

OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Joseph Cohen: Ode to a Flower

October 4 – October 28, 2017

Opening Reception during Art for Arts' Sake: October 7, 6 - 8 pm

Octavia Art Gallery is pleased to present *Joseph Cohen: Ode to a Flower*, an exhibition comprised of a select grouping of Cohen's works that illustrate the artist's meticulous approach to embracing medium specificity. On view for the first time will be a collection of paintings, works on paper, and multi-sensory works for the viewer to experience with their mind's eye.

Ode to a Flower references the famous interview of Richard Feynman, in which the Nobel Prize winning physicist discusses a scientist's perception of a flower compared to that of his artist friend's. By taking a flower apart and looking into the physical, elemental composition of the flower, we are able to see and appreciate the flower at a heightened degree. The flower's cells have a beauty at a smaller dimension, an inner structure, which has evolved over time, producing colors that serve to attract insects to pollinate the flower, thus bringing into the forefront the aesthetic question about the flower itself.

Joseph Cohen is an artist that seeks precision while embracing the correlation between medium specificity and human perception by the application. Three basic tenets propel him, the pursuit of meaning, exploring, and expanding of avenues to human understanding. As an artist, he has long been interested in the specific investigation of material and the diverse responses reached through engagement with the *Art Object*. Included in this exhibition are several mixed media paintings from Cohen's *Propositions* series. Within this series he has created surfaces that shift when engaged by the viewer, creating a play between both the physical and chromatic natures of paint. Paint can flow, drip, and carry the brushstroke's gesture, while at the same time being governed by the laws of gravity, measured geometrically, and formed mechanically.

Cohen began incorporating carbon nanotubes into his work while at Memorial Sloan Kettering's Heller Lab in New York City. More recently at Rice University, he has continued these iterations by studying innovations in optics. Utilizing short wave infrared cameras at the Weisman Lab, he has generated new ways of seeing color. Working at the Tasciotti Lab at the Houston Methodist Research Institute, has allowed him to analyze pigment samples and create audio signatures based on the physical material. Also, a collaboration at SugarHill Studios has permitted him to pursue, answer, and display to the viewer, the question: what does a painting sound like?

Through an interdisciplinary approach to art and science, Cohen continues to include carbon nanotubes as he fully integrates the artist, researcher, and scientist into his practice. Our ability to learn from one another as we evolve and share our diverse experiences, will inevitably push the boundaries of art. For Cohen, this heightened layer that he is unlocking for the senses adds another level to the art and science for which new meaning and understanding can be realized.

Joseph Cohen was born in Houston, TX, where he currently lives and works. He received his BFA in painting from Texas State University, San Marcos, and his MFA from University of Texas, San Antonio. Cohen's work is included in the permanent collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, and Hospital Leon Berard, Lyon, France. His work has been included in solo and group exhibitions at New Bedford Art Museum, MA, the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston TX, Carlo V Castle, Italy, De Buck Gallery, NY, Galerie Maximilian, Co, Rice University, TX, among others.