

# CORCORAN

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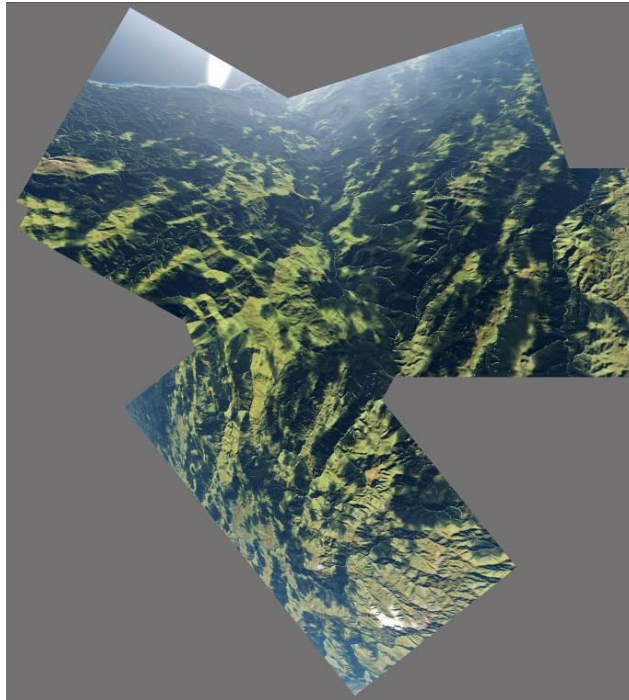
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**CORCORAN PRESENTS *MARK TRIBE: PLEIN AIR***

**July 19–September 28, 2014**



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — *Mark Tribe: Plein Air* explores the aesthetics and representation of aerial views in landscape photography through the virtual lens of computer simulation. Opening July 19 at the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art and Design**, this exhibition is the latest in the Corcoran’s NOW series and represents the first major solo museum exhibition for the artist.

Exhibiting all new work commissioned by the Corcoran, *Plein Air* includes nine large-scale images created with found software that uses geospatial data and fractal algorithms to create digital simulations of real landscapes. Tribe’s shaped prints were made using a UV inkjet printing process on Dibond, a durable aluminum composite material, so that they appear to hover over the gallery wall. UV inks solidify when exposed to ultraviolet light, which allows high quality printing on nonabsorbent materials like Dibond.

*Plein Air*—a French expression that refers to painting outdoors in the open air—alters our perceptions, presenting outdoor landscapes from a “drone’s eye view,” a machinic perspective that is playing an increasingly important role in contemporary culture. Tribe pictures a computer-generated world in which familiar environments appear distant, almost foreign. Unlike traditional depictions of landscapes in art, these aerial views abstract what we know. They do not reproduce our “natural” terrestrial viewpoint. There is no ground underfoot, no place to stand, and often no visible horizon. Tribe’s landscapes are idealized and pristine, what he calls “fantastic projections.”

These images grew from concepts Tribe first examined in his 2012 project *Rare Earth*, which considered aestheticized landscapes as a symbolic setting for paramilitary fantasy, particularly as used in combat video games. *Plein Air* provides an aerial view of such idealized, virtual worlds, which are often depicted as verdant, unspoiled, and edenic places that, according to Tribe, “may be symptomatic of a longing for a time before we started to destroy the land.”

“*Plein Air* collapses the boundary between the actual and the virtual—the abstract and the representational—in ways that challenge the basic premise of photography,” says exhibition curator Philip Brookman, chief curator and head of research at the Corcoran. “This project pushes some of the technological boundaries of image making and at the same time connects Tribe’s innovative practices to the historical conventions of landscape painting and photography.”

