

# One for the Monet

With a resumé that reads more like a Hollywood screenplay, John Myatt was infamous for his artistic genius before the world even knew his name. Having already fooled the experts in the biggest art con of the 20th Century, he is now legitimately taking the art world by storm. His six new limited edition pieces, created in the style of Monet, stand as a testament to his talent - and showcase his ability to match the Masters, stroke for stroke.

**W**ith Myatt's collection launching nationwide in summer 2007 and a limited number of personal appearances, publishers Washington Green are extremely proud at the opportunity to secure the rights to publish his work. Founder Glyn Washington said: "I've long admired the work of John Myatt and to have been able to sign him exclusively to Washington Green is very exciting for us."

While Myatt may be a celebrity in his own right today, his beginnings as an art teacher struggling to bring up two small children alone were not quite so glamorous. Needing to find a way to generate a bigger income and provide a better life for his family, Myatt decided to use his talent for reproducing masterpieces. In 1986 he placed a Classified Ad in *Private Eye*, offering '19th and 20th century fakes for £200'. At this point he had every intention of starting up a legitimate business.

Then Myatt met 'Professor Drewe', a man claiming to be a nuclear physicist, who commissioned a number of paintings; paintings that were copied so brilliantly that Drewe had one valued at Christie's for £30,000. This, admits Myatt, "was the moment that the legitimate business stopped and the crime began." →





↑ **Camille & Jean Monet  
In A Poppyfield, 1873**  
Hand embellished canvas  
Edition of 99  
Image 25½" x 21½"  
Framed £950

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In the following years Myatt produced a production line of paintings to order, including works by Ben Nicholson, Nicolas de Stael, Le Corbusier, Matisse, Roger Bissiere, Giacometti and Dufy. Concentrating on the visual, rather than worrying about the technical accuracy, Myatt even used household emulsion mixed with K-Y jelly in his work, saying that this technique added body and fluidity to his brush strokes.

Despite these unconventional methods, over 200 of his copies were sold through leading auction houses in London and New York, remaining undetected under the scrupulous gaze of countless leading art experts.

When the con was eventually uncovered, Myatt was sentenced, in 1999, to 12 months in Brixton Prison for fraud. After serving 6 months he was released, astonishingly enough with an already existing client base, starting with his arresting officer from the Arts & Antiques Squad at Scotland Yard. Now working on the right side of the law, Myatt is very much in demand for his 'Genuine Fakes' of some of the world's most sought after, but hugely expensive, masterpieces.

→ **Water Lillies, 1907**  
Hand embellished canvas  
Edition of 99  
Image 26½" x 29½"  
Framed £1,250



All titles in his new collection are painted in the style of Monet rather than straight copies, but all are unequivocally Claude Monet. To say it's testament to Myatt's versatility is an understatement. He says: "We were in Venice on holiday, and I took some photographs and made some sketches of Santa Maria Della Salute to take home. Monet never painted it himself, so in a way I'm just realising what he didn't have time to do," says Myatt. "It's probably my favourite."

Once again Myatt's brushstrokes have not only mirrored Monet's superb use of colour and light, but they have also captured the same sense of peace and serenity in each scene as Monet himself had done. "There are complex colour harmonies going on and it's not being fair to Monet if I don't work on that same basis. I try to understand the technical issues involved, re-creating the working practices for myself. One painting can take up to a year", he adds.

So great is Myatt's reputation today, that a new Hollywood film is now in the pipeline, produced by Jay Weston and Fred Levinson (brother of Barry Levinson of Rainman fame) and scripted by stalwarts Ian Le Frenais and Dick Clement. "I'm immensely excited about the prospect of my story appearing on the big screen. It's currently in the early stages of script writing and development and I'm hoping we may see it go into production at the end of this year," says Myatt.

This time round Myatt is probably a little more cautious about keeping his feet planted firmly on the ground and making the most out of this rare second chance for success. Yet with the art world singing his praises and Hollywood calling, who could not expect him to want to keep aiming for the stars.

To see this collection in full please  
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