

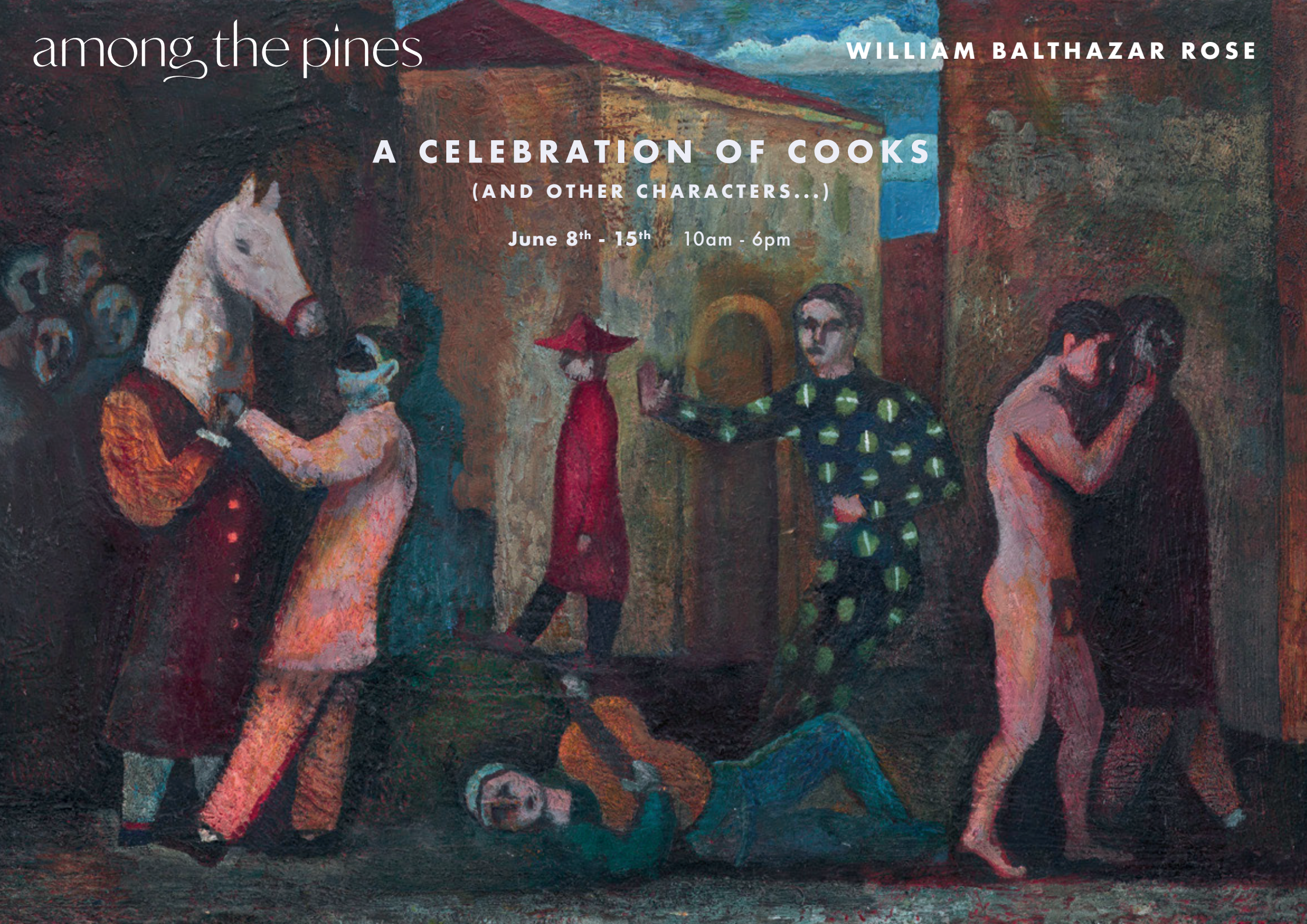
among the pines

WILLIAM BALTHAZAR ROSE

**A CELEBRATION OF COOKS**

(AND OTHER CHARACTERS...)

