

## **Simon interviews: Grant Wallace, artist**

Simon: So here we are in lovely Locarn with Grant Wallace. An artist originally from Scotland?

Grant: Originally from Scotland, that's right.

Simon: Originally from Scotland. We're standing in front of a lovely log fire and I'm looking around me and seeing lots and lots of paintings, as well as a bicycle hanging from the ceiling, and all sorts of wonderful things. So – you're an artist and you're a painter, particularly?

Grant: Yes.

Simon: So, tell us about your work.

Grant: People ask 'How long have you been painting?' Well, all my life. I started as a kid painting with poster paints and big brushes and doing snakes and stuff and like a lot of people I was very fortunate to have a good teacher when I was young. A teacher called Adam Robson. I've put stuff on Facebook about Adam Robson and I get a wonderful response because I'm not the only one who he inspired.

Simon: Right, OK. So, where did you sort of start becoming an artist, as it were?

Grant: Well, I lived on Dartmoor before moving to France and although I had had exhibitions and shows and stuff when I lived in Plymouth itself, once I met Teresa, my partner, I moved to Princetown where I had opportunities to get more involved with local shows in Mivi(?) and Tavistock, and Dartmoor is quite a 'folk' place, as I'm sure you imagine so being an artist is quite normal. So whereas trying to get an exhibition space in Plymouth was like pushing up-hill, it was always 'No, get a proper job', being an artist in Dartmoor was great 'Yeah, have you met so-and- so, have you met so-and-so'.

Simon: Right.

Grant: So, I think that's when it felt more real but coming to France, it's now my job title. A lot of things about Brittany remind us of Dartmoor and Devon and Scotland ....

Simon: Yeah, sure.

Grant: ...That's nice.

Simon: So, you said that when you came to Brittany it became your job – and that, sort of, painting became your job. How did that happen – how did you find that happen?

Grant: Well, two reasons. One, you sign up as a micro-entrepreneur and it's literally the box you tick is 'artist entrepreneur' ???? and register as an artist but also, actually, through the Marie here I saw there was a lot of opportunity going to the local Markets. I spent that, kind of, winter period setting up trestles and tables and stuff and getting ready to become a market stall holder.

Simon: Right, to sell your work.

Grant: Yeah – to actively sell. Because, it's lovely creating art but there was quite a lot of frustration, especially when I was in Plymouth, I was producing stuff, but Why?

Simon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Grant: I was really enjoying doing it, but you come to a bit of a buffer when, like, now I've got lots of stuff and sometimes it sells on Facebook or an art finder or friends.

Simon: So, you started going to art fairs or ...

Grant: I'm going to correct you. I signed up to do Carhaix.

Simon: Right.

Grant: Which is a market. I come top of the curriculum on this. I started just doing a market ....



Simon: Right.

Grant: ...And getting involved with the Market Association. So I didn't go directly to the art market/art fair route and that came about more through word-of-mouth later.

Simon: Right – I see.

Grant: Because every Saturday from since March I've been doing Carhaix market and just by being there, people come by and say 'Oh, by the way I'm the President of the Art Association of Huelgoat, will you come and join us? or 'Have you heard of so-and-so'? or 'Have you heard of this Market'? So, I got in touch with the guys at Huelgoat who I'm currently preparing paintings to hang for another exhibition with them. I've also done two of the Arti'Breizh events in Carhaix in the alleyway up by the church and I've signed up to do their Christmas Market.

Simon: So, how would you describe the style of art that you create?

Grant: You would look at my painting and know what it is of. I'm not an abstract artist. I do things that are representative and realistic. Sometimes with abstraction. I've done some bits recently a little bit more Breton, Celtic. Although I've done a lot of animals and bird paintings since coming to Brittany, I do tend to jump around between subjects. I'm looking around here at portraits; a painting of a guy from Iron Maiden.

Simon: So when you go to Market, which paintings tend to attract people, and which type of painting do you sell most of? Is there a formula or is it just – people just catch something – catches their eye and they buy?

Grant: It's more the latter.

Simon: And what about Commissions? Have you done...?

Grant: Yeah

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Simon: So how does that work?

Grant: It tends to be word-of-mouth. Lovely couple I met through the Moustoir Market. He asked me to do a dragon for his wife for her birthday which got me painting more fantasy and I've got four different fantasy paintings around me just now. So that was a commission. Oh, I've got a very good friend in Plymouth and his sister has learning difficulties. I know she was, she is, a great Harry Potter fan so I did a montage of Harry Potter images. And her best friend saw that and asked for a Harry Potter painting, but I thought I don't really want to be sued by the Harry Potter estate so I said I can do something but not Harry Potter, so she said 'Oh, do a dragon' So another fantasy picture. And then she came back to me and asked for a gift, a wedding gift for her friend. So she wanted an Arthurian image but with the friend's face so I did that for her. So I've had some really quite interesting commissions this year.

Simon: So when's your next outing, bearing in mind you should go ahead for November's show. What have you got coming up in November?

Grant: Actually, this coming week on Thursday I'm going to Huelgoat to set up a little show with the Huelgoat group. We're exhibiting in a Nursing Home but it's from October through to early December. Lots of people visiting – relatives; family. So I've got seven paintings lined up just putting attachments on the back to hang them easily. I've got three Christmas markets coming up in November and December.

Simon: Tell us where they are, where are they?

Grant: One's in Pleyben; one's in Carhaix and one's in Le Moustoir and maybe more to come.

Simon: OK, and how do people find you on-line?

Grant: My website: [grantwallaceart.com](http://grantwallaceart.com) (that's Wallace ace). I'm on facebook under Grant Wallace.



Simon: We'll put those details on the website. Thank you very much Grant.  
That's really useful. Thank you.