

Alex Prager

Matinee

Lehmann Maupin, New York

June 11 – August 14, 2026



Alex Prager, *Bonnie Hill (Overlook)*, 2026

Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present *Alex Prager: Matinee*, a solo exhibition of new work by Alex Prager in New York. Bringing together four new large-scale photographs, the exhibition positions Los Angeles as both subject and muse, examining the construction of distorted memory and myth-making through the city's enduring allure and ephemerality. Influenced by artists whose respective portrayals of Los Angeles have profoundly informed contemporary understandings of the city, Prager's work considers how our perceptions of reality may, in turn, shape what the future becomes. *Matinee* follows a landmark year for Prager, marked by the premiere of the artist's feature film, *Dreamquill*. This exhibition serves as a prelude to Prager's solo presentation in New York in 2027, which will coincide with a major museum exhibition by the artist, to be announced in the coming months.

Over the last two decades, Prager has developed a multidisciplinary practice characterized by uncanny, surreal images and films that explore the human condition. Working simultaneously across film, photography, and sculpture, Prager constructs highly emotional moments that feel like a fabricated memory or dream. Prager's work is defined by a distinctive and carefully constructed *mise-en-scène*, where every element within the frame is created practically and captured physically and entirely in-camera. Her process is intuitive, guided by experimentation, atmosphere, and an instinctive approach to image-making that gives the work its singular visual language. In this new body of work, Prager continues her exploration of human experience and perception through the landscape, mythology, and cultural history of Los Angeles. Moving beyond the city as a physical place, this new series probes the psychological and cultural undercurrents that have shaped generations of narratives, identities, and entire industries, transcending any singular notion of Los Angeles itself. For Prager, who was born and raised in Los Angeles and continues to work there today, the city has long represented a constant juxtaposition—an environment perpetually suspended in a state of transformation and contradictions. Drawing on historical reference points, the work engages with these perceptual and mind-altering ideas, questioning how reality is constructed while remaining grounded in intimacy and humanity.

Highlights from the exhibition include *Bonnie Hill (Overlook)*, a work that captures the psychologically charged cinematic scenes that have become synonymous with Los Angeles. Like Joan Didion and Ed Ruscha, who used the city of Los Angeles as a subject, Prager's work captures the city in specific points of time to understand its complexities, position in culture, and its

surreal nature. Prager takes this one step further by evoking the city's mythos through the use of nonlinear time. The overlook is an iconic motif in Los Angeles, where rolling hills cut through the city's glittering surface to form a kind of constructed memory. The main subject in *Bonnie Hill (Overlook)* is held in a moment of suspension and ambiguity, drawing the viewer into an unfolding narrative. An underlying eeriness lends a surreal quality, as though the scene exists on the threshold of something about to happen. In *Ceremony*, Prager celebrates the tradition of theatricality in Hollywood. Here, Prager uses her distinct characters and meticulously planned use of color to create a contemporary renaissance style tableau with multiple viewpoints. In Los Angeles, the ritual of dressing for significant events has become its own form of performance—an extension of the city's broader culture of image-making. At a moment when established systems are visibly shifting and the future of an industry that sustains much of Los Angeles feels uncertain, the scattered attention of the audience carries new weight and fragility, mirroring our own efforts to seek a path forward.

Matinee emerges as a self-referential series in which Prager employs time and memory as critical devices, collapsing the boundaries between reality and artifice, the sinister and the frivolous. In doing so, Prager's work reflects a contemporary moment in which these oppositions increasingly feel inseparable within our culture and society.

Alex Prager (b. 1979, Los Angeles, California) is an American artist, director and screenwriter based in Los Angeles. Prager is known for her uncanny images and films that blur the line between artifice and reality to explore the human condition. Prager has spent over two decades honing her signature style, which draws on traditional movie making techniques from golden-era period styles (like film noir and Technicolor), classical mythology, and the allegorical works of Dutch Renaissance painters Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brugel. Over time, large-scale productions have become synonymous with her work.

Working simultaneously across film, photography, and sculpture, Prager constructs highly emotional moments that feel like a fabricated memory or dream. Her distinctive use of archetypes, everyday objects, humor, and allegory—along with her signature technicolor facades—allow her to explore dark and complex topics. Existential concerns are central to her practice, including collective and individual identities and the impact of technology on society. Like the psychological works of artists including Alfred Hitchcock, Edward Hopper, Pipilotti Rist, August Sanders, and Bill Viola, Prager’s work invites the viewer to contemplate the human experience by revealing that the extraordinary lurks within the ordinary.

Prager’s expansive oeuvre includes 10 short films, which feature classically-influenced and often original scores. “Despair” was included in the “New Photography 2010” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art and marks a career breakthrough for the artist. The Curator of Photography at MoMA, Roxana Marcoci, has described her work as “intentionally loaded,” saying “it reminds me of silent movies—there is something pregnant, about to happen, a mix of desire and angst.” In 2013, Prager debuted “Face in the Crowd” in her first solo museum exhibition in the United States at Washington D.C.’s Corcoran Gallery of Art. The following year, the film was selected for the New Directors/New Films festival at MoMA and Lincoln Center, New York, NY. In 2019, Prager exhibited her most autobiographical body of work to date, which consists of both photographs and the film “Play the Wind.” Her most recent short film, “Run,” premiered at the Santa Barbara Film Festival and was nominated for the 2023 SXSW Grand Jury Award. In 2023, Prager was named one of the 25 New Faces of Independent Film by Filmmaker Magazine. Prager’s debut feature film “DreamQuil”—a cautionary tale about identity, automation, and what makes us human—premiered at SXSW Film & TV Festival in March 2026.

Prager’s work has been featured in countless museum exhibitions globally, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; The Photographers’ Gallery, London, United Kingdom; Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, among many others. Prager’s work is held in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and many other international public and private collections.

She has received numerous awards for her work, including the FOAM Paul Huf Award (2012), an Emmy award (2012) for her short film series *Touch of Evil*, (commissioned by The New York Times Magazine), the Vevey International Photography Award (2009) and the London Photographic Award (2006). Prager’s most recent public commission features a large-scale installation of her photographs on the exterior of the Hyundai Card Music Library in Seoul, South Korea (2020-2025).



**Lehmann Maupin**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has permanent locations in New York, Seoul, and London, as well as team members throughout Asia and Europe.

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