



INSIDE/OUTSIDE

WORDS ABOUT PICTURES

DAVID CHEEPEN

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'Bearing the Gift', Acrylic on board, 12 x 12 inches, 1988
In memoriam: Harry Cheepen

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1980's, prior to one of my exhibitions, I found myself scrutinising some of my completed paintings with a newly-acquired detachment, as if seeing them for the first time. As I looked, I discovered levels of meaning and symbolic significances of which I had been unaware prior to, and during the execution of the paintings. These new insights were recorded in notebooks and often appeared, spontaneously, in the form of rhymes and word-play.

I had written verses and aphorisms before, but only in intermittent bursts, amidst the regular, disciplined and persistent practice of painting and drawing. In 1995, I repeated the process, with different images, with similar results.

This book is a distillation, a mere selection, of some of the outcomes of these exercises. I recommend that the reader should examine the pictures first and, in the light of his or her personal experience and sensibility, find his or her own interpretations or 'stories', and only then read the accompanying verses, if he or she wishes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

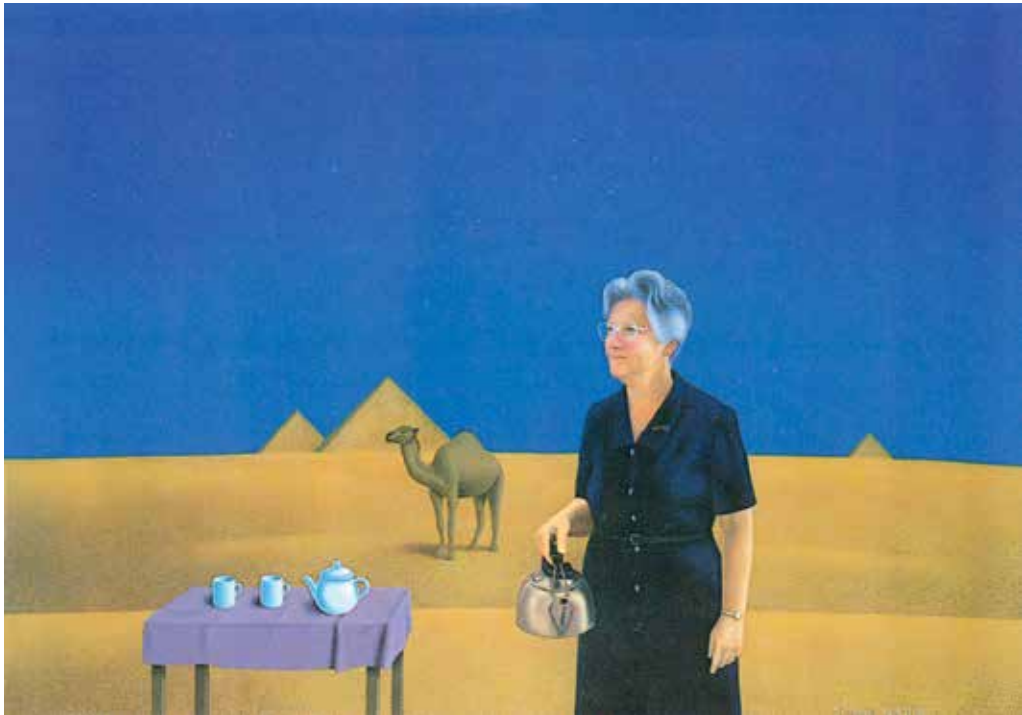
I would like to thank my family members and my many friends who have, in various ways, given assistance and encouragement during my forty years of 'messianically driven' creative activity. A few have sacrificed much. They know who they are. So much is owed to the few.

For Lucy, David and Daniel

To see a further seventy paintings, biographical information, lists of exhibitions and contact details, please visit www.davidcheepen.co.uk.

