

PRESS RELEASE



MACM
MUSEE D'ART CLASSIQUE DE MOUGINS

VANITAS

Jake WOOD-EVANS

15/10/2021 - 30/01/2022

Jake Wood-Evans

B. 1980, Devon, UK

In an age dominated by screens and pixelated image, Jake Wood-Evans' work feels like a welcome antidote. Drawing on the legacies of Old Masters, his intention is to capture the essence of these historic works without replicating them, depicting familiar, yet obscured subject matter.

Creating ethereal images that are both unsettling and beautiful, Wood-Evans' powerful use of light emerges from a loose and instinctive application of paint. His oil paintings shimmer with luminous and intense layers of colour as bold marks, dripping oils and scored surfaces sit in company with fine, delicate detail.

Describing his work as "a process of conflict with the ambiguous space between representation and abstraction", Wood-Evans resists the urge to provide easy readings or instantly accessible compositions. He invites the viewer to pause and quietly contemplate a series of multi-layered paintings that denote a common visual language built through our shared history and consumption of art imagery.



Wood-Evans' work has been exhibited at galleries in London and across the UK, as well as international art fairs. He has worked with museums including Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery and The Holburne, Bath. Wood-Evans' work can be found in private collections internationally, including collections in New York, Malaysia, London, Antwerp and Miami.

He holds a BA Hons in Fine Art from Falmouth University, and was subsequently awarded a scholarship from the Royal Academy for classical study at the Prado museum in Madrid. The artist currently lives and works near Lewes, East Sussex.

“Referencing the works of art that I do, shows my deep admiration for them. I suppose I’m attempting my own kind of art history archaeology.”

Jake Wood-Evans

VANITAS

Jake Wood-Evans' new body of work, entitled *Vanitas*, forms his first solo exhibition at the Mougins Museum. Influenced by traditional '*vanitas*' artworks that symbolise the transience of life and painted during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the artist uses inspiration from the past while simultaneously engaging with a distinctly contemporary mood.

The pieces combine the possibility of an attempted communal return to the beauty and bounty of nature with the inescapable reality in which we find ourselves at the present moment. In this sense, Wood-Evans' paintings convey a modern day *memento mori*; preoccupations with mortality, identity, histories, loss and fear have been hard to avoid in recent times. At the same time, this concept of the '*vanitas*' serves equally to inspire, motivate and clarify.

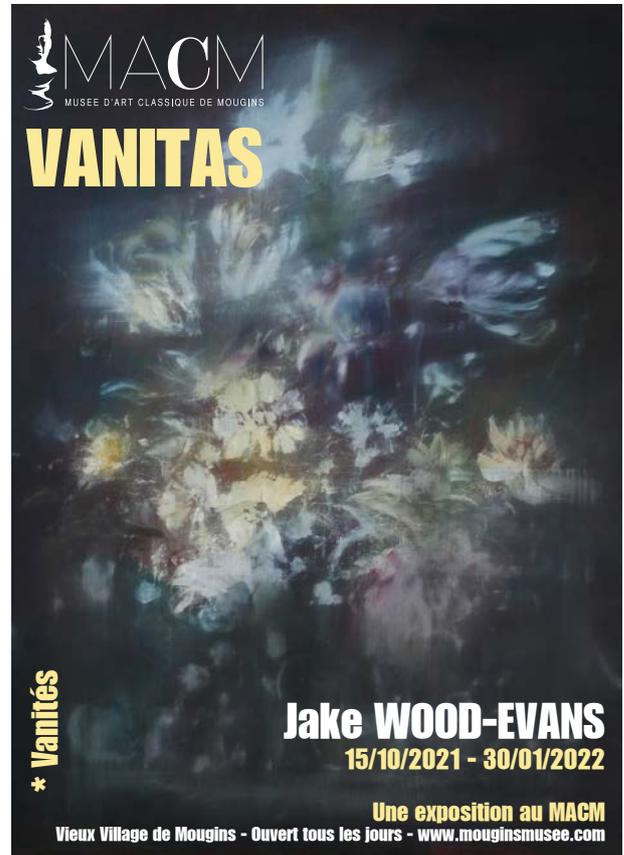
References within the collection draw from the Golden Age of painting in the 17th century. They include works by Andries Daniels, Jan Davidsz de Heem and female artist, Rachel Ruysch. Wood-Evans' ethereal flower paintings are formed of combinations and reorderings of these references, just as the original artists merged flowers from different continents and seasons in a single work, creating illusions of reality by rearranging and reusing individual floral studies in several subsequent works.

