

Boo Mallinson

By Emily Arbis

Boo Mallinson is one of Dorset's most prominent and popular artists, renowned for her striking seascapes that are inspired by her Dorset surroundings. Her compelling work typically conveys a strong sense of her encounter with nature and the elements, depicting the fluctuating interaction of land, sea and air. Recently, her work has found a new energy and excitement for painting and this new collection is a visual diary of her progress as an artist.

Mallinson's landscape paintings have always played with abstraction while retaining a clear sense of the seaside terrain from which she draws inspiration. This same balance between the abstraction and figuration follows through into her new work, though a greater abstraction is evident. Bold blocks of colour now occasionally enter the cool blue palate, and at times the horizon is abandoned to allow her greater freedom in her composition. These paintings are an exercise in colour and balance, and despite their greater abstraction than previous works, Mallinson still views these paintings as landscapes and an expression of her interaction with her surroundings.

Interestingly, Mallinson has observed that her more successful paintings are often those done from memory rather than from drawings on site. Her black and white works done from memory were the foregrounding for her new collection; an exercise to form her new direction without the distractions of colour and detailed observation of the landscape. This concern with the interaction between actuality and the imagination has always permeated her work, and is brought to our attention more explicitly in the new show.

Another aspect of Mallinson's work that has shown development is her interest in the discourse between the considered and the accidental. The new paintings display a spontaneity and experimentation that has invigorated them, particularly evident in 'From Sea to Land III' where paint is allowed to trickle and diffuse where it may to create an intensely active surface. Translucent thin washes and thick layers of blue pigment intermingle, drip and bleed to create an aqueous effect which absorbs the onlooker into this oceanic world. Despite this reliance on accident as part of the painting process, the new works simultaneously convey a new confidence, an experienced awareness of what the paint will do.

The new collection largely retains the sense of a joyous evocation of the landscape where deeply expressive atmospheres and moods are created with paint; however, progressions from her previous works are striking, and her innovations in painting techniques and her experimentation with further realms of abstraction make this an extremely exciting new collection.

Many aspects of her trademark style have been renovated: heightened abstraction of the landscape, the abandonment of the horizon, greater experimentation with accident and chance, and even the introduction of fiery reds and warming oranges into her usual cool palate of indigos and powder blues in works like 'Warm Again'. This particular painting is a prime example of how Spring has been a great influence on Mallinson's work – she says that this season of renewal and recovered warmth and energy has been inspirational for the bright hues that emblazon the new works.

'Moving On' keeps tones more muted than other paintings like 'Warm Again', only indulging in occasional streaks of colour. This painting creates a sense of intrigue, as its light grey gestural expanses seem to mask a brighter painting waiting to burst below. The fittingly named 'Moving On' encapsulates the spirit of Mallinson's recent creations. This sense of potential embodies the new productions of Boo Mallinson, and hints at exciting innovations and progressions for the future.

Boo Mallinson's Solo Exhibition will take place at Artwave West, Morcombelake, Dorset DT6 6DY from 7th June to 6th July.



Warm Again



Moving On