

COLLECTOR DAILY

Meghann Riepenhoff, Ecotone @Yossi Milo

By Loring Knoblauch / In Galleries / May 16, 2019

JTF (just the facts): A total of 14 cyanotype works, framed in white and unmatted, and hung against white walls in the East and West gallery spaces and in the jewel box in the connecting hallway. All of the works are “dynamic cyanotypes,” made in 2018 or 2019. There are 11 single panel works, 2 diptychs, and 1 set of 6 prints on view. Physical sizes on the individual panels range from roughly 30×21 to 89×42 inches, and all of the works are unique.



A monograph of Riepenhoff’s recent works entitled *Littoral Drift + Ecotone* was co-published in 2018 by Yossi Milo Gallery and Radius Books ([here](#)).

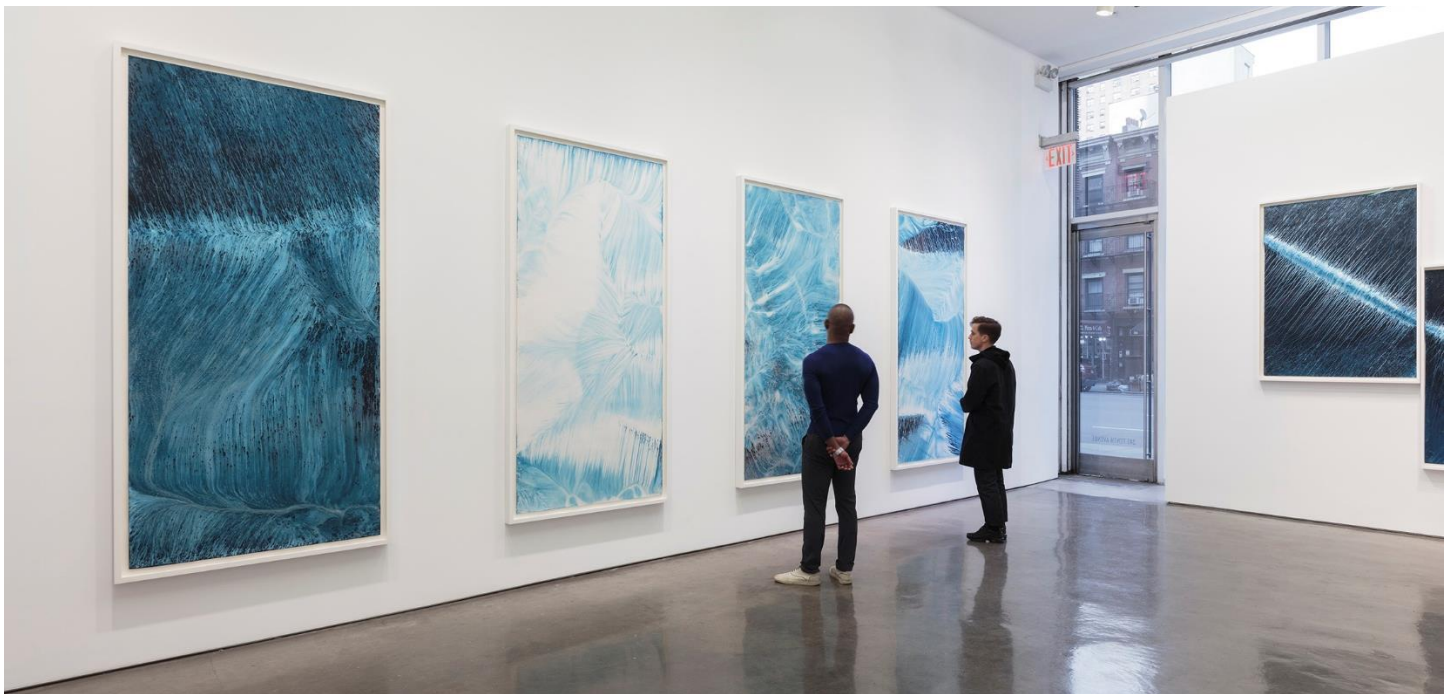
Comments/Context: In the two years since Meghann Riepenhoff’s last show in New York (in 2017, reviewed [here](#)), the momentum around her work has continued to grow. In 2018, she won a Guggenheim Fellowship, had a monograph published, and continued to refine and extend her working methods. This show brings us up to speed on her progress, and she’s definitely thinking bigger, both literally and figuratively.

Her largest work to date comes as a continuation of her prior series *Littoral Drift*. Made on the shores of the Great Salt Lake, it uses the ebb and flow of waves to create its soft layered blooms of dissolving cyanotype blue. Six adjacent sheets make up the monumental array, and each sheet is larger/taller than before, certainly making it more difficult to physically wrangle the paper in and out of the edge of the lake. But as the water washes away the emulsion and leaves behind traces of sediments that add a golden residue to the images, a sense of floating time emerges, the receding water building up curves and contours that have an ethereal fleeting presence. It is both massive and intimate, which isn’t an easy combination to deliver.

Riepenhoff continues this exploration of muscular scale in her *Erasure* series. In these works, heavy rain is the active ingredient, creating gestural marks that sweep across the surface of the paper and wash away the emulsion. By turning the sheets during the downpour, Riepenhoff can change the direction and angle of the drips and torrents, bringing a sense of energetic movement to the works. The effect is distinctly painterly, with swirls that build and twist back on themselves, brush-like textures that grip the paper, and alternating moments of relative violence and calm that create visual vitality.

While these falling water works have an inherent sense of speed, other new works go in the opposite direction, opting to explore the subtleties of slowness. Packed in snow drifts or set in frozen ice, Riepenhoff's cyanotypes document the incremental flows of melting and refreezing. These works have a darker, greyer set of color tonalities (less light is getting through to expose the paper) and faint crystal patterns emerge from their ghostly depths. These works are patient and reserved, the surfaces pulled like glacial drifting and resettling rather than brashly scraped by fluidity. Others placed at the edge of melting piles of snow offer a more obvious sense of separation, with the melt zone margins creating bolder transformations of color.

In Riepenhoff's prior show, she introduced works hung over tree branches and railings that captured powerful vertical zips derived from raindrops cascading down the two sides of the draped paper. In recent versions of this artistic idea, she has incrementally rotated the paper during its exposure or doubled the paper into an angled diptych. The turns allow her to orient the water flow across the compositions, creating rivulets that seem to fall in every direction at the same time. In another image, she instead gets under the branches of a tree, allowing the puddles created by gathered droplets falling from the canopy to pool in the hollows of a stone wall, creating a more dappled overall pattern.



What these new works say is that Riepenhoff is getting more confident, and that self-assurance is allowing more organic collaboration with her natural partner (the elements) to take place. Many of the recent images are multi-step efforts, moving away from straightforward (reactive) documentation of forces at work and toward pre-visualized outcomes that attempt to direct those unruly forces for her own artistic purposes. While the delicate gradations of blue in these organic abstractions will appeal to many, the increasing sophistication embedded in her approach is what stands out in this new batch of works. Her incremental learnings are being iteratively fed back into her art, accelerating her rise.

Collector's POV: The works on view range in price from \$6500 to \$38000, with the largest set of 6 prints already sold. Riepenhoff's work has little secondary market history at this point, so gallery retail likely remains the best option for those collectors interested in following up.