



KAORU MANSOUR (b. 1956)

Monkey ball #105

mixed media on wood panel

24 x 8 in.

2008

6675

Kaoru Mansour, a native of Japan, is an artist based in Los Angeles. Her artwork has varied over the last ten years, ranging from geometric abstract paintings on paper to her more recent botanical collage elements on wooden panels. Delicately colored organic forms are covered with twenty to thirty different layers of encaustic, which gives her work a rich and highly textured appearance.

Mansour grew up in a small mountainous village. She has vivid, early childhood memories of playing with, studying and even eating the tremendous varieties of seasonal plants in the lush forests of Japan. As she began her formal training as an artist at Otis Parsons Art Institute in Los Angeles, the impact of her previous natural surroundings emerged. While her work has evolved over the years, botanical imagery, whether actual or abstracted, has always figured in her work.

Mansour's current body of work connects images of plants with abstract mark making. The artist goes into her physical surroundings to gather plants and flowers - whatever she finds of interest during a particular season. She then transfers images of single specimens onto panels - whether it is a leaf, the whole plant or just a portion of a flower - the image is always simple and solitary. A muted, butter-like background holds the image which is glazed over to form a cracked, raku-like surface - a small gesture to her Japanese heritage. Mansour then draws colored circles and other small ink markings on the panels, enhancing the fundamental beauty of a single branch or stem. These simple, focused pieces elegantly integrate graphic and organic expressions. While the viewer may recognize a particular type of plant or flower, the image is always simplified - a flower stripped of leaves, a stem without its main branch or a sturdy stalk detached from the ground. Her compositions crop those "extraneous" elements from the picture plane to emphasize the abstract beauty and remarkable form of her chosen specimen. Her delicate markings swirl around and attach to the delicate branches, creating new, otherworldly plant forms that are at once astute with their precision and wonderfully whimsical.

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