

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

**Demetrius Oliver**  
***Early Work (2003–2006)***

At

**The Armory Show 2021**  
**Javits Center, New York**  
**Booth S8**

September 9 – 12, 2021



Demetrius Oliver, *Untitled*, 2003  
 digital chromogenic print, Edition of 10, 25 1/2 x 36 1/2 in

Inman Gallery is pleased to present a selection of significant early photographic work (2003–2006) by New York based artist **Demetrius Oliver** (b. 1975, Brooklyn, NY). Begun while the artist was in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied with artist Terry Adkins (1953–2014), most of the work was completed during his two-year Core Residency at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Oliver credits Adkins with shaping his deep interest in exploring commonplace materials and the layers of associations that can be activated using them. After graduating from Penn, Oliver went on to create three works in collaboration with Adkins.

Oliver began his studies as a painter but gravitated towards photography because for him, it allowed for the conflation of sculpture, performance, and painting. Furthermore, the rapid process lent itself to his exploration of materials. The deeply sculptural qualities of the photographic images also foreground the artist's later work.

Inspired by Transcendentalist writers, particularly Walt Whitman, the work images the artist's own body while breaking from the current identity-driven cultural narrative. The parts that comprise Oliver's performative photographs are his own limbs, feet, head, hands, etc., which in division approach an every-man status. Ralph Waldo Emerson provides insight: "We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal ONE" (*The Over-Soul*, 1841).

Despite their strongly graphic qualities, Oliver's early works resist quick interpretation and retain a compelling mystery. They encourage a generous reading and an active collaboration between the author and the viewer.

Many of these works were included in important exhibitions such as *Frequency* (The Studio Museum in Harlem, 2005-2006), and have been collected by institutions such as The Studio Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. A work from this series was recently on view in the expansive group exhibition *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse* at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

**Demetrius Oliver** (born 1975, Brooklyn, NY) received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998 and an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2004. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture also in 2004. Oliver has participated in numerous residencies, including the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2004-2006), The Studio Museum, Harlem (2006), and Light Work (2009). His work has been exhibited widely, with solo exhibitions at Klaus Von Nichtssaggend Gallery, NY (2018), Inman Gallery, Houston (2015, 2012, 2010, 2008, 2006), the Print Center in Philadelphia (2014), D'Amelio Terras in New York (2011, 2008), Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA (2009), and The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2006). His work is currently on view in the exhibition "The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse" at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond Virginia. In September 2010 Oliver completed a commission for the High Line in New York, which included a 25 by 75 foot billboard, musical performances, and stargazing. His work has been reviewed in Art in America, The Village Voice, The New Yorker, Art Lies, The Brooklyn Rail, Artforum, and The New York Times, among other publications. Oliver's work is in the permanent collections of the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Birmingham Museum of Art and others.

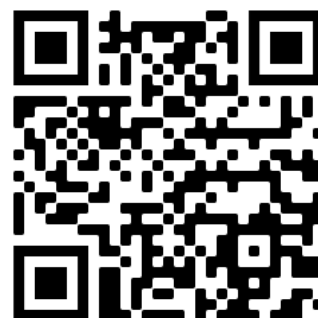
Oliver is known for creating elegant, improvisatory, site-specific installations using photography, sculpture and video to record the act of sidereal observation itself. His work draws heavily on a variety of disparate intellectual interests related to interpreting phenomena, including American transcendentalism, music of the spheres, and the history of cosmology, weaving them into spectacular, cohesive works of self-exploration and expression. Relying on ordinary materials and found imagery, Oliver creates artwork that brings visual form to the processes of exploration and experimentation referencing musical, scientific and literary materials. He lives and works in Harlem, New York City.

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with prices and exhibition history