
Judy Hall A Profile

To look into Judy Hall's series of *Slingers* paintings is to tumble into the elemental colours and gritty textures of the limestone landscape of Portland Bill. This is an area completely unknown to me and yet, when seen through Judy's eyes, I feel part of it. This period of her work is ethereal but with an edge to it - the colours, shapes and the compositions triggering a moment, a mood or a memory which draws one in. Abstract art can often confuse the viewer who relies on a visual pathway to navigate the image in front of them, and in Judy's work there are often clues to be found.

Judy was a mature student in Graphics at Bournemouth College but soon realised working in advertising or publishing was not where her interests lay and as she told me *"This design interest has carried over into my painting and given me an interest in typefaces which appear from time to time"*.



Judy with her work

During Covid Lockdown Judy worked in a completely different way using a large pad of paper and painting in a watercolour style and the results were vibrant and colourful. Judy enjoyed *"Just playing, and they developed as they wished"*. The most gorgeous clashing and sizzling coral and bursts of violet tempered with indigo and red seem to leap off the page and there amongst them is a self-portrait where she is wearing coral and black and holding a Marguerite, all framed by the window and garden behind (See next page).



'Summer'

Judy says *"I like space and the latest ones are about space. I always go back to space. And I like near tones, a picture with almost near tones, very spacey, tranquil"*, as her work **Summer** which she sold at BAS in 2023 perfectly encapsulates, giving the viewer a feeling of thoughtful stillness.

She uses acrylics as they dry quickly allowing a spontaneous change in direction when interspersed with glues, muslin, fillers, sand-paper as well as found objects, commenting *"The currency of Contemporary Art challenges what was before, and hints that there is more to come. It should confront prevailing notions and it might also be seen as interesting, exciting, significant and fresh"*.

Portland is an area Judy has known all her life. Her father had a fishing boat and she spent a lot of time exploring the island and still goes down there. *"It is a tiny place and only 5 by 2 miles long and there used to be a railway because of moving the stone, but the storms kept causing problems"*. Quarrying declined in the area and the sheer cliffs still have tunnels running underneath the top. Now the discarded worn rusty equipment is echoed in her colour palette of the Portland inspired paintings, particularly those entitled *Slingers*. Thomas Hardy immortalised the area as The Isle of The Slingers in his novel The Well-Beloved. Slingers was the name

given to the early inhabitants because of the specific method of defence they used against intruders, which was to fire stones and pebbles worn smooth by the sea, from their slings.

It is always interesting to hear which artist's work has been an inspiration or a trigger for our members. One of those who caught Judy's imagination early on is the English born Australian painter Russell Drysdale. His work *The Drover's Wife* depicts the lone figure of an Outback Settler in an inhospitable landscape under ominous skies.

The colour palette Russell used is tonally intense with the colours flowing powerfully but seamlessly across the canvas, which says as much as the scene depicted. Much of Judy's current work echoes this very effectively and I hope that from her small box room studio Judy continues to paint her ethereal and wide tonal spaces which reference ancient times and, as in *Fish and Chips*, may include a dab of gentle humour.

Eleanor Milton



'Drifting'



'Outcrop III'



'Fish and Chips'
