

An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes. The upper portion is dominated by light beige and cream tones, while the lower portion transitions into darker, more textured strokes of olive green, brown, and grey. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered depth.

LOUISE BALAAM

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The Colour of Light

25th March - 12th April 2019

Private View

Tuesday 26th March

6-8pm

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Louise Balaam: The Colour of Light

"The human being himself, to the extent that he makes sound use of his senses, is the most exact physical apparatus that can exist." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Although she has always painted in a wide variety of landscapes – the Kent Marshes, Constable Country, North West Scotland, North Wales and West Cornwall among them – Louise Balaam is not, by any measure, a painter of places nor, for that matter, perhaps, a landscape painter. What really obsesses her are skies and the particularities of light they cast on the landscape beneath them: at the back of her mind you always feel that impassioned injunction of her great artistic hero, John Constable, that it would be "difficult to name any class of landscape in which the sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale and the chief organ of sentiment." In many of the cloud studies that followed, Constable either abandoned the landscape beneath altogether or included just the merest smudge of hill- or tree-tops as reference-points, and it is this last motif which Balaam picks up on as point of departure for her own and, it should be said, very distinctly 21st century take on the subject, the pursuit of the colour of light; the landscapes, one feels, are there simply to bounce us back towards the piercing luminosity and mutability of her skies.

And what immediately strikes you when you start to look at her skies more closely is the extraordinary and dynamic balancing act she achieves between the expressive intensity of the brush-strokes – here is a painter who has been looking closely at artists as varied as Peter Lanyon and Joan Eardley, Willem de Kooning and Joan Mitchell – and the inescapable feeling that here, as Goethe was suggesting, is someone who is indeed "making sound use of their senses," the "exact physical apparatus" of her acute vision showing us exactly what it looked, and felt like, to be looking up at the sky in that place at that particular moment in time. For, as Goethe also understood so well, very much against the same scientific orthodoxies of his age as ours, looking is both an objective and an impassioned activity – or as Balaam herself puts it, from another angle, "I love the way paint is simultaneously itself, essentially coloured mud while also evoking the space and light of the landscape. Light is the crucial aspect of the emotional impact of the painting." Or again, in that astonishingly protean English Romantic vision of the great 17th century divine, Thomas Traherne, "Your enjoyment of the world is never right, til every morning you awake in Heaven; see yourself in your Father's Palace; and look upon the skies, the earth, and the air as Celestial Joys... and perceive yourself to be sole heir of the whole world."

Nicholas Usherwood
February 2019



Bay of light, Applecross
oil on canvas
130cmx130cm



From Mull, cloud shadow
oil on canvas
150cmx160cm



Still air, River Stour (Constable's walk)
oil on canvas
110cmx120cm



Winter surf, Cape Cornwall from Carn Brea
oil on canvas
110cmx130cm



White cloud leap, Norfolk coast
oil on canvas
110cmx120cm



Ancient fields, Cape Cornwall
oil on canvas
120cmx120cm



Slanting light at Zennor
oil on canvas
110cmx110cm



North Kent Marshes, October afternoon
oil on canvas
110cmx110cm





Sky clearing over the estuary, herons (Pembrokeshire)
oil on canvas
100cmx110cm



Quiet pink evening, Ashdown Forest
oil on canvas
100cmx110cm



Sky gleam, Zennor
oil on canvas
90cmx100cm



Sweeping cloud, bright edge (Porthledden)
mixed media on canvas
90cmx100cm



Naples yellow, dazzle (St Ives)
oil on canvas
90cmx120cm



Flying pieces (North Kent Marshes)
oil on canvas
90cmx100cm



Colonsay, sudden brightness
oil on canvas
80cmx80cm



Turner's yellow, East coast
oil on canvas
55cmx60cm





Higher Bojewyan, peachy sky
oil on canvas
70cmx70cm



Deep turquoise (Bojewyan)
oil on canvas
70cmx70cm



Last light, Wheal Bal Farm
oil on canvas
55cmx60cm



Grey-green light, Hebrides
oil on canvas
55cmx60cm



Pearly light at Carn Brea
oil on canvas
40cmx75cm



Louise Balaam NEAC, RWA

Member of the New English Art Club
Academician of the Royal West of England Academy
Head of Painting, The New School of Art

