

# NATHALIE KARG

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Seth Cameron, *Sunless*

February 20 - March 24, 2019

Opening Reception: Wednesday, February 20, 6–8 pm

Nathalie Karg Gallery is pleased to present “Sunless,” a solo exhibition by the painter and writer Seth Cameron, his second with the gallery.

Chris Marker’s 1983 essay film, “Sunless,” is a rumination on the capacity of images to suspend time, to thwart the drive of narrative toward resolution. The film posits the gaps and misdirections of memory as “things that quicken the heart.” For his exhibition, Cameron locates these moments of aesthetic sublimation through a series of sensitive watercolor paintings, a selection of small-scale oil studies and a personal essay presented on a large folding screen.

Each of the three cinematically proportioned sides of the folding screen, situated to indicate a spiral path toward the center of the gallery, is hung with theater flats printed with a story of the writer discovering his estranged father preaching in a nearby church. While the narrative positions the act of remembering as akin to the search for religious faith, gaps between the flats frame paintings at various distances. The father’s blindness, set against the writer’s desire to understand his own past, collapses metaphorical seeing with the sense of sight, and tenuously addresses the subtlety of the paintings seen, yet not seen, through the gaps.

Once beyond the screen, the watercolors disclose geometric space through subtle shifts of color, just as the universe is measured through the red and blue shifts of stars advancing and receding in spacetime. Produced in washes that do not betray the artist’s hand, these paintings emphasize the condition of painting as an experience of beholding. And yet they refuse to resolve into images – as soon as one field of color emerges,

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another disappears. “I consider them landscapes,” Cameron says, “in the sense that the condition of landscape is space beyond the body, the experience of some place beyond ourselves. Conversely, I think of the oil studies as more like memories than experiences, where the know-how of their making competes with the knowability of their image.” Accordingly, the studies emphasize the Romantic capacity of painted gestures to remain suspended between the story of their application and their capacity to evoke natural phenomena: breaking waves, the reflection of the night sky, light disappearing beyond the horizon.

Near the beginning of Marker’s film, the narrator says “that in the 19th century mankind had come to terms with space, and that the great question of the 20th was the coexistence of different concepts of time.” With this exhibition, Cameron works within this coexistence – time as space, as color, as memory and information – finding hints of the sublime, its terror and its awe, in the gaps between the religious, natural and technological.

**Seth Cameron** (b. 1982, South Carolina) is a painter and writer. He graduated from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 2004. For the next three years, he worked as the Creative Director for Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, curating the exhibition “A Knock at the Door...,” which examined First Amendment issues in the arts in the aftermath of the Patriot Act. Meanwhile he co-founded The Bruce High Quality Foundation, an artist collective masquerading as an artist’s foundation, producing unsanctioned public interventions, musical theater performances, zombie films and myriad other nose-thumbing commentaries on the art world. The collective has exhibited in The Whitney Biennial (2010), the Lever House (2012), The Lyon Biennale (2013), and held a retrospective at The Brooklyn Museum of Art (2013). In 2009 the collective formed the non-profit BHQFU, with Cameron serving as President of the tuition-free experimental art school until its closing in 2017. Concurrently, Cameron taught courses in Creative Writing, Art History, Sculpture, Drawing and Intradisciplinary Studies and lectured across the country on the future of arts education. Since 2016, Cameron has been exhibiting paintings under his own name. His writing and interviews with artists have been published by *The Paris Review*, *Flaunt*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Miami Rail*, *VWVWW* and Zwirner Books (forthcoming). In the summer of 2019, he is an artist-in-residence with the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in West Cork, Ireland. Cameron is married to Alexandra Cunningham Cameron, Curator of Contemporary Design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. They live in New York City with their two sons.