



OFF SEASON

@offseasonmargate

Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th

January 2026

A Review

by Crystal D. Evans, MA Fine Art
for **Artphoria.co**

Photography by Crystal D. Evans

Off Season Margate

150 exhibitions

300+ artists

23 Jan – 25 Jan 2026



Off Season Margate is a weekend, artist-led festival that reclaims the town during its quietest months, transforming everyday spaces into sites of encounter, experimentation, and exchange. Rooted in openness and community action rather than spectacle, the festival unfolds across galleries, shopfronts, homes, and informal venues, inviting discovery through movement and chance. This review draws attention to *Artphoria*'s highlights from the weekend – selected works, moments, and conversations that capture the spirit of the festival and reflect on how artist-led initiatives can momentarily re-energise a place, particularly when visibility, footfall, and cultural momentum are most fragile.

Extracted work in the featured photo:
Let's Pretend by **Jas Dhillon**, 10 Market Street, Margate, 2026





Artist **Lupen Crook** stands alongside **Quiet Psyche**, 2025, Oil and mixed media on canvas 122 x 90cm

Artphoria's Crystal D. Evans met **Lupen Crook** to discuss *Making Strange*, a solo exhibition at Harbour Arm, Margate (CT9 1AP), open all festival weekend from 11am–6pm. Wheelchair accessible and suitable for under 18's, the exhibition presents an exciting new body of oil paintings developed through automatism and intuitive mark-making.

Drawing on antique children's books and personal iconography, Crook's practice operates as a sublime form of bricolage – assembling haunted nostalgias and remnants of memory into dense, symbolic fields.

Within his complex and mesmerizing compositions, hierarchies of information are deliberately unsettled; narrative order fractures and reforms, encouraging an embodied mode of perception in which the viewer becomes aware of their own oscillation between recognition and uncertainty, absorption and distance. The result is a strikingly original exhibition that offers a refreshing, immersive encounter with painting as both thought and experience.



Faith In Nature, 2025, Lupen Crook,
Oil on canvas, 122 x 90cm



Intermediaries, 2025, Lupen Crook,
Oil and Mixed Media on board, 24 x 16"



Quiet Psyche, 2025, Lupen Crook,
Oil and mixed media on canvas 122 x 90cm



Artist **Jemima Brown** stands alongside an extract of **Layers**, 2026, clothing, bathmat, fiberglass, rubber, jesmonite, acrylic, plastic, 105 x 170 x 170cm

Winter Break Me embraces the quiet, reflective rhythm of the off-season, transforming a historic Margate apartment – once a hotel and tavern – into an intimate, domestic exhibition space. The show's blend of sculpture, film, and performance by **Jemima Brown**, **Cecilia Bonilla**, and **Chiara Williams** responds to the building's shifting light, interiors, and remnants of past lives, encouraging visitors to slow down and engage fully. Afternoon tea, framed by the apartment's panoramic sunset views, adds a communal, performative layer that complements the exhibition's contemplative atmosphere.

Jemima Brown's practice stood out for its subtle interrogation of space and material presence. In conversation, Brown described the challenge of knowing when a piece feels finished. Standout works such as *Titty Kitty* and *Layers* reveal a careful choreography between form, site, and perception, encouraging viewers to pause and reconsider their spatial relationship to the work. Alongside Brown, Bonilla's collage and sculptural interventions and Williams's performative installations enriched the exhibition, making *Winter Break Me* a quietly immersive reflection on space, memory, and engagement.



Titty Kitty, 2026, Jemima Brown,
polyurethane, wood, plastic, fabric, jesmonite,
acrylic and cat whiskers, 50 x 85 x 60cm



Pig in Bathroom, 2026, Jemima Brown,
wicker/wooden chair, fabric, glass, rubber, plastic
and hair, 100 x 50 x 55cm



Clamp Clip, 2025, Chiara
Williams, folded felt, ducting
clamp, plastic lemon, steel
nail, 16.5x15.5cm



Untitled (spare hand)
2024, Cecilia Bonilla,
toilet rolls, mannequin
hand, approx 60 x 20cm



Layers, 2026, Jemima Brown,
clothing, bathmat, fiberglass, rubber, jesmonite,
acrylic, plastic, 105 x 170 x 170cm



Artist **Tatty Phoenix** stands in front of her immersive pop-up shop installation, complete with trolley and shopping baskets 2026

The former Primark in Margate's town centre was given a fresh, DIY lease of life as artists and makers from The Margate School transformed its ground floor into a vibrant pop-up marketplace. The takeover blended creativity, commerce, and local flair, offering visitors a playful, hands-on encounter with contemporary art.

Tatty Phoenix, born and bred in Margate, spoke passionately about her artistic journey – leaning into imprecision, making the most of scraps from the cutting room floor, and even spray-painting a trolley late into the night. Her bold, Pop Art-inspired works brought energy and immediacy to the space.

