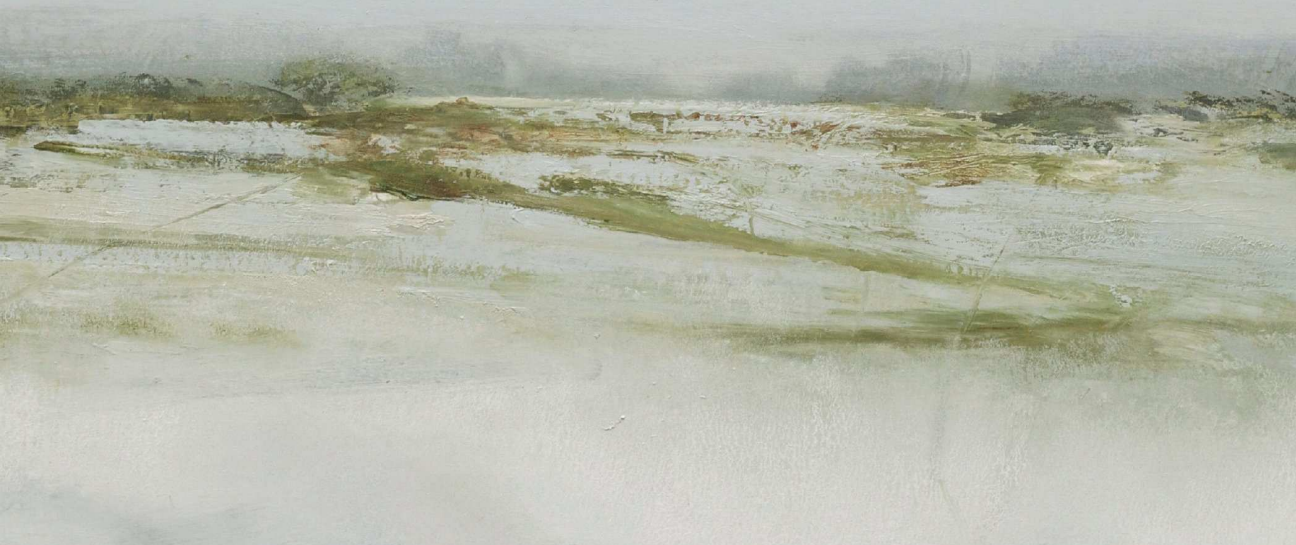


Bernie Masterson

Weather





# Bernie Masterson

## Weather

With Introduction by Carissa Farrell

Lexicon Fine Art Press Dublin 2014



Published by Lexicon Fine Art Press  
Primrose Studio,  
23 Neville Road Rathgar, Dublin 6

Bernie Masterson's work can be view at  
[www.berniemasterson.com](http://www.berniemasterson.com)

Copyright © Bernie Masterson 2014

ISBN 978-0-9926946-1-6

draíocht

Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



 **Fingal Arts**

# Weather

## Introduction by Carissa Farrell

The intangible quality that people love about landscape often makes it a self-contradictory pursuit. Successful landscape painting is less about pictorial representation and more about a process of translation through the poetic language of paint. Bernie Masterson's gift is fluency in this language. The key to her fluency is a skilled handling of the medium tempered by restraint and control which allows her to render the essence rather than the detail of Irish landscape. Nothing of value is lost in translation.

In this and previous bodies of work Masterson's landscapes are unmistakably Irish and often recognisable for their locations in Wicklow and Kerry. In them she has demonstrated a sophisticated and confident manipulation of paint that is vital and poetic yet deferential to the intrinsic beauty of the subject. Her use of colour – ochres, umbers, greens, soft purple, pink, cream and oatmeal is sensitive without sentimentality and is redolent of the earth, grass, heather and foliage that we are familiar with. Most importantly her fluid mark making – scrawls, daubs, and swishes bring to life a kind of resolution that holds on to the spirit of a place - it's smell, humidity, temperature and light - in ways that is felt more than is recognisable pictorially. Unlike other landscape painters whose interpretation of the landscape changes it into an '*entity*' of painting, Masterson creates images that convey the subtle aspects of the landscape through paint.

**Weather**, is a new departure in Masterson's work. She has suppressed her confidence with paint in order to resolve different and new challenges – scale, drama and narrative.

In these works her unique facility for expressive mark making is camouflaged in favour of pictorial realism. While retaining sensuality they have a compelling cinematic quality that changes the focus of what the landscape means to her, to us and why she has painted it. In previous work the viewer is huddled down into a rolling landscape, embedded in the textures and scents of heather, grass, earth and bog. The images are framed in square supports and the foreground feels close, intimate and familiar as multiple horizon lines unfold gently into the distance. In **Weather** the viewer is standing upright facing a low lying horizon surrounded by vast tracts of land under a colossal sky. A new dynamic is established.

