

Proposal for the self-directed project - Revisiting the Norwich School

Introduction

The Norwich School of Artists is the name given to a group of mainly landscape painters who were active at the beginning of the 19th century. In this project I propose to revisit and photograph some of the scenes painted by members of the Norwich School.

In an earlier *History of Art* module for this course I produced a critical review on the Norwich School of painters, looking in detail at paintings by John Crome and John Sell Cotman. I thoroughly enjoyed researching their work and saw many of their paintings at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery as well as visiting local auction houses and galleries to see work by many members of the School. This project would, therefore, have a special appeal to me.

Proposal

I will select a number of sites that feature in paintings, or prints, made by Norwich School artists and produce a landscape photograph of that site today. The aim is not to try to replicate the scene painted in the 1800s, but to use it as the starting point.

Green in Bottinelli (2013 p11) writes that Norwich School artists, principally landscape painters, “recorded their immediate surroundings” something which was a new approach as the prevailing method was to produce idealised landscapes. Instead the Norwich School painters aimed to portray the scene “as it was”. This view is reinforced by Allthorpe Guyton (2004 p2) who states that “The significance of Norwich School painting lies in a realism based on direct observation”. The artists also enhanced what they saw by “adding a variety of light and colour” (Kennedy Scott 1998 p8).

In my photographs I will try to reflect these values of the Norwich School painters, using locations painted by them I will produce images of how these sites are used in the City today, giving a contemporary view and observing the lighting and colour of the scene. Bottinelli (2013 p59) believes that the artists “captured the life and look of the City of Norwich”, my intention is to do the same today, not postcard views of the city sights but my version of portraying the scene ‘as it is’.

Methodology

I envisage the process being undertaken in four stages.

Stage 1. In the Appendix I have listed a number of paintings featuring local scenes. I will visit the sites and select around ten to photograph. I will decide the equipment needed for each site and the best time of day/weather conditions to photograph the scene. This is likely to take one or two days.

Stage 2. During this period I will be taking the photographs at the chosen sites. Depending on weather conditions, this will take up to three or four weeks.

Stage 3. This stage involves the processing of the final images and will take about two weeks

Stage 4. This is the production of the hard copies of the final work. I envisage the final product being prints, the titles of which reference the original Norwich School image.

Costs

The main costs at stages 1-3 will be travel expenses. The costs of stage 4 will relate to the production of the prints. For ten A3 Giclee prints from Spectrum would cost around £100.

548 words

Bibliography

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Kennedy Scott, P. (1998) *A Romantic Look at Norwich School Landscapes by a Handful of Great Little Masters*. Ipswich: Acer Art.

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Appendix 1: List of sites painted by Norwich School Artists

Site	Artist
Norwich Cathedral	David Hodgson
Briton Arms, Elm Hill	Henry Ninham
Haymarket	John Thirtle
Mousehold Heath	John Crome
Fye Bridge, Norwich	John Thirtle
Norwich Market Place	John Sell Cotman
Bishops Bridge, Norwich	John Sell Cotman
Carrow Bridge	James Stark
The River at Thorpe	Joseph Stannard
Norwich River Afternoon	John Crome
New Mills	John Crome
The Yare at Thorpe	John Crome
Whitlingham	E T Daniell
Trowse Meadows	George Vincent
The River Wensum	John Crome
Bishop Bridge Norwich	John Thirtle