

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

MATT SAUNDERS

On an Overgrown Path

25 June – 7 August 2026
385 Broadway, New York, NY 10013



Matt Saunders, *Plein Air 2*, 2026

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Matt Saunders, on view from 25 June to 7 August 2026. Embracing chance and contingency more closely than ever in this exhibition, Saunders undertakes investigations into the complex and open-ended interactions of materials and their making. He has often explored the border between photography and painting; his interest in hybrid forms is driven by a fascination with the material status of images, how they are positioned within a surface and can be transformed in time. De-stabilizing traditional forms and media, Saunders engages in improvisation and suspension between states of creation, engendering new transitions which reflect an ongoing interest in the mutability of perception and slippery encounters with beauty and unknowing.

An array of iconography, from cinematic history and found images is joined by new visual materials based on direct observation and nature, and the artist's own photographs. These suggest a new kind of passage through complex forces within the world, and an attempt to rearticulate its center.

On view will be new large and small format camera-less photographs, and a multi-channel hand-drawn animation, *On an Overgrown Path*, 2026, that incorporates sound collage as a major new element. Inspired by a suite of piano compositions by Leoš Janacek, which provides the title for this exhibition, they allude to Saunders' pivot to building musical analogies in parallel to his visual surfaces and mark making.

Saunders' new series of works includes both silver gelatin and C-prints. These start as paintings on fabric or film, which are then combined to directly expose images that range from figurative to abstract, effectively layering subjects and involving principles of transparency and resistance.

In the South Gallery, a group of Plein Air Landscapes expresses this hybridity with abstract landscapes in the form of three unique C-prints, whose negatives are drawn directly on site, created outdoors in nature. They rest in conversation with a large dense landscape, *Flooded Woods*, 2026, based on a photo Saunders made while walking in a Canadian wilderness, and created by applying oil on canvas as a negative process. Two groups of unique silver gelatin 'drawings,' *Overgrown* and *Memory Piece*, both 2025-26, utilize a resistance process of oil against water, to draw negatives on sheet film, layering the negatives multiple times to achieve an inherent doubling effect of the images. Using sources which range from historical Berlin performers to an Albert Renger-Patzsch photo from the 1940s, the images all use diverse 'drawing' methods. A triptych, *Days*, 2026, is sourced from Werner Schroeter's 1981 "Tag der Idioten" featuring three portraits of its subject, the actress Carole Bouquet, using oil on voile to create a negative, then a unique C-print, whose finished surface is then overpainted with oil.

In the North Gallery, *On an Overgrown Path*, 2026, Saunders' new two-channel video animation is a conduit to themes within the exhibition: metaphors of suspension, passage and entanglement. Its sound

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collage provides a musical equivalence for Saunders' material process and experiments with manifold surfaces, from ink on mylar through to his use of oil paint, photochemistry, and photosensitive paper. Many frames of the video are developed as unique photographs, which begin with a drawing in oil, then another in water-based chemistry, until the image is teased out in the repulsion between the two, and fixed, as a way to create an improvisatory time-based method of drawing.

In conversation with the above video work, several large C-prints, made again with oil paint, center more performers (Candy Darling, Ingrid Caven and Christine Kaufmann) from the films of Werner Schroeter, in particular "The Death of Maria Malibran" (1972), with a cameo from Jack Smith's "Normal Love" (1963).

Birkin Rosso, 2026, is a series of new prints commemorating the actress Jane Birkin (1946-2023) and her role in the 1976 film "Je t'aime moi non plus." Combining photogravure and woodblock processes, Saunders directly exposes photo polymer plates through ink drawings on linen, and then builds color with layers of inked woodgrain, repeating and varying his subject through these two diverse material processes. With a nod to Medardo Rosso (1858-1928) whose processes similarly juxtaposed matter and space, and entwined photography as an active agent with sculpture and drawing, this group of 13 prints shows Birkin in liminal states of materialization and erosion, as if resting within the transient space of a bardo.

Matt Saunders was born in 1975 in Tacoma, Washington. He lives between New York City, Berlin, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he is the De Ying Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University. In 1997, Saunders received a B.A. in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard and completed his M.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking in 2002 at the Yale University School of Art.

Saunders enacts painting as a time-based and transitive medium through his camera-less photography, multi-screen animation, and innovative painting and printmaking processes. Best known for his haunting portraits and landscapes, the imagery culled from a myriad of sources including avant-garde cinema and found photographs, and moving-image works, Matt Saunders uses analogue materials to explore the transience, mobility, and affective power of images.

In 2010 the Renaissance Society of Chicago organized his first solo institutional show. He has also exhibited at the St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2018); Tank Shanghai Project Space, China (2018); Qiao Space, Shanghai, China (2018); Tate Liverpool (2012); and the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Massachusetts (2012).

Matt Saunders' work has been in numerous group exhibitions including at: The Drawing Room, London (2026); Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Spain (2025); Institute of Arab and Islamic Art, New York (2023); Ecole des Beaux arts de Paris, France (2022); American Academy of Arts & Letters, New York (2022); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2020); Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2017); The Photographer's Gallery, London (2016); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2013); de Cordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts (2012); the 2011 Sharjah Biennial; and the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2011). His work is in the collections of major institutions including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California; the UCLA Hammer Museum, California; the Tate, London; MUDAM, Luxembourg; Istanbul Modern; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., among others.

Saunders was a recipient of the 2022 American Academy of Arts and Letters Arts Purchase Prize, the 2015 Rappaport Prize from the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the 2013 Prix Jean-François Prat, and the 2009 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation award.