



# ar[T]moire

**Interview by Efrat Cybulkiewicz and Yuzbeny Escobar for  
'Artmoire magazine'**

**'For me art in process is an act of spirit of returning to the self '**

*Paul McCloskey*



**\*Hi there. Please tell me your name and what you do for a living.**

Hi my name is Paul McCloskey, I'm a visual artist and teacher.

**\*Tell me a little about yourself... where are you from, where did you grow up. what was your childhood like?**

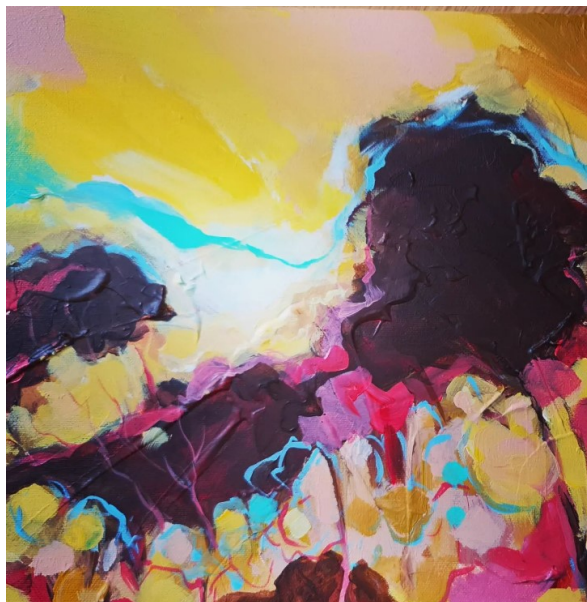
I live and work in Gorey, Co. Wexford, Ireland, however, I grew up in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan a border county during what is often referred to as the troubles in the 70's and 80's. I was very aware of the tensions and conflicts across the border, which often spilled into daily life.

I would often visit my father in his barber shop on my way home from school and marvel at the tapestry of colourful characters that would come and go as they got shaves and haircuts before the weekend.

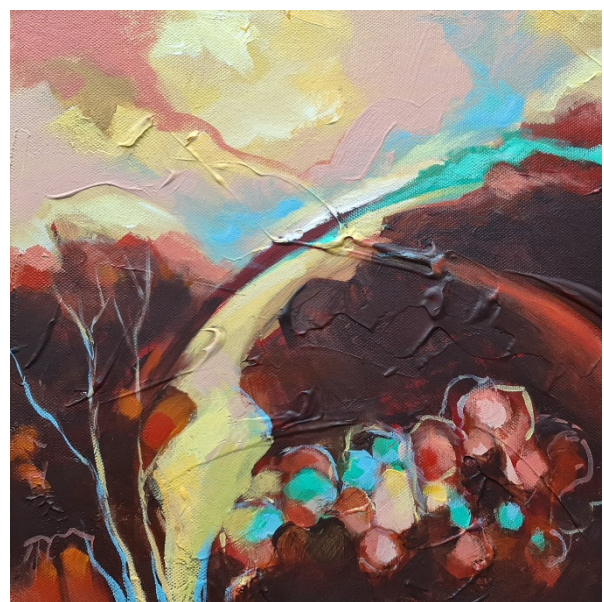
I was very shy as a child and internalised a lot, art was my expression even though I wasn't necessarily aware of its place until I was much older.

For as long as I can remember art has been my passion, it's an integral part of my everyday life; it is the most stabilising influence on me, the one constant throughout my life, it has given me identity and purpose, it has sustained me emotionally, spiritually and physically all my life.

Alongside my painting career, I am a teacher of art and design for over 30 years, I have always tried to balance the two. I consider it a privilege to be in a position to work with and influence young people, art by its nature allows you to connect on a deeper and more spiritual level with students.



*A New Earth- Acrylic On Canvas*



*Glimpse- Acrylic On Canvas*

**\*Do you remember the first piece of art you made? What was it and how old were you? What's shaped your artistic journey since then?**

I remember doing a drawing of a circus when I was ten years old in 6<sup>th</sup> class in primary school and winning 6p for best drawing.....it mattered to me as a shy and withdrawn child it was an acknowledgement, a recognition of been seen.

So much has shaped my journey since, such as studying the great painters, I remember earning a little money and buying oil paint and canvas board to copy the Rembrandt painting 'A Woman bathing in a Stream' but also the poets such as Heaney and Kavanagh and most recently and most profoundly the great spiritualists such as Anthony De Mello, Eckhart Tolle and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj have and continue to shape the narrative in my work.

**\*Tell us about some of the highlights of your artistic career, such as memorable shows/exhibitions where you have exhibited or publications and blogs where your work has been featured.**

Completing my Master's Degree in Fine art (MFA) in 2010 from De Montfort University UK was important for me, it was something I would have loved to have completed earlier but family commitments and other priorities meant delaying my further studies. I was thrilled to receive the 2016 special award by the international jury at the Osten Biennial of Drawing/Works on paper in Skopje, Macedonia five of my works now form a permanent part of the 'World Gallery Of Drawing Collection' of the Museum of Drawing/Works on Paper, this is a great honour for me.

