

HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

WHEN THE SKY CHANGES TONE, I'LL BE ABSOLUTELY TENDER

curated by R.H. LOSSIN | June 29 - August 12 | 79 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY

CHINO AMOBI, GLEN BALDRIDGE, GRAHAM COLLINS, CYNTHIA DAIGNAULT,
CHRIS DOMENICK, CHRISTOPHER ROBIN DUNCAN, KELLY JAZVAC, ANNESTA LE,
EMILY STEINFELD MAHLER, TREVOR PAGLEN, MARTHA ROSLER, PAUL ANTHONY SMITH,
SISELL TOLAAS & MISHA KAHN, TOM UTTECH, JACLYN WRIGHT

For all further information please email ryan@halseymckay.com



Trevor Paglen, *Color Study (San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA)*, 2016, Pigment print, 48" × 80" × 2" (121.9 cm × 203.2 cm × 5.1 cm)

Nothing is more overdetermined than an image of the sky. Take, for example, a sunset. Perhaps the most recognizable signifier of soothing platitudes available to us, it conveys leisure, relaxation, contemplation, and romantic love with incredible efficiency. But it is as much a command as it is an invitation to sit down and experience the free, visual pleasure of a natural phenomenon. The sunset represents the existential perversity of capitalism's beneficiaries: those who must work hard to relax and whose relaxation is only more work in the form of consumption and self-reproduction. The sunset is an injunction to forget, for a moment, that sunsets are not free or natural. To forget that vistas have real estate values, that the lion's share of beaches are colonial enterprises, and that atmospheric pollution produces nice colors. It is both a simple pleasure and a mechanism of psychic and political repression. There is much to repress: the sky is an endless source of threats (bombs, torrential rains, comets, surveillance devices, and lethal toxins). And yet, it remains an incredible source of beauty. It represents the contradictions of capitalism much more effectively than most of the imagery available to us, which may be why we continue to look to it as a source and symbol of knowledge. The artists in this show let us revel in the visual pleasure of the sky without forgetting the conditions that make this enjoyment possible.

- R.H. Lossin

R.H. Lossin is a writer based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has appeared in the New York Review of Books, New Left Review, Boston Review, Salvage, The Nation, Jacobin Magazine, and e-flux. She teaches for the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research and is a fellow at Harvard's Charles Warren Center. She is writing a book about sabotage.