





# **hilton miller** **p a i n t i n g**





Self portrait  
1982. Oil on board. 40 x 24"

3.11] Markov Chains - 127

show that we can apply the *theorem of reasoning* to the case where  $P$  is of the form

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} P_1 & \dots & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & P_r & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ P_{r+s+1} & \dots & P_{s+r} & Q_{s+1} & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ P_{s+1} & \dots & P_s & 0 & \dots & Q_s \end{bmatrix}, \quad (105)$$

where the  $P_k$  are irreducible and transient, the  $Q_k$  are absorbing and

$$R_{s+1} + \dots + R_{s+r} \neq 0 \quad (r = s+1, \dots, s). \quad (106)$$

We may write

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} A & 0 \\ B & C \end{bmatrix}, \quad P^s = \begin{bmatrix} A^s & 0 \\ B_s & C^s \end{bmatrix}, \quad (107)$$

where

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} P_1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & P_s \end{bmatrix}.$$

Then

$$\lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} A^s = \begin{bmatrix} \Pi_1 & 0 \\ 0 & \Pi_r \end{bmatrix} = \Pi \quad (108)$$

say, where

$$\Pi_s = \lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} P_s^s > 0, \quad \lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} C^s = 0 \quad (109)$$

and

$$\lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} B_s = V = \begin{bmatrix} V_{s11} & \dots & V_{s1r} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ V_{s1} & \dots & V_{sr} \end{bmatrix},$$

where

$$V = (I - C)^{-1} B \Pi. \quad (110)$$

In this case the sets of classes  $C_1, \dots, C_r$  corresponding to  $P_1, \dots, P_r$  are classes of recurrent states while the sets  $C_{s+1}, \dots, C_s$  corresponding to  $Q_{s+1}, \dots, Q_s$  are sets of transient states. We can in fact express  $V$  more simply, for if we consider the sub-matrix of  $P$

$$V_{s,s} = \begin{bmatrix} C_s & T_s \\ T_s^* & Q_s \end{bmatrix}, \quad (111)$$

Excerpt: The Theory of Stochastic Process, D.R Cox & H.D Miller. 1965

## **Hilton Miller**

### *Introduction by Nick Miller*

As a painter and a son, It is both a privilege and a great pleasure to introduce my father's work. I moved to Ireland in the 1980s and pursued a relatively public life as an artist, while my father, Hilton Miller maintained a modest and private relationship to his artistic practice in the London. As an artist he has worked in relative isolation for the last forty years, but painting daily with an absolute dedication. This year, 2011 marks his eightieth and remarkably it is also the first public exhibition of his work. This small publication is a start at a record and celebration of that life of painting. The opportunity to exhibit at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution seems particularly apt given his earlier career as a mathematician and because it is also a place of archive for the area he has lived since 1964. We would like to thank the society for agreeing to host the show at the Highgate Gallery.

I am very grateful to Aidan Dunne, painter and visual arts critic for the Irish Times for his insightful essay giving objectivity and context to my long held personal belief in the strength and relevance of my father's work. One of the few benefits of ageing has been a 'letting go' of Hilton's resistance to disturbance and exposure, giving me permission to root around his studio and make this small personal selection. As I write this, I uncovered a stack of another hundred or so paintings in a garage, that I am not even able to begin to address for this first show. This process has been a revelation, discovering the real depth and coherence of his journey as an artist. The paintings unfold with viewing and time as deeply considered dialogues with the language of colour hung on an armature of landscape— equations resolved in their own terms.

