

# FIDRA FINE ART

## **East Meets West**

**Lesley Banks**

**Alice McMurrrough PAI RGI RSW**

**Neil Macdonald PAI RGI RSW**

**28<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

**Preview: Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 12-5pm**

*Open weekends 12-5pm, viewing very welcome at any other time by appointment.*

Three of the most popular and intriguing artists from Glasgow will be bringing a variety of new and recent work to North Berwick. Fidra Fine Art is delighted to welcome Lesley Banks, Alice McMurrrough and Neil Macdonald to the gallery this summer.

**Lesley Banks** studied at Glasgow School of Art (GSA) specialising in Drawing and Painting. After graduating, funded by an Elizabeth Greenshields Scholarship, Lesley travelled and painted throughout Europe. She worked as a gallery assistant at the Compass Gallery, Glasgow, where, encouraged by Cyril & Jill Gerber she began to exhibit more of her artworks winning numerous prizes and awards, such as the 1991 Scottish Prize, Royal Overseas League London. Since this time Lesley has exhibited throughout the UK and as far afield as Singapore & USA.

Lesley's work is always well crafted with rich colours but it is often a brooding narrative that draws the viewer in. In these paintings, which are a mixture of work from her last trip to Venice and Tuscany, the beautiful land and cityscapes are captured with intense, atmospheric colour but there is always something about the scenes that leave the viewer with a sense of unease.

**Alice McMurrrough PAI RGI RSW** also studied at GSA graduating in 1979. She then went on to teach including Acting Principal Teacher in the 1990's and marker and moderator for the SQA until she left the profession in 2007 to concentrate on her own painting. She has won several awards including; D Muirhead Purchase Prize, RSA (2002), James Torrance Award, RGI (2011), Joe Hargan Award, PAI (2012) and in 2013 she was awarded the Diploma of the Paisley Art Institute, elected member of the RGI and the RSW.

Like Lesley, narrative is an important ingredient in the mysterious, magical work of Alice McMurrrough. Always beautifully crafted there is a mesmeric quality to the detail and mystery behind the characters in her work.

In Alice's words...*"My artwork is a tool to understanding self and the surrounding world. I make connections. I create from memories of particular events and general influences: family legends, cultural myths and religious fables. I aim for an attention that children have for the world, before ritual and maturity strips life of its daily magic. I paint the gap between innocence and experience using distortion, metaphor and symbolism, free form chronological time and place."*

**Neil Macdonald PAI RGI RSW** completes the trio of GSA graduates. Neil studied from 1975-79 and then a further year of Post Graduate Studies. He attended Hospitalfield Art College Summer School near Arbroath in 1978. Awards include; William Shanks Painting Prize in 1979, David Cargill Travelling Scholarship (Italy & Belgium) in 1981, Robert Innes Award – Scottish Drawing Competition 2011 and was awarded the Diploma of the Paisley Art Institute 2012, elected member of RGI & RSW in 2013.

Again, narrative plays a strong part in Neil's work. Drawing inspiration from familiar, distinctive, landmarks he subtly distorts and bathes them in a luminescent light then adds a little mystery to further engage the viewer - Dunbar, St Monans and Portsoy will be among the subjects in this exhibition.

In Neil's words...*"I am drawn to locations which exert historic and mythic presence. I explore the lyrical narrative of natural sites and strong bold shapes of castles, old townships and harbours. I do this through distortion of perspective, invention and editing, aiming to capture an essence of the structure or place. Colour is used in an emotive way to heighten the sense of mood. I apply each layer upon layer of paint in a divisionist manner. Slowly I realise a unity of statement as the image emerges, revealing the subject's unique sense of place."*

For more information please contact:

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