

Melanie Siegel

Environmental Thoughts

01/15 - 02/20

Melanie Siegel earned her Master's degree in 2015 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under the guidance of Karin Kneffel. Her practice explores the intersection of natural and artificial environments, highlighting the subtle tension between human presence and the landscapes we shape. The spaces she depicts appear idealized and devoid of people, yet traces of human influence remain embedded in architectural forms.

Before studying fine art, Siegel worked as a theater set painter, a background that continues to influence her work. Her paintings unfold as immersive, staged environments that feel almost like set pieces, suspended between reality and construction.

Her practice is rooted in thorough research. The environments she presents feel convincingly real, yet they are carefully composed fictions. Siegel gathers visual fragments from different places and reconstructs them into meticulously balanced spaces. This process of deconstruction and reassembly creates images that seem perfect at first glance, almost too perfect, subtly unsettling the viewer's sense of reality.

Each painting begins with observation: places she has visited, images she has encountered, and the details that stayed with her. From this starting point, the work evolves intuitively. The paintings remain in constant transformation, shifting as new visual discoveries emerge.

Light and shadow play a central role in shaping these atmospheric scenes. From a distance, her works may resemble photographs, but closer viewing reveals the layered illusion of paint, surface, and construction. Siegel's work encourages slow observation, pausing to engage in a quiet dialogue between image and viewer, where meaning unfolds over time.