



The moody hues and stylised subject matter of newcomer **Hamish Blakely's** narrative pictures are set to be great classics of the future. His themes are universal - sisterhood, relationships, secrets - all conveyed with an intense use of colour and atmosphere, providing the viewer with a desire to see and know more



Immaculate brushstrokes



 **The Optimists**

Giclée edition 195

Image 20 1/2" x 24"

 £294  £395

When Hamish Blakely recalls his childhood, he remembers a life filled with glamorous movie stars and old style crooners. With two theatrical parents to influence and inspire him, he was introduced to black and white movies at an early age and fell in love. "I think my current collection of paintings are an antidote to modern day living, they connect to a bygone era of style."

Cinema in the 20s and 30s produced some very striking images, and stars like Claudette Colbert and Louise Brooks, who embody that sophisticated easy style, plus the overall atmosphere of those old movies have been instrumental in the type of work Hamish produces today. "I definitely like to emulate the past, and collect lots of reference for a picture from old sepia photos, although sometimes a glance at the fashion section of the Sunday papers can produce something that inspires me."

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Sisters
Giclée edition 195
Image 16¼" x 18"
m £184 f £275

The Tune That Always Plays
Giclée edition 195
Image 18¼" x 24"
m £294 f £395



As an artist who likes to create a strong moody atmosphere, and a romantic narrative, Hamish is aware of the dangers of becoming too intellectual and conceptual. "I believe art is at its best when it's simply emotional. Before analysis or a full understanding, you see something and you are moved, the viewer must just enjoy the emotional sensation. My paintings explore moments of silence in between conversation, when thoughts are more important than words."

For a long time whilst growing up Hamish had always expressed his creative vision in pencil and charcoal drawings, but at eighteen he had a breakthrough with colour. He produced a painted portrait of his Dad that was impressive enough to change his

future. Today he no longer produces any preliminary sketches in pencil, and challenges himself to paint straight onto canvas. Using acrylics to build up layers of paint, and also because they end up having a similar quality to dry pastels, Hamish can plan out how a painting will start but not how the composition, colour and mood will evolve as the painting takes shape.

"Sometimes a new painting can reveal itself with ease, and at other times only after a real struggle. A great picture moves beyond technical ability, there has to be something indefinable, a magical quality that makes a piece of art extraordinary. The missing element that gives a picture its unique specialness is a riddle, but you don't want to know what that riddle is because then a painting just becomes a formulaic exercise."

Of the current collection his own personal favourite is *Sisters*, who look like starlets from the party scene of *The Great Gatsby*. With their fur collars pulled

up, and cloche hats pulled down Hamish has created another romantic narrative for the viewer to take on. Their shaded eyes and enigmatic half smiles immediately intrigue us and we want to know what they are whispering about.

"The women in my pictures are always very strong figures, I like them to take centre stage, and push the men into the background. Colours and the way light

falls is very important, and I often use a limited colour palette to create a feeling of early evening. This picture is very simplistic, but it has a feeling of great drama, and of course romance."

Like a classic Frank Kapra movie, a great painting will endure long after the initial impact has faded, and that is what inspires Hamish Blakely to keep painting. "Despite

all the wonderful breakthroughs I have experienced in painting over the years, I never feel that I have quite nailed it. There is always more to be done, and the only gratification is in knowing that you have not yet reached your potential." ■

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