



In the Beginning, 2023, oil on canvas
Wining and Dining, 2017, oil on Belgian linen

Marcus Beilby

There is a particular quality to certain memories—a crystalline clarity that makes them feel more vivid than the present moment. A shaft of afternoon light. The worn handle of a familiar tool. The particular yellow of a room we once knew. These moments, fixed in recollection, become somehow more real than reality itself, preserved in a space beyond time where nothing fades or changes.

This is the territory that Marcus Beilby has made his own.

For nearly five decades, Beilby has pursued a singular vision: to capture the ordinary world with such precision that it transcends the ordinary. Working in the photorealist tradition, he employs oil on linen to create images of startling clarity—a shovel, a hatstand, a broom, a window. Yet these are not merely technical exercises in mimicry. Beilby's paintings occupy that strange liminal space between documentation and meditation, between what is seen and what is remembered.

The works gathered in this exhibition represent years of patient dedication. Unlike many contemporary artists who feel compelled to exhibit frequently, Beilby has worked quietly and steadily, allowing this body of work to accumulate organically, trusting that its significance would reveal itself when complete. That moment has arrived. What we witness in *The Real and the Remembered* is not simply a grouping of

artworks, but the culmination of an artist's sustained investigation into the nature of perception, time, and memory.

Photorealism emerged in the late 1960s as a radical response to the dominance of abstract expressionism. Artists like Chuck Close, Richard Estes, and Ralph Goings demonstrated that painting could compete with photography in its fidelity to visual reality. But the best photorealist work—and Beilby's paintings belong in this category—achieves something photography cannot. The very act of painstakingly rendering reality by hand, brushstroke by brushstroke, transforms the subject. What results is not reality but something hyperreal, a version of the world where every detail is given equal weight, where time has stopped, where the ordinary becomes monumental.

Beilby understands this paradox intuitively. His technical mastery serves a deeper purpose: to create paintings that exist simultaneously in the present and the past, that are both utterly real and utterly remembered. When we stand before *Harry's Shovel* (2021), we are not simply looking at a tool. We are experiencing the strange alchemy by which an object becomes a memory, by which the specific becomes universal, by which the mundane reveals itself as profound.

The subjects Beilby chooses are deliberately unremarkable. There are no dramatic landscapes, no exotic locales, no



The Insiders, 2017, oil on Belgian linen
Harry's Shovel, 2021, oil on Belgian linen
The Red Broom, 2021, oil on canvas

obvious beauty. Instead, we find the things that populate our daily lives, the objects we use and discard, the spaces we inhabit without noticing. A red broom. A yellow room. A hatstand. These are the props of existence, the background elements we rarely pause to consider.

Yet in Beilby's hands, they become charged with meaning. Partly this is due to his technical skill—the way he captures the play of light across surfaces, the subtle gradations of colour and tone, the weight and texture of materials. But it is also due to something less tangible: his ability to select moments and objects that carry within them the residue of human presence. These are things that have been used, touched, lived with. They bear the marks of time and attention. They are, in their quiet way, portraits.

Consider the span of work represented here: from *Whatever Happened to Sunday Mourning* (1979) to *The Yellow Room* (2025). The earliest piece carries in its title a question about loss and memory. The most recent suggests a space suspended in light and time. Between these poles, Beilby has built a visual vocabulary for exploring how we inhabit the world, how we mark our presence through the objects we use, how those objects in turn become repositories of experience.

One of the most striking aspects of Beilby's oeuvre is his preoccupation with temporal markers. Titles like *In the*

Beginning (2023), *At the End of the Day* (2007), *A Moment in Time* (2018), *In the Moment* (2018), and *The Last Game* (2023) suggest an artist deeply engaged with questions of duration, sequence, and finality. These are not merely descriptive labels but conceptual frames that ask us to think about time itself—how it passes, how we mark it, how we try to hold it still.

Photorealism, by its very nature, attempts to freeze time. The painter working from a photograph is already working from a moment that has passed, transforming it through the slow process of painting into something that exists outside of time altogether. Beilby's work makes this temporal slippage explicit. His paintings are neither present nor past but exist in a third state: the remembered present, the eternalised moment.

This is why his work resonates so powerfully in our contemporary moment. We live in an age of instant images, of digital photographs that accumulate by the thousands, rarely looked at twice. Against this flood of throwaway imagery, Beilby offers something radically different: images made slowly, deliberately, with patience and care. Images that reward sustained attention. Images that suggest that some things deserve to be remembered, to be preserved, to be held in that space between the real and the remembered.

The works gathered in this exhibition represent more than individual achievements. Together, they form a cohesive meditation on the relationship between observation and memory, between the ordinary and the significant, between what passes and what remains. They ask us to slow down, to look carefully, to consider the world around us not as background but as subject.

In *Portrait in Absentia* (2020), Beilby reminds us that every object is, in its way, a portrait—of its maker, its user, its moment in cultural and personal history. In *Good Fortune Duck House* (2019), he suggests that luck might reside not in grand gestures but in the humble things that serve us well. In *The End of Motion* (2024), there is both finality and peace, the sense of something completed, something finished.

This exhibition itself represents an ending and a beginning. For Beilby, it is the realisation of years of patient work, the moment when individual paintings reveal themselves as movements in a larger composition. For viewers, it is an invitation to reconsider how we see and remember, how we transform the real through the alchemy of attention.

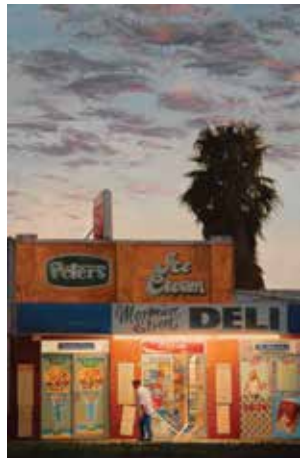
There is a line from Proust that seems relevant here: 'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.' Marcus Beilby has spent his career teaching us to see with new eyes—to recognise that the extraordinary is always present in the ordinary, that memory and reality are not opposites but partners in the creation of meaning, that art's highest purpose might be simply this: to make us pause, to make us look, to make us remember.

The paintings in this exhibition are gifts of attention. They ask nothing more than that we return the favour.

Connie Petrillo
 Curator



The Yellow Room, 2025, oil on Belgian linen
Cafe Society, 2016, oil on Belgian linen
At the End of the Day, 2007, oil on Belgian linen





The Real and the Remembered: The Art of Marcus Beilby

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