



RUBY DICKSON

Rarity Is Commoner Than You Think

29 May – 28 June 2025

Drawing on her Jamaican and Irish heritage, Dickson's new body of work explores the circulation and representation of Caribbean floriculture, focusing on flowers transplanted from Jamaica to the UK for decoration, agriculture, and commerce. These plants, viewed through a Western gaze, carry a layered history of displacement, nostalgia, and transformation.

Though seemingly a departure, Dickson's flower paintings build upon her acclaimed Kim Kardashian portraits (2024). They borrow the compositions, gestures, and abstracted backgrounds that defined that earlier series to investigate the tokenisation of beauty and its continual redefinition in visual culture. As with her previous work, Dickson sources images from the internet as her starting point, connecting contemporary digital imagery to historical processes and painting traditions.

The exhibition's title, "Rarity Is Commoner Than You Think," which Dickson discovered on a blog listing endangered Caribbean flora, perfectly encapsulates her artistic intention. Embracing the internet's casual grammar, the phrase distills the tensions she explores between the common and the singular, the vernacular and the historical.

These tensions materialise in Dickson's artistic choices. While her dark backgrounds reference Dutch still life painting, her rapid execution and vigorous brushstrokes create a compelling dialogue between figuration and abstraction, ornamentation and formalism.

Dickson transforms perhaps the most universal of artistic motifs, flowers, into vehicles for examining how familiar imagery functions as a repository for both private and collective desire. From roses and hibiscus to achiote flowers, love-bush, poppies, and lilies, she portrays species that evoke the transformation of natural elements into commodities and cultural signifiers, while tracing the colonial legacies embedded in their histories.

In doing so, Dickson's flowers serve as a lens to examine how origins can be rewritten, or gradually erased by dominant political forces. Drawing connections between traditional still life painting and colonial expansion, her work investigates how tensions between notions of "Britishness" and "Blackness" can be carried within natural organisms and landscape formations.

"Flowers tell stories of movement and transformation, they've been uprooted, transported, replanted, and reimagined, much like people. I'm interested in how we navigate spaces shaped by others while finding new ground within them."



Ruby Dickson was born in 1996. Selected exhibitions include *Maybe my fairy-tale has a different ending than I dreamed it would. But that's OK.*, N1COLETT1, London, UK (2024); *Independent Art Fair*, New York, USA, with *Harlesden High Street* (2023); *Minor Attraction*, London (2023); *Maybe The Real Art Is The Friends We Make Along The Way*, The London Arts Board, London, UK (2023); *Apt. 237, 3537*, Paris, FR (2023); *In The House Of Babylon*, site-specific project for *Metrolands Brent Biennial*, *Harlesden High Street* and *Notting Hill Carnival*, London, UK (2022), *Summer Show*, *Eve Liebe Gallery*, London, UK (2022); *FRIDGE – Brave New World*, *Anderson Contemporary*, London, UK (2022); *Imagining Otherwise*, *Harlesden High Street*, London, UK (2022); and *When Shit Hits the Fan, Again*, *Guts Gallery*, London, UK (2021). Dickson graduated with a BA in Fine Art and Art History from Goldsmiths, University of London (2017).