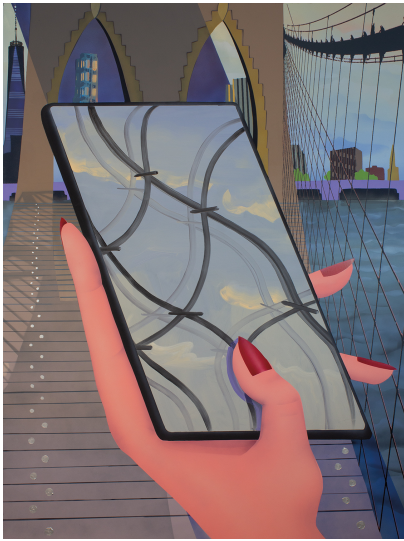


**Melissa Brown**

*NYNY2020*

November 19 - December 19, 2020



One of my favorite work projects has always been demo. It's now a romantic cliché of art school that you also have to learn how to drywall. But it goes without saying that if you shittily put up drywall, you will also inevitably have to take it down. I have done this (rotation) exactly once during my twenty-year stint of living in New York City. Anyway, few things are more animalistically enjoyable than recklessly slamming a sledgehammer into something you've built. With no professional knowledge of how to destroy, it comes very naturally.

Routines are the opposite of destruction, and reality consists mostly of these. A morning routine: snoozing, brushing, caffeinating, beautifying, updating, affirming, denying, the armor you put on to face the day. The robotic, but now fading, maze-

memory of timing, transfers, and cuts across the New York City transit system. Weekly, monthly, annual routines like stopping in, popping by, dining out, piling up, ordering in, throwing down, going to see, rolling the dice, scrolling past, liking, hating: some are done, while others just push into the future.

Ritual-routine paths get worn in, like a turfed lawn. Eventually you notice: *it's all in the cards*, and if you want the game to change, you have to play it differently.

— Melissa Brown, 2020

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present *NYNY2020*, an exhibition of new paintings by Melissa Brown. In this series, Brown uses her daily experiences, routines, and movements in and around New York City over the past year as portals into perceptual shifts and distortions caused by collisions between imagined, observed, and digital realities. To represent these perceptual shifts and their various temporal registers, Brown continues her exploration of collaged, disparate painting techniques: screen-printed digital photography, stencil, airbrush, and impasto oil paint mingle on flat- television-like surfaces (dibond). Juxtaposing straightforward images with those captured in mirrors and reflections, as well as natural light with the glare of a computer screen or phone, Brown's compositions transform familiar landscapes, interiors, and still lives into surreal tableaux that illuminate the obvious yet invisible symbolic structures in ordinary existence.

This emphasis on how the mundane can be extraordinary or symbolic will also be made manifest through an ongoing gallery performance by the artist. In an effort to create impromptu, dynamic, socially-distant synergies between random groups of gallery viewers, Brown will offer Bagomancy readings throughout the run of the exhibition. Bagomancy, a divination technique invented by the artist, interprets symbolic meaning from objects carried in one's bag or on one's person. Readings are limited to five and can be booked at [info@derekeller.com](mailto:info@derekeller.com). Sessions will last approximately one hour and can be booked at either 3 or 5 pm on Saturday 11/21, Friday 12/4, Friday 12/11, or Saturday 12/19.

Melissa Brown (b.1974) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Melissa Brown and Jamie Bull* at Dodd Gallery at University of Georgia in Athens, *Going AWOL*, Biggins Gallery at Auburn University, *Tennis Elbow*, the Journal Gallery, Brooklyn, *Past Present Future* at Magenta Planes, *Paper Fortune* at CANADA, in New York City and internationally at Roberto Paradise, San Juan. She has participated in group exhibitions at Mass MOCA, Canada, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Klaus Von Nichtssagend and Musée International Des Arts Modestes, and Deitch Projects, Los Angeles. In 2012 she was awarded the Joan Mitchell Painter's Grant and a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center in 2019. Her work is in the permanent collections at the Whitney Museum of Art and the New York City Department of Education. She is an associate professor in art at Lehman College, City University of New York and an organizing member of the artist-run-gallery Essex Flowers. This will be her second solo exhibition at the gallery.