

MIEKE VANMECHELEN
“Another Place, Another Time”

“The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery” **Francis Bacon**

Romantic views have long been associated with landscape painting, the symbolic horizons, lyrical references to places of personal importance and essentially the documentation of environment, static and transient, time and space. As an artist, Mieke Vanmechelen has the energy to dig deep into this personal terrain with bold physicality. It is as if her work lifts a curtain and offers a glimpse at something intimate. These are not safe paintings. They do not represent the misty green grey of the Irish landscape, the soft watery interpretations and docile palette we so often equate with the west coast. Compositionally, they culminate the artist’s abilities to emote her witnessing of the landscape firsthand.

Considering that Flemish born artist Mieke Vanmechelen has grown up in a somewhat timeless place surrounded by hills on a farm near Kenmare, introspection is an understandable human reaction to the epic scenery of the wild and mountainous Beara Peninsula. Therefore these are far from traditional landscapes. They are creations and alterations of space, both exterior and interior, both epic and intimate.

These oil paintings are an expression of personal ideas and feelings. The subject matter has been realised through hot colour and bold mark making. Drawing with paint, Mieke has arrived at an independent expression through gestural abstraction reminiscent of the twentieth century

painters, O' Keefe, Motherwell and de Kooning. She has bridged the gap between Modernism and the romantic painters desire to source and express spirituality within the two dimensional vehicle of an abstract painting.

Vanmechelen has titled her new body of work “ Another Place Another Time ”. The original point of departure is disguised deliberately to emphasise the transient and intangible relationship between the physical activity of painting, the subject and the moment where both co-exist. Vanmechelen explains that “ Various visual elements remind the viewer of earth, land, sky, sea – and simply play out their respective relationships on canvas in a way that seems so simple, they should represent for the viewer a window into a whole new world ”.

This new world becomes the destination she interprets as a “dream like place which is part of this dreamlike world. I feel the further back I travel the closer I get to the future, and so the cycle continues”. Mieke Vanmechelen has not created so much the description of a destination but has applied the process of finding one.

Each image has an entry point which allows the viewer to navigate their way through the painting over surfaces and between areas of tonal colour. The visual question remains leaving you to wonder what is behind and above the strong and feminine imagery. While much of her work is large in scale they are often inspired by tiny details, which are fundamentally organic, “swelling to huge proportions and bound by no restrictions”.

Written by Kate McCormick