

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

JESS ALLEN

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An abstract painting featuring a vibrant yellow section on the left side, which transitions into a large, textured teal and green area on the right. The brushstrokes are visible, giving the image a painterly, textured appearance. The word "BIOGRAPHY" is centered in the lower half of the image.

BIOGRAPHY

JESS ALLEN

b.1966, Dorset, UK
Lives and works in Cornwall, UK



Jess Allen's works emerge at the atmospheric crux between present and past, conjuring the liveness of an object or place we also sense is lost. Her paintings imply presence through absence through depictions of interior architecture and furniture—the ridge of a bench, a bent-up pillow—rendered in a rich color scheme dominated by deep reds, oranges, greens and blues. The shadow is explored intimately by Allen who casts shadows of figures or architectural features across the fabrics and walls painted in each background. Allen's shadows function like an inverted spotlight, creating focus and presence through absence. Crumpled cushions on sofas suggest a past human presence through their indentations. Areas of blankness within shadows allow space for thought. Light and shade index the passage of time, with shadows suggesting fleeting moments created by specific angles of the sun's rays and the earth's axis. Shadows are potent but mutable, much like memories that are evocative yet hazy. They capture fleeting moments in time and, when represented, memorialize specific instants within their transient forms. "Shadows interest me immensely because they are silent and ephemeral. They are evocative and, like memories, they are hazy. In a way, they are a minimal representation of our physical selves," Allen writes.

Jess Allen (b. 1966; lives and works in Cornwall; UK) studied at Camberwell College of Arts and Falmouth School of Art. Allen has had recent solo exhibitions with Unit, London, UK; Scroll Gallery, New York, NY, US; Blue Shop Gallery, London, UK. Her recent group exhibitions have been with Sens Gallery, Hong Kong, CN; Gallery Mark, Seoul, SK; Studio West Gallery, London, UK; and G/ART/EN/ Gallery, Como, IT. Allen's works are held in the public collections of Femmes Artistes du Musée de Mougins (FAMM), France; Elie Khouri Art Foundation, Dubai, UAE; Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castellet, France; and The Corridor Foundation, China.

A painting of a theater interior. The foreground shows a close-up of a red upholstered seat with dark, curved lines indicating the seat's structure. The middle ground features a wooden balcony with a dark railing. The background is a light, warm-toned wall with soft shadows, suggesting a stage or a large room. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

