Somerset

Jenny Graham

Artists Statement

When I decided to create 10 paintings of the different areas of Somerset I didn’t consider what a demanding task I was setting myself. This county’s landscape is so varied that there’s no way it could possibly be summed up in ten images. From the coast to the hills to the flatlands it changed at every move, not to mention the weather conditions and the seasons. I began painting and then we were imprisoned by the Coronavirus and Lockdown. No chance to go out and sketch or even take photographs.

Luckily, I had a wealth of photos and sketches already to draw from and 35 years of living and working in the county to remember places visited and admired. I knew the landscape like the back of my hand so I have managed to interpret the county in my own way. It has been difficult at times and I have used artistic license in certain of the paintings, incorporating a bit of one local scene with another to evoke an overall feeling of the area.. Many of the paintings are encrusted with layers of paint where I have repainted endlessly to capture what I recalled of the colours and flavour of a place, it’s earth, it’s wildflowers, it’s trees and topography. These paintings are not documentations but attempt to discover the visual heart of our wonderful county.

I began the etchings after the end of major Lockdown. They are photo etchings which explore the graphic qualities of our Somerset landscape. Shapes are reduced to a simple black and white image, showing the structure of the landscape and are intended to be a complement to the very textural paintings.

All the constructions, my most personal response to Lockdown, have been made from found objects in the area near my home, many from the disused building site across the road, others gathered on my daily dog walk.