

An abstract painting by Judy Buxton, featuring a dense and textured composition. The artwork is dominated by a palette of muted blues, greys, and earthy browns, with occasional highlights of yellow and white. The brushwork is highly expressive and visible, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of a complex, layered landscape or perhaps a close-up of a natural, weathered surface. The text 'JUDY BUXTON' is printed in a simple, dark, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

JUDY BUXTON



Judy Buxton  
Drawn from the Ancestral

8 – 30 October 2011

Dedicated to my sister Julia

  
campden  
gallery

## Drawn from the Ancestral

Horses. I'll start with a confession of sorts. Until around the age of twelve I dreamed of a life with horses. At weekends I rode at stables on the outskirts of London; the rest of the week I plotted how I would one day keep horses and ride whenever I wanted. Then came a resolute yet remorseful dividing of the ways, of a kind familiar in early adolescence. Overnight my horse pictures gave way to art posters from Habitat; *Elements of Riding* was banished under the bed, to be replaced by the earnest black spines of Penguin Classics. By the time I'd graduated to *Swann's Way* and *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, I blushed to think that I had once yearned to spend my days amid the loosebox smells of hay breath and hoof oil. I could not imagine Proust or Freud soaping their tack or scraping the sweat from a lathered flank. The life of the mind – or my idea of it – seemed to demand the renunciation of all things horsey. So when Judy Buxton describes the 'ghosting' effect of her large painting *Grey Horse Downland Romance 1961*, in which a striding animal appears alternately to emerge from and recede into the myriad brush marks' changeable weather, there is also for me a ghost of passion remembered – a Proustian moment, in its way.

For those who know Buxton's work well, on the other hand – who will think of her primarily as a landscape artist – the drawings and paintings of horses she has been making over the past year or so feel very much like a new departure, with all the exploratory fervour of a passion discovered. If this is true in artistic terms, however, there is also more to it than meets the eye – an ancestral dimension that's suggested by the title of this show. Buxton explains that her father, who died when she was five, was a horse-racing commentator on Australian radio. Further back in family lore, he was a young man driving across the outback in his horse and trap. 'Coming from Australia', she says, 'I suppose I'm naturally interested in my family roots.' Her genealogical researches have revealed, among other things, that her English great-grandfather was a cavalryman in the Sherwood Forest Rangers. Buxton's first childhood drawings were of horses; later, marooned in England without her passport, she found work as a stable hand in the Lake District and Cornwall.



A few years ago, searching for a pony for her young daughter, Buxton inadvertently re-entered the domain of the horse; this time round, it has become a serious involvement – not just weekend riding but breeding, showing, the whole equestrian vocation. I'm reminded of the qualified emphasis with which Patrick Heron referred to his garden above Zennor as 'very nearly the greatest passion of my life'. And, like the azaleas at Eagles Nest, the horses have irresistibly crossed the threshold into paint. To be more exact, it was the genealogical side of breeding – ancestral researches of a different kind – that attuned Buxton to a possible new direction for her work. Digital technology played an interesting role here: equine bloodlines are now accessible online, and, like prime ministers and their families, a surprising number of the animals to be seen in paddocks and gymkhanas around the country trace their descent to seventeenth-century aristocratic circles. More intriguing still, when you click on some of the historic names, paintings and prints appear on screen: Hanoverian thoroughbreds and Victorian hunters stand squarely in picturesque vistas or, as fashions changed, rear Delacroix-style in bravura proof of Arab blood.

At this point, I think, you have to set aside two prominent aspects of the English tradition of horse painting. The first, derived from George Stubbs, has to do with anatomical glamour, the deep-bedded power of flesh and muscle. The other is about the parade of possession – the horse as privileged tenant of an owned landscape. Buxton's horses have little dialogue with either; it makes more sense,

in fact, to see them as an evolutionary branch of landscape tachisme. In the vivid accumulation of brush marks, an atmospheric sense of physical immersion elides with a more detached awareness of spatial and temporal distance: the *matière* of paint becomes matter for thought, and vice versa. You can almost watch this two-way process happening on a table in Buxton's studio, which is covered with A4 printouts from the bloodline website – not ranked in genealogical order but piled, shuffled, bruised and flecked with pigment like autumn leaves. Here and there the clear arch of a neck, sinuously flexed spine or cusped hock stands out. These strongly articulated forms have a natural graphic magnetism, like the curve of a bay that enthral the drawing hand. In charcoal drawings, both from life and from the bloodline printouts, and the more linear of Buxton's paintings, such as *Lillibet Away or After Zobeyni 1844*, there's a feeling that maybe these shapes should be allowed to speak for themselves. What more (as you imagine artists often wondering in the life class) do you need to add?

