

**Irene Duma**

ART

**MEDIA KIT**

## Bio

A late-blooming artist, Irene started painting only a few years ago at the age of 53. She had just been laid off from her job as an advertising creative. **"It was now or never,"** she thought. **"This life is not a dress rehearsal."** And so she threw herself into her childhood dream of being a painter, "with 100% commitment" as she likes to say.

**"I needed to make up for lost time. So I decided that not only was I going to burn all my bridges, I was going to burn my boat, too. There was gonna be no turning back"**

And it worked. By her third year, Irene's work was showing in three galleries, collected around the world, and published in literary journals in her adopted province of Newfoundland.

**"I live at the edge of the world, and quite close to a corner!,"** says Irene, jokingly, referring to Fogo Island, deemed one of the four corner of the earth by the Flat Earth Society.

**"My first time here in 2005, I had a film in the St. John's International Film Festival, and they were taking us in shuttles to see Cape Spear. As I was getting into the van, a festival volunteer calls out to me, "Don't get swept away." Having no clue what she was referring to, I responded, "By the beauty?"**

**"No," she said. "By the waves. "A young man was just swept out to sea a few weeks ago. The waves can be rogue there.**

**It just struck me. A very different kind of danger from growing up in Toronto. Here I had waves to be afraid of.**

She still can't believe she moved here. It was never a dream, and she has no connection to the island.

**"But I was just so drawn to the energy. I am an energyphile. I want raw, unleashed, untamed, unharnessed energy. And that's what I get here, on the East Coast. The east side: the wet, damp and foggy side."**

**"But I can't think of any other place I'd rather live. I love the space, the nature. I love the culture. They really appreciate art, and so I fit right in."**

Back in Toronto, Irene performed in improv and comedy troupes for years. She also studied theatrical clowning, which she loved. These art forms are all about being in touch with the moment, trusting your intuition and first instincts, and acting spontaneously.

**"It's about flow. When you're in flow, the next logical step just seems amazingly clear, and effortless. It's so much fun to create this way."**

Irene has also been a filmmaker and writer. The power of story fascinates her. Though painting is her primary focus now, she firmly believes that her understanding of each of these diverse art forms enriches all her work.

Her colourful landscapes and seascapes are instantly distinguishable. Vibrant colour and bold brushstrokes. They do indeed exude a freshness and spontaneous energy.

**"I get a lot of comments from people saying they love seeing my artwork on their timeline. How it makes them feel happy. And that in turn, makes me happy. Not a bad gig, right?"**

Irene has a Fine Art History degree from the University of Toronto, and studied drawing at Parsons School of Design in NYC. When not painting, she is hiking about with her camera, participating in "swim club", and dreaming of how to save the world.

**"That's not a joke. I literally do that," she laughs. It's via art projects of course: music, stories ... art has the power to move people. So, I'm constantly digging into history, art periods, archaeology ... who has the nicest cultures? What makes happy, shiny people? I actually really like it. I love researching. It's my favourite procrastination technique. And I'm an excellent procrastinator."**

#goartgo

#latebloomersclub

#artistschangetheworld that's why #theworldneedsmoreartists



### **Artist Statement:**

For me, it's all about energy: **bold and expressive** landscapes, colourful cityscapes, painterly and energetic seascapes.

I spent many years training and performing clown and improv comedy, learning how to be present and in the moment and to capture the energy of first thoughts. Whether painting large canvases or my little itty bitty #minidumas, I aim to work **spontaneously** and to pay attention to my impulses and emotions.

I love being outdoors. I paint in oils and gouache from photos I have taken while hiking, wandering, or traveling. I use **vibrant colour**, exuberant gestures, big bold brushstrokes and shapes. I want my work to **delight** the viewer's eyes - the composition to draw you in, and then like good theatre, take you away on a journey, transform you, and leave you feeling just a little bit better. And always, maintaining a sense of **playfulness**, optimism and, **innocence**.



