

Lauren Anaïs Hussey

*Textine*

May 09/May 31, 2025

Lauren Anaïs Hussey's *Textine*, the artist's first solo exhibition at Tara Downs, encompasses a new body of paintings that stage moments of perceptual uncertainty, inviting viewers into a visual schema where the boundaries between representation, abstraction, and linguistic devices are placed in constant flux. Hussey's work often features *trompe l'oeil* renderings of metallic surfaces – stainless steel appliances, elevator interiors, and other industrial fixtures – borrowed from the more liminal spaces of everyday life. These surfaces, with their slick reflectivity and implied tactility, become sites of both beguiling attraction and visual ambiguity. They suggest a purpose the painted surface cannot fulfill. The viewer may be drawn in by their precision, only to be unsettled by the disturbances that emerge at the surface: gestural, calligraphic marks that either scratch upon or float across the picture plane, disrupting any illusion of stability or coherent space.

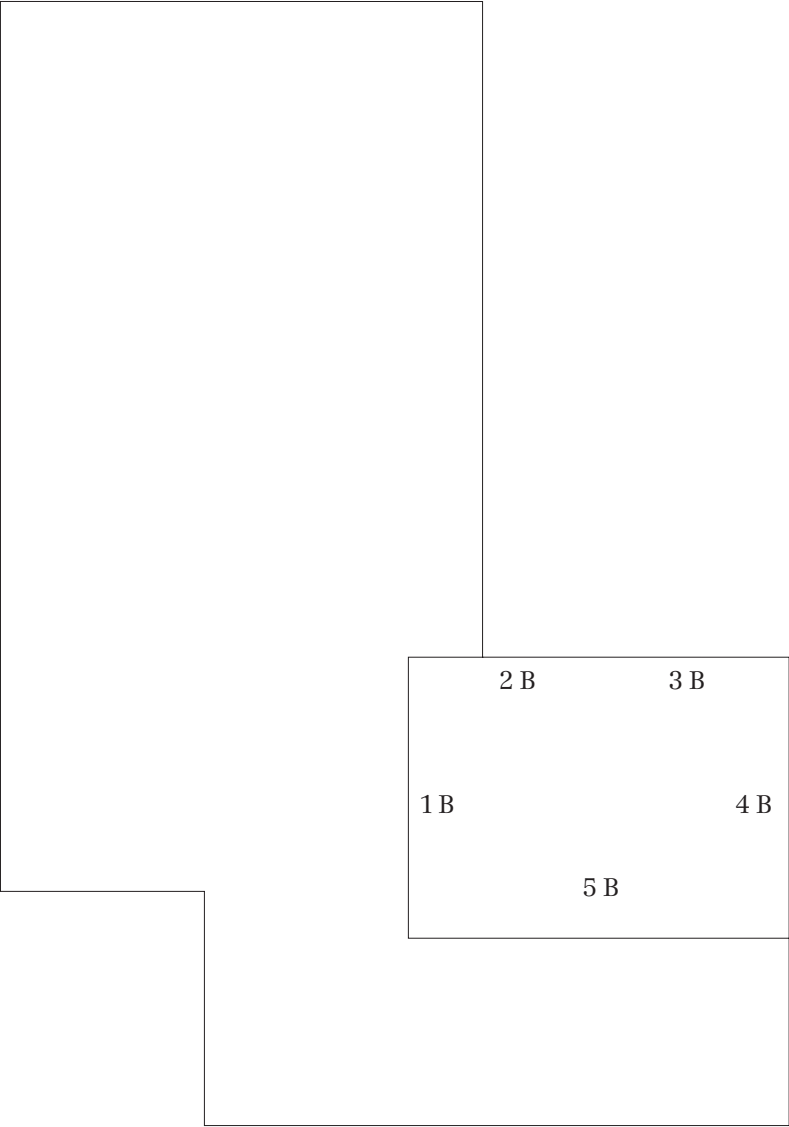
These overlays are not merely incidental; they operate as both formal and semantic gestures, evoking language – partial words, slivers of script, typographic reverberations – without ever becoming fully legible. They may also suggest vestigial traces of the complex process by which these paintings emerge. Working in traditional modes of calligraphy, Hussey begins each work in automatic drawing, a method of experimentation and free association, before submitting these drawings to processes of digital manipulation, deploying the final iterations as reference sketches for painting. Their mutation into painting suggests that the work unfolds across a series of translations, a series in some sense parallel to the transformations undertaken by the reflective surfaces, which transition procedurally from fleeting phenomena to digital snapshots to painted backdrops. Yet as much as these works converse with varied forms of post-digital abstraction, they also draw upon the legacies of other semiotic experiments conducted in drawing or painting, including the asemic writings of Mirtha Dermisache, the repetitious mark-making of Hanne Darboven, or the reworking of alphabetical form engendered by Chryssa.

