

Jeremy Demester *Nile*

5 November – 20 December 2025
First Floor, 41 Dover Street
London W1S 4NS

Opening: Wednesday, 5 November, 6 – 8pm



Jeremy Demester, *Entoptic painting 1*, 2025, photo: Lucy Dawkins

*'I feel this is where I belong, though I cannot discern from every form around me.
Everything seems abstract, yet I feel this is home.'*

Jeremy Demester, 2025¹

Galerie Max Hetzler, London, is pleased to present *Nile*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by **Jeremy Demester**. This is the artist's tenth exhibition with the gallery, and his second in the London space.

The title of the exhibition takes its name from the ancient, storied river – one of the longest in the world – that winds its way through Africa towards the Mediterranean Sea. An integral part of the Earth's landscape, the Nile has served as a primary life source for millennia, profoundly shaping civilisation, culture, mythology, and the economies which have emerged along its riverbanks. An emblem of life, vitality, and connection, both physical and psychical, the Nile offers a thematic entry point into the exhibition, as it drifts and meanders through each body of work.

Demester's new paintings are largely composed on unconventional surfaces: tarp, copper, and local cotton and linen, with just one on traditional canvas. His drawings are rendered on paper, handmade from hemp, or tea-dyed cotton rag. Using chance as a medium in and of itself, the artist sources much of his materials from local markets in Ouidah, Benin, where he lives and works. One work, *Nile I*, is painted on tarp, a ubiquitous and everyday material in West Africa, used as a protective cover for goods and cargo. Reminiscent of medieval parchment, made from animal skin, tarp retains the traces of time: exposed to the elements, it becomes bleached from sunlight, speckled with dust, worn by wind and rain. Inspired by visions and dreams, three copper paintings titled 'Chant' present swirling abstractions in rich hues, set against a metallic sheen. Demester notes that polished copper was used as one of the earliest mirrors during the Chalcolithic Period (c. 4000 BCE). Thus weighted in symbolic and historical significance, the works weave threads between the ancient world, the spiritual world, and the present moment.

¹ J. Demester, excerpt from the poem *Nile Paintings*, 2025.

² J. Demester, excerpt from the poem *Lantern*, 2025.

Each group of work in the exhibition is accompanied by a poem, written by the artist: 'Painting,' he states, 'is my translation of the poems.' Just one work, *Drifting continuities in ammonites territory* (*House of the cascade*), stands alone, its title a poem in itself. Conjuring a flowing waterfall and luscious vegetation in golden, light-drenched hues, the painting alludes to Demester's childhood in Provence, as memory, visions and dreams disband into vibrant abstraction. Themes of nature abound across the works, with references to geological formations, strata, fossils, and prehistoric rock art. Eight works on paper, titled 'Entoptic Drawings', are inspired by entoptic phenomena, visual patterns that originate from within the eye itself and become visible to the mind in altered states of consciousness – from trance to psychedelics. The drawings are displayed against a wallpapered backdrop showing cave paintings of multilayered hands from the archive of the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt am Main: a homage, notes the artist, to our ancestors.

Akin to the process of automatic writing, Demester does not plan his compositions but works according to instinct, spontaneity and intuition, citing art historical influences ranging from Willem de Kooning and Joan Mitchell to Ana Mendieta, Max Ernst and Robert Smithson. In his 'Breathe' paintings, the largest in the exhibition, the works are built through rhythmic layers which, he explains, come together like orchestral music. In *Lantern*, sweeping, gestural marks and a rich amber palette evoke the flickering glow of fire. The work pays tribute to spiritual guides who accompany others on their search for deeper meaning. 'The darkness of our being is here,' writes Demester, 'But the star is here, too.'² Traversing figuration and abstraction, past and present, the visible and the occult, *Nile* invites a dialogue between alternate worlds.

Jeremy Demester (b. 1988, Digne, France) lives and works between Ouidah, Benin and the South of France. Demester's work has been presented in institutional solo and group exhibitions, including at Le LAB - Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou (2024); Fondation Carmignac, Porquerolles Island (2023); Ouidah Museum - Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah (2021 and 2015); Monnaie de Paris (2021); MUba Eugène Leroy, Tourcoing (2019); Stiftung zur Förderung zeitgenössischer Kunst in Weidingen (2018); Château Malromé, Saint André-du-Bois (2018); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne (2016); Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2016); and Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2015), among others. In 2019, the artist and his wife Marie-Sophie Eiché Demester founded Atoké, a non-profit organisation that supports children in Benin by providing access to education, healthcare, nourishment and legal assistance.

Demester's work can be found in the collections of Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah; Istanbul Modern; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne Métropole; Patrimoine Hennessy; and Rennie Museum, Vancouver, among others.

Further Exhibitions and Events

BERLIN

Janaina Tschäpe
A gush of wind (Atemraum)
7 November 2025 – 31 January 2026
Potsdamer Straße 77–87
10785 Berlin

Eleanor Swordy
Say Less
14 November 2025 – 17 January 2026
Bleibtreustraße 45
10623 Berlin

Grace Weaver
Mothers
11 September – 29 November 2025
Goethestraße 2/3
10623 Berlin

PARIS

Albert Oehlen
Endless Summer
20 October – 20 December 2025
46 & 57, rue du Temple
75004 Paris

MARFA

Richard Prince
Posters
17 May – 7 December 2025
1976 Antelope Hills Road
Marfa, Texas

Press Contact

Galerie Max Hetzler

Stephanie Garcia
stephanie@maxhetzler.com
+44 20 7629 7733

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