

Peter Davies is a well-known art critic, author and artist. After art history studies at UEA, Norwich he became a freelance writer and exhibition organiser. As well as an obituarist for the *Independent* newspaper he is a reviewer for art journals and the *St Ives Times and Echo*. Among his books are the acclaimed *A Northern School* (Redcliffe Press 1989, reprinted by Clark Art 2015) and *Bratby* (2002). Davies is an executive member of Bath Society of Artists and a seasoned printmaker with linocuts in several museum and public gallery collections including Guernsey Museum, Poole Museums and Falmouth Art Gallery.

David Stoker graduated in Fine Art and History of Art, taught in the UK over five decades and has been a merchant seaman, lorry driver, farm labourer, vegetarian restaurateur, playwright, actor, arts administrator (Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, first Touring Officer) and prize-winning artist. One-man exhibitions include 'Poets from Life' (London, 2006–7), and he has read his and others' poetry at numerous events. Other writing activities range from assistant art critic, *Birmingham Post*, editing for Greville Press and writing news and reviews for the Wyndham Lewis Society. He lives in southwest France, where he was Director of the Atelier Cazeneuve art school in the mid-'90s.



Looking Down an Escarpment with Broom and Distant Strimmed Area I, 2018, oil on board, 96 x 122cm

Sansom & Company

www.sansomandcompany.co.uk

Sansom & Company



Ray Atkins

A painter's odyssey

Peter Davies



Ray Atkins

A painter's odyssey

Peter Davies

Ray Atkins (b. 1937) is – puzzlingly – one of the least well-known major painters of his generation. This book aims to reverse that, revealing an artist whose intense commitment, especially to specific places, is informed by a desire to celebrate the uncelebrated – be that china clay pits, scrapyards, a shopping centre under construction or a railway embankment. Atkins' work has embraced huge, exuberant *plein-air* scenes, a figure-based movement-themed series, and intimate subjects such as children and gardens.

Peter Davies follows Atkins' journey from a difficult but creative London period in the 1960s, including study at the Slade, on to the years teaching and living in Reading and then Cornwall, spanning the late 1960s to the early 2000s – with high spots such as a one person show at the Whitechapel Gallery and work in the Serpentine and Hayward Galleries. Atkins' relocation to the French Pyrenees in 2008 delivered fresh artistic challenges and an undimmed painterly energy. David Stoker's essay gives a personal account of his discovery of Atkins in France, leading to a growing friendship and a deep understanding of and respect for the artist's work.

The book highlights tensions arising from Atkins' insistence on working direct from his subject and from figurative versus abstract debates. It places his career in a wider context of the twists and turns of art-world thinking in the UK, Europe and beyond.

With over a hundred plates, mostly in colour, this is a long-overdue assessment of the vast, varied practice of a fascinating artist.