Front cover: 'Inside/Outside' Acrylic on board, 18 x 18 inches, 1986

Back cover: 'The Upper Room' Acrylic on board, 11 x 8 inches, 1990



'Aquarius: The Artist's Mother', Acrylic on board, 8 x 11.5 inches, 1988

AQUARIUS: THE ARTIST'S MOTHER



Amidst a million grains of sand
She stands by night in Egypt's land,
A stainless kettle in her hand
To brew some tea for two.

A mother's love is heaven-blest,
A love that's never second-best,
A love that passes every test.
(You know these words are true!)

So if you're thirsty, hot and dry
And parched, beneath a desert sky,
Just smile at her, and catch her eye.
She'll make a cup for you.



'Lucy, The Sky and Diamonds', Acrylic on board, Diameter 6 inches, 1985

LUCY, THE SKY AND DIAMONDS



Once upon a cloudy day
In England's merry month of May,
A maiden clothed in purest white
Prepared to make her maiden flight.
She thought, "Oh dear, it's quite absurd
To trust a flimsy silver bird
That's only bound with strings and wire.
Too young am I to join the choir
Of angels up in heaven's realm;
And who's the pilot at the helm?"

But after she had seen her world
From where it, like a map, unfurled,
She felt she thought she understood
Why men had worked with string and wood
With courage, since the olden days,
To rise above the misty haze,
To travel, like the birds and bees
Across the oceans, over seas,
To break the chains with which they're bound
And soar like swans above the ground.



'The Flying Display', Acrylic, 8.25 x 10.5 inches, 1987

THE FLYING DISPLAY



Another field, another day,
They came to see an air display,
To wonder at the works of man,
While hoping for a golden tan
 To show they'd been away.

But while they scanned the empty skies,
A sight appeared, to their surprise.
A lady dressed in white and blue
Decended slowly into view.
 A mystic matinée?

She hovered there for half an hour
As if sustained by hidden power,
And floating lightly, as a cloud,
She smiled upon the waiting crowd,
 And she was heard to say,

"I bring you love from far away
On this, your public holiday,
And where I come from, girls and boys
All play with very different toys
 And haven't gone astray."

And when she'd gone from earthly eyes,
The people failed to memorise
The lines she spoke, the words between,
So unaware that they had seen
 A miracle today.



'Angel Music', Acrylic on board, 5 x 5 inches, 1981

ANGEL MUSIC



You make your music in the clouds
And serenade the larks.
You're now above the laughing crowds.
God bless you, Harpo Marx!



