



Hannah Davies sees inspirational images everywhere, as reflected in her elegant paintings.

Exhibiting at Whitewater Contemporary this summer, artist Hannah Davies presents a collection of paintings which explore the theme of 'reflections'. This seems, at first, to be unusual subject matter, and yet Hannah's work cleverly pulls together landscape, figuration and abstraction into a single line of creative enquiry. The result is imagery that asks you to lean in and make sense of what you are seeing, instantly connecting you with the work and revealing the fascinating complexity of our visual world.

Cornwall as soon as I came to look around the university, and saw its location on a palm-lined street with the beach behind," she tells me. "It made my choice of art college very easy! I felt like I fitted, and I made Cornwall my home." Her interest in reflections began whilst studying, against the backdrop of a degree level education which teaches all of us who study art to notice and interrogate every visual stimulus available. "I started to look at reflections in the first year of my degree," says Hannah, "and have been fascinated by them ever since.



Hannah was born in Cambridge but decided to stay permanently in Cornwall after completing a degree in Fine Art at Falmouth in 2002. "I fell in love with

Coming from Cambridge, I had a seven-hour journey to and from Falmouth each term, and I passed the time drawing people on the train. So as not to be too intrusive

Moments OF BEAUTY

WORDS BY MERCEDES SMITH

LEFT
Lines and Leaves, Cambridge in Reflection



INSET
Hannah Davies



I drew them in the reflection of the train window, and I started to notice the wonderful layers and contrasts created on the glass as the landscape rushed past over the faces of figures lost in thought. This developed into looking at cafe windows, with their wonderful layers of interior and exterior worlds, all colliding into one dreamlike image on the glass surface. I never get bored of this ever-changing reflective picture, and I often paint the same window over and over as the seasons and the light change. Even within just one day a reflection will completely transform with the rising and setting of the sun.”

Using transparent layers of oil paint, built up slowly so that each layer is visible on the canvas, Hannah recreates the shimmering atmosphere of thrown light and the reflected images that surround us on a daily basis. Her paintings merge private and public spaces, and produce strange and surprising combinations where coffee cups, trees and seated figures float through sea and sky. Her images are mesmerising in their simultaneous sense of movement and calming stillness, with the echo of something vital in between.

“My working process starts when I catch sight of reflections or beautiful light when I am out and about,” says Hannah. “I carry a tiny sketchbook and a camera in my bag to capture that first idea. I make so many images and sketches that I always have a bank of ideas to work from. I’m fascinated by our relationship with nature. Layering up all the beautiful, organic shapes of the landscape against the hard lines of our interior worlds, in my view, just makes nature’s forms even more beautiful. The natural world is most important to me, but my paintings also look at how we move around and interact within our spaces, at people’s body language, whether together or alone, whether sitting still inside and having a break, or rushing past not noticing. I paint in oils, which is important to me as I love the history of oil work and the slow painting process. I try to let my first marks, or sometimes the under-drawing, show through so that the craftsmanship, the timeline of my process, is there for all to see.

“My actual paint choices are always the same – I always go back to my favourite colours and I find it difficult to work with





CREATE

any others – but my palette changes with the seasons as I am so influenced by the weather and by my surroundings. Winter brings more muted, pale blues and browns, then changes to brighter greens as spring comes, and then yellows and pinks as summer arrives. My paintings are complicated to begin with, because of the two combined images, so limiting my colour palette helps to take some of the decision making away. I paint only the visual information I find interesting in a window and leave out whatever I don't. I find that I often put too much information in a painting for it to be visually pleasing to me, so I will always layer a very pale blue or yellow over the top until I have taken it back to a simpler, more contemporary image. My palette and my technique are designed to create a calm, quiet painting from which details will emerge the longer you look at it."

