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Gina Kalabishis the artist more at home in the Australian bush

Kalabishis' images capture the power of nature, and her exhibition 'Romantica' will open on Saturday, March 18 at Flinders Gallery, Melbourne



If I didn't have your Love (after Leonard Cohen) 2023, oil on linen, 137cm x 198cm. Photo: Gina Kalabishis

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Gina Kalabishis presents her latest body of work which seeks to convey a romantic experience of landscape. It was inspired through her recent Gang Gang Artist Residency on the NSW south coast, and time spent camping at Banksia Bluff on Victoria's wild east coast over 2021.

Kalabishis, a lover of wildlife, has returned after two years of Covid lockdowns, to create colourful and dream-like images that capture the power of raw nature. Her exhibition 'Romantica' will be officially launched at Melbourne's Flinders Gallery on Saturday, March 18.

"I want these new images to trigger ideas that are at once nostalgic and also deeply, internally questioning," Gina Kalabishis says.

“I’ve used a somewhat subdued palette of pinks, blues and oranges to suggest the visual quality of a faded memory, of an experience that is now detached from reality or the sun damaged quality of printed images from the 50s and 60s. For me these colours also possess a kind of romantic character that make me think about the role romanticism might have to play in the 21st century as well as the possibility of rewriting of the history of female landscape painting. Does gender influence our view of nature and if so, can we avert future environmental catastrophes through a new, more attentive way of understanding our relationship to landscape?”



If I didn't have your Love (after Leonard Cohen) 2023, oil on linen, 137cm x 198cm. Photo: Gina Kalabishis

Kalabishis' paintings are an ode to the Australian bush, and depict an intricate memory of the light, the atmosphere, the fauna and flora; holding a "space of awe" as she describes her emotions as nature takes her away from her day-to-day thoughts, "becoming lost in something bigger than ourselves".

"Most of the paintings in *Romantica* are inspired by time spent on Yuin country while others depict scenes taken from Cape Conran Coastal Park along Victoria's far east wilderness coast."

Both places hold personal significance for Kalabishis, who has many life memories on those lands.

"This exhibition also seeks to draw attention to the life growing after the recent bushfires and storms and create awareness for climate change and its effects on Australia's natural landscape."



'You are always part of me now' – named after Van Morrison. Photo: Gina Kalabishis

For the Greek Australian multi-awarded artist, the perpetual cycles of natural life represent the art of falling in love.

In '*Romantica*', she captions the artworks with verses from classic poems -Kalabishis pays special tribute to Leonard Cohen- dedicated to romantic love while she removes her gaze from the animals or still life objects as the centrepiece and focuses on the wider picture, the background, the surrounding foliage, the repetitive patterns that allow something rare to grow where it seemingly does not belong.

Kalabishis' work is currently represented in major collections including the National Gallery of Australia and Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale. She has featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Spain, Asia and America while she has received an array of prestigious national and international awards.



Gina Kalabishis amongst her works. Photo: Supplied

When: Now – 25 March, Official opening on 18 March, 1-3pm (RSVP needed via assistant@flg.com.au)

Where: Flinders Lane Gallery, Nicholas Building, Level 1, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne