

DAVID MAISEL

Un/Earthed

Exhibition Dates: November 3, 2023 - January 6, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, November 3, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Haines Gallery proudly presents **David Maisei: *Un/Earthed***, our eighth solo exhibition with the Bay Area artist. For over thirty years, Maisei has created powerful photographs of sites transformed by human intervention. At once mesmerizing and disquieting, his thoughtfully composed aerial images consider the aesthetics, politics, and environmental impact of these radically altered landscapes.

Un/Earthed brings together a survey of Maisei's aerial works from various series created between 1989 and 2018. ***The Mining Project*** (1989), ***The Lake Project*** (2001-15), and ***Terminal Mirage*** (2003-05) chronicle the effects of mining, industrial pollution, water diversion projects, and desertification across the American West, from open pit mines in Arizona and Montana to the depletion of Owens Lake in California and Utah's Great Salt Lake. ***The Fall*** (2013) depicts zones of industry and agriculture in Spain, while his most recent series, ***Desolation Desert*** (2018), created with support from a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, focuses on the massive copper and lithium mining operations in Chile's Atacama Desert. This sensitive eco-region is being transformed at an unparalleled pace and scale, reflecting a shift in the burden of energy production onto landscapes in the southern hemisphere.

In Maisei's images, we find a strange, discomfiting beauty born of environmental degradation. Giving detailed but open-ended information, Maisei's works operate on a metaphorical level as much as a documentary one. Lush, saturated colors belie sites of ecological damage: painterly washes of industrial waste and toxic algae blooms, the jewel-toned grids of lithium evaporation ponds. Graphic marks emerge from manmade trauma on land that has been carved, scarred, and drained.

The exhibition's title, *Un/Earthed*, suggests both the extractive industries behind these changes as well as the process of discovery made possible through Maisei's photographs. Witnessed from an aerial perspective, the landscape is abstracted and disorienting, a reflection of the physical transformations brought about by human efforts. The terrain here is an alien one, the Earth made unearthly by our own presence.

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David Maisei, *Desolation Desert, Tailings Pond 4, Minera Centinela Copper Mine, Antofagasta Region, Atacama Desert, Chile*, 2018
Archival pigment print, 48 x 48 inches, edition of 6 + 2 AP



David Maisei, *Terminal Mirage 18*, 2003
Archival pigment print, 48 x 48 inches, edition of 5 + 2 AP

ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Maisel's (b. 1961, New York; lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA) photographs, multimedia projects, and public installations have been exhibited at and collected by institutions including the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY; Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, CA; Denver Art Museum, CO; George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C; Oakland Museum of California, CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; and ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany. Maisel was a Scholar in Residence at the Getty Research Institute, and Artist in Residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts. Maisel has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (2018), an Investing in Artists Grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation (2011), and a National Endowment for the Arts' Individual Artist's Grant (1990). His work has been the subject of numerous monographs including *Proving Ground* (2020, Radius Books) and *Black Maps: American Landscape and the Apocalyptic Sublime* (2013, Steidl).

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