

**Q & A with.....Painter Andrea Byrne, about her striking new work.**

Art Critic Carol Cordrey

CC: *What made you want to paint flowers?*

AB: Flowers make beautiful models. I wanted the challenge of working to a larger scale, to be intimidated by the void of a big canvas and I was drawn to the strength of a flower. I had always been interested in conventional notions of beauty and that led to philosophical investigations of the beauty and the grotesque while at Central St Martins.

CC: *Your subjects are saturated in colour and sensuality; are they influenced by the late Georgia O'Keeffe?*

AB: Sensuality, movement and an expression of temporality are major concerns in the paintings, which are heavily glossed to give them a seductive edge. Influences are the 17th century Dutch painter Rachel Ruysch: I share the same concerns that the great Georgia O'Keeffe has in her powerful flower paintings, but in terms of application it is, for me a performative process more akin to abstract expressionist Helen Frankenthaler whose work I greatly admire.

CC: *Do you work on a large scale because it allows for greater self-expression or do you simply 'think big'?*

AB: There has to be a challenge, a fear to overcome: as any artist will confirm there is nothing like a white piece of paper or canvas (whatever the size) to reduce a person so completely. I'm painting an existence, I'm painting while I'm having that experience and I like to give the viewer something to experience rather than the passivity of just looking. I want the viewer to be folded into the petals of that experience within the existence of the flower. Sometimes large scale helps that inclusivity to occur.



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The elements of style  
Andrea Byrne, 4 - 13 March (painterandhall.com)

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