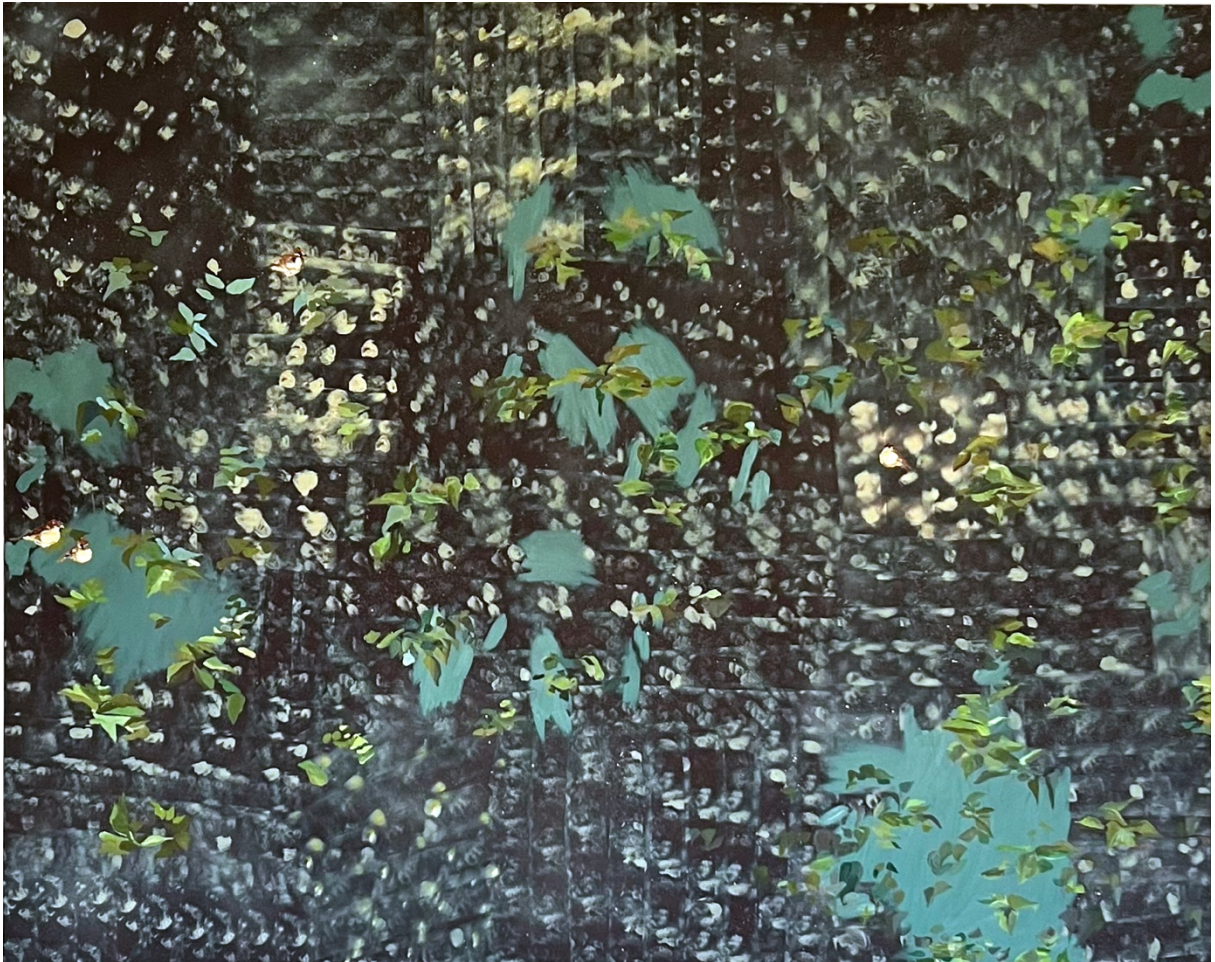


IONE & MANN

ALICE KEMP

In the Night Garden

14-25 September 2022



IONE & MANN is delighted to present 'In the Night Garden', a solo exhibition of new paintings by British artist Alice Kemp.

In her latest body of work Kemp explores the beauty, simplicity and ephemerality of the natural world, revealing and celebrating the hidden wonders of the domestic garden.

Kemp has long found inspiration in nature and the beauty of its inherent imperfection and asymmetry, what she describes as 'crookedness' or 'bulginess'. Her practice focuses on traditionally decorative subjects like plants, flowers and landscapes, partly as a deliberate act of defiance against long-standing stereotypes and preconceptions about subject, style and gender in painterly discourse. Seeking joy and expression in her work,

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she treats all styles, materials and subjects equally, challenging the delegitimising pairing of femininity with the 'decorative' as well as distinctions between high and low art.

Over the years, Kemp has painted natural forms inspired by her travels in Europe and East Asia, long walks along the British countryside and London's gardens and parks. In March 2020, as the world shifted and paused, the artist moved her studio to her garden; faced with a new normal, which for Kemp included first time motherhood, she set out to explore a world closer to home. As, in a sense, her world became smaller, her perception of what was around and within her began to expand.

The title of the exhibition is, like most of her paintings' titles, descriptive and literal; Kemp used her garden as a primary source of inspiration and she would often paint in the evenings. But it also invites introspection, a gentle exploration that holds possibility and promise, offering a glimpse of an enchanted, tranquil dream world which at night seems well within reach.

