

NICK BOTTING
SOHO TO SCILLY

24 MARCH – 8 APRIL 2022

Monday – Friday
10am – 6pm
and by appointment

PORTLAND GALLERY

3 BENNET STREET · LONDON SW1A 1RP
TELEPHONE 020 7493 1888 · EMAIL art@portlandgallery.com
www.portlandgallery.com

Cover: *Tresco, Old Grimsby from Above* Oil on canvas 24 x 30 ins Cat. no.11

SOHO TO SCILLY

In recent years there has been an upheaval to our sense of time. Perhaps it's a reaction to our digital lives, but a dizzying sense of acceleration is now being countered by a search for the exquisite moment. It can be seen in the rise in mindfulness, wild swimming and weekend cycling, in the phenomena of 'slow' food and choosing train travel over air, and it has ushered in a new era of sensorial fulfilment and connoisseurship.

Nick Botting brings something of that sensibility to the paintings in **Soho to Scilly**. His facture involves much use of freehand, suggesting a sense of the fleeting and transitory. But while his paintings express timeless themes, they also contain contemporary touches; purposefully put in to add a note of living authenticity to enduring scenes. In *Late Autumn, Primrose Hill Road*, for example, a passer-by sports an orange beanie hat, while another carries coffee.

There's a sense of the cinematic in Botting's works too, suggesting the potential of further movement while remaining in an eternal present. As John Berger said in *Another Way Of Telling* (1982), comparing drawing to photography: "A drawing contains the time of its own making, and this means that it possesses its own time, independent of the living time of what it portrays."

Much of the ephemeral atmosphere in his paintings comes from Botting's dynamic process. He sketches first, but doesn't draw onto the canvas, often going straight onto making what he calls "loose instinctive marks", then following with more pattern and solidity, balancing the elements in each painting, and working with what he calls "awkwardness" to assuage compositional jarring while retaining the integrity of each picture.

The hardest work is done on-site where Botting attends to each picture, sometimes for hours. For *Winter Swimmers, Highgate* Botting sat for five mornings at the same time, at the end of the jetty, to grab the same luminescence as "the light changes very fast at that time of day". He is interested in those moments of energetic transformation – night into morning, day into evening – and in *Winter Afternoon, The Thames* Botting sought to catch the specific qualities of the riverside light as dusk turned.

It can be laborious but there is no hardship as Botting loses himself in his work – although being in the public arena means that he often has to deal with public interest. When he painted *Wembley Stadium from Olympic Way* at 2021's UEFA football finals, security guards attempted to move him on, despite a near-riot nearby. When he sat for a sultry week in Old Compton Street to paint *Cafe Boheme, Summer* Botting gained the attentions of a group of

regular passers-by, keen to witness his progress and beseeching him to include them in the picture. To paint under these circumstances means that he has to marshal a real sense of focus, and for a restaurant composition such as *Brasserie Zédel*, Botting had to find the discretion to paint amid the noise and bustle.

On each site visit, as well as back in the studio, Botting returns to each painting, "messaging it up, going backwards a bit, and then tightening it". Sometimes, figures look good individually, but compositionally don't work, so he revises them, and reassesses the colours. The early stream of consciousness on-site turns into a more clinical conversation; such as whether a painting needs a central figure or not, whether to keep a certain gracelessness or to make it less awkward. *The Millennium Bridge* is a case in point, where the lack of a central subject means that figures seem almost as if walking in or out of the frame, on a high-tech bridge spanning an ancient river. In *Borough Market, The First People*, meanwhile, Botting depicted shoppers congregating at this revived urban market. He likes bringing together emblems of "modernity and timelessness", depicting reflective moments in the frenetic heart of the city.

