

## MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Exhibition:** Eileen Quinlan & Cheyney Thompson  
*Displacements and Dead Trees*

**Location:** 36 Orchard Street, New York, NY 10002

**Dates:** September 10 – October 17, 2020

**Reception:** September 10, Thursday

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, of Eileen Quinlan and Cheyney Thompson's two-person exhibition, *Displacements and Dead Trees*. The show will be held at our 36 Orchard Street location, while *Dawn Goes Down*, Quinlan's concurrent solo exhibition will be on view at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

Eileen Quinlan's sequence of new, mostly black and white photographs of trees and scenes from nature is here presented in dialogue with a suite of paintings by Cheyney Thompson from his recent *Displacement* series. The exhibition inaugurates this new body of work comprised of medium-scaled, chiefly black and white works, which the artist has developed over the past year.

As a dedicated *literalist* operating in the tradition of 'what you see is what you get' in painting, Thompson tends to astutely foreground the layers that participate in the subtle articulation of his works. Perhaps at no time in his career, however, has this plain truth and disposition been more nakedly visible and generously functioning than in this *Displacement* series. An initial layer of sprayed gesso is applied to the support, before a stencil made of small squares in grid formation is affixed to the linen and painted black, thus activating the retinal dimension of the flat surface. This simple and fundamental structure, one steeped in the history of art and of Thompson's medium of choice, then becomes the ground for gestures of material and graphic displacement, for attempts at discrete acts of liberation from the imposed arrangement made possible by the very paired down elements at hand. A snake-like silicone tool is used to at times extend squares into lines, at others initiate more dramatic painterly movements and smear effects. Surprising shapes of varied intensities ensue from these decidedly physical processes that always leave in plain sight the trace of their own making. Forms often seem to float in a state of suspension and produce illusions of three dimensional space, a space that remains directly connected, however, to its two dimensional sources. Finally and unexpectedly, as the insistent eye wonders and lingers upon these works, the contours of recognizable things, as if by chance, might begin to appear: a falling bird here, a tree trunk and a branch there. In one of the paintings, a yellow gradient is introduced like an intrusion of color from the outside.

Allegorically speaking, if the notion of displacement can suggest the unwarranted movement of objects all the way indeed to that of actual people, as it obviously does today, Thompson reminds us with these at once humble and compellingly executed paintings that it is feasible, in art, to mentally as well as materially escape from established formal circumstances. And as is well known, art at its best is an invitation to see something new that can be turned, eventually, into a model for decisive action.

On the far back wall of the gallery, installed adjacent to the final painting in the show, is Quinlan's close up picture of the doubly exposed bark of a tree. The lush and luminous black and white photograph, printed on fiber paper, veers towards abstraction and produces a haptic sensation that today few paintings are able achieve. Perpendicular to it hangs a glorious vertical winter landscape with the sun glaring through tree branches and into the camera. To the right, further, appears the only color photograph in the space, a faded image of foliage against the sky. The installation concludes with the outcome of a broken process, that of an old Polaroid film

sliding in and out of a camera and failing to get exposed to what lies in front of it. What instead appears to the viewer resembles a sand dune in the desert, a mirage of a place on earth where mirages are expected to occur.

There is a sense of melancholia emanating from Quinlan's diverse, yet thematically consistent installation across both spaces. If an elegiac determination to capture particular fragments of our endangered planet, as well as to reveal and manipulate the chemical and electronic processes of the photographic remain firmly in place, a feeling of uncertainty emerges as to whether the means at the artist's disposal can offer much more than their very limitation in manifesting slices of life in the universe.

*Cheyney Thompson (b. 1975, Baton Rouge) lives and works in New York. His work was recently included in Low Form. Imaginaries and Visions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence at MAXXI, Rome (2019) and in Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965-2018 at the Whitney Museum, New York (2019). His work was on view at Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016) and Whitney Museum, New York (2015) in Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner. Thompson had a survey exhibition at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts (2012) with an accompanying monograph and a solo exhibition at Kunstverein Braunschweig (2012). His work was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial as well as the 2003 Venice Biennale, curated by Francesco Bonami. Past exhibitions include Chat Jet - Painting 'Beyond' The Medium at Künstlerhaus Graz (2013); The Indiscipline of Painting at Tate St Ives (2011); Systems Analysis at West London Projects and Langen Foundation, Germany (2010); Greater New York at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (2005).*

*Eileen Quinlan (b. 1972, Boston) earned her MFA from Columbia University in 2005, and had her first solo museum exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in 2009. Her first survey show, Wait For It at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, was held in 2019. Quinlan's work was recently included in Objects Recognized in Flashes, a major group exhibition curated by Matthias Michalka at MUMOK, Vienna, alongside Michele Abeles, Annette Kelm, and Josephine Pryde (2019), Passer-by at Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2019), Picture Industry: A Provisional History of the Technical Image, 1844-2018 at the LUMA Foundation in Arles (2018), VIVA ARTE VIVA, the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, curated by Christine Macel (2017), and Always starts with an encounter: Wols/Eileen Quinlan, produced by Radio Athènes and curated by Helena Papadopoulos at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens (2016). Previously, Quinlan participated in Image Support at the Bergen Kunsthall, What Is a Photograph? at the International Center for Photography, New York, and New Photography 2013 at the Museum of Modern Art, along with group exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum, White Columns, the White Cube Bermondsey, the Langen Foundation, Mai 36, Marian Goodman Gallery, Andrea Rosen Gallery, and Paula Cooper Gallery, among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Hammer Museum, Pinault Collection, Aishti Foundation, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston, Ackland Art Museum, Henry Art Gallery, Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, V-A-C Foundation, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (MUMOK), Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, and the Brooklyn Museum. Quinlan's fifth solo exhibition at Miguel Abreu Gallery, Too Much, was on view in the fall of 2018, coinciding with the release of her first monograph, Good Enough, published by Osmos Books. Always Starts with an Encounter: Wols—Eileen Quinlan, was published by Radio Athènes and Sequence Press in the fall of 2019.*

*Quinlan's work is also currently included in Artist's Choice: Amy Sillman—The Shape of Shape at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.*

**For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:**

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