

Flora and Fawna  
Artwork Statement  
By: Vian Borchert

To begin, I am reminded by Rainer Maria Rilke's words in his work, "Letters to a Young Poet" about the importance of nature and looking inward where he states, "*then come closer to Nature. Then, as if no one had ever tried before, try to say what you see and feel and love and lose.*"

For this exhibit, the paintings illustrate imaginative floral landscapes that hint on mysticism, literature and love for nature. The works created are done from imagination. They are imagined landscapes that insinuate romance and forgotten tales.

When I set upon creating these floral landscape paintings, I figured I had put a tall order upon myself. I wanted the paintings to look pensive, whimsical, romantic, subdued, deep and full of grandeur while remaining contemporary, suggestive and engaging. I wanted them to be awe striking while being silently powerful. I wanted them to not only be pretty paintings of a floral theme but to be much more... I wanted them to become their own entity. The works created are done from imagination. They are imagined landscapes where I had to dig deep into every brain cell to imagine a romantic field filled with flowers, romance and mysticism.

Gardening is one of my favorite escapes, and daily observation of the blooming flowers is somewhat of an obsession of mine; nevertheless, making floral art is something I rarely gravitate to. I took this thematic project as a challenge to allow myself to dig deep into my own garden of creation to find fields of flora and hidden prairies along with withering flowers in seek of a second Spring - all wanting and yearning to spring out of me to bloom into the canvas and foretell their own stories that hint on romantic feelings while darkness and light step into the spotlight and become players in the color fields.

In the "Flora and Fawna" theme, I had realized this would be quite the challenge. Green is one of my least favorite colors and I've seldom met a flower in art history that I've liked. So, in a challenging task, I had to reinvent the wheel of flora in the arts.

For this thematic art exhibit, I wanted nature to speak up with volume and tell stories of far away lands where lovers caressed each other in the highlands and where flowers danced in the gentle breeze.

In this theme, I recollected my memory from the English literature classics that were part of my formal education.

The works represent abstractions collected from bits and pieces of leftover memories of classical literature that I read as a child. Some of my favorite literary novels from "Wuthering Heights" to "The Secret Garden" make an entrance in these works and hint on snippets of a love story gone wrong, and a garden forgotten in time to be found again by a wandering child. In the paintings I return to my childhood to revisit these tales. "Wuthering Heights" is a novel by one of my favorite authors, Emily Brontë, written in 1847. Thourough the art's creation, I delved into my imagination as a child remembering how I imagined each chapter and the setting of the story in the West Yorkshire moors. The deep cool green of the Yorkshire moors always struck a nerve in my imagination even as a child. I dreamt of the main characters, Heathcliff and Cathy, running into the fields to embrace secretly away from the forbidding

family. The wild, stormy countryside becomes a huge part of Heathcliff's wild love towards his soul mate Cathy who dies at a young age leaving a haunting ghostly feeling to take over the remainder of the novel. The isolation of the rural setting heightens along with the dramatic spiritual force that covers the fields. Thus, much like one of my all time favorite singers, Kate Bush, in her musical ode to the novel – the singer captures through the lyrics of her song “*Whuthering Heights*” the essence of my “Highland Moor” Painting.

These lines of the song play on the sense of drama that my painting alludes.

*“Out on the wiley, windy moors  
We'd roll and fall in green  
You had a temper like my jealousy  
Too hot, too greedy  
How could you leave me  
When I needed to possess you?  
I hated you, I loved you, too  
Bad dreams in the night  
They told me I was going to lose the fight  
Leave behind my Wuthering, Wuthering  
Wuthering Heights”*

**Side Note** about the renowned British singer-songwriter Kate Bush who rose to fame in the 1980's where now the singer sees a revamp of her career through her song “*Running Up That Hill*” which is famously used over and over again in the current celebrated show “*Stranger Things*” 4th season on Netflix. The show happens to also be one of my favorite shows as well that I thoroughly enjoy watching due to its sci-fi genre and mysterious storyline.

\* I've written a short poem to accompany each title of the five floral landscapes – here they are:

Painting Title: “Floral Mist”

Poem:

*“The Flowers whispered to the meadows  
and the valley echoed “I love you!”*

Painting Title: “A Sea of Flora”

Poem:

*“In a secret garden  
I buried a seed  
that bloomed and blossomed  
into a field”*

- Moreover, the idea of a “Secret Garden” symbolizes healing and how one's well being is transformed through keeping a garden which in return adds to our happiness and health.

Painting Title: “Baby Breath”

Poem:

*“Open skies  
Baby breath by the bridge  
Fresh breeze  
The grass on your feet*

*A smile upon your face  
All in a day"*

- This painting showcases the "Baby Breath" flowers in the foreground. Flowers that I grew up admiring since the white baby breath flowers were always included in floral bouquets to accentuate every floral arrangement that I can remember. Thus, I fondly recall the freshness and lightness of such flowers and their effortless subtle beauty.

Painting Title: "Over Fields"

Poem:

"And just like that  
the flowers understood  
how to embrace nature"

- The painting is executed in a painterly manner with a bird's eye view over fields taking in the whimsical landscape from up above.

Painting Title: "Highland Moor"

Poem:

"I stood there overlooking green heights  
and how the flowers shook  
at every heart beat"

In regards to "Fawna", this is symbolically represented as the haunting beast-like presence that seems to fill the air and fly within the atmosphere. In all the paintings there is a capture of two opposites: the dark and the light, the open and the closed, the soft and the harsh - all motifs that mirror life itself and its series of ironies that it throws upon our journeys.

Hence, I have to declare upon finishing these floral landscape paintings that I had surprised myself with the outcome and all the skills that were awakened within me through the sleepless nights of creating the work in the wee hours. At 3:30 AM, I realized I had created some of my best work as of yet that showcases not only my skills as an artist but digs deeper into the soul and pushes my artist spirit in each work. It seems losing my sense of time and going into the wee hours, the artist spirit does appear and is apparent in the works. The process of this creation felt like an out of body experience mingled with manual labor but also a labor of love. At the end, it is my love for nature that authentically comes out clearly through these works.