

Roisin Bateman: Abstractions Crackling with the Energy of Change

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by Jenna Weis

The west coast of Ireland has very intriguing weather patterns. Sudden atmospheric changes can happen in an instant, revealing electric colors of nature in one minute that vanish into a darkening gloom the next.

While efforts to depict the ever-changing landscape can produce beautiful work, artist Roisin Bateman is more interested in the moment of change. Through her abstract pastels on paper and oils on canvas, Bateman's art reflects her own interpretation of the instantaneous and bursting with energy metamorphic effects of weather on the natural world.



"Turlough" by Roisin Bateman. Oil on canvas, 54 x 54 inches.

Bateman, a native of Ireland who now resides on the South Fork of Long Island, has created works in the new series that reflect influences from both Ireland and the East End, specifically The Burren in County Clare and Napeague, to the east of Amagansett. In a recent email exchange, she commented about the direction she took in creating the pieces for the upcoming exhibition

“The colors in this new series are more complex and evocative,” the artist wrote, “peat, smoke, the autumn marshes of Napeague, intense mauves and blues of the wildflowers of the Burren.”



“Shadmoor” by Roisin Bateman. Oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches.

A look at Bateman’s previous works provides some insight into how the artist’s interest in intense light and color has now been expanded to include an exploration of more muted tones. The earlier works have a weight and sense of presence derived from the structural juxtaposition of bold colors. The effect of natural light on the chosen color palette is another element reflected in many of her previous works. The light source stands out and alters the colors’ intensity by degrees, depending on their distance from it, similar to way the sun at its zenith brings out the brightest colors of the natural world.



"Vernal Exhalation" by Roisin Bateman. 64 x 84 inches.



"Sanderling" by Roisin Bateman. 38 x 38 inches.

"For a time I was drawn towards brightness," she wrote, reflecting on the change in color palette in her most recent work. "Now I see the great beauty and potential of dusks and dawns ... In the older work, I used more primary colors, which are vivid, distinct, and individual. The more muted colors in my new series absorb and reflect one another."



"Windbeat" by Roisin Bateman. 60 x 46 inches.

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Kingfisher, a pastel work on paper included in the upcoming exhibition, displays the artist's subtle nod to the changes of autumn, with areas of burnt orange and olive green over a smoky gray background, which both absorbs and creates a subset of new colors. The overall brightness of the piece is heightened by a strong sky blue that drifts through the smoke, reflecting sudden changes. Gestural marks of even brighter colors give a sense of quickness and intensity, inspired by Bateman's experience of the outdoors in her native Ireland.

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"Kingfisher" by Roisin Bateman. Pastel on paper, 40 x 64 inches.

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The artist described different characteristics of her hometown and how they correspond to her artwork in her email, taking a deeper look at the source of some of her formal decisions.

“There are constant and sudden shifts of weather there,” she wrote. “The landscape is filled with brilliant light and color, and then disappears again into cloud and mist ... It’s a vast area of limestone rock worn away and molded by centuries of rain and wind. Among the crevices grow some of the rarest wildflowers on earth, especially wild orchids. These tiny specs of intense fresh color are interspersed in this vast blue/grey limestone landscape. What you see is the result of millennia of metamorphosis manifesting in the present moment.”



Rocks, Inisheer.

Annuallach, an oil on canvas, shows a play of intense color emerging from a surface of paler hues in a burst of organic fluid lines, evoking the brilliant floral colors contrasting with rock formations that quickly wash out with the arrival of mist, as Bateman has described. This piece, along with others from her most recent collection, reflects and depicts with color and composition the changes that spring from the ever-changing interplay of weather and the natural landscape.



“Annallach” by Roisin Bateman. Oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches.

The artist attributes much of her inspiration to her experience of geological history and changes in each moment along the shoreline.

“A wave crashes and for a brief moment it creates a film of water that mirrors the sky before sinking into the sand,” she wrote. “Colors and light change by the second with shifts in wind and waves and clouds. There is that juxtaposition again with ancient and new—sand and rock billions of years old and the immediacy of each new wave and the flight of birds.”



"Inishoirr" by Roisin Bateman. Pastel on paper, 40 x 64 inches.

BASIC FACTS: The new series of the artist's oil paintings, large scale pastels, and smaller prints will be presented in "Roisin Bateman: Paintings, Pastels, and Prints," on view from November 1 through 16, 2014 at the Peter Marcelle Project in Southampton, NY. An opening reception will be held at the gallery on November 1, 2014 from 6 to 8 p.m. Peter Marcelle Project at 4 North Main Street, Southampton, NY 11968. www.petermarcelleproject.com.

To see more of her art, visit Rosin Bateman's website at www.roisinbateman.com.

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