

SUMMER 09 FREE ISSUE NO 1

ARTicle

CULTURAL LIFE ON THE EDGE

ORIEL Y PARC

A WINDOW *on the* LANDSCAPE

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A WINDOW *on the* LANDSCAPE

‘The spaces and concentrations of this clearly constructed land were stuff for storing in the mind’

Graham Sutherland, writing about Pembrokeshire,
Welsh Sketch Book, 1942

What is Landscape? This is the question posed by the opening of the striking new Oriel y Parc Landscape Gallery in St Davids with its commitment to reach out to artists living and working in Pembrokeshire.



Graham Sutherland *Boulder with Hawthorn Tree*
© Baer Karrer, Zurich

Oriel y Parc will have a changing programme of exhibitions, featuring items from across all the collections of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. The current collection of works by Graham Sutherland demonstrates that artist’s visual fascination with the landscapes found on the edge of West Wales. However, Pembrokeshire artists have chosen to respond to their surroundings in a multitude of ways, and it is that response – whether visual, emotional or verbal – that we aim to showcase in this publication. We begin, in this issue, with a profile of Sara Lloyd-Morris, whose response to the subject has led her into the field of fine-art jewellery.



Aerial Oriel © Gareth Davies



Gallery Interior © Gareth Davies

Here in Pembrokeshire, the artists and makers cannot help but be influenced by the diverse surroundings that they live in. Anne Kerr’s work in oils is clearly inspired by the texture and light of the Pembrokeshire coastline and David Tress’ strong mixed-media paintings express the uncompromising nature of the landscape and weather of the peninsula. James Campbell’s work in pastels and ceramics expresses, as he puts it himself, ‘a landscape of great lyrical beauty’, whilst Philip Muirden’s watercolours are inextricably linked to the landscape of the sea and its stories, and Peter Dixon’s ethereal compositions evoke the magic of this land. These are just a few of the people who work in this special place.

Of course, despite Pembrokeshire’s extraordinary and sometimes outlandish landscape – one thinks of Sutherland’s oft-quoted remark about its ‘exultant strangeness’, or of the great pilgrimage cathedral of St Davids submerged at the bottom of a valley – this is not a purely a local obsession, and we shall also be attempting to highlight the universality of this powerful theme. In this edition, Solva-based artist Raul Speek looks at what landscape art means for him – and for us all.

PROFILE

SARA LLOYD-MORRIS *jewellery designer*



'Bailiwick's Brooch'
© Sara Lloyd-Morris

Sara graduated from the School of Jewellery and Silversmithing, Hockley, Birmingham in 1972, initially working in London for Andre Grima in Jermyn Street. She moved to Wales in 1985, having travelled extensively in India and southeast Asia, and in 1995 settled in Narberth, starting her studio gallery Furious Fish. Here, she ran jewellery-making classes, displayed the work of other jewellers and marketed her own work until a very recent move to Martletwy, where both the studio gallery and the courses continue. In 2001, she was accepted as a member of the Makers Guild in Wales and the Association of Contemporary Jewellers. She now exhibits throughout the UK, but particularly in Pembrokeshire.

Asked what first triggered her passion for creating Sara says: 'As a child I was an avid beach comber and collector of flotsam and jetsam, creating my first pieces by wrapping seaweed around myself'. Later, whilst at school, a demonstration of lost-wax casting, with its alchemical fascination, reinforced the creative hook.



'Earthstuds'
© Sara Lloyd-Morris

This last year has seen Sara bring to fruition a new strand of her art. Texture has always been a dominant element in her work, and whilst flying recently from Bristol to the Isles of Scilly she was struck anew by the ancient landscapes spread beneath the plane – especially the medieval strip farms with their contrasting textures of ploughed earth, changing colours and interwoven grass edged by land cultivated by another person. In Sara's words, 'The intricate patchwork of the earth spread out before me like a jewelled quilt; the rich contrasting surfaces of the fields and hedges, studded with ponds and traced through with rivers.'

Co-incidentally, on her return she came across a book by Toby Driver in St Davids Cathedral Bookshop called *Pembrokeshire – Historic Landscapes from the Air*. Ignited, her imagination grasped colours and shapes; she used various techniques – including etching, roller printing, reticulation and patination – to give form and texture to silver, brass, copper and gold, with their individual earthy colours. Once these pieces were accentuated with stones and found work, they sprang to life like the land in the Spring, allowing a piece of ancient Pembrokeshire landscape to be constantly with the wearer: a reminder of everything created here, now and for centuries before, forging a continuity which has perhaps been lost in the modern world. Sara calls this body of work 'Earthscape'.



'Earthscape & Golden Masked Hare'
© Sara Lloyd-Morris

To see Sara's work or arrange classes, contact her at www.saralloyd-morris.co.uk or visit her studio at Stoneybank, Martletwy; however, please ring first on 00 44 (0)1834 891543 as she may be out sketching details and textures or photographing the landscape from the air.

WHAT IS A FINE ART LANDSCAPE?

With the opening of the Oriel y Parc gallery housing the Sutherland collection, St Davids Visitors' Centre has given a new lease of life to artists who express themselves through the landscape. It has also forced us to confront what we mean by 'landscape' in art.

According to *Chambers English Dictionary*, a landscape is 'the appearance of the area of land that the eye can view at once'; but I hold a different, more all-encompassing, opinion. I believe that the definition of anything is – in essence – the limitation of that which is defined, and constitutes the boundary of its own reality with respect to our conceptual ability to grow and expand our vision whilst retaining its core and essence. So, I am interested to discover: what are the parameters which qualify a piece of art as a landscape, and yet allow it to remain a work of fine art in the ever-increasing diversity of the modern world?



