

Pilar Corrias

Press Release

James Owens
Allus Do It Fer Thissen
9 July–27 September 2025

Pilar Corrias
51 Conduit Street
London W1S 2YT



James Owens, *Tension Between Lilies*, 2025. Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias, London

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Pilar Corrias is pleased to present *Allus Do It Fer Thissen*, a solo exhibition by James Owens. This exhibition forms part of Gallery 2, an occasional programme of exhibitions by non-represented artists at Pilar Corrias Conduit Street.

Drawing its title from the Yorkshire saying meaning 'always do it for yourself', *Allus Do It Fer Thissen* echoes a quiet call to resilience, an undercurrent that moves through each of the works in the exhibition. Entangled in foliage or submerged in rising undergrowth, the figures in these paintings traverse dense landscapes as beings negotiating survival, connection and uncertainty. In Owens's world, the natural and the human are not opposed, but entangled, each shaping the other in moments of subtle tension, care and survival.

In this new body of work, flowers lean, stretch and entangle; plants creep and communicate in hushed tones. Nature grows in unlikely places, pressing through cracks, reaching skyward with discreet determination. Owens depicts a world where nature becomes a language of survival, capturing the delicate tension between growth and decay, connection and isolation. This language echoes the myriad of figures' own quiet will to endure; the natural world becomes both collaborator and witness to their fragile acts of self-reliance. Whilst sometimes not welcomed, figures move in dialogue with their surroundings. Vines trace the line of a shoulder whilst limbs mirror the bending of branches. At times, Owens's figures draw near, bound by an urgency to shield one another from an ambiguous threat; at others, they appear adrift, searching without knowing what for.

Architectural elements recur in Owens's work. Set deep within an overgrown forest, a theatre stage emerges in "*In Heaven Everything is Fine*" (*Ode to Lynch*), 2025. The forest is dense, shrouding a puppet theatre that feels both inviting and alien, as if it were never meant to be there, yet always has. In *Tension Between Lilies*, 2025, a tent emerges between two figures who sit before a banquet of vegetation. The figures appear distant, the connection between each other and their surroundings unclear. Tents, houses, and shire-like structures appear in Owens's world as if stumbled upon, functioning less as shelters and more as intriguing interruptions, things to navigate around, to fear or perhaps to enter.

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Drawing inspiration from Modern British painters such as Edward Burra and Graham Sutherland, the work of Hilma Af Klint, and the visual vocabulary of cinema directors such as Lynch, Hitchcock and Bergman, Owens creates a world where natural and human forces alike persist in fragile harmony, each influencing the other through quiet tension, connection and the persistent impulse to survive.

James Owens (b.1995, Middlesbrough, UK) lives and works in London. He received a BA in Illustration from Camberwell College of Arts. In 2018, Owens received the Evening Standard Art Prize in conjunction with his display at the National Gallery in London. Recent solo and group exhibitions include *Wayward*, Newchild Gallery, Antwerp (2025); *Penumbra*, Newchild Gallery at Frieze No.9 Cork Street, London (2025); *The Silver Chord*, Huxley Parlour, London (2024); *Home and Away*, Matt Carey Williams at Gallery2, Seoul (2024); *Rooted*, Berntson Bhattacharjee Gallery, London (2024); *Out of Earth*, The Approach Gallery, London (2024); *Disembodied*, Nicodim Gallery, L.A (2024); *The Moth and the Thunderclap*, Stuart Shave Modern Art, London (2023) and *Dreaming of UFOs*, Lychee One Gallery, London (2024).

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