

# Gestural Architecture

20 March – 19 April 2025  
69 Reservoir Street, Sydney

A gesture, a trace, a movement held in time—these elements form the foundation of *Gestural Architecture*, an exhibition that extends an enduring fascination with movement, light, and spatial intimacy. Audre Lorde wrote, "There are no new ideas, just new ways of giving those ideas we cherish breath and power in our own living." This sentiment courses through the exhibition, where painting, choreography, and installation are not merely disciplines but ways of thinking, feeling, and reshaping familiar ideas of gesture and perception.

In this world, painting is never static. Watercolours shimmer with transparency and liquidity, capturing the fleeting architectures of bodies in motion. The figures depicted are not fixed in time but emerge and dissolve in soft washes of pigment—an echo of a deep engagement with choreography. These are paintings attuned to sensation, where colour is not merely applied but experienced as a dynamic presence. Here, movement is not just represented but felt, an extension of a longstanding dialogue with dance and the spatial vocabularies of the performing body. Colour, in this context, is a living force, shifting and responsive, much like the way light refracts across skin or the way time bends through the patterns of choreography. It is not a static hue but a force of energy, motion, and transformation.

The textile installation expands these concerns into physical space, deepening an exploration of gesture beyond the painted surface. Draping, folding, and translucency extend the language of watercolour into an immersive environment, one where silk and sheer fabrics catch the light in ways that mirror the luminescence of the paintings. If the watercolours suggest bodies in motion, the installation invites us to move with and through it—to become participants in its shifting registers. The interplay of fabric and timber structures further underscores this dynamic; where the textiles flow, the timber provides a counterpoint, a subtle choreography between weight and lightness, form and dissolution.

Yet, *Gestural Architecture* also highlights the significance of the preparatory—the sketches, studies, and preliminary gestures that inform the final works. In this practice, these elements are not secondary but essential, forming a crucial dialogue between process and outcome. This approach challenges conventional hierarchies of artistic production, recognising that every mark, every material test, and every exploratory composition carries the same weight as the finished piece.

These preparatory works exist as living documents of motion, indexing thought in action and reinforcing the idea that movement itself is a central medium within the practice.

To observe Haley in the studio is to witness a practice that is deeply attuned to the fluidity of thought and form, where artistic decisions unfold through a process of acute listening: listening to materials, to movement, to the imperceptible shifts between self and space. She is a thoughtful interlocutor, engaging not only with the physical act of making but with the conceptual undercurrents that shape it. Her work mirrors the delicate negotiation between self and others, a quiet but persistent conversation between gesture and reception, action and resonance. More than an artist, she is a cartographer of relationships, charting the unseen pathways that connect bodies, materials, and environments.

This emphasis on process recalls the embodied sensibility of *A Sun Dance*, a performance work presented at the National Gallery of Australia and Tate St Ives. In that work, dancers moved through architectural spaces, tracing pathways of sunlight and shadow in real time. The translation of this performance from one space to another highlights the mutability of movement, the way choreography—like colour—responds to and is shaped by its surroundings. In much the same way, the paintings in *Gestural Architecture* embody an acute sensitivity to place, shifting in response to light, materiality, and the conditions of the moment. The body is central, even when absent, its rhythms and relations inscribed in the textures of pigment and fabric alike.

This practice has always embraced an expanded field of painting, one where abstraction, performance, and spatial experience intersect. *Gestural Architecture* continues this trajectory, offering not only an exhibition but an invitation: to consider how we move through space, how light animates form, and how colour, in all its mutability, might hold within it the sensation of time unfolding. The movement of colour across paper, the way fabric catches the air, the shifting perception of a painting as one walks past it. Each moment speaks to an ongoing transformation, a dance between material and experience.

We need artists like Haley—artists for whom practice, life, space, relationships, and the cycles of the sun are not separate, but entangled. Her work reminds us that perception itself is an act of movement—that to see, to feel, to engage is to be in constant negotiation with change. Every gesture, whether preparatory or resolved, is part of a continuum, and each mark, fold, and hue carrying the potential of movement yet to come, drawing us into the unfinished, the unfolding, the infinite possibility of encounter.

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