

YOSSI MILO



For Immediate Release:

Sarah Anne Johnson: *A Mountain and a Forest*

March 13 – April 26, 2025

Artist's Reception: Thursday, March 13, 6-8PM

Yossi Milo is pleased to announce Sarah Anne Johnson's second solo exhibition with the gallery, *A Mountain and a Forest*, which opens to the public with an artist's reception on Thursday, March 13 from 6-8 PM, and will be on view through Saturday, April 26, 2025.

Sarah Anne Johnson (b. 1976; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) explores the natural world through sensation and perception, and centers depictions of these internal experiences in a multimedia record across varied series that span photography, video, and sculpture. In *A Mountain and a Forest*, Johnson continues to innovate on the approach of her ongoing series *Woodland*, in which the artist alters photographs of the wilderness through digital color, oil paint, metal leaf, and holographic tape, among other media. Through these invented hues and textures, Johnson translates her wonder at the landscape into the visual realm and creates artworks that capture more than what can be seen through the camera alone.

A Mountain and a Forest presents two new bodies of work by Johnson: *Cedar Forest*, a vibrant series that grows out of *Woodland*; and *Mountain*, which presents altered photographs of a remembered wilderness excursion in hand-sculpted frames. Together, these series locate humanity's place within Johnson's vision of the North American wilderness and pay homage to the splendor of Canada's Western frontier.

In early 2020, Johnson created her *Woodland* series as a reaction to a collective sense of isolation and disconnection. Through this work, the artist sought a resonant source of joy in color and nature. In *Cedar Forest*, this practice moves geographically Westward from Johnson's home region of Manitoba to the cedar forests of British Columbia. Johnson compounds her change in horizon with an expanded field of view, emphasizing stands of cedar trees over any one individual, which glow from within through an intensified use of color. This visual overgrowth nods to the connections that ground Johnson's work — both between humans and the landscape, and in natural relationships that make up the ecosystem itself. In cedar forests, the oldest trees are known as "mother" trees, which communicate and share resources with the surrounding forest through a mycelium network. In *Cedar Forest*, the artist honors the potential of this non-human consciousness: the idea that there are unseen signals and intelligence between trees that exist underneath the sounds and sights of forests.

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As the titular subjects of *Cedar Forest*, trees take center stage, and Johnson's activations of their architectural forms give them an inviting, psychedelic energy. "Purple Stump (Cedar Forest)" (2025) is ringed by sunset tones, spangled with fragments of holographic tape; "Pink Secret (Cedar Forest)" (2025) draws the viewer towards a glade of neon radiance at its center. In many *Cedar Forest* works, Johnson locates the sun through the trees and digitally augments its rays, alluding to a euphoric enlightenment and the simple, yet profound pleasure of the outdoors.

This awe is counterpointed by sentimentality in the sculpturally-framed photographs that make up Johnson's new series *Mountain*. Each work is comprised of images of the artist's friends on a seven-day hiking, camping, and horseback riding expedition into the wilds of Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada. In creating the frame for each of these prints herself, Johnson brings together her sensibilities across media and envelops each memory in a textural portal of the artist's design.

Johnson digitally manipulates the images in *Mountain* and traces forms across them in oil paint, changing spectrum between black-and-white and color. These shifts allude to time's passage, and the works flit between past and present to share in the artist's memories and their echoes. By Johnson's hand, a sunbeam or figure will emerge, illuminated as the emotional core of the scene. Especially in greyscale, Johnson's casual snapshots recall the work of figurehead twentieth-century photographers and environmental advocates, imbued with an off-the-cuff and affectionate air.

The grand and tender vistas in *A Mountain and a Forest* posit a journey towards the sublime, a narrative where Johnson's practice acts as a motivation and a destination. The figures of *Mountain* journey ever-onwards, captured en route towards the salvation found in the forests of *Cedar Forest*. The images in *Mountain* were captured during a trip that took place before Johnson began her *Woodland* works, and their presentation alongside the growth of that series into *Cedar Forest* marks a full-circle step in the artist's practice.

Sarah Anne Johnson's work is held in permanent collections across the globe, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC, and Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada, among many others. Johnson's monumental 6-channel video installation "The Kitchen" (2016) joined the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's permanent collection in 2022, and in 2024, a large-scale triptych, "MBFR" (2021), was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada. A work by Johnson was featured in a central role in the 2024 film *The Idea of You* starring Anne Hathaway. Her work has been featured in numerous prestigious group exhibitions, such as those at the New York Public Library, New York, NY; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Canada; Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA; Anchorage Museum, Anchorage, AK; Musée International des Arts Modestes, Sète, France, and Taubman Museum of Art; among others. Johnson received her BFA from the University of Manitoba and her MFA from Yale University. The artist lives and works in Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada.

For more information, please contact Jack Cassou at 212.414.0370 or jack@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com

Image: Sarah Anne Johnson, *Magic Hour (Cedar Forest)*, 2024.
Pigment Print with Oil Paint and Gold Leaf, 57 3/4" x 86 7/16" (146.5 x 219.5 cm)