

An abstract artwork featuring a vibrant, multi-colored triangular shape in the upper center, surrounded by textured, layered bands of purple, pink, and blue. Below this, a dark, textured band transitions into a deep blue and green area with scattered, glowing, iridescent spots. The overall composition is layered and textured, suggesting a landscape or a celestial scene.

Barbara Rae RA

a d a m g a l l e r y

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'Return to the Arctic'

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BARBARA RAE CBE RA – Arctic Paintings

In 2015, the renowned artist Barbara Rae CBE RA RSA began a series of journeys of discovery into the Arctic circle, following in the footsteps of the Orcadian explorer Dr John Rae. The shared name initially drew her to him, but his history was the real point of fascination. John Rae was the first to discover the Northwest Passage in extremely dangerous expeditions between 1848 and 1851, but a controversy meant he was largely forgotten by posterity. Intrigued by the story and the landscape, Barbara has travelled three times to the Arctic to paint the sights John had seen a century and a half before.

Barbara's process has had to adapt to her subject matter: Arctic conditions make painting from life impossible. Sketches made on-site are developed into small paintings back in the cabin, which are further developed into large-scale works in the studio. Photography assists the refinement of her views out on the ice into a new body of paintings, monotypes and intaglio prints. Her palette has also shifted in response to the landscape, gravitating towards deep blues and opalescent silvers, but her characteristic bursts of intense colour – purples, oranges, yellows – remain. These tones construct the formidable unknown into which John Rae ventured on his Arctic voyage, in representations of fracturing ice and looming icebergs. Icy floes are translated into effervescent streams of colour and the scarce signs of life – huts, boats and fish – emerge in earthy browns and greens.

Topography has always been an important feature in Barbara's work, but never merely as a formal inspiration. Her interest lies in "the memory of the land", its relationship with the people who lived and died there. Previous subject-locations range from Ireland and the Mediterranean to South Africa and Mexico. Her paintings might be seen as records of the land's memory. This way of viewing the Arctic paintings gives them a different, more urgent resonance – they are the recordings of a historic landscape that may not last much longer.

Barbara's extensive arctic travels generated the highly acclaimed exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy during the 2018 Edinburgh Festival – later moving to Orkney and finally to Canada House, Trafalgar Square. Adam Gallery is delighted to show a follow up exhibition of selected works from her Arctic studies, nearly all of which have not been seen before.

