

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Jason Middlebrook
Drawing Time

August 3-September 3, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday, August 6, 2016, 7-9pm

Artist Talk begins at 6:30pm

Free and open to the public / Artist in Attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is pleased to present Jason Middlebrook's first solo exhibition with the gallery, *Drawing Time*. Middlebrook has long explored man's complex relationship with nature by painting bright abstractions across the surface of cut planks and slices of indigenous hardwoods. This exhibition will feature his symbiotic dichotomy of man and nature with a series of his plank paintings and wall works.

Sourced locally to his home in upstate New York, timber is cut into lengths and slices left raw to highlight the organic quality of the material. The wooden canvases once had a life of their own as evidenced by the many rings of "compressed energy" (JM 2013) radiating across the surface. Middlebrook pays deference to this record of history by laying a skin of brightly colored lines and shapes, a final layer of life celebrated by human intervention. Raw edges, whorls, and burls exaggerate the exacting geometry in his abstraction. Kaleidoscopic repetitive sequences guide the eye in and out of the grain, complementing the work nature already produced instead of obscuring it. Reminiscent of geodes or geological cross-sections, these works speak to a higher sublime quality of man's interaction with all nature—its presence before man and our brief visitation in its space. The works rest within the continuum of art history, visually referencing preeminent abstractionist shaped canvases of the 20th century and Op Art in his monochromatic works. The planks also call to mind the monoliths of a certain California minimalism.

The weightiness of the wooden slices and the floor-to-wall installation of the planks assert these works as both paintings and three-dimensional objects. Thus creating a relationship between viewer and object that is both visual and physical. *Drawing Time* strikes a chord with the viewer offering an opportunity to experience nature's timelessness and the momentary beauty made possible by human gesture.



Image: Jason Middlebrook, *21 paintings inspired by rocks*, 2016, acrylic on walnut, 39 x 34 x 1 in.

About Jason Middlebrook

Jason Middlebrook, born in 1966 in Michigan, lives and works in Hudson, New York. Middlebrook has mounted solo exhibitions at multiple 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. He has major outdoor commissions including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo) and the Q line U Avenue subway stop (Brooklyn). Middlebrook's work is included in the collections of the Denver Art Museum, 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.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works" and *The Denver Post* declared that it is the "premiere commercial space" in Denver. The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

###