

Stephen Friedman Gallery

House & Garden
Artists in Their Studio: Ged Quinn
Emily Tobin
December 2021

The Observer

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PEOPLE *artist*



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Ged in his studio in front of three works about imaginary pilgrimages, partly inspired by lockdown. The central work depicts Bollingen, where Carl Jung lived and worked

Artists in their studio

GED QUINN

For decades, he has cultivated the landscape around his home in Cornwall – and now the natural world is shaping the work he produces in a former hay barn, discovers EMILY TOBIN

PHOTOGRAPH JOSHUA MONAGHAN

Ged Quinn works from a converted hay barn on the edge of the West Penwith moors. He first glimpsed this corner of Cornwall as a teenager, having hitchhiked from his home in Liverpool. Several years, many trips and one residency at Tate St Ives later, he and his partner moved to the area in 1992 – and into their current home in 2006.

Since then, they have worked to rewild the surrounding land, planting some 1,000 trees and allowing the meadows to reflower with orchids, fritillaries and wild daffodils. With the help of an architect, Ged transformed a hay barn and lean-to into a studio. Once, he listened to music while he painted (he was a member of several Eighties new wave and post-punk bands); now, it is the sounds of snoring barn owls and nesting nightjars that accompany his work.

The studio sits under the brow of a hill – the only thing separating Ged from the Atlantic. 'I'm the kind of artist who, when they wake up, wants to see the work straight away,' he says. 'I don't like getting on the Tube or cycling or driving: I need to be as close as possible.' Ged is best known for his detailed pseudo-classical paintings, which are littered with contemporary interventions – a caravan parked beyond an arcadian temple; a Cadillac depicted under a canopy of Claude Lorrain-esque trees.

In recent years, Ged has shifted away from creating art-historical reproductions, looking instead to German lyric poet Wilhelm Müller, English Romantic poet William Wordsworth and Carl Jung's partially autobiographical book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, alongside watercolours by Albrecht Dürer. Where once the landscape was symbolic, the world beyond his studio is increasingly encroaching upon his practice. 'Originally, it didn't come into my work, but my last show was to do with natural phenomena and my experience of the landscape,' he says. 'In part, it's to do with coming out of lockdown, but I also think it's a natural progression to want to understand the mysticism of my surroundings' □ *Stephen Friedman Gallery: stephenfriedman.com/artists/50-ged-quinn*

HOUSEANDGARDEN.CO.UK DECEMBER 2021 91