But there's also a transformation happening in the contours and surfaces of Buxton's horse paintings that seems analogous to the way in which the landscape around her home on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall enters her art. It's a question not so much of adding as of assimilating. In later versions of *Zobeyni* or in the haunting, nocturnal *Grey Horse*, the anatomical forms have almost dissolved, yet at the same time they feel pervasive. It makes sense when Buxton talks of wanting to 'lose the image' or about the intuition that something is 'passing through' the painting. The vigorously worked paint surfaces resemble those of her landscapes and function in a similar way: translated into aggregative, all-over paint-strokes, something impalpable – an atmosphere, a movement – acquires a viscous, many-hued materiality, which immediately works to fragment the attention, rather than crystallise it into solid, graspable ideas. The horse itself becomes a kind of horizon, a rhythmic cipher holding the work together, like a meniscus delicately registering both balance and movement.

The title *Drawn from the Ancestral* applies as much, of course, to landscape as to bloodlines. Both relate to Buxton's painting through the notion of the palimpsest, the successive layers of inscriptions, or

deposits, each one part-augmenting, part-obscuring what went before. This consciousness of the past can weigh heavily in British landscape painting. We can't forget the common lands greedily enclosed to make pastures and paddocks, the man-traps in the woods. The landscape art of Buxton's native Australia, whose influence she acknowledges, doesn't come laden with this semi-feudal baggage of ancestry, and it may be that her horses breathe all the more freely in its absence. If her images of the nineteenth-century celebrity stallion Zobeyni seem possessed, it is by something other than the gaze of a proud owner.

Though the landscape and lanes of Cornwall aren't, as they would once have been, half-populated by horses, it doesn't take long to realise that horses get as good a run through art history as landscape or still life, from the wild horses in Chauvet cave, whose kidskin muzzles are some of the earliest known subjects in painting, to Velázquez, Degas or Picasso. It turns out, too, that even the Viennese townie Sigmund Freud couldn't get horses out of his head: searching for an analogy to describe the relationship between the id and the ego, he imagined a horse and its rider. In other words, such images reach as deep as you can go into the life of the mind.

*Michael Bird, September 2011*





Welsh Pony in Hand II (Dyroll Starlight)  
91,5 x 96,5 cm charcoal on Somerset paper



Welsh Pony in Hand II (Dyroll Starlight)  
168 x 183 cm oil on canvas



Horse and Groom I  
91,5 x 96,5 cm Charcoal on Somerset paper



Hyperion (Lillibet Away)  
152,5 x 152,5 cm oil on canvas

Pond Series (Winter Reflection)  
152.5 x 152.5 cm oil on canvas



### Zobeyni (1844)

The 'strength and beauty' or elite type, later called the classic type, was first highly esteemed and collected from the desert with great fervor by Abbas Pasha I of Egypt (1803 – 1858), who used his knowledge of the desert and horses, his immense fortune and his friendship with the Bedouins to make his vast collection of horses. He had as many as 600 head at one time. It is doubtful if the Bedouins ever again had the horses they had before he carried on, over a period of years, his systematic combing of the desert for the finest classic type Arabians, regardless of price, which he boasted he collected for their perfection of beauty like others in Europe and elsewhere collected priceless paintings.

Three of the Arabians of Abbas Pasha are among the most highly esteemed foundation of present day bloodlines, here and abroad. Zobeyni, a grey Seglawi stallion, bred in the desert, used by him with great success, is founder of the male line that has been the most successful in England and the United States. The line has been of preponderant importance in contributing to other lines in other countries, notably Egypt and Poland. Zobeyni's most celebrated son was Wazir, which has by some been considered the best stallion secured in Egypt by Wilfred and Lady Ann Blunt. Wazir was sire of many important mares for the Blunts at their Crabbet Stud; also the stallion Shahwan, famed for his beauty and perfection, imported to this country in 1895 by JP Ramsdell. Thus in this country was obtained some of the early Zobeyni blood.

