

## Comfort Zone

Doug Farthing's art is intense and sometimes raw. His expressionist style is well suited to the moments and moods of combat, as well as 'everyday' situations on the ground, on patrol, driving or walking among civilians. As a soldier, Doug was trained to observe everything around him, to see and interpret every face, action and the environment at all times – it could have an impact on what he should do next. At times his survival, and that of his comrades, depended upon his response. A Sergeant Major in 2 Para, Doug was decorated for his part in operations around Kabul in 2002.

This acute perception now serves him well as an artist – alert to the tensions as well as the beauty of life, his work is never 'off duty', even back in East Anglia. Instead his paintings share these moments with the viewer. As he says, 'I'm always drawn back to that piece of ground, that unseen danger, where there may be an enemy sniper hiding'.

'Comfort Zone' is Doug Farthing's artistic response to the more recent experiences of his extraordinary army career, which spanned Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and Northern Ireland, and his work on the northwest frontier since. The show's title refers not to the comfort zone of civvy street, away from risk and hardship. Instead, it means military life - which, despite the high-octane existence, represents a focussed, disciplined understanding of the hardest aspects of life, and an exceptional camaraderie driven by shared experiences of danger. From this 'zone', Doug has provided a glimpse of the moments of truth.

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