

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DAVID SALLE:  
NEW PAINTINGS  
APRIL 30 – JUNE 27, 2015**

**DISCUSSION WITH DAVID SALLE AND ART CRITIC/CURATOR CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNÉ:  
THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 5:45PM AT 550 WEST 21<sup>ST</sup> STREET**



(New York, NY)—Skarstedt is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by American artist David Salle at their Chelsea gallery this April. The exhibition will feature all new work from two recent series: the *Late Product Paintings* and the *Silver Paintings*. *David Salle: New Paintings* will be on view at Skarstedt Chelsea (550 West 21st Street) from April 30 through June 27, 2015.

Skarstedt will also publish a fully illustrated catalogue to accompany the show, featuring a conversation between David Salle and writer William Powers.

David Salle's new paintings are characterized by both immediacy and complexity; their vibrant color and highly energized, dynamic compositions display a marked evolution from his most recent exhibition, *Ghost Paintings*, shown at Skarstedt's Upper East Side gallery in 2013. Salle's *Late Product Paintings* can be seen as both revisiting and providing an extension to his 1993 series, *Early Product Paintings*, in which flatly painted backgrounds of collaged product advertisements were the stage upon which present-tense painting operations were carried out.

Salle's *Late Product Paintings* bring this premise to a much fuller, performative, and masterful resolution. Exploring the intangible relationships between subjects, Salle's images float in a fragmented world of poetic simultaneity. Drawing images from a variety of sources, Salle combines them into paintings as one would create a collage. Though often surprising, his connections are never forced; they have a non-programmatic, improvised quality, and they arrive at a place of buoyant equilibrium. Speaking to William Powers in the catalogue's text, Salle says of his use of collage, "I want the differences to show, but to somehow be resolved anyway. It's symphonic. Sometimes I like to think of myself as a kind of *orchestrator*." Indeed, many of Salle's paintings seem to have an implied soundscape—he expertly juxtaposes a visual depiction of the first few bars of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* with a fragmentary drawing of hands on a Pan's pipe; a vacant cartoon speech bubble waiting to be filled might be juxtaposed with the implied whirring sound made by a kitchen garbage disposal, the clinking of glasses, or the sound of words uttered to oneself.

The overarching theme of the *Late Product Paintings* is the nature of *presentation* itself—the way things, images, and gestures capture and hold our attention, and the kinds of unseen and unspoken decisions and conventions that govern how we create a relationship with an image. These paintings reach a dynamic synthesis, or mash-up, of advertorial iconography. Referencing literary methodology, Salle points to the ‘free indirect style’—a term coined by critic James Wood to describe Flaubert’s authorial omniscience—as a way of describing his own interest in keeping multiple narrative strands in play within a single painting. He also alludes to the way that popular image culture has inflected our way of seeing over time, with many images seemingly excavated from the 1960s. Without recourse to nostalgia, such era-specific imagery gives the paintings a sense of the elasticity of time—as something that can be tightened or loosened—an awareness that is woven into the conceptually tight, spatially elastic compositions.

Among painters, Salle has long been acknowledged as a sophisticated and daring colorist; in these new pictures he uses as many as three distinct color palettes in the same painting, making them coalesce into shimmering, vibrant, and luminous fields. In addition to their luminescent color, the *Late Product Paintings* are characterized by a vertiginous, yet highly organized composition that contains both tight and loose passages in counter-point. They have a cascading sense of gravity—images of loosely stacked crackers spilling downwards, milk pouring from an overturned glass, figures running or falling through space, and textual or musical fragments wrapping around the back of the canvas all work to create a sense of the plasticity of pictorial space on the paradoxically flat surface.

Salle’s *Silver Paintings* offer yet another study in contrasts—between painting and photography. The artist adds, “It’s the challenge of holding both things in your head at the same time. I’m trying to make them indivisible.” In these works, Salle’s gray-scale color palette recalls classical silver plate photography. The imagery in these paintings is based on a series of photographs the artist made in 1992 of the performer Massimo Audiello posing in front of unfinished paintings from his *Early Product Paintings* series. The photographic image has been transferred to canvas using a variety of non-digital techniques. The transfer of pigment to canvas is in each case unique and unrepeatable, leaving traces of the blank canvas that interrupt the image and serve to emphasize the painting’s surface. Salle’s initial interest in photography stems from the way the medium breaks down a subject into a schema of lights and darks—the *value pattern*—which can then be translated into paint.