First published in an essay 'Type in the Arab' by Ben Hur, *Western Horseman*, March 1951  
(Magazine Division of Morris Communications, Augusta, Georgia, USA)

After Zobeyni I  
152.5 x 152.5 cm oil on canvas





Tremayne (Golden Bank) III  
30.5 x 30.5 cm oil on board



Tremayne (Golden Bank)  
20.5 x 23 cm oil on board



River (Autumn Golds)  
101.5 x 127 cm oil on canvas





Studio Objects and Roses III  
91,5 x 96,5 cm oil on canvas



Studio Objects and Roses I  
101,5 x 106,5 cm oil on canvas



Grey Horse (Downland Romance) I  
20,5 x 24 cm Photograph and mixed media



Grey Horse (Downland Romance) II  
152,5 x 183 cm oil on canvas



Horse and Rider I  
91,5 x 96,5 cm Charcoal on Somerset paper



Horse and Rider IV  
91,5 x 96,5 cm Charcoal on Somerset paper

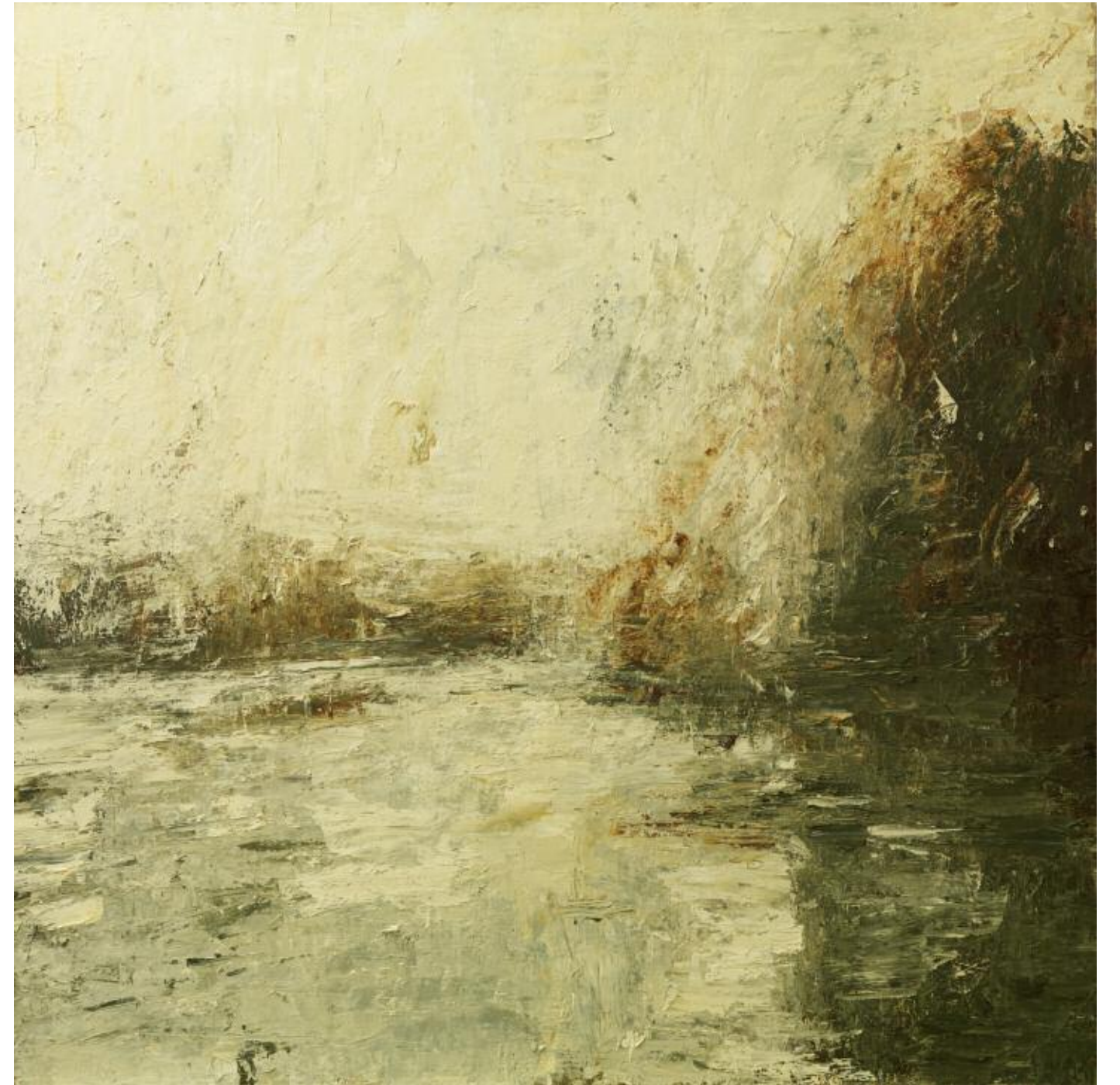


