



Wall Drawing Series: Marc Baue

September 22, 2023–Fall 2024 | Menil Drawing Institute

DONALD SULTAN: NEW WORKS



March 16 - April 27, 2024

From McClain Gallery:

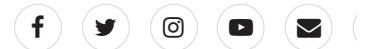
“McClain Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of **Donald Sultan: NEW WORKS**, featuring a selection of paintings and drawings that are a continuation of Sultan’s ongoing investigation of abstraction using the aesthetic structure of the mimosa tree in bloom. Inspired by the plants found in the French Riviera, this body of work highlights the artist’s innovative use of materials. This is the first solo exhibition of Sultan’s works at McClain Gallery and comes after a ten year absence in Houston.

Donald Sultan has a decades-long history of exhibiting in Houston with ten shows at the legendary Meredith Long Gallery. Meredith Long is recognized as one of Texas’ most iconic art dealers and part of a significant chapter of Houston art history. Long represented Sultan’s work throughout his career, and showed many of his early works such as his large-format, densely rendered charcoal drawings of eggs and lemons. These early works on paper relate to the abstracted still lifes created with highly textured, innovative media such as tar and plaster for which Sultan is most known.

Still working with materials that lend themselves to highly textured surfaces, Sultan created the recent paintings and drawings presented at McClain Gallery simultaneously, resulting in a seamless connection between the two media. Several

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...ing things to some degree of an ever abstracted form. The paintings on masonite are richly textured; the use of smooth enamel, sticky tar, and gritty cement exacerbates the focus on surface. Exposed sides provide a particular insight into a complex creative process that is both sculptural and architectural. The multi-layer technique begins with Sultan drawing directly on the masonite panel followed by various masking layers that are cut away or painted over with thicker materials – enamel, tar. The contrast of man-made substances against the delicacy of a natural-world subject produces a fascinating juxtaposition.

In the painting *Blue and Black Mimosa Dec 2, 2022*, Sultan explores his long-standing interest in reducing recognizable imagery to simple shapes. The non-objective nature of abstraction is applied to figuration as a filter that essentializes the object into simple geometry and graphic impact. In this painting, the artist removes the mimosa blossom from its branches and places it against a stark white background. The disentangled deep blue and stark white blooms are depicted as layered circles which contrast sharply with the tar-black foliage. The circles bob along a flow of dark leaves, reminiscent of the movement of wind through trees, calling back to natural processes through the meticulous application of industrial materials.

Color plays a prominent role in *Pink Mimosa November 21, 2023*. In this work, Sultan combines rich salmon pink and silver mimosa flowers with four planes of leaf forms. The matte gray leaves – made of smoothly applied cement – provide a collage-like surface because of their dimensional edges. The rough texture of this two panel painting on masonite causes the viewer to oscillate between contemplating the beauty of the natural world and considering the corporality of the medium. Sultan’s signature use of industrial materials and minimalist shapes paired with vivid color and delicate, precise line drawings creates a lyrical balance between the easily recognizable imagery of the natural world and the anonymity of abstraction. Rough textures tense up against organic subjects; thus the viewer accesses the sublime position of swaying between sensing, feeling, and thinking.”

Reception: March 16, 2024 | 2–4 pm

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