

MIDTOWN

## Tommy Malekoff

Through June 3. Presented by New Canons. International Building, 630 Fifth Avenue, concourse level, Manhattan. [newcanons.com](http://newcanons.com).



Tommy Malekoff's multichannel video installation, which the artist shot in Florida's Everglades. Cody Ranaldo and New Canons

An artist looking for visual metaphors can do worse than visiting Florida, a place that can seem to exist like a dream, and not always a good one. Over the past two years, the artist Tommy Malekoff has been filming in and around the Everglades, where images of intense beauty crash into abject horror with astonishing regularity.

Six wall-size screens pulsate with his footage, a kaleidoscopic, at times punishing array of natural splendor punctuated by ecological calamity. The usual players of human encroachment figure here — burning planes, belching smokestacks, unregulated development — but the tenor is less polemic than balletic. Malekoff depicts a danse macabre, the way nature adapts to our havoc, or doesn't: Manatees, a popular tourist attraction, are drawn to waters warmed by chemical runoff, where they starve to death; raging fires are deliberately set to control sugar cane crops, an agricultural shortcut banned most everywhere except Florida, where it attracts gawking tourists, and chokes the poor communities nearby. Set to a droning score by Joe Williams that fills the space like a dissonant sound bath, the effect is like channel surfing through the apocalypse.

Situating the work in a spooky, disused storage room in the bowels of the Rockefeller Plaza's International Building is a neat coup. Malekoff's looping nightmare disturbs the building's Deco-gentility, its own kind of touristic ecosystem plunked in the center of Midtown, where grace and garishness are inextricable. The non-place heightens the subject matter's otherworldliness, and the infinite loops in which we trap ourselves.

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