Caervallack Garden Roses II  
122 x 122 cm oil on canvas



Caervallack Garden Roses I  
122 x 122 cm oil on canvas

River Bank Series (Reflections)  
152.5 x 152.5 cm oil on canvas





Goonhilly Gorse  
20,5 x 23 cm oil on board

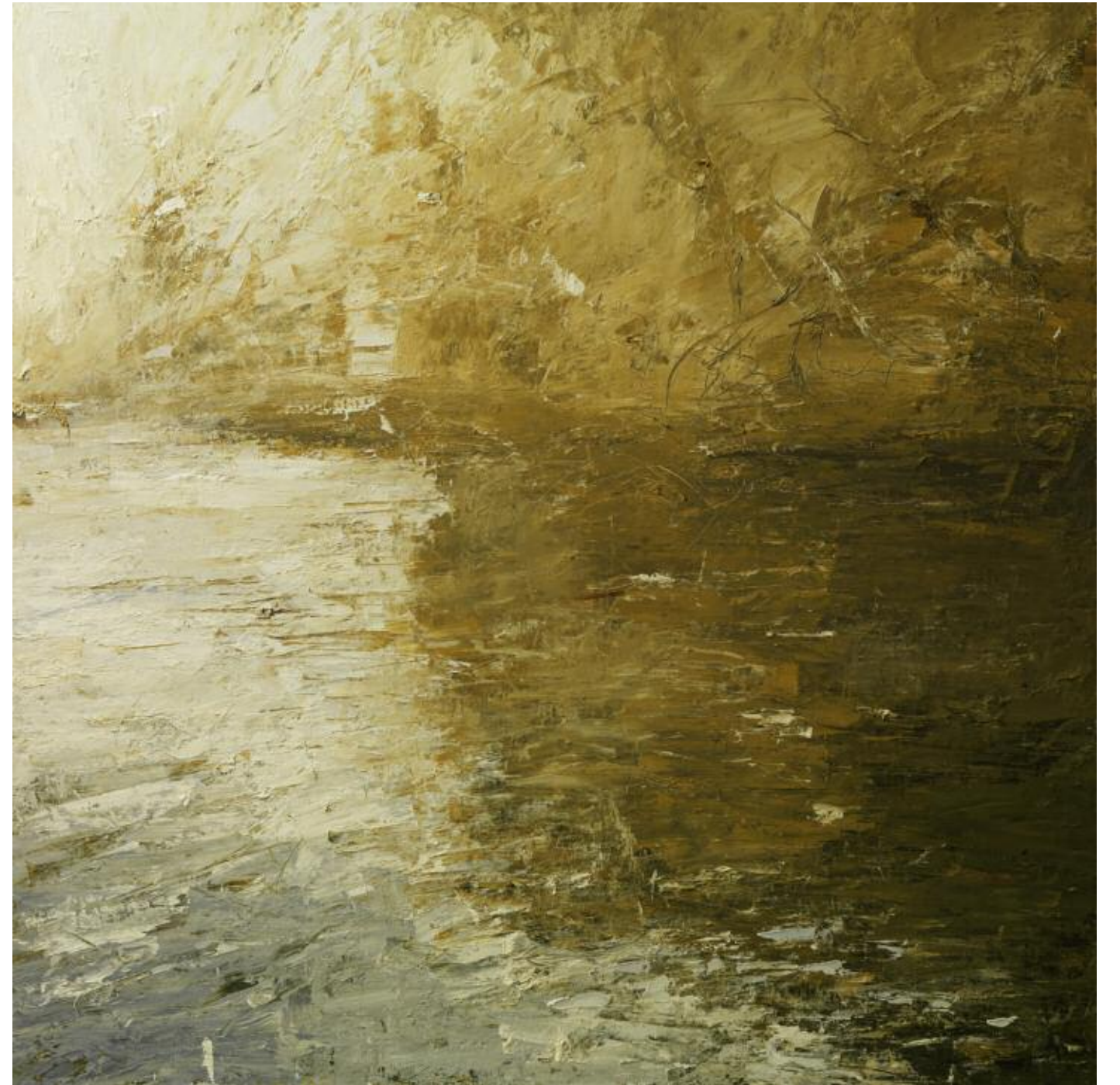


Spring Grasses (Goonhilly) II  
20,5 x 20,5 cm oil on board



Caervallack Garden Roses IV  
122 x 122 cm oil on canvas

