

JACK HANLEY GALLERY

Jeff Williams
Living Things

January 6 - February 11, 2023
Opening reception
Friday, January 6th, 6-8pm

Jack Hanley Gallery is pleased to present *Living Things*, an exhibition of new works by Jeff Williams. *Living Things* is Williams' third exhibition with the gallery and presents a collection of recent sculpture and video. Nobel laureate in Physics Didier Queloz, who shares the 2019 prize for discovering satellites orbiting distant suns, stated "we should not really have any hope, serious hope, to escape the earth," in response to a reporter dismissing the severity of climate disaster. Beyond the obvious warning of the impracticalities of leaving this planet – Queloz underscores that we should not even have the hope to do so. The sculptures in *Living Things* are the results of waking from the dream of escape.

A majority of the sculptures are cast and welded aluminum, a combination of handmade studio processes and mass-produced items. Aluminum is a paradoxical material, containing several different binary oppositions within one element. First, in regard to value, some of the cheapest and most expensive things are made of this material (from disposable foil to race cars, to sculpture). Aluminum is also capable of being both form and formless, as an I-beam for construction and as a salt for pickling. It is used in weapons that destroy life and in spacecraft that search for life. It both devastates surrounding ecologies through its extraction and is one of the most recycled materials. Lastly, Williams is interested in the mobility of this material as it is traded on the commodities market and moved through networked economies, aluminum travels the world on vehicles made of itself.

The exhibition features a series of wall-hanging sculptures that borrow their initial shape from the Szilassi Polyhedron. Named after its inventor, the form is a mathematically harmonious geometric solid. Williams truncated the symmetry in this polyhedron using free 3D software that glitch-fills his digital cuts with new designs the artist finds more aesthetically pleasing. The model is then exported as a pattern and handmade using a grade of aluminum usually reserved for gutters or siding on a home. Outfitted with everyday objects, these abstract sculptures are further removed from their source with cultural artifacts. Throughout the show is a blending of high and low, found and made, geometric and amorphous.

In the basement of the gallery, loops a 4-minute video *Fall Flashing at the Pennyroyal*. In the video, a roll of aluminum flashing, typically used to seal a house from the elements, is rolled through the northeastern wilderness at a property known as the Pennyroyal. Surrounding this property is tens-of-thousands of acres that are private and enforced as off-limits to the general public. The aluminum rolls extend through the landscape, following property lines from where they begin deep on the mountain, to the only through road in the area. Cascading downhill, the enduring roll of metal transforms into a drawing in space and time.

Williams has been awarded residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, CA, Recess in New York, NY, Galería Perdida, Chilchota, Michoacán, Mexico, and the Core Program in Houston, TX. He was the 2009 Leonore Annenberg Fellow in the Arts at the American Academy in Rome. Williams is a recent recipient of an NYSCA/NYFA Fellowship for Environmental Structures and a Santo Foundation Award. Solo projects and exhibitions include RAIR in Philadelphia, PA, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY, 1708 Gallery in Richmond, VA, Arthouse in Austin, TX, and Artpace, San Antonio, TX. Group exhibitions include Jack Hanley Gallery, NADA on Governors Island, NY, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, New Cities Future Ruins in Dallas, TX, and Lora Reynolds Gallery in Austin, TX. Articles and reviews include The New York Times, Art in America, Art Papers, Blouin Modern Painters, Shifter Magazine, and Hyperallergic.

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