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GALLERY & ART ADVISORY

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Rachelle Reichert
Salt Moon

January 15 - February 26, 2022

Sarah Shepard Gallery is pleased to present *Salt Moon*, by Bay Area artist Rachelle Reichert. *Salt Moon* is a series of new artworks created with sea salt from the San Francisco Bay. For almost ten years Reichert has explored salt as both a medium of modernist formal abstraction and a material that is witness to the serious environmental consequences of industrial activity throughout the history of the San Francisco Bay. For *Salt Moon*, Reichert draws on the formal visual language of the moon and its phases. The work connects the feminine energy of the moon and the healing powers of salt circles that have been used in rituals for centuries.

Reichert considers salt a material memory: a marker of her environment at a specific time. As the tide brings the Bay's water to the shore, the moon pulls the water out to the sea. The sun's heat evaporates remaining shallow waters, leaving salt behind. Embedded on the surface of Reichert's works are salt crystals harvested from the Bay. The crystals invite and reward the viewer's close observation with subtle color and texture. In some works Reichert adds specific material to the salt to change its color - cinnabar red and carbon black. In the 1800's cinnabar was extensively mined (cinnabar when heated becomes mercury, a necessary element for gold mining), leaching toxins into the Bay. Carbon black is derived from ash of redwood trees burnt in the recent wildfires that were exacerbated by the climate crisis. Reichert places the salt within steel frames, which over time intentionally stain the salt with rust color. The poetry of entropic processes such as corrosion and decay engenders an emotional understanding of complex traumas associated with progress.

The first step to healing and repair is often cleansing. Salt is known for its healing properties. It has been used in rituals all around the world to create safe spaces and clear negative energies. Long before industrialization, the Ohlone people of the shorelines of the San Francisco Bay Area offered salt to neighboring tribes as a sign of peace and friendship and trade. Salt collection is an important ritual to this day. In *Salt Moon*, Reichert uses the seductive qualities of her materials to draw attention to the environmental and ecological concerns in which they play a role. Her salt works reference the effect of human activity on the shifting shores while summoning primordial processes.

Rachelle Reichert lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area. Select exhibitions include the Contemporary Jewish Museum, Center for Contemporary Art at Pacific Northwest College of Art, Anglim Gilbert Gallery, German Consulate in New York City, San Diego Art Institute, and Mills College Art Museum. Her work has been reviewed and published in the San Francisco Chronicle, Make Magazine, California Home and Design, and New American Paintings. Artwork and research is included in many public and private collections, including the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Archive, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Library, Facebook, and Adobe, Inc. Rachelle has presented her practice at the California Climate Change Symposium, San Francisco State of the Estuary Conference, and the American Geophysical Union Meeting. She earned her MFA from Mills College in Oakland, CA and a BFA from Boston University. She is a charter resident of the Minnesota Street Studio Program.

Image: © Rachelle Reichert, *Salt Ash Moon*, 2022, San Francisco Bay Salt, redwood ash, resin, steel on panel 12 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 2 in. All rights reserved. For more information or press images, please contact sarah@sarahshepardgallery.com or 917-375-2720.

