



REBECCA  
HOSSACK

ART GALLERY

## PRESS RELEASE

# *Just So* Sophie Walbeoffe

3 - 26 May 2023

The great theme of Sophie Walbeoffe's art is the Natural World: wild animals in their familiar habitats. Born in South Devon, well-travelled in India, and now living in Kenya, Walbeoffe brings an intensity of emotional engagement to her work, as well as a lifetime of close observation.



Sophie Walbeoffe, *Shere Khan, 'Now I'm going to close my eyes and count to ten,'* 2023, oil on canvas, 153 x 123 cm

Having studied Fine Art at Wimbledon School of Art and later with Cecil Collins at the Central School of Art, Walbeoffe then spent three formative years painting in Amboseli National Park, Kenya, guided by Dr. Cynthia Moss, the distinguished scholar of elephant behaviour. It was in this landscape that Walbeoffe developed her enduring fascination with wildlife – birds and beasts existing in the fragile balance of their environment, in all their vitality, colour and beauty.

The challenge of capturing this fugitive world in paint animates Walbeoffe's highly distinctive practice: 'When I work en plein air, I paint what I see very fast, usually with both hands. When in the studio, I paint what I feel and remember, more slowly.'

Walbeoffe's current exhibition, *Just So*, connects her enduring artistic concerns with the world of Rudyard Kipling's celebrated stories of animal life and lore in both Africa and India. This reflects both a personal inheritance (Walbeoffe's mother was Kipling's goddaughter) and a recent re-engagement with Kipling's writings, a rediscovery of their vivid charms and their complex, sometimes troubling, colonial contexts.

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Many of the paintings in the exhibition derive from an extended Kipling-inspired tiger-spotting trek that Walbeoffe made through the Satpura forest in remote Madhya Pradesh, India. The extraordinary beauties of this rugged terrain and its denizens (from tigers and leopards to antelope and sloth bears) are brilliantly captured in the flaring colours and commanding lines of her art. The majesty and character of the animals depicted carry, too, suggestive echoes of Kipling's great creations.

**About the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery:**

The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery is a contemporary art gallery challenging trends. Over the course of three decades the gallery has built an international reputation for innovation, individuality, energy and excellence. Rebecca Hossack has been a great champion of non-Western artistic traditions, and hers was the first art gallery in Europe to exhibit Australian Aboriginal painting, which it continues to promote.



Sophie Walbeoffe progress shot of *Tiger Tiger*, 2023, oil on canvas, 122 x 152 cm

**Listings information:**

*Just So*

3 - 26 May 2023

Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery,  
2a Conway Street, Fitzroy Square  
London, W1T 6BA  
Free admission

**For press enquiries:**

Please contact  
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**Gallery opening times:**

Monday - Saturday: 10 am - 6 pm  
Closed Sunday