

IN BLOOM



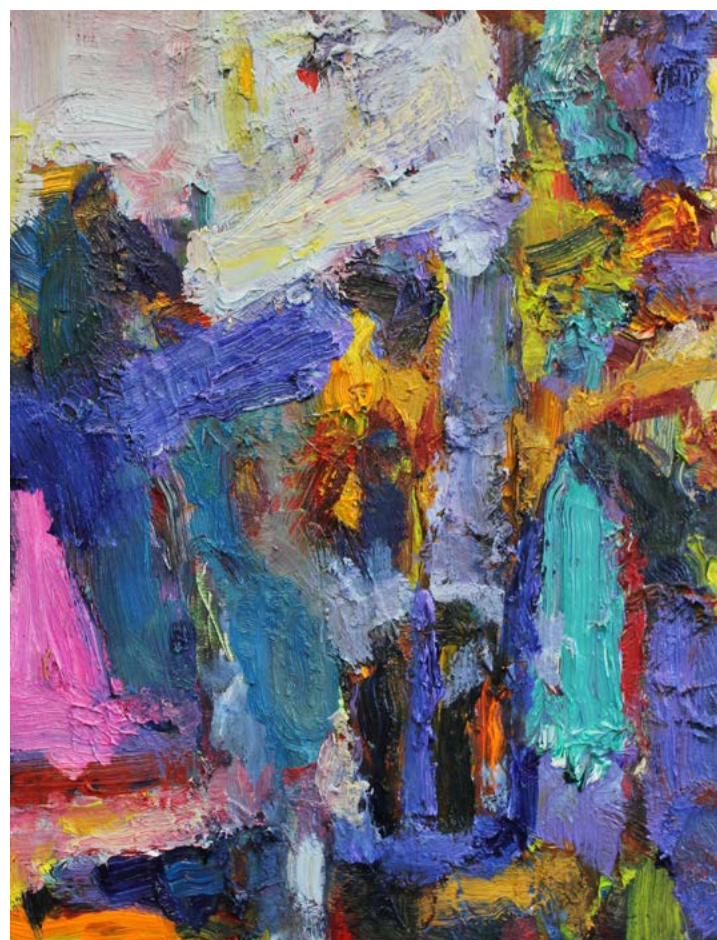
The Gallery, like many other businesses, has had to make difficult decisions to deal with these unprecedented circumstances.

We were excited to host this springtime exhibition — to fill our walls with contemporary art that celebrates nature and life in all its beauty. But instead of postponing this exhibition, we have decided to forge ahead.

It seems at this time, people are in need of some colour, perhaps now more than ever.

We hope you enjoy *In Bloom* from the comfort and safety of your own homes, and we are proud to share this exhibition with you — our clients and collectors.

— Alex Reuben, Gallery Owner



IN BLOOM

A MIXED EXHIBITION
CELEBRATING FLORA,
NATURE, AND
CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING

23 APRIL – 07 MAY 2020

Contemporary Six is delighted to present the mixed exhibition *In Bloom* featuring paintings by six British artists. Artworks by Liam Spencer, Craig Jefferson, Arthur Neal, Ian Norris, Matthew Bourne, and James Bland are brought together, with each artist displaying a number of works which take the beauty of flowers as their subject.

Whether sunflowers or waterlilies, peonies or poppies, flowers have been an eternal fascination of painters throughout the ages. The flower-vase still life was immortalised in western art history with the Dutch painters of the 17th Century, but contemporary painters, too, have found new ways to reinvigorate the simple flower — poised as it is between vulnerability and flamboyance. In this exhibition, Contemporary Six unfurls the flower in contemporary painting to reveal new, innovative ways of depicting its organic beauty.

[View the full selection and order online by following this link to our website.](#) All works are also available for purchase by phoning the Gallery at 0161 835 2666.

All paintings in the exhibition are available to purchase on the Own Art scheme which splits payments evenly over ten months. If you would like more information, please contact the Gallery, and we can talk you through the process.

We are happy to deliver all paintings to the UK free of charge at the earliest opportunity.

We hope you enjoy our springtime online exhibition *In Bloom*.

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WRITTEN BY JORDAN
HARRISON-TWIST

Midsummer / Night / Dream

In recent years, over 600,000 flowering plants have been subtracted from the world's total, many having been named and documented several times since the assessment began. The new total now stands at around 400,000 species. In some cases this is to do with small aesthetic variations owing to the growing plant's climate, but the existence of so many duplicates and hybrids is proof, if proof were needed, that the humble flower encourages many different readings.

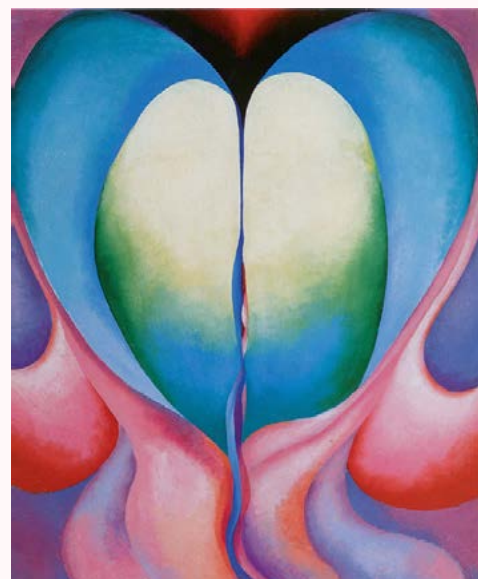
The powerful singular blooms of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings feature a flower magnified, so the texture of leaves, pollen, stamens, and petals are inescapable, looming like burning stars. Her use of the modernist photography technique of "close-cropping" foregrounds the folds and pastures of the flower such that they are inescapably erotic. This, in turn, led to her husband Alfred Stieglitz's theory that the depicted flowers are reminiscent of the vulva — a theory that O'Keeffe strenuously denies.

In the exhibition catalogue *An American Place*, she writes:

"So I said to myself — I'll paint what I see — what the flower is to me but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it — I will make even busy New-Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers.

Well — I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower, you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower — and I don't"

With gendered readings of the flower, the differences are not just aesthetic, but symbolic. Taking its name from the French admiral whose on-board botanist encountered it on their circumnavigation of the globe, the bougainvillea is variously known also by primavera, très-marias, sempre-lustrosa, santa-rita, and many, many other names. But with a strange quirk of fate, the flower also could symbolise the first around-the-world voyage by a woman. Disguised as a man on the ship, Jeanne Baret, the accomplice and romantic partner of the botanist Commerçon, carried out much of the labour in locating and categorizing the specimens. Moreover, in Commerçon's absence through illness, Baret may have been the first European ever to have documented the flower. Beyond the bougainvillea, as one has come to expect, the legacy of the pair is markedly uneven. Over seventy specimens are named after Commerçon and only one after Baret.



Georgia O'Keeffe's Series 1, No. 8, 1919.
Oil on canvas, 20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm).
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich



Edouard Manet, Still Life with White Peonies and other flowers. Oil on canvas, 13.9 x 10.4 in. (35.5 x 26.4 cm). Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Yet flowers are not fixed symbols, and their legacies can change with time. In fact, more often, flowers are used to depict not permanence, but transience; not just to celebrate life in all its colour, but to appreciate life as it stands before death. One-fifth of Manet's paintings are devoted to still lifes, but his white peonies have a particular appeal: resting as they do like a constellation of slumbering silk handkerchiefs, light enough to blow away into nothingness. Towards the end of his life, Manet took to painting the bouquets brought by his friends to his sickbed.

For the tragic tale of Emperor Heliogabalus watching his guests suffocate under a shower of violets, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema preferred the rose — a flower steeped in sex, decadence, corruption, and secrecy in Victorian fascinations with floriography. In his painting *The Roses of Heliogabalus* (1888), the many guests are consumed by a sumptuous tempest of pink rose petals. This image calls to mind Oberon placing a love potion into the eyes of Titania in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, on a:

"bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine."



Lawrence Alma Tadema, The Roses of Heliogabalus. Oil on canvas, 52 x 84.2 in. (132 x 214 cm). Collection Juan Antonio Pérez Simón, Mexico

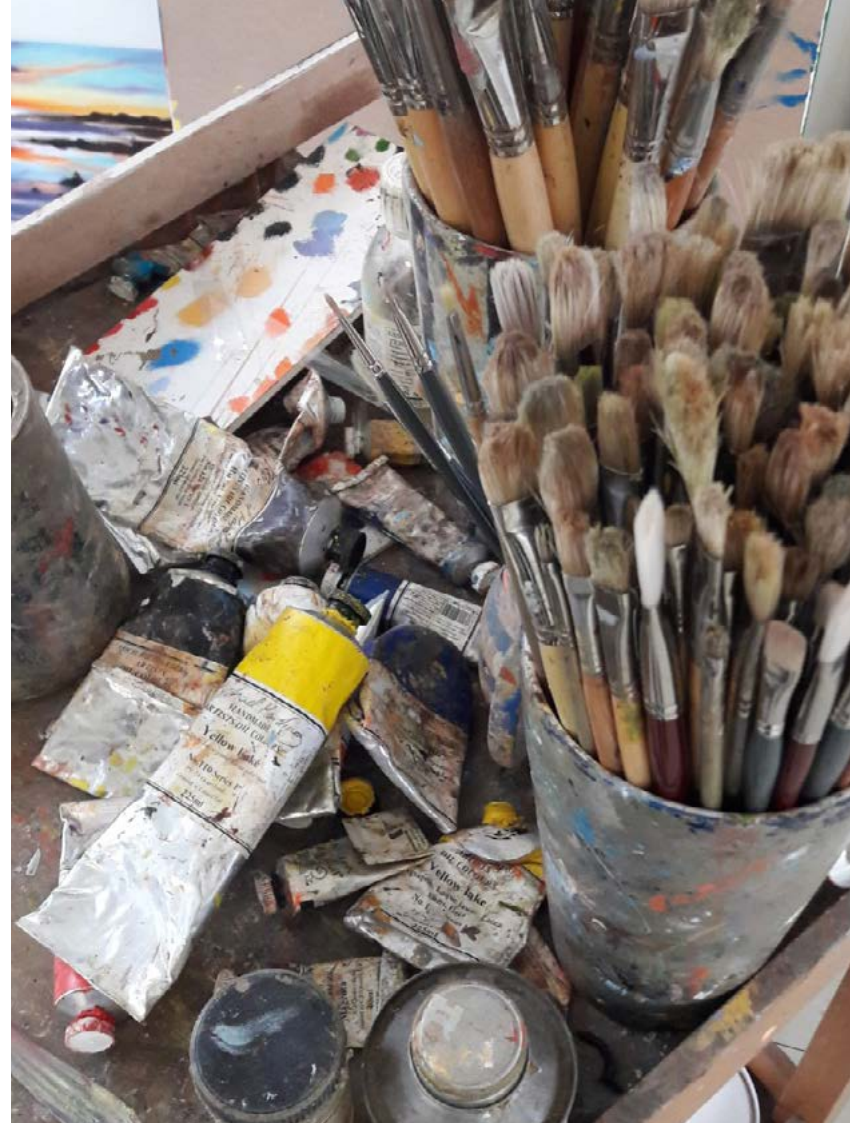
Midsommar (2019), dir. Ari Aster, prod. Square Peg, B Reel Films, dist. by A24



And the lineage is picked up in Ari Aster's comparably themed horror film *Midsommar* (2019), in which flowers are used to position life, love, and death, in a circle of restoration. With wild beauty matched with a drug-addled vibrancy, Dani (played by Florence Pugh) undergoes a brutal quest for community and acceptance, caped with a living millefleur tapestry, and crowned with a halo of white and yellow blooms.

