

Fresh Paint

Inspiring new artworks, straight off the easel

Christine McArthur

The towering pile of fruit in this energetic still life is born of the artist's delight in painting the minutiae of her life. "It's the only thing I really know about and the small, everyday things fascinate me most," says Christine, who studied at Glasgow School of Art but has been experimenting with media effects since she school. *El Magnifico*, which uses paper painted with acrylic and features in her new show *Kitchen Stories & Garden Notes*, was inspired by the ambitious ways she piles up fruit at home. "It always collapses and I laugh at myself," she says. "But when I paint them, they stay put no matter how I pile them. It's like saying to the fruit, 'Try to get out of this!'"

Despite it being a happy painting, Christine still wanted a hint of menace, so began with a dark background, which she brightened as the work developed. "At the back of my mind I was trying to achieve the look of an Old Dutch or Spanish still life without the detail." She works mainly with a limited palette but adds incoherent colours to keep herself surprised and alert, also prioritising choosing her paper. "I like to get a beautiful surface on the work, something you want to touch," adds Christine. "I spend ages preparing the palette of painted papers using acrylic, always with a matte finish medium." And although she has worked in various media, these days she only uses what feels right to her, adding: "Don't follow the rules!"

Christine's *Kitchen Stories & Garden Notes* is at Thackeray Gallery, London W8, from 15 May to 1 June.
www.thackeraygallery.com

RIGHT *El Magnifico*, mixed media on panel, 76x76cm

TOP TIP

Try every crazy idea that comes in to your head. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain

