



## BETWEEN PLACE & TIME | EXHIBITION TEXT

Text by Curator & Gallery Director Jack Trodd

The exhibition *Between Place & Time* features 73 paintings installed throughout 4 immersive spaces in the gallery. Grieve's paintings of 'supernatural surrealities' are intended to evoke a sense of wonder in visitors to this exhibition, by capturing the results of this artist's perceptual immersion in the 'natural realities' of wildernesses he has visited, including France, Portugal, Switzerland, North America, Ireland and Britain. The imaginative, fantastic and visionary 'psychedelic' technique used by Grieve to produce his paintings, includes the use of both extensive layers of coloured brushstrokes, and mind-bending perspectives, to allude to 'supernatural' ('noumenal') other-worlds beyond the 'natural' ('phenomenal') world of ordinary human perception. A painting by Grieve frees us to experientially trespass across the boundaries of convention, in order to open towards, see and roam through this world and other worlds. Within such a painting, Grieve champions our desire to see the natural world remain wild, change our perspectives, and value the idea that place and time are experiential constructs around something infinite. An ardent reverence for landscapes is seen within Grieve's work, and is often presented as an abstraction that speaks to the undefined and constantly evolving state of Nature and our relationships with it. Within the chaos of his painterly abstraction, Grieve wishes to give viewers undefined freedom to explore.

During the exhibition a visitor undergoes a rite of passage through 4 immersive spaces, each of which is intended to trigger his/her transgressive freedom to roam. The front room includes a series of 55 works on paper, that direct a visitor through skies, oceans, mountains, forests, fields and waterways. In the next room a visitor experiences a glowing pool under a shower of rain, a healing, transcendental pause before the nova beyond. The third room features a dry wasteland installation, in which Grieve's paintings emanate intense flares of light and heat, that are warping reality and ecology into an Apocalyptic dystopia where a scorched earth, tree stumps and floral husks seem victims of climate change and crisis. The backroom, by contrast, welcomes a visitor to a utopian meadow, in which he/she experiences both luscious grass and delicate flowers while observing Grieve's paintings of Edenic lands bathed in sunlight; and rolling green fields that extend from one of Grieve's paintings to immerse a visitor and the viewpoint bench on which he/she is sitting. During his/her journey, a visitor is also immersed in smell-scapes, and sound-scapes of neoclassical and electronic music by composers who were inspired by Nature.

A visitor's journey through *Between Place & Time* has physical, cognitive and spiritual aspects. Physically, Grieve's paintings and the supporting installations give visitors numinous experiences of the Earth's landscapes and other phenomena in the present and future. Cognitively, visitors are encouraged to look back over the last three hundred years of Western landscape painting; how non-Western cultures have approached landscape painting; the positive effects such painting and experiences of the natural world have on human mental health; and Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's philosophical understanding of the limits of human perceptions of reality. Spiritually, Grieve's use of his paintings to induce overwhelming natural and supernatural experiences of Earth's landscapes, inspires awe and appreciation in a collective consciousness.

The transition between the last 2 rooms - from an apocalyptic Dystopia to an idealised Paradise - could constitute a fork in the road concerning our relationship with Nature. Grieve's paintings allow us to walk between places & times, to a brighter or darker present and future; provoking us to question whether we can find a coexistent harmony with the Earth, or leave it to return to an Edenic state without us. The possible futures for Nature are alluded to in the titles of paintings such as *In Our DNA*, *Nirvana*, *Fuel for Fire*, *Atomic Night*, *Scarred by Burns*, *The Place Between*, and *The Other Side*.

Grieve's intense reveries may inspire our passion for Nature, and desire to roam wild in natural realities and envisage our own supernatural surrealities.

