

# On Waking

**Jenny Eden, Christopher Hanlon,  
Harinder Judge, Gillian Lawler,  
Damien Meade, Karen Roulstone  
and Rebecca Sitar**

**20th June – 10th August 2025**

**Preview 19th June from 5-7pm**

*"Painting is where images, memories and desires meet and are transfigured. It is where we have a particular internalized experience of space and time." – Tony Godfrey*



Damien Meade, 'Untitled' (2022) oil on canvas, 87.5 x 53.5cm

## Press Release

### Exhibition Overview

On Waking is a group painting exhibition featuring new and existing work by seven painters from Ireland and the UK, whose paintings communicate wonder and encounter, things half-glimpsed, remembered and imagined. It brings together paintings with an otherworldly sensibility, where the slippage between recollection and metamorphosis, between what is real or imagined, is played out in a series of new realities.

The title of the exhibition directs us to the 'waking moment' when our sense of time and reality is unlike usual conscious experiences. As we leave the cocoon of sleep, the veil between waking and sleeping falls away and the transition from sleep's slumber ignites continuous time and an openness of the self – nothing is finite. In this 'preconscious' state we are open to the possibilities of 'becoming'. Time feels expansive, fluid not fixed, and divisions between past, present and future dissipate in favour of a temporal fusion. The paintings in On Waking mirror this moment in a myriad of poetic, philosophical and perceptual ways.

Opening up to 'being in the world', these paintings also prompt a poetic sensibility and a different viewing, an attentive and participatory gaze. Encouraging an active way of seeing, the paintings do not describe an event, they *are* an event, resembling poems and Lavinia Greenlaw's notion of poetic form; "it is this vessel, and, it is a place in which you hope the reader will have something activated for them rather than enacted for them" [1]. And like poems, paintings hold experience and perception acknowledged by the viewer in the act of looking, who changes what is being observed and, through observing, becomes part of the picture.

Carnegie Building, Pery Square, Limerick, Ireland.

**FREE ADMISSION**

Tel: +353(0)61 310633; F:+353(0)61 310228; Email: [artgallery@limerick.ie](mailto:artgallery@limerick.ie); Web [www.gallery.limerick.ie](http://www.gallery.limerick.ie)

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 10-5pm; Sunday 12-5pm

**LAST ENTRY 15 minutes before closing**      **Closed on Public & Bank Holidays.**

The paintings in this exhibition invite a slow gaze, a complex ritual in ways of seeing. They pivot between representation and abstraction, looking one way and the other, oscillating productively between the two. Occupying this liminal space, paintings become “potential images”, according to Dario Gamboni, “[...] established – in the realm of the virtual – by the artist but dependent on the beholder for their realization. [...] Their property is to make the beholder aware [...] of the active, subjective, nature of seeing” [2].

### Curated and written by Jenny Eden & Rebecca Sitar

#### References

[1] BBC Radio 4 (2020) *Only Artists: Lavinia Greenlaw meets Charles Avery*, 11th March 2020, 14:29.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000g43y].

[2] Gamboni, D. (2002) quoted in B. Schwabsky, ‘Everyday Painting’ (2011) *Vitamin P2: New Perspectives in Painting*. London: Phaidon Press Ltd, p. 14.

#### Theoretical and Socio-cultural Context

This exhibition stems from an interest in the human experience of time, presented by phenomenologists Henri Bergson and Martin Heidegger. Bergson’s exploration of psychological time, fused and in flux rather than formulaic and structured, has particular relevance to the exhibition. His notion of unfolding time, where the past, present and future converge within the human ‘encounter’, is connected to the making and reception of paintings and central to an interpretation of the period of waking from sleep. In addition, Martin Heidegger’s investigations into the ontology of being and ‘being in the world’ are also poignant, suggesting an empowering responsibility in the durational activities of seeing and thinking.

Siri Hustvedt’s essay ‘The Drama of Perception’ has also been considered in the context of the exhibition. Hustvedt examines the gaze from a neuroscientific perspective, looking at the relationship between the pre-attentive and attentive gaze, claiming a gap between these positions can ‘open up’ embodied engagement and ‘seeing with feeling’.

Within a wider artistic and philosophical context, the works in *On Waking* highlight painting’s idiosyncratic characteristics as a unique and distinct medium. Paintings hold the possibility of movement within stillness – they are containers of compressed time, records of elongated time and an amalgamation of time-spaces from different periods. Thus, in relation to Eastern Philosophy, the paintings in this exhibition prompt a psychic experience whereby time and presence are refreshed and continuous, and expansive moments of reflection and enlightenment are channelled and processed.

In focusing on transitions and awakenings, this exhibition promotes active looking, mindful thinking and reception, and a deeper appreciation of human time in relation to memory and experience. These paintings provide a counter to recent global socio-technological developments, in the aftermath of lockdown decelerations, addressing positive approaches to health and well-being and an attitude of slow thinking and contemplation.

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