

GalleryX presents

The Shamanic Eye

William Mortensen · Chris Stein feat. Debbie Harry / HR Giger
· Andres Serrano · Edward Colver · Cormac Figgis · Courtney
Brooke Hall · Brittany Rose Luciani · Ken Weaver · Adam De
Ville · Alexis Palmer Karl · Erik Bergrin

Curated by Stephen Romano

30 November 2023 - 14 January 2024





William Mortensen



Chris Stein



Andres Serrano



Edward Colver



Cormac Figgis



Courtney Brooke Hall



Brittany Rose Luciani



Ken Weaver



Adam De Ville



Alexis Palmer Karl



Erik Bergrin



"Throughout the history of art the role of the artist has been compared to the role of the shaman. This is because the artist's role has always been one of mediator, transformer and, most prominently - visionary. The role of both the artist and shaman has always been to stand between two worlds: that of the visible and the invisible. The viewers, or the community in the case of the shaman, entrust the artist to go forth into the realm of the invisible and return with a gift: the invisible transformed into the visible."

— *Clare Milledge, 2013*



William Mortensen



William Mortensen (1897 - 1965) was an American photographer, primarily known for his occult themed works and Hollywood portraits in the 1920s-1940s in the pictorialist style.

Ansel Adams called him 'the Antichrist' and wanted him written out of history. But William Mortensen's grotesque photographs of death, nudity and torture and are now enjoying a resurgence in popularity and appreciation.

Mortensen's methods often made it hard to distinguish whether the results were photographs or not. He used traditional printmaking techniques, such as bromoiling, and developed many of his own. He would create composite images, scratch, scrape and draw on his prints, then apply a texture that made them look like etchings, thereby disguising his manipulations. Consequently, every print was unique. Ultimately, Mortensen's aim was to create something that, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be a photograph, yet portrayed scenes so fantastic they caused wonder and astonishment in the viewer.

His love of the fantastic and the grotesque was, then, partly an outward expression of his love to shock, but it had another purpose: by giving form to such emotions as fear and hatred, Mortensen, a Christian Scientist, believed "we are enabled to lessen their power over us". He added: "When the world of the grotesque is known and appreciated, the real world becomes vastly more significant."

It was these kinds of ideas that so angered Adams and his Group f/64 brethren devoted to photography that depicted a pure, unmediated reality. This began a spirited debate with Mortensen within the pages of the magazine that became ever more vitriolic. However, Adams did not stop there, suggesting in a personal letter to Mortensen that he "negotiate oblivion". When fellow photographer Edward Weston wrote telling of his excitement at photographing a "fresh corpse", Adams replied: "My only regret is that the identity of said corpse is not our Laguna Beach colleague."

The critics Beaumont Newhall and his wife Nancy held the same view: Beaumont consciously excluded Mortensen from his grandiosely titled 1949 book *The History of Photography, From 1839 to the Present Day*. Their distaste would not even allow them to acknowledge Mortensen's mastery of his craft. Ultimately though, for all the griping of Adams and f/64, it turns out that Mortensen was the true modernist all along, not them. For today, we are surrounded by images of the fantastic and unreal.

The photographs of William Mortensen are in several prominent collections including the Vatican in Rome, The Getty Museum Collection, The Houston Museum, The Minneapolis Art Institute, The MET Museum in New York, The Los Angeles County Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The Gallery of Everything, London, among many others. Recent exhibitions include the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the artist's birth at The Buckland Museum of Witchcraft, The Heritage Museum of Orange County, The Houston Museum and the Gallery of Everything, London. William Mortensen's art has been featured at many prominent art fairs including SCOPE Art show NYC, PULSE Art Fair NYC, The Outsider Art Fair NYC. Mortensen is represented in several notable private collection internationally, and is considered a seminal figure in the history of photography.





