



Katie Scorgie: *Fluent in Paint*

David Turner on the life and work of a sporting artist whose career, he believes, is poised to take off



Katie Scorgie is what art historians call a sporting artist, that is to say, she specialises in painting horses and their riders, be they hunting with hounds, racing, playing polo or merely out for a quiet ride in the countryside. Such painting has a long history in British art, and throughout its history much of it has been characterised by a somewhat genteel ordinariness at best, and a sentimentalising anthropomorphising at worst. Neither charge could be levelled at the work of Katie Scorgie.

Born in Woking in 1969, Katie came to Dorset at the age of 13 when her parents moved to Holnest. She has ridden and been around horses since childhood, and between 1993-98 she became quite a serious point-to-point rider, so much so that she took first place at Clyst St Mary on her horse *False Economy* in 1997! Even as a child Katie showed a natural artistic talent, and so in 1987 she enrolled on the Foundation Course at Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design. Somehow, though, the need to 'get real and earn a living' took her to London after only one year. There she became a secretary, though even then managed to stay 'close' to horses by working at The Jockey Club for a couple of years. During this time she bought a flat with her sister, who also worked in London, and when the time came to sell it, Katie found that house-price inflation had made her a bit of money.

Mature student

Now, during all the time as a secretary Katie had dreamed of one day becoming a painter and so, armed with the money she had made on her sale of the flat, she became a mature student in 1997 on the Fine Art degree course at the University of Plymouth, Exeter. The three-year course ended with her being awarded a 2:1, but with a First for the pictures she exhibited in her degree show. Not only that, she was awarded the Jane Hewitt Memorial Prize and also spent three months studying at the University of Nantes in France.

In 2000, Katie returned to Dorset, bought a tiny cottage in the village of Hinton St Mary, and began exhibiting her work right away. She joined the Society of Equestrian Artists (SEA) as a 'Friend', initially exhibiting with them at the Mall Galleries in London in 2001, and only a year later found herself promoted to an Associate; whilst in 2003 her painting 'A Couple of Hounds' was selected for the finals – out of hundreds – of *The Daily Mail's* 'Not the Turner Prize