

Ryan Sullivan

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26 April – 04 June 2016

1 Davies St London W1

Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

For his second exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ, Ryan Sullivan presents two new series of paintings, *wave paintings* and *flat paintings*. In these, he employs the casting process as a method of painting.

Sullivan's latest works are made using silicon-rubber moulds that are either undulating or flat as glass. All of the paintings are produced 'in reverse': Sullivan adds layers of paint to the open-faced mould, allowing its particular shape or contours to affect the pooling and movement of colour. Each painting thereby develops as an image and an object concurrently, becoming increasingly invisible and unforeseeable as Sullivan fills the cavity with paint. Pigment takes on the function of a molten sculptural medium. The evolution of the painted image (formulated out of drips, strokes and other gestures) is simultaneous with – and inseparable from – that of the physical stuff of the artwork.



The accrued layers of Sullivan's paintings are revealed at the moment the work is 'de-moulded', merged into a single plane. The effect of the *flat paintings* is similar to that of paintings on glass seen through their transparent underside, where multiple applications of paint have flattened into a dense optical singularity. In the cast works, however, there is no glass or support of any kind: the mould has itself compressed the process of painting into a finite, self-contained entity. Sullivan's diachronic method (executed over time, and in stages) is therefore rendered synchronic – radically extending a process that is common to all painting – with gestures and colours collapsing together in such a way as to render the image's development invisible. Each work is 'groundless' – independent of any canvas or support, and formed purely of paint until the finished work is applied to a thin fiberglass mount.

In the *wave paintings*, that element of flatness is offset – or problematized – by the dynamic undulations of the painting. The 'two-dimensional' image is equally a three-dimensional shape. And yet the alternating contours of that shape have in turn subtly dictated the appearance of the painting's flattened, glassy surface. In both the *wave* and *flat paintings*, Sullivan deploys sculptural casting in order to articulate the problems and processes of painting. He uses casting – a technique defined by the interplay of volume and surface, shape and substance – to throw the nature of painting into relief, simultaneously accentuating and dissolving oppositions between image and materiality, referent and medium.

Ryan Sullivan (b. 1983) lives and works in New York. He studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (RI). In 2015 he staged a major solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami – his first one-person exhibition in a US institution. Other solo exhibitions include his 2013 presentation at Hydra's Workshop, Hydra, Greece. In 2013, he was artist in residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva (FL), and artist-in-residence at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa (TX). Sullivan's work has been featured in group exhibitions including *New Skin*, Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon (2016); *Surface Tension*, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2015); *New York Painting*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany (2015); *Empire State*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy (2013); and *Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out*, White Flag Projects, St. Louis (MI) (2013). A new book on Sullivan's practice is forthcoming, published by ICA Miami and Dancing Foxes Press. The book will feature texts by Tim Griffin, Alex Gartenfeld, Christian Scheidemann, and a conversation with artist Laura Owens.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com