

ISLAND BODIES: KATE WALTERS  
IN THE PICTURE ROOM  
14 FEB – 18 APR

NEWLYN  
ART GALLERY  
& THE  
EXCHANGE

NEW WORKS IN OIL AND WATERCOLOUR

Kate Walters has visited the Western and Northern Isles of Scotland over recent years on research trips and for residencies.

The works in this exhibition were created on a recent residency on Iona.

LIST OF WORKS

UNFRAMED

1. Deep In The Psyche Of Nature	800
2. God Is A Woman	800
3. I Hatch Babies In My Hair	800
4. Black Madonna	800
5. Milk For The Wild	800
6. In The Garden	800
7. Where Creatures Feed	800
8. The Infant With Her Face In The Ground	800
9. Horses, Islands, Clouds	800

FRAMED

1. Child Soul With Spirit Bird	700
2. The Serpent, She Weaves	650
3. Having Sky Mind	450
4. From Out The Eye	450
5. Serpent Bird	650
6. Spirit Birds	600
7. Black Madonna, Flethy Sky	400
8. My Cups For Spirit	700
9. With Our Blue Toes	200
10. Black Madonna In Sky Of Nodes	400
11. Celestial Eye Sees	450

## ISLAND BODIES: KATE WALTERS

These recent works by Kate Walters stand on the cusp of change in her increasingly impressive oeuvre. Fascinatingly, they also position us on many thresholds, each of which works towards complex meanings: they are between worlds; between earthly beings; between beings and plants; between abstraction and figuration; between profound and ancient traditions and an innovative symbolism that extends them.

What I mean by this is that while she draws on traditions - the Shamanic, the Graeco-Roman - she never merely repeats them. So although she references Artemis/Diana (the huntress) we do not find a goddess figure accompanied by the usual trappings of hound, bow and arrow, and stag. Rather, Walters explores Diana's rôle as guardian of the wild forest, protecting all newborns, without distinguishing between animal and human. In this, her wildness is associated with water, both as the free-flowing imagination and the untamed rivers and springs. This is not to preclude Diana's lethal capacity as huntress; but rather to foreground that none of this is sentimental or easy. It is a matter of life and death.

The way Walters draws on the Shamanic helps to bring these thoughts of transition and the wild closer to the formal qualities of the painting. There are two elements in this tradition that she cites: the tree and hair. Several of the works in this exhibition articulate a co-emergence between branches and hair, and between both of these and veins or living sap, or the ducts through which nurturing milk flows. We see it in the forms and the way the paint flows and spreads. It is more than transitional: they are consanguineous.

So why *Island Bodies*? Because the works were inspired by islands, of course: Iona, Orkney, the Uists and Shetland. But it goes further than that. An island is not the opposite of the mainland; it's as connected as all parts of the earth are. It's just that we can't see it under the waters, nor can we see that the waters are what define all life.

We have to think and see differently to understand these things, these works of art. We have to be '*Deep in the Psyche of Nature*'.

As Walters points out, quoting her favorite Rilke:

The moon won't use the door,  
Only the window.

*In the garden Deep in the psyche of Nature  
Of Earth as River or Snake  
I hatch babies in my hair,  
The creatures I feed,  
Vision, Milk, Hair, Nest.  
Suspension. Belief.*

Penny Florence, with thanks to Kate for access to her research

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