



**Laura Matthews**

*Tamesis*

London 2020

**COVER**

*Icon /4.16*

oil on canvas | 150cm x 150cm

DETAIL

# Laura Matthews

*Tamesis*

18 March - 24 March 2020



**183-185 Bermondsey Street London SE1 3UW**

abps@project-space.london 0203 441 5152





*Cloud/ 2.16pm*  
oil on board | 50 x 50 cm



*Glare/ 2.30pm*  
oil on board | 50 x 50 cm





*Helter Skelter/ 10am*  
oil on board | 50 x 50 cm



*Snake in the Grass/ 3.19pm*  
oil on board | 50 x 50 cm



### **The Time of the Light**

The time of the light  
will vary with the season  
and the hemisphere.

Sun through clouds changes  
where it meets water rippling  
wind impacts colour.

Late Sun is golden  
and molten on the river  
gilding sleek-backed waves

Then, on the surface  
of naked canvas, thick, swift  
brushstrokes create light

build landscapes of paint  
creating tides and seasons  
holding time still.

Always a figure  
our still painted avatar  
watching as we watch.



Nicola Browne

*Crossing/0.44*  
oil on canvas | 50 x 50 cm





*Beam / 2.45*  
oil on cavas | 50 x 50 cm

*Blue Water / 2.59*  
oil on cavas | 50 x 50 cm





*Fresh / 10.00*  
oil on cavas | 50 x 50 cm

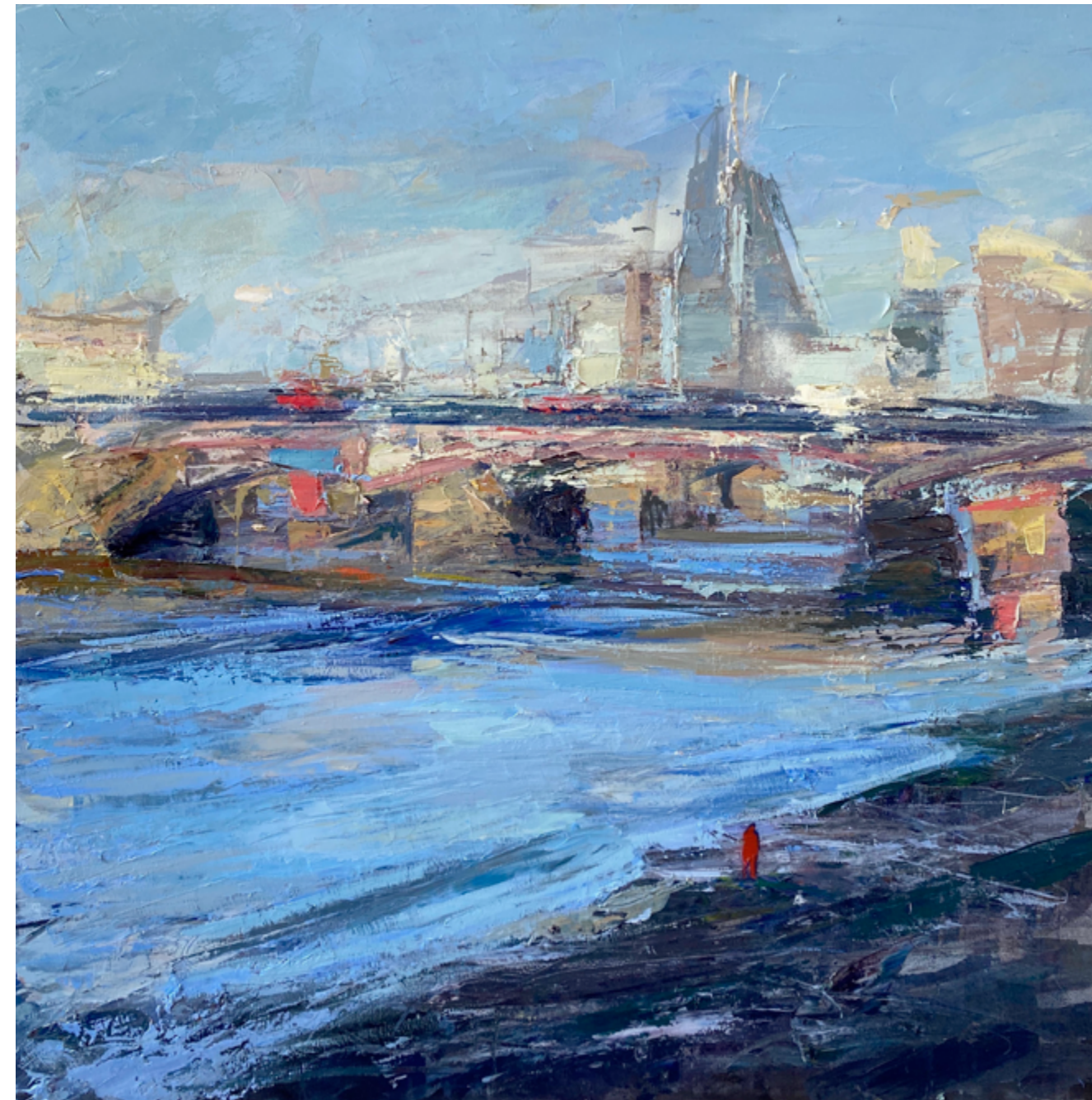


*Lightfall / 3.05pm*  
oil on cavas | 100cm x 100cm





*Pillar And Path /10.03*  
oil on cavas | 100cm x 100cm



*Crossing/0.44*  
oil on cavas | 100cm x 100cm





*Silver Lining / 3.17*  
oil on cavas | 100cm x 100cm



*Eye of Leadenhall / 2.38*  
oil on cavas | 150cm x 150cm





*Icon /4.16*  
oil on cavas | 150cm x 150cm



*Orange /3.11*  
oil on cavas | 150cm x 150cm





*Silver Thames /9.30*  
oil on canvas | 150cm x 150cm

### **Temporary Reliquary**

The Thames is lovely in its depths, and fatal,  
a temporary reliquary for new bones  
and old mistakes repeated  
regular as the tide  
which gives back  
what it has taken  
eventually.

Under the sun-glossed summer water,  
lithe and sinuous as an eel's long, toothed throat,  
nothing there lost  
cannot be remade  
by the wash of it  
the churning suck  
its open maw.