SAMPLE WORKS

**sample selection does not reflect current availability*



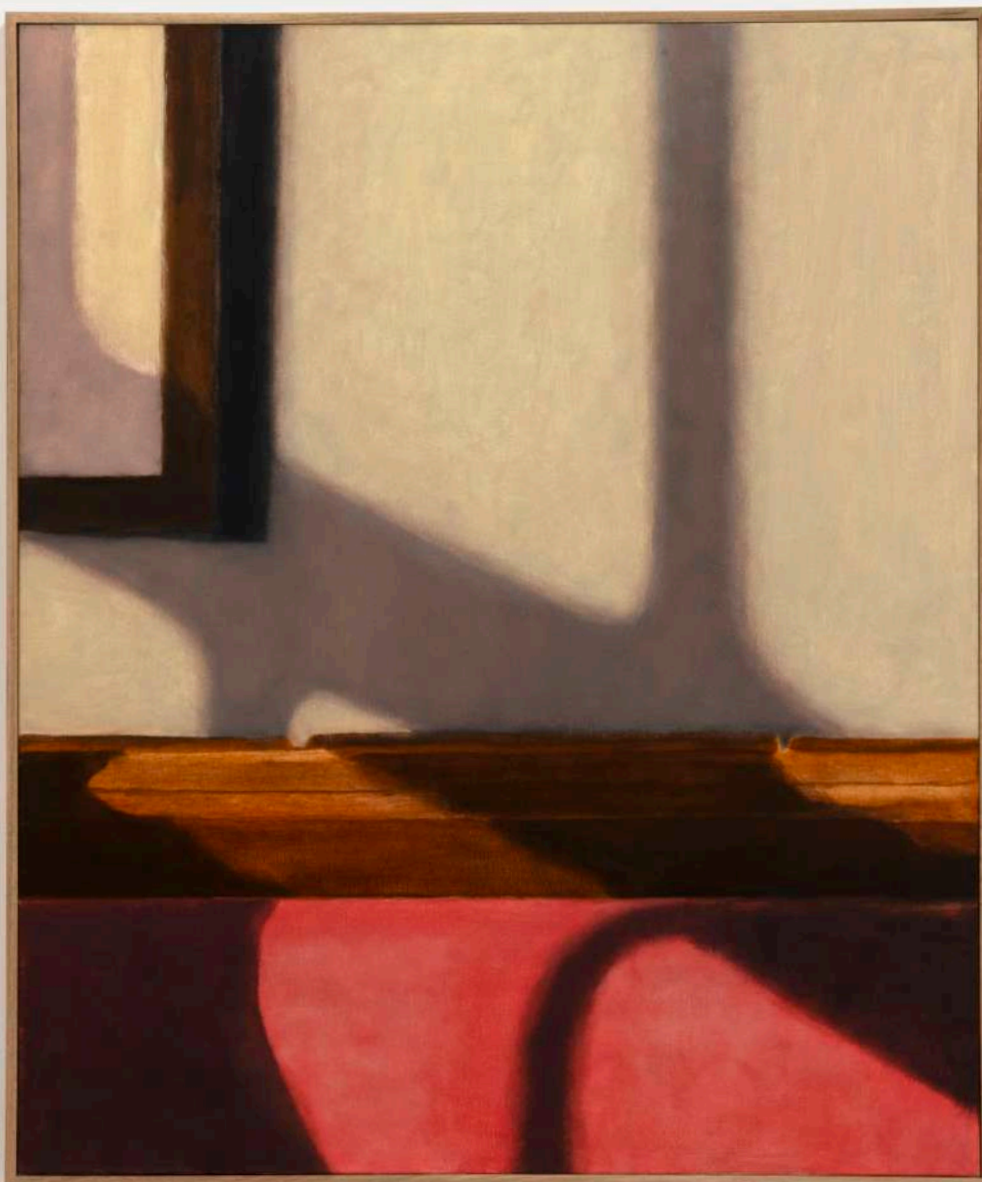
Out of Time, 2024. Oil on linen. 48 1/8 x 64 x 1 3/4 in, 122.1 x 162.5 x 4.6 cm (framed) (JAL24.016)



