



# Artwork Stories: Painting Celebrating Halloween Inspired by Irish Roots

October 31, 2015

by Pat Rogers

Happy Halloween....or Happy Celtic Festival of Samhain! Artist and illustrator Sage Cotignola searched for inspiration to get into the spirit of the modern-day holiday of costumes, candy and carved pumpkins by looking back at its pagan Irish roots to create her painting *Hallowe'en* (2015).

"In the Irish tradition, turnips were carved into what we call Jack-o-lanterns today to represent spirits of the dead," said Cotignola. "The turnip lanterns lit the way for "guisers," or people in costume, to walk door to door and recite poetry or sing songs in exchange for food. In some areas, a man would dress as a white horse and lead the procession of guisers through the town."

"I wanted to explore some of the folk customs that are thought to be the root of the holiday we celebrate today. I think I am really drawn to Halloween because you can still detect some of the themes of seasonal festivals like Samhain beneath the surface. There's something dark about it, but it's also oddly comforting to acknowledge and celebrate our primal connection with nature, the passing of time and the presence of death in our lives."



"Hallowe'en" by Sage Cotignola, 2015. Gouache on watercolor paper, 20 x 23 inches.

Halloween is one of the world's oldest holidays and is celebrated worldwide on October 31.

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Sage Cotignola is an artist and illustrator from The Hamptons who now lives in Brooklyn. She received her BFA in Illustration from Pratt Institute. To see more of her work, visit [www.sagecotignola.com](http://www.sagecotignola.com).

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