

CHATEAU SHATTO

ZEINAB SALEH
Frieze New York

Preview May 5 & 6
May 7-9, 2021

Zeinab Saleh (b. 1996, Kenya) is a London-based artist who received a Bachelor of Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Saleh's practice takes the form of painting, drawing, video, sculpture and publishing, with these various working methods and materials sharing a fluid exchange.

For Frieze New York 2021, Saleh is realizing paintings on canvas and on paper that are prompted by encounters with video, drawn both from her own recordings, widely circulated materials as well as an extensive family archive. Saleh works from stills to isolate details within a frame, extracting line, gesture and atmosphere. She translates not just the forms, but the frequencies and vibrational qualities from a moving, rhythmic format to one that is static. By lifting suggestive cues from their source, Saleh relocates their optical and emotional operations onto the surface of her paintings. Similar to the references born of archival footage, musicality plays a determining role in the Saleh's painterly process: her compositions unfold with a staccato that is comparable to melodic rhythm; marks resonate with the movement of a conductor; and often, works borrow their titles from popular music. By fusing the durational and emotive qualities of moving image and song, she takes advantage of the enigmatic potential of these floating forms.

Beyond this interplay between video and painting, Saleh's work more broadly pursues sensorial glimpses and fleeting impressions, submitting to the cultural specificity of the material she draws from while resisting the trap of over-aestheticizing or orientalizing these visual cues. Eyes appear across several of her paintings, asserting painting as a medium that is catalyzed by a perspective position and then, in turn, produces a new one.

This new body of work is more restrained than Saleh's previous groupings of paintings, as she isolates the particular qualities of the muted substrates she often returns to in her work. Eliminating most color invites a more subtle exploration of how line, surface texture and form might build compositional elements in the same way that a musical recording is assembled. Saleh considers the surface of these paintings as operating like the quality of the recording itself and any sonic artefacts that result from the recording process; the sweeping and more mellifluous lines suggestive of voice; and pictorial details within the painting assuming an operation similar to lyrics.

In 2020, Saleh's work was exhibited in a two-artist presentation with Yuko Mohri at mother's tankstation in collaboration with Château Shatto as part of CONDO, London. Additionally, Saleh's work has been exhibited at UCL Art Museum, London; MAMOTH, London; and Karma International, Zurich. In 2017, Saleh co-founded Muslim Sisterhood, an artist collective that focuses on activism and creative output, including the production of publications, panels, photo series and workshops. Her work is part of the permanent collection of the Start Museum, Shanghai.