

B E N R U B I G A L L E R Y

PRESS RELEASE
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Beautiful Night

September 8th – October 28th , 2023



Benrubi Gallery is pleased to present *Beautiful Night*, curated by Jude Broughan, featuring artists Karen Azoulay, Adler Guerrier, John Lehr, Reiner Leist, Daminico Lynch, Jasmine Murrell, Beuford Smith, Jenna Westra, and Jess Willa Wheaton.

Photography is about light (originally sunlight), and sometimes nighttime photography feels unexpected. Neon lights, camera flash, street lights, spot lights, tungsten lamps, high contrast, misty silhouettes. Nighttime is a restful time, when we unwind, hug each other, and look after ourselves, loved ones. Maybe go out and meet up, have some fun. Night is when we sleep and when we grow, our bodies relax and a time for healing. That inky blue twilight, then the star-filled dark night sky, souls gone before, and an as yet unmanifested void of exciting potential.

Beautiful Night is a synthesis of finely intertwined visual narratives. Jasmine Murrell's low-light long exposures with halos and glowing light traces, speak about miracles that happen in the worst of times and in the most invisible places, and transformative experience around historical erasures. The car headlights and streetlights glow in Daminico Lynch's "Lonely City", a still from his 2022 short film "A

Woman in the City", illuminating modern people in their everyday lives in the streets of New York, focusing on the connection between people and exploring human and universal connections.

In John Lehr's "Burger King, CT", street light illuminates the bubbled vinyl graphic sign – a photograph from his *Low Relief* series depicting the skin of the city, surfaces and facades that have been transformed by human interaction and reimagined through subjective perception. In Adler Guerrier's photograph "Untitled (Wander and Errancies–memories within; citrus in Saint Augustine)", the camera flash spotlight on a citrus tree is an unexpected focusing, an engagement in poetics of place and landscape.

Karen Azoulay foregrounds botanicals in "Dreaming of the Chamomiles", where the white and yellow chamomile flowers play across the child's face, and inky blues of the figure and ground, with floral symbolism and secret messages imbedded within. The inky blues flow through Jess Willa Wheaton's piece "Drawing in the Dark", where she combines disparate found images in radically unified ways, through a slow complex processes of observation and adjustment - in deep contrast to our widely shared experience of viewing images in rapid succession on screens.

In Reiner Leist's "Window, 4 DEC 2022" the night exposure is several hours long, perhaps analogous to the time it might take to make a sketch. This photograph is part of a serial ongoing long-term photographic project begun in March 1995 – "Window" involves a ritual of photographing the view from Leist's New York City apartment with two antique large format cameras making exposures on contemporary film.

Jenna Westra's "Aperture Self Portrait (Jump)" takes aesthetic cues from performance documentation and postmodern dance, and invites the viewer to re-examine their role in the dynamics of image production and consumption. And of Beuford Smith's iconic black and white silver gelatin photograph "Two Bass Hit", the photographer states "Photography is a call and respond medium. The call is the subject and respond is the creative process in capturing the image."

Image: Jasmine Murrell, *The Force, Unknown One Series #5*, 2019

Jude Broughan is New Zealand-born artist, based in Brooklyn, New York. She has had solo exhibitions at venues such as Benrubi Gallery, New York, Marisa Newman Projects, New York, Calder and Lawson Gallery, Hamilton, New Zealand, Dimensions Variable, Miami, and Churner & Churner, New York. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions and projects including the MoMA Design Store, New York; Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami; Jarvis Dooney Gallerie, Berlin; Document, Chicago; Sanderson Contemporary Art, Auckland, New Zealand; Magnan Metz, New York; Dorfman Projects, New York; and the Essl Museum, Vienna. Broughan holds an M.F.A. from Hunter College, New York, and a B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2015, and Yaddo residency in 2018. Her work has been discussed in Musée Magazine, Domino, Art in America, Blouin Artinfo, Collector Daily, Eye Contact, the Village Voice, and Whitehot Magazine, among others.