

PRESS RELEASE

October 25 – December 22, 2019

MICHAEL LIGHT *Gardiner's Island & Amagansett*



Dunes at Napeague State Park, 2016 45 x 55 in.



North Across Gardiner's Island, 2016, 29 x 35 in.

The Drawing Room is pleased to announce the opening of *Gardiner's Island and Amagansett*, an exhibition of recent photographs by Michael Light. A photographer and bookmaker with longstanding ties to the landscape of Long Island's East End, Light acknowledges the formative influence of place on his practice. His work has addressed human impact on the landscape and exploration of the cosmos, as well as themes of mapping and geology. This exhibition highlights two series of aerial photographs created in 2016, when Light returned the eastern tip of the Long Island peninsula to explore the personal and ecological significance of its farming history and unique geology of its terminal moraines.

The Gardiner's Island photographs focus on the archetypal nature of the farmed island that was settled in 1639 and has descended through one extended family over seventeen generations. Light's wide-angle views of its 27 miles of coastline, forests, streams and vernacular farm buildings suggest the pristine quality of the landscape when first cultivated centuries ago. Capturing this exceptionally rare private woodland preserve on the edge of dune cliffs, with its pastures, fishing shoals, ponds, and undulating coastline offers a window on early American settlement land use.

By contrast, the photographs shot above Amagansett and Napeague highlight the contemporary use of local farmland and nearby coastal acreage. Some parcels – like Quail Hill where Light was raised -- were presciently preserved for agricultural use by his mother Deborah Ann Light's gift to the Peconic Land Trust. Approaching from his plane at oblique angles in strong late afternoon and early morning light, Light composed abstract tableaux from the tree nurseries and crop fields. Lining Amagansett's Town Lane, other swathes of land abutting the sea are presented at the fragile crossroads of development, design and conservation. Light's sensitive and informed perspective on the legacy of preservation on the East End has inspired a lifetime of flying investigating the earth's surface. His homages to Quail Hill, Gardiner's Island and their environs are a thought-provoking reminder of the delicate balance of our landscape.

In addition to the panoramic photographs that are hanging in the gallery, two limited edition mammoth artist books, *Manchonake / Gardiner's Island* and *Town Lane / Promised Land*, comprise large archival

pigment prints of Gardiner's Island, East Hampton, Amagansett and Napeague. Each hand bound volume incorporates a sequence of photographs masterfully printed in deeply saturated inks on matte paper. As individuals turn the pages and hover over each spread, their experience mirrors moments and vantage points Light captured while flying his own light aircraft at 45 miles an hour and as low as 500 feet above the landscape.

Michael Light lives and works in San Francisco and travels broadly to explore the environments that are the subject of his work. A Guggenheim Fellow, his landscape projects have been exhibited internationally at museums including the Getty Research Institute, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the New York Public Library and the V & A in London. His work is in the collections of numerous institutions and 22 editions of his seven books have been published worldwide. Perhaps best known is *Full Moon* (1999), which used lunar geological survey imagery made by the Apollo astronauts to show the moon both as a sublime desert and an embattled point of first human contact. Four years later, *100 Suns* (2003), focused on the politics and landscape meanings of military photographs of U.S. Atmospheric nuclear detonations from 1945 to 1962.



Southeast to Quail Hill Farm, Amagansett, 2016, 45 x 55 inches

For further information and reproduction quality images
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Fall gallery hours: Friday through Sunday, 11–5 & by appointment