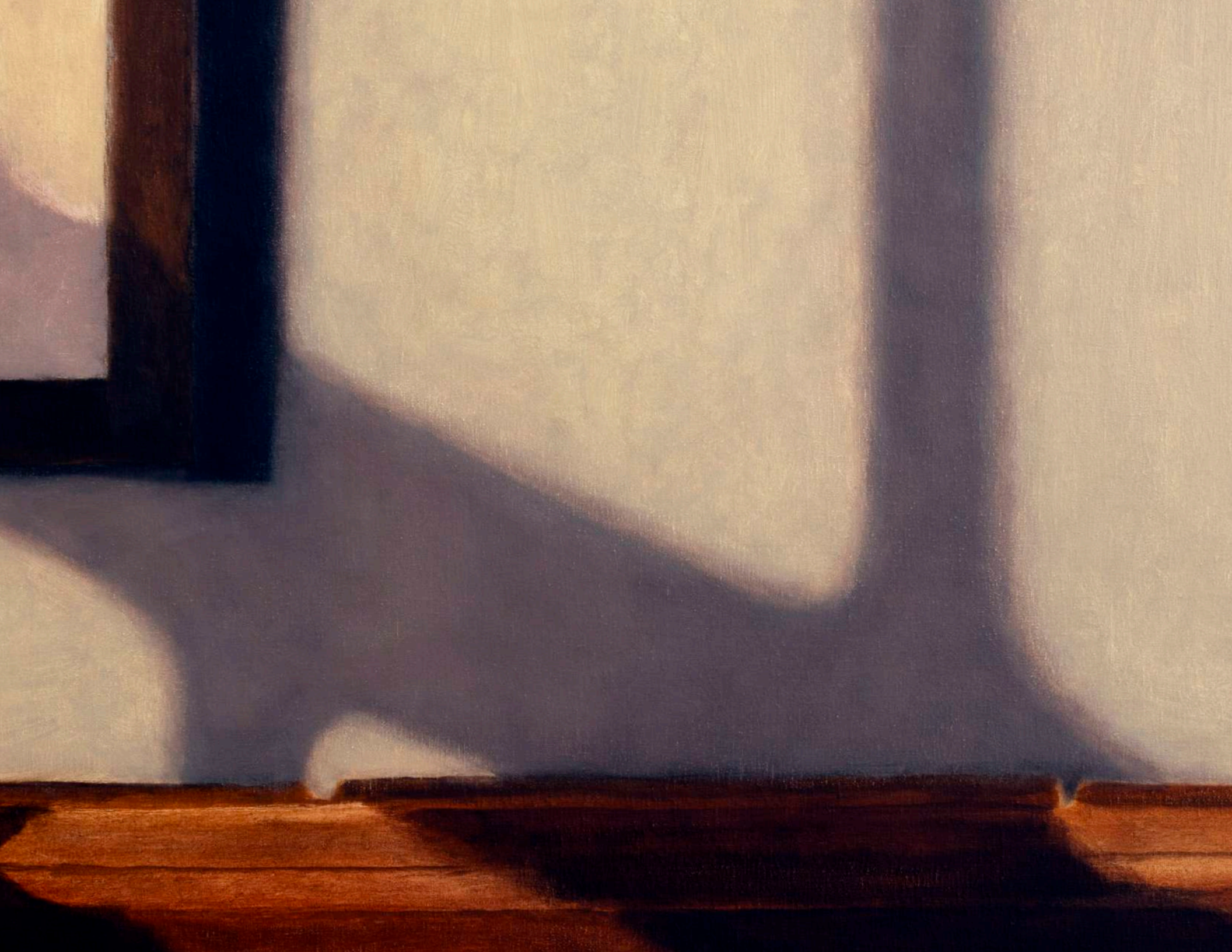
The Colour Of a Moment, 2024. Oil on linen. 48 1/4 x 59 x 1 7/8 in, 122.6 x 150 x 4.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.012)



An Ordinary Life, 2024. Oil on linen. 24 1/2 x 28 1/2 x 1 1/2 in, 62.2 x 72.3 x 3.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.007)



Everything Breathes, 2024. Oil on linen. 48 1/4 x 40 3/8 x 1 7/8 in, 122.5 x 102.6 x 4.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.009)





