

Press Release

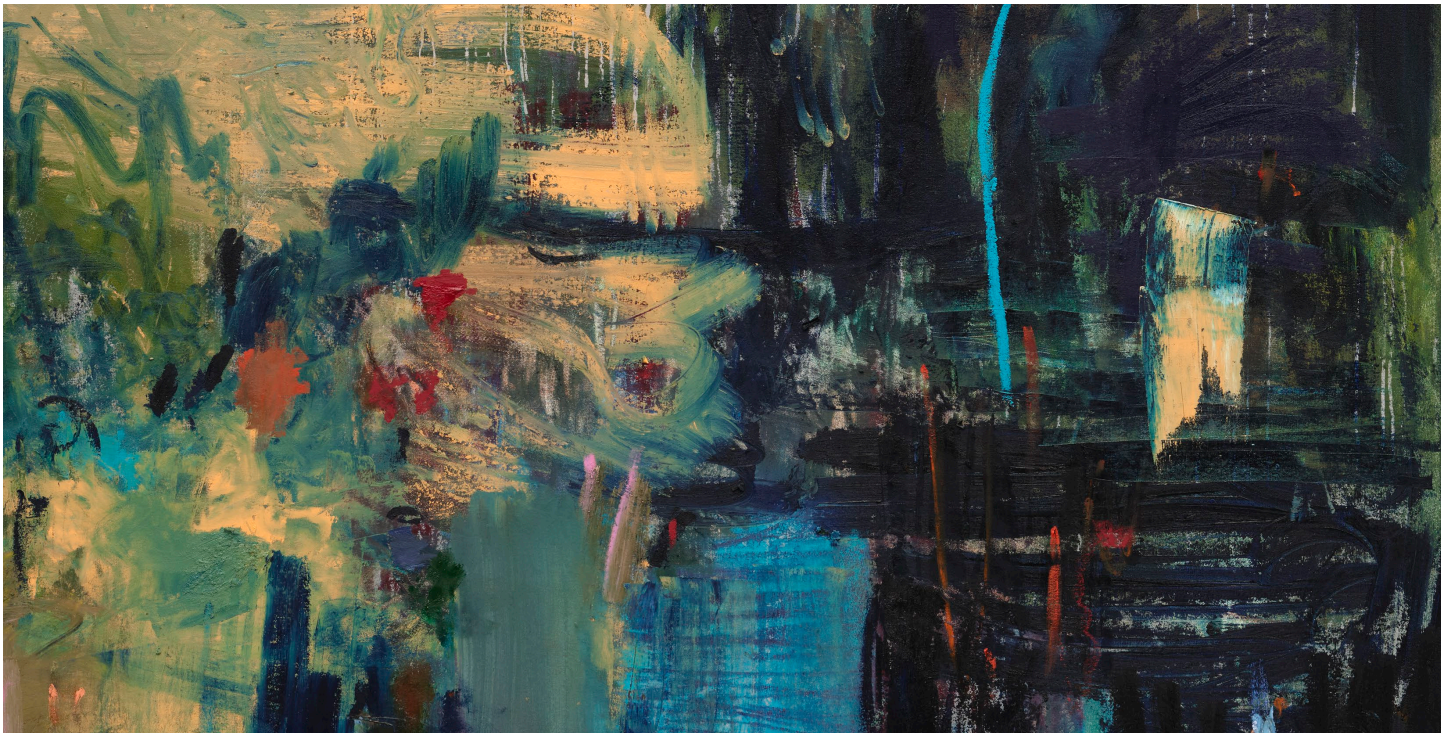
# Megan Rooney

## *Yellow Yellow Blue*

12 June—2 August 2025

Opening Thursday 12 June 2025, 6—8pm

Thaddaeus Ropac London  
Ely House, 37 Dover Street, London, W1S 4NJ



*Insomnia of the Rider, 2025 (detail).*  
Acrylic, oil, pastel and oil stick on canvas.  
199.6 x 152.3 cm (78.58 x 59.96 in).

