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Don Gummer Wall Panel

Fairfield University Art Museum

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Equilibrium and imbalance, stasis and flow, gravity and loft, emotion and reticence: these paradoxical impulses are poetically reconciled in Don Gummer's art. Gummer is renowned for his Constructivist sculptures—powerfully graceful, ascending creations of bronze and steel—but his considerable body of work also comprises drawings, watercolors, encaustics, collages, and painted wood wall reliefs, as well as earthworks incorporating rock, soil and water. All are represented in this exhibition, which explores the transmission of forms and ideas in his art through different iterations and across multiple media, beginning, invariably, with drawing. This fluid metamorphosis, highlighted here through the pairing of several monumental, richly layered, and tapestry-like drawings with the corresponding wall reliefs, is central to Gummer's creative process.

Bred of his early experience as a carpenter and construction worker, an architectural sensibility informs everything Gummer creates, from his drawings and reliefs incorporating and overlaying floor plans and elevations to his ethereal free-standing sculptures evocative of framed-in towers and high rises. Allusions to houses and less probable dwellings like birdcages and tents also echo. Underlying all is an immutable, cerebral, and rigorous sense of structure—an internal scaffold or armature that both articulates form and channels emotion. Whether literal and real, or implied and unseen, armatures are always present in some way in Don Gummer's art.

Linda Wolk-Simon
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