

SETAREH

The Blue of Distance

Mary Herbert, Junyi Lu, Sophie Smorczewski, Elizaveta Zalieva

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The Blue of Distance draws its title from Rebecca Solnit's essay — a meditation in which blue becomes a metaphor for longing, for the horizons that structure desire, for what recedes as we approach it. Solnit's blue is less a colour than a condition of perception: the hue that stretches between what we have and what we wish for, the tint of memory itself. It is the colour of what cannot be possessed, only contemplated.

Within that sensibility, this exhibition brings together four artists whose methods — through line, pigment, or narrative — make distance tangible and generative. Their works map states of remoteness without attempting to resolve them, asking the viewer to remain in that space where seeing and feeling touch.

Mary Herbert approaches drawing and paint with attentive restraint — a deliberate, patient process that allows image and omission to speak at once. Her work often unfolds as a field of near-things: gestures that almost settle into representation before receding. A quiet tension forms between presence and withdrawal. How much can be felt in what is barely there? How does absence contour presence?

Junyi Lu composes intimate tableaux in which longing and solitude coexist. Her works merge private narratives into surreal, tactile worlds, rendering distance both lived and reflective. There is a gentle clarity to her scenes: separation is held at a slight remove, where estrangement and tenderness share the same space.

Sophie Smorczewski makes paintings that feel like the afterimage of a remembered garden. Working with homemade pigments and materials that oxidise and shifts, she allows surfaces to register slow transformation — as if colour itself were subject to weathering. The work's melancholy warmth locates feeling not in an object but in the interval that lingers around it.

Elizaveta Zalieva moves across imagery and installation to transform the ordinary into something faintly uncanny. Her practice traces how memory and myth accumulate around everyday objects, how small and repeated signs can open onto vast interior geographies. It is precisely this associative distance that Solnit evokes: meaning forming not in things themselves, but in the space between them.

Together, the artists trace different dimensions of Solnit's blue. They suggest that distance is not emptiness but fertile ground, a topography where memory and possibility coexist. Each opens a mode of attentive looking within that charged moment where sight falters and feeling begins — in the light that has travelled far enough to turn blue.