



INTERVIEW

Five questions to Ian Rayer-Smith

Ian Rayer-Smith was born in Farnham, England in 1970. He works in two studios, in the city of Manchester and also is rural Shropshire. Ian started painting later in life and graduated in art school at the age of 42. He had grown quickly and has international recognition.



Tell us your story, why did you become an artist?

I only started painting at the age of 37. In my early twenties I decided to work for myself. I built a distribution company from a humble beginnings. Then created a business of juice bars but neither of those businesses gave me that sense of who I really was.

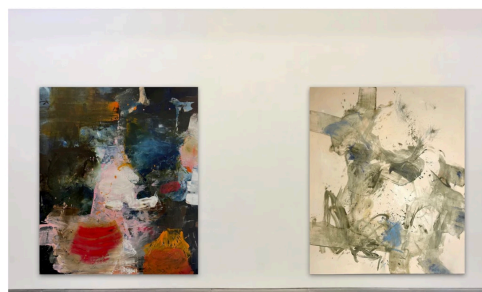
I was in California with my partner and we visited an art gallery and immediately fell in love with a painting and whilst in the gallery I had a realisation that I wanted to paint. It wasn't an immediate intention to be and artist but just to paint for myself. I had never painted before. I friend of mine was an art teacher. I called him when I got back home, I said to him that I wanted to paint! He said okay, I'll come over and get you started. After two hours he left and I have never stopped painting. I realised several years ago that my initial desire to paint was a course of therapy. I never really got a sense of who I was and the jobs and businesses I had worked at never really gave me the sense of true identity.

After a couple of years, painting at home and when I wasn't working I decided to make a major change. To start a new direction in life and become a full time art student. When I graduated I then got a studio, shut the doors and paint alone consistently. I could turn the studio into an exhibition space twice a year, I had no expectation of where I was going I just wanted to paint and grow.

The initial need to paint was now I realise a form of therapy. It made me happy and content. Over time I grew also in confidence. Growth in life is important and adds excitement and happiness.

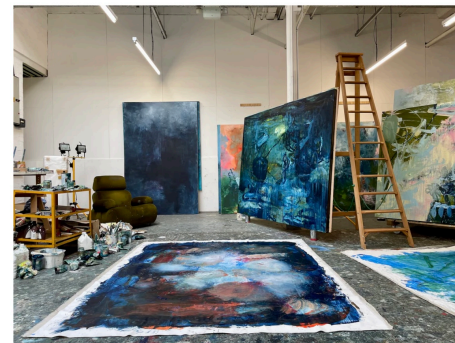
When you create a new work, how do you go about it? What comes first?

Three years ago I took a major jump and moved to a much larger studio. This elevated me and my work. I was able to work on larger pieces and many at the same time. I have a lot of ideas constantly yet when I start a painting I allow myself to expand on ideas and sometimes change direction. The work has to have a sense of freedom and energy. That's why I love the expressionist approach to painting. I work in many different ways I avoid falling into creating the same thing over and over. The focus on exploration is an exciting way of working. The combination of ideas keeps a freshness to my work.



What can you tell us about your studio, what makes it special to you and how does it influence the way you work?

Having so much space frees me up to take risks as I have so many paintings in progress I don't have a fear of being adventurous or taking risks. I just go into the studio and without the intention of completing any particular painting but just to make anything I work on better than when it appears when I came in to when I leave. I work without putting too much thought. Often we can overthink things, that can slow us down and sometimes block our creativity.



Is there a work of art in your life that has especially impressed you?

We are always very critical of our own work. Yet sometimes we create something that really resonates and sometimes it's a painting that almost feels over time that I didn't actually paint it. That's a great feeling that heightens the interest in some paintings.

Of course being a painter we are always inspired by other artists, their works, their approach and artists throughout history. There isn't just one painting that has impressed me. There are so many. I have very strong passion for paintings that are raw and expressive and give that strong sense of human emotion. It's not so much for me what is painted but how it is painted.

Reach to the stars: where will you be in 5 years?

I realise now that having many years of experience in business before becoming an artist, had now been a major benefit to me. It's often a difficult concept of being a creative and yet also to have the ability to grow not just in the creative process but also as a business and growth through strategy and making the right decisions and taking actions that elevate you as an artist.

I just don't have that hunger to be 'famous' but to my work to gain momentum and recognition in the art world which is a fascinating world to be in even when you're just on the periphery of it.