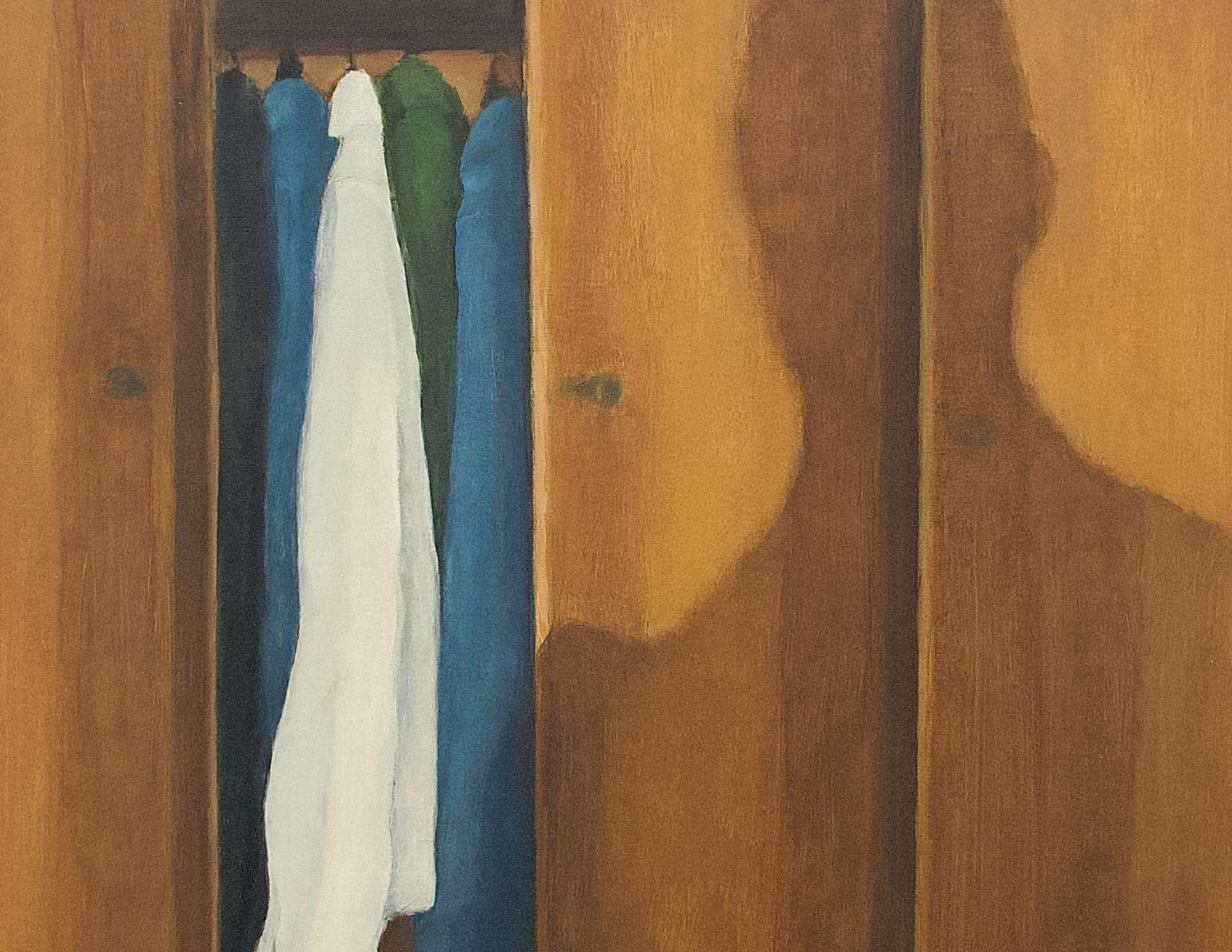
The Longest Day, 2024. Oil on linen. 51 3/8 x 59 1/8 x 1 7/8 in, 130.5 x 150.2 x 4.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.021)



The Quietening, 2024. Oil on linen. 24 5/8 x 28 1/2 x 1 1/2 in, 62.4 x 72.4 x 3.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.024)



Things Not Known, study 2, 2024. Oil on linen. 18 1/8 x 24 in, 46 x 61 cm (framed) (JAL24.001)





The Time We Had, 2024. Oil on linen. 48 1/4 x 60 1/8 x 1 7/8 in, 122.7 x 152.7 x 4.7 cm (framed) (JAL24.018)

The background is an abstract composition of soft, blended colors. On the left, there is a dark, almost black silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing right. The rest of the image is filled with various shades of green and yellow, ranging from a deep forest green to a bright, almost white yellow. The colors are layered and blended, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is that of a textured, painterly surface.

**SELECTED EXHIBITONS
AND PROJECTS**

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

OUT OF TIME

2024

NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

THIS IS NOW

2024

UNIT
LONDON, UK

THOUGH THE WINDOW

2023

SENS GALLERY
HONG KONG, HK

LIKE DUST THE SHADOW REMAINS

2023

SCROLL GALLERY
NEW YORK, US



OUT OF TIME

2024
NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

Nino Mier Gallery is thrilled to announce *Out of Time*, an exhibition of paintings by British artist Jess Allen. The exhibition features oil paintings of raking shadows projected across cropped domestic interiors. The works emerge at the atmospheric crux between present and past, conjuring the liveness of an object or place we also sense is lost. The exhibition, our first with the artist, will be on view from September 12 – October 26 in Brussels.

