

Recent Paintings by Gail Salzman

The eleven oil paintings by Gail Salzman on exhibition at the Furchgott Sourdiffe Gallery in Shelburne, Vermont, reflect her ongoing preoccupation with the nature and aesthetic of water. Yet, while the connection is certainly evident, many pieces also demonstrate a structure and form that belie the traditional notions of water as ephemeral, formless, and transparent.

Echo 2 depicts a series of circular or spiral forms floating within a muted, fluid background. The prominent forms appear to change color over their length, like sea life frozen in a still image. Yet the bold red, orange, and yellow color choices, their near-opaque application and their fairly strict bounding suggest an unexpected strength of form. Most of the works in this show include a conspicuous panel along one or more edges of the painting. While the content within the panels generally conforms to the content without, the color choices become skewed or tinted and the depicted forms become slightly more amorphous, like gazing at the panel through smoked glass, or viewing two separate but simultaneous refractions of the image.



Sounding depicts a series of colored ribbon-like forms hovering within a similar muted brown and beige background. The conspicuous panel is also present in this painting, but notably, a portion of one ribbon form breaks the "fourth wall" and over-reaches it, lending a surprising sense of dimensionality to the entire piece.

In contrast, *Alchemy* depicts a dark vascular or industrial tableau. Substantial and expansive planes of red colors layer one another while an overlying tubular form reminiscent of dark smoke drifts partially off the frame. In this painting the panel undercuts the darkening landscape by exhibiting a neutral yellow-beige color scheme applied with vertical brushstrokes in opposition to the horizontal planes in the other portions of the painting.

Salzman's paintings appear to embrace the scientific principles of water – reflection, refraction, viscosity, fluidity, volume, containment – as much as the aesthetic properties of the medium. Because of this, the paintings are a more refined and balanced treatment of the natural settings that inspired them.

– Claire Robinson-White

image: Gail Salzman, *Echo 2*, oil on linen, 30 x 36", 2007