

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

Jess Allen
Suspending Time
New York | SoHo
May 12 – June 13, 2026

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present *Suspending Time*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by British artist Jess Allen. This marks Allen's first solo exhibition with the gallery in New York, opening on May 12 at our Soho location. Bringing together several bodies of work that extend Allen's exploration of shadow, perception, and introspection, the exhibition presents psychologically charged interiors that invite personal reflection while resisting fixed interpretation.

Across the exhibition, time operates as both subject and condition. In *Suspending Time 1–5*, a female figure is rendered in the cast light of a moment suspended, her silhouette shown shifting subtly across the five canvases. Working from photographs of her own shadow, Allen tracks the movement of sunlight across minor changes in posture. Her form merges with the shadows of surrounding objects, collapsing spatial depth and compressing figure and environment into overlapping shapes. Each instant is contingent on a precise alignment of sun, surface, and body, introducing a tension between immediacy and duration: the instantaneous nature of photography is extended through the slow, deliberate labour of painting. What appears fixed is transient; what is rendered permanent in paint originates in a moment already gone.

In *Musings*, Allen returns to a single female shadow, revisiting it through slight variations that trace the movement of creative thought. Here, musing names a mode of thinking that is associative rather than directed, unfolding through the open drift of the imagination. *To Distraction 1–3*, by contrast, turns to the psychological tension that emerges when this creative impulse is contained. Saturated in vivid yellow, the compositions depict shadowed female figures caught within enclosing interiors, their forms stretched and distorted as they slide across the upholstery. Interplay of light, depth, and shadow gives rise to ambiguous shapes that suggest fluctuating states of female experience. Body language becomes a primary expressive vehicle, as subtle shifts in posture communicate psychological nuance that may elude conscious awareness. While rooted in the artist's own figure, the ambiguity of the shadow resists singular identification. It functions as a porous signifier, capable of expanding outward into broader projections of experience.

The twelve paintings of *Thinking Man* take as their starting point Rodin's famous sculpture *The Thinker*. Where Rodin described thought as something that extends through every muscle, limb, and joint, Allen transposes this idea onto the shadow of a solitary male figure, whose shifting postures map a range of interior states. Displayed as a grid, the paintings recall the illuminated windows of an apartment building at night, discrete yet contiguous sites of private experience. Echoing the urban solitude described by Olivia Laing in *The Lonely City*, each work appears as a self-contained interior, glimpsed from a distance yet ultimately inaccessible. Allen's thinking men are similarly enclosed, trapped not only within rooms but within their own heads. Male suppression of emotion finds form here not through confession but through silhouette.

Elsewhere, Allen turns from shadow to the fully realized female body, depicting figures in states of rest or withdrawal, bathed in bands of sunlight and shade. In *Daydreaming 1–3*, *Let me be lonely*, and *The Memoir*, a woman reclines across a sofa, reading, sleeping, or lying still. Light cuts across upholstery and skin, emphasizing the weight and placement of the figure: an arm draped, a torso angled, a head turned slightly away. These figures appear caught in recursive cycles of thought, their inward focus rendering the

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external world secondary. In *Let me be lonely* and *The Memoir*, a male shadow passes across the scene, registering ambiguously as either a trace of remembered companionship or a present figure rendered peripheral by the subject's psychological absorption. The repetition of closely related compositions across the series underscores Allen's iterative approach, in which small variations in body language and environment recalibrate the emotional tenor of the scene. What might initially register as quiet contemplation gradually reveals itself as a more ambivalent condition, where time seems to stretch and fold inward.

Jess Allen (b. 1966; lives and works in Cornwall; UK) studied at Camberwell College of Arts and Falmouth School of Art. Allen has had recent solo exhibitions with Unit, London, UK; Scroll Gallery, New York, NY, US; Blue Shop Gallery, London, UK. Her recent group exhibitions have been with Sens Gallery, Hong Kong, CN; Gallery Mark, Seoul, SK; Studio West Gallery, London, UK; and G/ART/EN/ Gallery, Como, IT. Allen's works are held in the public collections of Femmes Artistes du Musée de Mougins (FAMM), France; Elie Khouri Art Foundation, Dubai, UAE; Sander Collection, Germany; XeniArtSpace, Cyprus; Azman Museum, Malaysia; Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castellet, France; and The Corridor Foundation, China.