

LUHRING AUGUSTINE TRIBECA

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Oscar Tuazon
PEOPLE
Luhring Augustine Tribeca
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Trees are embodied water, bodies of water, petrified fire, water on fire. A tree is a sculpture with no author, a sculpture of water.

-- Oscar Tuazon

Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce *PEOPLE*, a presentation of all new sculptural works by West Coast-based Oscar Tuazon, marking the gallery's second exhibition of the artist. The conflagration of minimalist abstraction and natural elements in these works embody constantly changing morphologies, addressing notions of the natural systems of growth and decay.

Tuazon is fascinated by wood as a living material that is in a state of continuous becoming: "changing from seed, to plant, to tree, to log, to board, to frame, to building, to pulp, to paper, to ash, to dirt, and back again." The sculptures in *PEOPLE* arrest this process in critical but formless moments of the material's ever-developing transformation. *Oil City* is comprised of four sculptures arranged in a circle, their burnt wood represents fire petrified and references the charred, salvaged remnants from burn piles, the byproduct of industrial clear-cut logging found near Tuazon's home in Washington State. *Tree of Smoke*, a cast iron column that directly mimics those found in the gallery's architecture, is transformed into a post of smoke through the artist's addition of a functioning stove at its base.

The column's function as a supporting element is poetically underscored in a major new sculpture in the form of a *dəq^waled* or carved house post. The *dəq^waled* is a uniquely pivotal object that exists in Coast Salish tradition in the threshold between the human and the supernatural worlds. A *dəq^waled* is both sculpture and architecture, domestic and utilitarian; it functions as a stand-in for the owner of the house, a commissioned spirit portrait. The sculpture is a collaboration between Tuazon and the poet Cedar Sigo (Suquamish), deeply inspired by the work of Chief William Shelton whose posts are discursive, inviting performance and audience response in the tradition of Salish storytelling. During the course of the exhibition, Sigo will perform a poetic ceremony with the sculpture while it is on display.

Also on view in the exhibition will be *Natural Man*, a functioning bronze and concrete fountain cast from a black oak trunk. The sculpture captures the tree at the moment the water flowing through it began to produce new growth; in this sense, it recalls Meret Oppenheim's magisterial *Tower Fountain*, an ecosystem embodied in one single sculpture. The maquette for this new edition work, that included the original black oak wood from which the bronze was cast, was shown in the 2016 exhibition, *Hammer Projects: Oscar Tuazon* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Oscar Tuazon has had major public installations at the Place Vendôme, Paris; Central Wharf Park, Boston, MA; and Nouveaux Commanditaires, Belfort, France. He has presented recent solo exhibitions at the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO; Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA; Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU, East Lansing, MI; Dépendence, Brussels, Belgium; and the Hammer Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. The artist will be included in the 34th Sao Paulo Biennale later this year. Tuazon's work is in renowned international collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; the Kunsthaus Zürich; the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art, Zürich; and the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

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