



Fresh Ideas: Suzy Abrahams

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Fruits of her labour

Suzy Abrahams, 48, is a resident artist at the Fountain Gallery, Hampton Court. Her new exhibition, *Exotica*, is a collection of exotic fruit paintings inspired by her recent trip to South Africa. She speaks to ALITA HOWE about her art...

What led you to become an artist?

I trained and worked as a graphic designer for a number of years and then about five years ago I went to a pastels course which re-ignited my inspiration to paint. I did a few exhibitions with a friend and then last year I joined the Fountain Gallery as a resident artist.

What does being a resident at the Fountain Gallery involve?

It is a co-operative gallery with 18 artists, including myself, who share the running of the gallery. It is a very interesting gallery and a really good place to exhibit. We all have a two week show each year and guest exhibitions as well.

Exotica was inspired by your re-

cent travels to South Africa and some of your previous collections resulted from trips to Brazil and Spain – what is it about travelling that inspires you?

I have a love of travel and I look at everything when I am away. I love the excitement of seeing new places and the light is so different in the southern hemisphere. I ate a lot of exotic fruit in South Africa so when I came home I searched my local supermarkets for the fruits I'd eaten and spent a lot of time studying them. I found the cape gooseberry and did a series of three paintings on them. Its delicate leaves are so interesting to paint.

What is your favourite medium to work in?

Acrylic. I have moved from plain acrylic to mixed media where I incorporate materials such as sand to give the painting texture or dimension. Most of the paintings in the *Exotica* exhibition have been painted in acrylic and mixed media using different grains of sand. I like acrylic because it dries quickly which allows me to work fast.

Are you looking forward showcasing your *Exotica* exhibition?

Yes. The Fountain Gallery is great because you do have that direct contact with the public and it's nice to be able to explain your inspiration to the buyer.

Exotica runs from July 24 to August 5. Visit suzyabrahams.com or fountaingallery.co.uk.