

An abstract painting featuring a central figure, possibly a woman, rendered in soft, blended colors. The figure is surrounded by a dense, chaotic arrangement of leaf-like shapes in various colors including greens, yellows, oranges, and blues. The overall composition is dynamic and layered, with a sense of movement and depth. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

Alex Sutcliffe

Falling in Place

OPERA GALLERY

FOREWORD

In an era where the boundary between the digital and the tangible grows increasingly ambiguous, Alex Sutcliffe's exhibition 'Falling in Place' stands out as a testament to the enduring power of painting as a medium of exploration and reinvention. Sutcliffe, born in Chicago in 1997 and now based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, presents works that pay homage to the tradition of painting while pushing its possibilities within our digitally driven reality.

Across 15 captivating paintings, Sutcliffe delves into the interplay between traditional and contemporary practices. His process prioritises the physical act of painting, layering pigments and textures onto the canvas with meticulous care. These tactile beginnings serve as a foundation for subsequent digital interventions, creating artworks that blur the line between handmade and machine-altered. The effect is a harmonious tension — a visual dialogue where the viewer is invited to consider the boundaries of medium and technique.

At the core of Sutcliffe's approach is a dedication to exploring painting's relevance in an age defined by instant image creation. Rather than allowing the digital to overshadow the craft of painting, he uses it to complement and interrogate it. His manipulation of historical imagery through painterly techniques that echo digital tools — such as erasure and reconstruction — challenges perceptions of what painting can be. The layered surfaces of his works evoke the intricate fragmentation of mosaics or the disorienting distortions of a digital interface, imbuing each piece with a sense of temporal and spatial fluidity.

'Falling in Place' is more than an exhibition; it is an opportunity to reflect on the visual complexities of the contemporary world. Sutcliffe's works resonate as repositories of memory, culture, and innovation, underscoring painting's capacity to evolve and endure. The exhibition captures not only the fragmented nature of modern life but also the potential for connection and meaning amidst its myriad images, celebrating painting as a medium that bridges history and possibility.

Gilles DYAN
Founder & Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Jordan LAHMI
Director
Opera Gallery Geneva

ARTIST STATEMENT

Falling in Place

By Alex SUTCLIFFE

‘Falling in Place’ bridges the intimate and the digital, weaving the rich tapestry of painting's cultural history with the ephemeral artifacts of digital influence. Each piece is a palimpsest of cultural memory, using techniques that morph the familiar into the surreal. Through a process akin to digital editing, I manipulate scans of historical artworks, employing blurring, smudging, and selective erasing. This digital dissection distances each fragment from its origins, creating surfaces where the interplay of texture and layer becomes a playground for visual exploration.

The method I use mirrors the layering common in digital photo editing software, yet it is executed through traditional painting techniques. I build up layers of paint and selectively cut away — with the precision of a digital eraser — to reveal underlying strata. These surfaces, simultaneously soft and sharp, contrast blurred imagery melding into crisp digital contours of a multi-layered collage, resembling the luminous intricacy of stained glass or the fragments of a shattered screen.

‘Falling in Place’ is my ode to the dualities of painting. It is both an acknowledgment of the medium’s illusionistic roots and a celebration of its potential, highlighting how painting can encapsulate the fragmented yet interconnected narratives of our time. It is a meditation on the instability of our image-saturated world and a testament to painting’s enduring ability to hold us in its layered embrace.



Four Rivers

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

152.4 × 182.9 cm | 60 × 72 in (Diptych)



Life Tree

2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas
137.2 × 182.9 cm | 54 × 72 in



Battle of the Forest

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
121.9 × 152.4 cm | 48 × 60 in



