

Artist's Residency: Grinneabhat, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides, Scotland

Carol Mannas: Print Artist



In 2021, I was attending an Artist Residency in Barcelona and looked online to see where my next Residency would possibly be. I am a Canadian print artist and every two years since I graduated in 2017 from Art School in Calgary, Alberta, I choose a different country where I would like to live for a month and print. When I saw the pictures online of An Lanntair, the Isle of Lewis and especially Grinneabhat, I knew there is something here for me.

And there is.

What I can fully appreciate after a month is the sense of calm, rugged beauty and permanence that are present here. The vastness of the Atlantic Ocean along the west and north of the Isle of Lewis is inspiring to me – the weather it brings from other parts of the world and the

potential dramatic systems it can carry to this ancient coastline. Rock cliffs, in all their magnificence, appear as a protective wall – buffering the sea and keeping it at bay so that the citizens of this Isle have the land to live on and cultivate to provide for themselves.

My practice as a print artist changed as a result of being in the Outer Hebrides. The landscape is so completely surrounding with the big, moving sky and unique colors of the moors, lichen and rock formations that my subject matter was in front of me. The landscape was what most impressed me and inspired my work.

Technically, I had not hand printed any of my work previously. As there was no traditional print making equipment on the Isle so I looked at alternative options, such as hand burnishing, when printing here. Carving the five wood plates with a strong grain into various sections of the sea cliff image I worked up added a natural wood grain to the piece that would have been pressed out had I had a traditional printing press. The hand burnishing expresses the grain as part of the image in the cliffs. A natural element in a natural environment. Colors of the cliffs, moors, sky, water all impressed upon me the uniqueness of the environment and I endeavoured to capture them in the piece.

The people at Grinneabhat, especially Jon Macleod and Tina MacPhail, were instrumental in my success in the studio and I am very grateful for their help and guidance.

I have enjoyed trying to capture the mood and feelings that this island has offered me and have grown as an artist as a result of my time here.

