

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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48hills

Imrich, Bec, "A staring contest with Will Rogan's slippery corner entities," *48 Hills*, April 14, 2025

A staring contest with Will Rogan's slippery corner entities

Uncanny yet tender sculptures that speak to their creator's own mortality pop up at Altman Siegel Pacific Heights.

By BEC IMRICH APRIL 14, 2025



Detail of Will Rogan, "Fall 2024" (2025). Elm, mahogany, teak, cuckoo clock chain, watercolor and oil paint.

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In Will Rogan's solo exhibition *Night holds all your heart* (runs through April 26) at Altman Siegel's intimate **popup space** in Presidio Heights, the artist has assembled a show that subtly unfixes our sense of reality with tender, multifaceted sculptures that serve as both masks and unavailing clocks, nudging us to conceive of time differently.

The one-room show contains six small wall-mounted sculptures whose truncated corners protruding from the wall, where their two wooden planes of slightly different widths meet to form a vertex. The works mutate between flatness and dimensionality, forming a sort of diptych where the conversation created by the whole unit is different than the sum of the individual parts.

Sides of the sculptures are anthropomorphized to resemble faces with pink noses and inset bright blue eyes, with pupils that are actually black holes. The faces have their own temperaments, adorned with carved wooden pipes, cigarettes, keys, and spider webs, and changes in character depending on your angle of approach.

In addition to the illusions being created by these slippery corner entities, Rogan's innate sense of when to hide and show evidence of his hand feels like the work of a magician. Roughly sawn edges of painted wood resembling leaf fragments and noses coincide satisfyingly with smooth constellations of peg and mortise joinery.



"Corner Creep" (2025). Spanish cedar, mahogany, ash, cuckoo clock chain, oil paint, watercolor and colored pencil.

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Art-historically speaking, specters of Rene Magritte circulate throughout this show. Wooden plumes of smoke partially obscure the faces of several of Rogan's sculptures—this and his recurring motif of clock parts are just a few of the thematic references that nod towards the surrealist. Some of the artwork's titles glance toward this connection as well—*Future Smoke* possibly alluding to *L'Avenir Des Statues* (The Future Of Statues), a plaster copy of Napoleon's death mask that Magritte painted with cloud forms.

This linkage brings to the fore the idea of sculpture as (death) mask, inviting us to consider whether these creatures are referencing parts of the artist's interiority, or perhaps *false mirrors*, seeing and being seen simultaneously.

Gleaning some information about Rogan's personal motivations behind making this body of work adds more gravity to the experience of the exhibition. According to the gallery text, Will was building a roof when he fell, sustaining a head injury that sensitized his awareness of the inevitability of death the connection between and the end of life cycle in humans and nature overall.

Time has always been a central theme in the artist's practice—and Rogan continues to develop his own sense of it here, using the materials that would normally bolster time-keeping mechanisms towards alternative ends. Clock chains fall like tears out of the pupils of one sculpture, and are configured into cobwebs. In *Future Smoke*, the cast iron pinecone weights of a cuckoo clock protrude from the bottom of the wooden form, painted to look like cartoonishly elongated eyes, suspended, but seemingly ready to fall at any moment.



"Hospital Eyes" (2025). Spanish cedar, mahogany, oil paint and colored pencil.

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Our sense of time is just as subjective and selective as our sight. In the immediate aftermath of a near-death experience, one's perception of time becomes completely altered. Not to mention that hospital-induced delirium that upends all sense of flow and structure like a clinical casino.

Despite late capitalism's attempts to concretize "clock time" into digestible nuggets to regiment us as workers, we have all experienced the phenomena of the same chunk of minutes whirring by or stretching out unrelentingly. How might these different experiences of time manifest physically? What if an ephemeral puff of smoke became a solid block of wood? What if clocks only had a second hand and nothing else?

This show is worth seeing in the flesh, as it were. While the installation photos give a sense of the gestalt of Rogan's sincere attention to materials, form, and color, still images fail to capture the experience of navigating around these double-sided pieces, which morph significantly depending on where you are in relation to their faces' angles.

In person, you'll hear the tick of the hand-carved holly house key circling around *Stuck in the Seconds*, and experience the uncanny feeling that the little inset eyes in *Corner Creep* and *Corner Creature* might be following you around the room—despite the left side of your brain insisting otherwise.

NIGHT HOLDS ALL YOUR HEART runs through April 26. Altman Siegel Pacific Heights, 3067 Sacramento, SF. More info [here](#).