

John Brinton Hogan

Invasive Spectators

September 9 – October 28, 2023

Reception: Sat. Sept. 23rd, 4-7 pm

Santa Monica, CA: Marshall Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work from California artist John Brinton Hogan. The installation consists of eighteen unique pieces from his prolific series *Visual Aphasia* and two new projects, *Expedition Portal* and *Everywhere*. This is the artist's second show with the gallery following a 2021 presentation at the previous Venice Beach location.



In his recent mixed-media works, John Brinton Hogan continues spotlighting oddities of human presence within the southwestern deserts through surreal and hyper-colorful landscapes. The trademark manipulation of his photographs (created by a combination of editing software, custom-built “glitch” cameras, and outdated, low-res camera phones), provides a vibrant and unique foundation for each work before painting, cutting, or occasionally burning the printed landscape. The results transcend simple representation and provide an amusing yet sensitive and intelligent opportunity to examine the artist's impulses, broader environmental concerns, and the modern human's increasingly at-odds relationship to the natural world.

Visual Aphasia, the artist's largest body of work to date, anchors the compositions around human figures isolated in the wilderness. The visiting spectators, typically enjoying recreation or engaging in artistic and scientific pursuits, are often alone and in positions that accentuate their oddity, though several works feature groups of adventurous pilgrims in focused ascent or resting in the shade. Their opaque forms rise in relief to the surface following Hogan's meticulous and repetitive application of custom-mixed pearlescent acrylics. Inspirations from sci-fi novel illustrations, 1970s album covers, and “Finish Fetish” are all present and combine to produce a vision of our environment's tempestuous near future. By employing materials traditionally associated with lighthearted household craft (glossy paints, glitter, holographic appliqué), a tension develops between the aura of childlike wonder and a paranoid uncertainty, the human forms appearing simultaneously familiar yet unidentifiable.

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One sees the evolution of Hogan's work from *Visual Aphasia* most clearly in the pieces from *Expedition Portal* which are debuting in the exhibition. Still residing in a futurist desert, the spectators are gone and left floating ambiguously in their absence are oddly shaped objects rendered in Hogan's cosmic style. Appearing abstract at first, the survival and rescue equipment, offroad and backcountry gear, the tactical jewelry of an elite outdoor subculture, hover mysteriously among Joshua Trees, prismatic hills, and topographic maps. The series title comes from a website providing reviews and advertisements to consumers anxious to outfit themselves with the latest high-quality vehicles and tools for "overlanding." Taking stylistic cues from 20th-century African safaris, the concept of overlanding is a more extreme version of "van life," one where utility and durability are required in the harsh environments where would-be expeditioners imagine themselves. Companies capitalize on this through a marketing appeal to self-reliance, masculinity, and the fear of being stranded miles from assistance, lest one bear the shame of being ill-prepared. Isolating these objects of desire, Hogan creatively amplifies their absurdity with vivid colors and a sparkling, tactile presence.



John Brinton Hogan, *Ironman Land Rover Defender Heavy Duty Front Coil*, 2023. 12 x 16 in. Pigmented ink print with acrylic, glitter, and gouache on cotton paper.



John Brinton Hogan *Wendover Welcome*, 2023. 16 x 20 in. Pigmented ink print, adhesive, found mylar balloon scraps, acrylic, glitter, and gouache on hand-cut cotton paper.

During the past twelve years and across countless trips to arid corners from Utah to the Mexican border, Hogan has collected over one hundred downed mylar balloons that litter the land. In the new works from *Everywhere*, fragments of these balloons exclaim their original message from some distant event within iridescent landscapes where the dusty specimens were discovered, often in remote areas east of major population centers. *Get Well Soon... it's a girl... Feliz Cumpleaños...* Momentary jublations carelessly left to



float miles across the sky before eventually bursting and falling into a once pristine terrain. Nearly immune to biodegrading, their ubiquity is well known- so much so that there has been (so far unsuccessful) legislation proposed in California to outlaw their sale. As playfully postapocalyptic counterpoints to the grandiose word paintings of artists Ed Ruscha and Wayne White, Hogan celebrates the simple gift-shop sentiments, fusing them with their final resting place. He views these lost, would-be satellites as a form of communication, well-wishes from some far-away person, one he never met and will never know. This affectionate critique is the conceptual throughline of Hogan's work over the past decade: His deep connection to these spaces and the people who temporarily occupy them (including himself), expressed through a wildly original visual aesthetic.

Rooted in a lifelong and very personal relationship with wilderness landscapes, John Brinton Hogan's practice examines ideas, issues, and artistic interpretations associated with land use, primarily in the American West. He has exhibited around the world and his pieces are held in public, institutional, and private collections. Self-educated, Hogan (American, b. 1963) refined his technical skills photographing professional skateboarding during its resurgence in the 1980s, and as a commercial photographer and filmmaker in New York City before returning to San Diego, where he resides today.

For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery: info@marshallgallery.art

Image at top: John Brinton Hogan, *At the Summit of Sombrero Peak*. 2023. 20 x 26 in. Pigmented ink print, acrylic, glitter, and gouache on cotton paper. Unique.