

DAVID KLEIN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alternative Testimony

Cyrus Karimipour, Brittany Nelson, Aspen Mays, and Meghann Riepenhoff

February 15 – March 28, 2019

David Klein Gallery, 1520 Washington Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan is pleased to present *Alternative Testimony*, an exhibition of photographs by Cyrus Karimipour, Brittany Nelson, Aspen Mays, and Meghann Riepenhoff. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 15th, from 6 - 8 PM.

The four artists in this exhibition are unique in their practices, but what they share is a limitless curiosity and a habit of experimenting with traditional and historical photographic processes in alternative ways. The research, collection and documentation of scientific and natural evidence is an integral component in all of their work but addressed from different points of view. Early 19th century techniques, such as photogram, cyanotype, mordancage, and bromoil, are employed by all of these artists and, in some cases, used in conjunction with contemporary tools to achieve the desired results.

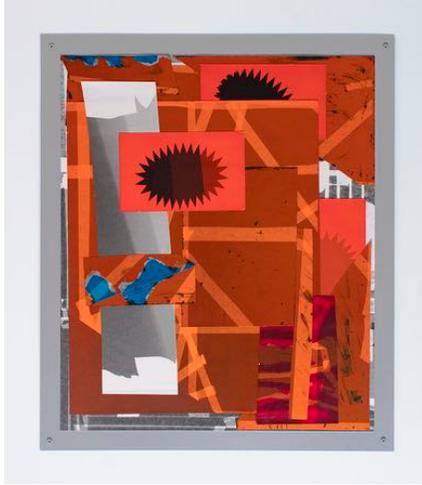


Brittany Nelson, *Mordancage 5* – 2020

Brittany Nelson is interested in separating traditional photographic processes from the representational imagery of the past and implementing chemical reactions to create entirely new images. For *Alternative Testimony*, Nelson presents two unique series; the first produced by manipulating an obscure and caustic process called mordancage. Experimenting with materials in the darkroom, she causes a chain of chemical and digital reactions to occur with the silver content of the photo paper. The results are beautiful optical illusions that appear to be translucent watercolor abstractions. Another 19th century process Nelson explores is bromoil, which starts with a silver gelatin print altered with bleach and lithographic ink. Appropriating photographs of the deserted Martian landscape from NASA's public archive, Nelson created the largest bromoil prints produced to date, measuring four feet by six feet.

DAVID KLEIN GALLERY

Nelson states: *Experimental and alternative photography processes traditionally have been developed and implemented in conjunction with representational imagery... These processes are largely associated with kitsch, nostalgia, and a special kind of photo enthusiast with an unwillingness to accept that Pictorialism has ended. To begin to explore this inherent problem, the processes were removed from representational imagery and subjected to an ongoing series of scientific experiments to catalogue the variables capable within each technique and discover what integrity they might possess as a purely formal material.*



Aspen Mays, *Hugo 20* – 2019

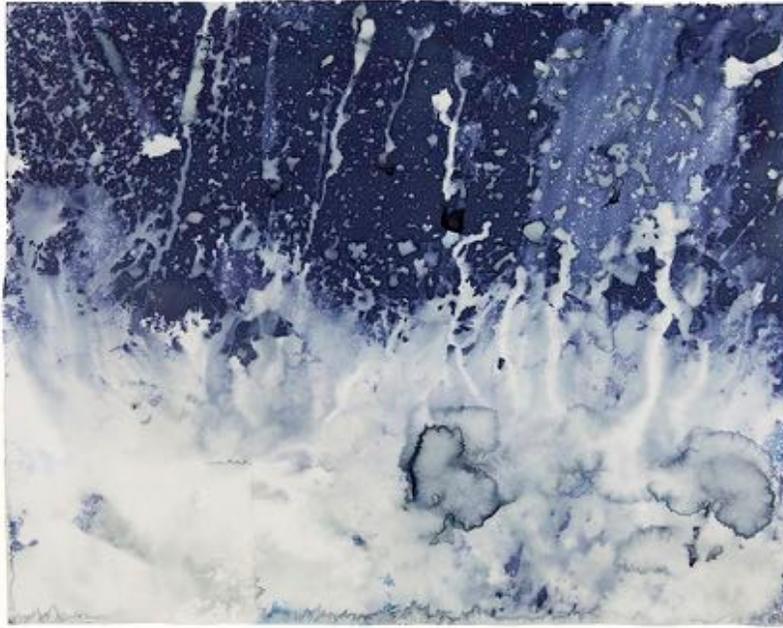


Aspen Mays, *Hugo 23* – 2019

Aspen Mays source for the *Hugo* series was her own archive of images documenting the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo, which devastated her hometown of Charleston, South Carolina in 1989.

I've collected images of Hugo's destruction for years, especially from newspapers and magazines, because even though I lived through the storm, my memory of it is so closely entwined with media images. I don't always remember what I saw and what is a photograph. I find patterns of storm taped windows very beautiful and the act of taping them, as a gesture, to be so futile - hope against hope that the ferocity of the event will somehow be mitigated by the tape keeping the outside out and holding the inside in or just maybe making it a little less bad.