Now that our streets and public places are coming back to life after the hiatus, the urban theatre has been renewed in all its intensity. They know Botting of old in some venues, and at *Inside Bar Italia on a Wet Day*, he painted the bartender looking out grumpily at the rain; a living link between the two worlds of the forbidding exterior and warm interior. Of his two gallery pictures, *The Spanish Room at The National Gallery* and *The National Gallery, Late Morning*, Botting observed the human need for pleasurable solace in the hallowed space of the gallery, capturing what he calls the impulse to "watch the world while escaping from it". This aura of suspended animation also emerges in Botting's other paintings of leisure pursuits, from *Campden Hill Lawn Tennis Club*, which has a palpable sense of sporting pleasure, to *Summer in Polzeath* which brings out all the bliss of a warm day on a beach. As in all of Botting's paintings, they tell a story of heightened experience – and of the eternal moment.

Oliver Bennett is a writer and journalist who lives in London



The Dog Walker, Primrose Hill

Oil on canvas
16 x 20 ins

Catalogue no.27



**Marylebone High Street,
Looking North**

Oil on canvas
24 x 20 ins

Catalogue no.19



Wetsbourne Grove, Midsummer

Oil on canvas
20 x 24 ins

Catalogue no.18



Towpath

Oil on canvas
12 x 16 ins

Catalogue no.49

Towpath, Autumn Day

Oil on canvas
14 x 16 ins

Catalogue no.46





Cafe Boheme, Summer

Oil on canvas
27.5 x 35 ins

Catalogue no.7



Summer, The Colbert

Oil on canvas
16 x 14 ins

Catalogue no.45



**The Plaquemine Lock,
Autumn Afternoon**

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.33

The Wolseley
Oil on canvas
30 x 36 ins
Catalogue no.6





Brasserie Zédel

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.36



The Bar Staff, Manicomio

Oil on canvas board
10 x 14 ins

Catalogue no.57

A Long Lunch at Sam's Riverside

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.30





The National Gallery, Late Morning

Oil on canvas
18 x 20 ins

Catalogue no.26



The Spanish Room at the National Gallery