The exhibition as a whole extends the idea of juxtaposition even further: one group of pictures is intensely colorful, extremely various, and organized along complex diagonal rhythms; the other is restricted to black and white, with a single subject, and composed along a vertical/horizontal axis. And yet, the two series have a clear reciprocity and point of intersection; together they seem to mirror each other with an oscillating sense of *place*. A few of the *Late Product Paintings* incorporate smaller iterations or fragments of the *Silver Paintings* into their compositional structure; it is almost as if one has *ingested* the other. In what might be called the *Las Meninas effect*, the two series become directly linked in the concentric swirl of a conceptual and visual conundrum.

## About David Salle:

Born in 1952 in Norman, Oklahoma, David Salle grew up in Wichita, Kansas. In 1970, he began his studies at the newly founded California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, where he worked with John Baldessari. After earning a BFA in 1973 and an MFA in 1975, both from CalArts, Salle moved to New York, where he has lived since.

Like many artists of his generation, David Salle initially drew inspiration for his rich visual vocabulary from existing pictures. Based on models from art history, advertisements, design, and everyday culture, as well as, most significantly, his own photography, Salle creates an assemblage with manifold cultural references. Since the mid-80s, his paintings have included allusions to the works of the Baroque painters, from Velázquez and Bernini, to the Post-Impressionist Cézanne, to Giacometti and Magritte, and to American art both post and pre-war.

In 1981 Salle was asked to design the set and costumes for *Birth of the Poet*, an opera by Kathy Acker under the direction of Richard Foreman. Since then he has designed sets and costumes for more than 15 ballets by choreographer Karole Armitage. Their ballet and opera collaborations have been staged in theaters around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera House, the Paris Opera, and Sadlers Wells, London. In 1986, Salle was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship for his work in the theater.

Since his first solo museum exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam in 1983, Salle has continued to evolve as a painter intent on integrating multiple points of authorial agency into an unprecedented gestalt; his originality and inventiveness have been manifest in many distinct series including the *Tapestry Paintings* (1989–91), *Ballet Paintings* (1992–93), *Early Product Paintings* (1993), *Vortex Painting* (2004–2005), and *Battles/Allegories* (2009–2010). In the 1990s, he added sculpture to his oeuvre and also began exhibiting his black-and-white photographs, many of which were made in preparation for canvases. He also directed the feature film *Search and Destroy* (1995), which was produced by Martin Scorsese and features Ethan Hawke, Dennis Hopper, and Christopher Walken.

Salle's paintings have been shown in museums and galleries worldwide for over 35 years. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Whitney Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; MoMA Vienna; Menil Collection, Houston; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; the Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, and the Guggenheim Bilbao. He is currently the subject of a solo exhibition at the Dallas Contemporary (2015). He has participated in major international expositions including Documenta 7 (1982), Venice Biennale (1982 and 1993), Whitney Biennial (1983, 1985, and 1991), Paris Biennale (1985), and Carnegie International (1985). David Salle lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Please join the conversation with Skarstedt on Instagram (@skarstedtgallery) via the hashtags #SkarstedtChelsea #Skarstedt #DavidSalle #SilverPaintings #LateProductPaintings

Image Credit: David Salle, *Faster Healing*, 2014. Oil and acrylic on linen with pigment print. 77 x 96 inches. 195.6 x 243.8 cm. Courtesy Skarstedt New York.

## About Skarstedt:



20 East 79th Street  
New York NY 10075



550 West 21st Street  
New York NY 10011



23 Old Bond Street  
London W1S 4PZ

Skarstedt (20 E. 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The New York gallery's program focuses on artists of the late Twentieth Century whose work explores concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Skarstedt opened its London space at 23 Old Bond Street in 2012 with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. Skarstedt London presents exhibitions and publications devoted to the gallery's established area of expertise while also seeking to evolve and expand its focus. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach through high-quality exhibitions and collaborations with top international museums and private collections.

Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21<sup>st</sup> Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition *Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings*, adding to the gallery's existing locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. The additional gallery space enables Skarstedt to expand on its core program of museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, John Baldessari, Georg Baselitz, George Condo, Carroll Dunham, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Günther Förg, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Robert Mapplethorpe, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Andy Warhol, Franz West, and Christopher Wool.

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