

for immediate release

Devening Projects

Sean Sullivan | “In the shade of a tree.” | March 13 - April 23, 2022

We continue to wonder at the breadth and diversity of Sean Sullivan’s studio practice, so it is with great pleasure that we announce his fourth exhibition with Devening Projects. *In the shade of a tree* is an exhibition and an intimate view into a vision of Sean’s world and his place therein. New ephemeral sculptures, mixed media reliefs, paintings and collages become a kind of material manifestation of a poem by Sean Sullivan that lies at the heart of this project. *Para mi amor*, is an allusive and chromatically rich meditation on connection and yearning. The wistful voice in this gentle piece shows how well Sean Sullivan can bring to life the emotional complexity of living.

Sean Sullivan, *In the shade of a tree* opens on March 13 and continues until April 23, 2022. Gallery hours are Saturdays from 12 - 5 pm and by appointment.

In his recent statement, Sean says: *“The work in this show was made at home on the dining room table between meals and school lessons. It was often made after work if there was energy and on the weekends as well. In every way it is tied to home – in scale, in material and most especially, in spirit. It is make-do, modest and messy –‘lived in’ like our home. When a piece was completed or stalled in creative limbo, I didn’t take it to the studio to contemplate, but instead hung it on the kitchen wall next to the sink. In this way I could consider it while doing the dishes or helping to prepare meals. Materially the work combines cardboard with crayon, paints of various kinds as well as just about anything else I could get my hands on. I’ve since come to think of this process as something akin to nest building.”*

In 2019, for Sun is Setting/ Faith in Strangers at Devening Projects, I had the great privilege of having an informal email exchange with poet, John Yau, regarding the creative process. In that exchange I spoke of a creative schism that existed within me. On one side was a natural, instinctive way of making art (‘nest building’) and on the other, in the distance, was an austere formalism, a conceptualism that has long called to me.

When Dan Devening offered me this show as an opportunity to put my work in context with the work of Samuel Beckett, Hanne Darboven, Allan McCollum and David Moreno, I thought, ‘now’s my chance!’, I could finally set out and find that mirage in the distance. It turns out, three years and a drastically altered world have helped to put that argument to rest. It’s just not that important to me anymore. There are bigger things to worry about.

Furthermore, it occurred to me that it may have never been about conceptualism at all, that cloaked in those formal concerns were things I had along, those of commitment and devotion. I don’t have to go very far to find those. They are here with me everyday, woven into our family, into our relationships and lives and into the process and ultimately, into the objects that are made as a result.”

Sean Sullivan has presented work in recent solo exhibitions at Devening Projects in Chicago; BDDW in New York, NY, and Gallery Fifty One in Antwerp, Belgium. He has participated in group exhibitions at Chris Sharp Gallery in Los Angeles, the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz, NY; the Markus Luettgen and Ute Parduhn Galleries in Dusseldorf, Germany; and the Museum for Drawing, Huningen, Belgium. He received the NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow in Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts Grant in 2017. He lives and works in the Hudson Valley, NY. He is represented by Devening Projects in Chicago and Chris Sharp Gallery in Los Angeles.