William H Mortensen

A Flemish Maid

Silver print, 1932. 11 x 14 cm, mounted, signed

€1200





William H Mortensen

The Heretic

Bromide print, 1932. 14 x 19 cm, mounted

€2000





William H Mortensen

Helen and Clytemnestra

Photographic print, n.d. 16.5 x 23.5 cm, mounted

€2000





William H Mortensen

Johan the Mad

Silver print, n.d. 14.5 x 18.5 cm, mounted, studio stamped

€1,200





William H Mortensen

Ko-Ko

Photographic print, n.d. 14.5 x 17 cm, mounted, signed

€800





William H Mortensen

The Mystic

Photographic print, n.d. 16.5 x 21 cm, mounted

€1200





William H Mortensen

The Mystic II

Photographic print, n.d. 18.5 x 23 cm, mounted

€1200





William H Mortensen

Courtney with Masks

Photographic print, n.d. 24 x 16.5 cm, mounted, signed

€1200



Chris Stein

w. Debbie Harry / HR Giger



Chris Stein is the co-founder, songwriter and guitarist of the iconic band and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee **Blondie**, whose most recent studio album, *Pollinator*, was named one of Rolling Stone's 20 Best Pop Albums of 2017.

Beyond his era-defining music with Blondie, Stein has collaborated with a host of artists over the years, including Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, William Burroughs, Devo, Glenn O'Brien, and Shepard Fairey. Chris' photographic work has been featured in the press and in galleries around the world, most prominently in a 2017 exhibition at London's prestigious Somerset House that drew a reported 60,000 visitors. His first book of photography and essays, 2016's *Negative: Me, Blondie, and the Advent of Punk* (Rizzoli) was hailed by GoodReads as "a must-have celebration of the new-wave and punk scene, whose influence on music and fashion is just as relevant today as it was four decades ago." With his second book *Point of View: Me, New York City and the Punk Scene* (Rizzoli), Stein expands upon that highly praised collection, which offered a unique, behind-the-scenes look at Blondie and its milieu. This time Stein recalls in photographs and words the rough-edged New York City streets he came of age in as an artist in the late sixties and seventies. Stein documents, most often in evocative black and white, an urban landscape filled with detritus yet teeming with life, from the avenues of midtown to the boardwalks of Coney Island. He offers a local's view of the far-from-gentrified East Village neighborhood where he lived, and where the punk movement emerged. And he shares previously unpublished images of such iconic figures of the era as Debbie Harry, his musical partner in Blondie; Andy Warhol; Iggy Pop; David Bowie; and the Ramones. The New York Times notes "*POINT OF VIEW: Me, New York City, and the Punk Scene* is a fascinating document, not only of the punk scene of the early and middle 1970s but more generally of New York City in its years of chaos, decay and creative energy."





Chris Stein

Debbie Harry by HR Giger (1980) - I

Digital print (printed 2023) 25 x 25 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Chris Stein

Debbie Harry by HR Giger (1980) - II

Digital print (printed 2023) 25 x 25 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Chris Stein

Debbie Harry by HR Giger (1980) - III

Digital print (printed 2023) 25 x 25 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Chris Stein

Debbie Harry by HR Giger (1980) - IV

Digital print (printed 2023) 25 x 25 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Chris Stein

Debbie Harry by HR Giger (1980) - V

Digital print (printed 2023) 25 x 25 cm, mounted, signed

€600



Andres Serrano



Andres Serrano is perhaps best known for his unflinching color photographs of controversial subjects including dead bodies, feces, handguns, Ku Klux Klansmen, and Catholic figurines submerged in bodily fluids.

Serrano's painterly compositions and rich tonalities create strange juxtapositions with his confrontational subject matter. In his famous photograph *Piss Christ* (1987), for example, Serrano uses a glowing, color-saturated palette to depict his transgressive subject: a crucifix suspended in urine. The photograph became a major touchstone in the American culture wars and sparked debates about arts funding in the United States.

