



Detail of *River Wind*: a hazy Thames seen from the deck of the *Cutty Sark*

poetry of these works, hers is a resolutely domestic art. 'I think about the homes the paintings go to. If I can get that energy of growth into the painting, it can get into the home,' she says.

This autumn, she is holding one of her eagerly awaited biennial exhibitions in St James's, London SW1. For many years, she has eschewed the regular London gallery scene: 'It's all about the white cube gallery and the museum, not so much work for intimate private spaces.' Instead, she relies on an extensive network of patrons and collectors and then, once every two years, a privately-organised exhibition in a congenial space to present her latest collection.

Emily grew up in Kent in an unusual family. Her theatrical father ran a furniture-making and antiques shop in Folkestone that served a discerning local and international clientele: 'He had a genuine love of art and beautiful things,' she says. One grandmother was a good amateur painter and owner of an early oil painting by Jack B. Yeats

An ecstasy of light and air

On the eve of her latest exhibition, painter Emily Patrick talks to Emma Crichton-Miller about the creative roots of her poetic oil and tempera paintings

THE day I visited the painter Emily Patrick, I had cycled through the formless urban sprawl of south-east London, beset by traffic and surrounded alternately by buildings going up and buildings falling apart. It was with a great sense of relief that I rang the doorbell of her beautiful 18th-century house. The tall trees of Greenwich Park stood opposite and, behind, through the windows, I could see a lush, green garden. The world once again seemed rooted and steady.

Emily, who was born in 1959 and has lived in London since she left university, is known for her sensitive portraits and delicate still lifes of simple domestic scenes that she conjures into compelling liveliness with her brushwork and strongly pigmented oil or egg tempera paints. A third primary thread

in her work is landscape. These paintings encompass fields full of wild flowers tossing beneath blustery skies; corners of sunlit woodland; a stand of brambles; a cabbage patch in Portugal's Alentejo; a view across gardens to urban roof tops; a magnolia tree swaying; and even a view of Deptford Creek, all white-capped brown water, swirling seagulls and exuberant buddleia bursting from old bricks.

Rather than the sublime, what Emily captures is the joyfulness of the quotidian and the bursting energy of the natural world, whether expressed through a jug of garden flowers on a kitchen table or a sweeping view of mountains. And, for all her technical flair and the powerful

Beetroot on Windowsill. Emily's paintings reflect the natural rhythm of planting and harvest



