

Tom Mackie – Dance on the Earth

Visual Description

This exhibit is of 8 pieces of reproduced art created using giclée on canvas. Most of the works are abstract with strong colours and through lines, and there are also a few semi-abstract landscapes, blending elements of impressionism and abstract art. There are four double sided panels, covered with a light grey linen, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel. I will describe a few of the works.

Tom Mackie was a potter and painter at the PotteryWorks studio for 22 years. His textured and painted pottery was an incredibly successful product for him and he became well known for his work.

Tom began painting on canvas in abstraction, and quickly developed his technique with palette knife and dry brush.

Tom worked with a deep concentration, for many hours at one time and produced works with depth and drama. Tom was experimental in his approach to his work, and was always willing to try new techniques. He experienced an obvious joy in the reaction to his finished works and the response to them by others. As someone who was non-verbal, Tom's work was part of his conversation with the world around him.

Tom passed away in July 2022, and left behind a large body of his work and many friends and family who mourned him and the enormous impact that he had on their lives. We are left though, with these paintings that are reminders of his determination and talent, and his struggle to communicate with us all.

Panel 2 – Boundaries (24" x 24", giclée reproduction on canvas)

This square piece features a bright orange section in the bottom half of the frame and a white tinged with light blue on the top half. The two halves are divided by a striking division roughly in the shape of a V, with the lower point slightly to the right of centre. The dividing line is not static, but has strong and movement-filled strokes of black, white, light orange and dark brown, and dark red. The black, dark brown and darker red are also visible in the bottom half of the work, overlaying the orange section (which shines out as brighter orange in the bottom right corner). The top section also has hints of yellow, and what seems to be 'dust clouds' of red and yellow rising up from the dividing line.

Panel 4 – Red Door (24" x 24", giclée reproduction on canvas)

This square painting reminds the viewer of an open door or doors in the middle of the image, but it is still an abstract image. On the left side of the painting is a large pink section, with some perspective lines and corners that suggest it is inside a room. The pink has some purple shading at the bottom and on the far left side is slightly darker as if to indicate different light and shadow on different walls of the room. The pink wall on the left becomes a pale neutral coloured wall on the right, with a bit of shading around

the door jamb. On the far right is a bit of pink shading. In roughly the centre of the painting is a doorway, or multiple successive doorways in pale blue, that look like they are leading on to a series of rooms. There is a deep red section on the left of the doorway that could be the interior of a further-away room, or could be a door. It is roughly shaped as a rectangle with a triangle on the top.

Panel 5 – Bleeding into Blue (30”x 40”, giclée reproduction on canvas)

This is a larger painting that evokes a reflecting pool. In the centre of the canvas is a blue section with depth and variety of blues, indicating some movement, light and reflection. Along the top and bottom of the canvas are lighter (top) and darker (bottom) sections that seem to hang over the middle section. The predominantly yellowish section at the top calls to mind trails of jasmine over a pool of water, and at the bottom, those same strands reflected back in darker red/brown. There are also a few rounder dark sections, all with the same impressionistic paint application, which stretch in a curved line down the middle of the work.

Panel 7 – The Thin Blue Line (40” x 30”, giclée reproduction on canvas)

This painting is in cool shades of blue ranging from pale to bright, with a smaller burst of bright yellow and light purple in the middle. Roughly across the midline of the canvas (slightly lower on the left, slightly higher on the right) is a line from which brushstrokes emerge both up and down with vibrant energy. The line itself is not clear, roughly etched in places in black and white, but the strokes away from the line are very clear. It looks a bit like a fold, or a curved horizon line from which the other colours are emerging. The strokes look a bit like the northern lights, or like fissures in ice. They leap away from the horizontal line, some of them reaching all the way to the edges, but some not going that far. Above the line, the colours are lighter, and below there are some darker blues. On the left side of the painting around the horizontal line, is a collection of random shapes in black and white.

Panel 8 – On the Horizon (40” x 30”, giclée reproduction on canvas)

This is the most realistic painting of the series I have described, though it still has elements of abstraction. It shows a single sailboat on a body of water with a cloudy sky above. What makes it abstract is the extreme colours used. The thick clouds are dark red highlighted in yellow and the sea has a dark blue base but the reflected clouds are in the same dark red and yellow with undertones of dark green. There is an extreme amount of brush detail and texture on the painting, and very little transparency in the water or clouds, as you might expect. They feel heavy. The sails on the slim sailboat also reflect the deep primary colours of the scene on the sails, and the boat casts a light white reflection on the water. The sailboat sits just off to the right of centre and the middle of the painting is brighter with what appears to be sun shining down the midline.