



AARON PARAZETTE: *Sweet*

September 13 – November 1, 2025

Artist Reception: Saturday, September 13, 5 – 7 PM

Artist Conversation and Book Signing at MFAH: Thursday, October 23, 6:30 – 8 PM

McClain Gallery is thrilled to announce our fifth exhibition with gallery artist Aaron Parazette. *Sweet* opens on the occasion of the publication of Parazette's first monograph, which overviews his career and reveals a dedicated and inquisitive practice. The book will be available for sale during the opening and through the exhibition, and an artist talk and book-signing is scheduled at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston on October 23rd, 2025. The event will feature a discussion between the artist and Alison de Lima Greene, Isabel Brown Wilson Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at MFAH, who penned one of the essays included in the publication. The exhibition highlights a series of new works, including some made during Parazette's early 2025 stay at the Elaine de Kooning House Artist Residency, and a selection of older works representing the artist's most iconic series. It mimics the trajectory of the monograph's journey through Parazette's career.

The title of the exhibition, *Sweet*, alludes to the overarching feeling of this abundant year in the artist's life, exposing the interest and investment of so many people in his work; Parazette is not prone to ingratitude. *Sweet* also refers to surf slang, a subject near to his heart and the generator of one of the artist's most prominent and famous series: the *Word Paintings*. These paintings play with specific idioms plucked from surf lingo, using their letters as formal elements Parazette arranges into composition and color. The term "sweet" expresses a genuine enthusiasm for the matter or situation at hand: an ease of finding something to like in

abundance. McClain Gallery invites all to celebrate and recognize the artist's accomplishment along with us.

The paintings Parazette created during his winter residency at the Elaine de Kooning House are a continuation of his long running series created on shaped painting surfaces. Parazette arrived at the residency with various supports prepared and primed, but not knowing how he might activate them with line, form, and color. Noting that he could feel the spirits of the many East Hampton artists both past and present, he proceeded to respond intuitively and logically to the supports as they hung in the de Kooning studio. Putting things on, testing color, taking things off, and finally arriving at a settled solution for each painting. Some solutions echo Parazette's past paintings, others press forward. One, *Night Sky*, offers a variation on a long-standing interest in the basic grid/plaid pattern. While the painting uses a symmetrical composition of horizontal and vertical bands, the symmetry is broken by the irregular manner with which the bands overlap, as well as the shifts in the blues between the bands. Each blue square becomes an opening and a space—perhaps a nod to the night sky of Long Island.

Several of the new paintings continue Parazette's interest in form and color, but with a new emphasis on line and intuition. Rather than responding to letterforms, or the nature and shape of his painting supports, the compositions are driven by a wandering line snaking around the surface of the painting—turning as it nears edges, over-lapping and crisscrossing as necessary, and then finally with the end meeting the beginning. The drawings for the paintings were done through two methods: some were drawn first on the computer and then transferred to the painting support; others were invented directly on the painting support, using pin-stripe tape as a line unspooling from the roll as the drawing was created. Each painting is a single line in a long tangled and elegant loop. An endless closed path, bending, stretching, reversing, and pressing forward, only to find itself again.

With an obvious nod to Jackson Pollock, the painting titled *Autumn Rhythm* employs this intuitive pin-stripe tape method for its composition. Much like Pollock's painting of the same name, Parazette's pulses in an all-over and balanced pattern. As the eye travels across the piece, the rhythm of Parazette's weaving line recalls the pattern of Pollock's white, black, and brown painting. While this rhythm is achieved in Pollock's work through his characteristic gestures and flicks of paint, Parazette's precise, singular line splits the pictorial space into a similarly harmonious composition. Unlike most of the paintings Parazette has made over the years, there was no sketch, preparatory drawing, or projection involved. Instead, the line drawing was done entirely on the support with a single roll of 60-yard long tape. Parazette called the trance-like drawing process in which revisions and reversals are instinctual "calming, visually surprising, and rewarding." It's a new method of solving paintings, and a sweet way to land there.

Launching alongside Parazette's monograph and new exhibition are two editions of three prints. Titled *Three Decades*, the project highlights three different series of the artist's career: the *Splash Paintings*, the *Word Paintings*, and the newer, single-weaving-line series. Each print is available in two editions of different sizes and numbers. The small edition is available in a

special trifold portfolio. The larger prints, each 32 x 28 inches, are available individually and titled *Creamy Supreme*, *Santa Ana Winds*, and *Groovy*. Find out more here.

AARON PARAZETTE (b. 1960 Ventura, California) holds an MFA in Painting from the Claremont Graduate University. In 1990, Parazette relocated to Houston as a Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He is currently an Associate Professor of Painting at the University of Houston.

Among the institutions in which Parazette has shown are the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas; Austin Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada; and the Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, North Carolina. Reviews of his work have appeared in *ArtPapers*, *Art Lies*, *Art in America*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New Art Examiner*, and *New York Times*. His paintings are included in numerous collections including Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Menil Collection, Houston, Texas; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; and many others. He was the recipient of a 2005 Artadia Fund for Art and Design and received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1994. He was given a solo exhibition at Dallas Contemporary in 2012 and was the Art League Houston's Texas Artist of the Year in 2012. Parazette has had three solo shows at McClain Gallery, in 2008, 2011, and 2022, and was part of a two-person exhibition in 2018. He also curated a lauded group exhibition at the gallery, *In Plain Sight*, in 2012.