



david blackburn



front cover detail - full work shown above

1. WEST YORKSHIRE LANDSCAPE AT DUSK, 2006 • £7,850
pastel 67 x 51 cms 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins

overleaf, opposite title page

2. LEAVES WITHIN A LEAF, 2006 • £8,850
pastel 66 x 51 cms 26 x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins

opposite

3. LEAVES AT EVENING TIME, 2010 • £8,850
pastel 46 x 65 cms 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ ins





2. LEAVES WITHIN
A LEAF, 2006
• £8,850
pastel
66 x 51 cms
26 x 20 1/8 ins

david blackburn

Works from the Studio Estate

2017

MESSUM'S

www.messums.com

28 Cork Street, London W1S 3NG Telephone: +44 (0)20 7437 5545

david blackburn

David Blackburn first studied as a textile artist, and by design or coincidence a sense of the layered and interwoven persists in his work. By nature a true Neo-Romantic, soon after he enrolled in the Royal College of Art, he dedicated himself to landscape, a genre that in 1959 was arguably retrograde to many of his contemporaries. But unlike Hockney or Kitaj, who looked to popular culture to shape their visual language, Blackburn was inspired by the transformative, shifting nature of printmaking and above all, pastel. Encouraged by Gerhart Frankl (1901-1965), his tutor at the RCA (and one of the few Austrian artists of his generation who did not embrace expressionism) Blackburn began to work in in this notoriously challenging medium, often mixed with charcoal and other media. In 1962, his degree show included richly monochrome drawings that caught the attention of Sir Kenneth Clark, who perhaps sensed in his work the Romantic landscape tradition he argued was intrinsic to British art. Clark bought at least two of Blackburn's drawings and became an advocate for his work, later stating: *'I don't know any artist to whom I can compare him. He is not a landscape painter, not an abstractionist in the ordinary sense... [but] a painter of metamorphosis.'*



4. BLUE FOREST EDGE, 1981 • £7,850
pastel
50 x 62 cms 19% x 24% ins



5. NIGHT TREES, 1982 • £8,850
pastel
50 x 65 cms 19% x 25% ins

In fact, Blackburn's career was practically an exercise in metamorphosis. His earliest critically successful works were charcoal series that visually suggest cellular biology, but actually were meant to express concepts of genesis, growth and decay. Subsequently, he pursued similar themes working exclusively in pastel, delineating his forms not by line, but by masked layers of opaque, glowing colour, which in itself, is not typical of "Northern painting." But while his creative persona is rooted in Yorkshire, Blackburn is a "Northern artist" only in the most superficial sense, because he actually spent most of his career abroad. He worked for long periods in Melbourne, where he encountered Australian art and the hot alien wonder of the Outback; the United States, where freeways and skyscrapers mapped his visual geometry; and even visited the Rocky Mountains and saw how Canadian artists interpreted their raw beauty through colour and symbolism.

As Blackburn refined his technique, scale and perspective became increasingly subjective, and beyond abstracting landscape, he began to rewrite its syntax, challenging the accepted order of land, sea, sky and natural form. A true Romantic, he repeatedly tackled Blake's paradox of 'the world in a grain of sand', and there is a constant tension throughout his work between the macroscopic and microscopic.



6. TREE STUDY WITH CURVED HILLSIDE
– EVENING, 1983 • £7,850
pastel
63 x 48 cms 24¾ x 18⅞ ins



7. EMERGING SUN, 1989 • £6,850
pastel
41 x 36 cms 16⅞ x 14⅞ ins

Perspective and form could depend as much on technique as subject matter, and could be earthbound or airborne, biomorphic or crystalline.

In the early 1990s, following major exhibitions at the Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Yale Centre for British Art, and interviews for the BBC and ITV, Blackburn returned to Huddersfield, which despite all of his traveling, he still considered home: "It's what I know – the hills and valleys, the history, the mix of urban and rural, old and new: the sheer texture of the place." He continued to exhibit his work until 2008, and his pastels express a deeply held belief in landscape as the doorway to the divine, and ultimately believed it to be the only genre that could communicate "the relationship between the unnoticed and the infinite". While it is a clichéd term, the potent colour and form of Blackburn's work is jewel-like, illustrating Clive James's contention that 'the best art appears to compress coal into diamonds.'