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.29



The Rosetta Stone II

Oil on canvas
20 x 24 ins

Catalogue no.20



Parsons Green, Bayley and Sage

Oil on canvas
14 x 16 ins

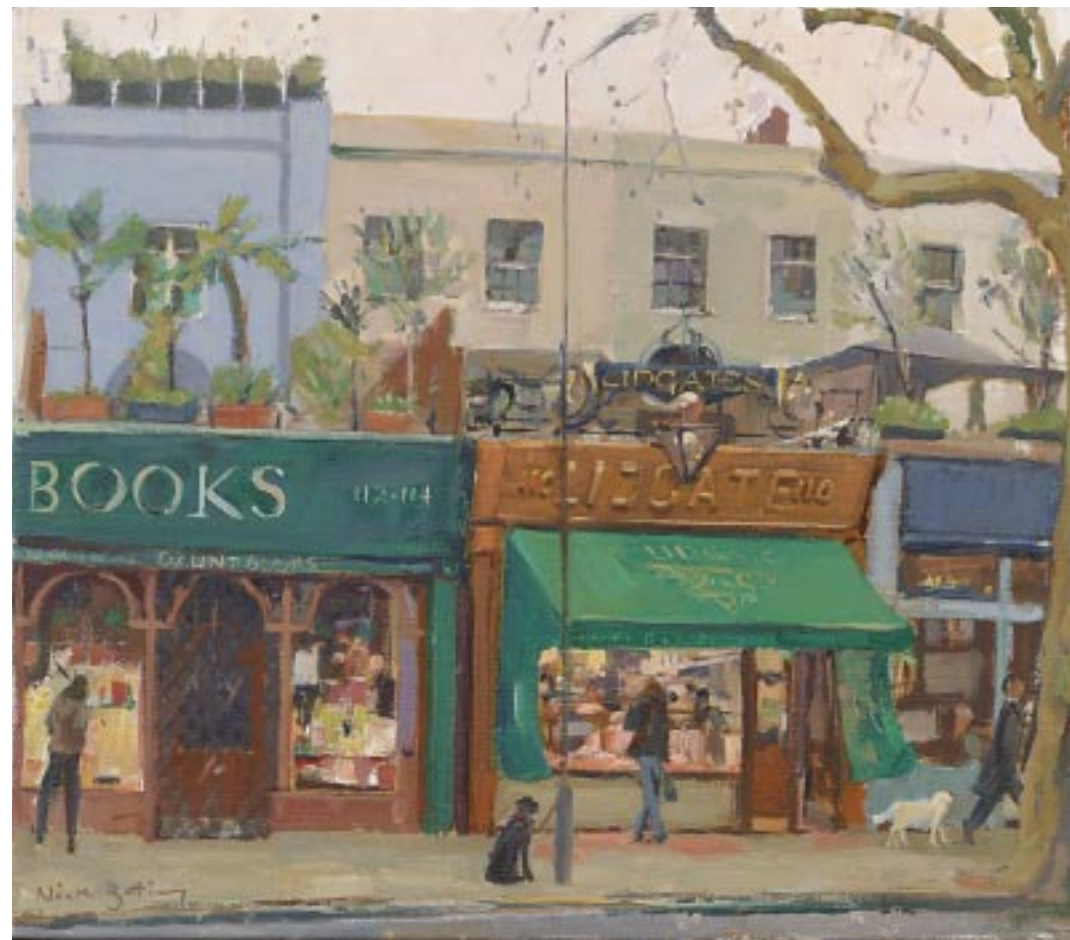
Catalogue no.44



Figures in the Sun, Berry Brothers

Oil on panel
16 x 10 ins

Catalogue no.53



Lidgate and Daunt

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.31



Borough Market

Oil on canvas
20 x 24 ins

Catalogue no.16



St Paul's with Blossom

Oil on canvas
20 x 12 ins

Catalogue no.42

Villiers Street, Autumn

Oil on canvas
48 x 36 ins

Catalogue no.2





A Bright Winter's Day in Town

Oil on panel
8.5 x 19 ins

Catalogue no.51



Winter Afternoon, The Thames

Oil on canvas
18 x 26 ins

Catalogue no.21

**A Bright Winter's Day
in Kensington**

Oil on canvas
30 x 36 ins

Catalogue no.4





Spring at Kenwood House

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.32



Autumn, St James's Park

Oil on canvas
16 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.35



Campden Hill Lawn Tennis Club

Oil on canvas
20 x 24 ins

Catalogue no.17



Holland Park Snow Scene

Oil on canvas
12 x 20 ins

Catalogue no.43



**Early Morning Swimmer,
Highgate**

Oil on panel
10 x 14 ins

Catalogue no.56



Winter Swimmers, Highgate

Oil on canvas
36 x 48 ins

Catalogue no.1

Summer in Regent's Park

Oil on canvas
20 x 30 ins

Catalogue no.12





Lincoln's Inn Fields, Hot Spring Day

Oil on canvas
14 x 16 ins

Catalogue no.47



A Warm Spring Day, Hampstead Heath

Oil on panel
12 x 24 ins

Catalogue no.34



Figures by the Sea, Polzeath

Oil on canvas
8 x 18.5 ins

Catalogue no.54



Summer in Polzeath

Oil on canvas
24 x 30 ins

Catalogue no.10



Daymer Bay, Summer

Oil on panel
8 x 14 ins

Catalogue no.61

Daymer Bay II

Oil on canvas
20 x 30 ins

Catalogue no.13





Old Grimsby, Tresco

Oil on board
12 x 22.5 ins

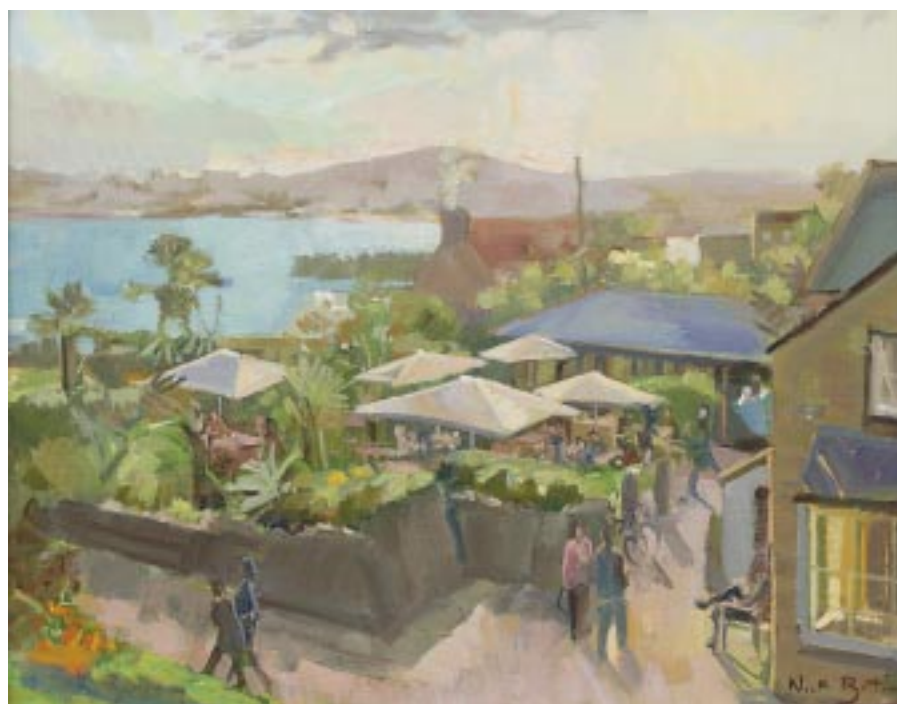
Catalogue no.39

Tresco, Old Grimsby from Above

Oil on canvas
24 x 30 ins

Catalogue no.11





Tresco, The New Inn from Above

Oil on canvas
14 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.41



Spring on Tresco, The New Inn

