



ALEX SAX

The Joy of Discovery



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Inspired by the natural world and influenced by Georgia O'Keeffe, artist Alex Sax presents new work exploring her fascination with the flora and fauna found along the woodlands and coastline of her home in Maine. For her upcoming show, *Finding Color*, Sax features close to 20 mixed media drawings. As the title suggests, the artist discovers a burgeoning interest in color, after a decade of only creating in black and white.

"My aim was to capture the beauty of the flowers without color," explains Sax of her early years of making small, close up and detailed black ink drawings. "The drawings were made of layers and layers of lines, [where] the images were pushed and pulled into existence. And through this process, I aimed to create works that had the feeling of old photographs and intaglio etchings."

Sax began adding a couple colors in watercolor, to make the work feel like early tinted photographs. Gradually, Sax began adding even more color into her work, which led to a new process combining ink drawings with colored pencil and gouache. "The process reminded me of traditional egg tempera painting, which I studied at Hamilton College," says Sax. "During that time, I had the opportunity to meet



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Rose, India ink, gouache and oil-based color pencils on paper, 24 x 18"

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Summer Glory, India ink, gouache and oil-based color pencils on paper, 10½ x 8¼"

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Cherry Blossoms, India ink, gouache and oil-based color pencils on paper, 24 x 18"

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Daffodil, India ink, gouache and oil-based colored pencils on paper, 24 x 18"

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and learn from artist Paul Cadmus. His egg tempera paintings have remained with me ever since, because of the technical beauty and his bold subject matter.”

While Sax’s new works have a very different feel than egg tempera, she notes that the process of layering, and understanding how the different materials and colors interact on top of one another, is essential. “My new paintings are bold, and each work tells a story through color,” she says. “I weave together layers of marks in both ink and color to evoke the fabric of life.”

We see the artist’s process bring to life impeccable works like *Daffodils*. Sax explains, “For many years, I lived in an historic house built in the 1800s in

Portland, Maine. It is in the yard of this house that I began my flora and fauna drawings and paintings. I was fascinated by the history of the house and the landscape around it. We were the third family to live in the house, and I had old pictures of it from long ago. These daffodils had been planted in the woods behind the house. As I began clearing out the woods, it was a joy to discover them and find more each summer. It is this experience of discovery that I have focused on in this drawing.”

Also influenced by her time at the historic house, is the piece titled *Rose*. “I drew many of the roses at my historic house, and they were all in black and white,” says Sax. “When I decided to make this one

in color, I decided to make it larger than life—and strong. The pedals of a rose are so delicate, but the gift of a rose is powerful.”

We see Sax’s techniques in layering ink lines and color—making it look and feel like a textile—in *Cherry Blossom*. “I love the contrast of the paper-like quality of the petals against the background,” Sax adds.

Discover more of Sax’s wonderfully vibrant creations during her show at George Billis Gallery’s Fairfield, Connecticut, location from February 13 through March 23. ●

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