

2025 at Hastings Contemporary

Undersea

29 March 2025 – 14 September 2025

Exploring the mysteries, myths and marine life that lurk under the waves, *Undersea* will bring together paintings, prints, drawings and sculpture from across different cultures and artistic movements for an inspiring exhibition next spring.

Undersea follows *Seaside Modern* (2020) and *Seafaring* (2021) in a trilogy of exhibitions curated by art historian James Russell.

With paintings, prints, drawings and sculpture by artists from a range of

cultures and periods *Undersea* explores life beneath the waves in an exciting and approachable way.



One group of works is based on artists' study of the marine environment and the creatures that inhabit it. Another explores the mythological and the imaginary, with an international group of works depicting mermaids. This includes the celebrated surrealist painting *A Siren in Full Moonlight* by Paul Delvaux (Southampton Art Gallery) and the startlingly inventive *Mermaids* series by contemporary Swiss painter Klodin Erb.

Alongside historical works by artists such as Edwardian illustrator Arthur Rackham, 19th century Japanese printmaker Tsukioka Yoshitoshi and German Expressionist master Oskar Kokoschka, visitors will find a rich variety of contemporary work. Stand-out paintings include the mysterious *Deep Dive* by Tom Anholt and *Octopus Veil* by Michael Armitage, while a completely different view of the sea and its denizens is offered by while a completely different view of the sea and its denizens is offered by a group of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander artists.

Hastings Contemporary is situated on the dramatic seafront in Hastings Old Town, alongside one of Britain's oldest and largest beach-launched fishing fleets. Accompanying the exhibition will be a full programme of talks and events that showcases and shares the fishing heritage of Hastings and the dangers that the fishing fleet now face. At a time of increasing division between and within nations, *Undersea* will celebrate cultural connections and the pleasures of difference.

Sophie Barber

27 September 2025 – March 2026

Sophie Barber (b. Hastings, UK 1996) will bring her accumulated and monumental canvases to Hastings Contemporary, opening in September 2025.

Heralded as one of the country's most exciting painters, Barber creates folk-like compositions that take her home and experiences of the Sussex coast as inspiration to explore and combine factual and fictional ideas across a variety of materials including painted canvases of various volumes, repurposed and unstretched canvas, with heavily textured surfaces often incorporating ambiguous slogans and hand-carved figurines alluding to the feeling or impression a place can leave.

Having exhibited in many solo and group exhibitions from Goldsmiths CCA to La Maison de Rendez-vous in Brussels, this exhibition will be Barber's most comprehensive showing of her works in the UK to date.



Isabel Rock

27 September 2025 – March 2026

A new body of work by Isabel Rock, winner of the 2023 Evelyn Williams Drawing Award, will be on display at Hastings Contemporary from September into the new year.

In a show combining drawing, woodblock collages and interactive spaces, this complex and far-reaching exhibition explores ideas around systems of commerce, power structures, the complexities of desire, as well as investigating human nature and endeavour.



Rock's signature large scale drawings will be displayed alongside corresponding short stories which share visions of a new and unstable world. The show will also feature animated immersive projections and the story of Sardines, a beautiful, desirable yet flawed mutant rat lady navigating a surreal world post climate collapse.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Images

- Tom Anholt, *Deep Dive*, 2022. Courtesy Josh Lilley, London. © Tom Anholt and Josh Lilley. Photo credit: Gunter Lepkowski
- Sophie Barber, *The mouse who was to marry the sun (Nezumi no Sumō)*, 2024, Oil on canvas, wood, © Sophie Barber. Courtesy Alison Jacques. Photo: Michael Brzezinski
- Isabel Rock, *Sardines Shoes*, 2024, paper mache, acrylic paint, textiles. Courtesy of the artist. © Isabel Rock

[High res image files can be downloaded here](#)

[Hastings Contemporary](#) brings world-class modern and contemporary art to a spectacular coastal setting. With an ambitious programme of exhibitions, events and activities, the gallery aims to enrich lives, support creativity and help Hastings to thrive.

Showcasing internationally celebrated artists and emerging practitioners, the gallery has developed a reputation for its focus on painting and drawing, supported by Artist Patron Sir Quentin Blake. The award-winning building is located on the town's historic fishing beach among the net huts and working structures of the fishing fleet.

Hastings Contemporary is a registered charity. Under 18s can visit for free. Hastings and Rother residents can visit for half price, from just £5.

www.hastingscontemporary.org / Instagram @hastings.contemporary

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS, AND IMAGES

Tracy Jones, Brera PR – tracy@brera-london.com / 01702 216658 / 07887 514984 / www.brera-london.com
Nicola Jeffs, Studio Nicola Jeffs nj@nicolajeffs.com / 07794 694 754