



LUKE ELWES

a d a m gallery

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CONSTELLATION

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1. Headland | Oil on canvas | 76 x 92 cm



The Island interior is a sacred realm, composed of rock faces and reflecting pools, where paths undulate in the mist, enfolding hidden lakes and lost gardens, before rising steeply upward, into the distant hills that punctuate this floating world and whose dark rounded silhouettes (a home to hermits and holy men) resemble rough hewn heads filled with silent thoughts.

Down below, shapes rise briefly through the monsoon mists - unfolding flowers, passing pilgrims, flashes of white, pink and orange - before sinking from sight, dissolving in water.

Moving through this veiled space, your mind becomes absorbed in the flow of time & belief.

Every painting is a veil, though given that many abstract painters have sought to vanquish the inherent illusionism of the medium, perhaps we should say, potentially so. The paintings shown here are characteristic, in their layering of diluted, stained and poured oil paint. Ostensibly abstract, in the sense that they are flat, dispersed in structure and without figural content, they manifestly suggest liquid, flowing, reflective surfaces. That which they enact, then, they also configure.

Elwes has a migrant past, having lived for part of his childhood in Iran, and he is attracted by remote and desert regions. While the desert, in its aridity, might seem the opposite of these apparently liquid formations, there is an underlying affinity between water and sand, and a liaison between both and the wind: sand is formed and moved by the wind, and flows like water, forming waves and ripples. Elwes intends his paintings to form themselves correspondingly, in a microcosmic recapitulation of these natural processes of flow and inundation.

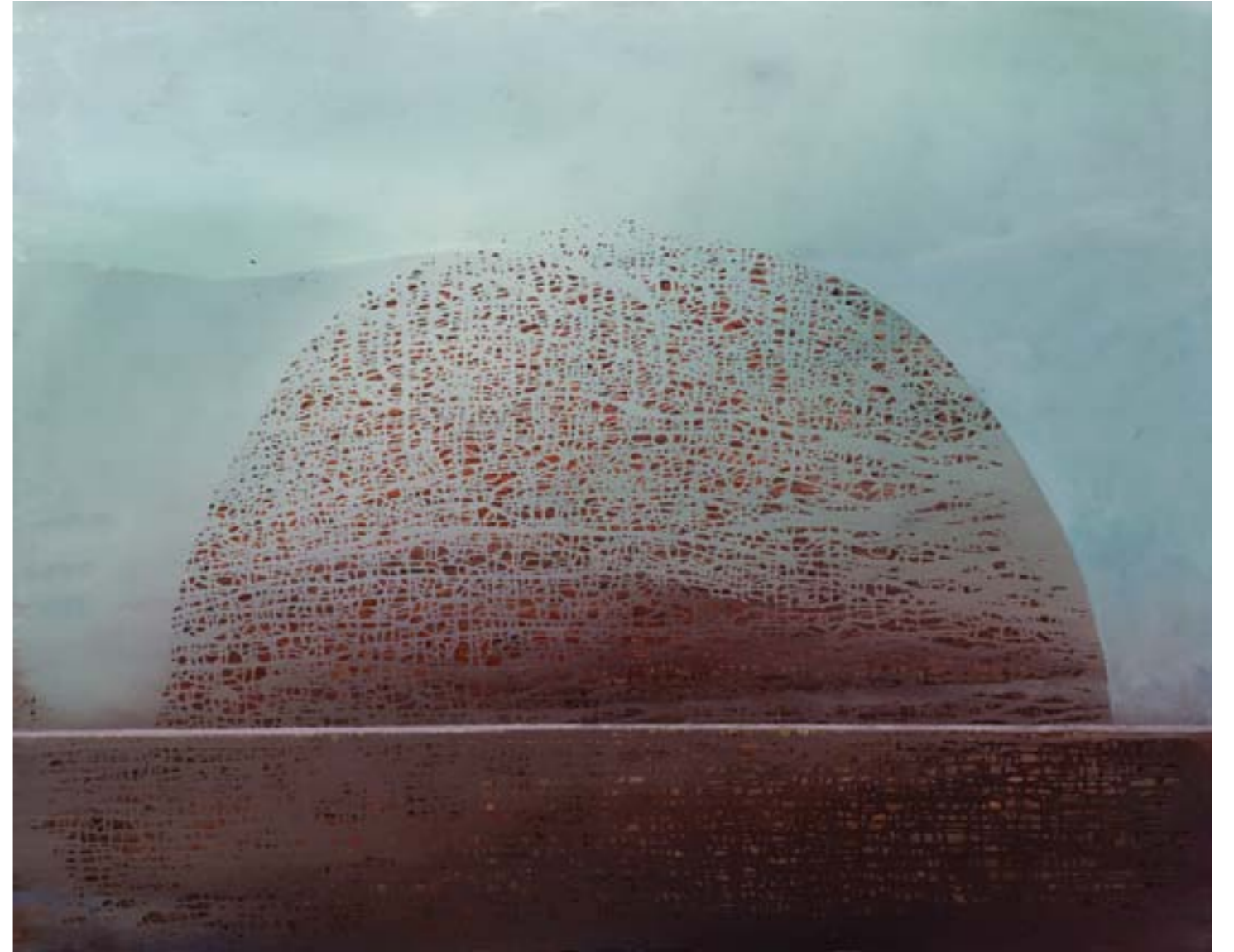
Brendan Prendeville, Senior Lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London ; extract on Luke Elwes
from 'Another Country', an essay for the Estorick Collection, (London 2010)





