

CARYN SCRIMGEOUR

Hope is a Thing with Feathers





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4 November – 3 December 2022



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Everard Read is delighted to present an exhibition of new paintings by South African artist, Caryn Scrimgeour. Taking inspiration for its title from the Emily Dickinson poem, this new body of work was made over the past 18 months in the artist's Cape Town studio.

Scrimgeour's paintings are obsessively immaculate – a manifestation of intense attention to detail and an extraordinary command of her palette. Her table settings intrigue and fascinate by juxtaposing fragile and precious curios with everyday objects, each exquisitely rendered.

Rich in symbolism, her work is reminiscent of still life paintings from the Dutch Golden Age. Scrimgeour uses ephemeral objects – butterflies, petals, a glistening fig – to remind us of our transience and fragility.

The perfectly rendered contours and surfaces of each object can be deceiving, though, as Scrimgeour uses them as both symbols and as more ordinary icons. These more commonplace objects are holders of memory – they prompt us to remember experiences and in so doing to remind us of who we are.

The absence of humans – aside from the artist's ghostly reflection in a spoon or a fish knife – makes these works all the more poignant, as do the unlikely protagonists: the sumptuously embroidered tablecloths, the mismatched china, the silverware alongside disposable chopsticks; the humble matchbox and the lavishly painted jellybean.

Scrimgeour explains further, 'this body of work is a deliberate steering away from the all-pervasive social commentary and noisy chaos in search of something that evokes a sense of hopeful reassurance and an affirmation and acceptance of the fragility of life. A recognition of the timeless relevance of lines

from old poems, bemusing long-held traditions, the sudden joy of a childhood game and the often painful memories held within seemingly trivial objects are the threads that tentatively connect us. The works are meditations, the letting out of a long-held breath and a reminder to take another. They are labyrinths of intertwined thoughts, riddles to be unraveled but never solved.'

Indeed, Scrimgeour's paintings are sublime puzzles, much like our identities – made up of fragments freighted with memories and experience. They are vanitas paintings for our age, their terrible beauty encompassing both the rich complexity of life, as well as its brief and fleeting nature.

'HOPE' IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

EMILY DICKINSON, 1830–1886

'Hope' is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

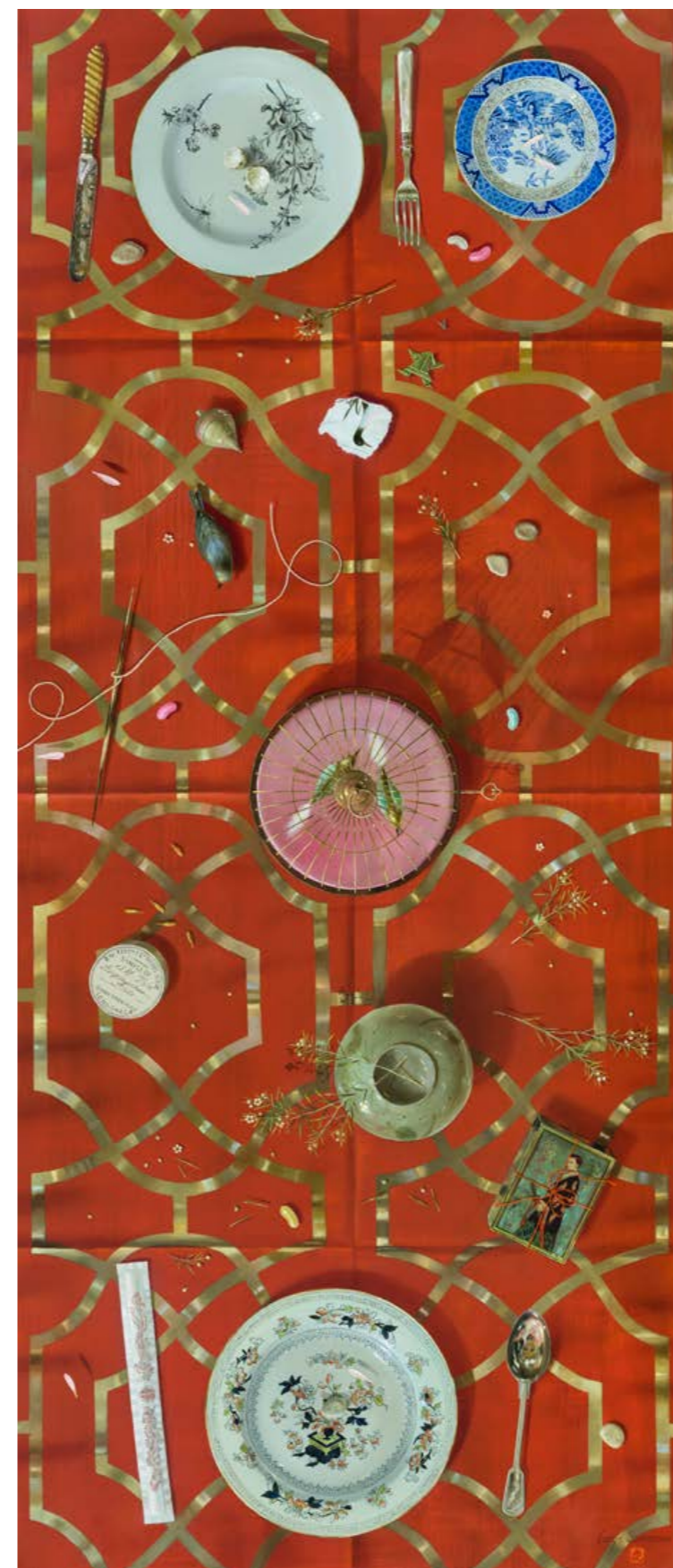
I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.



