

ART IN CALABRIA



Above: 'Adoration of the Lamb' (Adorazione dell'Agnello mistico), 215cm x 200cm, oil on canvas.

Below: 'Beauty is as Beauty does' (Bellezza é come Bellezza fa), 215cm x 200cm, oil on canvas.



From her difficult beginnings, an English artist has made it big in southern Italy.

I THINK THAT the art one produces is really formed by having something to say' says Linda Sutton, a talented artist from England with a beautiful exhibition about to open in Calabria. Linda certainly does have something to say, as you see immediately in her unique style that exploits gorgeously rich colours and an intriguing use of images, including mystical-looking people and animals.

Her inspiration began when she was small, as Linda explains: 'I was very sick as a young child and had to spend time in an iron lung, lying there with nothing to do but wait patiently for the nurses to turn the pages of books I was reading and that's when I started to use my imagination. It took quite a long time to get better and I missed a year of school, which was difficult, but I did get stronger. Then when I was about 13 years old I was on a school trip to the Tate Gallery in London (where today one of Linda's own paintings is kept) and when I entered the gallery I thought it was one of the most brilliant things in the world and from that moment on I just knew that I wanted to be an artist.'

Linda says she was more academic than arty but she was determined to study art and so enrolled at a local college. As it turned out, Linda was a fantastic art student and was soon offered a place at the prestigious Royal College of Art in London. During her time there one of her pieces was chosen to be part of the Royal Academy's Summer exhibition, a difficult exhibition to be accepted for and every year since then, except for just one, Linda has had her work exhibited there. This year she has two pieces on display...no mean feat at all.

Linda paints in varying sizes up to majestic canvases of seven feet. She's taking many of them, including 13 of the largest, to another very special exhibition in the deconsecrated Chiesa della Badia in Caulonia, Calabria. Linda's boyfriend, Dominic, is an Australian Italian with family from that area. 'I came many years ago with Dominic to visit his Italian relatives and we loved the area, the people and of course the food so much that we rented a house here. In fact we've just bought a historic house in the centre which is being renovated.' It was when Linda and Dominic were unloading Linda's paintings to be stored in their rented house that magically the solo exhibition began to take shape: 'We had hired a van and driven all the way from London to Calabria with my paintings,' she explains, 'and as we were unloading them the locals came out to have a look, including the Mayor and Head of the Arts Committee. They liked my paintings so much that I was asked if I'd like to exhibit. Every August an Italian artist is asked and this year they offered it to me, so I'm the first non-Italian artist ever to have had an exhibition in the Chiesa della Badia and I'm absolutely thrilled!'

Linda Sutton's Solo exhibition in Calabria
15th - 31st August
Caulonia
Reggio di Calabria 89014

www.lindasutton.com - for more information
about Linda and her work
www.royalacademy.org.uk - RA's Summer
Exhibition until 19th August