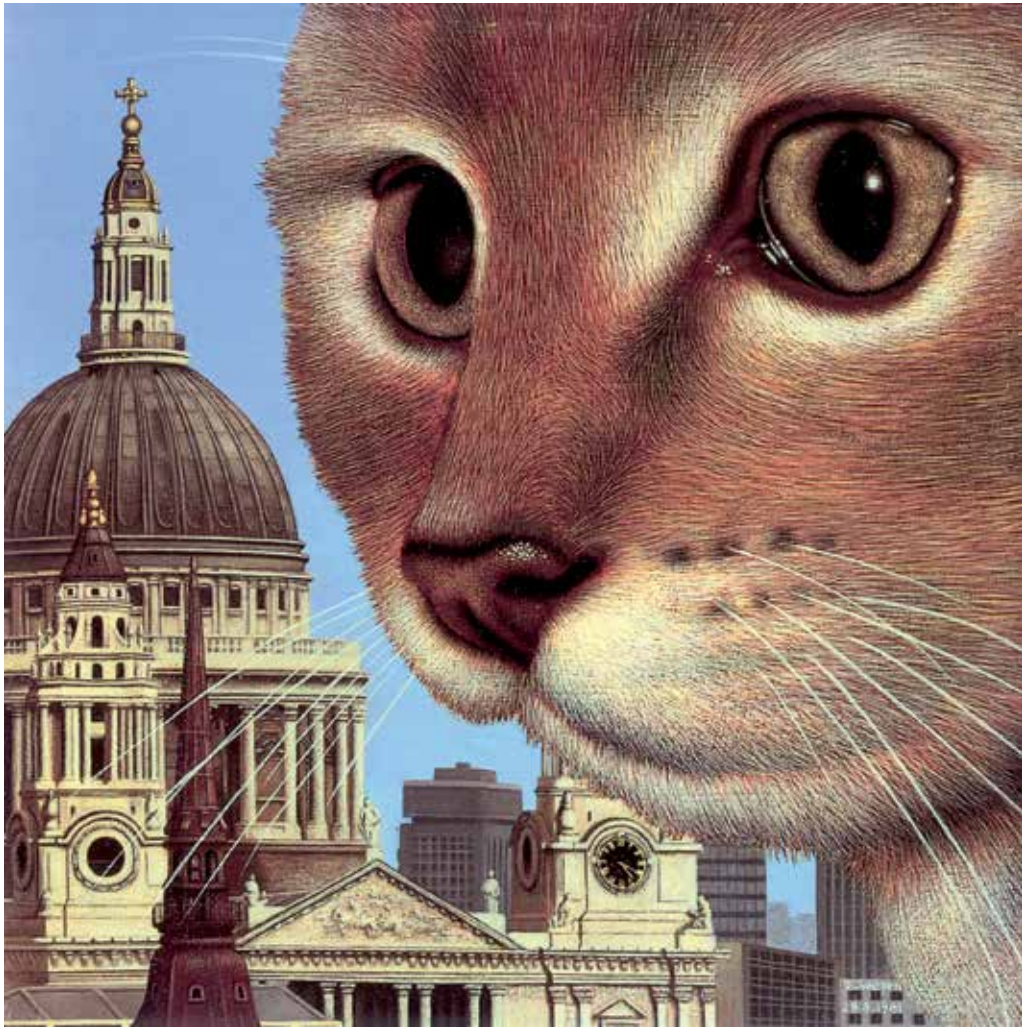
'Mona at the Airport', Acrylic on board, 5 x 5 inches, 1978

MONA AT THE AIRPORT



It's Mona Lisa's holiday,
She's left her gloomy rocks
To go and find the Spanish bay
Where Dalí's melting clocks.

For Mona, time is meaningless,
It doesn't seem worthwhile,
And airport skies are ceilingless
When Mona Lisa smiles.



'Thomas in the City' Acrylic on board, 5 x 5 inches, 1981

THOMAS IN THE CITY



Within the ancient city walls,
Before the dome of great St. Paul's,
Apart, alone, above the street,
He looks out from his lofty seat;
The cat with eyes as deep as pitch
In this, the Season of the Witch.

His whiskers feel the gentle breeze,
As he, alert to all he sees,
Is far above the noisy roar
Of city people, rich and poor,
Who, worried, hurried, racked with care,
Preserve no time to stand and stare.



'Goodbye Westminster', Acrylic on board, 5 x 5 inches, 1985

GOODBYE WESTMINSTER



Close by the old Confessor's towers,
Where poets' tombs are strewn with flowers,
There stands the House where dreadful powers
Enact their baleful plan.

The few who dare to stand up tall,
(The ones who cannot creep and crawl)
Are silenced now inside the Hall
Displaced by Satan's clan.

The outlaws watch with staring eyes,
Observing freedom's dark demise,
Prepared to wait in deep disguise
'Til insight comes to Man.

And when the reign of Phyllis Stein
Is pushed aside by power divine,
Then love will flow like vintage wine
From London, and it can!



