Lehmann Maupin

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Calida Rawles
Parallax
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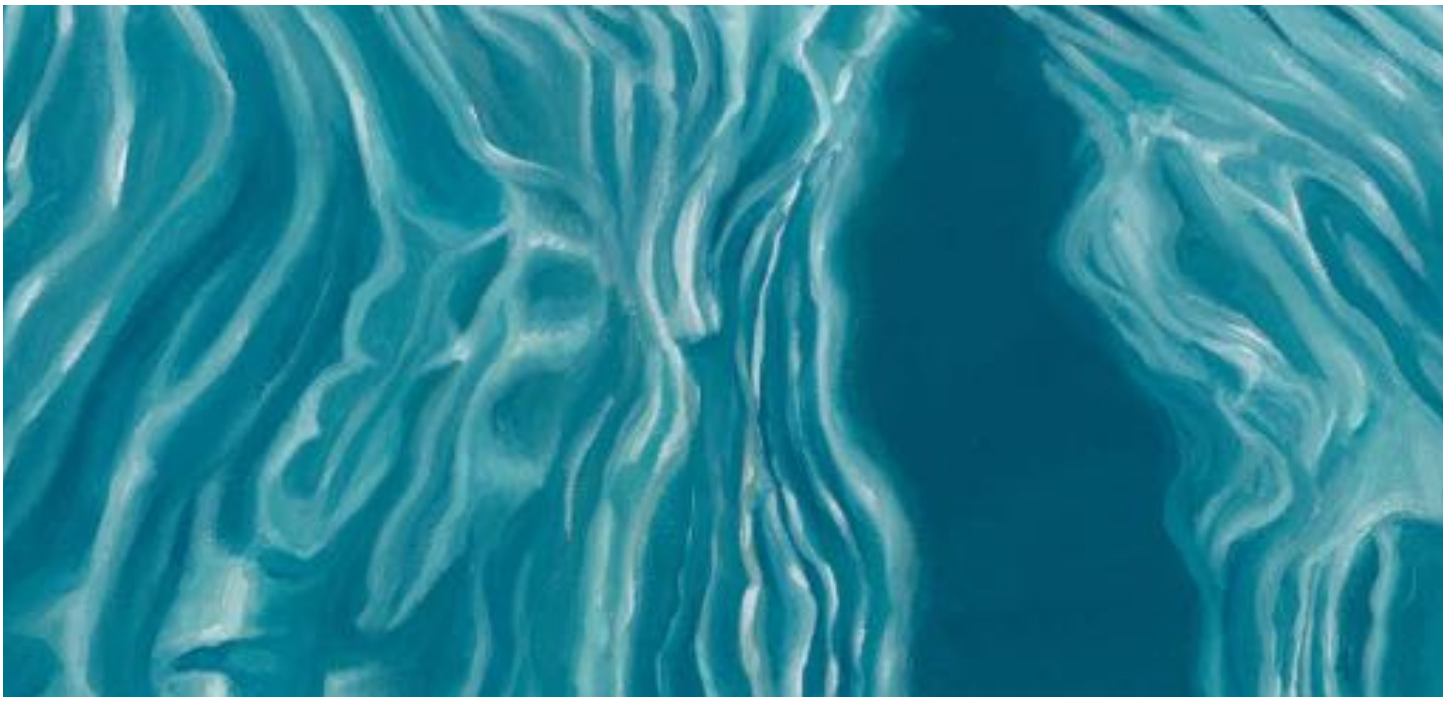
Calida Rawles, *Axis of Paradise*, 2026

In her latest exhibition of new paintings, Calida Rawles explores parallax: how changing our point of view can change the way we see the same moment. Known for merging hyperrealism with poetic abstraction, Rawles situates Black subjects within dynamic, fluid environments, using water as both a vital material and a historically charged space through which questions of identity, memory, healing, and belonging come into focus.

This new exhibition centers on a series of three paintings based on photographs Rawles took of her youngest daughter in a pool. Captured within seconds of one another as Rawles moved around her in the water, the photographs record essentially the same moment from shifting positions and perspectives—each yielding an entirely different composition and visual experience. As she notes, "*I became interested in this subtle shift: how proximity, distance, angle, and movement can transform what we see without changing the moment itself.*" Through abstraction, water, light, and the movement around the figure, the resulting works create spaces that feel at once intimate and expansive.

The three paintings differ significantly in scale, structure, and composition. Rather than presenting a single, fixed view, they create a dialogue between perspectives, each offering a distinct interpretation of the same fleeting moment. Together, they suggest that no moment is entirely singular—that it can be experienced, remembered, and understood differently depending on where we stand. There is a sense of quiet and stillness within these works, as well as an invitation to slow down and consider the world from another perspective. As Rawles concludes, "*Parallax* considers the relationship between perception and position, how changing where we stand can change not only what we see, but how we understand what we have seen."

Rawles's work, *Like Other Gods with Ancient Rage* (2023), is currently on view at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., as part of the museum's permanent collection. The exhibition follows Rawles's first solo museum presentation, *Away with the Tides*, which debuted at the Pérez Art Museum Miami in 2024 before traveling to the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art in 2025, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Jacksonville, Florida, and, in 2026, concluded its tour at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta.



Calida Rawles, *The Geometry of Origins*, 2026 (detail)

Calida Rawles (b. 1976, Wilmington, DE) is known for paintings that merge hyper-realism with poetic abstraction. Situating Black subjects in dynamic, fluid spaces, Rawles employs water as a vital, multifaceted material and historically charged space through which questions of identity, memory, healing, and belonging come into focus.

At times buoyant and ebullient, at others submerged and mysterious, her subjects float within exquisitely rendered landscapes of bubbles, ripples, and refracted light. For Rawles, water holds a profound duality: it can signify physical and spiritual healing while evoking histories of trauma, racial exclusion, and displacement. Drawing from history, mythology, philosophy, and politics, she uses this complexity to reimagine Black subjects beyond racialized tropes and envisions new possibilities for healing. At times referencing specific geographic locations, Rawles uses place to bring attention to the histories and specific events embedded within them, while water's ability to alter perception acts as the central force of her practice. A ripple may obscure a face while revealing something less immediately visible.

This interplay between what is seen and what remains submerged is reflected in Rawles's meticulous process. Through research, observation, photography, and a highly deliberate method of constructing each composition, she assembles countless references of figures she photographs in water. She carefully negotiates every current, reflection, gesture, and distortion, creating paintings that feel spontaneous yet are precisely rendered.

In late 2024, Rawles presented her first solo museum exhibition, *Away with the Tides*, at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. The exhibition traveled to the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art in 2025, followed by the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Jacksonville, Florida, and concluded its tour at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2026. Developed in collaboration with residents of Overtown, a historically Black Miami community shaped by decades of gentrification and displacement, the exhibition featured large-scale portraits of residents immersed in water, spanning generations from a ten-month-old baby to senior citizens. Through these portraits, Rawles reflects on Overtown's history while affirming the community's presence, vitality, and enduring legacy.



Artist portrait by Marten Elder



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Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 30 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has permanent locations in New York, Seoul, and London, as well as team members throughout Asia and Europe.

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