

MARK BORGHI

NEW YORK | BRIDGEHAMPTON | SAG HARBOR

Donald Sultan (born 1951)

Lantern Flowers, 2011

Flock, enamel, tar and spackle on tile over masonite

50 x 50 x 5 1/4 in. (127 x 127 x 13.3 cm)

Signed and dated Aug 9, 2011

Ex-collection:

Tagliatella Gallery, Palm Beach, FL

Private collection 2012 until the present



Born in Asheville, North Carolina, Sultan obtained his BFA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and later his MFA from the School of the Art Institute, Chicago. Two years after graduation, Sultan had his first solo exhibition at Artists Space in New York City. He rose to international prominence in the late 1970s as part of the "New Image" movement along with fellow painters, such as Susan Rothenberg and Julian Schanbel.

Sultan is best known for his use of industrial materials to elevate still-life tradition. While his subjects are immediately recognizable — flowers, lemons, playing cards, and so on — he deconstructs his everyday-life subjects into basic forms and renders them in powerful, sensual images. Instead of canvas, Sultan usually works on masonite covered with 12-inch vinyl floor tiles, from which he cuts geometric and organic forms and then fills in the cutout space with plaster and/or tar, and then paints over. The resulting images are distinctively textured with bold design that emphasizes equally on both negative and positive areas. This color silk screen painting from 2011 captures the essence of his process and subject matter.

Maintaining that his creations are first and foremost abstract, despite their representational objects, Sultan describes his works as essentially "heavy structure, holding fragile meaning" with the ability to "turn you off and turn you on at the same time."