*You spend your life as a painter developing a relationship to colour and then testing the limits of that relationship. It's radical, it's ever-changing – it can submit to you and it can betray you. It always seduces, always excites.*

— Megan Rooney

Thaddaeus Ropac London is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Megan Rooney. In *Yellow Yellow Blue*, Rooney allows her mark-making to be led almost entirely by colour, as she continues her ongoing investigation into abstraction as a means of storytelling. The London exhibition follows the recent opening of the exhibition *JOAN MITCHELL / MEGAN ROONEY*:

*PAINTING FROM NATURE (2025)*, at Espace Louis Vuitton Beijing, which continues until 19 October 2025, as well as Rooney's first major UK solo exhibition, *Echoes & Hours* at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2024).

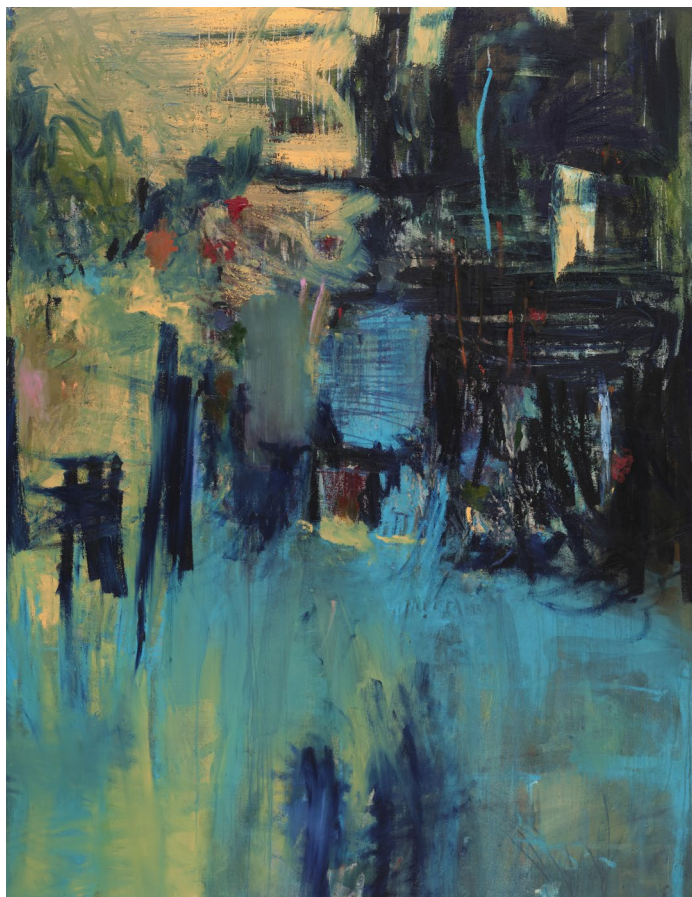
Spanning the gallery's two floors at Thaddaeus Ropac London, *Yellow Yellow Blue* presents a group of new works on canvas in Rooney's signature 'wingspan' format, equivalent to the full reach of the artist's outstretched arms, alongside a number of large-scale canvases which invoke the encompassing presence of her murals, and a selection of works on paper. The body has a sustained presence in Rooney's work, as both the subjective starting point and final site for the sedimentation of

experiences explored through her interdisciplinary practice. Combining painting with dance, the exhibition will be accompanied by a new performance piece directed by Rooney and made in close collaboration with Temitope Ajose, Leah Marojević and the musician tyroneisaacstuart. Taking place on 12 June, *Spin Down Sky II* marks the latest chapter in the unlikely love story of a night butterfly and bolas spider, symbolic characters first explored by Rooney over two performances at Kettle's Yard in 2024.

