

An art gallery installation featuring a white wall and a green floor. Two abstract paintings are displayed on the wall. The smaller painting on the left has two vertical red lines. The larger painting on the right has a vertical red line on the right side. A white column is on the left, and a large green plant is in the bottom right corner.

HAYLEY
MEGAN
FRENCH

ALG

ALEXANDRA LAWSON GALLERY

**DIFFERENT PATHS
I HAVE TAKEN
THAT REMIND ME
WHERE I AM**

16 JANUARY –
4 MARCH 2021

ALG

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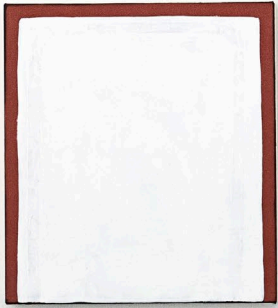


HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

I work primarily in painting, moving between abstraction and representation, and often using photography, drawing and writing to document stories of home. I collect memories and fragments of the places I move through and call home as a form of keeping track. I live and work on Darug land and through my practice think about how to honour and acknowledge this in my understandings of place.

Alongside my painting practice, I also write, occasionally curate and work as Programs Officer for Parramatta Artists' Studios Rydalmere. I work intermittently as a fieldwork researcher in Cultural Economics at Macquarie University. My writing has been published in Art Collector Magazine, Eyeline Contemporary Visual Arts Journal and Semaphore. I have exhibited regularly in artist-run, regional and commercial galleries around Australia since 2011.

