

Wide Open

Paintings and drawings by Heather Duncan at the New Court Gallery and No1 Gallery, Repton School

Heather's view of landscape is one of human experience: the impressions upon its surface mapping the interventions, modifications, and, in some cases, the mutual benefits that arise from our connection with the land. Her evocative, abstract paintings fuse with the realism of the landscape tradition in British art, creating works of great poetry, and full of sensibility. Heather inherits much from the Expressionist and Neo-Romantic artists of the twentieth century. Yet this is no fanciful or Arcadian view of landscape. Heather's paintings 'celebrate the beauty of landscape' in all its forms: natural, cultivated, wild, or industrial. As such, they offer an intuitive portrait not merely of geography, but of humanity.

In April, the New Court and No.1 Gallery at Repton School in Derbyshire, will host a major exhibition of Heather's work. Titled *Wide Open*, and drawing upon a year's worth of the artist's latest creations, it will present Heather's trademark abstract oil paintings, alongside her recent foray into ink drawings. These moving and penetrating works signal a turn in the constantly evolving nature of Heather's practice, demonstrating confidence and mastery of skill. Heather is producing what is arguably some of her most exciting work to date: the freshest and most significant paintings to have emerged from a Derbyshire landscape artist in recent years.

Rich colour fields, clinging ethereal mists, and monolithic totems form a fascinating trip into a landscape that speaks of the deeply complex and multi-layered interaction between the human and natural worlds. Heather Duncan's landscapes offer a view of these two spheres inextricably linked; where landscape becomes portrait, or even self-portrait, by an intriguing sleight of artistic hand.

'*Wide Open*' runs from 22 April to 26 June 2010 at the New Court Gallery and No1 gallery, Repton School, Derbyshire, DE65 6FL. Open Mon-Wed 2-4pm Fri 12-3pm and weekends by appointment 07808 930141 artist 07906 341245 www.heatherduncan.com

Lucy Salt is Keeper of Art at Derby Museum and Art Gallery