In her personal notes to this new work, Masterson describes as her objective to 'poeticise' the landscape in much the same way as early 19th century artists such as Turner, Jacob Ruisdael and John Constable did, who in her words '*made wild nature acceptable as a subject matter in its own right*'. Their sometimes unorthodox approaches could be likened to cinematographers who used paint as their film stock, seeking to capture a kind of mobile realism rather than the established pictorial one. It was about representing the reciprocal relationship between man and nature. In a similar way Masterson is seeking to represent the living and consequential relationship between weather, landscape and humanity and how landscape is bound up and implicated in the social condition of man. This has particular resonance in Ireland where land has a cultural significance that is imprinted in the minds of generations, shaped by taught and spoken histories of plantations and dispossession, famine, nationalism and now, previously unspoken horrors. Masterson describes landscape as being '*layered with time, place and memory*' and speaks of '*something intrinsic between the Irish and the weather*'. It seems for Masterson, in those skies, along those distant horizons and in the shadows of trees and ditches an unfathomable Irishness has been moulded.

When seen in reproduction these paintings appear vast and panoramic. Up close they emphasise Masterson's finesse for restraint, are painterly yet understated. The rectangular format expands the potential of composition from domestic to sublime. By widening the horizon and moving it lower the depth of field changes and the supremacy and autonomy of the landscape emerges. Paintings such as *Distant Hail Shower*, *Sudden Downpour*, *Creeping Fog* and *Low Cloud* depict the mercurial nature of Irish weather and evidence an accomplished ability by Masterson to render illusion without losing the emotion that underpins her impulse to paint. In *Sudden Downpour*, Masterson gracefully translates the scale and volume of the sky and the weight and density of a dark cloud rolling across a summer landscape. In *Creeping Fog* and *Low Cloud* she captures the uniquely Irish phenomenon of weather as a rapidly unfolding spectacle so close as to be able to reach out and touch it. The three dimensional quality is uncanny and a considerable technical achievement that she embeds imperceptibly without fuss. *Flood Fields* depicts townlands around the Shannon devastated by rising water levels and climate change. Relentless and unforgiving a dense white sky falls low and bleaches out a distant horizon of trees. It is a beautiful painting that manages with intelligence and tact to indicate human culpability in the deteriorating cadence between man and nature.

**Evening Sunset** is an iconic and utterly recognisable image of the end of the day in late Summer or early Autumn. Like all Irish sunsets it looks to the west, and in doing so triggers an involuntary emotional acknowledgement of something inexplicable - a non-verbal internal Irish sensibility. Perhaps more than any other place in the world, Irish landscape is a repository of history and heritage that runs deep and belongs to everyone and no one. It can be melancholic, ethereal, dark and withholding, magical and beautiful. Evening Sunset and other paintings in this show invoke most vividly how we recognise it.

They remind us of the origins of Bealtaine, Lunasa and Samhain, when pagan ritual defined existence through the rhythm of the land and cycle of seasons. As we Irish question ourselves and the profound changes that have altered the fundamental social, economic and cultural integrity of who and what we are, perhaps now more than ever, is the time to paint landscapes.

*Carissa Farrell is a curator of contemporary visual art, and a freelance art writer based in Dublin.*



List of Illustrations	Page
Storm Surge	9
Ash Cloud	11
Overcast	13
Squall Line	15
Downpour	17
Low Cloud	19
Distant Hail Showers	21
Creeping Fog	23
Flood Fields	25
Evening Sunset	27



# Weather

'A change in the weather is sufficient  
to recreate the world and ourselves'

