

# EFFICIENT FRONTIER

MAGENTA

Max Renn: *Why do it for real?*  
*It's easier and safer to fake it.*

Masha: *Because it has something  
that you don't have, Max. It has  
a philosophy. And that is what  
makes it dangerous.*

**–Videodrome, 1983**

*Let's make America great again.*

**–Ronald Reagan, 1980**  
**–Donald Trump, 2016**

EFFICIENT FRONTIER is an exhibition consisting of new and historical works by *Michael Assiff, Gretchen Bender, Ethan Breckenridge, Ashley Carter, Lea Cetera, Peter Nagy, Ariane Schick, Josh Tonsfeldt* and *Philip Vanderhyden*. Efficient Frontier maps the evolution of modern corporate civilization through the work of two generations of contemporary artists whose practices employ hybridized media including video, sculpture, photography, painting, and performance.

In modern financial management theory, an efficient frontier is a concept for organizational logic that allows for the balance of risk and reward to be tweaked, adjusting it to the desired risk tolerance of each specific client or portfolio. It was introduced by Harry Markowitz in 1952 and remains a cornerstone of modern finance.

The 21st Century is proving to be a strange new world; one in which our bodies are merging with corporate thought and technology, transforming and manipulating daily living into something as pixelated and hallucinatory as it is bound by flesh and bone. Gretchen Bender, Peter Nagy and their circle of post-appropriation artists were, in many ways, first responders to the neoliberal policies that were developed in the late 1970's and aggressively implemented under the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. Today the status and rights of corporate entities have been raised to well over and above the level of individuals. Ordinary citizens must increasingly recognize and assert themselves in the context of professional vernacular—self-formulated as “brands”—and enthusiastically surrender personal privacy, and data, in the basic pursuit of community, recognition and living wages.

Seen metaphorically, the words “efficient” and “frontier” aptly connote the contradictory condition we as a society find ourselves in. Frontiers, like art, suggest excitement, risk, experimentation, and ultimately hope—anything but efficiency. Forced into coexistence, Efficient Frontier dreams of the endless possibility of uncharted territories, in a world where culture and its dynamics are increasingly nullified by the mundane violence of corporate objectives.

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***May 1 - June 8, 2016***

***Opening: Sunday, May 1 6 - 8pm***

PLAINS



**Michael Assiff** (b. 1983, St. Petersburg, FL) is a Brooklyn based artist whose diverse practice involves digital printing, sculpture, painting, and theft. A self proclaimed vegan, Assiff's complex and perverse body of work explores a wide range of subjects including political celebrities, building infrastructure, the history of painting as well as corporate farming practices.

**Gretchen Bender** (b. 1951, Seaford, DE - 2004, New York, NY) was an American artist who worked in video, sculpture, photography and installation. Her work contrasts the power of corporations and technology with the struggle of the individual. Bender came to prominence in the 1980's as part of a circle of post-appropriation artists associated with Gallery Nature Morte and International With Monument in the East Village.

**Ethan Breckenridge** (b. 1977, Madison, WI) is a New York based artist whose work examines the presentation and rhetoric of social systems and values through social practice, sculpture and installation. Often involving staged scenarios and environments, Breckenridge mimics and recreates transitory spaces such as lobbies and office spaces. His recent sculptures and performances seek to transform the value of ordinary consumer goods and products through their re-appropriation and distribution.

**Lea Cetera** (b. 1983, Brooklyn, NY) is a New York based artist who works in video, sculpture and performance to produce temporal installations that examine the space between object and body, public and private, the virtual and real. Utilizing techniques culled from theatre and the moving image, her work addresses constructed identities, the mediation of technology, the alienation of the human body, and the aura of the object/fetish.

**Ashley Carter** (b. 1982, New York, NY) is a Brooklyn sculptor. Working with rebar, steel, silicone, and a number of other industrial materials, Carter has developed an improvisational language to investigate architecture, the human body, and their potentially parasitic relationship. Skirting a direct representation of the body, Carter relies on familiar artifacts that point to both utility and ornament, comfort and detritus.

**Peter Nagy** (b. 1959, Bridgeport, CT) is a Delhi based artist and gallerist. Nagy's work focuses on graphic paintings and xeroxes of corporate culture and architecture. His work in the 1980's explored the invasiveness of corporate control, as seen both in cultural institutions and as well as inside of our bodies. He founded Gallery Nature Morte in the East Village in 1982 along with fellow artist Alan Belcher. The gallery focused on a new type of work that blended Conceptualism and Pop Art exploring the relationship between art and commodity, exhibiting some of their generation's most promising young artists including Sarah Charlesworth, Gretchen Bender, Joel Otterson, Steven Parrino. Gallery Nature Morte is now based in Delhi, India and focuses largely on today's most important Indian contemporary artists.

**Ariane Schick** (b. 1984, Ashford, UK) is a London based artist whose work explores our subconscious social experiences. Through a varied practice that combines print, moving image and sculpture, her work activates muscle memory by engaging the viewer's emotions, memories and desires, both learned and programmed.

**Josh Tonsfeldt** (b. 1979, Independence, MO) is a Brooklyn based artist working in a variety of media ranging from installation, sculpture, prints and video. Tonsfeldt explores the narratives and memories embedded in the history of location, often working site specifically. His recent work poetically translates the visual and emotional experiences of everyday life as they are mediated by the ubiquitousness of the electronic screen.

**Philip Vanderhyden** (b. 1978, Menasha, WI) lives and works in NYC. His spectacular and hypnotic screen-based paintings utilize digital visual effects, 3D modeling and product visualization software. By combining multiple screens and channels, Vanderhyden creates seductive abstractions that refer to minimalist sculpture, luxury housing, financial graphs and comfort food.

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