

Press release

Oliver Beer

The Sky in the Cave

5 June—31 July 2026
Opening Thursday 4 June, 6—8pm

In Conversation: Oliver Beer and Rufus Wainwright
Friday 5 June, 12pm

Thaddaeus Ropac Ely House, London
37 Dover Street, London, W1S 4NJ



Oliver Beer, *Resonance Painting (The Time Has Come Today)*, 2026
Pigment on canvas. 200 x 250 cm (78.74 x 98.42 in)

Thaddaeus Ropac London is pleased to present *The Sky in the Cave*, an exhibition of new works by London- and Paris-based artist Oliver Beer, coinciding with London Gallery Weekend. Bringing together large-scale paintings, music, film and installation, the exhibition transforms the gallery space into an immersive environment in which sound and image are experienced as inseparable.

To mark the exhibition's opening and the launch of a limited-edition vinyl soundtrack, the artist will be in conversation with singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright. The discussion will explore their experience of singing and recording together inside a prehistoric painted cave in the Dordogne, and how this collaboration has informed the works in the exhibition.

Beer is renowned for his large-scale *Resonance Paintings* that make sound vibrations visible, translating the acoustic frequencies of specific sites, spaces and objects into pulsating fields of colour and form. From prehistoric caves to the most advanced contemporary buildings — including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Sydney Opera House — his work uncovers the harmonies that bind people, spaces and cultures together. Rather than depicting sound, Beer’s paintings are shaped by it: vibrations act directly on pigment, producing lasting, rippling patterns that fix a fleeting moment of sonic activity as a permanent image. The result is a painting practice grounded in listening — not as metaphor, but as a palpable, physical experience that connects voice, music, memory and matter.

The exhibition builds on Beer’s formative experience working inside a prehistoric painted cave in the Dordogne, under the mentorship of Jean-Michel Geneste, former Chief Curator of Lascaux. Here, he discovered a relationship between the precise locations of the Palaeolithic paintings and the points of greatest acoustic resonance – working with his voice to make the cave itself sing. Palaeolithic people were not simply decorating the



Rufus Wainwright during the shoot of *Resonance Project: The Cave*, 2024. © Oliver Beer. Photo: Oliver Beer

