

*BRIDGET MACDONAD A Deeper Landscape:
Paintings and drawings around the theme of landscape and memory.
10 April – 17 May 2024*



The link between literature and the visual arts has been a characteristic feature of Macdonald's work over the past 30 years. She has used the classical literary concept of the pastoral as a framework on which to build her particular way of working with landscape. Her own farming background and present life in the country around the Malvern Hills are blended with references to Virgil, Claude, Poussin, Samuel Palmer et al to make an allusive and resonant mix of the real and the imagined. As Sheila McGregor wrote in a catalogue essay, 'It is the tension between things observed and things remembered, between the immediacy of a specific visual stimulus and a process of retrospective distillation, that gives her work its power'.

Bridget Macdonald is interested in the way landscape is a palimpsest of centuries of history from farming activities to ancient battles. "Landscape in general also holds our individual memories of places and experiences, and many of the works in this exhibition depict the landscape of the Malvern Hills where I live."

"The painting *Easter Fire* for example, came out of seeing one of our field bonfires one cold and snowy Easter. So it was an actual thing I saw but also refers to the fires lit on Easter Eve, particularly in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox church. Similarly, *Crows in the September Orchard* reminded me of the amazing orchard paintings in the Villa Livia in Rome as well as Samuel Palmer's fruit trees, but is also based on

things seen in our orchard. The meanings and associations tend to develop as the works develop.

The old perry pear tree in *Perry Pear at Storridge* is a reminder of the old orchards of Herefordshire, many of which have been grubbed up over the last decades. We have a young orchard a few miles away planted with old local varieties of apples and pears – a scheme devised by Herefordshire County Council to conserve the heritage of this landscape. This orchard appears in *Crows in the September Orchard* and *March Pruning with the Japanese Ladder*.

The drawing *The Midsummer Mare II* came out of a chance encounter some years ago with a beautiful grey mare in the country below the Malverns on the evening of the Summer Solstice. Other drawings include the view to the hills from the orchard and the Severn water meadows where the Battle of Worcester was fought in September 1651."





Born in 1943 on the Isle of Wight, Bridget Macdonald trained in Fine Art from 1983 to 1987. Major solo exhibitions in public galleries include Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Worcester City Art Gallery, Derby Art Gallery, The Rotunda Gallery at Birmingham University, and QuayArts on the Isle of Wight. Her work is held in the permanent collections of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Worcester City Art Gallery and the House of Lords at 1 Millbank. She has shown regularly at Art First since its inception.

For all enquiries and an illustrated price list please contact Clare Cooper:
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Gallery hours: Wed – Fri 11am – 6pm, or by appointment.

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