

Paula MacArthur  
Painter

When nothing else remains, 2023  
Oil on linen, 100 x 100 cm

# Statement & biography

Paula MacArthur's paintings find fantastical moments in the real world; as objects of curiosity and wonder they invite us to stop and reflect, in awe of these earthly yet ethereal fragments of our planet. MacArthur exhibits a mastery of draughtsmanship and colour in her application of jewel-like glazes, embedding ideas of deep time through the meditative accretion of delicate layers. Identifying crystalline patterns which echo the wider world and beyond, she acknowledges the granular nature and interconnectedness of the universe.

This body of work began as a gesture of love with a small watercolour painted as a gift, and love remains the central focus of MacArthur's work. Through a process of tuning into the moment she discovered each crystal and coming to an understanding of its structure through drawing, her practice becomes a meditation in which memories of people, places and experiences surface and align with the object. These meditations become the subject of each painting and titles similarly emerge from fragments of texts or lyrics which resonate with the spirit of each motif.

MacArthur says, 'For me, crystals encapsulate love, life, the universe and perhaps even everything. My paintings are explorations of colour and light and reflections of my own inner world. They are a contemporary response to Dutch 17th century Pronkstilleven painting - ostentatious still lifes depicting highly desirable objects which invite us to consider the transience of life, the emptiness of wealth and the certainty of death.'

'The otherworldliness of these glassy, geometric forms sparks infinite imaginings on love and loss, joy and pain. In oil paint I find an equivalent magic and I use luminous colour to create intricate landscapes and new, unreachable worlds. These are metaphors for the fragility of the planet we inhabit, the human condition, but also a recognition of the potential joy in the here and now.'

Paula MacArthur b. Enfield, UK, 1967

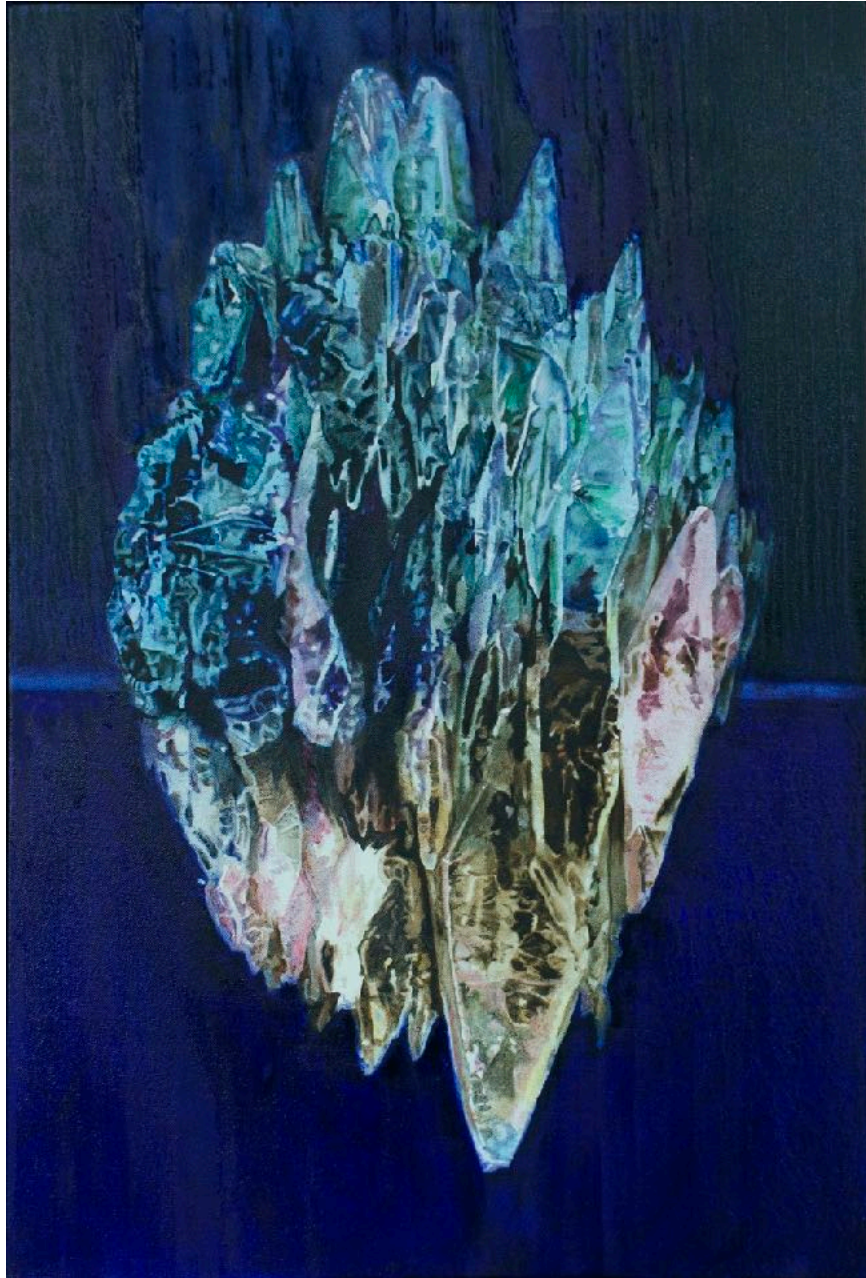
Paula MacArthur trained at Loughborough College of Art & Design and then The Royal Academy Schools in London. She now lives on the South Coast of England and works from her studio in Rye, East Sussex.

