

GALLERIA POGGIALI

THÉRÈSE MULGREW

SLOW BURN

26.03 – 24.05.2025

Opening 26.03.2025

6.30 - 9.00 PM

Galleria Poggiali - Foro Buonaparte 52, 20121 Milano

Galleria Poggiali is pleased to present *Slow Burn*, the first solo exhibition in Italy by American artist Thérèse Mulgrew, opening on March 26, 2025, at the gallery's Milan venue in Foro Buonaparte 52.

The title *Slow Burn* evokes not only a process of gradual combustion but also an existential condition: a desire that grows, spreads over time, and slowly consumes itself—an anticipation charged with tension and suspension. This notion is central to Mulgrew's painting, which captures the moment just before an action, the dense and silent instant that precedes the completion of a gesture, making the electricity of waiting almost tangible.

Moving fluidly between portraiture and still life, the artist constructs images imbued with narrative tension. Everyday objects—half-empty glasses, burnt-out cigarettes, plates abandoned on a set table—take on an almost metaphysical presence, becoming traces of something that has just happened or is about to occur. This sense of suspension is heightened by the cinematic construction of her scenes, which originate from actual sets carefully designed and lit by the artist to evoke the aesthetic and atmosphere of a film still.

The exhibition presents a new body of work created specifically for the occasion, in which Mulgrew explores the emotional tension between revelation and what remains unsaid. In *Awaiting Lunch Guests* (2025), a figure waits for a meal to begin: every detail on the table suggests the care for a convivial ritual yet to unfold, while her gaze rests on an empty chair, awaiting an occupant. In *Intimate Lunch* (2025), two hands meet over a shared plate, leaving the identity of the other diner unknown. In *Lipstick Touch-up* (2025), a figure is seen from behind, her face reflected in a compact mirror, caught in the moment just before lipstick touches her lips.

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The symbolic significance of hands, a recurring motif that weaves a common thread throughout the exhibition, is made explicit in a series of small paintings, each gesture assuming a symbolic identity. Works such as *The Lover*, *The Trickster*, *The Expert*, *The Skeptic*, *The Critic*, *The Overthinker* (2025) depict hands holding cigarettes in different stages of combustion—a metaphor for the slow dissolution of time and desire.

Through painting, Mulgrew constructs images that oscillate between past and future, nostalgia and anticipation. Her practice stands out for its cinematic approach to composition, where reality is suspended in fleeting moments: half-smoked cigarettes, abandoned glasses, hands resting on anonymous surfaces, objects that act as silent witnesses, carrying latent meaning.

In an era dominated by speed and perpetual acceleration, *Slow Burn* presents itself as an act of resistance—an invitation to pause, to linger in the interval between one action and the next, and to grasp the narrative potential of transitional moments.

Accompanying the exhibition is a catalog featuring a critical text by Giorgia Aproso, written specifically for this occasion, and an in-depth essay by Luca Zuccala, previously written in Chicago.

Thérèse Mulgrew (b. 1991) grew up near Dubuque, Iowa. Influenced by her mother's surreal oil paintings and her grandmother's impressionist still lifes, she developed a personal style focused primarily on large-scale portraits and nostalgically infused still lifes, painted in oil.

Mulgrew's work explores themes of intimacy and connection through a narrative visual language, often centered around table settings and domestic scenes. Inspired by cinema and photography, she collaborates with a filmmaker to create painting series that mimic the experience of a short film—each painting capturing a fleeting moment, while collectively revealing a broader, deeper narrative.

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