

Webb, Kenneth

Kenneth Webb walked into Kennys in High Street for the first time in 1953, and they have been working together ever since. It has been a very happy working relationship built on mutual trust and great friendship. In the sixty years since, his work has come in different phases. He gets locked on to and explores a particular subject, and when he is finished with it, he moves effortlessly on to a new theme. Art lovers have experienced his Forest of Dean pictures, his County Down farmhouses and harbours, thorn trees, tidewrack, the poppies of the 1960's, bog paintings, the waterlilies of 80's and 90's and his recent images of his unique garden and the Marconi Bog. What has not changed in all those years is his passion for painting and his use of colour. Colour for him is an all embracing experience which pervades his work, and he constantly experiments with his own freer ideas and personal concepts, using direct colour in a subjective expressionist manner. Whatever the topic, his fresh approach to painting, especially in Connemara, makes him one of the most important and influential landscape painters in the country today. Many artists who have achieved something personal in their work have been largely helped by a sense of place. For Kenneth, this place is Connemara, especially near Ballinaboy. It is imbued with a certain spirit he finds inspiring. He enjoys being isolated there and seems to find motivation in every neglected bog cut, every leaf and stone, the uncut grasses and the wonderful variety of colours in his garden. They all demand to be painted. He works in various styles but his internalised vision now takes precedence over any objective representation. John O'Donohue has written "Kenneth Webb's work is a homage to the secret life of colour. Though his paintings are intense icons, you never have the feeling that form or content are forced or contrived. He has managed to penetrate to some deeper level from which the painting is able to assert the dream of its own shaping. He says paintings have always come to him. His work does have that tone of lyrical necessity; they had to come. In our post-modern era where so much of life is reduced and commercialised through visual and aggressive image, it is healing to the eye, and refreshing for the heart to encounter these paintings. If beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, then Kenneth Webb is a graced and gracious beholder. He is an artist who does not crave praise or success, but a dedicated painter who is constantly driven to bold new experiments in paint. Long may paintings continue to visit his imagination and bless our darkness".

Selected Career Highlights

- 1927 Born London

Educated Bristol Grammar School, Lydney Grammar School and School of Art. Obtained H.S.C. and Slade Scholarship

1945-48 Served with Fleet Air Arm, Royal Navy

1949 First Exhibited Royal Academy

1949-52 Studied Gloucester College. Obtained National Diploma in Design.

1952 Marriage to Joan Burch

1953 Appointed Head of Painting School, Ulster College of Art, Belfast

1954 Solo exhibition - Arts Council, Belfast

1957 Founded Irish School of Landscape Painting

1958 Elected Member, National Society

1959 Resigned Appointment, College of Art.

Solo exhibition - Ritchie Hendricks Gallery, Dublin.

Solo exhibition Londonderry.

1960 Solo exhibition, Veerhoof Galleries, Washington.

1961 Solo exhibition - Ulster Office, London

1962 Solo exhibition - Maggee Gallery, Belfast

Moved to Ballywalter

1963 Commissioned work in Spain

1967 Solo exhibition - Solomon and Whitehead, London

1968 Solo exhibition - Imperial Art Gallery, Cheltenham

Solo exhibition - Gallery, Toronto

1971 Solo exhibition - Kenny Gallery, Galway

1972 Retrospective Exhibition - 1967-1972 Mall Galleries, London

1972 Retrospective Exhibition - Alexander Gallery, Bristol

"Kenneth Webb" Book published by Shenvall Press, London

1975 Solo exhibition - Harrods, London

Opened studio in Ballinaboy

1976 Solo exhibition, Deben Gallery, Suffolk

1979 Lecture on Ivon Hitchens, Royal Irish Academy, London

1985 Solo exhibition - Metropolis International Galleries d'Art, Geneva

1990 Retrospective Exhibition 1950-1990, The Kenny Gallery, Galway

Publication of "Webb - A Profile Of Kenneth Webb" by Tom Kenny

1999 Award winning film documentary "Kenneth Webb - A Life in Colour" Made by Donal Haughey

2000 Webbscapes - solo exhibition at Kennys

2003 A Life in Colour - The Kenny Gallery

2006 Webb at 80 - 18th solo exhibition at Kennys since 1963

2008 Solo exhibition - 'My Connemara Garden' at the Kenny Gallery ([link to collection](#))

2011 Solo exhibition - 'Portach' at the Kenny Gallery ([link to collection](#))

- View 2011 exhibition catalogue 'Portach' as PDF

- Kenneth Webb talks about his exhibition 'Portach' (link to Kenny's Youtube video)
- 2012 Solo exhibition - W.H. Patterson, London - during the 2012 Olympic Games
- 2013 Solo exhibition - 'Timeless' at the Kenny Gallery (link to collection)
- View 2013 Exhibition catalogue 'Kenneth Webb - Timeless' as PDFFROM THE ARCHIVES:
- Exhibition 2006 - Webb at 80
- Exhibition 2006 - Opening Night
- Exhibition 2006 - Press Release
- Group Exhibition 2005 - Galway: A Portrait
- Exhibition 2003 - A Life In Colour
- Opening Night 2003
- Exhibition 2000 - Webbscapes
- Exhibition 1998 - Midnight's Children
- Exhibition 1996 - The Old Lake
- Group Exhibition 1995 - Departures
- Exhibition 1992 - New Paintings
- Exhibition 1984
- "Kenneth Webb: A Life In Colour" by Josephine Walpole
- "Kenneth Webb: A Life In Colour" (PAL VHS)
- "Webb: A Profile" by Thomas Kenny