

ANAT EBGI

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On View: Alec Egan at Anat Ebgi

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As galleries and art institutions around the world begin to reopen, we are spotlighting individual shows—online and IRL—that are worth your attention.



Alec Egan, *Changing Room*, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Anat Ebgi Gallery.

Painter Alec Egan's Luscious Interiors and Brightly Lit Landscapes Are the Subject of a New Show at Anat Ebgi—See It Here

The artist's second solo show at the Los Angeles gallery is a delight for the eyes.

What the gallery says:

“The exhibition title alludes not only to the hottest apex of the year, when everything is at its most combustible, the ‘dog-days’ month that ends summer, but to a proposed conclusion before the start of something new.

“Since 2017, Egan’s practice has focused on creating oil paintings of the interior of a singular imagined house. Typically, Egan’s exhibitions are constituted around one ‘key’ painting—often of dominant scale—that depicts one room, such as a

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bathroom, living room, or bedroom, full of domestic details, which then becomes the conceptual fodder for the remaining works in the show. Although this project has been ongoing, the recent quarantine at home has cast a new light on Egan's meditations on the domestic.

"The key painting in 'August' is *Changing Room*, where, using an ad nauseum approach, Egan layers a cacophony of sentimental patterns. The effect is simultaneously grounding and disorienting. References abound, from the personal to Victorian wallpapers, to vintage Laura Ashley upholsteries, as well as boldly colored travel posters that are reminiscent of the '60s. The room has an air of mystery and concealment. Curtains hang heavily from their rods in a strange wild garden, perfumed by dewy roses. What is happening in the stillness of this house? Who or what is hidden behind the privacy screen?"

Why it's worth a look:

Staring at one of Alec Egan's paintings is like entering a strange vortex in which shapes and colors jockey for your attention.

In the midst of his luscious, floral-laden wallpaper and upholstery patterns though, distinct forms coalesce for a well-earned respite. A brown grocery bag filled with perfectly ripe fruit is a symbol of the nostalgia that permeates all of Egan's work, which he creates based on half-formed memories mixed with cultural sources.

Another example is in the brown leather work boots that appear in one painting, a reference to Van Gogh's well-worn peasant shoes. In Egan's painting, the red laces are formed by thick caterpillars of paint, squeezed straight from the tube and sitting atop the canvas, distinguishing them from the flat geometric pattern of the rug that recalls Édouard Vuillard's Japanese-inspired prints.

Other paintings in this suite of 14 works depict traditional "California" scenes, though the artist's artistic influences range widely. Impossibly candy-colored sunsets anchored by palm trees are reminiscent of Alex Israel's work, crossed with the movie poster for the cult surfing classic *Endless Summer* (1966). In Egan's study of cresting waves, the individual water droplets and spewing foam recall Hokusai's *Great Wave*.

All in all, it's a feast for the eyes.

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What it looks like:



Alec Egan, *Changing Room* (2020) [detail]. Courtesy of the artist and Anat Ebgi.



Installation view, "Alec Egan: August" at Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles.