

Heather Hutchison: Where the Light Slips In

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I said: What about my heart?

He said: Tell me what you hold inside it?

I said: Pain and sorrow.

He said: Stay with it. The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”

— Rumi

Los Angeles, CA. Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present *Heather Hutchison: Where the Light Slips In*, a selection of recent works by New York-based artist Heather Hutchison (b. 1964). These luminescent constructions of birch plywood, reclaimed Plexiglas, and pigmented acrylic medium act as conduits for natural phenomena, trapping, directing, and amplifying the light that enters as it changes hour by hour. Inspired by indelible impressions of the vaporous Oregon coast, boundless Arizona desert vistas, and lush forests of Upstate New York, Hutchison’s works are fundamentally environmental in foundation, intention, and effect.

Hutchison’s work of late has focused on the increasingly severe weather patterns and natural disasters wrought by climate change. While the artist finds an eerie beauty in the searing glow of a wildfire or a vivid algal bloom, she sees these extremes as alarm bells from a wounded planet, exhorting its inhabitants to sit up and pay attention. Inspired by the Sufi idea that forgiveness is “the fragrance that flowers give when they are crushed,” Hutchison views these extraordinary displays as love letters from the Earth, and her paintings as a response.

The artist ushers these phenomena indoors, blurring the lines between comfortable constructed human space and the unpredictable natural world. The works, like the rhythms of the sky, are in constant flux, changing in response to the shifting environment and echoing the time of day and year. Circumscribed within wood containers, ambient light is concentrated and magnified through reflection and material to create glowing pools and bands of cerulean, amber, and smoky grey. Encouraging the viewer to consider their place within and connection to nature, the works offer a box of ocean, a lick of wildfire, or a sliver of smog-laden horizon.

As evidence of an injured and unbalanced world, Hutchison likens the Earth’s response to human activity to *kintsugi*, the Japanese practice of mending broken pottery with a blend of lacquer and precious metals. The wounds are not only visible, but made beautiful, suggesting value in the fullness of a complicated history and offering hope for the ability to heal. Residing at an ineffable intersection of light, space, and time, Hutchison’s works embody the subtle beauties of imperfection and the pain and promise of a fractured world.

In a career spanning over three decades, Heather Hutchison has exhibited in dozens of solo and group exhibitions, including at the Brooklyn Museum, Montclair Art Museum, the Smithsonian, and the Knoxville Museum of Art. Her work was included in the 44th Biennial Exhibition of American Painting at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and is held in several public collections including the Brooklyn Museum; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Hutchison has been the recipient of grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Gottlieb Foundation, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her works have been featured in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Artnews* and *Art in America*, among others.