

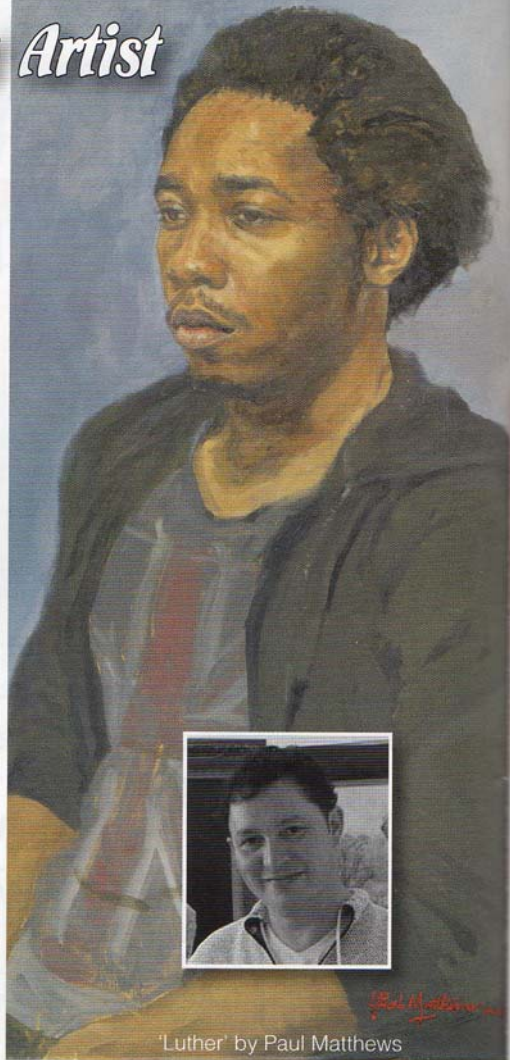
Portrait of a Dorset Artist

The work of a Dorset artist has made it into the final round of judging in the prestigious National Portrait Gallery competition. 'Luther' by Paul Matthews from Puddletown is a life study produced over a four day period. Earlier this year Paul received The Chester Zoo Award at The National Exhibition of Wildlife Artists for his painting of a chimpanzee.

Three years ago Paul took the tough decision to leave his career as a graphic designer and become a full-time wildlife painter. In 2012 he was a finalist in the David Shepherd Foundation's competition for Wildlife Artist of the Year. His picture, 'The Passenger', selected ahead of thousands of entries from all over the world, received 'Public's choice award' at The Mall Galleries, London. At the same time he was a finalist in the BBC Wildlife Artist of the Year competition, receiving runner up in the Frozen Planet section with his polar bear portrait. He has had work shortlisted in the final of this competition every year since its inception in 2008.

Prior to this he worked at Dorset County Council. *"I gained so much experience during my time at the council, which has stood me in good stead,"* says Paul, who has lived in Puddletown for 21 years and was born in London. *"I have drawn and painted most of my life and now that I am fulfilling my ambition I am so happy. I enjoy seeing how people react when they see their painting."*

Paul, who is currently in Botswana, has trekked all over the world in pursuit of his perfect subject. *"I have travelled to Tanzania, Kenya and the Okavango Delta in North Botswana,"* says Paul, who mainly paints in oils on canvas. Recently he drew entrepreneur Levi Roots at the National Portrait Gallery. www.lpaulmatthews.com



'Luther' by Paul Matthews

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