

PAUL THIEBAUD GALLERY

Sono Osato *Evolution of an Idea: Diluvia to Midden*

November 15 – January 10, 2026

Opening reception: Saturday, September 13th, 3–5 pm

Artist talk: 3:30 pm

Paul Thiebaud Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Evolution of an Idea: Diluvia to Midden*, an exhibition of new and recent paintings by Sono Osato, on Saturday, November 15, 2025, from 3 to 5pm, with an artist talk at 3:30pm. On view will be seven paintings and five drawings selected from Osato's *Diluvia* and *Midden Series*. Various rendered in oil, tinted rabbit skin glue, watercolor, gouache, and dry pigments, Osato's works explore the intersections of language, technology, and archeological time through abstract painting. The exhibition will be on view through January 10, 2026.

Inspired by the impact of eroding topographies on the evolution of visual iconography, and the need to disinter them to reveal histories, Sono Osato's exhibition charts the latest chapter in her thinking about our technological past and future. In previous series, Osato began mining and recontextualizing the gears, sprockets, and mechanical parts of defunct machines into a visual language for abstraction by embedding the objects within the paint surface. In the *Diluvia* and *Midden Series*, the physical objects have receded, leaving only their silhouettes and outlines to form each composition.

Osato's *Midden* works are composed of layered and overlapping shapes arranged in central clusters that are partially obscured by swaths of paint, as if they were being exhumed in an archeological dig. In the *Diluvia* paintings, flowing currents are conveyed through dynamic line work, visualizing how flood waters erode the ground to reveal relics of the past. Each series serves as a visual metaphor for the evolutionary forces of technology, and a meditation on how new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, mine through and encapsulate older forms of tech to create themselves. For Osato, these painting are an "incantation calling out to the deepest and most primal pattern within a pattern that humankind will never fully see or understand because it is a part of it." They are also "a kind of collective mortality that we can try to read and resound back to us, so that we can understand ourselves and perhaps each other just a little bit better while we are still here."

Sono Osato was born in Baden-Baden, Germany, in 1960. She received her BFA from Arizona State University, Tempe, in 1983 and her MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts), in 1986. She has had residencies at the Djerassi Resident

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Artists Program and the Contemporary Art Center for Herbaly, Pontoise, France, and been an affiliate artist at the Headlands Center for the Arts. She has received grants from CHANGE INC. and ART MATTERS INC., and is a three-time recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant in 1989, 1999, and 2008.

Osato's works have been featured in exhibitions throughout the Bay Area, New York, and Austin, TX, including at the San Jose Museum of Art; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; ISE Foundation, New York, NY; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA; Shore Institute for Contemporary Art, Long Branch, NJ; and the Dumbo Arts Center (DAC), Brooklyn, NY, among others. Her work can be found in the collections of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco; Oakland Museum of California; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA; Stanford University Law School; and the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH. This is Sono Osato's first exhibition with Paul Thiebaud Gallery.