Andrea Gates
director



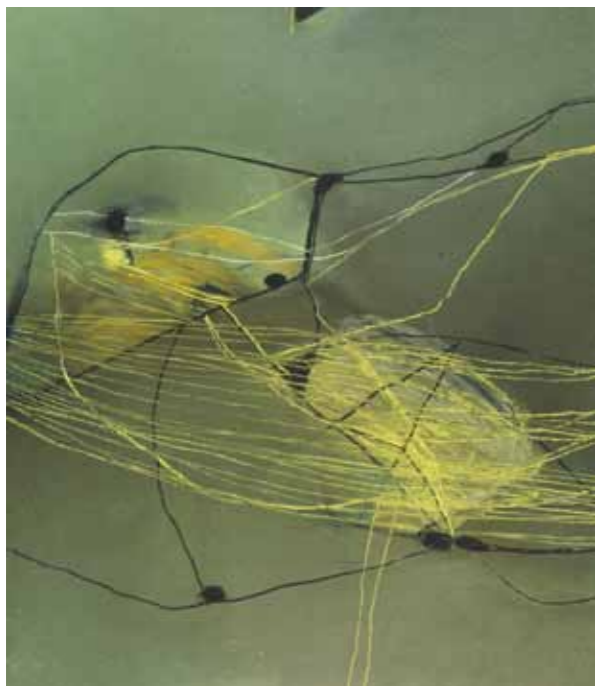
8. DUSK LANDSCAPE, 1991 • £7,850
pastel
60 x 51 cms 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



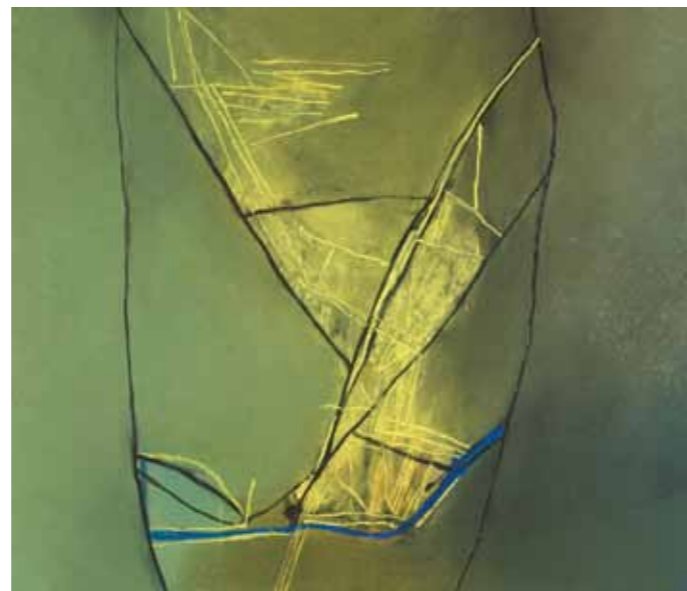
9. GASOMETER, 1991 • £6,850
pastel
42 x 36 cms 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



