

studio international

Barbara Takenaga, Linda Fleming, Jaq Chartier, Alison Hall at Robischon Gallery, Denver

LILLY WEI

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Robischon Gallery, Denver, Colorado
16 May – 6 July 2019

Although these four solo exhibitions – hosted side by side – are each distinctive, they all contain “slow” works that make you focus on them as they present ideas about abstraction, painting, sculpture and beauty



Alison Hall. *Chapel II (Lorenzetti)*. Oil, graphite and plaster on panel, 9 ½ x 7 ½ in. Image courtesy Robischon Gallery.

Hall's rich, velvety blue and black monochromes (depending on how rigorously that term is defined), from 2017-19, are variously scaled, discreet, densely concentrated works, her treatment of those colours very different from Takenaga's. Ad Reinhardt inevitably comes to mind, as well as others, but Hall's project is worlds apart from the (predominantly male) minimalist ideologies of that earlier period. Constellated by the glint of graphite marks and other details that hint at imagery and memory, her show is called *Heirlooms*, her paintings frequently inspired by the art and architecture of Renaissance chapels and their frescoes and mosaics.



Alison Hall. *Heirlooms*. installation view, Robischon Gallery 2019. Left to right: *Ancestral*, oil, graphite and plaster on panel, 91 x 71 in; *Arena*, gouache and graphite on paper, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 in; *Annunciation*, gouache and graphite on paper, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 in. Image courtesy Robischon Gallery.

For instance, in *Ancestral* (2017), the elusive figure of the Virgin Mary might be tantalisingly glimpsed before it melts into the painting's indeterminate, cloaking darkness, only to emerge again, depending on external conditions. Incidents appear and disappear, are lost and found like treasures from an archaeological dig, to be gradually excavated by a patient, attentive eye. You sense the weight of the paintings and how much they have absorbed, how much care has been lavished in their making, from the smoothing and refining of a traditional plaster ground to the countless repetitive, meditative, ritualistic markings out of which they are constituted. Hall's process and narratives are sourced in painting's own storied history, but what is included also feels deeply personal, encrypted and folded secretly into the painting like talismans or prayers, visible and not.

These are "slow" works that make you focus on them as they present a spectrum of ideas about abstraction, painting, sculpture and beauty. Above all, it is evident that they share an inclination for aesthetic pleasure, which they provide in abundant, absorbing measure.