



Josephine Halvorson holds a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA from Columbia University. Of her many accomplishments, she was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship to Vienna (2003), a Louis Comfort Tiffany Prize (2009), a NYFA Fellowship in Painting (2010), and, most recently, a Fellowship through the Académie de France à Rome at Rome's Villa Medici (2015). Her work has been shown in group and solo shows throughout the United States and Europe. She is represented by Sikkema Jenkins & Co. in New York and Peter Freeman Inc. in Paris, and she is a Senior Critic in the Painting and Printmaking department at Yale University.

## FOREWARD

Josephine Halvorson is a painter, though the particularities of such a narrow label seem to undermine the complexity of her practice. In a purely structural sense, her works are oil paintings, but if we consider their mood, composition, and scale, not to mention the dedicated process by which she produces them, we see that her pieces have a lot in common with photography, documentary film, and even poetic ode or oral history.

Halvorson presents herself in her paintings, while at the same time, presents herself to her paintings. Her process of painting on-site and completing a canvas in a single day can be described as an encounter. Her aim is not to capture an exact, objective likeness of a given subject, but to distill its character, one which comes alive only through genuine, direct contact. Like any relationship, this takes effort. Following in the tradition of the Impressionists who painted en plein-air, Halvorson is interested in the intimacy she experiences with each unique subject and the environment from which it is derived. She has been known to spend long hours in extreme heat or to haul her materials to a formerly industrious, presently disheveled California mine. More than just priming her canvas and mixing her palette, Halvorson's process entails consulting weather forecasts, packing a lunch, and applying sunscreen. All of this detailed planning and forethought is expediently channeled into a single day's work, leaving behind only a residual rectangle of canvas and oil.

Her paintings are testaments to existence in all its fragility; each brushstroke affixes her subjects' place in the world. Yet, in immortalizing these objects on canvas, we are reminded of the double-meaning of trace: an echo of presence decries its own absence. As much as Halvorson's paintings bring life to the neglected, forgotten, overlooked, and ignored in everyday life, their inception is, in itself, the catalyst for their eventual demise. They become ghostly memories of a moment in time and space that will never be again.

In a review of her 2014 New York exhibition *Facings* at Sikkema Jenkins & Co., Hyperallergic wrote, "We see the painting and we see the paint, its dabs and dashes. By collapsing image and tactility, she underscores that we do not live in a purely visual world." A work of art is not just an object we look at; it is hours on your feet, it is disappointment and pleasant surprise. Most of all, it is a relationship to be upheld, something Halvorson never allows us to forget.

- Nora Landes, '16