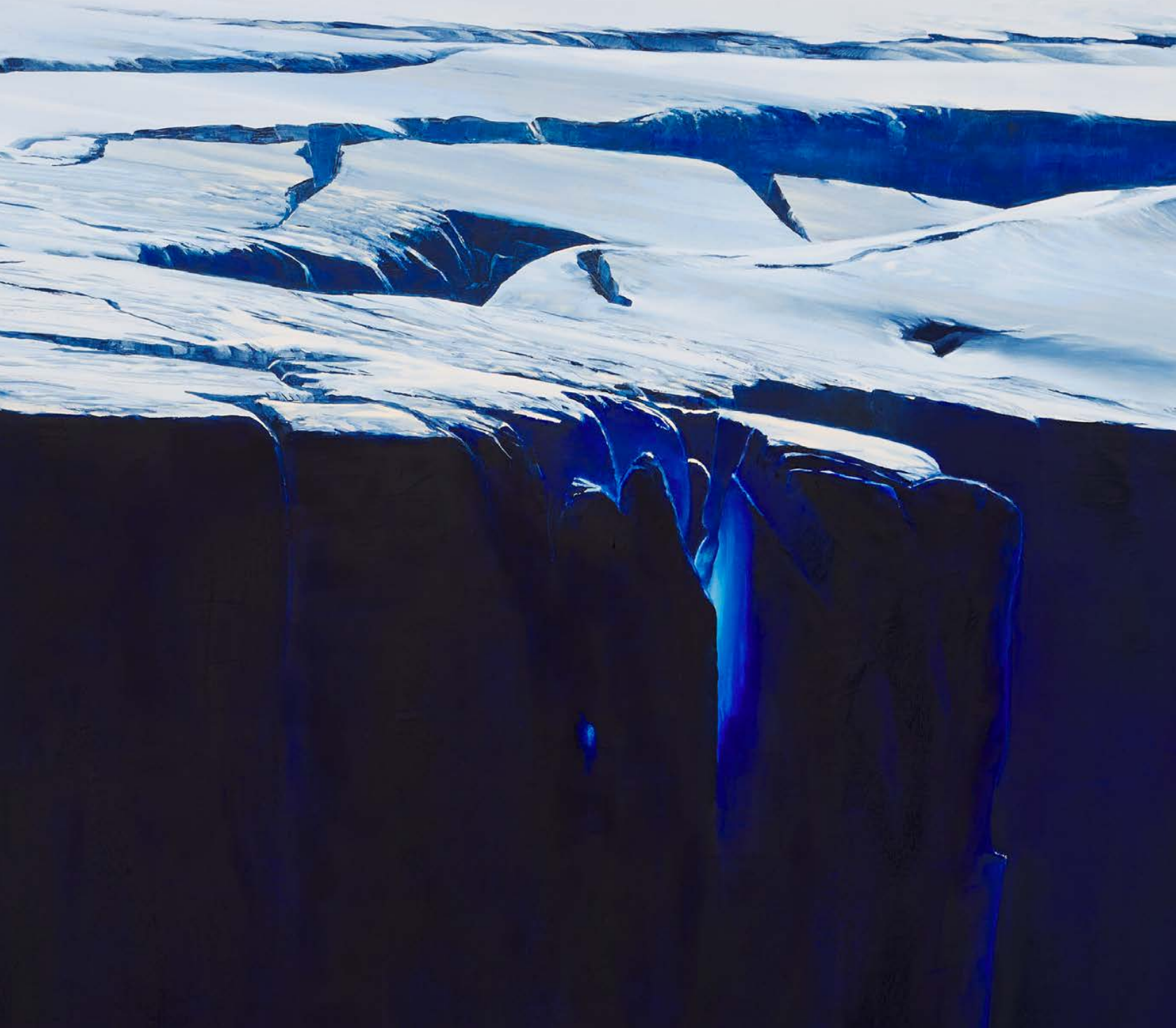


Polly Townsend
Antarctic Paintings





THE POLAR MUSEUM

Scott Polar Research Institute

John Martin Gallery



Polly Townsend

Antarctic Paintings

24 April – 17 May
John Martin Gallery
38 Albemarle Street
London W1S 4JG

John Martin Gallery
in association with
The Friends of the
Scott Polar Research Institute

www.jmlondon.com

Traveling in June to:
House of Commons
Portcullis House
London, SW1



(3) *Meditation on a Glacier*, 2024
oil and acrylic on panel, 35¾ x 48 ins, 91 x 122 cm

Polly Townsend

Antarctic Paintings

This extraordinary exhibition celebrates the art of Polly Townsend who was the 2023 Antarctic Artist-in-Residence, supported by the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute. Our programme began in 2009 and Polly is the fifteenth recipient of this coveted award.