'No News is Good News', Acrylic on board, 18 x 12 inches, 1990

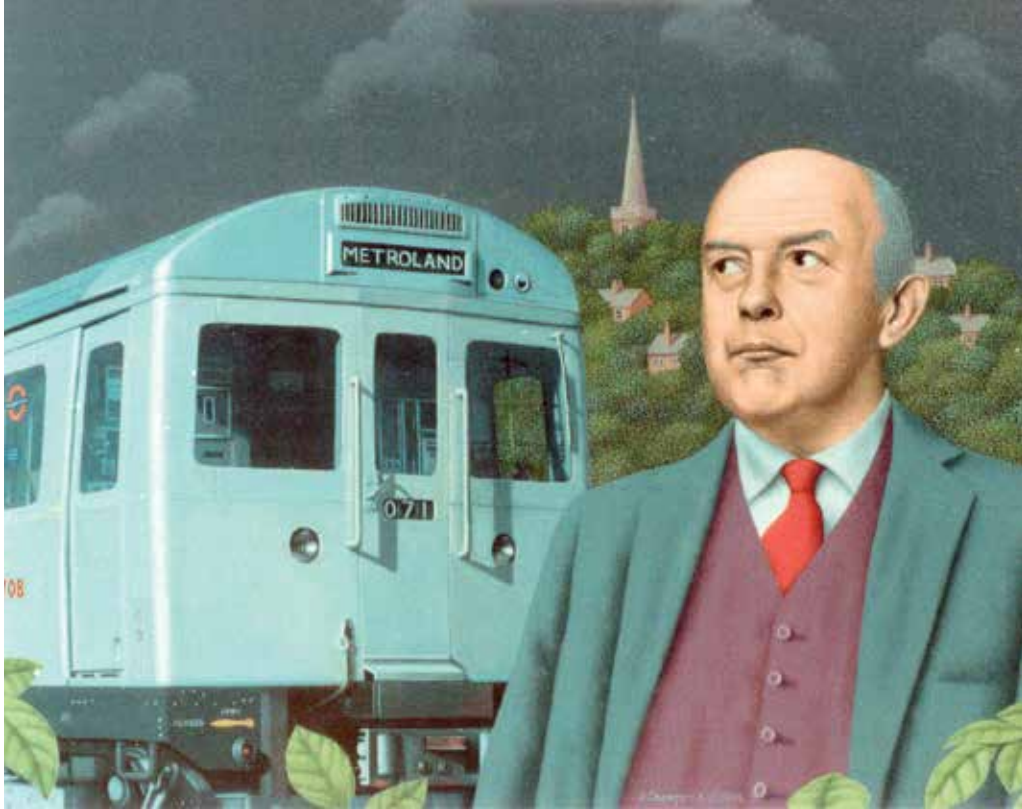
NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS



Headlines, deadlines, pressed for time,
Tittle-tattle, scandal, crime.
What's the difference, what's to choose?
You've got to keep up with the news.

Gossip, rumour, downright lies,
Hit the jackpot, win the prize,
Debase, degrade, abuse, accuse!
You've got to keep up with the news.

War, disaster, fame and shame,
Day in, day out, all the same.
If peace of mind you wish to lose,
You've got to keep up with the news.



'Metro-land' Acrylic on board 4.5 x 5.5 inches, 1984

METRO-LAND



Below the spire on Harrow Hill,
A poet dreams, (as poets will).
He dreams, while trains of silver-grey
Go back and forth along their way
From Amersham to Baker Street,
Past Metro-suburbs clean and neat,
Where humble hopes are satisfied
In tidy gardens, side by side.

And when the Watford train is nigh,
He'll travel 'neath the leaden sky
By Pinner fair and Northwood Hills
By golf course and by Croxley Mills
To railway's end, where River Gade
Is lost in Cassio's leafy shade
Of weeping willow, chestnut, elm,
In Nature's elemental realm.

But what is this to break his trance,
To cause the poet's eyes to glance
Towards the clanking rhythmic sound
Which seems to come from underground?
A train to stop a train of thought,
Or can it be from daydream wrought,
An inner image alchemised
By strength of vision realised?



'Little Fluffy Clouds', Acrylic on board, 8 x 6 inches, 1992

LITTLE FLUFFY CLOUDS



Maybe it's because I'm an introvert,
That I love empty places
Where fluffy clouds appear and fade
Like thoughts which leave no traces.
And maybe it's because I am curious,
That I keep asking why
Apollo's orb goes round and round
The endless desert sky.



