

# Eliza Gosse

## Line & Light

Words by  
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**Name:** Eliza Gosse.

**Lives:** Potts Point, Sydney.

**Reading:** ‘When painting, I listen to long, adventure audio books. A recent favourite was *The Will of Many* by James Islington. I’m currently reading *Lady Tan’s Circle of Women* by Lisa See.

**Listening to:** ‘The *Talking with Painters* podcast, when I need to feel inspired. I also recently found my old CD of Carla Bruni’s 2002 *Quelqu’un M’a Dit*, and I have it on repeat.’

**Enjoying:** ‘Experimenting with ceramics and painting with underglaze.’



A striking, hand-painted mural greets me outside Eliza Gosse’s Darlington studio. Two figures bookend the central text – a waiter holding a serving tray and an artist wielding a palette and brush. The cursive script reads: ‘Buon Gusto Authentic Cuisine’ followed by the word ‘studios’.

Housed in a former pizzeria, this extraordinary suite of studios are shared by eight creatives, including Gosse and her husband, architect Benjamin Jay Shand. Gosse has told me to find the door with a little hand-painted dog on it (a terrier). Sure enough, she greets me with smiles in the airy ground-floor space.

Gosse’s workspace is generous, as it used to be the restaurant’s main dining room. There are fabulous saloon-style swinging doors and a long banquet seat that patrons once used, but which Gosse now rests her paintings on. There are red-and-white chequered curtains, a cork board full of inspiration and ideas, masses of paint brushes and paints, and artworks by friends and peers, including a lovely still-life tapestry by her mum. There are pops of honey-yellow paint on the walls and a lollypop pink carpet, which was designed for her by Shand for her 30th birthday. ‘I’m worried about getting paint on it and I have thought about putting newspaper down, but no, I’ll just embrace it,’ she laughs.

We settle on couches in a section of studio that she uses for large paintings, and I ask Gosse how she made her start. ‘I’ve always wanted to be an artist,’

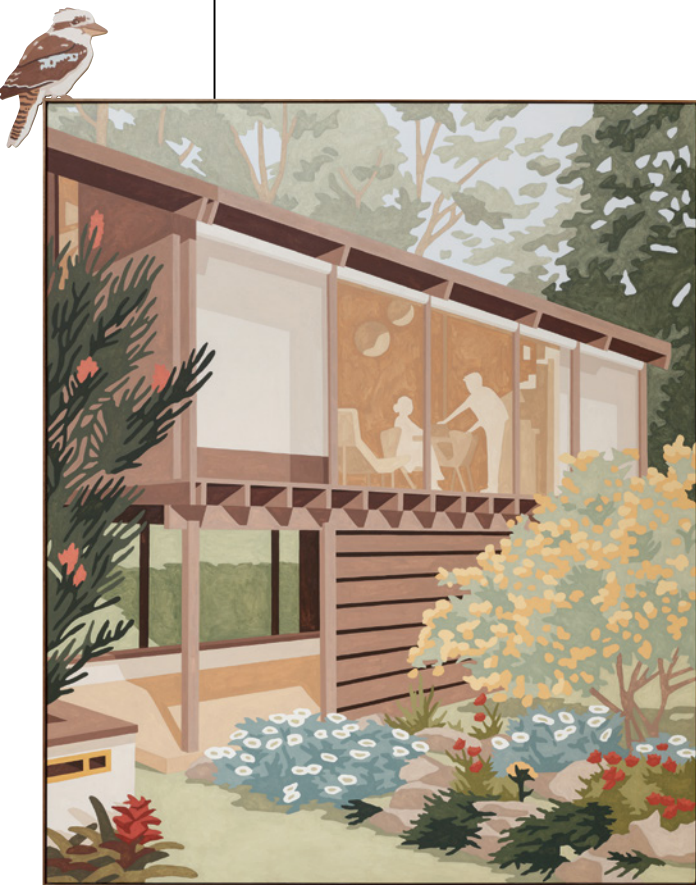
she explains, ‘but I didn’t really know any artists to model that off, so I went to architecture school for a year. In the end, because of my subject matter, it was an amazing grounding in architectural drawing.’

