

ANDY OUCHI
„SUNSET RIDGE“

19 May – 25 June 2021

ANDY OUCHI (*1974 Palo Alto, USA) makes a radically new interpretation of the classical concept of the diptych in his current series of works. The picture support made of mahogany or oak, separated into two parts by a bridge, is reminiscent of devotional images dating from the High Middle Ages. Endemic plants from the San Gabriel mountain range which rises behind **ANDY OUCHI**'s house in California are the starting point and centre of his artistic considerations. The title of our exhibition *Sunset Ridge* is the name of the hiking path the artist has hiked along already a hundred times in search of motifs. On one side of the diptych, in a difficult process consisting of wood he himself has carved and varnished, he realistically reproduces yellow mustard in bloom, Matilija poppy and similar plants. On the other side **ANDY OUCHI** contrasts an abstracted equivalent of the plant. The degree of abstraction and the representation of this vary from work to work. In some cases there are geometric, transparent acrylic glass panes in varying colours which depict stylised stems, leaves and plant blossoms (*Sphaeralcea Ambigua, Two Abstractions*). In other examples, abstract white forms, reminiscent of Hans Arp, mark the plant's spatial extension of the realistic opposite (*Romneya Coulteri, Two Abstractions*). The comment in the title *Two Abstractions* suggests that even the representative portrayal is already an abstraction of nature. In **ANDY OUCHI**'s works the plants free themselves from their botanical *raison d'être* and are transformed into sculptural objects which enter a symbiotic bond with their abstract equivalents.

The spatial arrangement in Joseph Cornell's display cases serves as a model for **ANDY OUCHI**. Similar to his countryman, he too in his works arranges differently formed separate parts over, in front of, and next to each other, thereby creating something new going beyond their original connotation. A mind game unfolds on observing the works that differs according to social distinction.

Talking about the work *Imbricate*, **ANDY OUCHI** says, "I wanted to inspire the observer to think about possible patterns of the overlapping or arrangement of the separate parts." Whole and half, varnished and unvarnished, small and large wooden discs were placed vertically and horizontally on a white varnished plaque in such a way that a play of space and colour is created. When looking at the work, the wish spontaneously arises of wanting to move the separate parts or to arrange them in a different way, but at the same time one is aware that this intention is impossible. The work *Millard Canyon* reflects this same intention which playfully takes up constructivism using multi-coloured acrylic glass panes.

Studio, Looking West shows us in the truest sense of the word the view from **ANDY OUCHI**'s studio in Altadena, California and conveys the impression of being a graphic work. On taking a closer look the "drawn" lines are perceived as negative positions which reveal that the work is a bas-relief. The reduction of the three-dimensional space to a two-dimensional wall object illustrates another motivation of the artist: the play with spatiality and its perception through the human eye.

Salzburg, May 2021

Katja Mittendorfer