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# Will Rogan gives the mast from his houseboat to his art



Sam Whiting | June 27, 2018 | Updated: June 27, 2018 2:55 p.m.



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Artist Will Rogan, right, and gallery owner Claudia Altman-Siegel, left, observe the urn that Rogan attached onto a 20-foot mast on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 in San Francisco, Calif. Rogan is opening his ...

Photo: Liz Moughon, The Chronicle

Ever since he moved onto a 50-foot concrete houseboat in Sausalito four years ago, Will Rogan has been looking for ways to take it apart and remake it as sculpture. In May, he finally got to it, gathering four dock-mates to help him pull out the 20-foot mast.

Now on Thursday, June 28, that mast will be standing tall again as the centerpiece of "Albatross," a major installation that makes use of bay life and bay water, at the 5,000-square-foot Altman Siegel, the largest art gallery in San Francisco.

In this iteration, however, the mast is now a pedestal, to put it into formal sculptural terms, and sitting atop that pedestal is a ceramic urn that Rogan lowered to the bottom of his berth more than a year ago. He hoisted it out of the water so it would be freshly crusted over with barnacles and slick with moss to drip down the pedestal.

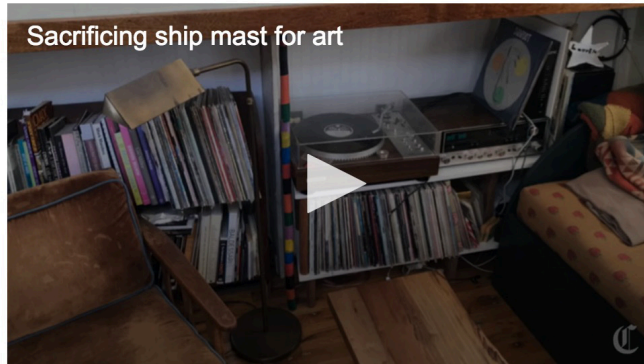
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Surrounding the mast are four oversize coffee mugs that Rogan glazed and will keep filled to overflowing with bay water he has brought over from his boat slip. As the water seeps out, it fuses the cup to the stone base it sits upon. The entirety of "Albatross" will evolve over the two-month life of the show.



Will Rogan takes apart his houseboat

Video: SFChronicle

"I've made a few of these artworks that involve taking things, putting them in the sea, taking them out and then elevating them," Rogan, 43, says during an interview in the cozy galley. Beside him a record is spinning on a turntable, miraculously unaffected by the shifting water below it. (The boat is not seaworthy, especially now that there is a hole in its bow where the mast used to be.)

Rogan, who has a master of fine arts from UC Berkeley and is on the adjunct art faculty at both Mills College and the San Francisco Art Institute, also does seasonal work on a tourist ship sailing Antarctica. His job is to photograph people, but he also takes his own nature shots and those are part of the show at Altman Siegel.

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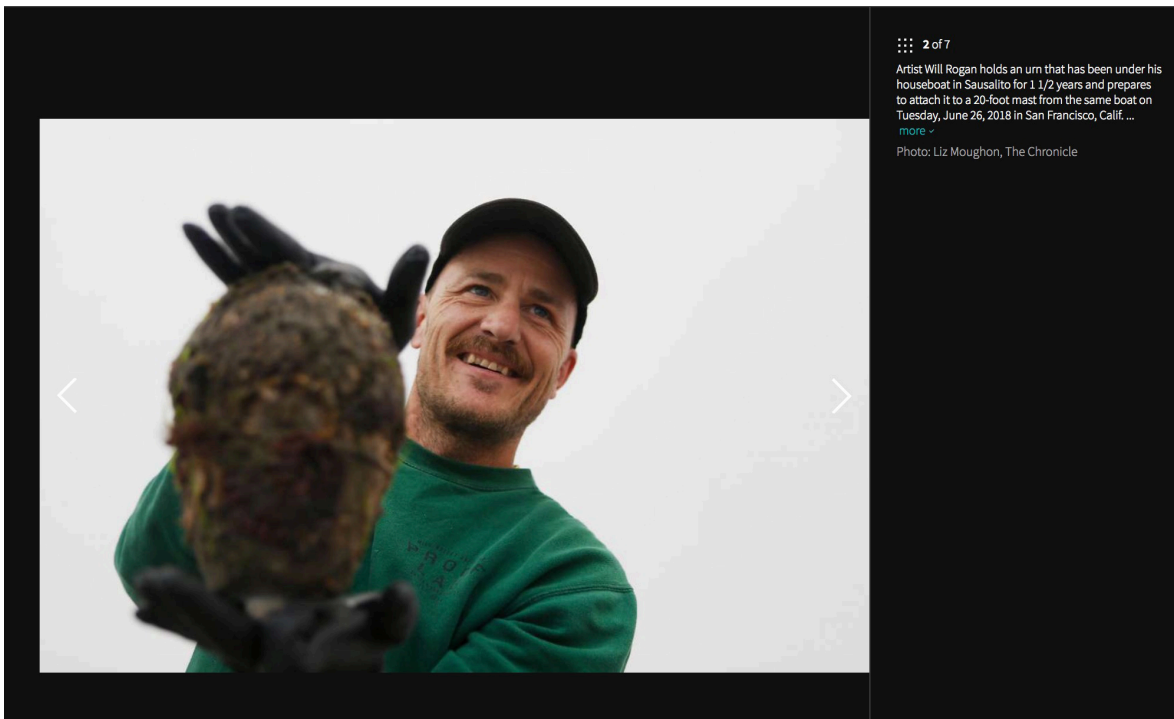
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“There will be lots of photographs of benign things in Antarctica,” he says. “Nothing like you’d see in National Geographic.”

