

Sarah Adams







Cover image: *Tregurrian 2* (detail), oil on linen, 60 x 140 cm

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9 – 19 November 2016

## The Maas Gallery

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*Exhibition opening hours*

Monday – Friday 10 am – 6 pm, Saturday 11 am – 4 pm





It has been ten years since I went to a mixed exhibition called *Coast* and first encountered a picture by Sarah Adams. I knew immediately, viscerally, that here was a painter I could unconditionally admire. It was the way her work stood out from the rest of the field: so quiet, yet with so much to say - so simple, yet so complex, and so well painted. After the curator, Kate Pierrepont, introduced us, the first thing I said to Sarah was: 'Do you want an exhibition?'

This collection, her sixth to be shown at The Maas Gallery, is divided into four groups of paintings from different places on the north Cornish coast, some familiar but others new and challenging. It has been particularly exciting for me to watch the development of her technique over a decade. The range of colours from her palette has extended, the play of light subtly harnessed, and the geometry of the rocks has become more abstracted, describing volumes and planes balanced in harmony or opposed in tension. Sarah's creative process is one of endless change, as inventive and various as nature itself.

**Rupert Maas**, September 2016







# Watergate and Tregurrian







I

Study of an arch at Watergate Bay

oil on board

28 x 28 cm



I've often walked the stretch of coast backing Watergate Bay, winding its way through Tregurrian to Whipsiderry, and made a mental note to paint there. This series sees the realisation of that long-held intention.

Away from the crowds near the cafe and surf school, the cliffs tower over a series of stacks and coves, and the cries of oystercatchers and fulmar echo around them. There are rock pools scoured into perfect bowls, numerous caves and arches, some candy-striped, some covered with corals and algae.

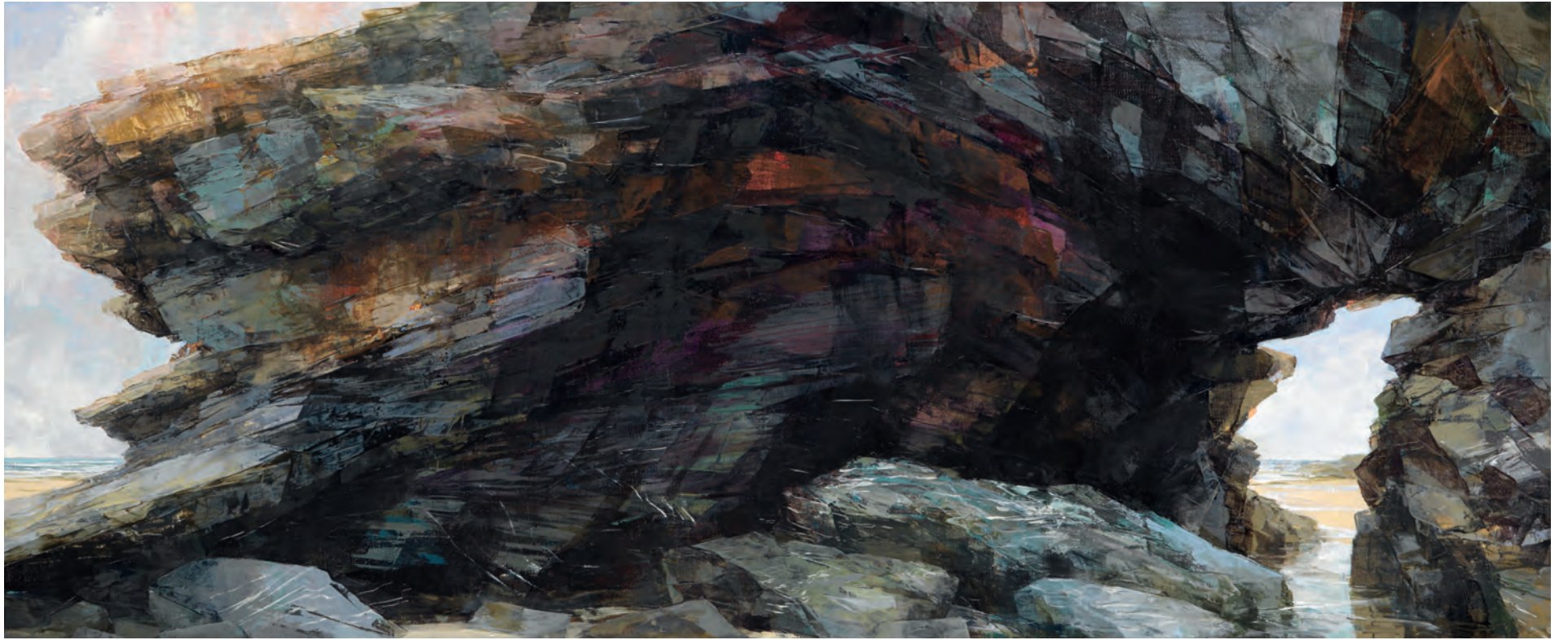
To the north, at Betrothal Arch (my nickname for it, after the proposals carved there) and beyond in Stem Cove, the cliffs appear rusty, ochre and sepia-tinted, with an earthy green bloom over the greys and blacks of the bedrock. Turning south to Tregurrian, mudstones in pastel shades that belie their name make the arches and boulder fields shimmer with unexpected, vivid colour.