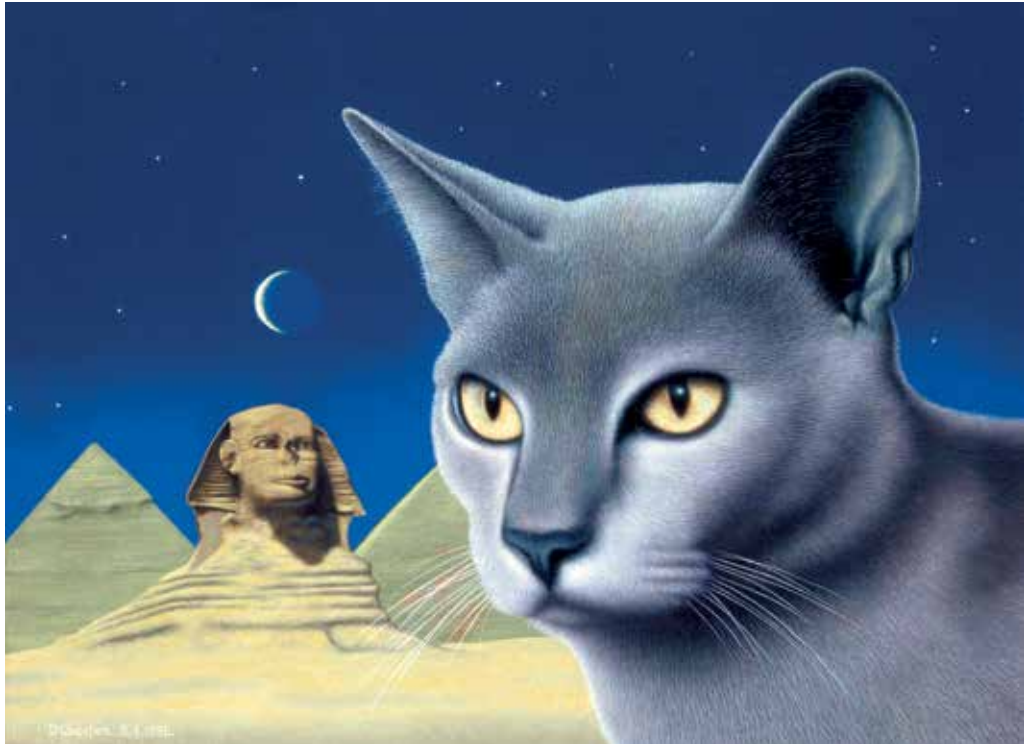
'Understanding', Acrylic on board, 8.25 x 6 inches, 1992

UNDERSTANDING



“Twinkle, twinkle little firmament,
How I wonder, are you permanent?”
He asked the starry sky at night
As try to understand, he might,
The reasons both for space and time
And Nature’s patterned ordered rhyme
Of birth and death, of new and old,
Of joy and sorrow, heat and cold.

The sky replied in riddled clues,
“Just go ahead and ask the Jews,
The Moslems and the Christians too,
The Buddhist and the wise Hindu.
Then stare at me from dusk till dawn,
And look within, ‘til Wisdom’s born.
Then slowly count the grains of sand
And then you’ll learn to understand.”