He began painting in the early 1970s after walking away from a growing academic career as a statistician at Cambridge and Birkbeck College at the University of London. He had been highly regarded for coming up with some significant mathematical "pearls" and solutions, and co-writing a book *The Theory of Stochastic*



Riva reading  
1979. Oil on board. 24 x 32"

*Processes* that is still a bench line text in it's field. He became uncomfortable with the pressure to "publish or perish" believing that publication should follow discovery of a true 'pearl' rather than a need to fuel academia. He left to become a consultant statistician for the Insurance industry and began drawing and painting. As his interest grew, he began to work part-time to enable him to devote himself to painting. His approach to art mirrored the purity of his understanding of mathematics, not seeking a 'career' which he felt would disturb and interfere with the crucible of true discovery in the studio, but to work with reserved and persistent dedication towards silent painted solutions. His somewhat unorthodox, quiet and hermetic way of life was made possible through the support of Riva, his wife, who lives and works with parallel vigour in the outer world.

The walls of his studio are littered with his personal colour notations, and almost impenetrable colour wheels of his own design about which I often joked with him could make his name in the contemporary art world. There are few painters I know who have had his knowledge and precision in colour mixing. In my mid-teens, I began using oils around the same time that he was establishing a serious studio in the house and capitalised throughout my career from his example of studio discipline. More important than the physical approach to the studio, the real legacy for me is in what I learnt from his extraordinary ability to pay little heed to the outer world, to focus entirely on the work so that the primacy of meaning is held in the activity of painting. It may also be true that both my brother Peter, a film editor and I unconsciously followed his example of life transformation, jumping untrained from other careers and disciplines into the arts.

This selection focuses on the French and Irish Landscapes that are mostly post 2000 from a particularly fruitful period, but also a few earlier pieces that can only hint at his development. I have included for the catalogue some other images from the studio and paintings that I feel give some context. I hope that others find the uniqueness and concentration of his vision as compelling as I do myself.

*January 2011*



Highagte in winter, window view  
1981. Oil on board. 24 x 32"



## ***Hilton Miller : Painting***

*Aidan Dunne*

Since the early 1970s Hilton Miller has amassed a body of work that distinguishes him as an artist of considerable ability and achievement. At the same time, if we view him strictly as a painter, his story is quite remarkable. Here is a man who was well into a career as a professional mathematician, whose diversion into painting might have amounted to nothing more than a hobby. It seems fair to say, though, that what he found in painting was the direct equivalent of what appealed to him about mathematics. This is not to say that he saw painting as a continuation of mathematics by other means. The evidence is that very quickly he came to look on it as a distinct language in itself, a language that is coherent, self-consistent, formally rich and infinitely flexible, and he applied his mind to its problems.

He has made some still-lives and fewer figure studies. Most of his paintings, though, are landscapes, confined to just a few general locations: the immediate surroundings of a family house in the South of France, rural County Sligo in Ireland where his son Nick Miller is based with his family, and around his home in London. The paintings are absolutely true to the landscapes that feature in them, and recognisably so, but their abiding purpose doesn't at all come across as being an expression of locality or place. Rather it's as if each landscape is a given, and he attempts to deal with it in terms of pictorial structure and internal relationships.

It might sound odd to say it, but to judge by his work, in a real sense he is not interested in landscape as such. He is interested in landscape as a species of subject matter that offers what is to him the virtue of complexity, together with a certain sameness, albeit a sameness with the potential for endless variation. In looking at the



House at Chateau-neuf-de Grasse  
1982. Oil on board. 18 x 26"

world around us we translate and compress a perplexing mass of visual information into a coherent picture, and for him, representational painting is an extreme version of that process. He sets out to organise a picture surface in a way that echoes the way we perceive the world, to create an image that is familiar enough to be comprehensible but that yet draws us in, makes us do the work of interpreting what we are looking at, and feel that the exercise has been fruitful, pleasurable and informative. And, importantly, incomplete, in that we sense we will learn more by looking again.

In this he appeals to a distinctive strand of European painting history. He is clearly related to Paul Cézanne, not because his paintings imitate or particularly resemble Cézanne's, but because of his choice of subject matter, its geographical location, and some shared pictorial values. What strengthens the association with Cézanne is a common affiliation with a classical tradition that long pre-dates Impressionism –though it does intersect with it to some extent. For Miller's work, the most relevant exemplars of this tradition, though they are not necessarily direct influences, are Camille Corot and Nicolas Poussin. It's worth exploring why this is so.

