



NERYS JOHNSON

1942 - 2001

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10 July - 2 August 2014

ALL WORKS ARE FOR SALE

Prices on application

MARTIN TINNEY GALLERY
WWW.ARTWALES.COM

NERYS A JOHNSON (1942-2001)

Nerys Johnson's work is a rare gem in the history of British Art. Her intense, vibrant flower studies are immediately recognizable and distinct. They are more like miniature stained glass windows than paintings. Their power comes from the forging of opposites: delicate, glowing petals and leaves are chained in darkness; the sense of movement in them – feelings of growing, flowering and dying – are rendered timeless by the clarity of her design; the minute and intimate are made monumental by her measured abstraction. These are condensed images of passion far removed from botanical painting, more influenced by Matisse and Mondrian than Redoute and McEwen.

Nerys's paintings are as deeply spiritual as the crucifixes of Craigie Aitchison, besides whose work they deserve to rank. Aitchison was another contemporary, individualistic British painter whose work, like that of Nerys, has been edged into the back seat by the ascendancy of Conceptualism, but whose paintings, when the clouds clear, will be seen to shine like beacons. When that happens, the work of Nerys Johnson will take its proper place in the canon of British Art. She is a little master, a Samuel Palmer not a William Blake, a Thomas Jones not a J.M.W. Turner; hers is a small oeuvre but an utterly genuine and deeply rewarding one. So she will be rated as a colourist beside her friend Bridget Riley, and their works will be hung together in any noteworthy showing of the modern era of British art.

There was a reason why Nerys's oeuvre is small, numbered in hundreds, rather than thousands, of watercolours and drawings. Though her sole ambition, from childhood, was to be a painter, she was constrained for most of her life by a debilitating form of rheumatoid arthritis, which prevented her pursuing a professional life as an artist. She earned her living as an art gallery curator, and became an extremely distinguished one, providing many artists with their first public shows. Early retirement gave her the time to paint, though with the passage of time she could only hold a brush with difficulty. The vigorous abstractions of her youth were gradually condensed into large-scale studies of flowers and foliage, many of them beautiful, in media which included charcoal, pen & ink/wash/watercolour, as well as, and increasingly, gouache. These led, through a remarkable process of distillation, to the jewelled illuminations of her last years.

Nerys's long career in art galleries, and her commitment to showing the best art to the widest possible public, led her to direct that the artwork she created and left in her studio be sold and the proceeds used to help public galleries acquire works by living artists. The Nerys Johnson Contemporary Art Fund assists institutions to acquire paintings by living artists, whose work is distinctive in its strong and imaginative use of colour. Nerys's own works and her generous Fund are fitting tributes to an outstanding artistic career.

PINK AMARYLLIS III (Looking Left)

gouache 2000 28.5 x 18cm



PINK HOLLYHOCK WITH PROTEUS LEAVES

gouache 1999 29 x 18cm



YELLOW CHRYSANTHEMUMS ON BROWN

gouache 1998 18.5 x 12.5cm



IRIS BUD AND COREOPSIS ON ORANGE

gouache 1998 12 x 9.5cm



PURPLE PANSY WITH LABURNUM SPRAY

gouache 2000 15 x 15cm



FUCHIA AND YELLOW COREOPSIS ON BURGANDY

gouache 2000 15 x 19cm



RED TULIP WITH VIRIDIAN AND PURPLE LEAVES

Gouach 2000 17 x 14cm



SUNFLOWER AND GENTIAN ON SPLIT GROUND

gouache 1998 32 x 45cm



IRIS ON RED GROUND
gouache 1998 19 x 14cm



ROSEHIPS WITH BLUE STALKS AND LEAF ON ORANGE

gouache 1998 14 x 10cm



ROSEHIPS WITH ORANGE STALKS ON BLUE

gouache 1998 14 x 10cm



CHRYSANTHEMUMS ON AUBERGINE

gouache 1998 14.5 x 10.5cm



DAFFODILS AND ANEMONES ON DARK GROUND

watercolour 1996 25 x 25cm



GODETIA WITH VIOLA AND HAREBELL

gouache 2000 19.5 x 10.5cm



WHITE ANEMONE, PURPLE ANEMONE AND RED BUD

gouache 2000 18 x 18cm



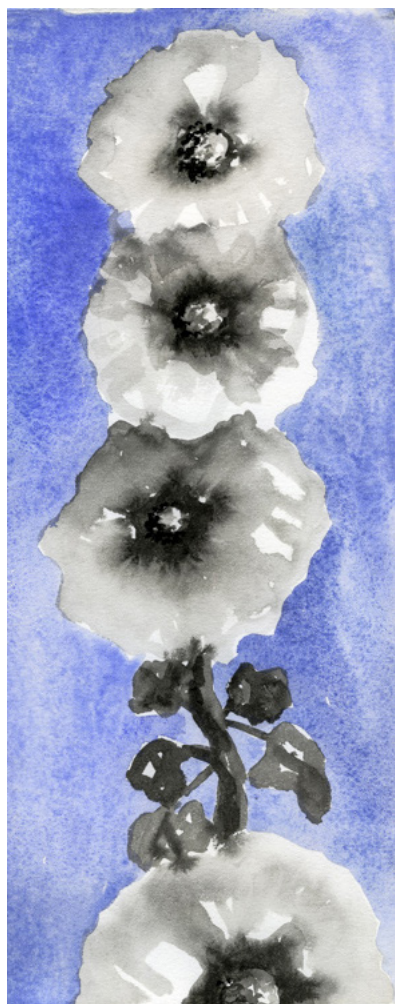
LILY NERINE BUD AND TWO GERBERAS

gouache 1998 28 x 17cm



HOLLYHOCK ON PALE BLUE

ink and watercolour 1998 34 x 13.5cm



PALE PINK LILY ON PURPLE GROUND

gouache 1998 16 x 9cm



ANEMONES AND LEAVES ON YELLOW

watercolour 1996 25 x 25cm



MAGENTA FRESIA AND BUD ON PURPLE GROUND

gouache 1998 13 x 8cm



KAFIR LILY AND PRIMULA ON BLUE GROUND

gouache 1998 14 x 14cm



PURPLE CLEMATIS WITH LEAF AND CRIMSON STALK

gouache 1999 15 x 15.5cm



PETUNIAS AND POPPY SEED HEAD

gouache 1999 15 x 15cm



FLOWERS IN OUTLINE II
gouache 1999 38.5 x 57cm



RED AND PURPLE SWEET PEAS

gouache 2000 15 x 15cm



IRIS POINTED TULIP AND BLUE LEAF

gouache 2000 18.5 x 11cm



FLOWERS IN OUTLINE I
gouache 1999 44.5 x 57cm



ORANGE DAY LILIPES WITH ECHIOPS ON DEEP BLUE

gouache 28.5 x 18cm



SUNFLOWER WITH DEEP ORANGE LILIES AND BUDS

gouache 1998 31 x 16cm



RED TULIP WITH BLUE AND VIRIDIAN LEAVES

gouache 2000 19 x 10.5cm



PURPLE LISIANTHUS ON BLUE GROUND

gouache 1998 19 x 10cm



STARGAZER LILY BUD AND NERINE BUD ON ROYAL BLUE

gouache 1998 15 x 15cm



BLACK WIDOW IRISES AND ANEMONES ON WHITE

watercolour 1996 25 x 25cm



PINK LILLY BUDS ON CHOCOLATE GROUND

gouache 1998 16 x 8cm



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