular is that people who have visited the places David paints are buying a postcard-sized memory. I describe them as gems, because that's what they are."

Painting is David's third career: after several years as a barrister in Birmingham, he spent two decades farming an estate in southern Germany inherited by his Austrian-born wife. He took up full-time painting when he returned to the UK in the late 1980s. Since 1993, he has been resident tutor at the Can Xenet School of Painting in Pollensa, Majorca.

"It's so exciting for me to be learning new techniques after all this time: I've had to buy new, smaller brushes and work out how to translate the charm of my usual-sized pictures into miniature ones without losing the integrity," said David.

"There are certain times in one's life when it's an effort to paint, but now I wake up in a morning and can't get out of bed fast enough in order to start work. The miniatures have given me a real zip."

\* David Mynett's miniature paintings can be seen at Number Nine The Gallery, 9 Brindleyplace, Birmingham. Opening hours: Tues-Sat 11am-6pm, Sun 11am-5pm. Tel: 0121 643 9099 or email: [lee@numbarninethegallery.com](mailto:lee@numbarninethegallery.com)

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