

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 20, 2021

Jim Napierala

Lisa Pressman



June 10 – July 11, 2021

433 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534



Opening Reception: Saturday, June 12, 6-9 PM*

For the summer 2021 season, Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson presents a series of three exhibitions, each fostering an intimate and dynamic dialogue between two artists based in the greater Hudson Valley region. Selected for the aesthetic, material and/or conceptual concerns resonating within and between their practices—the artist pairings are Jim Napierala and Lisa Pressman; Katharine Dufault and Sarah Lutz; and Barbara Marks and Joe Sultan. Each artist shines independently; then, contextualized alongside one another, their works manifest both interstices and interconnections.

The first presentation in SEFA Hudson's summer series highlights mixed media paintings and works on paper by Jim Napierala and Lisa Pressman. The exhibition opens with an artist reception on June 12th—coinciding with the inaugural 2econd Saturday Hudson Gallery Crawl.** Napierala and Pressman work in abstract styles, and their compositions are structured by their sensitivity to materiality. Creating highly tactile surfaces, they manipulate and layer materials, including wax and metal leaf, until forms emerge. Often, Napierala embraces humor

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and ambiguity, while Pressman contemplates grief and transformation. Yet, both artists firmly root their creative approach in their intuition—the otherwise and the unknown—always open to interpretation.

Currently living and working between Hastings-on-Hudson, NY and Sidney Center, NY, **Jim Napierala** is essentially self-taught as a painter. A student of art history and influenced by early Modernism, he began making sculptures. Soon, he turned to painting, mixing his own egg tempera paints to “truly know the material.” Approaching painting from this sculptural, tactile lens—Napierala always works with non-objective motifs, building abstract forms on his canvases that exude movement and dimensionality. Such strategies evolved into the series of works on view at SEFA Hudson, which the artist refers to as the “exploding head” paintings (with humor and affection). Created between 2014 and 2016, these works are composed of overlapping layers of Flashe, aluminum leaf, and acrylic on wood panel, in a range of sizes. Throughout his practice, Napierala seeks to “balance logic and intuition through structure and gesture,” collaging vibrant pigments with pops of metallic on saturated color-field backgrounds to produce bold and evocative scenes. Instead of relying on strict didactics for each piece, Napierala leaves the works open to viewer interpretation. Each canvas begins with “something that is tangible, visible that I then make otherwise”—an evolution that continues on in the mind of each viewer. This impetus is echoed in the “exploding head” series: the artist does not seek to depict the naturalistic body, nor solely the interiority of one’s thoughts; but rather the ever-shifting perspectives that emerge from one’s head, radiating various energies outward into the world. Indeed, Napierala creates a witty, playful cast of characters—a world where *The Problem Queen* can frolic with *The Duke of Ear*, or where *Dr Yin & Mr Yang* can observe *Ghostly* lingering nearby.

Based in Andres, NY and West Orange, NJ, **Lisa Pressman** initially focused on sculpture before moving toward painting in the 1980s, shaped by Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism. In her paintings and works on paper on view at SEFA Hudson, materiality remains central: “a source and an influence on what happens within each work, the imagery, the composition.” Crafted through Pressman’s masterful handling of wax and pigment, these new encaustic paintings demonstrate her continued interest in mark-making, as she layers these materials to build up surfaces. Entitled “Things That Were Never Said,” this work evolved from her previous “Navigation” series of encaustics, which similarly manifest themes of transience and

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transformation, loss and liminality. Also on view in this exhibition, “Messages” is a recent and ongoing series of mixed media works on paper. Pressman collects handmade paper, including Japanese Shikishi board that is edged with gold, as well as Letraset: rub-on letters employed by graphic designers before the computer era. On these unique papers, the artist employs the press-on letters as a mark-making tool to create a symbolic language—hieroglyphic and intuitive. This work was made during the pandemic as a means to meditate and to process the past few years of her life. Further manipulating the works, Pressman embellishes the paper with gold paint and ink, uses palo santo incense to create marks with smoke, and also sews into the backgrounds with colored thread (often red). Thus, a number of the pieces become objects—almost artifacts—generating a visceral allure via their handmade qualities and sense of tactility. Pressman recognizes the metamorphic potential within her recent body of work. Rooted in her own experiences of loss, articulated through her lyrical, ambiguous language—they reflect the grief of the world: a universal collective unconscious, influenced by “stored memory” yet “reshaping histories and futures.”

Text by Liz Lorenz, Assistant Director, Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson

* SEFA Hudson is following the rules and regulations around gatherings in Columbia County, NY. Face coverings are required for any visitors that are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated.

** Second Saturday Hudson Gallery Crawl: www.hudsongallerycrawl.com

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Jim Napierala - Biography:

Napierala is a New York based artist, working between Hastings-on-Hudson, NY and Sidney Center, NY. He was born in Buffalo, NY and studied Sculpture and Art History at SUNY Buffalo, NY and Hunter College, NYC. After moving to New York City, Napierala began painting, mixing his own pigments, and is essentially self-taught in the genre of painting. To describe his ever-evolving approach to layering forms on canvas—he slyly quotes American writer and satirist Ambrose Bierce regarding the definition of painting: "painting is the act of protecting surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic." Napierala has exhibited his work since the 1980s, with solo exhibitions at venues including Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts, Brooklyn, NY (2015); Allen Projects, NYC (2010; 2009; 2008; 2007); Gallerie Valerie, NYC (1999); Kentler Drawing Center, Brooklyn, NY (1995).

Lisa Pressman - Biography:

Pressman earned her BA in Art from Douglas College, Rutgers University and an MFA from Bard College. She currently lives and works in Andes, NY and West Orange, NJ. The artist is represented by Susan Eley Fine Art. Pressman's work has been exhibited extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad. Recent solo exhibitions include Jen Tough Gallery, Benicia, CA (2018); Causey Contemporary, NYC (2015); Susan Eley Fine Art, NYC (2014); Rosenfeld Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (2013; 2014); Center for Visual Art, Summit, NJ (2010). Her work has been featured in group exhibitions at venues including The Painting Center, NYC; Provincetown Art Associations & Museum, Provincetown, MA; The Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, NJ; Therese A. Maloney Art Gallery, College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ; The Cape Cod Museum of Art, Dennis, MA; Western Carolina State University Museum, Cullowhee, NC; A Gallery, Provincetown, MA. Pressman's work resides in numerous public and private collections. Additionally, she teaches painting locally and nationally.