



Art / Painting Chelsea

SLOANE SQUARE / NOVEMBER 2019

Chelsea Girl

MEET ARTIST KITTY NORTH, WHOSE LATEST EXHIBITION CELEBRATES CHELSEA'S WONDERFUL LANDSCAPES. BY CHARLOTTE PASHA

IF YOU GROW UP IN CHELSEA (as Kitty North did on Tite Street) and are educated in Chelsea (Kitty cycled to her Art Foundation course at the Chelsea School of Art on Lots Road), then it stands to reason that you fall in love with Chelsea – as Kitty did. While she now resides in Yorkshire, Kitty has spent the past 18 months living at 75 Flood Street, immersing herself in the area while painting everything she sees.

"I had a few commissions just off Sloane Square, and I started walking over Albert Bridge and back over Chelsea Bridge. I thought how much I would like to paint it and tell the Chelsea story, from the river to the rooftops," Kitty says. "I am a landscape painter, and Turner and Whistler, who lived here, have always been heroes of mine. The landscape of Chelsea has interested me as much as Chelsea itself. I find the tide completely mesmerising. It's all in the detail."

Kitty has been doing much of her painting from Cadogan Pier, working through the seasons. "I've gone through spring, summer, autumn and winter and then back again. Even in February I was able to stand outside painting for three hours and not mind – it's much colder up in Yorkshire!" Kitty laughs. The colours have progressed as the seasons did. "I love colour. The watercolours in the winter are



FROM TOP:
KITTY PAINTING ON FLOOD
STREET; SUMMER ALBERT
BRIDGE

quite wintery. When I started, the Thames was almost indigo, but as the seasons went on and as I got more confident, the colours have got brighter," she says.

"I did hours of sketching, day after day, at the river. That's what allowed me to do these great big six-foot paintings. I observed the tide and the light and I saw snow and sun and then went back to the studio to put it all down."

Art / *Painting Chelsea*

The pictures celebrate all that Chelsea is – its landscapes, its people, its cafés and its vibrancy – depicted on huge canvases with bright acrylic and en-plein-air watercolours. Look out for landmarks like Chelsea Old Church and the Royal Hospital, as well as homes and streets – Cheyne Walk is a favourite of Kitty's.

Kitty has also enjoyed spending time in Chelsea outside of painting. "I'm a member of the Chelsea Arts Club. I pop into Green and Stone for art materials sometimes – sadly they've moved but they are still within reaching distance. Clothes from Zara on Duke of York Square kept me going in winter months and Gail's on Oakley Street is good for cake and coffee after painting. I also love La Delizia on Chelsea Manor Street – I'm there regularly. And the Physic Garden is just remarkable, a fairytale secret garden in the middle of Chelsea," she says.

Given the absolute focus on Chelsea in the paintings, of course it makes sense that Kitty would exhibit them in Chelsea, too. "I've always previously been associated with a gallery or museum,



FROM TOP:
CHELSEA OLD CHURCH;
UNDER THE LAMPPOST;
SPRING IN GLEBE PLACE



but to tell the story of Chelsea, it has to end here," she says. Kitty will also take Chelsea commissions, she tells me, of particular houses, views and the like. People were so friendly, stopping to chat as she painted and to tell her how much Chelsea and its bridges mean to them, Kitty says. "The river is mesmerising and so embedded in people's psyche," she adds.

Another of Kitty's heroes is Mary Poppins. "If P. L. Travers had had a rooftop, her view would have been similar to mine," Kitty says.

And despite having soaked in the rooftop views for 18 months, Kitty's not done: "There is still more to do in Chelsea; I feel totally embedded in it," she says. She adds playfully, "I am made in Chelsea."

Chelsea: Rivers to Rooftops, 370 King's Road, November 7-17, art@kittynorth.com