

Look again

At first you may think you've seen Kirstin Carlin's work somewhere before – until you take a closer look.

Words **Sammy-Rose Scapens**
Photography **Heather Liddell**





ABOVE Kirstin in her Mt Roskill studio, at the back of her parents' garden. **TOP CENTRE AND RIGHT** Works in rapid progress. **RIGHT** The spot with the best light is, of course, where it all happens.

KIRSTIN CARLIN'S HEAVY BRUSH- strokes and dreamy imagery blend together to create works of mystical realism. Inspired to re-imagine historical still-lives, the Auckland painter's small-scale impasto works showcase floral arrangements and landscapes. But Kirstin's work, which seems familiar at first, soon distorts into something new and unexpected as the path you thought you recognised begins to twist and the landscape you thought you understood becomes unhinged.

On the challenge she sets herself to give new life to commonly portrayed images, Kirstin says: "I like to play around with subjects which are recognisable from painting's history and ones that have become ubiquitous through reproductions in calendars, mouse pads, framed prints and stuff like that. Working from an image which is highly recognisable lets me get carried away with the paint and formal elements." >





ABOVE LEFT The paintings keep piling up as work is discarded and new pieces created in the lead up to the *Pleasure Garden* exhibition. **ABOVE CENTRE** Mixing; purposefully not matching. **ABOVE RIGHT** A collection of cards and images of Matisse's Fauvist works serve as references. **LEFT** Hanging works up to dry has the added benefit of allowing Kirstin to literally sit with them, deciding which need altering.



Each of Kirstin's paintings exhibits strong gestural lines. And the offbeat colour combinations and introduction of pastels to her latest offerings are a move inspired by Matisse's Fauvist works.

Having challenged herself to use "fruitier", less monochrome combinations, Kirstin's upcoming exhibition *Pleasure Garden* will exhibit landscapes that could be "anywhere, everywhere and nowhere". A contemporary nod to historical public pleasure gardens, the landscapes intend to give the viewer a feeling of something special and somewhere familiar – with each painting, at second glance, speaking of the importance of adventure and play. ♣

Pleasure Garden will run until August 22 at the Melanie Roger Gallery in Auckland. kirstincarin.com