



JUDY NIMTZ

Between Two Worlds



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In the summer of 2019, artist Judy Nimtz and her husband, painter Kenny Harris, made a trip to Ireland to explore the lands and gather reference material for their artwork. Nimtz focused on the megalithic sites that are found in the country. The paintings mainly feature the figure in the landscape, but also solitary landscape paintings that capture the beauty and mysticism of the place.

"As long as I can remember I had wanted to go to Ireland," says Nimtz. "It's a magical, mystical place for me. Part of it is because when I was younger I was an avid fantasy reader. A lot of the stories are pulling from U.K., Irish and Scottish mythology with their names and Medieval themes.



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1
Flóra, oil on panel,
30½ x 13½"

2
Intermundium,
oil on panel, 37 x 23"

3
Prepare for Battle,
oil on panel, 48 x 24"

4
Path to Drombeg,
oil on panel, 18 x 12½"



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That really drew me in. I am also a quarter Irish and half Chinese. I grew up more connected to my Chinese side, but Ireland and the Irish culture was always fascinating to me, so over the years I wanted to go and spend time there.”

The megalithic sites were always of interest to the artist, but her connection was deeper, perhaps, because she has studied both geology and art. “I developed a love of the earth, stones and rocks,” says Nimtz, adding that the unknown aspect of these stone circles was also intriguing. “They’re very much here and of our world, physically in front of us, but we don’t know much about them. They exist almost between two worlds of the past and the now.”

This new series of paintings will be on view at George Billis Gallery in Los Angeles beginning September 11.

Included are works that are a bit more surrealistic than her usual paintings, such as *Intermundium*, which is named for a Latin word that translates to the “space

between the worlds.” The painting depicts Nimtz as the model—a rarity for the artist, but common in these works where she is a vessel for the narrative rather than the composition being autobiographical. She is blending seamlessly with the landscape; half-real, half-invisible, a space existing between multiple planes, or between the past and the now.

“My work isn’t super surreal, but I’m allowing that aspect to come forward more in the pieces because I want to convey the profundity of being there and being amongst these natural sites,” she says. “It’s profound being in the presence of these sites because they’re so old. They’re often in the middle of fields. There’s no one around, no ticket taker; you can walk up, move around them and be next to them. You can touch them if you want. It’s very immediate and very direct being there.”

The landscape is essential to the works, and posed a unique technical challenge for Nimtz. “I make landscapes as a practice

when we travel and paint, but it’s not my focus. It’s been really satisfying, too,” she says, “especially during the pandemic, being locked down at home, to be working on landscapes and surrounding myself with places or a place, and figuring out my own vocabulary and how the landscape will work with the figure.”

This show includes solitary landscapes such as *Path to Dromberg*, which shows one of the megalithic sites she visited while staying in County Cork. “This is the view as we were leaving, and I wanted to take one last glance,” says Nimtz. “It was so incredible, with heavy, bright skies and this path that was warm and cool. It encompasses the spirit and the memory that I had there.”

The exhibition will be on view through October 9. ●

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