



Press release:

## **ROBIN RICHMOND**

### **Stones of the Sky**

**04 – 27 March 2010**

Private view Wed 03 March 6-8pm

Artist's Talk Thurs 18 March 7pm

The germ of this show, Robin's 25<sup>th</sup> one woman show and her 7<sup>th</sup> at Curwen and New Academy, lies in a cycle of incantatory poems, *Las Piedras del Cielo*, by Pablo Neruda. These poems were published in 1971, in a great moment of worldly success. Neruda was about to take up his position as Chilean Ambassador to France, appointed by the newly –elected Salvador Allende, and soon to accept the Nobel prize for Literature. But Neruda was nearing the end of his life. The poems are a meditation on mortality and a celebration of Nature in all her various disguises and transformations. These poems are a suite of 30 love songs to the earth.

The poems have been a lodestone and guide in their limpid, meditative simplicity to the painter whilst producing this exhibition and their clarity and delicacy have tempered Richmond's lyrical use of colour with a new and greater subtlety. Her abiding sense of place – of where exactly *she* is in the world – is intimated but not fully explained. Titles are very important to this artist, and in this show she has respectfully borrowed many from Neruda.

Moving around is a constant theme in both the poet's and this artist's life. Growing up in America and Italy and spending her adulthood in England and France has made her restless. But her paintings have a deep stillness.

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They always evoke a very specific place in the world, an almost forensic obsession with the geography and history. She moves from Norway, where she has been spending time in the last 2 years, to her home in rural France, and is always obsessed with particularity.

Light; the movement of air on water; the shape of clouds; the smell of weather; the rhythm of trees and waves; the sometimes calm, sometimes agitated line of a horizon; the transcendent feeling that the earth and sky are sentient - these are all Robin Richmond's subjects.

From the reflections of palms in the backwaters of Kerala's rivers in *Fragrant Forest* to the eerie gleam of Venice at night in *Giudecca from the Zattere* to the crystalline skies of Oslofjord in *The Hard Shell of Night* there are never any human presences in the paintings. Only the painter and the viewer are there but not to be seen. There are "no footprints in the sand" as Neruda says.

Robin Richmond is a fellow and Artist in Residence since 2003, of Morse College, Yale University, USA. She was awarded the Jacob Mendelsohn Memorial Foundation Scholarship. She is the author of 7 books, including *Michelangelo and the Creation of the Sistine Chapel*, Random House 1992 and *Frida Kahlo in Mexico*, Pomegranate 1994, and a frequent contributor to art journals, *Nightwaves* (BBC Radio 3) and *Saturday Review* (Radio 4). Richmond was a visiting professor at Yale University, UCSC and London University, 1977-2002. She studied at Chelsea School of Art: B.A. in Fine Art, 1974, M.A. in Art History, 1975.

Works are in museums including San Francisco Legion of Honor, Middlesborough Art Museum, and in many private and corporate collections in Europe and the USA, including the Queen's Solicitors, Farrer's & Co, Freshfields, Priors Court School, Unilever, BP Amoco, Royal Institute of Chartered Accountants, Yale University, City University. She currently lives and works in London and South-West France.

Top image: *Fragrant Forest* (India), oil & acrylic on canvas, 74 x 56cm

Bottom image: *Waves* (After Munch), Oslofjord, oil & acrylic on canvas, 76 x 82cm

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