

# LEILA HELLER.



Richard Fishman, #216: WAVE, 2021, Bronze, pigmented epoxy, 8 x 8 x 6 inches, Edition 1 of 3 + 1 A.P.

Leila Heller New York is pleased to announce *Break, Blow, Burn*, an exhibition of work by American artist Richard Fishman on view September 14th to October 15th, 2021.

Marking his first solo show at Leila Heller, Fishman's exhibition consists of a series of 70 small and medium-sized intricate sculptures. The series builds upon his previous exhibition "What Remains," exploring themes of struggle, survival, life, and death. But whereas his last show was expressed through blackness, *Break, Blow, Burn* marks Fishman's return to color in a new and unexpected way. The colored works are built on a core of bronze or styrene and explore different avenues attempting to give shape to color, embedding the color in the sculpture rather than using it simply as a surface coating. The use of color in this way pushes the mutability of the form so that it appears to be in constant motion, almost filmic, flowing. This way of engaging with color as sculpture carries forward several art historical strands that have skirted this issue but not resolved it. The leap that Fishman is taking is based on his observations of the natural world- lava flows, meteorites, coral growth- where color is intrinsic to and inseparable from the observed form.

Much of Fishman's motivation for this exhibition came from his own curiosity of the unknown. During the height of the pandemic lockdown, the artist began experimenting with unusual, natural, household-materials. The whole of Fishman's practice is connected to the natural world and the aspects that engage him in nature are precisely what he delves deeper into. The goal is ultimately revealing that which he had not known or seen before. His experimentation during lockdown was the first part of his process. He would take natural objects and test the limit of the material- how far could it be bent before it snaps? How could he make something heavy appear light? How would one material react versus another? This process was not merely a means to an end, but rather a way of revealing truths of all

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aspects of the world that he did not know before. A way to discover buried secrets in his mind and buried secrets in nature.

After settling on a sculptural shape, Fishman takes the natural material to get scanned and 3D printed, opening the door to new truths only revealed on a larger scale and in different materials. Whether the work be done in bronze or polystyrene, whether it be painted, pigmented, or dyed, each sculpture reveals Fishman's love of the notion of play.

The title of the exhibition, "Break, Blow, Burn," comes from a poem by British metaphysical poet John Donne (1572.1631), titled "Break, Blow, Burn, and Make Me New." And making new is precisely what Fishman aims to do. "I am trying to reimagine myself, reimagine my work, and that is what keeps me fresh," says Fishman. "I think change and reinvention is the essence of a happy life."

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Drawing from sources across the natural world, and driven by relentless curiosity, Richard Fishman's sculptural practice spans more than fifty years. Fishman's creations are both engaging and beautiful. They draw you in with their allusions to the familiar in nature and beguile using opposing tensions within each piece. The complexity of the surface and its counterpoint opacity and transparency all allow him to uncover mysteries and then recover them with mysteries of his own.

Fishman has an enduring interest in combining a considered artistic approach with the operation of random incidents to generate new forms. As a result his finished work seems to be in a constant state of flux. Fishman continues to embrace his lifelong exploration of the complexities of nature. To realize the consequences of this new branch of his thinking he is creating objects that are a new way of looking at his source material: nature through a new prism.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location, in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state-of-the-art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practices of established artists.