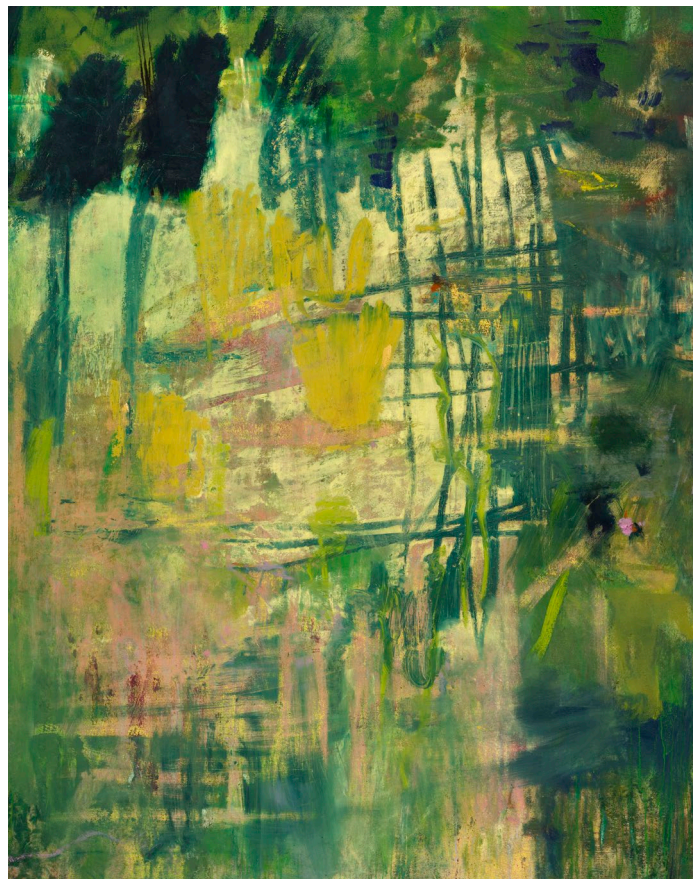
*All painting is about storytelling. I feel the act of painting connects me to the oldest parts of humanity. Telling stories is a central part of the human condition. This impulse to leave a trace, to make a mark, to say I was here.*

— Megan Rooney

Created concurrently in yearly cycles through a ritual of layering, sanding down and repainting, Rooney's canvases are repositories of time and memory, each accumulating traces of their environment, whether it is the subtle shifts in weather and light, the tensions of an uncertain world



*Insomnia of the Rider, 2025.*  
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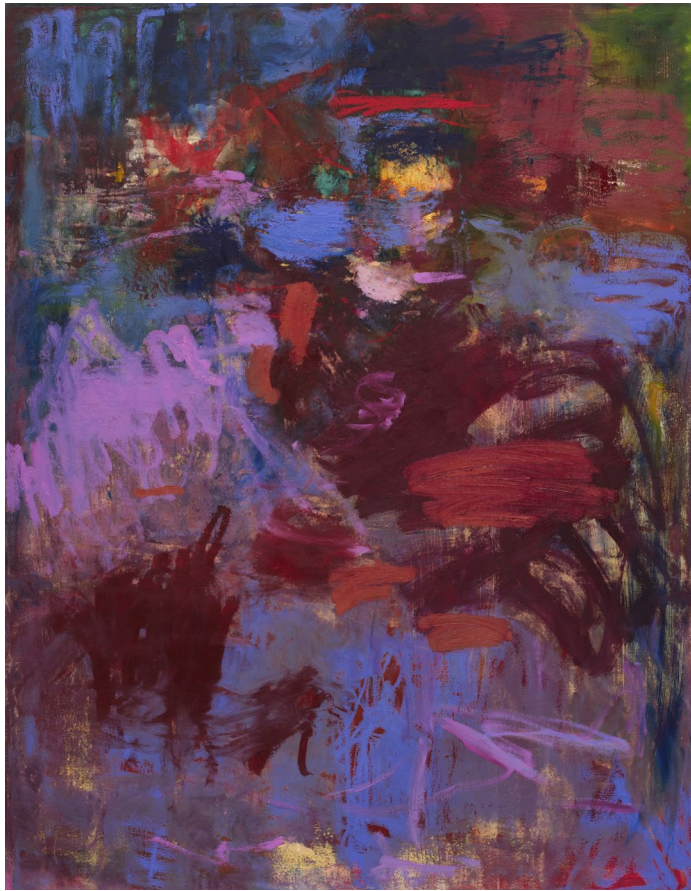


