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**NANCY SHAVER *COPPER AND PROPANE, A PHOTOGRAPH: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T* with works by Jean-Philippe Antoine, Jared Buckhiester, Pamela Cardwell, Dawn Cerny, Marley Freeman, Tracy Miller, and Steel Stillman  
JANUARY 22 – MARCH 27, 2022**

F is pleased to announce *Copper and Propane, a photograph: what it is and what it isn't*, an eight person exhibition organized by and featuring the work of upstate New York-based artist Nancy Shaver, with works by Jean-Philippe Antoine, Jared Buckhiester, Pamela Cardwell, Dawn Cerny, Marley Freeman, Tracy Miller, and Steel Stillman. The exhibition will be on view from January 22 – March 27, 2022, by appointment, at 4225 Gibson Street, Houston, TX, 77007.

The exhibition features three new *Spacers*, works Shaver made with Steel Stillman. Shaver's *Spacers* are assemblage wall-works that pull bits and pieces into arranged clusters: panels with various materials stretched over them are fastened together. Additional elements are added, hung on the wall butted against, to become part of the clusters. Like any of Shaver's *Spacers*, the raw materials are fragments, a tablecloth, an Afghani sleeve, a bit of carpet; often she works into the patterned fabrics with paint, sometimes pencil. The *Spacers* in this show have been built to house prints of two of Stillman's photographs. One *Spacer* includes versions of Stillman's *Blossoms (1983)*, a re-photographed photograph of cherry blossoms thumb-tacked to a painted wood panel covered with mica leaves. The other two *Spacers* display versions of Stillman's *Percolator (1990)*, which depicts a copper coffeepot on the lit burner of Shaver's stove that Stillman photographed while visiting her in 1990, the event to which the show's title *Copper and Propane* initially refers.

Shaver has also included two *Blockers* in the show. Each rectilinear facet of these layered wood block grids are covered with fabric or paint. The visual stability of the gridded form clashes with the fabrics, making busy comparisons of the colors and patterns. Like Shaver's *Blockers*, works by Marley Freeman, Tracy Miller, and Jean-Philippe Antoine are dense with material and paint. There is no blank space, no negative space, no non-material: like most works in the show, these are *all material*, celebrations of materiality. Freeman's intimate oil and acrylic painting, made with layers of marks in a range of opacity, is rich with greens and pinks. On the floor is Freeman's pile of unglazed stoneware blocks (which gallery visitors are welcome to rearrange). Miller's small color-bomb paintings look like a mess of a junk drawer, and are nearly representational. Antoine's small paint and collage abstractions on honeycomb cardboard have the gravity of dark jewels.

Dawn Cerny has incorporated other Stillman photographs into her hanging mobile and, elsewhere in the room, into her tabletop sculptures, taking the prompt given by Shaver (a kind of, "this is what we are going to do"). In Cerny's delicate, humorous works, Stillman's small photo proofs are presented with clips and pinches, as if held in the works' fingers. The backs of his prints have been painted, one with the same hue as the mobile, becoming integrated into the work. Nearby, with a similar formal lyricism, Pamela Cardwell's pastels on paper evoke the body in gestural earthy strokes.

For a show framed by photography, Stillman serves as the medium's main representative. Most of his work included has been absorbed in the service of Shaver and Cerny (although in both of their work, Stillman's prints have been left whole). Stillman is an ideal candidate for the job, as his project-at-large consists of reprocessing his own photographs through cycles of re-presenting the image-memories and architectures from his past. In this exhibition, Stillman's *Blossoms (1983) Triptych (2021)* presents a turn of the complexity and repetition of his project, in which three identical *Blossoms* prints are shown, installed one above another, each frame painted a different color: pink, green, light blue.

Jared Buckhiester's elegant charcoal drawing of a man sipping from a teacup additionally transforms *Percolator*, animating it through the suggested utilization of the coffeepot, and performing an odd bending of time: Buckhiester's man has accepted Shaver and Stillman's invitation. The exhibition title *Copper and Propane* may simply refer to that 1990 visit, and that would be enough, as an originating seed for a show that is as much about friendship as it is about looking and play. But the title is agile, underlining the importance of raw material to these artists, conjuring the elements, the chemical transformation of darkroom photography, and the daily alchemic rituals of dialogue over coffee.

