



RAMSAY GIBB

We think that humankind has explored every corner of the earth; we've navigated the poles; we know about the deserts and the forests. But this is far from the truth. We know virtually nothing about more than half of the earth's surface, the ocean.

According to NASA, our maps of the Moon, Mars and even Venus are 50 times more detailed than those of the earth's oceans and experts believe there could be as many as 10 million unidentified aquatic species lurking in the deep ocean.

Thus in the hyper-advanced 21st century, the sea remains a source of deep and enduring mystery. We are drawn to its hypnotic beauty and terrifying power. Artist Ramsay Gibb can certainly testify to the sea's relentless pull. Over many years, he has focused exclusively on seascapes, trying in each one to unlock some of the mysteries of the water.

He says: "Our personal understanding of the sea is complex, perhaps more emotional than real. We each have a relationship which can seduce us into thinking we know it better than we actually do. What we see is the edge – the surface of the edge. The vastness which lies beneath is hidden, and extends beyond the dropping curve of the horizon. A mystery unseen and unknowable."

In a new set of paintings for the Catto, Ramsay continues with his favoured subject matter. His mission this time is to explore how the effect of light turns the surface of the Atlantic Ocean into a constantly changing – almost living – entity. "These paintings are as much about light as they are about water. The colours of the sea, the colours of the sky, the angle of the sun... all are as important as the particular physical state of the water. At the low light of sunset, the sea becomes a complicated, wrought surface – different textures and elevations flashing tantalising glimpses of the water beneath."

Ramsay also tries to communicate a sense of connectedness in these new works; to convey the way in which unseen actions at a distance trigger the chaotic complexity of the sea's surface.

He explains: "The swells which break on westerly shores originate far out in the expanse of empty water. They are the result of the action of unwitnessed storms thousands of miles away; like pebbles dropped in a pond, the ripples they send out, travel unimpeded until, finally, we encounter them from the shore like the voice of distant radio transmission."

The Atlantic Ocean is, you might say, in Ramsay Gibb's blood. He was born in Ayrshire on the West coast of Scotland in 1965, though his family later moved to Lancashire. After studying in Bolton and the University of Brighton, Ramsay moved around but later re-settled in the remote Forest of Bowland area of Lancashire. However, in his 'ocean chasing' the artist regularly travels back to the Atlantic west.

Ramsay began exhibiting his work in 1994 with the Francis Kyle Gallery in London, and from 2003 he focused more exclusively on the landscapes of the North and Scotland. He has been exhibiting regularly with the Catto since 2016 and had a sell-out show in 2019 with his first solo exhibition of seascapes.

Today, Ramsay is acclaimed as one of the UK's great seascape painters, a recognised part of the British romantic tradition. But for all his success, he remains engaged in a battle to do justice to his elusive specialist subject. "The sea makes great demands of a painter," he says. "It is always beyond capturing in static paint. It seems to run through the fingers...it is only by investing many hours and layering paint that the beauty and complexity of the instant can be revealed."





Heading In 90 x 170cm







Down Rush, 70 x 100cm



Caught Against The Shore, 60 x 100cm





Mist Haze, 80 x 120cm





Arwen, 90 x 225cm

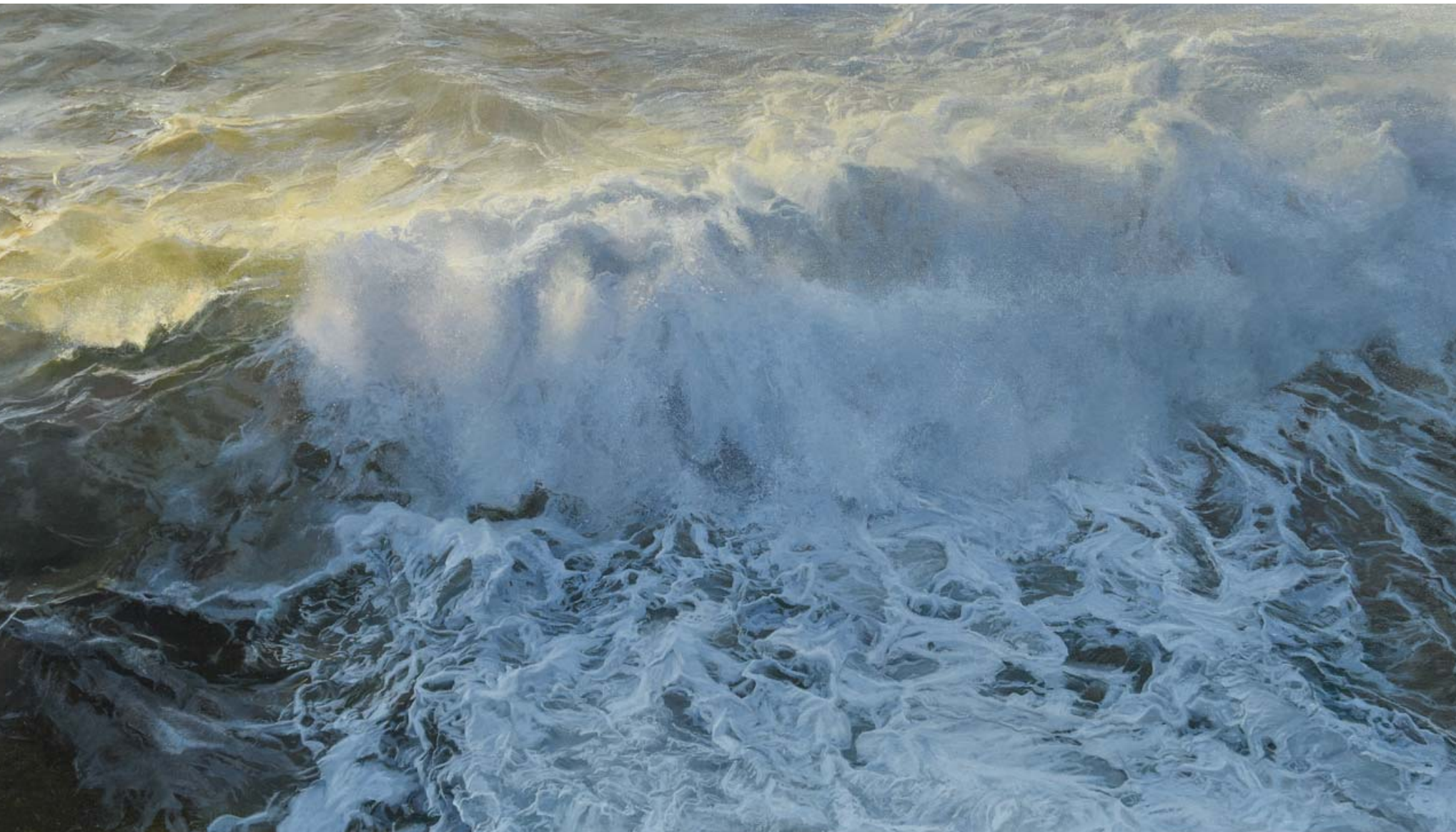




Dark and Light, 100 x 160cm







Gilded, 100 x 180cm







Zig Zag, 120 x 200cm



CATTO GALLERY

100 Heath Street • Hampstead • London NW3 1DP

Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6660 • www.cattogallery.co.uk • art@cattogallery.co.uk

Opening times: 10am - 5.30pm Mon – Sat • 12 - 5pm Sunday • and by appointment

Exhibition dates: 7th – 25th September 2023