

Onya McCausland

C L O S E

Onya McCausland's practice combines studio paintings, wall installations, and collaborative socially focused works that include making and using paint from waste materials to develop critical perspectives that examine and re-imagine industrial contaminants and pollution from mines as contemporary cultural materials that indicate and symbolise the structural environmental changes to the earth's systems.

McCausland's paintings develop contexts of landscape, abstraction and monochrome painting which are explored together to address environmental contexts and concerns, and specifically environments and sites in which mining industries leave their mark and make landscapes toxic or dangerous through the remains of waste in the land and water. In this, she explores an environmentalism that addresses the materials and materiality of how painting and paint relates to the earth (as being made from chemical elements and processes) and human cultures, as well as traditions of art that relate to specific sites and places. McCausland's use of ochre has other references, including the earliest known use of ochre pigment by humans in cave painting, emphasising the relation of materials, community, site and environment.

Education

2013-2017	PhD (Practice-led), Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. Turning Landscape into Colour.
2003-2004	PGCE (Post Compulsory Education Training) University of East London.
1997-1999	MFA (Distinction) Slade School of Fine Art, UCL.
1991- 1994	BA (hons) 1st Class. Falmouth School of Art, Cornwall.

Selected Exhibitions

2026	<i>The Residues</i> , solo exhibition, Close Gallery at Proposition, Bethnal Green
2026/2025	<i>After Nature</i> Group exhibition curated by Ben Tufnell and Freeny Yianni at Close Gallery Somerset 2025 and Proposition Gallery London
2025	<i>Expanding Landscapes: Painting After Land Art</i> , Curated by Rebecca Partridge and Joy Sleeman. Group show, Abbott Hall Cumbria
2023	<i>Aerial Landscapes</i> at Flat Time House, Peckham. Exhibition of art works and archive materials to coincide with the publication of <i>Aerial Landscapes</i> <i>Lines of Empathy</i> group show focused on drawing curated by Giulia Ricci at Close Gallery Somerset <i>Deep Horizon'</i> group exhibition drawn from the collections of the Roberts Institute of Art and Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art, February <i>Lines of Empathy</i> group show focused on drawing curated by Giulia Ricci at Patrick Heide Contemporary Art

2022/23	<i>Expanding Landscapes: Painting After Land Art</i> , Curated by Rebecca Partridge and Joy Sleeman. Group show, Hestercoombe Gallery
2022	<i>Extraction: Restoration and Renewal</i> , group show curated by Veronica Sekules. Groundwork Gallery, King's Lynn <i>Embrace</i> , group show curated by Mika Hannula. Akureyri Museum, Iceland <i>Chemical City</i> , group show curated by Ester Lesley and Elinor Morgan. Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art. The exhibition was a finalist at the Journal North East Culture Awards 2022.
2021	<i>Embrace</i> , group show curated by Mika Hannula. Norrtälje Konsthall, Sweden
2020	<i>This House Shall Be Preserved</i> , public art commissioned by Fermynwoods Contemporary Art. Rockingham Castle grounds. <i>Six Bells Red 1/100 1L</i> , launch of 100 tins of the first mineral-based wall emulsion made from mine water ochre, including 'Six Bells Burnt Ochre 1/1000' (40ml tubes oil paint developed in collaboration with Michael Harding Paints) and 'Six Bells 51°43 33.56 N 3°07 58.63 W' (cast iron marker plaque developed and designed by Onya McCausland, fabricated by Steve Whittton Castings, installed on Six Bells Mine water Treatment Scheme designating the site an art- work and claiming it for public benefit).
2019	<i>In Steps of Sundew</i> , group show curated by Fermynwoods Contemporary Art. The Arches, Fineshade Wood, Northamptonshire Saltburn 54°34 07.37 N 0°57 42.87 W for <i>Working on it</i> . Group show curated by Mika Hannula, Helsinki Contemporary, Finland <i>Europe After the Rain</i> , group show curated by Simon Faithfull. Newlyn Gallery, Newlyn, Cornwall <i>Cuthill Red</i> , wall painting installation for exhibition collaboration with potter Gregory Tingay as part of his residency at Hauser and Wirth, Bruton, Somerset
2018	Saltburn 54°34 07.37 N 0°57 42.87 W', wall painting installation for ' <i>Landscapes of the Future</i> ', group show curated by Beaconsfield Art Works. Helsinki Contemporary, Finland <i>Landscapes</i> , Solo show and online catalogue. Anima Mundi, St Ives, Cornwall <i>Five Colours / Five Landscapes</i> , solo show of wall paintings. UCL Cloisters, London
2017	<i>Horizon: Against Nature</i> , group show curated by Jasone Miranda-Bilbao. Instituto Cervantes, New Delhi, India
2016	<i>The Edge of Printing</i> , group show curated by Tess Jaray. Royal Academy, London
2015	<i>Charcoal Works</i> , group show curated by Onya McCausland. Hardwick Gallery, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham. Invited artists to make new artwork using the charcoal generated from the burning of Magdalena Jetalova's 1989 oak sculpture 'Place' in the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail
2014	<i>Visual Thinking: Turning Landscape into Colour</i> installation, performance and reading group. Camden Arts Centre, London

