

no conceptual or formal relationship with the most current proposal, but also because it was relegated to the gallery's last walls. So, the decision for the title would appear to respond to a desire to emphasize her works on canvas—which are more marketable—rather than her more recent production on paper.

Upon entering the gallery, viewers are welcomed on the left by an installation of eight small wood boxes displayed horizontally on the wall. These served as containers for small sheets of Essindia paper colored with very thin layers of sediment (mud) taken from the Ayeyarwady, Hudson, Urubamba, Ganges and Mekong rivers. Entitled *River Library*, the installation appeared in the list of works as consisting of ten pieces, so two were missing. A few steps later, at a lower level, a long shelf slightly a tilt displayed another series consisting of four open books entitled *River Library with Rivermaps*, created with mud from the Nile river and pencil. These notebooks were displayed as if they were the travel logs of an expedition in time of flowing water.

Rabinovich's third and most ambitious proposal belongs to her most recent group of works. It consists of a long cabinet placed in the center of the gallery that contained countless rolls of paper. Reminiscent of historical scrolls, the papers were differentiated one another by their color, length, thickness and texture, which resulted from the materials used. Here Rabinovich again used sediments from rivers as pigments with which she achieved peculiar colors. Besides the bodies of water already mentioned, the work also included the rivers Imjim, Tarangire, Mississippi, Menderes, Paraná, Urubamba, River Plate, Arno, Orinoco, Tarqui, Rio Grande, Jordan, Ayung, Sunga, Campuan, Araucania and San Julian. With such collection of samples, Rabinovich evokes the vastness of a natural

Michelle Lopez. *Smoke Cloud I*, 2014. Tempered architectural glass, ultraviolet light, tin, silver nitrate, enamel, wood. 88 x 60 in. (223,5 x 152,4 cm.).



universe that it also finds poetic resonances on the memory, history and culture of mankind. Renouncing the iconographic anecdote, the artist however does not discard the metaphor of the river sediment as a record of the passage of entire civilizations. She gives her work meaning through the symbolism of materials rather than through specific stories. Nonetheless, viewers are able to imagine such narratives in the abstract language of the scrolls and the coarse surface of the paper notebooks.

The three remaining walls of the gallery were dedicated to the paintings from the series *Gateless Gates*, gray monochrome paintings of equal dimensions but arranged in groups of different sizes with the legend "Gateless Gate" inscribed on them. The works on paper and these paintings have a connection that is more metaphorical than thematic: namely, the processes of accumulation of glazes that on the paintings are created with oil and wax, while on the paper are sediments of rivers. Another aspect they share is an emphasis on subtlety, something that greatly interests Rabinovich. Like the sheets of the river maps, the paintings forced viewers to concentrate on the very fine ribs of the pigment or on the graphite applied on the canvas.

It is not that Rabinovich has been totally absent from the New York art scene, since her work after all has appeared in numerous group exhibitions. Nonetheless, the fact is that her most important projects during this period of her career have been presented in outdoor locations alongside the Hudson River, which historically—along with the homonymous valley—has been a source of inspiration for artists and writers. These projects consist of in situ stone installations that Rabinovich places on the banks of the river so that they are covered or uncovered by water according to the variation in the water level. Rabinovich has called them *Emergencies*, having made the first one in Rotary Park, in Kingston (2001), and later in Dutchmen's Landing Park, in Beacon (2002), and in Nyack Beach State Park, in Nyack (2007), among others. The exhibition is important because it presents for the first time in the city works that the artist has created in parallel with her in situ installations. Therefore, the show would have been significantly enriched by including the documentary video made by Camilo Rojas that shows the modifications made to the *Emergencies* installation.

Y Gallery is an emerging and modest venue that has been doing a commendable job with Latin American artists for whom it has been difficult to find venues to showcase their work in the city. However, it is possible to employ more subtle signs so works like these are treated and showcased more adequately.

ELVIS FUENTES

Michelle Lopez Simon Preston Gallery

Michelle Lopez has decisively demonstrated her continued reengagement with Minimalism, particularly through a critique of its attendant but stereotypical masculinist overtones. This extremely sparse in-

stallation at Simon Preston continues her relation to Minimalism but as an integral part of her own aesthetic rather than a critique. Here more is more than less because when you push Minimalism you get... Conceptualism.