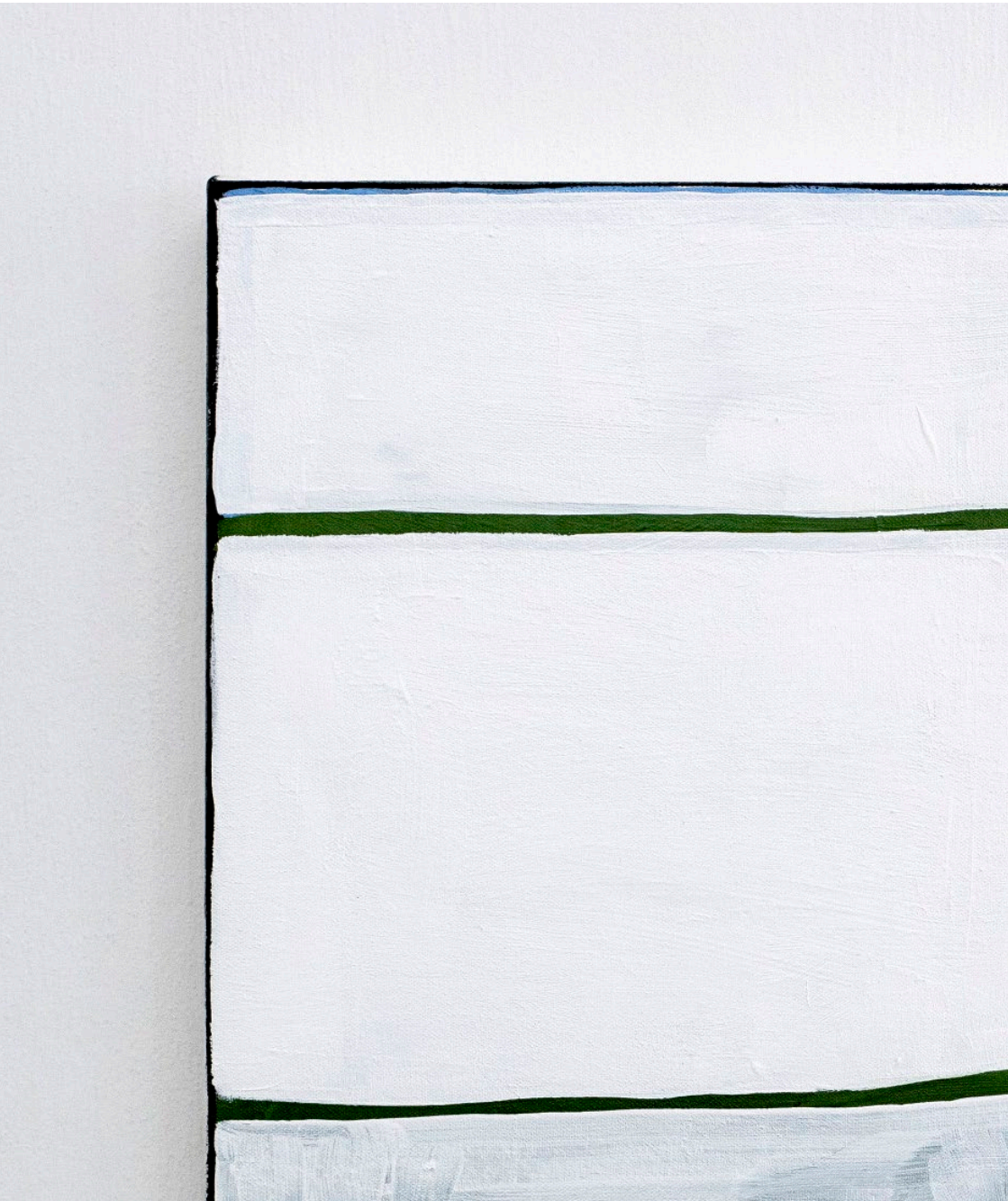




DIFFERENT PATHS I HAVE TAKEN THAT REMIND ME WHERE I AM

Different paths I have taken that remind me where I am presents 13 new abstract paintings of walking paths near my home in Guildford, Sydney. These are paths I walk or drive often and through this repetition they have become embedded with memories and associations that remind me where and who I am. Roads, intersections and footpaths are overpainted, highlighting the path I have walked like a suburban desire line.

The process of walking to understand where I am has been an important part of my process for the past few years, in particular for my ongoing project: *The Pipeline* documenting three suburbs through overpainted Polaroids. These canvases record this walking process and the remembering that takes place at home in my studio. With the need to stay close to home in 2020, these works have been an attempt to orient myself by physically and imaginatively circling home.



LAYERS OF PLACE – A REFLECTION ON THE PAINTINGS OF HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

By Nadia Odlum

The paintings in this exhibition come from walking.

Home for Hayley Megan French is in Guildford, on Bidjigal land in Western Sydney. Like most of us in 2020, Hayley was restricted in her movement, spending more time walking the streets close to her home, sometimes with a goal but also aimlessly, the type of walk where the mind wanders as much as the body. Hayley realised she was unconsciously circling her own home, creating a map of the local area in her mind in relation to the house. Returning to the centre, the studio, she engaged in a parallel process of recalling and painting, translating embodied experience to the canvas.

When we walk, there is always more than the eye can see, more

than the ear can hear. Experiences accumulate, and every layer we add is influenced by the ones that came before. The more we walk the same paths, through the same landscapes, the deeper this layering occurs, until places themselves come to impact the very fabric of how we see the world.

In Hayley's works, layers of white paint are built up on dark backgrounds, creating a sense of peering through multiple veils. Shadows of lines that have been painted and then obscured form muted compositional anchors, while a restricted palette of bolder lines reveal to us which paths were the focus of the artists' recollections. Walking, remembering and painting all intermingle in the process. When I visited her home studio the



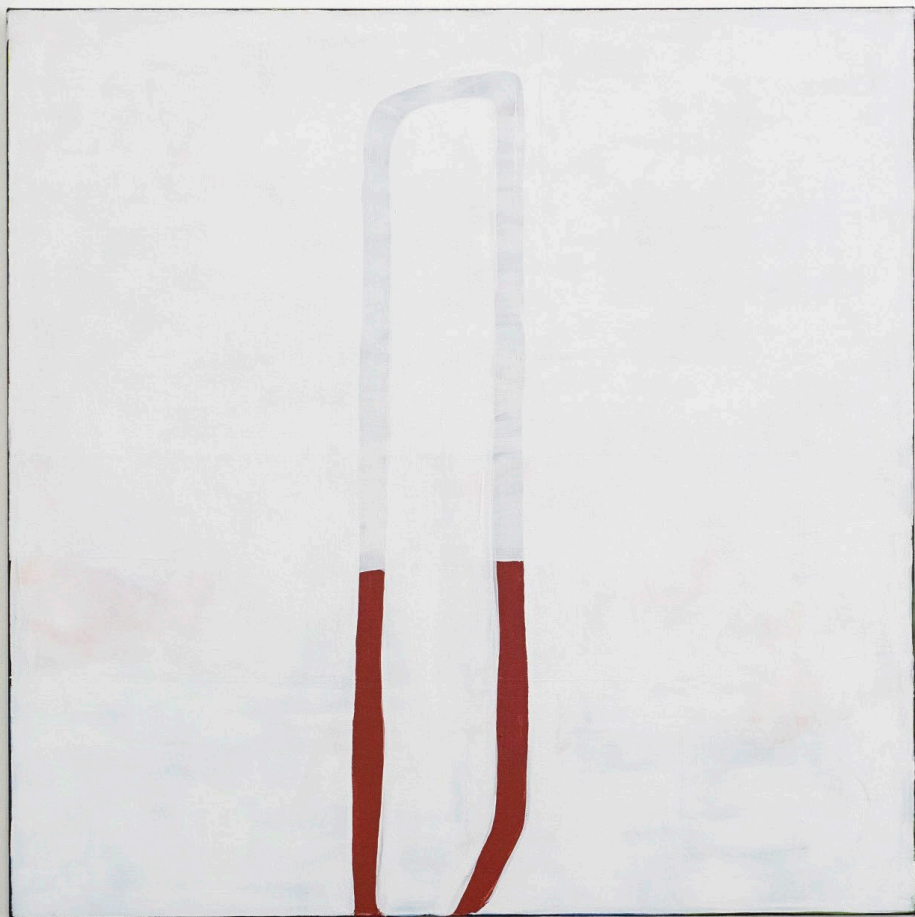
paintings were arranged around the room, some completed, some in progress, many still wet with paint. They circled us like Hayley herself had circled the house, forming portals between the world and its memory.

