



Pen on the page: Artist Chris Stavrou's subjects range from familiar scenes like East Finchley tube station to the beauty of the natural world

Chris sees the big picture in a single black line

By Ruth Anders

Archer readers will be familiar with Kokos, the popular shoe and repair shop that has been gracing our High Road since 1976. But few may know that the owner George's son, Chris Stavrou, is a highly talented artist.

Continuous Chris as his Instagram account labels him, excels in line drawings of animals, people and buildings, hardly ever taking his pen off the paper.

A very relaxed character, Kokos manager Chris is the person you will often see when

you visit the shop. He grew up in East Finchley going to school in Finchley and Mill Hill, before starting adult life as an architectural student in Manchester. Despite losing his passion for architecture later, it clearly informs his artwork with its precise linear application.

Chris worked in the Barnes and Wimbledon branches of Kokos, both of which have since closed, before moving back to East Finchley to focus on managing our local shop.

He hasn't been indulging his hobby so much recently, as he and his husband are busy

doing up their house on the East Anglian coast. "I love East Finchley," says Chris, "but it's also very nice to escape to the sea air of Suffolk."

Buildings, people and a whippet

Chris works equally happily with pen and paper or digitally using his iPad. "I've always loved drawing," he told us, "and I like the idea of being able to communicate without words." He has participated in the East Finchley Open Artist weekends and sold many of his sketches and specially designed Christmas cards. "My favourite subjects are buildings and people. I tend to start at the top, focusing on the contours rather than the whole subject, and just keep going," he said.

Animal-lover Chris, whose whippet features in his drawings, would love to run an animal sanctuary in some future life. Meanwhile, you can find his artworks by looking him up via www.instagram.com/continuouschris

RICKY SAVAGE ...

THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Weather or not

Remember the opening of 1963's biggest movie? You know, the one about four lads converting a London bus into the first double-decker motor home and going singing and dancing all the way to Athens, picking up three young singers and an American teen starlet pretending to be a boy?

You do? Well I bet you don't remember the very English opening sequence of the lads eating soggy sandwiches in the rain and moaning about the weather. Because that's the whole point of the movie, getting away from another English summer and going on a proper Summer Holiday where the sun shines brightly and the seas are blue. So very 2023.

After last year's heatwave, this year the weather gods got down to business with a vengeance. First it was a bit of a trick or treat in June with blue skies and soaring temperatures before turning dour for July and August.

Maybe it was the travel companies bribing the rain gods so they could pack more people into tin cans and fly them off to the 50C heatwaves in Greece, or maybe it was just the bad luck of the draw, but this year we got the kind of summer that ruined childhoods in the days before continental holidays had been invented.

Come to the Cornish Riviera, they said. So I did and the rain followed me. Ah, a chance to gaze at the azure blue sea whilst eating ice cream beneath a cloudless sky. No, a chance to sit in the car eating Cornish pasties and drinking tea while watching the rain. It was so bad that even the sea gulls gave up stealing chips and tried to keep dry in bus shelters.

It was the same up north. Skegness wasn't brazing, it was sodden and in Wales the rain came in horizontally from all sides at once. Scotland was worse because you got added bloodsucking midges attacking you from all sides.

It was proof that if they have 48 different words for snow in Greenland, we have at least as many words for rain. It poured, drizzled, mizzled, drenched and rained cats and dogs.

By the time you set out for your monsoon drive back to London you wished you'd converted a bus and driven to Greece just like Cliff and the boys did 60 years ago. The only saving grace from this great British summer was that your fence was still there. There had been just too much rain for even homo stupidus to put on his cooking shorts and try to hold his annual barbecue.



Seeking cat foster parents

By Sheila Armstrong

If you like cats and could give one a safe temporary home the RSPCA Finchley want to hear from you. Cats are taken in by the RSPCA for a variety of reasons and go into 'kennels' while awaiting rehoming.

By fostering one of their cats you are offering it the chance to live in a home giving it extra space, warmth and affection, all of which build their confidence. Everything is provided for them: food, litter, even a cat gym if needed. RSPCA officers will support you throughout and generally keep in touch. All cats are given inoculations and any medical help needed. And you can say how long you want to foster a cat for.

It's a rewarding and enjoyable thing to do, to help a cat find a new direction in life. Almond, Mui Mui and Monty have all moved on to their forever homes after staying in my home. You may choose to adopt the cat you have fostered or not, no pressure.

If you would like to foster or rehome a cat contact the RSPCA on 07928 628771 or email

admin@rspcafinchley.org.uk

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