

## Lara Cobden - Artist

### Biography

Lara Cobden is a figurative painter living and working in 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.

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. This year for the first time Lara has a painting pre-selected for the Royal Academy Summer Show and in the 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.

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 in the final 10 of the Saatchi Art Showdown 'The Painted World' in Los Angeles, February 2015.

She was awarded her first Artist Residency in the Cill Rialaig Project, Co. Kerry in June 2016.

Recent exhibitions include Fairground, Fairhurst Gallery Norwich, PAiNT, Norwich Undercroft, Germination at Espacio Gallery, London (Chelsea Fringe), Nature at Store Street Gallery, Bloomsbury, London, GoFigurative, London, The Wey Gallery, Surrey, Cambridge Contemporary Art, Red Dot Gallery, Holt, Norfolk, The Corte Real Gallery Paderne, Portugal.

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

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### 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 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 'un-belonging'.

'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 opposing elements together, somewhat diffusing and blending the darkest darks of the works into the softened earthy colours of the surrounding 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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### Selected Awards

2017 ING Discerning Eye - Exhibited Shortlist - Mall Galleries London  
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 - 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 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 Society of Women Artists - 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  
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

## Art Fairs

2015 Affordable Art Fair - Art\* Henrietta Cartwright - Battersea London 2015 Art Fair East Norwich June 4-7 2015

2014 Affordable Art Fair - Art\* Henrietta Cartwright - Battersea London 2014 Affordable Art Fair - Store Street Gallery - Stockholm Sweden 2014 The New Chelsea Art Fair - Store Street Gallery - Chelsea London 2013 Brighton Art Fair – Brighton Corn Exchange

2013 Affordable Art Fair - Go Figurative - Battersea London

## Educational and Residencies

2016 Artist Residency - Cill Rialaig Project Kerry, Ireland June 2016 1992-1995 BA (Hons) Fine Art Painting - University of Brighton

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