

'Think of how the hours pass in this house.

They pass,

I assure you,

they pass.'

MiyóVestrini, trans. Anne Boyer & Cassandra Gillig, *Grenade in Mouth* (2018), p. 44

The writer Sarah Manguso has kept a diary for twenty-five years. It is eight hundred thousand words long. In her book *Ongoingness* (2015), Manguso admits the diary is an attempt to hold onto memory—to record her experience in language, and to choose which moments to remember and which to forget. But, as Manguso writes, a diary can only do so much: 'despite my continuous effort—in public, in the middle of the night, and in moving vehicles—I knew I couldn't replicate my whole life.' It's through recognising this failure that Manguso begins to contemplate a different idea of time, one governed by the sensation of *ongoingness*: 'the forever that has always been happening.'

For the exhibition *Blue You Sea Sky*, Sally Anderson presents a body of work that also deals in the documentation of memory and experience. These paintings are diaries in that they are representations of Anderson's day-to-day existence. Through inscribing such moments onto canvas, Anderson is undertaking a similar task to Manguso—such works become records of time; the ballast against forgetting. There may be literal representation here (the landscapes of Tweed River and Bridal Veil Falls; orchids and trees) but such representations function within an abstract mode—they are memories or scenes revisited, or they are metaphors, or they are undisclosed symbols and references.

Manguso, like Anderson, recently had a child. And Manguso, like Anderson, understands how the child becomes the bearer of time: growing, speaking, talking, walking and running, discarding one skin and picking up another. Anderson takes these markers of time back to the canvas, using her son's clothes (which are now too small for him) as the means with which to record such moments in paint. Just as Manguso finds her child writing themselves into her diary, so too Anderson finds her son, and his way of being-in-the-world, spilling onto the canvas.

In this way, Anderson is a poet's painter in that she layers paint as a poet layers language—disparate associations are piled on top of one another in order to create multiple meanings, rather than singular definitive images. One painting may appear as a still life, but it is also *nota* still life (*Hat Hill Road Hydrangea with Sydney's Banksia*); another may appear to be entirely abstract, but it also has the marks of a landscape hidden within the frame (*Bridal Veil Falls and Reasons for Going to the Sea*). Yes, these works are about time, but they are also about kitchen sinks, motherhood, the colour blue (and all it conjures), the feel of a backyard's wet grass underfoot, and the flowers that sit in the corner of a room, in a particular house, on a particular day.

To look at Anderson's paintings is to be in the *middle*, where time—and our experience of it—is not marked by a beginning or end, but by movement: the way it can push forward and circle back, and the way it can elongate or diminish itself. 'In the making of pictures...time changes its shape,' writes Ali Smith in *How to Be Both* (2014), 'the hours pass without being hours, they become something else, they become their own opposite, they become timelessness, they become no time at all.'

Naomi Riddle, 2019