

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Monotasking*

Peter Holzhauer, Hannah Karsen, Mark McKnight, Mark A. Rodriguez

Organized by Michael Peña

June 23–August 4, 2018  
Artists' Reception: Saturday, June 23, 5–7 pm

Pings, beeps, alerts, tones, and auto-loading memes constantly divide our collective attention span. Digital screens had already proven distracting prior to November 2016, but their frequent dire notices now provoke a general malaise. The distracted quality of contemporary life ensures tunnel vision, with nuance and visual phenomena in the physical world escaping even our peripheral vision.

*Monotasking* draws on the practices of four contemporary artists who focus our attention through photographs of an insistently flat nature. Their chosen subject matter is ostensibly unremarkable—book covers, doors, corporate office facades, and removed decals. Their planar, all-over compositions propose these varied surfaces as needing further inspection and contemplation. The works share a sense of slowness as well as a physical objecthood in their lack of depicted action and context.

Hannah Karsen's photographic scans of generic institutional art book covers revel in the traces of past use present in stains and abrasions. The books' anonymity is set in contrast to the incredibly specific set of markings on each one. A productive exception is a monochrome embossed reproduction of a Josef Albers square painting. Its legibility echoes Mark McKnight's photograph of the discolored adhesive residue from a removed Nike sticker on a metallic surface. Their exploration of branding is timely as it relates to both entities.

The motif of the window in both McKnight and Mark A. Rodriguez's works emphasizes the degree to which some surfaces can be used to conceal as much as they reveal. Rodriguez's printing of his photograph onto a massive commercial tarpaulin surface is as much of a send up of the grandeur of urban Chicago skyscrapers as it is an approximation of their physical scale, prompting reflection back down at ground level.

The urban walking involved in Rodriguez's project reflects a changing point of view shared by Peter Holzhauer's four photographs. They show surfaces on the ground, on the sides and entrances to buildings and a set of mass-produced springs. Taken together, they suggest that nothing is beyond scrutiny.

In their focus on readily overlooked surfaces, these four artists reveal a profound depth of information. They magnify the world's manifold components by slowing their and our vision to a crawl. Viewed one at a time, the works offer us a chance to catch up with ourselves, and the density of our shared reality.