The artist has exhibited in New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, Beijing, and Brussels. His work has sold for six figures at auction and belongs in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Stedelijk Museum, among others.





Andres Serrano

Iron Maiden, Chillingham Castle, England, (Torture Series)

Photographic print. 29 x 33.5 cm, mounted, signed

€NFS





Andres Serrano

Iron Shackles (Torture Series)

Photographic print. 29 x 33.5 cm, mounted, signed

€NFS



Edward Colver



Edward Colver is an essentially self-taught American photographer, best known for his early punk photographs.

Colver not only created a visual document of the birth of the hard-core punk in suburban Southern California from late 1978 to mid-1984, but also he greatly helped in defining the photography style and graphic identity of the American hard-core punk movement. He was actually in the right place at the right time, and with the right attitude. He was not merely a witness in the eye of the storm, he was indeed a living part of that big picture, and in this regard, his early work is an authentic self-portrait of the Southern California hardcore punk scene in its golden years.

Most recently, Nico B, Cult Epics founder and friend of Christian Death's Rozz Williams, edited an oversized hardcover book of Ed's photos of Christian Death capturing rare and never-before-seen moments , as well as the story of early Christian Death as told by Edward, surviving band members and others through new, exclusive interviews.





Ed Colver

Rozz Williams I

Photographic print, 24.5 x 35.5 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Ed Colver

Rozz Williams II

Photographic print, 24.5 x 35.5 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Ed Colver

