

Plantasia

Act 1: Birds of Paradise

Galerie Quai 4, Liege, September 2021.

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I've always painted the mundane, whatever was around me. People, pigeons. I see beauty everywhere and in everything, and for me it was always about showing beauty where you least expect it, but the subject could have been anything. It never had to be "special" to be painted. It is usually the subject that chooses me rather than the other way around.

Following Gutter Paradise, where my subject was the tiny iridescent feathers of the cities gutter dwellers, one of my first monumental painting of the plantasia series depicts a bunch of birds of Paradise, the flamboyant plants with orange and purple bird-looking flowers. But here I painted only the gritty stems at the bottom.

Painting plants has not been an overnight decision. The seed has been planted a long time ago, quite literally. As a kid I always helped my mum in her large vegetable garden, sometimes fun, sometimes felt more like a chore. But I was subconsciously gathering up all that information being passed down to me. The moon calendar, what to plant when, how to prepare the earth.

And even though I lived most of my adult life in large cities... something along those lines sums it well:

"You can take the girl out of the garden but you cant take the garden out of the girl."

Of course nature (flowers, trees, landscape) is the most common of subject alongside portraiture in painting. But I hope that my microscope approach can still bring something new to the table.