

Daniel Lipstein is both an instinctive and intuitive artist. These two words are often used interchangeably, and in my view, incorrectly, because being quite opposite in nature, one actually usually negates the other.

So, to say that Daniel Lipstein is both an instinctive AND an intuitive painter, is to suggest that he operates from a place of complimentary contrasting tensions that energise his creativity. Indeed, it is my observation that he may simultaneously be driven by one while being drawn by the other.

To put it simply and succinctly, instincts are created and intuitions are creative. Instincts are strong impulses deeply embedded in our material experience by the behavioural habits of a species that resonate over time. Instincts are hard to ignore and often impossible to resist. Because, we, like many other animals, act on them automatically and without thinking.

Intuitions on the other hand are weak signals that are easy to ignore, because they have no substantiated form in our experience, and call on us to do something risky, which is to trust and open up to the unknown, to the as yet unidentifiable. Intuition asks us to pay attention to a resonance that strikes a faint chord in us that we have never heard before.

Recognising this dichotomy is helpful to me in framing how I can even start to talk about the work of Daniel Lipstein.

On first glance we see many landscapes that are undoubtedly reflections of the world he observes, but they have been filtered through his inner sense of mind, as he intuits not just a deeper reality *beneath* material forms, but the deeper reality *of* material forms. That they exist not just in the present moment of our observation of them, but as living entities that change and transmute in an unfolding temporal reality.

For example, let's take the humble bath tub, an object that appears in the open fields of Daniels landscapes.

As he himself put it:

The bathtub, "Once an intimate function in a household, now these are curious shapes in open spaces resembling alienation and corrosion on their way back to the elements of metal and earth".

Here the artist proposes that life is something that seemingly inanimate objects also have, as he recognises that there are shifts in function and constitution as the object endures the way of all material forms, to become, to disintegrate and eventually assimilate back into that from which it emerged.

When I first visited Daniel at home in Monestereven, many years ago now, there was in his back garden, a bathtub, sitting in the longer grass and weeds. We made a game of trying to throw objects into it from a distance, and I could see, that it fired his imagination, in the way that the artist and poet William Blake invites us to allow our imaginations to be fired, not to make things up, but to see further and deeper into the truth of things.

Prompted by intuition, we may be drawn into the unknown where we may realise, which is to bring into being, that which wants to come into being.

The image of the bathtub is not simply something that Daniel uses in a metaphorical way to get across an idea or a concept. It is quite the opposite, because sometimes, his relationship with the objects he perceives in the world, actually resonate with him, communicate with him, and he allows himself to be the instrument that they use, to describe themselves. Daniel recognises that objects contain potential ways of being, that resonate within the imagination.

Daniel Lipstein paints what resonates with him.

And more than that, he paints *the way* that things resonate with him, so that what emerges on the canvas is a highly subjective poetic description of the world. He cannot help but paint the inherent energy and aliveness of everything. Even on the static surface of a canvas, nothing is inanimate. Objects, spaces, vapours, beings, seethe with an intense inner aliveness, a resonating numinous quality.

All painters, will have their own way with the technical devices available to brush and paint to describe what can both seen and sensed. Daniel taps those that have the greatest potential to deliver on texture and atmosphere. I believe that is because he is interested in the co-existence of the material and immaterial. This gives us rich layering of paint, variety in the speed, directionality and quality of strokes, degrees of colour saturation, attention to tone as a way to lend weight, position and form to the shifting and the ephemeral, even words scratched into surfaces to reveal not just the presence of human thought, but the gold that is the meaning that words can convey.

Daniel Lipstein is an experienced and accomplished artist who both understands and delights in his craft.

In his own words again he says: “these painted things and directions merge on a deep level and their presence can be interpreted in many ways, but the composition and my effort to paint it to the best of my ability feel good and this is my main concern as an artist”.

This brings us to the matter of instinct.

Instincts as I have said, are created.

Instincts are strong impulses deeply embedded in our material experience by behavioural repetitions over time. Emotion, or how experience feels to us, is critical to the shaping of our instincts. For Daniel, it feels good to him to make art, to paint and to etch. And anyone that knows him knows that he is an incessant maker. He is driven to act purposefully in his studio day in and day out, and has come to a point of instinctual creative response to stimuli which is to make art to make sense, so as to make a way for himself to be in this world.

His instincts are animalistic. In many self-portraits and cameos within his landscapes he is the animal actor, the curious creature observing himself at play and at work in the world. His instincts are cultivated in and belong to his animal self, a lone perspective that recognises a larger existence within the entirety of the experience of our species and beyond, to the origins of our species in other species.

His affinity with fish comes from this deeply felt connectivity to life’s staggeringly large arena.

Fish belong as we belong to a common ancestry. To Daniel, fish are not some alien species that live in a separate watery world from us – his is an uncommonly sensitive view. How human beings treat the sea and its occupants, evidences little regard and even less care - but for Daniel, fish are our friends, and our brothers and sisters in a relationship that spans across eons of time.

We as humans at the present time, occupy their domain, a world where once there was only water and the vast potential for life that water contains, and to which it realised this first potential of life, as things that swim.

Daniel says that in fish we can “observe the antiquity of species that contains much of the universal data of the prehistorical, the undocumented and the unknown”. They take him back to the water, back to the primordial. They do so in his imagination where it is possible to resonate with a deeper reality that is a vast unknowable, but ever active dimension, that births all of life’s potentials and to which, all life must return.

We cannot resonate with that to which we are not connected, so it follows, that our connection to this deeper reality is profound. This understanding is the bed rock of Daniel Lipstien’s art. However, this connection seems not to be obvious or natural for everyone in the modern world. Indeed, many people deny it. William Blake recognised over 2 centuries ago with the dawning of the age of enlightenment and the age of scientific, technological and industrial development, that human beings were in great danger of severing this connection, and with the resulting alienation, we might become disenchanted with the world, and unwittingly partake in its destruction.

I would dare to say that his fears have come to pass. In a climate such as this, the art of Daniel Lipstein is in danger of being interpreted as simply metaphorical representations of human philosophies that will engage and entertain our intellect.

There is more going on here.

This work asks us to enquire further, not with the intellect, but with the imagination. Have we got it in us, this imaginative capacity, to see that this artist is a man enchanted by the world, enchanted by the experience of being alive and it is this enchantment, that is resonating and captivating and illuminating.

It is not for me to try to explain away that which is inexplicable even to the artist himself. I have attempted instead to suggest a way one might approach the paintings of Daniel Lipstein.

To see both instinctively and intuitively.

To see if we can, through enchanted eyes, that which is enchanting.

To see *how* he sees, not *what* he sees, and so perhaps we may see what it is possible to be seen, when we allow the world to resonate within the boundaries of imagination, and by its energetic force, allow them to be extended.

This is a rare event, the opening of Daniel Lipstein’s first solo exhibition of paintings in Dublin. Hard to believe given his prodigious output over the years. So it is my great pleasure and honour to invite you all here tonight, to join in a celebration of this visionary artist and welcome you into his enchanted world.

Text by the artist and creativity researcher Catherine Barron. Catherine opened Daniel Lipstein’s solo show ‘Self Portrait with a Pet and a Bathtub’ at the Olivier Cornet Gallery on 8 October 2025. We are very grateful to her for allowing us to publish her opening remarks here.