2

**Betrothal Arch**

oil on linen  
50 x 120 cm





3

**Arch and cliff at Tregurrian**

oil on linen

120 x 120 cm



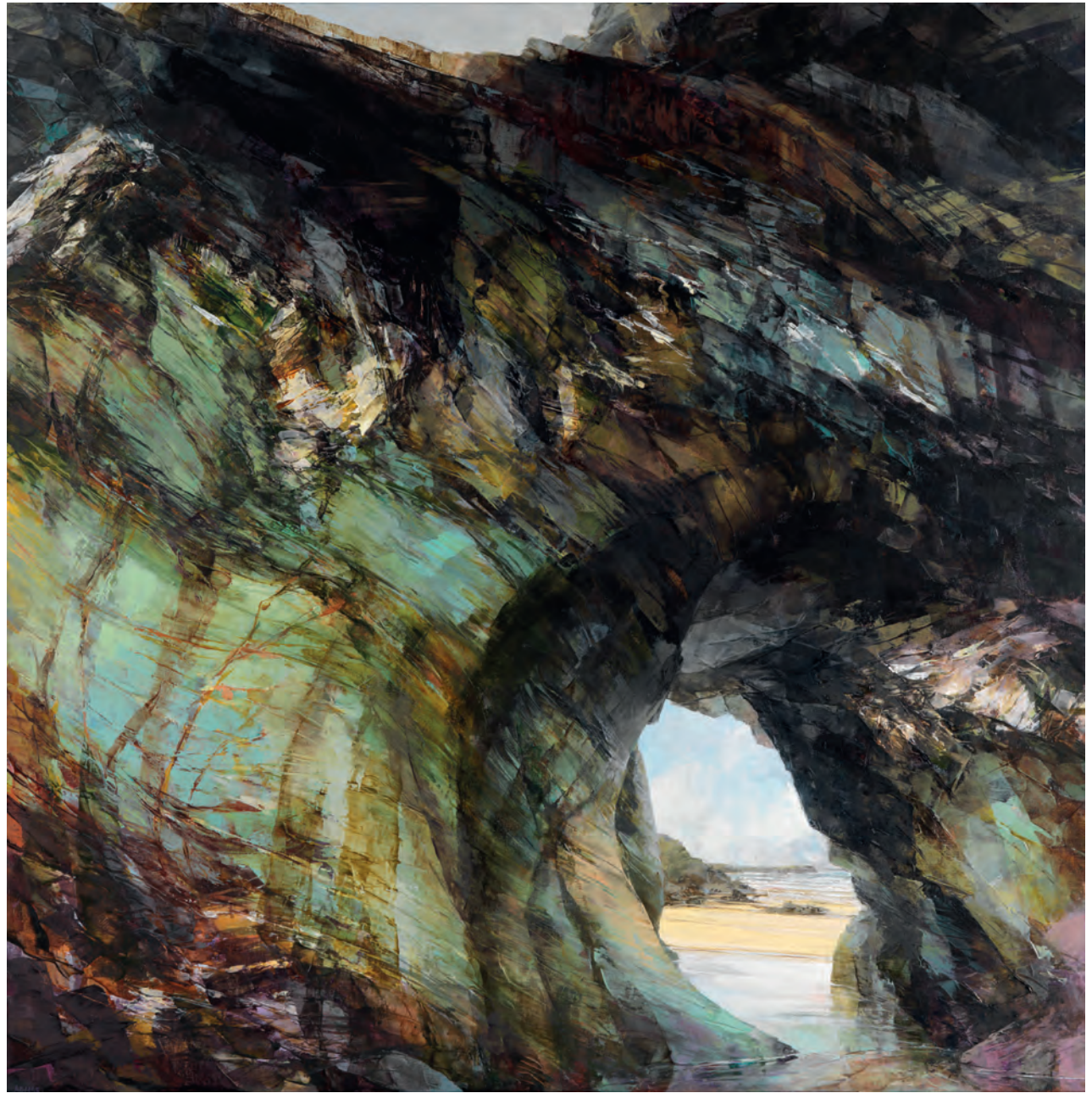


4

**Arch at Tregurrian**

oil on linen  
120 x 120 cm







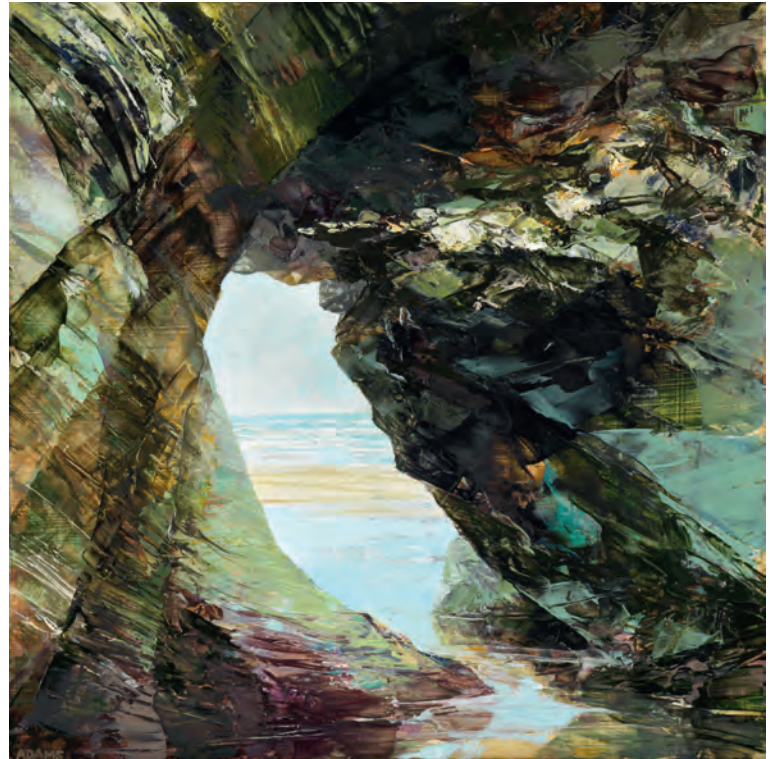
5

Tregurrian: study I  
oil on board  
28 x 28 cm



6

Tregurrian: study 2  
oil on board  
28 x 28 cm



7

**Tregurrian 2**

oil on linen  
60 x 140 cm











A detailed oil painting of a coastal scene. The foreground is dominated by dark, craggy rock formations, some with patches of green moss. A large, dark cave opening is on the left. In the center, a sandy beach leads to a calm sea. On the right, a large rock formation is partially illuminated by warm light. A waterfall cascades down a rock face on the right side. The sky is filled with soft, white and blue clouds. The overall mood is serene and atmospheric.

Chapel Porth





8

Fault line at Chapel Porth

oil on board

30 x 15 cm



The coast around St Agnes is pitted with caves and arches, where mineralised seams in the rock have been eaten away by miners in past centuries, and for millenia by the sea.

