

# M+B

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### CAN ARTIST WHITNEY HUBBS MAKE THE ORDINARY MEANINGFUL?

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By Susannah Tantemsapya

**Whitney Hubbs'** first Los Angeles exhibition "The Song Itself is Already a Skip" is on view at **M+B Gallery** through **March 9**. Her high contrast photographs provide a mysterious, romantic perspective to a loosely constructed story about California.

"I grew up in Los Angeles—at one point in the mountains and another point near the ocean," says Hubbs. "That sort of ominous experience of the landscape definitely has an affect on what I take pictures of and when."



Inspired by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, her show's title is extracted from his writing: "...the song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. **But the song itself is already a skip**: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment." Hubbs' photography lyrically moves the viewer in the same comforting way. Her current work has been inspired by songs from Joy Division, Bruce Springsteen, Grimes, and Spiritualized.

At first glance, her subject matter seems quite ordinary. But as time passes, the elements of light and dark begin to draw the viewer deeper into her composition. The sexual undercurrent that permeates her work is especially evident in *Untitled (Horse)*, which is beautiful, yet ever so slightly uncomfortable to linger on.

Hubbs prefers her viewers to come to their own conclusions about her work. Her understated approach allows a certain openness. "I'm just going to keep taking pictures and see what happens," continues Hubbs, "I give myself over to my intuition and what's in front of me, so I don't have a set plan."

*Whitney Hubbs (b. 1977, Los Angeles) holds her MFA from UCLA (2009) and her BFA from California College of the Arts, San Francisco (2005). Noted for her trademark intensely dark printing, her work often recalls those she cites. Cinematic influences include Jean-Luc Godard and Michelangelo Antonioni, as well as photographic masters Edward Weston, Frederick Sommer and Manuel Álvarez Bravo; visceral painters Michaël Borremans and Marlene Dumas are other notable influences. Hubbs was included in 2010's FotoFest Biennial, Houston, Texas and notable press includes a highlight in Vince Aletti's "Eight Emerging Photographers from Southern California" for The New Yorker (2011) as well as featured in Blind Spot Issue 38 (2008). Hubbs work is held in the permanent collections of The Whitney Museum of American Art: Library, New York and Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*