

LUHRING AUGUSTINE CHELSEA

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Tiptoeing Through the Kitchen ***Recent Photography***

Organized by Sasha Helinski and Lauren Wittels
Luhring Augustine Chelsea
April 26 — June 8, 2024
Opening reception: Thursday, April 25, 6–8 pm

“Taking pictures is like tiptoeing into the kitchen late at night and stealing Oreo cookies.” – Diane Arbus

Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce *Tiptoeing Through the Kitchen, Recent Photography*, an exhibition of new and recent work by seven artists: William Eric Brown, Sophia Chai, Kevin Landers, Brittany Nelson, Shaun Pierson, Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez, and Sheida Soleimani. Organized by Lauren Wittels and Sasha Helinski, the show will open in our Chelsea location April 25 and remain on view through June 8.

Materialized in varying ways, kinship and cultural inheritance are frequent touchstones for many of these artists. **William Eric Brown**’s works — the source images for which were taken in Antarctica in the 1950s by the artist’s father while serving in the US Navy and stationed on an icebreaker — are instilled with new significance through his manipulation and reconceptualization, which address the current reality of climate change and its effects on the arctic. **Sophia Chai** explores her memory of learning the Korean alphabet as a child through her work. By drawing and painting the shapes and lines of the characters on the walls and floor of her studio, Chai reimagines them in space, thereby abstracting written communication into an embodiment of the sensation of each word being formed inside the mouth.

Sheida Soleimani stages elaborately constructed tableaux to address interwoven narratives of family, politics, and caregiving that trace both personal and public histories. Her carefully fabricated scenes demonstrate her commitment to approaching her practice with measured sensitivity; rather than divorcing her subjects from their own realities, Soleimani creates a contemplative space in which each incorporated object or image conveys an intentional message. Similarly, **Shaun Pierson**’s work illuminates the complex dynamics in the relationship between photographer and subject. Entwining conflicting sensations of inhibition and desire, Pierson lays bare the often simultaneously transactional and vulnerable apparatus and process of making photographs. **Kevin Landers**’ photographs, taken on the streets of New York and across the country, are rooted firmly in the here and now. He documents a collection of seemingly unnoticed moments, paying careful attention to unexpected details that, more often than not, most people would simply walk past — ephemera such as an abandoned shopping cart or an intricately woven spider web expanding our notion of landscape beyond simply the pastoral.

Queer desire and a longing for another space and time are explored through the re-authoring of found or archival images in the works of **Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez** and **Brittany Nelson**. Reyes Rodriguez pairs images from his own history with a series of photographs he purchased from a bookshop in Mexico City — dated between 1987 and 1993, the found snapshots evidence the personal experiences of a young, presumably queer, man known to us as “Technoir.” By combining the two archives, Reyes Rodriguez invites us to dwell in a space of merged memories, neither of which we can fully inhabit, and of the desire to know more. While at first glance Brittany Nelson’s use of archival materials is less overtly personal, her work considers themes of otherness, isolation, and the desire for connection. In one of the series on view, she perceived a sense of romantic devastation in the images taken by *Opportunity*, the Mars rover, which she amplifies by re-printing them using the 1920s analog bromoil photographic process, thereby infusing them with an added eerie, otherworldly quality.

Though varied in their approaches to photographic practice, what unifies these artists is their investigation of longing, care, and lineage—familial and otherwise—and the way in which they use the medium and the process of making the work as a means to engage with others, with themselves, and to challenge expectations. Generating a constellated

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conversation that draws upon photography's history, yet turns toward something altogether new, the artists included in *Tiptoeing Through the Kitchen*, *Recent Photography* imbue the seemingly unknown with flashes of recognition.

For more information about the artists, please contact Sasha Helinski at sasha@luhringaugustine.com.
For press requests, please contact Caroline Burghardt at caroline@luhringaugustine.com.

Artist Bios:

WILLIAM ERIC BROWN

William Eric Brown (b. 1969, Buenos Aires, Argentina) is multifaceted in his practice, making paintings, sculptures, photographs, and installation work- Brown has also produced a large body of artists' books. He received a BFA from the University of Southern Maine in 1992, an MFA from The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1996, and currently lives and works in New York, NY.

SOPHIA CHAI

Sophia Chai (b. 1973, Busan, South Korea) references the phonetic alphabet of Korean, her mother tongue, and enacts three key ideas of language, optics, and photography in her recent body of studio-made pictures. She received a BA in chemistry from the University of Chicago, an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and lives and works in Rochester, Minnesota.

KEVIN LANDERS

Kevin Landers (b. 1965, Palmer, MA) succeeds in combining the highly familiar with the unusual in his photographs and objects. His exploration of urban phenomena helps transform our own perception and experience of the urban reality around us, making us take a second look. He received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

BRITTANY NELSON

Brittany Nelson (b. 1984, Great Falls, MT) explores 19th-century photographic chemistry techniques and science fiction to address themes of loneliness, isolation, and distance within the queer community and its parallels with space exploration. She received a BA from Montana State University in 2007, an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2011, and lives and works between New York, NY and Richmond, VA.

SHAUN PIERSON

Shaun Pierson (b. 1997, New Jersey) navigates the complex dynamics of photography, examining power relations between the photographer and the subject, and exploring themes of queer desire, self-reflection, and the transactional nature of the photographic encounter.

He received a BA from Rowan University, an MFA from Yale University, and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

GONZALO REYES RODRIGUEZ

Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez (b. 1987, Mexico City, Mexico) is an artist working in photography and film/video to examine the temporal ambiguity of our experience of images—still but in motion, historical yet continuously made present. He received an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania, was a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and lives and works in Vancouver, British Columbia.

SHEIDA SOLEIMANI

Sheida Soleimani (b. 1990, Indianapolis, IN) work explores intersections of art and activism, melding sculpture, performance, film, and photography to highlight critical perspectives on events across the Middle East, unpicking the complex power dynamics between the region and western nations. She received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2015 and lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.