Jess Allen's paintings feature close-ups of interior architecture and furniture—the ridge of a bench, a bent-up pillow—rendered in a rich color scheme dominated by deep reds, oranges, greens and blues. Stark shadows of figures or architectural features are cast across the fabrics and walls painted in each background. Allen's shadows function like an inverted spotlight, creating focus and presence through absence. Crumpled cushions on sofas suggest a past human presence through their indentations. Areas of blankness within shadows allow space for thought. Light and shade index the passage of time, with shadows suggesting fleeting moments created by specific angles of the sun's rays and the earth's axis.

Shadows are potent but mutable, much like memories that are evocative yet hazy. They capture fleeting moments in time and, when represented, memorialize specific instants within their transient forms. "Shadows interest me immensely because they are silent and ephemeral. They are evocative and, like memories, they are hazy. In a way, they are a minimal representation of our physical selves," Allen writes.

Intimacy becomes, in *Out of Time*, an experience beyond physical proximity. Closeness and intimacy can be conjured out of time, through memory and thought. The exhibition forges connections free of voyeurism, focusing instead on conveying mood and feeling. "Detail is deliberately kept to a bare minimum in order for this aspect to have dominance," notes Allen. "Because the shadow figures are unspecific, I hope that the viewer will more readily relate to them, and bring their own experience and feelings, and subsequently create a symbiotic exchange."

The works in *Out of Time* are experiments in free association for the viewer. Space, emptiness, and absence not only bring focus to what exists in the compositions, be it the shadow of a figure or the pattern on a hardwood floor, but also leaves room for the viewer's own imaginative remembering. And alongside their meditations on presence, absence, loss and memory, the works in *Out of Time* elevate mundane daily encounters with domestic space and light. Through Allen's masterful use of color, shadow, and composition, she transforms ordinary interiors and furniture into subjects of deep introspection.











THIS IS NOW

2024
UNIT
LONDON, UK

Jess Allen's first solo exhibition with Unit considers space, time and the inevitable transformation of present into past. *This Is Now* captures a series of fleeting moments in which shadows and figures overlap to represent the ephemeral and indistinct. The exhibition presents a series of paintings in which details are kept to a minimum. These are not portraits but are suggestions of presence, representative of feelings and moods. As vehicles to transmit her musings on time, Allen's paintings become methods to "extend" the current moment for both artist and viewer. As such, *This Is Now* explores the ways in which imagery can trigger memories both specific and universal, rendering past as present.

In paintings such as the passing of time, autobiography becomes a key theme. Sunlight through a window creates a shadow on a female figure relaxing on a sofa. Modelled on Allen herself, the figure takes time out to read and be in her own company. A series of artworks hangs on the wall behind her, recreations of paintings that Allen conceived six years ago. The open book with pages of empty words symbolises openness and also a story that has yet to be told. The painting tells its own story of time, of the literal passing of time, but also of how life can change over time. Shadows and figures connect in images like I even dream about you in which a standing silhouette falls over a sleeping woman, evoking her consciousness, dreams and memories. Equally, paintings appear within paintings to represent times gone by. In I remember everything, a recreation of a smaller artwork, the reunion, hangs on a wall next to a standing figure. The small painting is perhaps a visualisation of a past life

or a fantasy. These paintings do not only represent a slippage between present and past, but they also unite the general and the specific as Allen uses her own life to create universal stories.

Ultimately, *This Is Now* explores the ways in which imagery can conjure the past. It is the ordinariness of Allen's subject matter that is simultaneously able to speak to viewers and convey a sense of the self. These paintings suggest the ways in which we are shaped by our past as all indiscriminate moments coalesce to create our "now". Using indistinct and nonspecific shadows, figures and settings, Allen suggests something broader that connects to our everyday psychology. Viewers are able to project their own experiences onto these paintings, making each artwork active rather than static. In *This Is Now*, the current moment does not slip so readily into the past but becomes present again through its very visualisation.







