



COLIN DAVIDSON

VARIATIONS

OliverSearsGallery

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Oliver Sears Gallery is pleased to announce 'Variations' an exhibition of fourteen new paintings by Belfast born artist, Colin Davidson. Having spent many years focusing on oversized portraits of human heads, and after a shorter period painting nudes from life, 'Variations' sees Davidson immersed in a single, extravagant bouquet of flowers. Observing this luscious arrangement of flowers, branches and leaves bloom, wilt, shrink and decay in his studio over eleven months, Davidson writes that he was "eventually painting nothing but the memory of the arrangement".

It was music, however, that led him to this intensely creative period when he began to respond pictorially to Elgar's Enigma Variations - a piece of music he had known for many years. Written in 1899, the fourteen Variations represent characters in the composer's life - musical equivalents of sketches or portraits. Beyond the notes Elgar attached to the music detailing the individuals, he also suggested that the work could 'be listened to as a piece of music apart from any extraneous consideration.' Davidson, too, remarks that the music drove him to find an equivalent motif and the bouquet, made by Janet Browne (The Flower Room, Belfast) became the source.

Fourteen works on canvas represent Davidson's response to Elgar's (fourteen) Variations. And they vary in scale, in focus and in volume. Lush, vivid imagery becomes more muted, less defined until abstracted from a very recent past. Davidson does not describe these 'Flower' paintings as Still Life. For a man who has examined the diversity of the individual over years of sittings with his subjects and confronted the memory of profound loss at close quarters, perhaps these new compositions, with Elgar's beckoning, are ciphers that now give Davidson permission to make art on his own terms. To say something fresh on the subject of flower painting is almost impossible. Colin Davidson's constant evolution as a painter, shackled to his own emotional intelligence ensures that, here, it's the mystery of painting that endures.

FOR C.A.E.

Oil on linen
145 x 127 cm
2018



FOR H.D.S-P.

Oil on linen
51 x 46 cm
2018



FOR R.B.T.

Oil on linen
117 x 127 cm
2018



FOR W.M.B.

Oil on linen
94 x 101.5 cm
2018



FOR R.P.A.

Oil on linen
117 x 127 cm
2018



FOR YSOBEL

Oil on linen
28 x 30.5 cm
2018



FOR TROYTE

Oil on linen
61 x 56 cm
2018



FOR W.N.