River Bank Reflection Series (Golden Oak)  
152.5 x 152.5 cm oil on canvas

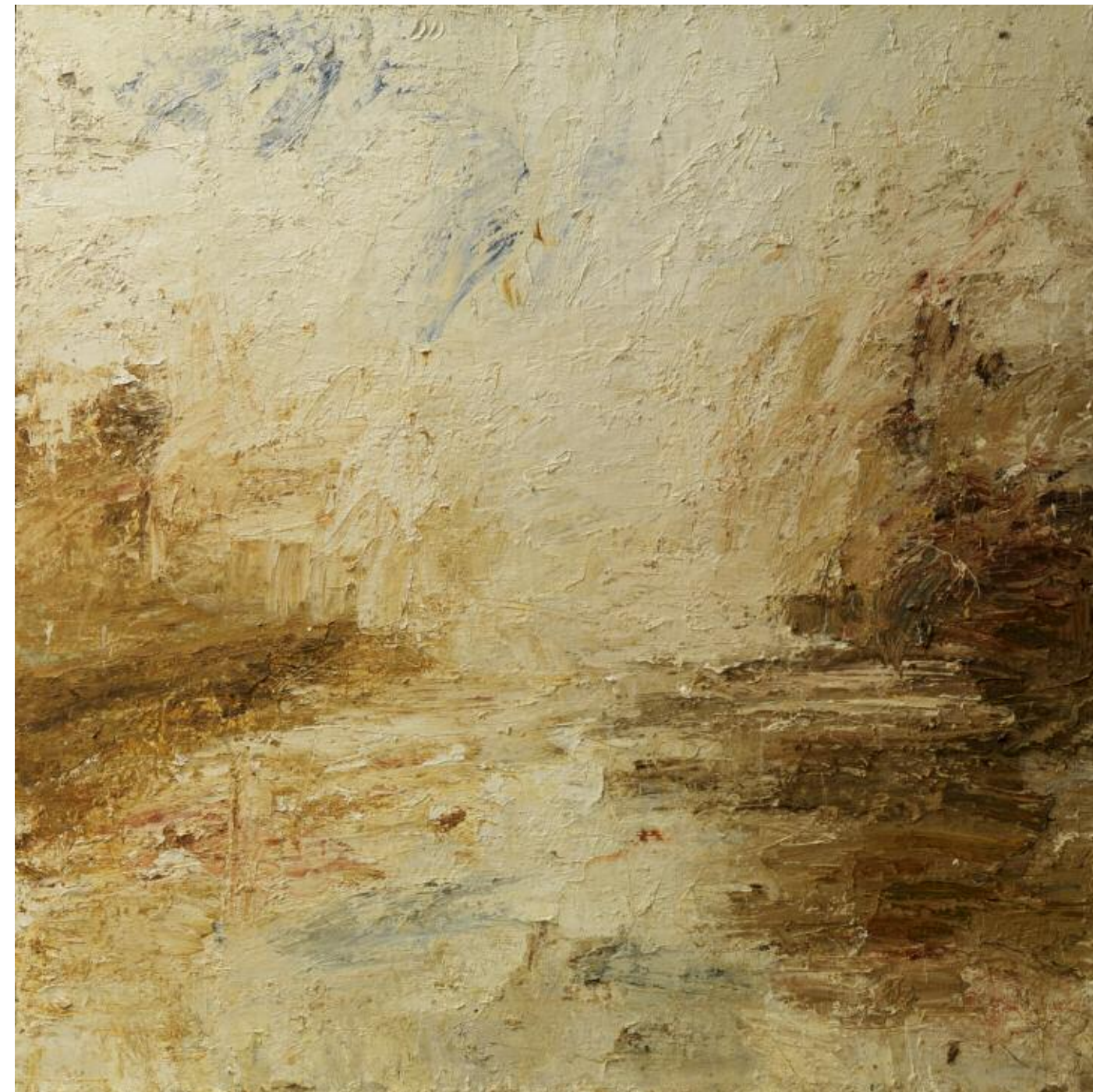




Green Island II  
23 x 35,5 cm oil on board



Green Island I  
23 x 35,5 cm oil on board



River Passage II  
122 x 122 cm oil on canvas





Carleon Cove (Winter Sea)  
20,5 x 33 cm oil on board



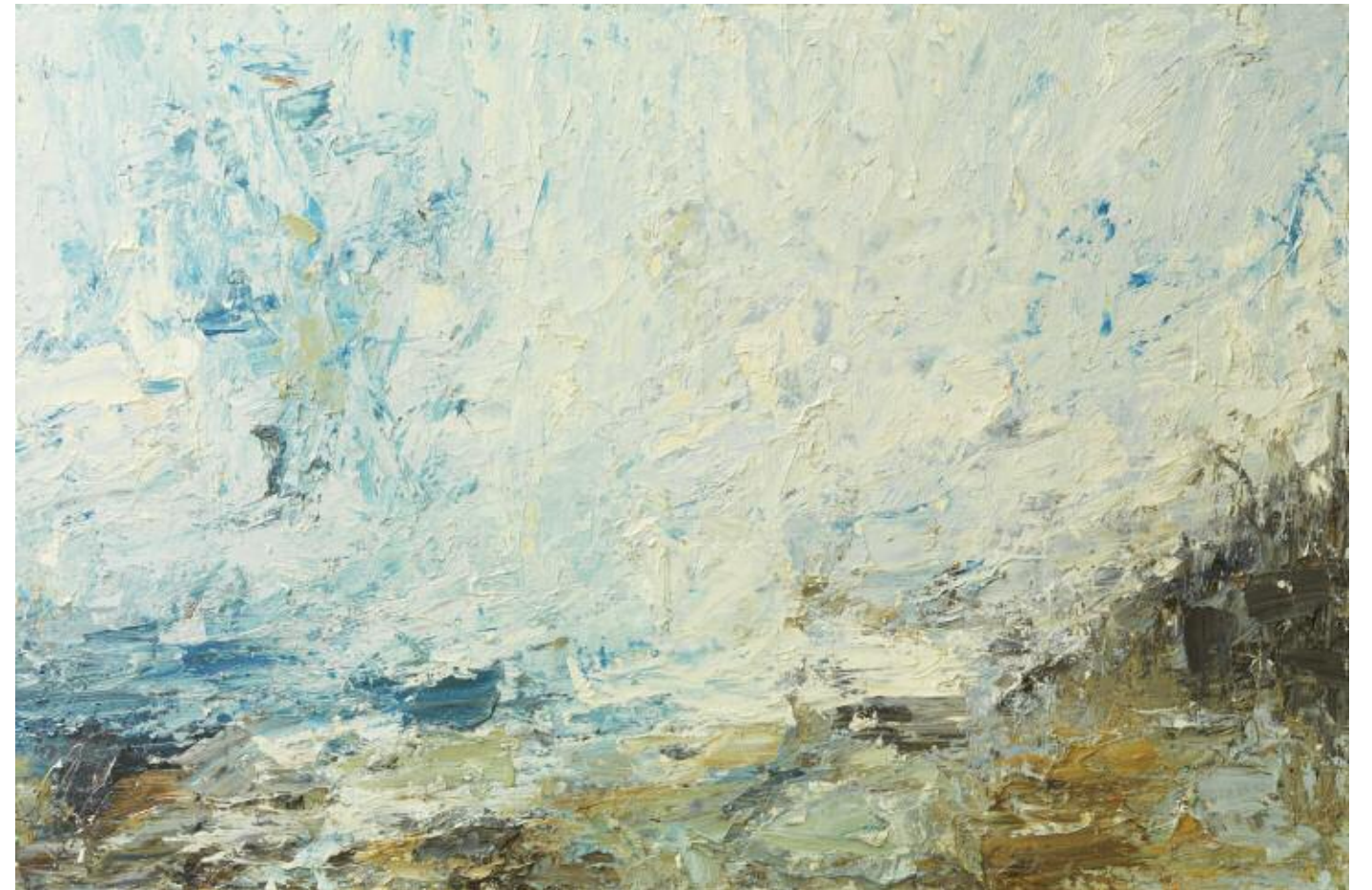
Carleon Cove (Autumn Calm)  
101,5 x 106,5 cm oil on canvas



