



Anchored in **Landscapes**

Chris Mann Artist's Statement

Making art to me is a natural extension of looking. I think as an artist you have a desire to record what you find interesting to look at in the world. We all look at the world physically, with our eyes, but also emotionally, so this is included in the works you create, you find yourself recording the way you feel about it, at least I do. The way you look at the world also influences your choice of subjects, as well as the way you put it down on canvas or paper.

I am interested in lots of things, people, history, culture, but landscape has always been a fascination for me. When you are in or before an interesting landscape you respond to it and feel part of it for a time. Looking at great or small vistas is a very human fascination and that is why people in all cultures enjoy seeking them out and being in beautiful or interesting places, it is inspiring. Nearly every place I have ever lived has been by the sea, so the sea often makes an appearance in some way in my work, and is therefore a part of landscape too for me.

I like wild untouched places, but the way in which people have influenced the landscape is also very interesting to me. I first saw Stonehenge when I was a small child, it is a very atmospheric place and an extraordinary structure and I still find it fascinating whenever I see it again. Yet I have felt the same in the ruins of a farm in Ireland or by the abandoned cabin that used to stand next to my home here in Cayman so the effect of people on landscape forms part of my work. I include references to figures because landscape is a space we inhabit and also a backdrop for our lives, a stage we pass across and act upon, well or not, and upon which we leave some memory of ourselves.

When I make a painting it is an emotional and physical journey. I am creating a kind of landscape separate from the image. The act of painting is like a journey across the surface of the canvas, with peaks and valleys, smooth passages and areas that can be difficult to negotiate.

An anchor is a physical link, and here, as a metaphor, a connection between me, the landscape and my paintings. These paintings record some of the things I have enjoyed looking at and traveling by here in The Cayman Islands; iron shore, mangrove, structures, and the journey itself, and also what I feel and think about these things and what they represent to me. I hope you find something for yourself in them.

Chris Mann January 2005