



LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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Oscar Tuazon

April 28 – June 16, 2018

Opening reception: Friday, April 27, 6-8pm

Luhring Augustine is pleased to present an exhibition of new sculptures by the Los Angeles based artist Oscar Tuazon, his first solo show since the gallery announced the artist's representation in 2017.

Tuazon identifies primarily as a sculptor, though his practice occupies a position between architecture and activism. His large-scale sculptural installations consist of structures that foreground their own means of construction, most notably through his use of industrial materials. Minimalist strategies inform Tuazon's work, yet his concerns revolve around relationality and presence over purity in form. He considers a sculptural installation as being homologous to a house, as both are continuously built, repaired, and maintained. By extension, the act of inhabiting or occupying a space functions as a kind of artistic production, serving as the undercurrent of his predominantly site-specific practice.

One of Tuazon's most ambitious projects is an architectural installation entitled *Zome Alloy*, a hollowed wooden structure consisting of eleven traversable polyhedral units, or zomes. The installation is modeled after the "Zome Home," a solar powered house in Albuquerque, New Mexico designed by innovators Steve and Holly Baer. One of the defining features of the Baers' home is a double-paned glass wall that utilizes water as a heating and cooling mechanism. Though passive and sustainable, the system must be manually operated by the home's residents, an aspect that circles back to Tuazon's views on sculpture and the way inhabitation actively maintains it.

The zome's modular structure affords a flexibility that allows Tuazon to replicate, modify, and adapt his work according to renewed contexts. After its public presentation during Art Basel 2016 in the city's Messeplatz, Tuazon's *Zome Alloy* was broken up into clusters and installed at various locations in the United States. Three zomes have been erected outdoors in Los Angeles, where they function as the artist's studio, and two zomes will soon be installed as a shelter at Camp Makwa in Minnesota, an active protest site against a proposed oil pipeline. Tuazon refers to each zome installation site as a "Water School," as the structure becomes a hub for discussion and education about the environment in which it is located. Tuazon is planning a permanent, public Water School in Cedar Spring, Nevada to bring art and awareness to a remote and ecologically fraught region, where the water that has served the community and environment for thousands of years is at risk of being siphoned to more commercial areas.

For his first exhibition with Luhring Augustine, Tuazon will present a series of sculptures whose dimensions derive from the architectural openings of *Zome Alloy*. Double-paned glass is a device that he often uses to form window sculptures, whose interstices have been filled with materials that disrupt their transparency. This interplay with visibility is a hallmark of Tuazon's practice. He recontextualizes architectural elements and municipal infrastructures that, despite their essential functions, tend to operate on invisible registers. The allocation of water amongst cities is one such example, which the artist strives to reintroduce back into the public's consciousness. Several of the sculptures on display are silkscreened with maps and text outlining controversial pipelines, which have garnered national attention not only for their environmental risks, but also for their proposed trajectory across protected Native American lands. These ongoing disputes have prompted Tuazon to advocate for the preservation of clean and sustainable water sources, an element that has been internalized in his recent work both in subject matter, as well as in the fluid conception of forms and sites.

Tuazon (b. 1975) has exhibited widely, and his work is in renowned international collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Kunsthaus Zürich; the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art, Zürich; and the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

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