



# Contemporary | Architectural Abstracts | Artist

## Artist Bio

CATHY READ

**Contemporary artist Cathy Read draws with masking fluid, creating urban landscape paintings that reflect city life in all it's glory.**



In a previous life she worked as an Occupational Therapist, using large art projects to help develop fine motor skills in children. While working in private practice her son was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome. At the time, working with children and having her own was somewhat a busman's holiday and she found it all too much.

The final straw came following an incident at school and she took the bold step to quit OT with a view to return when her youngest entered school. It was during this time that Cathy realised that she still wanted to be an artist - and it was now or never. She was certain of one thing: she would regret it if she did not at least try.

That was 2008. Since then, Cathy has tenaciously built her career. She had training and catching up to do since leaving art in her A-level year following her dad's passing. Picking up with portraits and caricatures she had loved doing as a teenager, she slowly improved with practice and attending a few courses at the local art shop which later became Buckingham art school. She says that she has been learning on the job ever since.

Her earlier paintings were predominantly circle based abstracts. Later her style developed into urban landscapes, fuelled by a lifelong interest in buildings - rooted in a childhood dominated by the giant decaying cotton mills in the North of England. Cathy now exhibits her paintings around the UK, Europe, and is in collections as far afield as Canada, Africa, and New Zealand.

She lives in a chapel near Buckingham, in the UK, which she converted with her husband. It's close enough to London to get an Urban Architecture fix when needed. When Cathy's not steering 60ft of steel canal boat along the British waterways and wielding a windlass, she can be found splattering paint and singing loudly in her Buckinghamshire Studio.

# Artist Statement

CATHY READ

Cathy  
Read

**From the ground breaking designs of cutting-edge architecture to the decaying remnants of a glorious past. Contemporary artist Cathy Read lovingly embraces each image with full detail.**

Using vibrant colours of watercolour and acrylic ink, she conveys the mundane and ordinary next to the glorious and spectacular. Cathy's distinctive paintings depict geometric shapes and inherent patterns of architecture in a free, expressive style, where she brings the city to life. She draws inspiration for these paintings from time spent in London and other major cities, such as Manchester and Oxford.

## Architecture paintings

Cathy's paintings are snapshots. She looks for contrasts where they occur: such as new building with clean shapes and lines alongside old decaying ones or geometrics architecture softened by nature over time.

Buildings reflect the dreams of the people who create them. By using an abstract technique, she captures that dreamlike quality. The masking fluid creates a linear structure which holds together the fluid and energetic paint and ink shapes. The ink, especially allows mini explosions of colour which evolve during the drying process.

There are two distinct groups:

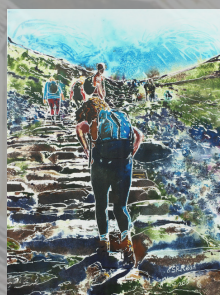
## Looming Paintings

Iconic architecture of London forms the basis of these. With these paintings Cathy looks for perspectives that convey the building's scale. That sense of awe at their sheer size.

By experimenting with angles, foreshortening and shapes, she seeks the essence of the vision behind their creation and that childhood sense of looming where the building feels like it will topple onto you.

## The Everyday

These are snapshots in time. A taste of life going on around familiar streets and buildings. Cathy looks for items in the foreground to convey a sense of depth in the scene. She includes groups of people who tend to become fused with the landscape. Street furniture, peeling paint and reflections on glass or water are common features.



# Exhibitions

CATHY READ

Cathy Read re-imagines iconic architecture using explosive, colourful drops and trails of paint, held together with a structure of white lines.

Her paintings were displayed at numerous solo exhibitions and Cathy has been invited to show her work alongside eminent artists..

Her painting of St Catherine's College Quad is in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. The piece was commissioned by Oxford University Press, to illustrate the 2016 Oxford Almanack.

Cathy has also shown with the Royal Watercolour Society, the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour and the Society of Women Artists in London.

**12 Solo Exhibitions 2011 - 2020**

**10 Group Exhibitions 2011 - 2020**



Battersea Reborn - Cathy Read

## Awards

CATHY READ

Cathy is inspired by looming and dramatic architecture. She draws on influences from various cities in the UK.

Cathy Read's Marylebone Station submission was publicly voted as the Winner – Mixed Media Painting Category at the 2019 Bafa Exhibition. She also came Highly Recommended for Best in Show.