## BETWEEN PLACE & TIME | EXHIBITION ESSAY

### Using Natural Reality to Paint Supernatural Surrealities

Text by Writer & Philosopher Stephen Baycroft (dedicated to Duncan Trainer)

The philosopher Immanuel Kant argued that the physical sensory organs of a human body, unconsciously extracted 'sensations' from data in the sensory 'impressions' made on these organs by the 'things-in-themselves' which occupied a noumenal (i.e. supernatural, intelligible, metaphysical, spiritual) other-world that lay outside this body. According to Kant the human mind occupying this human body used these 'sensations' to unconsciously correlate an *ordinary* multisensory perception of the enformed and coloured 'beings' in a phenomenal (i.e. natural, sensible, physical, material) world; and then unconsciously projected this phenomenal world outward as a (truly subjective yet apparently objective) conscious experience which veiled the noumenal other-world from this mind. In Kantian philosophy a human mind therefore never experienced the *reality* of the noumenal other-world; but instead only the *appearance* called the phenomenal world which this mind correlated from sensory data extracted about this other-world.

The word 'apocalypse' means 'to unveil', and Kant rejected every apocalyptic attempt to unveil (and thus mystically experience) the noumenal other-world which lay beyond the phenomenal world. Many post-Kantian visual artists nevertheless tried to use their artworks to commemorate the results of 'inner [worldly] apocalyptic' expansions of the 'sublime' boundary limits of their *ordinary* multisensory perceptions of the phenomenal world, to include previously uncorrelated sensory data. Such artists sought to correlate previously uncorrelated data they sensed using either the physical sensory organs of their bodies (as in the case of Robert Delaunay's production of Orphic visual artworks after his physical eyes had been temporarily blinded by dazzling sunlight); and/or the metaphysical sensory organs of their minds like the mind's eye (as in the Symbolist and Surrealist production of visual artworks which were intended to be 'outer material' images that commemorated the 'inner mental' memory-images seen by these artists using their mind's eyes).

Joe Grieve's painting practice may be compared to J.M.W Turner, Edvard Munch and Pablo Picasso's paintings of supernatural surrealities, whose forms, colours and life were more real equivalents (i.e. analogical correspondents rather than mimetic representations) of those in the natural realities of these artists *ordinary* multisensory perceptions of the phenomenal world. A painting by Grieve may be attributed to the inner apocalyptic inclusion of previously uncorrelated data about 'inner mental' memory-images he perceived with his mind's eye and the other metaphysical sensory organs of his mind, into his unconscious correlation of sensory data extracted by the physical sensory organs of his body into an *extra-ordinary* multisensory perception of a phenomenal world. Grieve then painted this *extra-ordinary* multisensory perception as a supernatural surreality whose forms, colours and life were more real than those in the natural reality of his *ordinary* multisensory perception.

The supernatural surreality of Grieve's paintings endowed them with a sublimity, which was compatible with the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's belief that an artist could use the production of a sublime artwork, to 'tame' the 'terrible' experience he/she had previously suffered while using his/her 'spiritualised [physical] eyes' to mystically tear the veil called his/her *ordinary* multisensory perception of the phenomenal world; and thereby gaze into the abyss of the noumenal other-world which lay beyond this veil. Nietzsche's aesthetics was a revaluation of the comparison made by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, between an artist's projection of his/her inner apocalyptic experience into a visual artwork, and a 'spiritual' and 'religious' experience of *nirvana*. Schopenhauer argued that during such a mystical experience of *nirvana*, an artist tore the veil called his/her *ordinary* multisensory perception of a phenomenal world of illusion (*maya*); and gazed into the reality of a previously noumenal, sacred, unknown and infinite abyss of thingness and nothingness, which lay beyond the phenomenal, profane, known and finite (spatial and temporal) horizons of this veil.

A spectator's inner apocalyptic experience of nirvanic immersion in the supernatural surreality of one of Grieve's sublime paintings, allowed him/her to emulate artists like William Blake and Aldous



Huxley, by passing through the multisensory doors (rather than purely optical windows) of his/her perception into a utopian/dystopian other-worldly place. A spectator may have an atmospheric and emotivating experience of this other-world place as a (haunting, mysterious, enigmatic and horrific) specter of an 'Outer [Worldly] Apocalyptic' event, that was occurring outside his/her mind and body in a past/future time; and might herald this spectator's post-Apocalyptic experience either of regaining a lost Paradise, or of entering a new Paradise.