

A detailed painting of a butterfly garden. The scene is filled with lush green foliage, including large, rounded leaves and several clusters of small, bright yellow flowers. Three butterflies are depicted: one in the upper left with orange and black wings, one in the lower right with similar orange and black wings, and a smaller one in the middle right with orange and black wings. The background is a dark, textured green, suggesting a dense garden setting. The overall style is realistic and detailed, with a focus on naturalistic elements.

KATHERINE HAMILTON



Autumn Floor II oil on canvas 49 x 62 cm

KATHERINE HAMILTON

Perspectives – Close and Far

29 APRIL – 20 MAY


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Katherine Hamilton's new work, while still engaging with the sense of place that has long been one of her strengths, delves deeper into the intimacy of her surroundings. Although she has continued to travel, particularly in Scotland, her work now tends to focus on subjects near at hand. Instead of taking the long view of landscape, she gazes intently at the ground beneath her feet, or the abundant vegetation beside the path. This examination of the modest and often overlooked has brought new insights to her painting.

The hedgerow is subject rich in potential for an artist, but is often treated as a structure within a painting — as, for instance, in the early hedgerow paintings of Roger Hilton (1911–75). In her *Hedgerow*, Hamilton makes the constituent plants her entire subject, and all sense of wider ambience is excluded. There is still a strong sense of surface and depth, with the butterflies feeding on the blossom at the front of the picture, and the plants falling into darkness behind. The bright livery of the three Red Admirals lighting up the interior gloom is dramatic and unusual, and Hamilton takes a well-earned place in the iconography of the British hedgerow.

There are several paintings on related subjects in this new group, *Fallen Crab Apples* chief among them. Here are yellow and green orbs on a dark ground articulated by sticks, leaves and twigs: we might be looking at a forest floor, rather than the surface of a domestic garden. The fruits are arranged and yet not arranged, laid out with rhythmic impulse and intensity, a handful touched with decay, though the brown-tinged skins only add to the visual variety and richness of the composition. *Old Man's Beard* and *Wild Rose* are two further hedgerow subjects, all-over compositions of concentrated focus, of decorative pattern falling into deep space. These paintings are worked over in the way an Abstract Expressionist painting is constructed, with every part of the surface activated, as it is in a Jackson Pollock painting for instance, though without any other stylistic resemblance.

Hawthorn is focused on the tree's blossom. The composition, as in so many Hamiltons, is by no means obvious, with any-angled branches giving the painting a dynamic quality and sense of movement. There's even a patch of sky. The delicacy of the blooms is exquisite, bringing a sense of Japanese fullness yet restraint to the patterning. The slight but distinct spikiness to some of the flowers (the stamens protruding between the petals) echoes the thorns of the parent bush. Hamilton has a gift for depicting sharp-pointed forms, as witnessed by *Winter Sea Holly*. However, in this painting the actual plant is depicted in a kind of conversation with its shadow, which complicates the design and enriches the content.

Teasel and Cobweb must refer to one of those autumn mornings when the field spiders have been out slinging their hammocks from every salient projection, and the inhospitable teasel is gentled with spider silk. Meanwhile *Webbed Thorn* is appropriately skeletal and threatening, for this web belongs not to a friendly spider but to the voracious micro ermine moth caterpillar. This creature swarms over young hawthorn shoots and devours them, leaving the tree looking blasted but with an eerie beauty, like something out of Miss Haversham's abandoned wedding breakfast.

Shell Cluster, Colonsay is one of the most beautiful, memorable and decorative of this latest group of paintings. Here the shells are deep piled on the beach and appear to have just been washed by the tide which reveals their form and colour with exceptional clarity. Colours and shapes are at their most controlled, harmonious and vibrant. People sometimes think that 'decorative' is a term of disparagement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Matisse, one of the greatest artists of the 20th century, was unequivocal: 'A picture should always be decorative.' Hamilton applies this rule to very good effect. Her work grows in stature.

