

Eilbhe Donovan

“Swells, Squalls & Scraggs from the Seven Heads”

Exhibiting once again in Zurich, Eilbhe’s understated naturalist work has morphed from her minimalist birds captured in an emptiness, to focusing on the craggy Atlantic shoreline that they inhabit. Exploring nearby remote Atlantic beaches and kayaking the rugged coastline – Eilbhe is constantly inspired by the marine environment she encounters along the Wild Atlantic Way. Her work delivers a peace, a simple beauty.

“The places I go to are pretty inaccessible which is why I like going there. I never meet anyone else while I am there, only birds, seals and occasionally dolphins. The changing tides mean each time one visits, it reveals another element. There are more than 25 caves, some of which can only be accessed at low tide, some amid tide, some at high tide - all looking different also in various water conditions. I have visited there when the water is like a mirror and also when the swell is up 3 metres, crashing over the scrag. Squalls fascinate me - these small short-lived sea storms with a heart of black clouds hovering ominously out to sea. I think of all those mariners who encountered them, thinking of getting back safely to shore. The ocean is this dangerous temptress, full of bounty and beauty, yet treacherous.”

Working in ink & monoprint on specialist cotton paper sustainably sourced from a mill in Southern England, each piece is a different size and is torn by hand. All work is framed using UV glass.

Eilbhe Donovan: Fading from View / Monoprint on cotton paper, 63 x 75 cm



Eilbhe Donovan is an artist from the gorgeous Southwest of Ireland with iconic minimalist nature imagery in the unusual medium of ink and monoprint.

EILBHE DONOVAN

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About the artist

Eilbhe Donovan works from her garden studio in the picturesque South West of Ireland. Having studied Illustration in West Wales School of the Arts, Eilbhe worked as a decorative painter for many years before returning to Fine Art.

Her subject is wildlife, but in a contemporary minimalist style. She achieves this by visiting reserves and marine environments to sketch, photograph, record and observe. All image sources are the artist's own.

Paintings are using natural hair Chinese ink brushes, painting with water before applying ink using a pipette. This leaves the pigment to spread arbitrarily within the water film culminating in unpredictable results, none of which become truly apparent until fully dry.

The paper is very specific as it holds a strong yet fine line without splintering or bleeding into the fibres of the paper. Sustainably sourced from St Cuthberts Mill in Somerset on a 10m roll x 152.4cm, this large format means the work can be sized exactly. None of her pieces are the same size - the image and the subject dictates the format and size of the work. Working initially within a far larger size, the finished image is scaled down by tearing, a precise procedure using a hand ruler that can ruin a piece if not executed correctly.

In print, works are done with intaglio etching ink in the monoprint technique before running through the press, followed by further manipulation using pencil, acrylic ink and metal leaf.

This monoprint effect is something orphic, almost reticent. Marks made through the process are capricious because of the many variables - the final picture becoming a dreamlike transgression from the source image.

Imaginings and stories develop through this process.

Eilbhe intends to create such stories, telling tales of the lives of her studies - the difficulties faced in this increasingly anti-wildlife age. Her message is to communicate the dilemma facing us as one of many species in a shared world. She hopes her work will inform the viewer as such, create a quiet pensive space for admiration of our diverse world and the richness within it - to become aware, one must be still.

Her work delivers a peace, a simple beauty.

Artist Statement

"I endeavour to capture the essence and soul of the animal I am portraying, shaking off superfluous detail to expose a faint imprint of that creature - a shadow that encapsulates their core being in as few lines, shades, and tones as possible. I like to leave some of the image for the eye and brain to configure, sometimes creating an unintended abstraction.

To make minimal, one has to begin with excess. "

Exhibitions

- 2021 Galerie Lindenhof, Pfalzgasse, 3, 8001 Zurich
HanseArt Kunstmesse, MuK Lübeck, Schleswig Holstein, Germany
Art Nordic, Lokomotice Copenhagen
- 2020 ArtSource, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Ireland
"Coast" Grey Heron Gallery, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland
Discovery Frankfurt, Festhalle Messe, Frankfurt, Germany
HanseArt, Musik und Kongresshalle, Lübeck, Germany - CANCELLED
Art Nordic, Lokomotivværkstedet, Copenhagen, Denmark - CANCELLED
Summer Show, Space Gallery, Corandulla, Galway, Ireland - CANCELLED
ArtSource, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
ArtSource, City Hall, Cork
Invited to participate in UK 360: an education in conservation & ecology
- 2019 Glasgow Contemporary Art Fair, Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow, UK
"Flights of Fancy", Cronin's of Crosshaven, Crosshaven, Co. Cork
Two-person show, The Ivy House, Drumcondra, Dublin
MAG Swiss, Montreux, Switzerland
ArtSource, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
- 2018 Winter Exhibition, Group Show, Origin Gallery, Fitzwilliam St. Dublin 2
Private Commission, West Cork, Ireland
ArtSource, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
- 2017 ArtSource, RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Group Show, West Cork Creates, Skibereen, Co. Cork
- 2016 Group Show, West Cork Creates, Skibereen, Co. Cork
- 2013 Private commission, Baden, Switzerland
- 2011 "Faultlines", Courthouse Arts Centre, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow
"Faultlines", Greystones Library, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
- 2007 Design for bowsprit of pedalboat Moksha for return of round-the-world expedition, London, UK
Private mural commission for listed Georgian building, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow
- 2006 Two-person Show, Townhall Arts Centre, Charlestown, Co. Mayo
Private commission, faux window in historical Church of Ireland church, Dundrum, Dublin
- 2005 Group Show, Wicklow County buildings, Wicklow
- 2004 Group Show, Letterkenny Arts Centre, Letterkenny
Group Show, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Public Art mural, Donore Avenue Community centre, Dublin 8
- 2003 Group Show, Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow

