



PRESS RELEASE

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Exhibition Title: Isabelle du Toit – *Vivarium*

Exhibition Dates: September 10 – October 24, 2026

Opening reception: Thursday, September 10th, 5-7 pm



Isabelle du Toit

Burrow Buddies (det.), 2025

oil on canvas

16 x 20 inches

Cris Worley is proud to announce a new exhibition of oil paintings by Isabelle du Toit, entitled *Vivarium*. This year marks the 25th year that Worley and du Toit have worked together. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, September 10, from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibition will be on view through October 24.

In *Vivarium*, Isabelle du Toit creates an imagined world in which animals, insects, and other living creatures become stand-ins for larger questions about difference, belonging, vulnerability, and coexistence. The exhibition takes its title from the Latin *vivus*, meaning “alive,” and from the enclosed environments designed to sustain and observe living

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things. For du Toit, the vivarium becomes both a metaphor and a point of departure: a contained world in which diverse forms of life exist alongside one another, each dependent on conditions that can be easily altered or disrupted.

Rendered with extraordinary precision in oil, du Toit's birds, mammals, and insects emerge from deep, often stark fields of color. Her characteristic attention to the individual—every feather, hair, wing, and surface carefully observed—gives her subjects a heightened presence. At the same time, the theatrical isolation of these creatures creates a sense of fragility and exposure. They are beautiful and self-contained, yet never entirely free from the possibility of human's encroachment.

Having lived between countries and cultures, du Toit brings a personal understanding of what it means to exist both inside and outside a particular place. In *Vivarium*, she considers belonging not as a matter of sameness, but as the possibility of difference existing without exclusion. By looking at the human world through the lives of animals, she quietly questions our tendency to categorize, separate, and determine who (or what) belongs.

The world of *Vivarium* is at once shelter and warning. It is a place where the fragile, the unusual, and the beautiful coexist, but where that balance is never guaranteed. Deeply engaged with questions of wildlife conservation and the impact of human activity on natural ecosystems, du Toit reminds us that diversity is not merely something to be admired from a distance, but something that requires care.

Ultimately, *Vivarium* proposes a more expansive understanding of coexistence—one rooted in curiosity, compassion, and our responsibility to protect the extraordinary variety of life around us. As du Toit suggests, nature may offer one of our clearest models for imagining a better world.

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. Following a long She now resides with her husband in the hills of north Georgia. Du Toit's work has been exhibited widely both and internationally She is the recipient of the Moss/Chumley award from the Meadows Museum. She was twice a finalist for the BP Portrait competition at the National Portrait Gallery in London. In 2023, she was included in the 2023 London Art Biennale, in 2024 the Chanciano Biennial in Italy as well as NordArd, Budelsdorf Germany.

Cris Worley Fine Arts is a Dallas, Texas based contemporary art gallery located in the Dallas Design District. With over 20 years of experience, Cris Worley is dedicated to promoting innovative work by contemporary artists at various stages of their careers.

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