Nicola Browne



# Tamesis

## Studies

oil on board

25cm x 25cm

LEFT > RIGHT

IMG\_0609.jpg

IMG\_0610.jpg

Tamesis 10.09

Tamesis / 3.17

Tamesis / 2.15

Tamesis/ 2.26

Tamesis/ 2.28

Tamesis/ 2.55

Tamesis/ 3.00

Tamesis/ 3.05

Tamesis/ 3.07

Tamesis/ 3.22

Tamesis/ 3.27

Tamesis/ 5.45

Tamesis/ 7.50

Tamesis/ 9.02

Tamesis/ 9.59

Tamesis/ 11.20

Tamesis/ 11.31

Tamesis/ 12.00

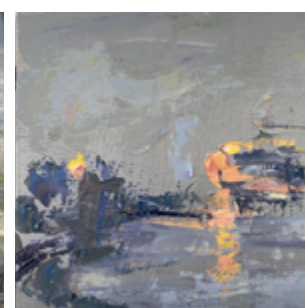
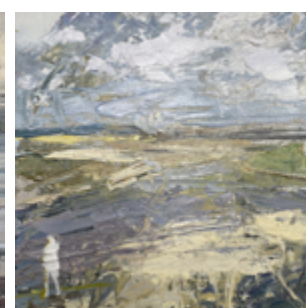
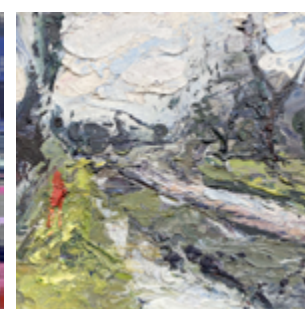
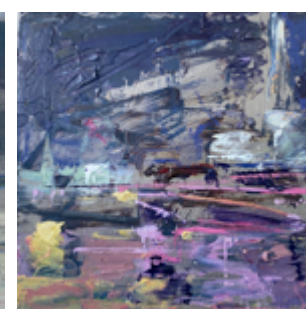
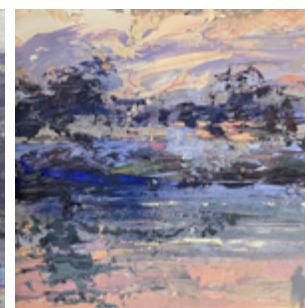
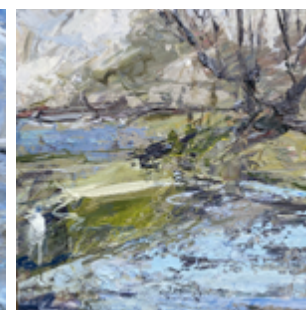
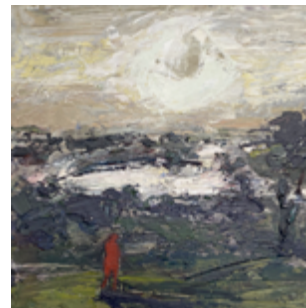
Tamesis/ 12.34

Tamesis/1.51

Tamesis/3.11

Tamesis/3.20

Tamesis/4.09







*Blue Day*  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm



*0601*  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm





0620  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm



0622  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm





*Lechlade /4.25*  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm



*Lechlade /1.57*  
oil on board | 40cm x 40cm



# LAURA MATTHEWS

## *Tamesis*

PAOLA TOTARO



0622 oil on board | 40cm x 40cm

*Tamesis* is an exhibition of new paintings by the Sydney-based, British artist Laura Matthews, at the Bermondsey Project Space in the heart of London.

This is Matthews' first show in the capital for more than a decade and includes a body of works exploring the world famous Thames, a river that has spawned cities and villages, defined architecture, threatened cataclysm – and is etched into the lives of all who live along its shores.

Welsh born and trained at the Slade School of Fine Art, Matthews' painterly influences – later to become colleagues when she joined the Slade's teaching staff – have also been some of Britain's greatest modern figurative painters: William Coldstream, Norman Norris, Patrick George and the late Euan Uglow who was not only a tutor but was to become a great friend.

Her aesthetic and artistic vision of the world remains palpably British, particularly in the Australian context where she has lived and exhibited biannually for almost 17 years.

Last year, she was a finalist in the prestigious Australian portraiture prize, the Moran and also won one of the country's most lucrative, acquisitive prizes for her seascape painting, *Sea Creatures*, now owned by the Manning Regional Art Gallery.

In 2020 however, Matthews says she felt a compulsion to return to paint in London, the city she describes with affection as her much loved 'old stomping ground'. Enconced in a studio in Hackney, she was surprised to feel artistically unmoored, suddenly unsettled and challenged by an environment that no longer felt familiar or comfortable.

'I've worked continuously since I left and felt it was time to come back and see what I can do here,' she says. 'Two of my children are totally Australian, even though they were born in London and my eldest is half and half so my heart and my painter's eye are in two places at the same time.'

'It was unexpectedly hard at first and yet it has been good for me to be uncomfortable, to be challenged by a place I don't feel I know any more.'

In *Tamesis*, an ancient word of Sanskrit or Celtic origin is said to mean 'dark one or dark

river', Matthews has produced a series of powerful, evocative and at times mysterious vignettes that do not represent but allude to the river and the not-always helpful presence of human beings on its environs.

'When I came back, I wanted to travel the source of the river all the way to the ocean and I was thrilled by what I found, from the bucolic themes of the semi industrial marshlands to the big looming buildings in the urban parts and classic meandering Thames you see in South London and Richmond,' she says.

