

KATHERINE HAMILTON



Dusk Shadows
oil on canvas 45 × 30 cm

Dusk Interior
oil on canvas 38 × 49 cm

KATHERINE HAMILTON

Sense of Place

8 – 30 SEPTEMBER


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gallery

A Compelling Dance of Shapes

Although she often paints figures in a setting, Katherine Hamilton is primarily a landscape painter of skill and inventiveness. Travel is the life-blood of her art, but if this exhibition ranges from Blackpool to Ghana, Lochinver to Benin, she is also content to paint subjects on her own doorstep, such as *North Sea Dawn*. She applies her paint thinly, diluted with turps, and seeks a quality of surface that is deliberately reduced, classic rather than romantic. She prefers to concentrate on structure rather than interpretation, and is always aiming to simplify her imagery still further. Already, her work has reached a remarkable harmony in the depiction of such empty buildings as those in *African Village (Ghana)*. She uses oil paint like pastel, with dusty surface overlays entirely appropriate to the subject.

The dynamic of poise and roam in her paintings recalls the fact that she trained as a dancer, but their mysterious quality is entirely a product of her understanding of the potential of paint.

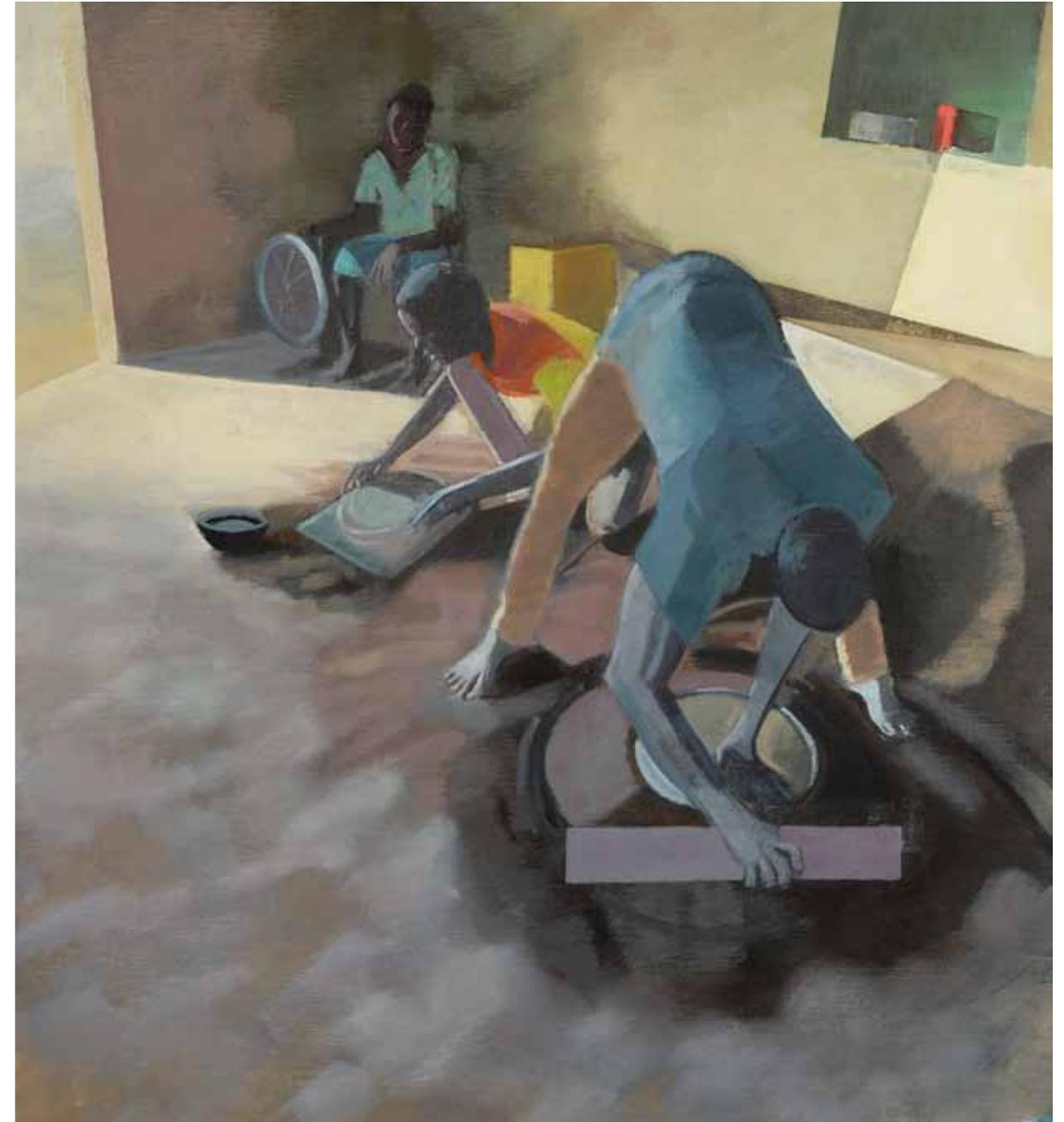
The paintings in this exhibition divide into two groups: those in which the place is specified and those in which it's not. Thus, there are four named Scottish paintings: *Winter's Wood*, *Gorge*, *Scottish Dusk*, and *Torrent*, but there are at least two others which take a specific place in Scotland but render it universal by generalizing it. Although detail is not entirely forfeited, and someone who knows the site would no doubt recognize it, the urge towards abstraction endows these images with a wider relevance. Hamilton distils a poetic entity - such as *The Deserted House* or *The Edge of Town* - from actual things observed in reality. It's easy to imagine such titles used for poems as well as paintings, perhaps by Walter de la Mare or Robert Frost. Although the particular underpins each of her paintings, there is always a dialogue between specifics and formal values. In these deliberately more universal images the challenge is to present a convincing sense of place and at the same time a more generally applicable identity. Very often the impulse behind the genesis of the image is not to make a portrait of a scene but simply to capture certain arrangements of line and light.