Rozz Williams III

Photographic print, 24.5 x 35.5 cm, mounted, signed

€600





Ed Colver

Rozz Williams IV

Photographic print, 24.5 x 35.5 cm, mounted, signed

€600



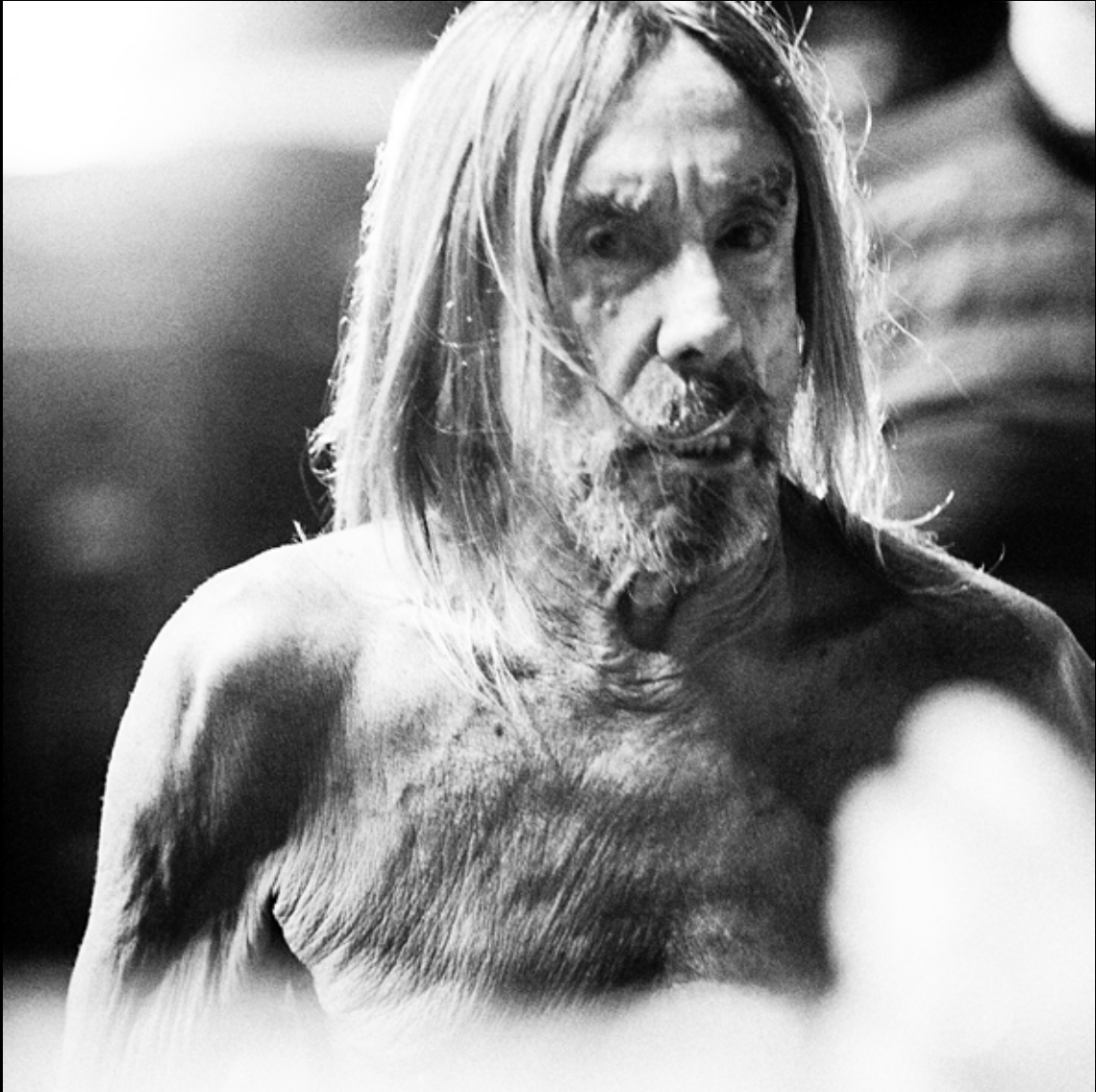
Cormac Figgis



Cormac Figgis is a Dublin based photographer who has been shooting at gigs, clubs and festivals for almost twenty years, in addition to creating press photography and album design for many bands. As a fan of Iggy Pop, Cormac has seen him perform many times over the past thirty-five years, finally getting the opportunity to shoot him live, for the first time, in 2007.

"Despite the many bands and singers I've shot that made an impression on me as a teenager, my Iggy photos have a special significance. I always wanted a piece of the animalistic drama that I first got from listening to his records, and then later witnessing live. Iggy embodies everything glamorous and destructive about rock 'n' roll in a way that no one else does." (From *Shot From All Sides*, published 2022).