Oil on canvas board
10 x 14 ins

Catalogue no.55



Spring Afternoon, The New Inn, Tresco

Oil on canvas
20 x 28 ins

Catalogue no.14



Countryside Still Life with Daffodils

Oil on canvas
30 x 36 ins

Catalogue no.5



Irises by an Open Window

Oil on canvas
32 x 42 ins

Catalogue no.3

CATALOGUE

1	Winter Swimmers, Highgate	Oil on canvas	36 x 48	38	A Late Breakfast at The Colbert	Oil on canvas	20 x 14
2	Villiers Street, Autumn	Oil on canvas	48 x 36	39	Old Grimsby, Tresco	Oil on board	12 x 22.5
3	Irises by an Open Window	Oil on canvas	32 x 42	40	A Winter Path to Kenwood	Oil on canvas	15 x 18
4	A Bright Winter's Day in Kensington	Oil on canvas	30 x 36	41	Tresco, The New Inn from Above	Oil on canvas	14 x 18
5	Countryside Still Life with Daffodils	Oil on canvas	30 x 36	42	St Paul's with Blossom	Oil on canvas	20 x 12
6	The Wolseley	Oil on canvas	30 x 36	43	Holland Park Snow Scene	Oil on canvas	12 x 20
7	Cafe Boheme, Summer	Oil on canvas	27.5 x 35	44	Parsons Green, Bayley and Sage	Oil on canvas	14 x 16
8	Hampstead Heath, Autumn	Oil on canvas	24 x 36	45	Summer, The Colbert	Oil on canvas	16 x 14
9	New Year's Day, South Coast	Oil on canvas	26 x 33	46	Towpath, Autumn Day	Oil on canvas	14 x 16
10	Summer in Polzeath	Oil on canvas	24 x 30	47	Lincoln's Inn Fields, Hot Spring Day	Oil on canvas	14 x 16
11	Tresco, Old Grimsby from Above	Oil on canvas	24 x 30	48	Inside Bar Italia on a Wet Day	Oil on canvas	14 x 14
12	Summer in Regent's Park	Oil on canvas	20 x 30	49	Towpath	Oil on canvas	12 x 16
13	Daymer Bay II	Oil on canvas	20 x 30	50	The Southbank in Spring	Oil on canvas	12 x 16
14	Spring Afternoon, The New Inn, Tresco	Oil on canvas	20 x 28	51	A Bright Winter's Day in Town	Oil on panel	8.5 x 19
15	Late Autumn, Primrose Hill Road	Oil on canvas	20 x 24	52	River Scene with an Approaching Storm	Oil on canvas	10 x 16
16	Borough Market	Oil on canvas	20 x 24	53	Figures in the Sun, Berry Brothers	Oil on panel	16 x 10
17	Campden Hill Lawn Tennis Club	Oil on canvas	20 x 24	54	Figures by the Sea, Polzeath	Oil on canvas	8 x 18.5
18	Westbourne Grove, Midsummer	Oil on canvas	20 x 24	55	Spring on Tresco, The New Inn	Oil on canvas board	10 x 14
