

Mystical Musings: A Review of Nate Young at Monique Meloche

May 22, 2020 at 10:00 am by [Caira Moreira-Brown](#)



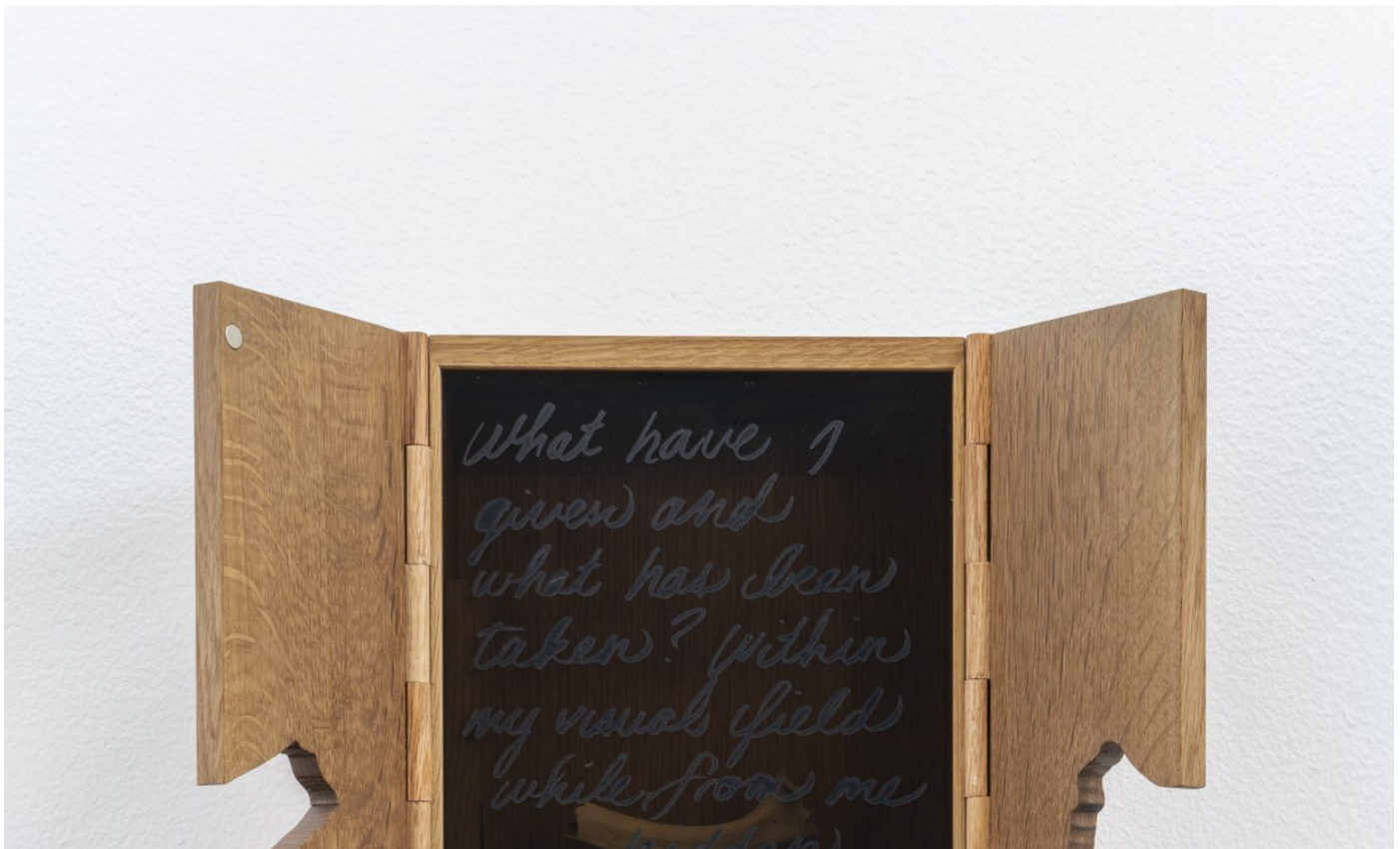
Installation view, "Nate Young: The Transcendence of Time," Spring 2020/Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery/RCH Photography

In the midst of social distancing, Monique Meloche offers an exhibition by Nate Young to explore how we understand identification through a body of conceptual work. Young's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, "The Transcendence of Time," dives into space, material and time through personal history.

In the space, which can be viewed virtually through the gallery website, we see

crisp white walls and industrial slabs on the floor along with dark wood tables. "Untitled (vitrine 1)" consists of a dark walnut wood table inlaid with bone, thought to be from the horse that carried the artist's great-grandfather north during the Great Migration, as well as an LED component. Walnut was often used in traditional furniture design, and in mid-century-modern designs. The multi-use nature of walnut can be attributed to the longevity of the wood, which can last decades. The motion sensory aspect of the table brings the historical wooden construction to the present. The piece travels through time and space with each carefully crafted decision in its construction.

"A Hill," a white oak box embellished with horse bone, is reminiscent of dated construction; opening the piece, you see tinted acrylic and LED lights. The juxtaposition of materials, new and old, reveals how "now" is a construction of what the past and the future holds. Closed, the dimensions of the piece are smaller than when it's open. This experience through size and space is mental as much as it is physical.





Nate Young, "Underneath," 2020/Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery

The walls are embedded with small wooden altars. Within the unique craftsmanship of these pieces, we see small lettering related to the experience of Young's great-grandfather with depression; time-traveling in a small script font. We see this space, an art gallery, but within that space, we see an intimate sculpture: the wooden altar. Between understanding our space and understanding the psychological history of the piece, Young peels a layer off the onion with personal anecdotes from his lineage. By grasping, viewing, thinking about "The Transcendence of Time," we, ourselves, are transcending

our own experience. As we are immersed in the exhibition, our vulnerability takes precedence and our ambitions are questioned. I wondered why am I here, who do I owe that to? The thought-provoking elements of Young's work filled the space, empty at first, with my own story.

"If there's a specific kind of affect I want the work to provoke, it's always deployed as a device to facilitate analytic processes," Young says of the work. "There are two of such devices I've been using a lot lately, the first is a sense that something transcendent is occurring...something mystical, and the other is a feeling of doubt...doubt in the substance of the former as solid ground from which to make credible presumptions."

Our concept of ourselves and our own story is challenged not only by Young's work but also by the space. How we contextualize where we come from and where we are is an intimate question in his show. Young shows a vulnerability throughout his ancestral sculptures through looking at his own history in front of us. As we begin to peel back our own layers of existence Young's constructions break down our own philosophical constructions. (Caira Moreira-Brown)

Nate Young's "The Transcendence of Time" is on view at Monique Meloche, 451 North Paulina, through June 27.