

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

- Press Release for immediate release -

**Donald Sultan**

**24<sup>th</sup> June to the 19<sup>th</sup> September**

Ben Brown Fine Arts is proud to present a body of works by Donald Sultan, one of the most significant artists to emerge in the 1980's. Featuring paintings and works on paper from 1984 to present, this exhibition will highlight his most iconic imagery. From lemons to dominoes to flowers, these deceptively complex works epitomize the distinctive stylistic approach he employs to depict objects inhabiting our everyday world.

Though Donald Sultan has exhibited widely throughout the world and his works are featured in many distinguished collections, including more than 50 museums worldwide, he has not exhibited in the UK since 1989. Ben Brown is delighted to be able to re-present such a pertinent contemporary artist to London.

Early in his career Sultan developed an intricate additive and subtractive approach to painting. Preparing his signature surface involves bolting a standard four-foot-square sheet of plywood to wooden stretchers, onto which he glues 12-inch-square vinyl floor tiles and applies butyl rubber (commonly used in roofing) to the surface. This industrial substance has a distinctive quality as it dries – it extends the picture's edge creating organic yet definite outlines, and serves as a ready-made, negative space.

Sultan's affinity to printmaking is evident in his paintings as he carves away any unnecessary rubber in a manner that is usually attributed to woodcuts or linocuts. He uses spackle and plaster to build up desired areas, then adds oil paint or silkscreen colour onto the surface. Sultan not only paints his subject matter, he constructs it, placing great importance in the process.

Donald Sultan's oeuvre is ground in the history of art and in the everyday world. The thick, rich, velvety quality of the roofing tar, its use as an industrial material, and the subject matter he chooses to depict, reveal a wide-range of art historical influences. Imbedded in his paintings the viewer will find evidence of movements as diverse and visually distinct as Impressionism, Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. His ability to combine such influences with his own unique style and process make for fascinating, beautiful, pictures.

Bringing one of the longest historical painting traditions up-to-date, Sultan has found a creative and innovative way to reinvent the still-life. Sultan told art critic Barbara Rose in 1987, his mission as an artist was "to haul painting into the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Now, nine years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this exhibition sets out to prove he has done just that.

Sultan lives and works in New York. Since 1977 he has exhibited throughout the world. He is featured in the permanent collection of notable museums such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Tate Modern, London.

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