June 8<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> 10am - 6pm







William Balthazar Rose

William Balthazar Rose was born in 1961 in England. He studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and Princeton University. The history of art is visible in his work with noted influences being Goya, Bruegel, and Morandi.

Rose paints landscapes, still life, and symbolic figurative work, but is perhaps best known for his *Cook Series*. He says of the cooks "The tall white hats are architectural, turning the human figure into something stone-like and eternal. The chequered trousers are playful and decorative, and the knives symbolic and threatening, full of innuendo and taboo."

Acclaimed chef Michel Roux Jr is a friend and collector of his work, as well as inspiring many of these paintings.

Rose has lived for several years in the Georgian city of Bath and maintains residences in Tuscany and Umbria, where he is also represented. He has exhibited widely in the United States, England and Europe.



**Card Players**

40 x 60 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

“Shortly after moving from Kenya to Bath, I attended an exhibition of William Rose’s work, hosted by him. It was small and informal, but I could tell the work held something significant, and he a notable artist.

I couldn’t afford an artwork at the time, so had to make do with intentional detours past a gallery that was showing his work at the time. The gallery’s curator and owner, Heather Le Fort, had an excellent eye for art, but it was William’s work that drew me to it time and time again, even if it was a quick peek through the window whilst rushing past on my way to work.

Twelve years later came an opportunity to finally start my own gallery. The plan was to focus mostly on applied arts, but a close friend suggested showing paintings too due to previous gallery experience. The first person who sprung to mind was William Balthazar Rose, but why would he show with an unknown, budding art dealer, when he was a well-established and revered artist?

Our first call was a nerve wracking moment, but he couldn’t have been more encouraging, and from there a friendship has grown.





**A Difficult Moment**

40 x 60 cm

oil on board

[View in Gallery »](#)

This is the first solo exhibition I have curated of William's work since starting *Among the Pines* two and a half years ago.

His work instantly drew young and old, new and established collectors, many from different countries. It seems to have universal appeal. I love it's mischief and intrigue. Small sets of narrative that make you wonder what's going on, or what has just gone on, and who is at play?

These lively ideas are underpinned by an experienced and talented hand, and a painter who uses the most gratifying palette of colour. Michel Roux Jnr is Rose's biggest collector, and an inspiration to him. It speaks volumes that such a creative and exacting master of his craft, can see that within the work of another.

It was really exciting to visit William's home and studio to choose work for this exhibition. Paintings that span 30 years, were out for me to choose from. Almost impossible! However, here is a mixture of work, some new, and some that were hidden behind others, including Cubist Musician groupings, and a few landscapes that express the artist's soulful bond with Italy. Tennis, another interest and fascination for Rose, is captured in quirky players who like to play with their own sense of style. And a few paintings that capture everyday folks going about their everyday lives. Charming in their tenderness and simplicity."

*Sophie Wood, May 2023*  
*Founder and Curator of*  
*Among the Pines gallery*



## The Chinese Cook Is Angry

The artist tends to juxtapose the Asian and more specifically the Chinese cook (who wears a straw and triangular hat) with the western chef who wears a tall white, cylindrical hat. Here the Chinese chef is angry, perhaps furious, raising his fist at the other chef.

Is there a deeper meaning to this painting? Is this in fact the embodiment of China angry with the west and ready to fight? Or are we merely witnessing an angry chef who is upset because his food has been stolen or his recipe adapted? Perhaps he is angry because the cat is being protected and he can no longer use it in his soup! The Chinese have been notorious for their ingredients from fresh monkey brains to dogs and cats all which have been readily available in open air markets in China for centuries.



**The Chinese Cook Is Angry**

61 x 76 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)





## Cooks Gathering

152 x 122 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Cooks Gathering

The artist has elaborated on the figure of the cook throughout his career. He appropriated the cook from a number of sources in historical art.

In costume they make reference to Egyptian sculpture and appropriate the pharaoh's hat seen on many figures, particularly Cleopatra. The tall cylindrical hat is also a reference to the white hat seen in Piero della Francesca and the long hat of the Puncinello made famous by Tiepolo in Venice.

