

Celia Francis

celiafrancis.artist@gmail.com

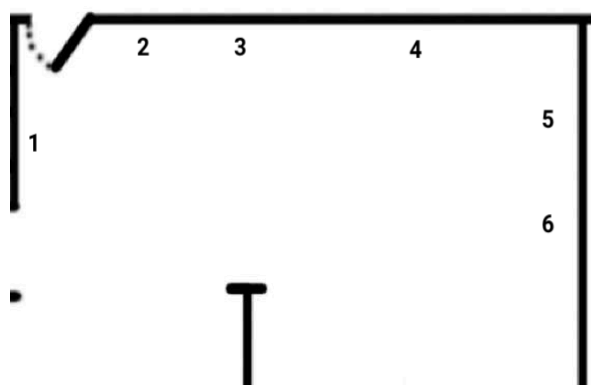
Instagram: @celiafrancis.artist

Celia Francis works intuitively, moving through fragments of memory as they surface and fade. Her paintings develop through a process of visual wandering, guided by what emerges in the act of painting itself. This method is open-ended and unpredictable, requiring her to follow the suggestions that arise through the material. In this sense, her practice recalls Tim Ingold's description of making as a process of "prising an opening and following where it leads," where the work does not simply answer to prior plans, but "joins [the maker] in their hopes" and imaginings.¹

She works through a rhythm of deletion and definition, using unassuming shapes and colour to build an image. As in *Mouse Named Willem*, some paintings remain suspended, never fully crossing from the semi-abstract into the figurative. Each work records this intuitive movement: thought and instinct, hesitation and decision, marks undone and forms reworked. This open, often chaotic way of working contrasts with the final compositions, in which figures appear fixed within structured, sometimes rigid spaces. These environments offer little context, leaving the forms or characters difficult to place and isolated within a kind of nowhere space: a fictional realm grounded at once in realism and the imaginary. Her paintings become a space one never fully inhabits.

From these remembered fragments, themes of theatricality, power relations, and humour begin to surface. Francis' work presents a cast of tragicomic, cartoon-like beings that draw the viewer into their remote and often uneasy worlds. Their stark presence invites attention and investigation. Developed through her instinctual handling of paint, these invented creatures are rendered with a curious certainty that is melodramatic, strange, and darkly humorous. Their environments remain unresolved, and their narratives ambiguous.

An undercurrent of masculine aggression runs through many of the works, something the artist herself has found both surprising and intriguing. In these particular paintings, Francis recognises feelings of ache and confusion that come from navigating a world that can feel difficult to understand or integrate into.



1. *Linoleum*, Oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, March 2026.
2. *Paradise*, Oil on canvas, 115 x 80 cm, April 2026.
3. *Mouse Named Willem*, Oil on canvas, 55 x 75 cm, March 2026.
4. *Mockingbird*, Oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm, March 2026.
5. *Phallic Horse*, Oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, April 2026.
6. *Happy Families*, Oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm, April 2026.

¹ Ingold, Tim. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, 2013, pp. 6–7.