



gallery

solomon

Tara Murphy requests the pleasure of your company at the private view of

# **EAMON COLMAN**

Thinking Like a Mountain

Thursday 10 March 2022

from 6pm to 8pm

The exhibition continues until Saturday 2 April 2022 Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10.00am – 5.30pm / Saturday: 11am – 4pm

Artworks may be viewed and acquired in advance at the gallery by appointment, or via the Online Viewing Room on www.solomonfineart.ie. Alternatively, please scan the QR code below with your smartphone camera for prices and availability.

Front cover: Night flight of the lacewing moth illuminated by a full moon (detail), mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 115 x 152 cm

#### Solomon Fine Art

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### Painting as Landscape

If there be fantasies of ownership in some landscape paintings, then, not in these works by Eamon Colman. Nature may be a space of spiritual recuperation and repair in some impressionist landscapes, but, again, not here. In these works, nature offers no respite. These paintings impart a sense of urgency. It would be a distraction from the perils of our environmental crises to elevate nature as fetish, a realm outside modernity or before history. These paintings keep us mindful of the shared tragedy of the common era – and of our responsibility for it.

Look first at the materials. Ours is a torn and broken world. These surfaces are collages of pieces torn from earlier, abandoned works. In an era of hydrocarbon excess, Eamon paints without oil on paper that itself incorporates plastics recycled from the floating Gondwana in the Pacific. This is an ethic of refuse, repair and re-use. Consider the textures. In places, these papers and their paints have been rubbed back, worked on, scored, and abraded; and then further colours, different forms and an altered balance have been ventured. In turn, these fused layers are themselves submitted to the element forces of selective scouring and scraping. The emergent morphology of the paintings is sculpted by the painter in ways that recall the weathering, erosion and deposition in the landscapes to which the paintings refer.

Look next at these landscapes. In some paintings we see the forms of the Bens of Connemara (perhaps in Above me, day blind stars). In others, more private references, such as to a pond near Eamon's home. Across many there float shapes that could be birds (There are eagles near the summit) or insects (we are told to look for the Night flight of the lacewing moth illuminated by a full moon and that, later, In the voodoo hall of morning mist, the lacewing makes its way to bed). Central to many, and in all her majesty, is the pap of Sliabh na mBan (Slievenamon), the Mountain of the Women (Over the fertile field work, bird sounds bauble - caged in by boundary fences). In some, this mountain is high up in the picture but the foreground is so deep that it's like a geological section and there seem to be veins connected to a pulsing heart of magma (perhaps in The shadow has intruded and with trembling hand leads the moon towards dawn).

These landscapes will not resolve themselves as a singular perspective. They are more democratic than that, and also, in many cases, more fantastic. Note how many titles in the exhibition reference night -- that bourn from which the traveller daily returns with insights, associations, and forebodings (consider *The night has settled its debt, like an unsound dream*).

Yet the prospect of better ways of living is fed not only in dreams, but also by literature and myth. The title *Something there is ...*, immediately sends us to Robert Frost and to one of his great anti-property poems, *Mending Wall*, where telluric forces make gaps in walls and unsettle boundaries. In *Something there is ...*, I see a break within a deathly black shape and through this fissure a substance white and vital pours. Eamon tells me that he has slept out by the cairn at the top of Sliabh na mBan, and although there are other claimants for the honour, this is by repute a burial place of Queen Méabh (Medb, Maeve) and as such an entrance to the underworld; the crepuscular corollary to the vitality of magma. This brings to the mountain an association with fertility rituals that include invigorating the soil with unpasteurised milk, that white and vital liquid.

While the sky hangs dark and heavy in several of these paintings (Walking at night, dream of Persian Gates, as fields like carpets fly), in others the mists, or skirts, may lift. In some we see the horizon broken by a band of colours to the right (An afternoon where the mountains neglect their curtains). If, then, this vertical column is a Jacob's ladder out of the dungeon, it might not be for us. Perhaps only the birds and insects can flit from one befouled nest to the prospect of another. We humans must stay and make what home we can in the midst of the entropy of our self-made hydrocarbon behemoth.

