Emma Obrietan 5b

Easy Preservation

15–30 May, 2026
Opening reception: Thursday, 14 May, 5–8 pm
The Shop, Sadie Coles HQ, 62 Kingly Street, London W1

Emma Obrietan's works on canvas exemplify what art historian and curator Paul Pieorni has termed a "governing *irrealism* within realist art." Though ostensibly photorealistic, each canvas belies resolution, appearing "as something warped, torqued, and anamorphically displaced."[1]

The exhibition's title, 'Easy Preservation' is drawn from the press communication for 'Stop Painting', an exhibition held at Fondazione Prada, Venice in 2021. The phrase refers at once to the critique of painting as a commodity – one of five ruptures in the history of painting identified by its curator, artist Peter Fischli – while acknowledging art's capacity to function as cultural record or artefact.

Obrietan's sources are typically vernacular, user-generated images, each researched, re-skilled and charged by the artist in a process of distortion which Pieroni argues "ultimately corresponds to a contemporary world whose own systems and structures have been stressed and bent out of shape."[2]

While screen and lens-based media are central to this destabilization, Obrietan's approach remains decidedly painterly, speaking above all to a reverence for craft and humanity.

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Emma Obrietan (b. 1999, Seattle, USA) lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. Obrietan graduated from The Glasgow School of Art in 2025.

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1 Pieroni, P. 2026. *Artist's Relief.* [Exhibition text]. 5b, Glasgow, 31 January – 21 March, 2026.
2 Ibid.

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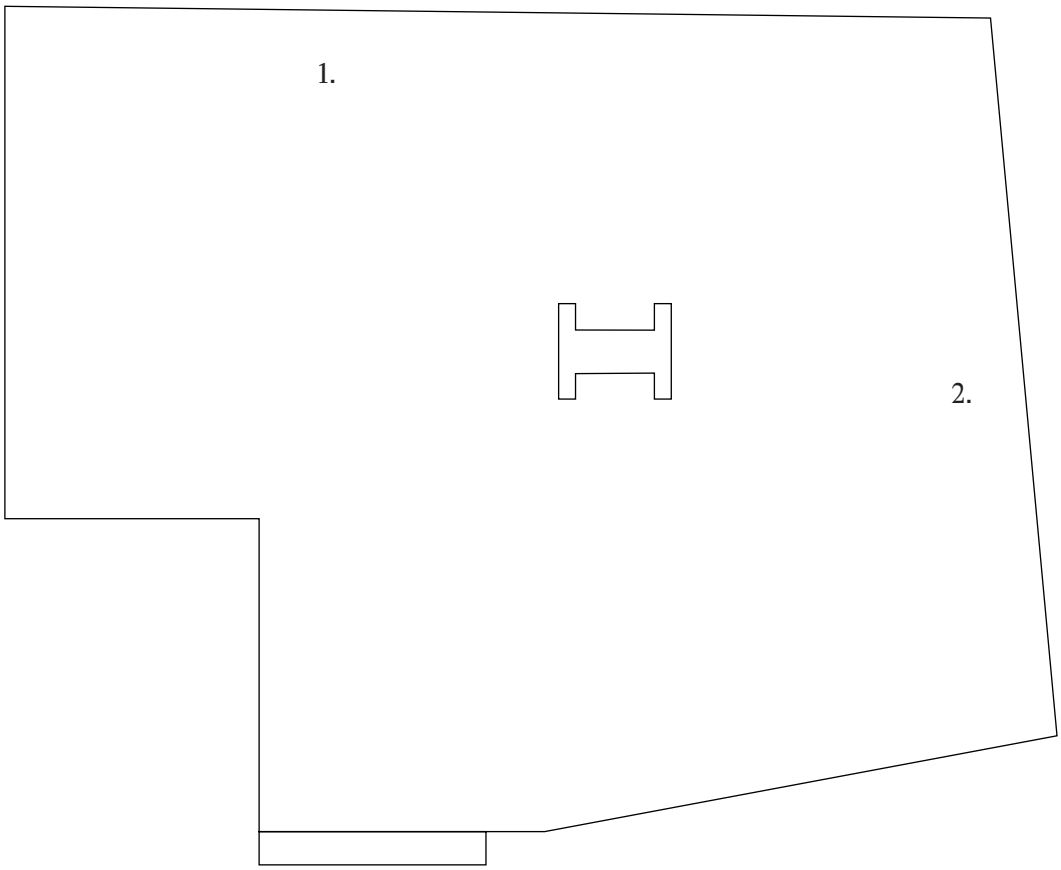

1. *Gardena Boulevard, Post Office*, 2026
   Oil on canvas
   95 × 170 cm
   37 3/8 × 66 15/16 in

2. *A Life Well Lived*, 2026
   Oil on canvas
   120 × 120 cm
   47 1/4 × 47 1/4 in