After decades working and teaching to work from life and *en plein air*, Matthews has embraced photography with alacrity, using thousands of images as inspiration, almost as she did with her sketchbooks in her earlier years.

However literal interpretations of her photographic images are of no interest to her: 'Experience allows you to have a kind of freedom in terms of understanding the plasticity of the surface and understanding the notion of what paint can do on its own if you allow it just to be paint.'

'There is no desire in me to render something into something which is like something else. I enjoy the fact that it's paint: it is not flesh, grass, sky, not a tree, it is none of those things, it is a fabrication of what is. To copy something, is of no interest.'



# LAURA MATTHEWS

Laura Matthews was born in South Wales to Welsh parents. She was educated in the north of England and at age 19, won a place at the Slade School of Fine Art, where she received many awards.

Leaving the UK in 2002, to reside in Sydney, Matthews quickly established herself as an acknowledged and respected artist. Her works are held in both public and private collections in Australia, Europe and the United States.

Lives and works in Sydney

Education

1987-1989: HDFA, Slade School of Fine Art, University College, London  
1983-1987: BA (Hons) Slade School of Fine Art, University College, London  
1989: Elected Freeman, Painters & Stainers Guild (London)

Awards

2019: Winner of the Manning Art Prize- “Naked and Nude”  
2019: Winner of People’s Choice Award- Paddington Art Prize  
2017: Winner of people’s choice, Tattersalls art prize  
2017: Winner of regional Art Prize Hunters Hill Art Prize  
2017: Finalist Paddington Art Prize  
2017: Finalist inaugural Ravenswood Art

Prize

2017: Finalist Tattersalls Art Prize

2017: Finalist Manning Art Prize  
2016: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2015: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2014: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2013: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2012: Finalist Portia Geach Portrait Prize  
2012: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2011: Finalist Tattersall’s Art Prize  
2011: Finalist Manning Regional Art Prize  
2010: Finalist Paddington Art Prize  
2010: Finalist Norvil Art Prize  
2010: Finalist The John Glover Prize for Tasmanian Landscape

2009: Finalist The John Glover Prize for Tasmanian Landscape (Highly Commended)  
2008: Finalist Kings School Art prize  
2008: Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award for Portraiture  
2008: Finalist Kings School Parramatta Art Prize  
2008: Finalist Norvil Art Prize, Salon  
2006: Finalist Art on the Rocks, Sydney  
2004: Finalist Paddington Art Prize, Sydney  
2004: Finalist Fleurieu Peninsula Biennale for Landscape Painting

2004: Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award for Portraiture  
2003: Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award for Portraiture  
1992: The Elizabeth Greenshields Award  
1990: Boise Travelling Scholarship (Italy)  
1989: David Bailey Travelling Scholarship (France)  
1987: Finalist, National Portrait Competition, National Portrait Gallery, London  
1987: The Slade Award (Most promising figurative painter)  
1987: The Elizabeth Greenshields International Award for figurative painting  
1987: Cyril Sweet Award (Outstanding figurative artist)  
1987: STA Award Finalist London

Exhibitions

Australia - Solo  
2019: “Sea Creatures” Studio Gallery, Yallingup  
2018: “Rivers, Roads and Relics” Nanda\Hobbs, Sydney

