

The background of the page is a painting by Robyn Horn. It depicts a white wall with a dark, rectangular window in the center. To the left of the window, there is a dark, vertical shape that appears to be a figure or a shadow. The painting has a textured, layered appearance with some yellowish-brown stains and dark, expressive brushstrokes. The overall mood is somber and abstract.

ROBYN HORN
PAINTINGS

Robyn Horn: Painting, August, 2018

Over the last few years my work has become more abstract and dimensional. The surface is an essential component, made with multiple layers. With whatever means I can find, I am developing areas that are tactile, giving the viewer a look into the depth of the work. Heavy texture is something you can see and feel, offering an optical and physical intricacy to which one can relate and respond. These surfaces invite the viewer to immerse themselves, and to evaluate the inner layers as well as the outer ones. The works that include distressed or rusted surfaces refer to the progression of time and how the condition of our surroundings changes things, weathers them, and causes them to deteriorate. This process of deterioration produces areas that I consider intriguing, catching them in the activity of transforming from one entity to another.

Gathering these dimensional components into a cohesive collection is the challenge. Experimentation is critical to arriving at newly successful processes with “mistakes” sometimes being the best thing that can happen. This provides a spontaneity that is unique for me, freeing me to try things that previously would not have been possible with my sculpture.



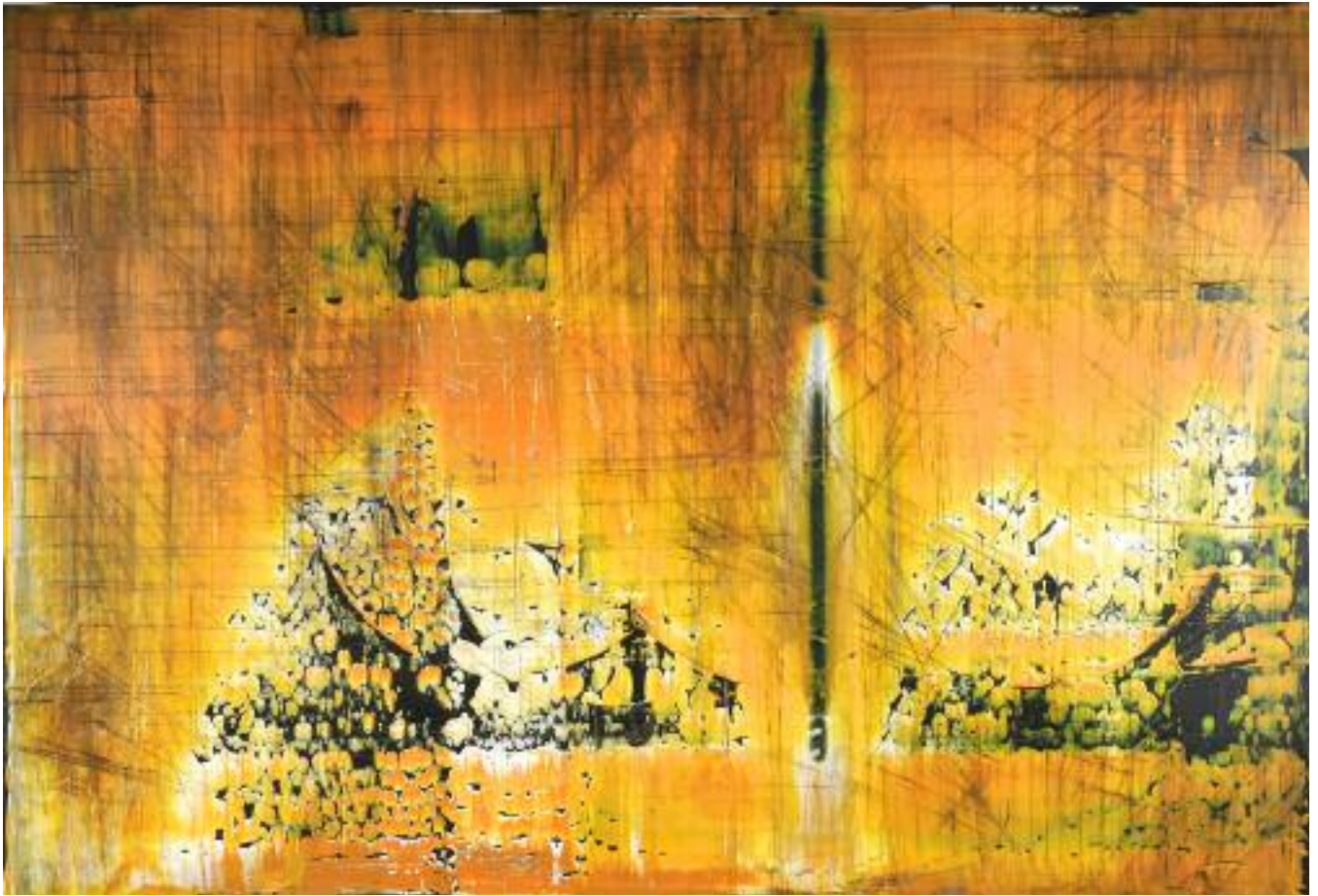
Robyn Horn, #900 *Relevant Surfaces*, 2019. Acrylics on carved wood panel, 60 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #891 *Disintegrating Surfaces No. 4*, 2019. Acrylics on carved wood panel, 24 x 36 in.



