



MICHAEL KESSLER

SHIFTING FILTERS

In *Shifting Filters*, internationally acclaimed artist Michael Kessler debuts an evocative suite of paintings on panel and canvas, and a separate selection of mixed-media drawings on paper, which juxtapose luxuriant impasto with ethereal washes, integrating the teeming lushness of nature with pristine geometric rigor. A natural-born innovator with a passion for inventing and refining tools and techniques, Kessler has worked with watercolors and transparent washes since his teenage years—evolving those early experiments into the strikingly original painting process that lends his artworks their instantly recognizable style. These washes, laid down on exquisitely absorbent watercolor papers, are becoming increasingly integral, lending a smokiness or *sfumato* that contrasts dramatically with sharp-edged gestures in acrylic. His new series, *Focusfields*, is a master class in constantly changing filters of crispness and expressivity.

A winner of the Rome Prize and a grantee of the Pollock/Krasner Foundation, Kessler has exhibited internationally, earning accolades from critics at ARTFORUM, *Art in America*, and ARTnews. His works are included in the portfolios of numerous private collectors and Fortune 500 corporations, as well as the permanent collections of institutions such as The Broad Foundation, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Vanderbilt University. Among his large-scale commissions are projects designed for the Hart Office Building (United States Senate), Torres Park Plaza in New Orleans, and private residences featured alongside his paintings in *Architectural Digest* magazine. As an art educator he has taught at the College of Santa Fe, Carnegie Mellon University, and Lafayette College.

For *Shifting Filters* at Callan Contemporary, Kessler debuts a vivid new body of work created in 2020: variations on shades of violet, lavender, and purple—intensely saturated and rich with historical associations of this most regal family of hues. These paintings share with Kessler's oeuvre a profound reverence for the natural world. His main studio is in Santa Fe, New Mexico, but his second studio in southern Utah sits at 8,000 feet elevation, equidistant from Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, surrounded by 2-million acres of national forest. In that magnificent setting he hikes, cycles, and meditates, constantly scanning the landscape for images he holds in an inner repository of visual inspiration. Although the paintings are fundamentally abstract, the gestures and brushstrokes can also be seen as nature in microcosm: lichen, twigs, the bark of trees, veins of leaves, tendrils of ferns and flowers. "I immerse myself in the natural world every chance I get," he reflects. "I have found that the more intimate I become with it, the greater influence it has in the studio."

