

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Paul Jacobsen

Spiritual Surveillance

Exhibition on view online: June 13 – July 18, 2020

Please contact the gallery to schedule an in-person visit: June 15 – July 18, 2020

**In lieu of an opening reception, please join us in protest and/or anti-racist action in your city*

Returning to David B. Smith Gallery for his third solo exhibition, *Spiritual Surveillance*, is Hudson Valley, NY - based artist Paul Jacobsen. Originally born in Denver, CO, Jacobsen's uncommon painterly skills and naked reverence for nature are immediately evident.

Inspired by scenes from iconic American landscapes, ranging from arid deserts to lush forests, Jacobsen delves into humanity's connection to nature and the technology that often mediates that experience. Posed as a complicated modern narrative, *Spiritual Surveillance* celebrates the awesome beauty of sweeping canyons and saluting Joshua trees, while nodding to the psychological imprint digital technology leaves on our memory and long-term interpretation of images.

Embedded in the works is the recognition of nature's immense power in contrast to its quickening fragility. Increasingly, under threat from the continuing rollback of regulations and protections in favor of exploitation for commercial gain, the double-edged sword of technology and the legacy of Westward expansion continue into the present day. With references to landscape painters of the past, environmental activism, and recognition of technology's central role in society, *Spiritual Surveillance* weaves complex visual themes from our past with an all seeing eye towards our future.

For Jacobsen, American parks act as a foil to European colonization and resource extraction. While the creation of National Parks may be one of America's greatest innovations, in preserving these beautiful and once wild places, they are in practice reduced to roadside attractions. Jacobsen states, "By elevating these picturesque landscapes we also diminish our own place in them. No longer are we participants in the divine dance but instead menacing spectators observing from stadium seats." Highlighting this idea, Jacobsen overlays digital lens flares to place the observer's eye as the object of the scene. Pairing technology's looming influence over consciousness, Jacobsen's mirage-like landscapes offer new potential to experience the sublime.

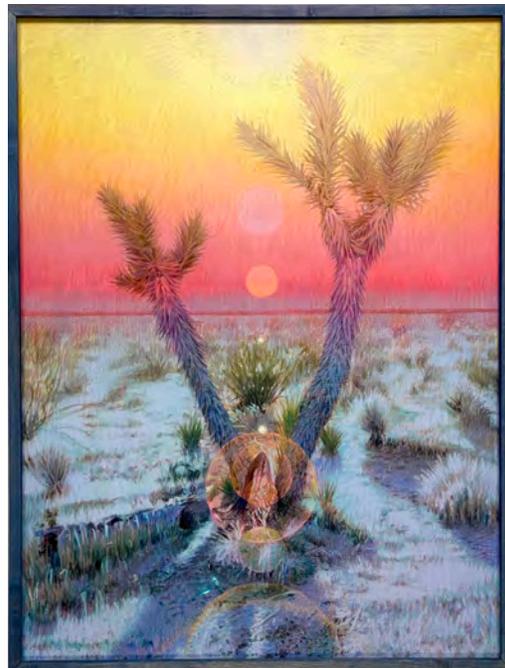


Image: Paul Jacobsen, *Industrial Tourism and the National Parks*, 2020, pastel on rag board in hand dyed frame, 41 x 31 in. (104.14 x 78.74cm)

About Paul Jacobsen

Artist Paul Jacobsen was born in Denver in 1976. He grew up in family of artists in a small mountain town in Colorado and moving to Brooklyn at a young age he has split his time between the two ever since. Forgoing a formal art degree Jacobsen has taken classes in Florence at Lorenzo De Medici Instituto de Arte, studied privately with acclaimed realist still life painter Daniel Sprick and worked for Artists such as Jeff Koons and Rudolf Stingel. Typically working with traditional mediums such as oil paint and charcoal, Jacobsen investigates the intersection of civilization and technology. His works have been exhibited at MASS MoCA and the Aspen Art Museum, among other institutions. Jacobsen lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as Art in America and ARTnews, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. The New York Times hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works" and The Denver Post declared that it is the "premiere commercial space" in Denver. The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.