

ZACK RAFULS

*"Long Time Listener,
First Time Caller"*

March 11 - April 8, 2022

Opening Friday, March 11th 6-8pm

Marvin Gardens is pleased to present the first New York solo exhibition of Brooklyn based artist Zack Rafuls. What seems at first glance an evenly-paced installation, soon turns into a complex journey through sensitive and nuanced details in image and material. Rafuls' materials are sui generis, and New York City offers a Babylonian library of found material. Thrift store frying pans full of disparate detritus suspended like insects in amber or Mandarin oranges floating in an aspic mold. Found toothbrushes bound together in cement align to stare at an image of a Brueghel folded into one corner, and gaze at a magnificent explosion in another, like captive audiences forced to stand and consider notions of the sublime.

Rafuls' dimensional objects (even when they're flat) are always in conversation with his enticing two-dimensional source material and inspirations. He includes landscape, still life, photography and literature, abstraction, conceptualism, and referents from High Modernism to cave painting. Puncturing and subtracting or piling and compiling his surfaces, whether composition books screen-printed on wood, (recalling again the artist's sketchbooks), or adding deceptively lush layers of tinted Styrofoam, simultaneously reproving Duchamp's goof that there is no such thing as a law of chance.

Often coupling ideas, sometimes twice, pairing, and multiplying, Rafuls' works keep themselves company by being deeply personal. There is gravity, sadness and humanity in the way he looks at the world. His two suites of drawings both contain imagery directly related to recent losses. Rubbings from books in his father's library, who passed away from cancer in 2020. Another drawing repeats a photograph taken in the kitchen of a recently deceased friend's childhood home; a ceramic handprint from kindergarten, lovingly maintained on his grieving mother's refrigerator. That hand signifies so empathically the one thing we didn't know we could miss so much: a simple human connection. Sometimes it remains elusive.