Marcel Proust

Storm Surge - Acrylic on Fabriano Paper - 124 X 178 cm ©

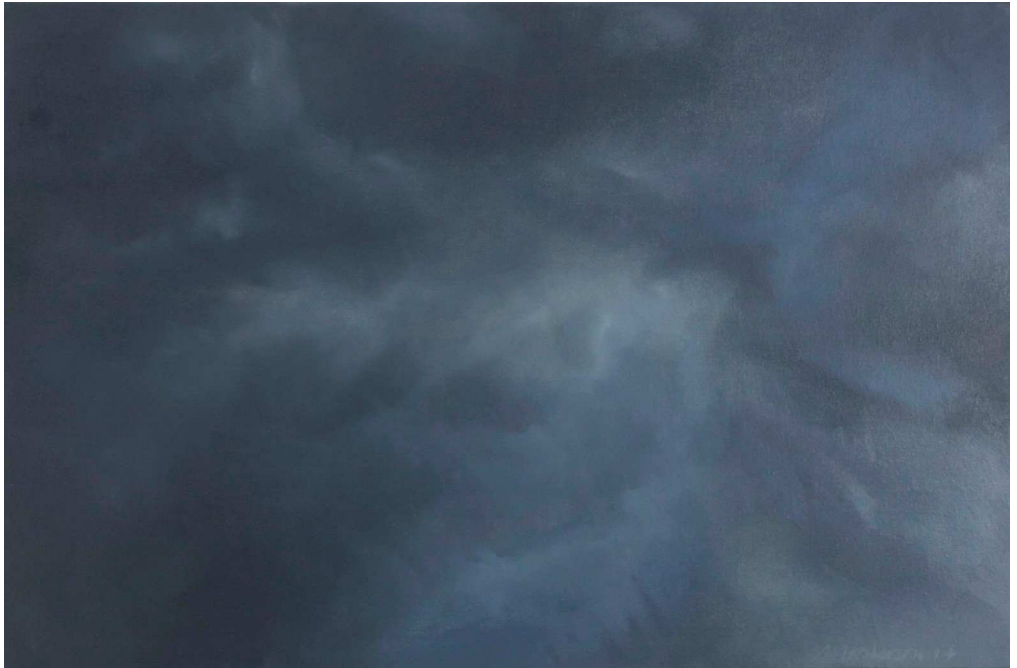


Ash Cloud - Oil on Canvas on Board - 80 X 120 cm ©



Overcast - Oil on Canvas - 40 X 60 cm ©





Squall Line - Oil on Board - 80 X 120 cm ©



Sudden Downpour - Oil on Board - 40 X 60 cm ©



Low Cloud - Oil on Canvas - 80 X 120 cm ©



Distant Hail Showers - Oil on Canvas - 40 X 60 cm ©





Creeping Fog - Oil on Canvas - 40 X 60 cm ©



Flood Fields - Oil on Board - 80 X 120 cm ©



Evening Sunset - Oil on Canvas - 80 X 120 cm ©



## Biographical Details and Selected Exhibitions

Bernie Masterson was born in Ballymoney, Co. Antrim in 1958.  
She lives and works in Dublin.

### Studied

Limerick School of Art and Design 1981 – 1982

Limerick School of Art and Design 1975 – 1979

### Solo Exhibitions

Weather, Draíocht Art Centre, Blanchardstown, Dublin (2014)

Drawing on the Body Exhibition, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland (2011)

Paper by Maebh O Regan Ph.D. Symposium on Medicine and the Visual Arts, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland (2011)

Drawing on the Body, Waterford Healing Arts Trust (2011)

Living Landscape, Custom House Gallery, Westport (2011)

Drawing on the Body, Tallaght Community Arts, RUA RED Gallery, Tallaght, Dublin (2010)

Landscape & Memory, Clothworthy Museum, Co. Antrim (2005)

Landscape & Memory, Draíocht Art Centre, Blanchardstown, Dublin (2004)

An Engagement with Nature 1, Hallward Gallery, Dublin (2003)

An Odyssey, Kerry / Queensland Works, The Hunt Museum Gallery, Limerick (2002)

Two Painters, Rachel Kierans & Bernie Masterson Dun Aímhirgin Gallery, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Dublin (2001)

A River of Images, The Dyehouse Gallery, Waterford (1997)

A River of Images, The Dolmen Gallery, Limerick (1997)

New Paintings, The Hallward Gallery, Dublin (1996)

Moods of a Landscape, The Dolmen Gallery, Limerick (1994)