Robyn Horn, #890 *Industrial Series No.3*, 2019. Acrylics on carved wood panel, 24 x 36 in.



Robyn Horn, #897 *Linear Dialogue*, 2019. Acrylics on carved wood panel, 24 x 36 in.



Robyn Horn, #910 *Time Enough*, 2019. Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #852 *Carved Painting No. 10*, 2019. Acrylics and pastel on carved wood panel, 24 x 36 in.



Robyn Horn, #849 *Carved Painting No.7*, 2019. Acrylics on carved wood panel, 39 x 28 in.



Robyn Horn, #844 *Carved Painting No. 2*, 2019. Acrylics and charcoal on carved wood panel, 36 x 30 in.



Robyn Horn, #816 *The Red Line*, 2017. Acrylics and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #869 *Industrial Series No.5*, 2019. Acrylics and steel on wood panel, 32 x 24 in.



Detail: Robyn Horn, #869 Industrial Series No.5, 2019. Acrylics and steel on wood panel, 32 x 24 in.



Robyn Horn, #803 *Something/Anything*, 2015. Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 48 x 60 in.



Robyn Horn, #822 *Framed, Rusted Panel Series*, 2018. Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #765 *Two Blue Ones*, 2015. Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

A True Urgency by Brad Cushman

“Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working.” - Pablo Picasso

Disciplined in her studio practice and grounded in the fact that there are only a finite number of hours to work for any artist, Robyn Horn is dedicated to making the most of her time. Her interest in time has also become an important element of design in her work. Integrating and creating surfaces that bear the marks of wear, incorporating metal parts that have become separated from their original function, along with carving and manipulating surfaces and forms—many of Horn’s pieces suggest the traces of time.

In 2005, artist Robyn Horn began a serious experimentation with painting. As a widely recognized wood sculptor, Horn brought her interest in the balance of organic elements with geometric form to her exploration. She was also intrigued with surface texture, and painting offered a faster method with which to create.

The abstract language of Juan Gris, Georges Braque, and most notably Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2* (1912) has influenced the sculptures created by Horn. Like the Cubists, she navigates between curving organic lines found in nature and angular geometry by using repetition and rhythm. This aesthetic was also a natural starting point for her experiments with paint on paper.

Spending time looking at works on paper with Registrar Thom Hall at the Arkansas Arts Center was an important step to learn about mark-making in a new way. Seeing the various techniques that artists used, provided inspiration for developing her own work. After four years of experimentation, Horn found successful results in her work with surfaces created with multiple layers of paint and other mediums. One benefit of not knowing the official rules of painting is there are fewer consequences if you don’t follow them. Moments of discovery in the studio are what keep an artist going. Horn states: “Experimentation is critical...with ‘mistakes’ sometimes being the best thing that can happen. This provides a spontaneity that is unique for me, freeing me to try things that previously would not have been possible with my sculpture.” Tactile surfaces were already an established language in Horn’s sculpture and this began to translate into her works on paper (*#429 Texture Series, 2009*).



Robyn Horn, *#429 Texture Series*, 2009.
Acrylics on paper, 20 x 30.5 in.

Studying the paintings of Gerhard Richter, Horn realized the paintbrush was not the only tool you could use in the studio. She began to manipulate paint with a squeegee (#651 *Impression Series*, 2011). A dark mysterious corridor leading to a partially open red door with a ray of light is an apt metaphor for the discovery that comes with the creative process (#619 *Small Red Door*, 2011). She also began developing rust onto plastic sheets that she applied to the surfaces of paintings she created on canvas and wood panels. She wanted to make textures you could see and feel (#759 *Blue Edge*, 2015).



Robyn Horn, #619 *Small Red Door*, 2011.
Acrylic, charcoal and rust on wood panel, 60 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #651 *Impression Series*, 2011.
Acrylics and charcoal on wood panel, 48 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #759 *Blue Edge*, 2015.
Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 24 x 30 in.