For the artist, the cook is the hero of our age and a co-conspirator. Gauguin appropriated the costume of the fisherman for the artist to wear and William Balthazar Rose has personally appropriated the cook's uniform which he often wears while working. He maintains *"Artists feed the world so they should be dressed appropriately like their comrades the Cooks, who also feed the world"*.

This particular painting suggests a plot; cooks gather, cooks discuss, they mutter and conspire, perhaps planning the next feast.





### **He Won't Eat**

70 x 100 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

## **He Won't Eat**

This is a grand and provoking painting, even the title has been carefully selected by the artist William Balthazar Rose arrests one.

He won't eat, but why won't he eat? In a world of cooks and culinary expertise with gourmet cuisine and delectable nibbles, he won't eat, in fact two chefs seem to be virtually forcing food into a man who won't eat, who on bent knees is obviously resisting, who seems too tired, too spent, and too uninterested in anything like food. Why is there an enormous figure looking on at the scene, why is he bald and observing in such a blank fashion?

He won't eat! What is it he won't eat? These paintings are metaphors and are expressions of our time, our zeitgeist, and our dilemmas and the terrible subtexts operating in the gleeful bonanza of our scientific, economic, and AI prosperity.





### Hold Him High!

40 x 50 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Hold Him High!

From the celebrated cook series this particularly riveting work celebrates the baby or child cook. Here baby cook is held high by a female cook who by implication seems to be his mother. His arms and legs are outstretched, is he shrieking or exuberant, happy with his cooking role? Hold him high or hang him high, a cook's life is far from easy and this little cook may have very little to look forward to in his current circumstances, being the pawn of others, and still himself small and vulnerable.

Isn't he in fact a little young to be already dressed as a professional chef? How the young and innocent suffer at the hands of their elders!



## The Hound

70 x 100 cm

oil on canvas

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## The Hound

A big, black hound dimly emerges among the figures of this scene. The cooks seem casual and unaffected by its presence though it is enormous and threatening in its size.

The structure of the painting allows the canine to appear harmonious, yet the implication is intimidating if not terrifying/ The hound though stationary, could suddenly respond to the surrounding figures aggressively, barking, biting and then drooling over dismembered chefs.

The Hound is a painting about hunger and the latency and force of hunger. It is a painting about the unknown, about unrecognised fear and the careful balance of things amidst the potential for absolute mayhem. The rag doll like figure who approaches the scene dressed in rust coat and ochre hat expresses this ultimate vulnerability.





**Angry Cooks**  
40 x 50 cm  
oil on canvas  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**Rubbing Tummies**  
48 x 36 cm  
oil on canvas  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**Marching Orders**  
40 x 51 cm  
oil on canvas  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**Marriage Vows**

30 x 42 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**Who's Next? God Forbid!**

50 x 36 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**Rolling Pin Triumph**

29 x 36 cm

oil on wood

[View in Gallery »](#)



**For The Love of Cupcake**

57 x 47 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



## Cook Paintings — Revised

When you look at William Balthazar Rose's paintings of cooks, you are looking at something completely new.

Not just new in the sense that they happen to have been made recently, but new in the sense that they mark a change of direction in art. A direction that is beginning to be shared by a number of other contemporary artists.

Rose himself has said: *"These paintings are humorous and at times terrifying."*

One may perhaps attribute this dichotomy, in part at least, to his fascination with the writings of the French-Bulgarian philosopher and feminist Julia Kristeva. Kristeva makes, for example, a distinction between the symbolic and her own version of the semiotic – the latter for her being an emotional state commonly found in very young children in which the self is fused to its surroundings and is not differentiated from them.

It is only in the stage of development that follows that the child learns to differentiate between self and other, and thus enters the realm of shared cultural meaning. In the paintings exhibited here, both stages are reflected and intermingle.

New art has always borrowed from what preceded it. It has drawn upon various moods when doing this – ranging from sincere reverence to mockery. Artists are after all people who professionally look – both at the world around them and at what they find within themselves.