### **Selected Group Shows**

*Fermanagh Visual Arts Open*, Enniskillen (2014)  
*What a harvest*, Waterford Healing Arts Trust (2012)  
*Ensemble*, Nas Studio Group Show, Dublin 7 (2012)  
*Wish You Were Here*, a Postcard Project, Nas 2/3 Mary's Abbey Dublin 7 (2012)  
*CultureFest*, Link Exhibition Smithfield Dublin 7 (2012)  
*Rua Red Winter Open Submission*, Tallaght Dublin 24 (2011)  
*Painting On Household Objects*, The Higher Bridges Gallery, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh (2011)  
*Miscellany*, Culture Night Event, Nas, 2/3 Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7 (2011)  
*Level*, Group Exhibition curated by Bernadette Madden Dunamaisé Art Centre (2011)  
*Royal Hibernian Academy Annual Exhibition* Dublin (2012, 11, 09, 08, 05, 04, 03)  
*Returning*, Cill Rialaig Arts Centre (2011)  
*20/20 Vision*, NAS, 2/3 Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7 (2010)  
*Xmas Exhibition Custom House Gallery*, Westport (2010, 09)  
*Xmas Group Show*, Cavehill Gallery, Belfast (2010, 09, 06, 05, 04)  
*1 Ft Square*, Visual Arts Exhibition Higher Bridges Gallery, Enniskillen (2009)  
*Anna Cheyne Visual Art Award Exhibition*, Lisburn Island Arts Centre, N. Ireland (2009)  
*Westport Arts Festival*, Westport Co Mayo, Ireland (2009)  
*Hunt the Postcard at the Hunt*, Museum, Limerick (2009, 06)  
*Dunamaisé Open*, Portlaoise, Ireland (2009)  
*126's How Do You Know show*, Blankspace, Gallery, California, USA (2009)  
*Enniskillen Visual Arts Festival* (2008)  
*Royal Ulster Academy Annual Exhibition*, Belfast, Northern Ireland (2012, 2008, 2004)  
*Fenton Gallery*, Christmas Exhibition, Cork (2007, 03)  
*Hallward Christmas Show*, Merrion Square Dublin (2007, 06, 05, 04, 03, 02, 01, 99, 98, 97, 94)  
*Hallward Summer Show*, Merrion Square Dublin (2007, 06, 05, 04, 03, 02, 01, 99, 98, 97, 94)  
*Utopia Fair*, Eigse Carlow Arts Festival (2006)  
*Vivid Visions*, selected artists from the Fingal County Council Collection (2006)  
*The Collection*, 10 Ormond Quay Dublin, Mill Cove Gallery (2005)

*Iontas*, National Small Works Exhibition, Ireland (2005, 03, 98,95)  
*Visuals*, the British Embassy Merrion Road Dublin (2005)  
*Eigse*, Carlow Arts Festival (2005, 03, 00)  
*Dialogues with Form*, Canvanacor Gallery Lifford, Co Donegal (2005)  
*Boyle Arts Festival*, Co. Roscommon (2004, 98, 95, 94)  
*Currents, Art of the State*, Touring Exhibition Ireland (2004)  
*Wexford Opera Festival* (2003)  
*Radharc*, Draíocht Arts Centre, Blanchardstown Dublin (2003)  
*Four Painters*, Gallery One, Kilkenny (2003)  
*Christmas Exhibition*, the Dyehouse Gallery Waterford (2003)  
*The Winter Show*, Dyehouse Gallery Waterford (2000)  
*Microsoft*, September Exhibition (2000, 98)  
*Aer Rianta Gateway to Art*, Dublin Airport (2000, 99, 97, 96, 95))  
*The Oireachtais Art Exhibition* (1998)  
*The Hunt Museum* Limerick (1998)  
*Omagh Art Auction*, National Concert Hall Dublin (1998)  
*The Blackcombe Gallery*, Cork (1998)  
*Green Thoughts*, the Hallward Gallery Dublin (1997)  
*The Oireachtais Art Exhibition* (1996)  
*The Dillon Gallery*, Barnes London England (1996)  
*SIPTU Inaugural Exhibition*, Ireland (1996)  
*Old Library Gallery*, Cardiff Wales (1995)  
*The Portobello Open Exhibition*, Tabernacle Gallery, London, Women's Art Festival (1995)  
*Monaghan Open Exhibition*, Co. Mayo (1995)  
*The Second International Female Artist's Art Biennial*, Stockholm Sweden (1995)  
*International Watercolour Exhibition*, Treg'Aquarelle Tregastel France (1995, 94)  
*International Crossroads Symposium*, Roscommon (1995)  
*Fe-mail Art Expo*, Old Library Gallery Cardiff, Wales (1995)  
*Art '95*, New York International Art Exhibition New York, USA (1995)

*Cork Arts Festival (1994) Claremorris Open Exhibition (1994)*  
*Ashling, Exhibition Pantheon Gallery Dublin (1994)*  
*Monaghan Open Exhibition, Ireland (1993)*  
*Riverrun Gallery, Dublin (1992)*

**Corporate Collections**

Smith, Kline and Beecham  
New Market Partnership  
Office of Public Works  
Fitzgerald Insurance  
Dept of Telecommunication & Regulation  
Government Buildings  
Tyrone Productions  
Limerick County Council  
Norkom Technology  
Microsoft Ireland  
Harcourt Development  
Brian Hogan Architects  
Stewarts Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin  
Department of Finance and Personnel, N. Ireland Civil Service  
Fingal Council Council  
Axa Insurance  
Allied Irish Bank  
Garda Headquarters  
BBC Public Catalogue Foundation  
Fintan Wallis Solicitors

