

MORGAN LEHMAN

534 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011

feature shoot



UNCANNY PHOTOS TAKEN IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT

January 31, 2017 by Ellyn Kail



Sapersteins, 2015 © David Allee, courtesy Morgan Lehman Gallery

Time passes differently at night; it halts, speeds up, moves backwards. Photographer David S. Allee visualizes the strange eternity of darkness in *Chasing Firefly*, now on view at Morgan Lehman Gallery.

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Like *Cross Lands*, the artist's 2006 show at the same gallery, *Chasing Firefly* comprises long-exposure photographs taken after dark. This time, Allee embarked on a kind of homecoming, circling back to sites in New York and the Berkshires where he had spent time as a boy. Included is a picture of the exact spot where he first learned how to swim.

Allee, now a father himself, steps back into his own childhood, bringing with him all the wisdom and experience that comes with age. While nostalgia runs through Allee's sleepy scenes, he's never sentimental. There's wonder and delight in the darkness, but there's also real anxiety.

People sit ready to watch fireworks, though none yet illuminate the sky. These aren't the moments in which things happen; they're the instants right before. The sun will rise eventually, but until then, everything remains uncertain. Anticipation grows to become either excitement or fear, depending on the picture and the person looking at it.

Ultimately, *Chasing Fireflies*, as its name would suggest, is not about darkness as much as it is about light. We come for the mystery and suspicion of nightfall, but we stay for the things that guide us home: the neon lights, the car headlights, and the moonlight brushed across the time-worn landscape.

Chasing Firefly is at Morgan Lehman Gallery until February 11th, 2017. The artist will sign books on the 2nd.