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Antonia Kuo
Mercury and Salt
February 2 – March 12, 2022



Antonia Kuo, *Stinging Nettle*, 2022, unique chemical painting on light-sensitive silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in welded aluminum frame, 24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in (62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm)

CHART is pleased to present *Mercury and Salt*, an exhibition of new work by Antonia Kuo. Featuring unique chemical paintings on light-sensitive paper, this exhibition highlights how Kuo has been incorporating a new level of control over color and form in her process, while also embracing elements of chance and change. Occupying the top floor of the gallery, the show will run from Wednesday, February 2nd to Saturday, March 12th.

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Mercury and salt, two of the alchemical organizing principles that were thought to govern all matter, references the ancient origins of chemistry and laboratory practice as well as its indissoluble link to the spirit of inquiry that defines early photographic invention. In this body of work, Kuo experiments with destabilizing the image through the mercurial nature of the photochemical process, with transformation as a core tenet. Salt is a symbol of fixity (as well as a key ingredient in photographic fixer); the resultant images are a record of volatile process.

The alchemical distillation practice “solve et coagula” meaning “dissolve and coagulate” was a method of transmuting materials, breaking them apart so they could recombine to form something new. Kuo also starts with a primary source material, distilling it again and again through iterative action, until she is left with something that is entirely transformed.

The foundation for Kuo’s layered pieces often begins with a gestural drawing or photographs taken on her phone or film camera. Using both analog and digital tools, these images are translated through various printmaking and image transfer methodologies, applied to the surface of the light-sensitive paper, and developed experimentally with photographic chemistry. Over many steps and multiple sessions in chemical baths, the images gain complexity and become something akin to what Kuo refers to as “destabilized photographs,” deliberately complicating the act of visual recognition.

Slowing our read of images is paramount to Kuo. As a culture defined by media consumption, we gorge ourselves, digesting images and jpegs at lightning speed. Photography and digital imagery have become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives, in some cases replacing the physical world altogether, altering how we see and, by extension, come to know the world around us. Kuo makes a point to work directly and physically with the picture plane, treating the photograph as a physical entity. These paintings—made with light, embedded with time and chemistry—bring our focus back to the inherent materiality of the world and the mutability of the image.

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Antonia Kuo is an interdisciplinary artist working with photography, film, sculpture, drawing, painting, and printmaking. She received an MFA from Yale University, her BFA from School of Fine Arts Boston and Tufts University, and a one-year certificate from the School of the International Center of Photography under the Alan L. Model Grant. Kuo was awarded the Robert and Stephanie Olmsted Award as a MacDowell Colony fellow, as well as fellowships at Mass MoCA, The Banff Centre, Center for Photography at Woodstock, The Vermont Studio Center, and Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto. She has exhibited internationally at the Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA PS1, Eyebeam, Microscope Gallery, Pioneer Works, and the Knockdown Center in New York; the Musee d'art contemporain de Montreal; and the West Bund Art Fair in Shanghai, among others. Her work is in private collections and the permanent collections of The Whitney Museum of American Art and Centre Pompidou.

In accordance with CDC guidelines and to ensure the health and safety of our staff, visitors will be asked to verify their vaccination status, and we ask that face coverings be worn and social distancing be practiced when visiting the gallery.

For more information, please contact us at info@chart-gallery.com.

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ANTONIA KUO: *MERCURY AND SALT*
FEBRUARY 2 - MARCH 12, 2022

CHECKLIST



Antonia Kuo

Oculus, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH775)



Antonia Kuo

Emission I, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH797)



Antonia Kuo

Emission II, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH798)



Antonia Kuo

Emission III, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH799)

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Antonia Kuo

Fruiting Body, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH801)



Antonia Kuo

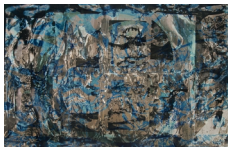
Hiraeth, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in

62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm

(CH774)



Antonia Kuo

Solaris, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

56 1/8 x 84 7/8 x 2 in

142.6 x 215.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH790)



Antonia Kuo

Twin Columns, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in

62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm

(CH789)



Antonia Kuo

Stinging Nettle, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in

62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm

(CH773)

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Antonia Kuo

Cream Copse, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in

62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm

(CH786)



Antonia Kuo

Cicatrice, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

24 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 1 1/4 in

62.2 x 52.1 x 3.2 cm

(CH785)



Antonia Kuo

Milk of Sulfur, 2022

unique chemical painting on light-sensitive
silver gelatin paper mounted on aluminum in
welded aluminum frame

70 7/8 x 56 1/8 x 2 in

180 x 142.6 x 5.1 cm

(CH800)