From the pagan to the spacefaring, the acclaimed botanical sculptor Azuma Makoto — whose work blooms with the Japanese concept of *mono no aware*, or "attraction to things that fade" — launched a bouquet and a bonsai into the stratosphere in his project EXOBIOTANICA. Exposed to direct sunlight and temperatures of -60°C , the dying flowers were documented as they fell back to Earth as miniscule terrestrial meteors of scarlet, gold, and green. The Earth, for a moment, turned upside-down.





IN THE STUDIO



Flowers by the Window, Oil on panel, 16" x 12", £1,750
(with Own Art £175 per month for 10 months interest-free)

LIAM SPENCER

Liam Spencer was born in Burnley, and studied Fine Art at Manchester Polytechnic, graduating in 1986.

Known for his vivid portrayals of urban landscapes, particularly of Manchester, he came to prominence with a solo exhibition at the newly opened Lowry arts centre in 2000. Since then he has exhibited widely, most notably a retrospective at Manchester Art Gallery in 2006 and his paintings have been collected avidly. In 2005 he was the subject of a 30-minute documentary on the BBC.

In 2008 Liam was asked to produce the artwork for the UEFA cup final at the City of Manchester stadium. The paintings and drawings were used to produce the cup final identity and were used on the programme, tickets, city centre banners and stadium dressing.

He exhibits regularly in the North West and beyond, and his work can be seen in several public collections, including Manchester City Art Galleries, Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Touchstones Rochdale and Towneley Hall Museum and Art Gallery in Burnley.



Daffodils, Crocus, and Forsythia, Oil on panel, 12" x 9", £1,200
(with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Tulips in a Grey Jug, Oil on panel, 6" x 8", £950
(with Own Art £95 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Roses and Tulips, Oil on panel, 12" x 9", £1,200
(with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Red Tulips, Oil on panel, 8" x 6", £950
(with Own Art £95 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Toy Boat and Flowers, Oil on panel, 8" x 6", £950
(with Own Art £95 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Flowers and Sunset, Oil on panel, 6" x 8", £950
(with Own Art £95 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Powfoot Flowers, Oil on panel, 10.5" x 7.5", £1,000
(with Own Art £100 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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In the studio: Liam Spencer's palette and the flower series





DETAIL ABOVE WITH FRAME; PAINTING ON PAGE TO RIGHT
Daffodil and Mirror Study, Oil on panel, 11.5" x 8", £1,200
 (with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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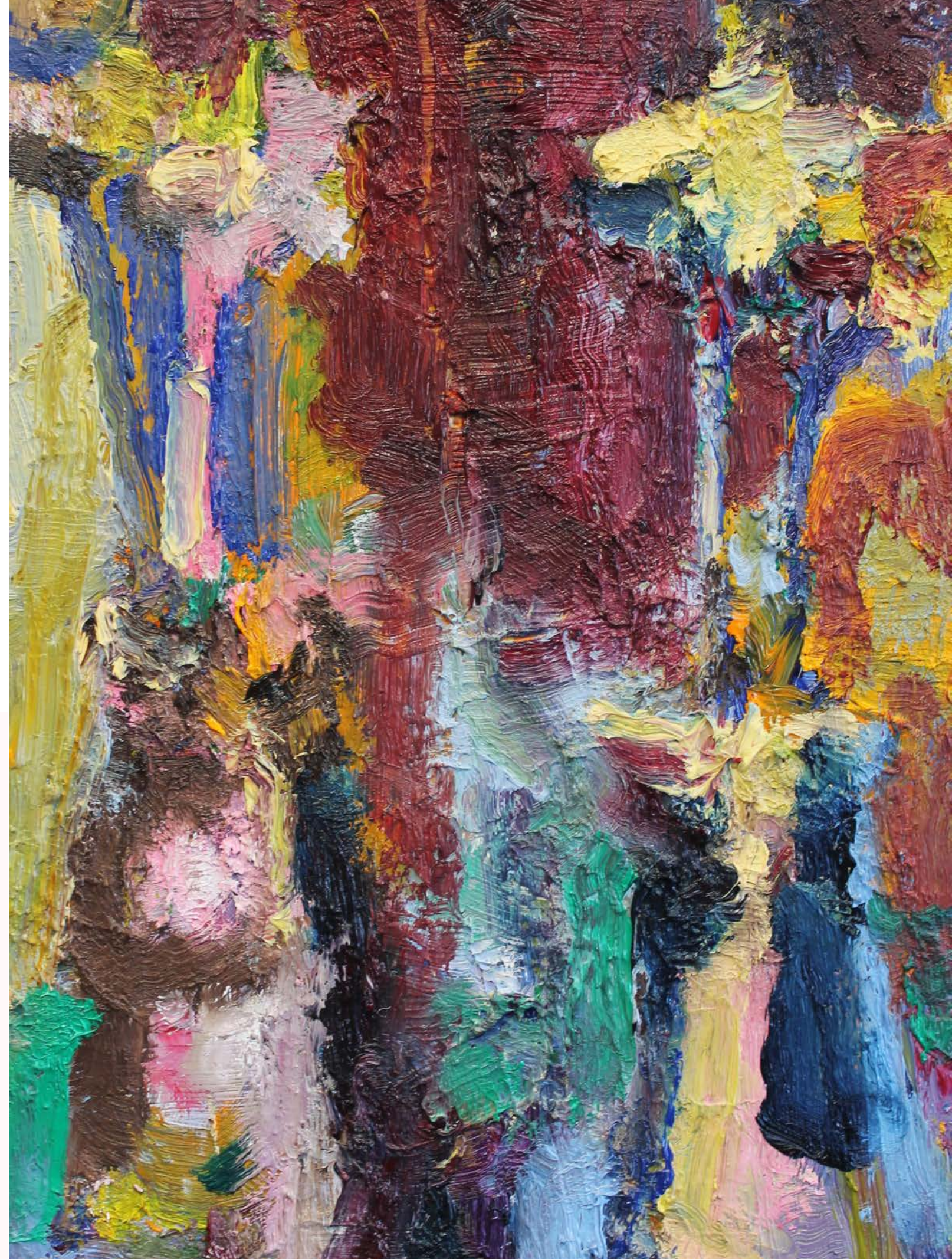
CRAIG JEFFERSON NEAC

Craig Jefferson, the youngest ever member of the New English Art Club, makes paintings and drawings that explore still life, figure and landscape subjects, seeking to investigate the profound qualities that exist in our surroundings.

Jefferson approaches his subject matter by careful observation and depiction of form to develop an understanding and personal connection with what he sees. He then moves from an observational response to an intuitive one, seeking to get beyond the 'presented

appearance,' as Bomberg puts it, to the 'other side' of the subject. Craig allows his imagination to speak, and inevitably abstract relationships develop within the work resulting in paintings and drawings of an ambiguous form that occupy the space between realism and abstraction.

Jefferson's painterly works unfold from prominent verticals and diagonals, so masts, spindles, and stems command the composition.

