

DANIEL BILODEAU

# Worlds within Worlds



1  
*Cherry Blossoms*, acrylic and oil on repurposed mirror finish Lucite, 9 x 9"

2  
*Flower Dream*, oil on circular panel, 16"

3  
*Fleuramour*, oil on panel, 60 x 48"



**F**lorals have been a part of Daniel Bilodeau's artistic output for many years but, prior to 2022, figures took center-stage largely in a style known as "disrupted realism."

Over time, he noticed that painting flowers gave him more joy than other subjects and found them an inexhaustible source of inspiration that he wanted to delve into more deeply.

Several years ago, for a group show at Arcadia Contemporary, Bilodeau, a Montreal native based in New York, snuck in a floral with a piece more in line with the work he presumed the gallery expected. "I knew that if they saw it they would be really excited—and that was exactly the case," says Bilodeau. Now, in his first solo exhibition at Arcadia, his florals will be front and center—a resplendent display aimed to stop viewers in their tracks.

"First of all, I intend a powerful initial impact with the work, like walking into a room where you unexpectedly find a big, healthy floral arrangement," says Bilodeau. "When that happens we are struck—it's reaffirming of the vitality of life. Then, I wish to reward the viewer for approaching, and get them interested in discovering all the little details of the petals and capillaries and botanical textures."

Bilodeau brings a contemporary aesthetic to traditional floral still lifes, creating round works with an aerial view, introducing unnatural colored light that heightens the ethereal quality of the lush bouquets in some pieces, and blurring the petal edges and backgrounds in others.

"I'm playing with focus because a lot of artists making highly rendered work treat the whole surface equally. In fact, we don't see that way," explains Bilodeau. "When we look at something, there's actually only a small, narrow area that's in sharp focus. I'm trying to create an effect closer to reality effect so it's more like the way we actually see."

For Bilodeau, florals and botanicals contain the microcosm and macrocosm, and exploring those worlds—the external and the internal—is a meditative act for the artist from fashioning the arrangements to









5

the process of painting itself.

“My interest in art stems from a deep sense of curiosity about how the world works,” says Bilodeau. “That merged perfectly with learning to draw and really taking the time to observe and examine the world around me, as well as my inner worlds, figuratively, conceptually and emotionally.”

Even as a child, Bilodeau demonstrated an innate ability to sustain a single-minded focus for long stretches of time and pour himself completely into whatever he was working on. This trait enables him to masterfully render the finest of details and smallest of forms that comprise each petal, each stem, and it is that space that Bilodeau drops into a meditative state.

“I get into the zone, so to speak,” he shares. “It’s so absorptive...time just goes by so quickly. It’s also a reverential place, a place to respect and appreciate the awe-inspiring nature of these flowers. They have such

pure color. They have a fragrance. They just announce themselves with their aliveness. It jolts us to encounter them and the endless possibilities that emerge from nature, and how beautiful it can be.”

He draws a comparison to seeing a sunset or hiking to a lookout, and how the sublime quality of the landscape washes over us. “It’s equally so with the microcosm—to gaze into these folds and patterns and textures is to be awestruck by the complexity and variation. There are worlds within worlds and to really stop and take in the wonder it inspires is truly rejuvenative.”

*Bloom*, consisting of a dozen-plus new works ranging in scale from 60 by 48 inches to 9 by 9, opens on January 20 and remains on view through February 4. ●

**Arcadia Contemporary** 421 W. Broadway • New York, NY 10012 • (646) 861-3941 • [www.arcadiacontemporary.com](http://www.arcadiacontemporary.com)

**4**  
*Daffodils Daffodils*  
Daffodils, oil on panel,  
36 x 30"

**5**  
*Quiet Light*, oil on panel,  
30 x 36"