

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Eileen Quinlan
Too Much

Dates: September 8 – November 11, 2018

Reception: Saturday, September 8, 6 – 8PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening on Saturday, September 8th, of *Too Much*, Eileen Quinlan's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be held at our 36 Orchard Street location.

Although Quinlan's work has often been discussed in terms of "abstract" photography, a label that she has resisted, the art historian Thomas McDonough has identified a number of other conceptual strands that have been present throughout her practice. In particular, he writes that Quinlan's photographs "necessarily hover in the space between 'sublimate' — alienated, ideological, phantomlike — and 'substrate' [...] or, to put it more bluntly, they are as much about materialism as materiality."¹

In her most recent work, Quinlan turns toward more directly existential concerns. Indeed, how does a photograph exist; what about its thing-ness; and how is it commodified? But even more crucially, how does it interpellate the viewer and seduce? How does this thing beckon us? How does it make an argument for its value as a popular form (not painting). How does it mobilize auras — scarcity, imposing on us physically, taking up space. But also why is it beckoning in the first place? What is it trying to say? "My work is about a lot of things," Quinlan says, "and they are largely present in this show — aging, sexuality, mortality, parenting, environmental collapse, mass murder and guns, macrocosms and microcosms, the domestic, feminism, motherhood and mother artists, making do, confinement, misogyny, available means, lifestyles, access, the internet as the source of all things (appropriation) and how that ties to limits on time and access, art historical allusions, advertising — 'brands' both artistic and commercial — touch, tactility and ghosts, analog and digital, authenticity, screens and distraction (an opiate of the masses), destruction via war and through consumption/pollution, violent attacks on film and IRL, the sysphian/entropic, making unseen forces visible, the privileging of sight..." *Too Much*.

Consistent with the commercial photographic practices in which Quinlan's earliest *Smoke & Mirrors* works — "tabletop still lifes, constructions staged in the studio for the camera" — found their roots, the use of large format Polaroids have been a constant in Quinlan's work. Since then, she has employed the Polaroid both as a proofing tool, an end in itself, and as a means towards the generation of a photographic negative from which to make traditional gelatin silver prints.

Faced with prospect of the Polaroid's immanent disappearance², in 2015 Quinlan turned to the digital flatbed scanner as an "instantaneous" capture device — evoking such artists as Barbara T. Smith who, in the 1970s, had pioneered the use of the photocopier for both artistic and practical purposes — while simultaneously returning to some of the material that had typified her earliest works, including mirrors and colored mylar gels. As McDonough articulates, these works, "made using a flatbed scanner across which she slides mirrors, which reflect back the scanner's light into the lens, producing strange distortions, iridescent smears, staggerings, and flares." The resulting large-scale photographs made reference to Quinlan's anxiety around the presence of games and screens in her children's lives, but also to the advertising image.

In *Too Much*, Quinlan brings these two materially distinct, but not altogether opposed, photographic processes together in one exhibition. In addition to a new oversized multi-panel scanner work entitled "I Can See It, But I

¹ McDonough, Thomas. "Eileen Quinlan: Between Substrate and Sublimate," *Osmos Magazine*, Winter 2017.

² The Polaroid Corporation declared bankruptcy in the fall of 2001, ceasing production of their instant analog instant film products in 2008. All existing stock of Polaroid Type 55 film expired in 2010.

Can't Feel It," printed directly on Dibond panels, Quinlan mined her archive of over a decade worth of 4 x 5 inch Polaroid positives, combining multiple photographs into thematic grids. The resulting constellations pull from prior series and works, including those that comprised her *Smoke & Mirrors* and *Night Flight* series, those that made up her *Curtains* and *Mind Craft* exhibitions, and her series of nudes most recently on view in the 2017 Venice Biennale. These unique prints both refer directly to the works that she would subsequently make from the Polaroids, while their arrangement draws from Quinlan's large grid works that play with the notion of the serial reproducibility of the editioned photograph.

As applicable to Quinlan's Polaroids as it is to her large scanner works, McDonough writes: "These are not so much 'imageless' photographs as ones in which the disintegration of the image itself is presented and the underlying technology is laid bare."

Good Enough, the first monographic publication on Quinlan's work, will be published this fall by OSMOS Books, and will include texts by Mark Godfrey, Thomas McDonough, and Cay-Sophie Rabinowitz.

Eileen Quinlan (b. 1972, Boston) earned her MFA from Columbia University in 2005. She had her first solo museum exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in 2009. Her work is in the permanent collections of several institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Hammer Museum, Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston, Ackland Art Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, and the Brooklyn Museum.

Recent exhibitions include VIVA ARTE VIVA, the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, curated by Christine Macel (2017), Systematically Open? New Forms for Contemporary Image Production at the LUMA Foundation, Arles, 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) with a catalogue to be published later this year, Image Support at the Bergen Kunsthall, and Transmission, Recreation, and Repetition at the Palais de Beaux-Arts Paris (2015), What Is a Photograph? at the International Center for Photography (New York), New Photography 2013 at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Outside the Lines: Rites of Spring at the Contemporary Art Museum Houston, a two-person exhibition with Matt Keegan at The Kitchen (New York) as well as a solo show and a two-person exhibition with Cheyney Thompson, at Campoli Presti (London). Previously, Quinlan participated in Picture Industry at Regen Projects, Los Angeles, organized by Walead Beshty, and 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. Mind Craft, her fourth solo exhibition at Miguel Abreu Gallery, was on view in the spring of 2016.