Writing about Corot, Anita Brookner noted that he struggled not so much with the classical tradition or contemporary artistic trends as with "the bewildering multiplicity of things seen." On his first trip to Italy, undertaken when he was in his late 20s, a few years after he had finally abandoned the drapery business to become a painter, he found inspiration not in classical antiquity but in making plein-air paintings of the landscape in the Roman Campagna.

Hence his subsequent nomination as a precursor of the Impressionists. In a sense he certainly was that, but rather than being the work of a thwarted or early Impressionist, his Italian paintings are fully realised within their own terms. As Peter Galassi argues in his book 'Corot in Italy', the painter transformed but remained true to the Neoclassical tradition. In Corot's paintings, the magnificent organisation of Poussin's idealised landscapes meets the quotidian actuality, the world as it is.

On the one hand Corot could remark: "When one finds oneself alone confronted by nature, one extricates oneself as best one can, and naturally one invents one's own style." On the other, though, when faced with the riotous complexity of the visible world, he wrote: "The first two things to study are form and tonal values. For me, they are the basis of what is serious in art." He sought out an order in the chaos of nature and attempted to represent it with an equivalent pictorial order. Together with an intuitive arrangement of masses in a compositional structure, he established a tonal scale, moving from the darkest value in 20 increments to the lightest. "Thus your study or picture is set up in orderly fashion." Both sentiments are entirely pertinent to Miller's way of working.

Cézanne too had an eye on classicism. He desired to make of Impressionism "something solid and lasting like the art in the museums." In the end, perhaps being rather hard on himself, he felt he hadn't managed "my project of doing Poussin over entirely from nature... of painting a living Poussin in the open air." Manet disparagingly described him as "a bricklayer who paints with his trowel", and you can see his point, not so much because Cézanne could handle paint roughly, but because each painting is visibly built from discrete brush strokes so that the end result is a solidly crafted edifice with the rhythmic stability of a brick wall.

Hilton Miller's paintings are without doubt situated in this historical and temperamental terrain, indeed following directly on from a lineage that extends from Poussin to Corot to Cézanne. His work can be fruitfully seen, appreciated and understood in the light of their concerns and achievements. As with Poussin and Cézanne, his paintings are constructed like intricate mechanisms, with every component part contributing to a carefully calculated overall effect. More, as with their work, everything represented in his images, from solid stone to the air itself, is invested with an identical density, lending an extraordinary evenness of temper to the paintings' surfaces and compositional rhythms, and an abiding serenity of mood.

As with Corot, he looks not to classical narratives but to the immediate fact of the landscape. Its sheer, profligate density, however, is dealt with in a highly structured way. Corot adhered to a tonal scale and Miller's works are also

precisely ordered in their tonality. But the core of his interest, and the heart of his paintings, lies in his approach to colour relationships. Each work revolves around the calculated interplay and balance of colour values, from warm to cool. He did a great deal of theoretical work exploring and calculating the relative temperature of oil colours, devising and employing diagrammatic colour wheels of daunting complexity. There is another painter who comes very much to mind in relation to his work, not a landscape painter but one who spans still life, architectonic landscape and even abstraction. That is Giorgio Morandi. The novelist Siri Hustvedt wrote about visiting a Morandi exhibition at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice. She noted the disappointment of an American couple, who keep wanting to see something different, not just “more bottles.”

There are, of course, only bottles, jars and similar containers in Morandi's paintings, but the paintings are not about bottles in the same sense that Miller's paintings are not about rural France. For the American couple, the point of a picture, as for many people, is the things it depicts. But when you actually turn to the paintings, Hustvedt feels: “These are not bottles and vases and cups.... After looking for a while, they did not even seem like still-lives any more. It is as if I were seeing forms that evoked idea rather than thing. The object...recedes into some larger mystery.”

