

A rose in bloom

Jamie Primrose followed his instincts to become a prolific bestseller, says *Jan Patience*

ARTIST PROFILE

Jamie Primrose's paintings may exude a heaven-sent sense of calm, but wielding the brush is a young man in a hurry. In the four years he has worked as a full-time artist, 34-year-old Primrose has hosted nine exhibitions of his work in Edinburgh and one in London, each offering about 50 works for sale. His landscape paintings now fetch prices of up to £3250 and he has just been shortlisted for the prestigious inaugural Jolomo Lloyds TSB Scotland Awards, the first prize for which is £20,000.

What makes his work even more remarkable is that for almost 10 years he didn't paint at all. After four years studying Fine Art at Newcastle University, Primrose got on with usual things that twentysomethings get on with: travelling a bit, working a lot, getting married and trying to buy a home. The catalyst for change happened in 2003, when he was employed as an art buyer in London for photographic library Digital Vision after spells with Getty Images and adventure travel firm Trailfinders.

"My wife Mari and I lost out on buying a flat and it started us thinking. We really wanted to move back to Edinburgh and I'd been thinking a lot about painting again. I was dealing on a daily basis with freelance photographers, going into their studios and feeling that creative energy, but in London, it's a Catch-22 situation – you work to survive.



In the mist: Edinburgh Castle from Greyfriars Kirk, Indian ink on paper by Jamie Primrose

"We abandoned the idea of buying a house in London and went travelling in South and Central America instead for six months. After that, we moved back to Edinburgh and I started painting again."

The inspiration he found on this Latin

American trip led to his first solo exhibition, entitled *Tierra de la Luz* (Land of Light), in October 2003 at The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. At this show, his trademark fascination with the transient nature of light and colour was noticed by

an appreciative client base that has grown considerably in the last three years.

Primrose displayed all the early signs of a precocious talent. At school in the 1980s, nurtured by the noted Scottish artist John Brown, then head of art at Edinburgh Academy, he was awarded first prize in the Iscis Exhibition of Independent Scottish Schools and the Cheyne Art Prize at the Academy in his final year.

His latest self-hosted and curated eight-day exhibition at Edinburgh's Dundas Street Gallery, *Moods*, ends today. In this collection of 56 works, Primrose has focused on winter scenes of Edinburgh, with a heavyweight mix of Indian ink drawings and oils. Anyone with a love of the capital in all its elegant grandeur will appreciate these early-morning people-free glimpses of the city from Arthur's Seat, the Old and New Town to Calton Hill and Leith. Primrose has also has new work of the River Thames on display at The Kings Road Galleries, London.

Now settled in his native Edinburgh with Mari and their two-year-old daughter Amelie, Primrose is fizzing with ideas. Making no apologies for being commercial in his approach, he works closely with Mari, a marketing specialist, to make sure his work continues to sell well.

"When I first arrived back in Edinburgh I approached the Scottish Arts Council about getting a grant, but they told me my work was not conceptual enough. People say I am commercial but I have to support my family and that drives me. Art is my passion but it's also my living; I'm lucky I can combine the two." ■

www.jamieprimrose.com