

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham
'Earth, Ice, Rock and Sea'





From English Island, St Martins
Pencil on paper, 1951. 25.5 x 35.6cm



Glacier
Offset drawing, 1951. 52 x 73.9cm



Autumn Landscape
Gouache on paper, 1952. 32 x 56.2cm



From Bedroom Window, Chiusure
Pencil & tempera on paper, 1955. 27.1 x 42.8cm



Chiusure -Tuscany
Pencil on paper, 1955. 38.2 x 51.5cm



Rocks
Mixed media on paper, 1958 - 86. 42.8 x 54.1cm



Mans' Head, St Ives Coast
Pencil on paper, 1985. 54 x 74.8cm



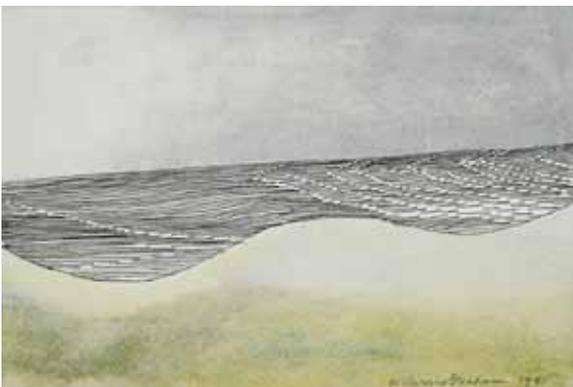
Dialogue Between Wind and Sea No.2
Pen, ink, and oil on board, 1982. 13.5 x 19.5 cm



Sea Waves
Gouache on paper, 1990. 38.4 x 56.2cm



Cape Cornwall
Pencil on paper, 1991. 52.4 x 75cm



Untitled - Dialogue Between Land and Sea II
Mixed media on card, 1991. 13.2 x 19.7cm



Lava Lanzarote - Study
Pen, ink, and oil on board, 1982. 13.5 x 19.5cm

Earth, Ice, Rock and Sea

The Art of Wilhelmina Barns-Graham

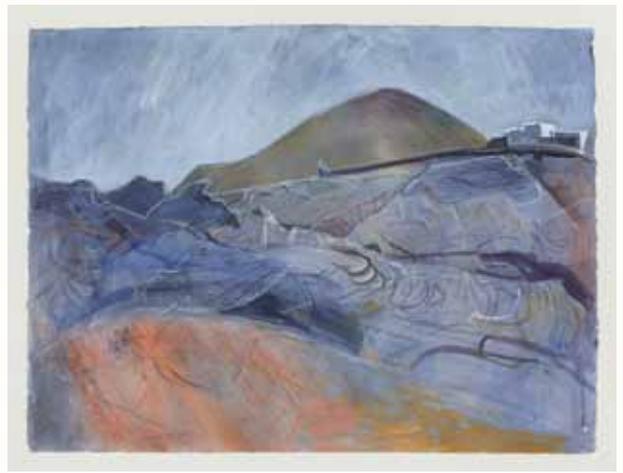
Wilhelmina Barns-Graham's engagement with the natural world was first expressed through line. Drawing was a key component of her creative toolbox, and she was extremely good at it. Her drawing teacher at Edinburgh College of Art, where she started in her art training in 1931 and from where she graduated in 1937, was Donald Moodie who taught her economy of line, to capture the complex character of her subject in a few swift lines. (Sir) William Gillies too was an inspiration. She shared his acute powers of observation and the confidence to select and simplify. In a conversation in 1992 Willie, as she was known, stated that *"I have always been interested in drawing – it is a discipline of the mind. I seek to discover abstract shapes, accepting the subject's demands often touching different moods....Being in the presence of the power and awe of nature, be it to study the effect of the sun on glaciers in Switzerland, the rain on clay formations in Tuscany, the lava forms and disturbances in the volcanic areas of Lanzarote, to the passing of cloud shadows on the hills and sea of Orkney or the wind movements on sand in Fife, all wonders emphasising the realisation of the importance of being at one with nature. This is a contemplation of sensing out, feeling and understanding particular rhythms, not just on the surface but underground as in Cornwall."*

'Earth, Ice, Rock and Sea' contains a variety of different ways of working, including several drawings which directly connect with her statement above. The small group of gouache and acrylic paintings hint at further developments. However, it was rare, if at all, that drawings developed into paintings. *"I seldom work from my drawings. The discipline used releases me in my paintings, to work more freely, expand with ideas and imagination involving joy in colour, texture and harmony, I start creating."*

The long years of daily observation of the sea, coastlines and fields; the erosion of rocky landscapes; the regeneration of land through volcanic activity; the immensity and translucency of glaciers; the meditative abstractions of waves and currents - all reflect her enquiring mind and her passion for the natural world. Being out in the landscape expanded her awareness. Within it she grasped not only surface appearances but explored its underlying structure, tapping into the energies and elemental forces that created it. As a consequence, it is clear that her drawings lie at the forefront of her art.

Geoffrey Bertram

Chairman The Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust



Lanzarote
Acrylic on paper, 1992. 56.5 x 75.6cm



Lava Forms, Lanzarote III
Chalk on black paper, 1993. 28.4 x 41.2cm



Line Drawing – Sea Movement
Mixed media on card, 1995. 19.2 x 25.8cm

Front cover image: *Ice Mountain*
Pen and oil on board, 1985-87. 27 x 20cm