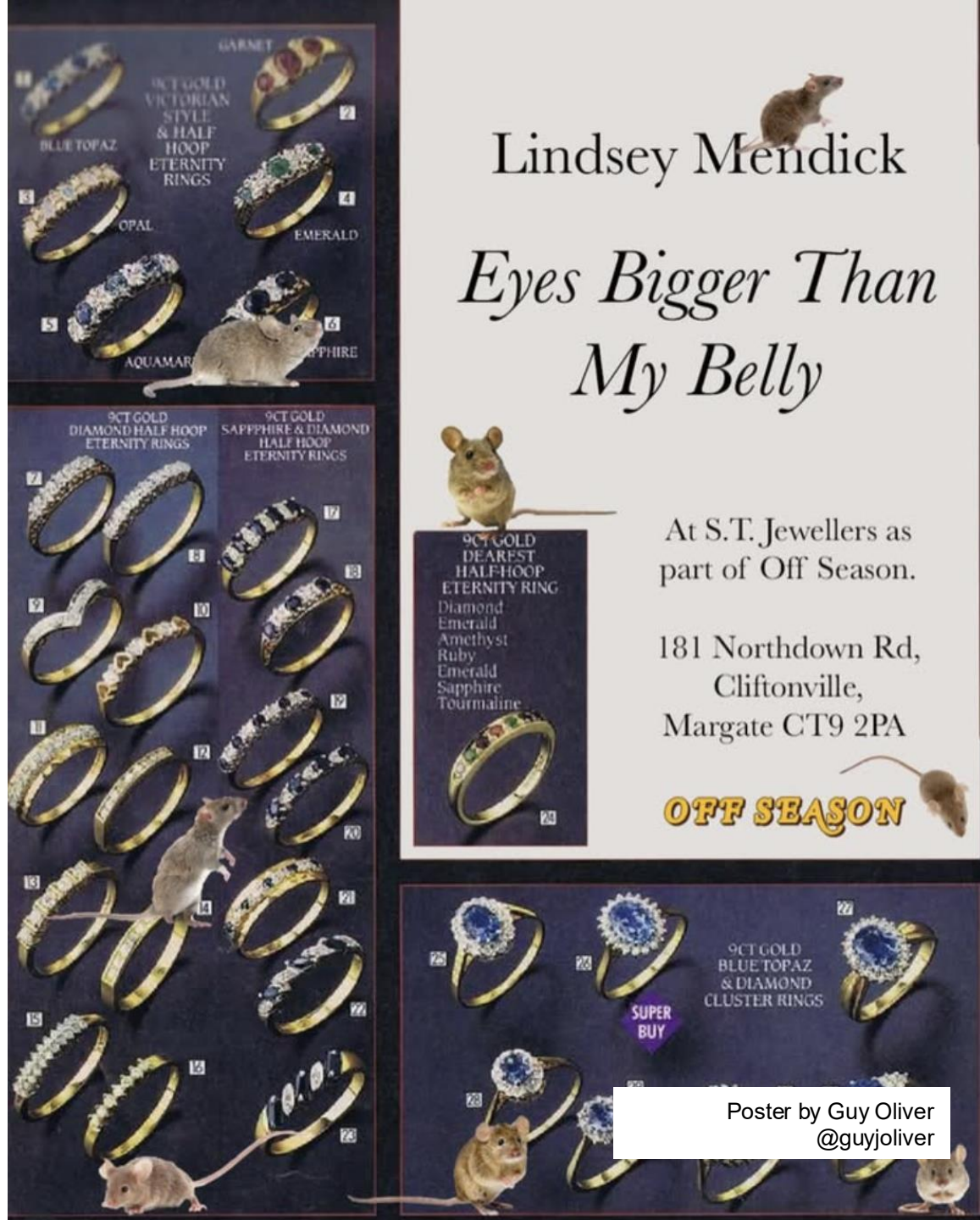
Newcomer **Lucy Lindsell** also stood out with her hyper realistic oil paintings, capturing reflective surfaces, water, and Margate scenes infused with the ever-changing beauty of its sunsets – a seaside she describes as part of her soul. Together, the artists turned a high-street interior into a momentary hub of local creativity, celebrating both the playful and the poetic aspects of place.



Untitled, 2026, Lucy Lindsell,
Oil on canvas with handmade frame



Artist **Lucy Lindsell** stands in
front of a display of her
original oil paintings



Lindsey Mendick's *Eyes Bigger Than My Belly* transformed the S.T. Jewellers shop front in Cliftonville into a theatrical rodent heist for the Off Season 2026 festival.

Inspired by childhood memories of pressing noses against jewellery windows, the masked, weapon-wielding mice wreak havoc in gluttonous pursuit of wealth and luxury, drawing on infamous heists and cinematic capers. Humorous and meticulously crafted, the work critiques greed, consumer desire, and the capitalist systems that endlessly produce – and withhold – objects of value. Viewable from the street, Mendick's miniature spectacle turns a commercial space into a stage for wit, satire, and storytelling.

Poster by Guy Oliver
@guyjoliver



Sculptural extracts from **Eyes Bigger Than My Belly**, 2026, Lindsey Mendick, as featured at S.T. Jewelers, Margate

Off Season Margate continues until Sunday 25th January, offering more opportunities to explore the town's vibrant artist-led interventions. From Harbour Arm to Cliftonville, Margate's galleries, pop-ups, and shopfronts are alive with inventive, playful, and thought-provoking works. For full details of venues, participating artists, and opening times, visit the festival website Off Season Margate or follow updates on social media via Instagram **@offseasonmargate**.

Whether discovering immersive paintings, hyperrealist seascapes, playful ceramic antics, or pop-up marketplaces, there is something for every visitor to enjoy – so take the chance to pause, explore, and see Margate in a refreshingly new light.

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Off Season - Margate

<https://www.offseasonmargate.co.uk/off-season-2026>

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23 January – 25 January 2026

Free entry



On Accessibility:

Venues marked as accessible on the listings indicate wheelchair and pram access. More detailed accessibility information provided by venues is available via the festival's [Google map](#). Visitors are advised to check individual venue websites for the latest guidance and any additional requirements.