Turquoise Sea I  
30.5 x 35.5 cm oil on board



Turquoise Sea II  
30.5 x 35.5 cm oil on board



Carleon Cove (Shoreline)  
81.5 x 122 cm oil on canvas

**JUDY BUXTON**

1961 Born Sydney Australia  
 1987-90 Falmouth College of Art Fine Art (BA Hons)  
 1990-93 Royal Academy Schools (PG RA Dip)

**Solo exhibitions**

2011	‘Drawn from the Ancestral’, Campden Gallery, Gloucestershire	2007/96	Royal West of England Academy Open Exhibiition, Bristol
2010	‘Light Pools’, Thackeray Gallery, London	2007/02/01	Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London
2009	‘Reflected Landscape’, Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire	2005/04/03/02/01	Hunting Art Prizes, Royal College of Art, London
2008	New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall	2004-1998	Messums Contemporary Mixed Exhibitions London
2007	‘Celtic Land & Sea’, Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire	2002-98	ART2002-98, Islington Design Centre & Chelsea Arts Fair
2006	New Millennium Gallery, St Ives	2004-98	ART2004-98, (New Millennium Gallery) Islington Design Centre London
2005	Campden Gallery, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire	2003-99	Lemon Street Gallery (group exhibitons), Truro, Cornwall
2004	New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall	1998/93/92/91	Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London
2002	Lynne Stover Gallery (with Jeremy Annear)	2002/01/00	Chichester Open Art Exhibition, Sotherby’s House, West Sussex
2002	New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall	2001-90	Newlyn Society of Artists (group exhibitions) including ‘From the Heart’ (showcase exhibition) 2001; Critic’s Choice exhibitions (99/97/96) & ‘New Generation’ (1990), Newlyn Art Gallery, Cornwall
2001	Beaux Arts, Bath	1999	‘Newlyn Now’, The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol
2000	Lynne Stover Gallery, Cambridge	1996	Royal Overseas League Annual Open Exhibition, Royal Overseas House, London and Edinburgh College of Art
2000	Messums Fine Art, London	1996	‘Landscapes From the West Penwith’, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery
1999	New Millennium Gallery, St Ives, Cornwall	1993	Sackler Galleries, Royal Academy of Arts, London
1998	The Oxford Gallery, Oxford		
1997	Thornton-Beven Arts, London		
1996	The Oxford Gallery, Oxford		

**Selected group exhibitions**

2011-08	‘Inside Out’ & group exhibitions Thackeray Gallery, London
2011-03	Josie Eastwood Fine Art Winchester
2011-09	ART2009, Islington Design Centre (Thackeray Gallery) London
2011-07	Denise Yapp Contemporary, Monmouth, Wales
2008/7/10	Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames including ‘35 years of Bohun Gallery’
2010-98	New Millennium Gallery (group exhibitions), St Ives, Cornwall
2011-04	Campden Gallery, (group exhibitions), Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire
2011-04	Edgar Modern, Bath (group shows)
2008-04	ART2008-04, Islington Design Centre, London & Art Ireland & Art Toronto, Canada & Paris Art Fair
2007	Modern Works on Paper and Watercolours & Drawings Fair, Royal Academy of Arts, London (Abbott & Holder Ltd, London)
2007/04/99	Cornish Show, Thompsons Gallery, London
2007	‘Art from Cornwall’ & ‘A Splash of Colour’, New Grafton Gallery, London

