

Megan Rooney: Echoes and Hours

22 June – 6 October 2024

Press view: 21 June 2024,
10.45am – 1pm

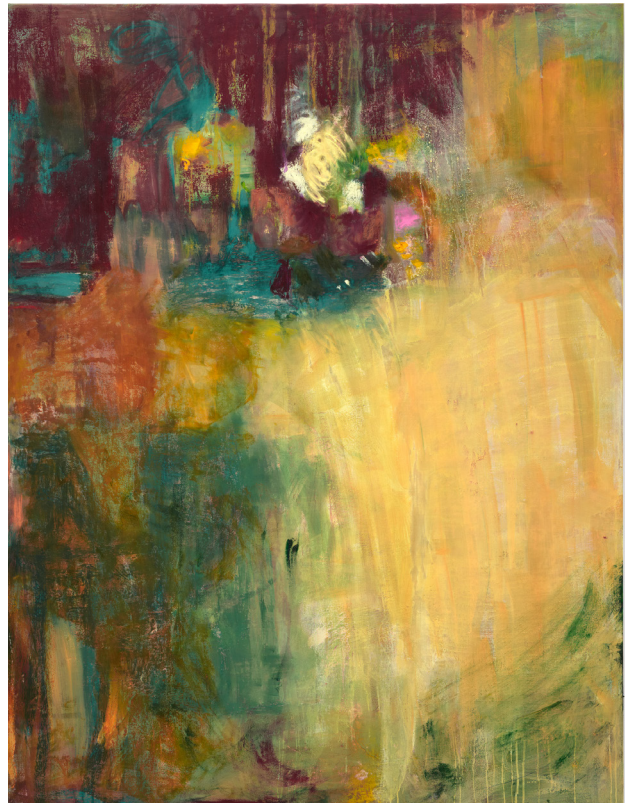
“I imagine myself in flight when I am painting, hovering above the surface and searching for places to land, touching down and lifting off. I do this again and again until the surface starts to collect information... The painting becomes a capsule, holding the weight of time.”

– Megan Rooney

Kettle's Yard is delighted to present 'Megan Rooney: Echoes and Hours', the first major solo exhibition in the UK by Megan Rooney (b. 1985, South Africa). Running from 22 June – 6 October 2024, the exhibition will feature entirely new work, including a series of interrelated paintings on canvas, a collaborative dance performance and a site-specific mural, marking the first time an artist has painted directly onto the walls of the galleries at Kettle's Yard.

Rooney's sensuous and compelling paintings reinvigorate the power of abstraction. They embody a sense of boundless energy and life, whilst reflecting the artist's deep knowledge of painting and the potential of each viewer's encounter. Created in 'family groups', the size of the canvases she uses are determined by the reach of her outstretched arms. Vibrant colour and gesture combine in dense, apparently infinite layers. Each work captures the ebb and flow of Rooney's process, from repetitive overpainting to the use of abrasives to remove pigment.

'Megan Rooney: Echoes and Hours' will unfold over three chapters, opening with a new family of works that embody the artist's fascination with weather patterns. As colours chase one another between canvases, splashes of viridian green and alizarin orange will intersperse with lemon yellow and ultramarine, perhaps suggesting a



Megan Rooney, *Flashed On (Hours)*, 2024. Acrylic, oil, pastel and oil stick on canvas. Photo: Eva Herzog

swelling storm, a mossy path or a city cast in winter light, though each mark is ambiguously referential. Her slow, yet restless process of painting over several months will reveal these landscapes in flux, enlivened in the gallery by each visitor's path.

In the adjoining space, Rooney will create a temporary mural which will expand slowly from floor to ceiling as she paints over the course of three weeks. Interested in the human desire to leave a mark, however transient, Rooney considers wall painting to be an extension of her performative practice, igniting an informal collaboration between her body, the architecture and the scissor lift she uses to reach high heights. Here the artist will work without a preparatory sketch, responding to subtle changes in temperature, sound and natural light, which filter through a skylight in the gallery space. Visitors will be fully immersed in colour: transformations will rise and collapse, giving way to layer upon layer of marks, traces, stains and scratchings that, together, create a vital, yet impermanent, final image.

Embodied experience has been consistently important to Rooney's work. The body, as she suggests, is both 'the subjective starting point and the final site for the sedimentation of experiences' explored through her practice. The final chapter of the exhibition will take the

**For further information
and images**

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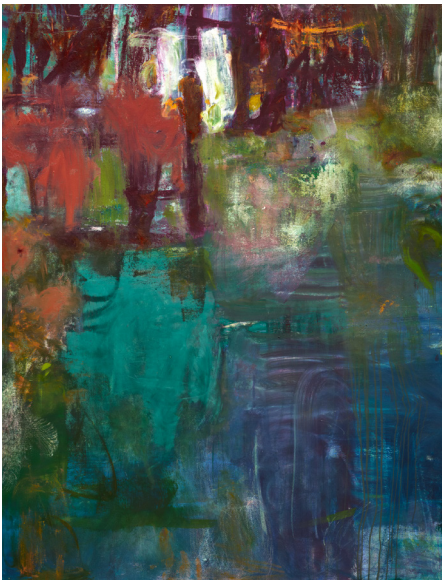
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form of a performance, narrating the unlikely relationship between a moth and a spider – symbolic characters that hold personal significance for the artist. Two performances will take place throughout the exhibition's run, choreographed by Temitope Ajose, with costume design by Rooney herself and a new sound composition by tyroneisaacstuart.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new illustrated publication with contributions by Rebecca Birrell, Emily LaBarge and Amy Tobin. A new painting by Rooney will be displayed in the Kettle's Yard house. 'Megan Rooney: Echoes and Hours' is curated by Kettle's Yard Director Andrew Nairne and Amy Tobin, Curator of Contemporary Programmes.

'Megan Rooney: Echoes and Hours' is supported by the Sonja and Martin J Brand Charitable Trust.



Megan Rooney, *Lean Twilight*, 2024. Acrylic, oil, pastel and oil stick on canvas. Photo: Eva Herzog



Megan Rooney, *EVERYWHERE BEEN THERE* (within the exhibition) 'Fire on the Mountain' at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2024. Photo: Eva Herzog

Notes to Editors

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About Megan Rooney

Megan Rooney (b. 1985, South Africa) works across a variety of media – including painting, sculpture, installation, performance and language – to develop interwoven narratives. She completed her BA at the University of Toronto followed by an MA in Fine Arts at Goldsmiths College, London in 2011. Her work has been shown in solo museum exhibitions, including at the Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2020–21); Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (2020); and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2019). Her performance *EVERYWHERE BEEN THERE*, created in collaboration with choreographer Temitope Ajose-Cutting and musician Paolo Thorsen-Nagel, premiered at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 2019. The year prior, she performed *SUN DOWN MOON UP* as part of the Serpentine Galleries' Park Nights programme in London. Rooney's work has also been presented in numerous group exhibitions, including at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2022); the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen (2021); Lyon Biennale (2019); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2019 and 2017); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018); Venice Biennale (2017); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2017 and 2014); and Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris (2014), among others. She lives and works in London.

About Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard, part of the University of Cambridge, is a leading gallery and unique house with a remarkable collection of 20th-century art. Its founders Jim and Helen Ede believed in art's ability to transform lives, a vision upheld today through critically acclaimed exhibitions, pioneering community and learning programmes, and research of the highest quality. Our aim is to offer an inspiring and enriching experience for everyone who visits. Find out more and get involved at:

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