



Biographical Notes

Over the years, Phil has received numerous grants and awards, including 2nd prize at the Grumbacher Gold Award at the Visual Arts Mississauga 22nd Juried Show of Fine Art in 1999. His paintings have been widely exhibited, namely in the Loop Gallery in Toronto, the Michael Gibson Gallery in London and the Art Gallery of Mississauga. His work has also been seen in Montréal and Baie-St-Paul, and will soon be shown at the gallery L'Oeil de poisson in Québec City. Over the past few years, Phil has taken part in several group exhibitions throughout the United States such as the International Juried Show at the New Jersey Centre for Visual Arts in Summit.

Artistic approach

"My work explores humanity's struggle with nature. For several years, I have worked thematically with images of water, exploring its beauty and its danger. The water images are expressive and evocative, creating rich surfaces and textures. My paintings play thin glazes against impasto brushwork or veils of drips. There is a unity between the images I employ and the sensuality of the painting medium. Recently, I have coupled the water imagery with tiny images of boats that span human history. The vessels become emblematic of cultures and ways of thinking. I play these small boat images, encompassing all of human endeavour, against large-scale images of tumultuous water. Thus our human efforts are humbled by the magnitude of time and space."

Work Created for the Games

"The four vessels I have chosen for the Games of La Francophonie suggest the complexity and diversity of Canadian history, and the disparate origins and dreams of our peoples. I have chosen specific images from our history to evoke a more general reflection on the nature of our collective struggles and ambitions. The water need not be viewed in any literal way. It is an image of uncertainty, danger and uncontrollability, of epic grandeur and beauty, of expansiveness and adventure."

What the Canadian Jury Said

"Phil Irish is a painter whose very modern approach is part of a continuum of historical awareness, a very Canadian way of expressing a mental construct using elements of nature. Working from the landscape tradition, with a very steady hand and impeccable technique, Phil Irish creates tension and invites us to delve into the vastness of the elements that surround us, in this case, the sea and its threatening immensity."

Contact

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Parental Supervision, 2000, huile sur toile/Oil on Canvas (2 panneaux/panels) 67 x 35 cm