

**Press Release****Overhang**, oil on canvas, 117 x 132cm**Julian Cooper**  
*Natural Forces*

Paintings 2014

14 March – 11 April 2014

[view exhibition catalogue on-line](#)

**Julian Cooper** was born (1947) in the English Lake District and learned it slowly, rock by rock, crag by crag as a child does, not just with his eyes but with all of his senses. And what has held the deepest fascination for him is not the spectacular scenery or the *sublime* but the rock itself; the story of the planet that is written into the landscape.

Throughout the 80s and 90s sacred and iconic rock faces in the Himalayas, Alps and the Tibetan plateau were the inspiration for paintings that explored the *genius loci* rather than the physical features of such awe-inspiring locations. He then shifted his ground and went beneath the surface to the slate quarries of Cumbria, the marble quarries of Carrara and the mineral workings of Tasmania and, most recently, to the scattered rocky outcrops on the lower Lakeland fells.

In these paintings Cooper has arrived at the very surface of the rock itself. They are almost entirely without air and explore the clear angles and geometric architecture of rock, rock as a substance formed and transformed over time into massive mountains that the forces of nature have taken millennia to reveal in the Lakeland outcrops as well as by brutal industrial intervention in the stone and mineral workings.

Taken as a whole Julian Cooper's paintings have the character of a unified and consistent vision. They usually embody a lightness of tone shifting from greyish hues to blues and ochre. They are built up layer on layer in bold brush strokes where the impulse to abstraction is checked only by a stronger impulse to communicate a subject; a subject that may be limited in scope but unlimited in imaginative and expressive potential that has its taproots in childhood experience.

Julian Cooper studied at Lancaster School of Art (1964-65), Goldsmith's College of Art (1965) and in 1969 was awarded the Boise Travelling Scholarship and was resident at the British School in Rome (1994-95). He has work in public and private collections worldwide and has exhibited regularly in London and abroad including a retrospective at Museo Nazionale Della Montagna, Turin and inclusion in *A Picture of Britain* at Tate and a major exhibition is planned for Abbott Hall, Kendal.

View the on line catalogue with an essay by Melvyn Bragg.