Inevitably, they also look intently at the work of other artists – at things observed in art, as well as at what can be observed in life, not yet processed by the artistic impulse. William Rose's paintings of cooks are fascinating examples of this complex series of interactions.



**Cooks Talking**

100 x 150 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**No Escape**

50 x 80 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

Western art has recently passed through a phase where the idea of 'appropriation' very often became an end in itself. Not-being-original, being exactly like some pre-existing image, paradoxically became the proof of true originality.

The viewer will not find that claim being made here. They will find echoes and allusions to previous phases of art. These references lead you to very diverse sources. To Piero della Francesca. To Dutch 17th century kitchen paintings. To drawings of punchinelli by Domenico Tiepolo. Perhaps even to some of Goya's Disasters of War.

The aim is to prompt you to consider, not earlier forms of art as things in themselves, but as precursors to what you encounter in modern life. These are pictures about ourselves, presented as succinct epigrams. The constricted world of the kitchen is suddenly large enough to embrace the whole world. One notable feature of these compositions is that they are succinct, intensely compressed narratives.

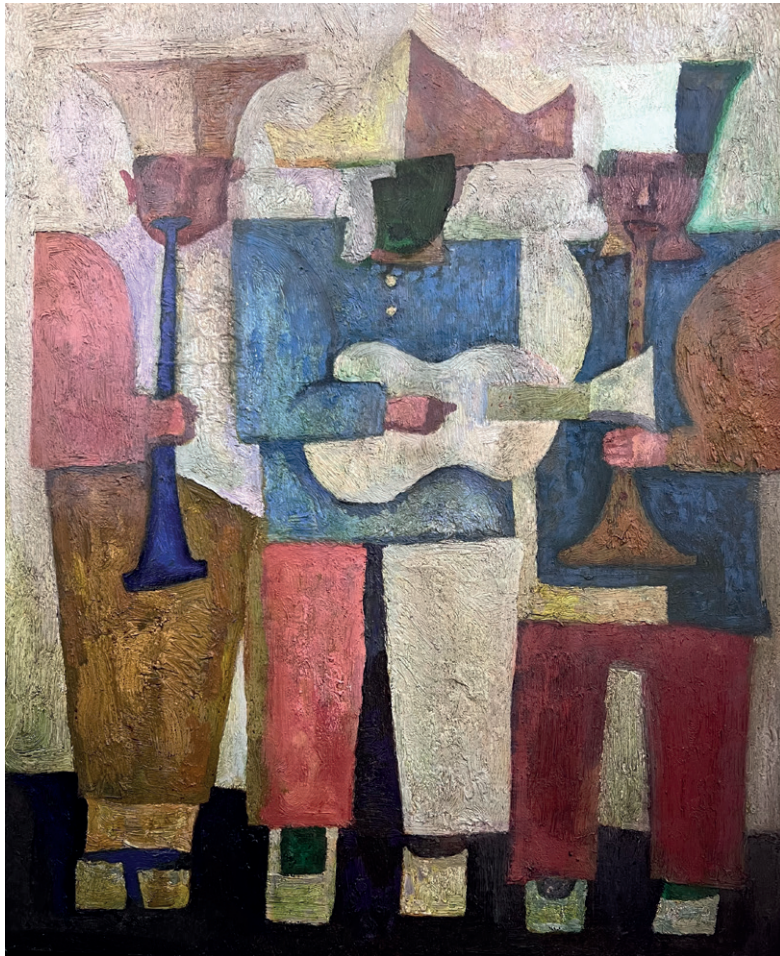
A feature of Western art, from Impressionism onwards, was that it increasingly tended to move away from narrative. When narratives were in fact present, as for example in Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, then tended to be heavily coded. The absence of narrative was presented as a form of artistic liberation. More recently, however, narrative content has returned.

It is very much present in forms of art that have become paradigms of what is supposedly new. I am thinking here both of performance art and of video. In both cases, the art is time-based, which is not the case with traditional forms. If you miss the beginning, or leave before the end, you've lost out.

These time-based forms are also preemptory. Their basic message-within-the-message is "Stand there (or sit there) and attend to me." No lapse in your attention is allowed.

