

# beth kennedy

## *A Pocketful Of Stars*

March 25 – April 8 2023

Brisbane-based Beth Kennedy's inaugural exhibition with Anthea Polson Art ushers the viewer into a light-hearted, aesthetic realm beyond extraneous concerns. She tells the title for this body of work, *A Pocket Full of Stars*, evolved during the isolation and contemplative atmosphere that are prerequisite for the creative process. "The stars refer to moments of illumination and the little jewel-like memories that we carry close with us as if in our pockets. Recalled precious moments in time are akin to accumulated tiny pinpricks of light that can generate our very own stars. The paintings are a celebration of life, family and love."

Initially a figurative artist, Beth abandoned such depictions quite a while ago, feeling they were becoming too personal. She currently prefers to create more "universally appealing" subjects. Pattern, colour and compositional factors now unite in abstracted, botanical shapes hovering over the picture plane.

Preliminary sketches on paper assemble flora and foliage details into fanciful bouquets and informal arrangements. Transferred to canvases, the designs mutate in response to larger format considerations and intuitive musings. Gentle visual narratives arise amidst layers of diverse media.

"I need to keep pushing what I'm doing, trying new ideas and techniques," she relays. "So far, I've added aerosol, oil stick, acrylic-gouache and pastel pencils to my watercolour washes and inks. The element of play and having fun, as well as letting the works embrace 'happy accidents', is really important to me."

There is also an evident predisposition to the colour pink in Beth's paintings. "I've been totally obsessed with pink ever since I was a small child," she discloses. "It's a colour that makes me happy. It's warm, embracing and euphoric." Rather than her customary botanical clusters floating freely in space, the works *Cherry Red* and *Sunshine Yellow* have an added dynamic as opaque, pastel panels lead the eye from the canvas edges into the intricate imagery.

Beth cites her artistic influences as being a "disparate bunch" which includes Del Kathryn Barton, Cressida Campbell and also Japanese woodblock prints, especially those of the Ukiyo-e with their sharply defined forms arranged on flat grounds and quintessential, patterned segments.

"This being my first solo show with Anthea Polson Art, I aspired to engender a colourful and luxurious feeling in the paintings," Beth imparts. "I want people to walk within a joyous, beautiful space and be enveloped in a richness of hues and patterns that will elevate the consciousness above the bustle and noisiness of everyday circumstances."

JACQUELINE HOUGHTON

