

## **Brian Mashburn - *Witness***

July 18th - August 8th, 2015

Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace project room are new works by North Carolina based artist Brian Mashburn. In *Witness*, Mashburn creates suggestive landscapes that invoke industrial degradation and the consumptive trappings of wealth and leisure. In the midst of these compromised human worlds, looming just off in the hazy distance, resilient wildlife manages to prevail in the foregrounds. Mashburn's meticulously rendered paintings allude to the consequences of unchecked industry and to the problematic nature of exploitative ideologies. His beautifully detailed oil paintings are gothic in sensibility, but timely in their social and political preoccupations. Though dark and ruminating with romantic disillusionment, the works, nonetheless, suggest the possibility of redemption in a world largely burdened by its own self-inflicted ruins.

Mashburn inserts realistically detailed animals into the foregrounds of these desolate forest landscapes. They provide a stark contrast and counterpoint to the shadowy and ambiguous scenes unfolding in the backgrounds. These animals, both wild and domestic, bare witness to the world around them, like allegorical figures in a cautionary tale. The narratives in Mashburn's works remain open to conjecture, offering the viewer incomplete and contemplative moments. Whether viewed as dystopian nightmare or contemporary political commentary, the works are at once aesthetically striking and emotionally resonant.