



Michael Gromm, *hgdfs*, 2021, oil and acrylic on linen, 182cm x 167cm. Image courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Michael Gromm, *Love the layered carpet patterns*, 2021, oil and acrylic on linen, 122cm x 107cm. Image courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Michael Gromm, *My mum works for eleven hours, and I did about five*, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 106cm x 91cm. Image courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.



Michael Gromm, *I prefer Da v*, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 80cm x 60cm. Image courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.

In Hapyhazard Michael Gromm offers a luminous blend of order and chaos

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Preview

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Melbourne-based artist Michael Gromm is deeply driven by the making process. Working as a painter since 2001, Gromm produces abstract images containing numerous layers of paint, combining molten textures with tightly controlled patterns. The result is lyrical, colourful and soaring with visual energy.

Speaking about his most recent work, Gromm cites painters Joan Miró, Gerhard Richter and Bridget Riley as influences. The connection is clearly evident in paintings like *Porsche*, 2021, which contains curling ribbons of rainbow candy stripes reminiscent of Riley's op art paintings and Miro's squiggly linework and colourful dots.

Looking at Gromm's paintings also brings to mind Rorschach inkblots, the multicoloured swirl that swims across the surface of spilled petrol and the ringed innards of cross-sectioned geodes. References to music, photographs from his phone's camera roll and memories of time spent in Indonesia also appear in Gromm's visual mix.

Working with acrylics and oil paint, Gromm's finished work is remarkably pristine yet the creative process he employs is a push and pull process made up of spontaneous and deliberate markings. Starting with acrylics, Gromm works from above onto a horizontal canvas, pouring paint onto the surface and then agitating the pools of fluid with any tool he has at hand: squeegees, brushes or pieces of cardboard. Recently he has introduced an airbrush to his repertoire of tools and has been experimenting with the effect it creates. "The airbrush adds a mechanical, orderly element to the process that contrasts with the free-form gestural marks and pretty much turns me into an inkjet printer," he says.

While most of his paintings are abstract, hints of the figurative occasionally appear. Blooming pools of colour in *Kylie on the radio*, 2021, possess a physicality that is almost bodily, while the abstracted formations in *Love the layered carpet pattern*, 2021, appear to reach out across the seeping painted surface. “My work has had a play between abstraction and figuration for a while now, though I have started placing the realistic motifs inside shapes (mostly circles) which may hide them more in recent works,” he explains.



Michael Gromm,
Kylie on the radio, 2021, acrylic on linen, 61cm x 55cm.
Image courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery.

Additional insight is also contained within Gromm’s titles. Similar to the mini-narratives painter Dale Frank imbues within his titles, the names of Gromm’s paintings are drawn from overheard conversations and random encounters. “I keep a list of things I may see, hear or read on my phone. A title could be inspired by something I hear someone say or something I see happen, or it could be a short sentence describing a certain moment I have experienced.”

Full of colour, light and contrasting textural patterns weaving across the surface, Gromm’s paintings are a luminous blend of order and chaos. A pictorial expression of recent global events, Gromm says his new work sums up his experience of the past year and explores his hopes for the future. “It represents me and my work and also the time and place I currently live, both physically and mentally. I am trying to maintain a sense of optimism in these crazy, dysfunctional times.”

[Hapyhazard](#)

Michael Gromm

Flinders Lane Gallery ([online](#))

24 August – 11 September