

## **Ian Whittlesea: Jerwood Artists Platform**

**2 April – 27 April 2003**

**Jerwood Space, 171 Union Street, London SE1 OLN**

**Open Tuesday-Saturday 11am-6pm, Sunday 1pm-6pm**

Ian Whittlesea's first major London solo exhibition, as part of the Jerwood Artists Platform, presents two recently completed series of text paintings developed over the last eight years.

Whittlesea's four part painting 'Mont Sainte-Victoire – Paul Cezanne' lists all of the subtitles given to Cezanne's images of that famous mountain. As is typical of Whittlesea's work, each canvas presents short rows of neatly painted white letters in a modified Helvetica font set against unobtrusively coloured flatly-painted grounds. Yet on looking at the paintings the words 'disappear' as the viewer visualizes the scenes Whittlesea has conjured.

At first glance, the text in Whittlesea's canvases appears to be mechanically reproduced, but more careful inspection reveals the discrete traces of the hand, evidence of his patient labour and emotional engagement with the work. The making of Whittlesea's paintings is clearly a willfully time-consuming and meditative process resulting in works that are as much to do with the daily practice of painting as they are about subject.

The eight part painting 'Circumnavigation – Charles Darwin' chronologically lists each place Darwin's ship 'The Beagle' anchored as it traveled round the world.

Accompanying this heroically scaled work is a much smaller single painting that simply says 'The Sandwalk', referring to the oval wooded track that Darwin would slowly walk each day, as if in unconscious mimicry of his earlier circumnavigation. The story of Darwin's retreat has a melancholy aspect typical of Whittlesea's work. His paintings have the somber presence of a memorial – a memorial to the time the artist spends making them as well as to the lives and places they describe.

Press images and advance copies of the catalogue with text by Simon Morley available.