Being the Artist-in-Residence is a daunting assignment. It involves creating art while living aboard the Royal Navy's ice patrol vessel HMS Protector for five to six weeks as it traverses the roughest seas in the world to explore the most hostile environment on Earth. In selecting Polly, we had high hopes, and she has exceeded every expectation we had.

Polly's art conveys the true essence of Antarctica. The viewer can literally feel the extreme cold and isolation of the continent, while admiring the incredible scenery – the ice on the sea, enormous lone icebergs, the deep crevasses in the snow, and the surreal light. There's something more that Polly captures: the grandeur and magnificence of Antarctica that attracted the early Antarctic explorers like Captain Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton as well as today's scientists who return year after year to study and try to save this precious continent.

Brad Borkan, *Acting Chair*
The Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute



John Martin Gallery
38 Albemarle Street
London, W1S 4JG
Monday to Friday 10 – 6pm
View all work at jmlondon.com



(7) *Encounters, Antarctica*, 2023
oil and acrylic on panel, 27½ x 39¼ ins, 70 × 100 cm



(8) *Ice, Antarctica, 2023*
ink, watercolour and charcoal on paper, 21¼ x 29¼ ins, 54 × 74 cm



(9) *Mass, Antarctica*, 2024
oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 × 59¾ ins, 122 × 152 cm



(21) *Antarctic Ascent*, 2023
charcoal on paper, 7½ x 11 ins, 19 × 28 cm



(30) *Ice Blink*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 11³/₄ x 15³/₄ ins, 30 × 40 cm



(20) *Crag*, 2024
pastel, ink and charcoal on paper, 15¼ x 23¼ ins, 39 × 59 cm



*From a moving vessel the landscape changed rapidly.
As did the weather and the visible distance. Light could
bounce, mollify, and sharpen within seconds. Antarctica
had a seemingly infinite range of personalities.*

(6) *Glacial Overhang*, 2023
oil and acrylic on panel, 28¼ x 40¼ ins, 72 × 102 cm



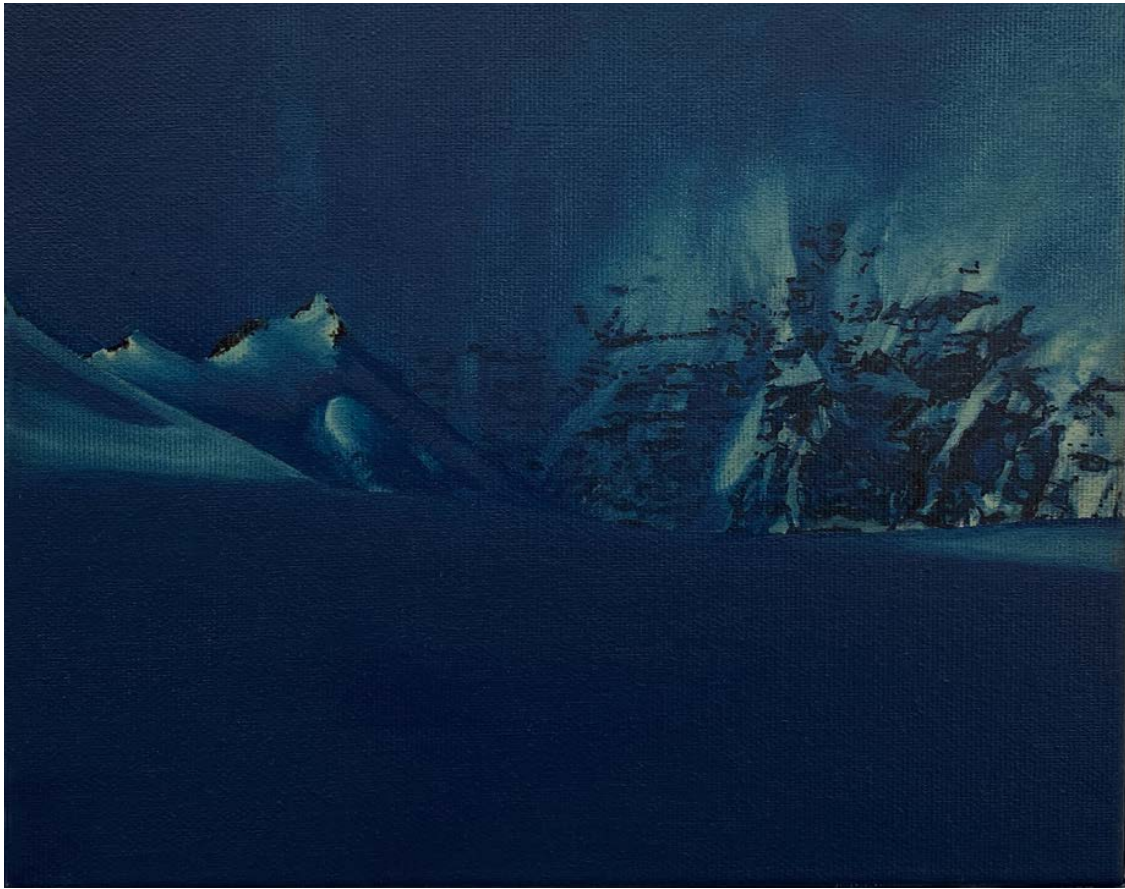
(22) *Antarctic Range*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 11³/₄ x 15³/₄ ins, 30 × 40 cm



