

**RICHARD SUDDEN**

An abstract painting featuring a central white circle. The background is a dark, textured wash of black and grey, with a radial pattern of fine white specks resembling stars or dust. The overall effect is ethereal and cosmic.

**FORCES  
of  
NATURE**

symbol / edifice / ritual

**SWAN COACH HOUSE GALLERY**  
**JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

# FORCES of NATURE

symbol / edifice / ritual

## RICHARD SUDDEN

Curated by K.Tauches

**JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

**OPENING RECEPTION: Saturday, JANUARY 16, 3-7pm**

**[www.swangallery.org](http://www.swangallery.org)**

Science defines Laws of Nature such as gravity and electromagnetism, but the mystery and wonderment of such forces remain potent for artist Richard Sudden. In this exhibition, Sudden shares recent paintings depicting icons such as sun signs, planets, comets, and stone circles. Conjuring the graphic power of ancient symbols, rituals, and architectural space commonly used in pre-industrial civilizations, Sudden expresses a deep veneration for the power, beauty, and the brute physicality of Nature.

An installation of twenty-eight cement castings representing the cycle of the Moon fills the main gallery space, creating a temporary, secular temple for visitors to enjoy. The artist encourages small offerings like flowers, stones, or messages.

Richard Sudden left the city center of Atlanta over seven years ago to set up a sustainable art practice in the woods, on his own terms. He has built a home, studio, garden and grounds, which are ever-evolving examples of high design unto themselves. Travel, solitude and a deep connection to the outdoors directly influence his work. Sudden channels a particular, rustic aesthetic that he has honed over the years into everything he creates. This exhibition is a special opportunity to experience his unique relationship with nature.

*--K.Tauches, Curator*

# ARTIST STATEMENT

In an attempt to comprehend, to fathom, the world around us and the *Forces of Nature*, we, as an ever-evolving species of intellect, have over time, observed the rhythms and cycles of the cosmos and tried to capture, make manifest, those observations through symbol edifice, and ritual. . . thousands of years ago our ancestors began to understand the paths of the Sun and Moon, they observed the ocean tides, and the night sky, giving symbol and myth to the constellations, they marked the flooding seasons of rivers, and the behavior and migration of animals. . . and they marked those powerful events, those life forces, with ever more sophistication and permanence, which spoke to its importance in all aspects of their existence. . . standing or stacking stone, for example became immovable centers of their world; they were simultaneously creating calendar, observatory and temple. . . they recognized special features in the landscape, mountains and bodies of water and built places of reverence near them or mimicked the shapes of the natural world in art and structure. . . they lived in awe and fear of those powers and created gods that represented every phenomenon in their environment. . . they saw omens in comets and eclipses, and the flight of birds. . . and auspicious signs in the changing of the seasons. And even as science has more fully defined these forces-- gravity, electro-magnetism, weak or strong nuclear force-- and identified the Laws of Nature. . . and though the edifice and rituals have changed, the mystery and wonderment remain. . . my work is a veneration of the *Forces of Nature*, and a deep respect for it's ultimate power and beauty.

*Richard Sudden*

*SpringHouse at Cross Plains / October 2020*

*(\*see artist statement video)*



*GRAVITY (whole installation) The entire back gallery is an installation. The light has been controlled to create a likeness to sunset or sunrise .*



*Sacrificial Arch  
cement casting with steel  
hook, seed form cement  
casting, and red fabric*



(foreground) *The Plummet*, cement casting hanging from ceiling armature and (background) *Hands*, large hanging canvas (10 x 8 ft.) at the back of entire *Forces of Nature* installation



A cast cement bowl, with fresh offerings from Richard's garden. . .



Another cement bowl lying beneath *The Plummet*, casting a shadow that sometimes "eclipses" the bowl. . .



Obfuscating the grand Palladian window at the back of the gallery is the large hanging canvas, *Hands*, (10 x 8 ft.) with 3 bowls at its base. In the center bowl, covered in water, is a large crystal lit from underneath. At each side are two of the *28 Phases of the Moon*, cement castings with steel supports (34 x 12 x 2 in. each) which encircle this abstract altar.



Detail of the crystal in the center bowl at the back of the installation in the back gallery.





*Lux / Motus* ♂ (Mars) & *Lux / Motus* ♀ (Venus)  
are a majestic pair of oil paintings on  
oak panel (96 x 24 in. each) that greet viewers  
at the front entrance of the gallery.



Lit from behind, *Forces of Nature, Omens and Auspicious Signs* is a circle-shaped panel in encaustic and oil which is 5 ft diameter. From a distance it looks like a simple black eclipse or new moon shape, but upon closer inspection, a viewer can read many small details in the engravings upon its surface. Not only is the artists' astrological birth chart embedded upon it, but there are many other interesting personal and esoteric symbols, notes and drawings.



*Planet B*, is a painting in oil and encaustic on perforated carbon steel that shows the beautiful marks of rust (48.5 x 48.5 in.).

Front gallery layout with Artist Statement panel.



Panels with ancient graphic symbols commonly used in pre-industrial civilizations. Framed works (to the right of the door) are encaustic and oil on perforated carbon steel that has been weathered outdoors, some are etched with lines or notations. *Implosion* (to the left of the door) is spray paint and oil on canvas. (this is the image used on the invitation. . .)



The perforated carbon steel surface allows the graphic symbols to cast subtle shadows behind them on the wall. If lit directly, intentional Moiré patterns emerge to create a dimensional effect.





Lux / Motus, I & II (Accelerator and Re-entry)  
*(left to right)*

oil, encaustic on panel

\*1997

12 x 24 in. each

symbol

edifice

*ritual*



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**This exhibition is sponsored  
by The Forward Arts Foundation  
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Mary Rose Taylor, and Jane Wheeler**

SWAN COACH HOUSE GALLERY  
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[www.swangallery.org](http://www.swangallery.org)  
Gallery Hours: Tues - Sat 10-4pm  
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