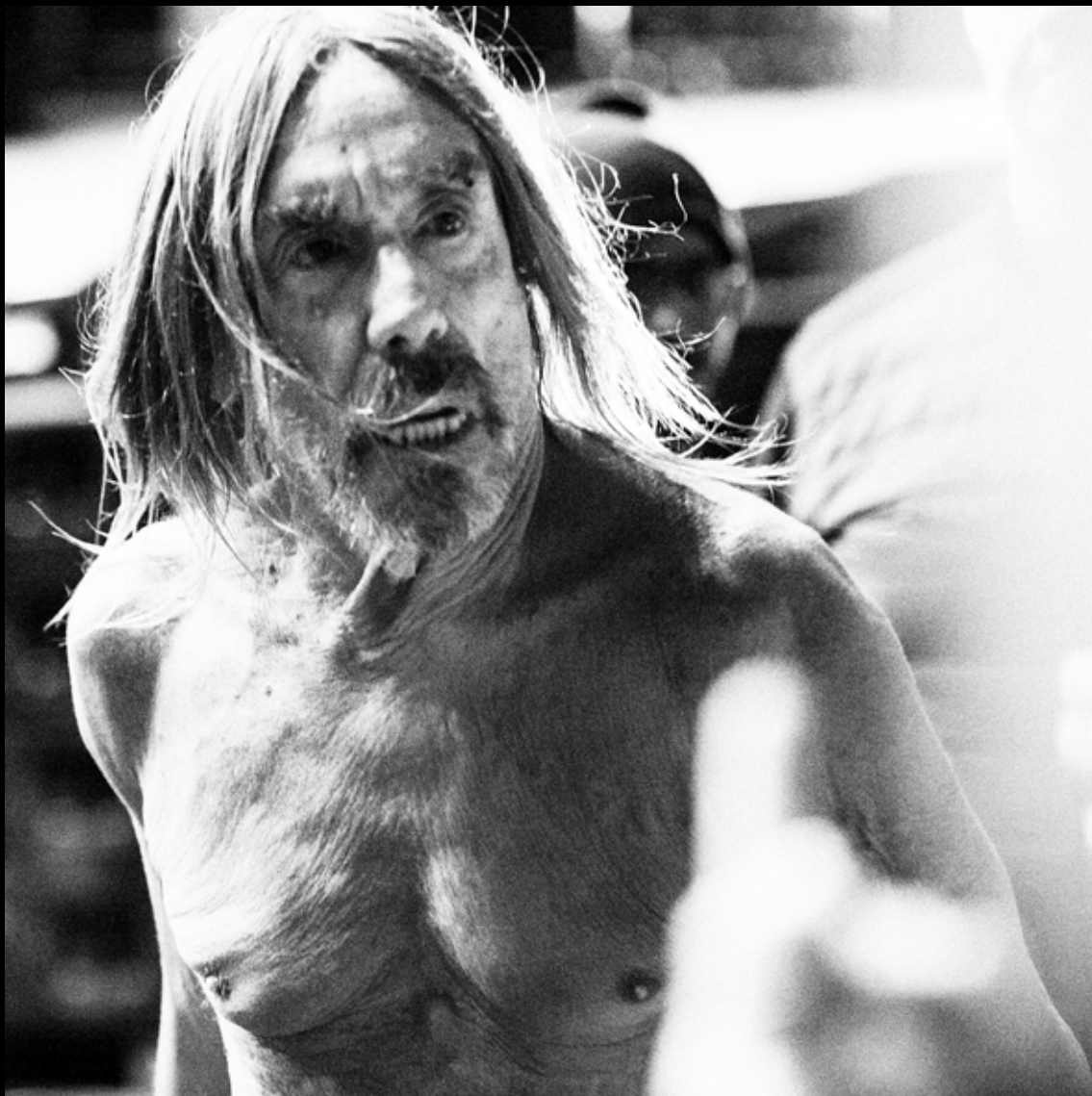
Cormac Figgis

Iggy Pop I

Photographic print, 36 x 36 cm, signed

€600





Cormac Figgis

Iggy Pop II

Photographic print, 36 x 36 cm, signed

€600





Cormac Figgis

Iggy Pop III

Photographic print, 50 x 36 cm, signed

€750





Cormac Figgis

Iggy Pop IV

Photographic print, 36 x 60 cm, signed

€750





Cormac Figgis

Iggy Pop V

Photographic print, 50 x 36 cm, signed

€750



Courtney Brooke Hall



Courtney Brooke Hall (1980, New England, United States) is a photographer and conceptual artist. She explores the ties of the feminine to nature and spirituality through the lens of nostalgia. Moments are depicted that only exist to punctuate human drama and clarify our cosmic existence, while finding the poetic meaning in everyday life.

"My work explores the relationship between the feminine, the natural world and spirituality. With influences such as witchcraft, the romantics, mother earth and death, I am exploring what it is to exist in a human form. Ever since I was an adolescent I have been fascinated by the unrelenting pressure of time and it's relationship to beauty. What starts out as yearning soon becomes manipulated into a tragedy of temptation, leaving only a sense of nihilism and the prospect of a new beginning. I strive to create a visual moment that urges the viewer to question spirituality, the human experience and one's own connection to the universe."





