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Sam Moyer
Circle of Confusion

BLUM, Los Angeles
November 4–December 16, 2023
Opening reception: Saturday, November 4, 5–7pm

Los Angeles, CA, October 17, 2023—BLUM is pleased to present *Circle of Confusion*, Brooklyn-based artist Sam Moyer’s first solo exhibition with the gallery.

“The circle of confusion” is a term used in photography and film to define and measure what is in or out of focus in a picture. It is an area where a point of light grows to a circle that you can visibly see in the final image, in which the size of the circle determines the sharpness of the image.

In the circle of confusion, ideas come in and out of focus. The closer and smaller the idea, the more acute and sharp the opinion, the action; the broader and wider the scope is, the blurrier the feelings, the greater the overwhelm and failure to process, but still an understandable image—all within the circle of confusion.

I started making these paintings in 2020 as a solution to a problem. It was a moment when the broader scope was too hard to hold. The narrowing of focus to the work of brush strokes and intuitive response tightened the circle of confusion for me. Since 2020, the circle has expanded and contracted. As I write this, I am feeling overwhelmed again, grateful for this task to sharpen focus.

These paintings have a limited palette centered around Payne’s Gray, a color that represents the cold reflective light of “magic hour,” the moment after the sun has set, before it’s dark—when the light is a soft blue. This in-between light emphasizes contrast while simultaneously flattening the world.

I never studied painting. I have sort of forged my way through this new relationship with oil paint via advice and guessing, but the material has revealed a direct tactile play with light that I have always sought from the existing surfaces of materials. In photography and stone, a relationship to light is inherent to the process, or comes directly from the source, but with painting, I have the control. Utilizing different techniques of application, I can get the surface of the paintings to reflect or absorb light in configurations that are only revealed as the viewer walks around the work, engaging the body, returning the painting to its objecthood and its relationship to the three-dimensional world, and sculpture.

The images and patterns of the paintings exist in my mind in a form of haunting. Another circle of confusion, they hold a soft edge while in the realm of imagination and tighten as I start the actual work of laying down paint. I pull focus through process, allowing the material to aid in the work’s direction.

Upstairs, seven new photographic works are on view. The images in this series are of eroded sea walls that were built on the beaches of Gardiners Bay on Long Island, using the stones of the beach as the aggregate in the concrete mixture. As time and water have moved over them, the structure of the walls has degraded into free-formed shapes. They have lost their protective function but, in so, have been

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transformed into site-specific sculptures— a collaboration between the human hands that made the walls and the forces of nature that have been breaking them down.

I have framed the photographs in concrete using the same beach stones as aggregate. The frames take on the role of representing what these forms once were, holding the image of their trajectory.

– Sam Moyer

Sam Moyer (b. 1983, Chicago, IL) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She earned her BFA from the Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington, DC, and her MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT. Her work has been featured in national and international exhibitions such as at the Drawing Center, New York, NY; the Bass Museum, Miami, FL; University Art Museum, University at Albany, NY; Public Art Fund, New York, NY; White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, MO; LAND, Los Angeles, CA; and Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden. Moyer's work is held in numerous prominent collections, including the Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon; Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA; Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris, France; Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from sixteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing artists of Japanese and Korean postwar and contemporary movements, such as Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale projects critically examining historical movements and work including the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023).

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to fostering inclusive

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and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

Press Inquiries

Nicoletta Beyer
Communications and Editorial Director, New York
nicoletta@blum-gallery.com

Christie Hayden
Communications and Social Media Editor, Los Angeles
christie@blum-gallery.com