

I N M A N G A L L E R Y

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Inman Gallery is pleased to present

Brad Tucker
Natural Numbers

November 20, 2021 –
January 8, 2022

Open house, Saturday, November 20
Artist will be present 1-4 pm



Brad Tucker, *Summer Cotton*, 2021
acrylic on canvas, thread
69 x 65 in (175.3 x 165.1 cm)

Inman Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition **Brad Tucker: *Natural Numbers*** on view November 20, 2021 through January 8, 2022. The show will open concurrently with **Tommy Fitzpatrick: *Simulated Structures*** on Saturday, November 20, with an all-day open house. Both artists will be present from 1–4 pm.

Brad Tucker's artistic practice includes sculpture, video, works on paper, and paintings that call to mind the 90s and aughts visual culture of suburban skate parks, college garage bands, and Richard Linklater's *Slacker*. His work is rooted in his own unique brand of offbeat humor, quirky abstraction, deft language play, and raw performance. Tucker's characteristic use of "low" materials, such as foam and crudely painted plywood, seem to invite the viewer to have as much fun in their engagement as he has in his making. Nonetheless, serious attention to art history, particularly Minimalism, Fluxus, and postmodern performance, undergird and complicate his practice.

At first glance, the works on view in *Natural Numbers* possess a fun, playful, Pop-like appearance, characterized by flattened blocks of color in vibrant, rainbow hues and candy-like pastels, but there are also hidden layers of meaning to be discovered beneath their surfaces. Tucker's practice recalls the 1960s Pop Art artists such as Claes Oldenburg's oversized soft sculptures, Andy Warhol's *Clouds*, or the heart and bathrobe paintings of Jim Dine. Each of these artists, like Tucker, reveled in presenting viewers with subjects drawn from everyday life, from record players to rudders. However, Tucker is as adept at drawing smiles as he is in generating tears. Beneath their cheerful exteriors, these pieces exude a richness of depth, creating a show that balances gravitas with levity, offering the viewer an experience that retains its weighty meanings yet resists burdensome heaviness.

This can be illustrated notably in the two tapestries, *Waterworks* and *Summer Cotton*, which are made of paint-stained canvas that is sewn together and feature a repeating water droplet motif. Tucker has intentionally left these works unstretched, favoring the rough edges that lend them an object-like quality as opposed to a traditional stretched painting. These water droplets, initially assumed to be raindrops due to their proximity to the cloud-shaped painting, *Logos*, can also be read as teardrops, which likewise give the piece a melancholy subtext. This double-reading calls upon the artist's recent experiences of grief; Tucker has lost some close friends in the past year, so there is a quiet sadness hidden beneath the surface of these works that exists in tandem with their joyous exteriors.

A similar sentiment can be found in the record player, *Solid State/Cascade*, where Tucker again uses the raindrop shape as the basis of the object's composition, visible partially in the body of the white speaker and in its entirety on the side of the evergreen record player. In this instance, the raindrop shape takes on yet another meaning as a direct reference to the classic teardrop guitar. The work serves as a private tribute to one of Tucker's close musician friends who passed away and with whom he learned to play guitar as a youth. The title of the piece itself refers to the record being played, where on one side ("Solid State") the viewer experiences ambient sounds while on the reverse ("Cascade") the sound of cascading water. Again, duality is at play in Tucker's works, as the choice of sounds offer both motion and stillness, solidity and fluidity.

The exhibition's title, *Natural Numbers*, alludes to another double meaning when considering that these works all pertain to natural elements in different ways – the water in the raindrop tapestries, the cloud shapes, and the currents alluded to in the rudder sculptures – while the notion of numbers refers to the fact that one can count the raindrops and other shapes on view, again inviting a youthful playfulness through the simple act of counting. The record player likewise plays a musical "number," which adds a further level of wit and wordplay in the show.

The sculptures are all made of wood, which places them within this context of nature (or rather the natural), but they were also handcrafted by the artist and are therefore manmade. Tucker's works revel in this dance or interplay of various states or contexts. Brad Tucker's *Natural Numbers* is as much a celebration of everyday joys – raindrops, clouds and music – as it is a quiet nod to the poignant solemnity of recent times, like rudders navigating through tough times and held afloat by the promise of calmer waters ahead.

Brad Tucker earned a BFA from the University of North Texas, Denton (1991) and an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2009). Tucker has exhibited and performed internationally for the past two decades, including solo exhibitions at Inman Gallery, Houston, TX (2015, 2012, and 2009); Re Gallery, Dallas, Texas (2015); and Old Jail Art Center, Albany TX (2013). From 1999-2000, Tucker was an artist resident in the Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX. His work is included in the public collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; the Menil Collection, Houston, TX; the New Museum, New York, NY; and the Plains Museum, Fargo, ND.