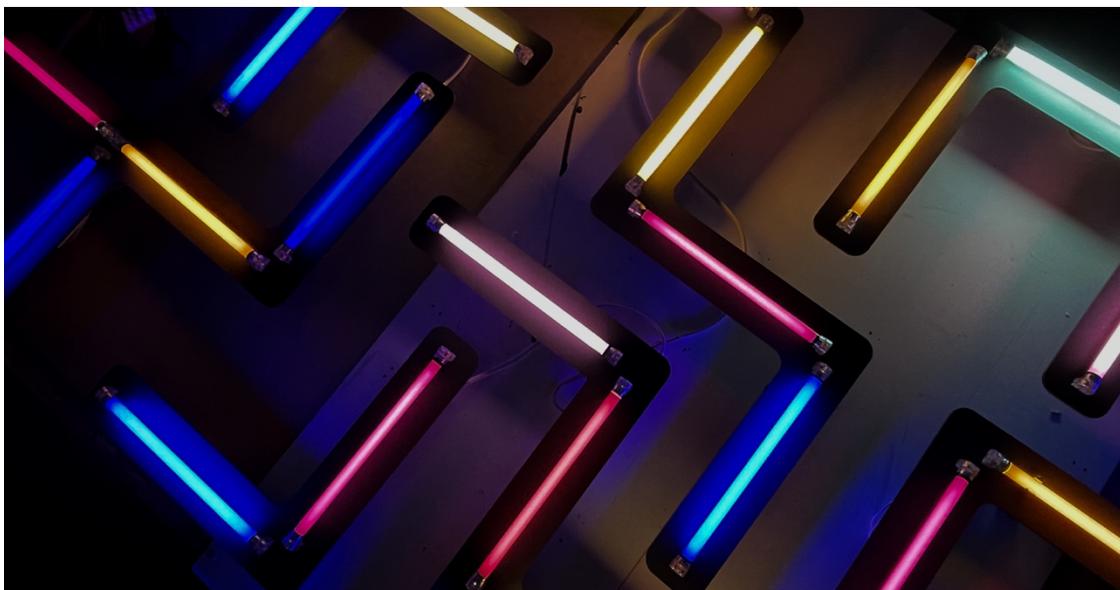


THE WANDERING ROOM

# MEAGAN STREADER

*Quiet moments over small horizons*



November 20 & 21, 2021



# Unfurling

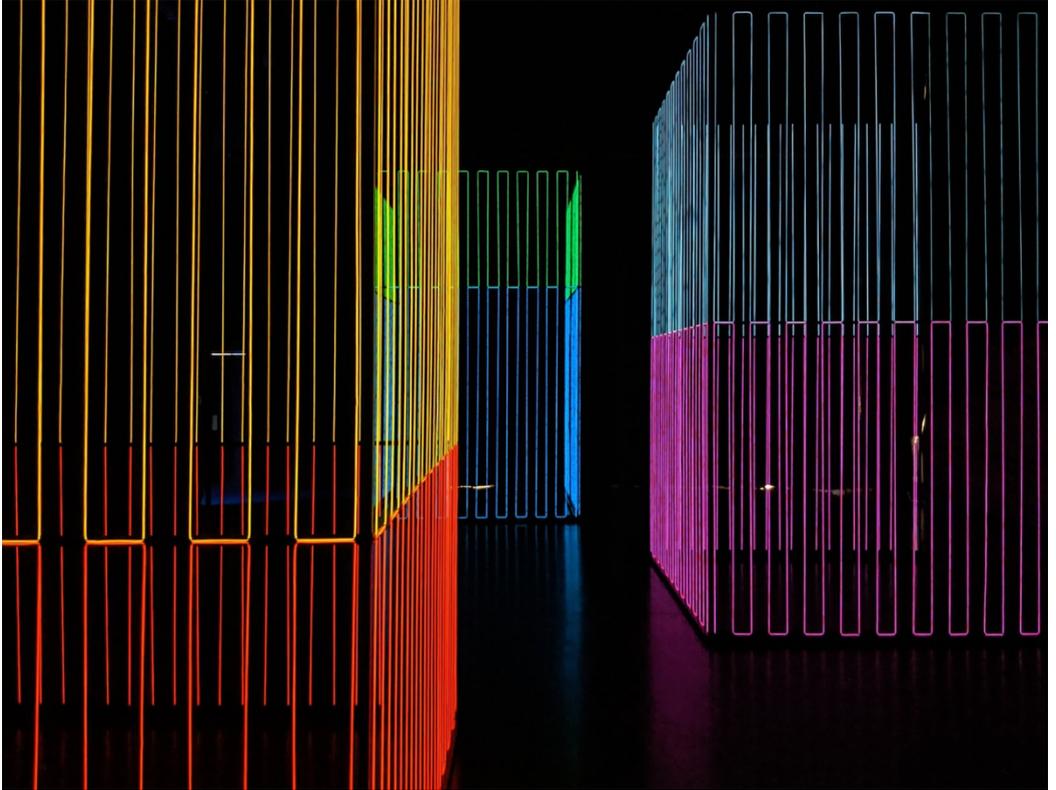
Hannah Gartside

In the last six years Meagan and I have shared two houses, and then worked from the same three warehouses. During this time (in varying degrees of proximity) we have supported each other's growth as artists and women. Recently, I have noticed a tenderness making itself known in Meagan's work. I see this as a fascinating refinement of the crisp, exacting visions that she has always realised. The new warmth is coming in part through her use of colour (see *A Window is a Square Horizon*, 2020 and *Silent Structures*, 2019, both Mars Gallery, Melbourne and *Parallelism*, 2019, HOTA, Surfers Paradise), which comes after years spent working almost exclusively with the subtle yellow or blue white of unfiltered electric light. It is an understatement to say that Meagan is sensitive to light and space. We have spoken of the majesty of sunsets, the life-affirming glory of their pink-gold brilliance. Meagan has transitioned into using colour as a way to "capture and explore emotions, associations and intimacy". To this end, she has (through determined inquiry) mastered new materials: coloured and patterned sheet glass and acrylic, coloured lighting gels used in theatrical lighting, 3D printing with PLA filament, steel, aluminium, and high-visibility reflective safety material. These materials vitalize the persistent presence and focus of all her works—forms of illumination.

Light has taken form in Meagan's work through electroluminescent wire, glass neon, LED neon flex, hand-held torches, U-bend and straight fluorescent tubes. Short, thin, fluorescent tubes are used in *Quiet moments over small horizons*, her installation here at The Wandering Room. Each has been wrapped in a lighting gel of smokey pink, rose, peach, deep blue, or dove grey, all mounted onto black MDF, and suspended in the opening to the space. The work functions as both barrier and greeter, a deconstructed grid which plays off the formal qualities of the space. Meagan chose the colours in *Quiet Moments...* for



*Silent Structures* (installation detail), U-bend fluorescent lights, pine, electrical components, 2019



