



Martial Art!

Ali Smith talks to extraordinary artist, Martial Robin, about life, art and Crufts!

REMEMBER THE name Martial Robin, who looks set to crash the European canine art scene in a big way in 2011.

Martial's paintings capture the essence of animals, with a contemporary twist, and are sure to be snapped up by canine (and art) lovers, as he makes plans to bring some of his fabulous works to Crufts.

He first took up a paintbrush around the age of 12, though he had been drawing long before then. He quickly built several exhibitions, mainly with his paintings of horses, which he worked almost exclusively in the early days.

I asked Martial when he realised he had a talent as an artist: 'As far as I remember, I always loved to draw. At school, I covered my books in lessons with little drawings! I took up a brush much later, when I took some painting lessons with an excellent teacher. Being a good artist! This, I have never realised! Being an artist is constantly having doubts. My only 'quality evaluation' of my art is the increasing interest and enthusiasm from the people over the last few years!'

Martial takes up the story: 'I have been in the world of dogs for 25 years and have bred Afghans under the Meneul Galopin affix for most of those years. I have bred 70 champions with a total of more than 400 champion titles, including several world and European champions. I have done well in UK too, having had the first (and only one so far) continental owned Afghan to win BOB at Crufts.'

It was Martial's love of dogs which led him down his next path, canine art. His paintings of dogs, which vary from Afghans (obviously), right through to small terriers, have gained a world-wide following.

'Even though I was very much involved in world of dogs, I was not too keen about painting them, Martial tells me. 'However, about five years ago, after being 'pushed' by my doggy friends, I started to paint dogs; to my surprise I found the whole experience very satisfying and gained some very positive feedback from my 'audience'. Since then, I have sold works in more than 25 different countries, had the chance to take part in several

painting exhibitions all over Europe and have been represented in galleries in France and Australia.'

'I would describe my paintings as expressive. I try to focus on the animal's expression more than anything else. In my painting, I try not to say too much, but to suggest. Many details, if they are not related to the true expression of the animal, are not important. I use many different techniques: acrylic, oils, pastels, inks, etc... that I always mix. I work on paper, on canvas or on wood. I have published two catalogues, each one depicting around 60 paintings: Dogs 2010 and Horses. They will be available at Crufts.'

Late last year the American Shar Pei National held an auction, where one of Martial's paintings was sold for \$2,800. His popularity is clear in the ascent.

Finally, what can people expect to see from Martial at his first Crufts exhibition? 'I have worked hard to present a set of 30-40 new paintings for Crufts... I do take commissions from people to paint their animals also. Putting my art into a specific dog is a very interesting exercise.'

www.martialrobin.fr

