

Matt Wedel

Pictures in the Garden

25 October 2023 - 6 January 2024

Venice, CA – L.A. Louver is pleased to present *Pictures in the Garden*, an exhibition of gouache paintings by acclaimed sculptor Matt Wedel. In this presentation two distinct bodies of work reveal formal and thematic dimensions of Wedel's oeuvre involving time and space, metaphor, and mythology.

The first series in the exhibition debuted in Wedel's solo exhibition, *Phenomenal Debris*, at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio (November 2022 - April 2023). Each entitled *Potted Plant*, these gouaches were created between 2017 and 2021 and illustrate the artist's development of abstraction throughout time, from curious botanical inquiry to explorations of color as form.

The second series of gouaches build on these developments. In these more recent paintings, each titled *Flower Tree (Hawaii)*, a heightened sense of immediacy is communicated through zoomed-in perspective, all-over composition, the use of background color as an active element, and a subjective shift towards what is seen *within* the landscape. In the artist's words: "Some of the cylinder-like vine structures, which seem like serpents in my sculpture, feel like neural synapses in my paintings."

Paintings in the *Flower Tree (Hawaii)* series take on new meanings in light of the recent Maui fires. Inspired by the lush O'ahu flora that Wedel experienced during his residency at the Honolulu Museum of Art, these gouaches memorialize the dynamic vibrancy of the Hawaiian landscape while highlighting ideas of environmental balance and fragility. On a collective level, these representations are also a memory of our ecology and its role in our awareness of self. Fragility is a pre-existing philosophical aspect in Wedel's work, emphasized here by a harmonious exchange of emergent forms and colors inspired by O'ahu's distinct ecosystem.

Distinguished by its opacity, the dense pigmentation of gouache brings nuanced meanings to both the *Flower Tree* and *Potted Plant* motifs that repeat and evolve throughout Wedel's oeuvre. The gouaches evoke feelings of present time through the intensity of their hues, energy is communicated by variegated arrangements of pattern and color, and familiar shapes take on new meanings in two-dimensional space.



Potted Plant, 2017
gouache on paper
30 x 22 1/2 in. (76.2 x 57.2 cm)



Potted Plant, 2021
gouache on paper
17 x 14 in. (43.2 x 35.6 cm)



Flower Tree (Hawaii), 2023
gouache and pen on paper
14 x 11 in. (35.6 x 27.9 cm)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2023

25 October 2023 - 6 January 2024

Opening reception for the artist:
Wednesday, 25 October 2023
6 - 8 p.m.

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The evocation of proximity and movement in these paintings is representative of Wedel's use of metaphor to connect the material world to the immaterial. Visual techniques of color, form, and perspective are only some of the metaphoric vehicles employed by Wedel; others include drawing thematic parallels between plant forms and the human body, the association between the growth of plants and the unfolding of a narrative, and the larger implied notion of life and death cycles. Mythology is also at play as Wedel communicates through his distinctive aesthetic language to give the *Potted Plants* and *Flower Trees* their own personalities and stories. However whimsical, these pictures are not divorced from reality; instead, they enhance the practice of observation by seeing significance — both universal and personal — in everything that surrounds.

Matt Wedel's artwork has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and internationally, including at the Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX; Omi International Arts Center, Ghent, NY; Wasserman Projects, Detroit, MI; and Erskine Hall & Coe, London, England. His work can be found in the collections of the Honolulu Art Museum, Honolulu, HI; the Flint Institute of Art, Flint, MI; the LSU Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA; the Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX; the Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA; the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; the Clay Museum of Ceramic Art, Middelfart, Denmark; the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS Canada; among others.

Matt Wedel: Pictures in the Garden culminates two significant moments for the artist in the last year. From November 2022 to April 2023 the Toledo Museum of Art presented *Matt Wedel: Phenomenal Debris*, a solo exhibition that included over one hundred sculptural artworks and works on paper created over the last decade. Also in 2023, Wedel participated in a two-part artist residency at the Honolulu Museum of Art during which he developed new ceramic works and the gouaches of the *Hawaii Series*.

Concurrently on view at L.A. Louver:

RED - An exhibition about the color red including artworks by Tony Berlant, Tony Bevan, Rebecca Campbell, Gajin Fujita, Frederick Hammersley, Dion Johnson, R.B. Kitaj, Heather Gwen Martin, John McCracken, Alison Saar, Katherina Sieverding, Don Suggs, Juan Uslé, Matt Wedel, and Tom Wudl.

Juarez: Now and Then - A selection of artworks by Terry Allen from the past and present.