*Parallelism*, electroluminescent wire installation, 2019

"[their] softness, or gentleness. There's something about sunset that can be really bold and in your face. I didn't want to focus on the sun itself. I wanted to focus on that quiet moment in between and around that time."

There is a sensory quieting that occurs through darkness in an exhibition context, a dampening down of visual distraction, through which we have an increased sensitivity to any light that is present. Meagan describes the decision to work with darkness as a way of "making the viewer kind of invisible, and making me invisible. It's this big overwhelming space that envelopes you, or protects you, and takes you away from your reality in a way." I know the expression 'many fears are born of late night loneliness', but I wonder if, in Meagan's work, the darkness does not deliver an experience so much of distinct, individual, human aloneness but rather facilitates a dissolving of bodily boundaries through which we can feel more connected. Less 'seen', as in perceived or judged, and more felt and accommodated (as in, there is a body breathing to my left, I will adjust my path slightly to the right). Within this framework, I understand Meagan's work as being about connection.

Coming a mere four weeks after Melbourne has been released from the longest lockdown in the world(!) *Quiet moments over small horizons* is a beacon, highly visible from the relatively busy suburban street. Meagan describes the work as "the opening up of an interior, private world...It's a shared experience, summoning warmth and collective energy - beaming out onto the street". Through working adeptly with the stuff of this physical, material realm, Meagan guides us over thresholds and into sensing dimensions that feel way beyond this one.

This exhibition has been proudly supported by Moreland City Council through the 2020 Flourish: Arts Recovery Grant Program.



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The Wandering Room acknowledges the traditional owners and sovereign custodians of the land on which we operate, the peoples of the Wurundjeri.

We extend our respect to their Ancestors and all First Peoples and Elders past, present and future.