

There Are Always Flowers For Those Who Want To See Them

Kate Friend

3 April - 16 May 2025

Test everything, retain what is good. - 1 Thessalonians 5:21



Elderflower I, Notre-Dame Du Laus, France, July, 2024

C-type colour print.

Signed and numbered verso.

Standard: 80 x 65cm, edition of 5 + 2 APs

Large: 153 x 122cm, edition of 3 + 1 AP



Rough Hawksbit, Fátima, Portugal, April, 2024

C-type colour print.

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During the making of this work, I lost control of my car on a steep 1500m altitude mountain road leading from La Salette Fallavaux – one of France’s most visited Marian apparition sites. The car rolled 180 degrees off the edge of the road but was held by a bank of trees. Without those trees the car would have continued to fall, and I would be dead. But I not only survived, I emerged without a scratch.

- Kate Friend

There Are Always Flowers For Those Who Want To See Them is a new series of 24 works by the British artist Kate Friend made at Vatican-approved Marian apparition sites (sites of alleged visions of the Virgin Mary).

The artist comments:

I was curious about faith, influence, the power of apparitions, and the designation and worship of relics. I was drawn to the question of whether holy ground, visited by millions, could affect the flowers that grew there, and whether it could shape my work. I wanted to explore how a holy site can create a Damascene moment. I did not know when I began, the extent to which I would end up with a Damascene moment of my own.

Each work comprises a photograph of a single flower, or type of flower, found growing wild at the apparition site. The flower is then isolated from its environment and photographed inside a travelling reliquary: a gold open-fronted box that was transported to each site. The interiors are full-colour 'voids' in reference to reliquary interiors. The title of this body of work is a quote from Matisse's *Jazz*, 1947. Matisse's *Chapel and vestments*, created for the Rosary Chapel in Venice, France, were of great inspiration.

The 'Damascene moment' the artist refers to occurred when she had a narrow escape from a catastrophic car accident when visiting the final Marian apparition site for this project. This event marked a poignant and extraordinary conclusion to the artist's spiritual exploration.

There are hundreds of Marian apparitions - alleged visions of the Virgin Mary - throughout the world but only 16 that are approved by the Holy See. This balancing of spirituality with rationality was a sensation the artist wanted to feel up close. Over the course of seven months, Friend travelled to four approved Marian apparition sites, seeking flowers at each location:

Fátima, Portugal

Notre-Dame du Laus, France,

La Salette-Fallavaux, France,

Basilica Parrocchiale di Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, Santuario Madonna del Miracolo, Rome, Italy



The artist came to the work with the intention to 'be open to the subtle longings we have for something greater than what empirically exists.'

Each work is titled with the name of the flower, the site at which it grew and was photographed, the month, and the year. There are 24 works in total, in reference to the biblical interpretation of 24 as symbolising Divine order and completeness. The colours in this series relate to the liturgical calendar and colour significance in the Catholic Church.

Green - Life, Hope, Anticipation

Purple - Penance, Sacrifice, Preparation

Red- God's love, Blood, Fire, Celebration of Martyrs

Blue - Constancy, Fidelity

Rose - Joy

White - Purity

Gold - Light, Glory

Lyndsey Ingram comments:

When Kate first discussed this idea with me, I was excited about the quest-like element of this project, going on a pilgrimage, finding something unexpected, creating a relic from it and capturing it in a photograph. What made the project even more profound is that during the course of this journey, Kate Friend had a near-death experience, prompting us to wonder whether her lucky escape was a coincidence or a miracle, and to question our own beliefs about Divine intervention. The wildflowers she captures in her photographs are there for all of us to encounter. If you make that pilgrimage, these flowers will be there for you. Whether they are holy or not is for each of us to decide.



Photo of Kate Friend's overturned car held by the trees above a ravine, after it rolled off the road at La Salette Fallavaux

To accompany the exhibition, a pocket-sized book will be published by Ridinghouse and Lyndsey Ingram. The book design is in reference to pocket-sized prayer books that are said to have stopped bullets and saved lives during WWI, and as recently as 2023 in Ukraine. The book features an accompanying essay by Emily LaBarge.

In this new series, as well as the rest of her practice, Kate Friend's constant subject matter is flowers, which she photographs in a portrait-like way, investing them with a permanence and expressiveness that belies their fragile and transitory nature. The artist comments:

A plant is often in three states at once. Simultaneously budding, flowering and fading. Flowers are how I understand cyclical time, and my own place in the perpetual universal cycle. Through flowers I discover restraint, humility, mortality, transcendence. The tension between the seen and the unseen, permanence and transience, magnificence and simplicity. Their beauty is deeply cathartic. In my work I try to do justice to that beauty, to that moment, and to the tenuousness of our time. I am inspired by Aldous Huxley's description of flowers as 'a bundle of minute, unique particulars in which, by some unspeakable and yet self-evident paradox, was to be seen the divine source of all existence.



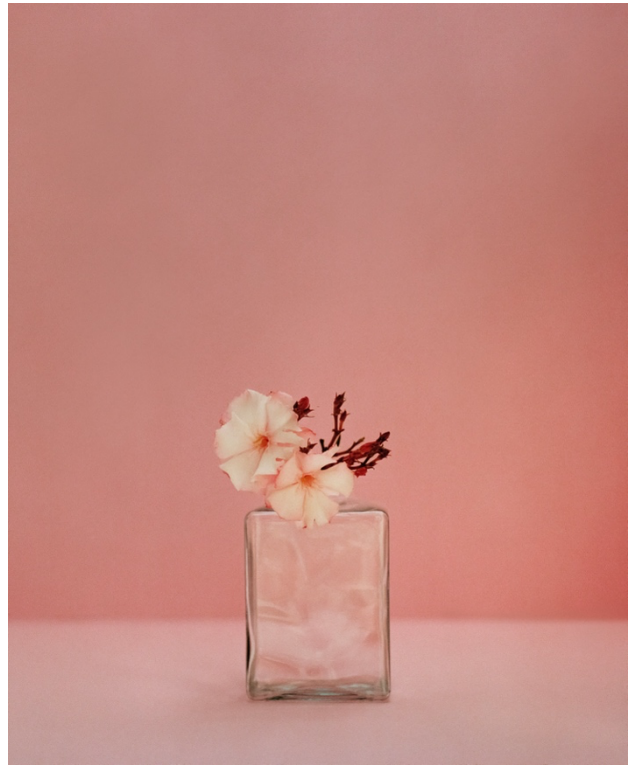
Morning Glory, Fátima, Portugal, May, 2024

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Oleander, Fátima, Portugal, May, 2024

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