



Flowering talents

THE WORK OF TWO OUTSTANDING PLANT PORTRAITISTS WILL BE ON DISPLAY IN EAST LoTHIAN THIS MONTH



Wild flowers are quite remarkable. They are often extremely beautiful and delicate flora that find their own habitat and can survive relatively unaided in bleak surroundings. Yet we usually overlook their natural beauty and extraordinary existence.

However, it was just these outstanding qualities that inspired Edinburgh-based artists Kirsty Lorenz and Jenny Matthews to base a whole exhibition around wild flowers. 'Really Wild Flowers' will be shown in Aberlady, East Lothian, throughout November and will feature around 50 of their most recent works, allowing visitors to get a rare glimpse into the world of our native wild flowers.

KIRSTY LORENZ IS RENOWNED FOR HER FLOWER PORTRAITS – TREATING THE FLOWER AS AN INDIVIDUAL BEING AND CAPTURING ITS DISTINGUISHING MARKS.

Kirsty Lorenz is renowned for her flower portraits – treating the flower as an individual being and capturing its distinguishing marks. She mainly works with oils, allowing her to build up strong structures on the canvas. Her series of daisy paintings – showing daisy chains in the shapes of hearts and swirls – have captured the imagination of many art lovers, but Kirsty hopes this focus on wild flowers will be equally embracing.

Kirsty's work is often on a grand scale, which means she is able to portray the tiniest details, as well as show the wonderful subtle colour changes on every petal. By contrast, watercolour artist Jenny Matthews' work will often capture a spray of flowers in its habitat, and will occasionally feature an indication of the elements being experienced while she was painting them.



Top: Pink Clover by Kirsty Lorenz. Above left: Aberlady Fairy Flower, Kirsty's name for a plant she couldn't identify. Left: Foxglove Blushing. Right: Wild Bramble II.

Jenny, who was tutored in Botanical Illustration by Dame Elizabeth Blackadder, has an enviable appreciation of the vibrancy and variety of flowers. However, she admits that focusing on wild flowers for this exhibition has opened her up to a completely new subject.

'I thought I was quite observant with flowers, but now that I have really looked, I have found so many wild flowers,' smiles Jenny. 'When painting, I often just home in on the flower, but I have done six paintings where I look at the wild flowers in their landscape – I felt that their environment was integral to these particular flowers.'

Two of these paintings are titled 'Welsh Poppies' and 'Foxgloves' – both show the flowers in their natural habitat. 'I got rained off while painting quite a lot,' laughs Jenny. 'My eldest daughter Zoe was actually holding an umbrella over me



JENNY'S COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS INCLUDES DELIGHTFUL AND VIBRANT IMAGES OF A THISTLE, FLAG IRIS, BUTTERWORT, RAGGED ROBIN, RED CAMPION, BLUEBELLS AND ORCHIDS,

when I was trying to paint on some days.'

Kirsty's work often resembles hugely magnified images of the tiny flowers she has selected. 'Some of the flowers I have painted are just 2mm in size,' says Kirsty, who is mum to two young daughters, Beatrice and Maeve. 'I tend to do the single flower image because I see it like a portrait. I like the idea that flowers are a bit like us in that they are a particular breed but are all individual and go through different life stages.'

She adds: 'Quite a few of the wild flowers that I have painted are from the Aberlady area. There was one flower growing out by the bird reserve – there are literally hundreds of them, beautiful tiny little flowers in the marsh. I couldn't find them in my books so I named them Aberlady Fairy Flowers in my painting.'

Along with the Aberlady Fairy Flowers, Kirsty has painted pink and white clover from near Aberlady and wood sorrel from a little further inland, while others, such as foxgloves and wild brambles, have been painted from Kirsty's garden or on location.

Jenny has similarly travelled around to find intriguing subjects for the exhibition, often with the help of her daughters, Zoe and Marie. 'Some of my paintings were done in Aberlady and Gosford Bay, while others are of wild flowers from the Moray Firth, Glen Lyon, the Water of Leith and the Pentlands. One, the helleborine, I found on my Mum's path.'

Jenny's collection of paintings includes delightful and vibrant images of a thistle, flag iris, butterwort, ragged Robin, red campion, bluebells and orchids.

It is clear from speaking with Kirsty and Jenny, and viewing their work, that both have found wild flowers to provide a wealth of new inspiration. It is also fascinating to see how they have portrayed the flowers in their own individual styles.

'I did not realise how many flowers were out there in the wild,' admits Jenny. 'If you look for them, they are there.'

Kirsty adds: 'I have so enjoyed doing this exhibition. It is unbelievable how stunning wild flowers are – I like their humility and strength.'



FACT FILE

'Really Wild Flowers' will be held at the Scottish Birdwatching Resource Centre, Waterston House, Aberlady, East Lothian, EH32 0PY from 25 October to 26 November. Jenny Matthews' work varies in size from 35x40cm up to 100x80cm and is priced from £450 to £1,800. Kirsty Lorenz's work varies in size from 25x25cm up to 125x70cm, and is priced from £250 to £1,500. Kirsty's work will also be on display at Edinburgh Airport until 11 November.