

MORGAN LEHMAN

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PHOTO+

PDN PHOTO
OF THE DAY

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Quiet Nights in the City and Country



"Fireworks," 2016. © David Allee/Courtesy of Morgan Lehman Gallery

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For more than a decade, David S. Allee's work has focused on the built environment, finding odd juxtapositions and arrangements in places ranging from Brooklyn's Domino Sugar Factory to the campus of an abandoned psychiatric center, all seen through the space-sensitive perspective of an urban planner, Allee's profession before he turned to photography. The images in his show "Chasing Firefly," opening today and on view until February 4 at Morgan Lehman Gallery, were made at night in New York City and in the foothills of the Berkshires, landscapes with personal resonance for Allee, a lifelong New Yorker who spent time in rural Connecticut growing up. Often framed to include little context, the images are graphic and minimalist—a bridge passes over a grassy field, a department store's sign and windows glow in an empty street. Allee uses a variety of nighttime light sources, from moonlight to the streaking head- and taillights of passing cars to create a range of moods, most of them surprisingly bright with a touch of nostalgia. There are distinctly urban scenes, such as a view of the Hudson River and Manhattan skyline framed by windy trees, and a study of peeling paint on handball courts, as well as more pastoral places, including a hillside covered by nighttime picnickers watching fireworks, and the roped-off lake where Allee learned to swim. Together, the images suggest quiet places for contemplation and recollection.