Significant Recent Publications

2023	Aerial Landscapes, McCausland, O., Sleeman, J., Bird, N., & Jackson, K. (Eds.), London: Published by Flat Time House (2023). Aerial Landscapes contributes to research on contemporary landscape perspectives and the ways in which artists participate in industries beyond the art world and academia Deep Horizons Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA). Deep Horizons explored the topic of excavation and presented sculpture, drawing, painting, installation, ceramics, photography and moving image from the last 90 years
2022	Chemical City, Curated by Esther Lesley and Elinor Morgan at Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art. An exhibition on the legacies of chemicals production in the Tees Valley. Artworks by Annie O'Donnell, Onya McCausland and Katarina Zdjelar trace associations and connections with globalised manufacture
2021	51°43 33.56 N 3°07 58.63 W, Solo show Karsten Schubert Gallery 2021. London. Catalogue essay by Ben Tufnell
2021-22	Embrace, Curated by Mika Hannula. Norrtälje Konsthall, Sweden then Akureyri Art Museum, Akureyri, Iceland in 2022
2020	Six Bells Red 1/100 1L, launch of 100 tins of the first mineral-based wall emulsion made from mine water ochre

Professional History

2021-current	Head of Painting Lead, Associate Professor Slade School of Fine Art UCL
2018-2021	Post-Doctoral Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow & Lecturer in Undergraduate Painting, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL
2018 (6 months)	Head of Painting, Senior Teaching Fellow, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton
2017-18	Visiting Lecturer, MA programme, City and Guilds School of Art, Kennington, London
2015-17	Post Graduate Teaching Associate, Drawing Methodologies. Slade School of Fine Art, UCL
2003-14	Lecturer, 0.5 Foundation Diploma Hastings School of Art, Hastings East Sussex
2012-14	Pathway Leader Fine Art, (Foundation Degree) University of Brighton
2012-13	Honorary Research Associate in Graduate Painting for Materials Research Project, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL
2012	Visiting Lecturer Finnish Academy of Arts, Helsinki
2007-08	Visiting Lecturer University of Gloucestershire during Artist-in-Residence at Gloucester Cathedral
2002	Visiting Lecturer, Chelsea School of Art

Other Appointments and Affiliations

2023	Chair of the UCL Slade School of Fine Art Anti-racist Action Group. Discussion, dissemination and working group
2020	Founder, Member and Director of Turning Landscape CIC, Six Bells, Blaenau Gwent, South Wales.

Prizes, Awards and Other Honours

2022	North East Culture Awards for Best Exhibition and Event for Chemical City at Middlesboro Institute of Modern Art.
2021	UCL Sustainability Awards, From Coal Mine Waste to Landscape Painting highly commended recipient in the Research Category.
2017	UCL Provost's Spirit of Enterprise Award Turning Landscape Into Colour: From Coal Mine Waste to Landscape Painting.
2012	Wollaston Award, shortlisted for outstanding work in summer show Royal Academy of Art.
2011	Jerwood Painting Prize selection and nominee.
2008	Awarded Artist in Residence for one year at Gloucester Cathedral.

