

Blue sky thinking

Artist Trevor Woods' bold, graphic-style interpretations of Norfolk and London scenes have captured the imagination of many, including Annie Hirst. By Colin Finch.





The sky is always blue, and the same shade of blue as that, in the work of north Norfolk artist Trevor Woods. "It is my signature colour at the moment. It's a unique colour and it has evolved that way but it may not always be like that. I may change it," explains Trevor, as he shows me his latest work in his studio, the garage at his home in Wellington Road, Briston.

"These are so different from when I started. Then my work was more abstract but now it's much more graphical in detail.

"People have said that my work shows influences of Lichtenstein, Opie or Mondrian. It can be likened to their style in some ways - the straight edges for example - but really it's not directly influenced; it's my own work that has evolved into what you see on the canvas.

"I'm completely self-taught. I left school with a GCSE in art and that's all," says Trevor, who is now 33 years of age.

But it seems that not having any formal training hasn't held him back for he has painted professionally for more than eight years. He grew up in Mundesley though he says he's a man of Kent having been born there.

"I came to Norfolk when I was three but still I think of myself as from Kent," he jokes.

After leaving North Walsham High School - "I had some fantastic art teachers who really encouraged me," he says - he worked at a picture framers. This is a skill that he still





(Left) Jo Woods with two of her Clippykit bags. Paintings by Trevor Woods: (Opposite page, top) Wells Beach Hut Panoramic. (Centre) Trevor in his studio at his house in Briston. (Bottom) The City Panoramic. (Page 129) Catching a Crab at Wells.

shall be going back there to do more work on London panoramas over the winter.

"The Saatchi Gallery has put my work on its online gallery and I also took part in the Affordable Art Fair, again in London."

However, as Trevor and his 31-year-old wife Jo were preparing to holiday in Aldeburgh the following week, you may see some Suffolk influences showing in future paintings. Or Scottish landscapes, as the couple eloped to Greta Green to marry this summer.

"I have been doing some interior scenes and, particularly this year, still lifes featuring contemporary design objects – it's very much a case of seeing what pops into my head.

"I don't stand still; I'm always experimenting," he adds.

"The key is deciding what to put in and what to leave out. My work isn't like a painting of a scene, it is more representational than that. I take lots of photographs and work from them. I think I'm becoming more minimalist."

Though interior scenes may be a new direction, it is one that seems to have met with the approval of the buying public.

"There's a real cross-section of people who like my work. It is hard to identify one group. I think people like contemporary work that will fit into any interiors scheme," he explains. This is also where Trevor finds that his framing skills are a bonus.

"I do my own framing. I don't like handing it over to someone else as I think a frame makes a painting and I'm lucky that most of mine suit this light ash frame," he says.

"But if someone wants a different frame to match a particular scheme then I can do that for them."

Another off-shoot is bags. "That's really Jo's project," says Trevor.

As Jo explains: "I was given a Clippykit bag [a clear PVC bag with opening pockets which you can fill with your own photos, fabrics beads and mementos] last Christmas and I put one of Trevor's paintings, Designer Dog, in it. I received so many complimentary comments when out and about with my bag that we decided to go into production.

"We are producing them under the name of 'It Caught My Eye and I Had to Have It' and the first two bags are 'James', who is a Black+Blum bookend, and 'Doggy Bag' featuring the iconic Magis Puppy."

Well, I'd certainly love one and they hope to produce more cards so that customers can give their bag a new look by simply changing the cards inside the Clippykit pockets.

Watch this space, for you get the feeling there's always something new on the horizon. As Trevor says, he's not one for standing still ●

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uses as he likes to frame his own work. "That way you get the overall look that you want", he says.

When you see Trevor's work for the first time, you could mistakenly think that it is computer-generated. However, nothing could be further from the truth for it is all painted and every piece is an original.

"Yes, it can be difficult to get this across to people as a lot do tend to think that they are prints," explains Trevor. "But they are all painted in acrylics and then edged in inks."

People who look beyond that first impression are clearly won over. "Last year was absolutely mad as I sold over 60 paintings," Trevor says.

"I did Open Studios, although they missed me out of the brochure but I won't say any more about that. However one couple who

came on the final day bought my gherkin painting so that made it all worthwhile," he says.

The gherkin, you have probably realised, isn't a painting of the pickled vegetable but rather a cityscape of London with the famous Foster gherkin at the centre. Architect Norman Foster's iconic design of 30 St Mary Axe is better known as "The Gherkin" and is a beacon in London's skyline. It was built for Swiss Re, the second largest insurance company in the world, and it opened in 2004.

"I've been quite successful with my London paintings. They are becoming increasingly popular," says Trevor.

"Then, there's my beach huts at Wells. People love those," he adds.

"I'm hoping to hold an exhibition in London, in Croydon, in the near future and I