## ENERGYPHILE (IRENE DUMA)

Jan 2021

When landscape painter, Irene Duma, landed in Newfoundland, she was actually destined for New York. But two visits (with films in the St. John's Women's International film festivals in 2005 and again in 2007), she moved to the island portion of the province (from Toronto) in 2008. She reports she's "been happy as a clam ever since." When I asked Duma what draws her to paint Newfoundland landscapes, here's what she said:



"What I love most is the energy. I am an energyphile ... is that a thing? I absolutely love the raw energy of the windswept coast line. I am drawn to it like a moth to light. Which is weird because I thought I was all about the sun, sand and warmth. And sometimes when standing on Signal Hill, getting a beating from the wind, I really wish I was.

But I guess I'm not. It's seeing the first light in North America which is thrilling to me. The expanse of the ocean, the jaw dropping cliffs, the breathtaking vistas. This is what never ceases to amaze me. I love being outdoors. I paint in oils and gouache from photos I have taken while hiking, wandering, or travelling. I use vibrant colour, exuberant gestures, big bold brushstrokes and shapes. I want my work to delight the viewer's eyes - the composition to draw you in, and then like good theatre, take you away on a journey, transform you, and leave you feeling just a little bit better. And always, maintaining a sense of playfulness, optimism and innocence. I also love the energy of the people - a kitchen party with singing, laughter and live music can't be beat."



NL landscape painting by Irene Duma



PORTFOLIO  
**I R E N E D U M A**  
**Q&A**

**Can you tell us a little about yourself?** I'm originally from Toronto but moved here in 2008 after having films in the 2003 and 2007 St John's International Women's Film Festival. It was just so much fun – I fell in love with the energy of the arts community – and the ocean – and moved here for what I call a grand adventure. \* I started painting just three years ago when I got laid off from my job as an advertising writer and assistant creative director. Painting had been a childhood dream, but I hadn't done any visual art since taking a summer course at Parsons School of Design in NYC in 1981 when I was a teen. It was the best course I ever took and one of the best experiences of my life. \* Sadly, I was dissuaded from pursuing art (you couldn't get a few other art forms including acting, then) so I got a Fine Art History degree instead. I've also meandered through a few other art forms including acting, stage design (Pochinko method), writing, filmmaking, and improv comedy. Yep, I love all the arts. **Why do you work in the media and subjects and format you do? (And I associate your work with small paintings, is that fair?)** I paint mostly landscapes and seascapes in oils, but also enjoy working in gouache and pencil. I'm always out and about with my camera, on the lookout for a beautiful view or lighting. I started to paint small works, originally 2" x 3" (called ACEO), and now 4" x 4" or 5" x 7", because as a late-blooming artist, I needed to catch up fast! There's an art saying that if you want to paint something well, you have to paint it 100 times. I quickly figured out that painting 100 mini-paintings takes a lot less time than 100 big paintings, so I was sold. \* At about the same time I came across the daily painter movement – daily painters usually do small works because you can finish a painting easily in a day. I now get up early to paint, and start the day with a quick way to learn the fundamentals of painting, but also a fun way to test new brushes, mediums, colours, surfaces, techniques, and subjects, etc. There are so many things to try and each tool brings something new to your work. Also if you flub one, it doesn't hurt – as much. **What artists, not necessarily visual, inspire you?** Oh boy, so many. Too many to list. But just this past week I was thinking about how much I still love the work I fell in love with as a teen: in no particular order some all time faves are Kurt Vonnegut, Pink Floyd, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Carol Burnett, Mike Nichols (The Graduate), Hal Ashby (Harold and Maude, Being There). Later on in University I also fell in love with the Dadaists. I have a real soft spot for comedy and satire. **Is there an artwork, somewhere in the world, that you would truly love to see (or maybe you've seen it)?** I can't think of just one piece of artwork, but I would absolutely love to go see the ancient cave paintings in Lascaux. The painting of animals are just so absolutely magnificent – they make me weep when I see them. Sadly this isn't a possibility, so my second choice would be to go see any Post-Impressionist or Fauve painting exhibit. I love this period of art – so inventive – and I just adore the vibrant colours and expressionistic brushwork. Oh, and I also love early Flemish art. They were the ones who invented painting with oils and just did such wonderful things with it. They didn't

