

**REBECCA PURDUM**  
**BREATHING PAINTING**

March 8 - April 11, 2021

**REBECCA PURDUM & ROBERT STORR**  
**IN CONVERSATION**

Tuesday, March 23, 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Presented as part of the 2021 Virtual Evening Lecture Series



*High Wire*, 2020, oil on panel, 32 x 24 in.

The New York Studio School presents Rebecca Purdum: *Breathing Painting*, March 8 - April 11, 2021. Purdum's paintings are slowly built up atmospheres that transcend distinct mark making and color decisions. Like breath on glass, the works are velvety fields, a mysterious recording of inner life; but unlike breath, these powerful paintings do not fade. The exhibition features eight works spanning 1987 – 2020, including two major triptychs, *Low Flight* (2002) spanning 18 feet, and *Winter Work* (2015), over 8 by 15 feet.

The exhibition's title is derived from an early memory of the artist's. Purdum writes "On a trip to the Museum of Modern Art in the late 1960s, I got into trouble for touching Monet's *Waterlilies* on the lower left-hand corner. Then I saw Jackson Pollock's *Full Fathom Five*. In my eight-year old experience, paints were colors and paintings were pictures of things that you filled in with those colors, but this Pollock was something completely different. I desperately wanted to touch it too but instead I got up as close to the painting as I possibly could, just trying to understand it. I don't know how long I stood there like that but the guard came over and told me not to breathe on the painting. I knew in that moment I wanted to be an artist. I wanted to be someone who could touch and breathe on a painting. For over fifty years, I have had the great good fortune to do so."

Purdum continues, "Nothing quite compares to the excitement and curiosity of anticipation. That is the feeling painting gives me. When I begin, I don't know what the painting will look like. I take whatever paint I have the most of, the color doesn't matter, and put it on, and I keep painting until the paint establishes a space, it's no longer descriptive like a color, but spatial in that unique picture plane kind of way. Then there is a moment when everything comes together, all the parts that make up the painting, the time and place involved, my thoughts and feelings and their sifting out. It all comes together as an affirmation of what is present, and essential, in the moment."

Rebecca Purdum was born in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and traveled back and forth across the country during her early years. She studied painting at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY and at the St. Martins School of Art in London, England. After attending the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1981, Rebecca moved to New York City. She had her first solo exhibition there and has exhibited nationally and internationally ever since. Her work was included in the 1991 Whitney Biennial, and in Ten + Ten: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters. Her paintings are in many private and public collections, including the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; the M.I.T. List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, MA; and the Hood Museum of Art in Hanover, NH. She received the Eugene McDermott Award from M.I.T. and grants from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation and the Joan Mitchell Foundation, among others. She joined a long and distinguished list of artists-in-residence at Dartmouth College for the fall of 2009, and was part of the 2019 inaugural exhibition, Doing What Comes Naturally: Seven Painters in their Prime at the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation in New York. In 2020 with a grant from the Peter S. Reed Foundation, she published a limited-edition book entitled Artist Enters. Rebecca lives and works in Ripton, Vermont.

Rebecca Purdum would like to thank Graham Nickson and the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture for giving her this opportunity. Special thanks to Rachel Rickert and Sam Levy. Thanks to Robert Storr. Thanks to Pamela Salisbury. Thanks to Stina Köhnke. Thank you to everyone who visits the show in a time when we cannot touch and breathe on each other.

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