

Artists Explore the Mythology of Mountains in a Group Exhibition

Andrew Nunes — Aug 23 2016



Summer Landscape (Cliff Shadows), Kristine Potter, 2015. All images courtesy of the artists and Black Ball Projects.

Nature's most regal landform is the theme of *MTN*, the newest group exhibition at Black Ball Projects (<http://blackballprojects.com/>). If the title wasn't clear, the three minds behind the artist-run gallery space centered the show around the idea of the mountain, both in a literal sense, as well as of the figurative representation of "a place where we act out our mythologies [...] that often serves as a distant frontier and a stark contrast from the civilized lowlands," according to show's press release.



Magic Holey Lonely, James Foster, 2015

Among the included works, there is a distinct lack of painting among the scattered photographs, sculptures, and drawings within the space. While landscape painting and mountains have shared an intimate relationship throughout art history, their intimacy has been put on hold in *MTN*, which prefers to explore the symbolic function of the mountain in culture, rather than gawk at the beauty of their peaks.



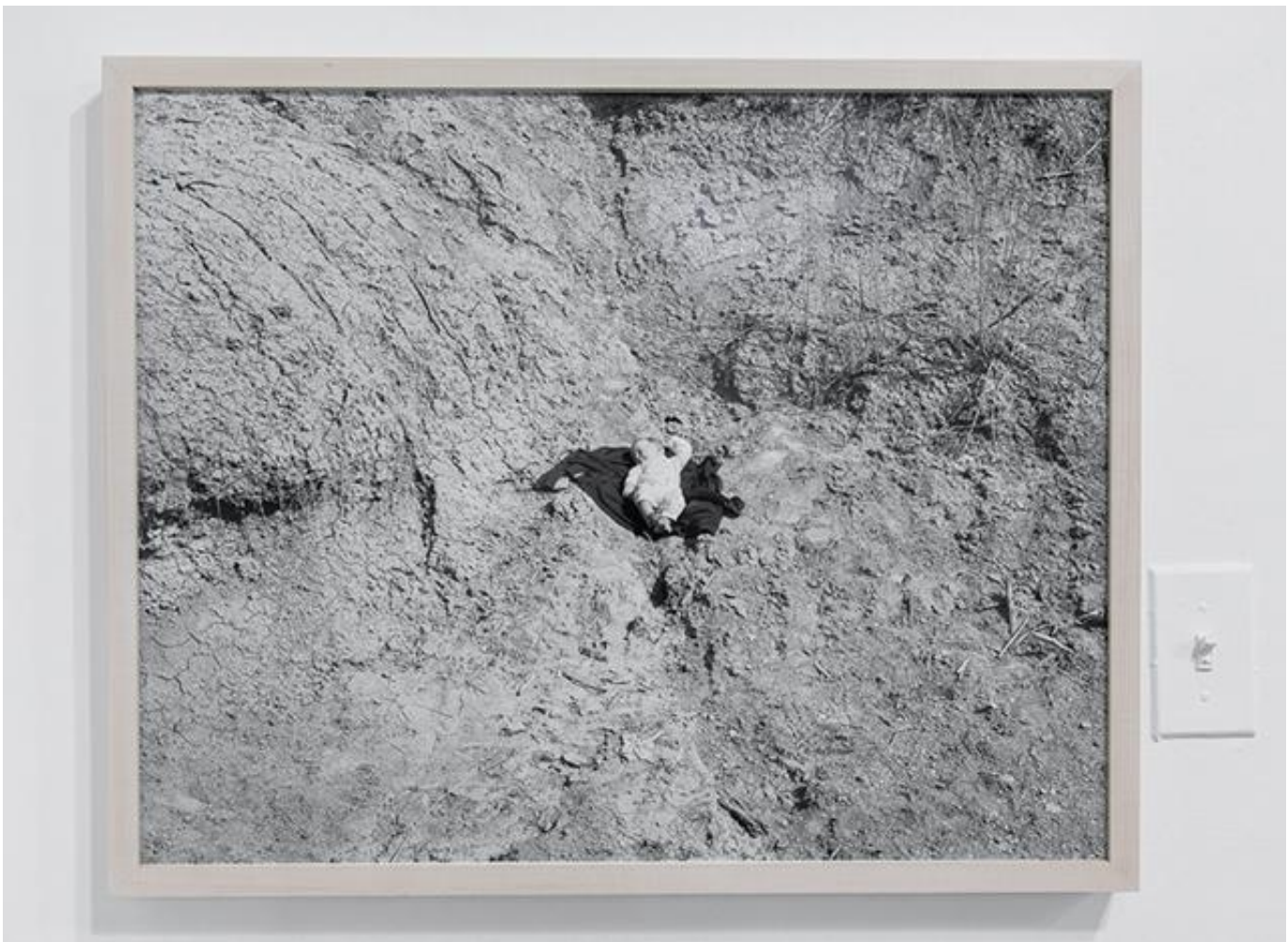
MTN Installation View, 2016

<http://www.marianneboeskygallery.com/artists/adam-helms/works/>' *The Dream of The Dream* is the most visually imposing work in the space and is also the work that inspired artists-turned-gallerists [Harriet Salmon \(http://harrietsalmon.com/home.html\)](http://harrietsalmon.com/home.html), [Jason Tomme \(http://jasontomme.com/\)](http://jasontomme.com/), and [Ana Wolovick \(http://www.wolovick.com/\)](http://www.wolovick.com/) to organize this exhibition. Consisting of 24 silkscreened felt panels spread out across two converging walls, Helms' piece is a blown-up rendering of the iconic Paramount Pictures logo, an elegant, but anonymous and non-descript mountain vista.



Spring Landscape (No Way In/Out), Kristine Potter, 2014.

The enormous work highlights the brute, unrefined ‘beauty’ of the logo; a depiction of aesthetics without particular substance or originality, something plain but universally and irrefutably pleasing. The blown-up details of the piece also reveal the lack of cultural context in the logo’s landscape which is specifically “devoid of any natives who might have staked prior claims [to the land]” a disturbing fact that “references corporate Hollywood myth-making,” according to the gallerists.