Gosse found that there was a bit too much computer-time in her early studies. Missing a sense of tactility, she moved to the National Art School where she studied for five years, enjoying the cubicle studio space that came with it. I’m reminded of Lloyd Rees, and how he was drawn to architecture too.

‘I normally walk in from where I live in Potts Point,’ she said, explaining a day in the life. ‘A nice hour-long walk to figure out what I’m going to do, because walking’s often where I get my best ideas. Once I get here, some of my work I do sitting down and some standing, and I try to do a bit of both in a day.’

Around her space, I notice a contrast of small scale and large paintings. ‘When I’m doing a study it’s my most creative process,’ she said, ‘because I’m working everything out. But when I’m doing a large work, I have the study there to replicate and I’m thinking more technically. Do I want this part to be more scratchy? Do I want that part to be flatter?’

Gosse’s artworks often draw upon architecture, but they aren’t straight depictions of houses and interiors. She pours over vintage architectural and



Eliza Gosse *Flannel flowers under the wattle tree* 2025, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, oil on birch plywood, 183.4 x 152.7 cm © Eliza Gosse

design magazines, magpie-like, seeking inspiration. Gosse starts with what she calls a 'base image', before altering it by adding in furniture and other compelling objects. 'Often it's made from ten or so images all coming together,' she explains.

Gosse's distinctive style began to resolve itself around her second year of art school. 'I've always liked artists that painted in a very flat way, so, at art school, I was looking at painters like David Hockney and Alex Katz,' she says. 'I also loved artists like Cressida Campbell, painting those intimate images of home. I guess I bought those two together: Australian artists painting Australia, and that flat pop style in America.'

While painting might be at the core of her practice, Gosse is one for experimentation. In recent years, she has been painting on laser-cut timber and leaning towards figuration. Her 2023 finalist work in the Archibald Prize depicted herself and Shand as dressing-gown clad, laser cut-outs. 'I had taken a great photo of him on a rooftop in his robe, on a chair, and the background was kind of ... not great. I thought about inventing a background but then decided to just cut it away.'

Extending on this, her 2025 Wynne Prize artwork, *Flannel flowers under the wattle tree* is painted on a large piece of rectangular ply with a cheeky kookaburra perched on top of the frame ready to swoop into the painted scene. The painting will tour with the *Wynne Prize 2025* exhibition throughout regional New South Wales over the next year.

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Working with the laser-cut shapes can be tricky, as 'funny things can happen with the way it scales up and you kind of have to wrestle with the shape', Gosse tells me.

'One of my lecturers said to me once that you should have your main practice but always be trying something new in the background that you can add into your repertoire,' says Gosse.

While the laser-cut paintings seem to have entered her core practice, Gosse is naturally working on another experiment in the meantime. On her desk sits some works-in-progress, quite different to her usual paintings. On small, hand-moulded rectangles of clay, Gosse is creating tiny portrait paintings using ceramic underglazes. The underglaze paint is vibrant and rich, and beguiling in this pre-fired state. 'It's so exciting because you just don't know what it's going to look like once you put something through a kiln,' she said.

Alongside her foray into ceramics, on this crisp June morning I find Gosse planning new paintings for her display at Sydney Contemporary in September. Plants and trees appear to predominate in the foreground – perhaps another evolution of her practice.

I bid farewell to Gosse as she prepares to tackle the challenge of rendering a study in large-scale. As I make a move to leave, warm winter light throws hazy shapes against the walls, and I am reminded of the golden light and shaded silhouettes of her paintings.

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Emma McLean, *Look* deputy editor

Eliza Gosse's *Flannel flowers under the wattle tree* is on show in the *Wynne Prize 2025*. View the *Wynne Prize 2025* and the *Archibald Prize 2025* as these exhibitions tour regional New South Wales over the next year. For details, visit [agnsw.art/wynne-25-tour](https://agnsw.art/wynne-25-tour)