This is a useful realization if you still think of Lopez primarily as a sculptor. But at what point do art historical categorizations deteriorate into sterility, detracting from rather than adding to our understanding of what is important about the work and the artist? At least the word “conceptual” tells us that much more is at stake through implied and open-ended associations. But even this orientation has its dangers.

Equally consistent in her work and more useful to understand is her continuing efforts to vocalize the ever present (and one might say expanding) meme of fear, the zeitgeist of our unsettled times. The specific list you can create for yourself about political art—and fear is not necessarily political—is the more interesting the more vague its referent, although there is a point in the curvature of such a narrative arc where vagueness disperses into meaninglessness. Such open-endedness is certainly present in her installation titled “Banner Year” but remains a sufficiently considered combination of ideas to allow the viewer to easily translate it as: “Something is ominously wrong here but I’m not certain what it is! How concerned should I be?”

The first room is deserted except for the lower half of a large aluminum flagpole that seems to extend through the roof. (It is actually the lower half of a real retractable 40 foot flag pole.) The title “Halyard” refers to the rope that is attached to the side of the flagpole, traditionally used to raise and lower a flag or banner. While the halyard is tied off to the side of the pole at the steel cleat, the rope vibrates periodically at various levels, faintly at first, and moving to violent wrenching. In short, a moving rope establishes a range of moods, which are matched to the sounds of a wind, recorded onto an 11 minute stereo sound loop and broadcast into the small room from six hidden speakers. You might be inside but you know the flag (or something flapping in the wind) is subjected to violent forces outside. OK, maybe it is just the wind but maybe... The sound design by Jonathan Mildenberg and Andy Clifford has its desired implications.

In the second room fear is both grounded and yet belied. This room, like the first, is bleak, with three large (88” x 120” each) pieces of mostly transparent glass leaning against the parallel walls, two pieces of which combine to form a diptych (“Smoke Cloud II”). The lower two-thirds of each glass is clear but the top third has cloud-like forms that are simultaneously solid but also reflective of the environment, especially

parts of the ceiling above due to the angle of installation. Clouds now seem integrated into the rafters. One immediately thinks of some of the Baroque illusionistic ceiling paintings or one of Correggio’s fluffy clouds, simultaneously fake but yet narrative.

Reflective surfaces are nothing new for Lopez but these glass pieces were treated with silver nitrate, the light sensitive chemical used in many types of photography, then exposed to ultraviolet light to yield a range of white and ominous grays with a reddish color range at the edges. The initial sense of cute clouds transform into the roiling

smoke created by fires or explosions. And they appear to emanate from the ceiling! Suddenly there is danger and it is all around you... sort of. It’s vague but present, like being upside down in a car crash, held in by your seat belt and looking out the refracted windshield, thinking the clouds seem so peaceful, but wait a minute, something is really wrong here.

There has been recent use of conceptual photograph—the term is not without its detractors and arguments—to raise the question of how much of a document does a document have to be to give a sense of the necessary presence. As images proliferate, we begin to realize more and more that the source of power for images is not in the work per se but in the imagination.

RICHARD LESLIE

Ruven Afanador Throckmorton Fine Art

Despite a childhood in Colombia and many years spent in Europe, Ruven Afanador did not attend a flamenco performance until he was an adult living in New York City. Prior to this experience, flamenco existed for him only as something mythic and imagined. After attending his first performance Afanador created a major photographic exploration of this theme, resulting in his book *Mil Besos* (2009), which largely explored the phenomenon of flamenco from a female perspective. Five years later Afanador has revisited this territory, this time engaging male dances, in a new collection and book entitled *Angel Gitano: The Men of Flamenco*, on view at Throckmorton Fine Art from November 6, 2014 to February 28, 2015.

Ruven Afanador. *Gabriel Moginot*, New York City, NY, 2013. Selenium toned gelatin silver print. 20 x 24 in. (50,8 x 60,9 cm.). Edition 2 of 25. Signed & numbered in pencil on verso.

