



Cade Tompkins Projects

# ART NEW ENGLAND

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

November/December 2016  
Alexander Castro

## NICK HOLLIBAUGH

Cade Tompkins Projects • Providence, RI •  
cadetompkins.com • November 11-December 23, 2016

Nick Hollibaugh's signature material is ash wood: hand-cut into strips, arranged tightly, and hung on the wall. Yes, the process is time consuming, "tedious" even, says the artist. But he adds: "[It] slows me down and allows me to really get into the work." His methods standardized, Hollibaugh can instead concentrate on concept.

This new exhibit migrates away from the "landscapes, farms and agrarian structures" of Hollibaugh's previous oeuvre. His recent sculptures are more abstract. He applies oil paint to the cut ash wood in flat, smooth coats, resulting in bold and inviting hues. "I am trying to edit it down a little more...[to] allow the surfaces and color and gesture to speak for itself," he says, designating "less dimensionality" as a major goal of these sculptures.

Hollibaugh aims for a canvas-like surface that's receptive to his experiments with color and texture. Greater expressive range is intended, and achieved in *Finding Lines*, where a column of radiant yellow overlaps bars of honeydew green for an activating contrast.

The slatted wood can sometimes resemble piano keys or a xylophone. The reception itself becomes musical, appearing rhythmic and soothing as it's enhanced by Hollibaugh's chilled-out palette.

Yet in refreshing deviance from the sculptures' usual equability, *Reaching Daisy* relinquishes its steady, serial and uniform shape when its right-hand side splinters into a jumble of mint green sticks. Hollibaugh's characteristically linear quality is not totally abandoned, but its control falters, allowing chaos to enter the fray. *Sorbet Skyline* is similar: less explosive but beautifully saturated with sugary red and blue, like the frosty treat of its title.



Nick Hollibaugh, *Finding Lines* 2016, acrylic on ash wood, 15 x 16 x 2 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Cade Tompkins Projects

198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906  
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com  
Telephone 401 751 4888



## Cade Tompkins Projects

A more whimsical take on Hollibaugh's minimalist ethos arrives in a series of large, uni-colored hearts. The somewhat childlike vibe of these pieces is not accidental; Hollibaugh's two daughters inspired him. Working with this simple shape allowed him "to explore color and pattern in a repeated process."

Hollibaugh says his kids are "both at the age of learning to draw shapes and forms," with hearts their current obsession. Their dad is likewise studying new possibilities of surface and color in his latest ash wood creations.