3. Aquaterra1 | Oil on canvas | 107 x 214 cm

4. Summa | Oil on canvas | 122 x 153 cm





5. Aquaterra 2 | Oil on canvas | 92 x 183 cm



6. Topos | Oil on canvas | 92 x 183 cm



7. Water's Edge | Oil on canvas | 30 x 40 cm



8. Dawn | Oil on canvas | 51 x 51 cm



9. Cosmos | Mixed media on paper | 57 x 76 cm

This new series of works on paper is the result of the fluid interaction of natural and man made materials. They are executed under an open sky, at dawn or dusk, sometimes in the rain or late at night, and they remain close to the ground or the water, where the shifting light radiates across the salt marshes and the tides move back and forth through the delicate maze of creeks and channels. They reveal chance encounters with a myriad of visual stimuli: passing birds, rolling mist, scattered flora, wind blown leaves or drifting shapes, floating on, reflected in, the passing streams.

They are a fragile record of process and time, the uncertain result of a particular moment of elemental engagement, made without correction in one sitting.

The location provides just a beginning, a way of collecting particles of colour and light and a way of observing the play of prevailing conditions on a paper surface which, once it is scattered with incidental markings and stained with coloured inks and organic matter, is then allowed to become saturated by the surrounding waters.



In an extract from a letter to the artist, Robert Macfarlane writes:

' I might try to articulate what I find so unusual and compelling about the work: its localism, for a start. But also the hover between encryption and archetype (enigma and fabulous openness). " As you hold on to a leaf, a shell, feather or pebble before returning it to its microcosmos, you learn to see not the names of things but the things themselves". Absolutely. We are both collectors, but not in the possessive sense of that word; quite the opposite. Surrenderers of sorts.'

Robert Macfarlane is the author of *The Wild Places* (Granta, 2008) and *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (Penguin 2012)



10. Constellation | Mixed media on paper | 114 x 143 cm

11. Night Tide | Mixed media on paper | 114 x 143 cm





12. Wildwood | Mixed media on paper | 114 x 143 cm



13. Stream | Mixed media on paper | 114 x 143 cm





15. Ryne | Mixed media on paper | 57 x 76 cm



16. Burst | Mixed media on paper | 57 x 76 cm



17. Spring | Mixed media on paper | 57 x 76 cm

Selected shows

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| 2012 | 'Constellation', Adam Gallery, London & Bath
'Celestial Confetti', North House Gallery, Essex
Threadneedle Painting Prize, London | |
| 2011 | 'Silent Kingdom', Adam Gallery, London & Bath
Royal Academy Summer Exhibition | |
| 2010 | 'Another Country', The Estorick Collection, London
Critics Choice, Browse & Darby, London | |
| 2009 | 'Secret Water', works on paper, Broadbent London
'Five London Painters', Hester Gallery, Leeds
'Luke Elwes: Peintures Recente', Galerie Marceau Bastille, Paris
'L'Isle Joyeuse', Falle Fine Art, St.Helier, Jersey, | |
| 2008 | 'Genius Loci', Galleria Ceribelli, Bergamo, Italy | |
| 2007 | 'Refugia', Art First, Cork Street, London
'Mapping', Bury Art Gallery, Manchester
'Gli Amici Pittori Di Londra', Galleria Ceribelli, Bergamo,
& Galleria Ghelfi, Vicenza, Italy.
Royal Academy Summer Exhibition | |
| 2006 | Celeste Art prize, London | |
| 2005 | 'Flowing Ground', works on paper, Broadbent, London
Royal Academy Summer Exhibition | |
| 2004 | 'Compass', Art First, Cork Street, London
'Slow Art', Broadbent Gallery, London | |
| 2003 | Royal Academy Summer Exhibition | |
| 2002 | 'The Osea Paintings', Art First, Cork Street, London
'Luke Elwes: New Work', Art First New York | |
| 2000 | 'Five British Artists', Galerie Vieille du Temple, Paris
'Sanctuary', Art First, Cork Street, London | |
| 1999 | The Hunting Group Art Prizes, London and Bath. | |
| 1998 | 'Pilgrim', Art First, Cork Street, London
Royal Academy Summer Exhibition | |
| | | 1997 14th Annual Open, Royal Overseas League, London & Edinburgh |
| | | 1996 'Endangered Spaces', Council for the Protection of Rural England,
Christies, London.
Bayer Earth Art Prize, London. |
| | | 1995 'Centenary', Contemporary British Art, Christie's, London.
Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (as invited artist) |
| | | 1993 Luke Elwes, Galerie Vieille du Temple, Paris |
| | | 1992 'Spring', Barbican, London (chosen by The Spectator) |
| | | 1991 'Il Sud Del Mondo, L'Altra Arte Contemporanea',
Marsala, Sicily, and Milan, Italy.
'Earthscape', Hastings & Southampton City Art Gallery.
'Songlines', Barbican, London. |
| | | 1990 The Broad Horizon, Agnews, London |





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