

HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

MARIAH ROBERTSON - *MANY MINI MOONS*

October 19 - December 31, 2024 | 79 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY

For all further information please email contact@halseymckay.com



Halsey McKay Gallery is thrilled to present our first solo exhibition with Mariah Robertson. Primarily known for photographic work experimenting with darkroom techniques and materials, her practice began in the late 1990's with improvisational performance work inspired by 1970's conceptual art. *Many Mini Moons* finds her at a place in between and amongst her established strategies. The show begins with an installation of photograms that serve as catalyst for paintings at varying degrees of finish and experimentation. The installation will be augmented throughout the duration of the exhibition and will be accompanied by writing that documents how she came to and is finding her way through her process. Developments will be updated throughout the run of the exhibition on the gallery webpage and will culminate in a printed risograph publication. We begin with her proposal for this show:

Since 2015, I have been working on a commissioned project for a large non-commercial entity building at a facility in a foreign country far from the US. Over the years there have been technical requirement changes and other challenges to the point that it would be impossible to make the work as originally proposed. At some point last year, I re-proposed making painted copies of my photograms. This came about in part because I saw a painter I admire use lens based source imagery in a way I found lazy, and a critical amount of friends had said to me that my work was "painting." I'm able to talk endlessly about how my work is a conceptual analysis of photography as a system and grows out of my performance practice, but my understanding of painting is a bit stunted, being frozen where I was at age 13 spray painting all my belongings black.

And so, I thought I would “learn by doing” and hitch my financial survival prospects to this project so I could not turn back.

It’s been a really strange, destabilizing inner and outer journey. I have been keeping a choppy journal of a person who has achieved some skill in one field, trying to learn another, failing and making scary bad decisions, all while contemplating what it means to copy, to interpret, to reproduce. I’ve worked on various aspects of materiality of photography, inverting the gendered gaze, and now the double helix relationship with drawing/painting. It’s actually terrifying me as we speak and I think it would best be expressed with writing, but there’s also all the detritus of making along the way.

Currently, I’m trying to “copy” 2 photograms, or interpret them via memory or translation or reproduce them in a new medium.

-Mariah Robertson
September, 2024

Mariah Robertson (b. 1975) received an MFA from Yale University and a BA from UC Berkeley. Select solo exhibitions include Van Doren Waxter, New York; 11R, New York; Green Gallery, Milwaukee; M+B, Los Angeles. She has been included in exhibitions at institutions such as MoMA, New York, NY and MoMA PS1, New York; International Center of Photography, New York; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England, and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. Robertson’s work is in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, Whitney Museum of American Art, The National Gallery of Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Art Institute of Chicago and National Museum of Women in the Arts, among others. Her work was featured on the cover of Elton John’s 2016 album, *Wonderful Crazy Night*.

Robertson’s work was recently included in three museum shows: *The Sky’s the Limit* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, October 21, 2023 – February 25, 2024. *The Surrealist Impulse* at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh NC, August 12, 2023–January 28, 2024, and *The Art Institute of Chicago* February - August, 2024.

Book of Details, a self published artist book had its debut at the 2024 at the NYABF at the table of Van Doren Waxter. A book tour series of events began in Chicago in June 2024 and will include stops in Kansas City, Houston, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Francisco.