In 2024, Paula won Matthew Burrows' Judge's Choice Award at the Jackson's Art Prize. In 1993 she was a prizewinner at the John Moores Painting Prize and she won the JPS Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery in 1989.

Recent exhibition highlights include 'Arcadia for All. Rethinking Landscape Painting Now' where her work was exhibited alongside Hurvin Anderson, Lubaina Himid, Carol Rhodes, Phoebe Unwin and George Shaw. In 2023, Paula's work was part of 'Entwined, Plants in Contemporary Painting' touring Huddersfield Art Gallery and 20-21 Visual Arts Centre, Lincolnshire. She has exhibited at the National Gallery in Gdańsk, Kühlhaus Berlin, IGCA in Anchorage, Art Helix in Brooklyn, Grassimuseum Leipzig and was included in a touring show of four museums in China.

She exhibits and curates nationally and internationally. Alongside her studio practice, Paula is a mentor for Turps Art School, a BA Painting Programme Tutor at OCA, Coordinator of the Contemporary British Painting Prize and a committee member of the artist-led group Contemporary British Painting.

Her work is held in private and public collections around the world including National Portrait Gallery London, Priseman Seabrook Collection, Baron & Baroness von Oppenheim and Jiangsu Art Museum in China and painter, Graham Crowley, included his essay on her work 'Still Light' in his book 'I Don't Like Art'.



Coming home to a place we'd never been before, 2023  
Oil on canvas, 75 x 50 cm



There will be no peace, 2024  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



She's in love (in her own mad mind), 2020  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



And if only I could  
2023  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 100 cm



Until I remember that you've gone 2022  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, private collection



All these silent moments, 2020  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm





And blazed through the sky, 2020  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



I will lead you (out of here) 2019  
Oil on canvas, 160 x 100 cm



We're all going down together, 2022  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100cm



Maybe if I fall asleep, 2022  
Oil on linen, 120 x 120 cm



Keep me in a dream, 2021  
Oil on linen, 150 x 120 cm, private collection



### Forthcoming exhibitions

**Darkness Visible**, APT Gallery, London, 25 March - 13 April 2025

**Silent Disco** curated by Graham Crowley

Greystone Industries, Suffolk, opens 28 June 2025

### Solo exhibitions

2022 **Still Light**, Rye Art Gallery, East Sussex

2018 **Verse: Inverse, Obverse, Converse, Reverse**,  
Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope

2017 **Resonance & Wonder**, with songs by Tine Louise Kortermant,  
Rye Creative Centre

