

NICK BODIMEADE



B328 oil on canvas 30 x 35 cm

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Ditch-Light

10 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER



## Ditch-Light

As the earth has slowly burned this summer, the artist Nick Bodimeade has brought water into the world. *Vidi aquam* – I saw the water flowing. In more than a dozen paintings of waterlilies, cooling striations of Prussian blue and lilac crisscross with sap green, viridian and moss, a web of shapes guarding inky depths. Vibrating brightness comes with blush pink flowers and swathes of orange and sharp green. Wide, waxy leaves jostle with tall reeds, hornwort and cuckooflower, a watery cosmos realised in lines, daubs and smears of paint. This is a lexicon of gestures honed over the last forty years. In Bodimeade's hands, the world brims with being.

'I wanted to make something very object-like, but also with deep, illusory space and a strong sense of surface', says Bodimeade. 'I've always been drawn to Monet's waterlilies because they are so complicated in terms of the layering of space. Every bit of the surface is covered and that is as important to Monet as the subject'. Bodimeade uses his canvases as flexible, experimental surfaces on which he tests the thin boundary between illusion and reality. In two works titled *Bevern Stream Pads*, the planes of the ditch are painted at an angle, tipped back and seeping to the edge, a reminder that the pictorial space is a shifting body of water. The aerial viewpoint in *Pad Reeds* is emphasised by the interplay of forms, a collage of flat outlines and vivid, downward strokes. Meandering reeds and stems are revealed through the diaphanous substrate.

The compositions are partly driven by Bodimeade's ongoing exploration of form against light. Not Monet's light – in which brushstrokes are a shortcut to a particular atmosphere or mood – but light as its own spatial dimension. There are shadowy recesses in indigo and cornflower-blue, softened by yellows and whites, and gauzy hues, marking the slow descent into the gloaming. Bodimeade also uses loose structure of calligraphic lines, a grid system that

ensures each mark is held in check by formal constraint. But sometimes nature is unruly. In *Pad Ripple*, these bands collide in the centre of the painting; there is a brief slippage between the painter and the complex life-forces he chooses to paint.

All of Bodimeade's paintings depict channels or pathways, the act of moving through space, through water and across land. For many years, he was a shepherd in the Black Mountains, traversing escarpments of sandstone and wool; an experience that must lend him a specific kind of visual lens. To understand the subtle changes of nature beneath your feet, and at the same time the macrocosmic landscape which you inhabit, is a powerful tool. In the second part of this exhibition, Bodimeade generously shares this viewpoint. He revisits the roads around his home in rural Sussex, known intimately through repeated journeys on foot or by bike. The veins of these journeys are mapped out in fields of colour, applied in wide, transparent brushstrokes, hazy and diffuse. Larger still are two paintings titled *Squall*, both elemental and sensuous. In these, we stand not at the edge of water but in its midst – the rolling cloud and thunder moving towards us with a black-blue energy. *Sisters* allows us to return to where we started. Thick bands of burnished orange, the broad silhouette of the Downs, the glimmer of pale water on the horizon. The earth might be on fire, but Bodimeade gives us safe passage to leave.