19	Marylebone High Street, Looking North	Oil on canvas	24 x 20	56	Early Morning Swimmer, Highgate	Oil on panel	10 x 14
20	The Rosetta Stone II	Oil on canvas	20 x 24	57	The Bar Staff, Manicomio	Oil on canvas board	10 x 14
21	Winter Afternoon, The Thames	Oil on canvas	18 x 26	58	Boats at Dell Quay, Autumn Evening	Oil on panel	6.5 x 18.5
22	Itchenor, Autumn Afternoon	Oil on canvas	18 x 24	59	Holland Park Road, Winter's Day	Oil on panel	12 x 10
23	The Millenium Bridge	Oil on canvas	16 x 24	60	Campden Hill Lawn Tennis Club - Players Preparing	Oil on canvas board	12 x 10
24	The Bar at Manicomio	Oil on canvas	18 x 20	61	Daymer Bay, Summer	Oil on panel	8 x 14
25	Wembley Stadium from Olympic Way - The Euro Finals	Oil on canvas	20 x 18	62	Villiers Street I	Oil on panel	12 x 9
26	The National Gallery, Late Morning	Oil on canvas	18 x 20	63	Borough Market at Lunchtime	Oil on canvas board	10 x 8
27	The Dog Walker, Primrose Hill	Oil on canvas	16 x 20	64	Borough Market, The First People	Oil on canvas board	8 x 10
28	Borough Market, Morning Shoppers	Oil on canvas	16 x 20	65	Towpath Study	Oil on panel	7 x 9
29	The Spanish Room at The National Gallery	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
30	A Long Lunch at Sam's Riverside	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
31	Lidgate and Daunt	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
32	Spring at Kenwood House	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
33	The Plaquemine Lock, Autumn Afternoon	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
34	A Warm Spring Day, Hampstead Heath	Oil on panel	12 x 24				
35	Autumn, St. James's Park	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
36	Brasserie Zédel	Oil on canvas	16 x 18				
37	Evening Sun, Polzeath Summer	Oil on canvas	14 x 20				

E&OE

Image dimensions are in inches, height before width.

This catalogue features a selection of the works that are to be included in the exhibition.

Images of all the works to be featured may be viewed on our website

www.portlandgallery.com

Works are for sale prior to the opening of the exhibition; please refer to the enclosed price list.

