

GARDEN OF EDEN

AN EXHIBITION BY JESS ALBARN

30.10.23 - 15.12.23

The Union Club proudly presents a solo exhibition by British artist **Jessica Albarn**, to include a new series of intricate fine line drawings, plus paintings, and screen-printed glass works, inspired by the mystical Garden of Eden.

"Albarn is a visual artist best known for her beautifully detailed pencil drawings." The Guardian

Jessica Albarn's 'Garden of Eden' is a gathering of creatures great and small. From the tiniest bee to the majestic stag, each are studied and drawn in forensic detail, often literally so. Jessica has an impressive insect collection and a microscope in her studio to view them. These creatures, however, very much feel alive. Their eyes clearly have soul.

Rather than depicting animals and insects in natural settings of field and shrub, Jessica positions them within patterns sourced from sacred geometry. These ancient mathematical motifs, executed with pinpoint accuracy, are now a mainstay of her practice.

In the work titled 'Lovers', we see a snake and an apple interlaced with concentric circles and spheres, representing the unity and diversity of nature. The effect here, as with the other works, is one that paradoxically transforms an animal or insect into something more magical, yet remains anchored at its most cellular level to the natural world.

In Jessica Albarn's words:

I have returned to ideas that have been forming my work for some time. Namely, our human relationship with nature, the symbolism we have projected onto animals and how we have woven them into our psyche, and the mistruths that have ultimately played an intellectual part in our current environmental crisis.

As I put together drawings for the exhibition, I reflected on this biblical passage from Genesis 1:26 (KJV):

'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

I wondered whether perhaps man has misinterpreted 'dominion' as 'domination'! This body of work is ultimately about how all things are equal and connected.

In the present day unease about the damage we are inflicting on the natural world, these works have a prescient profundity.

Enquiries

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Visiting

31 October to 15 December 2023

Monday to Friday / 10am to 5pm

The Union Club

49-50 Greek Street

London W1V 4EQ

Biography

Jessica Albarn (born 1971) studied at Colchester Art School and her BA Fine Arts at Hornsey School of Art (now Middlesex University).

Known and recognised for her use of sacred geometry in her drawings and her intricate paintings of bees, butterflies, insects and wildlife, Jessica Albarn's multidisciplinary practice extends to drawing, film-making, and printmaking, whilst also exploring materials such as clay, wax and honey in the creation of her multi-layered dioramas.

Devoted to raising awareness of the importance and plight of these important insects and creatures, Jessica Albarn works with many conservation charities such as The Bumblebee Conservation Trust. This ethos has also led the artist to create a meadow in Devon to support bees and the local wildlife, whilst also being a space to explore ideas and gather research.

Notable projects include:

- ❖ Large-scale drawings titled *Nocturnal Creatures* (2022) which premiered at Gallery 46 in The Whitechapel Gallery Festival
- ❖ *Life after Death* (2018), *Creation* (2016), and *Foxy* (2022), three stop frame animation shorts in collaboration with Nick Powell (musical composer and sound designer)
- ❖ *Dioramas* (2017) - screen printed drawings and geometry on glass, with cynotypes, and pinned butterfly specimens - commissioned as a unique series for the Morocco room at the Hoxton Hotel, Paris
- ❖ The Natural History Museum live drawing event ((2017) working with The Bumblebee Conservation Trust
- ❖ A large site-specific diorama (2017) for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Knightsbridge, London
- ❖ *Ghosts of Gone Birds* (2011), a group exhibition and print portfolio, which now forms part of the Victoria and Albert museum permanent collection
- ❖ *Boy In The Oak* (published by Simply Read Books, 2010), is a dark faerie tale written and illustrated by Albarn and subsequently made into a short film narrated by Jude Law and directed Luke Losey (2011/12)
- ❖ The *Spiderling* collection (2010), for Helmut Lang NYC, which took Jessica Albarn's spider collection to Tokyo for a three-day live drawing event.
- ❖ A unique wallpaper and an exhibition of original drawings including large-scale works and installations, for their ground floor windows of London's Liberty department store (2010)