1. Near Crocker

Mixed media on paper
98 x 110 cm





2. Through the Sea Ice

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



3. Loose Berg - Ilulissat

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



4. Light on Peel Sound

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



5. Dark Passing

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



6. Sea Gap

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



7. Loose Ice - Bylot

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



8. Night Voyage

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



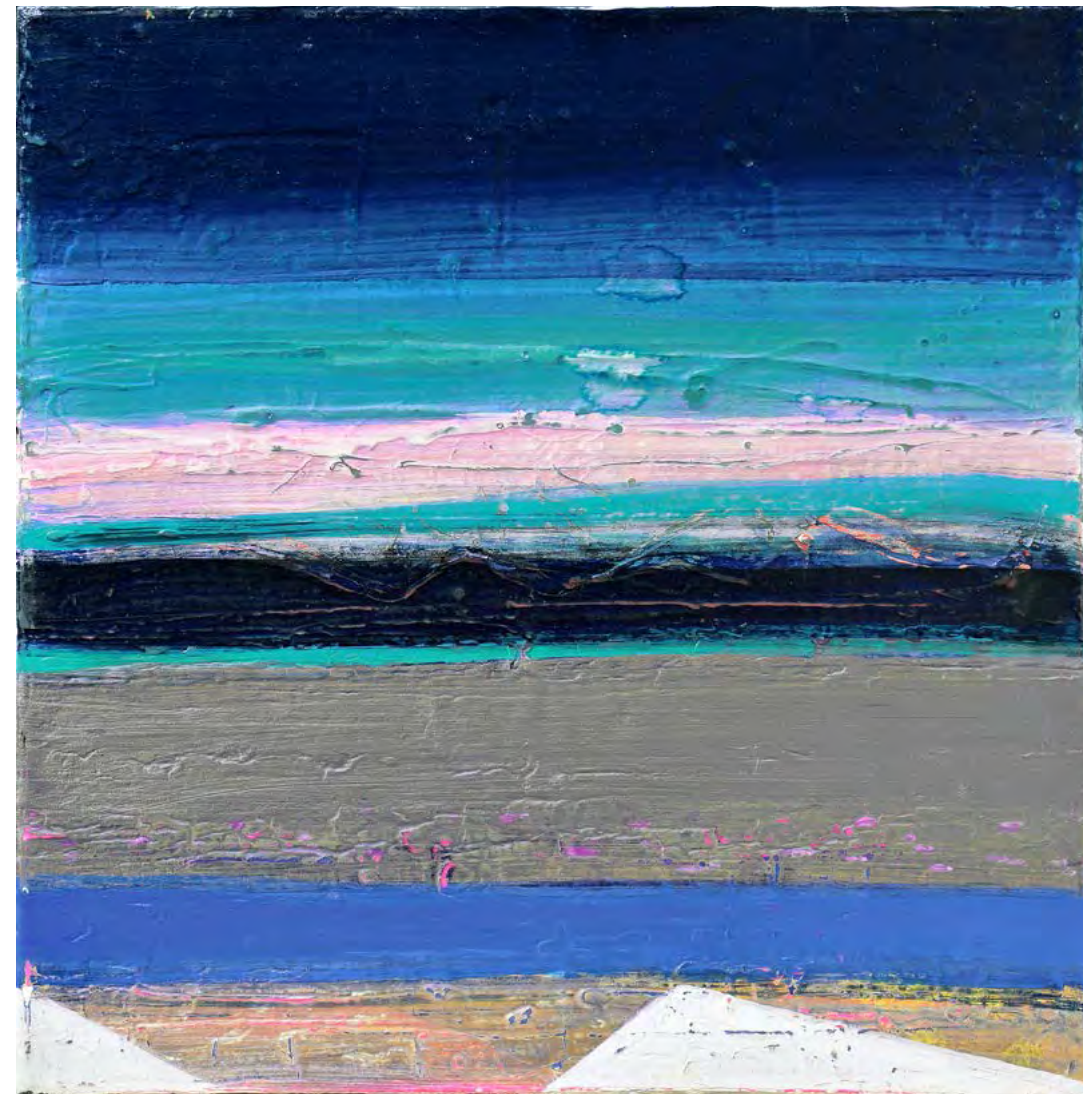
9. Broken Ice - Bylot

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



10. Small Bay - Light Bergs

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



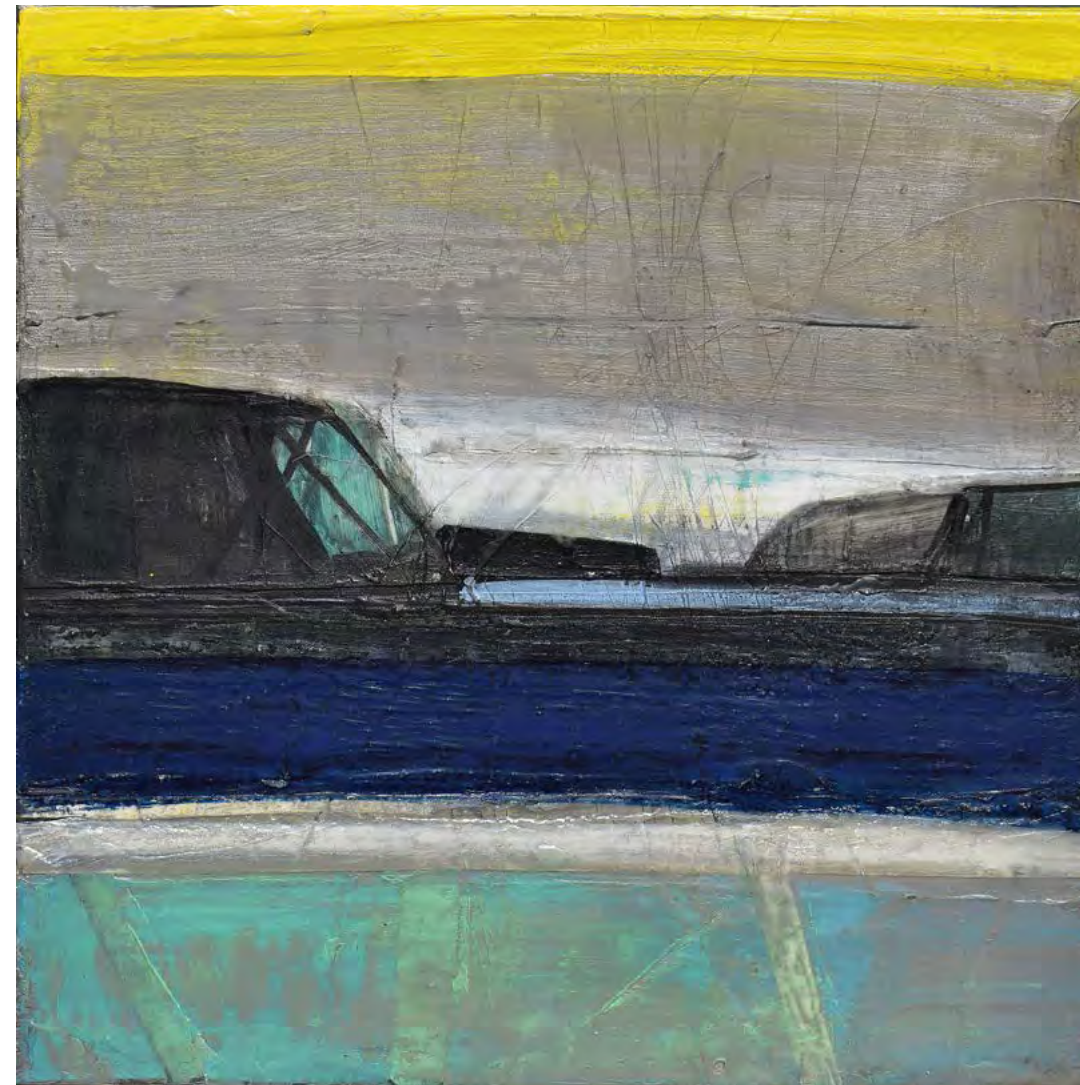
11. Bylot

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



12. Through the Ice Bergs - Ilulissat

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



13. Light on Sunshine Fjord

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



14. Dark Glacier

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



15. Night Passing Beechy

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



16. Glacier - Passing Lancaster

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



17. Jacobshavn Shore

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



18. Ice Cleft

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



19. Fossil Beach

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