2014 **Infinitely Precious Things**, VJB Arts, London

### Awards

2024 Matthew Burrows Judge's Choice Award, Jackson's Art Prize

2010 London Festival Fringe Award, 2nd prize winner

1993 John Moores Painting Prize, Prize winner

1992 Royal Academy Schools Prize for Painting

1989 John Player Portrait Award, First Prize, National Portrait Gallery  
London

### Selected Collections

Jiangsu Museum of Art - China

Goodnestone Park, Kent

Priseman Seabrook Collection

Chadwicks, Enterprise Centre, UEA Campus, Norwich

Baron and Baroness von Oppenheim

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Double Tree Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London

National Portrait Gallery, London

## Selected group exhibitions

- 2024 **Jackson's Art Prize**, Bankside Gallery, London  
**50/50**, Unit 1 Gallery Workshop, London  
**Start with Something**, featuring Louisa Chambers, Tim Ellis, Roisin Fogarty, Alex Hanna, Gareth Kemp, Paula MacArthur, Scott McCracken, Jason Thompson, Suzy Willey and Neil Zakiewicz, Bridewell Studios and Gallery, Liverpool  
**Assembly**, The Old Gym, Rye, East Sussex  
**Common Ground** curated by Rowena Easton, The Old Gym, Rye  
**The Lido Open**, selected by Vincent Hawkins Lido Stores, Margate  
**Slow Painting: Cultural Landscapes**, Studio KIND, Devon
- 2023 **Entwined, Plants in Contemporary Painting**, Huddersfield Art Gallery touring to 20-21 Visual Arts Centre, Lincolnshire  
**At Cross Purposes**, book and touring exhibition curated by Dr Frances Woodley, Aberystwyth University Gallery, Oriol Ynys Môn Anglesey, QSS Gallery Belfast and Elysium Gallery, Swansea  
**Abundance**, Rye Art Gallery, East Sussex  
**The London Group Open 2023**, Copeland Gallery, London  
**Of Lightness**, Blyth Gallery, Imperial College London  
**Arcadia for all? Rethinking Landscape Painting Now**, Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds touring to Attenborough Arts Centre, University of Leicester  
**Paint Fiction**, International Gallery of Contemporary Art, Anchorage, Alaska, USA  
**X, Ten Years of Contemporary British Painting**, Newcastle Contemporary Art, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne  
**Rogue Women 2**, Rogue Artists' Studios, Manchester  
**Embracement**, Tin Man Art for International Women's Day
- 2022 **Winter Lights**, Tin Man Art  
**Love, Celebration and the Road Ahead** curated by Hettie Judah, TJ Boulting, London  
**Once Upon an Instant**, HTW, Berlin  
**A Generous Space 2**, The New Art Gallery Walsall  
**Vitalistic Fantasies**, Elysium Gallery, Swansea
- 2022 **Paradoxes**, Quay Arts, Ryde, Isle of Wight
- 2021 **A Generous Space**, Hastings Contemporary  
**Roadside Picnic**, PADA Gallery, Barreiro, Lisbon, Portugal  
**Supernature**, Kaleidoscope Gallery, Sevenoaks  
**Human:Nature**, Linden Hall Studio, Deal, Kent  
**Margins** curated by Matthew Burrows MBE, Rye, East Sussex
- 2020 **Lockdown Interviews**, The Cello Factory, London  
**Vitalistic Fantasies**, The Cello Factory, London  
**Wells Art Contemporary**, online exhibition  
**Beep Painting Prize**, Elysium Gallery, Swansea
- 2019 **A Hand Stuffed Mattress** curated by Karl Bielik, Terrace Gallery, London  
**Supernature**, The Auxiliary Project Space, Middlesbrough  
**Mountain Size** curated by Gordon Dalton, Pineapple Black, Middlesbrough  
**Indoor Voices** curated by Graham Crowley, Greystone Industries  
**Made in Britain**, National Museum, Gdańsk, Poland  
**Contemporary British Painting**, The Hostry, Norwich  
**Im/material Bodies**, Sluice HQ, London
- 2018 **PaintLounge Berlin**, Kühlhaus, Berlin  
**Subsumed**, curated by Fiona Long, The Crypt, London  
**In the Future**, curated by Rosalind Davis, Collyer Bristow, London  
**Beep Painting Prize**, Swansea College of Art  
**Superstition**, Project Space Wapping, London  
**PaintNorth**, Lady Beck Project Space, Leeds  
**Five Sussex Artists**, Devonshire Collective, Eastbourne
- 2017 **Contemporary Masters from Britain**, The Yantai Art Museum, Jiangsu Arts and Crafts Museum, Jiangsu Art Museum and Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts Museum  
**Contemporary British Painting**, Bermondsey Project Space  
**Contemporary Masters from the East of England**, The Cut, Halesworth

