

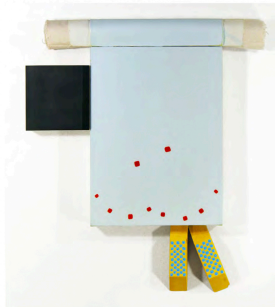
Surface Tension
 Lindsay Hook and Albon Sultan
 Curated by Anne Harris
 Riverside Arts Center Freerak Gallery
 November 18, 2014 – January 10, 2015

*Instructions for living a life:
 Play attention.
 Be astonished.
 Tell about it.*
 — Mary Oliver



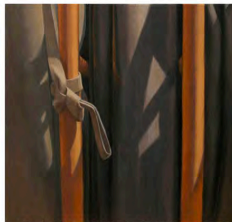
Lindsay Hook, Late 4, watercolor on paper, 15 x 11" 2013

Lindsay Hook lives in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, a short walk from Lake Michigan. Indeed, her knitted pieces and her barely visible watercolors are take-scapes, Hook's small apartment is her studio. Air mailing papers in every room, ranging from a digital photography project, called *How the Light Gets in*, to photo-based representational painting, to refined abstractions. All have in common an ethereal sentiment and an obsession with honing subtleties, whether through absolute refinement of surface — the meeting of made and glossy, income spectacle — or minute gradations of color. All contain luminous atmosphere while wittily existing as objects. That quiet humor is displayed here by *Intimate 1* and *Intimate 2*, abstracted multi-paced constructions that are portraits of Hook's underwear.



Lindsay Hook, Intimate 2, oil and acrylic on canvas and paper, 25 x 22" 2014

Lindsay is young, in her early thirties. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010, and is now focused almost exclusively on the growth of her work. She cites three artists of notable reserve as inspiration: Agnes Martin, whose rhythmic meditations were made in the contemplative seclusion of Adirondack; Hans Belasco James Bishop, who avoided New York during the seminal 1960's, to develop his fluid figures/ground play in France; and On Kawara, whose life's work encompassed the passage of time by date, but who lived so privately that his family declined to publicly release his date of death. In Lindsay, there is a private parallel: the slow unfolding of art work, independent of career pressures, accruing meaning over time through innumerable layers of paint. Although she's been reticent about showing her work, her painting has recently accompanied Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, played by The Lakeview Orchestra at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, IL. She has also exhibited in Chicago at Julian Caesar Gallery and at MURDERTOWN, as well as taking part in *An Exchange with Sol Lewitt*, at MASSMOCA/Cabernet in Brooklyn, NY. *Surface Tension* is her most significant exhibition to date.



Albon Sultan, Text, egg tempera on cabinet paint/milk, 6 x 7" 2011

Born in Brooklyn, **Albon Sultan** currently lives in an old farmhouse, once part of a hill farm in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. She finds subject matter for her paintings in the nooks and crevices of machinery and man-made structures found on neighboring farms. These are photographs — elegantly composed digital images — to serve as source material for her paintings, which are made at home in her day to studio. She has in common with Hook a deep respect for craft. In Albon's case, it reaches an unparalleled level of expertise in the traditional form of egg tempera. She is literally written the book, *The Luminous Brush*, which is used as a text by Materials and Techniques faculty at SAIC here in Chicago. Her small paintings are eggshell surfaced jewels painted on traditional, oil-like parchment mounted on panel. They are amplified and compressed, and resonate with the sparseness of Charles Sheeler and the reverence of Sargent.



Albon Sultan, Standing Circle, hand dyed wool, 2010

In both her paintings and fiber pieces (abstractions made by hooking hand dyed wool) shape, edge, material (flax) and luminosity of color contrast with irregularities — a conflict between elegant and awkward. The clear hand-done-ness of everything, her organic choice of materials, and the evocative relationship of her work to the wall, are reminiscent of Richard Tuttle. This is enforced by her playful non-grid hangings (she calls them "circles"), which you'll find on her studio walls, and also here at the RAC. Her work converges with a tradition of painting predating the Renaissance and extends to mature contemporary artists, ranging from Catherine Murphy to Elizabeth Kelly. Her work firmly contends with theirs. The paintings in particular, none here larger than 9 inches, regard forward on the wall with extraordinary intensity. They are vibrantly present.

Albon has been exhibiting for more than forty years at galleries such as Marlborough and Tibor de Nagy in New York, and at museums such as the Hood Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Her work is held in public collections as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery of Australia, and the Library of Congress. She is the recipient of two NEA Artist Fellowships, as well as awards from the American Academy and the National Academy of Design, the vintage industry, in addition to *The Luminous Brush*. Her book, *Studio and Garden*, where she chronicles her living and observations about art, nature, and other things that make life worth living. Her most recent solo exhibition at McKenzie Fine Art, New York, NY, ends the day before our show begins.

— Anne Harris

When you look upon what you do or where you are as the main purpose of your life, you negate time. Whatever you do, you will be doing extraordinarily well, because the glory itself becomes the foot path of your education. You don't then become the channel through which consciousness enters this world.
 — Eckhart Tolle

Anne Harris, the curator of this show, is Chair of the Exhibition Committee of the Riverside Arts Center. Anne is also the NEA and Agnes Martin Fellowship recipient, the twelve painting and drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.