20. Grounded Bergs - Godharn

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



21. Leaving Ilulissat

Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 cm



22. Lone Berg

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



23. Jacobshavn

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



24. Passing Devon Island

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



25. Dark Iceberg - Ilulissat

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



26. Bay - Late Bergs

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



27. Hudsons's Bay Hut

Mixed media on paper
15 x 15 cm



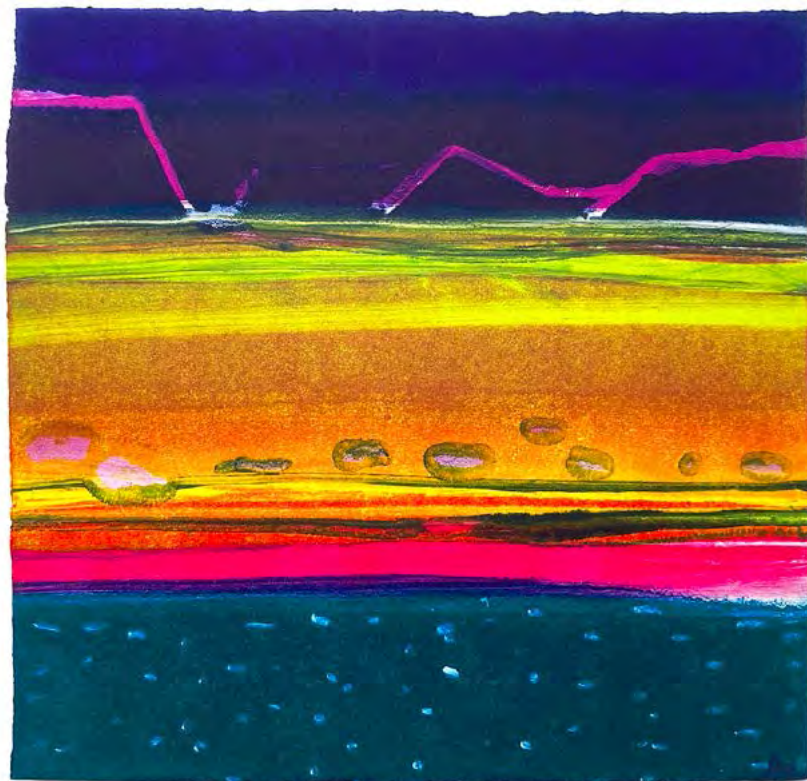
28. Far Bylot

Monotype
Image: 28 x 28 cm



29. Night Voyage - Bellot Strait

Monotype
Image: 38 x 38 cm
Sheet: 70 x 56 cm



30. Godhavn

Monotype
Image: 28 x 29 cm



Walking Bear - Baffin

Rae

31. Walking Bear - Baffin

Monotype
Image: 38 x 38 cm
Sheet: 68 x 56 cm



32. Night Light at Pond Inlet

Monotype
17 x 23 cm



33. Glacier

Monotype
27.5 x 28 cm



Photos: © Ian Ritchie CBE RA

Professional Affiliations:

1986	Member of the Art Panel, Council of National Academic Awards
1986-90	Trustee, Arts Education Trust
1986-90	Member of the Royal Society of Painters and Watercolours
1991	Member, Board of Friends of the Royal Scottish Academy
1992	Judge Paisley Drawing Biennale
1992-94	Member of the Board of Friends of the Royal Scottish Academy
1992-94	Member of the Merchandise Committee
1993	Curator and Hanger Royal Scottish Academy Student Exhibition
1993	Vice President, Royal Society of Painters and Watercolours
