

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 24, 2021

Redefine

Francie Hester



April 22 – June 6, 2021

433 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534



Opening Reception: Saturday, April 24, 5-7 PM*

We are delighted to announce the exhibition *Redefine*, featuring new paintings, sculpture and works on paper by Francie Hester. *Redefine* marks SEFA's first solo exhibition in our Hudson location. Hester, based in Silver Spring, MD, is a long-time artist with SEFA. She has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions with the gallery, as well at art fairs in Miami, New York, Silicon Valley, Toronto and most recently, in our solo booth at VOLTA NY 2020.

The past year, Hester has been working not only on her beloved and familiar series—*Convex*, *Vessels* and *Strata*—but also new 3D sculptural objects titled *Renewal* and *Clusters*. The exhibition also includes *Crossing Lines*, a series created in collaboration with Hester's longtime studio mate, interdisciplinary artist Lisa Hill.

Created during the unprecedented global conditions endured since the beginning of 2020—straddling both the sociopolitical and personal realms—Hester's latest series are a meditation on both her personal and our collective pasts. Throughout her works, Hester consistently acknowledges the seemingly opposing forces that build our daily lives—creating an atmosphere abounding with both elegy and rejuvenation.

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NYC - 46 West 90th Street, Floor 2, New York, NY, 10024 - By Appointment Only

Hudson - 433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY, 12534 - Thursday-Monday, 11AM-5PM

Hester's technique of painting on each substrate—paper, plexiglass and aluminum—goes far beyond conventional brushwork. Through a painstaking and physical process, she applies and removes acrylic paint with the use of sanders, hammers, routers and drills, in a continual process of building, breaking and rebuilding. Surprisingly, even the works on paper are sanded. Surfaces are mottled and textured, scraped and punctured. Layer upon layer of striated, chunky colors dance astride more delicate patterned areas, created with collaged bits of metal leaf and complex cross-hatching marks. Yet, strikingly, the eye finds places of rest as colors and pattern conjoin harmoniously, and chaos and control share spaces.

The *Daily Drawing 2020* series was a constant for Hester throughout the past year—a therapeutic exercise in her studio. She focused on a single sheet of paper each day—layering and degrading the shapes, colors and patterns until satisfied with the result. On the back of each page, Hester recorded the events of the day—effectively diary entries—with details that are seemingly quotidian, yet create a world of emotions for her personally, from the birth of her grandchild to the murder of George Floyd. Everything falls within her language of abstraction, a system of symbols evoking more than hues, grids and textures.

Another series on paper, *Portal*, was created through a process of intuitive mark-making, inspired by the automatic writing and drawing techniques of Surrealist artists. Hester selected a “theme” for each day; then made a drawing—a layer—corresponding to the hue/pattern/material of the day. After each gesture, the selected paper moved to the bottom of the pile—hidden amongst its compatriots until its turn to resurface and be remade again.

In the *Vessel* series, Hester creates a three-dimensional space, able to be read both visually and physically by viewers. To the artist, the Vessel is a place to put memory and intention. When viewed in the gallery, the works evoke a corporeal center—drawing one's body in—while simultaneously offering the possibility of extending beyond the physical realm. The golden *Vessel* that grounds the exhibition is a veritable eclipse, crowning the space, referencing the darkness that exists while offering the possibility for hope. We are absorbed by this golden concave shape; we enter into this radiantly textured, meticulously layered orb—the opposite of a black hole—a symbol of what is to come, what can be. The mirror behind the work reveals its true complexities, where the process is reflected outward.

Hester's newest sculptures from the *Cluster* and *Renewal* series instead manifest a transparency and an intermingling. Whether suspended in the window, susceptible to the ambient movements of the gallery; or woven and transparent, allowing the light to pass through freely—these twisting forms are Hester's latest creations, occupying the space in various heights and contexts. Created from scraps of previous paintings, dotted by her fingertips, they express airs of interconnectedness, yet changeability; they are malleable with intention, always shaped by her experience and her touch.

FRANCIE HESTER Artist Bio

Hester's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally and has received honorary grants from the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities and from the Arts Council of Montgomery County, MD. She is represented in numerous private and corporate collections including the World Bank, Capital One, KPMG, Covington & Burling, the International Monetary Fund and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Hester's commissioned works include a 1996 piece for the Ginetta Sagan Fund of Amnesty International and an 18-foot atrium piece for the Chicago Kent College of Law. In addition, she has created large-scale sculptural aluminum paintings for Airbus headquarters, ASHA, Booz Allen Hamilton and National Endowment for the Arts Member Benefits. Francie Hester received her MFA in painting from the University of Maryland and a BFA in painting from the University of Michigan. She is represented by Susan Eley Fine Art in New York City.

Artist Statement

Redefine

This is a time that has forced us to redefine. Redefine how we live, how we interact, how we see, what we value. The *Redefine* series reflects on that process of redefinition. It is an exploration of our sense of space and the changing pathways of interaction and interconnection.

Renewal and Cluster Series

For the past two decades, I have been working on aluminum panels—attacking the metal with sanders, hammers, routers and drills. Surfaces of paint are layered, sanded and stripped away, in a process that mirrors ideas about vestiges of time in my work.

The layers of paint removed through these arduous processes are reconnected—stitched and woven together to create the *Renewal* and *Cluster Series*. They reflect a spirit of renewal, of regeneration, of drawing on the past time and past events as inspiration for the future.

Crossing Lines

The exhibition also includes *Crossing Lines*, a series created in collaboration with interdisciplinary artist Lisa Hill. This series draws on the literal and figurative uses of the word “line”—bloodlines, headlines, lines of civic boundaries, lines of individual identity and lines that are emotional, spiritual and physical.

**SEFA Hudson is following the rules and regulations around gatherings in Columbia County, NY; face coverings and social distancing required.*

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