

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



MELISSA BROWN

Windows and Bars

April 26 – May 27, 2023

**Opening Reception: Wednesday, April 26,
6–8 pm**

That's not how I remember it, but ok, if you say so.

My photo app and I often disagree about events and how things looked. It's like I'm having a constant argument and I'm continually proven wrong. I'm not losing my mind, it's just that I have double memories and can't help noticing what one has and the other does not.

A shrink once told me that embodied memory changes with time and experience, which is funny because my fear is the other way around: that in fact my experiences are being altered in the cloud. But from a clinical standpoint,

apparently, it's my corporeal hard drive that is subject to change.

A chatbot suggested that I might prefer embodied memories because they contain smells, sounds, and textures as part of the picture. Nope. In my view it's all about light sliding through space: *How the red glow swirls in the champagne before shimmering down the wet bar.* It's about making bigger what I see as most important or most otherworldly. That sometimes means painting the invisible.

The works in this show depict a layering effect of both kinds of memories: There are bars and windows; windows inside bars; windows in an app with service-bars; spirits and spirits; going out and staying in; photos of memento mori against paintings of them. Overall, these paintings present a side-by-side account of experiences both banal and mystical as seen through two minds.

– Melissa Brown, 2023

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present *Windows and Bars*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Melissa Brown. In this show, Brown continues to work with a collage of painting techniques, including airbrush, impasto, silkscreen, and stencil. These works in particular use iPhone pictures as a point of comparison between recorded memory and lived experience. Phone pics are reproduced as CMYK screen-prints in the paintings. The images are taken from events in the artist's life: views of her apartment and of nightlife in and around New York City. The aggressively ordinary and subtle motifs could be from anyone's point of view. However, they are

selected because they feel out-of-time, mysterious, symbolic, or revealing about our current relationship to technology and representation.

She cites Joan Brown, (no relation) as a primary influence in this body of work, specifically the elder Brown's ability to monumentalize modest subjects that derive from her experiences of daily life. Additionally, she admires Joan Brown's ability to see quotidian events as parallel to grand, art historical narratives. Brown is interested in the hierarchical differences between how a memory is captured in the digital sphere versus how it is remembered in the body: how the human mind pushes forward what is emotionally resonant, phenomenological, or temporarily beautiful and how this feels categorically different from how the cloud stores experience as a static, retrievable image.

Melissa Brown (b.1974) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *West Coast Paintings* at Anat Egbi in Los Angeles, *Thrift Store Find* at Andrew Rafacz Gallery in Chicago, *Fountain, Melissa Brown and Jamie Bull* at Dodd Gallery, University of Georgia in Athens, *Going AWOL* at Biggins Gallery, Auburn University, *The Journal* at Tennis Elbow in Brooklyn, *Past Present Future* at Magenta Planes, *Paper Fortune* at CANADA in New York City and internationally at Roberto Paradise, San Juan. She has participated in group exhibitions at Parker Gallery, Venus Over Manhattan, Mass MOCA, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Klaus Von Nichtssagend and Musée International Des Arts Modestes, and Deitch Projects, Los Angeles. In 2012 she was awarded the Joan Mitchell Painter's Grant and a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center in 2019. Her work is in the permanent collections at The Whitney Museum of American Art, the New York City Department of Education, and the Fidelity Corporate Collection. She is an associate professor in art at Lehman College, City University of New York. This will be her third solo exhibition at the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.