

McCann, Fran

Fran McCann is an expressive painter in the mould of Jack Yeats. His dancing musical and mythical figures emerge from vibrant and instinctively painted backgrounds. In this regard can be noted a detachment of figure from their surroundings, as Beckett admired in Yeats; the juxtaposition, not the linkage, of landscape and figures. Further, due to McCann's use of saturated and bold colour and his use of the same method in applying knife to canvas there is a passing, albeit unrelated visual resemblance. A self-taught artist, who emerged from troubled streets of Belfast in the 1960's, McCann was something of a prodigy - learning to draw to impress his schoolmates and attracting the disbelieving ire of some schoolteachers who thought that his dyslexia precluded his excelling in any field. So taken with his burgeoning talent, John Luke, the consummate draughtsman, took him under his wing.

The troubles saw McCann and family emigrate to Australia, and the trowel replaced pencil, brush or palette knife for a good part of this period of his life. His return to Ireland was really like a new beginning in his relationship with art. When he again began to express himself artistically it was with paint rather than through drawing. He found that painting with the knife was the most immediate and direct way to express his ideas. Perhaps it is a stretch to suggest that the muscle memory of those early drawing sessions coupled with years of wielding the trowel led him to be most comfortable with the palette knife. One could suggest that McCann owes more to Myles Davis or John Coltrane than to any visual artist in inspiring his work. He has a visual facility, an almost jazz sensibility - he works in visual riffs and spontaneous and improvised chords. Instinctive moves that work for him.

Although a keen observer of the world around him, his paintings express an inner world of emotion rather than a naturalistically rendered reality. As it happens McCann is a gifted saxophonist, and images of musicians often enter his paintings. jazz on jazz, which works a visual treat. [VIEW THE COLLECTION NOW >>>](#)