NERISSA TAYSON

August 2022

*And so we wait* oil on canvas 105 x 120 cm







*Bevern Pads 3* oil on canvas 100 x 120 cm



*Bevern Stream Pads 1* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm





*Bevern Ripple* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm



*Bevern Stream* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm

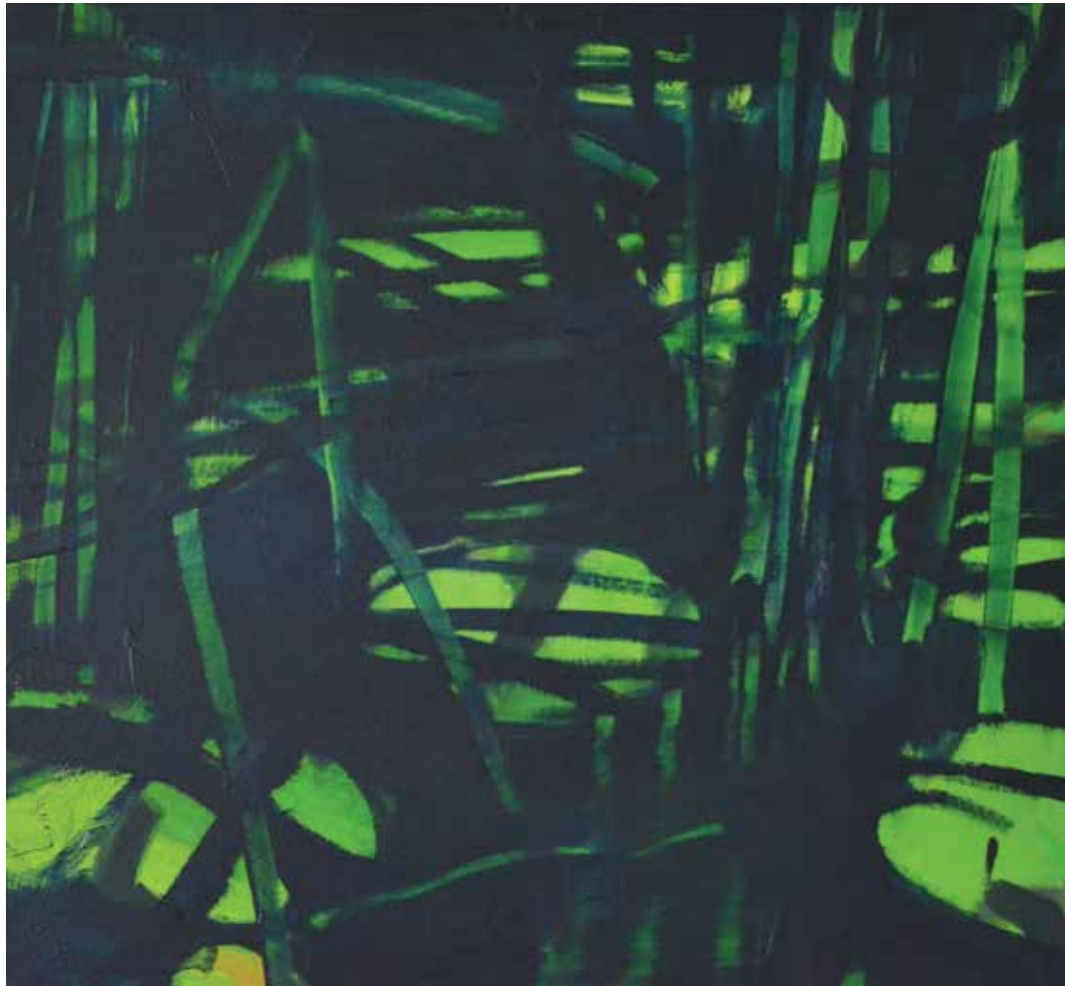




*Bevern Pads* oil on canvas 105 x 120 cm



*Bevern Stream Pads 2* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm



*Heron View* oil on canvas 66 × 71 cm



*North Pond Dusk* oil on canvas 60 × 66 cm





*Pad Reeds* oil on canvas 90 x 100 cm

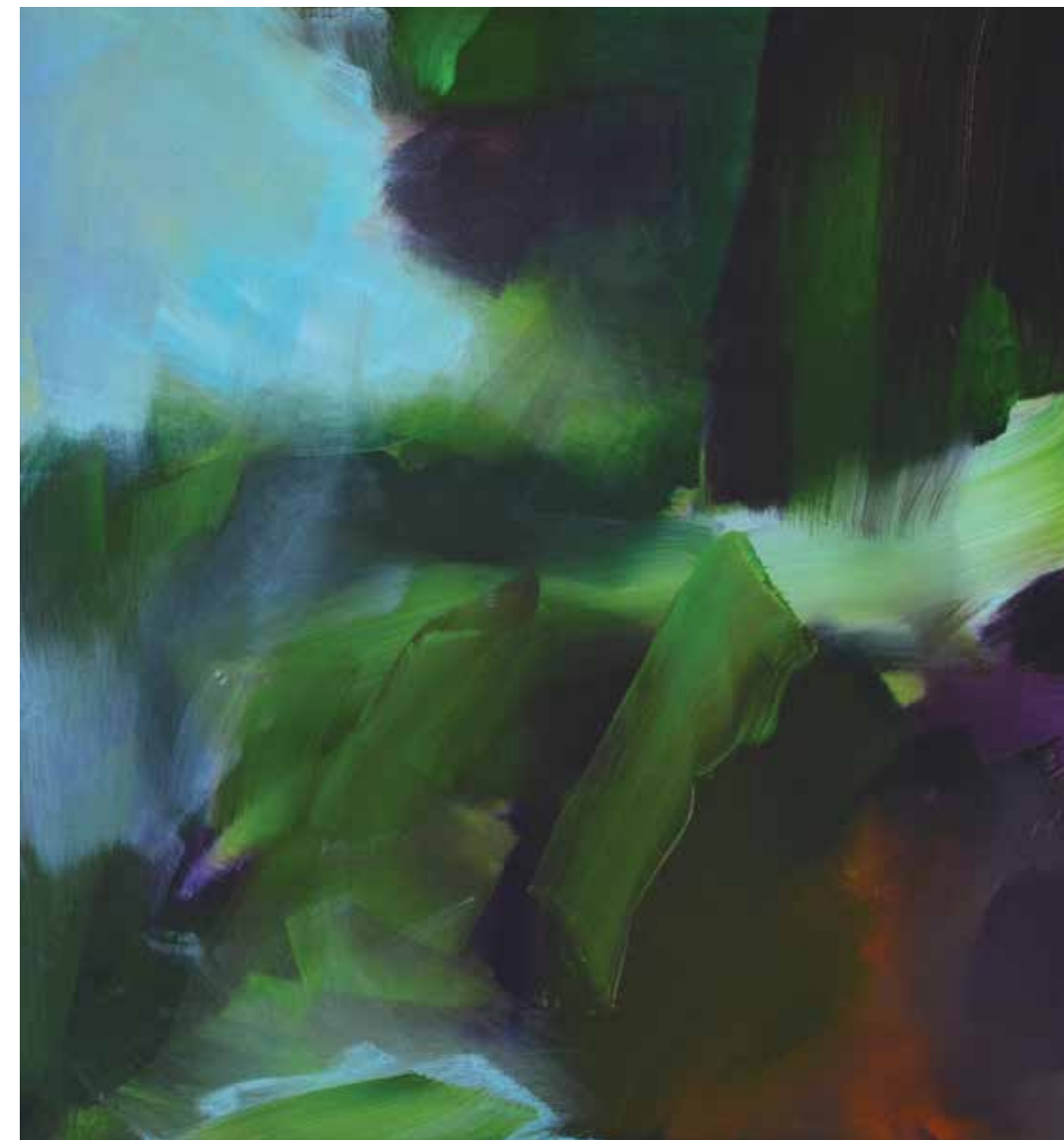


*Pell Brook Cross* oil on canvas 60 x 70 cm





*Ditch Ripple* oil on canvas 65 x 70 cm



*Ditchlight Pellbrook Dusk* oil on canvas 82 x 76 cm



*Glen Garry Descent* oil on canvas 105 × 120 cm



