

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue Boy Press, Joshua Orsburn

Boyhood

25 October 2024 – 18 January 2025

OPENING RECEPTION

25 October 2024 from 5 to 7 PM



Dependency, Joshua Orsburn. Lithograph with chine-colle. 30" 22 1/4".

(Santa Fe, NM) Esteemed regional printmaker Joshua Orsburn showcases prints from his storied career as a masterprintmaker alongside new prints from his publishing house Blue Boy Press.

(October 2024) In *Boyhood*, Joshua Orsburn, esteemed printmaker and artist, highlights the divide between art professionals and artists with a body of work that includes prints made in collaboration with artists such as Jaune Quick-To-See Smith and prints from his personal studio practice, which explores queer identity and personal history. **The exhibition opens with a reception at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art on October 25 from 5 to 7 PM.**

Orsburn's professional printing portfolio and exhibition of intimate self-portraits illustrate either side of an art world dichotomy that few are privy to. In fine art printmaking, printmakers help artists realize their vision with specialized knowledge of the fine art printing process. In many cases, these master printmakers are themselves artists. But the art of these printmakers is rarely taken seriously on its own merits. Although much of the public prefers not to have their profession define their identity, the standard appears different for printmakers, who are considered art professionals or artists but rarely both.

Beyond this divide between roles in the fine art printing community, *Boyhood* lays bare Orsburn's artistic truth. The nude figure, which Orsburn so often depicts in his work, is historically associated with eroticism, aesthetics, or beauty, but Orsburn's nudes occupy an alternately sinister and vulnerable space. The lithographs in *Boyhood* indirectly tell the story of domestic violence and the scars it leaves on the psyche of survivors. The work invites us to step into the psychological space of anxiety and fear that victims of domestic abuse live in. **"You can feel the gravity of Orsburn's work without knowing the subject matter,"** says Spencer Linford, communications director, **"which is beneficial, as it encourages careful examination that uncovers the layered subtexts of the work, such as queer identity."**

Unlike the idealized nudes of antiquity, Orsburn's figures are honest in their rendering. They invite viewers to see people as they are, not as society expects them to be. This paradigm shift is a philosophical undercurrent of Orsburn's work. No matter how progressive the art or social climate appears to be, we invariably avert our eyes from what happens behind closed doors, whether that be the labor of producing a fine art print or the dark reality of domestic abuse. In his first exhibition with Zane Bennett Contemporary Art, Orsburn invites us to consider whether our perceptions are founded on expectation or sober reality.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@zanebennettgallery.com.

Artist Statement

My practice is predominantly narrative, depicting my relationships both metaphorically and physically, stemming from my experiences as the victim of domestic violence in my childhood and early adolescence. These relationships are sometimes intimate and specific but are mostly symbiotic. Each piece has themes of the fear of being alone, the duplicity of needing people, and the struggle to enjoy one's own company.

The figures in my work protrude from each other, lay on each other, and even become each other, showing underlying queer tropes peppered with a sense of humor. This creates a dialogue between the viewer and the characters, whether a quick laugh or an empathetic moment of relatability. This disquieting balance between the realities of abuse, mental illness, and social discomfort and the humor and tenderness depicted creates an underlying tension throughout my practice—a tightrope I continue to explore.

Questions of materiality and medium choice periodically rattle in my brain as I ask myself, "Why am I producing paintings or drawings of these relationships, and how do I relate to the art itself?" The lithographic process answers many of these questions for me because the medium is alive. Each stone notoriously has a personality that interacts with you throughout your art making. Some stones like it hot, whereas others require a more gentle touch when chemically processing the image drawn right on its surface. My relationship with Lithography constantly reminds me of the importance of listening and the push and pull of making.

—Joshua Orsburn

Biography

Joshua Orsburn was born in Denton, Texas. He received his BFA in studio art at the University of Texas at Austin in 2016. After a six-year stint in Austin, Orsburn moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to attend Tamarind Institute, where he completed the Printer Training Program. Shortly after, he started interning at Landfall Press in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which transitioned into Black Rock Editions in 2020. He was the lead printer at this studio for three years before founding Blue Boy Press in 2022, a press focusing on collaborative printing through contract printing and publishing. He is also the lead printer for Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, which helps him facilitate his goals of producing work for himself in conjunction with working with the Native community in New Mexico.

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