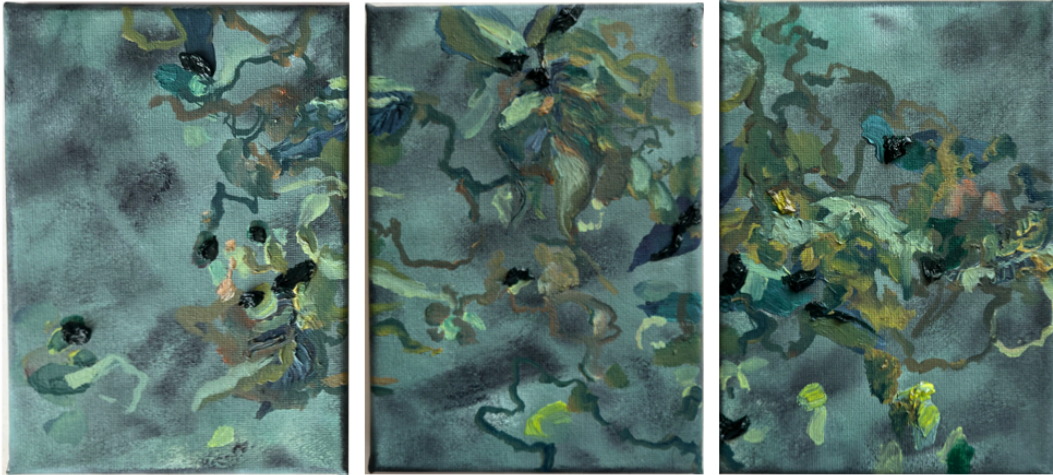
Kemp's Night Garden is equally mundanely domestic and curiously enchanting. We encounter all sorts of protagonists, from majestic blooms, to withered leaves, birds, insects, pod seeds, shoots, brambles and the humble allotment. The starting point is not just observation but an immersion in a sensory experience and a genuine connection with nature. Embracing burgeoning life as well as perishability, Kemp creates vibrant, atmospheric, fantastical yet familiar landscapes manifesting rootedness and connection and, at the same time, freedom and potentiality.

The artist's hand is very much visible and so are the conscious decisions about composition, expression and rhythm that often lead to delightfully unexpected, almost surrealist imagery. We see salad leaves dancing like falling autumn leaves, rhubarb shoots floating like waterlilies, suspended rocks, sparrows and pigeons camouflaged amongst exaggerated backdrops. Similarly to the practice of Zen Buddhism where emptying the mind is essential in order to liberate it, the natural form, perhaps symbolically, is taken out of its place and elevated to an independent existence outside of the confines of the meaning we assign to it.

Kemp's work feels expansive independently of scale. She works comfortably in small and large formats, stating that each work dictates its own size with smaller paintings usually taking much longer to "resolve". Often paintings emerge as diptychs or triptychs but she tends not to be rigid about combinations, even orientation. She does, however, pay particular attention to texture and mark making. She works in multiple layers alternating between flat, print-like surfaces and highly textural elements with an almost sculptural quality. In her backgrounds she makes use of repetition, pattern and negative space employing different techniques and materials as mark making tools. She shifts between gestural, expressive brushstrokes and hyper precise paint application all in a considered and deliberate manner, with every tiny mark and detail integral to the work.

Just like nature itself, Kemp's style of painting is a rich world of oppositions – order and chaos, abstraction and figuration, density and lightness, harmony and dissonance, expression and restraint, minimalism and visual overload. But, as Alice says, nothing that lives is rigidly perfect or definable; therein, among the gnarled, crooked, entwined, unknowable, magical reality of life, lies its infinite beauty and potentiality.

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Alice Kemp (b. 1987, Brighton, UK) is a visual artist and educator living and working in London. She finds inspiration in nature and the mundane, painting traditionally decorative subjects like plants, flowers, animals and landscapes yet choosing to accentuate both their beauty and inherent asymmetry, what she describes as natural “crookedness or bulginess”. Influenced by the Japanese approach to art where the distance between art, decoration and nature is shorter, she approaches her subjects with a conscious mix of expression and restraint, minimalism and visual overload

Her work has been exhibited in the UK, Japan, Turkey, Poland, Croatia and Thailand and is held in private and corporate collections across the UK, Europe, East Asia and the Middle East. She is a graduate of University College Falmouth (BA First class Honours in Fine Art, 2010), Central Saint Martins (MA Fine Art, 2016) and University College London : The Institute of Education (PGCE Art and Design 2019).

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Gallery 12 | 4 Cromwell Place, London SW7 2JE

Opening Hours: Wednesday - Saturday 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday 10 am - 4 pm and by appointment.

Exploring the Night Garden: Artist Talk and Exhibition Walkthrough with Alice Kemp: Saturday 24 September, 12:30 pm

For additional information, artwork/ installation images, or interview access to the artist please contact us at:

info@ioneandmann.com

Website: www.ioneandmann.com | Instagram: @ioneandmann

Images:

Sparrows in the Brambles, 2022, oil and acrylic on canvas, 152 x 122 cm.

Leaves for the Compost, 2022, oil on canvas, triptych, 17.5 x 12.5 cm. [each]

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