



Zach Meisner
Film and Volume



2

- 1 / cover *Untitled*, 2021. Shellac on maple and paper, plastic, acrylic paint/medium. 9.5×4.5×1.5 in. (24.1×11.4×3.8 cm). Courtesy of MICKEY, Chicago, IL; and Townsend, New York, NY.
- 2 *Untitled*, 2020. Photochromic acrylic paint, glass, stainless steel, foam core. 1.5×3 in. (3.8×7.6 cm). Courtesy of MICKEY, Chicago, IL; and Townsend, New York, NY.
- 3 *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic paint/medium stretched over acrylic and MDF. 12×6×4 in. (30.5×15.2×10.2 cm). Courtesy of MICKEY, Chicago, IL; and Townsend, New York, NY.
- 4 *Untitled*, 2021. Acrylic on walnut. 1.5×1.5×1 in. (3.8×3.8×2.5 cm). Courtesy of MICKEY, Chicago, IL; and Townsend, New York, NY.
- 5 *Untitled*, 2016. Metamorphic rock, putty and bamboo. 4.5×3.5×2 in. (11.4×8.9×5.1 cm). Courtesy of MICKEY, Chicago, IL; and Townsend, New York, NY.

Film and Volume reflects nearly a decade of Zach Meisner's evolving approach to artmaking. The objects, window treatments, and experimental music presented here articulate his manifold practice, focusing on works he produced in the past year as he has stretched his practice in new directions. All the works are untitled, a choice that nods to their non-representational nature. Viewing them requires close attention to the formal qualities of the work—color, texture, volume, sound, light, material, and size—which Meisner conceives through a process of intuition and experimentation. This process extends to music as well, resulting in rich configurations of synthesized melodies, beats, and vibrations.

Meisner's practice is deeply informed by the history of abstract art. His early work was influenced by painters such as Wassily Kandinsky, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Paul Klee, and he has since cultivated an object-based practice unhindered by the need for representational grounding. Meisner's forms are instead products of his perceptual responses to the work as he is making it—neither fully in our world, nor fully divorced from it. Even so, they harmonize with their surroundings in ways that highlight otherwise unseen elements: the roundness of stones through a window; a protruding fire hydrant on a column; or the muddled, serpentine pattern of a carpet worn by years of use. The objects in *Film and Volume* exist in tandem with their physical context even as they resist clear linkages.

This is equally true of the acrylic film adhered to the Courtyard Gallery's windowpanes. Each opaque section echoes its larger, rectangular boundary with an unpainted border, concentrating our view on the voids wherein the external courtyard is both abstracted and clarified. Glimpses of the outside foliage are heightened due to their sparseness.

The spatial blurring between inside and outside achieved with these acrylic films is striking in its simplicity. Moreover, this material allows Meisner to carefully manipulate the light coming into the space, creating an affective sense for viewers of being quietly enveloped by colored light. This affect is mirrored in some of the objects in the exhibition, such as *Untitled* (Fig. 3) (2020), which is enclosed by a stretched acrylic membrane. The sensorial relationship between the viewer's body and the skin-like coverings on many of the works in *Film and Volume* contributes to a haptic experience of Meisner's works.

Many of the objects offer distinct revelations when approached from various angles. *Untitled* (Fig. 1) (2021), for example, is a gently curving piece carved from richly stained maple. It juts out from the wall where it hangs at eye-level, revealing a round central cavity containing a green 3-D printed gear-like mechanism wrapped in acrylic film. Each perspective gives the viewer a different sense of its smooth angles, voids, internal architecture, and reflective qualities based on the light surrounding it. Like much of Meisner's work, this sculpture creates an intimate synergy with its viewer as they peer closer to comprehend its structure.

Film and Volume poses ambiguous analogies that have no clear beginning or end. This reflects Meisner's practice in many ways. His objects, acrylic films, and music are expressions of potential, wherein there are endless possibilities for our consciousness to explore. Through a layering process, Meisner manipulates our awareness of space and environmental phenomena. One layer, upon another, upon another, upon another.

Kaila T. Schedeen (b. 1992, Corinth, TX) received her BA in Art History at The University of Texas at Austin (2014) and her MA in Art History at the University of Delaware (2016). She is a PhD candidate at UT Austin specializing in contemporary American art with a particular focus on Indigenous artists and artists of the African Diaspora who critically examine the terms of identity, belonging, and nationhood in the United States through photography, performance, and multimedia works.



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5



June 24
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Zach Meisner (b. 1984, Taos, NM) earned a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2012), and an MFA in Fine Art from The University of Texas at Austin (2017). His work has been exhibited at MICKEY, Chicago, IL (2019); The Dude Ranch, Austin, TX (2019); Texas State Galleries, San Marcos, TX (2017); Visual Arts Center, Austin, TX (2017); and Victory+Mo Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2016); amongst others. He was a recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2017) and a Fellowship in Visual Arts from the Luminarts Cultural Foundation (2014). He is currently an Assistant Professor of Practice in the Department of Art and Art History at The University of Texas at Austin.

Organized by Kaila T. Schedeen, 2019–20 Visual Arts Center
Curatorial Fellow



The Courtyard Gallery is located in the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center at The University of Texas at Austin and features artwork from alumni of the Department of Art and Art History in the College of Fine Arts. Exhibitions at the Courtyard Gallery are organized by the Visual Arts Center.

sites.utexas.edu/courtyard-gallery