

# HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

## MARTHA TUTTLE - *HYDRA, TEETH OF QUARTZ*

September 2 – October 16, 2023 79 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY

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Halsey McKay is proud to present *Hydra, Teeth of Quartz*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Martha Tuttle, her first at the gallery. For Tuttle, themes surrounding rebirth, reuse, and regeneration have played a crucial role in the recent expansion of her singular process, in which she collects, intersperses, and merges her symbolic materials into meaningful and alluring objects of contemplation.

Inspired by an earlier series of Tuttle's own paintings (which were, in turn, influenced by Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius' didactic poem, *De Rerum Natura*) and the recent birth of her daughter, this suite of seven recently completed artworks is the very definition of regeneration—from its concept to the protean matter of its elements. In the spirit of Lucretius' Epicurean belief that all things at the atomic level are governed by the mechanical laws of nature (if only we can understand them), Tuttle's elusive artworks highlight the transience of our everyday lives through their miscellany of reconditioned, revised and reinvented elements.

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In the four paintings titled *Accumulations* (1-4), 2023, each seemingly abstract, geometric painting slowly reveals itself as a highly charged and volatile collection of materials. For instance, what at first appears to be a geometric border containing two strong diagonal marks is, in fact, the artwork's structural support viewed through a diaphanous surface. But Tuttle even unmask this surety, presenting her wooden braces in a state of flux by charring one of the diagonals to change its color—from a creamy light yellow to a deep ivory black—through an age-old transitional process.

Meanwhile, the artwork's stitched-together sections of silk bear their own abstract forms, in this case, opaque slashes and blips of accumulated stone pigment scattered across their surfaces. Always the formal experimenter, Tuttle continues her tradition of breaking out of the painting's rectangle by gracing the top of each artwork with an alluring, rock-like element. But the artist even exposes these symbols of permanence as fluid, casting each of these "rocks" out of aluminum (a material, ironically, found primarily in rocks), returning the element to its site of origin. Altogether, the sum of these elements not only emphasizes the objectness of Tuttle's paintings; they also punctuate how everything in nature, no matter how seemingly timeless, is part of a neverending cycle of flux.

Martha Tuttle (b. 1989, Santa Fe, NM) works between painting, textile, and sculpture. She is interested in the possible intimacies and discourses within entities of varying scales and time frames, such as the human and the mineral or the pebble and the interplanetary. She received her B.A. from Bard College in 2011 and an M.F.A. from The Yale School of Art in 2015. She has been awarded fellowships and residencies from The Rauschenberg Foundation, The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, The Montello Foundation, A-Z West, and The Ucross Foundation. Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *ArtForum*, *Art in America*, *BOMB*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and elsewhere. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.