Courtney Brooke Hall

Specter

Chromogenic print 1/1, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€250





Courtney Brooke Hall

Phantom

Chromagenic print 1/1, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€250





Courtney Brooke Hall

Wraith

Chromagenic print 1/1, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€250





Courtney Brooke Hall

Phantasm

Chromagenic print 1/1, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€250



Brittany Rose Luciani



Brittany Rose Luciani is a self-taught photographer, using the camera since she was a child. Having grown up with her grandmother who was an artist, she was encouraged at a very young age to express herself creatively. Brittany began her interest in the paranormal and occult at a young age as well. The two interests converged later when she began a professional practice as an artist, all the while supporting herself and her daughter as a house painter while living in Ohio.

The subject matter of Brittany's art and compositional elements are heavily guided by Mortensen's theories of the "Dominant Mass" in his 1937 magnum opus "The Command to Look", his treatise on the psychology of perception. Brittany's art not only demonstrates a deep knowledge of intuitively striking compositional elements, but a will and courage to explore subject matter not quickly embraced by the mainstream culture, yet whose culmination of technique and vision manifest an overt affirmation of the quality of the left-hand path.

For the exhibition, Brittany Rose Luciani has re-staged William Mortensen's "The High Priestess" of 1924.





Brittany Rose Luciani

The High Priestess I

Photographic print 1/1, 23 x 28.5 cm, signed

€400





Brittany Rose Luciani

The High Priestess II

Photographic print 1/1, 23 x 28.5 cm, signed

€400





Brittany Rose Luciani

The High Priestess III

Photographic print 1/1, 23 x 28.5 cm, signed

€400





Brittany Rose Luciani

The High Priestess IV

Photographic print 1/1, 23 x 28.5 cm, signed

€400



Ken Weaver



Ken Weaver, an artist living and working in New York City, delves into the realm of the otherworldly. Images are conjured and caught on metal plating: daguerreotypes that are once ghostly and terrifying in their decaying beauty, They are spirit photography of our age, arcane and modern, spellbound in time. In other works, Weaver paints behemoths of alien godheads who hover menacingly, caged in gilded cathedrals. Both series explore imagistic suspensions in time and space, enwrapped as they are in gothic and baroque sensibilities. In addition, Weaver has created textiles of his self photographed collages and paintings, and along with Risa Atelier in Rome, is currently creating a couture fashion line- which can be seen in the award winning experimental film *Meta morph*.

Weaver is also a musician, working in dark ambient noise for his new project *Mystique Mort*, as well as the lead singer in heavy metal band, *Growler*; often music which will be soundtracks for his solo exhibitions, and played on both *Sanford City Radio UK* with BBC and *Bat's In The Belfry Radio Boston*. Weaver has exhibited in both solo and group shows both nationally and internationally, most notably at *Schroeder Romero and Shredder Gallery*, *Barbara Gladstone*, and *Tony Frazier* in NYC, and *Heather Marx*, *Mark Moore* and *Regan Projects* in Los Angeles, as well as *G module* and *Xprmntl* in Paris. His work has been published in various art magazines such as *Art Forum*, *Flash Art* and *Zing Magazine*. Weaver's paintings and collage works have been the cover art of art theory books, *Zizek's Plague of Fantasies* and *If You're Into Eating Children's Brains*, *You Have a Four Year Free Ride: The QAnon Bedtime Story* in *Evergreen Review*. Weaver's work is in the *West and Zachery* collection, as well as collections throughout Europe and Asia. Currently, Weaver is preparing for a solo exhibition in NYC of collage and sculptural works, and remaining obsessed with peering through the proverbial looking glass to all that is in the shadow realms of dreams and nightmares.