<https://www.independent.ie/regionals/goreyguardian/news/prestigious-visual-art-award-for-paul-35061957.html>

Most recently I was delighted to be one of 13 international artists shortlisted for the 'London Contemporary Art Prize' 2018 but to then receive one of their top two awards the 'materials bursary award' was thrilling.

It's always great to see my work in print both as reviews and interviews but the review for the book publication of 'EXHIBEO Selected Art Reviews and Interviews' by Jonathan Raddatz was one of those highlights, beautifully written but most importantly for me an accurate summary and insight into my work....it was so refreshing to read from the perspective of someone who just got it.

<https://www.blurb.ca/b/6932336-exhibeo-selected-art-reviews-and-interview-vol-1>

<https://paulmccloskey.ie/exhibeo2.html>

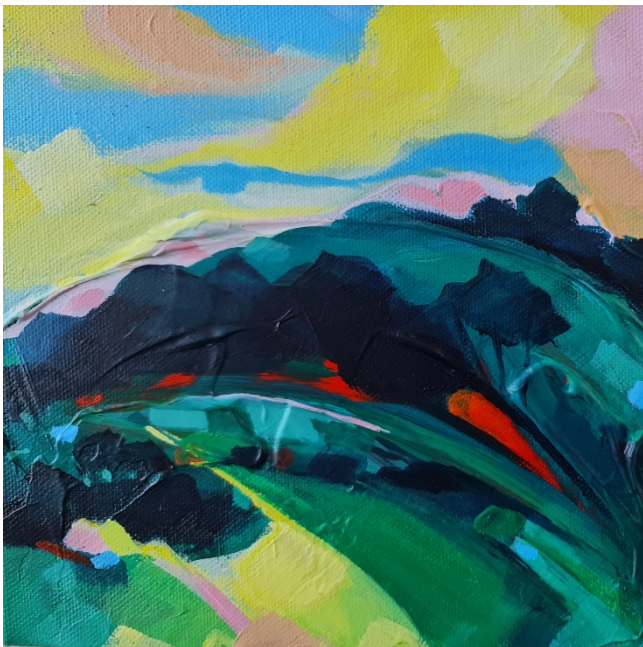


**\*Why did you decide to become an artist?**

I don't remember consciously making a decision to become an artist, it was just a given.

**\*Who are your biggest influences? Are you inspired by the work of your peers or anyone else in particular? Are there any particular painting traditions or 'old masters' that have influenced your work?**

I mentioned Rembrandt earlier, I love the figurative work of the Irish painter Jack Yeats and the English Romantic William Turner but I also love the work of Rothko in particular his Chapel series although abstract emanates emotion and spirit. We recognise great art as truth. Whether figurative or abstract.



*View - Acrylic On Canvas*



*Witness - Acrylic On Canvas*

**\*What does 'success' mean to you?**

In painting success for me is when I have allowed without hindrance my painting to emerge truthfully.

**\*Is the artistic life lonely? What do you do to counteract it?**

I see it more as aloneness, as allowing, the creative process works through one's own truth, through the process of allowing divinity/spirit to manifest through you, therefore you are never really alone.

But often the process is a singular, lone process but it's cannot really be any other way.

**\*What does your work aim to say? Do you intend your work to challenge the viewer?**

I explore that energy or spirit existing within all things, the hidden energy that vibrates within all matter. I attempt to create work that engages the viewer with this energy and aim to heighten their spiritual experience as a consequence of experiencing/looking at my paintings. When I speak of "spirituality", I'm not referring to organised religious assemblages, but more so I'm referring to the belief that the act of creating allows us to tap into our higher selves, which has been referred to as God, Spirit, energy or soul. This can open us to being inspired and allows us to sense, see and feel without the influence of the ego.

My work is based on landscape as it facilitates me in portraying that sense of immensity and space, which in turn assists me in expressing the power of spirit, the glory of something greater than me but connected to me. The luminosity of light and colour is central to all the work, light being used to reflect birth; for without light there is no life. The suggestion of heaven and earth in constant struggle, merging yet separable, solid yet amorphous all suggest the multidimensional nature of the spiritual.

I have also used the theme of seasons as a way to suggest the beginning and end, the circle of life, the alpha and the omega the struggle within, between the conditioned self and the divine/spiritual self. If the viewer is challenged and allows himself to feel the work before any labelling then the circle of artist, work and viewer is complete.

**\*What is your philosophy in matters of art?**

In painting one can only truly and honestly paint for oneself, through the process of allowing with truth, everything else is secondary. If the viewer through the act of allowing gets it then that adds to the process.

**\*Apart from making art, what do you love doing?**

I have so many interests, website/app development, reading and Music, I also love to walk/hike and I'm a keen gardener which is really another creative form.

**\*What's the best piece of advice you've been given?**

To remain true to yourself.

**\*What advice would you give to the next art-generation?**

Currently the art colleges place more emphasis on concept than on skill, the truth is both are needed in equal amounts, so try not to follow trends for the sake of being modern instead speak your truth your way, but more importantly know your truth first.

<http://paulmccloskey.ie>

<http://paulmccloskey.ie/biography.html>

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