

MY EXHIBITION

EMILY PATRICK

PAINTINGS 2013 – 2015 IS THE LATEST COLLECTION OF FIGURATIVE SCENES AND STILL LIFE COMPOSITIONS FROM ONE OF THE UK'S MOST TENDER, POETIC AND INSTINCTIVE PAINTERS

The last two years have felt like an unstoppable flow. I developed a bit of a phobia about 'missing' a subject. Just when I need to have a rest from painting, another subject reveals itself.

A new collection is often a reaction to what was lacking in previous paintings. A fiddly picture makes me reach instead for my palette knife and big brushes. Too much green makes me hunt for red. Too much movement and chaos makes me look for architecture.

Composition is subconscious or inevitable with me. Bad balance just hurts. The painting *Marmite, Butter and Guinness* began with a search to find a yellow subject – the Marmite jar lid. It found its place with the sun fully hitting it from behind, so sunglasses were necessary to look towards it.

I struggle with the fatigue involved in painting someone's portrait. There is only one in the exhibition (other than the two where I used myself as a model). It was done on the spur of the moment: a son's friend was having a very hard time and it was the best thing I could do to cheer him up. It's an example of how I flow with what life puts in front of me.

Some works have a troubled gestation. It works to go back to the original thought and ask, "What was it that I really cared about?" Other times I need breaks from the painting for days, weeks or years.

I am driven by the Quaker philosophy that you may no longer exist tomorrow. This drives me to keep at it today for fear that it will survive me, looking like a bad picture.

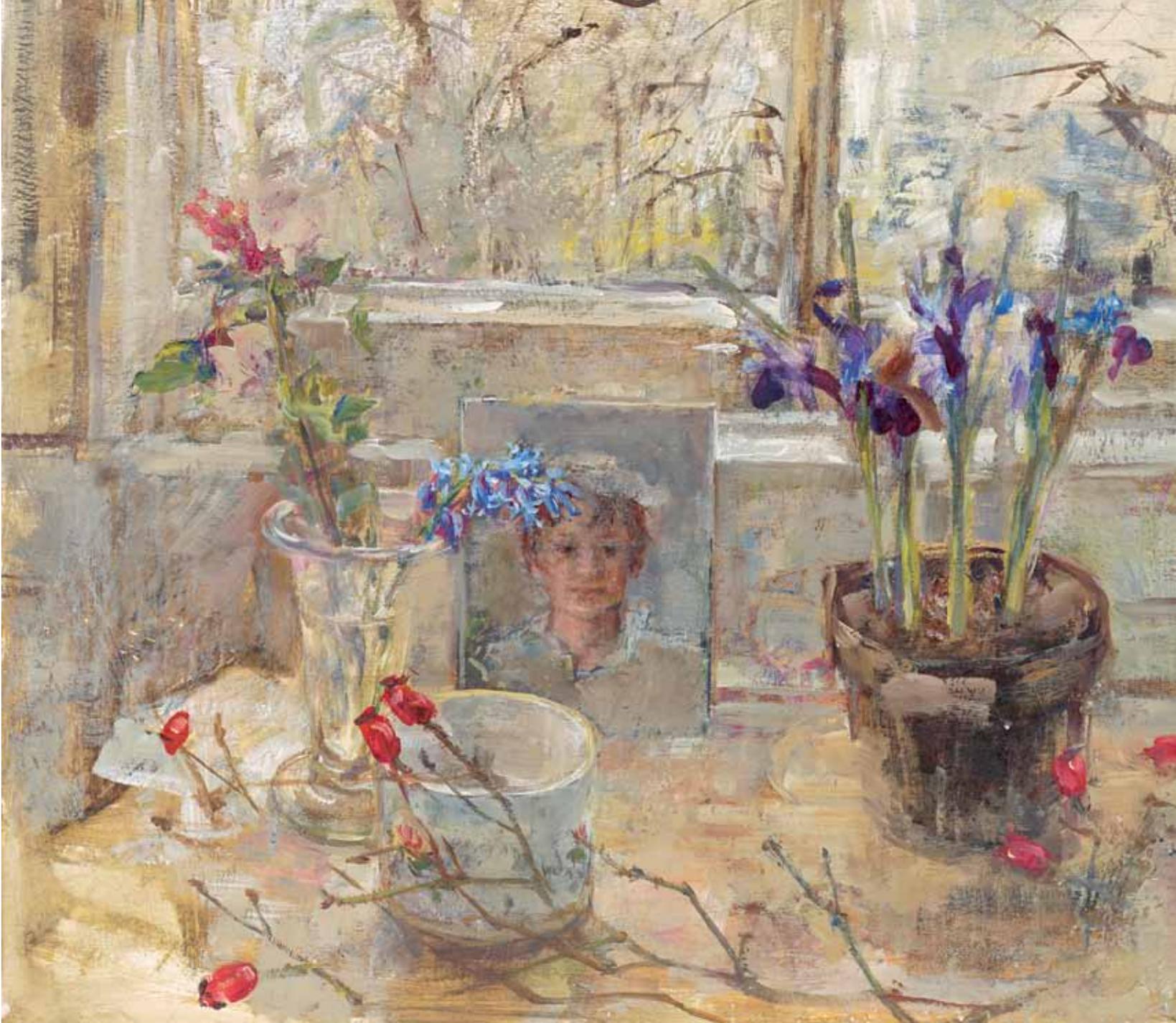
I am often asked how my work has changed. It makes me defensive – the work has not dramatically changed. It is a 20th-century idea that artists should keep coming up with a new style. What I enjoy is feeling more confident; that it might be possible to achieve a picture at all. It's still intimidating to approach any size of subject with a bare board. I have no real method that I repeat.

Life events inevitably change one's internal energies. These profoundly affect the instinctive movement of my hands at work. You can see in the paintings how strong or delicate I was at the time of production. That is why pictures done over a long time become so rich in different strengths.



ABOVE *Marmite, Butter and Guinness*, oil on panel, 51x42cm
OPPOSITE PAGE *Seville Oranges on Slate*, oil on slate, 33x26cm

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ABOVE *Rosehips and
Iris Reticulata*, oil on
board, 36x41cm

I was particularly inspired by the Courtauld's *Becoming Picasso*.

It was an exhibition of work made when he was a very young man. His figurative skills were already electric at that point and the works unpredictably combined huge grief at the world around him with heavenly, rich colours.

Exhibiting at a space-for-hire is very high risk and stressful. I can only do it because my husband, Michael Perry, organises the whole thing with great attention to the details. On the plus side, it also means that I hear more of the buyers' reactions to the paintings. Stories of paintings travelling around the world to bring solace – these inspire me greatly to work even harder.

When the artworks leave for an exhibition, the bare house becomes a clarion call to start painting again. I love that. I have a strong sense that the pictures need to go off and lead their own lives, not remain trapped here with me. At the same time, there was a bad day after the last show when my husband set off to deliver four particularly important paintings; that had me in tears.

Emily Patrick: *Paintings 2013 – 2015* runs 10-27 March at 8 Duke Street, London SW1. www.emilypatrick.com