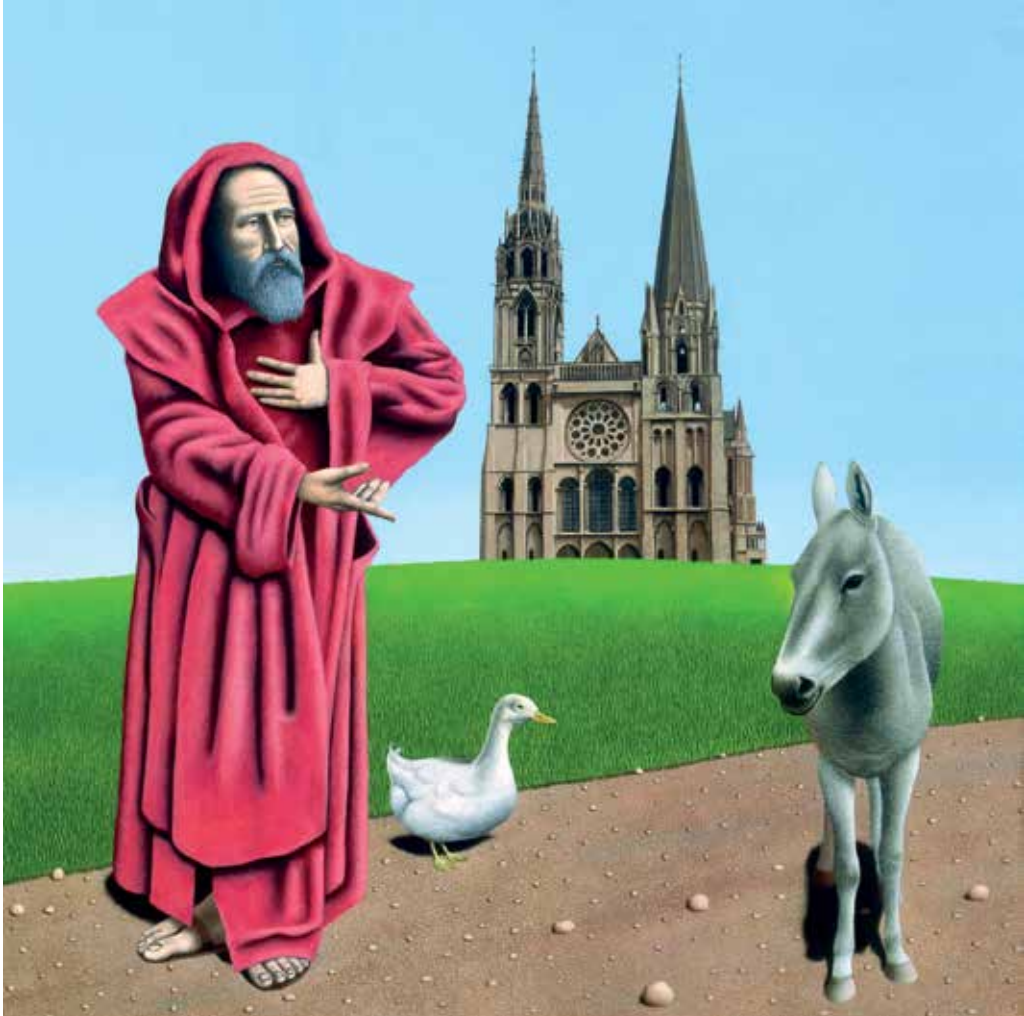
'The Homecoming', Acrylic on board, 4.75 x 6.5 inches, 1986

THE HOMECOMING



When mellow blue September night
Is lit by stars and crescent bright,
The Sphinx's lips become unsealed,
Her ancient secrets now revealed.
She speaks for none except the ones
Who've seen the moon, the stars, the suns,
And heard the music of the spheres
With opened eyes and opened ears.

A cat appears with eyes of gold,
(Revered by Man in days of old),
Returning to her land of birth
(The central omphalos of Earth),
From whence she's heard the Sphinx's call
To learn to see beyond the wall,
And look behind the Sphinx's eyes
To where the secret wisdom lies.



'Words of Wisdom', Acrylic on board, 10 x 10 inches, 1981

WORDS OF WISDOM



Beneath a blue heaven where lovelight is glowing,
A guru is teaching, his wisdom is flowing
And his words are for you and for me.

“I teach of your need to be being and knowing,
My words are like seeds when the wind is a-blowing
And these creatures, they know how to be.”

“But the beings enchained by their coming and going,
Imprisoned by ego and finished with growing
Are the ones who shall never be free.”



