

# SENS GALLERY

## SENS Gallery Presents “*Through the Window*”

### Seeking a deeper connection between viewer and artist through glimpses of intimacy and vulnerability

SENS Gallery is pleased to announce “*Through the Window*”, a group exhibition featuring the work of Jess Allen, Thérèse Mulgrew, Rachel Sharpe, and Caroline Zurmely. The exhibition will take place from 18 November to 9 December 2023. The exhibition showcases intimacy and vulnerability as expressed by four female artists, seeking to create a deeper connection between the artists and the viewer.

Jess Allen’s shadow figure paintings fixate on the feeling of a past moment in time. Still and content like that of a photograph, they are still, forever etched into a memory. Time and memory are symbolized through the everyday movements and subjects on the canvas. Constantly lurking is the *continued presence* seen amongst books and other domestic objects – shadows that inhabit these interior spaces, sometimes even falling across objects, like in *We are just passing through, study 1* (2023) and *Joined, study* (2023). Their stillness and proximity encourages a welcome closeness and the feeling of being together in the moment. An allegory of memorabilia, these shadows have the power to share a sense of familiarity for the viewer despite its predominantly personal subject matter.

Feelings of timelessness eschew in the oil paintings of Thérèse Mulgrew. Akin to a film still, Mulgrew’s hyper-realistic oil paintings draw to strong lights and shadows as a means to portray how one may present themselves to the world. *Morning Ritual* (2023) is a painting of a sitting individual with a cigarette in their right hand, their left hand adorned with rings grabbing their foot, while a cup, an ashtray, and a pile of books are present on the patterned rug below them. Mulgrew creates a scene that is simultaneously still and dynamic, juxtaposing the rough textures of the rug with the smooth textures of skin of the idling individual. Her compositions and use of rich colours are inspired by the vivacity of photography, fashion editorials, and the daily moments of beauty, creating narratives that play with the viewer’s imagination.

Rachel Sharpe’s oil paintings are synonymous with dramatic *chiaroscuro* lighting that emphasize on textures and colour. Sharpe reflects on how the two animals in *Goat* (2023) and *Pullet* (2023) are both animals that will eventually create produce that humans will consume. In *Goat*, Sharpe is fascinated with the diverse symbolism associated with the goat – it has represented magic and spirituality, or even fertility and virility depending on the culture. With *Pullet*, Sharpe uses warm tones to portray feelings of warmth and protection, but the way in which the pullet is cradled also reflects on the fragility of existence given its young age. Sharpe thus draws into considering the physical and the spiritual through these animals.

Caroline Zurmely utilizes the unconventional material of nail varnish to explore celebrity culture, specifically tabloid photography, through tight close-ups that captures the viewer and create a sense of intimacy with respect to distance. She places her subjects in close proximity, removing them from their wider contexts. By placing the subject’s right hand as the focal point of *Carry* (2023), Zurmely crops the image to disrupt the viewer’s sense of distance and creates an enthralling effect that draws the viewer towards the image. The pearl necklace worn by the woman is the focal point of *Necklet* (2023), arranged by Zurmely at a near distance to draw the viewer to its intricate details and question the nature of beauty.

Jess Allen reflects on time and memory through a continued presence; Thérèse Mulgrew uses semi-autobiographical narrative portraiture to explore vulnerability, Rachel Sharpe delves into the liveliness and fragility of existence through her animal portraits; and Caroline Zurmely plays with perception, taking an image out of context to reflect on the intimacy and vulnerability of celebrity culture and tabloid photography.

### “Through the Window”

Exhibition Period: 18th November – 9th December 2023 (Except Sunday, Monday and public holidays)

Time: Tuesdays to Fridays 11am – 7pm, Saturdays 11am – 5pm

Address: Room 08, 19/F, Landmark South, Wong Chuk Hang

SENS Gallery will be hosting a solo exhibition of Canadian painter Emily Pope to conclude the year, taking place from December 2023 through January 2024. Her work pairs her body with symbolic elements to augment her experiences of womanhood, and bring closer attention to the human condition and fantasy.

