

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

604 SECOND AVE
SEATTLE, WA 98104
206 903 6220
JAMESHARRISGALLERY.COM



Mark McKnight:

Turn Into

September 6th- October 13th 2018

Opening Reception:

Thursday September 6th 6 – 8pm

Gallery Hours are:

Wed - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday by appointment

Additional images are available
upon request

Left:

Mark McKnight

“Ballerino” 2018

Gelatin Silver Print + Selenium Tone

Edition of 3

23” x 27”

In his first exhibition in Seattle, Mark McKnight offers a selection of black and white photographs that reflect his ongoing engagement with the craft and materials of “traditional” black and white photography. Through careful employment of the fundamental tools of his medium—framing, composition, use of light and shadow—he produces an embellished reality through bleak, darkly printed photographs that upend their reliability as mere documents and instead foreground the artist’s existential and poetic concerns.

Utilizing conventional analog methods or “straight photography,” McKnight produces photographs of queer bodies, found objects, and landscapes using a large format view camera. Through dark room technique, he deliberately buries descriptive details and information—those matters of “fact” that have historically been the prescribed and privileged dominion both of “straight photography” and straight photographers. Shadows become psychological spaces in which to get lost, project, empathize and experience. By withholding such details and through his sensual depictions of queer male corpulence, the artist challenges a Modernist prescription of and pre-occupation with “pure description,” “photographic truth,” and beauty as it has historically been defined: untarnished, feminine, svelte, white and in repose.

In “Turn Into”, McKnight emphasizes subjects that appear in a state of formal and figurative flux. In “Eros (and Erosion),” this is manifested via shared resemblances; the uncanny effects of entropy on erotic body and eroded architecture appear as if

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

604 SECOND AVE
SEATTLE, WA 98104
206 903 6220
JAMESHARRISGALLERY.COM

contagious, suggesting one or both as a conduit for abrasion. In other images, meaning is not only manufactured individually but accrued through purposefully paired photographs within the installation. In "Ballerino," the picture's severed, ethnically ambiguous, play-acted protagonist begins to resemble the concrete on which he lies. In spite of his stasis within the fixed image, he also appears caught between an upended, ethereal pirouette and absorption by the shadow cast by his very body. In the adjacent "Earthskin," two craters are bluntly recounted and yet appear paradoxically corporeal. They recall the blemished flesh of "Ballerino" but also an arid otherworld. Both describe the kind of incongruity McKnight is courting and the potential therein. Between brutally direct, seemingly "straight" depictions of sun-drenched concrete, sand, and skin is a kind of poetry that signal the artist's human concerns. The pictures suggest time, desire, and deterioration but also they occupy a kind of interstice. Situated between the real and the surreal, direct representation and construed meaning, the terrestrial and the ethereal – the pictures illuminate the medium's broader poetic and transformative potentials as much as they point towards the specificity of the artist's subjective experience.

Artist Andrew Cameron will author an original essay, "Object Permanence," to accompany the exhibition.

Mark McKnight (b. Santa Clarita, CA 1984) is an artist based in Los Angeles whose work has been exhibited and published throughout the United States and in Europe.

Most recently, he was an artist in residence at Storm King Art Center, New York. In 2017, he published NOUNS, a book of photographs that was released at the LA Art Book Fair. His work was exhibited at Paul Soto/Park View, Los Angeles, 2017; BBQLA, Los Angeles, 2017; Human Resources, Los Angeles, 2017 and Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, 2017. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Queens, Los Angeles, 2018; the Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, 2015; and Strongroom, Los Angeles, 2015. Previously his work has been included in exhibitions at The Pit, Glendale, 2016; M+B, Los Angeles, 2015; Christophe Guye, Zurich, 2015; Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, 2013; Riverside Art Museum, 2013; Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, 2010; The San Francisco Arts Commission, 2009; and as part of the New York Photo Festival, 2008, among others. In 2009 he traveled to Finland on a Fulbright Scholarship. He earned his BFA at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2007, and his MFA at UC Riverside in 2015. In 2019, his work will be included in a multi-museum survey, "Defining Photographs & Radical Experiments: Inland Southern California 1945 – present," for which an accompanying catalog will be published.