



Image: LigoranoReese, *Vanishing Finish*, 2024. Cyanotype on Sekishu. Image courtesy of the artists.

LigoranoReese: *Vanishing Finish*

November 8, 2025 – January 3, 2026

Catharine Clark Gallery is pleased to present *Vanishing Finish* (2024) and *Borrowed Time* (2023–24) by LigoranoReese, on view in EXiT from November 8, 2025, through January 3, 2026. *Vanishing Finish* comprises 49 cyanotype prints documenting endangered keystone species from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List. A selection of 34 prints is presented here, featuring land animals, insects, sea life, plants, and bacteria—organisms at the apex of their habitats whose loss would decimate entire ecosystems. This

installation follows the work's inclusion in *Sympoiesis: Co-Creating Sense of Place* at the University of Wyoming Art Museum (April 26–October 18, 2025).

Both projects address humanity's impact on the natural world amid an accelerating climate crisis. The cyanotype process, invented in the 1840s, has served botanists and photographers as a vital tool for documenting nature. Pioneering practitioners including Anna Atkins, William Henry Fox Talbot, and Sir John Herschel employed the technique to capture botanical specimens with scientific rigor and haunting beauty. The process requires coating paper with a light-sensitive solution of ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide, which appears dark green when wet and oxidizes to Prussian blue upon drying. Unlike conventional photography, cyanotypes demand direct contact between subject and sensitized surface—light must be blocked for the image to emerge.

LigoranoReese's *Vanishing Finish* draws inspiration from Nora Ligorano's conservation work with the original Brooklyn Bridge blueprints and the 2018 New York Public Library exhibition *Blueprints: The Pioneering Photographs of Anna Atkins*. The artists source imagery primarily from 19th-century naturalist illustrations in the Smithsonian's Biodiversity Heritage Library, creating digital negatives that are exposed onto delicate 30-gram Japanese Sekishu tissue using UV light. The resulting prints possess a translucent, ephemeral quality that reinforces the work's themes of fragility and impermanence.

“The theme of the series is about the human hand and its impact on the climate, the environment, and flora and fauna,” explains Ligorano. “There's a sense of the ephemerality of life. The paper we're using—Sekishu—is very fragile. When it's wet during development, it has to be handled very carefully. This sense of fragility connects the process and the images' materiality with the larger ramifications of a perishing environment.”

The choice of cyanotype is deliberate: unlike traditional photographs that fade irreversibly in sunlight, cyanotypes possess restorative powers, returning to their original state after being placed in darkness. This unique chemical property functions as both warning and metaphor—a durational artwork that reacts to its environment while suggesting the possibility of regeneration. “As cyanotypes slowly fade in direct sunlight, the process of transformation elicits passing time and loss,” notes Marshall Reese. The medium also connects these endangered species to systems of economic development and resource extraction; translated into blueprints, they reference the cultural taxonomies and living architectural systems regulated by economics and environmental law.

Featured species in the exhibition include the African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), Southern Cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius*), Scalloped Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna lewini*), Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), Hellbender Salamander (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*), Southern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*), and keystone flora such as Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes rajah*), Amazon Brazil Nut Tree (*Bertholletia excelsa*), and nitrogen-fixing bacteria essential to soil health.



Image: LigoranoReese, *Borrowed Time*, 2023. Six plastic wall clocks, quartz movements, digital lenticular prints. Clock: 14 inches diameter. Image: 12 1/2 inches diameter. Edition of 9.

On view in EXiT's publication room is *Borrowed Time*, a suite of six clocks with embedded lenticulars depicting landscapes in the midst of destruction. The clocks literally tick down in real time, each paired with imagery of natural disasters, drought, wildfire, tornadoes, and hurricanes, that have actually occurred.

The clocks span the six U.S. time zones from left to right: Alaska, Pacific, Mountain, Central, Eastern, and Hawaii-Aleutian. LigoranoReese began *Borrowed Time* in early 2022 with the goal of changing perceptions of time. "Governments and corporations project a false sense of hope that global warming is generations away, when it's happening now," explains Marshall Reese. Nora Ligorano adds, "The clocks telegraph this sense of urgency. We chose catastrophic events from 1989 to the present." The work aims to dispel the myth that climate-induced disasters are a distant future threat, revealing instead their immediate and ongoing impact on our current reality.

Vanishing Finish and *Borrowed Time* will be accompanied by a public program on November 21, presented in conjunction with *Fall of Freedom*, organized by contemporary American artist Dread Scott as a nationwide effort of creative resistance. Additional details forthcoming.

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