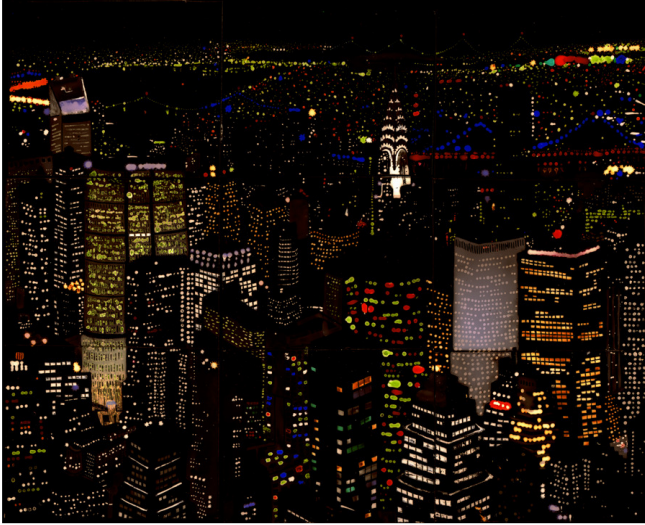


## COURTNEY JOHNSON: *Glass Cities*

Extended through May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York

Gallery hours : Tuesday – Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM



*New York*, 2009, carbon pigment print from cliché-verre, edition of 9, 48 x 60 inches



*Rome*, 2009, carbon pigment print from cliché-verre, edition of 9, 48 x 60 inches

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York is proud to present *Glass Cities*, a solo exhibition by the versatile photographer Courtney Johnson. This will be Johnson's first solo show with Jenkins Johnson Gallery in New York.

Courtney Johnson creates her luminous photographs using a modified version of the technique developed in the mid-nineteenth century by painters looking to transition into the new field of photography, like Corot and Delacroix. Johnson uses 4x5 inch glass plates, on which she creates a negative, painting with nail polish, white out, and drawing ink. From the negatives, she prints a photograph using a slide enlarger or a scanner. Most of Johnson's photographs are compiled from nine different negatives, one of which is included with the purchase of an edition. The complicated nature of the cliché-verre technique has made it virtually obsolete in the contemporary art world.

Johnson began utilizing the cliché-verre (French for glass negative) technique in the late 1990s, first experimenting with abstract ink blots on 35mm film. Around 2000, Johnson turned her cliché-verre practice to the representational, beginning with portraits and later progressing to landscapes, as in *Glass Cities*. While the glass negatives reference the historical tradition of painting, the final images are photographic and mechanically reproducible; Johnson has secured herself as a link between the arts of the past and the art of the future – a bridge from one medium and time period to the next. While her unique method contrasts ideas of the mechanical and the handmade (similarly detailed by Walter Benjamin in his pivotal "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"), she specifically selects her subject matter, in this case cityscapes, to explore the seemingly disconnected triangle between nature, technology, and mankind. She breaks down complex forms into more representative shapes, giving the scenes an abstract sensibility while retaining the essence of the city.

It is important to note that she paints the negative of her final image, so in Johnson's photograph *Rome*, which is composed from nine cliché-verre plates, the light turquoise sky would have actually been a thick yellow drawing ink. Johnson's use of a scanner can attribute to the particular luminosity of the piece – another bridge between the classical art of painting and the contemporary use of the digital media – as in the glowing, seemingly starry sky above the cityscape in *Rome*. Similarly, Johnson's *New York* perfectly captures the essence of the city, awake and aglow, regardless of the time of night. Her use of varying colors and textures gives the photograph a sense of depth and reality; the black borders between the nine different negatives Johnson created also gives the viewer the sensation of looking out a window over the glowing city below. Johnson's unique and masterful technique is a vestige of the art of the future, blending styles and media to form her own inimitable view of the city.

*Courtney Johnson* received her BFA with Honors from New York University and her MFA from the University of Miami. She has shown widely throughout the United States and has been lauded in both the English and Spanish American press. She has guest lectured on alternative photographic processes and was recently added into the collections of the Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale and the Lowe Art Museum, Miami. We are pleased to offer her first solo New York exhibition.