Walton Ford
An Orbed Drop of Light

17 September – 11 November 2026
First Floor, 41 Dover Street
London W1S 4NS

Opening: Thursday, 17 September, 6 – 8pm

Walton Ford, *An Orbed Drop of Light*, 2026
photo: Christopher Stach

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *An Orbed Drop of Light*, an exhibition of works by **Walton Ford**. This is the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery, and his first in the London space.

For the exhibition, Ford presents a selection of paintings and accompanying studies which extend his career-long investigation into the relationship between humans, animals and the natural world. Several works form part of the artist's new series of cinematic depictions of wolves, which explores the beauty, surrender and love that can be revealed in times of peril. 'The viewer is unarmed in these watercolours,' Ford reflects, 'a witness of sublimity and silence.' Looming large over the viewer, the wolves are framed by dramatic, expansive skies inspired by the cloud architecture of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's (1696–1770) ceiling frescoes. Ford notes: 'I wanted to see if I could create the sensation of looking up, past the wolves and into the heavens.'

As is typical of Ford's oeuvre, many of the paintings incorporate literary allusions to writers and poets. Lending the exhibition its title, *An Orbed Drop of Light*, 2026, quotes John Keats' (1795–1821) tender description of love in the epic poem, *Endymion,* whilst the endlessly unfolding sky in *Outward and outward and forever outward*, 2026, draws on a line from Walt Whitman's (1819–1892) evocative magnum opus, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855. In *Everliving Fire*, 2026, Ford conjures Heraclitus' (c. 535–475 BCE) metaphor of a perpetually surging and subsiding cosmos. Through attentiveness to minute, fleeting conditions of light and weather, or the intricacies of animal anatomy, Ford evokes the vastness of the natural world.

Elsewhere, Ford places beauty in dialogue with fraught legacies of human and animal encounters. In *Taughannock*, 2026, a monumental passenger pigeon presides over a phantasmagoric tableau. This now-extinct species of wild, migrating pigeon once dominated the North American skies, their flocks numbering billions and taking several days to pass overhead, blotting out the sun and darkening the sky. Devastated by human deforestation and hunted unrestrainedly, the dove-like species declined rapidly and by the start of the twentieth century had vanished entirely.

In *Hudson River Reel*, 2025, a bald eagle, a wild turkey and a turkey vulture perform a treetop 'reel'. Wings outstretched, the three birds perch high above the Hudson River while the golden, rolling landscape evokes the Hudson River School painters. Ford playfully alludes to Benjamin Franklin's

proposal of the turkey as a more worthy national emblem than the bald eagle, stating ‘We have a raptor, a scavenger, and a game bird. You can’t have one bird; the eagle isn’t going to tell the whole story’.

Walton Ford (b. 1960, Westchester County) lives and works in New York. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held in international institutions, including The Morgan Library and Museum, New York; Ateneo Veneto, Venice (both 2024); Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris (2015); Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, Berlin; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek; Albertina, Vienna (all 2010); Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach; San Antonio Museum of Art (both 2007); and Brooklyn Museum, New York (2006), among others. Ford’s work is in the collections of the Albertina, Vienna; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; New Britain Museum of American Art; Princeton Art Museum; The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

Walton Ford will be in conversation with Glenn Brown at Galerie Max Hetzler, London, on Wednesday, 16 September, at 6.30pm.

Further Exhibitions and Events

BERLIN

Sabine Moritz
ROT GELB BLAU STAUB
11 September – 31 October 2026
Potsdamer Straße 77–87
10785 Berlin

Grace Weaver
Parataxis
4 September – 24 October 2026
Bleibtreustraße 45
10623 Berlin

PARIS

Sergey Kononov
5 September – 10 October 2026
46 & 57, rue du Temple
75004 Paris

MARFA

Rinus Van de Velde
The Dinner
24 May – 6 December 2026
1976 Antelope Hills Road
Marfa, Texas

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