1993-94	Curator and hanger, Royal Scottish Academy Annual Exhibition
1995-05	Member, Royal Fine Art Commission of Scotland
1996	Member, Board of Trustees, Hospitalfield House, Arbroath, Scotland
1996	Member of the Royal Academy of Arts
1996	Member of Council of the Royal Academy of Arts
1998	Member, Board of the British School, Rome
1998	Lecturer for the British Council in Japan
2005-06	Member of the Council of the Royal Academy of Arts
2008-10	Chairperson, Board of Alumni, Edinburgh College of Art
2014	Patron Art in Health Care
2014	Member Royal Academy of Arts Council

Selected Awards:

1968	Scottish Arts Council Travel Award
1975-81	Major Scottish Arts Council Award
1977	Guthrie Medal
1979	May Marshall Brown Award – RSW Centenary Exhibition
1983	Royal Scottish Academy – Sir William Gillies Travel Award
1983	Caloustie Gulbenkian Foundation Printmaking Award
1989	Alexander Graham Munro – Royal Scottish Society of Painters & Watercolours
1990	Hunting Group Prize winner
1990	The Scottish Post Office Board Award – Royal Scottish Academy
1990	The Scottish Amicable Award – Royal Scottish Institute
1990	W.J. Burness Award – Royal Scottish Academy
1999	CBE – Commander of the British Empire
1999	Honorary Doctorate of Arts – Napier University, Edinburgh
2003	Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Art
2003	Honorary Doctorate of Literature – Aberdeen University
2008	Honorary Doctorate of Literature – St Andrews University
2016	Honorary Fellow of the Royal Scottish Institute of Architects



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