Derelict buildings in Namibia are marvellous subjects for the articulation of interior space, for the near-abstract juxtaposition of shapes. At the same time, the narrative element begins to nag the attentive viewer. What's the story? Why are these rooms deserted and empty? What tragedies lie behind their wrecked armatures? Is it something as prosaic as a diamond mine failing? Or is there something more humanly definitive - a death or infidelity, an unexplained disappearance? In *The Deserted House*, the chairs and books and rugs have been left behind, suggesting a swift and urgent exit. Was it a simple economic collapse, or were the missing occupants fleeing some other disaster? Or are we over-dramatising, and the tenants are simply out about their business? After all, there's a person in *Dusk Interior*...

The increasing formality and abstraction of her landscapes and built environments contrasts intriguingly with the anecdotal quality of her figure paintings. Whether her subject is nomadic herders or fishing boys, market vendors in Benin or boat builders in Mali, the human element approaches the hieratic and symbolic as Hamilton pursues her goal of timelessness. Her luminous new work is increasingly emblematic; perhaps that accounts for its mystery.

ANDREW LAMBIRTH

Metalworkers (Benin)
oil on canvas 81 x 73 cm

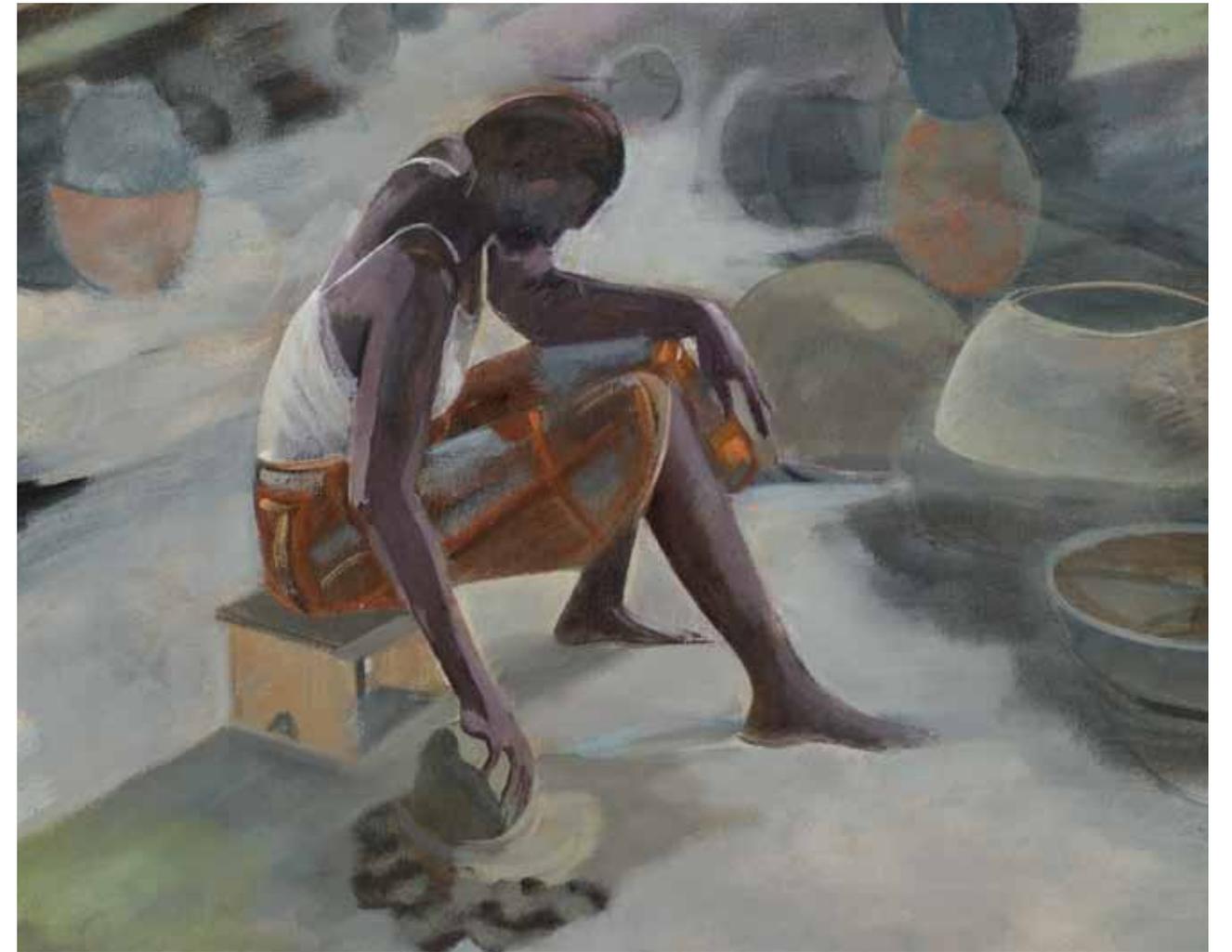




Elmina Fishing Boys (Ghana)
oil on canvas 68 x 129 cm



Potter's Village (Mali)
oil on canvas 95 × 42 cm



Potter (Ghana)
oil on canvas 54 × 67 cm



Nomadic Herders (Mali)
oil on canvas 44 x 136 cm



African Village (Ghana)
oil on canvas 41 x 62 cm



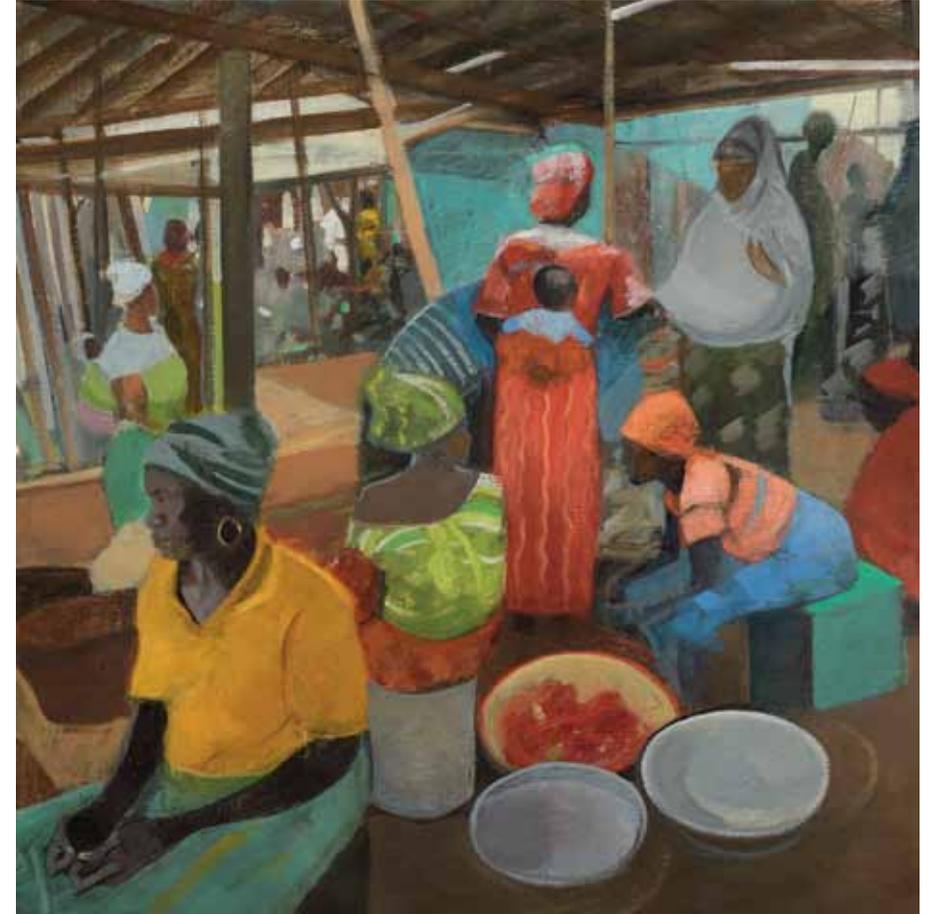
Interior (Benin)
oil on canvas 57 x 76 cm