2002 "Small Things", Signal Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow
2001 Illustrations for book, Pedaling to Hawaii by Stevie Smith
(Summersdale Publishers ISBN 184024 4461)
1995 Commissioned series of drawings for Eco-Lodge Casa Mojanda, Otavalo,
Ecuador

State Bursaries, Awards & Affiliations

2020 Member Cork Backwater Artists Network - www.backwatersrtists.ie
2019 Artist-in-Schools Programme, funded by Cork County Arts
2018 Artist-in-Schools Programme, funded by Cork County Arts
Arts Council Bursary from the Arts Council of Ireland

Education

2009-2010 Post Graduate Diploma in Education for Art, Craft & Design
Crawford College of Art & Design, Cork
2003-2004 BA(Hons) Art & Design
West Wales School of the Arts, Carmarthan, Wales, UK
2001-2003 HND Multimedia
BIFE, Bray, Co. Wicklow
1993-1994 NCVA Art, Craft & Design
Grennan Mill Craft School, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

Works



“Leaving Bird Island”

Ink & pencil on cotton paper

h:54cm x w:80cm



“Sylph”
Ink on cotton paper
h:91cm x w:91cm



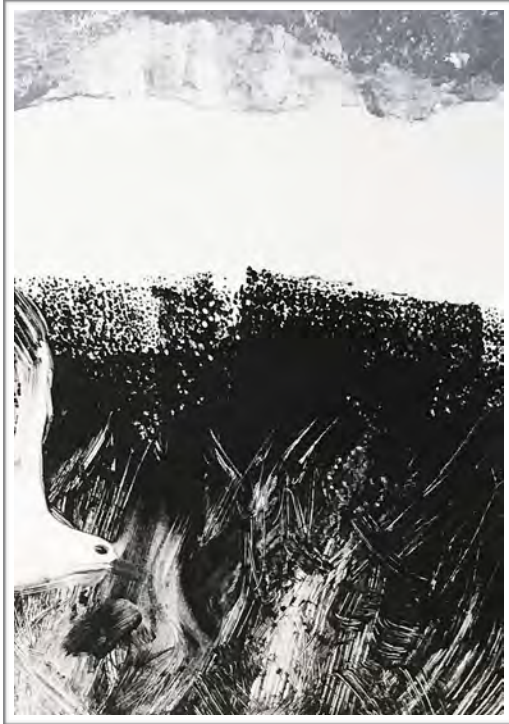
“The Minder”
Monoprint & ink
h:65cm x w:85cm



“Three Gulls”
Monoprint
h:42cm x w:86cm



“Lonesome Sentries iii”
Monoprint on cotton paper
h:30cm x w:30cm



“Incoming”
Monoprint & ink
h:42cm x w:35cm



“Pause”
Drypoint etching /4
h: 42cm x w:35cm

Sold Works



“The Interloper”

Ink on cotton paper

h:122cm x w:114cm

SOLD



“Silent Calling”

Monoprint

h:65cm x w:85cm

SOLD



“Above the Tangle”

Ink & pencil on cotton paper

h:85cm x w:85cm

SOLD



“Flit”

Ink & pencil on cotton paper

h:72cm x w:65cm

SOLD



“Cappuccino Bird”

Ink on cotton paper (np grey)

h:84cm x w:79cm

SOLD



"Estuary"
Monoprint on cotton paper
h:33cm x w:25cm
SOLD



"Scorched Earth i"
Ink, pencil & copper leaf on cotton paper
h:33cm x w:25cm
SOLD



“Kraniche Im Weiten Himmel”
Ink painted monoprint on cotton paper
h:65cm x w:85cm
SOLD



“Off Kilter”
Ink on cotton paper
h:60cm x w:33cm
SOLD



“Razorbill in the Surf”

Ink on cotton paper

h:42cm x w:44cm

SOLD