ANDREW LAMBIRTH



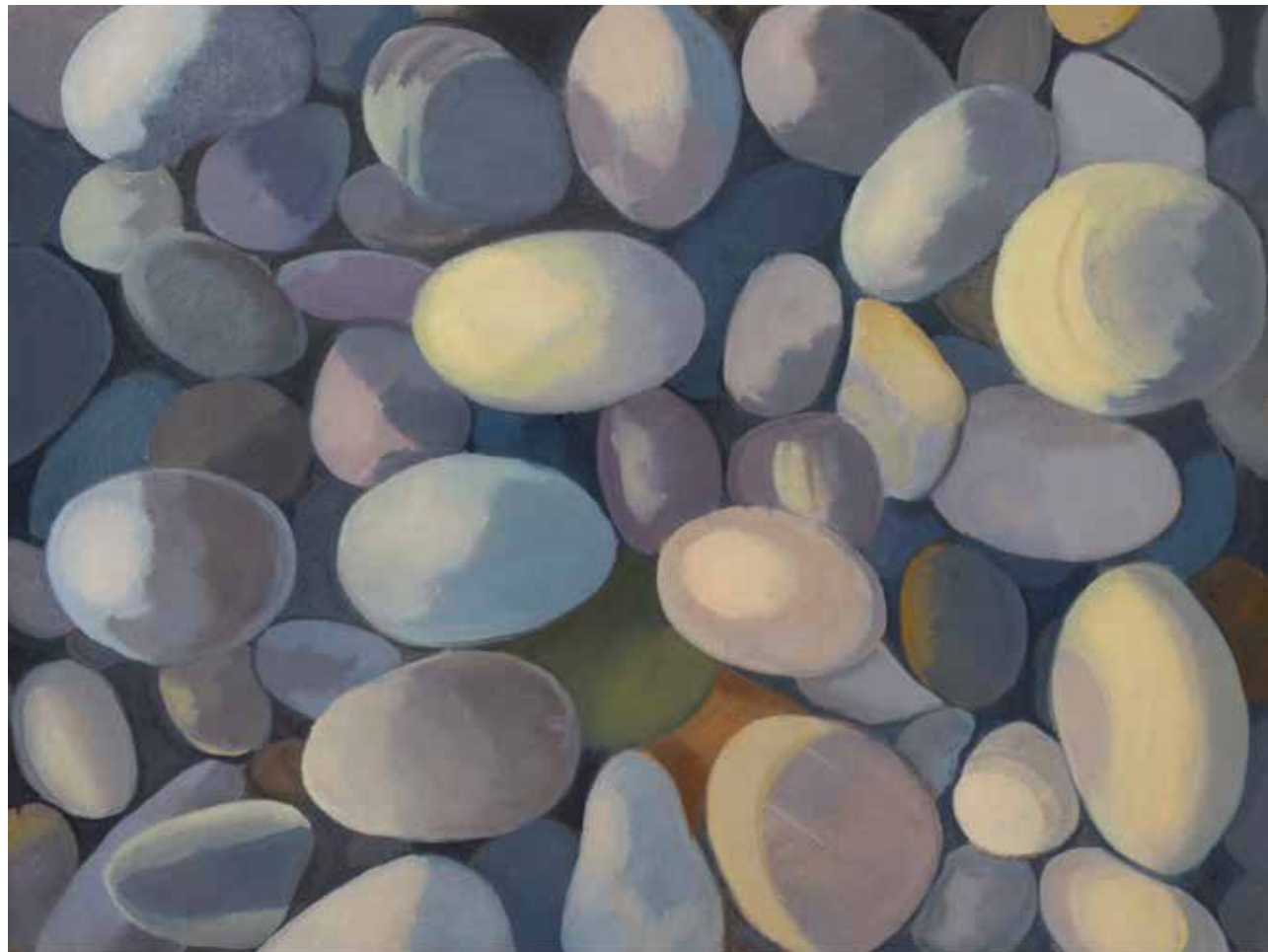
Shell Cluster, Colonsay oil on canvas 61 x 69 cm



Old Man's Beard oil on canvas 74 x 51 cm



Wild Rose oil on canvas 57 x 61 cm



Colonsay Pebbles oil on canvas 53 x 67 cm



Towards Oronsay oil on canvas 78 x 98 cm



Winter Sea Holly oil on canvas 57 x 50 cm



Thistle oil on canvas 62 x 78 cm



Felis Catus oil on canvas 56 x 73 cm



Needles and Cones oil on canvas 74 x 54 cm



Falling Water (Assynt) oil on canvas 62 x 73 cm



Autumn Floor oil on canvas 62 x 74 cm



Ebbing Tide, Colonsay oil on canvas 62 x 127 cm



Teasel and Cobweb oil on canvas 47 x 37 cm



Kilmartin Glen oil on canvas 65 x 95 cm



Soil Dance oil on canvas 44 x 68 cm



Webbed Thorn oil on canvas 61 x 79 cm



Hawthorn oil on canvas 69 × 47cm



Cumbrian Valley oil on canvas 75 × 84 cm



Millipede oil on canvas 54 x 50 cm



Flints and Roots oil on canvas 44 x 72 cm



Fallen Crab Apples oil on canvas 66 x 86 cm



Smoked Fish oil on canvas 42 x 58 cm

First published in 2023 by Campden Gallery Ltd, High Street, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6AG www.campdengallery.co.uk

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Design by Lyn Davies www.lyndaviesdesign.com

KATHERINE HAMILTON

The Academy of Florence and The Byam Shaw School of Fine Art formed the basis of my training.

My work has revolved around the interest in both landscape and the study of other cultures which has led to a variety of projects such as the agricultural communities of Guatemala, the fishing and farming communities of West Africa in Senegal, Ghana, Benin and Mali. Rural life in Japan as well as subjects closer to home such as the Hippodrome Circus in Great Yarmouth and my continuing interest in the landscapes of Great Britain.

This current group of paintings, completed over the last two years, has been to turn my gaze to what is closer/underfoot to focus on the varied patterns and forms of the natural world.

Since 1984 I have exhibited in London, East Anglia, America and Gloucestershire my work is held in both public and private collections, I live and work in Suffolk..

FRONT COVER

Hedgerow oil on canvas 60 x 60 cm

BACK COVER

Carduus oil on canvas 80 x 44 cm

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