

# jodie wells

## Spring Daze

September 24 – October 8 2022

Springtime is the season when the natural world revives and reinvigorates. It is a time of joy and new beginnings. Aptly opening in spring, Jodie Wells' exhibition celebrates the regenerative power of nature and its contribution to a much-needed positivity in our own lives. Jodie's works express a return to tactility; her luscious markings radiate a direct, sensory appeal. We encounter nature in all its textural vividness through the gestural freedom of her palette knife's passage.



Much of the imagery was kindled during stops on a long, recent road trip from her northern Gold Coast home to visit family in Tasmania. Those stops were somewhat frequent given she and husband were driving an electric car. "A lot of my paintings are inspired from the flora and fauna we saw on that journey," relays Jodie. "When walking through Tasmania's beautiful Freycinet National Park I photographed so many birds, eucalyptus leaves, banksia nuts, tea tree and wattle flowers."

"The birds in my works are all Australian natives. I saw galahs, cockatoos, magpies, butcherbirds and kookaburras everywhere, there's no avoiding them! I realised there were multiple facets to a creature's moods and actions that could be visually explored. Whether wild birds or even birds in captivity - like the finches, they all appear to display a distinctive personality." Jodie has endeavored to depict her perceptions in small paintings with earthy monochrome backdrops. Titles such as *Impertinent Zebra Finch* and *Dreamy Chestnut Breasted Mannikin* denote the subjects' dispositions. *Gumtree Cockatoo* and *Gumtree Kookaburra* are larger works in which the birds are perched amid leafy Eucalypt branches.

In an orchestration of shape, hue and tactile surface, many other canvases are covered with assemblages of the flora Jodie chanced upon during her journeying. One of her personal favourites is *Sunshiny Bouquet*. "It reminds me of fresh daisies and wattle blooms in 'hazy-dazy' springtime." Shimmering against dark grounds, *Waxflower Wonderland* and *Wild Tea Tree in Tasmania* are other lovely renditions extolling the season's floral bounty.

Rather than her now 'signature' equine imagery, Jodie decided to paint dogs for this exhibition. "I just love dogs and they were everywhere on our trip," she enthuses. Dogs particularly relish the advent of spring with all its new scents and rustlings to be investigated. Throughout history these animals have been regarded as companions, notable for their loyalty and protectiveness. From Jodie's impasto flourishes, a dachshund and corgi leap to greet the viewer.

An intense involvement with the materiality of her oil medium lifts Jodie's imagery beyond mere representation. It is largely an intuitive and consequently risky process as her palette knife interprets and amplifies form in thick slabs of paint. Light bouncing from the troughs and crests of the 3D markings creates a palpable presence which bids us entry into her delight of the natural world's offerings.

JACQUELINE HOUGHTON