

SUZAN WOODRUFF: FROM THE EDGE

May 11 - June 8, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 11, 4-7pm

PRESS RELEASE

Billis Williams Gallery is pleased to present SUZAN WOODRUFF: FROM THE EDGE, the gallery's first solo exhibition by the Los Angeles-based painter. The exhibition features the artist's new paintings and monumental sculpture and continues through June 8th.

Suzan Woodruff paints luminous and provocative abstractions that are the embodiment of light. With a career spanning three decades, Woodruff is well known for her ethereal and yet deeply grounded abstract paintings inspired by the natural world. Utilizing a physically demanding process, Woodruff creates paintings marked by cascading patterns that seem to change as the eye moves across them - colors shift, forms appear and recede, the light changes. Woodruff's mastery of her medium is haunting in its beauty - transfixing and transforming.



Woodruff's early work is marked by hints of what has become her signature cascading patterns. In 2003, Woodruff designed her gravity easel - an omni-directional pivoting table that can hold a 10x6 foot painting. Working closely with Jack Brogan, noted vision was brought to reality and the gravity easel, in multiple sizes, became central to her work, allowing her to push her paintings to new levels of complexity. Informed by ancient wisdom of the natural world and the new knowledge of science and space, Woodruff's goal is to capture every strand of the cosmos in her compositions. These immense goals for the work are belied by the seeming effortlessness of her compositions - they are free and elegant and eternal.

Over the last five years, Woodruff has survived the darkness of three major surgeries and radiation for near-lethal oral cancer. The surgeries left her unable to eat or speak for almost three years. For the first years after the main surgery, Woodruff's focus was surviving - she describes a blur of just getting through each day. Returning to painting became a distant hope. Although eating and speaking remain difficult, Woodruff is driven by an internal fortitude - she pushed herself back into her studio practice with steadfast determination.

Woodruff's new body of paintings and sculpture is a revelation: it is the very embodiment of the sublime. Woodruff has poured the emotional energy of one who has returned from the far edges of a soul crushing illness into her work - there is an exquisite joy to these works - a wonder, an exhilaration. Four years after the major surgery, a torrent of pent-up creativity exploded with Woodruff working on her smaller gravity easel - building strength to return to the large easel and her massive paintings. Never satisfied, Woodruff pushed and experimented. The years lost to cancer galvanize her - she had walked to the edge and returned with an intensity and focus that she poured into her work.

To stand in front of Woodruff's large compositions is to experience the transcendent moment of wonder at the world. As the eye wanders through the forms, the mind goes to nature, to space, to the micro and the macro, to the wonder of light, to the experience of true joy. And as one moves in front of the paintings, they change - colors shift, forms appear and recede, the light changes. Woodruff's mastery of her medium is haunting in its beauty - transfixing and transforming.

Susan Woodruff was born in Phoenix, AZ, and studied at Arizona State University before apprenticing with noted artists and sculptors. Woodruff's paintings have been exhibited internationally including shows throughout the United States as well India, Australia, and Hungary. Her work has been published in Art Ltd, ARTWEEK, Fabrik, Flavorpill, Huffington Post, LA Weekly, and White Hot, among many others. She lives and works in Los Angeles with her husband, the novelist Bruce Bauman, and their two dogs.

For all press inquiries, please contact 310.838.3685 or gallery@billiswilliams.com

For all other inquiries, please contact Tressa Williams at tressa@billiswilliams.com