THROUGH THE WINDOW

2023
SENS GALLERY
HONG KONG, HK

Seeking a deeper connection between viewer and artist through glimpses of intimacy and vulnerability

SENS Gallery is pleased to announce “*Through the Window*”, a group exhibition featuring the work of Jess Allen, Thérèse Mulgrew, Rachel Sharpe, and Caroline Zurmely. The exhibition will take place from 18 November to 9 December 2023. The exhibition showcases intimacy and vulnerability as expressed by four female artists, seeking to create a deeper connection between the artists and the viewer.

Jess Allen’s shadow figure paintings fixate on the feeling of a past moment in time. Still and content like that of a photograph, they are still, forever etched into a memory. Time and memory are symbolized through the everyday movements and subjects on the canvas. Constantly lurking is the

continued presence seen amongst books and other domestic objects – shadows that inhabit these interior spaces, sometimes even falling across objects, like in *We are just passing through, study 1* (2023) and *Joined, study* (2023). Their stillness and proximity encourages a welcome closeness and the feeling of being together in the moment. An allegory of memorabilia, these shadows have the power to share a sense of familiarity for the viewer despite its predominantly personal subject matter.





LIKE DUST THE SHADOW REMAINS

2023
SCROLL GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY

“The New Year began with an open book. It was an early morning in January and low winter sunlight reached across the room to the shelf where a book lay open, illuminating it. The pages, as they stood upright, cast a shadow onto the wall behind. It had the appearance of a bird taking flight. This shadow shape, so different from the inanimate object-ness of a book, felt alive. I considered how appropriate, and specific this bird-like shadow was. This was a book of original linocuts gifted to us by the late artist Breon O’Casey, who was much known for his abstract bird in flight’ images. The ‘bird’ shadow felt like it was symbolic of his presence, his artistic being. It also suggested to me how ideas, which we often find in books, can help us to metaphorically fly. It felt like a good omen. Was it a message from him, or was this just a flight of fancy?”

For me it was one of those moments of realization and inspiration. The potential of working about shadows, as my subject, was immediately apparent. I became a shadow hunter. I started to place books around the house wherever I found a pool of sunlight. Those moments were rare, it was January and sun was limited, and even more so in our cottage, but then this made these patches of light even more special. My excitement grew when a shadow of a light on the window sill fell across a sofa. Suddenly the possibilities in my work were expanding, to furniture and interiors, via my new shadows theme. And subsequently a new series began.

Almost always in painting I find that one idea leads to another, and then another. Paintings of sofas in interior spaces, and the effect of light on them seemed to be the key to enlivening what might to some be a rather 'dull' subject. Apart from enjoying the challenge of painting this new object, and a different sort of space, my mind was also whirring away, and the empty sofa/empty chair theme, suggested so much other meaning. Why were they so interesting to me? It was their emptiness. Seats without sitters. Who had sat in them, and why were they no longer there ? Was there a significance in their vacancy ? These ideas and

questions gave this subject a poetry which I wished to explore. And I began to consider the concept of 'Presence through Absence'. Initially through the emptiness of a seat or sofa, and then additionally I used a book left behind, open or shut, to convey the absence of its owner.

My primary interest in these empty space images is creating works which are about what is not there and what is absent, but paintings can have many different layers of meaning, for both the artist and the viewer. 'Nobody's Watching', is aptly titled because it is a painting of empty red theatre seats, but it is also a play on words which has a very personal meaning to me, because of my own experience as an artist working away in obscurity and feeling unseen and unwatched. Creating this painting and naming it, has been both cathartic and therapeutic.

"It is interesting how creating art can be an exploration into ideas which inspire others but also primarily delve deep into one's own self. I find the combination of the exchange of ideas and the self discovery a compelling force in my work."

- Jess Allen, 2022







SELECTED PRESS

SELECTED PRESS

ART EDIT MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2022

CULTURAL CAPITAL ARTS

OCTOBER 2019

BY KATE REEVES- EDWARDS

ART EDIT MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2023

BEST OF LIGHT AND SHADE: JESS ALLEN



“Working from observation, the presence of light and shade feels inevitable,” says Cornwall-based painter Jess Allen. “I like this visual game of presence and absence.”