10. LANDSCAPE WITH BLUE BOULDER, 1991 • £6,850
pastel
41 x 36 cms 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



11. PASSING SUNLIGHT, 1991 • £6,850
pastel
41 x 36 cms 16½ x 14¼ ins



12. MOORLAND WATERFALL, 1991 • £6,850
pastel
35 x 42 cms 13¾ x 16½ ins



13. INCIDENT OVER THE FIRE, 1993 • £6,850
pastel and collage
43 x 37 cms 16¾ x 14¾ ins



14. LANDSCAPE GASOMETER, 1994 • £7,850
pastel
62 x 51 cms 24¾ x 20¼ ins



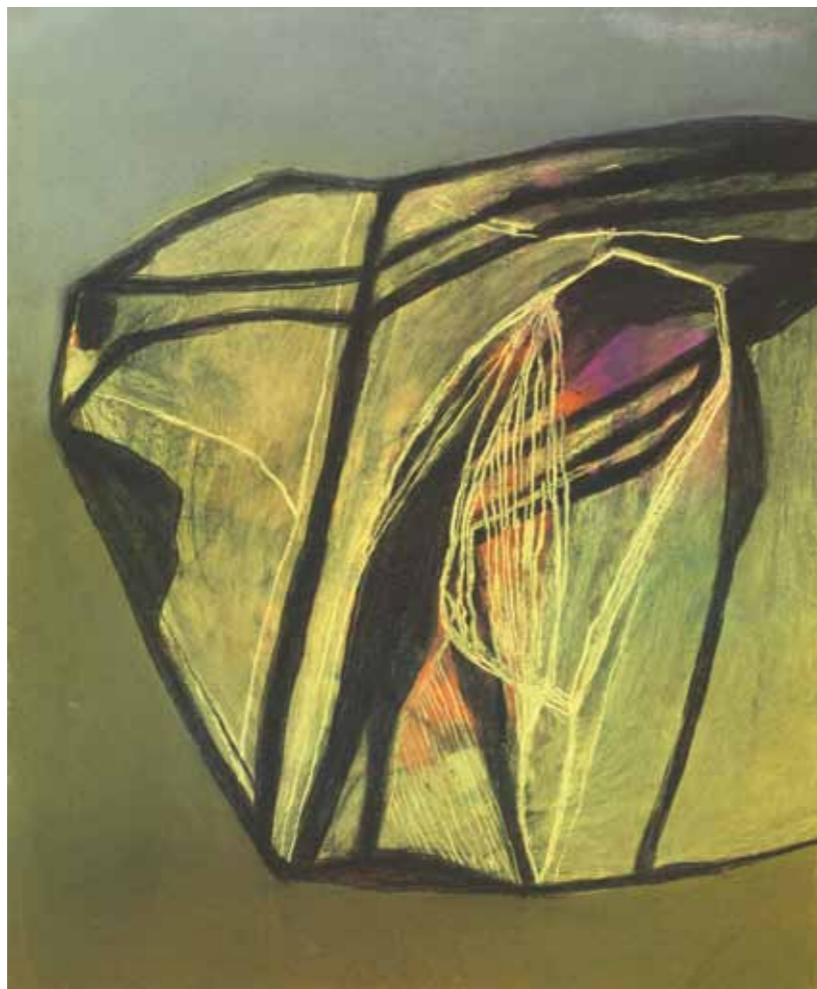
15. PALE STONES IN LIGHT, 1995 • £8,850
pastel
51 x 60 cms 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ ins



16. GREEN NORTHERN
LANDSCAPE, 1995 • £6,850
pastel
45 x 36 cms 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



17. BLACK SEA WITH RAIN, 1995 • £8,850
pastel
61 x 51 cms 24 x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



18 GREEN LANDSCAPE II, 1995 • £7,850
pastel
61 x 50 cms 24 x 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



19 GASOMETER AND ORANGE SKY, 1996 • £6,850
pastel
37 x 41 cms 14 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



20. MOORLAND LATE EVENING, 1996 • £6,850
pastel
36 x 42 cms 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins



21. SUMMER WALK MARSDEN, 1999 • £6,850
pastel
45 x 36 cms 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins



22. HIGH AERIAL MOORLAND, 1999 • £8,850
pastel
51 x 64 cms 20 1/8 x 25 1/4 ins



23. POST AND FIELD DUSK, 2000 • £7,850
pastel
51 x 64 cms 20 1/8 x 25 1/4 ins



24. LEAF AS EVENING COASTLINE, 2001 • £6,850
pastel
47 x 35 cms 18½ x 13¾ ins



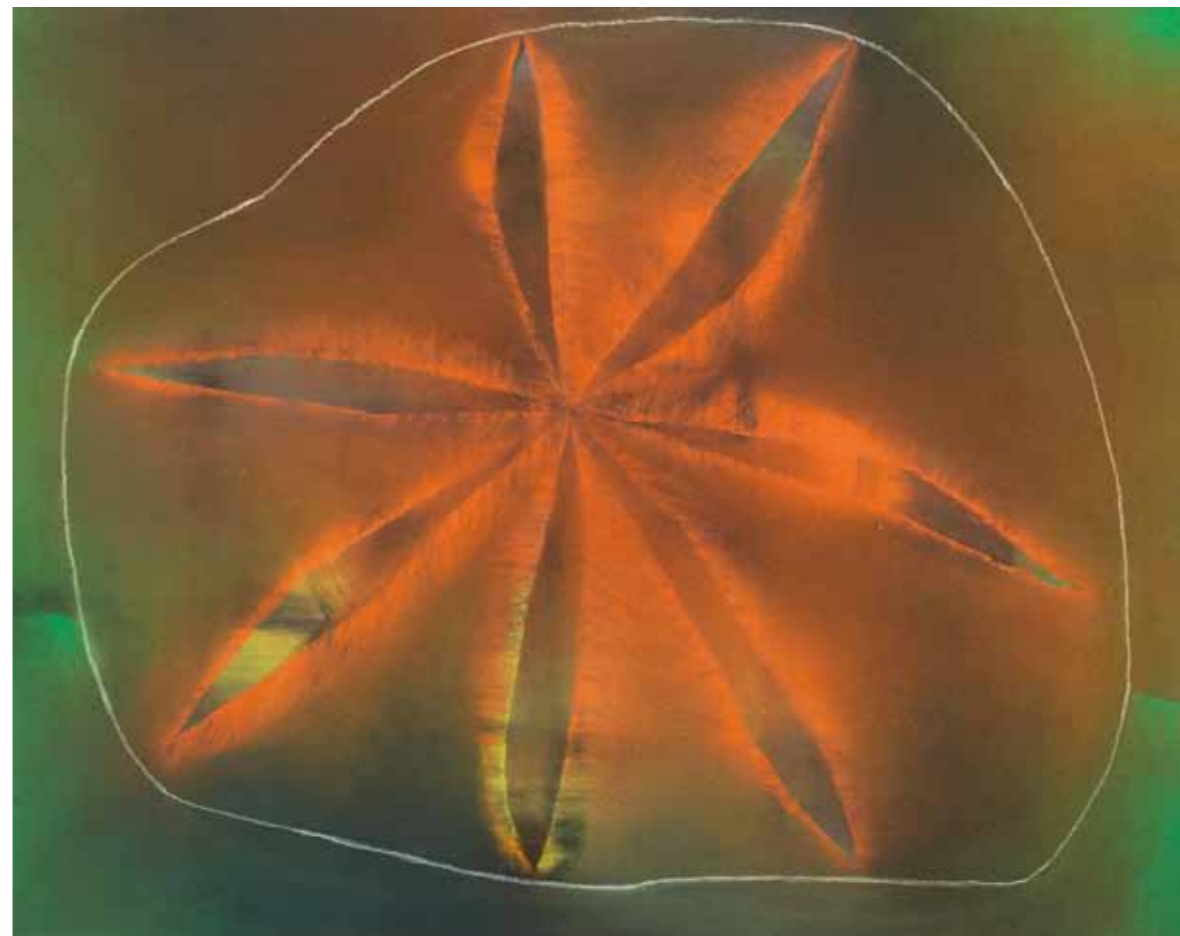
25. TREES AT THE WATER – WINTER, 2001 • £6,850
pastel
47 x 36 cms 18½ x 14⅞ ins