Procession (Benin)
oil on canvas 50 x 120 cm



Boat builders (Mali)
oil on canvas 65 x 98 cm



Market (Benin)
oil on canvas 61 x 61 cm



Derelict Mine (Namibia)
oil on canvas 36 x 43 cm



Derelict Building (Namibia)
oil on canvas 45 x 72 cm



Deserted House 2
oil on canvas 74 x 58 cm



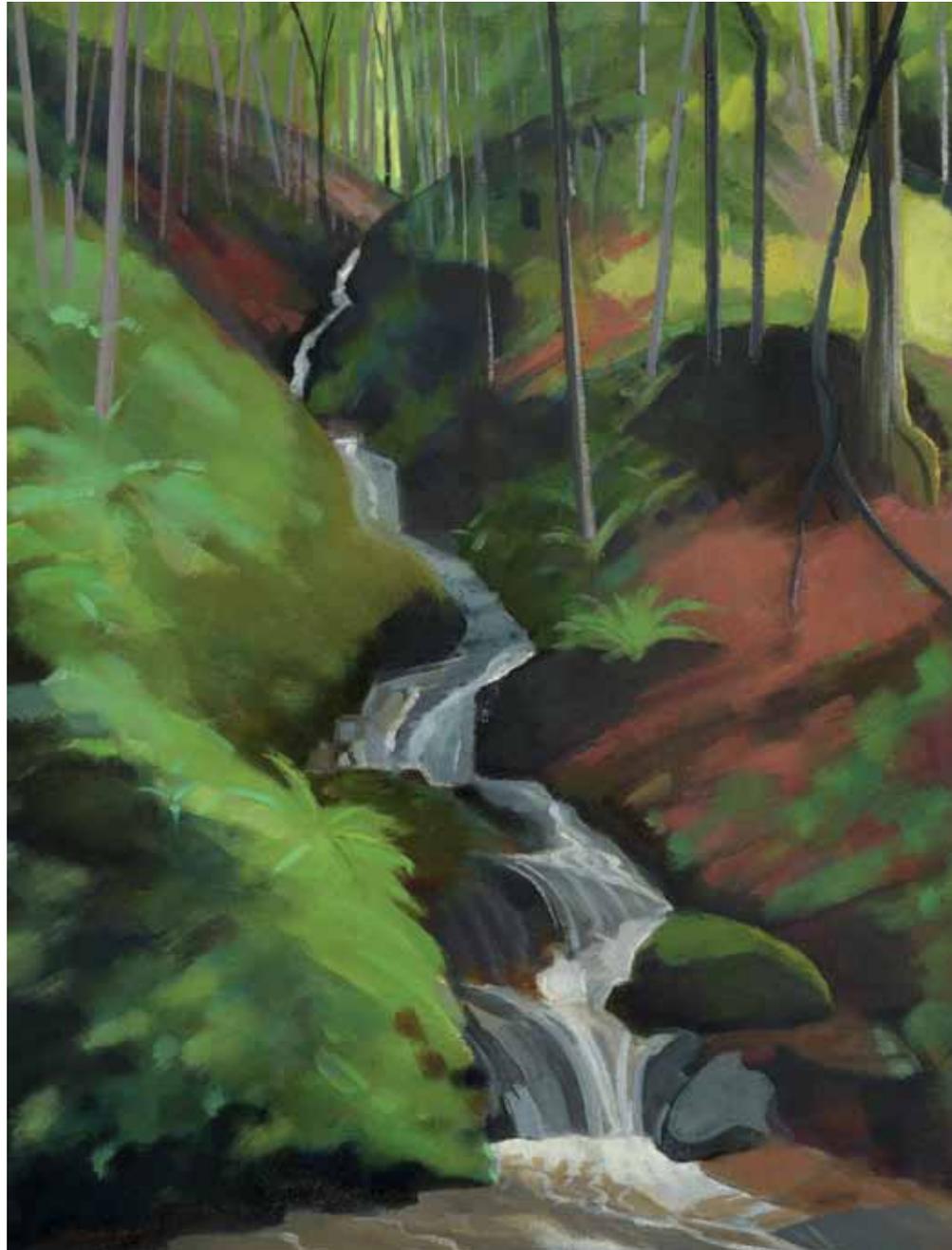
Deserted House 1
oil on canvas 64 x 80 cm



Winter's Wood (Scotland)
oil on canvas 60 x 77 cm



Gorge (Scotland)
oil on canvas 85 x 63 cm



Torrent (Scotland)
oil on canvas 85 x 65 cm



Midsummer Garden (England)
oil on canvas 84 x 109 cm



Stair Flight
oil on canvas 90 x 47 cm

KATHERINE HAMILTON

The Academy of Florence, The Byam Shaw School of Art and the London School of Contemporary Dance formed the basis of my training. I worked as both dancer and muralist in London, Amsterdam and New York, which led to a commission from the Ministry of Culture in Ethiopia to choreograph and form a dance company in Addis Abbaba.

From Ethiopia to the present day my work has revolved around both landscape and the study of other cultures, such as the agricultural communities of Guatemala, fishing communities of Senegal, life on and around the river Niger, Mali, as well as subjects closer to home such as the Hippodrome Circus, Great Yarmouth, landscape of the salt marshes, Norfolk.

Since 1984 I have exhibited in London, East Anglia and America. My work is held in both private and public collections.

I live and work in Suffolk.



Scottish Dusk
oil on canvas 30 x 55 cm

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FRONT COVER
Fishing Port (Ghana)
oil on canvas 44 x 82 cm



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