Given the scope of “Albatross” – photographs in hand-carved frames, the sea-crusted urn, the bay water seeping through the giant coffee cups and onto boulders that weigh a ton each – the exhibition needs room to breathe and, fortunately for Rogan, the expansive Altman Siegel has that. The 20-foot mast is not even halfway to the ceiling of this converted electrician’s garage.

“Will’s art is unique to the Bay Area in that he uses the natural resources,” says gallery owner Claudia Altman-Siegel. “But it is mixed with wit and humor, and the profound ideas that make for beautiful and smart work.”

*Sam Whiting is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: [swhiting@sfchronicle.com](mailto:swhiting@sfchronicle.com) Instagram: @sfchronicle\_art*



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Artist Will Rogan holds an urn that has been under his houseboat in Sausalito for 1 1/2 years and prepares to attach it to a 20-foot mast from the same boat on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 in San Francisco, Calif. ...

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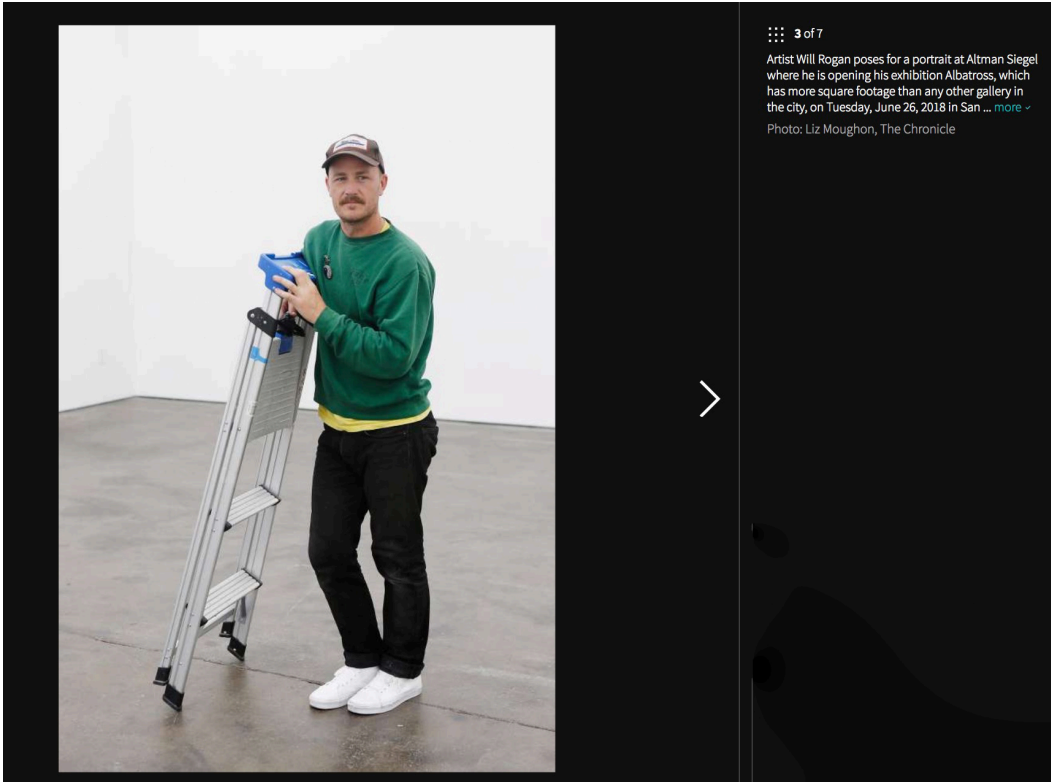
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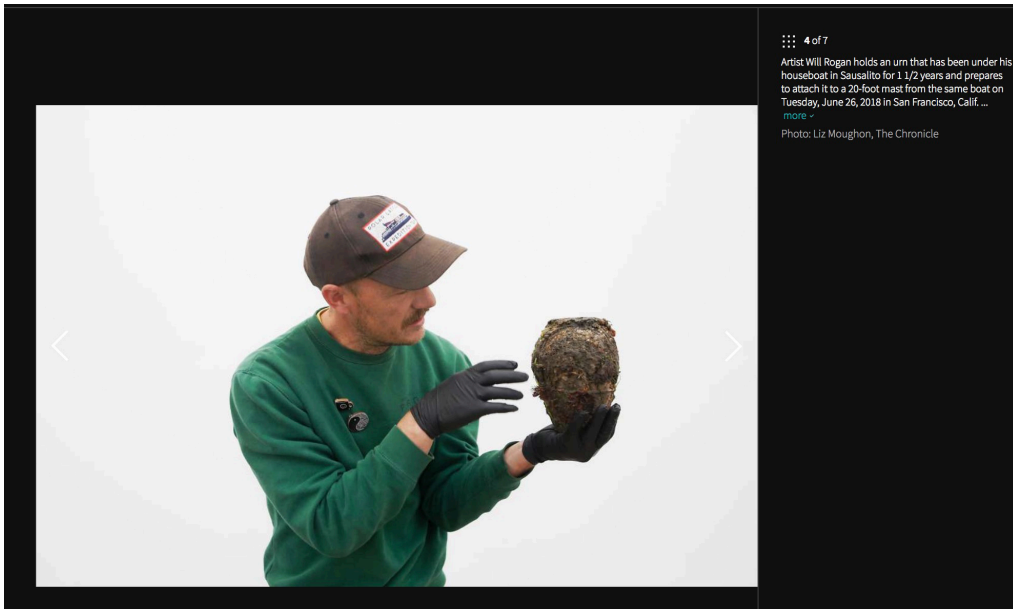
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Artist Will Rogan poses for a portrait at Altman Siegel where he is opening his exhibition Albatross, which has more square footage than any other gallery in the city, on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 in San ... [more](#)