Richard Speer

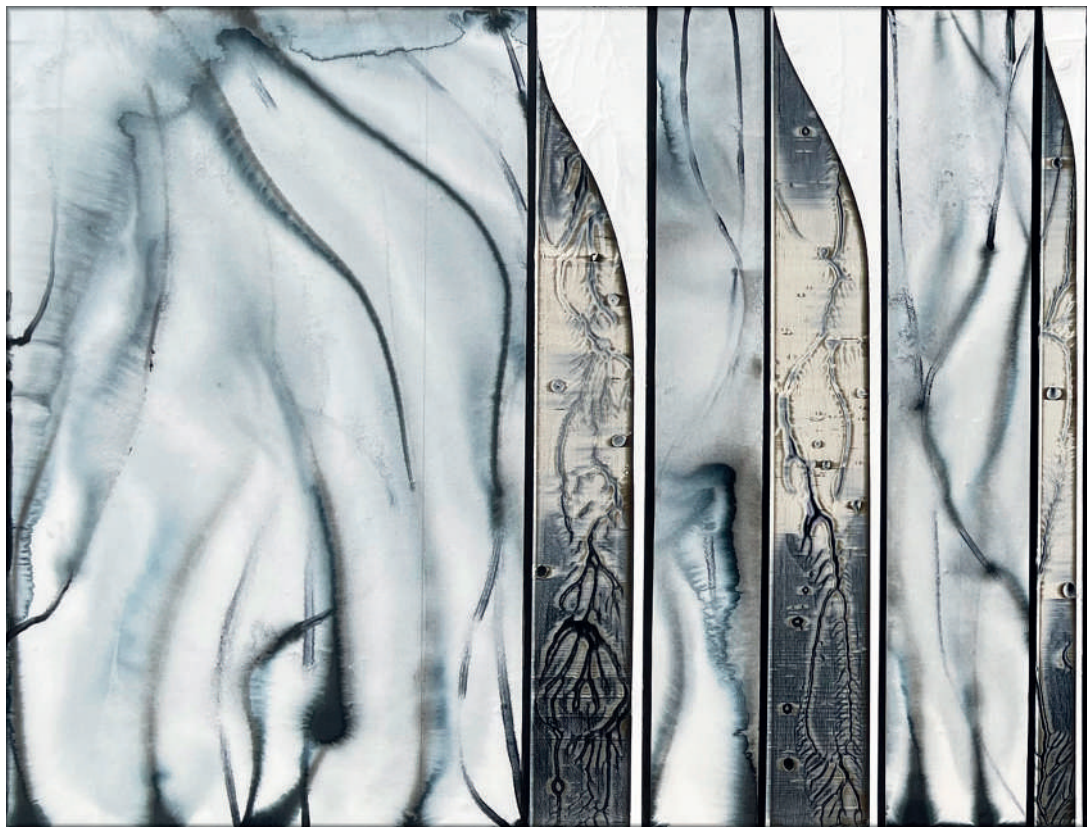
AUGUST 5th - SEPTEMBER 18th

RECEPTION - AUGUST 7th

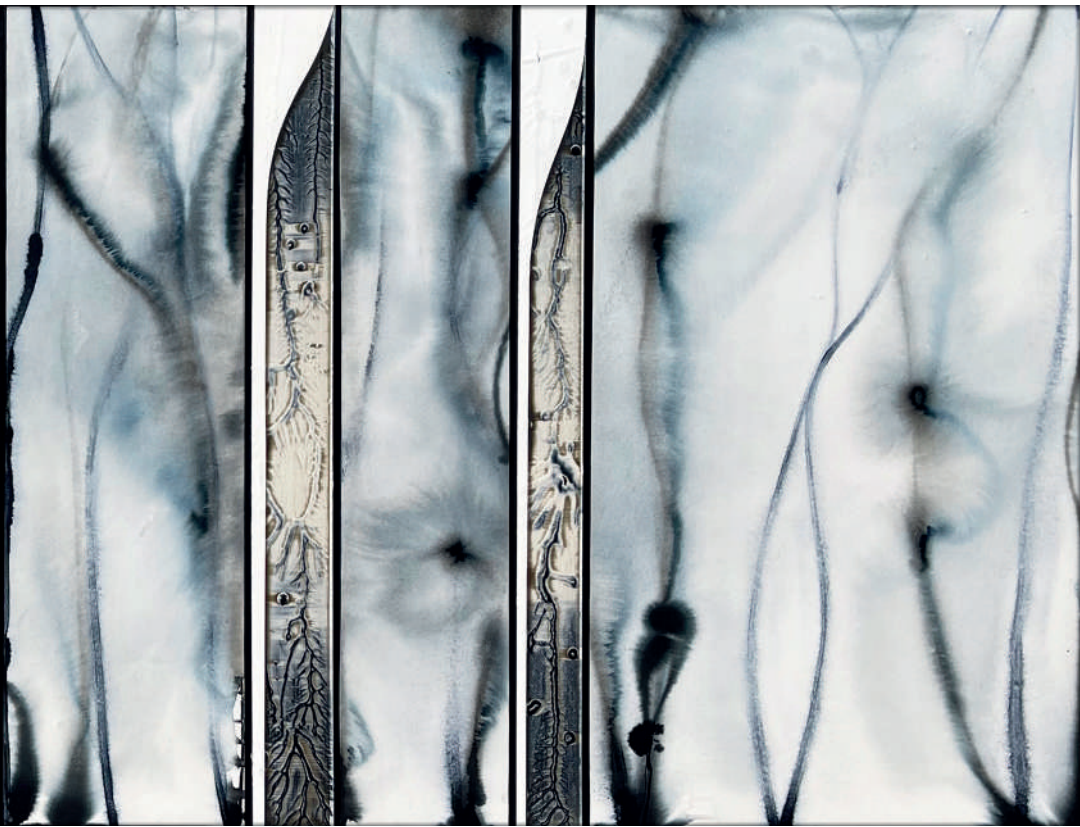
Front Cover: *Aspeniced III*, acrylic on panel, 60" x 96"



Focusfields XII, acrylic on panel, 48" x 84"

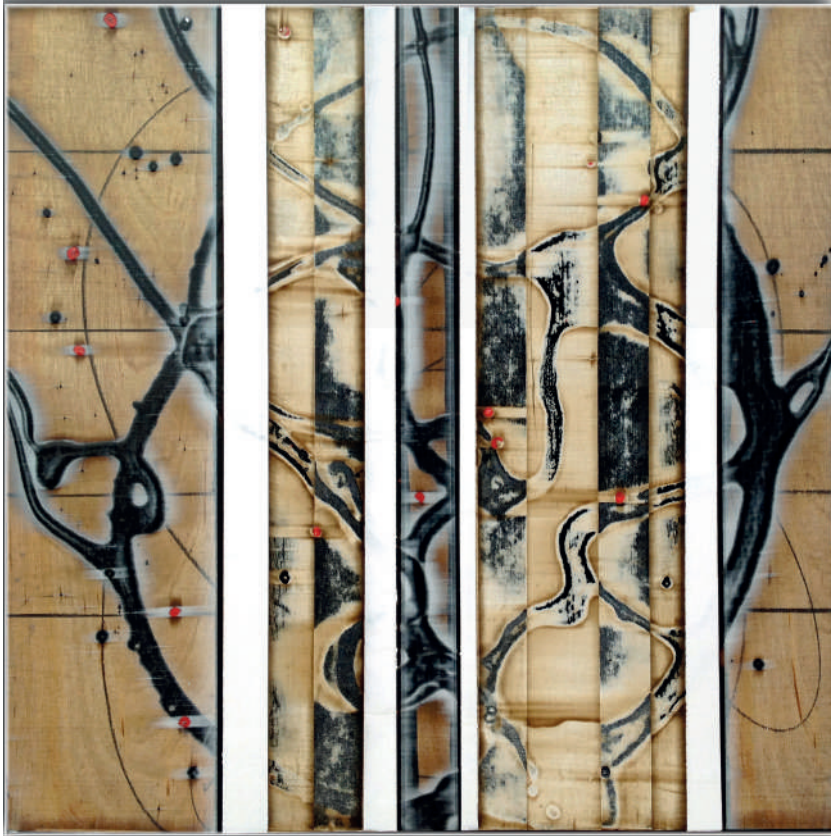


Focusfields XXXII, acrylic on panel, 30" x 80"





Formate, acrylic on panel, 18" x 18"



Coppice IV, acrylic on panel, 18" x 18"

CALLAN CONTEMPORARY

518 Julia Street | New Orleans, LA 70130



Clarification XXIV
acrylic on canvas, 77" x 55"

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