

A man with short brown hair, wearing a black jacket and a grey and black striped scarf, stands in the foreground. Behind him is a brick building with a sign that reads "FREE TRADE INN". The building is situated on a hillside with some dry grass and a chain-link fence in the middle ground. The sky is overcast.

Once upon a time

Alexander Millar's new collection is an intriguing development on the figurative focus he is so well known for. Evocative landscapes are now centre stage, with their timeless quality providing a window into thoughts and memories of our own



← **Take The High Road**
Hand embellished canvas
Edition of 99
Image 26" x 36"
£1,495

↓ **We'll Meet Again**
Hand embellished canvas
Edition of 99
Image 26" x 36"
£1,495

↓↓ **Home Is Where The Heart Is**
Hand embellished canvas
Edition of 99
Image 22" x 30"
£1,250



Millar's new body of images is an exciting change of direction and testament to an exceptional range of skills beyond those he is already recognised for. Moving temporarily away from his affectionate portrayal of the moods and spirit of his 'everyman', the Gadgie, he instead lets the sights, sounds and smells of the landscape stir hearts and minds.

The collage of imagery is set in a timeless industrial landscape, with his infamous Gadgie always in evidence. "Industry played a huge part in our landscape for decades," Alexander says, "and the fact that I now live in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which was steeped in the coal and shipbuilding industries, has enabled me to use images that are around me even today, using them as a backdrop to put my 'everyman' into."

Although the paintings draw deeply

on his own childhood memories and are influenced by places he has grown up and lived in, their universal feel allows viewers to glimpse their own particular past and remember people and places that have touched their lives. Consequently there are no identifiable locations in the paintings. "My landscapes are deliberately vague as I wanted them to appeal to anyone living anywhere. My aim was to capture essences of everyone's past, allowing people to recall their own personal experiences. I wanted to convey that our memories remain within each of us, and that they are within touching distance of reality."

The change in focus reflects a journey that has taken Alexander full circle. His first paintings twenty years ago were of landscapes devoid of figures. He then added the human element into his work until eventually his Gadgie figures - the 'everyman' →



'IT IS MY EARNEST WISH THAT THESE NEW PAINTINGS TOUCH PEOPLE DEEPLY AND BRING BACK TO THEIR LIVES HAPPY MEMORIES OF TIMES PAST'

↓ **Northern Lights**
Giclée edition of 195
Image 17¾" x 23¾"
£475



↑ **When The Boat Comes In**
Giclée edition of 195
Image 15" x 20"
£399

- took over from the landscape to become the prominent point of interest. The shift in style, which has now brought him back to landscape paintings, came about when, after the recent death of his parents, he found an old suitcase crammed full of black and white photos.

Looking through them he became very emotional about how much his life, and all life, had changed. "I began to yearn for the comforting blanket of nostalgia," he says "and how life used to be for me in the small mining community of Springside, on

the west coast of Scotland." His new collection 'Northern Soul' captures how we all feel when we dust off the old family photo albums, flick through the black and white images of our childhood and relive emotions and memories.

Alexander's personal journey was also a time to reflect on how fortunate he'd been in his career. This led to the idea of an Apprentice style TV programme on BBC Look North to help an unsung talent break into the art world. Some 150 entrants were whittled down to a single winner, Kevin Day, who Alexander is currently tutoring to help launch him as a new artist. "I grew up in a rough part of Scotland and my initial working life was as a window cleaner," Alexander says. "I've come a very long way since then and feel extremely privileged to be where I am now. Offering someone this opportunity is my way of giving something back."

Despite his busy schedule, Alexander likes to spend as much time as possible

interacting with the people who come to see his work. He will therefore be touring the country from April onwards, visiting selected galleries featuring his new collection. "Meeting collectors and getting their responses to my work means an awful lot to me," he says. "It is my earnest wish that these new paintings touch people deeply and bring back to their lives happy memories of times past."

The new collection from Alexander Millar will be in galleries from April onwards