

Theta

Maya Hewitt

Tending to the Root

November 7, 2025 - January 10, 2026

An improbable staircase is currently spiraling out from a hole in the ceiling of the upper floor in Maya Hewitt's Edwardian mid-terrace house. It lands in a narrow corridor, in front of a pillowy little bedroom that was, last year, a store room for little paintings made sitting at the kitchen table, but is now a bedroom for the artist and her two small children while renovations for a new attic-studio are underway. Lately the artist and her three-year-old have been sleeping on the carpeted floor, while her six-year-old sleeps above them on the twin-size bed. Elsewhere in the house there are stuffies and toys, a TV by a sofa, books, records, a table with benches before a lovely kitchenette, and a bike by the front door.

The rest of the house is paintings. Everywhere, paintings. Stacked, shelved, leaned and hanging on every available surface. They are rendered, compulsory archives of everyday life, memory, and imagination in radiant states of suspension. Constant additions and subtractions of oil, acrylic, watercolor and charcoal drawings allow for glimmers of buried underpaintings to peek through the surface, like portals to another world. Awaiting their designated new studio, ongoing paintings line the walls like animated pages of a diary or dreambook, tender and restless, dissolving whatever architecture defines the experiences happening within them. Emotions don't rely on structured space to take shape, and that's the matter from which each work begins.

This disintegration of place is apt for Hewitt, who grew up in London with a British father and Filipina mother, but emerged from the crosscurrents of narrative painting in early 2000s Japan. In 2003 she studied in Nagoya under painter Hiroshi Sugito, and presented her first exhibition in the nascent year of Misako & Rosen's founding in Tokyo. There, the polysemous notion of ukiyo—meaning at once “the sad world,” “the floating world,” and, more culturally, “the world of diversion and pleasure”—framed her view of what representation could hold.

In *Tending to the Root*, her first solo exhibition in New York and with *Theta*, Hewitt brings this layered sensibility to a new suite of paintings that refract everyday life along a spectrum of care. Where motherhood has reawakened the artist to the simple beauty of ephemerality in everyday things, it has also provided its own tinge of unease. Scenes of figures at play, learning about the world or wayfinding through worries, unfold with the irregular rhythms of sampled love songs. In equal measures of realism and cartoonish fantasy, affection cloaked in a bit of darkness is perpetually disrupted by the light of childlike joy. Her work speaks of life and death, nature and chaos, loving relationships and the spiraling out of time.

Maya Hewitt (b. 1981, London UK) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include: Misako & Rosen, Tokyo (2023); Nunu Fine Art, Taipei (2022, 2019, 2017); and Galeria Marta Cervera, Madrid (2020). Select group exhibitions include: Basel Social Club, Basel (2025); Misako & Rosen, Tokyo (2021); Union Pacific, London (2018); Redling Fine Art, Los Angeles (2017).