



ENGAGE Projects

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Temporal Dispersions

CAMERON GAINER

April 4- May 10, 2025

Opening: Friday, April 4, 5:30-7:30pm



Process photo courtesy of Cameron Gainer

“In many ways, every piece of landscape art is a failure of representation. What is fact are the ingredients—light, space, time. What's not is each artist's subjective interpretation. These landscapes, entropic cyanotypes, eschew affectation and embrace the turbulent, raw, and chaotic qualities of nature, with the result reflecting the process from which the image is formed.”

- Cameron Gainer

ENGAGE Projects is pleased to announce Cameron Gainer's solo Chicago debut with our upcoming exhibition "Temporal Dispersions." Using the open desert as his studio space, this new photo-based work elucidates enduring themes in Gainer's art, addressing the ineffable nature of time and the mysteries of perception—recurrent themes that span his artistic career.

Over the last two decades, Gainer has combined scientific and artistic inquiry in his expansive practice. His past works include using the world's most light-sensitive camera to capture bioluminescence, casting time out of 4-billion-year-old meteorites, and painting photo-realistic canvases based on satellite images of impact craters named for notable artists, scientists, and thinkers.

A conceptual landscape artist at heart, this recent work, the Temporal Dispersions, pushes the limits of photography in what Gainer calls "an interrogation of the photographic process and the representation of landscape at the edge of form."

For further information, please contact info@engage-projects.com



Working in the arroyos (seasonal riverbeds) of the Sonoran desert, Gainer begins creating these works by marking a section of land the size of the photographic material. He carefully removes the desert topsoil, which consists of insects, bones, plant material, scat, and primarily silica—the raw material from which photographic lenses are made. He then places this material in a temporary container and lays the photographic substrate onto the prepared ground.

The artist then acts as a human hourglass, letting time pass as he methodically pours the removed soil onto the surface of the paper or fabric. This durational element allows the light-sensitive material underneath to slowly record the time it takes for the displaced landscape to settle and be “exposed” by the elements of gravity, wind, time, and light. The earth acts as the camera, the raw silica the lens, and the desert functions as the focal point.

For the work’s final stages, Gainer removes the photographic material from the soil and returns the land to its original condition, removing any trace of a human presence. The resultant images are vibrant blue materially direct abstractions, the color of the sky and the ocean—the earth’s counterparts. Simultaneously evoking the most advanced imagery of deep space and a birds-eye view of the melting arctic ice, these meditations resonate with our contemporary ecological condition. For Gainer, the process remains a point of emphasis: he establishes the photographic conditions for an image to be formed, but the results are created by the elements and the landscape itself.

Cameron Gainer is the founder of *The Third Rail*, an internationally distributed publication devoted to a discussion of modern and contemporary art, politics, philosophy, and culture. He has had solo museum exhibitions at The New Temporary Contemporary at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, and the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Group exhibitions include “Spectators, Rendered and Regulated” at Koenig and Clinton Gallery New York, New York; “Midnight Party” at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; “The Paranoia of Time” at Carter & Citizen Gallery, Los Angeles; “The Moon is a Lantern” at Lisa Sette Gallery, Phoenix; and “Portal” at McClain Gallery, Houston. Awards and fellowships include a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, Pollock-Krasner grant, James L. McKnight Fellowship, and a Jerome Foundation grant for research.