ALMINE RECH

Daniel Gibson
Devil's Wind

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Marquez Art Projects is proud to present 'Devil's Wind,' the first US institutional presentation for Los Angeles-based artist Daniel Gibson. The exhibition takes its title from the Tongva word for the Santa Ana Wind, and comprises a suite of newly commissioned paintings, which see Gibson's dynamic approach to landscape and his studio practice at large, profoundly impacted by the devastation of the 2025 Los Angeles fires at the doorstep of his studio.

Gibson's paintings are informed by his upbringing on the California border with Mexico, and his sense of place is inextricably tied to the harsh terrain that is the setting for migration at the Southern border to the United States. Also informing these landscapes are the contributions of Marsden Hartley and Georgia O'Keeffe, and a modernist tradition of sublime abstraction imbued with forbidding topographies and vast skies. These landscapes entail vast mesas, dry expanses, ominous valleys, and massive, dangerously sublime scale. In these images, flora and fauna—datura, hibiscus, sunflowers and butterflies—hover above the scene, anthropomorphic and improbable like sentinels.

In just the last months, as disaster ravaged Los Angeles, the fires in Altadena loomed above Gibson's home, and smoke filled the air above his Chinatown studio. Trails across the mountains, used by the artist in his everyday life and representative of passage, were closed as the fires rapidly spread. The searing visuals of winds carrying flames across the city, the noxious aftermath of smoke and destruction experience of its impact led Gibson to consider the path forward for his home city, and inspire the works in 'Devil's Wind.' In these canvases, a crimson fireball shaped like a desert flower blazes angrily above the horizon; plumes of smoke teem from fields of white flowers. Elsewhere, spiraling blooms hover like funeral wreaths.

For Gibson, flora also augur transformation. In many of the compositions, Gibson's furious drawing—which motivates and gives way to his paintings, as contours coalesce—has given way to stark, reduced and iconic imagery. The night skies pause momentarily, as smoke rises from the ashes and as new seeds take root. Flowers are often surrogates in Gibson's works, and here they dot the horizon like homes amongst valleys. For the first time, Gibson incorporates architecture figures in his paintings as well; in the form of abstracted, hollowed-out facades of homes, or the chimneys that survived conflagration, and which remain amongst the flowers. Gibson's flowers mourn yet they endure—forces of nature, they are destructive and awe-inspiring; symbols of resilience and regeneration.

Daniel Gibson (b. 1977 Yuma, AZ; Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) has had solo and two-person exhibitions at Nassima Landau Art Foundation, Tel Aviv; Almine Rech, New York and Paris; Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles, CA; Brant Timonier, Palm Beach, FL; New Image Art, Los Angeles, CA; Ochi Projects, Los Angeles, CA; LAX Art, Los Angeles, CA; and Mexicali Rose, Baja, Mexico. Recent group exhibitions include the Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA; Casa Santa Ana, Panama City; MUSEA K11, Hong Kong; Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, CA. His work is held in the permanent collection of the Dallas Museum of Art, TX, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL, and the Deji Art Museum, Nanjing, China.

— Alex Gartenfeld, Irma and Norman Braman Artistic Director, Institute of Contemporary Art Miami