Alongside her paintings, Hannah's particular love of drawing is evident in her Light Patches series of works, which explore the simple beauty of shards of sunlight thrown across a room. "My Light

Patches drawings are an extension of the Reflections paintings," Hannah explains. "I see beautiful patches of light on crumbling walls, or bouncing around the rooms of my house as the sun comes up – the sunlight shining through leaves, through or reflected from the window, and projected onto a surface. Beauty shining everywhere, nature projected all over our buildings. Like reflections, they are ever changing and so fleeting, and I have to capture them before they disappear. I love the impermanence of them. They are like little flashes of joy."



This year, Hannah's beautiful drawings have been selected for the prestigious Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing prize for the third time.

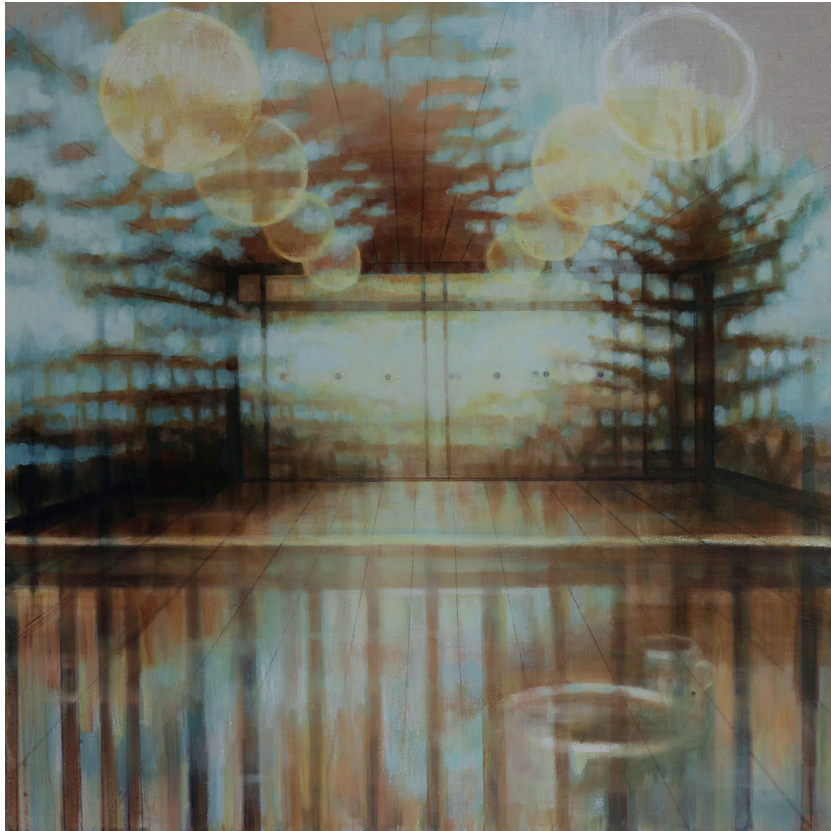
"First being selected for the Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize was wonderful," she says. "I felt like it gave me permission to pursue my drawing practice, which I have always done for pleasure but never presented as finished pieces. My drawings of light are just little studies really, looking at the layering of the many colours that make up white light. I am always trying to get that sense of movement as the light flickers, yet with a calming stillness too."



