

# EMANATE

These paintings focus on something or somebody seen from a near viewpoint ; if there are some eyes, then it's as if they are about to open, or appear to be damaged and reforming. If there is some skin, it's like it absorbs one colour or another, merges with it and makes the reflections mutate. It's as though the skin embodies the tint of an environment, indistinct in the painting, but deeply present. No details in that place, only some space which engulfs the individual, who seems to let it soak into the skin.

When the painting takes the form of a fire, it ends in cinders. If it's a sky, it is one which is overcast and is clearing up, or maybe it's the contrary, a dawn, or a sunset. And this painting of a moon which seems to brighten some night clouds resembles a sun in the middle of somber smoke. All of this painted with colours which have formed fine vibrations by some hand movements. We feel near to the skin, or fire or a sky, but they stay retreated and between two states. Each painting gives a dose of distance which permits both an intimate state and allows for feelings, questions and contemplation. Nothing is single or finished, there is no message or narration. These paintings of instants suspend some feelings which are not common and obvious. In each canvas an element seems to be caught in a tilted moment or in a change, between two or several states.

What is painted here seems very close, sharp and plain, yet the painting remains quite distant, enigmatic, elsewhere. It invites us to take the step which permits us to experience and to perceive it. Within a moment each of these paintings seizes a collection of forms and colours. The painter knows how to abstract the chosen instant and the painted element in order to make them appear in a singular manner. This arouses to the one who faces the canvas as to himself, this incredible faculty to see and feel in a condensed way what is delivered by the painting.

The moment we face these canvasses, we realise that a body in a space has felt and painted these bodies and elements, into these others spaces which are given to us directly in the present space.

Ben Readman's paintings can be considered as artworks which give, and which give on several levels, thicknesses and layers. You could say they are intensely simple or softly complex, in any case, generously attractive.

Lili Heller  
'Emanate' Exhibition text, Stone Gallery, Dublin, 2008

The paintings that form this new exhibition of work by Ben Readman portray the uneasy relationship between ecstasy, renewal and mortality. Close-ups of figures in an uncertain state of pleasure, pain, sleep or expiration are juxtaposed with a series of skylscapes which linger between twilight and dawn, light hovering between formation and extinction. It is for the viewer to decide the hope or sadness of these images. The painter has left a deliberate ambiguity in order that the viewer can complete the cycle from partial death to re-birth that is suggested.

This work is a new departure for Ben Readman showing an ambitious scope of thought and imagery. His work's foundation is in his personal and lived experience, working from first hand sources rather than mediated public imagery.

Aoife Desmond  
Short Press release for 'Emanate' 2008