

Jo Reitze 'SURROUNDS'
at The Hive Gallery
Ocean Grove
5 - 28 May

Artist's statement:

'SURROUNDS' for me refers to our garden in Surrey Hills. All my paintings on show in this exhibition at The Hive have been completed at home, 'en plein air'. This special place has provided both solace and inspiration for forty years. I am a keen gardener, so my expressive paintings are more than visual records, they are a celebration of nature's beauty and the restorative qualities of gardens and gardening.

I have freely executed these joyous oil paintings with lyrical, almost calligraphic mark-making. Their vibrant colours are enhanced by strong tonal contrasts. As in nature, green hues create unity. They capture the essence of my wild overgrown garden with its lush vegetation and luxuriant character. I specialize in the ordinary. I love plants that self-seed or grow easily from cuttings, if the ground is covered, I am happy. Most of my paintings will include geraniums, plectranthus, daisies, spider plants and centaurea as well as a range of foliage and strappy leaves. Viewed mostly from close vantage-points, plants are clearly identifiable. They enclose the viewer in a beautiful environment, despite their open compositions suggesting that more is beyond. Seasonal changes are evident particularly in the two series where, like Monet, I have painted the same spots throughout the year in summer, autumn, winter, and spring.

It is a pleasure to exhibit at The Hive again, this time with Alexandra Lewisohn's exquisite intimate interiors that often include the flowers that are prominent in my garden.