#### Gerry Kearns

Professor of Geography, Maynooth University, Ireland

Gerry Kearns is a geographer working at the intersection of historical, political and medical themes in Geography. He is the author of Geopolitics and Empire (Oxford University Press, 2009) and co-editor of Spatial Justice and the Irish Crisis (Royal Irish Academy, 2014). He is working on a book about the cultural politics of AIDS. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy.



Speak with the word time forgot, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram pa

ding along the 49 x 60 cm the final chorus, sound lerset 320gram paper, From some far shore mixed media on Sor





Music of the wind, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49  $\times\,60$ 





x 60 cm Rhythm like music of silence, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram pap

60 cm Above me, day blind stars, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper,





2021 rset 320gram paper, 49 x 60 cm Something there is ... mixed media on Som

An afternoon where the mountains neglect their curtains, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49  $\times$  60 cm





In slanting rain winter light moved wet and bright, 2022 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49 x 60 cm

Walking at night, dream of Persian Gates, as fields like carp mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49  $\times$  60 cm





The night has settled its debt, like an unsound dream, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49  $\times$  60 cm

There are eagles near the summit, 2021 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper, 49 x 60 cm

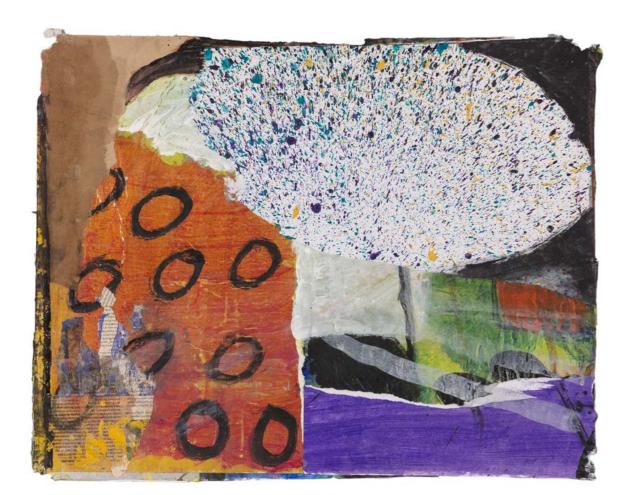




Lifted from the air, a curlew call, 2022 mixed media on Somerset 320gram pape

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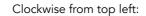
nd of frogs in the irrigation ditch, 2022 Somerset 320gram paper,  $49 \times 60 \text{ cm}$ Towards the soun mixed media on §

In the voodoo hall of morning mist, the lacewing mixed media on Japanese rice paper,  $50\times60$  cm









Storm Lorenzo #2 2019-2022 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper on birch panel 27 x 39.5 cm

Storm Lorenzo #4
2019-2022
mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper on birch panel
27 x 39.5 cm

Storm Lorenzo #5 2019-2022 mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper on birch panel 27 x 39.5 cm





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### **EAMON COLMAN**

Born in Dublin in 1957, Eamon Colman studied in the Trinity College, Dublin Art Workshop and the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, beginning a full-time professional career in 1979. He was Chairperson of the Artists Association of Ireland (1993-1995) and elected President of The European Council of Artists (1995-2000). Having created over forty solo exhibitions, presented nationally and internationally, he is considered one of Ireland's most important painters. In recognition of his major contribution to Irish culture, Eamon Colman was elected a member of Aosdána in 2007 and to the Toscairi in 2018.

In 1997, at the age of 39 years, he was invited to host a major mid-term retrospective exhibition of his work entitled 'Post Cards Home' at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. This was accompanied by a monograph on his work by writer and art critic Brian McAvera entitled 'Dreams from The Lions Head, The Work of Eamon Colman' published by Four Fields Press. A 25-year retrospective of his work is featured in a substantial publication by Gandon Editions, Kinsale entitled 'Profile 25 – Eamon Colman' (2006). In 1989, he won First Prize Painting Award in EVA International; in 2001 First Prize Painting Award in Eigse, Carlow Arts Festival; in 2002, he was the first Irish artist to be awarded Full Fellowship Award from The Vermont Studio Centre, USA; in 2005, he won a CCAT Interreg Major Award for touring an exhibition in Wales and in 2018 was awarded a Culture Ireland GB18 Award.

