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CULTURE

Art review: Nick Miller — Rootless

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Still lifes of flowers may seem a bland and decorative art cliché to some. In Nick Miller’s impressive new show, they are transformed into tragic emblems of our impermanence. Painting flowers is a race against time — they begin to die as soon as they are plucked. Miller began to explore and record this process in his *Vessels: Nature Morte* paintings in 2013 following a residency in a Sligo hospice, when mortality was on his mind. Following the subsequent death of his parents, he has continued with this theme in *Rootless*, his first exhibition for the Oliver Sears Gallery. The flowers depicted are again on the turn, losing their bloom. The fairest things having fleetest end. These flowers have a strong, visceral presence. Looking at the bowed heads in *Fuschias*, you sense the transitory nature of life and beauty. His theme is made explicit in *Seaweed Ascophyllum*, which suggested to the artist his dying mother’s hair. Miller is an admirer of the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, who encourages an open and receptive relationship to art rather than an objective and judgmental one. The elegiac beauty of these works will certainly reward the engaged viewer.

Oliver Sears Gallery, Dublin, Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm; oliversearsgallery.com

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