

R. J. Kern
Solo Exhibition

Opens Wednesday July 11 through September 1, 2018

OVERVIEW:

- R. J. Kern – Solo exhibition of photographs from R. J. Kern’s three series: *The Unchosen Ones*, *Out To Pasture*, and *Divine Animals: The Bovidae*.
- Burnet Fine Art & Advisory, 775 Lake Street East, Wayzata, Minnesota
- FREE Opening Reception Wednesday, July 11th, 6-8 p.m.
- Exhibition runs through September 1, 2018
- Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues-Sat and by appointment

Wayzata- Burnet Fine Art & Advisory’s newest exhibition showcases a selection of R. J. Kern’s photographs from his three series: *The Unchosen Ones*, *Out To Pasture*, and *Divine Animals: The Bovidae*.

The Unchosen Ones takes place on the sidelines of 10 county fair animal contests in Minnesota in 2016. These county fairs lead up to the Minnesota State Fair, one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world. The series consists of over 60 portraits of the animals and their young handlers that were not awarded first place but were instead “the unchosen ones”.

As Kern describes, “One isn’t born a winner or loser, but a chooser. This theme I explore in this series. As we look at them, they look back, allowing us to think about how we choose winners and the repercussions for the ones not chosen.”

Out to Pasture serves as a secondary, deeper glimpse of *The Unchosen Ones*, offering insight into the cultural landscape these animals call “home.”

This work explores how we see animals in a place, how we shape that place, and how it shapes us. The pastoral environment not only serves as backdrop for better understanding the cultural and physical landscape which have shaped this species, but human behavior is often mirrored in response.

Divine Animals: The Bovidae

Since 2012, Kern has traveled to Ireland, Germany, Norway, and Iceland to investigate his pastoral roots. When he arrived, he discovered that throughout history, his people and their land have been supported by Bovidae – specifically goat, sheep, and ram. These animals drove the economy for generations and were sources of income and sustenance. The hoofed animals are both banal and mythical. His attraction to these animals springs from an affinity for their calm presences and their innate functional beauty. They have been shaped by the landscapes they inhabit and the lives they lead, exploring across cultural boundaries and geographic lines. “While I have spent most of my life on the move, much like these animals, they taught me that roaming can sustain and anchor.”



Gus and Doolittle, Mahnomon County Fair, Minnesota, 2016, archival pigment print, from The Unchosen Ones

R. J. Kern runs from July 11 through September 1, 2018. Burnet Fine Art & Advisory is open Tuesday–Saturday 11–5pm and by appointment

R. J. Kern (b. 1978) is an American artist based in Minneapolis, Minnesota whose work explores ideas of home, ancestry, and a sense of place through the interaction of people, animals, and cultural landscapes.

Kern's photographs have been exhibited in a number of notable exhibitions, including at the Museum of Modern Art (Tbilisi, Georgia), National Portrait Gallery (London, UK) and the Yixian International Photography Festival (Anhui, China) among others.

Awards and accolades include CENTER 2017 Choice Award Winner, Curator's Choice (First Place), PDN's 30 2018, the 2017 TAYLOR WESSING Photographic Portrait Prize (Finalist), and he is the recipient of two Artist Initiative Grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board (2016, 2018).

Kern's work has been presented in a number of publications, including a feature in National Geographic (November 2017), with his series *The Unchosen Ones* and *Out To Pasture*. In 2018, Kern published his first monograph with Kehrer Verlag titled, *The Sheep and the Goats*, awarded one of "The Most Beautiful German Books 2018," by Stiftung Buchkunst.

Public collections holding his work include the Center for Creative Photography, the Griffin Museum of Photography, the Plains Art Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Mr Hofsó, Skagafjardarsysla, Iceland, 2014, archival pigment print, from Divine Animals: The Bovidae



Dumb and Dumber, Freeborn County, Minnesota, USA, 2016, archival pigment print, from Out to Pasture

R. J. Kern's *The Unchosen Ones* *The work is about people and animals, to be sure, but it is also very much about photography itself, and, as such, shows us a fresh and original treatment of special moments that are rarely dignified by the camera.*

– Excerpt from the essay, *Why Photograph Animals?*, by Alison Nordström, PhD, independent scholar, curator, and writer

Divine Animals: The Bovidae *Kern's evocation of nature as a device to understand his own sense of self draws upon historical precedence: the use of animals as metaphor and the pastoral tradition. Yet the artist's broad concept— his exploration of identity—is firmly grounded in a contemporary context. This tightly knit series of images, which together characterize the author, is common to our age of social media. Kern's aesthetic, however, emphasizes clarity and projects a warm stillness that is a balm to an overstimulated society.*

– Lisa Volpe, Associate Curator of Photography, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Burnet Fine Art & Advisory www.burnetart.com is located in downtown Wayzata, MN; 15 minutes west of Minneapolis. Burnet Fine Art & Advisory is a commercial gallery featuring original contemporary artwork that is thoughtfully curated to inspire and be enjoyed by all. For inquiries please contact info@burnetart.com or (952) 473-8333 | Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @BurnetArt

Editor's Notes: Hi-res and additional images are available upon request.