

Jonathan Callan's catalysts for introspection

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(Walking away from the Rest of the World (details), 2015 © Jonathan Callan)

A 1946 atlas, of which the pages are submerged in plaster one by one and then pressed into two hemispheres of a globe. A mountainous structure burying a set of illegible books. Two cut-up and meshed together books about the English poet Coleridge. And several series of paper works bearing tiny images of armchairs, streetlamps, paintings, and people in a desolate, roughly textured off-white. "Vacation", London-based artist Jonathan Callan's fourth solo show at Hopstreet Gallery, is a catalyst for introspection.

These works are silent, stripped testimonies to a place beyond observation, beyond the one-on-one of you looking at the world. By sandpapering pages from existing books or magazines but saving only one miniscule image which is then furnished with shadows, Callan objectifies and renders abstract things which reached our retina intact, and transforms a very tangible space into a set of possibilities. Oddly enough, it is not so much (the content of) the effaced context that captivates you, but the pared down relationship between the image and its medium, the status of paper, books, and art, and our own perspective being confronted with the enlarged detail and the flaws in our own sight... Jonathan Callan literally scratches the surface to dig deeper. This results in absurd and/or ominous, drawing-like work, that invites you to explore the emptiness of the frame to find your own place. Like a song you know the melody of but can't remember the lyrics to. The familiarity of the yet unknown.