He has held numerous solo exhibitions in museums and art galleries throughout Ireland and abroad, including: Hillsboro Fine Art, Dublin (2004 - 2018); Rubicon Gallery, Dublin (1990 - 2000); Rua Red, Dublin (2010); Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (1986); Oriel Q Gallery, Wales, UK (2018, 2010, 2006); Stern Studio Gallery, Vienna, AT (2017, 2011); The Cecille R. Hunt Gallery, St. Louis, USA (2008); Galleri Caernarfon Cyf, Wales, UK (2007). In 2021, he exhibited at The Sasse Museum of Art, California; The Museum of Biblical Art, Dallas and at The Source Arts Centre, Co. Tipperary. In May 2022, a solo exhibition 'Penser Comme une Montagne' at Château de Dampierre Sur Boutonne, Charente Maritime, France touring to The Irish Embassy in Paris in July - September 2022. His work has been included in exhibitions representing contemporary Irish Art in Brussels, Denmark, France, Spain, UK, Hong Kong, Canada, USA.

Colman's work is represented in many major public collections including: The Arts Council of Ireland; The Danish Arts Council; The Office of Public Works - Government Collection; The Irish Museum of Modern Art (Gordon Lambert Collection); Tralee Regional Technical College; Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast; AlB Bank; Bank of Ireland; KPMG; Smurfit Kappa PLC; Citibank; Deutsche Bank; Accenture; Fyffes Ireland; Delta Airlines; De Vere's private collection and various private collections worldwide.

#### Beyond the Horizon: For Eamon

You create a still world while your mind races, with every brush stroke a mountain, a ruin, a river the changing colours mysterious thought provoking.

In your own world a new universe, someday you will hang it on a wall, we will come bewildered. You will peel back the brush strokes, toss them into a blower scatter them back on the canvas, let them settle into that make believe world that calls out for more.

You are master.
This still world begins to live,
moves to towns and cities,
hears you
feels your breath
knows your temperaments,
cries if you improve beyond your last work.

Are you a day painter? Or evening? Could you paint a masterpiece in the dark?

Willie-Joe Meally, January 2022

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#### **EAMON COLMAN**

## Thinking Like a Mountain

10 March - 2 April 2022

All mixed media on Somerset 320 gram paper (unless stated otherwise)

- 1. Night flight of the lacewing moth illuminated by a full moon, 115 cm x 152 cm
- 2. Dreamwalking with Gerry, talking about weather and erosion, 115 cm x 152 cm
- 3. From some far shore the final chorus, sounding along the mighty labyrinth, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 4. Speak with the word time forgot, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 5. *Music of the wind*, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 6. Over the fertile field work, bird sounds bauble caged in by boundary fences, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 7. Above me, day blind stars, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 8. Rhythm like music of silence, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 9. Something there is ..., 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 10. An afternoon where the mountains neglect their curtains, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 11. Walking at night, dream of Persian Gates, as fields like carpets fly, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 12. The night has settled its debt, like an unsound dream, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 13. There are eagles near the summit, 2021, 49 x 60 cm
- 14. In slanting rain winter light moved wet and bright, 2022, 49 x 60 cm
- 15. The shadow has intruded and with trembling hand leads the moon towards dawn, 2022, 49  $\times$  60 cm

- 16. Towards the sound of frogs in the irrigation ditch, 2022, 49 x 60 cm
- 17. In the voodoo hall of morning mist, the lacewing makes its way to bed, mixed media on Japanese rice paper,  $50 \times 60 \text{ cm}$
- 18. Lifted from the air, a curlew call, 2022, 50 x 60 cm
- 19. Storm Lorenzo no. 2, 2019-2022, mixed media on Somerset 320g paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm
- 20. Storm Lorenzo no. 3, 2019-2022, mixed media on Somerset 320g paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm
- 21. Storm Lorenzo no. 4, 2019-2022, mixed media on Somerset 320g paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm
- 22. Storm Lorenzo no. 5, 2019-2022, mixed media on Somerset 320g paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm
- 23. Storm Lorenzo no.10, 2022, mixed media on Somerset 320g paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm

Photography: Anthony Hobbs

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Back cover: Storm Lorenzo no. 3, 2019-22, mixed media on Somerset 320gram paper on birch panel, 27 x 39.5 cm



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