

Lara Cobden - Artist

Biography

Lara Cobden is a figurative painter living and working in Norwich, Norfolk. Following a degree in Painting at the University of Brighton, Lara spent 11 years in Ireland before relocating to East Anglia. Her work has been exhibited in the UK and internationally. Focusing on memory and sense of place, her paintings are a response to the natural world around her.

Artist's Statement

Rooted in a central theme of recollection and sense of place, my paintings are informed by observation, memory and dream. They are a subjective and individual response to the natural world around me, calling on an imagined, coveted past that is unreal; a magical realism. Pulling between the chimerical and the familiar - I hope there is both a stillness and fluidity in my work; in the ordinary, a sense of reverence. Paintings evolved from remembered fragments and casual snapshots shift between misty and precise, perceived reality and imagined narratives.

I like to inhabit and explore this 'nowhere' or in-between place and try to collect and recreate that residue of experience; like recording details, grasping at the gossamer fabric of waking from a dream.

Photographs and memory are a starting point - through the process and medium (oil paint) an image evolves - one foot planted in the realms of reality and the other stepping into an alternate world. I tend to work in oil paint on wood panel - I like the the solidity of the surface and the contrast of the delicacy of thin glazes and washes. I am intrigued by the alchemy of paint and its facility to express voiceless emotion through intuitive choices of colour, composition and brushwork.

Recurring themes of love and loss and the desire to capture the essence of experience - a fleeting moment, ephemeral and yet resilient in its presence, are what inspire me to paint.

I like this quote from Charles Baudelaire - "Extract the eternal from the ephemeral."

The thread pulling my work together is about 'coming home', belonging; or conversely a sense of 'unbelonging'.

'Cobden's ethereal forest scenes delicately balance impressions of a rather contradictory nature, where feelings of slight caution created by the lurking depths of the forest are met with a distinct sense of life and hope, emanating from light found at the end of the foliage's misty tunnel.

The hazy nature of the artist's graceful technique however helps bind these apposing elements together, somewhat diffusing and blending the darkest darks of the works into the softened earthy colours of the surround trees. By handling the paint so tactfully in all areas of the painting, the space and depth of the environments become evermore prominent, helping emphasise such feelings of being swallowed and suffocated by the growing forest, or relief from finding the fresh, open air.'

Curatorial Writings by Adam Reid - Metaphysical Objectivity in Comparison with Realism 2013

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Recent Awards

Currently selected for the Sir John Hurt Art Prize, exhibition July 2018.

She has recently been accepted as a member of The Arborealists, a group of artists specialising in the art of trees.

In the 2017 Society of Women Artists Annual Exhibition, Lara was awarded The Artist Editor's Choice Award, for work to be used in an article in The Artist Magazine in August 2018.

Recently pre-selected for the Columbus Threadneedle Art Prize and selected for the 2017 ING Discerning Eye Exhibition, Lara has regularly shown work in the Mall Galleries London.

Last November she had two paintings selected for the ING Discerning Eye curated exhibition - one piece by Dan Coombs and another by Chris Orr RA.

Lara was awarded 1st prize at the Sir John Hurt Art Prize, with her painting Into the Enchanted Garden, in July 2016. She was also selected to exhibit in the 155th Society of Women Artists Annual Open Submission Exhibition in July 2016.

Lara's painting, 'Alternative Eden', was selected for the Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize exhibition, at the Mall Galleries in March 2016.

A finalist in the National Open Art Competition, she exhibited in the Finalists 'Winter' exhibition at the Royal College of Art, London 21st October - 1st November 2015.

In September 2015 Lara won 1st Prize in the Plein Air painting competition Paint Out Wells and was awarded her first Artist Residency in the Cill Rialaig Project, Co. Kerry in June 2016 and spent time painting on Lake Kukkia in Finland in August 2016.

