



CARMEN DRAKE

Wallflowers

August 19 - September 8

Collins Galleries | 12 West Road, Orleans, Cape Cod, Massachusetts 02653





Taraxacum Officinale, Triptych, Oils on mounted linen, 12 x 6 inches, 12 x 12 inches, 12 x 6 inches

Forward

Followers of Carmen Drake's (b. 1965) still lifes are eagerly anticipating the exquisite collection of 15 paintings the artist is unveiling this August at Collins Galleries in her solo exhibition *Wallflowers*. Drake does not turn out quick sketches or alla prima works prolifically, but rather painstakingly creates thoughtful, technically proficient still lifes in the classical realist manner she was trained in more than 10 years ago and has continued to perfect over her career. Longtime collectors have learned that the work is certainly worth the wait.

Drake was born in Lincoln, Maine and grew up in Meriden, Connecticut. Today she lives on a small farm in Carthage, North Carolina, where she fills her artistic cup with the surrounding beauty of nature, local antiques, her flower gardens, and farm animals. When she was younger and just starting to raise a family, she opted for decorative painting and creating bespoke pieces for a local boutique. In 2003 she merged her love of art and antiques to open C.R. Drake Mercantile, a shop specializing in primitive antiques and

reproduction furniture. Five years later, desiring to elevate her painting skills, she attended the Academy of Classical Design in North Carolina and studied with the classical realist D. Jeffrey Mims. She trained at the academy for nearly three years and then continued her education by taking several workshops before enrolling in a summer of study at the Grand Central Academy of Art in New York City in 2012.

Today Drake weaves together the influence of her decorative-art beginnings with her classical-realist training, with frequent nods to her love of antiques and ephemera a recurring theme. These paintings usually include a presentation of ethereal floral blossoms accompanied by a written note or antique object that holds special meaning to the artist or that is simply lovely to look at, as in *Sweet Remembrance* or *Viola Sororia*. The soft palette and diffuse lighting Drake uses in her paintings help conjure the feeling of nostalgia and recollection that causes viewers to want to linger just a little longer in the stillness.



The artist clearly lives a contemplative, closely observed life, and that care and sensitivity is reflected in her process. Her connection to nature and attention to detail are on full display in every painting she has created for *Wallflowers* over the last year. Violets, lilies of the valley, dandelions — these flowers might not be the obvious choices for painters or gardeners, but Drake brings them into the light and celebrates them for their understated beauty and unique colors, textures, shapes, and fragrances.

From the cornerstone piece *Primroses and Nest* — a quintessential spring painting embodying all the beauty and new beginnings that the season brings — to others like *Woolly Blue Violets*, *Dandelions and Old Creamer*, and *Azure Tit and Violets*, Drake has gathered her various interests and artistic experience over the years into one fine collection of paintings and wrapped them like a bouquet of warmth to present to every visitor of *Wallflowers* this summer.

Allison Malafrente
Writer/Editor

Harper and Her Flower, Oil on mounted linen, 16 x 12 inches

Dried Hydrangea and Old Bucket
Oil on mounted linen
32 x 31 inches



Azure Tit and Dandelion
Oil on mounted linen
6 inches





Dandelions, Oil on mounted linen, 10 x 8 inches



Dandelions and Old Creamer, Oil on mounted linen, 12 x 9 inches

Wild Flowers and Green Bucket
Oil on mounted linen
10 x 12.75 inches



The Violet
by Jane Taylor

Down in a green and shady bed,
A modest violet grew,
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colours bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there,

Yet there it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused its sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.



Azure Tit and Violets
Oil on mounted linen
12 x 10 inches

Viola Sororia in Tea Cup
Oil on mounted linen
7 x 9 inches



Sweet Remembrance, 2023
Oil on mounted linen
15 x 11 inches



COLLINS GALLERIES

12 West Road, Orleans, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 02653

The Paintings of
CARMEN DRAKE
Wallflowers

— August 19 - September 8 —

Artist Reception: August 19, 5 - 7 pm

Online catalogue available
Saturday, August 19 at 3:00 pm EST

www.collinsgalleries.com

Your inquiries are always welcome.

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Cover: (Left) *Wooly Blue Violets*, Oil on mounted linen, 7 x 7 inches (Right) *Old Door Knocker and May Flowers*, Oil on mounted linen, 24 x 12 inches