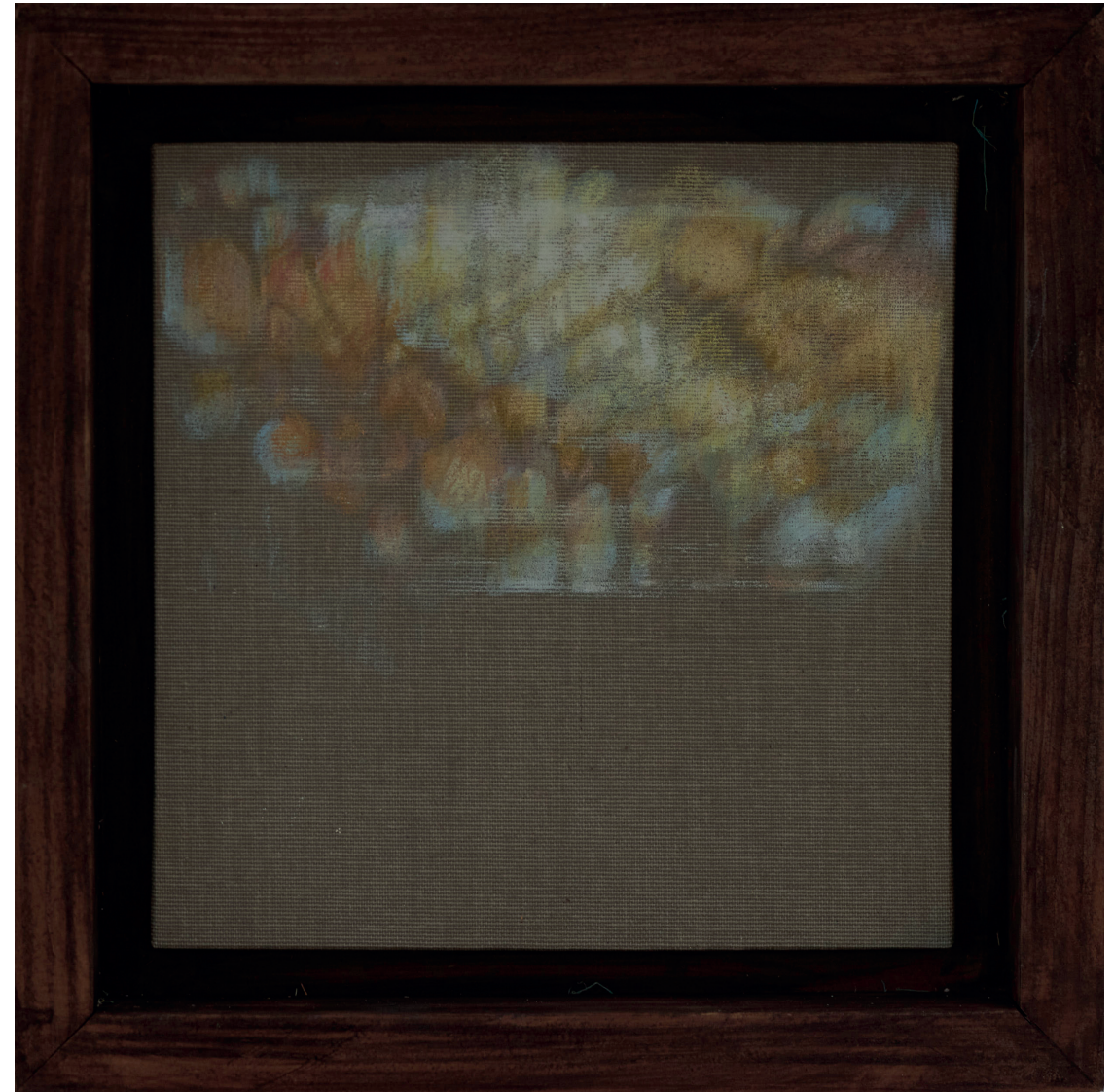
ABOVE
Little Light Patch 15



ABOVE
Into the Wild



ABOVE
It's All About Light.



ABOVE
Tiny Light Patch





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For her Whitewater Contemporary exhibition, Hannah has created a new Reflections series of large-scale paintings inspired by places across the country, including Cornwall, alongside a collection of smaller Light Patches drawings, “all tied together” she says, “with a pared back colour palette, and hopefully the same quiet, calming feeling of light and hope. I would love my exhibition to leave viewers with a feeling of optimism and calm, and to draw people’s attention to ways of looking

at light and reflections that they maybe haven’t noticed before. As a painter I see so many small moments of beauty in the natural world every day, and I love to share those moments through my work”.

See Hannah Davies’ Featured Artist exhibition from 29th June to 24th July at Whitewater Contemporary, The Parade, Polzeath, PL27 6SR.

 whitewatercontemporary.co.uk

ABOVE
Tree Tunnel

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