

Watercolors: Helga Kaffke

Writings: Gabriele Berthel

WALKING TALKING

On the road in Ireland's wild west



Imprint

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REFLECTIONS

Once, when asked about her artistic concepts, Helga Kaffke said: “...to paint a landscape like a portrait and a portrait like a landscape.”

The relentless blue of southern skies never tempted this painter abroad. She worked in the reserved expanses of the European north, in later years more and more in the loneliness of the west of Ireland. She loved its invincible light, whose source remains in darkness, when the storm tears slate-grey clouds into shreds in an overcast February sky. Beneath it, in scrubby bog grass, pink and blue sheep are blossoming. The gleaming bogwater reflects serenely a painter, who even in memory never claimed indifference. In those on-paper resurrected landscapes we find it all: bog grass and moss, rock and fern, sheep pink and blue. And people? Those too, but mostly their traces: in the skilfully woven complexity of electric lines, in cottages not just dreaming of sea views (location, location, location)...

Melancholic vitality and vital melancholy – sometimes the boundaries blur.

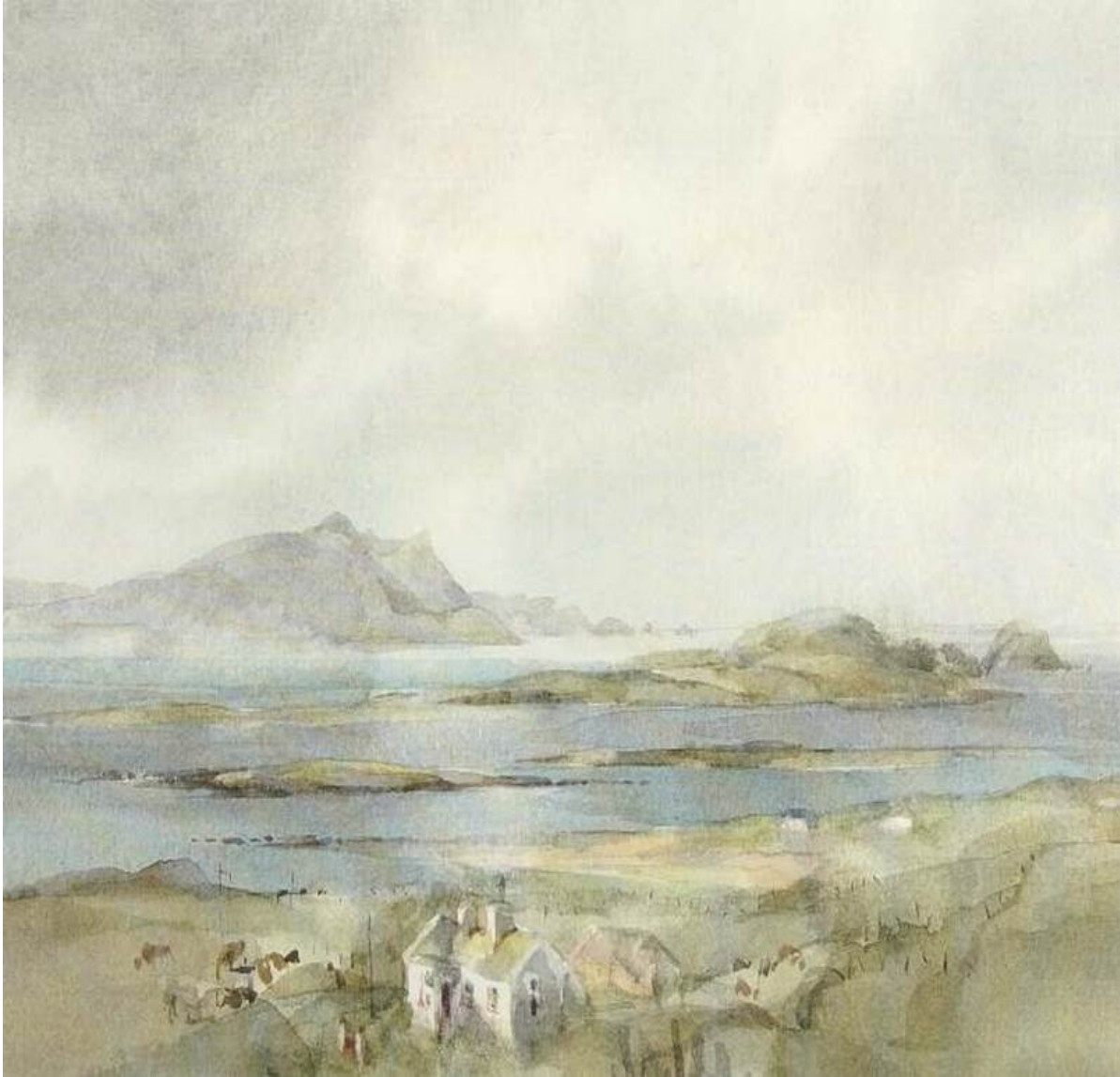
This is the ambivalence in these works of art – you can never be certain if what you see is truly there or if you intuit that which is neither hidden nor obvious on the surface. Beings, for example, who have become so much an integral part of the landscape that they can only appear as part of it, impossible to subtract from it without dissolving it in its entirety.

This is a way to create a riddle from a solution. Find and you will seek. And while we, the observers, look at such a painting, relays are closing in our brain, connections are made, in subtle ways, we can trace: in ourselves. This is a consequence.

The painter who portrays a landscape in this way can remain serene, when a mainstream trendsetter lectures her about the rules of the art market.

Gabriele Berthel

Farm with view of Achill Island



Doona, Ballycroy



Springtime in Doona



View of Rosturk Castle, Clew Bay



John's Row, Westport



Westport, Octagon



Westport, James Street



Still-Life with Cottage



STILL-LIFE WITH COTTAGE

The white-washed walls have been devoured by salt:
the last protection. The stones lie bare.

And on the walls that are still standing green moss is growing –
Thus, soon forgotten under the wind,

the leftovers of a life look, deserted:
six steps in a square, and nearly brightened
by the rag of the sky falling into the small room.
That tries to expand, to seize so much light...

and so much air, enough not to get smothered –
Beautifully reflected by the sea, by strange eyes,
the cottage wakes up dreamless from dreaming

Of elated cameras, romantic advertisements...
Where the blind window crosses itself,
the frame projects a shadow.

Fishing for salmon in the Valley of Delphi