Indeed, the exhibition title *Textine* itself begins to speak to these conceptual parameters. In some sense related to the preparatory drawings, although more aleatoric than automatic, Hussey generates words to produce novel or unexpected forms of signification, often by conjoining standard English prefixes and suffixes. *Textine* is one such word, made from the suffixes “tine” – “antler, tong, sharpened” – and “tex” – “to weave or construct.” And, certainly, something like “woven sharpness” may resonate with the sensuous aspects of Hussey's work, the sense of disorientation engendered by marks that are both seemingly embodied by force and ethereal or immaterial. But, of course, the chance combination brings us back to another, perhaps closer, meaning: “of or relating to text.”

We may glean this relation in the syntactical formation of language Hussey proposes in several works – *Gnomon Script*, for instance, or *Entendre*, both 2025 – yet also more holistically in her relation to something like a conception of “the scrawl” imagined by Travis Jeppesen in the essay “Becoming Subject.” Like the textual marks of Hussey’s canvasses, the scrawl is “the mark of gesturalità that posits itself somewhere between word and image, yet is markedly asignifying,” Jeppesen writes. “It is that thing that can be inferred, but hardly captured.” It’s a form of language imbued with agency, pitted against information. It is in this sense that the paintings become something like “a boundaryless etching into the future unknown.”

Simultaneously, Hussey is equally indebted to strategies of optical estrangement – those that challenge the reliability of vision and foreground the constructed nature of perception. Her paintings oscillate between the hyper-visible and the illegible, between the empathic qualities of representation and the associative logic of abstraction. Central to the artist’s project is a sustained inquiry into the space where lineages of abstraction and semiotic systems meet—where marks might resemble language but evade decipherment, or where recognizable objects might be effaced through scale, cropping, and other forms of manipulation. Her interest lies in the ambiguity that emerges when these systems collide, overlap, or break down. This is not a negation of meaning but a redistribution of it: a shift in emphasis from what is being represented, or how it is read, to how the act of looking itself unfolds.

*Lauren Anaïs Hussey* (b. 1990, Jacksonville, US) is an artist based in Brooklyn, US. Hussey earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting Drawing & Printmaking from the University of North Florida (Jacksonville, US) in 2014 and Master of Fine Arts in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art (Bloomfield Hills, US) in 2017. Hussey’s work has been the subject of selected exhibitions at the following venues: “Textine” Tara Downs, New York, US (2025); “Retinal Loop”, Chart Gallery, New York, US (2024); “Meet Me By the Lake”, CLEARING, New York, US (2024); “The Principle Cause of Serial Monogamy,” Tara Downs, New York, US (2024); “Retinal Loop,” Chart Gallery, New York, US (2024); “Chapter One: Extrinsicity,” Woaw, Wan Chai, HK (2023); “Abstraction Show,” Taymour Grahne Projects, London, UK (2023); “Solidarity,” Nexx Asia, Taipei, TW (2023); “Sunsets,” Underdonk, Brooklyn, US (2022); “FIFTY,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, US (2022).



- 1 B     Lauren Anaïs Hussey, Omnisuperous, 2025
- 2 B     Lauren Anaïs Hussey, Landscape of Misunderstandings, 2025
- 3 B     Lauren Anaïs Hussey, Rite of Words and Life, 2024
- 4 B     Lauren Anaïs Hussey, Gnomon Script, 2025
- 5 B     Lauren Anaïs Hussey, Entendre, 2025