

OFF PARADISE

Maximilian Schubert
Doubles

February 27 – July 27, 2020
Opening Thursday, February 27, 6-8pm



Off Paradise is pleased to present *Doubles*, an exhibition of new work by New York-based artist Maximilian Schubert.

While discussing ideas for the show, I asked Maximilian which artists meant a great deal to him, who his heroes were. He shared a quote from Philip Guston that had long stuck with him: “When you start working, everybody is in your studio—the past, your friends, enemies, the art world, and above all your own ideas—all are there. But as you continue painting, they start leaving, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then, if you’re lucky, even you leave.”

For Maximilian, Felix Gonzalez-Torres was the one artist who seemed never to leave the studio.

We decided to reach out to the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation to bring Felix into the conversation.

Something beautiful happened.

In the weeks leading up to the exhibition, Felix Gonzalez-Torres’s *“Untitled” (March 5th) #2*, one of the artist’s first works to incorporate light bulbs and arguably among his most personal, was brought to Maximilian’s studio. Lightbulbs were purchased and the work was hung and plugged in, shining on Maximilian’s pieces as they were in the final stages of completion for *Doubles*. As Randy Kennedy writes in *“Virus, Imposter, Infiltrator: Recent work by Maximilian Schubert, with a visitation by Felix Gonzalez-Torres,”* an essay for a book that will accompany the show, the work ended up being “a nonpublic public loan, continuing Gonzalez-Torres’s longstanding interest in the interplay between public and private.”

The gallery thus became imbued with the spirit of the studio in a doubling act.

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Central to the exhibition is Schubert’s *Untitled (fracture)* series, which takes the form of folded and draped linen, punctured by winding cracks and gaps in the body and surface of the work. The softness of the simulated fabric and the contrasting fractures scramble assumptions about the makeup of the object and provoke conflicting sensations. The works begin as sculptures, molded and cast, before being broken and reassembled. They are

then painted with layers of washes, as well as silver enamel on each tiny replica of a staple. The works are at once soft and hard, painting and sculpture, broken and whole.

Debuting here is *Two*, a pair of cast-sterling-silver pieces modeled from two overlapping clay slabs, recording the impression of the artist's hand and preserved in separate states of oxidation. The work is one cast object, appearing as two separate slabs in two separate states.

Freestanding in the exhibition is *Stations*, a sculpture made of a propane tank with various fittings attached to aluminum tubing that is bent and punctured at intervals. Tiny holes are made where the invisible gas is ignited along the bent lines, recalling the fractures of the *Untitled* works, with points of light—not voids— punctuating the winding lengths, creating a kind of vigil to the work's expending of its own energy.

In conjunction with *Doubles*, Off Paradise and Hassla are publishing a book that will feature Kennedy's essay. The publication, as an additional, liminal art space, documents Schubert's work in the studio: "the meetings, the errands, the ladder leaning against the wall, the box fan, the ironing of the linen, the floor, the snow sifted on the cars outside, the empty corner where the Felix work would hang, the corner with the work in it, the corner empty again—everything that involves and surrounds the work you're seeing, the things you don't usually see."

"While a private installation of the artwork may seem unconventional," said Emilie Keldie, director of the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, "the foundation suggested this loan structure both as a way of gesturing towards strategies in Gonzalez-Torres's practice that signal the arbitrary and permeable delineations of public and private spheres and also as a response to the character of the book."

Schubert and the photographer Kevin Brady took color photographs of Gonzalez-Torres's work being installed but otherwise primarily used an old Yashica T4 point-and-shoot camera loaded with 3200-speed black-and-white film, a highly sensitive format often used to take nighttime pictures of the stars, and that, when brought into a fluorescent-lighted studio, produces grainy, remote images "that seem," as Kennedy writes, "as if transmitted by fax from a surveillance camera on the dark side of the moon."

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Maximilian Schubert (b. 1983, Rockford, Illinois) received his BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007. He has exhibited in the US and abroad, including Lisson Gallery, London; the Power Station, Dallas, Texas; Bjorn/Gundorf, Aarhus, Denmark; Van Doren Waxter, New York; Kinman Gallery, London; And Now, Dallas; Eli Ping/Frances Perkins, New York; Stephane Simoens, Knokke, Belgium; Bureau, New York; The Warehouse, Dallas; Chart, New York, and CCA, Andratx, Mallorca. Schubert lives and works in New York.

Off Paradise is a new project space on Walker Street founded by Natacha Polaert. The name evokes the old neighborhood of Five Points, at the center of which was a small, triangular park, full of hopes and grime, called Paradise Square. It also invokes Paradise Alley, the artists' and poets' colony on the then-godforsaken corner of Avenue A and East 11th Street that is referenced in Jack Kerouac's novel *The Subterraneans*. Off Paradise is a fictional place, right off Paradise, adjacent to it, but not exactly it.

Images from left to right:

Stations; Private Installation of "*Untitled*" (*March 5th*) #2, 1991 by Felix Gonzalez-Torres at Maximilian Schubert's Brooklyn studio in advance of *Doubles*; Details of *Two*; Details of *Untitled* (fracture).