

# COLD ICELANDIC TONES



“I feel that everything I’m doing hangs together”

Tracks

**G**udbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir’s dominant subject is Icelandic landscape and the colours of Iceland. As a consequence, her work is characterized by cold Icelandic colour tones which produce a convincing picture of the country. At the College of Art and Handicrafts, Jónsdóttir qualified as an art teacher in addition to graduating from the fine arts department in 1988. “We were very independent as students,” she says, “and after I graduated the self-discipline I acquired has remained. At the college we were a close group and decided to continue supporting one another. For instance, we staged two joint exhibitions which made it easier for us to get started.” Jónsdóttir has a studio in the old city centre of Reykjavík in a building where other artists also work. She complains that a decent studio is both expensive and hard to find. “I was very lucky to find a place in the heart of the city and my landlord accepts my paintings as a payment for half the rent,” she says. It is also common for young painters to take on extra work. “Ironically, people who do a lot of extra work are often so busy that they can’t find time to use the studio they worked so hard to get,” she adds. But Jónsdóttir also sees the positive side of painting in Iceland. “In some ways it is very good to be an artist in this country,” she says. “I would not want to live anywhere else. We are in touch with our environment, as is clear from Icelandic paintings.” Her work is under characteristic Icelandic influences. She likes to paint waterfalls and animals in muted, grey and cold colours. “The place is cold,



Alone in the Mountains





Gudbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir

although the people aren't," she adds. "Maybe we need to be a bit hot to stand all the cold."

It is difficult to say what influences my work. Landscape certainly does, and the weather. I have also been influenced by some Icelandic painters. I don't know why I keep painting waterfalls. Maybe it's because I'm afraid of water. The power of these waterfalls fascinates me and scares me at the same time. The form of a white waterfall is really an impressive sight, but I paint mine from my own imagination. This summer, however, I did make a special study tour of waterfalls all over Iceland."

Jónsdóttir is born and bred in Ísafjörður in the West Fjords, where there is a thin strip of coastal lowland which gives way to sheer mountains. "You really have to bend your head backwards to see the sky there. Maybe that's the reason why my pictures always have high mountains and just a tiny stretch of sky.

"It is hard to explain why particular motifs recur in my work. Sometimes I am working with a series of different motifs, one after the other. I went through a period when I painted sheep and then tables. Now I paint waterfalls, which are beginning to connect with tables and animals. You somehow get these ideas subconsciously and do not really contemplate them much until later. I feel that everything I'm doing hangs together."

Jónsdóttir's pictures are as modest as the artist who paints them, but convincingly capture the Icelandic landscapes and colours. She feels that a large canvas suits her subjects better, although a change can be refreshing as well. "What's important is to give time to your paintings and re-evaluate them all the time."



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