

**Reina Mikame** *Following the Light*

May 17 – June 15, 2024

Reina Mikame continues to pursue her investigation of painting through the consideration of various elements such as line, color, light, and temperature. She has developed her practice by linking issues regarding perception and image with individual themes through multiple series of paintings such as Looking at the Line and Looking at the Color. This latest exhibition is being held to commemorate the publication of her first book, “Contemplations: The Studio and Painting” featuring Mikame’s text interspersed with photographs taken at the artist’s studio. Following the Light, featuring more than a dozen new pieces, can be considered as an expansion of Mikame’s studio practice of reinterpreting and repainting each series theme in uniform F3 size frames. This exhibition offers a fresh comparative consideration between the work the artist has produced to this point and her awareness of the issues within that production. A focus on the disparity between these two aspects and the consequent variation in artistic output makes up the compelling content for this show.

Weaving with the Color, a diptych approximately 4 meters in width, welcomes viewers to the space. This painting addresses the expression of humidity that arises from the relationship between color and object as part of a series of Mikame’s color-related work that includes Looking at the Color and Unraveling the Color. Juxtaposed on the same wall is a watercolor entitled Looking at the Color. This piece pursues the unique element of color characteristic of a specific object in a simpler way, creating a contrast with the exploration of humidity and fragrance that arises in the space between the deconstruction and reconstruction of color in Weaving with the Color. The effect of this contrast is to emphasize the outlines of each of these artistic approaches.

In Distance of the light and Face, two pieces exhibited on canvases of the same size, one can see the expressive difference in the perception of light through the disparate motifs of a solid, three-dimensional stone and a cut hologram sheet. The Face presents an awareness of the frontal aspect of painting. When it was first made in 2016, Mikame used the wooden framework of a shelf as a “body” and referred to the canvas that fit within that space as a “face.” This context, folded into the work, evokes themes that connect to Mikame’s current practice.

What about the set of paintings Enduring Surface of Water and Glass? In the former, Mikame pursues the Bergsonian concept of perception as the site where mind and matter intersect through her painting. She describes the puddles in this series of paintings as “enduring” in that they are images that are also connected to individual memories. Glass, by contrast, demonstrates an intense formal interest in the way light permeates the rim and base of the cup. In this way, one can see the clear distinction Mikame makes between the issues involved in these approaches. What happens when a real-world object is flattened? What is added or removed? This awareness, something that Mikame has held since the start of her career in regards to painting, persists in the aforementioned The Face, as well as in her attempt to use reflections of light to create a solid, tangible landscape in Back to Front.

# Y K G

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This exhibition is an attempt to extract the iterative thoughts and practices that Mikame has accumulated over many years in the studio and organize them in the form of an exhibition and a book. These paintings, with their ability to physically present images lacking materiality, are special sites where the artist can further pursue her investigation of perception and images while also transcending her own boundaries and enabling dialogue with others. Just as Mikame's intuition to refer to Bergson was already glimpsed from the time she made *The Face*, which envisioned a bodily site for the image, so too do Mikame's past and present paintings illuminate her path as an artist as they reflect and resonate in the exhibition space. This is a special exhibition that explores the development of Reina Mikame's practice and thinking that surrounds her earnest, repeated efforts to delve deeper into her paintings. You won't want to miss it.