**Awards & prizes**

2005	25th Anniversarty Hunting Art Prize (2nd Prize) and Poster
1997	NatWest Art Prize finalist & Prizewinner, Lothbury Gallery, London
1996	First Prize, Gold Medal, The Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers Annual Cyril Sweett Award, PG Painting Prize (selected from PG students at the RCA, Slade and the Royal Academy) awarded by the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers
1993	Royal Watercolour Society Award David Murray Travel Scholarship Creswick Landscape Prize
1992	Henfield Drawing Award

**Publications & reviews**

2011	‘Drawn from the Ancestral’ (catalogue essay by Michael Bird), Campden Gallery
2010	Featured in Article on Josie Eastwood <i>The Sunday Times Magazine</i> Thackeray Gallery, exhibition catalogue
2009	‘Thumbnails’, Nicholas Usherwood, <i>Galleries Magazine</i> (July) Campden Gallery catalogue forward ‘Reflected Landscape’ by Laura Gascoigne
2008	<i>Cornwall Today</i> (February) <i>The Cornishman</i> , Frank Ruhrmund (May) Exhibition catalogue, New Millennium Gallery, St Ives Forward, ‘A Dynamic Orchestration of Space’ by Caroly Shapiro Wyatt, lecturer in 20th Century Art & Design at University College Falmouth
2007	<i>The Times</i> , ‘The Knowledge’ (Sept 8-14), ‘New Face of Cornish Art’ by Laura Gascoigne. Exhibition catalogue, ‘Celtic Land and Sea’, forward by Nicholas Usherwood. <i>Galleries</i> , ‘Thumbnails’, Nicholas Usherwood <i>St Ives 1975 – 2005 Art Colony in Transition</i> , by Peter Davies, St Ives Printing & Publishing Company
2006	Exhibition catalogue, Campden Gallery, forward by Nicholas Usherwood New Millennium exhibition catalogue, forward by David Falconer ‘A Wild and Free Lizard’, Peta-Jane Field, <i>Inside Cornwall</i> (June) ‘Preview: Cornish Art in 2006’ Peta-Jane-Field, <i>Inside Cornwall</i> (January) <i>‘Art Today’, Cornwall Today</i> (May)
2005	Hunting catalogue & publications & poster
2004	New Millennium Gallery catalogue forward by William Packer ( <i>Financial Times</i> art critic)
2003	William Packer, review, Hunting Art Prizes ( <i>FT</i> 0-02-03) Pip Palmer, <i>Galleries</i> (June) <i>Cornwall Today</i> , Editor’s Choice (June) ‘Modern Turners’ <i>Living on the Edge</i> , Simon Edge & Jessica Lack <i>The Guardian</i> (June)

2000	<i>Catching the Wave, Art and Artists in Cornwall</i> , Tom Cross, Halsgrove Press <i>Painters and Sculptors from the South West</i> , Messums, London Catalogue essay by Jenny Pery
1999	Exhibition catalogue essay by William Packer, <i>FT</i> critic, Messums Publication ‘Cornish Setting for Interior Landscapes’, <i>Inside Cornwall</i> (June)
1997	William Packer Review ( <i>FT</i> 20-05-97) NatWest Art Prize catalogue essay ‘The Indestructable Art’ by Brian Robertson
1994	Royal Overseas League catalogue
1993	<i>Guardian</i> Newspaper Exhibition, selected by Ed Nite, <i>RA Magazine</i> London Underground poster campaign for Royal Academy summer season (with David Hockney and Pissaro)

**Major collections & commisions**

Falmouth College of Art  
 Tresco Estate  
 Guinness Collection  
 The Swiss Bank  
 Connaught Hotel  
 Commissions include the cruise ship The Crystal Serenity



Right: Zobeyni  
91.4 x 96.5 cm screenprint on Somerset paper  
Edition of 10 and 5 artist's proofs

Cover: After Zobeyni I  
152.5 x 152.5 cm oil on canvas (detail)



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Sunday 11.00am – 4.00pm