

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

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# Caragh Thuring Reinvents Her Own Work at Thomas Dane Gallery

BY JULIET HELMKE | NOVEMBER 22, 2016



Belgium-born, UK-based painter Caragh Thuring opened a show of new work on November 17 at Thomas Dane, her third exhibition with the London gallery. But the imagery, largely abstract with recognizable fragments of things like submarines, oil-rigs, and hints of the human form, has its origin in a decidedly familiar place for viewers already acquainted with Thuring's work. It could be said for many artists that each new series is a continuation of the last, but Thuring has taken this one step further with this body of work, literally starting her new paintings over the top of recreations of previous ones. She elucidates more about this unconventional approach in a conversation with Artinfo, below.

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**Tell me about your process for this body of work—the canvases, the imagery, and the people you worked with.**

I worked with silk weavers in Suffolk and tapestry makers in Belgium to produce material on which to paint. Rather than beginning with bare linen, ready made or found cloths, or printed fabrics, I wanted to build the painting from the start with a layer of imagery already part of the surface.

I met with the manufactures to discuss the possibilities and what I was aiming to achieve. Extremely skilled and knowledgeable, they were sensitive to all aspects of producing the work . I had to renege a certain amount responsibility for the first stage of the work and also the result was directly related to the physical process of the techniques.

**What did you feel that starting this way—with your own images—was able to achieve? What did these surfaces bring to the work?**

I wanted to create a different starting point for myself, to see if that affected how the paintings emerged. Painting straight on the woven surfaces was challenging at first. I didn't want to appropriate another's work and realised that I hadn't ever seen a canvas woven with the artist's own imagery. I was also able to update certain works with new information.

I enjoyed the visual con of the woven surface with what was applied afterwards. Aware that most areas weren't painted, I was continually amazed at the slippage between the two and how the mind oscillates between prior knowledge and being faced with the actual experience.

Repetition and layers began to be built up even before starting to add paint, just through the process. For example the cast of uneven light from one of the original photographs of a painting was exaggerated through the weaving process. So there were in fact many extrusions and shifts of the original image before I even got started.

**What were the original images?**

They were from different series of works over the past few years. The woven material with the figures used bricks from two different 'Brick figure' paintings and I asked the weaver to extract certain areas of brick from these to create a repeat pattern. I chose the paintings specifically to test how different imagery might work as a background and to suit my ideas.

**Tell me about your research process before beginning a work or body of work.**

I never make preparatory work or lay out what the painting might look like, so I attempt to have a fairly clear intention before beginning. I write lists, words or phrases to remind me of what I'm trying to do. I collect images or information that over time build up a direction in my mind. I meander through this and follow tangents until I feel excited or that I have some form evolving.

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