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**Jess Allen, *We are just passing through, study #1*, 2023**

Oil on linen  
61 x 76 cm



Jess Allen (b. 1966 in Dorset) is a British painter who lives and works in Cornwall, UK. After completing her Foundation Course at Camberwell in London, she graduated with a Degree in Fine Art from Falmouth School of Art in 1988.

In her work, Allen explores how time and memory can be held or symbolised in everyday moments and subjects. Images often contain books and other domestic objects, such as chairs, sofas, and bookcases. Human shadows inhabit interior spaces, sometimes falling across objects, and themes of absence and presence are also suggested. Her paintings have an uncanny ability to inspire reflection on the feeling of a past moment in time, and like photos, they act as a form of memorabilia. Although predominately personal, they have a power of connection which suggest shared feelings of familiarity.



**Thérèse Mulgrew, *Morning Ritual*, 2023**

Oil on canvas  
76 x 102 cm



Thérèse Mulgrew (b. 1991 in Dubuque, Iowa) is an American painter who lives and works in Chicago. She graduated with a degree in English Literature from the University of Iowa in 2013, and found a passion for painting after attending classes at The Art Students League and the New York Studio School of Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture. Her large scale, photorealistic oil paintings are her explorations of vulnerability and intimacy through still life imageries and scenes that are reminiscent of film stills.

Mulgrew found inspiration at a young age, influenced by her mother's surreal oil paintings and impressionist still lifes created by her grandmother. The meticulous use of *chiaroscuro* and hyper-realistic brushwork are attributed from cinematic lighting and the artist's own photographs, where she utilises classic compositions and colour palettes to create scenes that project an intimate reality. Her paintings are semi-autobiographical: Mulgrew tends to paint friends and family, as well as the everyday objects present in her vicinity.



**Rachel Sharpe, *Pullet*, 2023**

Oil on panel  
61 x 46 cm



Rachel Sharpe is an American painter who was born in Seattle and is now based in Los Angeles. She danced ballet professionally at the age of eleven and previously studied philosophy at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. A self-taught painter, Sharpe's oil paintings carry a great attention to detail, enhanced by dramatic *chiaroscuro* lighting and a focus on textures and corporeal elements.

Sharpe's use of *chiaroscuro* is reminiscent of the work of Caravaggio and Goya, but finds influence in the literature she reads, especially in her personal experiences. Sharpe detaches her subject matter from a larger narrative, and attains focus into that particular object or being to highlight the meaning of existence.



**Caroline Zurmely, *Necklet*, 2023**

Nail polish on panel  
41 x 31 cm



Caroline Zurmely (b. 1994) is an American artist who lives and works in Dallas, Texas. She graduated with a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2017. Zurmely's works play on the habitual indulgences of consuming magazine imagery, utilizing nail polish to emulate the glossiness of pages and synergize self-care and artistic production.

Inspired by her use of enamel paint pens at a young age, Zurmely emphasizes on tight closeups of subject matter such as fabrics, handbags, hairstyles, and makeup, detaching them from their wider context. Nail varnish serves as both embellishment and barrier, enhancing a sense of intimacy yet simultaneously conceals. Through her unconventional approach, she aims to transform the viewer's experience with a respect to distance.

### **About SENS Gallery**

SENS Gallery is a contemporary art gallery located in Hong Kong. The gallery is dedicated to identifying and advancing prominent global artists with diverse backgrounds and practices. We take a bold and innovative approach in promoting artists in the greater Asian region.

As the name indicates, SENS states a sense of feeling, a sense of taste, and a sense of gesture. Founded inside the leading corporate complex in Wong Chuk Hang district, SENS expresses internationalism, channelling between the west and east spheres. Through our curated programs, SENS endeavours to cultivate tastes and inceptions that stand for inclusiveness, diversity and uniqueness. We are devoted to fostering cultural belonging and care for the Hong Kong art community.

The gallery will also be located above the new headquarters of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, enhancing the emerging creative enclave of Wong Chuk Hang and bringing further attention to art lovers in Hong Kong and worldwide.

**SENS Gallery** is open from Tuesday to Friday, 11am to 7pm and Saturday, 11am to 5pm (Closed on Sundays, Mondays and public holidays)

**Address:** Room 08, 19/F, Landmark South, Wong Chuk Hang

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**Instagram:** [@sens.gallery](https://www.instagram.com/sens.gallery)