Paper tigers
oil on linen
140 x 200 cm
55 x 78 5/8 in



Ducks & Drakes I & II (diptych)
oil on linen
140 x 120 cm
55 x 47 1/8 in





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Daisies pied and violets blue
oil on linen
150 x 150 cm
59 x 59 in





Keepsake
oil on linen
100 x 240 cm
39 1/4 x 94 3/8 in







Ties that bind I & II (diptych)
oil on linen
180 x 180 cm
70 3/4 x 70 3/4 in





Sleight of hand
oil on linen
70 x 40 cm
27 1/2 x 15 5/8 in





Compromise
oil on linen
40 x 70 cm
15 5/8 x 27 1/2 in



Telling the bees
oil on linen
70 x 40 cm
27 1/2 x 15 5/8 in





Loose ends
 oil on linen
 40 x 70 cm
 15 5/8 x 27 1/2 in

Caryn Scrimgeour




CARYN SCRIMGEOUR

b. 1970, Johannesburg, South Africa

Caryn Scrimgeour's subject matter is chosen from commonplace objects that surround her. Delicate chinaware, glassware and insects are combined with trinkets and knick-knacks and portrayed against a backdrop of richly patterned fabric. Her works are filled with symbolism, and the place settings consequently 'become representative of major events which have impacted my life over the past ten years, but which are also events that most women will experience in the course of their lives, in one form or another.' – Caryn Scrimgeour

The objects in these paintings are easily recognisable, familiar and often nostalgic, making the images highly accessible to the viewer.

The images are elevated from that of traditional still-life by the use of aerial perspective which forces a shift in our viewpoint and the way in which we interpret the objects. At the same time it creates an almost abstract interplay between the objects and the patterns, creating a contemporary context for a very traditional genre.

Scrimgeour graduated from the University of Stellenbosch with a B.A in Fine Art and lives and works in Cape Town. She has held numerous solo and group exhibitions in South Africa and at Everard Read London. Her work is held in private collections in the UK, Europe, Asia, the USA and South Africa.





SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *Entangled*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2019 *A Word is Not a Sparrow*, Everard Read Gallery, London, UK
2018 *My Borrowed Life*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2016 *Postcards from Chinatown*, Everard Read Gallery, London, UK
2014 *Breaking Point*, Exhibition Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2012 *Conundrum*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
2008 *Fragile, Fertile Deceptions*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2006 *Solo Exhibition*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *Summer 2021 / Masterpiece Online*, Everard Read, London, UK
2019 *Birds*, Rust-en-Vrede, Durbanville, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2018 *Investec Cape Town Art Fair with Everard Read*, Cape Town, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read London, UK
2017 *Summer Exhibition*, Everard Read Gallery, London, UK
2015 *Winter*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

- 2014** *Summer*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2013 *100*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2013 *Centenary*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Possessed, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Sydney Art Fair, Everard Read Johannesburg, Sydney, Australia
2012 *Johannesburg Art Fair*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Small Works, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
India Art Fair, Everard Read Johannesburg, New Delhi, India
2011 *Johannesburg Art Fair*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
15th Anniversary Group Exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Self Portrait, Rust En Vrede, Durbanville, South Africa
2010 *Summer*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
View From The South, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2009 *Sex, Power, Money*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Summer, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
2008 *The City*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
2007 *Artwords II*, Rust En Vrede, Durbanville, South Africa
2006 *Seven Deadly Sins*, Rust En Vrede, Durbanville, South Africa
2004 *Women's Day*, Rust En Vrede, Durbanville, South Africa