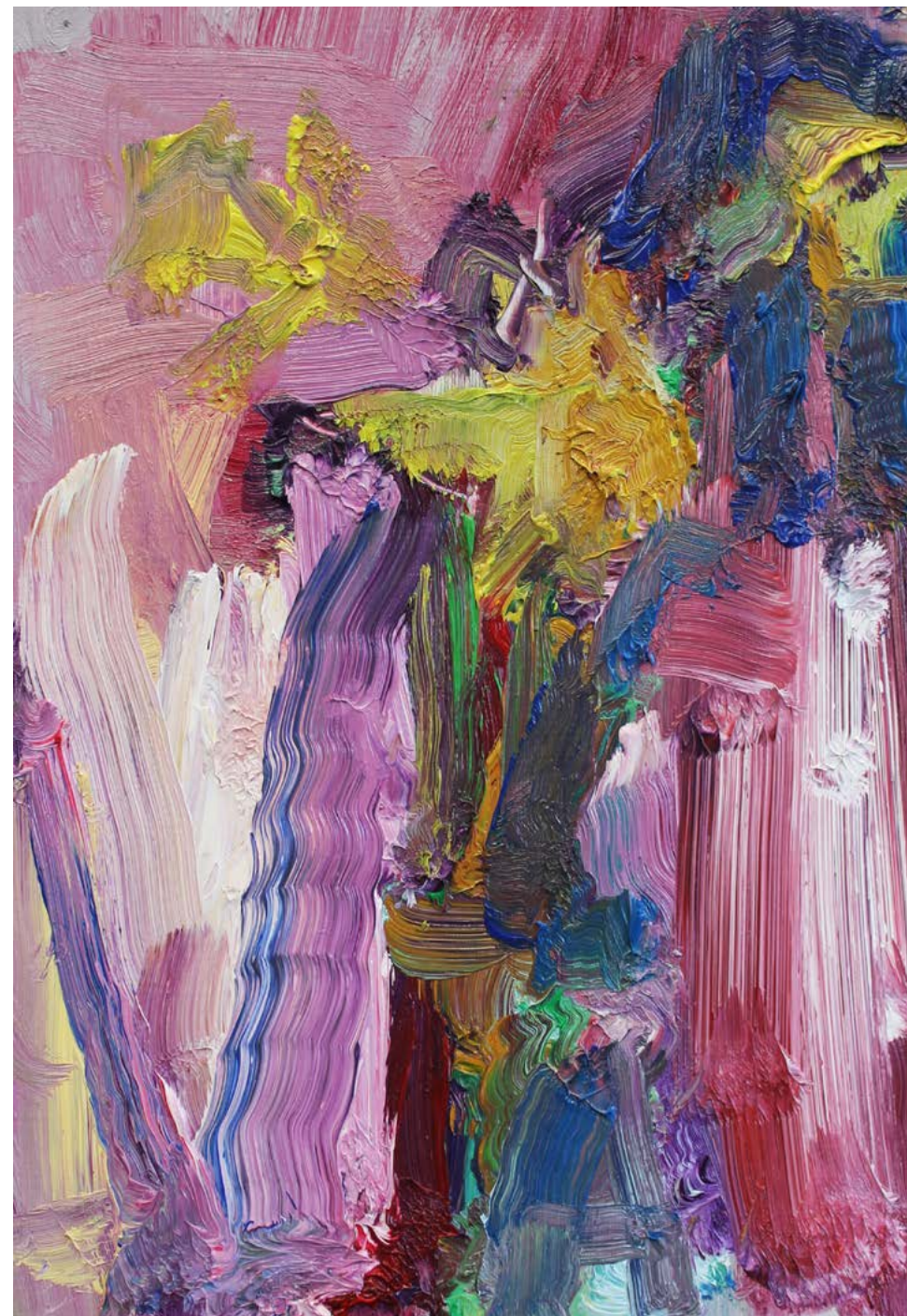




Daffodil Study 2, Oil on panel, 11.5" x 8", £1,200
(with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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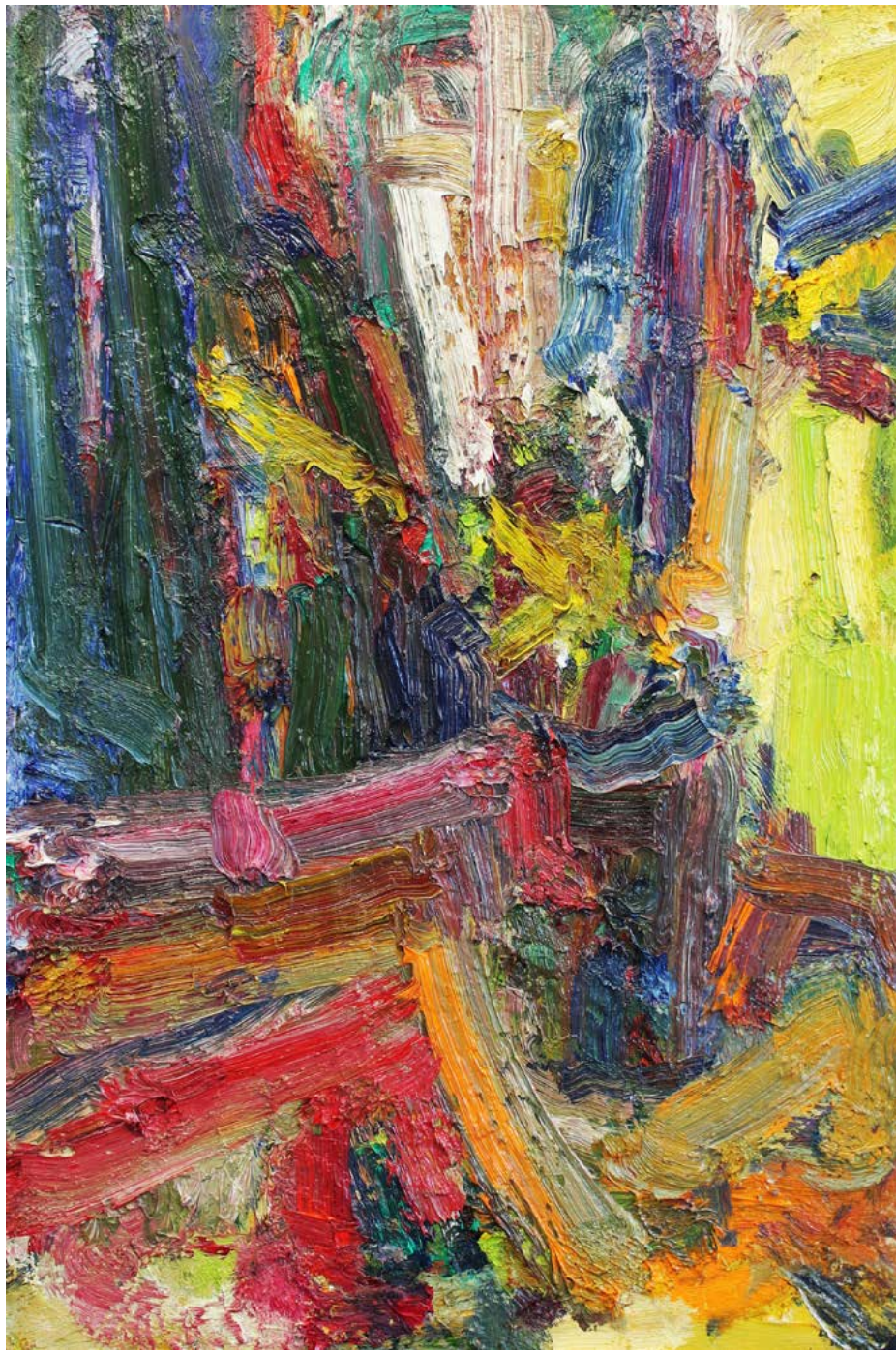
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Daffodil Study 1, Oil on panel, 11.5" x 8", £1,200
(with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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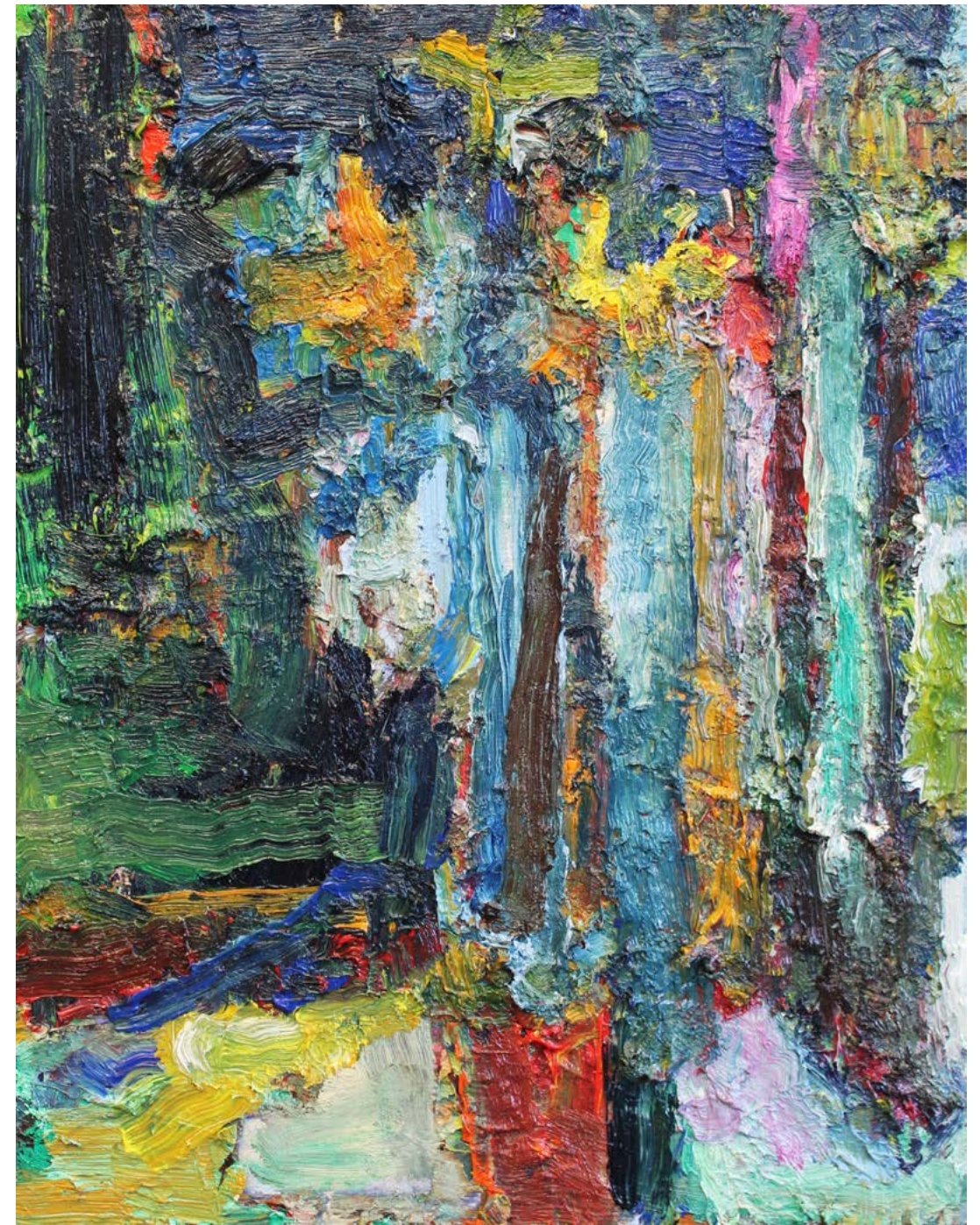
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Daffodils 1, Oil on panel, 24" x 16", £2,600
(with Own Art £260 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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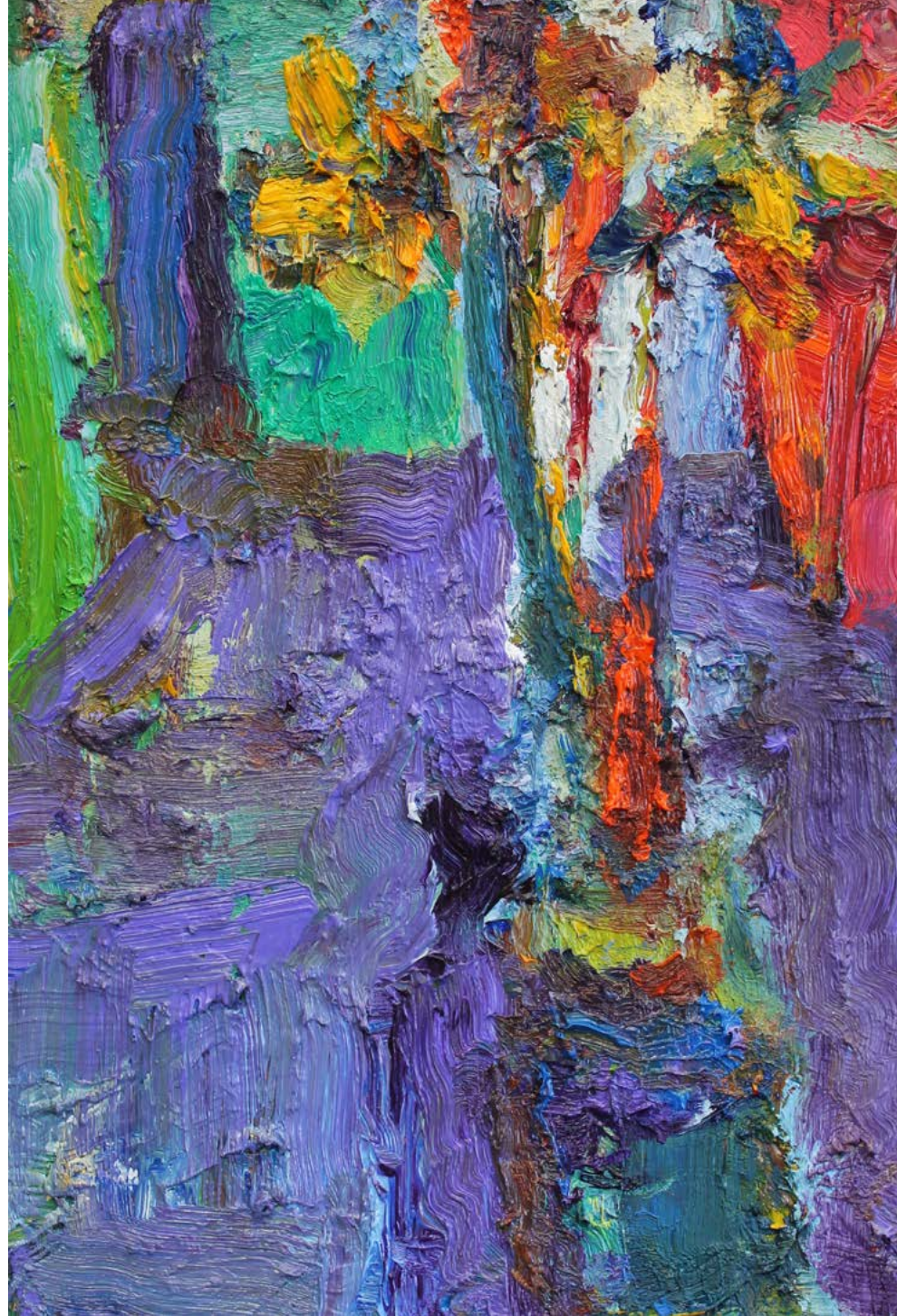
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Daffodils and Mirror, Oil on panel, 16" x 11.5", £1,500
(with Own Art £150 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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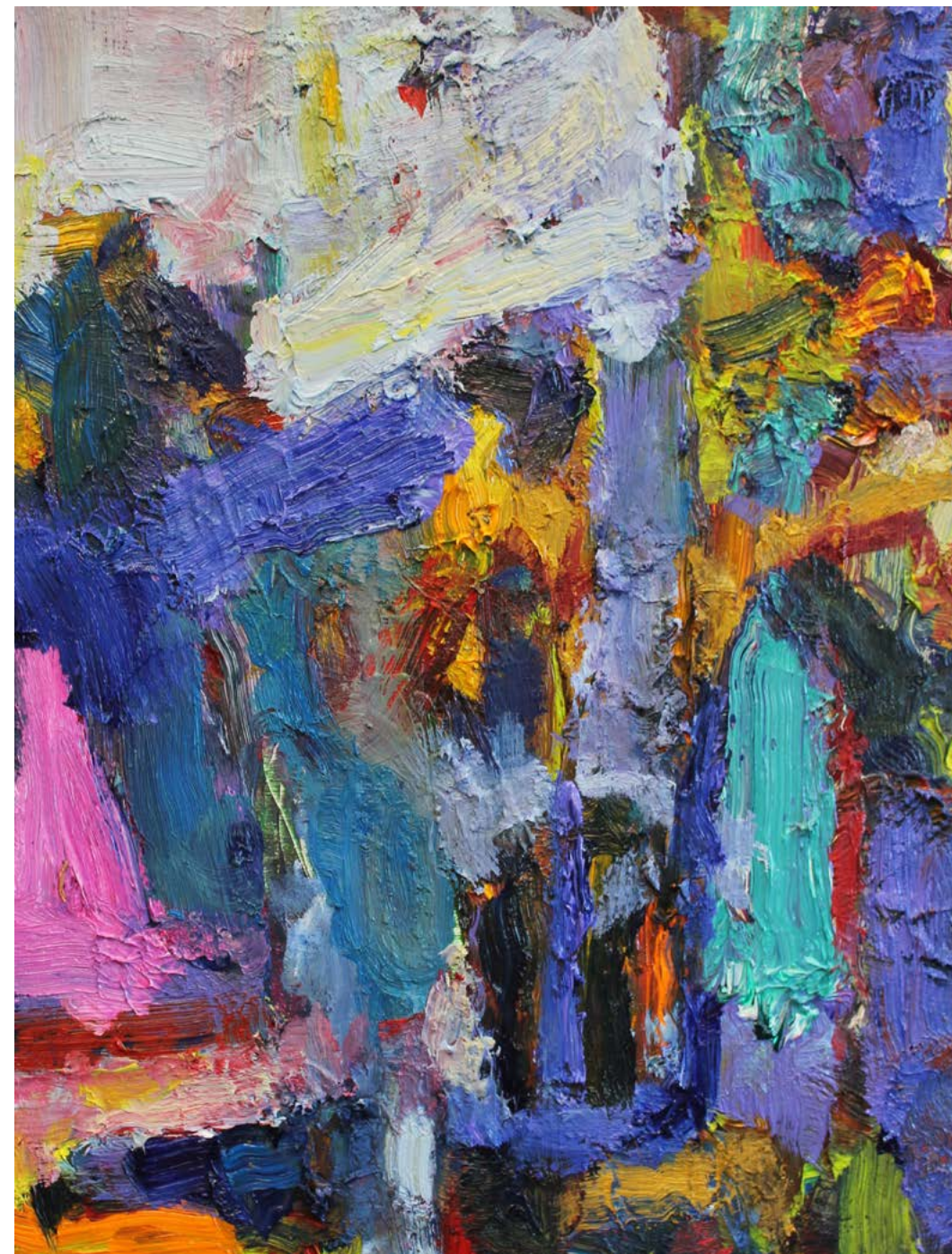