Mays was particularly drawn to the images of taped windows, a pre-storm ritual she calls more shamanic than practical in its ability to provide any real protection. Her colorful *Hugo* works in the exhibition are composed of gelatin silver prints of photograms on cotton rag paper. Breaking the prints into pieces, she turns them into a collage and mounts it on colorful sintra. The vibrant hues in the work are inspired by the emergency alert colors used on weather maps to specify forecasted violent storm patterns. In order to achieve the brightly saturated color, not typical of most photography, Mays uses a locally sourced pigment dye that is readily absorbed by the cotton rag paper the photograms are printed on.



Meghann Riepenhoff, *Ecotone #163 (Parking Space in Front of Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY 03.14.17, Snow, Rain, & Melting Ice, Draped on Construction Barrier)* – 2017

Meghann Riepenhoff presents dynamic cyanotype prints from two recent series: *Littoral Drift* and *Ecotone*. Her approach to this historical technique is directly involved with the environment. Carrying sheets of light sensitive paper to the beach, Riepenhoff places the paper at the edge of the waves, allowing the water, sand and natural debris to wash over it. The paper turns a brilliant blue when exposed to light and the process reveals beautiful impressions of sand and foaming water. The Ecotones are produced by exposure to rain, snow and ice, rather than immersion in an ocean or lake. These unique cyanotypes are exposed to light for just a few seconds, but even after they are removed from the light source, they continue to develop for about 48 hours. Riepenhoff has made her ecotones in various locations including in a slushy New York City puddle and a snowy day in Aspen. In effect, the ocean, lake, rain or falling snow makes these photos with the artist acting as a facilitator, using the weather and environment to produce these lasting impressions.

Riepenhoff states: *[Littoral Drift is] a geologic term describing the action of wind-driven waves transporting sand and gravel along a shoreline, the series consists of camera-less cyanotypes and chromogenic print made in collaboration with the landscape and the ocean, at the edges of both. The elements that I employ in the process—waves, wind, precipitation and sediment—leave physical inscriptions through direct contact with photographic materials. Photochemically, the pieces are never wholly processed; they will continue to respond to environments that they encounter over time. Cycles and dynamism are embedded in the work, as the pieces physically oscillate with daylight and darkness, grow salt, rust, and otherwise subtly drift in form. Each cyanotype is like a fingerprint of place, a hyper-literal, sometimes three-dimensional, photographic record of specific cumulative circumstances.*

DAVID KLEIN GALLERY



Cyrus Karimipour, *Untitled*, 08/14/2018, 4:50pm – 2020



Cyrus Karimipour, *Untitled*, 07/05/2018, 10:14am – 2020

The source of **Cyrus Karimipour's** series, *While I Was Away*, is a collection of images captured by trail cameras installed by the artist on a remote piece of private land. Over a period of several years, the trail cameras have collected millions of photographs, documenting the history of the property and the uninvited guests who travel across it. Initially, Karimipour viewed the monitoring as a way to establish sovereignty and control. Over time, he has come to accept the human visitors simply as a part of the natural wildlife on his land. The presence of the trespassers is now viewed as a gift and has become a resource for his work. The artist reflects on this transition: "Through our forced exchange, I have resolved to exploit subjects as some sort of compensation. I can't stop them, so what can I use them for? I used to dread finding people on the cameras, but now I rely on their presence."

Karimipour describes his process here: *This body of work is developed using the 19th century technique of contact printing with contemporary inkjet materials. The supersaturation of unreceptive, low adhesion film creates a buildup of pigment, which makes the photo malleable. This image is then contact printed to materials of greater adhesion, which instantly dries the pigment and bonds the films together.... The tension between surfaces causes tearing and puckering which creates a common texture that causes foreground and background to converge.*

Brittany Nelson is a graduate of Montana State University and received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. Her work is in numerous private and public collections including the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA; New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM; and the Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC. She is a 2015 Creative Capital Grantee. Nelson lives and works in Richmond, Virginia.

Aspen Mays received her MFA in photography from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She was a 2009 Fulbright Fellow. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Light Work, Syracuse; and the Center for Ongoing Projects and Research, Columbus. Mays lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, where she is Assistant Professor at California College of the Arts.

DAVID KLEIN GALLERY

Meghann Riepenhoff's work has been widely exhibited in the U.S. and in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia and Antarctica. Her photographs are in the collections of the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; and the New York Public Library. She is a 2018-19 Guggenheim Fellow. Reipenhoff, a native of Atlanta, GA, holds an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute. She is based in Bainbridge Island, WA and San Francisco, CA.

Cyrus Karimipour's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions in the U.S., South America, Europe and Asia. His photographs are in multiple private and public collections including La Fototeca, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Lishui Photography Museum, Lishui, China; Light Work, Syracuse, New York; and Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Karimipour holds an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, he lives and works in Metro Detroit.

For further information, please contact:

Christine Schefman

Director of Contemporary Art

christine@dkgallery.com

David Klein Gallery

1520 Washington Blvd

Detroit, MI 48226

313-818-3416

www.dkgallery.com