



In the Absence of Quiet

to write

about this burning

is to spend

all of the hours

trying to catch a breeze

in resin



Something good that never happened

To write about Nabil's work is to consider the octaves, or shades, of feeling between absence and presence, between sound and silence, between archival and imagined. I find myself noticing that emphasis lies in the alternating shadow and light cast by the abstract figure, a shifter that claims space between objects, between nouns and verbs, beginnings and endings. Like the experience of gently approaching the contours of a thought as you think it for the first time, as it's transcribed from the unconscious to consciousness. These images are personal and free from figurative impulses, like finding a puddle shimmering in the sun after a good, hard rain. This, however, does not mean the works avoid formalities, since there is much to say about the exactitude with which Nabil weaves through personal and collective histories of the medium. So when trying to answer questions regarding the moments we're witnessing, I come to the conclusion that they're ones of sincerity, that under the surface tension lies a generosity that extends laterally in every direction, keenly aware of the individual connections we all have to pictures. A genealogy of affect out of chronological order, held close to the heart.

While the show contains only five pictures, there's a sense that they arose out of abundance, that part of their inspiration is the pure joy of taking a picture that captures the uncanniness of daily life just so. And more often than not, this joy, or the ecstasy of everyday moments, is a notional one, too slippery to pin down. In this blurred center are all the potentialities held in abstraction, which allow these works to function as repositories, wishing wells, or rooms for the viewer to enter and quietly move furniture around after the lights dim. To make connections between things and things, things and oneself. In their preoccupation with both the particular and the cosmic, these pictures have a way of quieting louder overtones to let subtler reverberations pass through. Like when small sounds travel across a body of water, revealing the listener's proximity to silence. What I find most compelling is how this doesn't relate directly to scale; while the show features both expansion and contraction of form, neither one is more successful in prodding me to consider how I look and not just what I see.

Emily Zuberec is a poet living in Montreal, QC. Her work has appeared in Peach Mag and she is the managing editor of Commo Magazine.