



*House with Steep Roof*, 7.25 x 12 in.

In his landscape work he is much more interested in painting for the sake of painting, form, light, shadow and colour and what is happening to the pigment on the canvas.

Now 56, Newman has his studio at the Emerson Umbrella, a community art centre in Concord Massachusetts where he also lives. He had his Road to Damascus moment in 1991 in a small village near Avignon in the south of France during a village fete. "On that evening I had what seemed to be a revelation: that you only live once and that you should do what you really want to do."

Newman had become a lawyer more or less because he couldn't think of anything better to do after graduating from Trinity College, Oxford with a degree in Modern History. As he says, he was never terribly committed to it, and then someone gave him a box of paints and he became a weekend painter. "It didn't take long for me to realize that this was a far greater passion."

His decision couldn't have come as a complete surprise to his family, his mother was a watercolourist and his brother, David, had trained as a fine artist. "One of the things my brother said was that one of the things you have got going for you is that you have no training, no particular received wisdom. You just bash about and try this and try that and sometimes things work and sometimes they don't, but the result is that your work could look a little bit different and that's a function of not having any specific training."

Newman is now an established artist with gallery representation in England, America and Canada. He started off by painting landscapes for the simple reason that they represented less of a challenge in terms of draftsmanship. Over the years he met that challenge and triumphed through application and perseverance. "A point came in 1992-1993 when I said you are really going to have to add this arrow to your quiver." And so Newman literally went back to the drawing board and learned to

draw by doing it over and over again, and by studying the work of artists like Michelangelo.

His figures are incredibly articulate and expressive, very present and very much in the here and now. Another way to describe them would be solid with presence and freighted with emotion. Sadly for us, Newman doesn't paint as many figures as he used to. He has explained this by saying that since his three children arrived in his life the set of emotions that he used in creating his figures are pretty much taken up by his being a father.

He describes his style as "Objective or realistic because a tree looks like a tree and a head a head but beyond that I would say contemporary and Andy Newman." Over the years he has tended to work monochromatically.

"A painting will be of a blue, green or red cast. It doesn't mean those are exclusively the colours in any particular painting but typically the range is narrow. Typically you will have a green landscape with a few red accents or a bluish landscape that might have a few yellow accents but it is very rare in the last ten to fifteen years that I will have a landscape or a figure where all the colours of the rainbow are represented and distributed pretty much equally over the canvas."

In terms of landscape Newman says he has been influenced by Edward Hopper, Matisse, Andre Derain and de Vlaminck, in figures by Lucien Freud, Francis Bacon and to some extent Honore Daumier.

Travelling to paint has played a large part in Newman's career. When I interviewed him he was in the south of France, close to the village where he had made his original decision to become a fulltime painter.

"In terms of inspiration, where I sit now in France is of huge proportion. I have an endless pleasure in painting what I can see from around here, the village architecture, the vineyards. Every year I go to France and a couple of times a year I go to

