

NUMINOSITY

I first came across the word numinous in the forward to the book "Voices At The Worlds Edge," which is a collection of poems by a number of Irish poets invited to spend some time on two islands that rise out of the Atlantic off of the west coast of Ireland- Skellig Michael and Little Skellig. These islands had been inhabited for 600 years by hermits, anchorites and holy men who wanted a place that would bring them closer to their God.

In her forward Marie Heaney writes, "I will never forget my own visit there...I had a sense of the numinous---as if I had landed on Prospero's island." There was something about her phrase "I will never forget" and the word "numinous" that caught my attention, and though I didn't know what numinous meant, I got the feeling it referred to something almost indescribable. So I looked it up.

Numinous; from the Latin word nuere meaning to nod, or a nod. This is no simple nod, but a nod from the Gods. A sign that will lead you, confirm your belief and encourage your faith. It reminds me of making paintings, the moment one hopes for. It also reminds me of moments in my life that remain relevant even after years have gone by. They connect time to eternity: time experienced as emotion, meaning, and relevance, where linear time ceases to exist. These moments feel like inspired thought frozen in space, connected to each other by an invisible thread.

Intuition, premonition, coincidence, déjà vu, consciousness, contemplation and dreams. These words spring to mind when I think about numinous, and many of these words are relevant to me in my painting, and then painting has it's own ideas as well. Working with the subtleties of color, tone and composition is mostly humbling. The physical properties of the paint tease your ideas that get buried for the most part, reminding you that you are better off not fully in control. When a painting actually works it feels like a nod from the Gods who respect the unexpected.

When I proposed the title Numinosity for our show at Liberty Arts to Tor he said "Numinosity it is! It is what has tied our work together from the start".

Jenny Bloomfield
March 2014