

## Gail Salzman: Soundings

Burlington City Arts

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There are few more prestigious places in Vermont for a living artist to show their work than the main gallery at the Burlington City Arts Center (BCA) on Church Street in the heart of downtown. Indeed, it is not surprising that Gail Salzman, an artist who has lived and worked in rural Vermont over 40 years, would be honored by a solo show. While Salzman's inspiration comes from the natural beauty that surrounds her in her modest Fairfield studio, it is the subtle power and depth of recently completed (all 2011-2013) paintings that hold their place on the walls of the BCA's first floor gallery.

The influence of the artist's early mentors, Elmer Bischoff and Esteban Vicente, can be felt particularly in the larger works (48 in x 44 in), oil on aluminum panel, but the complex layers and evocative color are Salzman's own. *Soundings*, the title of this show, is a nautical term that refers to testing water's depth. It is an apt metaphor for experiencing the ebb and flow, the flotsam and jetsam, of water's many guises, held suspended in time by these paintings. Abstraction seems to teeter into the world of objects. A personal favorite is *Reflection*, 2012-13, where stringy yellow/green seaweed-like tendrils appear to be tangled in an orange rope (or is it just a line?) that curls around the corner of a blue web (could it be a lobster trap?) that is caught at the left edge of the panel.

The show is divided across two galleries. A series of smaller paintings created with palette scrapings (oil on paper on wood panels) occupies the rear space. While physically intimate in size (18 in x 12 in and 14 in x 14 in) these paintings have a suggestive monumentality. They were hung in two groups, forming a kind of rhythmic flow around the gallery, further evidence of the pervasive theme.

Supported in part by an Individual Artist's grant of the Vermont Community Foundation, Middlebury, a generous, full-color catalogue accompanies the show. It contains an informative essay by Eleanor Heartney, a contributing editor to *Art in America*, and an introduction by DJ Hellerman, the new BCA head curator.

—Cynthia L. Close