

# CARDI GALLERY PROJECTS

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Joanna Kirk, *Headspace*, 2016  
Pastel on paper on board, 176 x 122 cm (69 1/4 x 48 1/8 in)

JOANNA KIRK

## **FLOWERS OF THE FUTURE**

Curated by Joe La Placa

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I have always been interested in the most profound way in the psychological immersion of being in landscape and one's connectedness with nature. In earlier work I have felt this about motherhood too. The Guardian described my work once as full of 'rural panic'. Most recently I've described these new ink and watercolours as an attempt at heroic vulnerability. I was always working only in pastels before this new chapter of work, though I must admit I want to render some of these new works as large and rigorous pastel paintings.

**Kirk** explains: *'This is me getting older. Thinking about me still being alive and very much part of everything but actually, it is quite scary. I think this may be the age where I am quite scary. But it is also celebratory.'* All the images in this exhibition are fraught with similar contradictions - between fear and confidence, chaos and serenity, joy and madness. The detail is maniacal, but it is also deeply satisfying, as, in the words of **Kirk**, *'there is no corner that hasn't been dealt with.'* We are held, spell-bound.

Emma Crichton-Miller, *Apollo*

In my more recent pastel paintings I have been finding myself drawn to a less obvious pattern of work. These have instead been drawn to themes more in the abstract, hinting at a rich interior world without ever naming it. Nor I believe would I have been able to invest so much thought and detail in these pieces without having been more literal, though always conceptual, once upon a time in my earlier large pastel paintings.

The feelings and sensations of breathlessness or anxiety are so strong that the landscape is doing more than just being out there; it is inside us too, and the viewer identifies with it viscerally.

Victoria Rance, *The Learned Pig*

I began *Flowers Of The Future* only a few months ago. The motifs come from my own imagination. They are basically imagined flowers of the future. This does not mean a hopeful future, but one full of all the complexities of beauty and nature and internal workings as well as the fragility of life itself. I also see each piece as a kind of personification of something, a mood, a gesture, a human maybe.

I saw all sorts of funny little faces in the undergrowth. And that crystallised for me into something else.

Rachel Cusk, *Joanna Kirk*

I always felt I wanted to do something specific yet abstract, something describing a kind of emotional and human state - looking at certain flowers, in other words, but never depicting them in any kind of literal sense. (I am not interested in that.) As I say, I see these pieces very much as characters with their own feelings, strengths and weaknesses. Each one is different, as indeed all flowers and human beings are. I hope there

is a take-off point in each picture, too, when it becomes something quite different to what you first believed you were looking at. They could even be self-portraits.

Joanna Kirk

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