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PRESS RELEASE



**Claire Cowie “Crossings”
January 15 to March 5, 2022
Virtual Online Exhibition**

Additional images are available upon request

Left: Claire Cowie
“Self-Portrait (Blind)” 2019
Hard ground etching, aquatint, dry point
7.5 x 5.5 inches

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our ninth exhibition with artist Claire Cowie. Titled “Crossings” the show is a selection of twelve pieces focusing on the connections between Cowie’s print making practice and its influence on her unique works on paper. Paper has been the artist’s primary material. Even when making sculpture she has often enhanced her three-dimensional objects with bits of paper. This exhibition looks at the bridge between print-making and drawing and how Cowie intertwines subject matter and themes between both mediums.

Etching is a different visual language than painting. Whereas painting is the process of adding color pigment to a surface, in Cowie’s case paper is her preferred surface. Etching unfolds as the artist removes information from a surface, reversing the creative process. Color is then applied later in print-making and transferred to the paper. The selection of work here demonstrates two distinct and disparate ways of creating a work of art. Cowie has had a long history of collaging her prints into her unique works on paper. This process allows her to repeat themes and iconography over time. For example, in her watercolor and ink pieces titled “The Storm” 2009, “Stranded: Raven and Egret” 2010, “Where Are You” 2014 and “The Game” 2020, an image of an 18th century sailing vessel appears in different scenarios and is part of a larger narrative. But in her etching from 2012 titled “Waiting (Ship)” the ship is now isolated and has become the sole subject. The ship can be seen as a metaphor the more human, fallible process of the artistic journey. Biomorph shapes also repeat across the two mediums; rising cloud of smoke in “The Root System” 2004 is seen again in “Orange Smoke” 2005. Self-portraits have been a recurring theme over the last two decades demonstrated here in works from 2002 and 2019.

Cowie’s prints and collaged paintings are in many ways autobiographical. Her work draws upon stories, events and people in her life, but the meaning is not exclusive to her alone. They describe both the physical and psychological spaces in which we reside, and are meant to be both comforting and disconcerting.