

Press Release

Susan Rothenberg. The Weather

4 September – 18 October 2025

Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street



New York...Hauser & Wirth is pleased to announce 'The Weather,' the gallery's first exhibition dedicated to the work of celebrated artist Susan Rothenberg (1945 - 2020). 'The Weather' presents 14 paintings—including canvases rarely and never before exhibited—that span the arc of the artist's career. In addition to canonical masterpieces, the exhibition features works that Rothenberg both lived with and tucked away for decades. Together, these works offer an uncommonly intimate glimpse into the restless expanse of Rothenberg's psyche—revealing, in turn, the raw emotional depth that defined her singular vision.

For more than five decades, Rothenberg developed a powerful language through painting that was guided by an intrinsic sense of formal rigor as well as her unerring intuition. From the 'asteroidal impact' of her radical breaking open of minimalist conventions to the spectral apparitions of her late paintings, Rothenberg continuously redefined the medium, placing her at the center of the global re-emergence of painting that began in the mid-1970s. Rothenberg encoded a fierce, sometimes cryptic language of resistance and alterity into her work, establishing herself as a model of artistic integrity and self-determination. In so doing, she developed an oeuvre which has served as an inspiration to generations of painters.

The exhibition highlights the poignant and personal facture of each of Rothenberg's canvases—their haptic immediacy. Using vigorous brushwork, she whipped up a kind of atmospheric pressure in each canvas—what she often called 'the weather'—from which her enigmatic figures emerged. From the outset, the bold contours of Rothenberg's horses, which she set against agitated monochromatic backgrounds resembled glyphs, charged with a primordial force. Later bodies—both human and animal come under pressure, they fold, break apart, multiply and dissolve.



The critic Peter Schjeldahl once observed, ‘the paintings hit higher than the viscera. Their effect is both frenetic and icy, a frozen violence very much of the head—without being heady, because they are so firmly composed and cannily painted.’

From the ghost of her own palm prints at the margins of ‘Outline’ (1978) to the bold lines of ‘Red Head’ (1981)—a nod to the artist’s tools—Rothenberg’s literal and figurative touch is unmistakable throughout her work. The floating heads of ‘Las Blancas’ (1996 – 1997), painted after a near-death experience from a bee sting, show her adrift in the liminal space between consciousness and mortality, while the raucous entwined bodies of ‘All Night Long’ (2000 – 2001)—pulse with energy. And in ‘Untitled (Green Hands with Band)’ (2018), painted towards the end of Rothenberg’s life, the grasping hands feel both urgent and elegiac. Here, as across the works on view, the essence of the artist, as a subject containing multitudes, radiates.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Hauser & Wirth Publishers will release ‘Susan Rothenberg. The Weather,’ a richly illustrated monograph tracing Rothenberg’s career from the monumental horse paintings that brought her to prominence in the 1970s, to the fragmented limbs and figures in motion that defined her production in the 1980s, through to the natural drama of New Mexico’s desert landscape which infused her work throughout the 1990s. Introduced by exhibition curator Alexis Lowry, striking reproductions of Rothenberg’s paintings are paired with thought-provoking responses by writers, artists and thinkers, while a meticulously researched biography provides insight into Rothenberg’s remarkable life.

About the artist

Susan Charna Rothenberg was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1945. She received her BFA from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1967, having studied painting and sculpture. During and after college, Rothenberg traveled to Greece and Spain, respectively, briefly attending the Corcoran School of Art, then moving in 1969 to New York City, where she lived for the next twenty years.

Despite the wide critical acclaim accorded to her oeuvre, Rothenberg’s art was the subject of only two major survey exhibitions during her lifetime. In 1992 the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, a museum Rothenberg had visited growing up in Buffalo, presented ‘Susan Rothenberg: Paintings and Drawings,’ featuring over 80 works that explored the relationship of drawing to the artist’s paintings going back to the beginning of her career. In 2009, Michael Auping organized ‘Susan Rothenberg: Moving in Place’ at The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. That exhibition’s aim was to look back upon the development of the artist’s career from a more holistic and formal standpoint, identifying her distinctive approach to organizing pictorial space regardless of subject matter, reaching well beyond her early, more well-known horse paintings.

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Rothenberg's work is held in many important public and private collections, including at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, D.C.; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, DK; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, among others.

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Caption and courtesy information:

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Foxes on a Hill

1972

Acrylic on canvas

134.9 x 197.8 x 4.4 cm / 53 1/8 x 77 7/8
x 1 3/4 in

Photo: Sarah Muehlbauer

Las Blancas

1996 -1997

Oil on canvas

134.6 x 154.9 cm / 53 x 61 in

Photo: Sarah Muehlbauer

Red Head

1980 -1981

Acrylic and flashe on canvas

271.8 x 289.6 x 3.5 cm / 107 x 114 x 1

3/8 in

Photo: Matt Grubb

All Night Long

2000 - 2001

Oil on canvas

182.9 x 289.6 x 3.8 cm / 72 x 114 x 1

1/2 in

Photo: Matt Grubb