'Examining the Nightingale's Code', Acrylic on board, 6.5 x 9.5 inches, 1986

EXAMINING THE NIGHTINGALE'S CODE



“I have seen you before”, the sweet nightingale said,
“You have stood by a church for an age,
With the duck and the stones and the guru in red,
But pray tell me, for whom is the cage?”

The donkey replied, “I am learning to see,
And to shine like the jewel that I wear.
The cage is for he who has set himself free
To remind him that some are still there.”



'Above the Dying Planet', Acrylic on board, 5.5 x 6 inches, 1988.

ABOVE THE DYING PLANET



High above the dying planet,
Floating slowly in the sky,
We know, as know the gull and gannet,
All things live, to live and die.



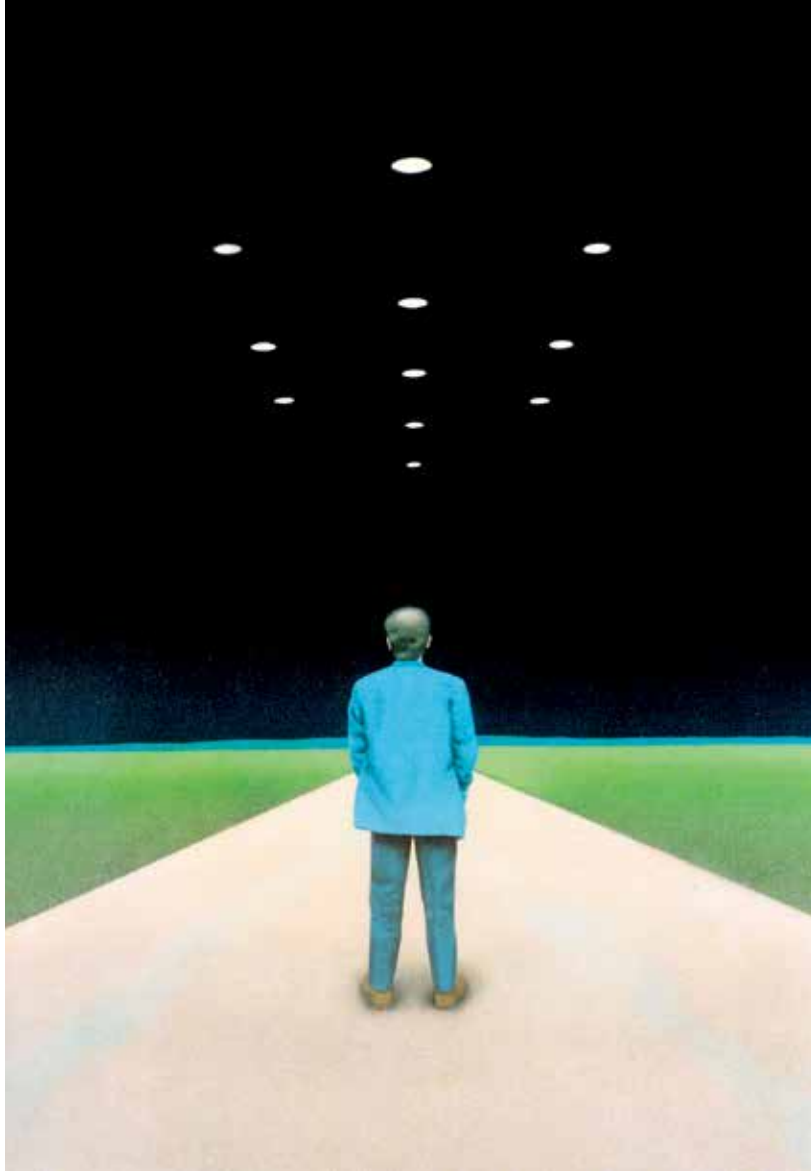
'Under the Rainbow', Acrylic on board, 12 x 12 inches, 1985.

UNDER THE RAINBOW



The yellow brick road of the mystical mind
Is paved with intangible gold,
When encounters and dreams of the infinite kind
Are recorded, to later unfold.

A picture of wholeness can come into view
On the screen of interior sight,
To grant one a clue as to that which is true,
And to guide one from darkness to light.



