

katy woodroffe —
looking both ways —
an 80th birthday celebration



Looking through my journals in preparation for this exhibition, I was not only reminded of the many different cultural experiences I had been exposed to, but also of how deeply I had immersed myself within each one. I then looked for artworks which best reflected my responses to these encounters.

A life changing residency at the McCulloch studio in the Cite des Arts in Paris in 2001 provided the first thrill of working within an artistic community. After initially exploring the magnificence of Paris, I turned inwards to the 17th century building which housed the studio. On a subsequent residency at the Cite in 2012 in the Chinese Nanjing studio, I made visits to some stunning residences. At Versailles, some majestic swans on the lake mirrored the palace's grand opulence and resulted in the *Dreamlands* piece.

Other residencies in Mojacar in Spain, Skopelos Island in Greece and Udaipur in India, provided unique and exciting opportunities for exploration and self discovery at these intriguing destinations. The residencies not only enriched my artistic practice but also profoundly impacted my personal growth as an artist. They taught me the value of stepping outside my comfort zone, of embracing new challenges and allowing myself to be vulnerable in the pursuit of new artistic adventures while working intuitively using multiple collected memories. I love discovering beauty in the process of layering paint and pigment on paper.

Recurring images run through so much of my work, not just from residencies but also from stimulating journeys to some unforgettable countries. A golden fish sculpture in the Islamic Museum in Paris, budgerigars and flamingos in the Natural History museum in La Rochelle, lemons in the temples in Udaipur, a dressmaker mannequin in a Paris market, oranges in the gardens in the Alhambra, pomegranates in a cafe garden on Skopelos Island, as well as decorative porcelain and ceramics gathered from various collections, including the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. I accumulated exotic patterns wherever I went and many of these have become subtle backgrounds and borders in many of the pieces.

In recent years I have also been fascinated by the historical implications of the early settlement of Tasmania, where I have re-examined the colonial history from a present day viewpoint with links to my own family. I also became obsessed with the story of Josephine Bonaparte's black swans and their improbable journey between Tasmania and France in the early 1800s.

This exhibition presents works which are personal favourites and I feel privileged to be able to exhibit them together at Handmark Gallery on this special occasion. A huge thank you to Allanah Dopson for her incredible support and professionalism and to my amazing family for their encouragement, patience and love. I am delighted to be able to share this exhibition with you.

Katy Woodroffe

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