*Taste of Wind, 2025.*  
Acrylic, oil, pastel and oil stick on canvas.  
199.6 x 152.3 cm (78.58 x 59.96 in).

or the artist's internal landscape. Rooney refers to her groups of paintings as 'families': born out of the same atmospheric conditions, they are intimately connected to one another as well as the lineage of paintings that precedes them. Together they make echoes, share resemblances and form complex, interwoven narratives. They have 'lifespans', writes critic Emily LaBarge. 'Paintings, like the people who make them, can change by the day, are good- and bad-humoured, rebel, accede, talk back, learn hard lessons, long to escape their boundaries, swell with joy, accomplish what they hope, feel buoyant, dismayed, overjoyed...'

In her latest body of work, Rooney explores the chromatic territory between yellow and blue, and the abundant spectrum of green that emerges from mixing these two colours. Completed in the months that heralded spring, as winter's darkness gave way to the luminous renewal of foliage and life, *Yellow Yellow Blue* captures a period of fertile seasonal transition. As she says, 'I have a special relationship to all the seasons because the light varies dramatically depending on the month, but spring is particularly sacred to me. Long before green returns, nature slowly begins to add colour to her palette.'

Although resolutely abstract, Rooney's works contain fleeting suggestions of recognisable forms. Shapes of ladders, beehives, clouds, trees, skies and tombs weave through the exhibition, like fugitive glimpses of a half-dreamed world.



*Old Rome, 2025.*  
Acrylic, oil, pastel and oil stick on canvas.  
199.6 x 152.3 cm (78.58 x 59.96 in).

*At different stages of the painting, I take on different roles. For most of the painting's life, I am tunnelling into the core of the painting, trying to get deeper. Then I become an excavator, unearthing forms which lay buried deep within the surface of the paint. Late in the painting's life, I become bird-like. I want to fly on the surface, so I am looking for places to touch down.*  
— Megan Rooney

#### About the artist

An enigmatic storyteller, Megan Rooney (b. 1985, South Africa) works across a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, installation, performance and language. The subjects of her works are drawn directly from her own life and surroundings, while her references are deeply invested in the

present moment. She addresses the myriad effects of politics and society that manifest in the home and on the female body. Recurring characters and motifs form part of a dreamlike narrative that is never fixed, but obliquely references some of the most urgent issues of our time. Based in London, Rooney grew up between South Africa, Brazil and Canada, completing her BA at the University of Toronto followed by an MA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London, in 2011. The exhibition *JOAN MITCHELL / MEGAN ROONEY: PAINTING FROM NATURE*, will continue at the Espace Louis Vuitton Beijing until 19 October 2025. Rooney's work has recently been shown in solo museum exhibitions at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2024); Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2020–21); Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (2020); and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2019). Her performance *EVERYWHERE BEEN THERE*, created in collaboration with choreographer Temitope Ajose-Cutting and musician Paolo Thorsen-Nagel, premiered at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 2019. The year prior, she performed *SUN DOWN MOON UP* as part of the Serpentine Galleries' Park Nights programme in London. Rooney's work has also been presented in numerous group exhibitions, including at the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Florida (2024); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2022); the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen (2021); Lyon Biennale (2019); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2019 and 2017); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018); Venice Biennale (2017); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2017 and 2014); and Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris (2014), among others.



*Spin Down Sky, 2024.* Choreographed by Temitope Ajose. Performed by Temitope Ajose and Leah Marojević. Sound composition by tyroneisaacstuart. Directed by Megan Rooney. For Echoes & Hours, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge. Photo: Camilla Greenwell.

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