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Daffodil Study 3, Oil on panel, 11.5" x 8", £1,200
(with Own Art £120 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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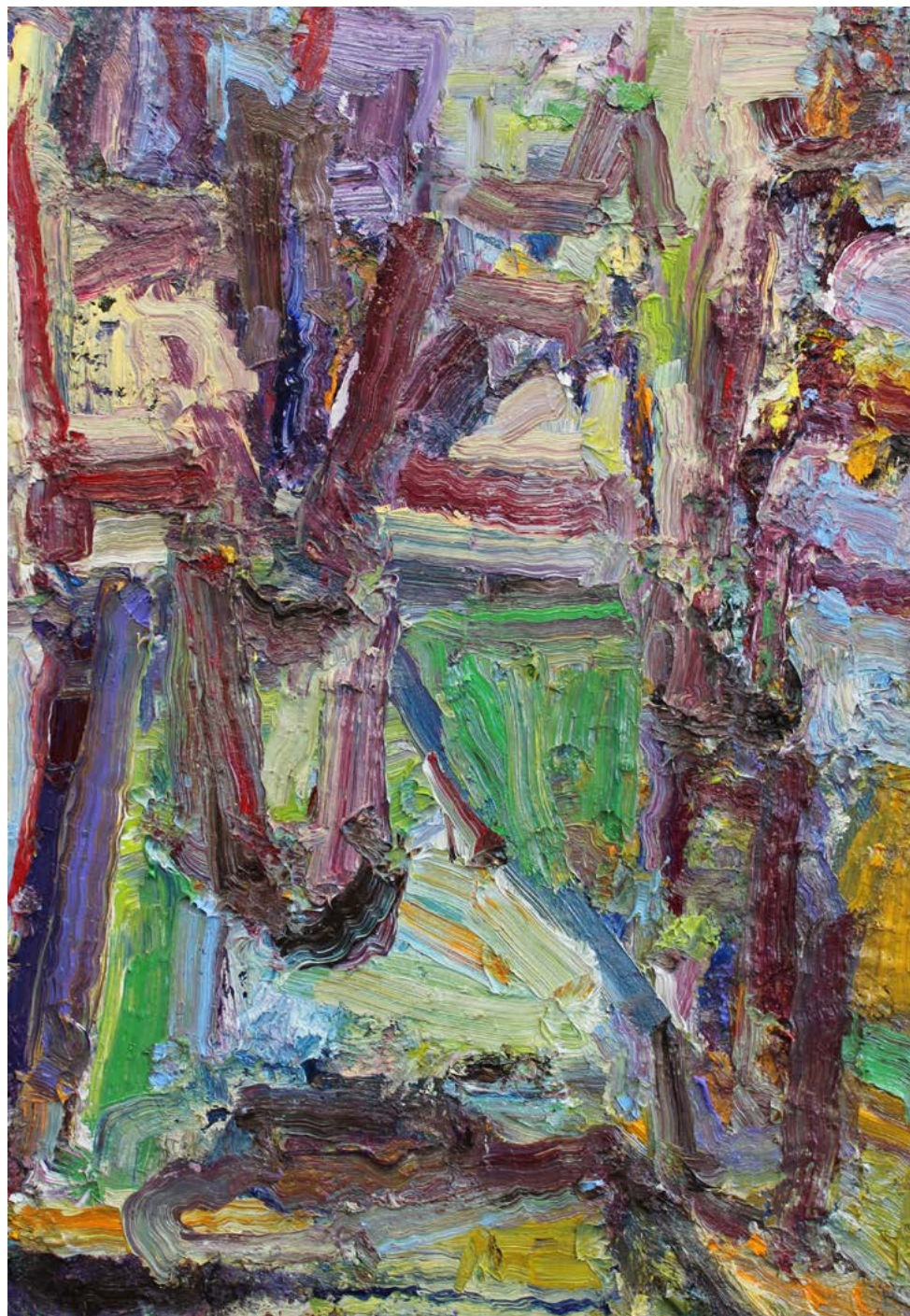
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Daffodils 2, Oil on panel, 16" x 11.5", £1,500
(with Own Art £150 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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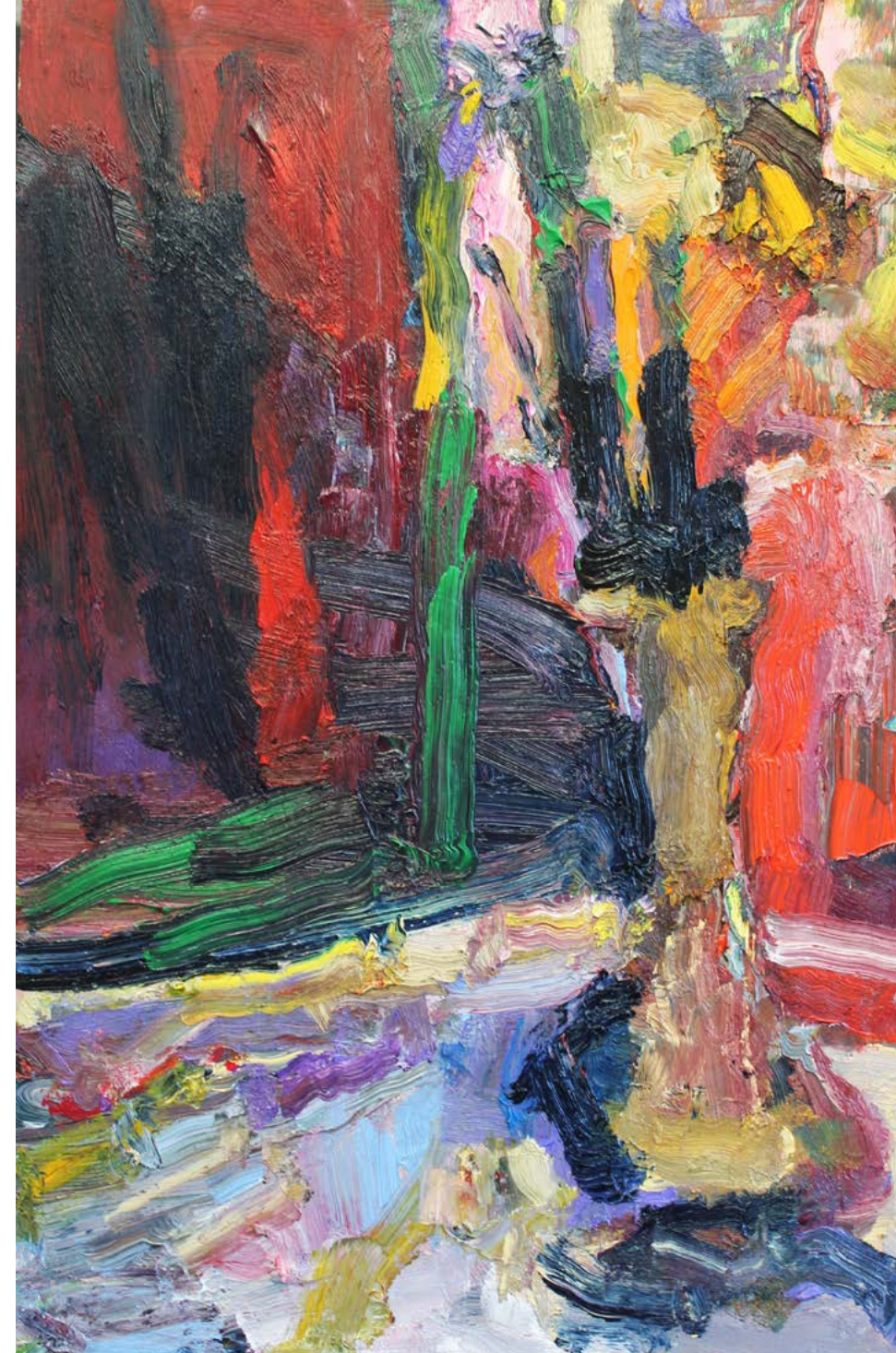
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Two Vases, Oil on panel, 24" x 16", £2,600
(with Own Art £260 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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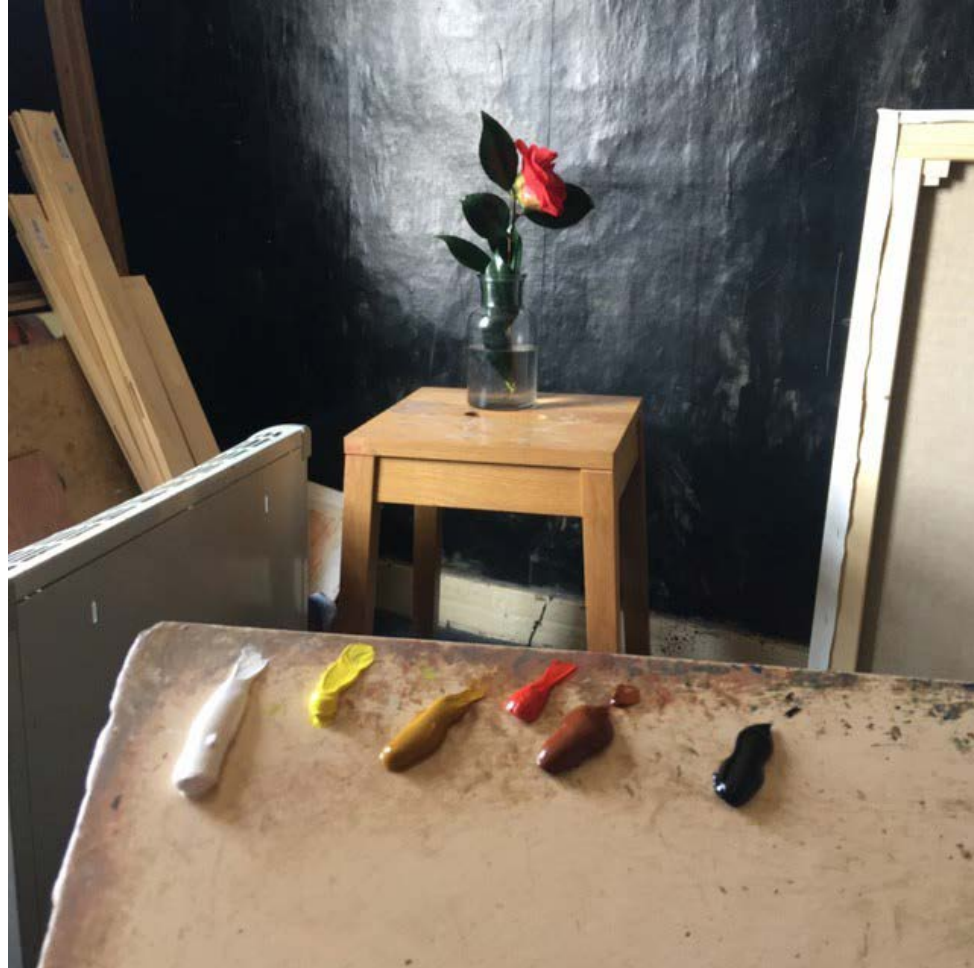
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Yellow Roses and Iris, Oil on panel, 24" x 16", £2,600
(with Own Art £260 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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IN THE STUDIO

