

On **Sept 29th** Sandra Ondraschek-Norris will open her latest solo exhibition ***uncoding landscapes*** at the International Lyceum Club's **Haus Zum Ehrenberg** in Zurich.

The title is taken from the poem 'The Peninsula' by the renowned Irish poet Seamus Heaney. The poet, finding himself, "with nothing more to say", gives in to his silence and just drives – around the peninsula -a "land without marks". Heaney's landscape is one of darkness, silhouettes and fog and he returns "still with nothing to say". However he now understands that he will "uncode all landscapes by this: things founded clean on their own shapes/water and ground in their extremity."

This idea of 'uncoding landscapes' is not just poetic whimsy. It has been confirmed by human geographers and environmental psychologists who have studied links between exposure to natural environments in childhood and the environmental preferences we develop as adults. The special bond that develops between children and their childhood environments is known as a 'primal landscape'. This forms part of people's identity and constitutes a key point of comparison for considering subsequent places later in life. Adults tend to evaluate new places in relation to this 'baseline' landscape experienced early in life.

Ondraschek's baseline landscape was, incidentally, a peninsula (Inishowen, in the most northerly part of Ireland) and it remains a strong influence in her paintings. She paints from and about memory, only rarely referring to photographs. Remembered landscapes are reconstructed and deconstructed by a process of layering and removing paint, obscuring and revealing, allowing moods and atmospheres to emerge gradually and often accidentally. The resulting works have a depth and a textured complexity that invites the viewer to indeed engage in a process of 'uncoding'. There are dramatic skies, dizzying aerial views, rugged coastlines shrouded in fog and cloud - the moods tense and shimmering. These paintings, some soothing, some unsettling, beautifully capture what the poet TS Eliot called 'the menace and caress of waves that break on water'.

This show offers visitors more than a leisurely stroll around the coast with pleasant scenery to admire. It is a painterly and poetic exploration of the link between our sense of place and our sense of self and it challenges us to ponder on our own inner geography.

**The exhibition opens on Sept 29<sup>th</sup> at 17:30 and runs until October 13th**

**Opening hours:** Tues-Thurs 14.00 – 18.00; Fri-Sat 16.00 – 20.00

Haus zum Ehrenberg, Rämistrasse 26 / Fussweg Hohe Promenade

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