

HESSE FLATOW

Sarah Blaustein: *Central Feeling*

July 13 – August 11, 2023

Opening reception: July 13, 6-8pm

HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Central Feeling*, an exhibition of paintings by the Bay Area artist Sarah Blaustein, marking her first solo presentation with the gallery.

Known for her brightly hued, gesturally abstract compositions of acrylic and ink, Blaustein approaches her painterly practice as a meditative kind of ritual, initiated by filling a jug full of water. A conduit both for her pigments and pronouncements, water functions as a dynamic medium that the artist manipulates between sponge soaks and brush strokes, negotiating at each turn with its fluid and fugitive properties. Attuning to her canvases as if they are living, reacting entities, Blaustein maintains a sensibility to the here and now - watching, feeling, and charting her next move in the time it takes to refill her water jug.



This repetitive, back-and-forth outlines a choreographed mantra that allows Blaustein to focus in on the present moment. As she attempts to access and extemporize an inner, *central feeling* - a mode of expression in its purest form - she balances spontaneous free association with a mindful awareness akin to that of musical improvisation. What has become a distinct vocabulary of undulating holds and sweeps across her surfaces translate as rhythmic intonations. Her color choices and intensities of gradient offer melodic verse that crescendo as she delves deeper and deeper into self-reflection. Combining a nimbleness that harmonizes with her organic markings, and a judiciousness that underscores their expressive essentiality, Blaustein meets the challenge of working with permanent materials as they stain and set, leaving little room for error.

From the vessel carrying water, the body harboring feelings, and the canvas recording actions, this feedback loop generated between containers makes Blaustein's paintings fundamentally performative. Here, a language of abstraction not only translates raw emotion often difficult to encapsulate in words, but in turn provides the mechanism through which to elicit an empathetic response.

Sarah Blaustein (b. 1982) studied at the University of Michigan School of Art and Design, the New York Studio School, the Art Students League of NY, and Syracuse University in Florence, Italy. Blaustein has exhibited her work at numerous galleries and museums, including Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco; Paul Thiebaud Gallery, San Francisco; Berry Campbell Gallery, New York; Prince Street Gallery, New York; and Hackett Mill Gallery, San Francisco. Recent exhibitions include *Sum of Sensations*, a private viewing at PACE Gallery in Palo Alto for a salon event with art historian Alexander Nemerov. In January of 2023, she showed a select body of work at a private salon hosted by Jennifer Stockman. Her concurrent show at the Institute of Contemporary Art San José, titled *Present Tense*, is on view until August 13, 2023. She was recently awarded a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome.

For press inquiries, please contact Emily Sussman at emily@hesseflatow.com. For information about the exhibition, please contact Rana Saner at rana@hesseflatow.com.

Image: Sarah Blaustein, *Electric Vessel*, 2023, ink and acrylic on canvas, 70 x 60 in (177.8 x 152.4 cm)

HESSE FLATOW, 508 W 26 Street, Suite 5G, New York, NY 10001 / ADA accessible by elevator / Open Tues-Sat 11am-6pm
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