

Exhibition: R. H. QUAYTMAN
The Hieroglyphic, Chapter 0.4

Location: Frieze Masters, Regent's Park, London
Booth E8

Dates: October 15 – 19, 2025

In 2001, I began to call my exhibitions “chapters” as a way to organize, bind, and detect other meanings, as if zoomed out over time. This shift in terminology was accompanied by a uniformity in the paintings’ support: gessoed plywood panels adhering to the nesting geometry of the golden section. Thus, I have five possible squares and five possible rectangles. This method enables a single painting to be understood as part of an overarching whole, continuing as long as I do.

The Hieroglyphic, Chapter 0.4 is my 39th chapter and my first show in London since 2008’s *Iamb, Chapter 12*. For this new chapter, I turned to my lifelong love and obsession with Queen Elizabeth I. As Roy Strong elucidates in his scholarship on the subject, Elizabeth both appreciated and influenced the politics of her portraits; in 1560 she even drafted a proclamation instructing her “portraiture sargent payntors” that no image of her was to be made unless it conformed to an official pattern, approved by her and distributed throughout her realm.

I often retreat into the past, researching art history related to the site of the exhibition. Reflecting on previous chapters while working on these paintings, I noticed a recurring pattern of returning again and again to the 16th century. *Chapter 22* was based on engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi. *Chapter 26* focused on the ruff in Clouet’s portrait of Empress Elizabeth of Austria. *Chapter 29* paired Martin Luther with the *Angelus Novus*, and *Chapters 31* and *32* drew on two large 16th-century paintings by Otto van Veen.

Looking at hundreds of reproductions of Elizabeth’s image—in paintings and engravings, on coins and statues—I became interested in one particular early pattern showing her face in three-quarter view. While the clothes and backgrounds change dramatically from painting to painting, the face remains mask-like, with only the direction of her gaze shifting. Rarely does one feel the possibility of knowing her through her image.

Because of this, her appearance seems to delicately morph over time, as if Muybridge had made a series of stop-motion photographs of a woman’s face aging. There is one allegorical painting that struck me deeply: Elizabeth depicted in the role of Paris, about to choose which of the three goddesses will win the golden apple. Would she also choose Aphrodite and her child, Eros—or would she choose Hera or Athena? Or should she be content with the two ladies-in-waiting at her back? Luckily, Elizabeth always took her time choosing. After all, she holds not an apple but the globe.

— R. H. Quaytman

R. H. Quaytman (b. 1961, Boston) lives and works in Guilford, CT. Recent one-person exhibitions include Ones, Chapter 0.2, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2025); Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD (2022); Modern Subjects, Chapter zero, WIELS, Brussels (2021); and The Sun Does Not Move, Chapter 35, a two-part exhibition at the Serralves Museum, Porto (2020) and Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (2019). Book, the second volume of Quaytman’s artist book and catalogue raisonné was recently published by Glenstone Museum.

Quaytman's work has been featured in documenta 14 (2017); the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); and the 2010 Whitney Biennial. Other solo exhibitions have taken place at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2018); Galerie Buchholz, Berlin and Cologne (2018, 2011); Secession, Vienna (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2016); Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2015, 2008); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2015); Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels (2014, 2012); Renaissance Society, Chicago (2013); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2012); Kunsthalle Basel (2011); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2010); and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2009), among others. In 2015, Quaytman was awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize with Michael Krebber. In 2005, she co-founded Orchard, a cooperatively-run exhibition and event space that concluded its three-year run on the Lower East Side in 2008.

Her work is held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; The Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD; and Pinault Collection, among others.

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

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Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10AM to 6PM or by appointment
Subway: B, D to Grand Street; F to East Broadway; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street
Bus: M15 to Allen Street / Grand Street