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## Art *at the* palace

As the Bishop's Palace in Wells welcomes its first artist-in-residence,  
Somerset Life finds out a little more about the man behind the pictures

BY SAM KIRBY



**W**illiam Kalthazar Rose, who works from art studios in Somerset and Tuscany, has taken up a position as the first artist-in-residence at the 800-year-old home of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

The artist lives in the historic city and an exhibition of his work will take place in the conference room of the Bishop's Palace in Wells until 26 June.

William's subjects range from a series of religious allegorical 'cooks' to luminescent landscapes and metaphysical still lifes. Visitors can take part in a variety of sessions as part of his post as artist-in-residence, including a portraiture workshop, talks about his work and the chance to watch William at work.

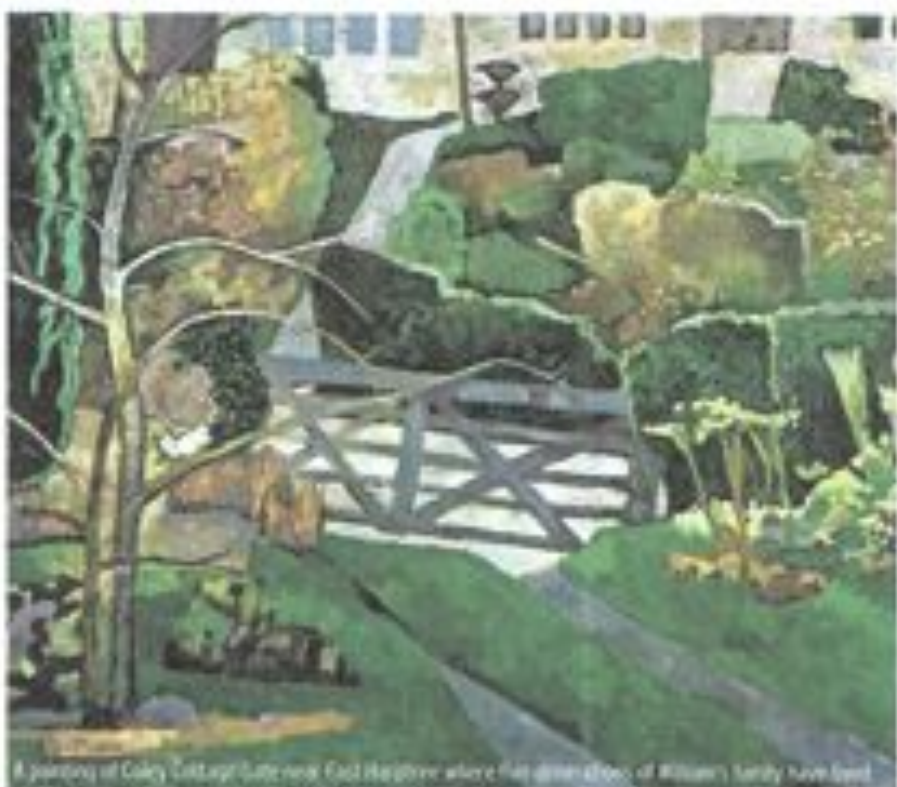
William, who grew up as the son of two painters, has a studio in the countryside near Litton with a wonderful view of a flower garden. He has recently relocated his Italian studio to a mountaintop next to a Benedictine monastery.

#### Were you taught to paint by your parents?

They both taught me a great deal. They had quite different approaches and temperaments. They encouraged me to embrace as wide a spectrum as I could, so I learnt everything from stained glass to jewellery making, etching and lost wax casting. By the age of 11 I was well versed in all the major craft forms. I was never expected to become an artist; however, I never really felt that I would do anything else.

#### Were you inspired and encouraged to paint during your time at Wells Cathedral School?

I got on very well with the art teacher, Mrs England, who was a very encouraging influence. She helped me to follow my own interests, which included tutoring me in my first wood carving. I carved a St George and the Dragon and then expressed an interest in stone carving. She again encouraged me and arranged a meeting at the cathedral with a stone mason. Mrs England tutored me in academic drawing. I still have the drawing she did in my sketchbook in which she explained aspects of proportion and tonality. She introduced us to a variety of art movements. Remembering back, it was a great period of discovery. Wells left me with a tremendous sense of harmony, which has followed me and helped me to get through moments of difficulty. The school left me with a profound sense of order and spiritual calm. I have never known another circumstance like it.



#### Have you painted many Somerset scenes?

I live in Wells now and I equally enjoy painting individual figures I see strolling on the pavement in the city centre as much as the lovely architecture. I have lived in Bath and painted a lot of its views. I have also painted the landscapes around my family home in Coley near the Harptrees. Most recently I have had the wonderful opportunity to be artist-in-residence at Sherborne Gardens in Litton, owned by Pamela and John Southwell. Their garden is very much like Monet's garden outside Paris.

#### What is your favourite medium and how would you describe your work?

My favourite medium is oil paint. I find that oil is flexible and can yield some very rich and complex results. It is also a medium in which one can continue to add to over several years. I describe my work as figurative, and sometimes as poetic naturalism. ■

For details on opening times and admission charges visit [bishopsplace.org.uk](http://bishopsplace.org.uk)