

QUADRANT'S FEATURED ARTIST

Sheila Richardson

Resident Artist at the Draiocht Art Gallery
Adare County, Limerick

I was born on Gentian Hill, overlooking Galway Bay in Ireland in 1968. I've lived both in Ireland and in the UK over the last fifty years with frequent travels to Europe. Now based in Limerick, I am supported by the Limerick Culture and Arts Department and Limerick City and County Council, with an artist studio fellowship at the Cappamore Artists' Studios Complex, Co. Limerick, Ireland. My artistic practice is concerned with the exploration of the visual language of Painting and Collage. Recently she has been researching the interface of Art & Psychology within the framework of a Post-Jungian Context. The suite of painted collages exhibition titled *The Green Road—Painting Psyche* was shown for the first time at the Courthouse Art Gallery Co. Clare in 2018. It typifies my current interest and ongoing research into painting as imaginal space concurrent with the painting process.

Inspiration & Process

My inspiration and process are revealed in the following conversation with the artist, Gavin Hogg, of the Cappamore Artist Studio Complex, Limerick, Ireland.

Gavin Hogg: You have titled the suite of paintings. *The Green Road—Painting Psyche*: What is the Green Road in respect of your psychic imaginations?

Sheila Richardson: The 'Green Roads', was the colloquial name for famine roads, built as relief projects in 19th century Ireland, to allow those affected by hunger to earn money. I drew on the Irish writer Anne Enright's 2015 novel of the same name, set in the Burren Landscape of County Clare; which explores the lives of a rural family and the intra-psychic journey of the Mother. In doing so I'm exploring my own psycho-geographical experience of landscape. Over the last four years, I've travelled the Green Roads of this unique Landscape as act of pilgrimage and mourning. The *Verdant Gnosis* acts as a metaphor for our journey through life. The art works are not souvenirs of this action but psychological moments of this experience transformed and intensified in a painted language.

GH: When/why did you start using collage materials in your artworks?

SR: At various points in my Fine Art Painting practice, I've incorporated collage materials into my working image. However, four years ago, on the tragic death of my father; I spent a good deal of time outside of the studio; walking,

meditating, and making whilst on the move. Working in small sketchbooks, I was able to visually dialogue with my inner world more acutely. I used photography, writings, and gathered pieces of papers, using magazines and newspapers/found materials that unconsciously mirrored aspects of my thoughts and heightened feelings at that time. I found the images literally moving from the *literal* to the *symbolic*. I was able to grasp meaning in my mourning using this method.

GH: Describe the qualities of the Collage Method that you engage with?



SR: The act of finding interesting pieces of papers, cutting, tearing, and sticking is rather playful, spontaneous, and immediate. I can work with uncertainty and anxiety in this way as I am unsure what the outcome will be. Initially, it seemed like foreplay, preparation before the primal act of painting, however, the collages came into lived experiences of their own. They exist in their own right.

There is something inherently domestic and feminine about the act of working with the hands in this manner, almost like knitting or kneading. It is a very embodied and intimate and indeed it is the subject of the *Feminine* within a Jungian context that I am engaged with at this time... within myself—

post parental death and indeed within the larger global picture of the current world disintegration of patriarchal power structures.

GH: Can you speak about this process further?

SR: Tearing, cutting (the act of disintegration), and sticking pieces on a background to create a whole (integration) allow me to create new configurations. A new story, a new metaphor and hence new meaning is arrived at. I also integrate painting (acrylic/inks) into the works which is why I prefer to call them *painted collages*. There is often *something* trying to work its way into my consciousness. The scale is small, 30 x 30 cm, I can leave the pieces dwell for a time in the studio and return to them and continue myself conversation with them. This can mean adding to them, erasing or accepting them as is.

The Green Road—Painting Psyche 2018: Observations by Lyn Mather, Art Therapist & Founder of Art & Psyche Ireland

With Sheila's art you find yourself in the shape and color of a lived experience. It is an experience of a revitalized psyche. This is a coup of midlife—to find one—

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