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DAVID MAISEL

Proving Ground

January 4 - February 24, 2018

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 4, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is pleased to present *Proving Ground*, a solo exhibition of new work by photographer David Maisei (b. 1961, New York, NY; lives and works in San Francisco, CA). Best known for his striking aerial photographs that chronicle environments impacted by human intervention, here Maisei debuts a new body of work, fifteen years in the making, investigating the landscape and architecture of Dugway Proving Ground, a classified military site in a remote region of Utah's Great Salt Lake Desert. *Proving Ground* is Maisei's seventh solo exhibition at Haines Gallery.

Since its inception in 1946, Dugway Proving Ground has served as a center for development and testing of chemical and biological weapons and defense programs. Although larger than the state of Rhode Island, it remains *terra incognita*, virtually invisible to and unknown by the general public. Maisei first encountered Dugway Proving Ground in 2003; after a decade of inquiry to the Pentagon, the artist was granted rare permission to photograph the site in 2014. The resulting photographs and videos in *Proving Ground* reference Land Art and the language of minimalism to describe an American West in which the terrain itself has become a measuring device for toxicity levels, dispersal patterns, and threats to the human body.

A series of six black-and-white photographs (*Air Force Target Grid Building*, 2014) portrays a ziggurat-like structure from sequential angles, and recalls the stark landscape photography of the New Topographics. An interior image of a test chamber in a laboratory designed for neutralizing and decontaminating biological toxins (*Referee Module Interior*, 2014) seems to delineate a zone where our known world encounters an alien other.



Air Force Target Grid Building 04, Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, 2014
archival pigment print
21 x 27 inches



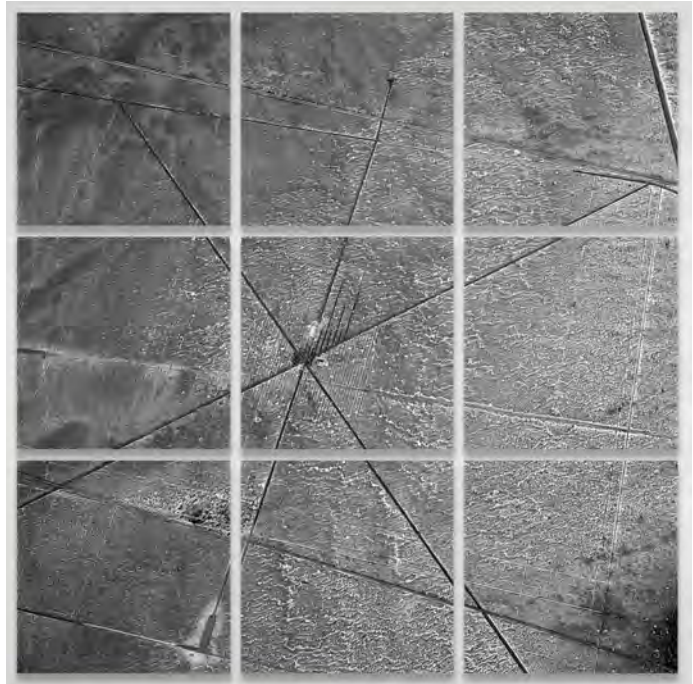
Referee Module Interior (5370_04), Whole System Live Agent Test Laboratory, 2014
archival pigment print
30 x 40 inches

While weapons themselves are nowhere to be seen, a signature of violence is permanently etched into the land. This is most evident in a series of aerial photographs documenting the colossal military test grids carved into the desert floor, against which chemical weapons have been detonated and their effects measured. *South Ballistics Grid_04* (2014) is a monumental, 10.5-foot square grid of 9 photographs that depict one such testing site. The military markings appear as crosshatched grids and nested circles, resembling the elegant line drawings of Agnes Martin or Sol LeWitt taken to a poisonous extreme.

These aerial photographs are further utilized in *KYDOIMOS: The Din of Battle* (2017). Projected in Haines Gallery's Project Space, this ambitious, half-hour long video work pieces together more than 50,000 individual frames of test grid images in a dizzying, rapid-fire sequence. Accompanied by a hypnotic soundscape created in collaboration with composer Chris Kallmyer, *KYDOIMOS* presents an immersive viewing experience, reflecting and refracting the forces at work at Dugway Proving Ground, and enveloping the viewer within what Maisel calls "a site of dark creativity."

Proving Ground is also the title and subject of a new monographic publication of Maisel's work, published by Steidl and set for release in 2018.

David Maisel received his BA from Princeton University and his MFA from California College of the Arts, in addition to study at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He has been the subject of six monographs, and recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 1990. Maisel's work has been exhibited internationally, in institutions that include the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; Somerset House, London, UK; ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. His photographs are included in major public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; and Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK.



South Ballistics Grid_04, 2014
Nine-part grid of dye sublimation prints on aluminum
Each panel: 40 x 40 inches; Overall: 126 x 126 inches



KYDOIMOS: The Din of Battle, 2017
single channel 16:9 projection with surround sound audio
31 minutes 38 seconds
sound composition by Chris Kallmyer