

Susan Eley

Fine Art

axis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 1, 2023

Francie Hester

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Susan Eley Fine Art, NYC
190 Orchard Street, New York, NY, 10002

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May 11—July 1, 2023
Opening Reception: Thursday, May 18, 6-8PM

Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to announce the opening of *Axis*, a solo exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Francie Hester. This is the fifth exhibition at SEFA's new Gallery on the Lower East Side since our relocation from our Upper West Side space, founded in 2006 by Susan Eley. SEFA NYC is now located at 190 Orchard Street in the heart of the LES arts district.

Axis will open to the public on Thursday, May 11th. There will be a reception at the LES Gallery with the artist present the following week on Thursday, May 18th from 6-8PM. Hours for SEFA NYC are Tuesday-Saturday, 11AM-6PM. Our location in Hudson, NY will continue its regular hours and programming at 433 Warren Street.

This presentation will debut Hester's newest series entitled "Axis." The works are striking sculptures in an X shape. Their forms are crafted with curved plexiglass. Their surfaces are adorned with acrylic, aluminum leaf and wax. They are simultaneously exuberant and

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introspective, colorful and contemplative. These works embody the hallmarks of her practice—dimensionality, dynamism and color. The artist has an acute sensitivity to texture and flow. The show at SEFA LES will include Hester’s incredible series of fifty small X shaped sculptural works that are about two feet high. *Axis* will also include her larger six-foot X structures, which are admirable in their transitioning hues and materiality, as well as their scale. These pieces are mounted on the walls, often in grid-like formations, referencing the larger influences in her approach to construction and display.



The exhibition *Axis* will also feature works from Hester’s previous series that have been exhibited with great success at both SEFA Hudson and SEFA NYC. The 3D X shapes of the “Axis,” the convex acrylic glass of the “Vessels,” the textural metallics of “Crossing Lines,” the patterns of “Convex,” the more traditional paintings on aluminum called “Confluence” and the colorful, lengthy “Strata” are all united here. Indeed, this show acts as a type of retrospective, featuring selections from the most notable of Hester’s works. SEFA has had the pleasure to work with the artist since 2012.

Hester’s practice is 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.

The artist’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, thick 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 patterns conjoin harmoniously, and chaos and control share spaces.

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Francie Hester works principally on sculpted aluminum, steel and plexiglass, in a process-based practice that builds pixelated and vibrant pigments in deep layers with patterns of drips, grids and fragmented shapes that are then deconstructed through sanding, scraping, drilling and cutting to reveal the finished, textured surfaces. Her work has been exhibited internationally in Jordan, Ulaanbaatar, Ireland, and Costa Rica, and in solo exhibitions with Susan Eley Fine Art in New York City and Hudson, NY, Anton Gallery, Washington, DC, Green Chalk Contemporary, and the Hawthorne Mansion, Monterey, CA.

Her commissioned works include sculptures for Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York City, a sculpted aluminum painting for the U.S. headquarters of Airbus, and paintings on 18-foot aluminum surfaces for an atrium in the Chicago Kent College of Law. Her work is represented in numerous private and corporate collections including the World Bank, Capital One, Covington & Burling and the International Monetary Fund. She has received honorary grants from the District of Columbia, from the Arts Council of Montgomery County, MD and from the Maryland State Arts Council. She received her MFA in painting from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a BFA in painting from the University of Michigan.

Hester has studios in Kensington, MD and Boulder, CO and is represented by Susan Eley Fine Art in New York City and Hudson, NY.



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ARTIST STATEMENT

In the “Axis” series, recollection pivots around vivid, etched markers of moments, days, events—an axis of reference points. The work’s surfaces are integral to this exploration—the process of building layers through pixelation and deconstructing through sanding and scraping creates sharp focus alongside imprecision. “Axis” includes a constellation of 50 sculpted pieces and separate six-foot pieces, all of sculpted aluminum and plexiglass in the shape of X.

The exhibition also includes “Crossing Lines,” drawing on the literal and figurative uses of the word “line”—bloodlines, headlines, lines of civic boundaries and individual identity, and lines emotional, spiritual and physical; “Confluence,” exploring the potential for abstraction to meaningfully engage memory through fluid surfaces that interrelate with imperfections of recollection; “Convex,” examining pathways and repetition that create patterns and cycles of memories—ones lost and found; “Strata,” an ongoing series that began as a series of chants stripped of imagery in the deafening silence after the Twin Towers went down, and reflects a diary chronicling the layering of days; and “Vessels,” gentle arcs that create a space for reflection, contemplation, healing—thought, time and memory come together as a fluid collective.

Hester’s practice is process-driven, building surfaces through the relationship of unpremeditated actions in repetitive patterns of drips, hand-drawn grids, fragmented shapes, unfound imagery, layering and deconstruction to create a visual image where the arbitrary and systematic are at play.