This is the most complex: a pair of parallel gullies, both partly enclosed and linked by a corridor, running deep into the cliff. One occupies a fault line at which the strata have shifted, revealing different faces each side, joined overhead by a series of handshakes, boulders held in space. There is a waterfall at the very back, and in winter a curtain of droplets trickles from a high ledge, running the length of the cave.

9

**Labyrinth**

oil on linen  
140 x 140 cm





10

Chapel Porth diagonal

oil on linen

120 x 80 cm







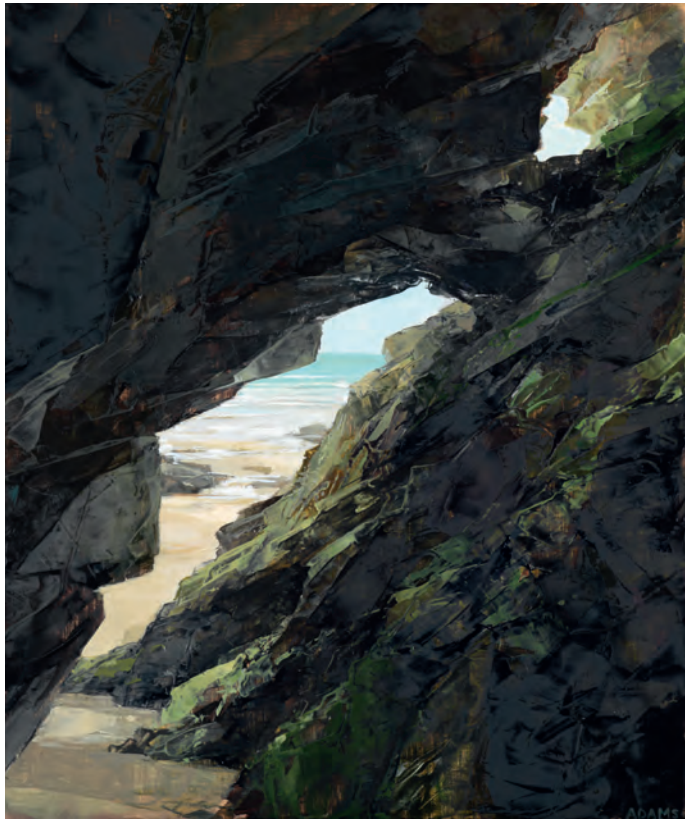






Newtrain and Trevone





II

Vaulted arch at Newtrain

oil on board

30 x 25 cm

This must surely be the bay I've painted most over the past ten years. From Rocky Beach to Porthmissen, it continually yields surprises. New formations are revealed, while old favourites are encountered in a new light.

The angular nature of the faults and stratification lends itself to the creation of diagonal features. The rocks are stark grey and white, pitched and flung about in geological time, and twice daily in a tide's span. Sand and other debris shift about too, making each visit a separate adventure.

On a neap tide it's possible to spend a day cut off by the sea, painting the cliffs as the waves lap around them. The southern end of the bay is only accessible at low tide and rarely attracts visitors, but those prepared to scramble across the rocks will find a beautiful sandy cove. The cliff is peppered with small caves, one of which has a secret: tucked away at the back a window shaped like a medieval arrowslit allows light to filter in.