COMMISSIONS

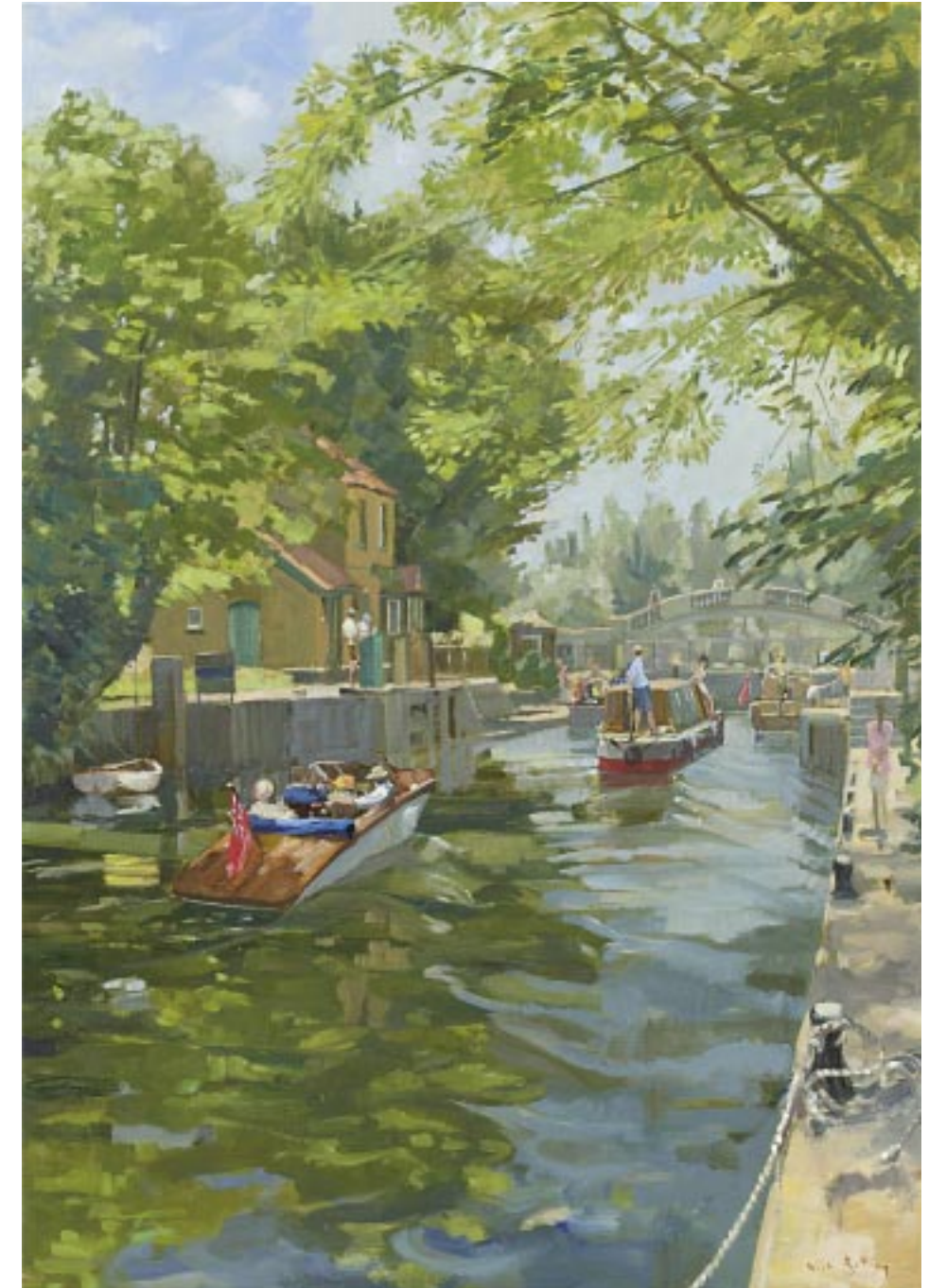
Nick Botting's unique ability to capture the essence of both people and places directly from life has led him to undertake numerous private commissions. Nick has painted conventional portraits and places but has also turned his hand to painting Wembley Stadium for the Football Association, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Flotilla, various private events, and group portraits.

If you would like to enquire about commissioning a painting by Nick please contact art@portlandgallery.com



Ella Playing the Piano

Oil on canvas
28 x 32 ins



Boulter's Lock, Maidenhead

Oil on canvas
42 x 30 ins



A Winter Path to Kenwood

Oil on canvas
15 x 18 ins

Catalogue no.40