

BLACKSTON

29C Ludlow Street

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HOURS: Wednesday – Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and by appointment

TINA HEJTMANEK

DAY WITHOUT A NAME

SEPTEMBER 9 – OCTOBER 25, 2009

Blackston (formerly Bespoke Gallery, 2004 - 2009) is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition *Day without a Name*, featuring new photographic works by Tina Hejtmanek. A reception will be held for the artist on Wednesday, September 9th from 6 to 8 p.m. at the gallery's Lower East Side location, 29C Ludlow Street, between Hester and Canal Streets.

For this series Hejtmanek captures expansive and anonymous land- and skylscapes untethered from the specificity of location or time. Taken while traveling by car on a single road trip through the Western United States, these photographs -- with their long exposures and palettes that flatten the picture plane -- form a painterly and abstract composition of passing moments. The images of familiar yet unknown and unidentified settings create a visually intertwined narrative as a means to explore a wistful and uneasy yet lyrical nostalgia for something elusive, irretrievable and sacrificed to the past. As abstractions, these works become necessarily removed from the photographic process as a documentary tool and function more like paintings in their conveyance of something emotionally complex and beyond the literal.

A number of pieces in this exhibition present sunrises, sunsets and cloud formations -- what could be the perfect rendering of what we think of these subjects. Hejtmanek explores the value, symbolism and degree of sentimentality associated with iconographic images when they assume greater distribution and prevalence. The luminous skies in many of her works resemble 19th Century American landscape paintings by the important artists of that era. Such images of roiling golden clouds that historically would have represented nature and its splendor could easily be found today on the covers of widely distributed religious pamphlets taken from stock photographic footage. They are imbued with an entirely different meaning from the moment identified in the photograph itself.

In her prior work, Hejtmanek's photographs of butterflies and rainbows on one level address the fickle nature of our visual canon: what at one time may have been considered a relevant depiction of the world can later come to be perceived as clichéd.

Hejtmanek uses repeating and altered variations of one image in *Sunset, Nine Variations* to examine this re-evaluation of visual moments. Hejtmanek states, "By repeating the image it loses its awesome factor and is reduced to a graphic component further abstracted by the overall patterns made by its relation to the other prints in the grouping. By revealing the process -- the color and density tests and presenting variations -- it becomes a cynical take on the perfect majestic moment, allowing the viewer to see the artifice of what is presented. The image can be presented in a variety of ways; the viewer is not necessarily given the truth but what we want them to see." The perceived meaning of any image is thus rendered subject to reinterpretation, reinvention and differing valuation over time: memory, both collective and personal, and illusion very much in conversation.

Hejtmanek lives and works in New York City and Marfa Tx. Recent solo exhibitions include *Between Promise and Loss*, 2007 and *Everybody Knows This is Nowhere*, 2004 at Bespoke Gallery, NY, NY. Selected group exhibitions include: *In a Box*, American Can Company, Curated by Billy Miller, 2008; *What Comes Naturally*, Fake Estate, Curated by Glynnis McDaris, 2008; *Temporal Pause*, W52 Gallery (Dinaburg Arts LLC), NY, NY, 2006; *Fresh Meat*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 2004; *Bystander*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, NY, NY, 2002. Her work is included in many private collections and in the collection of Lannan Foundation, Santa Fe, NM. Hejtmanek's photographs have been featured in publications such as *K-48* (Volumes 2 and 5) and *Catholic*, 2003. Hejtmanek was Artist in Residence at Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas in 2001. Hejtmanek attended Parsons School of Design, NY, NY, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA and Tufts University in Medford, MA.

*The title *Day without a Name* is from the poem of the same name by W.S. Merwin.