

David Salle

Painting in the Present Tense

6 May—27 September 2026

Palazzo Cini Gallery, Venice

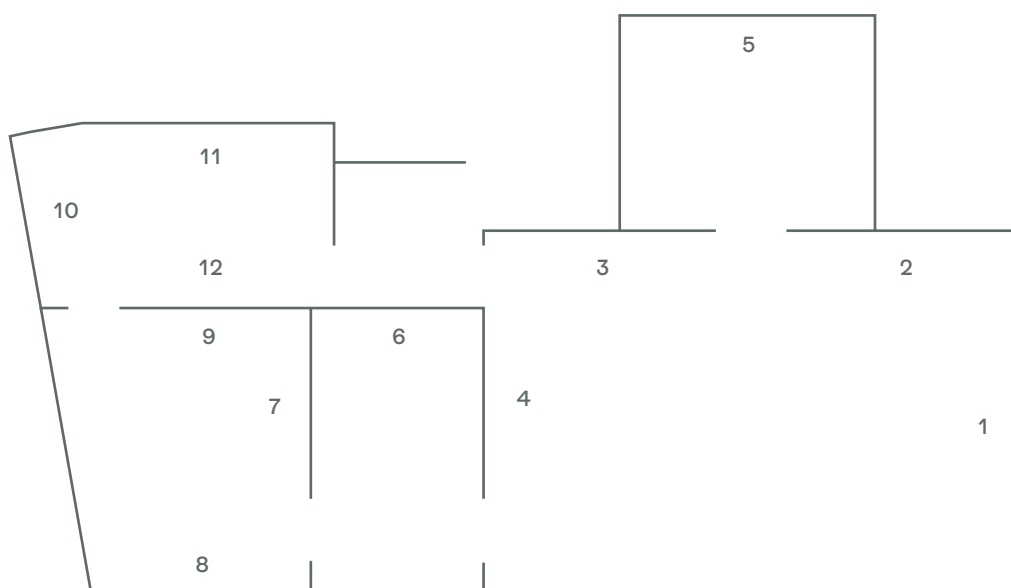
*Everything in painting exists in the present tense.
Art-historical past-times resonate through the painting
even as they are subsumed within it.*
— David Salle

The Fondazione Giorgio Cini presents *Painting in the Present Tense*, an exhibition of new works by the New York-based artist David Salle, curated by Luca Massimo Barbero, Director of the Institute of Art History of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, and supported by Thaddaeus Ropac gallery. The works extend the artist's earlier *Tapestry Paintings* (1989–91), a series based on eighteenth-century Imperial Russian tapestries that were themselves interpretations of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian oil paintings.

Over the course of his nearly fifty-year career, the artist has consistently incorporated new technologies into his practice. These new paintings develop Salle's use of artificial intelligence as a tool to unravel and recalibrate the logic of painting. Filtered through Salle's personalised AI model, figures and scenes already twice translated from their original Italian contexts are warped into phantasmagorical, all-over abstractions. These printed images become the grounds over which Salle paints, correcting, attacking and amplifying each printed pixel with the brush as he introduces another layer of high-colour imagery atop.

Salle's recent partnership with AI stems not from a desire to outsource his role as an artist or thinker, but to introduce to his art a destabilising force. His custom model, trained primarily on the contents of his own oeuvre, does not know how to paint; it distorts and deconstructs compositional space, and then reassembles the pieces into a new, synthetic whole. Centuries of art history leapfrog one another as AI burrows into the circularity of Salle's pictorial logic. Mimesis – the AI's *raison d'être* as well as the painter's own pretext – is pushed to its limits, exaggerated until the relationship between the *thing* and the *description* of the thing untethers. The historic galleries of Palazzo Cini become echoes of this process, layering past and present into an endless *mise en abyme*.

David Salle
Painting in the Present Tense



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| <p>1. <i>Mime</i>, 2026 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 182.9 × 236.2 cm (72 × 93 in)</p> | <p>7. <i>Pink Cloud</i>, 2025-26 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 172.7 × 221 cm (68 × 87 in)</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Crowned</i>, 2025-26 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 172.7 × 226.1 cm (68 × 89 in)</p> | <p>8. <i>The Men</i>, 2025 Flashe, acrylic and pencil on paper mounted on aluminium 49.5 × 66 cm (19.5 × 26 in)</p> |
| <p>3. <i>Washing</i>, 2025 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 133 × 183 cm (52 × 72 in)</p> | <p>9. <i>Faster</i>, 2025 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 121.9 × 180.3 cm (48 × 71 in)</p> |
| <p>4. <i>Workplace</i>, 2025-2026 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 182.9 × 236.2 cm (72 × 93 in)</p> | <p>10. <i>Dots</i>, 2025 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 86.4 × 109.2 cm (34 × 43 in)</p> |
| <p>5. <i>Old Couple</i>, 2026 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 172.7 × 221 cm (68 × 87 in)</p> | <p>11. <i>Space People</i>, 2025 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 76.2 × 101.6 cm (30 × 40 in)</p> |
| <p>6. <i>The Green Cap</i>, 2025 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 152.4 × 195.6 cm (60 × 77 in)</p> | <p>12. <i>Yellow Shawl</i>, 2025-26 Oil, acrylic, Flashe and charcoal on archival UV print on linen 152.4 × 195.6 cm (60 × 77 in)</p> |