'Winter Landscape in Pembrokeshire'

© Raul Speek

At the outset of my fine-art training, I participated in an event in which many Cuban artists travelled to a specific geographic area to paint that particular landscape. I sketched every corner of all the views that I preferred, and then integrated them into a single view in an oil painting. In that moment, I understood what I liked about being an artist: it was the creative impulse, which experimented and played with the configuration of the reality that the universe offers us. It was the same experience that artists had had throughout history as they arranged the 'now', or present time, of their own sub-

jects and captured their dream images: Constable, Turner, Jackson Pollock with his work 'Autumn Rhythm' and even the architect Le Corbusier with his 'Plan for a City of Three Million Inhabitants' of 1922.

RAUL SPEEK *artist*

Today, the digital world offers other variations for playing with reality, in which it is possible to push the horizon line of our own little universe – or, indeed, to choose to go back to where we were before. It is all down to us as creators, in whichever media we desire.

As implied above, it can be salutary to take a look at what was done in the past. On a recent visit to Peru, we saw and experienced the manner in which the Incas went about building their cities and most precious temples. They built them in harmony with nature, so that the finished outline mirrored and enveloped the profile of the surrounding landscape. In this, they also reflected a spiritual and magical configuration. Today, we would regard this almost as an avant-garde conceptual approach – almost as a forerunner of what we now consider to be ‘sustainable’ architecture, in which development goes hand-in-hand with the needs of a community without an overexploitation of natural resources. These are lessons that we have hitherto found extremely hard to apply to our modern living, yet they encompass issues that other cultures successfully resolved, sometimes hundreds of years ago.

In terms of pushing our horizons, the future vision of the human landscape we see in science-fiction films appears to be surrendered completely to every little desire of our own creature comfort, or to simply venturing out to conquer other worlds without resolving the problems of our own. NASA probes or satellites conquer alien landscapes for our proud scientific achievement, yet we still build third-rate schools and hospitals.

So, as artists – as ‘visionaries’ – what will be our own contribution to our overdeveloped landscape? Here we are responsible in many ways.

‘Whether we agree or disagree!
Whether we like it or not!’

Raul Speek

HIGHLIGHTS

ARTicle RECOMMENDS for the SUMMER

- Oriel y Parc's first artist-in-residence, Brendan Stuart Burns, is working and exhibiting at the gallery as part of their current theme of *The Hidden Landscape*. His residency will conclude in October with a major exhibition featuring his new work and links with Wales's national collection. See www.orielyparc.co.uk or call 00 44 (0)1437 720392.
- Nant y Coy Arts, Treffgarne: 'Drawing Breath: a drawing extravaganza': 8th June – 3rd July. See www.nantycoy.co.uk or call 00 44 (0)1437 741671.
- Judy Linnell is exhibiting her vibrant landscapes in 'Watercolourings' at the West Wales Arts Centre, Fishguard until 4th July. See www.westwalesartscentre.com or call 00 44 (0)1348 873867.
- After a mini-season of talks on art and literature last year at the Raul Speek Gallery in Solva, June sees the start of a new enhanced programme – this time accompanied by food and wine. Highlights include presentations by Ian McDonald on Indian art and architecture, 'IndianAsia', on Wednesday 8th July, and on the traditional buildings of Japan on 5th August. Raul Speek himself will be talking on Wednesday 19th August about growing up as an artist during the Cuban revolution, including a projection of the BBC documentary *A Long Journey Home*. See www.raulspeek.co.uk or call 00 44 (0)1437 721907.
- 4th April saw the opening at the National Museum, Cardiff, of a joint exhibition on Haverfordwest-born Gwen John, celebrated artist and muse of Auguste Rodin, and the sculptor. 'Master & Model' runs until January 2010. See www.museumwales.ac.uk or call 00 44 (0)2920 397951.
- The Cloisters Gallery at St Davids Cathedral Refectory is hosting the landscape photography of regular exhibitor Rupert Heath: 16th – 29th June. Click on 'Visitors' on the cathedral website www.stdavids cathedral.org.uk or call 00 44 (0)1437 720204.
- Art Matters Gallery in Tenby is showing the work of artists Sandra and John Phillips. Their images of West Wales and western Scotland can be seen until 28th June. See www.artmatters.org.uk or call 00 44 (0)1834 843375.



LOOKING FORWARD

EVENTS

- The Big Draw is the UK's major event to get everyone sketching. It will be taking place all over the country, and at a variety of locations around Pembrokeshire, in October. See www.campaignfordrawing.org.uk for national information and 'watch this space' for local announcements on events throughout the County.
- 'Talking Balls', otherwise known as 'Turbulence', the planned Big Art project for Cardigan by renowned Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has been approved by Ceredigion Council. The installation is being followed by Channel 4. Further details can be found on www.cardiganbigart.com/big-art-turbulence

FUTURE ISSUES of ARTicle will be looking at

- The growing cultural links between Ireland and West Wales.
- Landscape photography in Pembrokeshire.
- The growth of the art-course market in the County.

LISTINGS

- Information on Oriel y Parc's events can be found on www.orielyparc.co.uk or by calling 00 44 (0)1437 720392.
- *Western Telegraph*, weekly local newspaper, out on Wednesdays, also www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/leisure
- *Pembrokeshire Life*, published monthly.
- *Pembrokeshire Country Living*, six editions published each year.
- Arts Council Wales lists events happening in Pembrokeshire at www.acw-ccc.org.uk
- Arts events can also be found in the listings of www.visitpembrokeshire.com and www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest
- And if you want to track down the artists yourselves, see Pembrokeshire County Council's Art and Craft Guide 2009 available to pick up throughout the county and to download on www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk (type 'Pembrokeshire Art and Craft Guide' into the search box).



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