

RYAN LEE

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Donald Sultan

New Paintings

November 10 - December 23, 2016

Opening: Thursday, November 10, 6-8PM

RYAN LEE is pleased to announce Donald Sultan: *New Paintings*, an exhibition of work made in the last two years. Sultan, who first rose to prominence during the 1980s, has challenged the boundaries between painting and sculpture throughout his career. Using industrial materials such as roofing tar, aluminum, linoleum and enamel, Sultan layers, gouges, sands and constructs his paintings—sumptuous, richly textured compositions often made of the same materials as the rooms in which they are displayed. This is Sultan's second solo painting exhibition at RYAN LEE.

In this new series of paintings, Sultan expands his exploration of the industrialization of nature, interrogating the transformation of natural elements such as fruit and flowers into iconography for consumption, whether as fine art or manufactured goods. The image of a “button poppy”—a hybrid shape that melds the plastic button and remembrance poppy motifs developed by Sultan in works from the late 1990s through the mid-2000s—appears throughout the exhibition. Rendered in slick monochrome enamel, the button poppies appear highly plastic, heightening the synthetic quality of the form itself, and suggesting its relationship to the world of manufactured goods.

Sultan's use of background patterning reinforces this as well; he takes his color palette from vintage automobiles such as the 1959 Bel Air (both the full-size car and its miniature model versions), and his compositional grids from fabric design such as plaid and hounds-tooth. Several paintings make reference to Modernism, drawing on familiar patterns and colors from early- and mid-twentieth century works of art. Sultan's allusions to Piet Mondrian's (1872-1944) recognizable mode of abstraction respond to that artist's appropriation by the world of fashion, pointing to the transformation of highly theoretical works of art into something mass-produced.

Born in Asheville, North Carolina, Sultan studied at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and later received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute, Chicago. His first solo exhibition was mounted in 1977 at Artists Space in New York, and since then he has exhibited worldwide in solo and group exhibitions, including at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Gotlands Konst Museum, Sweden; Institute of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Memphis Brooks Museum, Memphis; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Musée d'art Contemporain, Montreal; National Galerie, Berlin; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. His work is included in internationally renowned public and private collections, among them the Art Institute of Chicago; British Museum, London; Cincinnati Art Museum; Cleveland Art Museum; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts; Detroit Institute of Arts; Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Ludwig Museum, Budapest; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Neuberger Museum at SUNY Purchase, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Singapore Museum of Art; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Gallery, London; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

In September 2016, a solo exhibition of Sultan's *Disaster Paintings* began a two-year tour of five American museums, organized by Dr. Marla Price at the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth. This exhibition will originate at the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami. It will then travel to the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth, Texas; Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC; North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, North Carolina; and Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Forthcoming exhibitions at RYAN LEE include David Schorr: *Flying Carpets* (Jan 5 - Feb 18, 2017). For press inquiries, please contact Bridget Casey at 212-297-0742 or bridget@ryanleegallery.com.