The soft uneven lines in the paintings are like 'desire lines', the unofficial tracks of worn grass or dirt that appear in suburban parks as the result of many people taking the same route, each footstep contributing to the cumulative mark. As the body leaves its trace upon the world, so too we leave traces upon each other, guiding and being guided in measure by those who we live close to, who also seek to call a place home.

The suburb of Guildford is recorded in these works from a number of

perspectives. In the works bearing the title *Three lines, three horizons*, the artist recreates the gaze of someone standing at street level. The stacked lines depict the street, the houses, and the latent horizon. In other works, such as *Half a lap of Springfield Park*, the abstraction adopts a top down view, like a diagrammatic map scribbled on a napkin. The artist is examining her experience of this place from all angles, a process as physical as walking itself.

Through contemplative abstraction these works communicate what it is to spend time in a place, and to allow that place to layer itself within you. A slow approach to landscape, they give form to the intimate intertwining of the body and the world.



*Remembering walking
paths near my home,
2020, acrylic on canvas,
102 x 102cm*

\$3,500



Pipeline orientation notes, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 102cm

\$3,500



Half a lap of Springfield Park, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 102cm

\$3,500



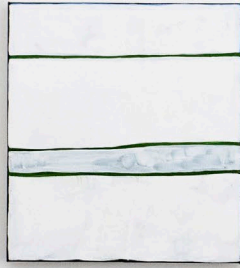
What I remember, 2020,
acrylic on canvas,
51 x 41cm
\$1,600

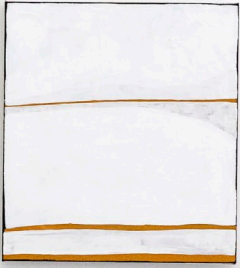


Springfield St & left,
2020, acrylic on canvas,
51 x 41cm
\$1,600



Circling home, 2020,
acrylic on canvas,
51 x 41cm
\$1,600





12



13



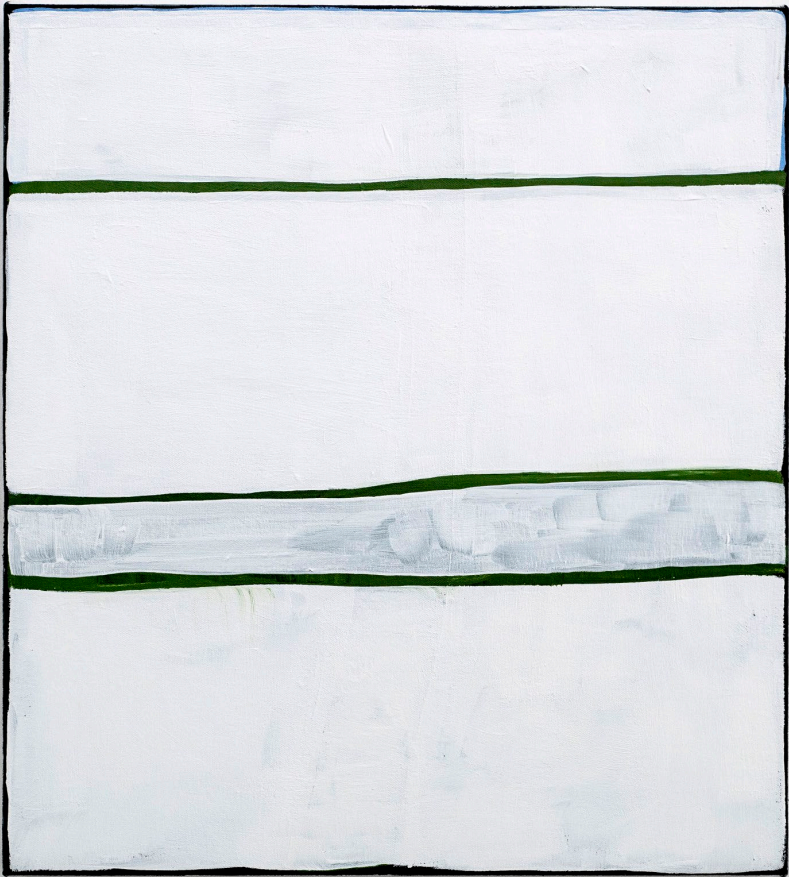
Three lines, three horizons, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm

\$1,600



Three lines, three horizons (2), 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm

\$1,600



Three lines, three horizons (3), 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm

SOLD



Three lines, three horizons (4), 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm

\$1,600



Three lines, three horizons (5), 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm

\$1,600



Boundary painting,
2020, acrylic on canvas,
51 x 41cm

\$1,600



Boundary painting (2),
2020, acrylic on canvas,
51 x 41cm

\$1,600

