

Christine Johnson

Bio

Christine Johnson needs to look no further than her backyard to find the inspiration to paint nature, reports Chris Beck.

The first shape of a painting takes up an entire wall of Christine Johnson's studio in her backyard. An outline guides layers of oil paint that produce a rich work derived mostly from the garden. The range of cool, warm tones and her sense of light aim to give the work a meaningful beauty.

"When we are talking about beauty, nature is the source," Johnson says. "There is a deeper dimension to the work but I'm really happy if people enjoy (my paintings) for their beauty. Contemporary art hasn't valued beauty much in recent years. It's something I think needs to be restored because it is uplifting to look at something beautiful."

Johnson grew up in a big, rambling Edna Walling-designed garden in Malvern. She now lives in Balwyn, which was developed in the late 1940s and '50s when, she says, people were planting roses.

She walks around the area photographing and collecting flowers - "I always ask" - later floating them in a bowl of water and sketching them. Roses have been central to Johnson's work for the past four years.

Excerpt taken from "A flowering brush with beauty" By Chris Beck, The Age, May 29, 2004.