VANITAS follows Wood-Evans' last solo show, *Relic*, which referenced great altarpieces by Old Masters such as Rubens and Van Dyck, contemporaries of the Dutch Golden Age artists. In this exhibition, Wood-Evans' still life compositions present bountiful, authentically impossible arrangements of flowers while creatures and adornments provide powerful moralistic allegories. The paintings arc upwards in a celestial exhibition of light and darkness, at once representing the brevity of life and the promise of an eternal afterlife. The flowers seem to blossom upwards, reaching towards the heavens, while those blooms that fall below wilt and wither, shrouded in shadow.

In and of itself, Wood Evans' practice is a form of *vanitas*.

The subjects within the paintings that form this exhibition are, in turn, revealed and concealed behind tarnished and dissolving facades. Underneath dappled light, transient shapes form and reform across the surface of the linen. These works are made in moments of experimentation. Similar to Picasso's description of his own work as '*a sum of destructions*', Wood-Evans' builds and demolishes in the same instant. A canvas is rarely discarded, even though the artist admits his process often risks the overworking of an idea to the point of elimination.

Surfaces are reused and recycled, ideas are reborn and adapted while bearing the imprint of what has passed before. Details dissolve to form altered and retranslated versions of themselves, almost becoming visual equivalents of palimpsests. In Wood-Evans' *VANITAS*, the traces of previous workings remain and are celebrated, encouraged even, rather than denied, becoming integral to the final image..





Still life after Jan Davidsz de Heem I, 2021
Oil on linen
160 cm x 140 cm



Still life after Jan Davidsz de Heem II, 2021
Oil on linen
160 cm x 140 cm



*Drawing from Dutch Still
Lives I, 2021*
Graphite on paper,
172 cm x 138 cm



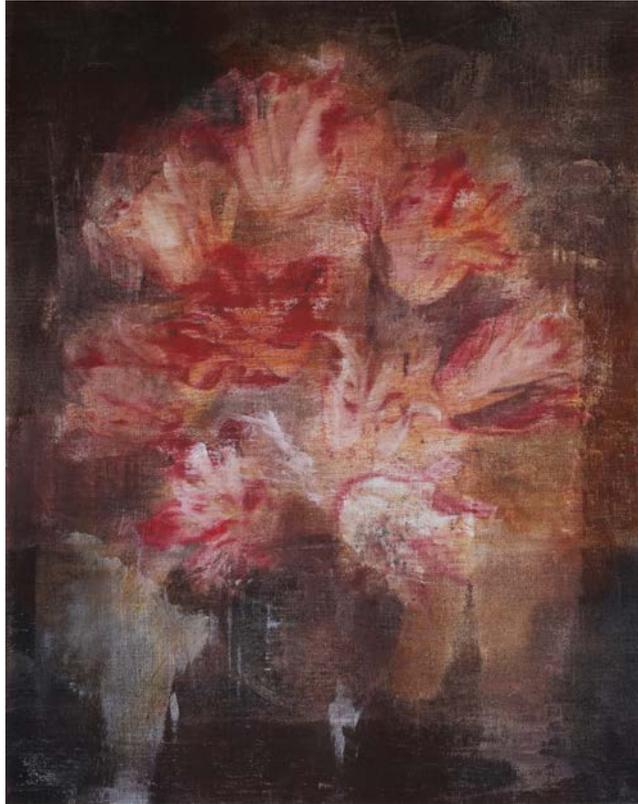
*Drawing from Dutch Still
Lives II, 2021*
Graphite on paper,
172 cm x 138 cm



Vase of flowers, after Jan Davidsz de Heem, 2021
Graphite on paper
75 cm x 60 cm



Still life with flowers, after Rachel Ruysch, 2021
Graphite on paper
75 cm x 60 cm



*Vase with tulips, after
Andries Daniels, 2021*
Oil on linen
57 cm x 45 cm



*Flowers in a vase, after
Rachel Ruysch, 2021*
Oil on linen
67 cm x 56 cm



VANITAS

an exhibition by
Jake Wood-Evans

15 October 2021 - 30 January 2022

MACM (Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins)

Open every day

10am - 6pm

32 rue Commandeur,
06250 Vieux Village de Mougins

Only 25 minutes from Nice Côte d'Azur airport
& 15 minutes from Cannes

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