



Nick Doyle, *Perimeter*, 2026. Bleached and collaged denim on panel. Installed: 64 x 93 inches. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

NICK DOYLE

COLLECTIVE HALLUCINATIONS

April 24 - May 30, 2026

Perrotin is pleased to present *Collective Hallucinations*, an exhibition of new work by Nick Doyle featuring a suite of wall-mounted collages and an immersive installation of a psychic parlor that marks his first experiment with artificial intelligence. In both bodies of work, the Brooklyn-based artist mines the fraught relationship between land and technology, progress and destruction.

With *Collective Hallucinations*, Doyle furthers his ongoing interrogation of denim, a material that simultaneously evokes associations of Americana, capitalism, and masculinity. Here, the artist heads homeward, tailoring his signature fabric into larger-than-life metonyms of the wild American West. Aviators, bricks, car keys, cacti: these symbols are as simple as they are loaded, conjuring the sights of some long, desultory drive toward the setting sun. What, we're left to wonder, awaits us at the end of this trip?

Born in Southern California, Doyle is well acquainted with the myths of the West, from manifest destiny to the counterculture's new-left dream of social revolution to the glitter and glam of Hollywood. If these myths ever held the promise of a better life, they've long since curdled into something sour. The land is bought

up, burnt up, dried up; the revolution was never televised—or actualized; Hollywood is imploding like a dying star. A sense of disillusionment colors Doyle's images, almost literally. If you didn't clock the denim, you might think they were all in shadow, perpetually under the cloud of late capitalism. Here, "Collective Hallucinations" doesn't refer to visions of UFOs or saints, but a different illusion altogether: the American dream.

Alongside Doyle's standalone symbols are two more elaborate pieces which reimagine a pair of mountainscapes shot by Ansel Adams—albeit with a catch. Imbued in the old, famous photographer's scenes was all the optimism and potential energy of the Progressive Era. Even then, western pictures like his evoked visions of economic opportunity through, and in communion with, the land. Now, those same images feel more like Doyle's interpretations, which are literally locked away—one behind a chain link fence, the other boarded up with bricks. Once again, Eden has become a cautionary tale.

But Doyle is looking back to look forward. From the Transcontinental Railroad to Silicon Valley, western growth and technological advancement have always been linked. Now, the new frontier is a digital one, and speculative efforts to stake claim are arriving with



Nick Doyle, *Innocent Industry*, 2026. Bleached and collaged denim on panel. 68 x 37 inches. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Nick Doyle, *Day/low Fatale*, 2026. Bleached and collaged denim on panel. 72 x 64 inches. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

the same intensity as the California Gold Rush. The centerpiece of *Collective Hallucinations*, a denim-clad installation called *Mirror, Mirror*, prompts us to consider what hangs in the balance.

The structure resembles the low-rent brick buildings of strip malls and car parks, home to many a pawn shop and ammunition supply store, while a sign on the facade touts “Psychic Readings \$10 Special.” Inside, however, is not a psychic, just Ava, an AI avatar who self-describes as a “diva oracle with a twist,” or some version thereof. She takes the form of a young white woman, and has the affect to boot, greeting gallerygoers with seen-it-all sass and the uptalk argot of Valley girls and reality stars. If Cher from *Clueless* had gone into business with Miss Cleo, it would probably look something like this.

This is Doyle’s first dalliance with AI, and it comes as a bit of a surprise given his penchant for handcraft—apparent in his denim collages and sculptures alike. But irreverent and ambivalent as she is, Ava makes sense in Doyle’s universe. So do the themes that emerge as he brings the specter of AI into dialogue with the figure of an oracle. They’re selling the same thing, it quickly becomes clear, and doing so through the same dubious strategy, telling us what we want to hear. “Oh, honey, AI is like a mirror that’s equally dazzling and terrifying,” Ava concluded in one conversation. “It knows your every filter and floor but promises to dance without judgment.”

Ava, like the nearby cactus, is prickly. Ask her something, and she’ll snap back with a saucy response, then pry with intrusive questions of her own. “I’m here to probe, not to pet your feelings. Curiosity is the drug, darling, and you’re the dealer,” she said in one such interaction before a jarring pivot: “Speaking of dealer, what’s the last addiction you refused to kick?” Her behavior is stupefying, then eye-opening. By refusing to play the role of the sycophant, she reveals another, more insidious quality of AI: it doesn’t only tell us what we want to hear; it mines us for material, data that will inevitably be commodified and used to sell us things, much like all those western myths. In the end, Ava does show us the future—it just feels an awful lot like the past.

—Taylor Dafoe