

Russell Baker

ICE

10 November – 22 December 2015

Private View 24 November 6-9 pm



Northern Light, Oil on board, 2015

ART BERMONDSEY PROJECT SPACE

sponsored by OLYMPUS

- Russell Baker was born in Lancaster in 1958
- He graduated from the Slade School of Art and has worked in London, New York & Florence
- After many years of collecting Soviet Art he created the specialist dealership, the Baker Mamonova Gallery
- The exhibition features a collection of 16 paintings of icebergs that are part of a series the artist began 10 years ago.
- Art Bermondsey Project Space is a new not-for-profit-platform sponsored by OLYMPUS supporting the fusion of art, photography and culture in association with STATE magazine
- Catalogue available
- Press contact Serenella Martufi: sm@project-space.london 0203 441 5858

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A Journey into the Abstract

by Helen Samuels

THE LARGEST recorded iceberg was the size of Belgium; another was the height of a 55 storey building. Small wonder then that they have a sense of the awesome and mysterious, a sense of belonging to a place that is beyond our reach. Russell Baker's iceberg studies convey this otherworldliness but at the same time exude a forceful presence. When Baker talks about his work, he describes a deep rooted sculptural memory – an abiding fascination with certain blunt shapes and clearly defined forms which he has chosen to represent not in sculpture but condensed and flattened into the icebergs and snow shelves seen in his paintings.

The process of layering informed Baker's work throughout his earlier career as a printmaker and is now central to his painting practice. The natural layering and erosion of icebergs; the layering of snow and the idea of layers of ice concealed by water are all at play here, mirrored in the way Baker builds up and breaks down dense layers of paint, constructing, compacting and exposing fields of colour and texture, acting on his canvasses in ways which imitate the action of natural forces upon a landscape, honing and refining until the final form emerges. These paintings embody a process in which subject matter and technique resonate and reinforce each other with a satisfying circularity.

Russell Baker's work sits within the context of fellow artists of far northern landscapes, Alexander Borisov (1866-1934), Rockwell Kent (1882-1971) and Andrey Yakovlev. He is also struck by the powerful nostalgia of Tacita Dean's found images. Baker has travelled to Canada and Northern Russia but his iceberg paintings do not depict a specific landscape. They are instead informed and inspired by a vast store of photographic, filmic and dream images charting a lifelong fascination with the inky seas and frozen landscapes of the far north; a dormant sensibility, which has evolved and developed throughout his life since childhood. Baker started this series of iceberg paintings about 10 years ago and an engagement with his audience leads him to believe that his own sense of affinity with these sublime and awe-inspiring landscapes taps into a wider sense of wonder, the quintessentially abstract nature of icebound landscapes perhaps allowing a freedom of painterly expression; a geological template where the shapes of the subconscious can be assembled, orchestrated, allowed to float to the surface. These paintings represent a journey through the physical manipulation of paint, through layers of perception and substance to harness the allure of remoteness, depth and distance and bring it into focus.



Ice Block N. 02, Oil on board, 2015

Press images on request.

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Directions

Bus: C10 Victoria to Canada Water
(Stop F Bermondsey Street)
Underground: Borough; London Bridge

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