

# heidi woodhead —

## *oceanic*



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With this series I return to a more traditional approach to still life composition. I have recently been studying classical drawing and painting techniques and striving for realism in my work. The 21 paintings I have done for *Oceanic* evoke the ocean rather than directly depicting it. Instead, I wanted to create the feelings I have when I visit a coastline; a sense of grounding and peace, but with an ever present current of awe and vulnerability.

I have tried to communicate a sense of history with time-weary, ancient objects - layers of history reaching through the ages to communicate their tales of woe. The passing of time has rendered the objects beautiful and their stories evocative. They have lost their harshness and gained a romantic patina.

The ocean is mostly metaphorical here – represented by the swirling, turbulent drapery. It is a sea of ages that is being invoked in these paintings. I feel awash upon a vast ocean of time, crashing and stretching to infinity. In my art practice I seek to find a tiny moment of calm, a stopping place, time to reflect and pause and appreciate just being in the moment.

Shells, fragments of sea pottery, ceramics and glass symbolise the natural and man-made world and time passing. By paintings these objects I am referencing our place in history and questioning its relevance in our contemporary world.

If you look closely at the work, you will see an abundance of colour. I have tried to really capture the quality of light at the terminus of the day, giving it a golden hue or a coolness that you only see at dawn and dusk. I find these times of day to be my most reflective. There is a beautiful stillness, especially in the early mornings, and I wanted to bring that into my work. I am also fascinated by capturing reflections and refractions: glass, the nacre of a seashell, light shining through a fragile shell wall. I have built up layers of texture for visual interest but also to suggest the weaving of history, of nature, and of time.

*Heidi Woodhead 2025*