




28 October to 19
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Edwina Corlette Gallery,
Brisbane

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Julian Meagher, *Sleep Cycle*, 2020, oil
on linen, 153 x 122 cm
Courtesy the artist, Edwina Corlette
Gallery, Brisbane, Olsen Gallery, Sydney
and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore

Meagher's palette is deliberately muted, soft, subtle. He says, 'I think painting is only good if you're true to yourself. Painting is a kind of meditation for me in a way; I want the end result to slow down my breath rate.'

To construct his portraits and colour fields – which can be read as landscapes, abstracted, or the sky out of his studio window – Meagher applies thin layers and begins to remove the colour as it starts to dry. Working against the drying time of the paint stops the artist from 'overcooking' them. By revealing the linen below, the canvases hold luminosity, adding a watercolour effect evocative of the ocean-inspired landscapes. 'We've all seen those storms out to sea; it's in our collective consciousness,' he explains, 'most can associate strong memories and rites of passage with these coastline images.'

Meagher recognises his desire to paint the Australian landscape as a dialogue of love and shared land. Where in previous works, the artist approached the toxic masculinity prevalent in Australian society, since having children he has found himself being drawn to more 'feminine' energy. 'If you want to get rid of the masculine toxicity, spend some time caring for a baby, it makes you see the world in such a different way,' he points out.

Working against the clock, in the 'parenting windows', has allowed Meagher to fall in love with painting again. 'My process is a lot more uncertain and intuitive than it ever used to be, and hopefully more so in the years to come,' he concludes. 'I don't really know where it's necessarily going to end up, which I suppose is a lot more exciting and honest way to live.'

SLEEPWALKING

JULIAN MEAGHER

PAINTER JULIAN MEAGHER IS SEEKING CALM WITH HIS NEW EXHIBITION 'SLEEPWALKING' AT EDWINA CORLETTE GALLERY, BRISBANE, IN OCTOBER.

Preview

EMMA-KATE WILSON

A few years ago, Sydney-based artist Julian Meagher welcomed the birth of his son and found himself working more instinctively. 'I think I'm making better works because I am taking a lot more risks, I make so many more bad paintings that end up in the bin now than I used to,' he comments.

When his daughter was born eight months ago, he went through a whole new level of sleep deprivation and heartbreak, with their little girl suffering reflux for six months. 'Sleepwalking' channels this energy, exploring the space between altered states, the subconscious and dreaming.

Alongside ultra-romantic pink and blue landscapes, complete with rainbows, built through active painting, raw brushstrokes and delicate fades, Meagher presents his sleeping family. The small and intimate portraits connect with the large glitchy, idyllic landscapes. 'I'm trying to make sense of the complex human existence through the power and beauty of nature,' he adds, 'I feel like a rainbow next to a little sleeping baby is what we need right now ... A hope that things will get better on both a personal and collective level.'