



PRESS RELEASE

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Exhibition Title: Isabelle du Toit – *Refuge*

Exhibition Dates: November 18 – December 30, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, November 18th, 4 – 7 pm



Isabelle du Toit
Royal Flycatcher, 2023
oil on canvas
24 x 30 inches

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Cris Worley is proud to present *Refuge – Isabelle du Toit*. This will be du Toit's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, November 18, from 4 to 7 p.m. *Refuge* will include new oil-on-canvas wildlife paintings exploring the ideas of safety, home, and comfort. The exhibition will be on view through December 30.

In *Refuge*, du Toit taps into a recent collective unconscious exploration of home and shelter. The pandemic, current world events, and natural disasters like Hurricane Ian, which ripped through du Toit's South Florida home, have laid bare the fragility of our shelter and safety. Du Toit states, "As an immigrant, the idea of refuge has always been an aspect of life that I like to explore...I'm intrigued by what shelter means to different people. Is it your house, your country, your community, your children, a spouse, a familiar surrounding, a job, or even your belongings?"

The fragility of a familiar, safe, and healthy place to thrive has also haunted our natural world due to human mismanagement of ecosystems. In du Toit's paintings, expertly crafted birds and frogs sit in her signature style, centered on a canvas of velvety black. Under a spotlight, these inquisitive creatures are vulnerable to their observers, clinging to one last piece of their natural environment for safety. The stark surrounding creates an uncomfortable yet striking background for the stunning beauty of each bird and amphibian to shine. The mushroom and stick props are a nod to Northern Georgia, where du Toit and her husband have and continue to find refuge after Hurricane Ian.

Deeply involved in wildlife conservation, du Toit explores our responsibility to preserve the natural world and ensure all species, including our own, find shelter and survival. Each canvas asks us what part we want to play in the future of our world - as a voyeur, predator, or savior.

Isabelle du Toit was born in Strasbourg, France and moved to South Africa with her family as a teenager. She received a Bachelor of Fine Art in Printmaking from Nelson Mandela University before moving to Texas in the mid-1990s, where she lived and worked for over 10 years. She now resides with her husband on the coast of South Florida. Du Toit's work has been exhibited nationally in Texas, California, Chicago, New York, Colorado, Seattle, and Florida, among others. Internationally, her work has been shown in London and Panama City, Panama. She was awarded the Moss/Chumley award from the Meadow Museum in 2010. In addition, in 2016 and 2020, she was a finalist for the BP Portrait competition at the National Portrait Gallery in London. In 2023 du Toit was included in the 2023 London Art Biennale.

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