

KILMORACK GALLERY

PAUL BLOOMER | WORK FOR BORROWED LAND EXHIBITION

A PRAYER FOR THE LANDSCAPE

"Landscape in its various manifestations is central to my artistic practice but it was not always so. As a child my playground and classrooms were in the border land between industry and green space and I developed a close connection to the land, trees and birds in this area.

As an undergraduate fine art student in the 1980s, landscape and nature did not lend themselves to the 'serious art' I was trying to pursue, and I fell deeper and deeper into a pit of increasing meaninglessness. This dramatically changed one day when I was working on large charcoal dreamscape set amongst the canals of the Black Country. In one part of the drawing a man was desperately trying to touch a bird that was out of reach, and I realised that this was an echo of the yearnings of my soul to reconnect with nature and, through the act of drawing, this connection was restored.

A move to Shetland in 1997 gave me the sense that I had arrived in an unspoilt wilderness and for twenty-five years I immersed myself in the land, sea, and sky. However, in time I realised that all was not well. Centuries of overgrazing had stripped the land bare of trees, intensive salmon farming had played a part in the loss of wild salmonoids, warming oceans had changed the availability of sand eels and led to near collapse of some sea bird colonies.

My own artistic response to the landscape is supported by four foundational pillars: weeping, praying, thinking and acting - in that order. Weeping for the world opens our hearts and helps shift the paralysis of eco-anxiety that many of us feel today. The ecological problems facing our world are so great that it is easier to ignore them and look away, but if we open our minds and hearts to what we have done to other-than-human-life, then weeping is a powerful and apt response that can motivate us into action. When we think of what we have lost, what species we have made extinct, homeless, and hungry, what else can we do other than weep healing tears?

Prayer is a loaded word but in the context of ecological awareness and conversations with the other-than-human it is easier to do. Western culture has tried to convince us that we are above nature, that we have dominion and control of it, whereas in reality we are a part of it. In our increasingly secular age, we have lost touch with the spiritual dimensions of nature. If we stop seeing water as sacred, then why should not we dump sewage into it? If air is not sacred, then why should we not pollute it? If animals, insects and birds have no spirit then why shouldn't we abuse them? If fish are not sentient beings, does it matter if we Hoover them all up, or turn them into industrially farmed commodities? Prayer for me as an artist is vital because it opens doors and channels with the other-than-human-world. It humbles me and helps restore the broken links between humanity and nature.

Thinking is the starting point of everything in our logic driven culture, but without the supporting pillars of weeping and praying it can lead to the dead end we are in. If weeping breaks us open, and prayer offers the means of heart expression and communication, then thinking helps us respond to the challenges facing the planet. When we understand, we can use our individual gifts to do something about them.

Weeping, praying and thinking are only part of the equation. We have to act and use the gifts we have been given in whatever ways are appropriate and we feel called to do, which in my case is art. I can think of no more urgent subject. Earth is the only home we have, and destroying it is destroying ourselves and everything that makes this beautiful, complex, and multidimensional planet our home.

We are guests on this earth and as such we should leave minimal footprints."

Paul Bloomer, Shetland, October 2023

For full details and larger images, please see the end of this document.



Paul Bloomer
Water Song, 2017-2023
oil on canvas
150cm x 119cm
(157cm 127cm framed)

£ 6,000.00

[View detail](#)



Paul Bloomer
Night Flight, 2023
oil on canvas
150cm x 120cm
(158cm x 127cm framed)

[View detail](#)

£ 6,000.00



Paul Bloomer
Passage, 2022-2023
oil on canvas
120cm x 120cm

[View detail](#)

£ 4,000.00



Paul Bloomer
The Meeting in the Garden, 2020-2023
oil on canvas
150cm x 120cm
(158cm x 127cm framed)

[View detail](#)

£ 6,000.00



Paul Bloomer
Yellowhammers on Autumn Rowan, 2009-2023
oil on canvas
99cm x 140cm
(105cm x 146cm)

[View detail](#)

£ 4,200.00



Paul Bloomer
Geosetter, 2020-2023
oil on canvas
100cm x 80cm
(106cm x 86cm framed)

[View detail](#)

£ 3,200.00

PAUL BLOOMER
Water Song, 2017-2023



oil on canvas
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Image 1/2



Image 2/2

PAUL BLOOMER
Night Flight, 2023



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Image 1/2



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