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P R E S S R E L E A S E

SITE131 opens the new year with *WHOLE CLOTH*: January 11 ~ March 21, 2020



Wu Jian'an



Brian Scott Campbell



Material Lust

SITE131 in Dallas begins its fifth year with *WHOLE CLOTH*, January 11 ~ March 21, 2020, a stunning exhibition featuring three artists, each from Texas, U S and China. *Whole Cloth* distinguishes itself as the complete entity, the solid piece of fabric that tells the story of hard work, dedication, and a compassionate heart. Charming intimate pieces contrasted with engaging wall-sized works define **SITE131's** *WHOLE CLOTH*.

New to Texas, artist **BRIAN SCOTT CAMPBELL's** small, intimate tonal landscapes create a dreamlike locale far from the dramatic spaces of the other two artists. Chinese artist **WU JINAN'AN** and the New York pair of **MATERIAL LUST** show us how they creatively re-invent substantive materials: Jian'an's striking use of water buffalo hides meets Material Lust's inventive amalgamation of reliable materials and Campbell's vinyl paint.

CAMPBELL creates small-scale *flashe* vinyl paint on canvas works that depict abstracted landscapes in gray scale, which are punctuated by dashes of flat color. Campbell allows humor to surface while also deftly holding it in check, taking a jab at the sublime, and permitting something sober, emblematic, and deeply human to emerge. "Being human is such a strange thing, and in my work I'm trying to capture that." As he says, "The

work embraces the area between which the subject is formed and formless, inanimate and alive, ephemeral and solid.” Gazing at his fictional world, one sees mystery and wonder in graphite greys and charcoal colors. Uncanny in their presence, there’s logic and absurdity, elegance and crudeness coming together to recreate a new experience for the viewer.

“A kinship with ancient civilizations seems to meet an everydayness that’s kind and gentle,” claims director|curator Joan Davidow. These neutral imaginative settings create the stage for Wu Jian’an’s oversized works to float nearby. In contrast with Campbell’s haunting subtle paint on canvas, the traditional cloth surface of painting, **WU JIAN’AN** surprises all with his three oversized 8-foot masks of water buffalo hide. When creating *Shadows of Knives*, Wu Jian’an used different sharp weapons to stab, slice, and puncture soaked water buffalo hide. The intense action and resulting catharsis sought to access an ideal state of being. To Wu Jian’an, the resulting artworks bore a resemblance to ancient African or Southeast Asian masks, stimulating a feeling of kinship with ancient human civilizations. The first ‘mask’ was created without planning. Although the individual cuts into each buffalo hide were planned, the final shape of the material after it dried remained a mystery. Once the hides completely dried, Wu completed each ‘mask’ by painting both sides in bright colors, imbuing each with a new-found intensity.

Artist-designers **CHRISTIAN SWAFFORD** and **LAUREN LARSON** left day jobs to launch their own studio, **MATERIAL LUST**, creating objects that hover between art and design. The couple turned a design brand into an artist collective. They showed a new body of work ~ ambiguously functional sculptures wrapped in modern materials at a New York art fair, and the public recognized the work as sculpture. In stunning spare sculptures, *Material Lust* focuses on ideas of oppression and how the populace finds ways to cope by developing a protective skin. Their modern materials include rubber, latex, and plastic as well as dependable hardwood, plaster, and steel. “There are nods to functionality,” explains the pair, “but we’ve changed the sizing of things and the materials so they’re not functional.” Materiality is what it’s about for the two artists: They use latex, because it evokes the skin, and it also brings man-made things to mind, such as latex gloves.

Special thanks go to the artists and galleries: **Chambers Fine Art** and **DUTTON** in New York for their participation in **WHOLE CLOTH**. At the southeast end of the Design District, SITE131 at 131 Payne Street, Dallas 75207, is open Fridays, noon ~ 5pm, and by appointment. Special tours can be arranged. Director|curator Joan Davidow and assistant to director Stephanie DeLay can be reached online at SITE131.com or hello@site131.com

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