



Jason Middlebrook // The Small Spaces in Between

March 25-May 6, 2016

Opening Reception with the artist Friday March 25, 6-9pm

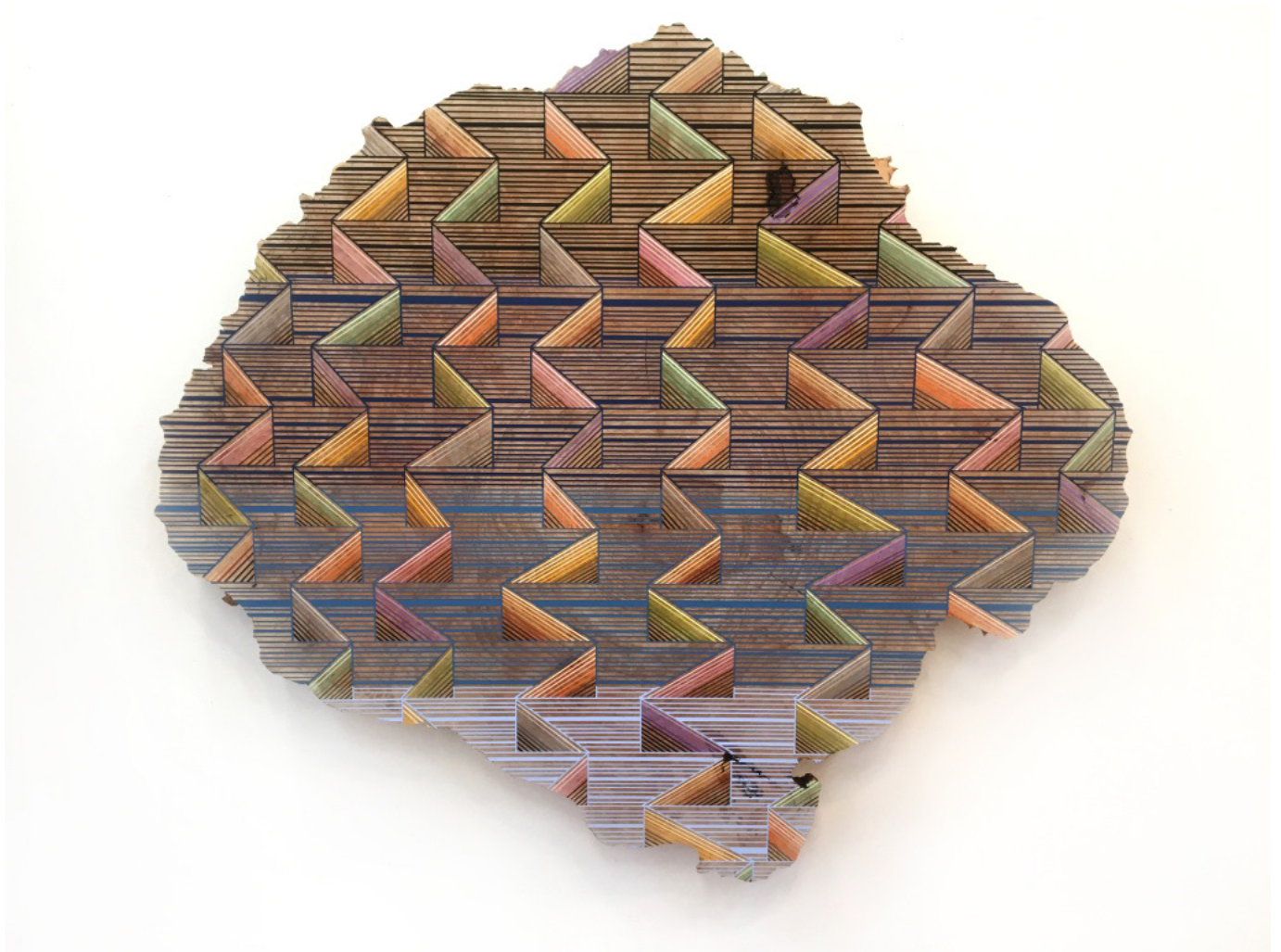
"We use trees to measure our own lives, to anchor our notions of time. To most of us, trees represent constancy and continuity, living giants that persist through many human generations. We want them to achieve maturity; we want them to tower above us." Helen Macdonald

Gallery 16 is pleased to announce our first exhibition with New York based artist Jason Middlebrook, *The Small Spaces in Between*. This is the first West Coast solo show by the California native in over a decade. His work has been the subject of major exhibitions and public projects around the world, most recently at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary art and Site Santa Fe.

The Gallery 16 exhibition will include 20 of Middlebrook's signature towering "Plank" paintings and wall works. These are geometric abstractions painted directly onto internally cut trunks from the local mill in Hudson New York. Middlebrook's patterning weds the geometry of modern abstraction with the lines of wood grain to "create a tension between something organic and something man-made."

Middlebrook has long been interested in man's complex and often adversarial relationship with nature. The straight lines and precise angles in his paintings lay over the historical rings of the tree. "My work is broken into two parts, the first is a skin that I lay over the top of nature, somewhat like a side walk or a parking lot. The skin is just visiting, it's covering but respecting the borders it has been given. The borders in my case are the shapes of trees, the trunks and limbs are what I choose to make paintings on, the paintings become the skin. I respond to the compression of time and the organic shape that has grown, I respond to the order of the tree and the form that it became. The second aspect of my work is my reaction and interpretation of nature. This current body of work in it's 10th year of evolution. The plank series started first and the wall works (Cross sections) have followed. In all cases the grain and the shape of wood dictate the direction of the painting which always starts with multiple drawings. All the wood is selected from a mill in western Mass which specializes in kiln dried indigenous hardwood from New England. In addition to the the pieces on wood, there will be a series of works on paper. Drawing has always a big part of my practice, for this show I have returned to paper for the first time in five years."

Jason Middlebrook, born in 1966 in Michigan, lives and works in Hudson, New York. Middlebrook has mounted solo exhibitions at a number of institutions, including the New Museum (New York), the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (Connecticut), and the Santa Monica Museum of Art. He has participated in group shows at the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Last year he unveiled a major outdoor sculpture commission at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo). Middlebrook's work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the Princeton University Art Museum, among others.



Above:
The Small Spaces In Between, 2016
Acrylic on Maple
29" x 32.5" x 2"

Right:
Growing Up In California, 2016
Acrylic, spray paint and wood stain on
Maple
112 x 15 x 1 1/2 in

