



Denver + Marfa rulegallery.com
info@rulegallery.com 303-800-6776

Nathan Abels: Machine Dreams

March 21 – May 17, 2025

Public Reception: Friday, March 21, from 6-8 pm *artist in attendance

Location: RULE Gallery, 204 E. San Antonio St., Marfa, TX

(Marfa, TX) RULE Gallery is delighted to present *Machine Dreams*, a solo exhibition of work by Nathan Abels. It is the artist's sixth solo with the gallery and second at our Marfa location. The opening reception will take place on Friday, March 21, from 6 to 8 pm, with the artist in attendance. *Machine Dreams* will be on view through May 17, 2025. Gallery hours are Wednesday-Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm.

Machine Dreams reflects on the ghostly presence of forgotten ideas and lost futures—a form of hauntology where technology conjures apparitions. Science fiction merges with the paranormal, revealing landscapes and figures that feel both ancient and futuristic, familiar yet unplaceable. There's a recurring motif of glowing screens, projection surfaces, and illuminated figures that appear to exist between physical and digital realms. The color palette across the works emphasizes otherworldly environments that create an atmosphere of technological mysticism.

In these dreamlike compositions, Abels presents vintage television sets emanating supernatural light—not merely displaying images but becoming portals where figures emerge from or are absorbed into the screens. Some depict familiar indoor scenes infused with pale pink, neon green, or gentle gold mists holding figures as they emerge from the ether. Others explore outdoor settings, where lone seekers move through landscapes populated by ancient glowing screens and other avatars of high technology abandoned by their makers. Throughout, Abels' work embodies what cultural theorist Mark Fisher described as "the agency of the virtual"—where past visions of the future continue to haunt our present.

Light becomes a transformative medium in Abels' paintings—not merely illuminating objects but manifesting as an almost sentient presence. His mastery of producing diffuse, spectral glow creates liminal spaces where the physical and digital worlds intersect, where screens become portals and familiar environments turn uncanny. The exhibition title "*Machine Dreams*" operates on multiple levels—suggesting both dreams or hallucinations generated by artificial intelligence and our collective technological fantasies. Throughout it all, the specter of past, present, and future bleeding into one another challenges the viewer, prompting questions fundamental to our current world. One where innovation gives way to recycled nostalgia and technological promises remain eternally unfulfilled.

"The theme was once homesickness for the past... now it is the impossibility of the present" - Mark Fisher

Nathan Abels (b. 1980, Bowling Green, OH) received his MFA in Painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design and his BFA in Painting & Drawing from the University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, IN. He currently lives and works in Evergreen, CO. Over the past decade, Abels has established himself as a significant voice in contemporary painting with solo exhibitions at RULE Gallery (Denver, CO and Marfa, TX), Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder CO, Littleton Museum, Littleton, CO, and Whitelight Contemporary in Santa Fe. His work explores themes of technology, mysticism, and memory through a distinctive atmospheric style. Abels' paintings can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Telfair Art Museum, Savannah, GA; Fort Wayne Art Museum, Ft Wayne, IN; Martin Sanders Investments, New York, NY; Blue Room Investing, Denver, CO; First Western Trust Bank, Denver, CO; and the Savannah College of Art and Design.

RULE Gallery, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO, and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historic art movements to a broader audience. For more information, visit <http://www.rulegallery.com/>

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