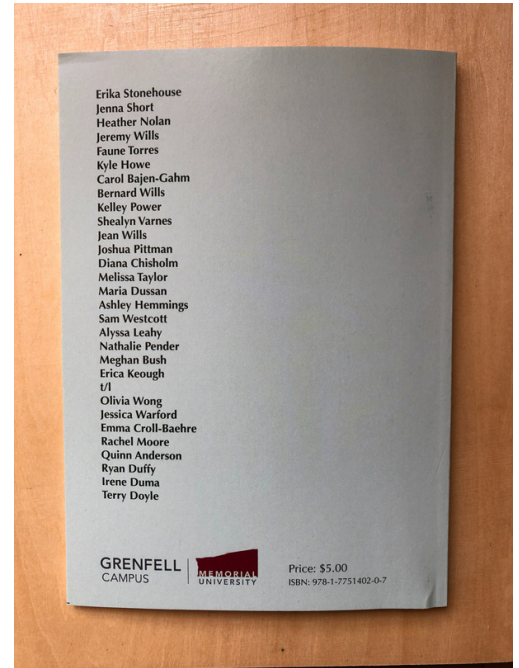
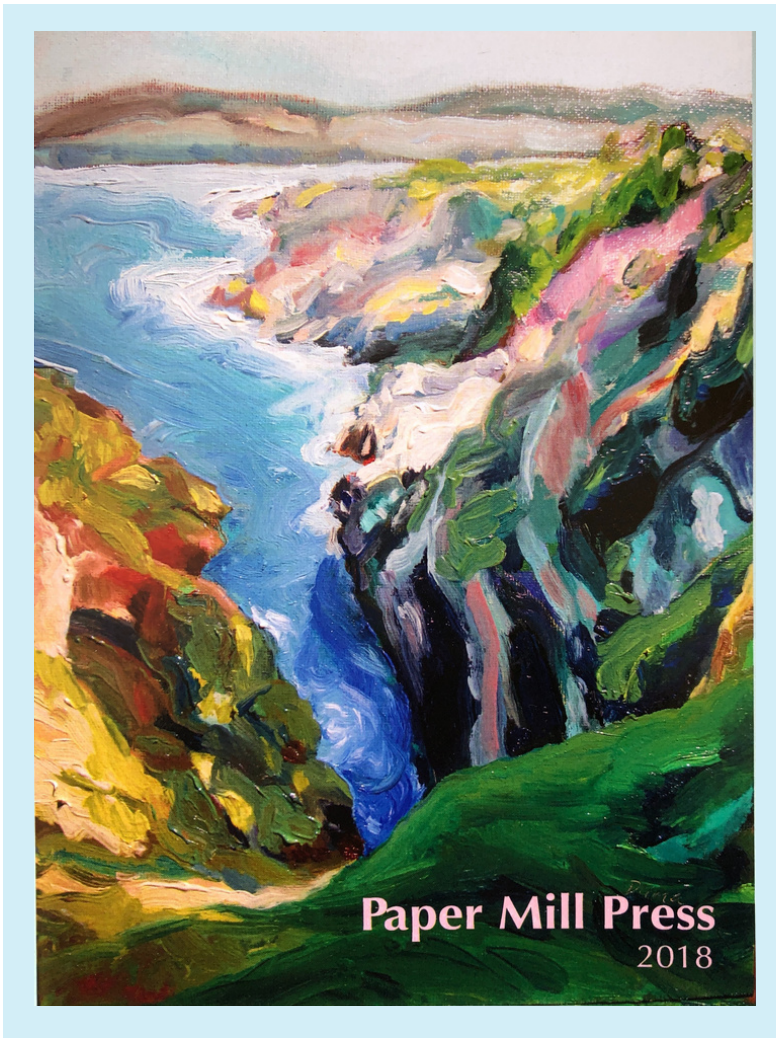


*Ships of New Peril, 12x12in, oil on wood, 2019*

understand perspective, but they did know how to paint people. **What's next for you?** The big news is I'm working on an online painting school where I'll be teaching the joy of painting via mini-paintings – students will be able to paint their first masterpiece in three hours. An Ivy Bry Mini Old Painting Class will be available soon at [www.iredumadumacacbeart.com](http://www.iredumadumacacbeart.com). \* I'm also experimenting with large paintings, so far I've learned I need non-sized brushes and buckets of paint to get the same energy and brushwork onto large canvases. And a much larger studio. Anyone know how to get the fish smell out of old fishing glasses? 🐟



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Paper Mill Press: A Journal of Creative Arts, Grenfell College, MUN,  
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