

WILLIAM IRVINE

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINE ART

WILLIAM IRVINE

Sea Change

JULY 20 – AUGUST 13, 2016

Introduction by Margery Irvine

Notes from the Artist



Table with a Lobster, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 16 inches

COVER *The Darkening Sky*, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches

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The Darkening Sky, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



A Break in the Clouds, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches

As distances go, it's not far: out the front door, past the seckel pear and Asian pear trees, and then you've reached the studio. No more than thirty yards.

But that's as far as you get. The studio door is closed; entry is by invitation only, for my husband, William Irvine, is a solitary painter. Neither I nor anyone else has actually observed him at work, save for our Shetland Sheepdog, Tam o' Shanter, who sleeps on the paint-spattered floor at the foot of the easel.

The studio has no clock on the wall, no radio on a shelf. From inside, one would hear only birdcall and the movement of the wind in the trees and the waves on the beach; from outside, one hears only the sound of footsteps, pacing.

I call it the Magic Kingdom. Whatever dross enters—bait bags, fog banks, lobsterman's gloves—transmutes, Rumpelstiltskin-like, into gold. How this works, I do not know. I only know that this treasure, unlike cold metal, gives warmth and joy to my days.

— Margery Irvine



House in the Fog, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 16 inches



Coming Out of the Fog, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Table with Two Lobsters, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches

WILLIAM IRVINE

SEA CHANGE

I was not born with artistic talent, but I was born an artist. That is to say I did not have that easy facility to draw that some children have, but I did have an acute awareness of the world around me—of its beauty, its mystery, its harmony that lifted me into a miraculous state of being demanding expression. I found a way through art. It took time to master the mechanics: to become fluent with the language of art, the power of composition, color, tone, line; to be able to dismantle a scene and rearrange it, often intuitively, in a way that captured the essence of what I felt. This exploration sometimes brings me to the brink of abstraction, as in *Sunset over Tinkers*, but I never cross that line, for I believe that the subject, the origin, has a place in the final expression.

One of the earliest paintings I saw, in reproduction, for I grew up in a remote part of Scotland, was Giotto's *Saint Francis Preaching to the Birds*. I still get that knot in the stomach when I see it, for it gives me, like all great art, a glimpse into the eternal, that moment when time does not exist, when we are suspended in a state of grace.

When I first came to Maine, to Washington County, I found myself drawn to the simple white houses of the fishermen, in places like Jonesport, Corea, the islands. In some respects they reminded me of those white Scottish farms dotted among the green hills where I'd grown up, but here in Maine

Day's End, 2016, oil on canvas, 36 x 60 inches







The Sleeping Fisherman, 2016, oil on panel, 40 x 36 inches

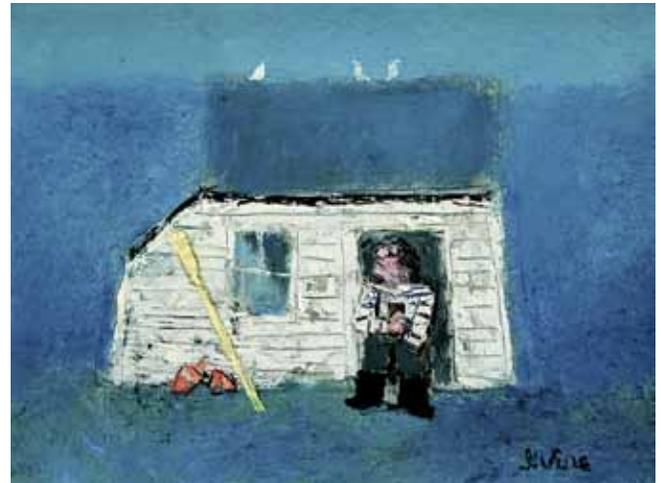
I was captivated by their inhabitants, going about their daily lives. *Morning Coffee* is one of those Maine paintings. I wanted to express that feeling you get when you step outside into a new day, startled by the beauty that surrounds us. We all step through that door at times in our lives, and the artist can help by guiding us through.

As for my subjects: I have said that every artist is born with a small set of poems, and it is the exploration of that personal mythology that defines him as an artist. Most of the paintings for this show relate to the sea, for I have lived most of my life in its presence, saying “good morning” if its mood is right, or keeping my distance when the storms roll in. John Marin, writing about painting landscape, said “First you make your bow to the Landscape—Then you wait and if and when the Landscape bows to you then and not until then Can you paint the Landscape.” The sea, like the land, demands respect.

I often include gulls in my paintings; I love their cry, their free flight, or their stillness on my lawn, accepting my presence. They could be the birds of Saint Francis, reminding me that nature prevails and is beautiful. I sometimes paint sleeping sailors, or fishermen, sometimes mermaids, for I find in sleep, or, as the Aboriginal people say, “In the dreaming,” the ordinary gives way to that inner world which is part of us, our desires, unbound by logic. Sometimes I paint storms at sea, or the fog rolling in, obscuring the islands, nature putting on a show. And often, caught up



Resting Mermaid, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 16 inches



Morning Coffee, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 16 inches

in this drama is a single boat, sailor or lobsterman, the human presence making a brief appearance on stage.

A word about how I work. Technique to me is using whatever is at hand to capture how the artist feels in front of the canvas, that state of suspension before he reaches for the means, be it brushes, paper towels, razor blades, kitchen utensils, whatever. I often use paper towels to apply the paint. By doing so I am able to apply one layer over another, creating density. At some point I feel it necessary to lose control, to free myself of the intellect, of method, of calculations, for I believe it is through the senses that art communicates.

