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Jimmy Wright 'Recent Paintings and Pastels'

*D. C. Moore Gallery
724 Fifth Avenue, at 57th Street
Manhattan
Through Thursday*

Sunflowers and other blooms are Mr. Wright's focus in this painterly show, untrammelled images so deeply expressive that they make van Gogh's florals look decorous by comparison. Such is the artist's skill at paint handling that his subjects, in color and in monochrome, burst on the retina like small explosions, their dense central hearts shooting out trails of petals and tendrils with a fluidity that pushes toward abstraction.

A case in point is "Moth to Flames," an inferno of a painting in which an intense floral center of blue touched with red is framed by a multicolored blaze of sepals and petals, attended by an infatuated gauze-winged moth.

In "Blue Bloom," the tone and mood are quieter. A blue petal-fringed flower streaming with creamy white tendrils floats on a summery ground of bright blue and greens, a lush, dreamy idyll of freedom.

These are not flowers as decoration but symbols of a deeper engagement with the vagaries of nature and the self.

GRACE GLUECK