

# Babylongallery

## Ted Coney: A Retrospective

*"I never have to think about what I want to paint next – the thing about families is that they are endlessly fascinating".*

Ted Coney, February 2014

For more than forty years Ted Coney has painted the joys and sorrows of family life. He is well-known in the city of Ely through his pop-up gallery, *Ted Coney's Family Portraits*, which is located in his 300 year-old cottage and from April to November it is possible to view a number of his pictures in one of eight themed tours\*.

Births, deaths, family secrets, and generations of strong Coney women are recurring ideas in Ted's art. In this, his seventieth year, the Babylon Gallery has curated a public exhibition of his work which makes connections between these motifs and brings them together in one space for the first time.

Each painting takes approximately two years to come to fruition. Ted prefers to be working on one actual painting at a time, while a second is a fully-formed idea in his mind, and a third is at an embryonic research stage. In this way the process of creation is cyclical and constant.

Working from preliminary sketches and making extensive use of props, the composition of Ted's paintings is planned meticulously. However, each new piece of work brings its own technical challenges which have to be resolved through exploration and experimentation.

From the first painting *Life Cycle*, painted in 1969 to *If The Boats Come In*, completed in 2013, this exhibition is a bittersweet journey through the lives of several generations of the Coney family. Tender, compassionate and life-affirming, Ted's retrospective is ultimately a celebration of family relationships in all their joyful complexity.

Curator, Christine Pike, MA