Oil on linen
117 x 127 cm
2018



FOR NIMROD

Oil on linen
51 x 46 cm
2018



FOR DORABELLA

Oil on linen
145 x 152 cm
2018



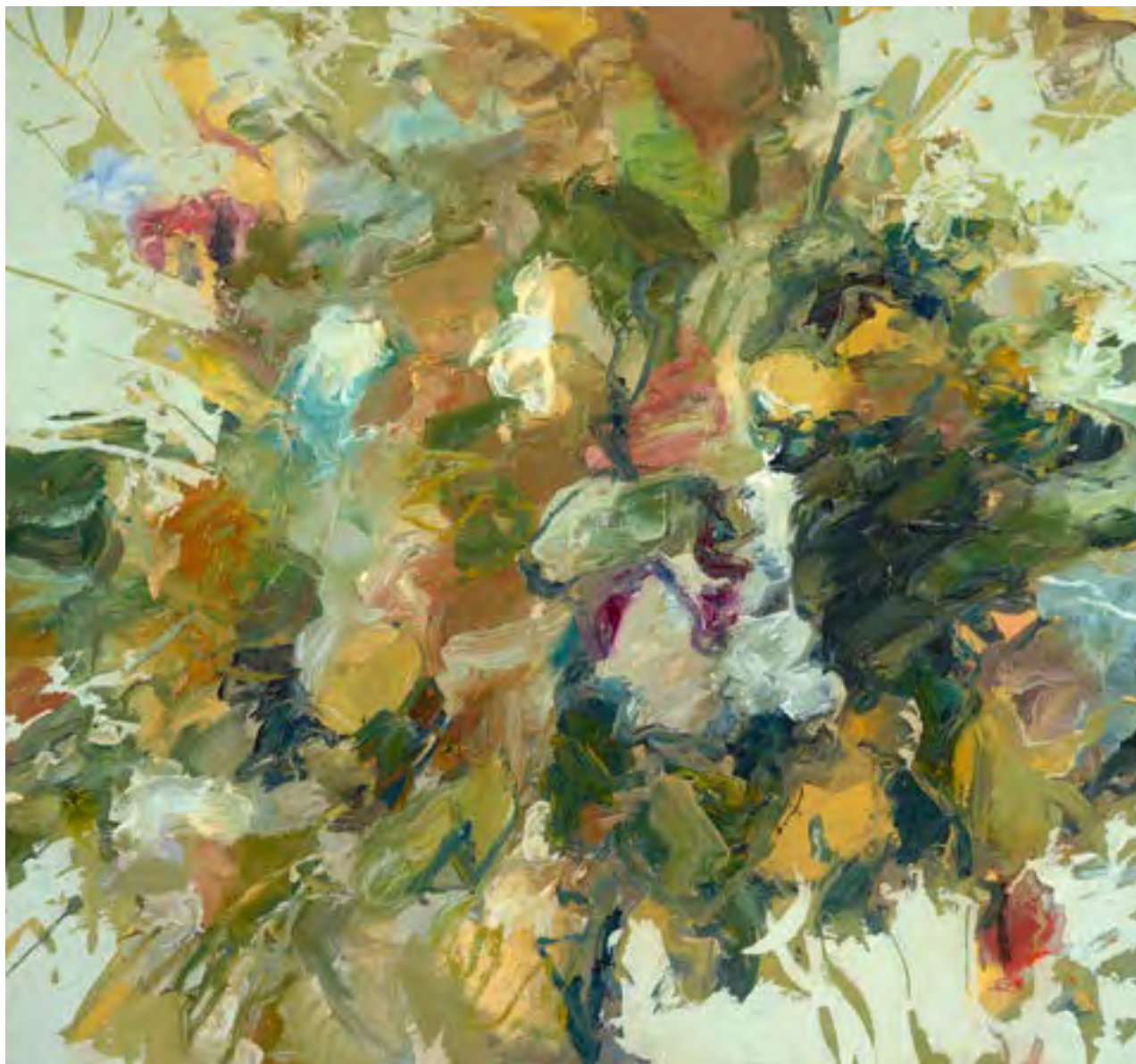
FOR G.R.S.

Oil on linen
117 x 127 cm
2018



FOR B.G.N.

Oil on linen
94 x 101.5 cm
2018



FOR***

Oil on linen
28 x 30.5 cm
2018



FOR E.D.U.

Oil on linen
145 x 152 cm
2018



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BIOGRAPHY

Colin Davidson is a contemporary artist, living and working near Belfast, Northern Ireland. Since graduating in 1991 from the University of Ulster with a 1st-class honours degree, he has structured his practice in themes, and since 2010 his focus has been on painting grand scale portraits, which have won widespread recognition and many international awards.

As well as numerous commissions, Davidson's portrait sitters have included Brad Pitt, Ed Sheeran, Liam Neeson, Brian Friel, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Dame Mary Peters, Gary Lightbody, Marketa Irglova, Glen Hansard, Mark Knopfler and Seamus Heaney. His work is held in many public and corporate collections worldwide, including Queen's University Belfast, the Ulster Museum (Belfast), Standard Life (London), the National Gallery of Ireland (Dublin), the Standard Chartered Bank of Asia, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (Washington DC) and the National Portrait Gallery, (London).

Davidson's recent exhibition of portrait paintings, entitled 'Silent Testimony', reveals the stories of eighteen people who are connected by their individual experiences of loss through the Troubles - a turbulent 30-year period in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s onwards. This critically acclaimed body of work was on show at the Ulster Museum Belfast during 2015, before embarking on a tour which included the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, Dublin Castle and the United Nations NYC.

In December 2015 he was commissioned by TIME Magazine to paint the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, for the cover for its 'Person of the Year' issue. In 2016 Colin Davidson was invited to paint an official portrait of HM Queen Elizabeth II, which was unveiled later that year. He is currently working on an official portrait of President Bill Clinton, due to be unveiled later in 2018.