

Alex Kwartler: *Off-Peak*
January 15–February 28, 2026
Lower Level

Magenta Plains is pleased to present *Off-Peak*, Alex Kwartler's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Over two decades, Kwartler has developed a painting practice that looks to the material that consistently eludes our attention. Our attention is always captured by something, even if it is only by distraction itself, or by the sense that we cannot fully command where our attention settles. The substance of this distractedness is the raw material that articulates our unconscious and still-unrecognized desires.

Kwartler's paintings are an attempt to illuminate the moments when we are absorbing the world for reasons we are unaware of. These records of noticings, thoughts, images and impressions are unique, nonlinear and non-chronological. Materially promiscuous and intuitive, each painting is a response to these impressions. The accumulation of these moments amounts to a body of work that is both isolated and relational.

The works in *Off-Peak* comprise a wide-ranging series, and all were completed in the past year. Each work, however, draws on an inventory of passing attentions Kwartler has collected over many years. In some cases the paintings register an immediate response to and recording of these moments, while other paintings are the product of years-long interventions.

When viewed as a group the paintings become contingent upon one another, and relationships and affinities they share invite further associations. Various arrangements stimulate new connections, which become tools for interpreting the subconscious desires and affective registers encoded in these passing impressions. In these moments of emergent connection, where attention is still being metabolized, the viewer sees what they want to see, as well as what may not yet exist.

Taken as a whole, Alex Kwartler's (b. 1979, New York, NY) work defies a singular style. Moving effortlessly between figuration, abstraction, and representation the work draws from imagery and experience; from offhand observation and moments taken directly from the artist's life, to the art historical and the textual. Kwartler has developed an approach resembling an interior monologue or conversation; his paintings make leaps, digressions, and diversions between themselves which taken together read as a web of continuous connection and becoming. Using a variety of techniques, from slow pictorial rendering in oil to the fast polished surfaces of his plaster 'frescos' each painting follows its own material and visual logic within the larger whole. Individually, the discreet works form a kind of catalog of thought and observation. Collectively, the works are combined and set against one another forming a lexicon that functions like a visual grammar for thoughts in time.

Alex Kwartler received his MFA from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ and his BFA from The Cooper Union, New York, NY. Kwartler has mounted four solo exhibitions at Magenta Plains. He has exhibited his work at The Green Gallery, Milwaukee, WI; 47 Canal, New York, NY; Parapet Real Humans, St. Louis, MO, MoMA PS 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, NY; Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, NJ; White Columns, New York, NY; Bortolami Gallery, New York, NY; Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, NY; Martos Gallery, New York, NY; Petzel Gallery, New York, NY; and Wallspace, New York, NY. His exhibitions have been reviewed in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Frieze, Artforum and Art in America. Kwartler's paintings were featured in "Painting Abstraction" edited by Bob Nickas and published by Phaidon Press. Kwartler was artist-in-residence at The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, TX in Spring 2017. The artist lives and works in New York, NY.