

mel aliendi — *wonderplay*



“Wonderplay” is the meeting place of wonder and play; a way of painting guided by curiosity, intuition and freedom.

A sense of wonder and curiosity sits at the heart of my practice. It creates a space for me to trust my intuition, let go of certainty and remain open to discovery. Nothing is planned - a plan means you already know the answer to what needs to happen. Staying curious allows for an interaction between myself and the painting - a conversation, a response to what is right there in front of me. Each painting begins as an exploration, unfolding through experimentation with moving colour and finding hidden shapes. I follow the signals from the painting — when to add, when to take away, when to begin again. Marks arrive before meaning, and shapes settle into their own rhythm. Painting in this way leaves room for unexpected moments - layers become part of the history of each painting.

The *‘play’* in Wonderplay is about freedom - the freedom to experiment and respond instinctively through mark-making, colour and composition. When I am in a state of play, nothing feels off-limits, and ideas are followed through without overthinking or judgement. I want my paintings to remain visibly human-made. Blurred edges, uneven marks and uncertain gestures are left untouched. They are the moments where the work feels most alive.

I paint because it is enjoyable. I love the physicality of paint — the texture, the movement, the feeling of loading up a brush and simply going for it. Painting also satisfies my curious mind. I’m not afraid of a blank canvas; that is often the easiest stage. The play begins, and curiosity quickly follows — along with the challenging middle part and answering the question of ‘when is it finished?’

Being curious about my own painting habits and observing my process has given insight into my practice and offers a glimpse into that elusive thing called creativity. Staying open to the unknown and having a playful spirit is enough for now. Those are the feelings that keep leading me back to the canvas.

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August 2026