

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Anne Rothenstein

23 September–5 November
2022

Private view:
Thursday 22 September, 6–8pm

Gallery hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm
Saturday 11am–5pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by **Anne Rothenstein**.

Focusing on portraiture, interiors and landscapes, the show brings together a group of new paintings that Rothenstein has created in the last two years. It is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery.

Rothenstein's enigmatic paintings are characterised by a dreamlike quality. Mysterious figures populate flattened landscapes and interiors. Her protagonists, often androgynous and vulnerable, provide intriguingly subtle suggestions of narratives. Drawing inspiration from found imagery, personal experience and memory, Rothenstein works instinctively to communicate atmosphere and psychological tension.

The artist's landscapes depict transient or dimly lit scenes such as final moments of sunsets and moonlit nights. They are rendered with sinuous lines and a distinctive palette built up of thin washes of oil. By painting directly on wood panel, Rothenstein allows the grain to become part of her compositions. Through her experiments with scale and distortion, and by simplifying details, the artist is visibly driven by shape and texture.

'Moonlight' depicts a female figure reclining on a bed, perhaps asleep or gazing out of a window at the night's sky. Rothenstein's palette is consistent throughout the painting: the dark scene is permeated with blue tones. Calm and contemplative, the figure is harmoniously entwined with the bed.

Speaking of her artistic process, Rothenstein says:

"My reasons, or intentions, when making a particular painting are quite mysterious to me. The spark is always lit from an existing image, a photograph or another painting, and I often don't discover why that image leaped out at me or what it is I'm exploring until the work is finished. Sometimes I never find out. It is almost entirely intuitive. Finding a rhythm, searching for balance, alert to missteps, to what is happening, to changes of direction.

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I am telling myself a story much of the time and asking questions. Who is this, where is this place, what is going on? This is what I think of as the noise of a painting. And of course, what I am trying to reach is the silence. There is a wonderful Philip Guston quote: "if you're really painting YOU walk out." That is what I mean by reaching the silence."

By painting using her intuition, Rothenstein invites a multitude of interpretations and conclusions from viewers.

Anne Rothenstein

Rothenstein is self-taught and lives and works in London. Born in 1949, the daughter of the late Michael Rothenstein and Duffy Ayres, she grew up in a lively and distinguished community of artists in the Essex village of Great Bardfield. Following a foundation course at Camberwell School of Art in the mid-1960s, Rothenstein worked as an actress for over a decade before gradually returning to painting.

Rothenstein has had solo shows at Beaux Arts Gallery, London and at England & Co, London. A two-person exhibition by Rothenstein and Irina Zatulovskaya took place at Pushkin House, London in 2018. Recent group exhibitions include 'Framed in Friendship: A Legacy of Art in Sheffield', Graves Gallery, Sheffield Museums, Sheffield, Yorkshire (2022); 'Proximity', Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, West Sussex (2022); 'Antisocial Isolation', Saatchi Gallery, London (2021); 'Body and Soul', Royal West of England Academy, Bristol (2019). Rothenstein's work has been included in the Summer Exhibitions at The Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

A new painting and two new collage works by Rothenstein were included in 'From Near and Far', a group exhibition co-curated by art historian Katy Hessel and artist Deborah Roberts, which opened at Stephen Friedman Gallery in June 2022.

The artist's work is included in the collection of Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex. Rothenstein has been designing covers for The London Review of Books since 2012.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery represents exceptional artists from around the world. Since its inauguration in 1995, the gallery has been based in London on Old Burlington Street, Mayfair. The gallery has three spaces in which it hosts solo and group exhibitions throughout the year. Additional works can be viewed by appointment in private rooms and office spaces. There is also a facility to exhibit outdoor sculpture in a landscaped private garden.