

## Ben Payne

Ben Payne has built a reputation for creating artwork which is fresh, escapist and above all, uplifting. Born in Surrey in 1975, he began drawing portraits and painting as a hobby; by the age of 16 he was selling his work, and he has now developed into a major British talent. Although he is almost completely self-taught Ben is able to respond to challenges and create artwork that is both technically accomplished and highly accessible.

Ben's degree from Southampton University is a world apart from his artistic life, yet the influence of his academic and professional background can be observed in his art. After graduating in Psychology he became an independent therapist and pursued a career in the field of Autism, working with young children, helping them to overcome their difficulties in communicating with the outside world. Whilst pursuing this career he continued painting in his spare time, teaching himself and extending his range into oils.

Ben's high-impact land, sky and seascapes are inspired by the British coastline. He owes an artistic debt to a range of artists, in particular Turner and Whistler. Their influence can be seen in the way he captures the appearance of clouds with such delicacy, while employing a vivid and dramatic palette - a characteristic which lends his work an ethereal quality.

Ben believes that working with children has taught him to value simplicity and to communicate in a very direct and accessible language. His powerful paintings do display a certain innocence which somehow sets them part from the work of his contemporaries. While his subjects are realistic they often have dreamlike overtones, rendering them an intriguing combination of enchantment and sophistication.

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