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Erin Calla Watson *(Untitled) n.d.*

05 September 2023 - 08 October 2023

Erin Calla Watson makes pictures. Her first New York solo exhibition expands on her previous interventions in male living spaces, moving from modifications of domestic spaces towards the environment and exterior architecture.

"(Untitled) n.d." consists of 15 appropriated-then-altered images from the 1975 exhibition "New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape." Calla Watson scanned the photographs from the seminal exhibition catalog; she then photographically manipulated visages of supermodel Jordan Barrett onto their landscape and architecture. Jordan appears in varying depictions, spanning from hauntings to God-like figures. Inkjet prints were made from these digitally-altered images, then re-photographed on 35mm film.

The resulting photographs in "(Untitled) n.d." are gelatin silver and chromogenic color prints. Calla Watson determined the exhibition's title as a response to curator notes in the "New Topographics" catalog: "n.d." being short for "no date" known for the photograph's original negative or positive.

Erin Calla Watson (1993) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from Otis College of Art and Design (2016) and an MFA from CalArts (2023). She has had a solo exhibition at Larder, Los Angeles (2022), and a two person show at As it Stands, Los Angeles (2019). Calla Watson has been included in group shows at Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris (2023); Foxy Production, New York (2022 and 2023); In Lieu, Los Angeles (2022); and Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles (2019). Her work has been featured in Artforum, Mousse, and Studio Magazine.

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Thank you to the George Eastman Museum for research assistance on the 1975 exhibition "New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape."

And the clouds are the dust of His feet **Essay by Makayla Bailey**

Face pareidolia: seeing Jesus in toast, the Virgin Mary on a tortilla, God in the sky. In Erin Calla Watson's "(Untitled) n.d.", pareidolia is shirtless, smoking a cigarette, and looking right through you. It's that one male model, you know the one, in a "man-altered landscape." Calla Watson captures the primal human impulse to see an object, pattern, or meaning where there isn't one – imaging a space outside of Chronos, or measurable time, where sensory perception always beats logic. In this case, the artist undresses the historic "New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape" exhibition by grafting supermodel Jordan Barrett into these previously unoccupied landscapes, creating an immediate punctum.

Jordan's face appears in likely places – echoing an insatiable, ever-present violent pareidolia as the unconscious aspirations of a sect of middle-class, white American men. Here lies the shirtless mall phantom in Calla Watson's suburban gothic – circling endlessly around the post-2008 financial crisis, recycling jocks and cheerleaders, post-truth, and supermodels. Calla Watson forges an appropriate figure for this untimely haunting of the current age: an anachronistic masculine ideal of this recent past.

Because online images of Jordan are ubiquitous and encyclopedic, Calla Watson is able to neatly place him in almost any situation (smoking, mouth agape, etc), like a pliable proto-3d model. Jordan appears in these works as a part for the whole – a synecdoche for an elusive masculine ideal, a garish, clunky, at times aptly disembodied figure. His poses take turns personifying variations of the deadpan, stylized, anonymous, hypersexual — the kind of masculine that only feeds back into the male gaze. This body is its own architecture; a familiar landscape surrounded by lack.

Who exactly looks into the sky and sees God? Who looks into the sky and sees himself? Clouds are often associated with God. In certain corners of the internet, a face like Jordan's may as well be the same. Jordan's image collapses in Calla Watson's photographs. Nature is feminine, but the Great Outdoors is different. Time spent "away from it all" becomes the domain of man.