

## MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

Eileen Quinlan & Cheyney Thompson  
*Displacements and Dead Trees*

September 10 – October 31, 2020  
36 Orchard Street

For inquiries, please email [post@miguelabreugallery.com](mailto:post@miguelabreugallery.com)

*Displacement* [1], 2020  
Oil and acrylic on linen  
61 5/8 x 46 1/2 inches (156.5 x 118.1 cm)  
[CT1005.20]



### Note:

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.

*Displacement [3]*, 2020  
Oil and acrylic on linen  
61 5/8 x 46 1/2 inches (156.5 x 118.1 cm)  
[CT1004.20]



*Displacement [11]*, 2020  
Oil and acrylic on linen  
61 5/8 x 46 1/2 inches (156.5 x 118.1 cm)  
[CT1009.20]



*Displacement [2]*, 2020  
Oil and acrylic on linen  
61 5/8 x 46 1/2 inches (156.5 x 118.1 cm)  
[CT1003.20]



*Unfolding*, 2020

Gelatin silver print

22 x 18 inches (55.9 x 45.7 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

Edition of 2 + 2 APs

[EQ1753.20]



Note:

Quinlan here addresses both the folding of space within the image and the synesthetic sensory folding of seeing and touching. *Unfolding* records the double-exposure of analog medium format film shot from two different angles at the same tree bark. The title further references the work of painter Simon Hantaï and, as Quinlan says, “how the process of rephotographing, or putting two negatives on top of each other, causes these chance encounters between the two patterns/ Kind of like folding something, you don’t know what you have until you unfold it.”

*Wendell's Eden*, 2020

Gelatin silver print

22 x 14 1/2 inches (55.9 x 36.8 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 16 1/2 inches (61 x 41.9 cm)

Edition of 2 + 2 APs

[EQ1751.20]



Note:

The two landscape photographs—*Wendell's Eden* and *Curtain Call*—function as establishing shots for the exhibition, combining the core motifs of light, trees, and surface textures. They were taken on New Year's Day in Wendell, Massachusetts with a digital camera, and then rephotographed onto four-by-five analog film. Traces of the digital image are retained in the darkroom prints.

*Joy of Life*, 2020

Chromogenic print mounted on Dibond

24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

Edition of 3 + 2 APs

[EQ1755.20]



Note:

*Joy of Life* is a straight nature photograph shot on analog film, the title of which references a surrealistic landscape painting by Max Ernst. As Quinlan states, the photograph subtly evokes the painting's tone, that "there is something almost suffocating about nature."

*Wendell's Eden (Curtain Call)*, 2020

Gelatin silver print

22 x 14 1/2 inches (55.9 x 36.8 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 16 1/2 inches (61 x 41.9 cm)

Edition of 2 + 2 APs

[EQ1750.20]



*Isle of Calypso*, 2020

Gelatin silver print

22 x 18 inches (55.9 x 45.7 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

Edition of 2 + 2 APs

[EQ1754.20]



Note:

Flowers have appeared throughout Quinlan's work, which often plays with their inherent symbolic signaling while also functioning as a marker of place. The title is a reference to the Greek mythological figure of Calypso, well known for ensnaring Odysseus. With regard to the work's documentary nature, Quinlan notes, "There are moment in the exhibition where sand and snow get somewhat confused, and in this case we're dealing with sand and this flower."

*Lookout Mountain*, 2020

Gelatin silver print

22 x 18 inches (55.9 x 45.7 cm)

Framed dimensions: 24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

Edition of 2 + 2 APs

[EQ1752.20]



Note:

*Lookout Mountain* resulted from a technical error, imaging itself when the film did not pass through the camera properly and did not expose. What is ultimately depicted through this chance malfunction seems to perfectly bridge the abstract and figurative tensions in Quinlan's work: there is produced simultaneously a cameraless abstraction and a spectral landscape that recalls the artist's photographic manipulations of sand. She notes of this work, "To me, this is a dune, and also the white lines can be understood as a kind of road through this landscape."