

BLUM

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Tom Anholt
Sticks and Stones

BLUM, Los Angeles
November 4–December 16, 2023
Opening reception: Saturday, November 4, 5–7pm

Los Angeles, CA, October XX, 2023—BLUM is pleased to present *Sticks and Stones*, Berlin-based artist Tom Anholt's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Anholt makes paintings that straddle the line between the semiotic implications of representation and the ineffable emotive qualities of abstraction. Referencing the artist's curated repository of tropes and imaginary settings, each work on linen places a strong emphasis on composition and the hand. This signature style breaks each scene down to its most essential spatial components of form, light, and color— affective gestures that accumulate and transform recognizable symbols.

Partially alluded to in the exhibition title, the symbol of the tree is one of the predominant signifiers in *Sticks and Stones*. Formally used as a device around which to build receding depths, *Contemplation* (2023) or *Perfect Day* (2023) depict trees and their branches as dark, snaking lines which route from end to end of the linen's most forward-pushing interior. Receding from these meandering twigs are mid-plane horizon lines which separate glistening bodies of water from rolling hills. On a personal level, trees also represent the artist's twin sister Maddy, who began a battle with brain cancer just as Anholt started his first work for this exhibition. That precursory painting, *Twin Branches (For Maddy)* (2023), is a tribute to her, and functions as the narrative beginning of the show. As Maddy's condition advanced, the artist began to see the person he had known wane—she left this world just as Anholt was finishing the exhibition's concluding work, *Drifting Away* (2023). Telling a story of resilience and strength, *Sticks and Stones* honors Maddy's life—capturing the unutterable emotions and simple moments of closeness tied to the universal experience of losing a loved one.

Viewing painting as a healing process, Anholt often takes as his subject matter the types of contemplative pastoral nature scenes favored by painters of the Romantic era. Key elements of these landscape paintings are blue pools of flowing or still water next to vibrant green fields. Each quadrant of the work functions as an abstraction with ambling brush strokes of greater or lesser pigmentation, imitating the natural qualities of light as it reflects. Seeded into these swatches of painterly marks is the occasional tiny figure, calling to mind the allegorical scenes of Caspar David Friedrich.

Most of the vignettes in *Sticks and Stones* take nighttime as their setting, employing the rich, darker palette required to indicate the absence of light. Simultaneously, the moon appears in many of these works—a twinkling orb or crescent that commands attention by means of its striking contrast with its shadowy environment. As much a recurring character as it is a motif or geometric abstraction, this moon unites the splintered factions of the painting schools from which Anholt draws reference.

Like the Romantic painters of times past, Anholt conveys personal sentiment and an interest in the natural world. Like the Abstract Expressionists, he uses gestures that call attention to his medium. Anholt unites art history, allegory, natural imagery, and an emotive palette to under the umbrella of his own visual language.

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Tom Anholt (b. 1987, Bath, UK) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He holds a BA from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, UK, and studied at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, Sweden. Anholt's work was the subject of the solo presentation *Time Machine* at Kunstverein Ulm, Germany (2018) and featured in group presentations at the Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA (2023); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2020); and KH7 Artspace, Arhaus, Denmark (2018). His work is held in numerous public collections, including the Collection Majudia, Montreal, Canada; Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; and M Woods, Beijing, China.

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from sixteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing artists of Japanese and Korean postwar and contemporary movements, such as Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale projects critically examining historical movements and work including the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023).

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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