

REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
165 EAST BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10002

JOHN DUFF

February 18 – March 24

@

RSFA, NY

JOHN DUFF
February 18 – March 24, 2024

John Duff came to New York from California in 1967, just after the Summer of Love. On Manhattan's Lower East Side, he shared studio space with a community of young artists (Melvin Edwards, Janet Fish, Neil Jenney, Brice Marden, Gary Stephan, Robert Neuwirth and others) at the legendary 76 Jefferson Street building (demolished in the late 1970s). In 1969, Duff was included (along with Bruce Nauman, Linda Benglis, Richard Serra, Neil Jenney, Barry Le Va, Carl Andre, Eva Hesse and Richard Tuttle) in *Anti-Illusion Procedures/Materials*, a survey of contemporary process-based art at the Whitney Museum of American Art (curated by Marcia Tucker and James Monte).

While majoring in ceramics at the San Francisco Art Institute, the artist quickly expanded his sculptural practice by experimenting with found materials (rope, wooden slats, window screens, beach sand) and assemblage. In New York, he began working with fiberglass, producing austere, lightweight forms usually hung on the wall with a single nail. In the 1980s, he fabricated welded steel armatures to support torqued, blade-like areas of painted fiberglass. These post-minimal forms emerged from the sculptor's continuing interest in geometric modeling: how repeating triangles, split or stacked spheres, curved channels and twisted planes can open onto unfamiliar yet strangely coherent topologies. Tense, unorthodox combinations of plaster and steel, steel and foam, concrete and rubber, resin and plaster, wax and concrete, etc, organize sculptural situations where form arrests attention at the very limits of what a viewing body can know or predict. One thing is done to another, space is changed, and the object becomes a sort of portal.

Reena Spaulings presents a selection of works encountered in the Doyers Street studio where Duff has been working for over four decades. An early wall-based sculpture made of a tree branch and rope wrapped in black cloth tape dates from the artist's very first solo exhibition in San Francisco, 1967. A bamboo structure with suspended resin-encased fish is the first sculpture Duff made after arriving in NY. Hollow, translucent fiberglass wedges and curved fin-like forms were produced during the 1970-80s. *Concatenation* and *Orange Concatenation* link triangular sections of cut fiberglass, generating serpentine coils and spirals. A ten-part floor-based work, *Five Materials in Combination*, 2003, elaborates a sculptural code based on changing combinations of recurring substances and qualities. More recently, Duff has returned to ceramics, producing small-scale works with fired, glazed clay: a "broken labyrinth," a house-like structure composed of intersecting planes and voids, and rectangular and circular volumes penetrated by crisscrossing hollow tubes.

Duff has shown at Irving Blum gallery in Los Angeles, Blum Helman Gallery and Knoedler & Company in New York, as well as the Hill Gallery in Birmingham, MI. His work is included in many public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, MoMA, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and LACMA.

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Installation views

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Individual views

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John Duff

Curved Channel, 1970
fiberglass, paint
233.68 x 46.99 x 45.08 cm ; 92 x 18 1/2 x 17 3/4 in

JD/S 1

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John Duff

***Silver Serrated Wedge*, 1985**

fiberglass, paint

201.29 x 11.43 x 31.75 cm ; 79 1/4 x 4 1/2 x 12 1/2 in

JD/S 3

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John Duff

Untitled, 1969/2023
fiberglass, sand, wire
130.81 x 31.75 x 25.4 cm ; 51 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 10 in

JD/S 4

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John Duff

***Orange Concatenation*, 1980**

fiberglass, wood, wire, paint

39.37 x 236.22 x 15.24 cm ; 15 1/2 x 93 x 6 in

JD/S 5

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John Duff

***Untitled*, 1967**

tree branch, cloth tape, rope, metal ring

95.25 x 41.4 x 6.98 cm ; 37 1/2 x 16 1/4 x 2 3/4 in

JD/S 6

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John Duff

Concatenation, 1970
fiberglass, wood, wire, paint
78.74 x 151.76 x 8.89 cm ; 31 x 59 3/4 x 3 1/2 in

JD/S 7

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John Duff

***Curved Wedge*, 1983**

fiberglass, poly urethane, tin cans

186.05 x 39.37 x 27.94 cm ; 73 1/4 x 15 1/2 x 11 in

JD/S 8

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John Duff

Untitled, 1983
Fiberglass resin
209.55 x 36.2 x 20.32 cm ; 82 1/2 x 14 1/4 x 8 in

JD/S 9

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John Duff

2-part Harmony, 1985
fiberglass, steel, paint, steel rods
208.91 x 41.91 x 38.1 cm ; 82 1/4 x 16 1/2 x 15 in

JD/S 10

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John Duff

Untitled, 1980
fiberglass, wood
162.56 x 26.67 x 12.06 cm ; 64 x 10 1/2 x 4 3/4 in

JD/S 12

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John Duff

Green Stripe, 1972
Fiberglass resin, paint
184.15 x 5.71 x 5.71 cm ; 72 1/2 x 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 in

JD/S 13

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John Duff

Corrugated Column, 1970

fiberglass resin, paint

163.58 x 55.88 x 34.92 cm ; 64 3/8 x 22 x 13 3/4 in

JD/S 14

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John Duff

***Broken Labyrinth*, 2023**

ceramic

38.1 x 37.46 x 2.54 cm ; 15 x 14 3/4 x 1 in

JD/S 15

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John Duff

***Untitled*, 2022**

ceramic

20.95 x 20.95 x 20.95 cm ; 8 1/4 x 8 1/4 x 8 1/4 in

JD/S 16

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John Duff

***Untitled*, 2023**

ceramic

31.75 x 22.23 x 31.75 cm ; 12 1/2 x 8 3/4 x 12 1/2 in

JD/S 17

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John Duff

***Untitled*, 2023**

ceramic

6.25 x 15.5 x 6.25 cm ; 2 1/2 x 6 1/8 x 2 1/2 in

JD/S 18

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John Duff

Five Materials in Combination II, 2003
plaster, wax, cement, resin, rubber, steel
dimensions variable

JD/S 21

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John Duff

Inclined Form, 2001

steel, foam

60.96 x 85.09 x 72.39 cm ; 24 x 33 1/2 x 28 1/2 in

JD/S 19

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John Duff

***Untitled*, 1968**
bamboo, fiberglass, wire, fish
152.4 x 109.22 x 63.5 cm ; 60 x 43 x 25 in

JD/S 22