12

Newtrain Neap study: southward

oil on board

15 x 18 cm

13

Newtrain Neap study: northward

oil on board

15 x 18 cm





14

Newtrain stack

oil on board  
15 x 30 cm





15

Newtrain cave study

oil on board

15 x 30 cm



16

**Arrowslit cave**

oil on linen  
50 x 120 cm

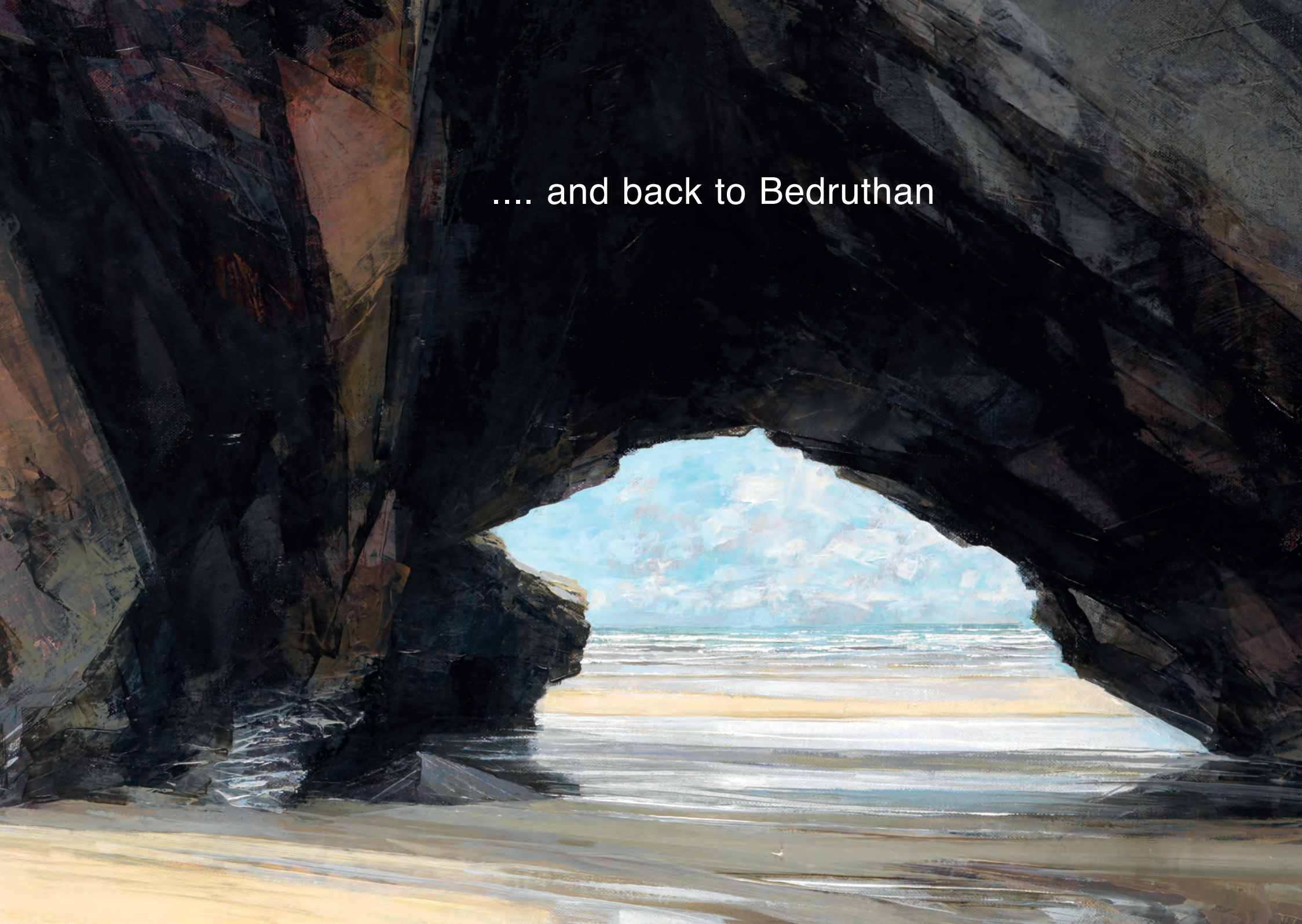








.... and back to Bedruthan





17

Study of sunlight, Diggory's Arch  
oil on board  
30 x 70 cm



This arch at Diggory's Island was the first I painted, and remains a favourite. Each year I return for the spring tides, when the seaward side is above water for a short time. Each year there is something new to see.

The studies for this painting, however, were unplanned. I was heading somewhere else for a change, when a patch of sunlight caught my eye. A few yards later I turned back; the arch had reinvented itself once more.



18

Sunlight at Diggory's  
oil on linen  
60 x 140 cm





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