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As an offering, and to prevent Stillman from bearing the sole photographic responsibility, Shaver has also included her own photograph in the show, *Iris* (1973 – 1975), a small framed silver gelatin print of an embroidered lace doily, for which she has given her notes:

The camera here records light on white surfaces 1973, 1974, or 1975?

An Iris, embroidered on a cotton square, has been taped to a white wall. The whites are softened to pale gray by the camera. The wall itself is marked, an uneven surface. The grays feel like light and air.

The cotton square, again. It has been ironed, folded and unfolded. The various foldings have left it rumpled, in spite of the fact that it has been ironed. Perhaps the foldings are the history of being put away, for future use.

The surface of the cotton square again and again. It was made for decoration and protection. It is evidence of domestic work and decoration for protection. It has been a call. The call became the photograph. The response has been tended by women, artists and craftsmen worldwide for centuries. Decoration and Protection.

## IRIS

A species of flowering plants with showy flowers.

It is a popular garden flower.

The Iris flower is of interest, it is an example of the relation between flowering plants and pollinating insects.

Birth flower for February.

In antiquity, the Iris represented Our Lady of Sorrows as its sharp leaves are like swords.

Vincent Van Gogh painted several famous pictures of Iris.

It takes its name from the Greek word for rainbow.

It is a woman's name.

Jean-Philippe Antoine, at Shaver's request, wrote an essay on *Iris*, available as **F PDF 016**

**For more information, please contact Adam Marnie at [office@fmagazine.info](mailto:office@fmagazine.info)**

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**Nancy Shaver** (b. 1946 in Appleton, NY) lives and works in Jefferson, NY. Select solo and two-person exhibitions include *Blockers, Spacers, and Scribble Drawings, 2020*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); *fastness, slowness and Monstrous Beauty*, Derek Eller Gallery, New York (2020); *Gathering texture, following form* (with Emi Winter), Parker Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); *Alex Olson and Nancy Shaver: Waters, 12.26*, Dallas; *A part of a part of part*, Derek Eller Gallery, New York (2018); *Nancy Shaver: Reconciliation*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2015); Feature, Inc., New York (2002-2011) and Curt Marcus Gallery, New York (1987-1999). Select group exhibitions include *Broken Dishes* (curated by the artist), Soloway, Brooklyn, NY (2021); *One Day at a Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art*, MOCA, Los Angeles (2018); *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2018); *VIVA ARTE VIVA*, 57th International Exhibition of Art, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2017); *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2015); and *Robert Gober: The Heart is Not a Metaphor*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014).

**Jean-Philippe Antoine (b. 1957, Paris, France)** is an artist and writer based in Paris and Nalliers, France. He teaches Aesthetics at Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis.

**Jared Buckhiester (b. 1977, Dahlonga, GA)** is a New York-based artist who makes everything but painting. Using figurative representation as a vehicle, he combines autobiographical material with social and political narratives. His practice has been described as “a long-term project of representing beleaguered American masculinity through a gay male lens.”

**Pam Cardwell (b. 1962, Bluefield, WV)** is a painter based in Brooklyn, New York. She teaches painting and drawing at the State University of New York. Her studio is at Artbuilt in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

**Dawn Cerny (b. 1979, Carpinteria, CA)** lives in Seattle, WA. Her recent sculptural work examines ideas of furniture and mothers as metaphors: figures that secure value for their potential to hold, display, or be absent-mindedly left with things. Cerny’s work is held in public collections, including The Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, The Portland Art Museum and The Seattle Art Museum.

**Marley Freeman (b. 1981, Lynn, MA)** is an artist who walks in circles at [www.ff-ff-ff-ff-ff.net](http://www.ff-ff-ff-ff-ff.net)

**Tracy Miller (b. 1966, Storm Lake, IA)** is a painter living and working in Brooklyn, NY. She constructs large, messy still-life paintings that hover between abstraction and landscape.

**Steel Stillman (b. 1955, New York City)** is an artist and writer based in New York. He is a contributing editor at Art in America and teaches in the MFA Photography, Video and Related Media department at the School of Visual Arts, New York.