

Jodie Wells

Soft Petals, Bold Spirits

August 29 – September 12 2026

The expressive colours and forms of flora, fauna and birds are again the substance of Jodie Wells' 10th solo exhibition with Anthea Polson Art. Her new body of work evinces a desire for a more instinctive state of being; a return to tactility and away from an electronic, virtual reality. The paintings' surfaces are palpable. We encounter the allure of Nature in the 'soft petals' of flowers and the 'bold spirits' of its creatures.

Based in Queensland's northern Gold Coast, Jodie's locale is one teeming with all manner of wildlife. "My studio is in my house and often just looking out a window is a creative stimulus," she imparts. "The birds in my works are all Australian natives, apart from the *Pondering Pigeon*. Early this year when in Bali visiting a Buddhist temple we were mobbed by a huge flock of pigeons. They were flying around and landing on heads, shoulders and arms - quite scary and funny at the same time. The other birds I've painted mostly hang out in my garden. A magpie family drops by daily and the wailing bush stone curlew visits our driveway. Observing the multiple facets to the birds' moods and antics I'm inspired to visually explore their distinctive personalities." The painting titles, *Sassy Scarlet Wren*, *Scoundrel Magpie* and *Pondering Pigeon* denote such.



Horses that thunder across the canvas as if they would break free from their pictorial confinement are another of Jodie's favourite subjects. "I don't know why I am drawn to painting horses," she muses. "I think perhaps it's because they have always been around me. Family members in Tasmania, where I grew up and visit regularly, have all owned horses. It seems I can't escape seeing them, even during my Bali holiday I saw horses galloping along a beach and these were what inspired the recent works."

Throughout history dogs have been regarded as companions notable for their loyalty and protectiveness. These animals are again depicted in the exhibition. Painted unusually on aluminium, an alert golden hound sits indoors during the dark night. In another work the oodle, *Sweet Scruff*, seemingly scrutinises the viewer. Jodie informs that an oodle is a dog crossbred with a poodle and she has two of them.

In an orchestration of shape, hue and tactile surface, other canvases illustrate vases of flowers, the orchids being homegrown. An intense involvement with the materiality of her medium lifts the imagery beyond mere representation of 'soft petals'. Employing an instinctive technique Jodie's palette knife interprets and amplifies their form in thick slabs of oil.

The enormous popularity of her paintings lies in the affable subjects and the direct sensory appeal of their rendition. The viewer is induced into an alternative way of responding to one's own environment - to experience and enjoy the natural world's bounty of 'soft petals' and 'bold spirits' without recourse to analysis.

JACQUELINE HOUGHTON

Jodie Wells' work is represented in the Gold Coast City Gallery Collection. She was the Winner of People's Choice Ward, APA in 2019 and she has been a finalist in a great number of Art Prizes including: Tattersall's Club Landscape Prize, Brisbane 2019; Moreton Bay Art Prize, Brisbane 2015; Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2015; Clayton Utz Art Award, Brisbane 2012; Stan and Maureen Duke Art Prize, GCCG 2011; Black Swan Portraiture Prize, Perth 2011, 2009, 2008; Lethbridge 10000 Art Award, Brisbane 2013, 2011, 2010; Mount Eyre Vineyards Art Prize, Rex-Livingston Gallery, Sydney 2011, 2010; Glover Art Prize, Evandale, Tasmania 2010; Border Art Prize 2010, 2008, 2007; Mortimer Art Prize, 2010; Waterhouse Prize - Works on Paper, South Australian Museum, Adelaide 2010; Eutick Memorial Still Life Award (the EMSLA), Coffs Harbour 2009; Open Art Prize, Royal Queensland Art Society, Gold Coast 2007.

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