

M+B

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MARIAH ROBERTSON *The Hydra*

January 13 – February 17, 2018

Opening Reception

Saturday, January 13, 2018 from 6 to 8 pm

M+B is pleased to present *The Hydra*, a solo exhibition of new works by Mariah Robertson on view from January 13 to February 17, 2018. The exhibition is the culmination of several different series that Robertson has been making over the last decade. Much of the work alludes to the body: its representation and all of its problematic attendant power dynamics, along with its necessity, limitations and possibilities in physically producing artwork. In addition to new photograms, the show will present the artist's tintype series of male nudes created over the last year, as well as sketchbook drawings and various ephemera. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, January 13 from 6 to 8pm. The artist will be "dancing like a photon" inside a giant camera, and the public is welcome to join.

The photograms are made with all the basic components in a darkroom: the enlarger, the table, the timer, some paper, me, and some cardboard. It is the system built for image printing from negatives, for fine control of light. I'm just using the essentialized elements of the light control machine and the human body, a duo made for each other. Moving the cardboard mask, measuring in units of "my fingertips," then up on the toes to hit the color film base layer dial, I cup my hand around the lens to shape the shaft of light, then down to hit the pedal for an exposure, then up on the toes and crank the Yellow and the Magenta and all over again. I know the number combos that make colors . . . 30 Y, 130 M, 2 sec, f2.8 makes this lime green, and then my favorites are the grays which happen around 70Y 70M. The numbers are descending or ascending together in unison or opposition, one descends and calls the other to join it. I spend a lot of time in the dark, obviously. The color darkroom is pitch black; it is painted black to prevent the reflection of light, and the equipment is black.

The mobiles are beloved pieces of cardboard that I have been shaping and keeping for years. They started out being made as masks for special darkroom printing, and then they became a wild thing of their own and then they wrapped back around again into being masks. You can see some of their silhouettes in the framed photograms. While working, I would tape them up on the walls of the darkroom to see them, so they are a little like that here.

The quilt is mostly from old t-shirts and some nicer pieces are from abandoned projects. The summer I turned thirteen in Sacramento, I started to try to dress goth on a limited budget. Up to that point, in the early color theory exercise known as getting dressed, I had understood black and white to be certain absolute anchors amidst the fluctuations of shade and tints of the rainbow. But then I noticed faded black, slightly greenish polyblend t-shirt black, and realized that it was not absolute, but relative.

2017 Tintypes (Nude portraits of men born after I got my period in their New York City apartments) is a collection of mostly nude portraits that were made on-site in young men's apartments in New York City, in the historical photographic process referred to as tintype or wet plate collodion. I made these in collaboration with

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artist Rowan Hasty, who prepared and processed the plates on-site. I started learning photography on the cusp of the two eras. Darkroom and chemical processes were still standard, but so was Photoshop. I love all the historical processes, but I can't understand the uncomplicated nostalgia. This is my adventure in trying to push those specifics of time to extremes, the anachronism of wet plate when everyone has an iPhone, the specifics of domestic life now, the specific time period of youth when your whole life is expressed in your bedroom because you have roommates. This has been a long slow project that inverts the gender binary power dynamic . . . me, a woman who has been making male nude photography for the last ten years.

Vagtopia (book of truth or Drawings from a Menstrual State of Mind) is a risograph editioned zine of my drawings from the last five years.

The Dance Camera is just for the opening night. It is built to look like a giant view camera and one enters via the shutter like a photon. The first thing I do in the darkroom is usually dance to a few songs to warm up the connection between the unconscious and conscious mind and the hands or the body. I recently talked to a painter friend who does something similar at the beginning of a work session. The playlist is primarily what I have been listening to in the darkroom this past year. This is also a celebration of being alive. I have no formal dance training, just enthusiasm, so don't be shy, join me.

Mariah Robertson (b. 1975) received her BA from University of California, Berkeley and her MFA from Yale University. She has exhibited widely at public and private institutions, including the exhibitions *A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Outside the Lines: Rites of Spring* at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and *Process and Abstraction* at the Cleveland Museum of Art's Transformer Station. Other exhibitions include *Mariah Robertson* at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, UK; *Greater New York* at MoMA/PS1, New York; and *Mariah Robertson: Let's Change* at Grand Arts, Kansas City. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others. Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn, and this is her second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Location:	M+B , 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	<i>Mariah Robertson: The Hydra</i>
Exhibition Dates:	January 13 – February 17, 2018
Opening Reception:	Saturday, January 13, 6 – 8 pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

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