

Val Britton's first solo exhibition at Gallery Wendi Norris opens in San Francisco



Val Britton, *Retrograde*, 2014. Graphite, ink, and collage on paper, 44 x 60 inches. Image courtesy of the Artist and Gallery Wendi Norris.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA.- Gallery Wendi Norris announces Passage, Val Britton's first solo exhibition at Gallery Wendi Norris. Presenting a site-specific sculptural installation alongside a collection of two-dimensional, mixed media works, this exhibition continues Britton's exploration of memory, imagination and the potential of abstraction.

Based on the language of mapping, Britton's abstract, collaged works-on-paper were initially inspired by her father, a long haul truck driver. After losing her father at an early age, the artist searched for ways to process the emotional impact. Using maps of the routes he often travelled as her point of reference, Britton began to fragment and mutate her father's itineraries, piecing together the past while inventing histories forever unknown to her. Working in an explorative mode, Britton's abstractions explode across the canvas, creating space, depth and texture, rendering visible the navigation of memory's complex terrain.

Using cut paper, drawing, painting, ink and watercolor, Britton's collages are at once topographic and ethereal. Within each work, aspects of the familiar arise from her enigmatic formations. In

“Reverberation #11,” pools of varying shades of blue resemble a suite of lakes seen from above. Beneath, lines and orbs of cut paper assemble into a network of intersecting lines, forming a coordinate system born of the artist’s imagination. Ultimately unrecognizable, the piece demonstrates Britton’s deft ability to explore the tensions between the concrete and imaginary.

Developing organically from the works on paper, Britton’s sculptural installation will combine cut paper and hanging elements arranged throughout the gallery space. Viewers will travel around the work, following the installation as they would follow the lines of a map. In this way, Britton not only imbues her abstractions with a sense movement, she cultivates a bodily relationship between the work and its viewers, inviting them to examine both the work and their own psychological and physical journey, or what Britton terms a “geologic tangle of memories.”

Passage coincides with the completion of Britton’s extensive public installation at the San Francisco International Airport, a project awarded to her by the San Francisco Arts Commission in 2012.

Val Britton received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design before earning her MFA from the California College of the Arts. A recipient of the Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant, she has participated in residencies and fellowships including Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, the Affiliate Program at Headlands Center for the Arts, Recology in San Francisco, and the Millay Colony for the Arts. Her work is held in public collections including the Facebook Corporate Headquarters, the New York Public Library, the New-York Historical Society, the Library of Congress and the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts at Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. As a recent recipient of the Fleishhacker Foundation Eureka Fellowship, she lives and works in San Francisco.

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