EDUCATION

2007 MA Fine Art, Christchurch University College, Canterbury
2002 BA (Hons) Fine Art, Kent Institute of Art and Design, Canterbury

AWARDS

Odin Trust Prize, Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, 2010
Highly Commended, Chichester Open Art Exhibition, 2007

SOLO EXIBITIONS

2017 "In the Marsh Country", Cadogan Contemporary, London
2015 "Painting a Space", Cadogan Contemporary, London
2014 John Davies Gallery, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos
2013 "Cornish Light, Cadogan Contemporary, London
2012 John Davies Gallery, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos
2011 Cadogan Contemporary, London
2010 Cadogan Contemporary, London
2008 Trinity Gallery, Tunbridge Wells
2007 "Response", Ashford Library Gallery
2005 "A Sense of Place", Portico Gallery, Sevenoaks

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 NEAC Annual Exhibition, Mall Galleries, London
 Royal West of England Academy Annual Exhibition, Queen Street, Bristol
 Geedon Gallery, Fingringhoe, Essex
2017 New English Artists, Linden Hall Gallery, Deal, Kent
2016 RWA Exhibition, Bristol
 New English Arts Club, London
 Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize Exhibition, Mall Galleries, London
 White Space Art, Totnes, Devon

2015

20/21 Art Fair, Royal College of Art, London
Summer Show, Belgrave Gallery, St Ives
New English Arts Club, London
Fairfax Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Josephine Harpur, Bury St Edmunds and Aldeburgh
Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize Exhibition, Mall Galleries, London

2014

RWA Exhibition, Bristol
"Quintet", White Space Gallery, Totnes, Devon
"Little Gems", Mall Galleries, London
Hilton Fine Art, Bath
Fairfax Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Josephine Harpur, Bury St Edmunds and Aldeburgh

2013

Summer Show, Belgrave Gallery, St Ives
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
New English Arts Club, London
Royal Academy Summer Show, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol
New English Arts Club, London
Fairfax Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Russell Gallery, Putney, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Josephine Harpur, Bury St Edmunds and Aldeburgh
Royal Academy Summer Show, London

2012

RWA Exhibition, Bristol
New English Arts Club, London
30th Anniversary Exhibition, Cadogan Contemporary
Fairfax Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Russell Gallery, Putney, London
Hilton Fine Art, Bath
Josephine Harpur, Bury St Edmunds and Aldeburgh

2011

RWA Exhibition, Bristol
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
New English Arts Club, London
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Threadneedle Prize Exhibition, London
Porthminster Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall

2010

RWA Exhibition, Bristol
New English Arts Club, London
Royal Society of British Artists, London
Royal Academy Summer Show, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol

2010
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
Porthminster Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall

2009
New English Arts Club, London
Royal Society of British Artists, London
Royal Academy Summer Show, London
Threadneedle Prize Exhibition, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
Two-person show, Ruthven Gallery, Scotland
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
Porthminster Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall

2008
Royal Academy Summer Show, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
Porthminster Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall

2007
Contemporary Work on Paper Fair, Royal Academy, London
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
Chichester Open Art Exhibition, Sussex
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
New English Arts Club, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
Porthminster Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall

2006
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
New English Arts Club, London
RWA Exhibition, Bristol
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon

2005
Contemporary Work on Paper Fair, Royal Academy, London
Alan Kluckow Fine Art, Sunningdale
Hunting Art Prize Exhibition, London
Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
White Space Art, Totnes, Devon
Contemporary Work on Paper Fair, Royal Academy, London
Chichester Open Art Exhibition, Sussex
New English Arts Club, London

* Photography by John Caruana



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