



EDWARD TYLER NAHEM

erik benson: *Sleep Walking*

September 26- October 25, 2013



Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, New York, announces an exhibition of new works by Erik Benson, *Sleep Walking*, that will feature a series of nocturnal cityscapes created with thousands of shapes hand-cut from dried sheets of acrylic paint.

Erik Benson's paintings depict the stark urban landscape of everyday metropolitan life. These paintings of residential buildings, playgrounds and graffiti-stained construction fences appear as both delicately balanced, nearly abstract compositions of geometric color as well as the epitome of isolation, individual containment within the city masses and cinematic in their mood and structure. As noted by Greg Lindquist in *ArtNews*, Benson's work revels in "laborious design and painterly dissolution" (*ArtNews*, December 2011).

One of the paintings in the exhibition, *Bookmen*, depicts a large silhouetted tree in front of two condominium buildings at night. The painting exudes a feeling of anxiety brought on by an ever-shifting urban landscape. For Benson, it brings to mind Edward Hopper's remark that "all [he] wanted to do was paint sunlight on the side of a house." Through formal the artist arrives at a place that is socially relevant in the here and now – consciously or not.

Erik Benson writes of this new body of work:

The title *Sleep Walking* is a reference to the experience of a place in darkness and carries the theme of a pedestrian landscape observed at night. Whether with a tired eye, or a sleepy brain, there is a more poetic approach to the subjects than observing them in the cold hard light of day. In this state, abstracted elements occur between real forms of architecture and nature, shapes and spaces are changed by angle and lack of definition. Glimpses of night windows, refractions from streetlights and silhouettes of obstacles, all lend themselves to an undefined footing – dark sided glimpses of a changing landscape.

Born in Detroit, MI, Benson currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He received his BFA from Minneapolis College of Art and Design and his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Benson's first exhibition with the gallery in 2010 *Detouring*, opened to critical acclaim after popular showings of his work at The Armory Show and Art Basel Miami Beach. Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art also organized the popular pop-up gallery show, *Erik Benson: All City* in Madrid, in 2012. Previous solo exhibitions were held at Roebing Hall, Brooklyn. Benson has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including those held at Storefront Bushwick, Brooklyn; Third Streaming, New York; Mason Gross Galleries, Rutgers University; Salon 94, New York; Flag Art Foundation, New York; and the Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York. Benson participated in the Bronx Museum of Arts' Artist in the Marketplace program, and in 2008 he awarded the New York Foundation for the Arts Painting Fellowship. In 2011, he completed a residency at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. Most recently, Benson exhibited at the Arsenal Gallery in New York's Central Park with a solo exhibition, *The Park*, presented by the City of New York Parks & Recreation in partnership with Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art.