

KATHERINE HAMILTON





Aegean Thistle
oil on canvas 54 × 79 cm


campden
gallery

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KATHERINE HAMILTON AND THE CLASSICAL RESPONSE

Katherine Hamilton's latest work has a new authority, especially in her treatment of light, and she paints with enhanced sophistication the dialogue between abstraction and depiction. For example, the witty Mondrianesque *Table and Chairs*, in which a high viewpoint on an ordinary interior affords the painter the opportunity to organise her canvas in a semblance of High Modernist abstraction, while still describing what she has seen. *Neighbourhood*, *Chania* offers similar pleasures, proposing a kind of folk cubism of boxy facets which is oddly pleasurable. In *Mountain House*, *Uchiko*, the empty interiors we have seen before in Hamilton's work reach a new level of serene geometry. Its companion piece, *Interior, Uchiko*, is altogether less severe, gentled with a prospect of greenery and a pinkish balustrade, allowing in an element of the organic and idiosyncratic. *Beehives*, *Crete* is another highly enjoyable simplification of colour and form in Hamilton's architectonic mode.

She is equally effective out of doors. The yellow surface pattern of the flowers in *Wild Parsnip*, slightly resembling a molecular model of some chemical compound, doubles as concise painterly design and accurate observation of structure. Here we see science in nature: the science of explaining natural history and the science of painting. There is even something macrocosmic hinted at, and we are reminded of William Blake's dictum about seeing the whole world in a grain of sand. *Sea Holly* and *Spear Thistle* are equally memorable examples of a small group of botanic paintings, which are nothing like botanical illustration, but take the character of the plant and interpret it in formal ways that explore further Hamilton's aims as a painter. *Aegean Thistle* is perhaps the most beautiful of this set of flower paintings, a virtuoso performance in its delicate needling.

This new assurance in the handling of dynamic rhythm and

pattern can be seen especially in *Thorn*, in which the brilliant berries on their arabesque of stem bring an extra touch of menace as a blood-red necklace to the deadly stilettos of the thorn bush. Here decoration and structure work hand-in-hand to a most eloquent end. *Crocus and Stones* is even more ambitious, embracing a sculptural impulse in the arrangement of the stones, though the way they are painted does not emphasise their mass so much as their flat shape. Again colour pattern is the dominant aesthetic, the yellow and green working succinctly against the blocks of white.

Seashore is a kind of memento mori which takes the flotsam and jetsam of the beach, including dried tendrils of seaweed, cockle, mussel and slipper limpet shells and the shattered remains of a crab, and assembles them into a pleasing composition, a dexterous exercise in colour and tone. Here is the beauty to be found even in death, a ready acceptance of the natural order that seems possible with molluscs, but that we humans find increasingly difficult to apply to ourselves. *Fallen Leaves* is another, even gentler, exploration of the same theme, its innate melancholy counteracted by a rich autumnal colouration that paradoxically raises the spirits with its verve and movement.

There is no room to mention here all the paintings to have impressed me, but I must not neglect the landscapes in my enjoyment of the still-life paintings, flowers and interiors. Particularly, the bold palette and broad sweeps of *Winter*, *Coigach*, in which colour and shape knit effortlessly to form a powerful design, and descriptive line is less important than colour-patch and pattern. In these new paintings, Katherine Hamilton shows herself to be increasingly adept at the kind of nuanced classical statement that offers solace in troubled times.

ANDREW LAMBIRTH



Table and Chairs
oil on canvas 54 x 70 cm

Mountain House, Uchiko
oil on canvas 66 x 117 cm





Fallen Leaves
oil on canvas 44 × 63 cm



Interior, Uchiko
oil on canvas 66 × 78 cm



Sea Holly
oil on canvas 49 x 56 cm

Neighbourhood, Chania
oil on canvas 125 x 87 cm



Morning Harbour, Chania
oil on canvas 68 x 117 cm





Wild Parsnip
oil on canvas 39 x 55 cm



Mountain Farm, Shikoku
oil on canvas 82 x 96 cm

Pilgrims Route, Nara
oil on canvas 65 x 122 cm





Seashore
oil on canvas 59 × 46 cm



Harbour, Uwajima
oil on canvas 52 × 92 cm

Lower Garden
oil on canvas 90 × 135 cm





Bird in the Grass
oil on canvas 59 x 41 cm



Garden, Shikoku
oil on canvas 70 x 81 cm



Crocus and Stones
oil on canvas 33 x 41 cm



Interior, Late Afternoon
oil on canvas 120 x 67 cm

Beehives, Crete
oil on canvas 71 x 112 cm





Spear Thistle
oil on canvas 51 × 39 cm



Early Spring, West Sussex
oil on canvas 72 × 75 cm

Lofoten Islands, Southern Arctic
oil on canvas 79 x 110 cm





Lofoten, Winter
oil on canvas 54 x 80 cm



Lofoten, Dusk
oil on canvas 59 x 86 cm



Glade, Cumbria
oil on canvas 58 x 70 cm



Winter Wood
oil on canvas 57 x 79 cm



Thorn
oil on canvas 95 × 60 cm



Winter, Coigach oil on canvas 83 × 99 cm



Winter Marsh, Suffolk oil on canvas 80 x 106 cm

KATHERINE HAMILTON

The Academy of Florence, The Byam Shaw School of Art and the London School of Contemporary Dance formed the basis of my training. I worked as both dancer and muralist in London, Amsterdam and New York, which led to a commission from the Ministry of Culture in Ethiopia to choreograph and form a dance company in Addis Abba.

From Ethiopia to the present day my work has revolved around both landscape and the study of other cultures, such as the agricultural communities of Guatemala, fishing communities of Senegal, life around the river Niger, Mali, as well as subjects closer to home such as the Hippodrome Circus, Great Yarmouth and the varied landscapes across Britain throughout the seasons.

Just before Covid hit our shores I visited Japan, my aim was to go to the more rural parts of Japan to observe landscapes and communities in a more traditional setting.

The handmade skills of its craftsmen, whether making a sword a pot or just a sweet biscuit, is something close to magic. The attention to detail, working with raw materials, practising techniques passed down over the centuries and honed from within takes years of apprenticeship. One barely scraped the surface of this mysterious country, it both humbled and inspired me.

Since 1984 I have exhibited in London, East Anglia, America and Gloucestershire, my work is held in both public and private collections. I live and work in Suffolk

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FRONT COVER
Sea Holly
oil on canvas 49 x 56 cm





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