

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 1, 2021

**Barbara Marks**

**Joe Sultan**



Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson  
433 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534



August 19 - September 30, 2021  
Artist Reception: Saturday, August 21, 6-8 PM

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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 third exhibition in SEFA Hudson's summer series features intimately-scaled paintings and drawings of abstracted structures by Barbara Marks and architectonic wooden sculptures by Joe Sultan. Marking its first anniversary in Upstate NY this summer, along with its participation as a headlining gallery in The Hudson Eye Festival—SEFA is pleased to exhibit recent works by regional artists Marks and Sultan.

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NYC - 46 West 90th Street, Floor 2, New York, NY, 10024 - By Appointment Only  
Hudson - 433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY, 12534 - Thursday-Monday, 11AM-6PM

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**Barbara Marks** is a multidisciplinary artist currently based in the New Haven, CT area. She studied painting at Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, earning a BFA in 2005, followed by an MFA from Brooklyn College CUNY in 2008. Marks creates sumptuous, multicolored paintings. Her canvases are small in scale, compared to the mid-century abstractionist traditions they recall. Initially perceivable as evolutions from this art historical lineage, Marks' compositions push further—into both the three-dimensional and psychological realms—while invoking a striking immediacy. For the artist, color is not merely employed as pigment, but rather as form, integral to the composition. On view at Susan Eley Fine Art during The Hudson Eye festival—the paintings from Marks' series "Painting[s] from Recollection" are rendered in her characteristic square shape, and they comprise a visual record of places that she has visited. Upon closer observation—walls, angles and perspective lines—interiors and landscapes—emerge. Viewers find themselves teetering into curious, liminal spaces between abstraction and representation, where reality slips into dream states. An ongoing series, "Recollection" currently exceeds 150 works, which are numbered rather than didactically titled. Thus, collectively, these explorations reveal Marks' intention to free painting from fixed interpretation, allowing for a continuum of interpretations by artist and viewers. Additionally, Susan Eley Fine Art's exhibition will debut Marks' new series of "Upcycled" drawings and paintings on collapsed, disassembled packaging material, notably cardboard boxes, which she re-envisioned structurally and aesthetically. SEFA will also feature a selection of Marks' "Isolation Journal," comprised of over 52 accordion-fold volumes of drawings that document her time and the minutiae of daily life in COVID isolation—living alone in coastal Connecticut, yet creating expansive, immersive depictions of the environment within and around her.

Currently living and working in Germantown, NY, **Joe Sultan** was trained as an architect. He received his degree from The Cooper Union in 1976 and established his own practice in 1980. In 2005, Sultan became CEO of Chilewich, a textile design company known for contemporary place settings and flooring, where he set up the domestic manufacturing of their products.

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Building and constructing have consistently served as integral aspects of Sultan’s daily life and creative practice. When he built a house in the Hudson Valley in 2012, he began making furniture and then sculpture from found trees on his property. Literally rooted in the nature of the Hudson Valley—the artist builds his sculptures with sticks and branches that he hand-cuts from fallen trees and logs. He uses a chainsaw and chisels to mine for the forms within each piece of wood, and next begins the additive part of his process: connecting and interweaving the fragments together to create sculptures that are sensitive to space—how it is enclosed, defined and balanced. On view at Susan Eley Fine Art during The Hudson Eye festival—Sultan’s skeletal sculptures are not to be looked at, but rather looked through. Whether mounted on a wall, or posed on a pedestal, his sculptures grow stick by stick: often, they become towering vertical formations, reminiscent of the buildings he once designed. At other times, they manifest as sprawling horizontal amalgamations— admittedly a greater challenge for the architect, accustomed to designing vertically, from the ground up. Sultan does not sketch designs for his sculptures, instead allowing the unexpected twists and turns of the sticks to lead him. According to the artist, the surprises that emerge from the “not-knowing”— perhaps the “un-knowing”—is where the magic resides. After each sculpture is constructed, he paints its components, either multicolor or monochromatic black. For Sultan, the intuitive color choices add to the works’ dimensional qualities, creating perspective and balance.

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

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