

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Cecily Brown

A sunset, a ruin, a crowd, and a battle

Private view: Saturday 26 September, 12–6pm

Exhibition dates: 29 September–19 December 2026

Thomas Dane Gallery
Via Francesco Crispi, 69
Napoli

Cecily Brown's fourth exhibition at Thomas Dane Gallery *A sunset, a ruin, a crowd, and a battle* captures the heat and tumult which descends over Europe each summer. Across thirty new paintings and drawings, Brown elides myth and archaeology with the clamour of contemporary tourists who jostle for snapshots and cocktails across the continent's summer hotspots.

Brown first visited Naples in the early 1990s, ahead of moving from London to New York and was taken with the energy of the city, the clarity of the light across the Bay, and its intertwining shadows. She returned in 2019 for her first exhibition at Thomas Dane Gallery, Naples, *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*, a whirl of shipwrecks which brought together the history of Romantic painting with the harrowing reality of contemporary migration. For her second exhibition in the Naples space, Brown now addresses the restlessness ashore. *A sunset, a ruin, a crowd, and a battle* (2025) from which the exhibition's title is drawn, condenses a thousand years of history into a jigsaw of enigmatic figures that emerge and recede, just as the city continuously transforms. In contrast, *Sorrento Sunset* (2025-26) depicts a more contemporary European beach scene, of an overcrowded tourist town at the height of the summer season. Close to four metres in width, the painting engulfs the viewer in the overwhelming commotion that consumes these should-be idyllic settings. The energy of Brown's brushstrokes mirrors the friction of summer visitors jostling for the best spot to enjoy an aperitivo or capture selfies against the setting sun. The romance of the heavenly summer holiday slips via uneasy collisions and interrupted vistas into a hellish scene. Both pictures are epic in size and nature, packed with myriad reimagined figures and dissolving perspectives. In Brown's hands, the mundane becomes satirical and the futile battle for perfection produces a new genre of history painting.

Smaller paintings isolate more discreet vignettes from the summer season, and their timelessness emerges when seen as a group. *Angelina, the waitress at the pizzeria* (2025) appears as a contemporary rejoinder to three different depictions of Pandora, the first female created by the Gods in Greek mythology. This group of works alludes to the parts of the city that are not accessible to the tourist, and draws on the Belle Époque tradition of boudoir paintings to hint at a more opulent scene that exists out of the visitor's reach.

Alongside the paintings, Brown will display a series of drawings and etchings, which draw on the bustling energy of summer. She reimagines the sparse piazzas and statuary of de Chirico as though overpopulated with competing tourists; and depicts beaches where the sand has disappeared beneath the crowds. The frenzy of the seafront is particularly accentuated in a new pair of etchings: *Tequila Sunrise*, and *Tequila Sunset* (both 2026) – made in collaboration with Two Palms – in which Brown has hand painted an energetic wash of colour mimicking the vibrant ombré of sugary cocktails served up along Europe's beaches all summer.

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Cecily Brown was born in London in 1969, she lives and works in New York. Public collections include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY; and Tate, London, England. Recent solo exhibitions of the artist's work have taken place at Serpentine, London, England (2026); The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia PA (2025); Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas TX (2024); Museo Novecento, Florence, Italy (2023); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY (2023); Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2022); Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy (2022); Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, England (2020); and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2018).

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Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Friday 11am–1.30pm and 2.30pm–7pm, Saturday 12pm–6pm, or by appointment
Admission: Free
Nearest station: Piazza Amedeo
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