The physicality in Horn's paintings reference mass and the tensions between forms found in her sculptures. Carving hardwoods can present the artist with materials resistant to change. In contrast, the creative processes in her paintings involve building up layers and breaking them down. A palimpsest of surface textures created and erased makes room for new textures, while remnants of previous layers remain. Those surface variations invite the viewer to become immersed in the depth of her compositions. Horn shifts her palette to bright blue with pops of yellow and red in contrast with fields of white in the painting *#807 Blue Door* (2016). This is a break from a warm earth tone palette that dominates many of her earlier paintings.



Robyn Horn, *#766 Gray and Red Blocks*, 2015.
Acrylics, rust and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, *#720 Leveled Out*, 2013.
Acrylics, charcoal and rust on canvas, 36 x 36 in.



Robyn Horn, #791 *Composition in Rust*, *Rusted Panel Series*, 2015. Acrylics on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Robyn Horn, #807 *Blue Door*, 2016. Acrylics and wood on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Another bridge between Horn's sculptures and paintings are the reliquaries created in 2017. These constructions with found objects have visual references to the collages by Kurt Schwitters, boxes by Joseph Cornell, and ready-mades by Duchamp. Constructed as shrines or containers to hold special objects, Horn has placed measuring devices, mechanical parts, rusted metal, and Linotype parts in the wall boxes she has made (#1308 *Reliquary No. 17, Carefully Measured*, 2017 and #1295 *Reliquary No. 5 "Constructive"*, 2017). She states: "The works that include distressed or rusted surfaces refer to the progression of time and how the conditions of our surroundings change things, weather them, cause them to deteriorate."



Robyn Horn, #1308 *Reliquary No. 17, "Carefully Measured,"* 2017. Poplar, pine, acrylic, measuring stick, sewing machine plate, 20 x 13 x 4 in.



Robyn Horn, #1295 *Reliquary No. 5, "Constructive,"* 2017. Cypress, acrylic, steel, 19.5 x 13 x 2 in.



Robyn Horn, 2017. Photo credit: Chroma.

background, middle ground, and foreground. A more atmospheric space is represented in #846 *Carved Painting No. 4* (2019) that includes a wooden totem or tool attached to the wood panel. Horn lives among open meadows and forest on a beautiful property in central Arkansas and it makes sense that she would draw inspiration from this setting, as well. The studio process Horn navigates by subtracting, adding, and erasing, is the reality of mortal stuff.



Robyn Horn, #846 *Carved Painting No. 4*, 2019.
Acrylics, charcoal, and oak on carved wood panel, 48 x 36 in.

A photograph of the artist standing by one of her large scale sculptures shows the rough hewn marks of a chainsaw alongside the natural woodgrain. In her most recent two-dimensional work, she has taken the chainsaw textures to the wooden panels she paints on. Her palette now spans from warm to cool colors. This work reveals a visual relationship to rough-cut hardwood, manipulated and controlled carved textures, and the landscape. *Woman in nature*, Joan Mitchell's abstract expressionist landscape paintings have inspired the artist. There is a strong understanding of landscape space in Horn's new work with references to a distinct

Woman verses nature and the control of geometric order verses the organic flow found in a piece of wood or in the landscape are elements constantly filtering into the painting constructions created by Robyn Horn.

Brad Cushman is a studio artist and Gallery Director and Curator at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He received a BA in Studio Art from Illinois College, and an MFA in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Robyn Horn (b.1951)

Robyn Horn was born in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and graduated from Northside High School. With both her mother and her sister as painters, her interest in the arts was encouraged and she went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Art from Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas. Following college, she worked in the typesetting field in Little Rock, before becoming the chief photographer for Arkansas Parks and Tourism. After trying her hand at stained glass, she found wood.

In 1984, she began working on the lathe making wood bowls and vases which eventually evolved into carving wood sculpture. Over the past 30 years, she has developed an aesthetic through studying the work of sculptors such as Barbara Hepworth and David Nash, as well as painters' work such as Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending A Staircase*, along with Picasso and Braque's Cubism. Horn has always worked in series, making sculptures that contain qualities of asymmetry, geometry, volume, lack of balance, and contrast with heavily textured surfaces. In 2005, she ventured into painting and explored similar qualities in two dimensions.

Robyn Horn's wood sculptures have been collected and exhibited by museums and galleries throughout the nation and abroad. Public collections include: The National Museum of American Art, Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; White House Collection of American Crafts, Clinton Library, Little Rock, AR; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR; Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA; Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ; Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN; Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile, AL; The Center for Art in Wood, Philadelphia, PA; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA; North Carolina State University, Gregg Museum of Art & Design, Raleigh, NC; Mint Museum of Craft & Design, Charlotte, NC; Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI; Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN; and many others.

Horn currently lives and works in Little Rock with her husband John Horn, a letterpress printer.



827 A Central Avenue, Hot Springs, AR 71901 | 501-321-2335 | justusfineart.com