Art Fairs attended include Art Fair East, Norwich, Affordable Art Fair in London and Stockholm,

Selected Awards

2018	Wells Arts Contemporary - Exhibited Shortlist - Wells Somerset
2018	Sir John Hurt Art Prize - Exhibited Shortlist - Holt Norfolk
2017	ING Discerning Eye - Exhibited Shortlist - Mall Galleries London
2017	Royal West of England Academy - Exhibited Shortlist 165th Annual Summer Exhibition
2017	SWA Annual Summer Exhibition - Awarded The Artist Editor's Choice Award - Mall Galleries
2017	Sir John Hurt Art Prize - Exhibited Shortlist - Holt Norfolk
2016	ING Discerning Eye - Exhibited Shortlist - Mall Galleries London
2016	1st Prize winner - Sir John Hurt Art Prize Holt Festival Art Prize - Norfolk
2016	Society of Women Artists - Exhibited Shortlist - Mall Galleries London
2016	Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize - Exhibited Shortlist - Mall Galleries London
2015	National Open Art Competition - Exhibited Shortlist - The Royal College of Art
2015	1st Prize winner - Paint Out Wells - En Plein Air Competition
2015	The Painted World - Exhibited Shortlist - Saatchi Art Los Angeles
2012	Holt Festival Art Prize - Exhibited Shortlist - Holt Norfolk
2008	Norwich Castle Open Art Show Norfolk - Exhibited Shortlist - East Anglian Art Fund
2008	Norfolk Contemporary Art Competition - Exhibited Shortlist - The Forum Norwich

Selected Exhibitions

2018	Wells Arts Contemporary - Exhibited Shortlist - Wells Somerset
2018	The Arborealists - Mariners Gallery St Ives
2018	Sir John Hurt Art Prize - Exhibited Shortlist - Holt Norfolk

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2018	Arborealists and Guests – featuring Paul Nash - Black Swan From Somerset
2018	Arborealists and Other Painters - John Davies Gallery Gloucestershire
2018	'Fairground' Exhibition - Fairhurst Gallery Norwich
2017	ING Discerning Eye - Mall Galleries London
2017	Pre-Selected for the 2018 Columbia Threadneedle Prize
2017	SWA Annual Summer Exhibition - Mall Galleries London
2017	Pre-Selected for the Royal Academy Summer Show
2016	ING Discerning Eye - Mall Galleries London
2016	Holt Festival Art Prize - Holt Norfolk
2016	SWA Annual Summer Exhibition - Mall Galleries London
2016	Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize - Mall Galleries London
2015	PAiNT Exhibition - Undercroft Norwich
2015	Pre-Selected for the Columbia Threadneedle Prize
2015	National Open Art Competition - The Royal College of Art
2015	Germination Chelsea Fringe Exhibition Espacio Gallery London 2015
2015	Short listed - Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize - Mall Galleries London
2014	Anteros Selected Open Submission - Anteros Gallery Norwich Norfolk
2013	Halesworth Arts Festival - The Cut Suffolk invited artist in the 2013 NOA exhibition
2013	National Open Art exhibition - short-listed NOAC exhibition
2013	Metaphysical Objectivity in Comparison with Realism – Lloyd Gill Gallery Somerset
2013	Wonder of Nature – Store Street Gallery Bloomsbury London
2012	Holt Festival Art Prize - Juried Exhibition Holt Norfolk
2012	Wey Gallery Summer Show - Godalming Surrey
2012	East Anglian Sea/Landscapes - Cambridge Contemporary Art Gallery
2012	Red Dot Gallery Spring Show - Holt Norfolk
2011	In Bloom - Wey Gallery Godalming Surrey
2011	Joint Show -Corte Real Gallery – Paderne Algarve Portugal
2010	Shades of Summer - Wey Gallery Godalming Surrey
2009	Summer Show - Cambridge Contemporary Art Trinity Street Cambridge
2008	Norwich Castle Open Art Show Norfolk
2008	NCAS Juried Exhibition - The Forum Norwich

Educational and Residencies

2016	Artist Residency - Cill Rialaig Project Kerry, Ireland June 2016
2016	Artist Residency - Lake Kukkia, Finland August 2016
1992-1995	<i>BA (Hons) Fine Art Painting</i> - University of Brighton