

Anton Kern Gallery

Matthew Monahan *frNMEz*

For Immediate Release

September 12 – October 20, 2018

Opening reception: Wednesday, September 12 from 6–8pm

In *frNMEz*, Los Angeles-based artist Matthew Monahan presents a new group of freestanding sculptures and paintings on aluminum. Known for his mastery of both traditional and industrial materials, Monahan's new works reflect a physical and mental tug of war with the history of figuration. For this show Monahan pushes beyond the individual icon, populating his works with unruly masses and subjecting his figures to an intractable struggle. Rendered primarily in black and white, the viewer is forced to zoom in and out across a pixelated optical field, where sculpture and painting overlap and crossfade.

Monahan carves his forms from standardized rectangular blocks, then slashes them into fragments, with torsos, limbs, and skulls repositioned to reanimate the whole. The bodies, caught in states of conflict and embrace, recall classical motifs of stone statuary. While quoting from the formal language of classical sculpture, Monahan inserts an element of sci-fi mystery, untethering his objects from their exact moment in time. Like relics found in a possible future, the sculptures are enclosed within perforated aluminum chambers that eschew the traditional relationship between the sculpture and its pedestal. The quality of the aluminum structures suggests the utilitarian blankness of server farm shelving, and the dissonance between these enclosures and the forms housed within flatten the view of the object, and at times cause the forms to disperse and disappear entirely. The black screens encrypt the figure-ground relationship and undercut their sculptural qualities in favor of a virtualized, private space.



Matthew Monahan, *Triad*, 2018, acrylic on aluminum, 67 x 48 inches.

Monahan's paintings echo this visual ambiguity and physical tension. Constructed from sheets of glossy white painted aluminum, the artist inscribes, collages, etches and sprays the surface with layers of grayscale to create chaotic multi-figure compositions. Stripped of any context provided by facial expressions or landscape, we are left to wonder whether the frenetic energy is one of celebration or outrage.

Matthew Monahan (b. 1972, Eureka, California) is an American sculptor who lives and works in Los Angeles, California. His work has been exhibited in galleries and institutions internationally, most recently in the group exhibitions *People*, Deitch Projects, New York, NY (2018); *The Trick Brain*, Aishti Foundation, Antelias, Lebanon (2017); and *Nerve Center*, The Pit, Los Angeles, CA (2017). He is featured in the public collections of the AzkoNobel Art Foundation; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; De Ateliers, Amsterdam; Fries Museum; Leeuwarden; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; SF MoMA, San Francisco; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; TATE Modern, London; The Rabo Art Collection, Netherlands; The Saatchi Collection, London; Utrecht Museum, Utrecht.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

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