Out of the Forest

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

121.9 × 152.4 cm | 48 × 60 in



Bathing

2024

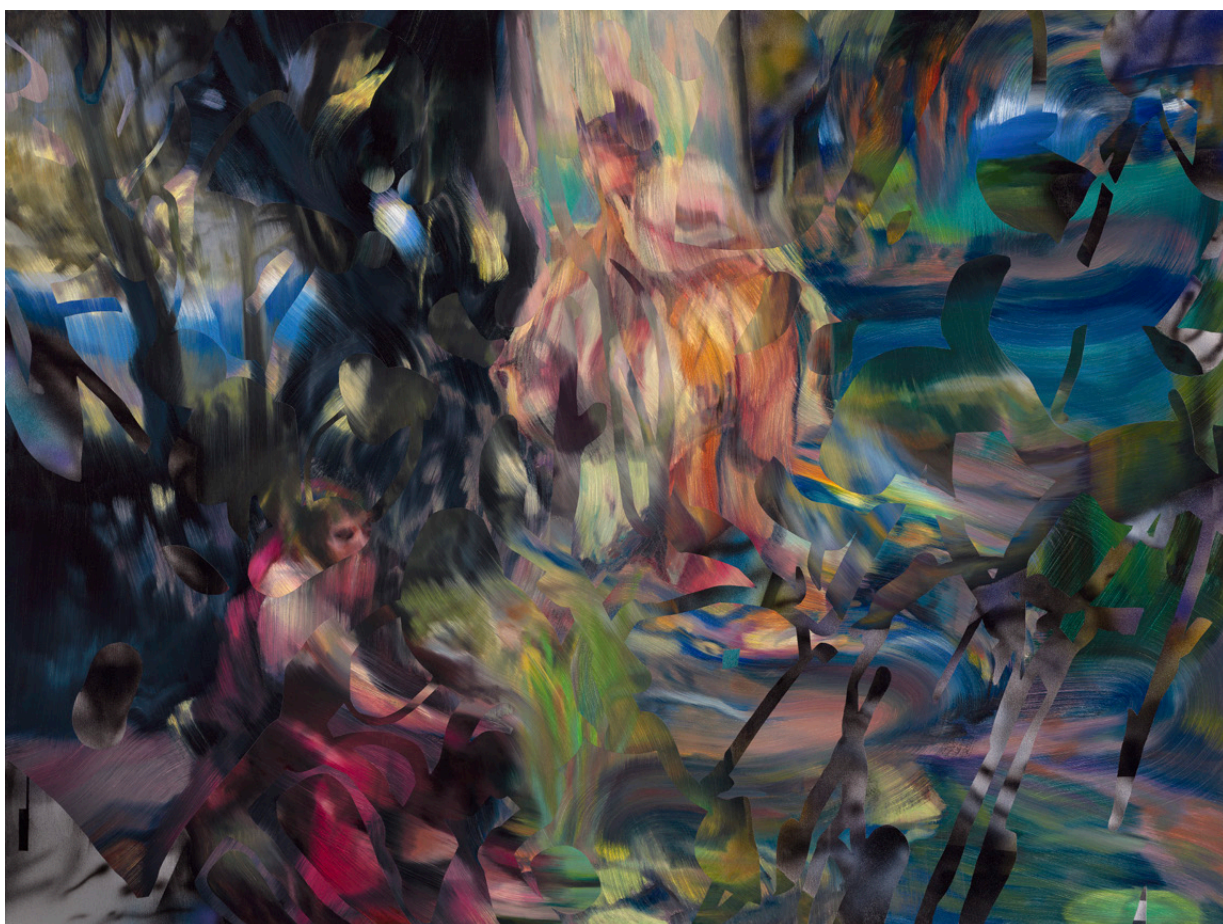
Oil and acrylic on canvas
101.6 × 121.9 cm | 40 × 48 in



Falling Hunt

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
101.6 × 121.9 cm | 40 × 48 in



Quiet Overflow

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

91.4 × 121.9 cm | 36 × 48 in



Flesh of Oil, Shadow of Stone

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
91.4 × 101.6 cm | 36 × 40 in



Falling Through Scenes

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
101.6 × 91.4 cm | 40 × 36 in



Passing Through

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
91.4 × 75.6 cm | 36 × 29.7 in