You are the prisoner of the artwork.





**Pink and Blue Musicians**

97 x 82 cm

oil on board

[View in Gallery »](#)

That is not the case here. The images offered are things to be ruminated about. You look. You react. You think. You look again. This process is, however, not linear. There is no strict sequence imposed. The way in which you order your thoughts and reactions remains within your control.

I have mentioned the work of Domenico Tiepolo and of Goya, as offering points of comparison to this series of paintings. One important link, in both cases, is that these two artists offer images pervaded by a sense of irony. Irony is humorous, but it is also sardonic. It operates on the principle that the world we inhabit is not how we would like it to be. It implies, indeed, that it is never in fact going to be exactly as we want it to be. In this sense, irony is the enemy of idealism.

Idealism, and its cousin 'the ideal' - ideal forms, ideal appearances - are things that have a long history in art. These paintings are not idealistic. Not, that is, in any usual sense of the adjective.

What they offer, instead, is a sharply focussed vision of the way the world really is. That vision is then transported, complete, into a parallel universe - that of the cooks, in their distinctive outfits, sometimes wearing their tall chef's hats. Sometimes carrying one of the tools of their trade: a big sharp cleaver perhaps. They can be deadly, those cooks. Deadly serious. Dead funny. You inhabit their world at your own risk.

An essay by *Edward Lucie-Smith*



### **The Volley**

53 x 81 cm

oil on wood

[View in Gallery »](#)

## **The Tennis Players**

'The series of Tennis Players stem from my childhood as Tennis was one of the few sports I was able to play or understand.

The first tennis player I ever painted was in fact a portrait of my brother Inigo. He wore a very particular hat which my aunt had purchased for him in Venice. It was a straw hat of a bright yellow and had been blown into a canal and had gotten thoroughly wet. He had been forced to dry it on his finger as he walked home. It had acquired a rather unique shape due to it's reformation upon his finger. He wore the hat for our tennis lessons. It was a little oriental in feeling.

Tennis is a game of the court with fixed boundaries played mostly between two people. A little like marriage when it has gone wrong or like boxing, it is about opposition and victory, keeping a cool head and fighting it out. Both light-hearted and cruel depending upon one's outlook. It inevitably reveals the duality of victor and loser.

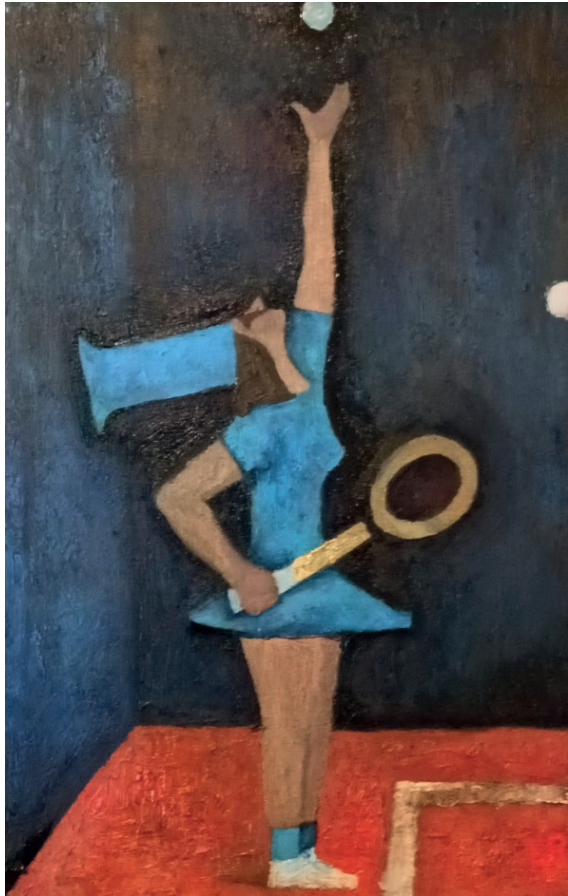
The tennis players also have unusual hats and costumes which derive from the fanciful and elevated social status of the game.