Photography, particularly landscape photography, is as much about projection as it is about representation. The camera captures images, but it also projects power: not only the power to see and to imagine, but also the power to picture the land, to investigate the story of its past, and to delineate its future. First made from balloons



in the mid-19th century, aerial photographs developed significantly during the First World War, when it was used for reconnaissance. In 1968, orbiting astronauts first photographed an iconic view of Earth rising over a barren moon—an image that forever changed our notion of landscape as a subject. Since then, military applications of aerial imaging technology expanded exponentially, from spy planes to satellites and, most recently, drones. In *Plein Air* Tribe presents a catalogue of virtual landscapes that appear to have been shot by drones. He interrogates, frames, and implicitly critiques the ways in which landscape images are used to expand territories and defend geopolitical interests. By using software to generate his uncanny panoramas from data, Tribe suggests that the hovering lenses of unmanned devices produce images that can be as powerfully seductive as they are artificial. “We are entering a new era in which aerial imaging, facilitated by satellites, geospatial simulation technologies, and drones, is proliferating and becoming remarkably sophisticated,” says Tribe.

Mark Tribe is Chair of the MFA Fine Arts Department at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. His art explores the intersection of media, technologies, and politics. His photographs, installations, videos, and performances are exhibited widely, including recent solo projects at Momenta Art in New York, the San Diego Museum of Art, G-MK in Zagreb, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. Tribe is the author of two books, *The Port Huron Project*:

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*Reenactments of New Left Protest Speeches* (Charta, 2010) and *New Media Art* (Taschen, 2006), as well as numerous articles. In 1996, Tribe founded Rhizome, a nonprofit organization that supports the creation, presentation, preservation, and critique of emerging artistic practices that engage technology.

For more information about *Mark Tribe: Plein Air*, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/now-corcoran-mark-tribe>.

For more information about the NOW series, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/now>.

*Mark Tribe: Plein Air* is funded in part by the Corcoran's 18969 Society.

## **RELATED EXHIBITION**

*Terra Firma: Landscapes from the Photography and Media Arts Collection*  
July 5–September 28, 2014

Drawn from the Corcoran's collection of photography and media arts, *Terra Firma* examines the ways in which photographers have portrayed the natural and built environment for over 150 years. Beginning in 1861 and continuing through to the present, *Terra Firma*—meaning all of earth's dry land—features 40 photographs and one video by a wide range of artists including works by Ansel Adams, Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Linda Connor, Edward Burtynsky, Dorothea Lange, Sally Mann, Eadweard Muybridge, August Sander, and Carleton Watkins. Seen together, these works reveal how photographic depictions of the land have evolved and changed over time, while informing our perception of the natural world.

## **EXHIBITION-RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **Free Summer Saturdays**

Saturdays Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/freesummersaturdays>.

### **Visiting Artist lecture**

September 11, 2014

7 p.m.

Artist Mark Tribe will meet with Corcoran students in-classroom, and then give a lecture about his work, including his new project for the Corcoran. Visiting Artist lectures are free and open to the public.

## **ABOUT THE CORCORAN**

Established in 1869, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art** was one of America's first museums of art, dedicated, in the words of founder William Wilson Corcoran, to "encouraging American genius." Today it is Washington, D.C.'s largest nonfederal art museum, known internationally for its distinguished collection of historical and modern American art, European art, contemporary art, photography and media arts, and decorative arts. A dynamic schedule of special exhibitions complements a range of educational programming, which together enrich the perspectives of the visiting public, support the local arts community, and encourage thoughtful interpretation of today's most compelling social issues. **The Corcoran College of Art + Design** was founded as a school of art in 1890 and stands as Washington's only four-year

accredited college of art and design. The College is one of the few in the nation whose educational model includes an integral relationship with a museum, fostering the talent of the next generation of artists. For more information about the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design**, [visit www.corcoran.org](http://www.corcoran.org).



### **Hours**

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m.–9 p.m.

The Corcoran is closed on Monday and Tuesday.

### **Admission**

Wednesday through Sunday: \$10 Adults; \$8 full-time students (with ID) and seniors (62+); active-duty military and children under 12 free; Corcoran members free.

Images:

Page one: Mark Tribe, *4406-4812* (from the *Plein Air* series), 2014. UV print on Dibond. 108 x 96 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Page two: Mark Tribe, *4348-4352* (detail), from the *Plein Air* series, 2014. UV print on Dibond. 55 x 84 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

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