

## Rebecca Salter: Tracing Time

19 September - 26 October 2024



UNTITLED (AMO5), 20218  
REBECCA SALTER

Huxley-Parlour are delighted to announce *Tracing Time*, a new solo exhibition of paintings by Rebecca Salter PRA opening in September 2024. Presenting works made over the last six years, *Tracing Time* is Salter's first exhibition with the gallery and her first solo exhibition since being appointed the first female President of the Royal Academy of Arts in 2019. The exhibition traces the artist's preoccupation with line and materiality, which have been a continued territory of exploration throughout her career.

Presenting both small and large scale works, the exhibition showcases the breadth of Salter's experimentalism with material. Her canvases are spread with paint; washed with ink; veiled in thin layers of muslin in an intuitive process in which the artist revels in the serendipity of the media. Each work is the product of a lengthy exchange between artist and material, some works taking months to complete. Salter begins every painting confronting a blank canvas, eschewing most preparatory work. For Salter, her role is not to invent a composition but tease out something pre-existing, embodied within her materials.

This repositioning of artist/object relation, from an artist imposing a composition onto a surface to acting as an agent for its material possibilities, is informed by Salter's training in Japan. Following her graduation from art school, Salter moved to Japan in 1979 where she spent the next six years training in various traditional techniques including Japanese woodblock printing. In this process, the paper absorbs the materials laid onto it, altering its makeup and producing a molecular shift in the object. Recalibrating her relation to surface, Salter pushes her materials to their limit; muslin is painstakingly pulled apart, thread by thread, paint is spread across the canvas to then be concealed by ink and further layers of paint. Salter seeks to engage the viewer in an exercise of prolonged looking, where each layer and intervention is slowly revealed. In the exhibited works a ghostly layer of white dots haunts one canvas, gestures of architectural space emerge and colours shift from white to blue,

silver grey to white. This multiplicity lends Salter's work an autonomy and animacy, each canvas brimming with energy.

Salter's practice is rooted in an endless pursuit to keep the line alive, informed by her understanding of line from an Eastern perspective. In Western art history the line fulfills a delineating function lending representation to a form; in the Eastern tradition, however, the pictorial line emerged from calligraphy, where the line achieves not only functionality but also meaning through its association with language. *Untitled* (2018) conveys the influence of calligraphy on the artist, which she takes one step further in a rejection of the representational and an embrace of Modernist principles of the limits of painting's edge. Salter's paintings retain a border within which she contains her material. This approach offers an elasticity to the work in which a rejection of representation allows for unending potentialities of meaning, while simultaneously condensing its scope in emphasising its boundaries.

The artist's extended engagement with her material and the unfolding, revelatory nature of looking indicates the centrality of time in her work. Her paintings seek to manifest the intangibility of space and light, while relying on a total absence of the representational. Instead Salter suggests the essences of both through an alchemy of material, where time passes and marks itself on her canvases as her ink separates and her materials dry and evolve with one another. Emptied of figuration, Salter's work traces that which is left behind when everything else is gone.

Rebecca Salter (b. 1955) initially studied ceramics at Bristol Polytechnic. After being awarded a Leverhulme Scholarship to study at Kyoto City University of the Arts in Japan, Salter trained in traditional Japanese printmaking. Her experiences in Japan altered the course of her artistic career, proving fundamental in developing her minimalist and multimedia practice. She has published two books on Japanese printmaking and, until 2016, was Associate Lecturer on the MA Printmaking Course at Camberwell College of Art, University of the Arts, London. Salter was awarded the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation residency twice, in 2003 and 2011. She became a Royal Academician in 2014 and was elected as Keeper of the Royal Academy in 2017. In 2019, Salter was elected president of the Royal Academy of Arts, becoming the first female President since the Academy was founded in 1768. Salter has exhibited internationally, with a major retrospective *into the light of things* at the Yale Centre for British Art in 2011. Her work is in numerous public and private collections, including Tate; the British Museum; the Victoria & Albert Museum; and the Library of Congress, Washington DC.

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HUXLEY-PARLOUR

3-5 Swallow Street, London W1B 4DE

Opening Hours Monday to Friday, 9:00am - 5:30pm

Saturdays, 1:30pm - 5:30pm

Entry is free

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