Cathy received the Wild and Tame Award in 2017 and was also shortlisted for the Artist and Illustrators Artist of the Year.

She appeared as a contestant on Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year in 2016. Returning as a wildcard in 2017.

Cathy Read is a member of the Society of Women Artists exhibiting with them in London since 2013, receiving the Barbara Tate Memorial Award in 2015.



Marleybone Station - Cathy Read

*Cathy  
Read*

**2017 Wild and Tame Award – Artist of the Year – Artists and Illustrators Magazine**

**2017 Shortlisted for Artist of the Year – Artists and Illustrators Magazine**

**2015 Best Interpretation of a Theme - Buckingham Art For All People's vote**

**2015 Barbara Tate Memorial Award – Society of Women Artists**

**2012 Artist Residency – Fringe MK Westbury - September – November**

**2012 Artist Residency – Fringe MK Westbury - November 2011- January 2012**

# Contact Information

CATHY READ

*Cathy  
Read*

Cathy Read Art  
Unit 10, West Well Farm, Barton Rd, Tingewick,  
Buckingham  
MK18 4BD  
United Kingdom

cathy@cathyreadart.com  
+44 (0)7818240116

**Website:** [cathyreadart.com](http://cathyreadart.com)

**Find Cathy Read Art on:**



# Publicity History

CATHY READ

"Using a rich and cheerful palette, her paintings showcase the beauty of architecture in its environment, whether that's a busy metropolitan street or an area saddened by urban degeneration. The buildings she chooses are usually distinctive, a local landmark or an industrial powerhouse."

*Artweeks Oxfordtimes.co.uk Oxfordshire Limited Edition May 2017 – p 10*



*The Cheesegrater Couple - Cathy Read - 2018 -  
Watercolour & Acrylic*

"Cathy paints with watercolours and acrylics, creating a structure with masking fluid and using ink for dramatic effect. It's a distinctive way of working, producing a hazy, dreamlike image and she loves the element of surprise. The aim is clear – to present the built environment in a new and, perhaps surprising, light."

*Sarah Millington – Urban Twist – Buckinghamshire Living and Oxford  
Limited Edition Magazine April 2019 p 104 – 105  
<https://www.living-magazines.co.uk/our-magazines/buckinghamshire-living>*



*The Vision of Milton Keynes - Cathy Read - 2012 -  
Mixed Media*



*Destination Anywhere - Cathy Read - 2012 -  
Mixed Media*

"It was with this in mind that Cathy embarked on the Milton Keynes Project, in 2012. Through a series of painting and a book, she aimed to celebrate the much-maligned city and show that it was so much more than a carbuncle."

*Sarah Millington – Urban Twist – Buckinghamshire Living and Oxford  
Limited Edition Magazine April 2019 p 104 – 105  
<https://www.living-magazines.co.uk/our-magazines/buckinghamshire-living>*

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# Publicity History

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"Cathy draws with masking fluid, outlining pencil-drawn building and architecture in a white liquid which protects paper from paint before adding free-ranging watercolours and acrylic ink applied with a pipette.

It is the precision of her lines combined with the relaxed fluid approach to colour that gives her urban landscapes such a distinctive style."

*Hidden Oxford: Architecture and Aquatints – Esther Lafferty – Art – Ox Magazine – September 2017, p 44*  
<https://estherlafferty.wordpress.com/2017/09/10/art-hidden-oxford-architecture-and-aquatints/>



*Wolfson College from Rainbow Bridge - Cathy Read  
2013 - Mixed Media*

"The buildings she chooses are usually distinctive, and her Oxford series include the buildings of the 1960s and 1970s, from Wolfson's square blocks, which are a contrast to the classic image of an Oxford College, to St Catherine's striking buildings in glass and concrete by the Danish architect Arne Jacobsen, and the Keble Collect 'Spaceship', a glass-sided college bar, a striking building, the lines of which Read shows with emphatic glory."

*Hidden Oxford: Architecture and Aquatints – Esther Lafferty – Art – Ox Magazine – September 2017, p 44*  
<https://estherlafferty.wordpress.com/2017/09/10/art-hidden-oxford-architecture-and-aquatints/>



*Keble College - The Spaceship, Oxford - Cathy Read - 2013 -  
Watercolour & Acrylic*

Cathy  
Read



*St Catherine's College - The Quad - Cathy Read - 2013 - Watercolour  
& Acrylic*