

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 5, 2022

***Ingrained***  
**Jared Abner & Rachel Burgess**



Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson  
433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY 12534



September 22—November 13, 2022  
Opening Reception: Saturday, September 24th, 5-7PM

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Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to present *Ingrained*, a two-person exhibition featuring recent work by Jared Abner and Rachel Burgess. The exhibition is on view from September 22 to November 13, 2022 at the Gallery's Upstate location in downtown Hudson, NY. There will be an opening reception with the artists present on Saturday, September 24th from 5-7PM.



The exhibition title *Ingrained* references the materials and the processes of both artists. Abner works in wood, carving and combining the unique natural material to create sculptures that are intuitive and expressive. Burgess produces monotypes on paper—a substance also generated from trees. Her prints of landscapes literally ingrain the ink, thus the image, into paper via the pressure of a printing press. Both artists rely on the tree—the trunk, the bark, the pulp—and activate its particular formal and textural properties.

According to the Oxford Languages dictionary, “ingrained” is defined as “deeply established, as in a habit, belief or attitude; firmly fixed or embedded and difficult to remove; implanted, rooted.” Thus, what is ingrained *physically* becomes an integral quality of an object, and what is ingrained *emotionally* becomes an essential element of oneself.

Continuing with the motif of the tree—these organic beings are marked with their age and experiences. Tree trunks of all variations possess circular rings that allow one to date the arboreal creatures. These harmonious spherical patterns are referred to as “concentric growth rings.” They visually depict time and evolution, as well as allude to the memories present within a material. In tandem with the rings of trees,

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
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Abner's and Burgess's works in this exhibition are similarly ingrained with growth and memory. Whether presented as dimensional wood structures or rendered on refined paper sheets, the artists' works reflect the essence of nature and its potential to be interpreted and transformed by the human hand.



Jared Abner's origin story as an artist is both poignant and empowering. As a child, he was fascinated with the tools and scraps found on the workbench in the basement of his home. Abner yearned for the day where the saw could be in his control—for exploration and experimentation. The artist is open about his dyslexia, and for him, woodworking was a means of testing his creativity and learning in an atypical means. With a chisel in hand, he tried out various techniques. He wanted—rather, needed—to know “what happens when you use a saw to cut through a 2 by 4 piece of lumber.” These investigations eventually led Abner to art school and to developing a practice as a sculptor and as a furniture maker. His current output bridges these formal classifications with skill and attention. The artist is also conscious about the environmental implications of his work, and he primarily favors wood that is native to New England such as walnut and bass.

Currently based near Boston, MA, Abner is a recent graduate from Rochester Institute of Technology. He is the youngest artist that SEFA has worked with, and the Gallery is proud to debut his sculptural production in Upstate New York. *Ingrained* will feature two large-scale floor sculptures, including *Suspension Five* (2021), which is seven feet tall and stands as the focal point for visitors upon entering SEFA Hudson. Additionally, the exhibition will highlight intimately scaled works that are posed on ledges and shelves throughout the Gallery. They twist and morph into shapes that can be read as organic and fantastical; as prehistoric and modern. The delicate and intricate carvings demonstrate Abner's commitment to highlighting—perhaps honoring—the idiosyncratic properties of the wood that passes through his hands and under his tools.

Abner discovered wood to be the perfect medium for his three dimensional dreams. While marble sculpture is a process of subtraction, and clay sculpture is a process of addition—the wood medium is a special substance that allows for the breaking and the building to coexist within the same form. Abner uses his chisels to carve into basswood and cherry, often followed by applications of wood glue to fasten parts together again. His abstract amalgamations are pure—simultaneously raw and precise; unpretentious and intentional.

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
Fine Art



Rachel Burgess is a master of the monotype medium, her preferred method of translating landscapes to paper. The monotype is never a repeat. Nothing is carved into a plate, as with an etching. Instead, each image is painted onto plexiglass and exists for a finite moment before it is passed through a printing press and transferred onto BFK Rives paper. The artist uses brushes, rollers, Q-Tips and her hands to manipulate the oil based pigments. In the studio, Burgess works quite quickly, and each monotype is finished within one day so that the ink does not dry, adding a performative aspect to her approach. The final images become reversed through the printing process; thus, there is also a transformation—adding a further poetic layer to her methods.

Burgess primarily works in landscapes and seascapes. Her monotypes range in size from intimate squares to monumental diptychs and triptychs. These various scales will be present at SEFA Hudson in the exhibition *Ingrained* to showcase the variety and dynamism within the artist's practice. In *Autumn Day* (2019), three panels of an abstracted landscape are coalesced into an immersive scene. The sunrise is rendered with light blues, soft yellows and blush pinks. The synchronicity in her color palette carries over throughout the triptych. Each of the three panels is striking individually and, together, create an atmosphere—a mood. Burgess's landscapes seem to extend infinitely, generating similar effects as when one gazes into the horizon. Lines become forms; forms become colors; colors become memories: "perceptions of a fleeting moment."

