

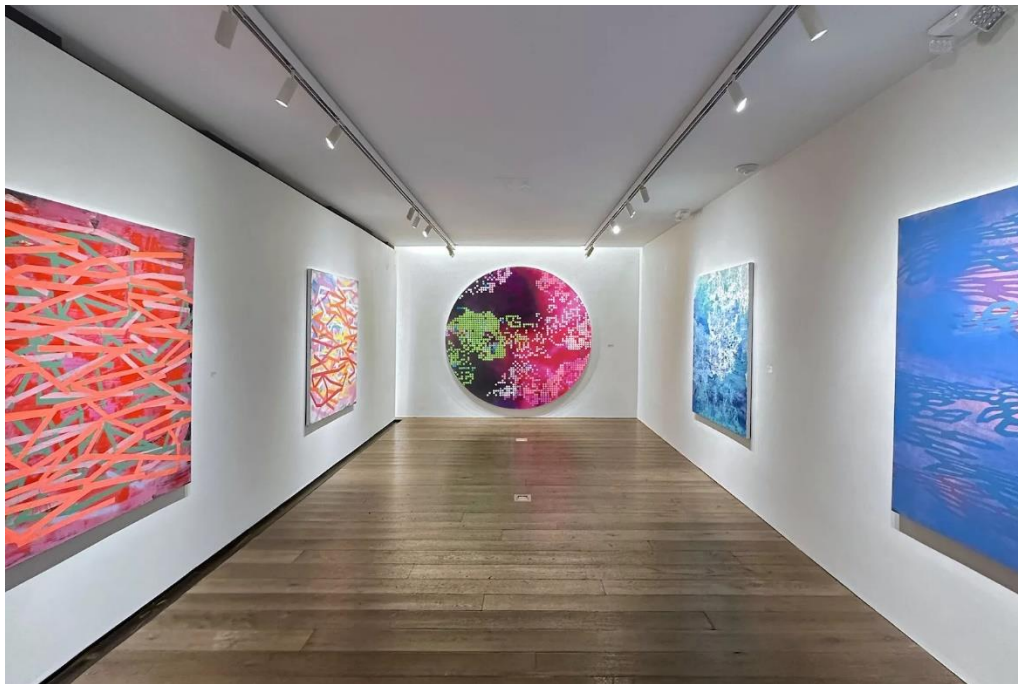
BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



Rebecca Rutstein's paintings tell of life's interconnectedness, on land, sea, and under the sea

By [Roberta](#) October 14, 2024

Roberta sees the solo exhibit by Rebecca Rutstein at Bridgette Mayer Gallery and talks with the artist about the work, which is inspired by Rutstein's 30-day voyage as artist in residence on a research vessel in the Gulf of California. The paintings are strong and energetic and a new installation piece evokes the magical phosphorescent creatures that light up the ocean's depths, something the artist experienced on her voyage. Art and science combines in these works to tell a story of the interconnectedness of life on our planet. Give a read, then follow links for more information and images. And go see the work at the gallery! The show is up through Oct. 19, 2024.



Rebecca Rutstein. Installation view, 'All the Stars in the Sea' with paintings from left to right: Wide Open Spaces (2024), Rhapsody (2024), All the Stars in the Sea (2024), Under the Sky (2023) and Mirroring (2024), all paintings 60 x 60" Acrylic and Spray Paint on Canvas (except center painting: 96" diameter round wood panel) . Courtesy of the Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Some artists get inspired by science. But not all of them actually get to work alongside scientists. Rebecca Rutstein, whose passion for science has fueled her colorful abstract works for many years, has more recently been able to work "elbow to elbow"

709 Walnut Street 1st Floor Philadelphia PA 19106 tel 215 413 8893 fax 215 413 2283
email bmayer@bridgettemayergallery.com www.bridgettemayergallery.com

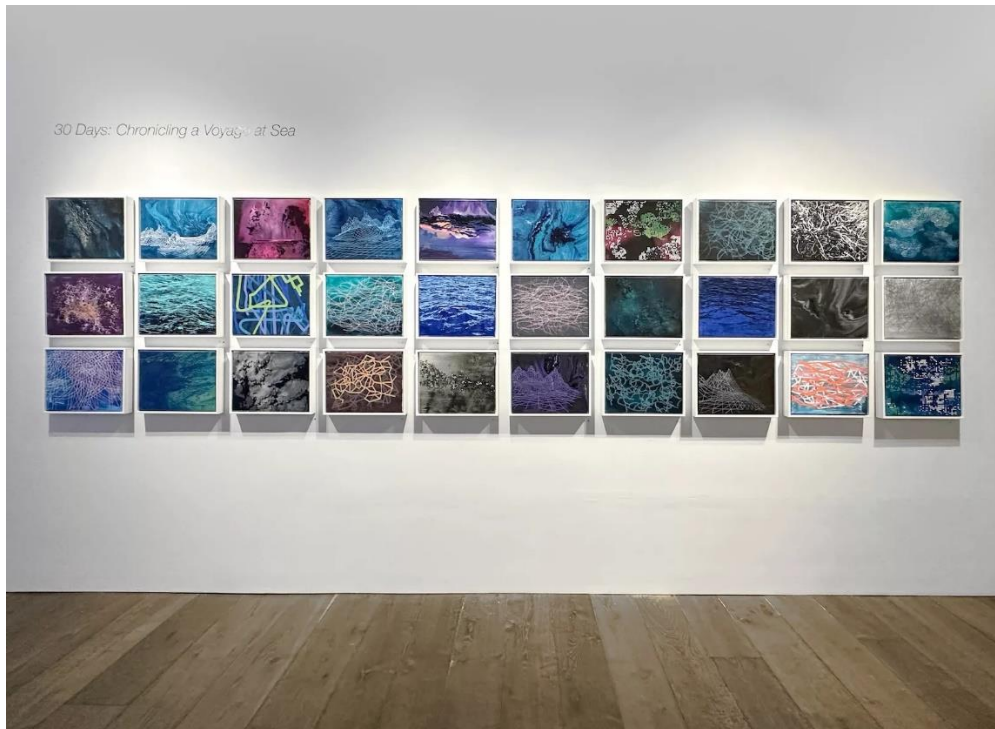
BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

