

Campus Art



UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

NAVIGATE



Katherine Boucher Beug
Telemachus, 2002
acrylic and pigment on canvas

In Katherine Boucher Beug's *Telemachus*, the canvas displays irregular patches of colour in variations of blue, gold and white, bleeding and blurring into one another. At one time, there appears to have been a distinct grid-like structure at work that has long since been effaced and painted over. The repetition of the composition subtly veers off course, into juxtapositions of density and light, of delicate washes and layers of opacity and texture. The image seems to have been built up gradually, through long periods of painting and over-painting, looking and waiting.

In this light, the connection with Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope, makes sense. The image bears a formal resemblance to a ship's flag, wind-swept and tattered through years of ocean voyages. The fluid, formless delineations of the squares easily evoke the spray of water, fog and mist. Even the violence, inflicted by Telemachus and Odysseus upon his father's return home and eventual confrontation with Penelope's suitors, is represented. More than anything, however, the painting suggests patience, uncertainty, and the prolonged anticipation of the son (like the artist) for a satisfactory resolution of their trials.

I am a native Newfoundlander, who has spent the last ten years away from home. For this reason, the work has both a personal and professional appeal for me. *Telemachus'* themes of distance and duration are especially compelling for me as there is only a (admittedly quite lengthy) stretch of water separating my hometown of St. John's from Cork. My initial studies in art history tended towards the ability of abstract art to capture the ambiguous and the epic without resorting to literal representation. *Telemachus* reaffirms the innate capacity of this medium to address both individual experiences and universal themes.

Katherine Boucher Beug's *Telemachus* is one of several works by the artist in the University College Cork Art Collection, including, *Orange Defined*, *Birth Canal*, *From the Notebooks of an Alchemist*, *Towards Enclosure (2)* and *Multi-Channel*. A publication on her *Telemachus* series of works published by Fenton Gallery and featuring texts by Nuala Fenton and Eibhear Walshe is also available from the Lewis Glucksman Gallery bookshop.

Chris Clarke is Curator of Education + Collections at Lewis Glucksman Gallery

