



Finding joy in the everyday

We're all guilty of missing the pleasure to be found in the small things. Janice Walker speaks to artist Anita Klein about her stunning paintings which aim to celebrate every day occurrences

ANITA KLEIN is, without doubt, an incredibly talented artist. She studied at both Chelsea School of Art and Slade School of Art, and has exhibited across Britain, Europe, America, India and Australia, including at the ICA and the Royal Academy in London. Her works exude such a beautiful air of simplicity that you cannot help but go back for a second, lingering look. The simplicity is not demonstrated through a lack of skill or detail; it is in the everyday subject matter that she celebrates, the small things we often forget to stop and enjoy, from children's bath time to hanging out the washing. The more you study her paintings and prints, the more

you realise just how technically flawless they are; her confident use of colour, the classical composition and engaging subject matter.

Born in Sydney in Australia, Anita was 11 when she came to London with her mother and younger sister. The daughter of a Hungarian Jew, whose family lost everything in World War II, Anita has been keenly aware of the fragility of life since childhood.

'I am always conscious of how I would feel if everything was taken away from me. It's the small, everyday things that I would miss most, and it is those things that I choose to record,' says Anita. 'But my art is not just my story. I want everyone who views it to



recognise themselves and to appreciate the unremarkable, to find joy in the smallest things.'

Asked about the inspiration behind her angel pictures, Anita explains: 'I'm not sure what they mean. The beauty of visual art is that there can be as many meanings as there are viewers, and often the artist is surprised by their own subject matter. Angels have popped up in my work periodically for all the 35 years that I have been a full-time artist. I suspect that they may mean something about counting blessings; noticing how wonderful ordinary things are. I am not a particularly religious person, but I know that in Biblical tradition, angels often appear to

show the way forward when it is unclear. There may be something of that in my angels, and also the freedom of being able to fly is a kind of celebration and ebullience.'

Anita's humour and warmth is evident in every artwork, and anyone fortunate enough to view a collection of her work is given an insight that leaves you questioning whether you have just spent a day with an old friend and her loved ones or glimpsed into an album of long-forgotten moments in your own life. ♦

FIND OUT MORE

There is still time to catch Anita Klein's exhibition at Hayletts Gallery in Maldon, which runs until May 6. For more information, visit www.anitaklein.com or www.haylettsgallery.com