That is how it is with Miller's landscapes. They have an air of calmness about them. They offer spaces that the eye is invited to explore. But after a while, looking at a tree, one is politely encouraged to think: “This is not a tree, after all.” It is as if the eye is first engaged on the understanding that you are looking at a tree, but quite soon you are agreeably, intriguingly involved in negotiating with something else altogether, with “some larger mystery.” With, in fact, just how we see rather than what we see, with how we can actually make sense of, in Brookner's phrase “the bewildering multiplicity of things seen.”

***Aidan Dunne is an artist, writer and the visual arts critic with The Irish Times in Dublin.***





# FRANCE

## Landscapes



France, untitled landscape #1  
1990. Oil on board. 24 x 40"



France, untitled landscape #2  
1989. Oil on board. 24 x 36"



France, untitled landscape #3  
1989. Oil on board. 24 x 32"





France, untitled landscape #4  
1989/90. Oil on board. 24 x 32"



France, untitled landscape #5  
2005. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



France, untitled landscape #6  
2004. Oil on board. 18 x 24"





France, untitled landscape #7  
2006. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



France, untitled landscape #8  
2003. Oil on board. 18 x 24"





France, untitled landscape #9  
2006. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



France, untitled landscape #10  
2008. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



France, untitled landscape #11  
2010. Oil on board. 12 x 18"





France, untitled landscape #12  
2010. Oil on board. 12 x 18"





# **IRELAND**

## **Landscapes**



Ireland, untitled landscape #13  
1998. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



Ireland, untitled landscape #14  
1999. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



Ireland, untitled landscape #15  
2002. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



Ireland, untitled landscape #16  
2004. Oil on board. 18 x 24"





Ireland, untitled landscape #17  
2005. Oil on board. 18 x 24"





Ireland, untitled landscape #182006. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



Ireland, untitled landscape #19  
2007. Oil on board. 18 x 24"



Ireland, untitled landscape #20  
2004. Oil on board. 18 x 24"

## Hilton Miller: Biography

Born in Johannesburg in 1931. Hilton Miller began studying engineering at Witwatersrand University, but switched to Mathematics and Physics. After a post-grad in Mathematics he went to Cambridge University where he took the Mathematics Tripos in two years followed by a further degree in statistics. Returning to South Africa in 1956, he worked at Stats lab of the Department of Mines, SA. In 1958 After marrying Riva Suzman, they moved to the Manchester, UK where he worked for ICI as a statistician. In 1959 he went back to Cambridge to complete his Doctorate in Statistics where he was credited with a series of new mathematical "pearls" and solutions. In 1962 he moved to London to lecture at the Statistics Department at Birkbeck College. There, as a Reader at Imperial College he co-wrote with David Cox *The Theory Stochastic Processes* (published in 1965), which remains a bench line text to this day.

In 1970 he chose to leave academic life. He became a consultant statistician to Sun Alliance Insurance and began later to work part-time, allowing him the time to devote to painting. He began attending painting classes at City Lit. While he did not respond well to the class format, he developed a long relationship with the tutor, the painter Michael Horn, who for many years was the only outside person to whom Miller regularly showed his work for criticism and advice. In 1973 The family bought a house in the South of France, and there he draw regularly from landscape. Converting a room to a studio in their Highgate home, he used the drawings as a source for painting while in London. He later began drawing and using digital photography on trips to visit his son, an artist based in Co Sligo, Ireland. He continues to work on landscape subjects from the South of France and the West of Ireland.

His wife, Riva Miller has spent her working life as a Family Therapist at the Royal Free Hospital and elsewhere. They have two children. Peter Miller, is a film editor based in London specialising in documentaries; Nick Miller is a painter, based in Ireland.

**[www.hiltonmiller.com](http://www.hiltonmiller.com)**



Thanks to Aidan Dunne for his essay; Peter Miller and his wife Alpha; my nephew Nathan Miller who reminded and kick started me back into this organising process; my wife Noreen and my children for giving me the necessary time away to organise it; to Riva for all that she does to keep teh show on the road and of course to Hilton for the paintings.

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