2017: “Disparate measures” Anita Traynor Fine Art Melbourne “  
2017: “Inside Out “Studio Gallery Perth  
2016: “Hiraeth” Nanda\Hobbs Contemporary, Sydney  
2015: “Eye Witness” Pine St gallery Chippendale  
2014: Threshold” Art Equity ,Sydney  
2013” Exhibition studio gallery Yallingup  
2012: “10 paintings “ Studio Gallery Yallingup WA  
2012: ‘Ghosts “ Gallery Aloft Sydney  
2011: “Nature Built it First” Despard Gallery, Hobart  
2011: “Life on Mars”, Astras Galleries, Gold Coast  
2010: “What Lies Beneath” Metro Gallery, Melbourne  
2009: “Diemens” Metro Gallery, Melbourne  
2009 “Roar” Charles Hewitt Gallery, Sydney (Televised)  
2008: “Devils Heart” Art Equity, Sydney  
2007: “Vistas” Art Equity, Sydney  
2007: Ross Hill Winery, Presented by BCFA, Orange  
2006: “Breathe” Art Equity, Sydney  
2005: “Sky Sweep City Scape” Art Equity, Sydney  
2004: “Caught in the Eye” Art Equity, Sydney  
2007: “Australia Day” Sydney Morning Herald Exhibition “Barbeque”  
2007: “Sydney Art Fair” Group Corporate Art  
2006: “Images of Little Bay” for Landcom  
2005: “Affordable Art Fair” Sydney  
2004: “1+2 Media” Dommayne Design Inaugural Exhibition Presented by BCFA United Kingdom  
2002: July move to Australia - 1+2 Artist Studios, Lilyfield, Sydney  
2001: Mixed show, Sheen Gallery, London  
2000: Five Painters, New Grafton Gallery, London

1999: Joint exhibition; The New Grafton Gallery, London  
1999: Mixed show Quantum Contemporary Art, London  
1999: Mixed show, Highgate Fine Art, Highgate, London  
1999-2000: Works commissioned Royal Caribbean International Cruise  
1998-1999: Works commissioned by Royal Caribbean International Cruise liners  
1998: Guest exhibitor at the New English Arts Club, Pall Mall, London  
1997: Abbott & Holder, London  
1997: Collyer Bristow: “A Clear Picture”  
1996: “Slade Summer Exhibition, “Drawing a Survey”  
1996: Slade Gallery, One Woman Show  
1995: New Grafton Gallery Joint show, London  
1994-1996: London Contemporary Art Fair  
1993-1998: New Grafton Gallery (Mixed shows), London  
1992: The Heffer’s Gallery, Cambridge  
1991: Austen Desmond “The Prose of Painting”, London  
1990: Bonham’s’ “New Generation”, London

Collections

Works contained in Slade (UCL, London) Collection  
Private collections in Europe, USA, Australia and Asia  
Works collected and exhibited by Royal Caribbean Cruise Liners 1998-2001  
Landcom Australia

Publications

2009: Featured Artist, Cyclomedica Calendar 2010 Edition  
2009: Featured Artist, “The Apprentice”

Channel 9  
2007: Sydney Morning Herald, Australia Day Edition  
2006: Landcom “Little Bay” Promotional material, SMH (large advertisement)  
1997: Cover Piece for The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse. (Philip Larkin, Ed. OUP, 1997)

Teaching

2000-02: Lecturer in Drawing (Costume Design School of Art)  
1999: Slade Affiliate Programme Tutor - Life Painting, Drawing  
1998-99: Wimbledon School of Art -costume design, drawing tutor 0.5 lecturer Painting & Drawing tutor (course co-ordinator)  
1997-98: Course tutor - Slade Life Drawing BA/MA students; Slade Affiliate Programme  
1997-98: Wimbledon School of Art Visiting lecturer (Life Drawing & studio visits)  
1996: Painting & Drawing tutor B-Tec Foundation Course Painting & Drawing coordinator – Richmond Adult & Community college.  
1994-98: Slade Summer School continuing to work on the Alternative Foundation course, course co-ordinator for specialist drawing courses i.e. “Drawing a Way of Thinking”  
1990: Workshops (Barbican) based around the exhibition “A Singular Vision”  
1990: Drawing & Painting workshops incorporating lectures on the work of Euan Uglow - Whitechapel Art Gallery London.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank all at The Bermondsey Project space for giving me a wonderful opportunity to exhibit this series. Special thanks to Jeremy Levison of *Levison Meltzer Piggott* for his generous sponsorship of this event and additional thanks to Paola Totaro, Professor Susan Collins and my sister Dr Nicola Browne.

**INSIDE BACK COVER**

***Orange /3.11***

oil on cavas | 150cm x 150cm

DETAIL