26. HILLSIDE, HIGH SUMMER, 2003 • £8,850
pastel
65 x 50 cms 25½ x 19¾ ins



27. HILLSIDE ABOVE HALIFAX – DUSK, 2003 • £8,850
pastel
65 x 51 cms 25½ x 20¾ ins



28. FOSSIL, 2002 • £7,850
pastel
51 x 65 cms 20¾ x 25¾ ins

DAVID BLACKBURN



29. HILLSIDE ABOVE HALIFAX – DUSK, 2003 • £7,850
pastel
65 x 51 cms 25½ x 20¼ ins



30. SUNSET EDGE OF THE MOORS, 2005 • £6,850
pastel
48 x 36 cms 18¾ x 14¼ ins

Biographical details

- 1939 Born 22 June, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, son of Wilfrid and Nora Blackburn
- 1955 Wins scholarship to Huddersfield School of Art
- 1959–62 Royal College of Art, London
- 1962 Meets Gerhart Frankl. Introduced to pastel, and the works of Austrian artists and scholars. Kenneth Clark purchases drawings, becomes patron and adviser
- 1963 Travels widely in France, Italy and Germany visiting galleries and private collections
- 1963–6 Visits Australia. Lecturer, School of Art, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Travels in Western Australia.
- 1966 Completes *Creation* series. Returns to England Lecturer, School of Architecture, University of Manchester Working on *Metamorphoses* series
- 1970 Exhibition at Agnews, London. Retrospective at Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
- 1971 Visiting lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of Melbourne. Visits Central Australia
- 1973–4 Visiting Associate in Fine Art, University of Melbourne
- 1974 Exhibition at Agnews of *Central Australian Drawings* Visiting Fellow, Merton College, Oxford
- 1977 Visiting Associate, Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra
- 1977–8 Visiting Artist, University of Melbourne
- 1978 Retrospective at Heslington Hall, University of York Travels regularly between England, Australia and America
- 1981 Visiting Professor, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Begins American 'architectural' drawings and Californian 'beach' scenes
- 1984 Drawings purchased for Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.
- 1986 Exhibition: Dulwich Picture Gallery, London Begins *Landscape Vision* series
- 1987 Travels in Canada
- 1989 Retrospective Exhibition at Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
- 1989 BBC *Northern Lights* programme
ITV *Celebrations* (30 minute documentary)
Commences association with Hart Gallery
- 1991 ITV *Artists' Lives* programme
Featured on BBC radio *Kaleidoscope*
- 1994 *David Blackburn and the Visionary Landscape Tradition* by Sasha Grishin, published
- 1995 Four month visit to Australia
- 1997 Visit to Australia for Australian National University exhibition
Awarded Hon. D. Litt by University of Huddersfield
- 1998 *David Blackburn – A Landscape Vision* by Malcolm Yorke published
- 2002 *David Blackburn – The Sublime Landscape* by Charlotte Mullins published
- 2006 *Landscapes of the Mind* DVD by Optic Nerve Productions produced