Such visual experiences encapsulate the natural wonders of the sky, sea and land. Yet, they also hint at the rich, interior reactions specific to each viewer. Indeed, for Burgess, many of her landscapes are based in Maine and depict the coastal areas that she remembers from childhood—notably the Piscataqua river. In the new series on view at SEFA Hudson, Burgess extends her locales to include additional places on the East Coast including Upstate New York. Inspired by Japanese woodblock prints, early Colonial folk art and New England Impressionism—she continues to simplify her forms into "crude but beautiful images." Still, the priority is capturing the malleability of nature and the emotive potentials of our impressions while immersed by the worlds above, below and beyond our basic perception. As described by the artist, her works are "storytelling through the landscape."

Text by Liz Lorenz, Assistant Director, SEFA Hudson

## JARED ABNER

### Biography:

Jared Abner is an emerging artist based in Boston, MA. He is a recent graduate from Rochester Institute of Technology. His 2021 thesis show for his BFA program was entitled *Quickly. Quickly and slowly.*

Currently, Abner maintains a studio in Charlestown, a neighborhood within Boston. Woodworking and sculpture has always been Abner's passion. He also makes furniture including chairs and benches that straddle the categories of fine art and furniture.

Abner was first exhibited by Susan Eley Fine Art NYC in the exhibition *New Voices for the Twenties I*, which was a juried show in 2021 featuring work by recent art school graduates. The 2022 exhibition at SEFA Hudson entitled *Ingrained* represents Abner's first major show in Upstate New York with the Gallery.

### Artist Statement:

When I was six, I started spending time in the basement. On top of an old workbench, there was a rusty hammer with a leather handle, and right next to it there was an equally-rusted carpenter's saw hanging from pegboard. As soon as I was tall enough to reach them, I started using the saw to cut through whatever scrap wood I could find lying around, and using the hammer to nail them together.

I never came in with a plan as to what I was going to do or make. Instead, I was doing something much more productive: playing, or, perhaps more accurately, exploring. Exploring the hammer and the saw, exploring the material of wood, the same material even today, fifteen years later, I still play and explore with. Today this playtime results in furniture or sculpture, with the exact same excitement I had as when I was six.

Simply put, my work is about subtraction and addition. First, through the processes of turning, carving, and cutting away at the raw material, I subtract. Then I put the pieces together again. Creation through destruction. Just like a little kid cutting something with a saw.

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
Fine Art

## RACHEL BURGESS

### **Biography:**

Rachel Burgess is a visual artist based in New York. Originally from Boston, she received a B.A. in Literature from Yale University and an M.F.A. in Illustration from the School of Visual Arts. Her interest in narrative and sequential forms continues to inform her work. She is the recipient of a 2021 Artist Development Program Award from the International Print Center of New York (NY); previous solo/two-person exhibitions include 3S Artspace (NH), Susan Eley Fine Art (NY), the University of Connecticut Art Gallery in Stamford (CT) and the Jonathan Frost Gallery (ME); previous group exhibitions include the International Print Center of New York (NY), 20/20 Gallery at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (NY), the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art (NY), the Monmouth Museum (NJ), the South Bend Museum of Art (IN), the American University Museum (Washington, D.C.), the Pyramida Center for Contemporary Art (Israel) and the Seoul Museum of Art (Korea). Burgess' work has been supported by residencies at Acadia National Park and Zea Mays Printmaking, and has been featured in the New York Times, the Boston Globe, Drawing Magazine, Introspective Magazine, 3x3 Magazine and CMYK.

The coast of Maine has been the main source of inspiration for Rachel Burgess for many years. Using monotype, she creates iconic scenes that explore the relationship between experience and myth. In a print studio, she makes monotypes based on her drawings. The pulling of the print, which takes a few minutes, is followed by a wiping away of the image from the plate. The initial "painting" is lost, and a new work on paper is created, mimicking the way we transform fleeting experiences into lasting stories. The final product is a mirror image of the original, a metaphor for the fictionalization and abstraction that occurs in our minds.

### **Artist Statement:**

My work is about memory. I grew up in New England, and my pieces are inspired by memories of its landscape that have stayed with me since childhood. I'm interested in the discrepancy between what we experience and how we remember it – by the way we take a specific moment and turn it into an abstract memory. My landscapes are places that exist in my mind's eye, as a collection of key colors, or a memorable silhouette. I aim to capture an essence or mood, rather than a detailed rendering.

To create an image, I first sketch on location. Then I create a monotype based on my drawing. Monotype is a form of printmaking that yields just one image (as opposed to techniques that allow you to produce an image over and over again). To make a monotype, I paint an image directly onto a plexi-glass plate and then use a printing press to transfer the medium onto paper, creating a one-off impression. This process mirrors my interest in memory, as my original painting on the plate is lost for the unique work.

The way we remember things is changing. As we rely more on digital pictures, selfies, and videos, our ability to create genuine - albeit abstracted - memories will surely be impacted. As I work, I wonder how this will affect our personal memory bank: the stories we tell about ourselves. What will it mean to reflect and recollect when our lives are an endless trove of data? Can we continue to absorb places organically and fold them into ourselves, or will it be enough to just post pictures online? How much of our identity is lost as we allow thousands of images to memorialize our lives, rather than a few, treasured ones?