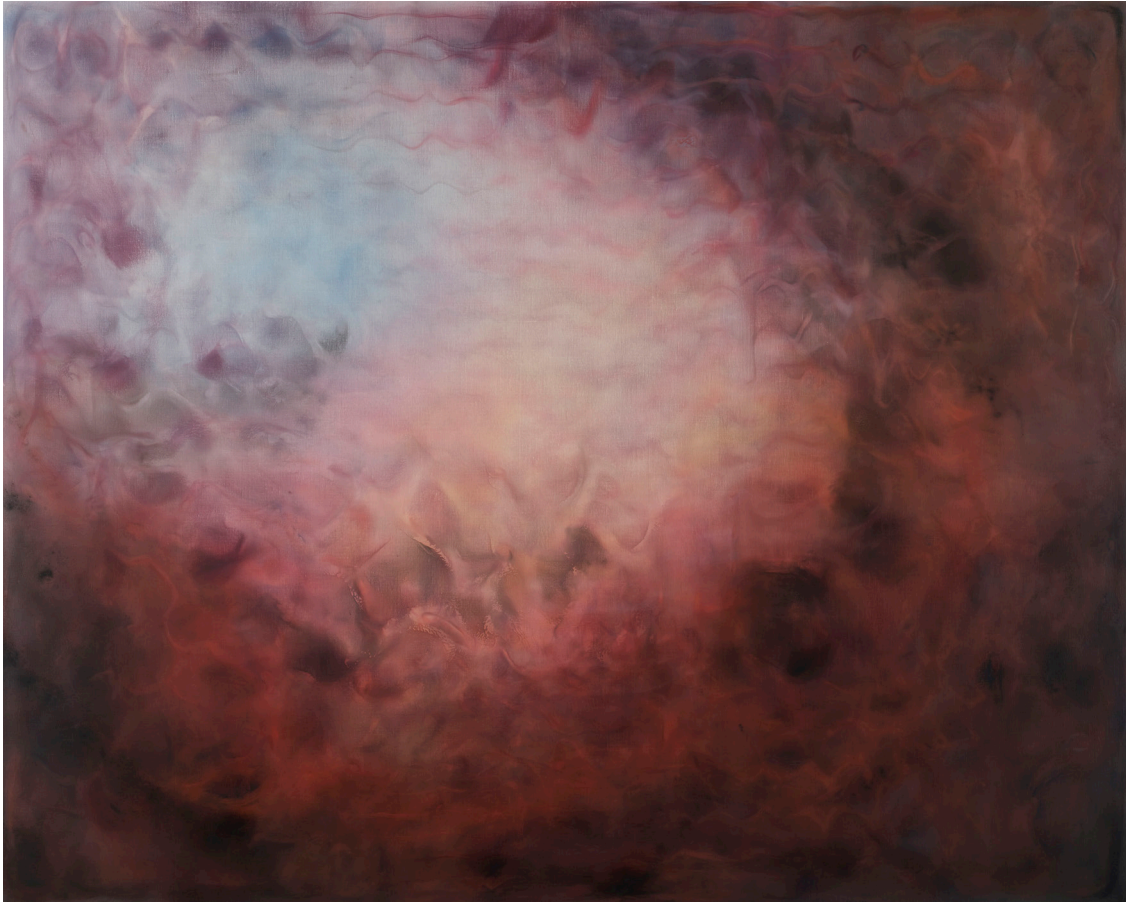


Oliver Beer, *Resonance Painting (Kings and Stars)*, 2026
Pigment on canvas. 150 x 120 cm (59.06 x 47.24 in)

cave but responding to it acoustically, and the frequencies that determined where they placed their marks are the same frequencies Beer was working with. This research led to his critically acclaimed installation *Resonance Project: The Cave*, presented at the 17th Biennale de Lyon (2024–25) and now touring internationally.

Spending long hours underground, singing and recording with eight different performers, Beer encountered sound as something elemental and transformative, capable of altering perception in ways that resist language and explanation. The resulting *Resonance Paintings* emerged directly from these layered interactions between voice, body and cave, revealing how musical harmony and image-making are deeply intertwined.

The Sky in the Cave brings these discoveries into the present, and to London for the first time, as Beer translates the experience inside the cave onto canvas. Shaped by sustained periods of singing and listening, his new paintings reflect sound’s capacity to carry us from one mental or emotional state into another. Beer continues to include the same red and black minerals used



Oliver Beer, *Resonance Painting (On and Ever Onward)*, 2026
Pigment on canvas. 200 x 250 cm (78.74 x 98.43 in)

by Palaeolithic painters 17,000 years ago. Only now, the dark ochres and terracottas evolve into luminous blues, pinks and yellows, tracing a passage from subterranean depth towards open sky. The exhibition's title speaks to this paradoxical journey through sound – what Beer describes as 'going deep down into the earth only to find yourself transported to a place beyond the cave, where time and space feel dissolved.'

The *Resonance Paintings* are accompanied by a soundtrack featuring Beer's composition for the eight voices recorded in the cave, based on each singer's earliest musical memory. This music, played from a vinyl record, immerses the paintings in the very sounds

that shaped them. A 16mm film intercuts footage of the prehistoric cave paintings with the artist's painting process – pigment caught mid-motion, patterns forming and dissolving in real time. Together, these elements trace the origins of the paintings, and restore listening to the centre of perception.

For Beer, sound has the potential to function as connective tissue, offering a form of shared memory that predates modern language and contemporary cultural divisions. *The Sky in the Cave* foregrounds the urgency of intentional listening – of finding shared frequencies and, as the artist puts it, 'being silent long enough to hear what comes back when you put your voice out into the world.'



Portrait of Oliver Beer. Photo: Pierre Tanguy

About the artist

Oliver Beer's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris. His work has been presented at major institutions including MoMA PS1, New York; London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE; Centre Pompidou, Opéra Garnier, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Palais de Tokyo and Château de Versailles, Paris; Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; WIELS, Brussels; West Bund Museum and Long Museum, Shanghai; and the Sydney, Istanbul, Lyon and Venice Biennales. He has participated in the British Art Show 9 and completed residencies at the Watermill Center and Villa Albertine, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Sydney Opera House; and Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche. Beer studied musical composition at the Academy of Contemporary Music, London; fine art at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford; and film theory at the Sorbonne, Paris.

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