*Glen Garry Road* oil on canvas 105 × 120 cm

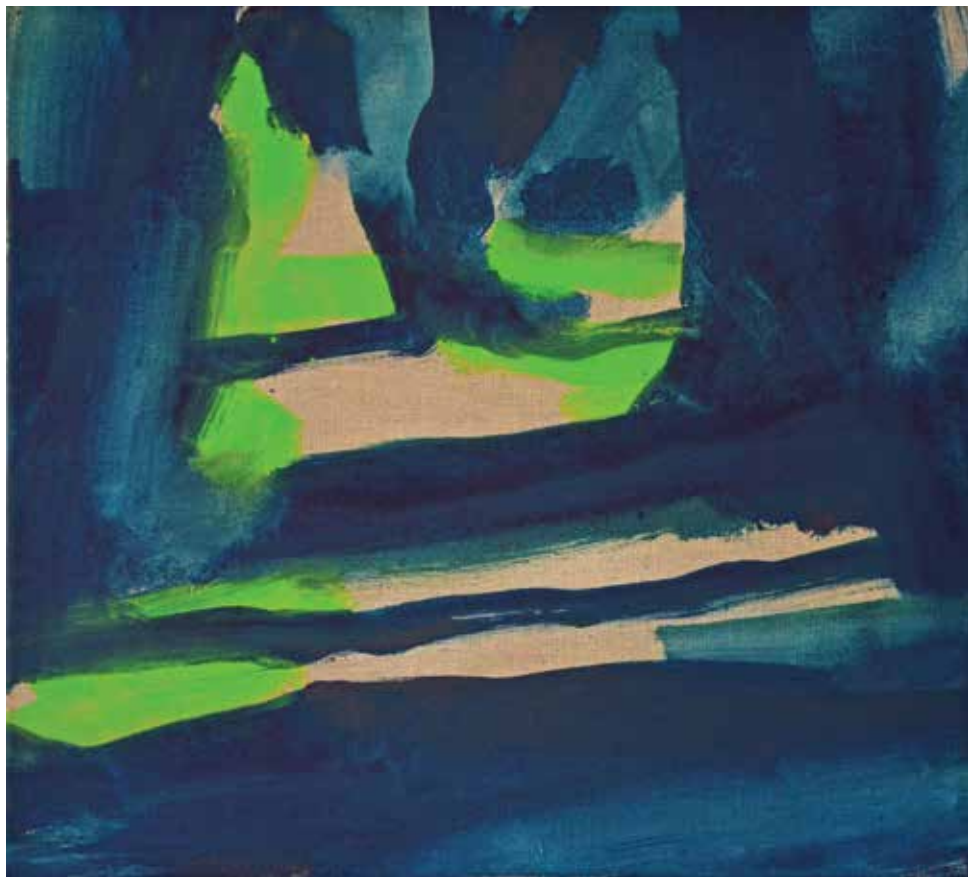




*River Fork Path* oil on canvas 90 x 105 cm



*River Fork Path 2* oil on canvas 100 x 130 cm



*Halcombe Track* oil on canvas 50 x 56 cm



*Hanger Sunset* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm





*Squall 3* oil on canvas 105 x 120 cm



*Squall* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm



*Sisters* oil on canvas 110 x 130 cm



*Ashcombe Bottom* oil on canvas 46 x 50 cm

First published in 2022 by Campden Gallery Ltd, High Street, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6AG [www.campdengallery.co.uk](http://www.campdengallery.co.uk)

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Design by lyn Davies [www.lyndaviesdesign.com](http://www.lyndaviesdesign.com)

## NICK BODIMEADE

Born in London in 1957, Nick studied at Worthing Art School and Wolverhampton Polytechnic. During this time, and after, he worked on farms in Sussex and Wales to support his developing practice. Having moved to Oxford in 1984, he joined the Oxford Artist Group and became a founder of the Chiltern Sculpture Trust. Nick taught at Banbury School of Art and Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College where he became Head of Fine Art. In 1993 he moved to his current home on an island in the Ouse valley near Lewes, and has increasingly focused on landscape painting. He has had many exhibitions in London and throughout the UK. Nick is widely collected and his work is held in public and private collections across the world.

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FRONT COVER *Pad Ripple* oil on canvas 90 x 100 cm

BACK COVER *Ditchlight Pellbrook Cut* oil on canvas 36 x 31 cm





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