

Frances Hatch

SENSING PLACE
at Bridport Arts Centre



The opening of a new exhibition by locally based artist Frances Hatch is a highlight of the April calendar at Bridport Arts Centre. Entitled *Sensing Place*, the exhibition features ‘place palettes’, sketchbooks, and paintings created along the Jurassic coastline over the past 20 years.

Sensing Place explores Hatch’s process as a plein air painter and the ‘place palettes’ she creates at Dorset’s coastal locations using found earths, clays, organic matter, and man-made materials like litter. Accompanied by written and painted notes, the palettes become portraits of place that inform her paintings, a small number of which will be exhibited.

Working outside and combining these found materials with water-based media such as watercolour, acrylic, and gouache, Hatch allows the weather—rain, snow, humidity, wind, sun—to participate in the shaping of the work.





'I look forward to showing a body of work that has been in the making for the last 20 years' says Frances. 'The core of the show is a sequence of about 100 'Place Palettes' each made at locations all along the length of the Jurassic Coast.'

The practice of making these palettes originated in sketchbooks. Frances explains: 'Curious to grow into a relationship with the locations I chose to work in, I would pick up, finger and investigate marks made with the rocks and clays around me. Dipping my fingers in puddles, in mud, massaging clays into the paper surface, mixing molehill samples into a paste, literally drawing on and with what surrounds me.'

Frances moved out of the sketchbook onto individual sheets of paper and continues to this day to investigate sites she works in, marvelling at how much

is available in a landscape without introducing loads of "art kit".

'In fact, the less I bring, the more the landscape offers.'

Infused with the geology of each place, traces of weather, circumstance, and happenstance, the palettes and paintings serve as a witness to and a record of time spent along the ever-changing Jurassic coast.

'Sometimes I include resident litter, jot down thoughts, mention the phase of the moon, weather notes and describe sounds,' she says. 'The site prompts my lines of enquiry, and I learn about the personality of the place and about myself in relationship with it.'

She says that one day gatherings will develop completely differently from the next day



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gatherings—even in the same place. 'It is absolutely fascinating. I consider it a kind of divinatory process. The palettes are complete in themselves—but in the making of them I gather information and experience of the material nature of a location. I will then understand how I might use the materials in my paintings, integrating the geology with the paint.'

The Exhibition will include large paintings so that visitors can see the connection with the materials contained within the paintings. There will also be sketchbooks and samples.

The show opens on World Heritage Day and is part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations of The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Status.



A palette in the making



Frances Hatch: Sensing Place

Allsop Gallery, Bridport Arts Centre

Sat 18 April – Sat 6 June 2026

Wed-Sat, 10am-4pm

Free Admission

<https://www.bridport-arts.com/event/frances-hatch-sensing-place/>