with scientists as artist in residence on their projects, and the immersion in the scientific world has been transformational, with experiences that she says gave her a purpose she didn't have before.

Rutstein's exhibit "All the Stars in the Sea," at Bridgette Mayer Gallery **through Oct. 19, 2024**, reflects her experience on a recent oceanographic expedition – her eighth – which included a trip in a submersible to the ocean floor with the scientists, a plunge of more than a mile down **that lasts about 9 hours, with the descent taking about 2 hours**, to study the sea's floor, gather samples and experience the awe of life at the bottom.

Rebecca Rutstein. Installation view, "30 Days: Chronicling a Voyage at Sea" in the exhibition All the Stars in the Sea; all paintings 11 x 14", acrylic and ink on canvas, 2024, painted on the Research Vessel Atlantis in the Gulf of California, Mexico. Courtesy of the Bridgette Mayer Gallery

The paintings in the exhibition tell the story of Rutstein's trip on the R/V Atlantis. The expedition went to the Gulf of California off the coast of Mexico and was there for 30 days. One series of small paintings, titled "30 Days: Chronicling a Voyage at Sea" is a grid of 30 works that captures the day by day flow of the month-long expedition. The paintings were made on the ship and they continue Rutstein's abstract motifs of dense overlapping networks that make up the fabric of life including life under the sea. There is one day represented that is a painting apart. Monochrome instead of her usual palette of blues, pinks and other bright colors, the painting is also realist instead of abstract. In grays and blacks, the piece captures the smoky plumes of volcano-hot water and minerals erupting from a hydrothermal vent in the ocean floor. An experience most of us will never have, captured and shared.



BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



Rebecca Rutstein. "Flow," 38 x 60 x 36", 500 nickel plated steel discs, biodegradable monofilament, 2024, Courtesy of the Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Another piece, an installation titled "Flow," captures the bioluminescence that lights up the darkness at the ocean's depths. Rutstein experienced this bioluminescence in the submersible, and to share the experience she's made a simple but magical piece with round metallic discs suspended from the ceiling at various heights in the gallery's small vault space. Brightly lit, with shadows dotting the walls, the piece dances and undulates as the discs move with the air circulating in the space.

[Note of Correction from the artist: Regarding "Flow:" It's about bioluminescence but it's also about the flow of iron dispersing from vents on the ocean floor and dissipating thousands of miles all the way to surface waters around the globe, providing nutrients for microorganisms who in turn produce the air we humans need to breathe. In essence, we are inexorably connected to the bottom of the ocean through this cycle...]

Rutstein, whose high energy and passion come across in person as she tells her story, is on a mission to help others experience the wonders of the earth, especially now when the climate crisis is upon us. The artist feels her purpose deeply. Her work and her words speak to the interconnectedness of life and how we're all in this crisis together. Her hope is that through her work, people will get a better understanding of the connections and the danger we face with our warming planet.

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY



Rebecca Rutstein. Photo credit- Rebecca McAlpin Photography

In her description of “Flow,” she says, “Everything from the smallest microorganisms to the largest ecosystems are connected through, and depend on, various cycles, such as the water cycle, carbon cycle, and food web. Humans are a part of this matrix. By understanding and respecting these infinite connections, we can work towards a more harmonious relationship with nature, a deeper appreciation for the natural world, and a recognition of our responsibility to protect and preserve it.”

Art and science together in Rutstein’s works tell a story. It’s both a story of the world, and a story of an artist’s wonder at the world and her conviction that telling these stories matter. I was moved by the work and by Rutstein’s stories. And I love the paradigm of art telling stories. Work like this, it does matter.

‘All the Stars in the Sea,’ solo exhibition by Rebecca Rutstein, at [Bridgette Mayer Gallery](#), through Oct. 19, 2024

See a [video](#) of Rebecca Rutstein speaking about her work and her residencies on the oceanographic voyages.
More [information and links](#)

709 Walnut Street 1st Floor Philadelphia PA 19106 tel 215 413 8893 fax 215 413 2283
email bmayer@bridgettemayergallery.com www.bridgettemayergallery.com