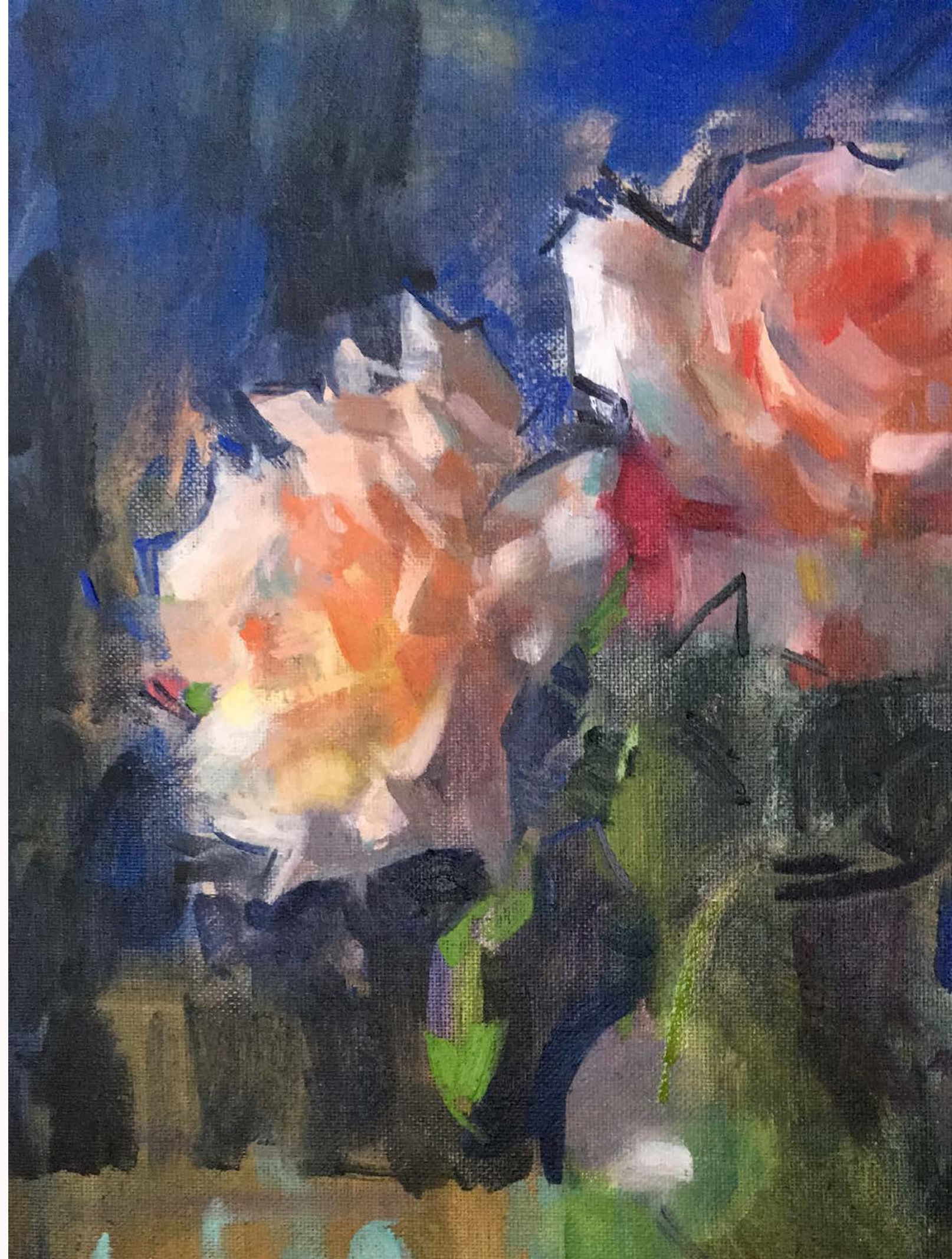
JAMES BLAND

James Bland is a figurative artist who enjoys the surprises that oil painting uniquely offers. Memory, folklore, and dreams are the main subjects of his work and his paintings, while being rigorously-observed depictions of light and form, are tantalisingly imaginative.

James paints in oils but first develops his ideas in sketchbooks before setting up his compositions in the studio with models and homemade props. As they progress, his paintings evolve from pure direct observation, and this is where the full range of influence is

engendered, from traditional Asian art, to mediaeval manuscripts, and children's drawings.

In the revision of his paintings, they change, sometimes departing from the original motif — a method inspired by Giorgione and Georges Braque. Objects, locations, and figures might be painted out or in, canvases re-stretched, and colour schemes completely altered. The alchemy of this unpredictable process is what gives each painting its unique character and excitement.

