

## Ben Murray

*If I needed you*

January 9 – February 13, 2021

monquiemelcohe is thrilled to present Ben Murray's third exhibition with the gallery, *If I needed you*.

Well, if I needed you  
Would you come to me  
Would you come to me  
And ease my pain?  
- Townes Van Zandt (1972)

Operating between painting's long history of image-making and the immediate vanishing of images in film, *If I needed you* is in direct conversation with works created by pioneers of Avant Garde cinematography, such as Rose Lowder, Hollis Frampton, Joseph Cornell, and Steve McQueen.

While inspired by the oeuvres of other artists, this new body of work reflects a deconstructed vantage point of Murray's life at the time of applying paint to canvas. Drawing its name from the celebrated Townes Van Zandt song, *If I needed you* recalls Murray's complicated relationship with the notion of home, surveying both the solace and suffering that can be experienced when strongly tethered to family histories and responsibilities. Layered marks embedded on both sides of raw unstretched muslin utilize a range of opacities, transparencies, and refractive hues, as if to composite a myriad of enigmatic moments through deposits of paint. Each mark, a record of the artist's physical movements through his recollected history, while also paralleling durational movements in the films from which each work's brilliance is inspired.

Selected for both their formal considerations as well as their structuralism, each experimental film is played on a continual loop in Murray's studio, integrating within the artist's vernacular and embracing the precarious relationship to time and brevity of the present. The ever-changing landscapes of Lowder's *Bouquet's* charges the works with transformational images that exist somewhere between urban and native ecological systems, echoing Murray's coexistence between the city and the Indiana Duneland. While Cornell's 'Rose Hobart' reflects Murray's personal narrative related to the bonds and obligations of caring for family. They are active participants, destabilizing each image to create works that acknowledge interminability through the movement of light and form and the transition of imagery.

*If I needed you* offers a window through which to reexamine and re-experience the different stages of Murray's life as they relate to the inescapable pull of one's past and homeland. Depicting fragments of intermittent images and memories stitched together, Murray's captivating works bring significance to a collection of stages of development sustained all at once in past-present-future-tense.