(18) *Delirium Antarctica*, 2023
charcoal on paper, 6 × 7¼ ins, 15 × 20 cm



(4) *Slab, Antarctica*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 9¾ x 14¼ ins, 25 × 36 cm



(26) *Dark Turn*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 7³/₄ x 9³/₄ ins, 20 x 25 cm



(27) *The Edge*, 2024
ink and charcoal on paper, 18 × 24 ins, 46 × 61 cm



Time could seem as suspended as the ice; often trapped in slumber between cloud and sea. Sudden awakenings and unveilings could bring sky-scraper sized slabs crashing down and pinnacles accelerating up. Colour was both playful and tortuous, dancing between impossibly delicate hues and bold swathes of pure pigment.

(25) *Bergy Bit*, 2024
oil and acrylic on canvas, 11³/₄ x 15³/₄ ins, 30 × 40 cm



(10) *What Time is Day*, 2024
oil and acrylic on canvas, 9¾ x 11¾ ins, 25 x 30 cm



(2) *Ice Slice*, 2024
oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 × 59¾ ins, 122 × 152 cm



(13) *Massif*, 2024
charcoal and watercolour on paper, 17¼ x 27¼ ins, 44 × 69 cm



(24) *Antarctic Shift*, 2023
oil and acrylic on panel, 11¾ x 15¾ ins, 30 × 40 cm



(23) *Antarctic Dreams*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 11³/₄ x 15³/₄ ins, 30 × 40 cm



(14) *Lost Horizons*, 2023
oil and acrylic on canvas, 11¾ x 9¾ ins, 30 × 25 cm



(11) *Sliver, Antarctica*, 2023
charcoal, ink and watercolour on paper, 6 × 7¾ ins, 15 × 20 cm



(19) *Gossamer, Antarctica, 2023*
oil and linen on board, 7 × 9¾ ins, 18 × 25 cm

About Polly Townsend

Polly Townsend's paintings draw on the solitary journeys through many of the most remote and hostile landscapes in the world. Recent works come from visits to Kashmir and Kyrgyzstan and, as well as completing artist's residencies in Death Valley and The Badlands National Park, in January 2023 she was the Artist in Residence in Antarctica. Her paintings present a view of the world beyond the familiar, of places vast in scale, apparently desolate and mostly uninhabited.

Townsend treats the land as a singular subject, a still life; disembodied the form whilst remaining faithful to original patterns, colours and light. This objectification helps probe the gap between the tender and the unnerving; the beautiful and the bleak. The use of titles and the empty spaces serve to emphasise the tension between absence and presence, reflecting on the current state of landscape: one of flux, impermanence and a challenging passage of time.

Townsend produces small works on site using a collapsible easel, sketchbooks and photography, building up larger canvases in her London studio.

Biography

Polly Townsend (b.1977) completed an MFA at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2001. She has exhibited widely throughout the UK and USA and has won several painting and drawing awards, including the Slade Life Drawing Prize (judged by Paula Rego), the Duveen Travel Scholarship, the Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers Award, The Sir Ben Bowen Studio Prize for Fine art, The Contemporary Art Prize for Wales Studentship award and she was shortlisted for both the Gilchrist-Fisher Landscape Painting Award and, in 2019, the Jackson Painting Prize.

Townsend has several paintings in the Permanent Collection of the Department of State USA, currently on display in Beijing, Karachi and Mumbai and has work in the National Parks Collection USA, The Alpine Club Collection UK, and the Ben Uri Collection. Polly Townsend has travelled extensively for her work and has twice been selected for the prestigious National Park Artist-in-Residence schemes (to Death Valley and Badlands National Park). Polly Townsend lives and works in London.



From the Crow's nest, HMS Protector



The artist's heated easel



Polly Townsend in the Crow's Nest studio



Polly Townsend painting on land

