

Barrington Tobin b. 1948

Barrington Tobin was born in London and trained at Putney School of Art. Prior to working as an artist he was a specialist in early and contemporary music and the tonality of his painting and mark making reflects this. The relationship between painting and music has always fascinated Tobin and he sees great music, architecture, literature and painting as sharing the same vital and spiritual source. Harmony and counterpoint, and the compositional techniques of the early polyphonists have been enriching - if intangible - influences. Working on several paintings simultaneously allows Tobin to tap into this quality of multi-vocality. The life of colour, its vibrations and emotional impact, has grown from his earlier engagement with musical composition, building up a library of sound from the 12th to the 20th century. Tobin has also been a lifelong collector and custodian of 16th and 17th century vernacular furniture. He senses a living connection between the past and present and through the transformation of natural materials, which nurtures his creative practice.

A decade living in Bath was the catalyst for Tobin to begin printmaking and he produced a series of works inspired by the spa town and the defining element of water at its centre, as well as its connection to Roman history and the ancient past. His work is responsive to the landscapes he has experienced on long distance walking through the UK. Equally, it responds to the particular spirit of place in his local environment: a strong connection and sense of responsibility and reverence towards trees and the natural world has always guided his creative life. Since the 1970s he has been a strong supporter of environmental protection groups and biodynamic farming.

In 2016 the award-winning filmmaker Mike Southon made the documentary [Concord](#), which unfolds the meaning and inspiration behind Tobin's paintings and his striving for harmony and balance. In recent years, two new interests have appeared in his work. The first is alchemical and involves the notion of *The Winnower*, who separates gold from lead, a process that is also a metaphor for the making of art. The second is the poet Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, the reading of which inspired Tobin to make a series of 12 oil and 12 pastel paintings responding to Orpheus's quest into the visible and invisible, the unknown and the known. This investigation culminated in an exhibition in 2019 curated by Professor Frances Spalding at Clare Hall, Cambridge.

Lately, Tobin has broadened his practice by exploring a range of printmaking processes. This has resulted in two new screenprint editions and a lively creative dialogue with master printmaker Nigel Oxley. Oxley's unique take on hand-burnished colour carborundum printmaking has added a rich dimension to Tobin's graphic work and the exquisite *Gable Court Suite* is the first flowering of this exciting collaboration.

Tobin's work has been exhibited widely in the UK, Europe and America and is held in private and public collections. He has enjoyed a long-standing collaboration with Eames Fine Art with whom he has exhibited regularly at major UK art fairs including the London Art Fair, British Art Fair and the London Original Print Fair in addition to three major solo shows at Eames Fine Art Gallery: *Postcards* (2016); *New Paintings* (2018) and *Concord* (2019). In 2021 Tobin moved from London to rural Dorset and this change in location has been hugely influential on the body of new work that he has produced over the last two years. A major show of new paintings is planned for later in 2025/26 with Eames Fine Art.