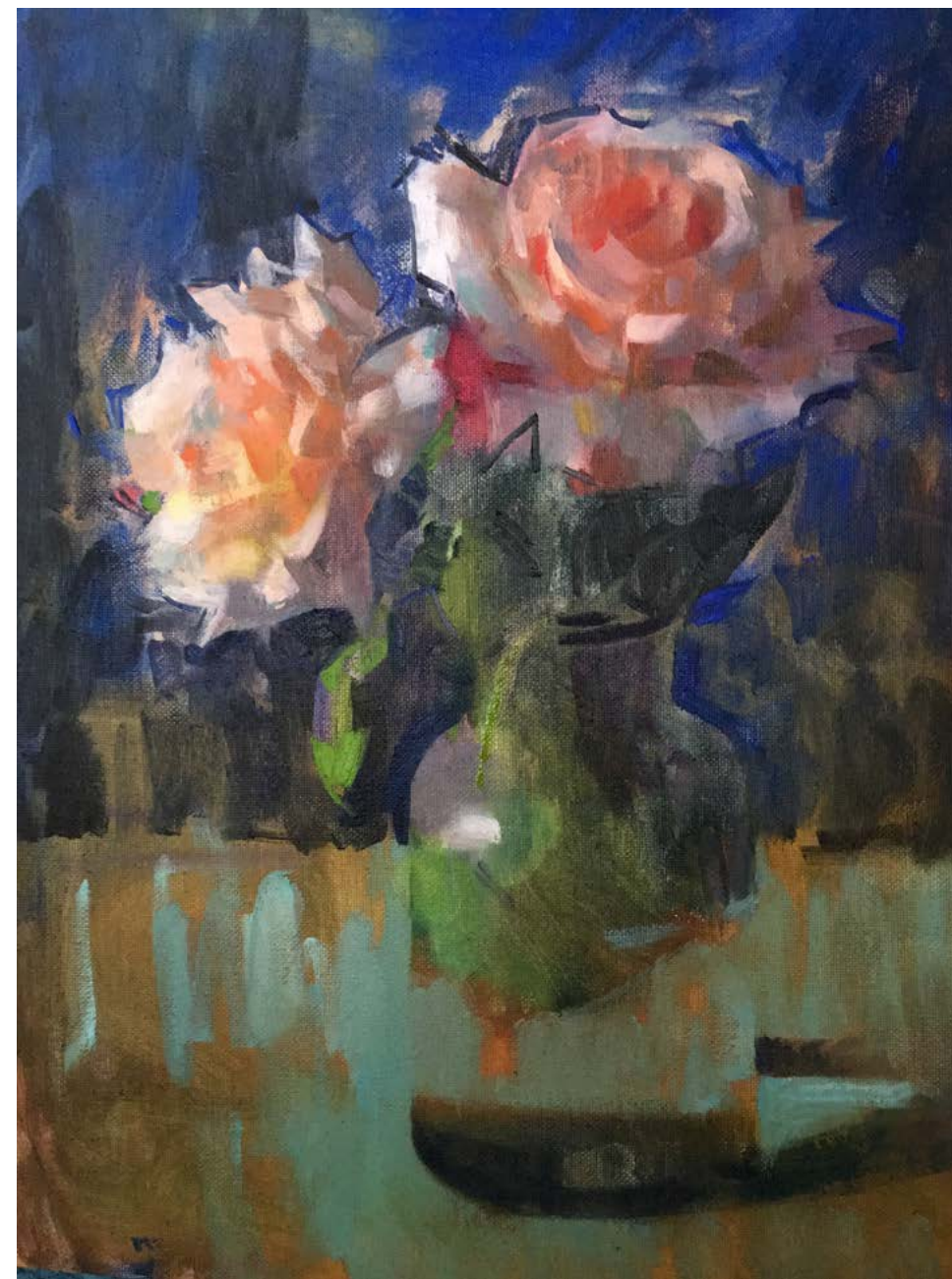




Mjollnir, Oil on canvas, 23" x 21.5", £1,400
(with Own Art £140 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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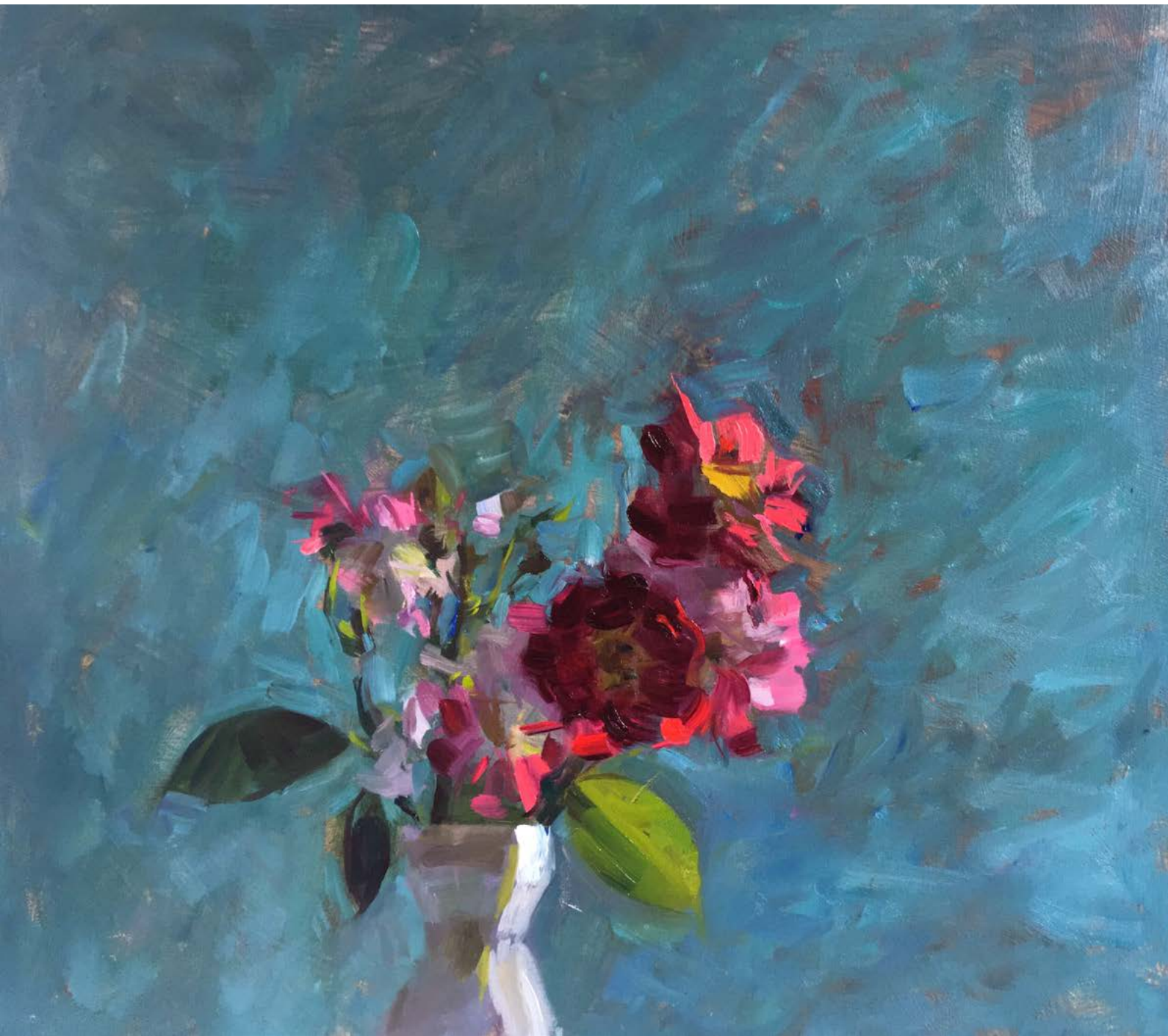
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Roses on Ultramarine, Oil on canvas on panel, 15.5" x 12", £750
(with Own Art £75 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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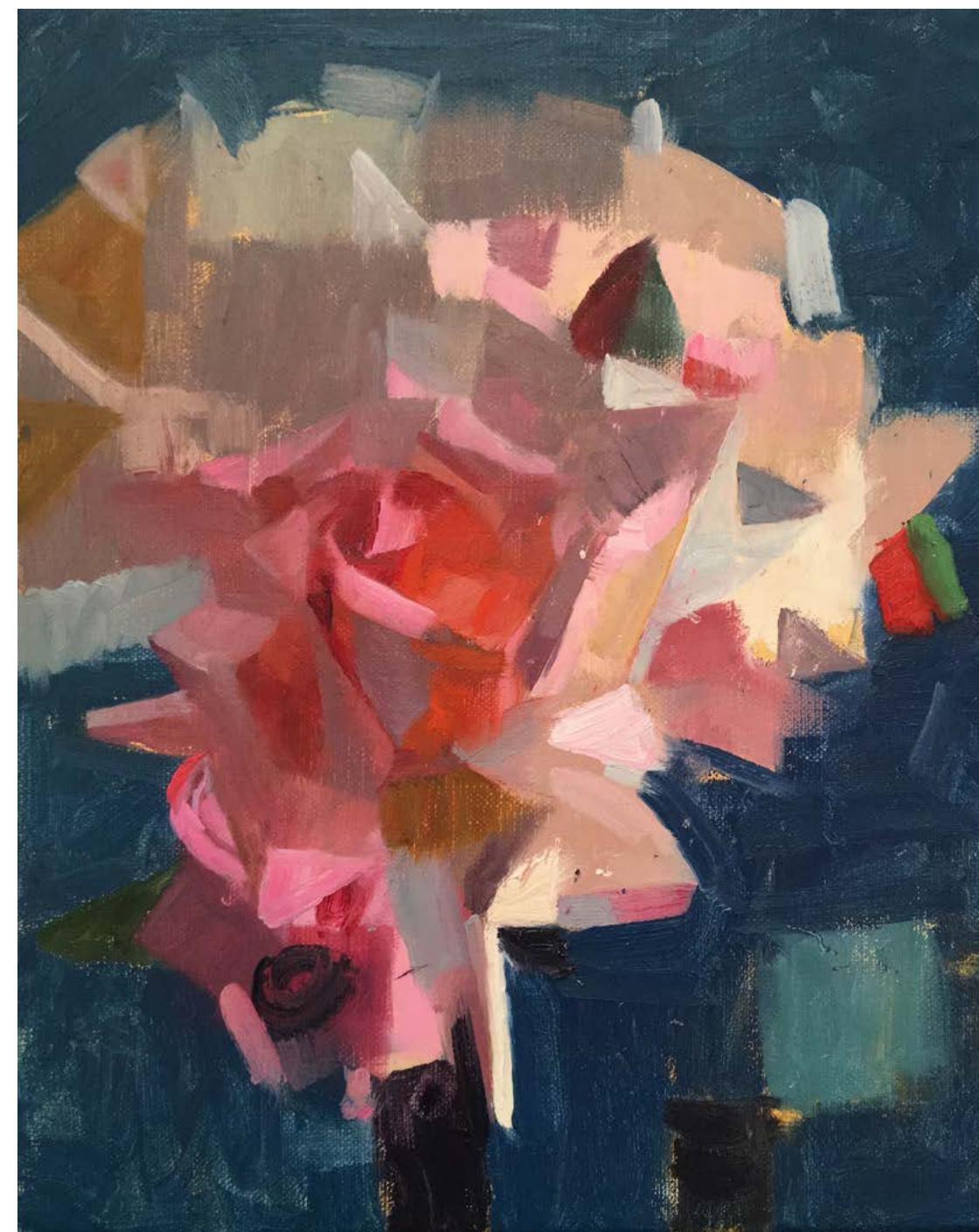
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Crimson Roses on Blue, Oil on canvas, 16.5" x 17.5", £750
(with Own Art £75 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Rose Abstraction 2, Oil on canvas on panel, 12" x 10", £600
(with Own Art £60 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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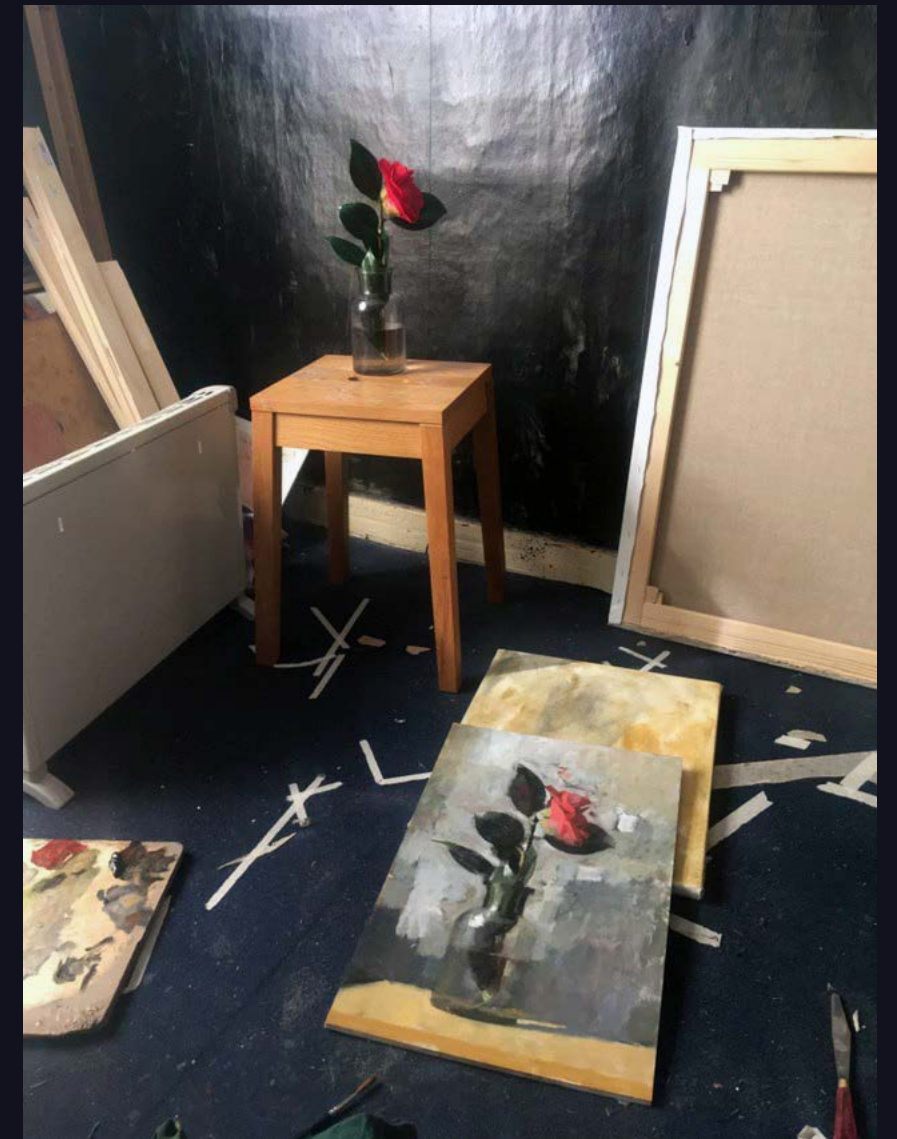
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Rose Cluster, Oil on canvas, 12" x 10", £600
(with Own Art £60 per month for 10 months)

