

Exhibition: **BEAUX MENDES**
The Manzanita Loop

Location: **88 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002**

Dates: **September 19 – November 9, 2024**

Reception: **Thursday, September 19, 6 – 8PM**

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday, September 19, of Beaux Mendes' *The Manzanita Loop*, the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery. On view are twenty-five 'neo-en-plein-air' observational paintings, mostly renderings of tree trunks and branches from which a figure might emerge. The works interact in a continuum of unusual materials, such as animal hide, wood, marble dust, or distemper on linen. The images at hand are in a state of formation; they constitute sensuous and evanescent moments of pure sensation.

MANZANITA LOOP
Or ORNAMENT AND MUSCLE

*Each of us forests unto ourselves.
Lonely, crooked, sere.*

— Leon Yushi

What if, when forms rhyme, it is not just a flourish? Rather: a root, an arm. A material intelligence that plunges through gallery walls the way urban tree roots tent a sidewalk.

To look at these paintings in a gallery, I'm sorry, you have to close your eyes. Five breaths. Then flutter them open. It's 1 am on the mountain — you are emerging from a dream and look up at the tree that looms over your tent against the sky, the big moon.

Realize you have been misreading your life's imperatives. The old command to honor father and mother is just a way of saying that the world is full of wild and violent energies. The earth has these big arms, the earth has this big cock, Motherfather will rock you in a breeze and drink the blood of your shattered body. All of our figures for transformation are inadequate. All of our figures for sex are plasticine. We are turning into rubber dolls. I dreamed I was a mantis. I dreamed frozen cutlets at the Trader Joe's. It is getting harder to deny the gods.

Can a painting be an animal? Can a subject rupture its painter? If a surface has topography, and there is light and shadow, does the painting paint itself?

The forest was always a painter. A pencil is just a tentative proposal. It can take many months to process an animal skin. Our grandparents brought animals to this forest to sacrifice. Your father can no longer teach you about strength. Your father, with his big hands. You forget how long it was snowing. I haven't written any of this. The paintings taught me how to write it and the trees taught the paintings. My only job was to scrape the fur from the language as it dried.

Door swings open. Smell of sumac and ammonia.

A child wants to know about the age of marble. Her mother is distracted. There are dinner reservations and where will we park before the show? The child fiddles with her shirt. The writer (mother) thinks, "This will be special. My child will remember this forever. I saw a magician at a birthday party when I was her age." The child

is suddenly sad.

The tree was talking. The tree was shattered. The tree's body organized the mountain. The woman was drawing. The hand was drawing. They were all drowning. The tree drew itself. I'm trying to become more of a bitch. (This in order to survive.)

(The painter takes a break — sits on the floor of their studio — most of this work was finished on the mountain — close eyes — listen to the human dramas unfolding on their dusty laptop screen. Paintings begun in a season of snow storms and finished in a season of heat waves. Car backfires outside the studio. Painter starts.)

The child is lost. The child is not coming home. The child is watching us from the snow-blanketed forest. At the magic show, the mother's fingers clutched the balcony. An empty seat beside her. In the human world, every image has a frame, every miracle proceeds behind the proscenium. Not so on the mountain.

"I'll show you my hand," the magician is saying. "Front and back. I'm hiding nothing."

None of the parents want to give up hope. The search party keeps searching. Every night at dusk they ring the town bell. We want them to know we are here. We want them to know we are thinking of them.

I want to tell the mothers:
Give up the children to the forest.

"Let me roll up my sleeves," the magician is saying. "I'll show you. Nothing."

Paintings made with animal hide (sheep, goat). Surfaces made with animal gelatine (bovine, rabbit). Certain of the paintings done in distemper. (Have I heard the word this way before?) Distempered surfaces are easily marked, and cannot be washed down. Beaux is finishing, has been here all day, is telling me about the paintings. The glue is usually prepared with rabbit skin, sometimes cow. But rabbit is too sticky for this purpose.

Of course the children are staying in the forest. Down here, they fear for their lives.

Nothing is finished. Everything is dying or dead. And the sun sinks and the people of the town close up their shops and the bell rings and rings and rings.

— Agnes Borinsky

Beaux Mendes (b. 1987, New York) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. They hold MFAs from University of California, Los Angeles as well as from Bard Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts. Recent solo presentations include Black Forest at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin (2023), Capitol Reef at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2022), and Willow Staging Area at STARS, Los Angeles (2021). Mendes' work has been included in group shows at Real Pain Fine Arts and STARS, both in Los Angeles, Drei, Cologne, MAMOTH, London, Meredith Rosen Gallery and GEMS, New York, and Palazzo Tamborino Cezzi, Lecce, Italy, among others. Their work is in the permanent collections of Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Mendes is currently included in the 15th Gwangju Biennale, Pansori: A Soundscape of the 21st Century, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud.

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery.

Miguel Abreu Gallery

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Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00AM to 6:00PM or by appointment