



## Carmel Van Der Hoeven

### S I X E A S Y P I E C E S

The title and meaning of this stunning hexptych is taken from the 1970 film *Five Easy Pieces*, starring Jack Nicholson. The film refers to five piano compositions from Chopin, Mozart and Bach. Jack Nicholson's character, Bobby Dupea believes that he cannot do justice to these great composers and their five famous (easy) pieces without finding deep inner feeling for each composition. In contrast, Carmel Van Der Hoeven's *Six Easy Pieces* are best understood and fully appreciated when placed alongside the art masters who over a hundred years ago broke free of pure representative art. Far from being intimidated by this pastiche and unlike Bobby Dupea, Van Der Hoeven revels in the inner strength that these art masters created.

For centuries artists have sought to represent gardens, attempting to curate and present the munificence of nature. Monet and the impressionists signalled a move away from accuracy in art representation by using daubing techniques designed to capture an overall feeling beyond the faithful rendition of petals, grasses, stalks and stems. This is seen in his paintings, *The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil*, 1873 and *The Artist's Garden in Giverny*, 1900. Similarly, in 1887 Vincent van Gogh developed a form of swirling pointillism as demonstrated in his composition, *Garden with Courting Couples*, whereas Matisse in his composition, *Landscape at Collioure*, 1905 used extensive 'Fauvist' gestural lines to create an integrated cadence to his garden canvas.

While these compositions created a general blurring effect, during this same period, Gustav Klimt's, *Bauerngarten*, 1907, *Cottage Garden*

1905-7 and *Italian Garden Landscape*, 1913 retained and brought forward floral idiosyncrasies thus releasing garden representations from their actual location. In effect Klimt's paintings elevated the floral components rather than the gardens themselves.

Decades later, in 1950, Jackson Pollock abandoned any attempts to portray form and indeed content by creating a *Lavender Mist* canvas that defied systematic form in favour of a dense overwhelming immersive experience, suggesting that this is how a large lavender field impacts the senses. It is the viewer who connects the famous drips.

Finally, New Zealand artist Karl Maughan returned the genre of garden painting to some semblance of systematic order and symmetry with paintings such as *Huia East*, 2013. In an attempt to transcend simple representative art, all of these great master artists painted effortlessly from impressionism to post-impressionist, flirting with fauvism, eventually moving towards abstract expressionism. What else can be said?

Painting for *The Art of Hamilton Gardens* exhibition, at the *Welcome Swallow Fine Art Gallery*, Carmel Van Der Hoeven has been able to develop her own unique garden patterns; part post-impressionist, part expressionist and part abstract. This multiple pastiche approach borrows from her predecessors, yet she manages to create her own intricate rhythmic style using a vivid colour palette that is richly textured and full of movement. With this extraordinary contemporary focus, the artist plays upon both Klimt and Pollock by eschewing a specific garden context in favour of strong colour-laden brush strokes that bring drama and soul to each composition. At the same time Van Der Hoeven also imports van Gogh's swirling motion with a hint of

Matisse's gestural lines. The result is a veritable visual feast that is simply breath-taking.

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**From the artist:**

The Hamilton Gardens collection, *Six Easy Pieces* responds to the Gardens through emotion rather than realism. Instead of depicting them accurately, I use colour to convey the mood and atmosphere that each space creates.

Each piece is shaped by my personal experience within a specific garden. The palette, intensity, and composition reflect the energy I felt; whether calm, vibrant, or contemplative. The Gardens serve as the source, but the works themselves are expressive interpretations, capturing how these environments resonate with me rather than how they physically appear.

*Carmel van de Hoeven, April 2026*

*To better understand Carmel Van Der Hoeven's work, consult the compositions shown here that are referred to in the aforementioned text.*



Claude Monet, *The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil*, 1873



Claude Monet, *The Artist's Garden in Giverny*, 1900



Vincent van Gogh, *Garden with Courting Couples*, 1887



Henri Matisse, *Landscape at Collioure*, 1905



Gustav Klimt, *Bauerngarten*, 1907



Gustav Klimt, *Cottage Garden*, 1905-7.



*Gustav Klimt, Italian Garden Landscape, 1913*



*Jackson Pollock, Lavender Mist, 1950*



*Karl Maughan, Huia East, 2013.*



*Carmel Van Der Hoeven, Six Easy Pieces, 2026*