

In *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches*, Nick Larsen (born 1982) uses collage, projection, and model-making to map and mine both what is present and visible in the desert landscape, and perhaps more importantly, what isn't. The images woven throughout the exhibition were taken in Rhyolite, Nevada—a ghost town thirty miles from Death Valley National Park that the artist had visited a number of times throughout his life, but only began photographing after discovering a fading aspect in the town's history. In the mid-1980s, Rhyolite was one of three proposed sites for Stonewall Park, a planned queer community envisioned by two men from Reno that never developed beyond initial planning, as it was plagued by financial struggles, poor organization, and homophobia in nearby communities.

Collapsing boundaries between past, present, and future, Larsen imagines possibilities for the townsite through the lens of his own ambivalent desire to make something from the ruins of what came before, fantasy of living radically, and attachment to suburban comforts. Whether working in two dimensions (using fabric and printed Tyvek) or three dimensions (with repurposed billboard vinyl, paracord, bandanas, and denim jeans), Larsen considers all of his artwork to be a form of collage—a kind of “making do” with what's at hand. Through layering both sewn material and projected images, the artist proposes ways of giving form to that which never came to be and of visualizing a largely invisible history. For example, a deteriorating house that was still standing when Larsen began documenting Rhyolite, but has since collapsed into the desert landscape, is a recurring element in the exhibition and offers one possibility.

Informed by his experience working in the archaeology field in the Great Basin, Larsen explores the potential for small bits of material culture embedded within the landscape to suggest a speculative history of that location. He questions the subjective criteria that transforms a place into a site of social and archeological importance, particularly when a layer of that site's history leaves no trace in the landscape. How do we remember and preserve something that never existed?

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Nick Larsen is an artist working at the intersection of collage, sculpture, video, and textiles. Born in 1982, Larsen grew up in Northern Nevada. He is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno, and The Ohio State University. Larsen currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he is the Managing Editor at Radius Books.

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