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Holker Hall by John Morrison, Alamy



Norman's on the *long road* to London

An artist from Preston is preparing for his first solo show in the capital. He spoke to Barbara Waite

Lancashire artist Norman Long has a spring in his step this month with the opening of his first solo show in a prestigious London gallery.

For the last 17 months he has been working on more than 40 works from his studio in Preston for this major boost to his career at the Osborne Studio Gallery in Knightsbridge just around the corner from Harrods.

Since graduating from university in Newcastle and spending a year as artist in residence at King Edward and Queen Mary School near St Annes, commissions have come in from all over England and - thanks to a one-year stint studying and working as a teaching assistant in a Philadelphia art school - America too.

Traditionally it can take many years to get this sort of London exposure, but Norman entered and won an art magazine competition and the prize was a solo exhibition in the capital.

'I've had paintings in London



Norman at work in his 'freezing' Preston studio

exhibitions before, but it can take years and years slowly building up a reputation before you get a solo show, so this is a fantastic opportunity for me,' said Norman.

'The relationship between gallery owner and artist can be tricky, but it has worked really well. They've been up to Preston to visit my freezing studio and have been



Another Day at the Circus



Just for the Day

very encouraging. I've been given free rein on what I paint and it's been a great learning experience putting together a collection of paintings,' he added.

People expect pictures of local scenes to be of a recognisable building or landmark but in Norman's work the location is secondary to colour and light, atmosphere and composition. He connects with the subject in ways which make you linger over a painting. Prices start at about £500. 🌸

The exhibition runs from April 21 to May 8. Visit www.normanlongartist.co.uk for more information.

Arts diary

Until September

WithDraw, Imperial War Museum North, Salford

Depicting everyday life in Afghanistan, a new display of artworks drawn live in situ by journalist and reportage illustrator George Butler will be unveiled for the first time.

The images were specially created for this small, powerful display. Butler's previous work has appeared in news media outlets and exhibitions across the globe but these new images offer an insight into what happens away from the TV cameras, at quiet moments in between the events that make news headlines.

More than 20 vivid pen and ink drawings created on the streets of Afghanistan reveal the impact of conflict on people, communities and society.

April 11-12

Spring Art and Craft Fair, Lytham

Twenty-five artists will be converging on Lytham Hall for the first Spring Art and Craft Fair with two days to see, buy and enjoy affordable British art and craft.

Taking part will be artist-photographer, Ruth Brooks-Carter, Katie Hampson whose fast paced wildlife paintings have featured in Lancashire Life, contemporary print designers, Bullie, Diana Morrison's textiles, Lucy Elisabeth a wirework artist, printmaker Debbie Williams, and Samantha Taylor with her fused glass and jewellery. Three weeks later, the event moves to the Museum of Lancashire on Stanley Street in Preston.

From April 24

Evelyn De Morgan Exhibition and Events, Blackwell, Bowness

A celebration of the work of the artist Evelyn De Morgan (1855-1919) whose remarkable paintings bear the influence of early Italian Renaissance art as well as that of her Pre-Raphaelite contemporaries, fittingly goes on display at this Arts and Crafts House.

This significant show will focus on De Morgan's pacifism and with many of the works having been included in the artist's solo exhibition held in the spring of 1916 in aid of the Red Cross.

From April 19

Locality, Churchfield House Great Harwood

Talented local artists all inspired by the wildlife and love of buildings include award winning nature and wildlife artist Heather Ashton-Rowell, Mixed media artist Louise Hornby, wildlife painter Ian Robert Pickvance, 3D installation artist Simon Dawson and Colin Livesey, a former surveyor whose excellent artwork is inspired by his love of building.

Open 11am-5pm Sunday, Thursday, Friday; Tuesday 7-9pm.



Felt on show at Oldham

Until May

Black Sheep, Gallery Oldham

An exploration of the ancient textile felt, which has been used for everything from military armour to housing, from cosy winter garments to conceptual art. This exhibition is an exploration of the edgier side of this extraordinary and versatile material, looking at artists who create sometimes disturbing and bizarre oddities and technically brilliant objects.

Until May 18

One to One: New Work by Martin Greenland, Brantwood, Coniston

Prize-winning, internationally acclaimed painter Martin Greenland creates imagined landscapes inspired by his native Cumbria. This is the second in an annual series focusing on a single new work by a living artist. Plus, in the Severn Studio there is Tina Balmer: Still life & flower studies. Tina is an exceptionally talented, and modest, artist. Her work is an appreciation of everyday objects, from table top settings with teapots and teacups, to exuberant paintings of flowers.

Until May 31

Leonora Carrington at Tate Liverpool

A celebrated Surrealist painter lauded world-wide but scarcely heard of in her native Lancashire is the subject of a major retrospective exhibition opening at Tate Liverpool this month. Leonora Carrington built up a massive international reputation, especially in America and Mexico where she lived to her death in 2011 and is acknowledged as one of the few female exponents of the genre.

Until May

Drama in the Dales, by Kate Bentley, Lime Gallery, Settle

An evocative collection of watercolours and oils exploring the ever-changing North Yorkshire landscape by this Cumbrian artist combines small-scale works painted in situ and larger works created in the studio environment. Kate has included her working sketches into the exhibition to give the viewer an insight into her working practice.