'On the Knowledge' Acrylic on board, 16.5 x 11.5 inches, 1990

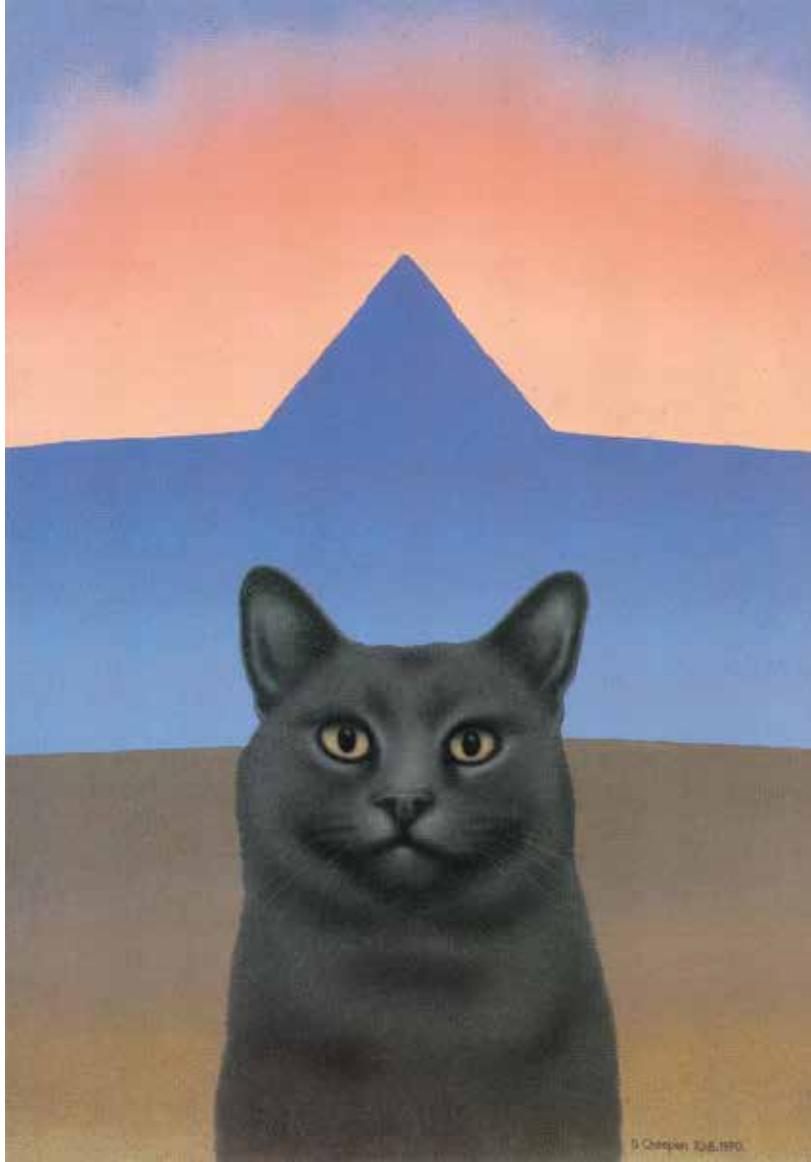
ON THE KNOWLEDGE



Alone, below the silent night,
The Artist finds the Key
To open up the Doors of Sight
Which lead him to the Tree.

And after passing through the Gate,
He stands inside the Light
And enters Eden's blessed state
Between the Black and White.

He sees the Sun behind the sun
(The sum of all the parts)
And locks the One within the One
Inside his Heart of Hearts.



'Devotion', Acrylic on board, 12 x 8.5 inches, 1990

DEVOTION



When the sum of all numbers is One,
And the Sunshine enlightens the sun,
The Devotion's repaid,
The connection is made,
When the sum of all numbers is One.



'The Fallen Angel', Acrylic on board, Diameter 11.5 inches, 1985



D. Cheepen 2015

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