- 2016 **Slippery & Amorphous NYC**, ArtHelix, Brooklyn, NYC  
**Contemporary British Painting**, Quay Arts, Ryde, Isle of Wight  
**Slippery & Amorphous**, The Crypt, London  
**Correspond**, The Artworks, Halifax touring to Rye Creative Centre, East Sussex and Interview Room 11, Edinburgh
- 2015 **Right Here, Right Now**, Rye Studio, East Sussex, Hermione Allsopp, Andrzej Jackowski, Chantal Joffe, Paula MacArthur  
**Undead Painters**, ASC Gallery, London  
**Adam Fenton's Painting Club**, Thames-side Gallery, Woolwich  
**Creekside Open**, APT Gallery, London, selected by Richard Deacon  
**Disturbance**, Atom Gallery, Stroud Green Road, London  
**Cold on the Outside**, Willowbank Crescent, Glasgow
- 2014 **Q14**, APT Gallery, Deptford, London  
**OVERHE(a)R(e)**, Aplomb Gallery, Chicago, USA  
**Le Voci Ritrovate**, Castello di Monti, Corigliano d'Otranto, Italy  
**Zeitgeist Open**, ASC Studios, London, selected by Rosalind Davis, Annabel Tilley, Andrew Bick & Juan Bolivar  
**Correspond**, curated by Marcus Harvey, Turps Art School, London  
**Off the Wall**, The 9th Terrace Annual Open, London  
**Zeitgeist Summer Exhibition**, Zeitgeist Arts Projects, London  
**20 Painters**, Phoenix Brighton  
**Crash Open Salon**, Charlie Dutton Gallery, London, selected by Phillip Allen and Neil Tait
- 2013 **Lion and Lamb Gallery** at Sluice Art Fair, Bermondsey, London  
**The Open West**, Newark Park Gloucestershire touring to Cheltenham Art Gallery  
**The Femail Project**, The Article Gallery, Birmingham City University  
**Navigate**, Bexhill Art Trail supported by the De La Warr Pavilion, The Old Cinema, Bexhill  
**Covert and Obscured**, Frances Bardsley Gallery, Romford  
**Tasty Modern**, Schwartz Gallery, London
- 2012 **Seeing in the Dark**, The Fletcher Centre, Rye, East Sussex  
**Minutiae**, The Stone Space, London  
**ALAS**, Autumn Residency Exhibition, Matt Roberts Arts, London  
**The Perfect Nude**, Wimbledon Space touring to Exeter Phoenix Gallery & Charlie Smith London, curated by Philip Allen and Dan Coombs
- 2011 **What the Folk Say**, curatorial interventions by Tasha Amini, James Ayres, Daniel Baker, Sir Peter Blake, Sonia Boyce, Faye Claridge, Simon Costin, Jeremy Deller, Susan Hiller, Juneau Projects, Alan Kane, Paula MacArthur, Mike Nelson, Martin Myrone, Paul Ryan & Sarah Woodfine, Compton Verney, Warwickshire  
**Surface Meaning**, House of Hastings, East Sussex
- 2010 **A Thousand Words**; an installation for Art in Romney Marsh London Festival Fringe Art Award, 2nd prize winner
- 2005 **Ahoy Kunst**, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 1994 **Four Self Portrait Artists**, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 1993 **Prize winner, John Moores Painting Prize**, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool  
**Royal Academy Post-Graduates**, Grassimuseum, Leipzig, Germany
- 1991-3 **Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition**, London
- 1989 **Young Contemporaries (now New Contemporaries)** Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester  
**First Prize Winner, John Player Portrait Award**, National Portrait Gallery, London

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