Composing pared-back interior scenes featuring tableaux of silhouettes and shadow, the artist seeks to capture a moment in time without resorting to a conspicuous or distinct narrative. Natural light falls from above onto familiar domestic scenes, where closely cropped views of couches and stacks of books are overlaid with shadow figures – indeterminate and unnamed portraits that stand just out of view.

Allen does not name these figures, instead hoping that the audience can impute their own experiences and desires on their indistinct forms. By using the interplay of light and shade, the artist elevates her subjects to an archetype or allegory, to be understood by her audience using their personal experiences.

Her true subject then is not any one person, but time itself, defined by the angle of the sun and the tilt of the earth’s axis. It is defined by omission, the length and distortion of shadows defining a particular instant which the artist has carefully and attentively recorded using her striking, muted style.

Allen’s paintings are quietly compelling, their composition making them feel intimate. By placing light and shade at the centre of her practice, and elevating the consideration of shadows to become the fundamental element of her works, Allen has beautifully personalised the universal experience of time.

Featured image: Jess Allen, I am not just a shadow, 2022. Oil on linen, 91 x 122cm. Courtesy: the artist.

CULTURAL CAPITAL ARTS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2019

'COMPOSTING' OCTOBER NEWSLETTER



Jess Allen, *pile of penguin books*

Jess Allen's still lives are meditations. The artist takes that which is overlooked and lovingly scrutinises it, looking at its objectness: its shape, its colour, its form. The artist tips the boundary between abstraction and figuration, always being led by the reality of the objects themselves but focusing on the patterns they make: the jagged stacking of book-spines, the geometry of a collection of boxes, the variations of shadow in a paper bag. You will notice, especially in the book paintings, that she omits the titles and words that would make her still lives strictly observational. Allen does not want to bow to typeface, nor the intellectual aggrandisement of a title and an author, but allows the viewer to fill in those details. In this way her work has a quiet, self-assured modesty, being simply what it is- a collection of shapes and colours, which the artist offers up as a reminder to appreciate the inconsequential. The artist casts a soft light on the objects that make up the ordinary, gently whispering: look, aren't they beautiful?



CURRICULUM VITAE

JESS ALLEN

b. 1966, Dorset, UK

Lives and works in Cornwall, UK

EDUCATION

1984-5 Foundation, Camberwell School of Art 1985 – 88, London, UK
1985-87 BA, Fine Art Honours, Falmouth School of Art, Cornwall, UK

SELECHTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Out of Time*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, BE
 This is Now, Unit, London, UK
- 2023 *Like Dust, the Shadows Remain*, Scroll Gallery, New York, USA
- 2022 *Nobody's Watching*, Blue Shop Gallery, London, UK
- 2021 *Books and Boxes*, Blue Shop Gallery, London, UK
- 2010 Galerie Pelar, Long Island, USA
- 2005 Badcocks Gallery, Newlyn, UK
 The London College of Fashion, London, UK
- 1990 Bridport Arts Centre, Dorset, UK

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *contemporary domesticity ii*, Taymour Grahne Projects, London, UK
- 2022 West Bund Art Fair Presentation, Cubism Art Space, Shanghai, China
 Inside Out, Scroll Gallery New York, USA
 No 4, Morgans, Falmouth, UK
 A Room of Her Own, Irving Contemporary, Oxford, UK
 Habitat, Contemporary Six, Manchester, UK
 Books, Cultivator London, London, UK
- 2021 Stratford Gallery, Broadway, UK
 A Tiny Bit of Fire, Warbling, London, UK
 Postcards, Magnus Karlsson Gallery and Mothflower, Sweden
- 2020 *Why*, Cultivator London, London, UK

COLLECTIONS

Femmes Artistes du Musée de Mougins (FAMM), France
Bunker Foundation (Rudin De Woody Collection), USA
Elie Khouri Art Foundation, Dubai, UAE
Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castellet, France
The Corridor Foundation, China

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