

## Our Featured Artist: Juliette Losq



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Juliette Losq is an internationally exhibited, prizewinning artist who won the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2005. Losq studied Fine Art at the University of the Arts London and the Royal Academy Schools as well as studying English and History of Art at Newnham College, Cambridge and History of Art at the Courtauld Institute, London. She was elected to the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours and the Guild of St. George in 2020 and became an RWA Academician in 2021.

### **Can you tell us where you are from and where you are based now?**

I was born in Havering, and now live and work in Twickenham.

### **Did you always know that you wanted to be an artist and how did you start out?**

I did always know – when I was a child my dad and I used to visit the galleries at weekends and made an annual pilgrimage to the Royal Academy Summer Show. He was an Art Teacher, and I was always working on art projects from a very young age, raiding his art cupboard at home.

## **Do you remember the first art materials you bought or were given? What was it and do you still use it today?**

I had access to all kinds of paint at home – poster paints were the first I would have used, but by the time I was 10 or 11 I had moved on to gouache, which is similar to what I now use.



## **How does a typical day in your studio begin?**

I usually arrive by 10:00 am, I bring my dog in with me and we have a walk by Twickenham Riverside and Marble Hill Park before we walk across to Eel Pie Island, where I am based. The studio is in a working boatyard with a small community of artists' studios sprinkled among industrial equipment. When we first arrive, I feed the dog and have a coffee. Usually, I listen to the television rather than the radio when I am working, so I set that up. I spend a bit of time looking through emails, and sometimes reviewing or editing photos. I generally try to be thinking about and preparing my next piece of work whilst the current piece is in progress, so morning coffee is a good time to do this. I generally start drawing or painting by 10.30.

**You work with watercolour and inks in such an exciting way; we love the interventions you do that include furniture. Can you tell us a bit about how you began to work in this large-scale?**

I developed a particular way of working with watercolour and ink when I was doing my BA at Wimbledon College of Art. Based on the building up of an etching plate, I work with alternate layers of ink and resist and build up a tonal range incorporating mark making within each layer. I took full advantage of the space to challenge myself by expanding the scale of my work, playing with this language of marks that I had developed so that the pieces became increasingly more abstract in areas as the scale of the imagery increased.

The furniture was introduced whilst I was studying at the Royal Academy Schools. I was experimenting with depicting interior and exterior spaces. The interiors of the furniture concealed miniature landscape paintings which then extended beyond them and onto the walls via layered drawings, which could be read both as landscapes and faded wallpaper. These gradually evolved until they expanded to fill entire rooms, physically immersing the viewer. The more recent installations expand on this idea of physical immersion to become walk-in, navigable drawings. They are inspired by optical devices such as paper peepshows, which created these layered, perspectival spaces, and at the same time are composed of two-dimensional imagery.



**How long do these pieces take you to create?**

I worked on Umbraculum for about 9 or 10 months alongside another large-scale installation – they basically took up the whole of the first lockdown during the pandemic, and I alternated between them. I was fortunate to be able to use my studio throughout, as it is self-contained and isolated from the other studios on the island.

### **What is it that draws you to the recurring themes of urban decay and nature in your work?**

I think its because time seems to slow down in marginal and neglected spaces, so that you feel that you can and should explore them visually and physically. There is this quiet battle going on between manmade structures and nature, that nature would inevitably win if left to its own devices. But there is also this threat lurking in the background that everything you see could disappear in the blink of an eye – these kinds of spaces are always contested, and inevitably redeveloped. In a sense I am preserving my experience of them at a given moment in time.



**Do you have any go-to tools in your studio that you could not make work without? How do you use them and why?**

My favourite is a giant rubber that would normally be used for cleaning belt sander discs. It has saved me so much time and effort over the years when removing drawing marks and resist from my large-scale works.

**Do you have any 'studio hacks' on how to recycle items in the studio or any items you re-purpose?**

As I work with large quantities of watercolour, I tend to use this from tubes as opposed to briquettes. I have a raft of plastic and glass containers in various shapes and sizes that I use and reuse to mix my paint in. I don't buy palettes. I also use some of the items of furniture from my installations to store things in, so in a sense the artwork becomes the studio.



## **Do you have a favourite colour you return in multiple works?**

Probably cerulean blue.

## **What contemporary artists do you enjoy? And what historical artists do you look at?**

I really enjoyed the Matthew Barney exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London recently, I also like Eva Jospin, Mauro Giacconi, Hew Locke, Emma Stibbon, and the Australian artists Mary Tonkin and Catherine O'Donnell. Of historical artists I am constantly looking at different people, at the moment it's Hercules Seghers.

## **What was the best piece of advice you were ever given?**

To make work that holds your own interest.

## **Do you have one piece of advice that you would you share with an artist just starting out?**

Don't be affected by rejections, it's all part of being an artist.

## **Are there any current or upcoming projects that you are happy to share with us?**

I'm designing a new installation to be shown next year at the Garden Museum in London.

All images courtesy of the artist, click [here](#) to see more of Losq's work.