

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Ena Swansea, *Central Park pond 2*, 2019, Oil and acrylic on linen, 152 x 275 cm. (59 7/8 x 108 1/4 in.)

NATURE, ABSTRACTED

CURATED BY SEAN ZHANG

Ben Brown Fine Arts
201 The Factory, 1 Yip Fat Street
Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong
4 July - 29 August 2026
Private View: Saturday 4 July, 5-7 pm

HAROLD ANCART
YOAN CAPOTE
KRISTY M CHAN
CHENG TING TING

JENNIFER GUIDI
EMMA MCINTYRE
JOSÉ PARLÁ
DAISY PARRIS

GERHARD RICHTER
ENA SWANSEA
MERRIL WAGNER

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to present *Nature, Abstracted*, an exhibition curated by New York-based curator and advisor Sean Zhang. The exhibition brings together eleven artists whose practices share a sustained engagement with the logic of the natural world.

The exhibition takes as its premise a statement **Gerhard Richter** has returned to across decades of practice: that nature possesses an inherent logic, a structural intelligence in the behaviour of water, the branching of trees, the stratification of earth, and that abstraction, at its most ambitious, aspires to embody that same intelligence.

The eleven artists assembled here approach this proposition from vastly different starting points. Richter's squeegee-built canvases encode the logic of geological accumulation and erosion in each layered surface.

Yoan Capote is known for works fabricated from hand-wrought fishhooks pressed into the painted surface. Viewed from a distance, the works read as classic paintings of sea meeting sky; only upon close examination do the perilous materials become clear, and the idyllic tableaux shift to something more sinister. The fishhooks speak to the dangers entwined with the dream of migration, transforming the seascape into a charged terrain of longing and risk.

José Parlá works from a different but related logic, layering acrylic, oil, and plaster into canvases that carry both the physical

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sediment of urban surfaces and the mark of lived time, works in which the natural and the inscribed are inseparable. **Jennifer Guidi** embeds sand into oil and acrylic on linen, building radiant, mandala-like color fields whose logic is molecular and cosmic at once, echoing the same organising principles that govern a dune, a cell, or a galaxy.

Ena Swansea's large-scale paintings negotiate a tension between visibility and disappearance. The still surface of *Central Park Pond 2* (2019) renders the natural world at the threshold between presence and absence. **Harold Ancart** works in a similar register, distilling direct observation into passages of colour that straddle abstraction and representation. What unites these paintings is the horizon line running through each work, dividing sky and sea, foreground and background, dissecting the figurative whole into abstract parts and turning the placid landscapes into a meditation on painting itself.

Merrill Wagner, whose practice has spanned six decades, brings a rigorous and materially inventive approach to abstraction rooted in direct observation of the natural world. In *Ucross 2002: 5 Brands of Naples Yellow* (2004), horizontal strips of the same yellow pigment drawn from five different paint brands build a rich chromatic gradient that is vaguely, and beautifully, reminiscent of landscape. Alongside this more structural work, Wagner's intimately scaled plein air paintings, created at her Pennsylvania farm since the 1990s, chronicle the changing seasons year after year: the deep reds of fall, the snow-whites of winter, the yellows and lavenders of summer bloom.

Among the emerging voices in the exhibition, **Daisy Parris, Cheng Ting Ting, Emma McIntyre, and Kristy M Chan**, share a commitment to landscape as a site of emotional and material possibility. Parris layers saturated colours and embedded text until emotion becomes material and language is distilled into pure mark. Cheng Ting Ting's paintings flicker between foliage, figure, and memory, making time and passage the true subject. McIntyre's flora and fauna surface through smeared and streaked paint, the boundary between representation and pure mark dissolving as the image resolves into pure mark-making. Kristy M Chan's canvases are built from the inside out, layer upon layer of colour and mark coalescing into dense chromatic fields where the personal and the painterly are inseparable.

What unites these eleven artists, across generation, geography, and medium, is a shared conviction that the most rigorous abstraction is never a departure from the world but a deepening of attentiveness to it. The works in this exhibition are unsparring. What they locate in nature is not comfort, but precision: the same relentless exactitude that governs weather systems and geological time, encoded through paint, material, surface, and process. The question of how the world organises itself, as Richter understood, has no answer. But the asking of it, rigorously, materially, and without resolution, remains among the most vital things art can do.

ABOUT BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Ben Brown Fine Arts is an international gallery specialising in post-war and contemporary art with locations in London, Hong Kong and New York. Founded in London's Mayfair in 2004, the gallery operates across both primary and secondary markets and represents a group of leading contemporary artists including Tony Bevan, Awol Erizku, Candida Höfer, Vik Muniz, Yoan Capote, Nabil Nahas, Gavin Turk, José Parlá, Enoc Perez and Ena Swansea. Alongside its contemporary programme, Ben Brown Fine Arts is known for exhibitions of post-war figures such as Alighiero Boetti, Frank Auerbach, Alexander Calder, Lucio Fontana, Gerhard Richter and Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne. Recent landmark exhibition projects include *Planète Lalanne* during the 60th Venice Biennale (2024), *Calder: Extreme Cantilever* (London, 2024), *Alighiero e Boetti: Embellishing the Sky* (London, 2025) and *Alighiero Boetti*, curated by Elena Guena at SMAC during the 61st Venice Biennale (2026). The gallery participates regularly in international art fairs, including Art Basel (Basel, Hong Kong and Miami Beach), Frieze Masters, TEFAF (Maastricht and New York), Miart, the Armory Show and Art Mumbai.

ABOUT SEAN ZHANG

Sean Zhang is a New York-based independent curator and art advisor. As the founder of Loft 121, Zhang has organised a series of independent curatorial projects and group exhibitions, collaborating with over 35 emerging and established artists while developing a growing network of collectors, galleries, and institutions. Previously, he has held positions at David Zwirner, National Museum of Asian Art - Smithsonian Institution, The Rubell Museum, Thaddaeus Ropac, and The Baer Faxt.

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