I go into my studio almost every morning. I take in a cup of tea, and after an hour if I find the tea untouched, I know things are going well. I work non-stop until lunch, and after lunch I will go back into the studio to see if the painting is still breathing. If it is not, I may take it apart and reassemble it, a radical procedure that sometimes saves it. If it is alive, I am very careful not to upset it.

To many the life of an artist may seem a lonely life, spending days by himself in his studio, but he is not really alone. If conditions are right, the muse is with him, and if the muse is elsewhere, he has his creations to keep him company. It's a pretty good life.

— William Irvine

Emerging from the Fogbank, 2016, oil on canvas, 36 x 40 inches







The Green Sea, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Woman Carrying a Lamb
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



Searching the Fog
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



Hauling in the Fog, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



A Passage Through the Clouds, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Sailor Resting, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Woman Drying Her Hair
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



*Waiting for the
Fog to Clear*
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



The Gathering Storm, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



The Last Swim
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



Calling in Daisy
oil on panel
12 x 16 inches
2016



Evening Sea, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Summer Storm, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Sunset Over Tinkers, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Sunset Over Harriman Point, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



Evening Sail, 2016, oil on board, 25 x 36 inches



Table with Two Moons, 2016, oil on panel, 24 x 30 inches



Woman with Umbrella (front and back), porcelain vase, 10h inches

The Highlander, porcelain plate, 13d inches



Shower Girl, porcelain vase, 9h inches



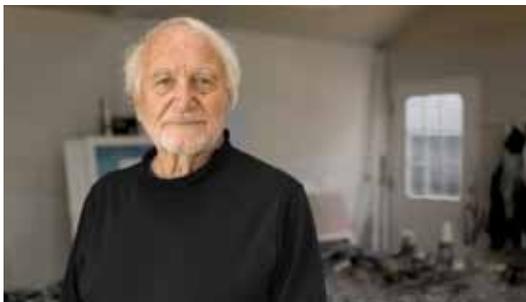
Boats, porcelain bowl, 6d inches



Girl with Flowers, porcelain vase, 11h inches

WILLIAM IRVINE

DIGITAL MONTAGE JEFFERY BECTON



BORN Troon, Scotland

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2012, '14, '15, '16
The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland 2016
Marshall Store Gallery, York, ME 2015
Gleason Gallery, Boothbay Harbor, ME 2011, '12, '13, '14
Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, ME 1986–2011
Firehouse Gallery, Damariscotta, ME 2002–2009
Studio E, Palm Beach, FL 2003–2006
Shaw Gallery, Northeast Harbor, ME 2003, '05, '07
McGrath Dunham Gallery, Castine, ME 2001–2006
George Marshall Store Gallery, York, ME 2005
Eastland Gallery, Portland, ME 2001
Carnegie Museum, University of Maine, Orono, ME 2000
Davidson and Daughters, Portland, ME 1996, 1999
Leighton Gallery, Westford, MA 1982, 1995
Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA 1993
June Fitzpatrick Gallery, Portland, ME 1992
Bayview Gallery, Portland, ME 1989
Noel Butcher Gallery, Philadelphia, PA 1982–1986
John Little Gallery, Clark University, Worcester, MA 1980
Rudolph Gallery, Woodstock, NY and Miami, FL 1968–1976
Drian Gallery, London, England 1960, 1962
Parton Gallery, London, England 1960
McLellan Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland 1958
Carnegie Library, Ayr, Scotland 1949

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME 2007–present
Gleason Gallery, Boothbay Harbor, ME 2011–present
George Marshall Store Gallery, York, ME 2007–present

Greenhut Gallery, Portland, ME 2006–present
Elan Gallery, Rockport, ME 2007
Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME 2006–2013
Turtle Gallery, Deer Isle, ME 2006
Penobscot Marine Museum at Searsport, ME 2002
Marine Environmental Research Institute, Blue Hill, ME 2001
Monmouth Museum, Lincroft, NJ 1984
Mast Cove Gallery, Kennebunkport, ME
Gregory Boon Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
Congress Square Gallery, Portland, ME
National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC
Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT 1982
American Art Cultural Center, Washington, DC 1978
Shore Gallery, Boston, MA 1970–1973
Portal Gallery, London, England
Artists International Association, London, England
Blue Hill Library, Blue Hill, ME
Scottish Arts Council, Edinburgh, Scotland 1953

PUBLIC AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME
Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, ME
Hand and Flower Press, London, England
Marine Environmental Research Institute, Blue Hill, ME
Rouse Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA
Scottish Arts Council, Edinburgh, Scotland

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Little, Carl. *William Irvine: A Painter's Journey*. Marshall Wilkes 2014
Down East, Kim Ridley, April 2010
Maine Home + Design, Suzanne McEvoy, August 2008
Maine Painters, Carl Little, editor, September 2006
Maine Sunday Telegram, Philip Isaacson 2001, Ken Greenleaf 1996
Maine Times, Feature Article, Donna Gold 2000
Bangor Daily News, Feature Article 1999, 2000
Art New England, Carl Little 2000
Portland Press Herald 1992, 1999
Preview 1993
The Maine Times 1991
The Philadelphia Inquirer 1983
ArtNews, Ann Jarmusch 1983
Maine Life 1979
The London Observer 1960

EDUCATION

Glasgow School of Art, DA



Island, 2016, oil on panel, 12 x 16 inches

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