

Alison Pullen

The Garden | Annual Summer Exhibition
Sarah Wiseman Gallery
16th June – 28th July 2018

'I have a garden that my kitchen looks out onto, and I absolutely love it. I grow as many flowers and vegetables as I can. I am sure its creation has been influenced by visiting gardens since childhood. I have always been interested in what gardeners have created as a reflection of themselves. I loved reading about the garden at Sissinghurst created by Vita Sackville West and all her interesting artistic and intellectual friends who were striving for a different way of living.

When I was at art school, a friend and I spent a summer visiting several famous Italian gardens and painting them. These included Giusti, Garzoni and by far our favourite, Villa d'Este. I was struck by the beauty for its own sake and the fact they were created to be enjoyed as a personal experience and a place of contemplation to feed the soul. It always interested me how historically, gardens could only be created by the rich.

In my art school work I travelled the world painting parks and gardens, and then after graduating I painted in Chiswick House gardens and Hampton Court gardens. It is only with Sarah Wiseman Gallery's suggestion and encouragement that the outside spaces have been reintroduced to me as subject matter. Firstly in tentative steps, with greenhouses which are still 'rooms'.

Gardens are spaces created for pleasure and reflecting their owner, just like rooms are. They are still spaces that people's lives are played out. I was particularly interested in them if they were enclosed spaces like topiary rooms. Every Sunday I would go and paint the grand piano topiary at Blickling Hall. The triangular trees at Hampton Court gardens were also regular haunts.

Other artists' interpretations have always inspired, including Bawden's Kew works.

I love Lucian Freuds paintings of plants. Masses of dense leaves in 'Two Plants'. Or a plant in a portrait painting, with a life of its own. I always admired at Chatsworth the painted cyclamen flowers on the bathroom wall.

Nash, Sutherland and particularly Ravilious works of landscapes have always influenced me.'