

WILDING CRAN GALLERY



Ry Rocklen

Desert Lenses

September 12 - October 24, 2026

Wilding Cran Gallery is pleased to present *Desert Lenses*, an exhibition of new work by Ry Rocklen.

Ry Rocklen has spent more than two decades making ordinary objects — rocking chairs, drying racks, abandoned cars, shopping carts — behave unexpectedly. In *Desert Lenses*, these familiar forms become uncanny vantage points for surveilling the high desert around his home in Joshua Tree. Rather than simply depicting the wilderness, however, Rocklen folds these objects through a looking glass and back into themselves. Using photography, mold-making, and glaze decals, he turns each form into a kind of container or frame, its surface carrying an image of the desert it inhabits. Part sculpture, part landscape, part optical illusion, Rocklen forces these objects to look at the unvarnished realities of the places that birthed them.

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These conceptual gestures are also quietly autobiographical. Rocklen isn't simply interested in the desert as an abstract concept so much as a rugged terrain filtered through daily life: the things you sit on, hang clothes from, push through a parking lot, or find abandoned by the side of the road. His sculptures make those mundane encounters visible, turning the stuff of everyday life into a set of lenses through which a place can be understood.

The second body of work in the exhibition brings that lens closer to home. Rocklen casts socks worn by members of his family in aluminum and paper, preserving the shape and suggestion of the bodies that once occupied them. The desert disappears, but the act of looking remains. These are portraits without faces, intimate records made from the things people leave behind.

Together, these quotidian sculptures amount to a family portrait told through place and perspective. One body of work is about a landscape and the objects through which it comes into focus; the other is about the people who live in that environment. In both, Rocklen finds a way to make the ordinary carry something larger: history, memory, the traces of a life.

Desert Lenses is Ry Rocklen's second solo exhibition at Wilding Cran Gallery.

Ry Rocklen (b. 1978) studied at CalArts, Santa Clarita, CA, 1996 - 1998, received his BFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, CA (2001), and his MFA from the University of Southern California, CA (2006). Rocklen's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Solo exhibitions of Rocklen's work have been presented at Wilding Cran Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Team Gallery, New York, NY; Feuer/Mesler, New York, NY; Honor Fraser, Los Angeles, CA; Praz-Delavallade, Paris, FR; Lamar Dodd School of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, GA (2014); and the Visual Arts Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX (2010). Rocklen has also been included in several major survey exhibitions, including the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY (2008); Made in LA, Hammer Museum (2012); Murmurs: Recent Contemporary Acquisitions, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2013); Sculpture from the Hammer Contemporary Collection, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2016); CURRENT:LA FOOD, Public Art Triennial, Los Angeles, CA (2019); That Was Then... This Was Now, MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (2008); Red Eye, The Rubell Collection, Miami, FL (2006); and the Athens Biennale 2009 HEAVEN, Athens, Greece (2009). His work belongs to public and private collections including Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Mohn Family Foundation, Santa Monica, CA; Thomas J. Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY; Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, West Palm Beach, FL, and the Rubell Museum, Miami, FL.

Ry Rocklen lives and works in Joshua Tree, California.

Image: Ry Rocklen, *Rocky Sunday*, 2026, Ceramic, glaze, glaze decal, 11 x 9 x 5 1/4 inches, 27.9 x 22.9 x 13.3 cm.