Solo Exhibitions

- 2017 Messum's Gallery, Cork Street, London
- 2016 Messum's Gallery, Cork Street, London
- 2014 Messum's Gallery, Cork Street, London
- 2012 Hart Gallery, London
- 2010 Hart Gallery, London
- 2008 Hart Gallery, London
- 2006 Hart Gallery, London
- 2004 65th Birthday Exhibition, Hart Gallery, London
- 2002 Winchester Cathedral
Hart Gallery, London
- 2001 Hart SouthWest, Cornwall
- 2000 60th Birthday Exhibition, Hart Gallery, London
- 1999 New Ashgate Gallery, Farnham, Surrey
60th Birthday Exhibition, Phillip's Auction House, Leeds
60th Birthday Exhibition, Peter Bartlow Gallery, Chicago
- 1998 Hart Gallery, London
- 1997 Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne, Australia.
- 1996 Peter Bartlow Gallery, Chicago
Hart Gallery, London
Hart Gallery, Nottingham

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 1995 | Retrospective, Djanogly Art Gallery, The University of Nottingham | 1979 | Retrospective, Huddersfield Art Gallery |
| 1994 | Stein Bartlow Gallery, Chicago | 1978 | Retrospective, Heslington Hall, York |
| | Hart Gallery London | 1974 | Agnew's, London |
| | Retrospective, Huddersfield Art Gallery | 1973 | Joseph Brown Gallery, Melbourne |
| | Retrospective, Kreis Unna, Germany | 1972 | Agnew's, London |
| 1993 | Hart Gallery, Nottingham | 1970 | Bradford Festival |
| 1991 | Hart Gallery, Nottingham | | University of Swansea |
| 1989 | Yale Center for British Art, New Haven | | Agnew's, London |
| | Hart Gallery, Nottingham | | Retrospective, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield |
| | Goldmark Gallery, Uppingham | 1969 | Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne |
| 1986 | Dulwich Picture Gallery, London | 1968 | Oldham Art Gallery |
| 1985 | Vorpal Gallery, San Francisco | | University of Leeds |
| | Royal Institute of British Architects, London | | House of Commons, Westminster |
| 1984 | Vorpal Gallery, New York | 1967 | Watters Gallery, Sydney |
| | Agnew's London | | University of Bradford |
| 1982 | International Monetary Fund, Washington D. C. | | Watters Gallery, Sydney |
| 1980 | David Jones Art Gallery, Sydney | 1965 | Argus Gallery, Melbourne |
| | Solander Gallery, Canberra | | Watters Gallery, Sydney |

Public and Corporate Collections

Albertina, Vienna; Art Gallery of South Australia; Art Gallery of Western Australia; Asda Property Holdings Pic; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Australian National University Art Collection, Canberra; Bradford Art Gallery; Bradford and Bingley; British Council, London; British Museum, London; Calderdale Art Galleries & Museums; Carlow Art Collection; Castlemaine Art Gallery; Contemporary Art Society, London; Darwin College, Cambridge; Exeter University; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Fogg Museum, Harvard University; General Electric Company Art Collection; Halifax Building Society; Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Harlow Art Collection; Huddersfield Art Gallery; Leeds City Art Gallery; Mercer Gallery, Harrogate; Merton College, Oxford; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Victoria; New Hall, Cambridge; Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.; Provident Financial Art Collection; Queensland Art Gallery; Red Bull; Risk Magazine; St Johns College, Oxford; Stanford University, California; Sheffield Art Gallery; The Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester; Trustees of St Thomas's Hospital; University of Bradford; University of Canberra Art Collection; University of Melbourne Art Collection; University of Leeds; University of Prague Art Collection; Wakefield Art Gallery; Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; Yorkshire Arts Association.



ISBN 978-1-910993-14-9 Publication No: CDXXII
Published by David Messum Fine Art
© David Messum Fine Art

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing from the publisher.

The Studio, Lords Wood, Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

Tel: 01628 486565 www.messums.com

Photography: Steve Russell Printed by DLM-Creative

opposite

31. ACROSS THE VIADUCT, 2005

• £6,850

pastel

48 x 36 cms

18½ x 14½ ins

back cover

32. SUNSET – NORTHERN MEMORY, 2005

• £6,850

pastel

48 x 36 cms

18½ x 14½ ins





MESSUM'S

28 Cork Street, London W1S 3NG Telephone: +44 (0)20 7437 5545
www.messums.com info@messums.com

ISBN 978-1-910993-14-5



9 781910 993149 >