

# ALG

ALEXANDRA LAWSON GALLERY

## Different Paths I have taken that remind me where I am

16 January - 4 March 2021

Hayley Megan French

1. *Boundary painting (2)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
2. *Boundary painting*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
3. *Circling home*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
4. *Half a lap of Springfield Park*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 102cm, \$3,500
5. *Springfield St & left*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
6. *Remembering walking paths near my home*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 102cm, \$3,500
7. *What I remember*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
8. *Pipeline orientation notes*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 102cm, \$3,500
9. *Three lines, three horizons (4)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
10. *Three lines, three horizons (3)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
11. *Three lines, three horizons (2)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
12. *Three lines, three horizons*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600
13. *Three lines, three horizons (5)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41cm, \$1,600

Please contact:

[www.alexandralawsongallery.com](http://www.alexandralawsongallery.com)

[info@alexandralawsongallery.com](mailto:info@alexandralawsongallery.com)

0418 603 695

Open Wednesday - Saturday noon-5.30pm

# *Layers of place – a reflection on the paintings of Hayley Megan French*

By Nadia Odlum

The paintings in this exhibition come from walking.

Home for Hayley Megan French is in Guildford, on Bidjigal land in Western Sydney. Like most of us in 2020, Hayley was restricted in her movement, spending more time walking the streets close to her home, sometimes with a goal but also aimlessly, the type of walk where the mind wanders as much as the body. Hayley realised she was unconsciously circling her own home, creating a map of the local area in her mind in relation to the house. Returning to the centre, the studio, she engaged in a parallel process of recalling and painting, translating embodied experience to the canvas.

When we walk, there is always more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear. Experiences accumulate, and every layer we add is influenced by the ones that came before.

The more we walk the same paths, through the same landscapes, the deeper this layering occurs, until places themselves come to impact the very fabric of how we see the world.

In Hayley's works, layers of white paint are built up on dark backgrounds, creating a sense of peering through multiple veils. Shadows of lines that have been painted and then obscured form muted compositional anchors, while a restricted palette of bolder lines reveal to us which paths were the focus of the artists' recollections. Walking, remembering and painting all intermingle in the process. When I visited her home studio the paintings were arranged around the room, some completed, some in progress, many still wet with paint. They circled us like Hayley herself had circled the house, forming portals between the world and its memory.

The soft uneven lines in the paintings are like 'desire lines', the unofficial tracks of worn grass or dirt that appear in suburban parks as the result of many people taking the same route, each footstep contributing to the cumulative mark. As the body leaves its trace upon the world, so too we leave traces upon each other, guiding and being guided in measure by those who we live close to, who also seek to call a place home.

The suburb of Guildford is recorded in these works from a number of perspectives. In the works bearing the title *Three lines three horizons*, the artist recreates the gaze of someone standing at street level. The stacked lines depict the street, the houses, and the latent horizon. In other works, such as *Half a lap of Springfield Park*, the abstraction adopts a top down view, like a diagrammatic map scribbled on a napkin. The artist is examining her experience of this place from all angles, a process as physical as walking itself.

Through contemplative abstraction these works communicate what it is to spend time in a place, and to allow that place to layer itself within you. A slow approach to landscape, they give form to the intimate intertwining of the body and the world.