

ALICE AMATI

ABIGAIL DUDLEY
A PLACE AFTER A PLACE

22 APRIL - 30 MAY, 2026
27 WARREN STREET
W1T 5NB LONDON

We are pleased to present *A place after a place*, American artist Abigail Dudley's (b.1996, New Jersey) first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition is accompanied by a newly commissioned essay by London-based writer and academic Matthew James Holman.

In *First Love*, a short story from which Abigail Dudley has taken the title of her present exhibition at Alice Amati, Gerald Murnane writes: 'In all the world there has never been, there is not, and there will never be any such thing as time. There is only place. What people call time is only place after place. Eternity is here already, and it has no mystery about it; eternity is just another name for this endless scenery where we wander from one place to another'. *A place after a place*. Murnane's passage proposes something quietly radical: that what we call time is not a flowing, invisible medium, a straight-lined vessel in which we inhabit our lives day after day, but a misunderstanding—an effect produced by our movement through places. To say 'a place after a place' is to strip time of its authority and return experience to something more immediate and more material. If nothing else, it does away with an idea that everything is subject to being lost forever – or, indeed, staying as it is forever.

This is a useful way to approach Dudley's paintings, which observe atmospheres of interiority in relatively private spaces. On the surface at least, very little appears to happen in them: two lovers, or perhaps platonic friends, are so at ease in one another's company that back-to-back silent contemplation becomes the preferred method of a lazy afternoon; a woman, resembling Dudley herself, sits cross-legged on the floor of her small apartment, reading a miniature red book while eating grocery-store clementines out of a plastic bag; another woman, on the beach in a pistachio-green bikini, tips sand from her exquisite white shoe with the same distracted sprezzatura of a Raphaelite saint. They are pictures of elongated pause rather than causal progression, where each scene feels self-contained yet faintly continuous with another, as if encountered just before or just after something else. The spaces they occupy operate as shifting conditions, assembled from fragments of ordinary life—or, more specifically, from that time-outside-of-time we might feel on holiday or on an idle and sunless Tuesday, when the rattle of our ordinary lives is briefly held in suspension and we are able to look at ourselves as though from elsewhere—so that nothing is held long enough to become fixed, and what remains is a quiet sense of having arrived somewhere already slipping into another place.

One of the most striking aspects of Dudley's recent series are the studio portraits. In *The Painter*, for instance, the most consequential formal decision happens below the waist: the crossed, folded legs are rendered as a single flattened mass in raw ochre and yellow—not so much a description of anatomy as a compressed ellipse, with a long diagonal slash of near-white cutting across the yellow ground and a dark line looping beneath like a dropped cord. It recalls the biomorphic compressions of Willem De Kooning's late-1930s figure studies, where pelvis merges with thigh and the body becomes its own environment—though where De Kooning's forms torque restlessly against one another, Dudley's oblong sits with a stolid composure closer in spirit to Luc Tuymans, who reduces the body to its most economical silhouette and lets that economy do the unsettling. The contrast with everything above the waist is what gives the picture its particular charge: the torso and face are thinly painted, barely resolved, the grey-blue top dissolving into the cream wall behind it, so that all the pictorial weight has pooled in that wedge of ochre—gravity and paint finding the same place to rest.

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'Dudley's approach to the fantasy aspect of her imagery has not calcified', reflected John Yau, the poet who has spent a critical lifetime considering the mark-making of the Figurative Expressionists, 'making everything in her art feel discovered.' This feels true in the way that Balthus' stage-set street-scenes do, or even the narrative frescos of Piero della Francesca, which Dudley cites as an influence on works like *Overcast*. Often, her figures appear to be lost in the rapture of a mute dramatic monologue, inviting the viewer in just far enough that we can see the outlines of the performance—whether the painting of a self-portrait with a mirror, or the unnaturally contorted posture of *Studio Break*, or the shimmering light on a pearl in a woman's hand—while the substance of the theatre is hidden. Dudley works with oil ground and oil paint, sometimes incorporating cold wax, before using rags to wipe back the textured surface, lifting away built-up layers from earlier interventions. The effect of this reworking is to leave each image suspended between emergence and erasure, as though what we are seeing has only just come into view and is already on the verge of slipping back into the ground from which it was made.

– Matthew James Holman

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Abigail Dudley (b. 1996) lives and works in New Jersey. She holds a BFA from The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (2021) and an MFA from the University of Delaware (2025). Dudley recently completed her fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC) in Provincetown, Massachusetts, US (2026). Selected solo and two person exhibitions include 'Paintings from Provincetown', Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA (2026); 'Painting and Sculpture', Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York, US (2025); 'Of Honey and Gold', curated by Samuele Visentin, Greatorex Street, London, UK (2025); 'Abigail Dudley', Nancy Devine Gallery, Rhode Island, US (2025); 'Arcadia', curated by Steven Harvey, Wagner College, Staten Island, US (2024); 'In Sight', Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York, US (2024); and 'Invention Observed', Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York (2023). Her work has been included in group shows internationally in Provincetown, MA (2026); Sydney, AU (2025); Market Street Studio, New York, US (2024); LaiSun Kean Gallery, Boston, US (2023); Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York, US (2024, 2023); Exeter Gallery, Baltimore, MD (2023) amongst others. Dudley's work is included in the collections of the X Museum, Beijing, China; The Mini Museum, Philadelphia, US; Mount Gretna School of Art, Pennsylvania, US; the Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, US and the Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in London in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their careers, often providing opportunities for their first solo presentations in the city as well as on the international stage, while creating a supportive context for artistic exploration and career development. The gallery's roster currently includes ten represented artists. Since its inception, the gallery has staged more than twenty exhibitions at its London location while also expanding its international presence through participation in numerous art fairs worldwide.

Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and international artists through a challenging, experimental, and rigorous exhibition programme. The gallery aims to operate as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global art scene, with a strong commitment to research, collaboration, and diverse artistic practices.

For more information, sales enquiries, interview and image requests please contact: info@aliceamati.com