

# Cristina Rodriguez



## Imaginary Landscapes



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Step into Cristina Rodriguez' studio and you sense both a warm embrace and a defiant gesture, an assertion that a better world exists than the cold grey wasteland beneath the concrete and noise of Westway that you have just left behind. In this world made of magic and stories you step all at once into a celebration, where colours sing and shapes dance, where animals walk, children caper and fish leap from painted waters. Sweet moments recorded with an open heart and the delight of a child, but a sweetness sharpened by the artist's encounters with suffering and death in her native Colombia. Just as bright flowers are planted in the face of loss, so her pictures affirm life in the face of the world's destructive urges.

Travelling with her sketch book to Namibia, South Africa, Peru, and Patagonia, seeking to be alone, she looks closely at what so many travellers pass by in their urgency to consume - the pattern on a dress, the stately amble of a Peruvian ox, and the raw sun baked earth and turquoise water from which such patterns and images emerge. Familiar sights return with emblematic power: majestic moons, red suns, rosy mountain tops. Her journeys express a desire akin to Rousseau's to make manifest the imaginary world that resides close to the real, and to give back to the viewer what a shortage of time so often denies us. Nor is it only in the exotic that she finds sustenance for the spirit - for it is present too in the local park and the city street, where a homeless figure surrounded by birds is bathed in brilliant yellow, and a giant whale passes beneath the solemn facade of the Palace of Westminster.

Some of the recent work revives those places with a lingering significance in her life - a playful retelling of remembered scenes in Venice or Paris, or of an autumnal walk amongst wild horses in Somerset. Other pictures push deeper into imaginary country, as with the female figure who rises from the cast off skin of a snake. Elsewhere she rises up a long vertical canvas in a similarly transformative quest, climbing out of a secret Eden via a winding umbilical path and up beyond the solitary white cloud towards an eagle perched on a mountain peak. If there is reference here to the stories of Isabelle Allende, there is also something of the lucid colour and visionary imaginings of Ken Kiff, although they remain distinctly her own, fashioned as they are from her heritage and her insistent message of feminine healing.

Cristina Rodriguez' new paintings speak of a fierce and tender love, the mother's for a child and the traveller's for a fragile world. And, of course they make you smile.

Luke Elwes. March 2006

*Gillian Adam*

*Requests the pleasure of your company to celebrate  
the opening of an exhibition of new paintings by*

**Cristina Rodriguez**

**Imaginary Landscapes**

**On Tuesday 13th June, 6-8pm**

Blenheim Crescent Gallery  
5 Blenheim Crescent  
London W11

12th – 18th June 2006

Open: Mon-Fri 11am-6pm, Sat & Sun 11am-5pm  
Or by appointment

RSVP

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*Cristina Rodriguez in her Studio, 2006*  
*Photo: Angelo Plantamura*

## Biography

1964	Born Colombia
1983-1987	BA in Fine Arts, University of Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia
1989-1991	MA in Fine Arts, The Slade School of Fine Art, University of London
2006	Lives and works in London

## Solo Exhibitions

1987	<i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> , Fundacion Alzate Avendano, Bogota, Colombia
1991	<i>My Gift to a Continent</i> , Cadogan Gallery, London
1997	<i>The Carnival of the Animals</i> , The Pump House Gallery, London
1999	<i>La Fête sous la Pyramide</i> , Carrousel du Louvre, Paris
2001	<i>Jump into Reality</i> , Maclean Fine Art, The Air Gallery, London
2004	<i>The Desert is not Deserted</i> , The Orangery Gallery, Holland Park

## Awards

1989	Scholarship for Outstanding Artists, Icetex: Government of Colombia
1990	The British Council Scholarship
1992	The Delfina Studios Scholarship, Delfina Studios Trust
1993	Travel Scholarship to Zimbabwe, Delfina Studios Trust
1995	Travel Scholarship to New York, Delfina Studios Trust





*Illus (above): In the Peruvian Mountains, 2005, oil on linen, 12 x 12 in.*

*Illus (below): The Amazing View, 2005, oil on linen, 16 x 16 in.*





*Illus: Those Days are Gone, 2005, oil on linen, 42 x 60 in.*

*All Photography: Angelo Plantamura*