

Aleana Egan
dove passages

3 September – 3 October 2026

Kerlin Gallery is pleased to present *dove passages*, an exhibition of new painting and sculpture by Aleana Egan.

“Criticism is one artist discerning the secrets of another artist, who understood that something was decided perhaps by the passage of a bird, or a color.”

(from Hélène Cixous interview in The Paris Review issue 254)

The sculptures and paintings in *dove passages* are initiated by a sense of touch and movement alongside a sense of sight. To Aleana Egan, painting is imagined as an activity of passage and continuum; an internal language that permeates the artists' practice in indirect and associative ways. In this exhibition the compositional power of dreaming is given focus. It's ephemeral nature, the having and then losing of an area of a painting, is akin to the elusive qualities of dreaming: slippages and grasping are integral to both.

The materials in the exhibition share a porosity and intimation to what they were before: papier-mâché mixed with pigment holds its pulpy quality and absorbs colour within; the inflow and resistance of different types of paint and fabrics give hints and signals about the temporal nature of materials and the various registers that they can hold.

Occupying the centre of the exhibition is a floor sculpture titled *lit-clos* – the Bretagne equivalent to an Irish vernacular settle bed. It is part of a trajectory of sleeping sculptures by Egan that began in 2012. These bed-like forms which include pigmented surfaces, moulded shapes and dyed or stained fabrics are haptic assemblages; soft structures that are made from, with and through emotional transmission. They tentatively invite a sensation of what Elizabeth Freeman has called 'affective histories': tactile memories of materials and textures; practices of knowing that are physical as well as mental.

Placed adrift from *lit-clos*, is *Bruno*, a sculpture that is named after the little boy from Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. Bruno is what one would call an 'old child', poignantly portrayed in the film as forced beyond his years. Watching films and activating the expansive enclosure of cinema through sketching and note-taking has been a connective tissue throughout Egan's body of work. To her, taking photos of areas of clothing, landscape, cityscape, furniture—the characters' environments are analogous to underlining words and sentences in a book.

One way I like to think of my work is as a bridge language populated by affinities. Some kind of variant topography that is shaped by the effort to communicate visual things that can't be conveyed via language and stay intact. Recently, something I find generative is to make physical in a painting or sculpture a moment of reaction and relation to other people; be that a moment of

shame or embarrassment in social life; some missed opportunity or mix up in communication and moments of connection and shared joy. One feels that in the body, and it can be transfigured into shape and colour relationships that have material consequences in artworks. Philip Guston's dictum - 'I paint what I want to see' could also be 'I paint what I want to feel'.

There are no strict divisions in Egan's creative work – it is a picture of things in flux. The sculptural assemblage, *home and the world*, is a composition of dyed fabrics, a refurbished bentwood chair, a light-pink light fixture, and adapted garments. This work has its roots in an accidental sculpture made in the artist's home, which she photographed and then extrapolated from. The visual facts of the piece seemed to exist fully formed: its various weights, opacities and index of materials coming together to form an enigmatic whole. The title refers to the writer Geetanjali Shree and her resistance to being asked about the idea of the domestic in her work. Regarding the false dichotomy of home in relation to the outside world where important things happen, she says: “*The home is a microcosm of what's happening outside, and they both have an interactive role to play*”.

Aleana Egan has exhibited at Sculpture Center, New York; Kunsthalle Basel; Kunsthalle zu Kiel; Landesmuseum Münster; The Drawing Room and Jerwood Space, London; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh; Leeds Art Gallery; the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Temple Bar Gallery; IMMA, Dublin, and the Berlin Biennale. Forthcoming exhibitions include *dove passages*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin (3 September – 3 October 2026). Recent solo/two-person exhibitions include *Interface Inagh*, Connemara, Ireland (2026); *Material Flux*, a two-person exhibition with Isabel Nolan at Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda; Lismore Castle Arts, Co Waterford (both 2024); Kerlin Gallery (2023); *Void*, Derry (2022); and *Künstlerhaus Bremen* (2021).

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