

# FAT CATS

Art and animal lover **Kim Haskins'** whimsical collection of cat images are set to charm and captivate collectors

**THE 'VACANT EYES'** of a cat are what attracted Kim Haskins when she started to paint her beautiful collection of beguiling cats. "I only ever paint cats I know," says Kim, who likes to paint in acrylics on three foot wide canvases which are both colourful and striking. "People have very set ideas about cats and I wanted to challenge people into looking at what they might be saying," explains Kim.

She likes to paint fluffy Persian style cats as it allows her the luxury of using wide, bristly brushes and 'going a bit wild.' She also maintains that her perfect inspiration is permanently by her side, as she paints in the kitchen of her seaside home alongside "a ridiculously fluffy Ragdoll cat with a permanently gormless expression."

Kim skilfully captures the essence of an expression or an emotion. In **'Purrfect Family'** there is a sense that the cheeky-looking kittens are just moments away from mischief as the adult cats attempt to retain some sense of order and decorum. **'Ginger Tom'** is based on a half Persian/half Ragdoll cat that Kim lived next door to in London's East End and is a classic image of what she refers to as "a real bruiser on the outside, but a complete softie inside." As someone who is at that age when wedding invitations are dropping through the door thick and fast, **'Mr & Mrs'** perfectly sums up the straight-backed formality of a bride and groom on their wedding day. "It's a tribute to all my friends who have got married this year," says Kim, who has created a tuxedo wearing Persian Tomcat and a white female "who wouldn't look out of place in a frilly gown!"

Working in an "erratic but fast" way, the large canvases are visually dominant and colourfully bold. "Colour attracts me more than anything and it affects my mood," says Haskins. "It's very impulsive, and I usually just have a rough idea in my head. I enjoy the unpredictability of these paintings. I never quite know how they're going to turn out as they take on a life of their own."

She says that the deadpan humour of the cat's situation elicits a warm response from collectors. "I think it's important for art to evoke emotion. I hope mine evokes joy and that people feel happy when looking at my pictures."

→ **Ginger Tom**  
Canvas edition of 95  
Image 28" x 28"  
Framed £699

→ **Mr & Mrs**  
Canvas edition of 95  
Image 28" x 28"  
Framed £699



→ **Purrfect Family**  
Canvas edition of 95  
Image 28" x 28"  
Framed £699



# NEW TALENT



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◀ **Buzz Off!**  
Giclée edition of 150  
Image 14¾" x 22"  
Framed £399

◀ **Man Flu**  
Giclée edition of 150  
Image 16" x 20"  
Framed £399

▶ **It Wasn't Me!**  
Giclée edition of 150  
Image 18" x 18"  
Framed £399

Working quickly and with a limited but bold palette, he uses both brush strokes and rags to create his signature effect of muted colour tone combined with a dry sense of humour. Using attractive colours and a subject that collectors can respond to means that these artworks will no doubt have a wide appeal.

Although his animal creations are painted in a contemporary style he enjoys creating a certain realism when it comes to depicting the character unique to the species. "It's not unusual for collectors to make a connection between one of the dogs and someone they know. 'Man Flu' always elicits a knowing response," he laughs, referring to the blue green tones of the morose, but lovable dog in the collection.

Much admired, Abrams is proud that he's just celebrated his twentieth year as a full-time professional artist. "In that time I have worked and exhibited in New York, designed figurines, and ceramics featuring my work for Wedgwood are rapidly becoming a collector's favourite."

Joining Washington Green's prestigious stable of artists this year is a particular highlight in his artistic career. "I have hit the ground running and feel I've already progressed as an artist. I'm really looking forward to the exciting challenges ahead and creating more witty depictions of man's best friend."

## PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Washington Green's latest signing, artist **Michael Abrams** has found the perfect models for his witty and amusing new collection; sure to strike a chord with dog lovers everywhere

"**I DON'T OBSERVE** things in the traditional sense," says Michael Abrams, "I just let my mind take a walk and see where it takes me." In this collection it has taken him into the playful minds of dogs, where he cleverly captures an emotion or familiar characteristic.

"People often wonder what pets are thinking and I try to make those thoughts come to life by looking into the soul of the animal and then depicting those emotions

on canvas," says Abrams. "The real fun for me starts when I have completed 99 per cent of the painting and only the eyes are left to paint. As soon as I add the pupils I cannot help smiling as suddenly there is an animal with a personality staring back at me!"

Abrams, who is self taught, says Picasso, Hockney and Beatrix Potter - as well as the cartoon styles of Ralph Steadman and Terry Gilliam - have provided his key influences.