Ken Weaver
Daughter of Oracle
Tintype 1/1, 16.5 x 21.5 cm, signed
€600





Ken Weaver

Circe

Tintype 1/1, 16.5 x 21.5 cm, signed

€600



Adam De Ville



Born in London and currently based in Brisbane, Australia, **Adam De Ville** is a mixed media artist, sculptor, photographer and designer. Specializing in experimental works, Adam draws heavily on the Dada tradition in addressing themes of sexuality, mortality and human fallibility. Throughout his career, Adam has exhibited in and sold his fine artwork to collectors across Australia, as well as the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and Canada. He has also developed strong ties within the world of music, designing promotional artworks for multi-platinum selling musician Al Jourgensen (of Ministry). More recently, he produced the photographic artwork for the cover of Uncle Acid and the Deadbeats' live album, *Slaughter on First Avenue* and had his live photography featured worldwide by Billy Corgan (The Smashing Pumpkins) and Perry Farrell (Jane's Addiction).

The exhibition features three intimate, experimental photographs of antipodean sorceress Kelly Mia.





Adam De Ville

Incantation

Photographic print, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€400





Adam De Ville

Blood Moon

Photographic print, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€400





Adam De Ville

Manifestation

Photographic print, 28 x 35.5 cm, signed

€400



Alexis Palmer Karl



Alexis Palmer Karl is a filmmaker, multidisciplinary artist and professor at Pratt Institute. A scholar of magic and ritualism in art, fashion and fragrance, Karl has lectured extensively on ritualistic shamanic practices and folkloric magic, and the relevance of ritual within artistic culture at both the Metropolitan Museum and The Morbid Anatomy Museum, where she was the house perfumer and an exhibiting artist. In addition, Karl is presently directing and shooting experimental documentary and dance films for the US State Department, and is currently in production on a horror movie in her Brooklyn neighborhood within her self-fabricated forest film set, which will be installed as a site-specific installation in NYC this winter. Karl's filmic work (film and photographic film stills), often veer into shamanic realms and that of experimental dance and urban folk horror. These works have won acclaim in festivals around the world, with recent films screening as public art installations on the Manhattan Bridge Light Year Projections and Jay Street DUMBO Glow projections. Karl's troupe, Lex and The Cult of Spurts, has performed their spell-weaving gothic music, dance, aerial and oration across the globe in theatres and museums, most notably, The Whitney Biennial and the Guggenheim Museum, as well as albums debuted on international radio such as Salford City Radio UK with BBC.

Alex Palmer Karl is featured in the exhibition with stills from her filmworks which feature the actress Hannah Fierman, best known for her roles in *V/H/S* and *Sirens*.





Alexis Palmer Karl
The Persistence of Ritual, I
Photographic film still, 28 x 40 cm
€600





Alexis Palmer Karl
The Persistence of Ritual, II
Photographic film still, 28 x 40 cm
€600





Alexis Palmer Karl
The Persistence of Ritual, III
Photographic film still, 28 x 40 cm
€600





Alexis Palmer Karl

Oracle

Photographic film still, 28 x 40 cm

€600



Erik Bergrin



Erik Bergrin is a fibre artist based in NYC, who fuses ancient and contemporary fibre techniques in works which alchemise psychological shadows into creative freedom. The artist draws on his background in costume design, as well as a study in meditation and the investigation of the mind in order to make the work. This work has been featured in galleries and museums such as Marlborough Contemporary, Sotheby's Gallery and auction, The State Historical Museum in Moscow, the Morris Museum, The Bakrushian Museum Moscow, The Society of Arts and Crafts Boston, Fierman Gallery NYC, Zaz10 gallery NYC, and more. His art videos have been featured on the big led screens in Times Sq for a 4 week run, NYShorts Film Festival NYC, Bergen Kunsthall Norway, Here Arts Center, USITT Prague Biannual, and won the best in film award at the FashionClash Festival in the Netherlands. He has designed costumes for shows and movies such as, "A Wounded fawn," on Shudder, John Cameron Mitchell's "Origin of Love" tour, "Goodbar," at the Public Theatre. Erik's creations have been in publications such as Dazed and Confused, Zink, NYTimes, ODDA, Iris Covet Book, L'Official, Schon, NY Mag, King Kong, and many more.





Erik Bergrin
Dissolution 8: Emptiness
Photographic print, 43 x 28 cm
€800





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