Private collections in Ireland and abroad

## **Awards and Residencies**

The Tryone Guthrie Center, Annaghmakerrig, Co Monaghan (2012)  
Invited Artist, Cill Rialaig Project, Ballinskellig, Co Kerry (2010)  
Awarded Custom House Studio Residency, Westport, Co Mayo (2009)  
Awarded a residency by the Heinrich Boll Association, Co Mayo(2008)  
Artist in Prison Scheme, HOPE, Farranferris College, Cork (2007)  
The Cill Rialaig Project, Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry (2006)  
Nominated by the Hunt Museum for the AIB Award (2002)  
The Cill Rialaig Project, Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry (2001)  
The Tryone Guthrie Center, Annaghmakerrig, Co Monaghan (2000)  
Arts Council of Ireland Artflight Award (1997)  
The Tryone Guthrie Center, Annaghmakerrig, Co Monaghan (1996)  
The Oireachtais, Douglas Hyde Gold Medal Award for Painting (1996)  
The Cill Rialaig Project, Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry (1995)

## **Bibliography**

*Weather*, catalogue introduction by Carissa Farrell, ISBN 978-0-9926946-1-6  
*Living Landscape*, catalogue introduction by Dr. Maeabh O Reagan 22 / 7 / 10  
*Drawing on the Body*, catalogue introduction by Dr. Maeabh O Regan 10 / 4 / 10  
*The Scared Landscape*, essay by Jacquie Burgess 1 / 2 / 10  
*New Forms, Solid Values*, by Aidan Dunne, The Irish Times, Arts Review 30 / 5 / 09  
*Not in Alphabetical Order*, Fingal Public Art Collection Volume One 2008 ISBN 978-0-95491-038-9  
*Landscape and Memory*, by Sara Keating, In Dublin Issue 38 2005  
*Landscape & Memory*, catalogue introduction by Marianne O Kane 2004  
*Art of the State*, OPW Catalogue 2004  
*Object lessons*, by Aidan Dunne, The Irish Times, Arts Review 10 / 9 / 03  
*Magnetic quality of images*, by John Fitzgerald, The Kilkenny People 11 / 7 / 03  
*Celebrating the beauty of Irish landscape*, The Echo, 2 / 2 / 03

*The Missing Heart in Group Art*, Taispeantas Ealaine an Oireachtais, Guinness Hop Store, by Brian Fallon, The Irish Times, Section: Arts; Pg 12. 19 / 9 / 96  
*Art Exhibition Winners Named*, by Brian Fallon The Irish Times: Section:; Arts; Pg 12. 12 / 9 / 96  
*Art of the State*, OPW Catalogue, 1996, ISBN 0707623901  
*Gateway to Art*, by Brian Fallon, The Irish Times: Section; Arts; Pg 12. 15 / 2 / 95  
*Right Mix Of Many Styles*, by Brian Fallon. The Irish Times: Section; Arts; Pg 12. 3 / 8 / 94  
*Varied art at Regional*, by Isabel Healy, The Cork Examiner, 22 / 11 / 94  
*Magnificent Seven Show their artistry*, The Cork Examiner: ArtFest 94; Pg 7. 15 / 11 / 94  
*Moods of a Landscape*, by Marie Hobbins, Limerick Post, Pg 15. 6 / 8 / 94

#### **Online**

*Landscape and Memory*, circa on-line review by Brian Lynch, uploaded 30 / 1 / 2005  
([http://www.recirca.com/cgi-bin/mysql/show\\_item.cgi?post\\_id=1863&type=reviews](http://www.recirca.com/cgi-bin/mysql/show_item.cgi?post_id=1863&type=reviews))

#### **Broadcasts - Radio**

*Arena*, Drawing on the Body interview with Jacqui Corcoran in association with Waterford Healing Arts Trust RTE Radio One 22 / 3 / 2011  
*The Arts Show*, (International Crossroads Symposium Interview) RTE Radio One 1 / 8 / 95

#### **Additional information**

CDET B Educational Services to Prisons

Member of Visual Artists Ireland

Associate non resident member of the New Art Studio, 2 / 3 Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7

The artist would like to thank the following

The Director Emer McGowan and Marketing Press & PR Manager Nicola Murphy at Draiocht for their help and support with this exhibition. Carissa Farrell, Arts Facilitator / Curator for writing the introduction to the catalogue.

A special thanks to Michael Harding, Poet and Playwright for opening the exhibition and to Mary Burke for her professionalism and assistance with photography.

To Helena Powell for her on-going support, encouragement and patience.





