

The Watching Ground

This body of work initially developed from an interest in creation stories and the representation of women within them, particularly the figure of Eve. However, as the paintings developed, these references became less central. My focus shifted towards the landscape as a witness to human activity – a space that carries within it traces, histories, and narratives of what has taken place. Increasingly most landscapes bear some imprint of human intervention, whether visible or subtle and I became interested in the idea of the land as a repository for these accumulated stories.

The notion of watching connects to ideas of looking and perspective. I began to think about lenses and the notion of moving between different scales – zooming in and out, much as a camera might. The smaller paintings or vignettes can be understood as moments drawn from, or contained within, the larger works, which provide a broader context and sense of place.

Whilst these ideas might have informed the development of the work, the paintings remain open and intuitive. They are, in many ways, a collection of images that emerged through the act of painting itself.

Laura Matthews 2026