

Francis Tansey

Geometric Colourist

The contemporary Irish abstract painter Francis Tansey was born in Dublin in 1959 and has been one of the most popular Irish artists over the last two decades. He studied at the National College of Art and Design in (1978-1983) specializing in abstract art and in 1985 he became the first Artist in Residence, at The Butler Gallery, Co. Kilkenny, where his brightly coloured geometric acrylic painting's caused great interest. Tansey's unique distillation and interpretation of Colourism, gained him immediate recognition worldwide and particularly in Ireland. He first rose to prominence with his inclusion in R.O.S.C. in 1988 as the youngest artist ever to have exhibited in this prestigious International Exhibition.

Having been external tutor and examiner to Tansey in preparation for the 1983 NCAD Degree Show and upon seeing the resulting works on display, it was Scully who deemed Tansey to be one of the most exciting prospects emerging in Irish art. Four years later Tansey was featured on the front cover of the Irish Arts Review and profiled inside by the then Chairman of ROSC, Patrick J. Murphy. In the article Murphy described the artist's technique of using both brushes and rollers to apply acrylic co-polymer paints in numerous thin glazes until the desired colour saturation was reached and using masking tape to achieve the crisp edges. Wrote Murphy; *"I believe along with Jerry Zeniuk, that Abstract art has infinite possibilities intuitively and intellectually, and so does Francis Tansey, who is busy proving the point."*

Tansey's work quickly found its way into many important collections. Including; The Ulster Museum, the Arts Council of Ireland, Jefferson Smurfit Group, AIB, Ulster Bank, The Central Bank, O.P.W., Contemporary Irish Arts Society, Butler Gallery, B.A.S.F., Elan Corp, Forrest Laboratories, Glen Dimplex, The I. D. A., Lorcan Lyons and Associates, Leo Pharmer and many other prominent corporate and private collections.

Tansey employes a hard edged geometric style, using acrylic paint in a glazing technique reminiscent of a renaissance master with many layers of glazes to create vibrant colour field paintings in a modern abstract geometric colour language, that is his own. Despite some critics attempts to categorize his work it is hard to place his unique style and he has enjoyed a constant demand for his work over the past twenty years.

Twenty years on, Tansey's new works still show the original influences that spawned his style, and yet his works have consistently progressed, probed, and explored, never loosing their freshness of impact and vitality. It's that recognition of personal style that separates a few artists from the pack.

"I believe colour is an universal language common to all people, I have dedicated my time over the past twenty five years to understanding it's, principals and properties. I have payed particular attention to the after image principal, or otherwise known as simultaneous contrast, and have used it to engage the viewer with the image directly, given time the image will appear to move and flip back and forward in the viewers eye, taking you on a journey and subsequently questioning your own reality. Enjoy the journey

Unlike when I started to produce this work all those years ago, Geometric colour is every where today, with the advance of new technologies and computers as I knew it would be. But I still value the opportunity to produce it using more traditional methods like paint and canvas." - Francis Tansey

Appreciation for Francis Tansey

"Tansey's pictures advance or recede, each acrylic colour activated by its neighbour. The paintings seem to buzz and hum like old radio sets. This is not rainbow colour used with spiritual consequence as Rothko used it. It is space age colour, the honky tonk downside of the microchip." - Patrick Gallagher, 'Sunday Independent', Dublin.

"Tansey, one of the most exciting prospects in Irish art." - Sean Scully, internationally acclaimed abstract artist.

"Sensational interaction of brilliant colours that dazzle the retina and reverberate with repeated after-images on the mind's eye." - Patrick Murphy, 'The Sensational Paintings of Francis Tansey', Irish Arts Review, Vol. 4 No. 1, p.

"On the face of it Tansey's style is an electric one, compounded of elements from Albers, Itten, op and pop, Vasarely, Mondrian, and perhaps early Leger. The result however is wholly his own. It is in the key area of colour, however, that Tansey has advanced the most. In the beginning his treatment of it was rather hard and flat, but it has grown steadily more nuanced over the decade. Francis Tansey is now fully living up to the claims made for him a few years back." - Brian Fallon, The Irish Times.

Francis Tansey

Résumé

(Born 1959, Dublin Ireland)

Education

1978-83, NCAD, Dublin

Exhibitions

2010, Group Show Gormley Gallery Belfast,
2009, Francis Tansey: Geometric Colourist, The Bad Art Gallery, Dublin
2003, Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny
1999, Grovesnor Gallery, Dublin
1998, Contemporary Kilkenny Artists, Waterford Regional Hospital, Waterford
1995, 96, Market Cross, Kilkenny
1995, Max Factor Building, Wilshire, Los Angeles
1994, Real or Unreal, James O'Donoghue Gallery, Kilkenny Arts Week, Kilkenny
1994, Chicago Group Show, Pizzaro Design, Malibu
1993, LACA, Los Angeles Contemporary Art Exhibition, Los Angeles
1992, Geometrics, Bistango Gallery, Irvine, California
1992, New Acquisitions, Ulster Museum, Belfast
1989, 92, 97, Aer Rianta Exhibitions, Dublin Airport, Dublin
1988, ROSC International Exhibition, Dublin (represented Ireland)
1987, Kilkenny 9, IMMA, Dublin
1987, The Riggs Gallery, La Jolla, California
1986, International Festival of Painting, Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France (represented Ireland)
1986, Six in the Sticks, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny
1985, 86, 87, 89, 92, 95, Solomon Gallery, Dublin
1984, Solomon Gallery, Dublin

Awards

1994, Elected Director of Butler Gallery, Kilkenny

Residencies

1985-86, Artist in Residence, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny

Corporate Collections

National Concert Hall, Dublin, Ulster Museum, Belfast, Arts Council of Ireland, Dublin Writers Museum, Citibank, Greencore Group, Glen Dimplex, Guinness Group, Elan, Jefferson Smurfit Group, Allied Irish Bank, Central Bank, Government Buildings Dublin, Contemporary Irish Arts Society, Forest Laboratories, Merk Sharp and Dome, Arthur Anderson, Craige Gardner, Lorcan Lyons and Associates, Irish Life Assurances, Leo Pharmer.