Summer Landscape (Cliff Shadows), Kristine Potter, 2015

Manifest, a body of photographic work by artist [Kristine Potter](http://kristinepotter.com/) (<http://kristinepotter.com/>), are black-and-white photographs of Colorado mountain ranges. Veiny, sprawling tree branches, high noon shadows, and a lone baby on a blanket imbue these images with heavy psychological tension, somewhat uncomfortable images filled contextual mystery. Potter's photographs manage to instill the mostly inanimate landscape with a strained, creeping anxiety.



The Vacuum Flower, James Easter, 2016

Shifting away from a more literal depiction of mountains, James Foster (<https://www.instagram.com/jfoster666/>)'s sculpture and photograph approach the landmass indirectly and symbolically: “His totem-like sculpture and quasi-surreal photograph elude to the mountain in sly ways: a vertical converging pinstripe, earth ore in the form of a crystal, a steeped blanket. These two pieces stem from his fascination with the landscape in science fiction,” the gallery tells The Creators Project. The wry simplicity of these pieces seems to poke fun of the idea of the mountain as something monumental, reduced to line on wood and the corner of a blanket in each case.



Tania Cross, 2016

Tania Cross (<https://www.instagram.com/taniajanecross/>)' drawings make up the final series within the exhibition. Each black-and-white square consists of a textual fragment extracted from *The New Yorker*, often consisting of dramatic proclamations like “I TRIED IT ON THE GATES OF HELL” and “YOUR TRUE LOVE WIL

LLEAVE YOU". The written content bears no direct relationship to mountains, but they are hung together in an inverted triangle arguably resembling an upside down mountain, perhaps the ultimate antithesis to the head-on, cliché mountain of the Paramount Pictures logo.

MTN will be on view at Williamsburg's [Black Ball Projects \(http://blackballprojects.com/\)](http://blackballprojects.com/) until September 12th.

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