

Ptolemy

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Bill Jenkins & Nathaniel Robinson

A Pair of Binoculars

August 15–September 14, 2025

Opening Reception: August 15, 2025, 6:00–8:00 PM

Glendale, NY, 8/15/25: The first thing that one should do upon purchasing a new pair of binoculars is perform a diopter adjustment. Even those of us with nearly impeccable vision most likely have slight variances from eye to eye; the diopter adjuster calibrates the eyepieces to match your eyes' natural focusing abilities to create a seamless stereoscopic image.

Binoculars alter our perception of the world by cropping and enlarging our gaze, but they require a physical intervention to work—i.e. they are a tool that must be manually held. *A Pair of Binoculars* is comprised of two video works: Each is a monocular with its own unique perspective, physically enabled and surveying a natural-looking, but constructed, environment.

Bill Jenkins' *Freshkills Scan 3* finds the artist activating and documenting the landscape of Freshkills Park in Staten Island during a 2018 residency. Freshkills is notable as a landfill site that has been transformed into a park using layers of impermeable membrane and landscaping. For this work, the artist first created a plexiglass "sled," consisting of a sheet of acrylic with a suspended stationary camera and a rope attached. The sled was then placed directly on the wet ground at Freshkills and dragged across the terrain, stopping for extended periods of time at different points of the landscape. The multiple surfaces captured by the camera's framing compete with one another in unexpected and sometimes disorienting ways: the glossy plexiglass surface perfectly reflects the sky while also accruing damage; water and dirt are compressed beneath the sheet, while debris accumulates on top; grass and vegetation drift in and out of the frame as the breeze passes by. As the video plays, long stretches of silence are abruptly broken by the sound of the moving sled.

Nathaniel Robinson's *Rubble Field Flowing* appears to have been shot on the side of a crumbling mountain, but it was actually made entirely in the artist's studio. Following a format used in one of his earlier video works, Robinson propped a wood panel at a slight incline, at which he then aimed a camera set up on constructed rig. He then loaded a batch of crushed mortar onto the panel, shot a photograph, and tapped the panel to slightly jostle the rubble. This process was repeated thousands of times at various times of day, sometimes with seconds between each frame, and sometimes with days. The resulting stop-motion animation juxtaposes the consistency of Robinson's physical gesture and its resultant smooth animation against the passage of time and its unpredictable, constantly changing light.

The works in this exhibition utilize different techniques, but taken together—possibly with a slight diopter adjustment—they offer a well-calibrated view of our relationship to the natural world.

Pat Reynolds

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Bill Jenkins is an artist based in New York City producing sculpture, installation, video and drawing. Jenkins was raised and educated in northern California and the Bay Area, in the context of former Gold Rush towns and latter day technology booms and busts. Jenkins makes work that compares individual agency with the scale of industrial production and urban growth. Using infrastructure as formal and conceptual inspiration, Jenkins makes artworks that perform functional tasks such as redistributing light within exhibition spaces, adding structural exoskeletons onto paper, or digitally scanning the ground in close up detail in urban landscapes. These activities appear as breakdowns in the logic of commercial or managerial efficiency, but their practical failures are recuperated as sculptural content, opening up alternative means of valuing forms and spaces.

Jenkins received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (2003) and a MFA from the University of California at Berkeley (2007). Recent solo exhibitions of Jenkins' work have been at Freshkills Park Gallery, Staten Island, NY; CAPITAL, San Francisco, CA; Todd Madigan Gallery, California State University Bakersfield; and Galeria Stereo, Warsaw, Poland. Other solo projects have been held at Laurel Gitlen, New York, NY, and The Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, OR. Jenkins' work has been included in group shows at Tanya Bonakdar, James Cohan, Feature Inc., Sekkima Jenkins & Co., Simone Subal, and White Columns, New York, NY; Regards, Chicago, IL; Ratio 3, San Francisco, CA; and Yvon Lambert, Paris. In Fall 2017 Jenkins was in residence at the Atelier Calder in Saché, France. An interview with Jenkins about his installation projects is featured in the Spring 2019 issue of BOMB Magazine. Reviews of Jenkins' work have been published in *Artforum* and *artforum.com*, *artinamericamagazine.com*, *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*, *The New Yorker* and the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* among other publications.

Nathaniel Robinson has had solo exhibitions at venues including Feature, Inc. and Magenta Plains in New York; Devening Projects and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; Thomas Park in Seoul; Twig Gallery, Brussels; and Northwestern College, St Paul. He has participated in group exhibitions at On Stellar Rays, 33 Orchard, Martos Gallery, and White Columns in New York; Devening Projects, Heaven Gallery and Adds Donna in Chicago; the Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College; as well as in Brussels, Dusseldorf, Leipzig, Melbourne, and Istanbul. In 2015 he was a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant. In 2019 his work was included in the Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York. In 2022 he constructed an empty space with the aid of a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Divergent impulses have led him to work with a variety of means, and a significant bifurcation between painting and sculpture; as well as intense though transitory periods of attention to video, installation, and things less categorizable. In common among these efforts is a focus on the vagaries of first-person experience, in particular what J. J. Gibson called "the co-perception of self and world," as well as the nuts and the bolts of vision and optics, and generally the contradictions of being a thing and a think. His exhibitions have been reviewed in *The Chicago Reader*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, *Modern Painters*, *The L Magazine*, *New City*, *Art Ltd*. Robinson lives and works in Brewster, New York. Born 1980, Cranston, RI; BA Amherst College, 2002; MFA The School of the Art Institute of Chicago 2005.