

PRESS RELEASE

PROVIDENCE RI November 2022

For additional information and images, please contact Paula Martiesian at 401-521-7634 or at artsong5354@gmail.com. Attached images: Provost in Brittany photographing the landscape and “In the Blink of an Eye,” mixed media on watercolor paper by Michele Provost.

The BankRI Galleries present:

BankRI Turks Head Gallery: "Here Thinking of There, Now Thinking of Then: Paintings on Paper by Michele Provost," January 5 through March 1, 2023.. The branch is located at One Turks Head Place in downtown Providence. Hours are Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The branch is not open on weekends. For more information, contact www.bankri.com or call the branch at 401 456-5152.



MEET THE ARTIST –MICHELE PROVOST

Memory is elusive, a shape-shifter constantly altered by time and perspective.

Cranston artist Michele Provost is drawn to this “phenomenon of remembering and forgetting” and has created a body of work that centers around memories soaked into the French landscape of Normandy and Brittany.

Provost is a lifelong traveler who spent many months exploring these two regions of France that played such pivotal roles in the Battle of Brittany and the D-Day invasion of World War II.

“I began this project in 2016 after spending time in coastal Normandy and Brittany,” Provost writes in her artist statement, “drawing a landscape that seems to me to resonate with deep sadness.” Traveling through the villages, she noticed war memorials dedicated to those villagers who died in the war inscribed, “A tous les enfants” or to all the children. Three people she knew – her father, a friend’s father and an acquaintance – also had ties to the history of the land. This place with its beauty and sadness awakened a sympathetic curiosity that led Provost to try and capture in her paintings the lingering memories of loss and war.

Muted colors, lines that move with purposeful grace and suggestions of objects combine in dream-like vignettes meant to conjure up memories of places with complex histories. Provost explains, “The shapes and marks refer to a combination of landscapes of home and of France, of maps, military diagrams, blockhouses/bunkers, cemeteries, flowers and a French porcelain funerary wreath.”

She builds the surface of the paintings by layering, scraping, and embedding color and line. She will spend days creating an idea on paper, only to paint over it. To her, the image is still there, not unlike a memory planted deep in a person’s mind.

As quiet as these paintings are, they manage to convey deeply rich environments, both mysterious and practical, dark and light, cerebral and intuitive. There is an enigmatic quality to her painting that speaks to the everlasting call of the landscape, its beauty and mystery and power to hold us against all odds.

“We carry memories in our hearts, in our minds, and in our bones,” Provost states, “But long after we’ve forgotten, the earth remembers.”

The BankRI Galleries are curated by Paula Martiesian, a Providence-based artist and arts advocate.

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