stir world
see. think. inspire. reflect

Roots, seeds and slow activism at the Edinburgh Art Festival 2025

This year's Edinburgh Art Festival takes a slower, deeper curatorial approach, integrating into its home city with care and attention.

by Vamika Sinha | Published on : Aug 12, 2025

Coinciding with an international book festival and the frenetic Fringe, the Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) 2025 eschews explicit, politically urgent responses in favour of a slower activism, returning to nature – both human and non-human – as worth interrogating first. In its 21st year, the **festival** comprises 82 **exhibitions** across 45 partner venues across a wide range of practices and materials. There is a demonstrated investment in bringing to the fore local, young and emerging artists and venues, as well as those from marginalised communities, especially queer artists, in **Scotland** and beyond. The festival is without a theme this year, which enables a more amorphous experience of it. But as one darts between galleries, amid hordes of **street performances** and teeming cobbled streets, patterns begin to emerge, just as one might contemplate a leaf or flower over a period of time.



Studio Desk, oil on panel, 2025, Aubrey Levinthal
Image: Andy Keate; © Aubrey Levinthal; Courtesy of Ingleby, Edinburgh

One of EAF's quiet standouts is undoubtedly Philadelphia painter Aubrey Levinthal's show *Mirror, Matter* at Ingleby Gallery, a softly-lit, charming space in **Edinburgh's** New Town. Figurative painting is a major trend right now, but Levinthal has an edge; her **paintings** carry the strange, melancholic patina of everyday life, yet they are also sublime and introspective, pulling you into their shifted gravity. Translucent blocks or ribbons of colour reveal themselves to be laptops or charging cords, amid the traditional markers of still lives like water glasses and flowers.