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In the studio: James Bland's dramatic work-in-progress



Autumn Sunflowers, Oil on panel, 39" x 39", £3,600
(with Own Art £360 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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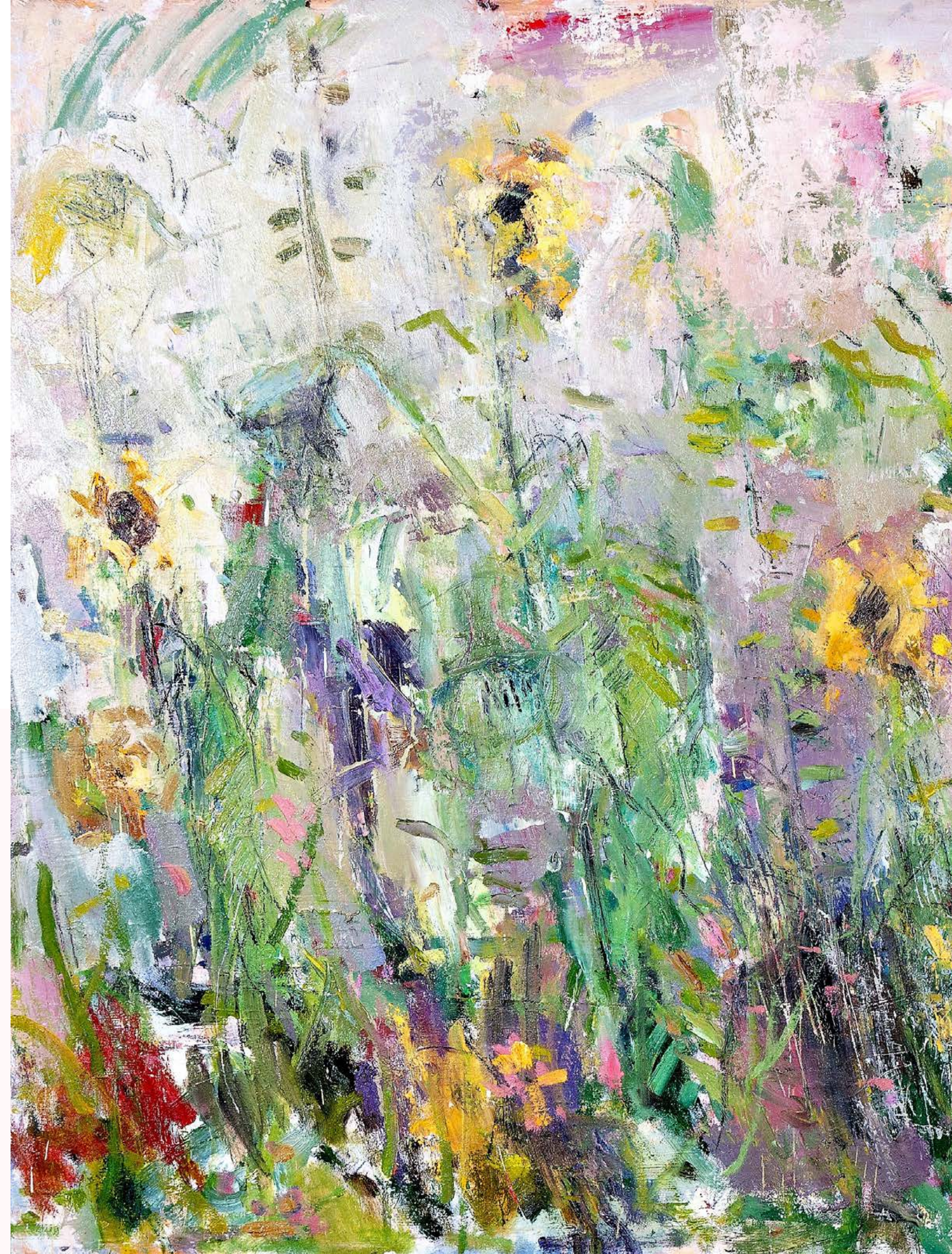
IAN NORRIS

Ian Norris's paintings lie upon the boundary of observation and memory. Throughout the process of repetitively sketching and drawing, he is expressing feelings of being present before his subject, not just its immediate form. His paintings are intimate artefacts — the subject and his emotive sensibilities are fused with abstraction.

Norris is interested in the physicality of paint, so the paintings are built up with multiple layers of paint to create textured layers. The progressive build-up of paint combined with

the scraping back of whole or partial areas of the surface reveal a complex matrix of varying colours, textures, and depth which is not unlike the landscape itself.

'I like to deal with material that is local and with which I am familiar,' said the artist. 'Exploring the figure and the landscape as subjects. I usually work on the same motif over long periods.'