Another aspect of the series is the racquet which often seems to suggest a hand mirror. This suggestion initiates an alteration of the narrative. The racquet held up as a mirror used to gaze into by the player or to reflect the viewer. A place of introspection and contemplation which is part of the traditional role of painting.

The humour of these paintings is in the delight of the human condition when at a game of Tennis. Though there is opposition (as in war) the opposition is so much more about revealing technique, mastery and spectacular gamesmanship. The players themselves become entranced with the wonder of the event almost like lovers thrilled with their own sexual sophistication as they fight for dominance.'

— *William Balthazar Rose*





**Nocturne Blu Tennis Player (the Serve)**

42 x 31 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

**Nocturne Blu Tennis Player (the Serve)**

'A nocturnal blue highlights the surreal and metaphysical aspect of this painting, in fact the painting may be part of a shamanistic exercise on the part of the artist as the figure seems to embody a person in his life.

The painting has an unusual history as it was mauled by a dog while awaiting the framer and had to be returned to the artist for repair.

The artist then added a second tennis ball to the composition which totally destabilizes the resolute action of the server dressed in a blue costume and wearing a large blue wedding hat.

Is she in fact oblivious to the events of the actual game being played? She seems so intent on her own serve that she hasn't taken note of the ball bounding towards her.'



**Tennis Game, Sydney Gardens, Bath**

40.5 x 51 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Tennis Game, Sydney Gardens, Bath

William Balthazar Rose is an artist often consumed with issues of the human condition. Quite often he takes time out to enjoy a game of tennis, a game he played throughout his youth and still on occasion plays. During the pandemic he was care-taking for his mother. There was a tennis court near his mother's house and he would slip off to paint or draw the tennis players.

Tennis can be deadly serious or quite light hearted, much like painting. Pleine air painting is like a game of doubles and tends towards a certain lightness of spirit which the artist likes to offer himself when totally overwhelmed by the trials of the human world.

Tennis like painting cannot be equated with war and the real conflicts in life. Conflict in tennis is not the same as conflict in war. Tennis is refined and may be devastating but it seldom results in death or mayhem.

A tennis player must be an artist and balance must always be present and is tantamount. Without it there would be no game.





**Nocturnal Tennis Boy with Large Blue Hat**

42 x 31 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**Red Dress Tennis Girl**

42 x 31 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**Tennis Player With Orange Shirt**

42 x 30 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)



**Umbrian Landscape in Winter**

80 x 80 cm

oil on Italian linen

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Umbrian Landscape in Winter

The artist throughout his career has been fascinated with the square format and chose it for this painting which was to commemorate the attacks made on the eleventh of September, 2001 in New York City. He had recently moved to Italy and viewed news of the attack in the bar at Oscari's Restaurant in Monte Santa Maria Tiberina, Umbria.

The aftermath was extremely melancholic for everyone and the grand but grey landscape he saw from his terrace as winter arrived seemed a fitting eulogy for the event and those that died in it. The painting has been exhibited in a number of venues including the Bishop's Palace, Wells.





**Musical Trio**

82 x 62 cm

oil on wood board

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Musical Trio

The artist often paints musicians, usually as constructions with references to cubist work. These paintings are an excuse for colour excitement and compositional play.

Here music is made by blaring trumpeters with tin hats, puffed faces, squat physiques.

There is a noisy harmony coming from this group painted in yellows, reds and greens with so much passion that the sounds explode from the frame.



**Lady With a Cane**

26 x 18 cm

oil on wood panel

[View in Gallery »](#)

## Lady With a Cane

The artist has spent many years in the city of Bath observing local figures. He says that sometimes it is difficult to believe the kind of people he sees. In this case a woman who is almost Georgian in her apparel is depicted.

The painting is both a rendition of a real person, and a timeless event in which geometry, colour and composition unite in a brilliantly funny and well-balanced exercise.





### **Midday View of Città di Castello**

50 x 80 cm

oil on canvas

[View in Gallery »](#)

## **Midday View of Città di Castello**

Città di Castello is a smallish city at the northern most part of Umbria and it sits on the edge of the Tiber river. It is a remarkable city and one very much worth visiting.

