

CREAN & COMPANY

## *In the Wings*

A solo show of works by Laura Smith



*Laura Smith, The March of the Wands, 2021, oil on linen, 81.3 x 66 cm, 32 x 26 in*

**3 - 30 November 2021**

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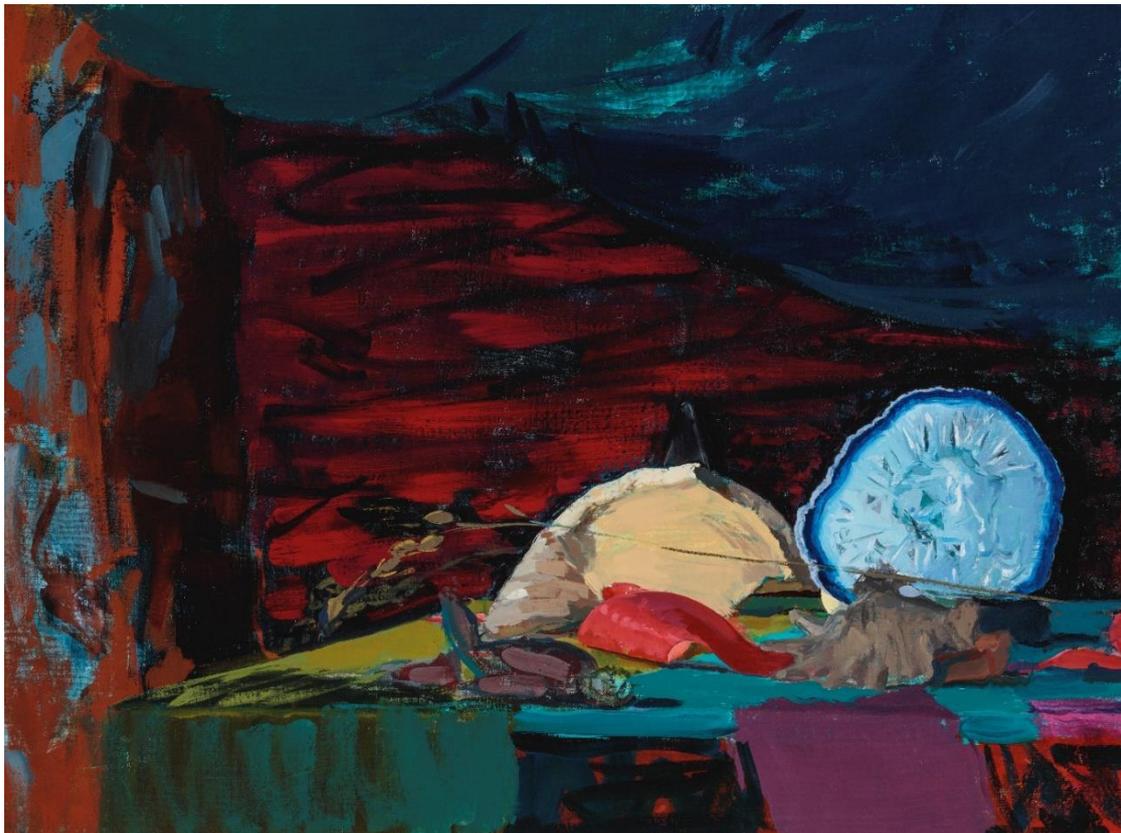
Crean & Company is delighted to announce a forthcoming solo viewing room of works by British painter Laura Smith. *In the Wings* (3 - 30 November 2021) presents a series of 17 new paintings that unite some of the artist's formal and stylistic concerns: light as subject, the emotive power of gesture and the textural characteristics of objects in art.

A still-life painter trained at The Slade School of Fine Art, Smith is interested in dissolving our familiarity with regular objects. From crystals and scraps of fabric to other domestic debris, her use of light, colour and perspective to depict these objects blurs

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the lines between the figurative and the abstract. Creating unfamiliar and mysterious realms out of the everyday, Smith is interested in how repeated motifs enable a deeper and freer investigation of the objects themselves.

Painted as a series, this new collection of works is based on a single, elaborate set-up where the light could be fully controlled in a theatrical way - the inspiration behind the title of the exhibition. This method enables Smith to focus on the shifting potential of visual qualities and details. She describes the objects in her paintings as 'personas' variously disguised by the shifting effects of light, sometimes illuminated, sometimes cast into the shadows. Often rendered with anthropomorphic qualities, Smith's placement and juxtaposition of these objects often speaks of human dynamics and dramas.



*Laura Smith, A Big Sigh of Relief, 2021, oil on linen, 61 x 81.3 cm, 24 x 32 in*

Inspired by the transporative potential of imagery - such as the pearls and shining coins in a Georges de La Tour, or the billowing silk in a Hogarth - Smith's work also echoes the influence of contemporary painters such as Lynette Yiadom-Boakye in her use of titles. With names such as *A Kind of Answer* and *A Big Sigh of Relief*, the titles play into the enigma of Smith's paintings, further drawing out the poetic, abstracted and ambiguous quality of her work.

'My process of making a painting is very intuitive - I let it evolve,' describes Smith. 'I see the painting and myself as going on a journey together. I think many observational painters like to look at things in such a way that they become totally unfamiliar to them and therefore exciting to paint. In this way, I attempt to reach from within the still life

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genre towards both peopled narratives and abstraction. The aim of the paintings is to transport the viewer – and the artist – to a semi-fantastical world where everything is real.'

'I've followed and collected Laura's work for some 15 years, so it's wonderful to be able to offer this new series of considered, energetic and colourful still lifes,' says Nick Crean, Founder and Director of Crean & Company.

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## Notes to editors

Exhibition: Laura Smith – *In the Wings*

Dates: 3 – 30 November 2021

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## About Crean & Company

Launched in December 2020, Crean & Company is an online gallery founded by collector Nick Crean. A timely online celebration of artists, makers and collectors, the gallery acts as a digitally curated space with viewing rooms full of curiosity, colour and conversation. Its line-up of contemporary international artists includes Kate Braine, Julie Held, Thomas Merrett and Rupert Shrive.

## About Laura Smith



Laura Smith completed her BA at The Slade School of Fine Art in 2003 and went on to win the Richard Ford Award from The Royal Drawing School in 2004. She graduated from her MFA at The Slade School of Fine Art in 2012, winning the Clare Winsten Memorial Award. She was shortlisted for the Threadneedle Prize in 2011 and 2016.

Selected group shows have included: One, 155A Gallery and NEAC Annual Exhibition, Mall Galleries, 2021; Efflorescence, 155A Gallery and Colour/Collage/Poetry, Slade School of Fine Art, 2020; Ruth Borchard Prize Exhibition, Piano Nobile Kings Place, 2019; Small is Beautiful, Flowers Gallery, Spring Exhibition, Rebecca Hossack Gallery and Little Clown My Heart, Arthouse1, 2018; Control to Collapse, Blyth Gallery and Three:100, No Format Gallery, 2017; Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, 2014 and 2016; Models and Materialities, Bay Art Gallery, 2016; Creekside Open, APT Gallery, 2015 and 2017; Lynn Painter-Stainers Prize, Mall Galleries, 2015; The Jerwood Drawing Prize, 2011.