

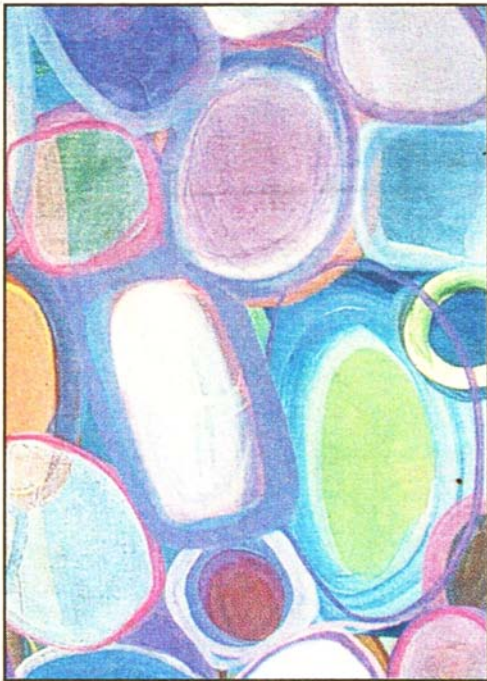
Between Here and There o3 gallery, Oxford Castle

The translucent hues that dance through many of Karen Purple's superb oil paintings, now on show at the o3 Gallery at Oxford Castle, were inspired by winter and the Oxfordshire landscape. By walking through the countryside, Karen is able to observe the effect of weather and light on the fields and trees. She also collects samples of soil, river water or muddy puddles which she incorporates into her palette. The paintings in her *Small Field* series are executed in her studio, and although they evolve partly from her imagination, many of her brush strokes and colour combinations come from the many words and images she has placed in her notebook during the walk. Layers and layers of paint are then added and removed from the canvas until she's satisfied that she has finally captured her experience. Karen describes this process as "gradually building up a painting through the act of remembering".

There are seven of her *Small Field* pictures executed in this way on show.

Her other work includes three magical oils on linen entitled *Pollen Painting* which can be confidently described as Turner-esque.

Her *Colourblock* series are earlier works and equally impressive, but in an entirely different way. Take *Colourblock Cobalt Violet* (pictured), for example, in which she has placed together misshaped circles, juxtaposing purple against green, pink against mauve. It's a lively, colourful work that displays great artistic talent and Karen's instinctive feel for the way colours interact with each other.



Karen is an emerging artist whose work is now being taken seriously, as was evidenced on her opening night when several pictures were bought before the guests had been offered a second glass of wine. By the end of the evening, there were red stickers everywhere.

Having enjoyed Karen's collection, which remains on show until May 6, it's worth stepping over to the Ovada Gallery, Gloucester Green, to view the work of Linda Jane James entitled *In the Wild Wood*, which remains on show until tomorrow. She is also an emerging artist with much to offer.

Helen Peacocke