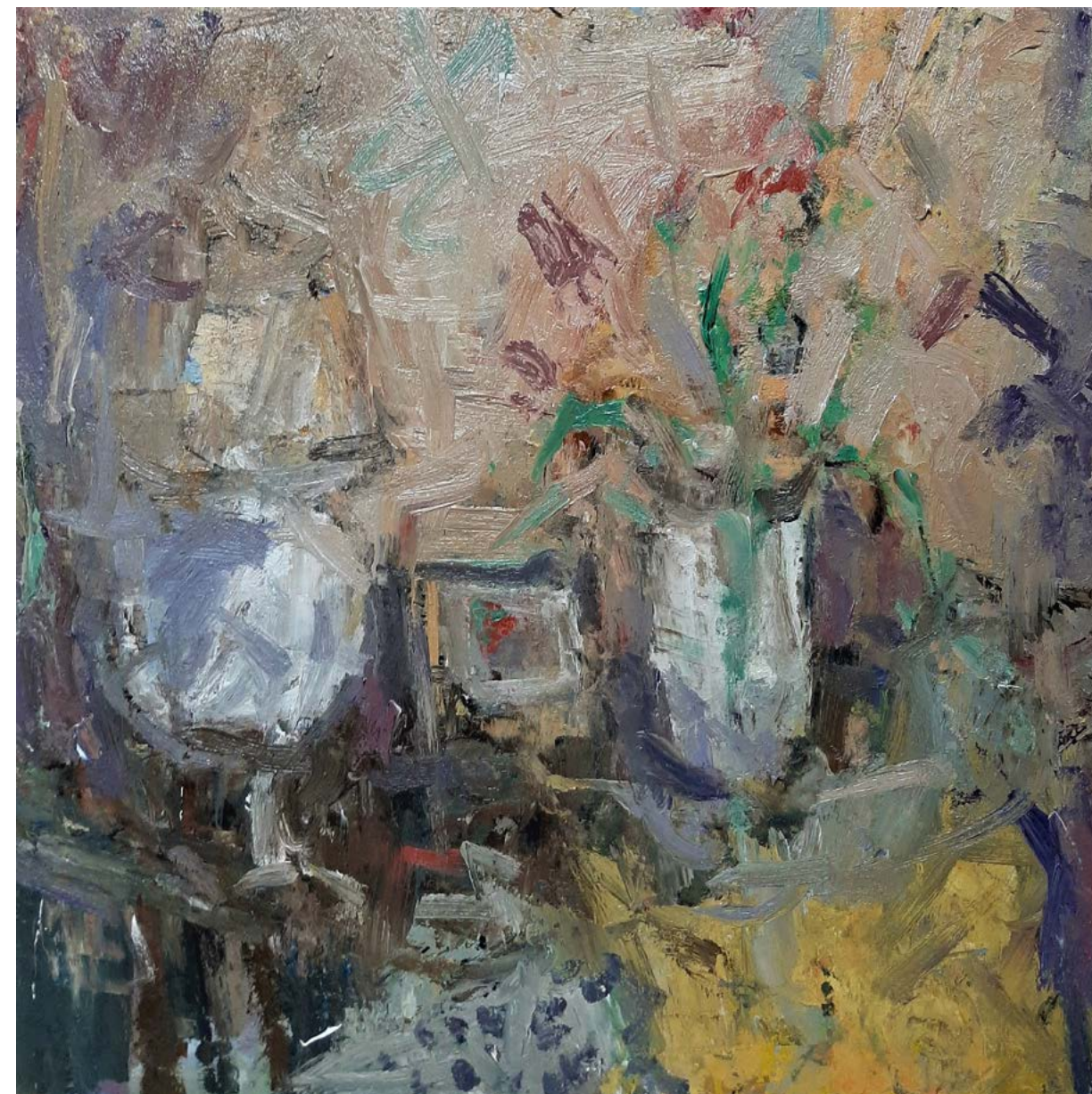




Still Life with Tulips, Charcoal on paper, 7" x 7", £300
(with Own Art £30 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Still Life with Tulips, Oil on board, 23.5" x 23.5", £2,100
(with Own Art £210 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Sunflowers and Wild Flower Meadow, Oil on panel, 29.5" x 29.5", £2,700
(with Own Art £270 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Sunflower Field, Oil on canvas, 15.5" x 23.5", £1,500
(with Own Art £150 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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STUDIO AND GARDEN SPRING DETAIL

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ARTHUR NEAL

Arthur Neal works largely in impasto – his work defined by a rich, sometimes lugubrious, colour palette, coupled with a heavily textural treatment of oil paint. Viewing his work demands a period of contemplation to fully appreciate the depth and complexity of the paintings. There is a process of discovery, a sense of evolution reflecting the laborious artistic process that Arthur Neal takes on creating a work of art where the initial abstraction gives way to a figurative composition.

Arthur Neal was born, and studied at Camberwell School of Art under Euan Uglow.

Neal later taught at Metropole, Folkstone and Maidstone Colleges of Art. He is a member of the New English Art Club (NEAC) and has illustrated and published two books on the poetry of Edward Thomas.

Neal has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows including with the Royal Academy (for 16 years including 2015 where his work was selected for merit by author Sebastian Faulks); The New English Arts Club, London; Cadogan Contemporary, London; Merriscourt gallery, Oxford; Discerning Eye, Mall Galleries, London; Lynne Strover Gallery, Cambridge and the Alton Gallery London.



Studio and Garden Spring, Oil on panel, 43" x 36", £5,950
(with Own Art £595 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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B. 1969 **MATTHEW BOURNE**



Spring Bouquet, Coffee Cup, Oil on canvas, 20" x 20", £695
(with Own Art £69.50 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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MATTHEW BOURNE

Matthew Bourne derives his work from his passion for metaphysical concepts such as sight, sound, and emotion.

As a result, Bourne argues that his abstract paintings are timeless due to their emotive qualities and transcendental means of expression. Bourne's work is abstracted because he spends time focusing on the process of painting, rather than solely the subject matter. He believes the process of painting is the quality of foremost importance, and is integral to its content.

Bourne aims to set up a tension in his paintings between spontaneity and risk, and a more measured, controlled approach. With this technique, the paintings include both a mix of abstracted and recognisable forms.



Spring Flowers, Window Sill, Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 23.5", £895
(with Own Art £89.50 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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Spring Flowers, Studio, Vase, Oil on canvas, 27.5" x 27.5", £995
(with Own Art £99.50 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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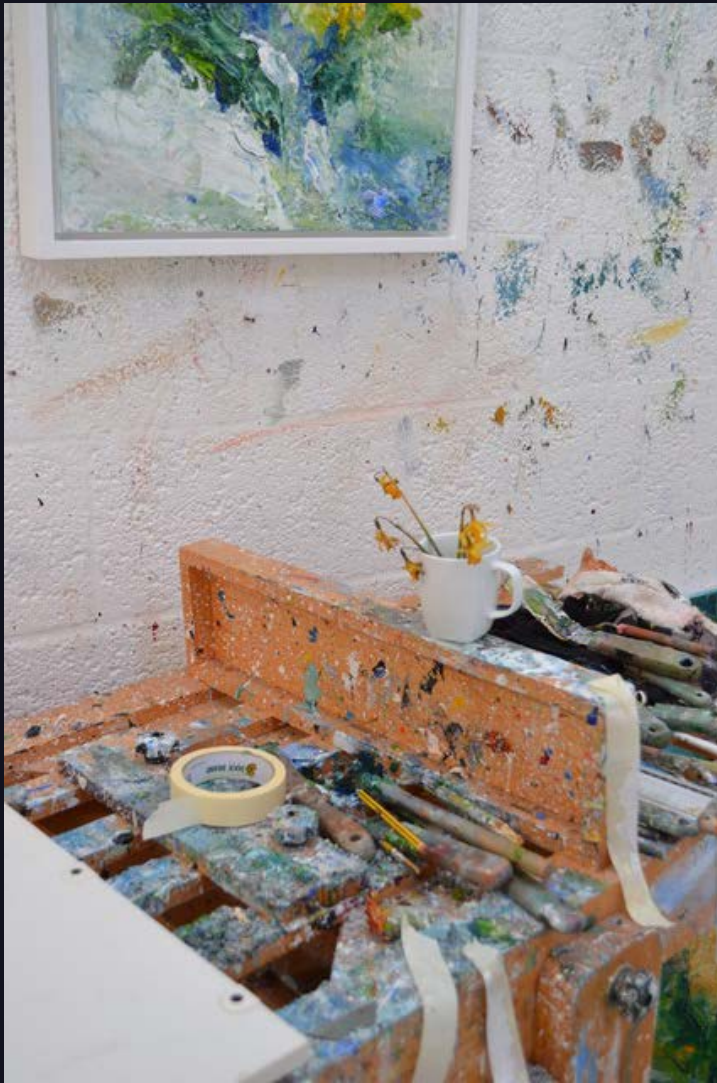
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Spring Bouquet, Coffee Cup, Oil on canvas, 20" x 20", £695
(with Own Art £69.50 per month for 10 months interest-free)

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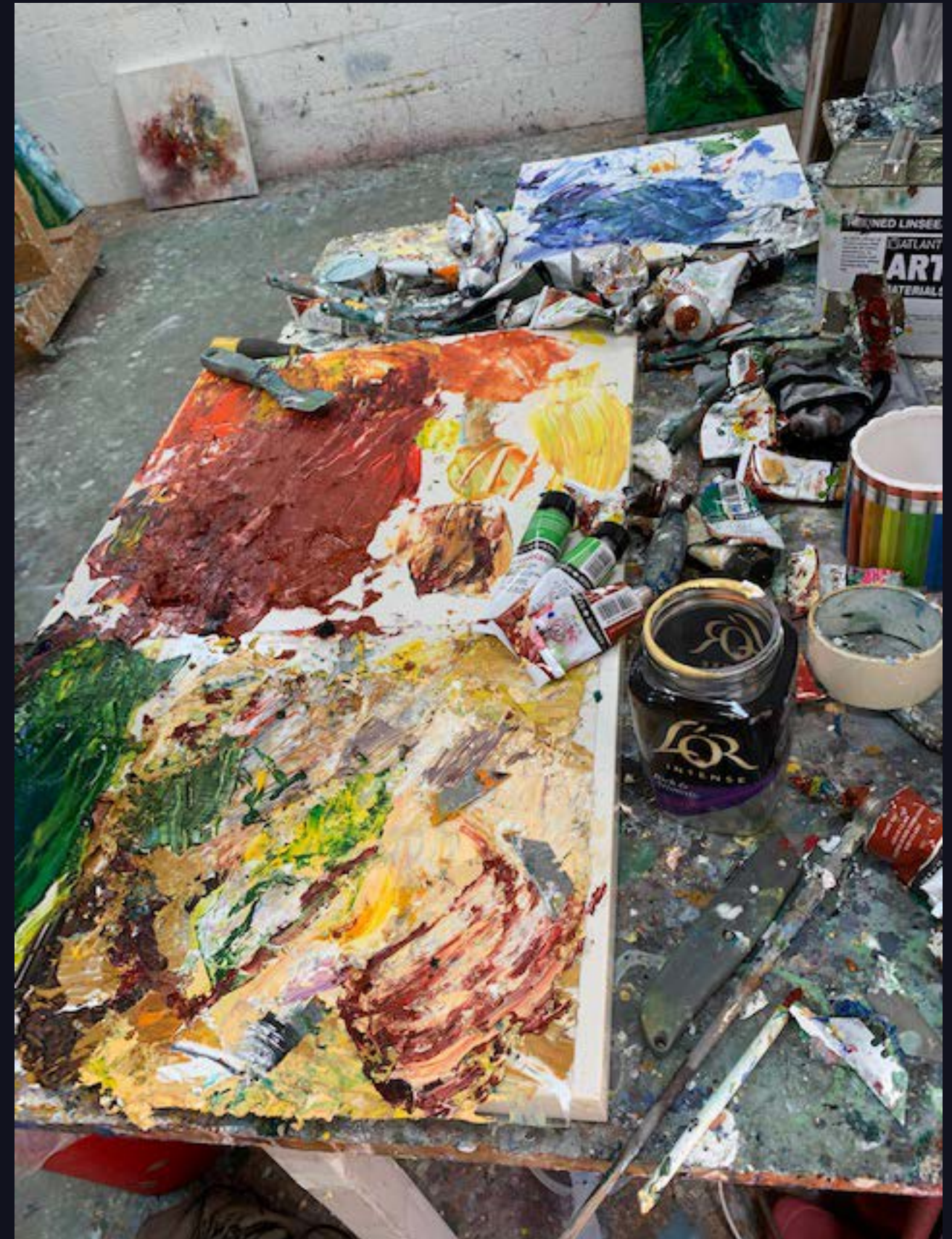
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Matthew Bourne's studio and *Spring Bouquet*,
Coffee Cup — a work-in-progress



A palette full of colour and nature's mess



In Bloom is a mixed exhibition by Contemporary Six celebrating flora, nature, and contemporary painting. This springtime online exhibition features paintings by six British artists. Artworks by Liam Spencer, Craig Jefferson, Arthur Neal, Ian Norris, Matthew Bourne, and James Bland are brought together, with each artist displaying a number of works which take the beauty of flowers as their subject.

CONTEMPORARY SIX

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