Photo: Liz Moughon, The Chronicle



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Artist Will Rogan holds an urn that has been under his houseboat in Sausalito for 1 1/2 years and prepares to attach it to a 20-foot mast from the same boat on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 in San Francisco, Calif. ... [more](#)

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Artist Will Rogan, left, installs an urn that has been under his houseboat in Sausalito for 1 1/2 years onto a 20-foot mast from the same boat while gallery registrar Michael Svendsen assists on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 in San Francisco, Calif. ... [more](#)

Photo: Liz Moughon, The Chronicle



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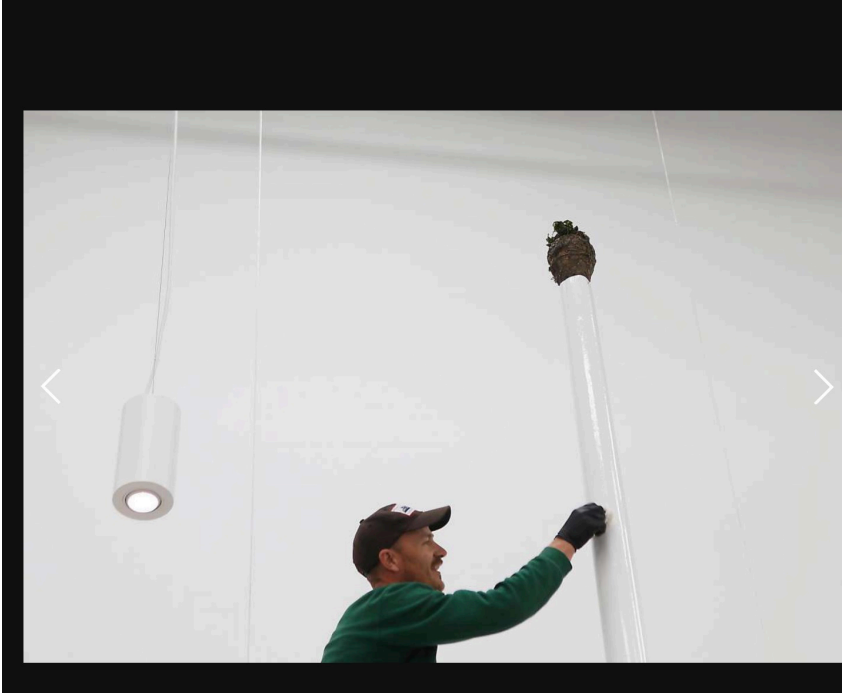
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