

WHAT IS, IS NOW

"I prefer to take 'landscape' as a collective term for...the uncountable other transitory phenomena and atmospheres that together comprise the bristling presence of a particular place at a particular time."

—Robert Macfarlane

from *The Old Ways, A Journey on Foot*

Each painter depends on what makes his or her particular practice possible, or what necessitates it. Mine is having the observable world directly before me in order to create my paintings. There is considerable individual psychology underlying this need. Yet I prefer to consider its origins as serving a biological function, akin to the way I require food or fresh air: I need my interactions with the perceptual world in order to draw forth meaning in my work. My paintings, and the very fact that I am a painter, depend upon them.

I am immersed in an illusory, yet sensate, world. As spring returns, I am again reminded upon stepping outdoors how much I respond to that world and the evocations it gives rise to. Spring's more robust light, its first smells, the stirring breeze on my skin, the chatter of birds, and the rich complex of associations involving *all* my senses put me in mind of the larger subject of my paintings, which is the lived experience of their making.

My paintings are records of my experience before particular motifs, described as accurately as possible, and colored by the attendant thoughts and sensibilities that—moment to moment—accompany their making. They are records of my being in the world and are, as such, for me, existential in nature. They reflect my search for meaning through the observations and choices informing them, and through the very acts of their being made.

I am not interested in premeditated or ideal forms of representation, nor in *ideas* of representation; I am interested in representations based on my immediate perceptual engagements with things themselves. To some, this may seem too subtle a distinction, but it is a crucial distinction that, to others, will signal the Modernist legacy underlying my work. It is a legacy that, in a world increasingly regulated towards mediated, device-driven experience, takes on new significance. I did not make these paintings in search of a cause. Being what they are, however, my paintings may nonetheless reflect one—an advocacy for experience shaped less through secondary interfaces and more through our direct engagement with the world immediately around us, using our senses. That experience begins...by looking up.

Head up (not down) and looking out (*really* looking)—the present moment is the frame for exploration in these new works. *What is now* is the primary focus and criterion of their making.

—Christopher Chippendale, March 2018