

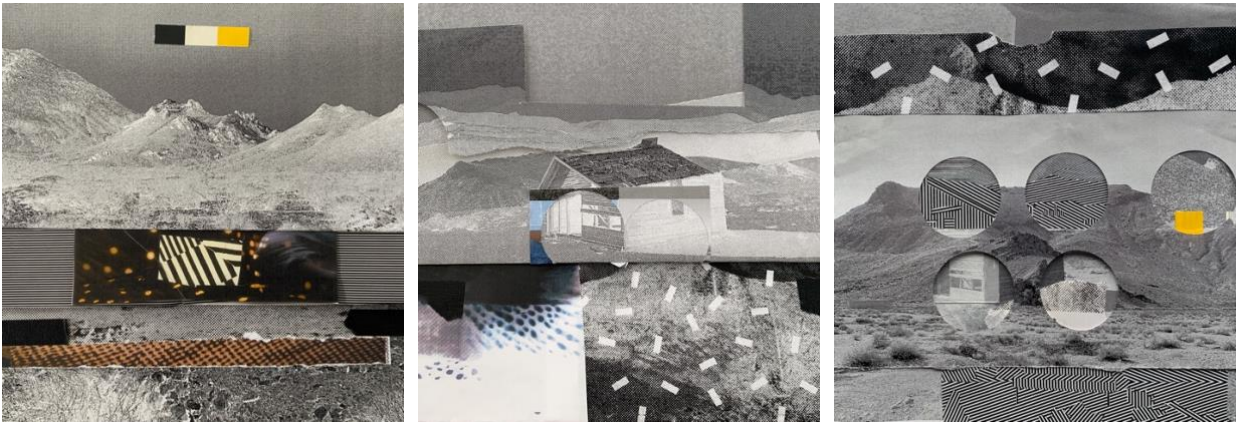


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Nick Larsen's *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches* Proposes New Possibilities in "Empty" Spaces

RENO, Nevada. (January 20, 2024) – *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches*, which will be on view at the Nevada Museum of Art from January 20 to July 7, 2024, is an exhibition that excavates history, possibility, identity, and place through layered collage pieces, textile-based architectural models, and image projection. In the words of artist Nick Larsen, the exhibition demonstrates how collage is "...a kind of making do, using what's materially at hand to give form to that which doesn't exist."

Larsen's exploration of what is present and visible in the desert and, perhaps more importantly, what isn't is articulated by a fictional archeological mapping augmented by objects, materials, and experiences from his own life. What is remarkable—and evident in the pieces that comprise *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches*—are its silences. "The desert is a landscape defined by what it lacks," he said, and the exhibition explores those ellipses in the human history and place through possibilities of what could have been.

Uncovering Lost Histories: Rhyolite as Nevada's Stonewall Park

Research for *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches* began when Larsen discovered a fading layer in the history of Rhyolite, Nevada, a ghost town near Death Valley. "Hearing the mostly forgotten story of Stonewall Park—a failed planned queer community envisioned by two men from Reno in the 1980s—drew me to the three proposed sites of the community: Rhyolite, Silver Springs, and Imlay," said Larsen. "I took stock of what was extant in each location, guessed at what might have been there forty years ago, and photographed the sites and the surrounding landscape, trying to understand the vision—and maybe desperation—needed to imagine these spaces as sites for future communities."

Between trips to Rhyolite to document the area, a house structure that he had been particularly focused on collapsed, giving form to the idea of the environment pushing back and potentially taking one's dreams with it. The house, in various states of being overtaken by the surrounding environs, is a core element to the artwork in the exhibition and a symbol of the visionary and desperate history that traverses *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches*.

Old Haunts, Lower Reaches

The exhibition's title speaks to the threshold between the built environment and the landscape—a "haunt" being a place one used to frequent, and the "lower reaches" being a term used to describe the bottom or endpoint of a geographical feature, the foothills of a mountain range, for example. "In the exhibition, these terms take on multiple meanings, as Rhyolite, the genesis of this project, is a ghost town charged with a largely invisible (spectral) history, and it is now also a place that I frequent, visiting multiple times a year to document what's there and to contemplate what isn't." While place and the environment figure prominently, the exhibition's emotional resonance comes from its human absences, the "old haunts" in the exhibition's title. The term "reaches" also suggests a kind of striving, an attempt at something that—like Stonewall Park and many other utopian endeavors before it—may never be attainable.

The exhibition's wide-ranging visual lexicon comes in part from the artist's experience working for an archaeological firm focused on the Great Basin region. "In an archaeological site, even small bits of remnant cultural material found within a particular landscape can suggest a profound—if speculative—story about the human activity that occurred there," he said. Described by Larsen as vestiges, these elements of the work are layered or collaged into images of a landscape and offer a glimpse not just of what remains but also of what never came to be and/or of what could be in the future.

"While this project started with research and becoming aware of the history of Stonewall Park, that research very quickly collapsed into the autobiographical," said Larsen. "In the Stonewall Park archives, I found evidence of impulses, longings, and ambivalences that I share: the desire to make something from the ruins of what came before, the fantasy of living radically, the attachment to suburban comforts I'm much more interested in what the story of Stonewall Park can tell me than I am in trying to tell that story."

Image captions: Collages from the series *Old Haunts, Lower Reaches*, 2023, printed Tyvek, photocopies, thread, printed and found fabric, 22" x 22" each.

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The Nevada Museum of Art is the only art museum in Nevada accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). A private, nonprofit organization founded in 1931, the statewide institution is supported by its membership as well as sponsorships, gifts and grants. Through its permanent collections, original exhibitions and programming, and E.L. Cord Museum School, the Nevada Museum of Art provides meaningful opportunities for people to engage with a range of art and education experiences. The Museum's **Center for Art + Environment** is an internationally recognized research center dedicated to supporting the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their environments. The Center houses unique archive materials from more than 1,000 artists working on all seven continents, including Cape Farewell, Michael Heizer, Walter de Maria, Lita Albuquerque, Burning Man, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Great Basin Native Artists Archive, Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains*, and Trevor Paglen's *Orbital Reflector*. Learn more at nevadaart.org.

Land Acknowledgement

The Nevada Museum of Art acknowledges the traditional homelands of the *Wa She Shu* (Washoe), *Numu* (Northern Paiute), *Newe* (Western Shoshone), and *Nuwu* (Southern Paiute) people of the Great Basin. This includes the 28 tribal nations that exist as sovereign nations and continue as stewards of this land. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these Indigenous homelands.