Falling in Space

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

61 × 76.2 cm | 24 × 30 in

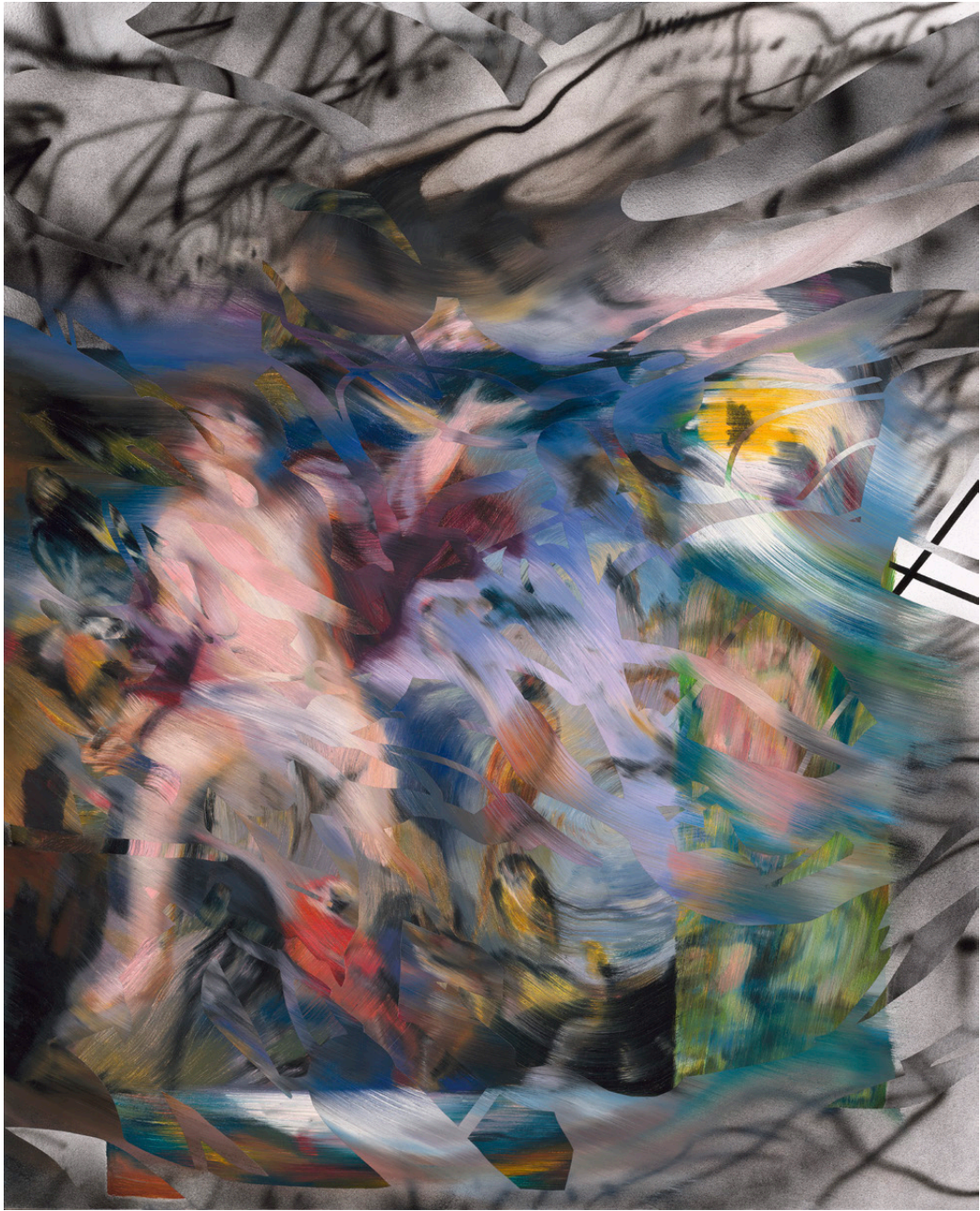


Falling Sun

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

75.6 × 61 cm | 29.7 × 24 in

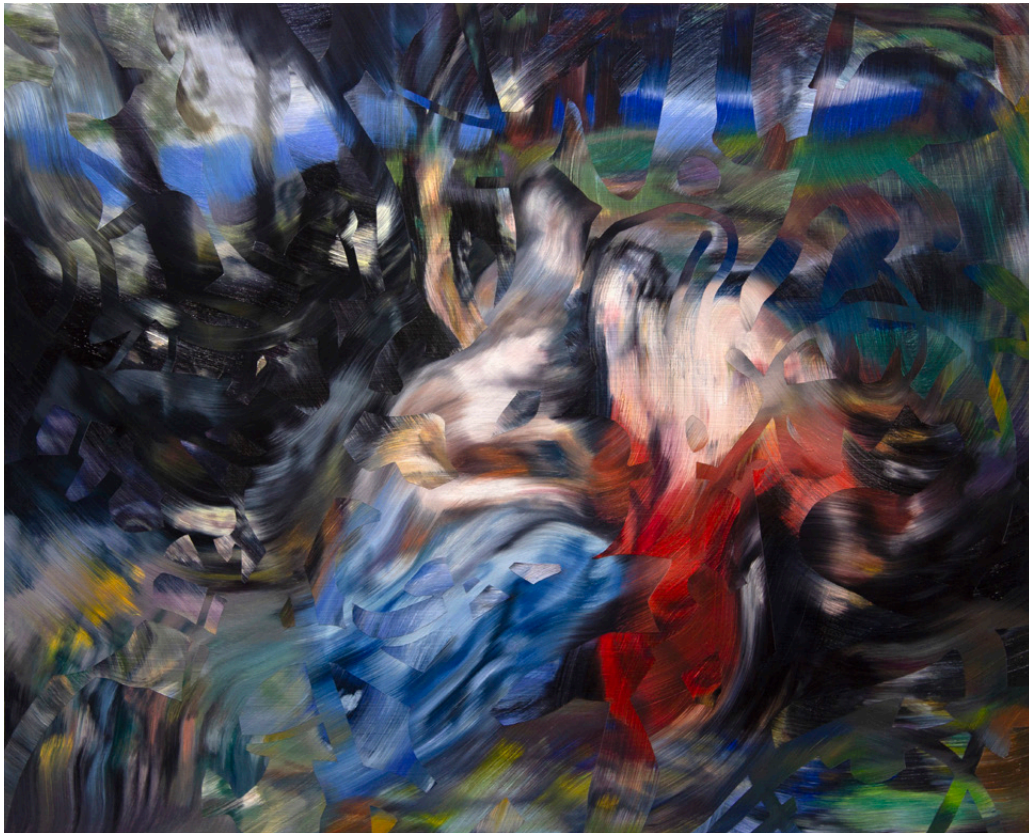


Aeolus

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel

75.6 × 61 cm | 29.7 × 24 in



Meeting
2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
61 × 75.6 cm | 24 × 29.7 in



Falling Asleep

2024

Oil and acrylic on birch panel
61 × 50.8 cm | 24 × 20 in

BIOGRAPHY



Born in 1997 in Chicago, Alex Sutcliffe is an emerging visual artist based in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Alex creates artwork that explores the tensions in contemporary visual culture. His approach emphasises painting's illusionary qualities through the interplay of surface, texture, and layering processes. His paintings' surfaces shift between hand-painted elements, mechanical interventions, and diffusion-generated imagery, blending these components together.

Alex Sutcliffe has exhibited his work in London, New York, Toronto, and Halifax.

EDUCATION

- 2020 Bachelor of Fine Arts, NSCAD University, Halifax, Canada
- 2016 Visual Arts Diploma, Canterbury High School, Ottawa, Canada

EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
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| <p>2025 'Falling in Place', Opera Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland</p> <p>2024 'Prologue', Gallery Sonder, Corona Del Mar, California, USA
 'Legacy', Plato Gallery, New York, New York, USA
 'Social Tapestry', Chilli Art Projects, London, UK
 'Whisper Networks', Katzman Art Projects, Halifax, Canada
 'A Glimmering Feel Towards the Now', City Hall Art Gallery, Karsh-Masson, Ottawa, Canada</p> <p>2023 Art Toronto, Co6, Studio Sixty Six, Toronto, Canada
 'Summer 2023 Group Exhibition', (Formerly) Studio 21, Halifax, Canada
 'Modal Strata', (Formerly) Studio 21, Halifax, Canada</p> <p>2022 '2022 Nova Scotia Art Bank Acquisitions', Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Canada