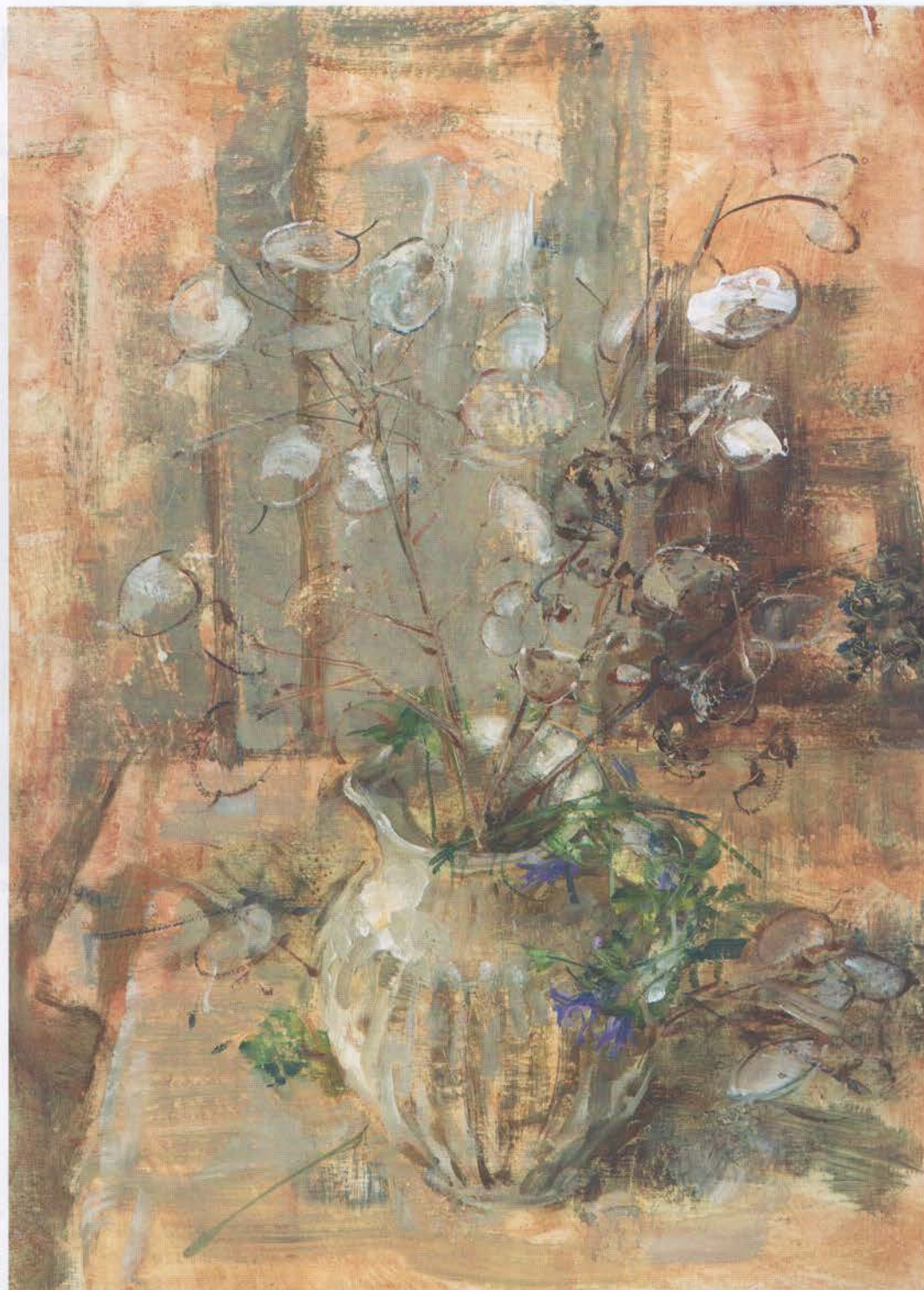
(‘technically beautiful, the paint-work heavenly’); another had a ‘tactile love of fine objects.’ But it was her mother who kept the household together, running a farm from ‘crack of dawn until late at night. I would get back from the aesthetes and go out into the fields and that would keep me sane’.

Emily captures the joyfulness of the quotidian and the energy of the natural world

Emily spent hours delivering lambs and distributing grain to 12,000 chickens, but as a teenager, she was already earning money painting imitation Dutch still lifes. She also travelled extensively in Europe looking at art. She went to Cambridge to read architecture, which seemed to offer a robust, practical engagement with life, but, while on holiday in Canada, she painted her first portrait and knew that this was what she should do.

So, after completing her degree, she moved to London and started painting portraits in a friend’s house, determined to learn on the job. Her understanding of space still permeates her airy paintings, in which Nature is as often seen through a window or within a room as it is on its own.

Once Emily was married and had young children, she found portraits, with their long sittings, difficult. Fortunately, by now she was exhibiting with Agnews, which was delighted for her to produce pictures of ‘flowers and edibles’. Working in the large billiard room of their Blackheath home with her children about her, she would paint whatever was near to hand—decorative objects, babies, flowers and vegetables from their allotment—venturing onto the heath itself for ‘a feast of sky’.



Honesty. Emily takes simple domestic scenes and adds energy and liveliness using tempera

After the family moved to Greenwich, she began to think increasingly about gardens. ‘There was no garden on the farm; there were wild flowers. But when you grow things you realise it’s the roots and leaves that matter and that the seasonal rhythm of planting and harvest is very celebratory.’ Her paintings have taken on some of this natural rhythm.

Emily puts on her exhibitions in collaboration with her husband Michael Perry, a polymathic former financier and frame-maker, and together they make all the frames, each of which is a work of art. Each collection also has its own character, but every painting, whether of people, animals, musicians or flowers, is driven by the same spirit: ‘chasing

to get the outdoor world into a home....In defence of the art of Peace.’
‘A Collection of Paintings 2015-2017’ is at Gallery 8, 8, Duke Street, St. James’s, London, SW1 from October 10 to 28. (2017@emilypatrick.com; 020-8858 0427)

Next week: Impressionists in London at Tate Britain