

# LOWELL RYAN PROJECTS

## Mind Body Soul

Samuel Jablon, Spencer Lewis, Maysha Mohamedi

January 12 - February 23, 2019

Opening: Saturday, January 12, 2019, 6 – 9 pm

Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition, *Mind Body Soul*. The show brings together three artists—Samuel Jablon, Spencer Lewis, and Maysha Mohamedi—to explore the complex relationship between abstract painting and our everyday surroundings. “Everyday surroundings” encompasses a full spectrum of definitions, from the poetics of the city (Jablon), to formal notions of spatiality (Lewis), to the aesthetics of language and earth matter as art materials (Mohamedi). Likewise, the tone varies from spiritual to ironic to referential to irreverent—sometimes overlapping. Despite all these differences, the three artists share the same foundational approach. They rely on gesture and color—or more specifically the medium of painting—as a tool to probe their surroundings.

**Maysha Mohamedi's** gesture is greatly informed by the Farsi calligraphy of her ancestral home, Iran; yet from its mystic traditions she also gives credence to fate. Relying on both intention and intuition, the L.A. artist collects tar from beaches and then uses found objects (sometimes affixed to long sticks) to stamp or otherwise mark her canvas. It distances the learnedness of her hand, by rendering a painting like an asemic writing about her interactions (physical and otherwise) with the earth that feels deeply personal and universal. The two works in the show are Mohamedi's largest to date and were created on site for the show. Likewise, **Samuel Jablon** begins his “poem-paintings” by encountering, gathering, and editing source text from conversations and advertisements on the streets of New York City. Expanding the idea of the found object à la John Cage, he then works words like *emptiness*, *trouble* and *ravenous* onto a canvas by thickly applying, densely layering, and sanding down paint. The result is work that exudes immediacy and prolonged negotiation.

It's a visual pacing that we also find in L.A. artist **Spencer Lewis'** works on jute and cardboard. Starting each work with a quickly rendered (often spray painted) and rational underlying structure, Lewis then wields the brush in a more bodily manner. His gesture becomes intuitive, frenetic, and abstract yet also practiced, figurative, and repetitive, as if translating the history of human pose and movement. Then, relinquishing all control to his surroundings, he stacks the cardboard works and lets them sully, bend, and deteriorate. Paradoxically, it is through this intentional neglect that Lewis' works undergo unintentional final edits.

Using a variety of approaches, the artists in *Mind Body Soul* all create paintings that remind us to pay attention—both with our eyes and our psyche—to our surroundings. Which raises another, more complex relationship forged by these paintings: that of matter and essence. Mohamedi's works exist across worlds; each mark is natural (biochemical) and supernatural (mystical), and also somewhere in between (cultural). Jablon's words are also not words; they dissolve into form and force the reader to wonder, should I be reading or viewing? Lewis is painting on things and also painting things; the double-sided works become sculptural, regardless of whether they are free standing or leaning against the wall. Ultimately, all the works make us consider what it is to be a human in the world, a deeply personal but also universal relationship where we each define our own terms of engagement. Yet, because each artist takes a different approach, we're left to wonder—what will we decide?

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**Maysha Mohamedi** is an Iranian-American painter who lives and works in Los Angeles. Her abstract works investigate the potentials of fate and play. Her approach is rooted in her cross-cultural and multidisciplinary background; and her source material is equally varied, from Farsi calligraphy she references, to black tar she collects from LA beaches, to detritus she comes across in LA. Mohamedi has exhibited throughout the United States with a recent solo show at The Lodge (2018) and group shows at ESXLA (2018), Guerrero Gallery (2018), Big Pictures Los Angeles (2018), The Hole (2017), Dalton Warehouse (2017), and The Pit (2017). Her work has been written about in numerous publications including *LA Times* (2018), *San Francisco Chronicle* (2018), and *Hyperallergic* (2018).

**Spencer Lewis** is an American painter who lives and works in Los Angeles. His works, which are composed on cardboard or jute, probe painting beyond its traditional 2-dimensional consideration. Painting on both sides, he also works across the duality of “muscle formalism” and gestural abstraction, where highly practiced and unplanned elements meet in a complex dialogue. Lewis has a forthcoming solo show with Harper’s Apartment. He has also recently had solo shows with Nino Mier Gallery (2016), Harper’s Apartment (2017), and Edward Cella (2014), among others. He has also been featured in many group exhibitions, such as at Et Al (2016), Irvine Fine Arts Center (2014), and Monique van Genderen (2012). His work has also been written about in publications including *East Hampton Star* (2018), *ARTnews* (2017), *LA Weekly* (2008), and *NY Times Style Magazine* (2006).

**Samuel Jablon** is an American painter and poet who lives and works in New York City. His works explore legibility in painting and physicality of language. Treating words like found objects, he thickly applies paint in a manner that lends tactility and crypticness to the subject of his work, creating a push/pull experience for the viewer. Jablon has exhibited throughout the United States, with solo shows at Freight + Volume (2018, 2016), Ballon Rouge (2018), Diane Rosenstein (2016), and Arts & Leisure (2016). His selected group exhibitions include venues such as Pierogi Gallery (2018), Mindy Solomon Gallery (2017), and Life on Mars (2014). His work has also been exhibited at museums including Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2018), Queens Museum (2014), Museum of Modern Art (2013), Socrates Sculpture Park (2013), and New Museum (2013). His work has been written about in *Interview Magazine*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Wall Street Journal*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *Cultured Magazine*, *Artnet News*, *BOMB Magazine*, and *Whitehot Magazine*, among many other publications.

## **About Lowell Ryan Projects:**

Co-founded and directed by Virginia Martinsen and Mike Weiss, the gallery aims to foster a contemporary art program defined by a strong, visceral and conceptual approach to art making. Lowell Ryan Projects is located in a 3,000 square foot, ground floor building in the historic neighborhood of West Adams, Los Angeles.

**In light of this year’s devastating fires in California, Lowell Ryan Projects will donate 10% of all the gallery’s proceeds from their inaugural show, Mind Body Soul, to the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation.**