 'Syncing Matter', Studio Sixty Six, Ottawa, Canada</p> | <p>2021 Art Toronto, B34, (Formerly) Studio 21, Toronto, Canada
 'Re:newAll', (Formerly) Studio 21, Halifax, Canada
 'Liquid Pixel', Studio Sixty Six, Ottawa, Canada</p> <p>2020 'BMO 1st Art! 2020', Art Museum at the University of Toronto, Canada, Virtual Exhibition
 'Rationing Time, Data and Paint', Studio Sixty Six, Ottawa, Canada
 '2020 NSCAD Showcase', Online Catalogue, NSCAD University, Halifax, Canada</p> <p>2019 'Paintings', Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Canada
 'Preparation Suites', Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Canada</p> <p>2018 'Land Escape', Hermes Gallery, Halifax, Canada
 'A Survey of Ordinary Scenes', Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Canada
 'Spark: NSCAD Student Painting Exhibition', Teichert Gallery, Halifax, Canada</p> |
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PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- 2020 Global Affairs Canada Visual Art Collection, Canada
 Nova Scotia Art Bank, Canada

AWARDS & GRANTS

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|------|---|------|---|
| 2024 | CIBC C2 Art Program Finalist, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce | 2020 | Nova Scotia Regional Winner: BMO 1 st Art! Competition, Bank Of Montréal Artistic Development Board. Toronto, Canada |
| 2023 | Explore and Create—Concept to Realization, Canada Council for the Arts | 2019 | Margó and Rowland Marshall Award for Painting |
| 2022 | Explore and Create—Research and Creation Grant, Canada Council for the Arts
Explore and Create—Concept to Realization, Canada Council for the Arts | 2018 | Robert Pope Foundation Painting Scholarship |
| 2021 | Explore and Create—Research and Creation Grant, Canada Council for the Arts | 2017 | Robert Pope Foundation Painting Scholarship |
| | | 2016 | NSCAD Entrance Scholarship |

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Alex Sutcliffe, *Bathing*, 2024

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