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Discover painter George Rouy's soft-focus faces and blurred bodies

The London and Paris-based artist eerily abstracts the human form
June 7, 2023



In British painter George Rouy's early works – dating to his 2015 graduation from Camberwell College of Arts in London – the human figure was a voluminous, monochrome, and mysterious form. Paintings like *Keeping It for Myself* (2019) rendered the nude body as a rotund, textureless acrylic surface: a pink and magenta mass attached to cartoonish limbs and a placid expression.

Then, in 2021, the painter saw a series of performances by Israeli choreographer Sharon Eyal. The experience marked a turning point in his approach. 'Her work really changed the way I looked at figuration,' Rouy tells me over the phone from his London studio. On a darkened stage, the dancers' awkward, almost confrontational poses punctuated the ballet-like fluidity of their movements, striking a psychological tension that has since found its way into the painter's work.

Rouy is now less about depicting the static body and more about expressing motion, specifically the parallels between a foggy, fleeting memory and the blurriness of movement as captured by a camera lens. In his 2022 painting *Tearing of the Savage Breast*, three or four abstracted forms emerge from a nondescript crimson

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void. Here, he renders the faces in soft focus, smearing the features while the paint is still wet, and warping the bodies and their tangled limbs with broad gestural strokes. Having recently substituted acrylic for oil, the artist has also adopted a more vibrant palette to capture nuanced, luminous flesh tones against shadowy backgrounds.



Born in 1994 in Kent, UK, Rouy divides his time between London and Paris. Reflecting on his previous bodies of work, he describes his approach to figuration as an ongoing experiment, and the challenge of capturing a 'more complex presence' in his paintings. In his newest pieces, Rouy explores how much further the body can be distorted – how not just blurring but fully erasing the face might open a composition to wider interpretation. 'The facial expression is the anchor to a piece sometimes; it tells us something about the painting,' he says. 'When you remove that, the gaze kind of disperses.' Like in a fuzzy memory, or a dream.