The great painter and artist Alberto Burri has two museums dedicated to him in the city and Monica Bellucci regularly appears for a passeggiata when not at work. The painter knew this view well as he passed it regularly when he walked from his home in Monte Santa Maria Tiberina.

The view is in fact a well known view displaying the prominent Duomo of the city. He has painted the view several times and this particular version has been reworked and developed over the course of several years, giving it depth and mood.

Città di Castello is a very welcoming city, both elegant and earthy, the population is friendly and educated, the food rustic but sophisticated. The centre of the city is timeless and once visited a place difficult to ever leave.



**Etruscan Hills**  
50 x 60 cm  
oil on canvas  
[View in Gallery »](#)

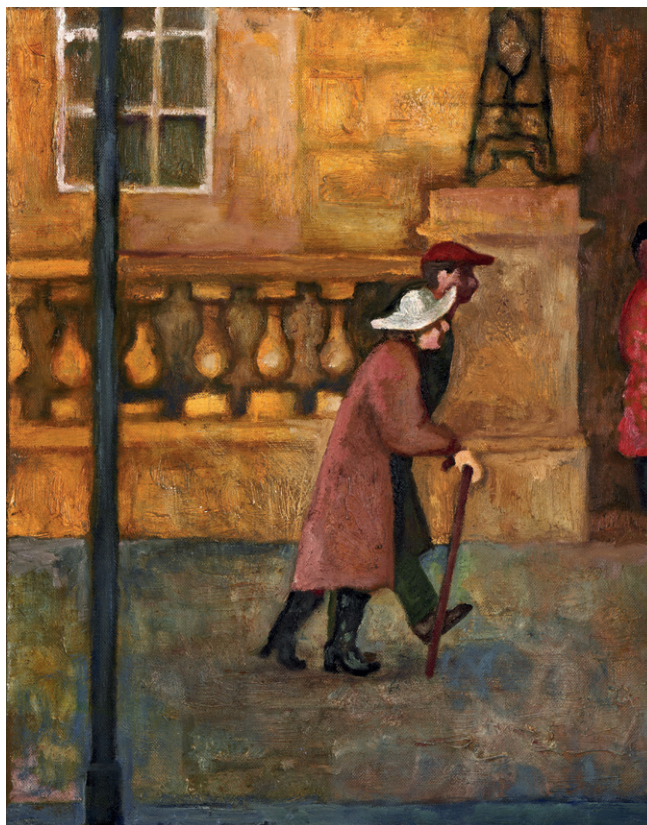


**Red and Yellow Serenade**  
122 x 91 cm  
oil on wood  
[View in Gallery »](#)





**Woman With Dog**  
30 x 20 cm  
oil on wood  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**Outside The Victoria**  
50 x 40 cm  
oil on canvas  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**A Cubist Group**  
42 x 31 cm  
oil on wood  
[View in Gallery »](#)



**This is the End**  
40 x 60 cm  
oil on wood board  
[View in Gallery »](#)

## **This is the End, Beautiful Friend** **This is the End, My Only Friend**


The title of this comes from the song by Jim Morrison of The Doors which the artist has listened to often and been much moved by.

The scene figures a man on the ground with a guitar (perhaps Morrison) to the left there is a group of singers, ghost like behind a dancing couple one with a horse's head and the other masked.

In the centre is a figure attired in red and placed in the distance marching as if he is a wind-up toy. To the right is a figure in an outfit with circles on it who reaches out while two mournful figures move away, one is a fully naked man.

These last two have been extracted from Masaccio's Adam and Eve being banished from the Garden of Eden. The scene is architecturally Tuscan, perhaps Florence and the grandeur of the event, like Morrison's song recalls the epic poetry of Dante and a scene from his Divine comedy.





# among the pines

To enquire about the exhibition or any of the artworks, please contact:

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**June 8<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>**

10am - 6pm

**Drinks Opening June 8<sup>th</sup>**

6pm - 9pm

19 Kensington Park Road, Notting Hill, London, W11 2EU

[amongthepines.gallery](http://amongthepines.gallery)

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